



LEVERHULME
TRUST _____

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FIRST QUEER(Y)ING ASYLUM SYMPOSIUM

Date:

Wednesday 8th November 2023

Time:

9.30 AM – 17.00 PM UK time

Location:

University of Nottingham's Campus, Monica Partridge Building (Rooms C10 and C14)

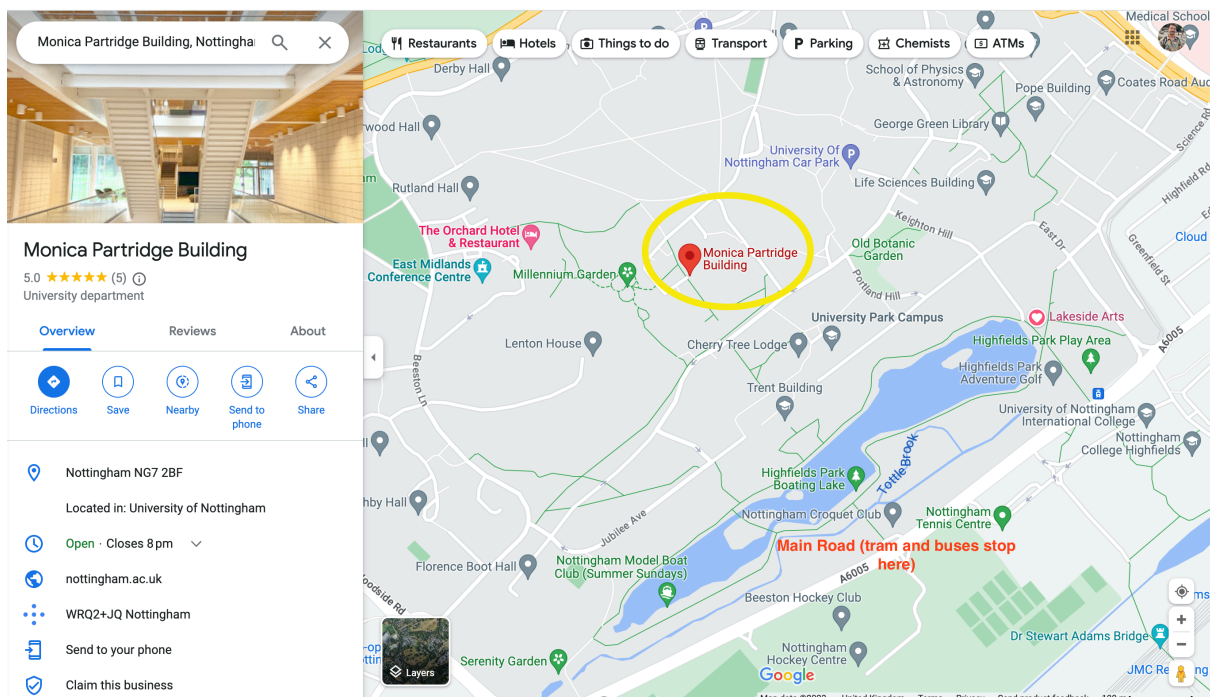
Organisers: Dr Diego Garcia Rodriguez, Leverhulme ECF Research Fellow, and Alex Wainwright, PhD Candidate in Sociology, with the support of the Identities, Citizenship, Equalities and Migration Centre (ICEMiC), and the Leverhulme Trust

HOW TO GET THERE IN PERSON

The event is hosted in the Monica Partridge Building on the University of Nottingham campus.

For more information regarding how to get to the University of Nottingham Campus, please visit this link: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/fac-sci/society-for-natural-sciences-student-conference/finding-us.aspx> It000 explains how to get to the campus by public transport including tram and bus, as well as by car.

If you are coming from another city in the UK by train, you will probably arrive at Nottingham's railway station. From there, please take the tram to the stop 'University of Nottingham' (5 stops away from the railway station). Please find a map below indicating the location of the Monica Partridge Building, where the conference will take place in rooms C10 and C14. From the main road (please find the words in red stating 'Main Road, train and buses stop here'), please walk up and you will find the building near the School of Sociology and Social Policy. Please use Google Maps if you cannot find the space or contact us using the phone number 079 2323 2006 (Diego) or 075 0049 8411 (Alex).



HOW TO JOIN ONLINE

The University of Nottingham uses Microsoft Teams for online presentations. Follow these steps to join a session:

1. Check the agenda below to find out which room your session is in.
2. Click the provided link for that room.

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Once in, write your name and adjust your audio and video settings before clicking "Join Now". You'll either enter the meeting directly or be placed in a waiting lobby.

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The links to enter each of the rooms are:

Room C10:

- Meeting ID: 380 493 596 185
- Passcode: 5gTx9h
- Link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZjA3ZDZhNjctNDE0NS00NzM1LWlzOTctNDMwNjMxYTZiMzM0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2267bda7ee-fd80-41ef-ac91-358418290a1e%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2259dbfdb7-376d-4c11-a5bc-bbdec07c1e90%22%7d

Room C14:

- Meeting ID: 384 019 998 58
- Passcode: XJz3t5
- Link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ODVjMjU2ODYtMzlyNC00YTQzLTNmOTAaNzE2NWNjMjBhMmQy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2267bda7ee-fd80-41ef-ac91-358418290a1e%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2259dbfdb7-376d-4c11-a5bc-bbdec07c1e90%22%7d

AGENDA

TIME	LOCATION (ROOM NUMBER)	LOCATION (ROOM NUMBER)
	Room C10, Monica Partridge building	Room C14, Monica Partridge building
9.30 am - 9.45 am Coffee Reception		
9.45 am - 10.40 am	Keynote Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leila Zadeh, Rainbow Migration • Richard Mole, University College London 	
10.40 am – 11.55 am	Session 1: Legislation and Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ambivalent Advice: Models, Practitioners and Supporting LGBTIQ+ Asylum Seekers" by Alex Powell (Oxford Brookes University) and Claire Fletcher (UCL/ Rainbow Migration) (In-person) • "At the frontiers of truth: How are the impacts of trauma on memory dealt with in LGBTQ+ women's cases for asylum in the UK on SOGI grounds?" by Daisy Vaughan Liñero (University of London) (In-person) • "When Legal Aid Is Competitive and Inaccessible: Impact on Queer Asylum Seekers" by Reuben Silungwe (SASWA) (In-person) • "How do legal aid cuts in the UK impact LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum?: Perspectives from providers and directly affected people" 	

	by Edward J. Alessi et al. (Rutgers University) (In-person)	
11.55 – 12.55 pm Lunch Break		
12.55 pm – 14.10 pm	<p>Session 2: Rights and Social Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Where are Queer Migrants? Exploring evidence of absence in labour rights movement's archives in Manchester, UK" by Artemis Christinaki (HCRI, University of Manchester), Luan Cassal (University of Bolton), and Louise Moracchini (University of Manchester) (In-person) • "Between Venezuela and Ecuador: Right to work and LGBTIQ+ migrant networks in the pandemic" by Flavio Carrera (LSE) and Cristina Yopez (McGill) (Online) • "Social Work with LGBTIQ+ Young Migrants" by Rachel Larkin (University of Kent) (Online) • "Twice the Threat: Gender Identity, Refugee Status and Freedom of Movement in Lebanon" by Jasmin Lilian Diab (Lebanese American University) and Bechara Samneh (Lebanese American University) (In-person) 	<p>Session 3: LGBTIQ+ Asylum in Global Perspectives I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Queer Sub-Saharan Africans in the Netherlands - Migration motives, trajectories and lived experiences" by Jamel Buhari (Leiden University) (In-person) • "Disclose Yourself Thoroughly: Queer and Trans Encampment in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp" by Gabriel/le du Plessix (University of Warwick) (In-person) • "Queering the border-line" by Costanza Bergo (Nottingham University) (In-person) • 'No one wants to be a refugee. But anyone could be' Experiences of sexual and gender minority asylum claimants in the UK by Paschal Gumadwong Bagonza (De Montfort University) (In-person)
14.10 pm – 15.25 pm	<p>Session 4: LGBTIQ+ Asylum in Global Perspectives II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Shifting paradigms, not identities. LGBTIQ+ refugees queering temporalities in 	<p>Session 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Wholeness & Well-being Therapy" by Jason Thomas-Fournillier (Spectrum Rainbow) (In-person)

