



Sexual and Gender Minority Refugees and Asylum Seekers: An Arduous Journey

18

Johanna E. Nilsson, Sathya Baanu Jeevanba,
Aurora Molitoris, Sally Stratmann,
and Rhyan Kubik

Abstract

A small but growing group of refugees and asylum seekers are members of the LGBTQ+ community. This identity may be separate from their identity as a refugee, or it might be the reason for their refugee status. Many refugees flee countries in which identifying as LGBTQ+ is considered a crime, sometimes punishable by death. The unique challenges of this population concerning forced migration, resettlement, and acculturation to host nations are addressed in the present chapter.

While efforts have been made to increase human rights protections and equality for LGBTQ+ individuals in certain parts of the world (Gartner, 2015), anti-LGBTQ+ agendas are still rampant (e.g., State Equality Index, 2017). Human rights are nonexistent in many nations, where LGBTQ+ individuals live under constant threat of violence. Some members of this community seek protection in other countries, and many report arduous and horrifying experiences in their journeys

toward safety (Alessi, Kahn, & Van Der Horn, 2017; Gartner, 2015; Kahn & Alessi, 2017). Compared to other groups of refugees, LGBTQ+ refugees are unique in that they not only face legislative infrastructure criminalizing their sexual orientations and gender identities but may also be violated by their families and communities (Alessi et al., 2017). Unfortunately, they may also be discriminated against by fellow refugees in their attempts to flee and seek safety (Witschel, 2018). These intersecting and doubly marginalized identities create unique burdens and barriers. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees, address the rights of refugees, and shed light on experiences in resettlement.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

As of 2019, there are approximately 26 million refugees and 3.5 million asylum seekers around the world (“UNHCR Figures at a Glance”, n.d.). In comparison to refugees, the terms asylum and asylum seekers refer to individuals seeking protection from the border or inside a chosen country where they would like to settle and whose legal status as a refugee has not yet been determined (Cepla, 2019). The status of refugee is granted once it is determined that the individual is indeed fleeing violence or persecution. There are no current estimates on what proportion of

J. E. Nilsson (✉) · S. B. Jeevanba · A. Molitoris
S. Stratmann · R. Kubik
University of Missouri Kansas City,
Kansas City, MO, USA
e-mail: NilssonJ@umkc.edu

these individuals identify as LGBTQ+, but it is clear that the number of LGBTQ+ refugees is increasing. Some of these refugees flee war-torn countries, such as South Sudan and Syria, together with other natives, whereas others flee alone from countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and United Arab Emirates, where being LGBTQ+ is considered a crime. In about 77 countries, same-sex relationships are considered a crime, and in 7 of those it is punishable with death (“LGBTI People”, n.d.).

The definition and rights of refugees were first articulated in the aftermath of World War II in Europe. In 1951, the Geneva Convention on behalf of United Nations defined a refugee as an individual who,

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; UNHCR, 2011).

Based on this definition, LGBTQ+ individuals can seek protection under the clause of having *membership in a particular social group* (“LGBTI People”, n.d.). The Geneva Convention also established a list of rights for refugees, such as that they cannot be sent back to their country of origin if there remains a threat to their lives. Additionally, they have the right to the same civil, economic, and social privileges as the citizens of their new host country (UNHCR, 2011).

While some refugees are resettled in host countries, a much larger proportion end up living close to the border of their native country. Most of these countries tend to be low- and middle-income, developing countries, such as Turkey, Uganda, Pakistan, and Lebanon. While the number of LGBTQ+ refugees in these nations is unknown (Portman & Weyl, 2013), many of these nations, which end up hosting the most refugees worldwide, are also likely to be perpetuating the same discrimination and violence that led to these refugees fleeing their homelands in the first place. Only a fraction of refugees resettle in

industrialized or high-income countries, and just 20% of the world’s nations have formally agreed to resettle refugees at all (“UNHCR Information on UNHCR resettlement”, n.d.). Resettlement, or being permanently relocated in a new country, is often the goal and sole existing long-term solution for refugees (UNHCR, 2017). The agency in charge of resettlement decisions, UNHCR, decides whether a refugee demonstrates a priority to be resettled. Reasons for priority can include having unique medical, legal, or physical protection needs, being a woman, or a child at risk, among others.

