

Propositions

Intensities of the State

An ethnography of intimacy and suspicion
in Dutch asylum procedures

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- 1:** The state is nothing without the bodies, objects and places that actualise its power, and therefore it is important to closely examine the relations and affectations that concentrate in the sites staged to perform decisions over in- and exclusion.
- 2:** Immigration officials are attached to, instead of detached from, the aims of the procedure, and so it is not bureaucratic indifference but bureaucratic passion that characterises their work.
- 3:** Next to understanding compassion as an emotion, it can be taken as institution-alised and embedded within the larger structure of the asylum procedure, which also means that it is irreducible to the feelings of single immigration officials.
- 4:** While 'objective' decisions in the asylum procedure rely on intimacy and proximity, objectivity is practiced and preached through notions of distance and detachment, which mainly results in the effacement of the intimacy that made it possible.
- 5:** Being included within such a tense and highly politicised site like the asylum procedure inevitably also means to be moved and affected by it, to be positioned and repositioned, and to feel with and against its practitioners.
- 6:** We are never not emotional.
- 7:** 'Creating impact' should not only be valued through a researcher's complicity with state agendas, but also in the activist potential to work against those agendas and toward radical equality.
- 8:** Neutrality is a performative trick used to claim empty authority and to place oneself above and away from the issue at stake.
- 9:** Heteronormativity hurts each whom it concerns, even those who benefit from it.
- 10:** There is a tragedy to money as it is never just good enough, it cannot but inspire thoughts and quarrels over how best to replace and get rid of it.
- 11:** The rules of proper attire during a defence need to change into a requirement of utter flamboyancy.