

Queer Global Displacement: Social Reproduction, Refugee Survival, and Organised Abandonment in Nairobi, Cape Town, and Paris

Ali Bhagat 

Global Development Studies, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS, Canada, ali.bhagat@smu.ca

Abstract: Queer refugees are misfits in the global political economy of migration. While international human rights law has provided some room for queer acceptance, queer refugees face organised abandonment—marginality, erasure, and invisibility—as they attempt to survive in the face of ongoing displacement. This paper explores queer refugee survival in Nairobi, Cape Town, and Paris, and examines the netted practices of the state, non-state actors, and civil society embedded in a landscape of heteronormativity and anti-migrant sentiment. In so doing, this paper emphasises queerness as a form of precarity inseparable from the overarching violence of race, class, and capital. With this critique in mind, queer refugee survival is constrained by the lack of access to shelter, community, and work-related social reproduction. In short, queer refugees face deeper marginality than their cis-gendered and heterosexual counterparts as they attempt to survive in the city.

Keywords: queer geography, global displacement, forced migration, global South, social reproduction

Queer refugees¹ are misfits in the global political economy of migration. As Luibheid (2008:169) observes, “Most scholarship, policymaking, service provision, activism, and cultural work remain organised around the premise that migrants are heterosexuals ... and queers are citizens”. Although international traction grounded in human rights law (UNHCR 2012:2) has had a positive impact on queer people escaping situations of extreme violence, the current framework of queer refugee governance remains both heteronormative and incapable of contending with the urban realities of relocation; namely, the difficulties in accessing shelter and work—key aspects of social reproduction—amidst rising xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiment in major cities of relocation. Queer refugees are often forgotten, hidden, or abandoned, and this paper explores three urban hotspots of relocation—Nairobi, Paris, and Cape Town—in aims to illuminate the systemic violence and urban struggles that exemplify refugee survival in contemporary capitalism. While all three cities have varying histories of sexual regulation, migrant governance, and state welfare capacity, I argue that queer refugees face organised abandonment in each of these three cities where their ability to socially

reproduce is impacted by the netted practices of state and non-state actors amidst an overarching landscape of heteronormativity and racism.

As Neferti Tadiar highlights in *Remaindered Life* (2022), the ability of refugees to socially reproduce is destroyed through displacement and “indefinite territorial and temporal conferment by legal, economic, and social forces of imperial dispossession” where many face precarity in “urban slums, ghettos, and forsaken peri-urban and rural zones” (Tadiar 2022:58). Tadiar argues that “we miss too much if we understand these groups of people and their captive lives principally through the category of ‘labor’ ... in the case of refugee camps, prisons, detention centers, and other sites of security and border control, ‘superfluous’ populations serve ... as matters requiring attention, response, action”. Queer refugees are thus understood here as abandoned people who are superfluous to the needs of capital yet must struggle to survive upon relocation. Even if some queer refugees are able to relocate to new cities, they face deeper exclusion than their heterosexual/cis-gendered counterparts.

I identify two important gaps. The first, is an empirical one where queer refugee experiences remain relatively unexplored despite some important groundwork laid by scholars in the sub-field of queer migration (Gorman-Murray 2009; Murray 2016; Seitz 2017; Shakhsari 2014). Scholarly contributions focus on the violence of bordering, the importance of queering the asylum-seeker subject, queer liminality—the politics of dis/belonging and precarity, and the impact of heteronormative asylum regimes on queer people (Mountz 2011; Wimark 2021). Although academic work regarding the experiences of queer refugees and their survival upon relocation is emerging (Bhagat 2020; Camminga 2019), the various landscapes of queer refugee life remain muted in urban and economic geography. As such, this article seeks to cover some more empirical ground by exploring queer refugee survival in three cities in hopes to further the contributions of scholars in queer geography.

Relatedly, the second gap is theoretical and surrounds the violence of contemporary capitalism at the urban scale. While queer geographers have rightfully understood the importance of sexuality and gender identity amidst border violence, urban neoliberalism, and queer consumption (Heynen 2018; Oswin 2015), this paper seeks to deepen these concerns via an understanding of queerness as precarity vis-à-vis engagement with the concepts of social reproduction and organised abandonment.

The three cities snapshotted in this piece are all home to large numbers of homeless/slum-dwelling, under/unemployed, and precarious people—albeit at varying degrees. Queer refugees in particular face a double erasure and deeper marginality than their non-queer counterparts (Bhagat 2018). Like many refugees, queer refugees are not seen as populations ready for employment or exploitable for their labour—in fact the state and various non-state actors barely pay any attention to the lives of these particular queer people at all (Shakhsari 2014). For example, many of the asylum seekers I interviewed in Cape Town had some form of asylum status; however, this does not confer them equal opportunities for formal work. Even when asylum seekers are employed, they face the structural dimensions of state-based exclusion vis-à-vis a constant pressure to renew permits

and police violence. In Paris, even when refugees have the appropriate documentation, they are prevented from meaningful employment due to ongoing displacement and lack of language skills amongst other structural barriers. Queer refugees cannot escape this reality but to survive in their cities of relocation they must also contend with homo/transphobia as they access various services, public and private forms of shelter, and attempt to secure some means of income (Wimark 2021). In short, sexuality and/or gender identity does impact the ways that refugees survive in major cities and these identities do not operate in isolation from race and class.

I organise this article in five subsequent sections. The first section develops the concept of organised abandonment and survival with regard to queer refugee survival. I see these as related aspects of the queer refugee experience where survival emerges in tension with state and society led abandonment within the context of heteronormative erasure. In the second section, I provide a brief note about methodology. Following this, the third, fourth, and fifth sections deal with the three cities of inquiry—Nairobi, Cape Town, and Paris. These empirical sections are organised on a spectrum of imagined queer (un)friendliness, and they illustrate the various challenges that queer refugees face upon relocation as well as highlighting some avenues used by refugees for survival. Racism, anti-migrant sentiment, heteronormativity, and the lack of viable service availability unite these cases despite varied topographies of abandonment.

Survival and Organised Abandonment

In “World, City, Queer”, Natalie Oswin (2015:561) suggests that decolonising queer studies requires an expanded geographical reach and a decentring of the “universal white western subject”. In heeding this call, I aim to understand queer refugee life through a dialectical understanding of social reproduction and abandonment. I define organised abandonment as it relates to refugee governance with inspiration from David Harvey (2007) and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2008) who point to the interrelated practices of the capitalist state and society which systemically discriminates against the racialised poor through various strategies like redlining, policing and incarceration, and consumer debt. As regards refugee governance, organised abandonment refers to the intense violence faced by refugees in their attempt to relocate and survive in major urban centres where housing insecurity and welfare retrenchment are important vectors of governance (Soederberg 2019). Abandonment, as theorised by Leshem (2017), is not only a technology of power but also a response to persistent and painful resistance.

