

Professor Anthony Good

The Conversion of Asylum Applicants' Narratives into Legal Discourses in the UK and France: A Comparative Study of Problems of Cultural Translation

End of year report for 2008

Robert Gibb: Field Research (24/11/2007 to 31/12/2008)

Attendance at asylum hearings in Paris.

Semi-structured interviews with caseworkers ('rapporteurs'), the heads of administrative divisions, judges, legal representatives and the heads of the Legal and Geo-Political Information Centres and the Interpreting Service at the French National Court for the Right to Asylum (CNDA).

Interviews with key staff in the following NGOs: Cimade (Paris) and Forum-Réfugiés (Lyon). Work as a volunteer in a weekly drop-in advice centre in a Paris suburb run by the Cimade for asylum applicants. Attendance at training sessions, monthly meetings and other events organised by the Cimade for its volunteers.

Semi-structured interviews with caseworkers ('officiers de protection'), interpreters, the head of one administrative (geographical) division and the heads of two administrative (geographical) sections, and the head of the Research, Documentation and Study Centre at the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). Observation of interviews between asylum applicants and caseworkers at the OFPRA.

Interview with member of Paris delegation of the HCR responsible for liaising with the CNDA and OFPRA.

Attendance at statement-taking interviews between asylum applicants and legal caseworkers/ representatives in Paris.

Anthony Good: Field Research (01/04/08-30/09/08)

Attendance at asylum hearings in London and Glasgow.

Semi-structured interviews with Chief Executives and other key staff (including chief executives and senior legal staff) of Immigration Advisory Service, Refugee Legal Centre and Asylum Aid. Interview with head of medico-legal team at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Semi-structured interviews with caseworkers, solicitors, barristers and Immigration Judges.

Involvement in shadowing IAS staff, including membership project advisory board. Observation of statement taking interviews between asylum applicants and legal caseworkers/ representatives.

Attendance at relevant public meetings, AGMs, seminars and conferences hosted by the Nuffield Foundation, Scottish Refugee Council, Asylum Aid, Electronic Immigration Network, etc.

Through this period, regular meetings took place between AG and RG in Edinburgh and Paris, as well as frequent discussions via email and Skype. AG also attended asylum hearings in Paris on two occasions and interviewed one French lawyer.