



PASSING AS AN “AUTHENTIC” QUEER?

QUEER DISRUPTIONS TO TRUTH AND CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT WITHIN ASYLUM PROCEDURES

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Description

A newly recognised and poorly understood category of asylum seekers, queer people are disproportionately disadvantaged by the culture of disbelief within asylum systems. In this context, what can queer asylum seekers inform us about how credibility is established and how truth claims can be asserted and assessed?

Credibility assessment during asylum procedures has previously received scholarly attention, including in Switzerland. It has so far been examined from the point of view of asylum officers and bureaucrats, privileging institutionalised and hegemonic perspectives on how credibility assessment is or ought to be practiced. But how do those asylum seekers who arguably find it most difficult to establish their credibility react to and critique these practices? To answer these questions, this project examines how queer asylum seekers come to understand what is expected of a credible subject through interactions with fellow asylum seekers, legal aides, and asylum rights advocates within venues of socialisation including asylum centres and associative spaces. It also asks how these understandings shape their approach to the asylum system, the way they narrate their experiences, the kind of documentary evidence they choose to provide, and so on.

In so doing, the project will illuminate how the truth-establishing conventions and practices of queer asylum seekers articulate with those of asylum authorities. Putting queer asylum seekers' understandings and critiques of credibility assessment intellectually at par with those of asylum officers, this project will address a regrettable imbalance in scholarship investigating the regime(s) of truth that operate within asylum systems and society at large.