While refugees are seen as superfluous to the needs of capital and as threats to state security and national coherency, queer refugees continue to struggle and survive despite systemic and everyday forms of violence. As such, this paper seeks to engage with queerness not only as identity, but also as precarity where the material basis of queer (forced) migration rests on the violence produced by bordering, security, and exclusion as part of contemporary capitalism. To follow Tadiar’s (2022) conception of superfluous people, queer refugees are perennially

in limbo. They are stuck in waiting rooms, border sites, camps, detention centres, and eventually on the streets and in low-income areas in cities of relocation.

As Gilmore (2008:31) argues, “Forgotten places are not outside history. Rather, they are places that have experienced the abandonment characteristic of contemporary capitalist and neoliberal state reorganization”. Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) and Brenna Bhandar (2018) are further instructive in defining the Janus-faced nature of organised abandonment. At one instance, the capitalist state manages its activities in order to render various groups of people (racialised migrants, indigenous people, incarcerated people, and others) superfluous—for Povinelli (2011) these groups might face a slow death. At the same time, these same marginalised people are also prone to intense value extraction under particular circumstances, i.e. prisoners, migrant workers, and even refugees are brought into informal and violent labour markets where their safety and security is not guaranteed and their ability to socially reproduce is temporary.

Organised abandonment coupled with displacement forecloses social reproduction. While refugees are alleged beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance in camps, detention centres, and even in urban areas, these places act more as holding grounds and transfer sites to prevent most people from a permanent life with secure shelter and work. As Harsha Walia (2021:24–25) emphasises, the border is “less about a politics of movement per se and is better understood as a key method of imperial state formation, hierarchical social ordering, labor control, and xenophobic nationalism”. Not only are migration crises manufactured by the state, but these forms of violence, deportation, and erasure also play out at the level of the city.

The city emerges as both sanctuary (Squire 2011) and a site of abandonment for many refugees, as most displaced people live in urban areas globally. For instance, Darling (2017:184–185) suggests, the urban emerges as a space “produced through the desire to variously control, contain, or expel forced migrants ... the experiences of refugees are framed in terms of how they articulate an imposition of state authority”. In general, local government, NGOs, and police have both greater responsibility and violent authority to manage refugees—the city is the site where organised abandonment plays out an aspect which Darling (2017) refers to as the “re-scaling of border control” (Bhagat 2022; Rajaram 2018). Refugees in the city are caught between state-led strategies of exclusion that weaponise the border and create the refugee other. They also face non-state strategies of assistance that work against neoliberal scripts of austerity in order to provide housing, legal support, and other forms of welfare assistance (Jeffries and Ridgley 2020). Urban refugee livelihoods (Sanyal 2012; Thompson 2016) and the experiences of queer and racialised people (El Tayeb 2012; Manalansan 2005; Ritchie 2015) in the city have both received scholarly attention; however, the particularities of queer refugee life remain muted in the literature barring some key insights from queer geography.

For instance, Seitz (2017) explores the waiting room in Toronto as a place where asylum seekers are rendered dispossessed, and deportable. Seitz echoes the work of Mountz (2011) and Murray (2016) where the waiting room and the desire for asylum renders refugees liminal. Queer refugees in particular face a dual

burden. Like all refugees, they occupy a precarious position of asylum-seeking where they are reliant on the benevolence of state officials to validate their claims to asylum in the waiting room. In addition, they also have to prove that they are queer enough, that is to say, telling the truth about the violence associated with their gender identity and/or sexual orientation in their country of origin. Queer geographers have thus rightfully pointed to the role of state power—particularly in the so-called global North—to determine the authenticity of queer and trans life globally. Refugee governance regimes shape the narratives of claims under a Western matrix of acceptable race, class, gender, geographical, and sexual categories.

Critiquing the rights-based regime of global refugee governance in Turkey, Shakhsari (2014:1013) argues that the “notion of refugee rights, which has proved to be contradictory and unachievable for those who do not fit normative notions of citizenship, race, class, gender, and sexuality, is the only available framework for queer and trans refugee advocacy ... it is exactly because of rights that queer and trans refugee lives become disposable in the process of recognition and resettlement”. Shakhsari goes on to highlight that refugees are trapped in an in-between zone; their life is put on hold and mirrors a slow death. Importantly, Shakhsari points to the material dimensions of refugee survival around access to adequate living conditions that are difficult to attain despite the citizenship status conferred upon them by the UNHCR; refugees are given protection but are barred from the everyday rights and means of social reproduction. Reading organised abandonment in parallel with Shakhari’s article reveals the netted practices of state and non-state actors who perhaps confer some form legal recognition to refugees but prevent them from achieving permanence through the provision of the means of social reproduction vis-à-vis shelter and work.

Wimark (2021) furthers Shakhsari’s work on queer liminality by highlighting that refugees endure the space-time of non-belonging, in-betweenness, and precarity from their often-violent points of departure to an eventual search for home. Wimark (2021:662) summarises this limbo experience effectively: “They [queer refugees] never had a home—no place to be safe, comfortable, and have a sense of belonging—and they do not have a homeland that recognises their group identities and ways of being. They also do not fit into the new land in which they arrive, a country that bases the queer home on LGBT identities”. What we can take away from these insights in queer geography is that queer refugees face organised abandonment not only at the level of the state and city but also through their intimate lives. The queer refugee experience is often one of perpetual unbelonging grounded in the inability to socially reproduce either as acceptable heterosexual refugees or as appropriately raced and classed sexual minorities who hold citizenship.

Influenced by these various considerations of queer refugee liminality, my approach in this paper aims to shed more light on the lived experiences of queer refugees as it concerns the material conditions of survival—shelter and work. Adding to work on citizenship access, asylum adjudication, and deportation (Lewis 2021), the twinned concepts of organised abandonment and survival centre the violence faced by refugees who relocate to the urban fringes of major

cities where queer and trans identities dovetail with xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiment. To do this, I place the above discussions of sexuality in the city and queer asylum governance in conversation with theories of so-called wasted people and queer social reproduction.

Most recently, Bernards and Soederberg (2021) provided a comprehensive overview of Marxist and non-Marxist theorisations of the concept of relative surplus. In a nutshell, the “RSP [relative surplus population] describes the portion of the working-age population, who are surplus to the immediate needs of capital for waged labour at any given time. These disposable workers live lives often characterised by un-or underemployment, hyper exploitative work, lack of a living wage, and an increasing inability to meet basic subsistence needs” (Bernards and Soederberg 2021:412; see also Soederberg 2020). Regarding refugees, Zygmunt Bauman’s *Wasted Lives* (2013) emphasises that the concept of relative surplus is twinned to a notion of human waste where refugees are “collateral casualties” superfluous to the needs of capital who have no social status and are portrayed by their societies of relocation as undesirable others. Bauman sees the production of these superfluous people as a consequence of globalisation.

The global (re)production of disposable, wasted, or superfluous people is inseparable from racial and gendered forms of exploitation (Hall 1986; LeBaron and Roberts 2010; Robinson 2000); however, the experiences of both refugees (in general) and queer/trans people (in particular) deepen the importance and validities of these critiques under racial capitalism.