The Global Response to LGBTQ+ Refugees

Nations differ widely in their views of LGBTQ+ individuals, and this is further shaped by the country’s legislation and sociopolitical views on refugees and asylum seekers. While Western European and North American nations are often seen as beacons of progress for LGBTQ+ rights (Gartner, 2015), the legalization of same-sex marriage, the ability to adopt children, and other anti-discrimination protections vary widely. Even though there is an increased number of LGBTQ+ refugees resettled in Western nations, rising anti-refugee sentiment due to populist and nationalist rhetoric has created hostility toward immigrant communities (Dekeyser & Freedman, 2018) and a reduction in the annual number of approved refugees. For example, in 2017 the United States had the sharpest decline in refugee resettlement of any country in the world (Connor & Krogstadt, 2018).

Asia Pakistan and Turkey are currently hosting the greatest number of the world’s refugees (“United Nations Regional Information”, 2019) but lack the political infrastructure to keep LGBTQ+ refugees safe. Pakistan has criminalized nonheterosexual relationships and is known for its hostility, discrimination, and violence against the LGBTQ+ community (European Asylum Support Office, 2015; Itaborahy, 2012). Turkey, while not criminalizing consensual same-sex acts, offers no protections for LGBTQ+ individuals and has no legal recognition of same-sex

marriage, unions, or adoptions (Itaborahy, 2012). Non-European asylum seekers can live in Turkey while awaiting their claims to be reviewed. It can take several years to go through the application and interview process before resettlement. During this period of waiting, LGBTQ+ refugees stay in “satellite cities” where they undergo various interviews and medical and psychological examinations. They are also required to pay for their living expenses (e.g., healthcare, transportation, and accommodation), despite having fled their country and a scarcity of resources, placing them in a vulnerable social or financial situation often exposed to discrimination from police and local residents (Shakhsari, 2014).

Israel accepts refugees and asylum seekers, the majority of which are from Sudan and Eritrea. It has an LGBTQ+ task force, Aguda, that actively partners with the government to expand the rights of the LGBTQ+ community in Israel, as well as for those that seek refuge. While Israel does not recognize sexual orientation or gender identity as protected identities, refugees in threat of deportation can appeal the deportation by disclosing their orientation or identity; however, Israel has rarely halted deportations for these reasons (Yaron, 2018).

Europe LGBTQ+ individuals from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Baltic and Slavic regions are increasingly seeking refuge in the European Union due to the threat of persecution (Witschel, 2018). European nations often have conflicting legislative and social stances on LGBTQ+ rights. For example, the Czech Republic has both public and legislative support for gay marriage but until recently enforced the sterilization of transgender individuals seeking to change their gender identity on government documents (Transgender Europe and ILGA-Europe v. The Czech Republic, 2018). In Germany, the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals have developed over the last few decades and are considered some of the best in the world (Davidson-Schmich, 2017). While Germany has accepted a large number of refugees recently, refugees that identify as LGBTQ+ are placed in holding facilities with

other refugees that are often hostile to them, resulting in discrimination and violence against them in areas that are supposed to be safe. While deportation is not allowed by EU courts when death, torture, or persecution is imminent, these considerations are more often afforded to individuals fleeing wars than to individuals facing the same threats due to their gender or sexual identities, as shown by several recent court cases around Europe (Witschel, 2018).

North America In 1991 Canada became the first country to accept refugee claims based on persecution for sexual orientation or gender identity (LaViolette, 2009) and is one of the most pre-eminent destinations for those applying for asylum for persecution based on gender or sexual orientation. While Canada’s system for meeting refugee needs is not flawless, there are several notable programs that offer assistance to both refugee-serving agencies wanting to provide better care and to refugees themselves (LGBTQ+ Immigration Info: Being LGBTQ+ in Canada and Laws You Should Know, n.d.). The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) has started a Positive Spaces Initiative that provides training to area agencies, as well as referrals and assistance to LGBTQ+ refugees (OCASI, n.d.).

