

The Effectiveness of First World Asylum Practices in Deterring Applications, Offering Bureaucratic Deniability, and Violating Human Rights: A Greek Case Study

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Abstract : Rising waves of nationalism around the world have led first-world migration receiving countries to exploit the ambiguity of international refugee law and establish asylum application processes that deter applications, allow for bureaucratic deniability, and violate human rights. This case study of Greek asylum application practices argues that the 'pre-application' asylum process in Greece violates the spirit of international law by making it incredibly difficult for potential asylum seekers to apply for asylum, in essence violating the human rights of thousands of asylum seekers. This study's focus is on the Greek mainland's asylum 'pre-application' process, which in 2016 began to require those wishing to apply for asylum to do so during extremely restricted hours via a basic Skype line. The average wait to simply begin the registration process to apply for asylum is 81 days, during which time applicants are forced to live illegally in Greece. This study's methodology in analyzing the 'pre-application' process consists of hours of interviews with asylum seekers, NGOs, and the Asylum Service office on the ground in Athens, as well as an analysis of the Greek Asylum Service historical asylum registration statistics. This study presents three main findings: the delays associated with the Skype system in Greece are the result of system design, as proven by a statistical analysis of Greek asylum registrations, NGOs have been co-opted by the state to perform state functions during the process, and the government's use of technology is both purposefully lazy and discriminatory. In conclusion, the study argues that such asylum practices are part of a pattern of first-world migration receiving countries policies' which discourage asylum seekers from applying and fall short of the standards in international law.

Keywords : asylum, European Union, governance, Greece, irregular, migration, policy, refugee, Skype

Conference Title : ICMRM 2019 : International Conference on Migration and Residential Mobility

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : August 13-14, 2019