	<p>Denmark" by Rieke Schroder (Aalborg University) (In-person)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Supporting LGBTIQ+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Various Backgrounds: The Case of Time To Be Out", by William Roche and William and El Parnham (Time to Be Out) (In-person) • "SAFAR - Too many to resettle as refugees; too few to be part of humanitarian response in Afghanistan", by SAFAR team member & Leanne MacMillan (Stonewall) (In-person) • "Trans Migrants: Escaping violence, persecution and coping with intersectionality in the United States", by Alexandra Rodriguez (La Jauria Trans Mexico) (In-person) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Creative practices and participatory research: Recognising LGBTQ+ refugees' narratives of home" by Sonia Quintero (University of East London) (In-person) • "The Use of Arts- and Theatre-Based Methods to Facilitate Sexual Health and Wellness for Gay/Bisexual and Transgender Women Migrants in Cape Town, South Africa: Preliminary Findings from Externalize and Mobilize!" by Edward J. Alessi et al. (Rutgers University) (In-person) • "Working through cumulative trauma: challenges and resources for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers", by Chuanfei Chin (University of Oxford) (In-person)
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15.25 - 15.40 pm Coffee Break

<p>15.40– 16.55</p>	<p>Session 6: Sexual Citizenship and Intersectional Struggles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Too Gay to Leave, Too Straight to Stay- Navigating the UK Immigration System as a Bisexual Asylum Seeker" by Alex Wainwright (University of Nottingham) (In-person) • "Untellable Bi Asylum Stories: Construction of Narratives of Sexual Orientation in the Persian-Speaking Communities in the Context of Seeking Asylum in Turkey" by Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh (University of Huddersfield) (Online) • "Obstacles to refugee status for bisexual people in the UK" 	<p>Session 7: Religion, Necropolitics and Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "LGBTIQ+ migration, accommodation, and mental health: Death worlds and the living dead in the UK" by Sejal Patel-Roberts (University of Manchester) et al. (In-person) • "Challenging Homosecularism: Queer Religious Refugees and Asylum Seekers" by Diego Garcia (University of Nottingham) (In-person) • "Transgressed borders. Resignifications, stigma and religious practices of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in Mexico City. An intersectionality approach" by Rene Abel Tec (UNAM/ ORAM) (Online)
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	<p>by Aine Bennet (Royal Holloway) (In-person)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Navigating Sexual Identity as Journalist-cum Whistle-blower & Refugee" by Zarith Hanipah (Independent Journalist) (In-person) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Embracing Intersectionality: Navigating Race, Religion, Sexuality, Migration and LGBT+" by Jide Macaulay (House of Rainbow) (In-person)
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SPEAKERS AND ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Leila Zadeh, Rainbow Migration

Title: Shining a light on LGBTQI+ asylum in the UK

Abstract:

We are in a particularly grim moment in time, in which the current UK government is using hostile rhetoric, demonising people seeking asylum and enacting cruel laws to punish people seeking to rebuild their lives in safety here.

Rainbow Migration supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) people through the asylum and immigration system. They provide help accessing health services and housing as well as giving specialist legal information and advice to LGBTQI+ people who are seeking asylum or making partnership applications to live in the UK with their partners. All services are free and confidential. Rainbow Migration also carries out campaigning, policy work and strategic litigation to improve the asylum and immigration system.

In this keynote, Leila Zadeh, Executive Director at Rainbow Migration, will talk about the situation of LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum in the UK, recent challenges introduced by the government, and how Rainbow Migration is responding.

Richard Mole, University College London

Title: 'Worthy' refugees and 'acceptable' forms of harm: the role of gender

Abstract:

Drawing on interviews with 10 queers from Russia seeking asylum in Germany, my paper analyses how national asylum regimes create 'worthy' and 'unworthy' refugees on the basis of the 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' forms of homophobic harm they have suffered and how this assessment is influenced by the gender of the applicant.

PANEL SESSIONS

Session 1: Legislation and Advocacy, 10.40 am – 11.55 am, Room C10

1. "Ambivalent Advice: Models, Practitioners and Supporting LGBTIQ+ Asylum Seekers" by Alex Powell (Oxford Brookes University) and Claire Fletcher (UCL/ Rainbow Migration) (In-person)

Abstract:

Law and policy operate on the basis of rigid simplifications, seeking to reduce the messiness of human lives into a proclaimed scientific approach. As Grabham has argued, in pursuit of providing objective answers to social problems, law operates through the deployment of categories. Others have identified the significant amounts of complexity reduction employed within administrative agencies such as the Home Office. In this paper, we explore the role of models and practitioners in (re)articulating stereotypes in the context of LGBTIQ+ asylum claims, which have been criticised for creating an expectation that LGBTIQ+ claimants will demonstrate an emotional journey and 'perform' their queerness. This often manifests in an expectation of 'outness' and involvement with LGBTIQ+ support

groups and queer spaces. This paper discusses how practitioners participate in the (re)production of stereotypes and create ambivalent spaces that are both supportive and oppressive. We argue that this places practitioners in zone of ambivalence, forcing them to regulate queerness through conceptions of 'genuine-ness' or 'need' when deciding which claimants to support.

About the speakers:

Alex is a Lecturer in Law at Oxford Brookes University. His research predominantly draws on the work of Michel Foucault, as well as queer theorists such as Judith Butler, to analyse the relationship between legal apparatus and cultural discourses. However, Alex is also a trained qualitative interviewer, with expertise in narrative analysis approaches. As such, he seeks to bring together critical scholarship and empirical socio-legal research. Through these methods he interrogates how conceptions of phenomena such as sexuality become implicated within legal and administrative decision-making processes and the forms of violence which can emerge when these conceptions are discordant with the lived experiences of those attempting to navigate these systems.

Claire has recently completed a PhD at the University College London. Her research focuses on the intersection of queer subjectivity, religion and asylum seeking. Claire has also worked at Rainbow Migration for the past five years which is the largest charity in the UK supporting LGBTQI+ people through the asylum system.

2. "At the frontiers of truth: How are the impacts of trauma on memory dealt with in LGBTQ+ women's cases for asylum in the UK on SOGI grounds?" by Daisy Vaughan Liñero (University of London) (In-person)

Abstract:

Despite increasing interest in the topic of 'queer asylum', the specific experiences of LGBTQ+ asylum-seeking women – which are indeed unique – are notably less researched than those of gay, cis-male asylum claimants seeking protection on SOGI grounds. This research is interested, therefore, in exploring the particular areas of international refugee law and practice that deal with the specific experiences of LGBTQ+ women – given their often-overlapping identities and reasons for persecution in their country of origin – the implications of this in decision-making in present day outcomes, and the compounding effects of memory and trauma on these processes, ensuring the study and any subsequent recommendations are relevant to current academic debate. The research will consider, for example, how LGBTQ+ women's experiences of SGBV are presented to form a case, and how the complexities of overlapping experiences, combined with the compounding impacts of memory and trauma, are assessed, through which lens, and to what level of consistency? Issues around the deeply ingrained culture of disbelief in SOGI claims for asylum, as well as the focus on "evidence" and the applicant's ability to "form a coherent narrative" will be central to the research.

About the speaker:

Daisy is a multi-lingual refugee practitioner based in the UK, currently working to support people with lived experience of migration and displacement to amplify their voices to bring about positive change to minds, policy and practice in the UK. With another hat on, under the University of London MA Programme (Refugee Protection and Forced Migration) she has been conducting secondary research into the specific experiences of queer asylum-seeking women, and the (in)ability of the UK asylum system to accommodate for their intersecting identities and experiences holistically and effectively. This research will be finalised by October 2023.

