

Reception centres trap migrants seeking asylum

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Reception centres for migrants seeking asylum trap the people seeking help through social disempowerment as they become increasingly dependent on so-called humanitarian government, according to research published in the International Journal of Migration and Border Studies in August.

Giuseppe Campesi of the Department of Political Sciences, at the University of Bari, in Italy, carried out [empirical research](#) on Italian migrant reception centres and has discovered that subtle social control essentially imprisons people who have attempted to escape oppressive regimes elsewhere. He points out that the use of large-scale facilities for receiving asylum seekers and refugees is justified through arguments stressing the need for bureaucratic efficiency in delivering services and the need that in certain circumstances arises for urgent assistance.

Given the alternatives where migrants risk their lives attempting to breach international border controls and escape to what they perceive as the ultimate goal, those nations that offer them safe harbour, such as the UK, it might seem that reception centres are the only sensible alternative. However, Campesi argues that people caught up in this system are having their human rights and freedoms severely limited in the name of humanitarianism.

"Under the rules governing the so-called Dublin system, anyone who wants to apply for asylum is forced to file his or her application in the country of first arrival, and generally has to wait for the outcome within

its 'reception' system," explains Campesi. "The system seems explicitly designed to confine [asylum seekers](#) on the threshold of Europe, forcing them to orbit around the region in which they received first assistance," he adds. It is perhaps not surprising that many seeking [asylum](#) attempt to break through national borders illicitly on board unsafe seagoing vessels or by secreting themselves in lorries passing through the Channel Tunnel.

More information: 'Humanitarian confinement: an ethnography of reception centres for asylum seekers at Europe's southern border', *Int. J. Migration and Border Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp.398–418.
[www.inderscienceonline.com/doi ... 04/IJMBS.2015.070785](http://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/.../04/IJMBS.2015.070785)

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