In the United States, the number of refugees hosted varies significantly depending upon fluctuating policies and the will of the sitting President and Congress. In the 1990s, this number averaged around 100,000, but this has plummeted in the last 3 years to a record low ceiling of 18,000 admissions set for the year 2020. Prior to 1990, refugees who identified as gays were not allowed to resettle in the United States. In 1994, the United States began to allow LGBTQ+ individuals to apply for asylum on the basis of persecution for their sexual and gender identity (Sussman, 2013). There are currently a growing number of asylum claims from LGBTQ+ individuals hoping to resettle in the United States (Alessi, 2016). Approximately 300 LGBTQ+ refugees are resettled annually, and around 500 are granted asylum (Portman & Weyl, 2013).

South America Brazil recently criminalized homophobia and transphobia and is consequently becoming a more popular destination for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers in Latin America. However, it simultaneously continues to be considered highly unsafe for LGBTQ+ individuals where attacks and murders are routinely reported (Lopez, 2019). Argentina is another country that offers protections for gender identity and sexual orientation. FALGBT is an LGBTQ+ rights group in Argentina that helps refugees fleeing discrimination due to gender identity and sexual orientation. While no official data are collected on LGBTQ+ refugees, requests for asylum have increased fourfold in the last couple of years. While there is still active violence against gay and trans people in Brazil, Argentina has not had reported violence against these groups. Brazil and Argentina are two countries, along with Mexico and Uruguay, offering protection for those seeking asylum due to gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. These are among the 28 nations in the region that adopted the UNHCR's 2014 Brazil Declaration, which listed gay and trans migrants as vulnerable populations (Lopez, 2018).

Finding Country-Specific Data

An annual report, *State-Sponsored Homophobia* (ILGA, n.d.), can be used to locate information on current sociopolitical and policy changes at the international, regional, and national levels. This report details legislation both criminalizing and protecting sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as cultural shifts toward or away from LGBTQ+ rights. Rainbow Europe also has a country-by-country index of safety for this community in European Nations and includes asylum laws in its consideration (ILGA Europe, 2019).

LGBTQ+ Refugees' Experiences

There is limited research on LGBTQ+ refugees and their experiences seeking and claiming refugee and asylum status, as well as about their resettlement experiences. To provide a more

holistic picture of this dual identity, we will provide an overview of what is currently known about LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers together with more general information about refugees' experiences.

Prior to Leaving Refugee status is often associated with traumatic experiences and posttraumatic stress. Traumatic events may include either being the victim of or a witness to war, torture, discrimination, starvation, rape, diseases, and loss of family members among many other possible events (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2006). Traumatic experiences like these are associated with posttraumatic stress symptoms, depression, and anxiety among refugees (e.g., Anna et al., 2017; Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Steel et al., 2009).

Outcomes for LGBTQ+ refugees are compounded by these doubly marginalized identities. Internationally, LGBTQ+ children and adolescents are at risk for social exclusion, HIV/AIDS, abuse, and discrimination (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in the global south, 2016). In a study that specifically examined premigration experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylees, participants described hiding their sexual and gender identity even from individuals closest to them. The fear of their identity being discovered kept them in a constant state of hypervigilance (Alessi et al., 2017). Furthermore, Cheney et al.'s (2017) study on transgender asylum seekers reported high levels of pervasive verbal and physical abuse by family and community members.

Given the high risk of abuse and anticipation of danger, LGBTQ+ refugees and asylees utilize various strategies to minimize the risk of violence and persecution. Many conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity by pretending to be heteronormative (Alessi et al., 2017; Cheney et al., 2017; Shidlo & Ahola, 2013). Sometimes these strategies include limiting their day-to-day activities related to job choices and interpersonal communication, such as minimizing their contact with members of the community by working night shifts (e.g., to hide effeminate traits; Alessi et al.,

2017). Despite efforts to hide and remove themselves from dangerous spaces, including moving to an entirely different city, the assaults continued; most participants in Alessi et al.'s (2017) and Cheney et al.'s (2017) studies detailed continuous assaults until they left their country or origin.