3. "When Legal Aid Is Competitive and Inaccessible: Impact on Queer Asylum Seekers" by Reuben Silungwe (SASWA) (In-person)

Abstract:

The UK's legal aid system is under strain, leaving many vulnerable LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers without essential guidance for navigating the initial stages of the asylum process. Constrained by financial limitations and the inability to work, these individuals often find themselves grappling with ambiguous legal criteria and Home Office requirements. Drawing from my personal experience as a queer-identifying asylum seeker in the UK, this abstract details the challenges faced while participating in various meetings and events organised by LGBTIQ+ focused charities. These long-standing charities are reducing their activities due to either funding shortfalls or shifts in strategic focus, which undermines the effectiveness of their interventions. Although free legal aid is strongly advised, it is currently unavailable to new clients, forcing individuals to opt for costly legal services that they cannot afford. Most charities recommend these paid services, often from a pool of solicitors with whom they have established working relationships. Despite the clear expectation from both the legal system and the Home Office for asylum seekers to have legal representation, there is a lack of adequate informational and financial resources related to legal aid. There is an urgent need to identify and support the most vulnerable among queer asylum seekers, providing them with tailored psychosocial support, current information, and financial resources from the outset.

About the speakers:

Reuben Silungwe is a queer identifying asylum seeker from Zambia. He has engaged with and worked at the intersection of health, human rights, faith and LGBTIQ+ spaces in Zambia and the region. He is a member of the Southern African Sex Workers' Alliance (SASWA) Working Group. He is also an alumnus of various national, regional and international programmes.

- 4. "How do legal aid cuts in the UK impact LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum?: Perspectives from providers and directly affected people" by Edward J. Alessi (Rutgers University), Lillian Alexander (Rutgers University), Yong Gun (Rutgers University), Matthew Lynn (Rutgers University), Ayesha Aziz (Rainbow Migration), Claire Fletcher (UCL/ Rainbow Migration) and Leila Zadeh (Rainbow Migration) (In-person)**

Abstract:

This qualitative study, conducted in January 2023, explored how significant cuts to legal aid in the UK have impacted the asylum process for LGBTQ+ people there. With recruitment assistance from community organizations, we conducted online interviews with 17 providers (solicitors, legal assistants/caseworkers, social care workers) and 9 LGBTQ+ people throughout the UK. Interview data were analyzed using grounded theory. The construct of structural violence was also used as a sensitizing concept to aid the analysis. We identified four themes to capture the processes impacting LGBTQ+ people. First, providers expressed that anti-immigrant sentiments and policies had permeating effects on legal aid access, including not being able to easily find a quality solicitor, whose expertise is critical to the success of LGBTQ+ asylum claims. Second, providers discussed how backlog, low compensation, and burnout among solicitors deterred them from accepting new LGBTQ+ asylum cases, which can be more complex and time-intensive. Third, providers conveyed apprehension that solicitors who took new LGBTQ+ asylum cases would not have sufficient time to build the trust that is necessary for working with LGBTQ+ people, especially when developing their witness statement. Last, difficulty finding a solicitor has the potential to compound multiple life instabilities (housing, work/finances, relationships) for LGBTQ+ people, further jeopardizing their chances of having a successful claim. Findings indicate that structural violence is a helpful lens through which to understand the impacts of legal aid cuts on LGBTQ+ people in the UK. Policies must be changed to account for these impacts, to better support LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum.

About the speakers:

Edward J. Alessi is Associate Professor at the Rutgers University School of Social Work in New Brunswick, NJ, USA. His research examines how trauma and structural conditions during pre- and post-migration shape the integration, mental health, and sexual health of LGBTQ+ (im)migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. He has led studies in the United States, Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, and his research has been published in journals such as *Journal of Traumatic Stress, Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, Stress & Health, Sexuality Research and Social Policy,*

Journal of Refugee Studies, Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, and Psychology of Sexual and Gender Diversity.

Lillian Alexander is a PhD student at Rutgers University School of Social Work, New Brunswick, NJ, USA.

Yong Gun (YG) Lee is the Postdoctoral Associate in Intersectionality & Sexual and Gender Minority Health at Rutgers School of Social Work, New Brunswick, NJ, USA.

Matthew Lynn is a MSW student at Rutgers University School of Social Work, New Brunswick, NJ, USA.

Ayesha Aziz is a Legal Officer at Rainbow Migration, London, UK.

Claire Fletcher is a Support Worker at Rainbow Migration, London, UK, and a PhD student at UCL.

Leila Zadeh is the Executive Director of Rainbow Migration, London, UK.

Session 2: Rights and Social Work, 12.55 pm – 14.10 pm, Room C10

1. **"Where are Queer Migrants? Exploring evidence of absence in labour rights movement's archives in Manchester, UK" by Artemis Christinaki (HCRI, University of Manchester), Luan Cassal (University of Bolton) Louise Moracchini (University of Manchester) (In-person)**

Abstract:

This paper examines the presence and absence of discourses of queer migrants in archive materials of labour activism, as part of the project 'Queering migration and migrating queer studies: a literature review on LGBTIQ+ migration in the UK'. The study brings together inequalities in gender, sexuality, race, nationality, and class by examining the ways in which these overlap, exclude, and relate to one another in public material available in archives in Manchester. Although we found mentions of LGBTIQ+ people connected to race and class, there were few materials addressing queer migration. For this paper, we focus on the Lesbian and Gay Anti-Racist Alliance Summer 1994 Newsletter, supported by Unison and part of AIU Race Centre Archives. The absence of queer migrants from the material reflects the lack of queer migrant voices and discussions in the unionist movements. Through a Foucauldian reading, this absence could be a discursive formation in which the subject would not exist despite their physical presence. Therefore, the absence of queer migrants who could work in the UK in archives raises a question about queer refugees and asylum seekers. If unionism has been one of the strongest movements in the country and queer migrant workers are not part of it, what happens to those who cannot join – particularly queer refugees and asylum seekers, without a work permit? The absence of queer migration in general, for some exceptions, presents an opportunity to reflect on the position of queer migrants in popular social movements.

About the speakers:

Louise Moracchini is an undergraduate History student at the University of Manchester. Her particular interest is 20th century British history, highlighting the stories of underrepresented groups in opposition to typical historiographies. She approaches this with a focus on source materials, especially those reflecting cultural and societal values, using archives and artworks in her analysis. She hopes to work in public history and heritage in the future.

Luan Cassal is a Brazilian psychologist and queer activist living in the UK. He is a Lecturer in Psychology at University of Bolton and a PhD candidate in Education at University of Manchester. His research interests include discourse analysis, childhood, gender, sexuality, recognition, and social policies.

Artemis Christinaki is a lecturer in Global Health in the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at the University of Manchester, UK. Her PhD research critically explored the politics, or the

role, of psychosocial support in the refugee camps of Greece. Her main research interests lie in migration and refugee studies, critical social theory, critical psychology, psychoanalysis, feminism and postcolonialism.

2. "Between Venezuela and Ecuador: Right to work and LGBTIQ+ migrant networks in the pandemic" by Flavio Carrera (London School of Economics) & Cristina Yépez (McGill) (Online)

Abstract:

Based on research conducted between May and July 2020 on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees from Venezuela in three cities in Ecuador, this article focuses on the specific effects of the pandemic on their employment situation and access to rights. The participants' experiences in this research revealed a context in which significant obstacles to accessing adequate employment and a stable income existed before the pandemic, and the pandemic not only increased the precariousness of their economic situation but accentuated their risks. As evidenced in this article, the obstacles and difficulties faced by LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in accessing their rights impact them on an individual level and directly affect their families and the people with whom they maintain affective relations and networks of care.

About the speakers:

Flavio Carrera Verdesoto is an MSc (Candidate) in Anthropology and Development at the London School of Economics. He has a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations and Political Science from the Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ with a concentration in anthropology and history. His research work focuses on the intersection between gender, sexualities, feminist political ecology, and gender-sex diversities in Ecuador, Argentina, Costa Rica and the Galapagos Islands. He works with interdisciplinary methodologies from academia, consulting, public policy and civil society. He is an associate researcher at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Inequalities (IASI-USFQ) of the San Francisco de Quito University. He has published in academic and opinion spaces. He is co-author of the book "Spiritual and religious diversity in Quito Ecuador: a look from collaborative ethnography" (2018) and "Higher Education and Gender" (2017).

