

STRATEGIC SILENCE AND CIRCULAR CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG LGBTQ MIGRANTS

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown how the credibility of young asylum seekers at the Migration board are based on different stereotypes, gender dichotomy and heteronormativity, and the public debate, opinions and discussions regarding young newcomers are often based on these prejudices and perceptions. The asylum seekers themselves tend to end up questioning and navigating in their own sexuality and identity when they already are in a vulnerable situation. This could create a feeling of exclusion for LGBTQ individuals right from the start in the new country.

The study is based on individual interviews with 18 participants, 20-30 years old, identifying as LGBTQ persons with a migration experience, residing in Sweden. By using intersectional analyses, different factors which affects queer migrants in a western context will be highlighted, and how a queer sexuality and identity affects the quality of life. The results show the importance of creating a new safe space of belonging. Such space facilitates the ability to be open with one's own sexual- and gender identity, and to create feelings of safety. The study reveals feelings of coming from oppression to freedom, and how it affects a person, but also the complexity of negotiating revealing their sexuality or staying in the closet, in a country where the concept of *coming out* is clearly a norm. An LGBTQ migrant have strategies of disclosure and silence around their sexuality or gender identity. They navigate around "the closet" between hetero- and homo normative moralities for respect of their family, society, diasporan and queer communities and other expectation. Their subjective positionings are in constant motion redefining identities, which can be a strategic tool for daily survival and daily living.

The study underlines the intersection between gender, sexuality and ethnicity and the specific features of these power asymmetries.

Keywords: lgbtq, migrants, navigate, safe spaces, subjective positioning, strategic silence

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