Seeking Refugee Status LGBTQ+ refugees and asylees bear the burden of proving their sexual or gender orientation when seeking refugee or asylum protection. They need to provide proof concerning their LGBTQ+ status and the risk of persecution if they return home (Khan & Alessi, 2016; Gartner, 2015). It can be difficult and traumatic to not only reveal but also provide evidence regarding one's sexual orientation or gender identity to immigration officials. Considering this common history of victimization, hypervigilance, and taking pains to conceal one's identity, disclosure to an immigration official may be terrifying (Berg & Millbank, 2009). Not surprisingly, some refugees choose not to readily share this personal information. Kahn and Alessi's (2017) qualitative study of service providers and LGBT refugees and asylees showed that many refugees found it difficult and even retraumatizing to "out" themselves and disclose deeply private and traumatic experiences to support their claims to immigration officials. In addition, others reported fearing having their claims dismissed and sent back to their countries of origin with their LGBTQ+ identity now documented, while others described fearing abuse and exploitation by immigration officials (Alessi et al., 2017).

It is important to note that some individuals may not be aware of their right to claim refugee status as an LGBTQ+ individual. A lack of knowledge among immigration staff regarding LGBTQ+ concerns creates yet more barriers for this population. For example, immigration and UN officials may impose Western biases on what behaviors or attributes constitute being gay; individuals from non-Western nations use of other cultural terms to describe their identity and experiences (Munro et al., 2013). For example, to protect themselves, some asylum seekers may have engaged in heteronormativity by getting married

and having children (Mule & Gates-Gasse, 2012), which some immigrant officials may not understand.

In Resettlement After being granted asylum, the process of acculturation begins. It is important to remember that only a small percentage of refugees are given the opportunity to resettle. The majority of asylum remain in refugee camps for years. Some may migrate to other nations and remain undocumented.

Legislation regarding resettlement varies between countries. In the United States, refugee assistance is divided between the federal and state governments. Refugees granted asylum are the responsibility of the State Department's Refugee Admissions Reception and Placement Program (R&P). The R&P supports refugees financially for their first 30–90 days to cover rent, food, clothing, and other basic necessities. After this time period, other federal agencies and private organizations provide resettlement agencies with additional albeit limited resources. Refugees may apply for permanent residence after 1 year of residing in the United States and may apply for citizenship after 5 years (Felter & McBride, 2018; US Department of State, 2018).

For many refugees, resettling involves a turbulent emotional adjustment combining relief, gratefulness, and hope with grieving the loss of ones' culture, identity, and often family and friends. While some refugees show remarkable resilience during this adjustment (e.g., Hussain & Bhushan, 2013; Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007), others find this transition more difficult. Both traumatic experiences prior to immigration and post-migration stressors, such as financial stress and cultural and language barriers, are associated with mental health symptoms and acculturation difficulties (e.g., Carswell, Blackburn, & Barker, 2009; LeMaster et al., 2018). In addition to these challenges, LGBTQ+ refugees and asylees often face unique challenges due to their marginalized sexual and gender minority identities.

Munro et al. (2013) interviewed LGBTQ+ refugee youth in Canada and found that many of

their challenges stemmed from a lack of social and financial support due to discrimination. The youth reported experiences of racism, xenophobia, and homophobia, and intersection of racism and homophobia. This discrimination existed even within entities previously thought to be safe: social service providers, immigration authorities, and within the LGBTQ+ community. Many participants also described not feeling believed or having a difficult time “proving” their LGBTQ+ identity. Some youth alleged that service providers did not acknowledge their identities because they did not conform to stereotypical views of a person of the LGBTQ+ community.

Discrimination is unquestionably a significant stressor for some refugees. It interferes with access to employment (Baranik, Hurst, & Eby, 2018), health care, and housing (Chung, Bemak, Ortiz, & Sandoval-Perez, 2008). In Munro et al.’s (2013) study, the participants described sexual and gender discrimination in their workplaces, educational institutions, and ethnic communities. Recommendations from the study showed a need for training by refugee agencies to the awareness of the differing needs and barriers for LGBT refugees. Even in countries such as United States, Canada, and Australia, newly resettled LGBTQ+ refugees can experience oppressive stigma toward heteronormative ideals, coupled with racist and nationalistic sentiments (Shakhsari, 2014). In the United States alone, as of 2019, 22 transgender or gender-nonconforming individuals were murdered (Human Rights Campaign, 2019).

In addition, LGBT refugees and asylum seekers are not excluded from the challenges faced by the overall refugee population. Language barriers and lack of formal education can make certain aspects of acculturation especially challenging, such as learning to drive, use computers, and use different appliances (Cultural Orientation Resource Center, 2014). There may also be difficulties in finding employment and become financially independent. Studies on stressors and barriers among Muslim Arabs refugees showed that their greatest concern revolved around getting access and opportunity for employment (Baranik et al., 2018). Financial hardship and

poverty are not uncommon among refugees (e.g., Capps et al., 2015; Vang & Trieu, 2014).

