

CALL FOR CHAPTERS

Edited collection on LGBTIQ+ migration on, from and to the African continent



On 15 November 1884, the major European powers met in Berlin to carve up a continent. They haggled over ‘ownership’, made claims to territories and peoples, and debated how best to ‘trade’ resources; by the end of the conference, they had inscribed borders that remain to this day. While as an event the ‘scramble for Africa’ lasted less than a century, its legacies can be seen in many contemporary social, legal and cultural structures on the continent. These inherited modes of social regulation are perhaps most visible in the fervent use of colonial-era penal codes to punish non-normative bodies. Those perceived to transgress sexual and gender norms – whether through their relationships, identities or expressions of self – are frequently subjected to exclusion, violence, surveillance and in some case criminal prosecution. Political, cultural and religious leaders often draw on colonial-era notions of morality to justify this treatment and to position anything outside the bounds of heterosexuality as patently unAfrican. This has led to a new phenomenon in Africa’s long history of migration: the movement of people fleeing persecution on the grounds of their sexuality and/or gender.

The existence of anti-LGBTIQ+ laws and the prevalence of heteronormative rhetoric are increasingly cited by Western commentators as evidence of Africa’s inescapable brutality. In the process, the colonial notion of a savage continent in need of salvation is repackaged and repurposed for the twenty-first century. At the centre of this discourse is the figure of the LGBTIQ+ refugee, always imagined as seeking freedom and liberation in the ‘progressive’ West. This is despite a growing body of research challenging reductionist and neo-colonial portrayals of LGBTIQ+ migration (Camminga 2019; Masri 2017; Murray, 2014; Manalansan, 2014; Jenicek, Wong, & Lee, 2009).

This edited collection seeks to contribute to this urgent scholarly conversation by bringing together diverse inputs on topics related to LGBTIQ+ migration on, from and to the African continent. We have a particular interest in what happens when borders, sexualities, genders, identities, languages and mobilities come up against the histories, trajectories, futures and imaginaries of what Mbembe (2007) calls the ‘geographical accident’ that is Africa. The collection aims to reflect on what it means to do research with, on and perhaps for migrant LGBTIQ+ bodies, particularly at a time when global contestations around human rights have initiated a new ‘scramble’ – this time for evidence of homo/trans/xenophobia on the African continent. We welcome contributions that go beyond simplistic narratives of persecution and instead explore how LGBTIQ+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers subvert hetero-patriarchal norms, forge solidarity networks, negotiate care and protection structures, develop livelihood strategies and carve out spaces within landscapes of abandonment.

Possible topic areas might include, but are not limited to the following:

- *The state of research*: trends in LGBTIQ+ migration research, knowledge gaps, moving beyond the ‘single story’ and so on.
- *Theorising LGBTIQ+ migration*: looking beyond South-North migration trajectories, rethinking movement, boundaries and borderlands, challenging European ‘exceptionalism’ and so on.
- *Methodological tensions*: unpacking the ethics and practices of researching and representing LGBTIQ+ migration, the use of arts-based methodologies, decolonial approaches to LGBTIQ+ migration research and so on.

- *Structures of asylum and migration*: encampment, waiting, documentation, border control, online fundraising campaigns, illegality as orientation, the finitude of language, sex work and so on.
- *Law and justice*: making sense of legal challenges and opportunities relating to LGBTIQ+ migration, including local, regional and international legal mechanisms, state responses to decriminalisation and so on.
- *Documenting, archiving and disseminating knowledge*: partnerships (civil society, government, policy-makers, etc.), research uptake beyond the academy, data security, keeping LGBTIQ+ communities safe when 'going public' and so on.
- *Research in action*: empirical findings from recent studies related to LGBTIQ+ migration on and from the African continent.

Deadlines

- 13 September: expressions of interest – short abstract (200-250 words) and a biography (150 words)
 23 September: feedback on abstracts
 15 December: submission of full chapters (8000-10,000 words)
 01 January: editorial review and feedback to authors
 17 February: full manuscripts submitted for peer review

Submissions

Please send all abstracts and enquiries to almresearchnet@gmail.com, addressed to either B Camminga or John Marnell (African Centre for Migration and Society, University of the Witwatersrand).

References

- Camminga B (2018) *Transgender Refugees and the Imagined South Africa: Bodies Over Borders and Borders Over Bodies*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jenicek A, Wong A & E Lee (2009) Dangerous Shortcuts: Representations of Sexual Minority Refugees in the Post-9/11 Canadian Press. *Canadian Journal of Communication* 34(4): 635–658.
- Manalansan M (2014) The 'Stuff' of Archives: Mess, Migration, and Queer Lives. *Radical History Review* (120): 94–107.
- Masri H (2017) A Liberated Life? Thoughts on the Paradoxical Binds of Queer Refuge. *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 3(1): pp. 36–40.
- Mbembe A & Holler C (2007) Africa in Motion: An interview with the post-colonialism theoretician Achille Mbembe. *Mute*. Available at: <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/africa-motion-interview-post-colonialism-theoretician-achille-mbembe> (accessed 29 April 2015).
- Murray D (2014) The (not so) straight story: Queering migration narratives of sexual orientation and gendered identity refugee claimants. *Sexualities* 17(4): 451–471.