Cristina Yépez Arroyo is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at McGill University. She holds a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ, with a focus in Anthropology and History. She has worked as a researcher, consultant, teacher, translator, and workshop facilitator. Her research focuses on the intersection between gender, sexualities, human mobility, and criminalization of migration in Ecuador, through interdisciplinary methodologies between academia and community organization. She has published her work in diverse fields and formats, including academic articles, books and book chapters, as well as educational materials and resources, both in English and Spanish.

3. "Social Work with LGBTIQ+ Young Migrants" by Rachel Larkin (University of Kent) (Online)

Abstract:

This paper will consider the experiences of migrant LGBTIQ+ young people (16-24) who are separated from family, and the ways in which social workers (dis)engage with young people's LGBTIQ+ identities. Social workers can be at the forefront of care and support services for young migrants, but categorisation processes which foreground age and immigration status can overlook the significance of other intersecting identities. This paper will draw on findings from a pilot study conducted in 2023 to explore how living at the intersectionality of childhood, youth, migration and LGBTIQ+ identity may influence how young people experience social work in the UK, and how they agentially navigate these encounters. It will discuss the complex meanings attached to safety and protection by practitioners and LGBTIQ+ young migrants. Finally, the paper will consider how social work could contribute to developing safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTIQ+ young migrants, and hold to its stated aim of contributing to social justice, in an increasingly xenophobic social and political context.

About the speaker:

Dr Rachel Larkin is a Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Kent, UK. She has many years' experience of working with children and young people in state care, including young migrants separated from their families. Her doctoral research, completed in 2019, explores how separated girls and social workers construct each other in practice encounters. Dr Larkin is the author of *Separated Migrant Young Women in State Care: Living in Contested Spaces*. (2022) and co-editor of the book 'Social work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants: Theory and skills for practice' (Wroe et al 2019), published by Jessica Kingsley. She is also co-author of 'Unaccompanied Young Females and Social Workers: Meaning-Making in the Practice Space', *British Journal of Social Work* (2020) 0, 1–18.

4. "Twice the Threat: Gender Identity, Refugee Status and Freedom of Movement in Lebanon" by Dr. Jasmin Lilian Diab (Lebanese American University) & Bechara Samneh (Lebanese American University) (In-person)

Abstract:

Over the past decade, more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees have fled to Lebanon at an unprecedented rate. With a total population approaching 4 million people, Lebanon presently hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. Lebanon's social, political, economic and legal landscapes cast a blind eye upon refugees' intersectional challenges – particularly those from the LGBTIQ+ community. LGBTIQ+ refugees in Lebanon continue to endure extreme forms of violence, discrimination, stigmatization, and isolation in the "safe" places they seek. In June 2022, Lebanon's Minister of Interior gave "urgent" instructions to security forces to stop gatherings of the LGBTIQ community, following what he referred to as pressure from religious institutions. Through key informant interviews and focus group discussions, MOSAIC and the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) at the Lebanese American University will examine the different ways that the Ministry of Interior's latest decision against the community, coupled with its already long-standing restrictions on the mobility/movement of the country's refugee community, has added contributed to further insecurity within the LGBTIQ+ refugee community.

About the speakers:

Dr. Jasmin Lilian Diab (she/هي) is a Canadian-Lebanese Scholar and Expert in Migration, Gender and Conflict Studies. Dr. Diab is the Director of the Institute for Migration Studies at the Lebanese American University, where she also serves as an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Migration Studies. In 2022, she became the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research's first ever Global Fellow on Migration and Inequality. Dr. Diab is a Research Affiliate at the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University, a Global Fellow at Brown University's Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies, as well as a Visiting Fellow at University of Cambridge and the Centre for Lebanese Studies' British Academy Bilateral Research Chair on Education in Conflict. She is a former Visiting Professor at the United Nations-mandated University for Peace at their Peace and Conflict Studies Department, and currently serves as an Advisory Board Member at MOSAIC.

Mr. Bechara Samneh (he/him) is the Special Project Coordinator at ILGA Asia's Afghanistan Program. He currently serves as a Board Member of MOSAIC MENA, where his work is focused on finding specialized and comprehensive service provisions for marginalized gender groups on a national and regional level. Bechara is also a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Migration Studies at the Lebanese American University, where he works on two projects (under Dr. Diab's leadership) at the intersection of Gender and Migration -- more specifically, on LGBTIQ+ displaced communities in Lebanon and their access to rights and services, as well as barriers to LGBTIQ+ refugees' mobility in Lebanon. Bechara is a researcher and advocate for policy reform on intersectional topics focused on SOGIESC, refugees and policy reform.

Session 3: LGBTIQ+ Asylum in Global Perspectives I, 12.55 pm – 14.10 pm, Room C14

1. "Queer Sub-Saharan Africans in the Netherlands - Migration motives, trajectories and lived experiences" by Jamel Buhari (Leiden University)

Abstract:

This project studies the migration motives, expectations, trajectories and lived experiences of black Sub-Saharan African Queer migrants in the Netherlands from 1980 – now. It looks at developments in the policy and asylum domain, local and international media and artistic representation and LGBTIQ+ and migrant support organisations. The research is based on both archival research and oral histories. By using the oral history method, the project aims to centralise migrants' personal narratives. The project explores how an intersection of race, sexuality, gender, class, religion and other categories of identity and power shape the experiences of queer black Sub-Saharan African migrants in a Dutch context. By zooming in on this Dutch context, this research critically analyses the Dutch self-image of tolerance, by shedding light on the experiences of queer migrants of colour. It explores how the Dutch colonial legacy plays out in modern times and influences the framing and lived experiences of queer black Sub-Saharan Africans in the Netherlands. Moreover, it explores how rather recent developments, such as rising 'homonationalism', the combination of pro-gay and anti-immigrant rhetoric, impact the lives of queer black Sub-Saharan migrants and diaspora communities in the Netherlands.

About the speaker:

Jamel Buhari is a PhD candidate at Leiden University's Institute for History. His research deals with queer migration, with a focus on Sub-Saharan African queer migrants in the Netherlands. The project explores migration motives, expectations, trajectories and lived experiences of Queer black Sub-Saharan African migrants, from 1980 - present. In this research he looks at developments in the migration policy and asylum domain, local and international media and artistic representation and LGBTIQ+ and migrant support organisations. The research is part of the ERC-funded project "Horizon 2020 - ITHACA. Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency: Entangled Narratives Across Europe and the Mediterranean Region".

2. "Disclose Yourself Thoroughly: Queer and Trans Encampment in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp" by Gabriel/le du Plessix (University of Warwick)**Abstract:**

During the last three decades, Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp has transformed a semi-arid, flat, and barren landscape, sparsely populated by the semi-nomadic Turkana, into something that more closely resembles a densely populated, urban space. Refugees from South Sudan remain the largest group in the camp, closely followed by Somalia, DR Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda. At least since 2005, moreover, queer and trans refugees from the East African and Great Lakes region have sought asylum in Kenya. This is noteworthy, as Kenya remains the only East African nation to expressly grant asylum based on persecution related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex characteristics (SOGIESC). The camp's significance is further compounded by the fact that refugees are legally required to remain in the camp. For queer and trans refugees, this is especially pertinent, as interactions with the government, police, aid agencies, and fellow refugees usually oscillate between indifference and outright hostility. Focusing on this critique, my presentation will share findings from 28 interviews, conducted over one year between 2023 and 2024, with queer and trans asylum-seekers living in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. The presentation first provides a broad overview of encampment in Kenya. Following this, it considers the ways encampment specifically affects queer and trans refugees in the country. It concludes by considering alternatives and suggests some ways forward.

About the speaker:

Gabriel/le du Plessix is a doctoral candidate at the University of Warwick (UK). Their doctoral research deals with lived experiences of queer and trans forced migration in East Africa and considers the ways queer and trans refugees develop protection strategies, establish support networks, and advocate for international assistance. Their research interests include SOGIESC asylum, queer theory, and sexuality in mediated and transnational contexts.