Influenced by feminist political economists who theorise social reproduction in contemporary capitalism (Gore 2022; LeBaron 2015; Mezzadri 2021; Mullings 2021; Roberts and Zulfiqar 2019), it is my contention here that queer refugees face deeper violence than their heterosexual counterparts particularly because of a hidden heteronormative context that makes survival upon relocation difficult. Lewis (2017) importantly highlights that *queer* social reproduction extends beyond the possibility of partnership and heteronormative family formation and also includes community led support around access to work, friendships, coming out, and dealing with illness. Similarly, Ye (2021) emphasises that queer social reproduction in neoliberal times requires the reproduction of the community. Neoliberal queer consumption reproduces particular gay identities where queer refugees are incongruent on the multiple lines of race, class, and citizenship. Queer social reproduction can also provide multiple avenues to resistance in the face of heteronormative racial capitalism. For example, scholars like Andrucki (2021) and Nguyen (2021) articulate the importance of desire, community, and sex as vital elements of care in the ongoing restructuring of queer urban spaces.

If, as Tithi Bhattacharya (2017:2) in her important edited volume *Social Reproduction Theory* reminds us, human labour is at the centre of reproducing all of society, then what happens to those who cannot reproduce and to those people who are considered irrelevant and unwanted by state and society? Alan Sears’ (2017:184) essay in the same volume emphasises that “Hegemonic heterosexuality is institutionalised in the form of monogamous couples who cohabit and raise children in a household ... the parameters of sexual normativity have

expanded to include homonormativity, a new lesbian and gay normality that presumes that same-sex couples live much as a heterosexual couple do". Sears further explains that while same-sex couples have been brought into the folds of capitalist social reproduction, those who do not conform to these normative and stable family units are forgotten.

Queer refugees are thus misfits amidst common scripts of both ideal queer subjects of consumption and idealised refugee subjects. As Shakhari (2014), Seitz (2017), Wimark (2021), and others remind us, queer refugees enter a state of limbo upon relocation where they are hidden, marginalised, and/or forgotten. Extant conditions of relative surplus or implicitly heteronormative notions of social reproduction do not apply to those who face heteronormative organised abandonment. While piecemeal networks of solidarity and queer support organisations persist, queer experiences combined with extant racism, classism, and anti-migrant sentiment individualise queer survival in the city. The empirical sections of this paper highlight the systemic features of organised abandonment while also providing some narratives of survival in the face of erasure and marginalisation. The next immediate section provides some insight about how this fieldwork was conducted.

A Brief Note on Methodology

This paper is based on uniting three cities where I have conducted fieldwork between 2014 and 2022. Instead of a strict comparison, I opt to take a topographical approach (Katz 2002; Peake 2016) which focuses on cross-cutting political-economic logics of organised abandonment and survival. While the cities encapsulate rich colonial histories, various experiences of violence, and attract refugees from different contexts, I am more interested in the ways seemingly distant geographical spaces converge within an overarching regime of global refugee governance. I conducted 156 semi-structured interviews with workers in international organisations, various levels of government, non-governmental organisations, charities, entrepreneurs working in the private sector, and refugees. Access to the field was facilitated through volunteering and as a queer and racialised migrant myself, I was able to share my own stories with refugees in order to minimise distance between researcher and informant.

I follow Walia (2021:21) who argues that "the migrant is a historically contingent, relational category imposed by the state. It is a category that uses difference (often race) to determine the rights and privileges of citizenship, facilitate labour segmentation, ensure a vast army of casualised labour, and empower the state to use deportation to remove dangerous, unwanted, or deviant sections of the working class". With Walia in mind, this paper uses the term "refugee" as an imperfect catchall to avoid reifying these categories of state-led status determination. At various times, in piecemeal and unguaranteed ways, and on an individual basis, the position of refugee status does afford some more capacity for access to shelter and work; however, the overall structure of abandonment along the lines of race, class, and heteronormativity persists. In general, refugee status in Kenya allowed some people to access safehouses away from camps; however, many refugees are

targeted by the police for bribes and deportation in urban Nairobi even if they have status. In South Africa, documentation (and its access) was more fraught and seemingly did not always confer safety or the means of social reproduction. In France, many refugees were deported back to the port of entry in Europe based on poor documentation, or lived on the streets and avoided police. At the same time, in all three cases homelessness, insecure work, and poor housing conditions seemed to prevail regardless of documentation. At best, status provided some potential benefit; however, this was—in no uncertain terms—not an avenue that guaranteed survival.

In thinking about organised abandonment and survival I chose these three sites along a gradient of queer acceptance. All three cases are destinations for queer refugees fleeing violence and represent some form of sanctuary. The Nairobi case ($n = 80$; 2018) exemplifies the most difficult legal terrain for LGBTQI+ acceptance—sodomy laws persist and while there are no statutory provisions relating to transgender people, same-sex desire and non-conformist gender identity remains a societal taboo. Despite this, the Nairobi case illustrates how marginalised and erased queer people manage to find a sense of community and access shelter amidst widespread social stigma. The Cape Town case ($n = 46$; 2014 and 2022) is reflective of Africa's so-called gay mecca where South Africa was the first to legalise marriage equality and bring equal protection under the law for LGBTQI+ people. However, Cape Town remains a segregated apartheid city distinguished by cleavages of race and class where predominantly white and/or upper-class queer people enjoy the privileges of consumption while queer refugees are left out and face the double precarity of xenophobia and heteronormativity. Despite legal acceptance, same-sex desire and gender non-conformity are not widely accepted social positions—although this position has shifted drastically even over the last decade. Paris ($n = 30$; 2017) assumes the position of perhaps the most LGBTQI+ accepting city where one might expect queer refugees to flourish amidst an infrastructure of support given France's progressive stance on queer rights. Paris competes with Berlin and New York as a centre for queer consumption; however, my research reveals that queer refugees continue to face deeper marginality and invisibility as they relocate. The three cases reveal variation in organised abandonment: Nairobi exemplifies piecemeal solutions of queer people in safe-houses away from police and society intervention; Cape Town illustrates the struggles that queer people face in context of anti-migrant hate and homophobia in informal settlements; and Paris shows us how even progressive cities force refugees into precarious shelter and work arrangements. I now turn to these empirical snapshots.

Snapshot I: Abandonment as Erasure/Targeting in Nairobi

The legal landscape for sexual minority rights in Kenya—while actively contested—remains anti-queer. At the time of my fieldwork in 2018, the Kenyan National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) launched a legal challenge in the Kenyan High Court thereby pushing to decriminalise consensual

same-sex relations between adults (Burke 2019). Potential decriminalisation provided palpable hope to the various organisations and activists I engaged with during my fieldwork, despite widespread media criticism and fear-driven coverage of the legal challenge. Unfortunately, on 24 May 2019, the High Court upheld the constitution and refused to strike down sections 162 and 165, thereby maintaining the country's position on same-sex relations while also paving the way for further queer activist resistance and a future challenge in the Court of Appeals (Human Dignity Trust 2020). However, as Ombagi (2019) illustrates, Nairobi is full of contradictions in terms of queer liveability in nightlife spaces like clubs, taverns, and cruising spots despite the fraught legal terrain. Same-sex desire is expressed, is becoming increasingly visible, and certain places in the city are queer accepting without the western demarcations of pride flags.