Social, Educational, and Mental Health Support

Many refugees are unfamiliar with the idea of individual therapy and may feel uncomfortable engaging in intimate conversations with a stranger (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Particularly, LGBTQ+ refugee and asylum seekers may find it difficult to trust service providers given their history of trauma and discrimination, even in in LGBTQ+-affirming spaces. Some LGBTQ+ refugees also come from countries that associate gender and sexual minority identity as a form of mental health disorder (Kahn, Alessi, Kim, Woolner, & Olivieri, 2017). Not surprisingly, the stigma and shame associated with seeking mental health services may act as a barrier to receiving traditionally Western forms of mental health services. In addition, mental health providers may not have the knowledge base to understand the needs and experiences of the LGBTQ+ refugee population (Kahn et al., 2017).

In light of this, providers need to understand that building trust and safety is paramount for LGBTQ+ refugees who have experienced discrimination and this may be the first point of contact they have with such services. A few clinics have been noted for their success working with LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers. One example is the Jewish Family and Community Services East Bay (JFCS). JFCS’ case managers trained to work with LGBTQ+ refugees and provide support, such as housing, benefits, health-care, and education. Mental health services and counseling are also offered, along with introduction to other LGBTQ+ individuals and those within the same cultural group (“LGBT Refugee Services”, n.d.).

Heartland Alliance is another organization that helps individuals claiming marginalized identities, including refugees. They provide resources such as the Rainbow Welcome Initiative and the Rainbow Response manual. The Rainbow Response manual provides agencies with training

material for case workers and counselors detailing resources helpful for LGBTQ+ refugees (“Rainbow Response”, n.d.). In their article on emerging best practices, Portman and Weyl (2013) reported that it may be beneficial to resettle LGBTQ+ refugees in environments where there are a greater population of other LGBTQ+ refugees or in communities where there are allies and support. The manual reiterates that emphasizing tolerance and community support are best practices for individuals who have previously experienced persecution and trauma due to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Conclusion

The current research demonstrates the vulnerability of LGBTQ+ refugees and their risk for discrimination, exploitation, and violence. Domestic and international laws are painfully ambivalent when it comes to protections for LGBTQ+ individuals and certainly toward refugees as a whole. There is a growing need for agencies and service providers, who work with the refugee and asylum-seeker population to be trained and aware of the differing needs and barriers for this population. Additionally, agencies that have been successful in working with LGBTQ+ refugees have found that introducing LGBTQ+ refugees to other individuals who share similar identities (i.e., already settled LGBTQ+ refugees and individuals of the same cultural background) can help provide them with a sense of support and belonging so greatly needed during the resettlement process.