3. "Queering the border-line" by Costanza Bergo (Nottingham University)

Abstract:

"Australia's treatment of refugees and asylum seekers has been criticised worldwide for its violations of human rights. From the white Australia policy, to indefinite detention practices and dehumanising portrayals of 'boat people', Australia's relationship to immigration is one of crisis. Within this crisis, the coast -- turned border-line -- becomes a space of anxiety. This paper will offer a close reading of artworks produced by queer asylum seekers in Australia in order to weave a critique of borders. First, I will draw from decolonial theory and feminist ecology to problematise the notion of the coast as self-evident national border. The notion of a self-evident, unmovable border that starts at the edge of the water is an anthropocentric, colonial perspective. It discounts the interdependent nature of ecosystems and builds on the imperialist notion of oceans as empty spaces. The idea of a natural border also conceals the artificial, inconsistent nature of man-made borders, which regularly contract and expand through state operations. In 2003, for instance, the Australian government retroactively deterritorialised Melville island, in order to prevent refugees who had arrived to the island via boat to apply for asylum from Australian soil. The second part of my paper, then, will explore how the coastal border-line is used as a line of violence. By 'line of violence' I mean three things: firstly, it refers to an imaginary spatial demarcation that allows for violence to occur in certain areas and not others (eg, deaths in international waters being legally different from death on national soil). Secondly, it denotes a spatial demarcation whose placement – and, as we will see, frequent repositioning – facilitates the categorisation of state killings as natural deaths. Finally, a line of violence is a line of conduct, a settler-colonial modus operandi. At the same time, artistic responses show that, far from conceding to one particular narrative, the liminal space of the coast remains queer: a site of resistance and ambivalence that invites us to discern the differences between generative boundaries and destructive borders."

About the speaker:

Costanza Bergo is a cultural theorist who specialises in settler colonialism. Originally from Italy, she has lived across the UK and Australia for the past decade. Costanza's PhD thesis "Atlas of Denial: Australian landscape and the settler-colonial structure of feeling" originated a new methodology to examine oppressive structures, one that accounts for both the material and affective registers that sustain them. Costanza is currently working as a researcher across a number of projects that focus on the lived experience of marginalised people, particularly migrants and LGBTIQ+ people.

4. 'No one wants to be a refugee. But anyone could be' Experiences of sexual and gender minority asylum claimants in the UK by Paschal Gumadwong Bagonza (De Montfort University) (In person)

Abstract:

This research is a new materialist exploration of sexual and gender minority asylum seekers and refugees lived and embodied experiences of the UK's refugee status determination process. It explores specifically experiences of sexual minorities forced to flee their homeland to the UK where they later sought sanctuary on grounds of Sexual Orientation and/ or Gender Identity (SOGI), as per UNHCR guidelines because their countries outlawed consensual same-sex activities. Twenty asylum seekers and refugees from nine countries were interviewed for this study using semi-structured interviews. Data were also collected through photovoice- participants provided self-generated images, capturing their ephemeral experiences. These images were analysed alongside interview data, using materialist analysis to generate the most significant intensities. I draw on and extend the new materialist notion of assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) as an overarching theory in conjunction with a 'conceptual assemblage' of necropolitics (Mbembe, 2013), slow death (Berlant, 2007) and slow violence (Nixon, 2011) to explore participants' asylum migratory experiences. Some findings include: multiplicity of persecutions, internal displacements, intimate encounters and connections, assembling the intangible, navigating welfare un/certainties, agentic ways of challenging asylum brutalities, and mechanics of transformation. This thesis established that violence was heterogeneous, boundless, recurring and metamorphosised and rooted in necropolitics which demarcated who was disposable or not. Violence was also a productive force. Overall, this research established that the refugee status determination

process did not end after participants got sanctuary- even though this was the ultimate aim of the application where they had to prove their sexuality.

About the speaker:

Currently a doctoral student at De Montfort University, Leicester. Paschal has held various teaching and research supervision contracts at DMU, and has volunteered with a number of charities- the most recent as a Volunteer Counsellor at a charity that provides free confidential services to male survivors of sexual abuse and their supporters. Paschal's background also includes experience in Journalism and Media Studies, Guidance and Counselling/Psychotherapy and Social Work.

Session 4: LGBTIQ+ Asylum in Global Perspectives II, 14.10 pm – 15.25 pm, Room C10

1. "Shifting paradigms, not identities. LGBTIQ+ refugees queering temporalities in Denmark" by Rieke Schroder (Aalborg University) (In-person)

Abstract:

In light of tightening immigration policies, LGBTIQ+ refugees are oftentimes presented as 'stuck' in the asylum regime, having to continuously perform their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE) in a fixed way. This article rethinks this narrative, arguing that rather than being stuck, LGBTIQ+ refugees are navigating through spatialised temporalities – during and after their asylum process. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with LGBTIQ+ refugees in Denmark, this article explores how LGBTIQ+ refugees queer temporality in multiple ways: First, I analyse how the so-called Danish "paradigm shift" is producing uncertain temporalities for LGBTIQ+ refugees. Second, I analyse how LGBTIQ+ refugees are becoming and remaining queer after having been granted asylum. Finally, I explore how LGBTIQ+ refugees are (un)able to "come out" of the asylum system. By claiming belonging to the Danish nation-state, they seek a change in the asylum system and demand permanent residence to express their SOGIE fluently.

About the speaker:

Rieke Schröder, M.Sc. in Global Refugee Studies, is a PhD scholar at the Department of Politics and Society, Aalborg University in Copenhagen. She is a fellow of the German Academic Scholarship Foundation. Her research focuses on queer feminist perspectives on displacement and migration. Rieke is co-editor of the anthology 'Situating Displacement. Explorations of Global (Im)Mobility' (Peter Lang, 2022).

2. "SAFAR - Too many to resettle as refugees; too few to be part of humanitarian response in Afghanistan", by SAFAR team member & Leanne MacMillan (Stonewall)

Abstract:

"This session examines the role of civil society and humanitarian actors in refugee crises responses.

LGBTQ+ people in Afghanistan face grave human rights abuses and disproportionate threats from the Taliban, their families and communities, often forced to flee, internally displaced, in hiding, destitute, beyond the reach of or out of scope of refugee protection and humanitarian actors. Since the beginning of the crisis in Afghanistan, the SAFAR team found secure ways to reach the queer community, provide safe passage, humanitarian support and built secure LGBTQ+ communities in Afghanistan while pursuing diminishing but needed resettlement solutions. To manage risk inherent in this work and the need for intersectional approaches, an innovative case management system - SAFAR - was developed by ILGA Asia & Stonewall, to support LGBTQ+ people seeking safe passage and protection in Afghanistan. It is well-recognized for its potential to improve global protection and humanitarian response for LGBTQ+ communities in protracted refugee crises. SAFAR responds to LGBTQ+ people in refugee and crises situations where they remain severely underrepresented in traditional

humanitarian responses. Many humanitarian responders lack understanding of the diverse needs and threats crisis-affected LGBTQ+ people face, inadvertently putting them at further risk. Data and analysis gathered from the hundreds of clients supported by the SAFAR team will be shared to evidence the need for programming, practices and standards that address the needs and contexts of queer refugees and displaced persons. This session will recommend how to queer refugee protection and humanitarian responses and the need for intersectional approaches.

About the speaker:

Leanne has over 30 years' experience working in the international non-profit sector as an intersectional, international human rights lawyer. She has worked extensively in over 40 countries on a range of human rights, protection and clinical case management and development matters. She has managed several major multi-country programmes in conflict, post-conflict, emerging democracies and repressive regimes and is highly experienced in managing risk with complex multi-partner projects. She has led the design of all major global programmes of work since joining Stonewall including in queering refugee protection in SAFAR's implementation in Afghanistan, advancing global work in hate crime, and addressing the challenges of the anti-gender movement. She studied law in Canada before managing Amnesty International's global refugee programme for several years; was a member of the senior leadership team & represented the organisation at the UN in NY & Geneva before leading global teams in torture prevention & rehabilitation CSOs.

ILGA Asia representative's bio is not included in this programme due to confidentiality issues.