All this said, I was unsure what kind of visibility queer activists and organisations had in a city like Nairobi. What I found was that many of the international organisations that operate within the city have specific safety and security programmes pertaining to LGBTQ+ refugees in refugee camps like Kakuma and Dadaab along with urban refugees in Nairobi. It was doubly surprising to hear from leading refugee NGOs that Kenya was somewhat tolerant and accepting of Ugandan refugees who were fleeing anti-homosexuality laws. Uganda is oft-regarded as the blueprint for refugee integration (Idris 2020); however, it produces queer refugees because of abject state-led homo/transphobic violence. While I do not mean to minimise the “actually existing” violence queer refugees face in Nairobi, the lived reality of those on-the-move illustrates the nuances between the politics of abandonment and isolation as well as community-building in queer refugee enclaves.

In short, Nairobi is home to a network of EU-funded NGOs (Refugee Councils), UN-agencies, and national queer activist organisations that assist refugees. The current strategy involves LGBTQ+ safehouses that are scattered in distant areas outside the city where queer people live in enclaves. These houses are usually kept secret and reflect one of the ways that queer people are disposable as they struggle to survive (materially) in cities of relocation. Nairobi's queer scene is emerging with underground parties and nightclubs that are queer friendly; however, queer refugees—due to their foreign status and distance from the city's core—are kept away from this developing queer societal fabric.

Refugees exemplify Bauman's (2013) “wasted lives” as the de facto position of the state has been encampment. Only recently has Kenya pledged to integrate some refugees in the context of dismantling both Dadaab and Kakuma camps whereas the majority of urban refugees live under the threat of heightened policing, detention, and deportation. Although the camps report widespread sexual and physical assault, queer refugees in the Kakuma refugee camp held the first pride festival which was attended by about 600 people—a radical step in queer visibility in Kenya and in Kakuma. Despite this event showing growing acceptance toward sexual minorities many of the organisers and participants faced death threats in the event's aftermath (Sopelsa 2018). As such, most queer refugees prefer to live in Nairobi despite the various tensions that emerge in the urban setting, including difficulties finding work and safe places to live.

An informant from an international organisation operating in Nairobi stated:

We have scattered safe housing for LGBT populations and survivors of gender-based violence. We have trained refugees themselves to support these people. We support the family, give you money, and take care of your basic needs. Homosexuality is illegal in Kenya, but they do not care as long as it is not in your face. As long as the community does not know that the person is gay then they do not care. They come to know because they see how LGBT people become known and communities evict LGBT people. Kenyans sometimes cause problems when they find out because of moral issues. (Interview with a European refugee organisation working in Nairobi, June 2018, Nairobi)

These safehouses are located in remote areas of Nairobi. On one visit to a safehouse, it took about two and a half hours to get from Nairobi city centre to a safehouse with traffic. As the informant emphasises, these safehouses are only safe if the identities of those refugees as either illegal migrants and/or as queer people remains hidden. The fact that these safehouses are so far away from Nairobi makes it difficult for queer refugees to find work and integrate within a community. Indeed, I often wonder who is being kept safe—is it queer refugees from the state or is it communities being protected from queer people, with the prescribed position of many human rights organisations for refugees to maintain a low profile and in essence not cause too much trouble by simply being too queer.

An interview with a trans-identifying refugee who fled Uganda revealed the following about life in a safehouse:

We are safe here, we can be gay, I can wear lipstick and dresses and we can express ourselves. This is my home; I am also with other Ugandans, so we do not experience the real Nairobi. Sometimes I forget how it is because I am a gay and it is accepted here. Once we went to town and they attacked my friend, so we have to still be careful ... It is safe here but not outside these walls. (Interview with a refugee in a queer safehouse, June 2018, Nairobi)

In this case, shelter insecurity centres queer refugee survival. Issues of safety and security in the safehouse in effect confine queer refugees to a life disconnected from urban Nairobi and other queer people outside the small community in the house. While the space for queer refugees is certainly part of the fabric of Nairobi and reflective of potential legal change, the dangers of being queer are still palpable as the informant's friend was identifiable as a queer person while they were out in the town.

Queer refugees from Uganda in particular are easy targets of homophobic and/or transphobic violence. For example, an interview I conducted with a gay refugee from Uganda revealed the violent persecution he faced when residents in his community in Kenya heard him speak Luganda:

They think all Ugandan refugees are gay so as soon as they heard me talk to my friend they came with machetes and knives and told me to get out or they would kill me for being a gay ... In reality, they knew I was from Uganda but they just wanted the house I was staying in so they used it as an opportunity to throw me out. (Interview with a refugee in a queer safehouse, June 2018, Nairobi)

Thinking about organised abandonment, queer refugees in Kenya occupy a limbo space in safehouses and in hiding as they await a promised queer future outside of Nairobi. Organised abandonment in Nairobi takes place through the social context of homo/transphobia and the displacing of queer refugees in safe houses because of the lack of social acceptance. In these safehouses queer refugees do not threaten state heteronormativity and anti-migrant sentiment because they are hidden away. The safehouse is thus, a waiting room in a city that is indeed transforming into a more queer and cosmopolitan space.

For instance, another gay refugee I interviewed in a safehouse told me the following when asked about how he sees his life in Kenya and beyond:

I am a gay now, I can do whatever I want ... but in Kenya we are still not free. I love my community and my friends here, but I still want to go to America or maybe Canada with you! [He said jokingly after we discussed where I was from.] I want a baby and a family ... We can't work we can't do anything here, but I am still happy to be with my friends and countrymen. (Interview with a refugee in a queer safehouse, June 2018, Nairobi)

This sentiment was shared by a lesbian-identifying woman who also lived in the safehouse:

I don't like to talk about my sexuality. No one believes I am a lesbian anyway. I like my friends here and the organisation does a great job to make us feel safe ... but I also miss my friends and family back home. This is not a normal place to live we are only safe in the walls of this place ... otherwise especially the boys get attacked. I can go into Nairobi and people don't suspect ... but it is not a life for me. I want to meet someone, I want money, cars, I want a family ... Kenya is not for us, but for now it is safe. (Interview with a refugee in a queer safehouse, June 2018, Nairobi)

These excerpts reveal a palpable desire to be accepted and live a fully accepted queer life outside of Kenya with perceived fantasies of relocation in Canada, America, or Europe. My informants also embody their lived experiences. They acknowledge that they are in a limbo space: some of them—those who can pass as straight and/or cisgendered—can pick up piecemeal work; however, their foreign status precludes them from long-term meaningful employment.

