Refugees that seek asylum based on sexual orientation and gender identity are often expected to demonstrate a particular form of sexual and gendered identity towards the immigration authorities when they apply for asylum. This expectation of the asylum system in the Global North is often based on ideas of more liberal and progressive gender and sexuality policies that Jasbir Puar (2007) has termed homonationalism. This seminar will bring together international scholars to discuss how queer refugees navigate the asylum system in the different nation states and other heteronormative spaces in the Global North. While the main area of interest when studying queer refugees remains the asylum system and its understanding of sexuality and gender identity, a number of studies (e.g., Dustin and Held 2021) stress the need to understand the social and political context through which queer refugees navigate. Paying attention to the temporality and the spatiality of sexuality and gender identities, the aim of this research seminar is to discuss how queer refugees navigate spaces such as asylum accommodation, support groups for queer refugees as well as spaces outside the asylum system. Together, such navigations reflect how different spaces affect their chances of being granted asylum.

Programme

09.00-09.20 Arrival with coffee and welcome by Marlene Spanger, Aalborg University

09.20-10.10 Domesticizing sexual orientation and gender identity refugees in asylum accommodations
Thomas Wimark, Uppsala University (discussant Marlene Spanger, Aalborg University)

10.10-11.20 Break

11.20-12.10 Time as queer capital, or coming out of the asylum system
Rieke Schröder, Aalborg University (discussant Moira Dustin, University of Sussex)

12.10-12.50 Lunch (at own expense)

12.50-13.40 Buckled up temporalities of SOGIE refugees deported from Queer Utopias
Árdis K. Ingvars, University of Iceland (discussant Rieke Schröder, Aalborg University)

13.40-14.30 Pathways to refugee protection for women: victims of violence or genuine lesbians?
Moira Dustin, University of Sussex (discussant Jesper Lindholm, Aalborg University)

14.30-14.45 Break

14.45-15.30 Surveillance practices within the Danish asylum system: On social media and the invisibilities of queerness
Marie Lunau, Roskilde University (discussant Thomas Wimark, Uppsala University)

15.30-15.45 Closing remarks by Rieke Schröder and Marlene Spanger
Thomas Wimark (UU/SE) is an associate professor at the Department of Human Geography at Uppsala University, Sweden. Thomas' research interests include migration, urban planning and marginalised groups. In his academic work, he mainly interrogates how normative views of sexuality, gender and race affects (queer) individuals that migrate within and between countries. His latest work includes explorations on queer refugees' experiences in the Swedish asylum accommodation.

Moira Dustin (UoS/UK) is a lecturer in the School of Law, Politics and Sociology at the University of Sussex, England. Moira has been working on the European Research Council project SOGICA – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum: A European human rights challenge (2016-2020). In 2021, Moira launched the Women in Refugee Law (WiRL) network.

Marie Lunau (RU/DK) is a PhD student at the Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University, Denmark. Marie’s PhD project follows queer affects in bureaucratic migration spaces in Denmark. Specifically, she investigates how geopolitics, truth and queerness is constructed in the process of seeking asylum based on sexual and/or gender identity.

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Rieke Schröder (AAU/DK) is a PhD student at the Department of Politics and Society, Aalborg University, Denmark. Rieke’s PhD project compares how queer refugees navigate different spaces – such as asylum accommodation, queer bars, pride parades, support groups – in Berlin and Copenhagen.

Árdís K. Ingvars (UI/IS) is an adjunct in Sociology and a researcher at the RIKK Institute, at the University of Iceland. She is focusing on the experiences of queer refugees who are deported from the Nordic states to Italy and Greece on the Dublin grounds. She has also been associated with the Centre for Gender Studies at Karlstad University and Migration and Diversity at Tübingen University where she followed refugee activists in Greece, as they (un)settled in Germany.

Marlene Spanger (AAU/DK) is an associate professor at the Department of Politics & Society at Aalborg University, Denmark. Marlens's research interests include discursive formations within the policy fields of prostitution, labour and human trafficking, transnational intimacies and migration with a special attention to gender, sexuality and racialisation.

Jesper Lindholm (AAU/DK) is an associate professor at the Department of Law at Aalborg University, Denmark. Jespers’ research interests evolve around refugee law and human rights, including gender identity and sexual orientation in asylum cases. He is a former employee of Amnesty International and UNHCR, and a former member of the Danish Refugee Appeals Board.