3. "Supporting LGBTIQ+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Various Backgrounds: The Case of Time To Be Out by William Roche and El Parnham (Time To Be Out) (In-person)

Abstract:

This presentation will take a look at countries of origin of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, persecution and extermination, and challenges faced once individuals arrive in 'safe countries'. Through the experience of Time To Be Out, a charity working for the rights of LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in the North of England, we will explore the impact of both homophobic and transphobic settings preceding asylum journeys as well as the anti-migration sentiments and policies faced in receiving countries such as the United Kingdom.

About the speaker:

William Roche is the co-founder of the charity Time To Be Out for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers. He has worked with refugees in Lebanon, the Balkans and France for over 35 years, specialising in the impact of involuntary displacement.

El Parnham (they/them) is a recent post-graduate student based in Leeds. Their dissertation project for their master's degree was entitled 'Access to Justice: An Assessment of the Impact of Cuts to Legal Aid on Asylum Seekers Claiming on the Grounds of Their Sexual Orientation.' For the past 3 years they have been involved as a volunteer for Time to Be Out, an LGBTIQ+ asylum organisation based in York. They work as a befriender, caseworker and most recently as a trustee. Next up they are pursuing a career in law in order to interrogate our current legal system and identify how access to justice can be improved for those who need it.

4. "Trans Migrants: Escaping violence, persecution and coping with intersectionality in the United States", by Alexandra Rodriguez (La Jauria Trans Mexico) (In-person)

Abstract:

With performance and reading a paper along with images, I will narrate my experience as a trans teenager escaping the persecution and violence that existed against transgender people in Mexico City and my transit as an undocumented immigrant in the United States. I will also talk about how working

with transgender women and their stories of violence, persecution, and their transit to the border of Mexico with United States are as varied and complex as the process of political asylum. My focus is on the methods of survival that trans people face upon arrival at the border and on the many places that exist to give momentum to trans migrants, including the perversity of power politics that serve as a bridge for them to cross the border. Once crossing the border, trans people must assimilate on North American soil an intersection of identities and face racism, transphobia, exploitation, and stereotypes, which are a reality for trans migrants living in the United States.

About the speaker:

Alexandra (she/her) is a gender and sexuality freelance consultant, a published author in Mexico, Spain, and the United States. She graduated from CC San Francisco with an AA in Psychology, and she took courses at UC Berkeley for her specialty in Sex and Gender. Alexandra is an advocate for the human rights of transgender people, including trans migrants, trans sex workers, trans elderly and trans people living with HIV. She's also an active member of the Innovative Response to Transwomen and HIV (IRGT) and participated with them as one of the organizers of the First Trans Pre-Conference at the International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa in 2016 and again in 2018 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Alexandra currently lives in Mexico City, where she's a Program Director of La Jauria Trans, a trans lead virtual program, and she's actively a part of the LGBTQI+ movement, organizing and mobilizing the trans-movement internationally, doing presentations and workshops and writing for various publications.

Session 5: Mental health and Wellbeing, 14.10 pm – 15.25 pm, Room C14

1. "Wholeness & Well-being Therapy" by Jason Thomas-Fournillier (Spectrum Rainbow) (In-person)

Abstract:

This session will stoke discussion on one's sensitivity and awareness of themselves and their new life in the UK to bolster self-care and love.

About the speaker:

Jason is an LGBTQ asylum seeker, Columnist for Prospect Magazine, Founder & Senior Administrator of the LGBTQ Social Support Group Spectrum Rainbow Community based in Doncaster. Member of the LGBTQ Charity Time To Be Out based in York. Member of RAS Voice an asylum and refugee support group based in Manchester.

2. "Creative practices and participatory research: Recognising LGBTQ+ refugees' narratives of home" by Sonia Quintero (University of East London) (In-person)

Abstract:

This paper addresses the interdisciplinary theme of refugee narratives through the examination of participatory arts-based practices to explore the meaning of home among LGBTQ+ refugees. The showcase of oral narratives, visual artworks and poetry promotes the recognition of the lived experiences of an under-researched community and generates an emotional collage for understanding home in forced migration. Through participatory methodology, LGBTQ+ refugees exercise agency to: document internalised homophobia in both refugees' nations of origin and host countries; challenge the homogenising refugee narrative of home that perpetuates their invisibilities and marginalisation; and confront the heteronormative ideology of home that ties them in a painful cycle of rejection, and redefine it. The voices of participants gain public recognition through the showcase of their creative works in community centres and local libraires, making their voices visible to the general public and opening dialogues about the journey of LGBTQ+ refugees. This initiative led to the creation of Borderless, which takes the participatory arts-based approach to documenting LGBTQ+ refugees' lived experiences into the community.

About the speaker:

I am a queer Colombian–British poet. I have lived in London for 15 years and have published several poetry books, both in English and Spanish. In my poetry I explore mental health and social issues, and when writing in English I reflect on topics such as migration, refugees, identity and belonging. I hold a BA in Psychosocial studies, a MA in Conflict, Displacement and Human Security at University of East London (UEL) and right now I am a PhD candidate student also at UEL, where I am an active member of The Centre for Migration, Refugees and Belonging (CMRB). I have become an active member of the community and have led several projects that combine my passion for poetry and LGBTQ+ rights. I also co-founded Queer Newham, a local initiative that brings visibility to LGBTQ+ issues in my area. We work closely with the LB Newham, community groups and neighbours to tackle discrimination, hate crime and other issues that impact us.

3. "Working through cumulative trauma: challenges and resources for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers" by Chuanfei Chin (University of Oxford) (In-person)

Abstract:

LGBTQ+ asylum seekers face cumulative trauma when their experiences of abuse and discrimination in host countries compound the experiences that prompt them to leave their home countries (Alessi et al 2021; Lasowski et al 2023). In working through these traumas, their intersectional identities often present unusual challenges that reduce a sense of safety and reinforce self-doubt. At the same time, their intercultural awareness can produce unexpected resources, enabling them to make new meanings of their experiences and foster connections across communities new and old. In this paper, I shall offer a psychotherapeutic perspective on some challenges in trauma recovery, by drawing on my experiences working with LGBTQ+ asylum seekers in the UK. I will focus on the processes of recovery identified by Herman (1997, 2023): building safety and stabilisation; fostering remembrance and mourning; and promoting reconnection and repair. My paper includes a brief case study on how one asylum seeker drew on faith, fantasy and compassion in navigating these processes. It highlights why LGBTQ+ asylum seekers need culturally sensitive therapeutic relationships and spaces that can support them through some unpredictable dynamics of trauma and resilience.

About the speaker:

Chuanfei Chin (DPhil Oxford, MCouns SUSS) is a philosopher, counsellor and educator based in London. He works for a charity that provides trauma-informed counselling and psychotherapy for LGBTQ+ abuse and violence survivors. He has provided psychosocial support for LGBTQ+ refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to the United Kingdom and the United States.

4. "The Use of Arts- and Theatre-Based Methods to Facilitate Sexual Health and Wellness for Gay/Bisexual and Transgender Women Migrants in Cape Town, South Africa: Preliminary Findings from Externalize and Mobilize!" by Victor Chikalogwe Pilirani (PASSOP), Edward J. Alessi (Rutgers University), Sarilee Kahn (Rutgers University), Yong-Gun (YG) Lee (Rutgers University), and Willson Tarusarira (PASSOP) (In-person)

Abstract:

Despite facing high risk of HIV infection, LGBTQ+ immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (hereafter LGBTQ+ migrants) in South Africa are often overlooked in HIV prevention efforts. Further, stigma/discrimination has been shown to contribute to low levels of HIV-related self-confidence (i.e., the feeling that one has the confidence to protect themselves), which in turn may increase HIV risk. Our 2019 research with LGBTQ+ migrants affiliated with PASSOP, a community-based organization in Cape Town, showed that because they faced multiple structural barriers (stigma/discrimination, legal/housing/financial), it was challenging for them to obtain HIV testing, PrEP, and treatment. In 2022, we were invited by PASSOP to return to Cape Town to address these issues. Along with PASSOP staff, we developed and led an arts- and theatre-based intervention for gay/bisexual men and transgender women migrants. Entitled Externalize and Mobilize!, the intervention integrated theories (intersectional minority stress, syndemics, trauma theory, constructivism), techniques from Theatre of the Oppressed

and Playback Theatre, and concepts from arts-based qualitative research to encourage reflection/exploration of how structural barriers can shape internal experience, as well as sexual behaviors. The 4-day group sessions culminated in an art exhibition and an immersive theatre performance for community-based partners. Findings indicate that Externalize and Mobilize! shows preliminary efficaciousness as an HIV prevention intervention for gay/bisexual men and transgender women migrants in South Africa. The intervention also enabled participants to share their own stories of stigma/discrimination, while also serving as a compassion-building experience for community-partners/audience-members. Implications for using arts- and theatre-based approaches with LGBTQ+ migrants in multiple contexts is also discussed.