A report by the Human Rights Litigation and International Advocacy Clinic (2020) at the University of Minnesota for the UN OHCHR highlights the ongoing discrimination queer refugees in Kenya face in terms of accessing health-care, housing, and employment—many are threatened with homo/transphobic violence, eviction warnings, and criminalisation. In the context of Covid-19 even safehouses are no longer spaces of refuge. One was raided by the police where “they arrested a transgender woman and her roommate because they found lubricant in her bedroom drawer. Police then told them that they could either buy their freedom or be charged with sex crimes” (Human Rights Litigation and International Advocacy Clinic 2020:7). All this to say, despite emerging legal and socio-political activism that is creating more queer visibility in Kenya, queer refugees face violence both as foreigners and as those embodying immorality as determined by the Kenyan state. Queer refugees, despite being accepted from

countries like Uganda, are abandoned by the UNHCR, Kenyan government, and sometimes NGOs as well once they arrive in Kenya and are placed in a safehouse. They exist on the urban fringe and survive through piecemeal assistance from charity organisations while facing harassment and xenophobia by the police and the communities in which they relocate. Nairobi emerges as an embodiment of the limbo space where queer refugees desire a fuller queer experience fantasised about elsewhere.

Snapshot II: Abandonment in Cape Town

In contrast to Kenya's criminalisation of same-sex desire, South Africa was the first country in the world to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. With the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2006, South Africa challenged the trend of homophobic state legislation on the African continent. A key public debate at the time of this legislation concerned the fact that South Africans held a high degree of religiosity and many people opposed same-sex marriage on the grounds of these beliefs despite the progressive constitution and marriage equality act (de Vos 2008; Mwaba 2009). Therein lies the puzzle of the South African case that despite progressive legislation queer refugees continue to face discrimination on multiple scales upon relocation thereby struggling to claim asylum in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

Anti-foreigner sentiment in South Africa adds further precarity to queer refugee survival and adds another layer to the South African puzzle of queer refugee abandonment. For instance, Patrick Bond and Greg Ruiters (2017) emphasise that South African racial capitalism rests on a white business class, racially segmented working class, and migrant labour—an enduring legacy of apartheid. Migrants traditionally take on low-wage jobs, live in precarious housing, and face xenophobic violence as South African citizens see migrants as competing for scarce resources as illustrated by ongoing xenophobic riots in major South African cities.

Queer geographers and others who study sexuality (Moreau 2015; Tucker 2009) have pointed to Cape Town as a tale of two queer cities. The De Waterkant and Green Point areas of the city bowl are home to queer bars and other spaces of consumption, while queer people who live in townships are excluded from these spaces. While township spaces can be sites of queer consumption and community building (Williams 2008), spatial politics of post-apartheid Cape Town reflect class- and race-related tensions which, in turn, exclude non-white people from predominantly white areas of queer life. These intersectional dimensions of exclusion appear with more intensity as queer refugees face intense violence due their SOGI and migrant status. As Hoad (2010:121) suggests, the "South African state in its colonial and apartheid-era incarnations had overriding concerns in regulating sexual behaviour in both instrumental and paranoid modes". Regulating same-sex desire spoke to the moral purity of the apartheid regime and LGBTQI+ liberation in the post-apartheid era re-aligned South Africa to the progressive west as a state-led project attuned to globalisation. Queer refugees encapsulate colonial hangovers around sexual regulation and ongoing tensions around race and the so-called untrustworthy and dangerous migrant subject.

In general, South Africa remains a key destination for queer refugees who are fleeing countries of origin across the continent. The motivating reasons for asylum not only concern perceived economic benefit but are coupled with the fact that South Africa is one of the only countries with queer friendly legislation. As a recent article by de Greef (2019) in *The Atlantic* asserts, LGBTQ rights in South Africa is an unfulfilled promise where “refugees fleeing homophobia elsewhere often find a morally conservative, hostile, and profoundly violent” country of relocation. De Greef paints the South African experience with a broad brush, but still it is important for us to remember that refugee survival is hinged along the cleavages of race, class, and nation in contemporary capitalism. In what follows, I detail some of the experiences that refugees in Cape Town faced while trying to survive upon relocation. In short, queer refugees are abandoned by the national-level state while encountering widespread discrimination in South African society while living under the threat of deportation, arrest, and arbitrary harassment by police.

Most recently, the Government of South Africa and the UNHCR signed a \$9.6 million agreement to set in motion a plan to eliminate backlogs on asylum decisions that have plagued the Department of Home Affairs for at least the past decade (UNHCR 2021). At present, around 153,000 refugees are awaiting decisions on their asylum claims (UNHCR 2021) and many of the refugees I worked with had to constantly return to the port of entry—at their own cost—to renew their asylum permits while they awaited adjudication of their asylum claims often for years. In 2022, I found that many refugees were still stuck in this ongoing battle of paper renewal and many others that I interviewed gave up on renewals because they simply could not afford to return to Durban or Pretoria every few months.

This quest for refugee status has invariably affected refugees who need formal documentation for employment and shelter. This was worsened during the lockdowns of 2020/21 when Home Affairs paused the processing of all asylum claims, leaving many of the refugees I interviewed without permits, thereby making them illegal/undocumented people. Queer refugees in particular struggle to be treated with respect at mandatory asylum permit renewal meetings and in the Department of Home Affairs in general. Many who had previous documentation were fired or had to hope that the police would not storm their workplaces and conduct random checks.

For instance, an organisation I interviewed told me about one of their clients, Dorotea, a transwoman who faced homo/transphobia during her initial meeting with a Home Affairs official. The official said, “How can you be gay? That is not African” (Interview with an LGBTQI+ refugee organisation in Cape Town, October 2014). Dorotea did receive an asylum permit, but like countless others was placed in limbo waiting for refugee status adjudication. After receiving her six-month permit, Dorotea faced physical and verbal abuse from her landlord who later terminated her lease. Dorotea later went to the police who also ended up attacking her for being both a refugee and perceived as “gay” and “un-African”. On the one hand, queerness is seen by Home Affairs officials as “un-African”. South Africa’s exceptionalism is seen to be abhorrent in the majority Christian country and

the queer rights movement remains in the national imaginary as a movement driven by white people while ignoring the longer history of same-sex desire and non-cis identity on the continent. On the other hand, the queer refugee is “too African”, and they cannot shed their foreign identity simply by occupying a queer positionality. The “African” refugee resembles job-stealing, social unrest, and corruption, and thus queer refugees in South Africa face violence on both fronts of their perceived identity.

One trans-identifying refugee-activist I interviewed told me how he faced housing discrimination from a lesbian couple near the township of Gugulethu. Initially, the couple were happy to rent to Jay, but as their relationship soured, the couple told Jay: “You are from the Congo, go home” (Interview with Jay, December 2014, Cape Town). Despite the fact that the landlords were in a same-sex relationship, it was Junior’s foreignness that rendered him homeless.

