Geography of the Fürth Departure Center

Since we conceive of space not as something given or fixed but as something constructed that develops through concrete use, experience, forming, or reflection, a map is a constitutive element of this manifold production. Maps, as descriptions of and inquiries into space, are neither neutral reproductions nor mere copies of space. They rather shape space through the act of naming and confining. In opposition to planning, which has as its aim the implementation of an anticipated project in space, mapping describes and unfolds existing structures and forces. Maps are tools to capture the incomprehensible, unconscious, or structurally "invisible" qualities of space. What they describe is the basis for new realities. As maps both disclose and reshape what is already in existence, they give it meaning and introduce new layers of perception.

Ausreisezentren, or, "departure centers," are camps for refugees and migrants that, due to missing papers, cannot be deported. Asylum seekers held in these camps are accused by authorities of concealing their land of origin and resisting obtaining passports. So far there are seven departure centers in Germany. They are a repressive expansion of the systematic defense against refugees and act as a supplement to custody pending deportation *(Abschiebehaft)*. These camps are designed to coerce immigrants into "voluntarily" leaving the country, become "illegal" and thus disappear from an administrative standpoint, or to be legally deported after their country of citizenship is ascertained. In contrast to the custody pending deportation that is limited to a certain amount of time by law, a stay in a departure center has no legal time limitation.

The Fürth Departure Center has existed since 2002 and was the first to be erected in Bavaria. It is situated directly next to an accommodation for asylum seekers and has a capacity of 50 persons. Approximately 20 migrants live there at present, mostly from the former Soviet Union and African countries. They are held here in a particular form of "lodging." Pressure is exerted on them – mainly through the form of their accommodations, restrictions on their freedom of movement, the obligation to register daily at the camp, through access control, and random room searches. Further measures designed to compel the refugees to leave Germany include the revocation of cash subsidies given by the state to asylum-seekers, the prohibition of enrollment in German courses, the need to obtain a permit in order to see a doctor, forced appearances at embassies, a prohibition on working, and regular interrogations.

In collaboration with students from the M.A Program in Architecture at the Nuremberg Academy of Fine Arts, we have compiled a map that relates the spatial conditions and the everyday life of the Fürth Departure Center both to the nationwide system of camps and the biographies of individual migrants. Res Publica (www.ausreisezentren.de), the Munich organization for human rights and rights of refugees, and the activists of the Nuremberg organization "Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants" supported our research.

Collectively, we have experimented with cartographic representation in order to pose these questions: What kind of spaces does the German system of the administration of migrants produce? How do political and social circumstances appear geographically? Which potential for analysis or evaluation is offered by a spatial representation? How can a critique of exclusion be formulated by means of mapping? How can the varying levels of state and institutional structure be brought into relation with those of individual experience? How is subjective knowledge transmitted by this?

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The Geography of the Fürth Departure Center
"You have to take residence on (date) in the accommodation herein. You are not in possession of a passport or similar documentation and therefore the country that is obliged to grant you residence could not be ascertained. (…) The measures occurring in the above mentioned facility for procuring a replacement passport bear no delay, as you do not have a right to stay in Germany any longer. Furthermore because you make your living on public funds you are considered to be a particular burden on the country beyond your illegitimate stay. Therefore exists a public interest in taking immediate measures to end your residence." (Official Form Letter from the public authority responsible for aliens *(Ausländerbehörde)* given when admitted to a Departure Center)

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Stations and Places of Residence of five Migrants