About the speakers:

Victor Chikalogwe Pilirani is Executive Director of PASSOP, Cape Town, South Africa.

Edward J. Alessi is Associate Professor at the Rutgers University School of Social Work in New Brunswick, NJ, USA. His research examines how trauma and structural conditions during pre- and post-migration shape the integration, mental health, and sexual health of LGBTQ+ (im)migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. He has led studies in the United States, Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, and his research has been published in journals such as Journal of Traumatic Stress, Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, Stress & Health, Sexuality Research and Social Policy, Journal of Refugee Studies, Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, and Psychology of Sexual and Gender Diversity.

Sarilee Kahn is Adjunct Professor at McGill University School of Social Work, Montreal, QC, Canada.

Yong Gun (YG) Lee is the Postdoctoral Associate in Intersectionality & Sexual and Gender Minority Health at Rutgers School of Social Work, New Brunswick, NJ, USA.

Willson Tarusarira is a Project Manager at PASSOP, Cape Town, South Africa.

Session 6: Sexual Citizenship and Intersectional Struggles, 15.40 pm – 16.55 pm, Room C10

1. "Bisexual Refugees and Asylum Seekers" by Alex Wainwright (University of Nottingham) (In-person)

Abstract:

Asylum applicants in the UK receive excessive scrutiny in relation to their sexual orientation, relationship history and experience of persecution. Bisexuality is a very complex, nuanced and largely misunderstood umbrella of contemporary sexualities that are not typically part of Global South vocabulary. However, on entering the UK asylum system there is an expectation that within a sexual minority claim the applicant will explicitly align themselves to a formally recognised orientation label that can be critiqued in a court of law. This research was conducted part time between 2021 and 2023 through a multi-methodological approach with a particular focus on semi-structured interviewing. I worked with asylum seekers who either self-identified as bisexual or disclosed a relationship history which has gone on to be interpreted by support workers and solicitors as bisexual. Alongside this, I interviewed representatives from LGBT asylum organisations across England, Scotland and Wales to explore how professionals support the different needs of bisexual asylum seekers. The findings of my research highlight the issues of imposing Global North sexual categories onto other populations and aim to inform policy within the legal setting.

About the speaker:

Alex Wainwright is PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham, School of Sociology and Social Policy as well as a social sciences teacher in a sixth form in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. His academic interests are in the social construction of sexuality and how people in the Global South reconcile their religiosity with their own sexuality.

2. "Untellable Bi Asylum Stories: Construction of Narratives of Sexual Orientation in the Persian-Speaking Communities in the Context of Seeking Asylum in Turkey" by Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh (University of Huddersfield) (Online)

Abstract:

Various studies argue that bi asylum seekers' claims are by far fewer than lesbian and gay ones because other asylum seekers, as well as activists and lawyers, may encourage bi asylum seekers to perform gayness in the asylum process to increase their chance of being recognised as refugee. This paper discusses how this unequal and injustice asylum system makes Persian bi stories less tellable due to the dominance of mono-normative narratives of sexual orientation which reduce the diverse spectrum of sexual orientations to the dichotomy of heterosexuality versus homosexuality. Since asylum processes have played a central role in shaping the Persian speaking LGBT communities in Iran, I argue that these dominant mono-normative asylum narratives can shape not only the way that Iranian asylum seekers, but also all Persian speakers tell their sexual stories. With an interactive narrative analytical approach based on semi-structured interviews with Iranian asylum seekers in Turkey and activists, as well as an analysis of Persian social media contents, I will explain how the mono-normative understandings of sexual orientation are reproduced through asylum procedures and negotiated within and between asylum seekers, LGBT communities and asylum officials. This study contributes to various under-researched areas as not only one of the first fieldworks about bi asylum seekers but also one of the first studies about bi individuals in the Global South countries and among the few studies on the intimate rights of stateless people.

About the speaker:

Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh is a researcher, lecturer, and queer feminist activist. They are finishing their PhD in the Department of Sociology at the University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom, focusing on constructing the dominant binary Persian narratives of sexual orientation in the context of seeking asylum in Turkey. They are also a lecturer at Iran Academia, the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities in the Netherlands, and the co-founder and board member of Spectrum, a feminist, queer organisation based in France.

3. "Obstacles to refugee status for bisexual people in the UK" by Aine Bennet (Royal Holloway) (In-person)

Abstract:

In refugee receiving states with available statistics, bisexual+ people seeking asylum are found to be much less likely to be successful than their gay or lesbian counterparts. The UK Home Office does not make available asylum data disaggregated by sexual orientation but initial findings from my research project suggest that bisexual+ people seeking asylum in the UK similarly face significant obstacles to obtaining refugee status. Interviews conducted with solicitors, staff in refugee support organisations and people with lived experience in 2022 and 2023 point particularly to higher burdens of proof; bisexual+ applicants being read as inconsistent; a lack of country-of-origin information; and decision makers misunderstanding bisexual+ experiences. This paper discusses the impacts of these obstacles for bisexual+ people navigating the asylum system. It further sets out how such obstacles fit into a broader framework of queer asylum in the UK primarily working to filter people seeking asylum out of accessing refugee status. These findings contribute insights about the specific experiences of people with different sexual orientations claiming asylum in a context where those differences are masked in official data and studies often approach sexual orientation and gender identity asylum claims as a whole. The experiences of bisexual+ people are particularly understudied, so this paper seeks to contribute some initial findings towards mitigating that gap in the UK context.

About the speaker:

Aine is a PhD researcher in Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research focuses on the experiences of bisexual+ people seeking asylum in the UK and France. She is interested in border abolitionism, critical migration studies and queer security studies.

4. "Navigating Sexual Identity as Journalist-cum Whistle-blower & Refugee" by Zarith Hanipah (Independent Journalist and Asylum Seeker) (In-person)

Abstract:

This presentation will delve into the intricate and multifaceted experiences faced by individuals who juggle multiple identities in the realms of work, sexual orientation, and societal status while navigating the asylum system. Drawing on his firsthand accounts, Zarith unravels the challenges and dilemmas faced by journalists who act as whistle-blowers, particularly within societies where sexual identity is a contentious issue. The paper further explores the compounded vulnerabilities faced when such individuals seek refuge in foreign lands, often facing discrimination. By shedding light on these intersections, Zarith underscores the need for more inclusive policies to ensure the well-being and safety of this unique group.

About the speaker:

Zarith is a journalist who sought asylum in the UK after facing persecution in Malaysia because of his sexuality and because he blew the whistle on the government. Zarith is also a poet, who came to the UK to start a new life, free from harm, and is currently awaiting a decision on whether this government will allow him to live in safety in the UK. If he is granted asylum, he hopes to continue his studies at University College London.

Session 7: Religion, Necropolitics and Mental Health, 15.40 pm – 16.55 pm, Room C14

1. "LGBTIQ+ migration, accommodation, and mental health: Death worlds and the living dead in the UK" by Sejal Patel-Roberts (University of Manchester), Artemis Christinaki Sejal Patel-Roberts (University of Manchester) and Luan Cassal (University of Bolton) (In-person)

Abstract:

Various studies argue that bi asylum seekers' claims are by far fewer than lesbian and gay ones because other asylum seekers, as well as activists and lawyers, may encourage bi asylum seekers to perform gayness in the asylum process to increase their chance of being recognised as refugee. This paper discusses how this unequal and injustice asylum system makes Persian bi stories less tellable due to the dominance of mono-normative narratives of sexual orientation which reduce the diverse spectrum of sexual orientations to the dichotomy of heterosexuality versus homosexuality. Since asylum processes have played a central role in shaping the Persian speaking LGBT communities in Iran, I argue that these dominant mono-normative asylum narratives can shape not only the way that Iranian asylum seekers, but also all Persian speakers tell their sexual stories. With an interactive narrative analytical approach based on semi-structured interviews with Iranian asylum seekers in Turkey and activists, as well as an analysis of Persian social media contents, I will explain how the mono-normative understandings of sexual orientation are reproduced through asylum procedures and negotiated within and between asylum seekers, LGBT communities and asylum officials. This study contributes to various under-researched areas as not only one of the first fieldworks about bi asylum seekers but also one of the first studies about bi individuals in the Global South countries and among the few studies on the intimate rights of stateless people.