References

- Alessi, E. J. (2016). Resilience in sexual and gender minority forced migrants: A qualitative exploration. *Traumatology*, 22(3), 203–213. <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000077>
- Alessi, E. J., Kahn, S., & Van Der Horn, R. (2017). A qualitative exploration of the premigration victimization experiences of sexual and gender minority refugees and asylees in the United States and Canada. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 54(7), 936–948.
- Anna, C., Rita, F., Reid, A., Van den Boogaard, W., Deiana, P., Quaranta, G., et al. (2017). Mental health and trauma in asylum seekers landing in Sicily in 2015: A descriptive study of neglected invisible wounds. *Conflict and Health*, 11, 1–11.
- Baranik, L. E., Hurst, C. S., & Eby, L. T. (2018). The stigma of being a refugee: A mixed-method study of refugees’ experiences of vocational stress. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 105, 116–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.09.006>
- Bemak, F., & Chung, R. C. (2017). Refugee trauma: Culturally responsive counseling interventions. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 95(3), 299–308. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12144>
- Berg, L., & Millbank, J. (2009). Constructing the personal narratives of lesbian, gay and bisexual asylum claimants. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(2), 195–223.
- Capps, R., Newland, K., Fratzke, S., Groves, S., Auclair, G., Fix, M., et al. (2015). *The integration outcome of U.S. refugees: Successes and challenges*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Carswell, K., Blackburn, P., & Barker, C. (2009). The relationship between trauma, post-migration problems and the psychological well-being of refugees and asylum seekers. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 57(2), 107–119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764009105699>
- Cepla. (2019, January 25). *Fact sheet: U.S. refugee resettlement*. Retrieved from: <https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-u-s-refugee-resettlement/>
- Cheney, M. K., Gowin, M. J., Taylor, E. L., Frey, M., Dunnington, J., Alshuwaiyer, G., et al. (2017). Living outside the gender box in Mexico: Testimony of transgender mexican asylum seekers. *American Journal of Public Health*, 107(10), 1646–1652.
- Chung, R. C.-Y., Bemak, F., Ortiz, D. P., & Sandoval-Perez, P. A. (2008). Promoting the mental health of migrants: A multicultural– Social justice perspective. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 38, 310–317. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00514.x>
- Connor, P., & Krogstad, J. M. (2018). *For the first time, U.S. resettles fewer refugees than the rest of the world*. FACTANK/Pew Research center. Retrieved at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/>
- Cultural Orientation Resource Center. (2014). *Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/nilssonj/Downloads/CAL+Backgrounder+07+-+Congolese+FINAL.pdf
- Davidson-Schmich, L. K. (2017). LGBT politics in Germany: Unification as a catalyst for change. *German Politics*, 26(4), 534–555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2017.1370705>
- Dekeyser, E., & Freedman, M. (2018) *Toxic elections: Elections and attitudes toward immigration in Europe*. Retrieved from: https://edekeyser.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/DekeyserFreedman_ImmigrationElections.pdf

- European Asylum Support Office. (2015). *Annual report on the situation of asylum in the European Union 2015*. Retrieved from: https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/public/EN_%20Annual%20Report%202015_1.pdf
- Fazel, M., Wheeler, J., & Danesh, J. (2005). Prevalence of serious mental disorder in 7000 refugees resettled in western countries: A systematic review. *Lancet*, 365, 1309–1314.
- Felter, C., & McBride, J. (2018). *How does the U.S. refugee system work? Council of Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/background/under/how-does-us-refugee-system-work>
- Gartner, J. L. (2015). *(In) credibly queer: Sexually based asylum in the European Union*. Humanity in Action. Retrieved from: https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge_detail/incredibly-queer-sexuality-based-asylum-in-the-european-union/
- Human Rights Campaign. (2019). *Violence against the transgender community in 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2019>
- Hussain, D., & Bhushan, B. (2013). Posttraumatic growth experiences among Tibetan refugees: A qualitative investigation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 10, 204–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2011.616623>
- ILGA. (n.d.). *State-sponsored homophobia report*. Retrieved from: <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>
- ILGA Europe. (2019). *Rainbow Europe 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://ilga-europe.org/rainboweurope/2019>
- Itaborahy, L. P. (2012). State-sponsored Homophobia: A world survey of laws criminalizing same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults. *International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/50ae380e2.html>
- Kahn, S., & Alessi, E. j. (2017). Coming out under the gun: Exploring the psychological dimensions of seeking refugee status for LGBT claimants in Canada. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 31(1), 22–41. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fex019>
- Kahn, S., Alessi, E. J., Kim, H., Woolner, L., & Olivieri, C. J. (2017). Facilitating mental health support for LGBT forced migrants: A qualitative inquiry. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 96(3), 316–326. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12205>
- LaViolette, N. (2009). Independent human rights documentation and sexual minorities: An ongoing challenge for the Canadian refugee determination process. *International Journal of Human Rights*, 13, 437–476.
- LeMaster, J. W., Broadbridge, C. L., Lumley, M. A., Arnetz, J. E., Arfken, C., Fetters, M. D., et al. (2018). Acculturation and post-migration psychological symptoms among Iraqi refugees: A path analysis. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 88, 38–47. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000240>
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in the global south. (2016). *Advocates for Youth*. Retrieved from: <https://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-lgbt-youth-in-the-global-south/>
- LGBT Refugee Services. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://jfc-eastbay.org/lgbt-refugee-services/>
- LGBTI People. (n.d.). [Internet]. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/lgbti-people-56a7a9164.html>
- LGBTQ+ Immigration Info: Being LGBTQ+ in Canada and Laws You Should Know. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://ok2bme.ca/resources/outside-of-canada/canadas-laws/>
- Lopez, O. (2018). *Fleeing persecution, LGBT+ migrants seek refuge in South America*. Retrieved from <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-latam-lgbt-immigration/fleeing-persecution-lgbt-migrants-seek-refuge-in-south-america-idUSKBN1OIIIV>
- Lopez, O. (2019). *Top Brazilian court to decide key homophobia cases*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-court-lgbt/top-brazilian-court-to-decide-key-homophobia-cases-idUSKCN1Q1218>
- Mule, N.J., & Gates-Gasse, E. (2012). *Envisioning LGBT refugee rights in Canada: Exploring asylum issues*. Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Retrieved from http://www.ocasi.org/downloads/Envisioning_Exploring_Asylum_Issues.pdf
- Munro, L., Travers, R., John, A. S., Klein, K., Hunter, H., Brennan, D., et al. (2013). A bed of roses?: Exploring the experiences of LGBT newcomer youth who migrate to Toronto. *Ethnicity and Inequalities in Health and Social Care*, 6(4), 137–150. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eihsc-09-2013-0018>
- OCASI (n.d.). Positive spaces initiative. Retrieved from <https://ocasi.org/positive-spaces-initiative-psi>
- Portman, S., & Weyl, D. (2013). LGBT refugee resettlement in the US: Emerging best practices. *Forced Migration Review*, 42, 44–47.
- Rainbow Response Manual: A practical guide to resettling LGBT refugees and asylees. (n.d.). [PDF file] Retrieved from: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ort/rainbow_response_heartland_alliance_field_manual_0.pdf
- Schweitzer, R., Greenslade, J., & Kagee, A. (2007). Coping and resilience in refugees from the Sudan: A narrative account. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 41(3), 282–288.
- Schweitzer, R., Melville, F., Steel, Z., & Lacherez, P. (2006). Trauma, post-migration living difficulties, and social support as predictors of psychological adjustment in resettled Sudanese refugees. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 40, 179–187.
- Shakhsari, S. (2014). The queer time of death: Temporality, geopolitics and refugee crises. *Sexualities*, 17, 998–1015.
- Shidlo, A., & Ahola, J. (2013). Mental health challenges of LGBT forced migrants. *Forced Migration Review*, 42, 40–43.
- State Equality Index. (2017). *A review of state legislation affecting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community and a look ahead*