On-site length of stay
Total length of stay since entry

Person 1
Person 2
Person 3
Person 4
Person 5

Source:
Res Publica, Karawane Nürnberg

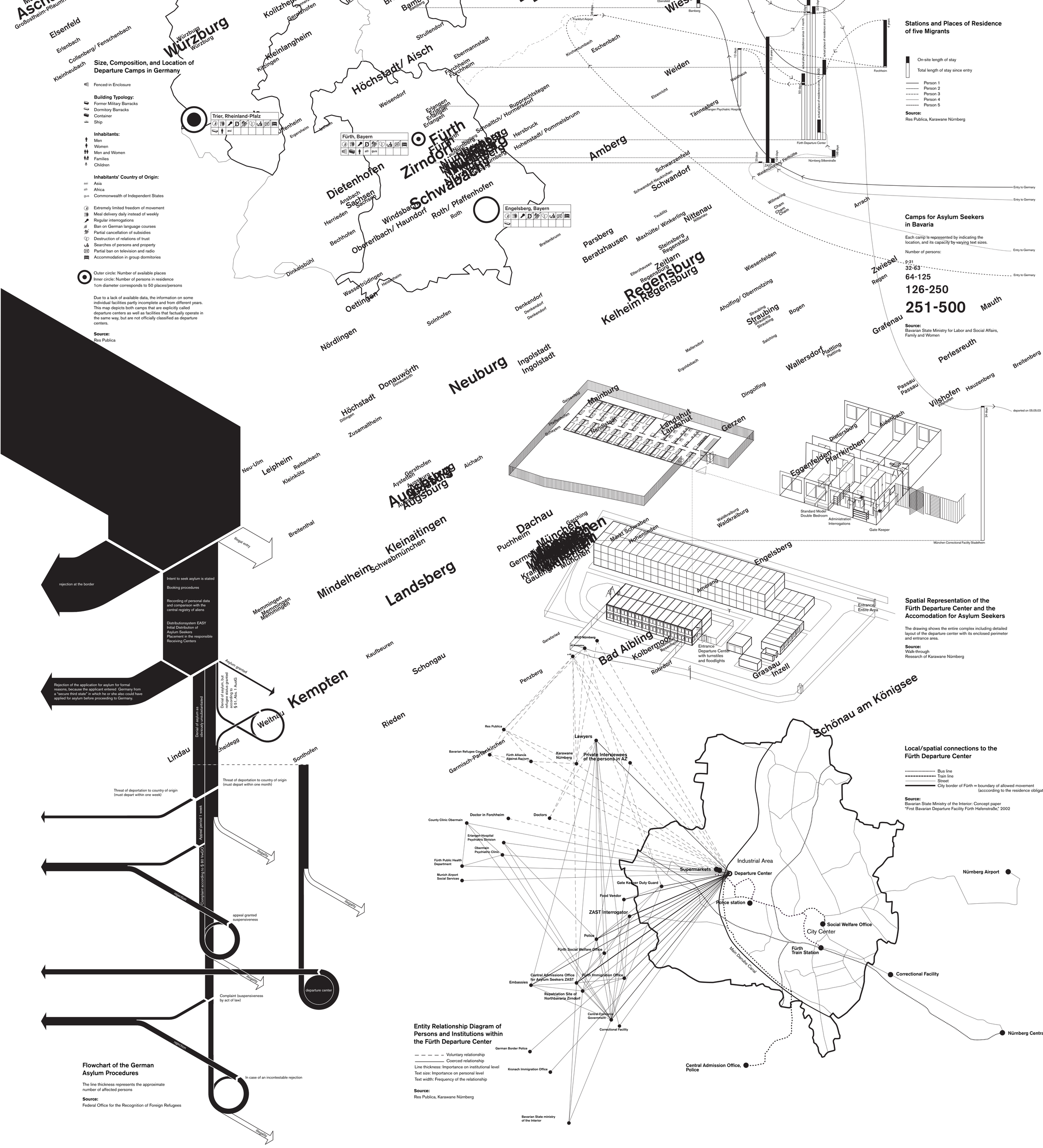
Camps for Asylum Seekers in Bavaria

Each camp is represented by indicating the location, and its capacity by varying text sizes.

Number of persons:

0-31
32-63
64-125
126-250
251-500

Source:
Bavarian State Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs, Family and Women



Size, Composition, and Location of Departure Camps in Germany

Fenced-in Enclosure

Building Typology:
Former Military Barracks
Dormitory Barracks
Container
Ship

Inhabitants:
Men
Women
Men and Women
Families
Children

Inhabitants' Country of Origin:
asi Asia
afr Africa
gus Commonwealth of Independent States

Extremely limited freedom of movement
Meal delivery daily instead of weekly
Regular interrogations
Ban on German language courses
Partial cancellation of subsidies
Destruction of relations of trust
Searches of persons and property
Partial ban on television and radio
Accommodation in group dormitories

Outer circle: Number of available places
Inner circle: Number of persons in residence
1cm diameter corresponds to 50 places/persons

Due to a lack of available data, the information on some individual facilities partly incomplete and from different years. This map depicts both camps that are explicitly called departure centers as well as facilities that factually operate in the same way, but are not officially classified as departure centers.

Source:
Res Publica

Flowchart of the German Asylum Procedures

The line thickness represents the approximate number of affected persons

Source:
Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees

Spatial Representation of the Fürth Departure Center and the Accomodation for Asylum Seekers

The drawing shows the entire complex including detailed layout of the departure center with its enclosed perimeter and entrance area.

Source:
Walk-through
Research of Karawane Nürnberg

Entity Relationship Diagram of Persons and Institutions within the Fürth Departure Center

Voluntary relationship
Coerced relationship
Line thickness: Importance on institutional level
Text size: Importance on personal level
Text width: Frequency of the relationship

Source:
Res Publica, Karawane Nürnberg

Local/spatial connections to the Fürth Departure Center

Bus line
Train line
Street
City border of Fürth = boundary of allowed movement (acccording to the residence obligation law)

Source:
Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior: Concept paper "First Bavarian Departure Facility Fürth Hafenstraße," 2002