About the speakers:

Sejal Patel-Roberts is a recent graduate in International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response (BSc) from the University of Manchester. Her dissertation focused on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, specifically focusing on access to mental health services and the pathologisation of suffering. Her research interests centre around queer studies, postcolonialism and refugee and migration studies.

Artemis Christinaki is a lecturer in Global Health in the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at the University of Manchester, UK. Her PhD research critically explored the politics, or the role, of psychosocial support in the refugee camps of Greece. Her main research interests lie in migration and refugee studies, critical social theory, critical psychology, psychoanalysis, feminism and postcolonialism.

Luan Cassal is a Brazilian psychologist and queer activist living in the UK. He is a Lecturer in Psychology at University of Bolton and a PhD candidate in Education at University of Manchester. His research interests include discourse analysis, childhood, gender, sexuality, recognition, and social policies. "

2. "Challenging Homosecularism: Queer Religious Refugees and Asylum Seekers" by Diego Garcia (University of Nottingham) (In-person)

Abstract:

This study interrogates the mobilisation of 'homosecular' technologies in the UK's asylum processes that are used to marginalise the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ religious refugees and asylum seekers. It does so by examining the role of religion in the lives of this population to critically challenge the normative assumptions of the Home Office, which often expects 'credible' LGBTIQ+ asylum narratives to conform to secular experiences informed by neo-liberal Western-centric values. Utilising a participatory framework and multi-method design, the study seeks to inform policy dialogues by offering a nuanced understanding of the complexities of religion, sexuality, and asylum.

About the speaker:

Diego is a Leverhulme-funded Early Career Research Fellow. He is currently exploring the experiences of LGBTIQ+ religious refugees and asylum seekers in the UK while examining the support provided by their allies through a 3-year project (2023-2026). Prior to this, Diego completed a PhD on the everyday religion of Indonesian LGBTIQ+ Muslims to interrogate the role of religion as a source of agentic power. Based on his PhD research, his book "Gender, Sexuality and Islam in Contemporary Indonesia: Queer Muslims and their Allies" was published in August 2023. Diego holds a PhD in Gender and Sexuality Studies (University College London), a MSc in Asian Studies (Lund University/ National University of Singapore), and a BA in Journalism (University Complutense of Madrid, University of Tampere and Korea University).

3. "Transgressed borders. Resignifications, stigma and religious practices of LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in Mexico City. An intersectionality approach" by Rene Abel Tec (UNAM, Oram) (Online)

Abstract:

This work aims to recognize and analyze the migratory trajectories and experiences of LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in Mexico City. Specifically, the processes of resignification that they carry out in the face of discrimination and stigmatization through socio-political resources and/or religious practices in the networks and circuits to which they adhere in their mobility and settlement in Mexico. Methodologically, we conducted the research from an intersectional perspective and a qualitative and collaborative methodology, as we consider that it requires a deep look from different dimensions of understanding and collaboration with other organizations working to support this sector in Mexico City. Therefore, we use the Case Study method, which allows us to investigate at a processual, systematic and deep level, a phenomenon located in a particular context. And to immerse ourselves in this information field, we applied three research techniques with their respective approaches: observation, semi-structured interview, and life narratives.

About the speakers:

René A. Tec-López (they/them) holds a BA in Social Anthropology from the University of Yucatán and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Santiago, Chile. They have experience in research

projects focused on the intersectionality between religion and sexual diversity and the migration of LGBTIQ+ people in Mexico. René is co-founder of the Fundación Josías, a nonprofit organization that aims to combat violence against queer people within religious institutions and make visible safe religious spaces for LGBTIQ+ people. René is currently Oram's Mexico Program Officer serving LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in Mexico City.

4. "Embracing Intersectionality: Navigating Race, Religion, Sexuality, Migration and LGBT+” by Jide Macaulay (House of Rainbow) (In-person)

Abstract:

In this session, Jide will share insights on intersectionality based on both personal and professional experiences. The focus will be on human rights, justice, equality, diversity, and inclusion. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of discrimination faced by marginalised communities and religiously motivated abuse. The session will explore traditional and culturally sensitive approaches to understanding human sexuality, as well as legal provisions and guidelines for challenging prejudice held against LGBTIQ migrants.

About the speaker:

Reverend Jide Macaulay is the visionary behind House of Rainbow CIC, where he serves as Founder & CEO. He is a prominent figure, openly embracing his identity as a gay British-Nigerian, born in London. With a profound commitment to Christianity, he has been a minister since 1998, serving as an Anglican Priest, pastor, and preacher. Beyond his spiritual pursuits, he is a multifaceted individual, showcasing his talents as an inspirational speaker, author, poet, and HIV Positive Activist. Reverend Macaulay's educational accomplishments are impressive, with a degree in Law, a master's degree in Theology, and a post-graduate certificate in Pastoral Theology. His dedication to the cause extends to various organisations, where he actively contributes his expertise and leadership. Notably, he serves as Patron for ReportOUT, Chair for One Voice Network, and Chair for INERELA Europe. Additionally, he generously volunteers as a Chaplain at Mildmay Hospital, further exemplifying his compassionate nature and commitment to community service.

Speaker Directory

Please note that the number after the speaker's name denotes the session in which the speaker will present.

- Alessi**, Edward J. *Rutgers University* 1
- Bagonza**, Paschal G. *De Montfort University* 3
- Bennet**, Aine *Royal Holloway* 6
- Bergo**, Costanza *Nottingham University* 3
- Buhari**, Jamel *Leiden University* 3
- Carrera**, Flavio *London School of Economics* 2 (online)
- Cassal**, Luan *University of Bolton* 2
- Chin**, Chuanfei *Philosopher, counsellor, educator (PhD MCouns)* 5
- Artemis Christinaki** *University of Manchester* 7
- Diab**, Jasmin Lilian *Lebanese American University* 2
- du Plessix**, Gabriel/le *University of Warwick* 3
- Fletcher**, Claire *Rainbow Migration* 1
- Garcia**, Diego *University of Nottingham* 7
- Hanipah**, Zarith *Independent Journalist* 6
- Larkin**, Rachel *University of Kent* 2 (online)
- Liñero**, Daisy Vaughan *University of London* 1
- Macaulay**, Jide (Rev.) *House of Rainbow* 7
- MacMillan**, Leanne *SAFAR* 4
- Moracchini**, Louise *University of Manchester* 2
- Mole**, Richard *Director of SSEES, University College London, K*
- Parnham**, El *Time To Be Out* 4
- Patel-Roberts**, Sejal *University of Manchester* 7
- Peyghambarzadeh**, Zeynab *University of Huddersfield* 6 (online)
- Pilirani**, Victor Chikalogwe *Director PASSOP* 5
- Powell**, Alex *Oxford Brookes University* 1
- Quintero**, Sonia *University of East London* 5

Rodriguez, Alexandra *La Jauria Trans* 4

Rosche, William *Time to Be Out* 4

Samneh, Bechara *Lebanese American University* 2

Schroder, Rieke *Aalborg University* 4

Silungwe, Reuben *SASWA* 1

Tec-López, Rene *UNAM/ Oram* 7 (online)

Thomas-Fournillier, Jason *Spectrum Rainbow* 5

Wainwright, Alex *Nottingham University* 6

Yopez, Cristina *McGill University* 2 (online)

Zadeh, Leila *Executive Director at Rainbow Migration* K