In contrast, a gay refugee I interviewed from the DRC lost his home because of his sexuality. Asylum seekers from the DRC have a slightly easier experience claiming asylum due to well-known conflict-based displacement in the DRC. As such, Katanga claimed asylum based on conflict instead of his sexual orientation. His distant relative extorted him for money to pay for housing and other costs and threatened to out Katanga to relatives in the DRC if he did not pay. His relative called his parents who stopped transferring money to Katanga, and he was rendered homeless after his relative evicted him (Interview with a queer refugee, January 2015, Cape Town). Katanga’s story illustrates the unevenness of the landlord–tenant relationship and the ways in which sexuality affects one’s circumstances in accessing these basic survival resources. It also shows us the return to the closet and a lack of a queer community of care further forecloses the possibility of social reproduction for many queer refugees.

An interview with a trans-identifying refugee from Uganda showed the cleavages of resource access based on nationality and sexuality. Chuk told me that “Cape Town is safe for some people, but I am a black, gay, foreigner it is not safe for me”. Chuk resides in Delft and his rent is 300 ZAR a month—an amount he cannot afford without employment. He further said that “Black South Africans never accepted me ... in Delft they say every [foreigner] must move out”. Chuk has faced repeated attacks from his landlord and the wider community because he is unable to pay rent. His landlord complained to the taxi drivers who have political clout in Delft and take matters of alleged crime and injustice in their own hands. Chuk was physically abused by these taxi drivers and his possessions and asylum permit were also held by the landlord until he was able to pay rent (Interview with a queer refugee, January 2015, Cape Town). Chuk was also made homeless by default and was pushed to unsafe sex work in order to pay for his accommodation costs.

Difficulties negotiating safe sex also appeared in my interview data with Anele—a transwoman from Zimbabwe who also resided in Delft. Anele said:

When I came here, I have no friends and no support because I am from Zimbabwe and they don’t want to hire me. Cape Town is a beautiful city, but I do miss my home still ... I cannot go back. When I came, I found a job working for a German man and I

said I would clean for him ... I worked there for a month, but he didn't pay me any money. He said, I did not do a good job and dismissed me. I asked him for at least some money, but he did not want to give me he threatened he would call the police if I did not go from there. (Interview with a queer refugee, November 2015, Cape Town)

With no other job prospects and ongoing difficulty accessing appropriate status documentation, Anele was forced into sex work which she described in the following excerpt:

I worked some jobs like cleaning, gardening, but it was not enough to survive so I am doing sex work now. It is not a good job but for me it is the only way I can make enough money to survive. In Delft even here they are very homophobic. When I take the taxi one guy said I do not want to sit beside the *moffie* [slur for gay man] ... they said you are a *moffie* we do not want *moffies* in the bus. Then the same man comes to my house at 12 midnight and says "Oh baby, I am sorry, I am sorry", and he demands sex.

In general, South Africa's queer refugees work in restaurants, do odd jobs, and many are pushed into sex work in order to pay rent and survive. Returning to the key insights of scholars who study queer social reproduction (Andrucki 2021; Nguyen 2021), sex work emerges as a form of survival work that allows queer refugees to socially reproduce while also potentially creating situations of harm around sexual violence, the negotiation of safe sex, and the spread of sexually transmitted conditions.

Organised abandonment in Cape Town involves a state apparatus with a backlog that makes received refugee status virtually impossible unless the client's case is expedited because of UNHCR intervention. At the same time, the pandemic and the lack of viable work opportunities made many refugees illegal and available for deportation. Far from the sanctuary of queer Cape Town, the informal settlements that refugees live in were marked by xenophobic or homo/transphobic violence where queer identity intersected with migrant position. The netted practices of abandonment by the heteronormative and anti-migrant state and society push queer refugees to precarity. Survival is piecemeal: some escape South Africa, and some return, illustrating the cyclical and ongoing violence of global displacement that persists on the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Snapshot III: Abandonment in "Welfarist" and "Progressive" Paris

Taken together with queer refugee experiences in Nairobi and Cape Town, the Paris case illustrates abandonment in a state with far more robust infrastructure of welfare. Despite having legal provisions for queer people such as same-sex marriage rights (in 2013), and some protections around housing and employment related discrimination (since 1985), queer refugees in France are not afforded the same privileges as LGBTQI+ citizens in France. As disposable people, queer refugees are abandoned in the wider terrain of French anti-migrant sentiment. While Kenya and South Africa often avoid discussions of sexual orientation and gender

identity, Florent Chossière (2021) highlights that France is preoccupied with the policing of queer refugee stories rejecting and excluding many people on the grounds of authenticity. This fact is echoed by what Giametta (2018) refers to as a filtering system in France where the key assumption of adjudicators is that refugee claimants are lying about their stories. For Giametta (2018:154), the queer refugee emerges as a figure that allows France and other European countries to tout their progressiveness against the backdrop of homophobic violence in the global South. However, queer refugees face organised abandonment not only because they are continually rejected because they are framed as not genuinely queer, but also because they are unable to access long-term shelter or meaningful work upon relocation to Paris. What we continue to see in Paris is ongoing displacement—an attack on the ability for refugees to socially reproduce even in the sense of a stable community or kinship network as the literature around queer social reproduction has pointed out.

My entry into field research in Paris started with a refugee legal aid clinic that reviewed asylum applications. The volunteers at this clinic assisted refugees with their written statements while also preparing them for their interviews with refugee officials. I interviewed one of the volunteers at this clinic who also happened to work for the French government; he said, “Most of the people who work in [the government department] are racist French nationalists ... I felt guilty for being part of this government, so I come here and try to help as much as I can” (Interview with government official at refugee law clinic, May 2017, Paris). In the informal conversations I had with queer refugees who attended this clinic, I found that most struggled to provide an authentic account of their journey to “queer realisation”. That is to say, many queer refugees had to write and speak in a way that showed that they were indeed “gay enough” or “trans enough” to claim asylum—that they were not “faking” their queerness to come to France. Placing the burden of proof on the asylum claimant is not only retraumatising—as many flee intense violence in their countries of origin—but it also highlights the ways in which sexual minority rights are weaponised. It is also an abandonment strategy. The legal burden of proof implies that queer stories of authenticity must fit into preordained scripts of sexuality and gender identity.

In practice, this has meant that queer refugees are questioned about their early relationships, descriptions about “coming out”, and whether their claims to asylum are authentic if they kept their sexuality hidden. This also means that queer people who are somewhat more femme-/butch-presenting and gender non-conforming access asylum with greater ease. Conversely, this also means further ostracisation and disconnect from kinship networks upon relocation in Paris. The following is an excerpt from my interview with a prominent LGBTQ+ rights advocacy organisation in Paris. Indeed, achieving refugee status is one aspect of difficulty; the more pressing issue, upon immediate relocation, concerns shelter and work.

My informant said, “According to [the government department] every refugee has to be housed in a room or centre, this is the law, but it is not being followed because of housing shortages. Majority of refugees are not housed. They first used to go to CADA [refugee housing centres] those are now full ... then they went to

HUDA [homeless emergency shelters] those are full too ... so the majority of refugees must find a family member or acquaintance. This is a trap" (Interview with the director of an LGBTIQ+ rights NGO in Paris, June 2017).