- in 2018. Retrieved from: https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/HRC-2017-report-FINAL-2.pdf?_ga=2.182561510.1721583375.1572970425-1116808829.1572970425
- Steel, Z., Chey, T., Silove, D., Marnane, C., Bryant, R. A., & van Ommeren, M. (2009). Association of torture and other potentially traumatic events with mental health outcomes among populations exposed to mass conflict and displacement: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 302(5), 537–549.
- Sussman, A. A. (2013). Expanding asylum law's pattern-or-practice-of-persecution framework to better protect LGBT refugees. *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Law and Social Change*, 16, 111–131.
- Transgender Europe and ILGA Europe v. the Czech Republic. (2018). Complaint No. 117/2015.
- U.S. Department of State. (2018, Oct 22). *The reception and placement program*. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/receptionplacement/index.htm>
- UNHCR. (2011). *What we do: Solutions*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10>
- UNHCR. (2017). *Frequently asked questions about resettlement*. Retrieved from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/56fa35b16>
- UNHCR Figures at a glance. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>
- UNHCR Information on UNHCR resettlement. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/information-on-unhcr-resettlement.html>
- United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.unric.org/en/world-refugee-day/26962-every-link-you-need-about-refugees->
- Vang, C. Y., & Trieu, M. M. (2014). *Invisible newcomers: Refugees from Burma/Myanmar and Bhutan in the United States*. Washington, DC: Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund & Association for Asian American Studies.
- Witschel, M. A. (2018). Human rights in times of crisis: Article 3 prevails-examining how LGBTQ asylum seekers in the European Union are denied equal protection of law. *American University International Law Review*, 32, 1047–1078.
- Yaron, L. (2018). *Israel to deport lgbt asylum seekers to Rwanda, Uganda, despite likely persecution*. Retrieved from: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-lgbt-asylum-seekers-in-israel-won-t-be-shielded-from-deportation-1.5868046>