

Izabela WAGNER

izabela.wagner@civitas.edu.pl

Collegium Civitas, Poland



“Strategic Boredom”: The Experience and Dynamics of Boredom in Refugee Camp

Using the ethnographical method, the paper examines the boredom of asylum seekers deployed in an refugee camp in southern Europe. It concerns understudied, yet widespread phenomenon of boredom, in the centers of retentions and other places, in which people wait several months/years for the obtention of the permit of stay in a given state (EU) and cannot work. Boredom is defined as socially-constructed feeling being an effect of the interaction between people and institutional/organizational ambience that lacks qualities necessary to arouse engagement. We distinguished three modalities of the phenomenon: “doing nothing,” “the life in Limbo,” and “Strategic Boredom.” We claim that the last one is the most powerful phenomenon, which is the specific tool of the strict control exercised on the fragile population (asylum seekers) by the administration of the camp. From the other hand the dominated group is using Boredom as a strategy to obtain the favors of the administration; this strategy – they hope – will conclude in the obtention of the permit of stay and/or the legal status of a refugee.