The trap that my research participant refers to reflects on the multiple scales of abandonment that refugees face on the urban scale in Paris. Understandably, it is difficult to learn French, keep a job, or even form a community if you are constantly being bounced from area to area—another example of an attack on refugee social reproduction. Another prominent LGBTIQ+ rights NGO echoes these sentiments concerning homeless, exclusion, and precarity:

Queer refugees have to go back into the closet when they move here. They must hide their sexuality because they are not often out to their relatives back home. They also fear violence from their landlords or friends or relatives here because sexuality is still a taboo in Middle Eastern or African countries. Many of them are ashamed of their sexuality and it even prevents them from gaining refugee status because they have to hide their sexuality. In some ways it makes sense for them to not disclose their sexuality ... look, many of them have not had a stable home for a long time, so when they finally get a place that seems safe and secure they rather just stay in the closet. (Interview with two directors of a queer youth rights and homelessness NGO in Paris, June 2017)

This excerpt reveals that coming out and the perceived freedoms associated with it are intimately linked to class, race, and the politics of nation. While queer refugees in Cape Town and Nairobi fantasised about the so-called West, the return to homophobic situations is underscored by the inability for queer refugees to find and access other queer spaces and communities. The material needs of social reproduction supersede sexual freedom.

The same activists went on to discuss how queer refugees are pushed into sex work when they do not choose the "closet". They said:

Some of our clients are sex workers because they have no other choice. Many of them do not use protection and sometimes they are uneducated about it ... sometimes their client will say, "Okay, if you don't use a condom then I will pay you more", so HIV and STI risk is a big part of our programme ... They get clients through Grindr [gay dating app] or they go to particular areas and many times they do not even want money, they just want to stay for a night, so they exchange sex for shelter ... Sometimes it is positive, for example, one of our refugee clients was referred by a guy he met on Grindr and he said the man came to ask for a place to stay and immediately started taking off his clothes and he stopped him ... he realised the situation was desperate so he referred him [the refugee] to us ...

This above excerpt not only shows the interlinkages between shelter and income but also the dire circumstances that many queer refugees are pushed toward in a city that might appear as a safe haven for queer people. As Wimark (2021) emphasises, queer refugees in Western nations have a perpetual inability to make a permanent home and applications like Grindr, former kinship ties, and piece-meal assistance from NGOs—while helpful in some instances—still reflect a wider tapestry of abandonment, isolation, and failure of homemaking. While this NGO (and others) supports queer refugees through emergency housing, their capacities are limited due to the reduced welfare capacity of a city like Paris

(Bhagat 2020) which is dealing with dual crises of housing and labour insecurity and refugee integration. In the Paris case, the queer refugee represents the safety provided by the so-called progressive “West”. However, the lived realities on relocation reveal a tale of abandonment by the state and the reliance on piecemeal assistance by NGOs which dovetails with insecure labour and shelter—queer refugees are once again extant on the fringes of urban capitalism as forgotten and erased people who cannot find solace even in communities of people from their country of origin. Even when they receive state assistance, queer refugees have to either hide their sexuality and live with people they know from their home countries or escape and find their own housing in one of the most unaffordable cities in the world. Organised abandonment occurs in Paris not only at the moment of claims’ adjudication, but it is also an ongoing process related to shelter and work access.

Conclusion

The key purpose of this article is to link queerness with material precarity in its entanglements with race, class, and global displacement. As such, I have emphasised the lived realities of relocation as it pertains to shelter, work, and survival. This article examined organised violence in three urban refugee hotspots. The three snapshots provided here cover various geographical ground; however, they all point to varying degrees of queer (legal) acceptance and dovetail when it comes to the politics of abandonment. In all three cases, queer refugees face various forms of state-led violence or erasure while they struggle to access some form of permanence—in short, refugees are rendered liminal in what Shakhari (2014) refers to as in-between spaces of safehouses, violent informal settlements, or street and/or overcrowded arrangements in Nairobi, Cape Town, and Paris respectively. In doing this, I have also aimed to shed some theoretical light on the intersections between sexuality, abandonment, and social reproduction in contemporary capitalism. While organised abandonment forecloses many possibilities of social reproduction on a systemic level, queer refugees continue to persist and survive (with great difficulty) in spaces where they are unwanted and superfluous to the needs of the state, capital, and society. Queer refugees survive through piecemeal NGO assistance, precarious labour, overcrowded and insecure housing, and often ephemeral community networks.

Acknowledgements

I thank Kiran Asher for guiding this paper and the three anonymous reviewers who all provided two rounds of incredibly thoughtful feedback and direction. I also thank Andrea Pollio for reading a draft of this.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study

Endnote

¹ Refugee is used as a catch-all term outside the formal state-given status of rights. While imperfect, I use this term as a way to critique state practices of demarcation and the production of ideal and authentic refugee subjects.

References

- Andrucki M (2021) Queering social reproduction: Sex, care, and activism in San Francisco. *Urban Studies* 58(7):1364–1379
- Bauman Z (2013) *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts*. Cambridge: Polity
- Bernards N and Soederberg S (2021) Relative surplus populations and the crises of contemporary capitalism: Reviving, revisiting, recasting. *Geoforum* 126:412–419
- Bhagat A (2018) Forced (queer) migration and everyday violence: The geographies of life, death, and access in Cape Town. *Geoforum* 89:155–163
- Bhagat A (2020) Queer necropolitics of forced migration: Cyclical violence in the African context. *Sexualities* 23(3):361–375
- Bhagat A (2022) Governing refugees in raced markets: Displacement and disposability from Europe's frontier to the streets of Paris. *Review of International Political Economy* 29(3):634–653
- Bhandar B (2018) Organised state abandonment: The meaning of Grenfell. *Critical Legal Thinking* 21 September <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2018/09/21/organised-state-abandonment-the-meaning-of-grenfell/> (last accessed 8 February 2023)
- Bhattacharya T (ed) (2017) *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. London: Pluto Press
- Bond P and Ruiters G (2017) Uneven development and scale politics in Southern Africa: What we learn from Neil Smith. *Antipode* 49(S1):171–189
- Burke J (2019) Kenya to rule on gay rights as African neighbours look on. *The Guardian* 21 February <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/feb/21/kenyan-court-set-to-rule-on-decriminalising-homosexuality> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- Camminga B (2019) *Transgender Refugees and the Imagined South Africa*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Chossière F (2021) Refugeeeness, sexuality, and gender: Spatialized lived experiences of intersectionality by queer asylum seekers and refugees in Paris. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics* 3 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2021.634009>
- Darling J (2017) Forced migration and the city: Irregularity, informality, and the politics of presence. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(2):178–198
- de Greef K (2019) The unfulfilled promise of LGBTQ rights in South Africa. *The Atlantic* 2 July <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/07/southafrica-lgbtq-rights/593050/> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- de Vos P (2008) A judicial revolution? The court-led achievement of same-sex marriage in South Africa. *Utrecht Law Review* 4(2):162–174
- El-Tayeb F (2012) “Gays who cannot properly be gay”: Queer Muslims in the European city. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19(1):79–95
- Giametta C (2018) New asylum protection categories and elusive filtering devices: The case of “queer asylum” in France and the UK. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46(1):142–157
- Gilmore R W (2008) Forgotten places and the seeds of grassroots planning. In C R Hale (ed) *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship* (pp. 31–61). Berkeley: University of California Press
- Gore E (2022) Understanding queer oppression and resistance in the global economy: Towards a theoretical framework. *New Political Economy* 27(2):296–311
- Gorman-Murray A (2009) Intimate mobilities: Emotional embodiment and queer migration. *Social and Cultural Geography* 10(4):441–460
- Hall S (1986) Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10(1):5–27

