

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Shaping Administrative Practice: The Institutional Habitus</b>	<b>1</b>
	The Shaping of Discretion	5
	Assessing Credibility in Asylum Procedures: A Subjective Matter?	9
	The Institutional Habitus: A Brief Conceptual Introduction	12
	Outline of the Book	15
	References	17
<b>2</b>	<b>Studying Everyday Practice(s) in the SEM</b>	<b>27</b>
	Getting into the “Black Box”	28
	“Getting In”... Literally	31
	Doing Fieldwork	32
	Following People Around	33
	Method Triangulation	36
	The Researcher as a Learner	38
	My Interaction Partners in the SEM	40
	Thinking Through and with Practice Theory: Methodological Limits and Challenges	41
	References	43
<b>3</b>	<b>Asylum Decision-Making in Switzerland</b>	<b>47</b>
	Asylum Politics in Switzerland and Beyond	48
	Changing Law and the Proliferation of Legal Categories	52

The SEM: A Specialised Asylum Administration Emerges	55
The Decision-Making Procedure	59
The Swiss Asylum Act	66
References	70
<b>4 Knowledge as Practice: Producing Decisional Certainty</b>	<b>75</b>
Ben's Case	79
"Country Knowledge"	83
Determining Applicants' "Country of Origin"	85
Assessing Reasonable Likelihood	88
Assessing Demeanour	90
Producing Decisional Certainty: The Role of Professional-Practical Knowledge	91
Producing On-File Facts: The Asylum Interview	98
Writing Asylum Decisions: The Final Creation of Legal Facts	104
Managing Uncertainty: The Importance of Credibility Determination	107
Concluding Remarks	109
References	111
<b>5 Getting in Line with the Office</b>	<b>117</b>
Becoming a Member of the Office	118
Who Are the Decision-Makers?	119
Recruiting New Decision-Makers	122
Communities of Interpretation	124
Learning the Ropes of Asylum Decision-Making	130
Learning What Questions to Ask	133
Learning to Test Credibility	136
Accountability	138
Peer Pressure	139
Accountability Towards Superiors and Beyond	141
A Brief Summary: Acquiring an Institutional Habitus	148
References	150
<b>6 The Good Decision-Maker or Protecting the System</b>	<b>155</b>
Negotiating "the Right" Decision: A Field Anecdote	157
Ethics of the Office: Decision-Makers as Protectors of the System	160
Ethos of the Office: Professional Norms and Values	164
The Efficient, Fast and Economical Decision-Maker	165
The Neutral, Apolitical Decision-Maker	168

The Objective, Sufficiently Distanced and Emotionally Detached Decision-Maker	170
The Sufficiently but Not Overly Suspicious Decision-Maker	176
Ethos Is Ethics: The Fair Decision-Maker	178
Conclusion	180
References	181
<b>7 The Normalisation of Disbelief</b>	<b>187</b>
References	195
<b>Index</b>	<b>201</b>