- Harvey D (2007) *The Limits to Capital*. London: Verso
- Heynen N (2018) Urban political ecology III: The feminist and queer century. *Progress in Human Geography* 42(3):446–452
- Hoad N (2010) Re: Thinking sex from global South Africa. *GLQ* 17(1):119–216
- Human Dignity Trust (2020) Kenya's highest court to hear final appeal against seven-year battle for official registration of LGBT organisation. 10 June <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/news/kenyas-highest-court-to-hear-final-appeal-against-seven-year-battle-for-official-registration-of-lgbt-organisation/> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- Human Rights Litigation and International Advocacy Clinic (2020) "Submission to UN OHCHR Survey, '20 Years Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing: Taking Stock and Way Forward'." University of Minnesota https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/MinesottaLGBTQI_Kenya.docx (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- Idris I (2020) "Integrated Approaches to Refugee Management in Uganda." Helpdesk Report, Institute of Development Studies <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/14991> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- Jeffries F and Ridgley J (2020) Building the sanctuary city from the ground up: Abolitionist solidarity and transformative reform. *Citizenship Studies* 20(4):548–567
- Katz C (2002) Vagabond capitalism and the necessity of social reproduction. *Antipode* 33(4):709–728
- LeBaron G (2015) Unfree labour beyond binaries: Insecurity, social hierarchy, and labour market restructuring. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17(1):1–19
- LeBaron G and Roberts A (2010) Toward a feminist political economy of capitalism and carcerality. *Signs* 36(1):19–44
- Leshem N (2017) Spaces of abandonment: Genealogies, lives, and critical horizons. *Environment and Planning A* 35(4):620–636
- Lewis N (2017) Queer social reproduction: Co-opted, hollowed out, and resilient. *Society+Space* 31 October <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/queer-social-reproduction-co-opted-hollowed-out-and-resilient> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- Lewis R (2021) Queering deportability: The racial and gendered politics of lesbian and anti-deportation activism. *Sexualities* <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634607211047516>
- Luibheid E (2008) Queer/migration: An unruly body of scholarship. *GLQ* 14(2):169–190
- Manalansan M (2005) Race, violence, and neoliberal spatial politics. *Social Text* 23(3/4):141–155
- Mezzadri A (2021) A value theory of inclusion: Informal labour, the homeworker, and the social reproduction of value. *Antipode* 53(4):1186–1205
- Moreau J (2015) Intersectional citizenship, violence, and lesbian resistance in South Africa. *New Political Science* 37(4):494–508
- Mountz A (2011) Where asylum-seekers wait: Feminist counter-topographies of sites between states. *Gender, Place, and Culture* 18(3):381–399
- Mullings B (2021) Caliban, social reproduction, and our future yet to come. *Geoforum* 118:150–158
- Murray D (2016) *Real Queer? Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Refugees in the Canadian Refugee Apparatus*. London: Rowman & Littlefield
- Mwaba K (2009) Attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality and same-sex marriage among a sample of South African students. *Social Behavior and Personality* 37(6):801–804
- Nguyen D (2021) The political economy of heteronormativity. *Review of Radical Political Economics* <https://doi.org/10.1177/04866134211011269>
- Ombagi E (2019) Nairobi is a shot of whisky: Queer (Ob) scenes in the city. *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 31(1):106–119
- Oswin N (2015) World, city, queer. *Antipode* 47(3):557–565
- Peake L (2016) On feminism and feminist allies in knowledge production in urban geography. *Urban Geography* 37(6):830–838
- Povinelli E (2011) *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press
- Rajaram P K (2018) Refugees as surplus population: Race, migration, and capitalist value regimes. *New Political Economy* 23(5):627–639

- Ritchie J (2015) Pinkwashing, homonationalism, and Israel–Palestine: The conceits of queer theory and the politics of the ordinary. *Antipode* 47(3):616–634
- Roberts A and Zulfiqar G (2019) Social reproduction, finance, and the gendered dimensions of pawnbroking. *Capital and Class* 43(4):581–597
- Robinson C (2000) *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Sanyal R (2012) Refugees and the city: An urban discussion. *Geography Compass* 6(1):633–644
- Sears A (2017) Body politics: The social reproduction of sexualities. In T Bhattacharya (ed) *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (pp. 171–192). London: Pluto Press
- Seitz D (2017) Limbo life in Canada's waiting room: Asylum-seeker as queer subject. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35(3):438–456
- Shakhsari S (2014) The queer time of death: Temporality, geopolitics, and refugee rights. *Sexualities* 17(8):998–1015
- Soederberg S (2019) Governing global displacement in austerity urbanism: The case of Berlin's refugee housing crisis. *Development and Change* 50(4):923–947
- Soederberg S (2020) *Urban Displacements: Governing Surplus and Survival in Global Capitalism*. New York: Routledge
- Sopelsa B (2018) Following pride event, Kenya's gay refugees fear for their lives. *NBC News* 20 June <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/following-pride-event-kenya-s-gay-refugees-fear-their-lives-n885136> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- Squire V (2011) From community cohesion to mobile solidarity: The City of Sanctuary network and the Strangers into Citizens campaign. *Political Studies* 59(1):290–307
- Tadiar N X M (2022) *Remaindered Life*. Durham and London: Duke University Press
- Thompson D (2016) Risky business and geographies of refugee capitalism in the Somali migrant economy of Gauteng, South Africa. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42(1):120–135
- Tucker A (2009) *Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity, and Interaction in Cape Town*. London: John Wiley & Sons
- UNHCR (2012) "Guidelines on International Protection No. 9: Claims to Refugee Status based on Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity." United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees <https://www.unhcr.org/509136ca9.pdf> (last accessed 30 January 2023)
- UNHCR (2021) "Work to Revamp the Asylum System Begins in South Africa". Press Release, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 8 March <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-africa/work-revamp-asylum-system-begins-south-africa> (last accessed 8 February 2023)
- Walia H (2021) *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*. Chicago: Haymarket
- Williams J (2008) Gender, race, class, and gay tourism in Cape Town. *Race, Gender, and Class* 15(1/2):58–78
- Wimark T (2021) Homemaking and perpetual liminality among queer refugees. *Social and Cultural Geography* 22(5):647–665
- Ye S (2021) "Paris" and "scar": Queer social reproduction, homonormative division of labour, and HIV/AIDS economy in postsocialist China. *Gender, Place, and Culture* 28(12):1778–1798