THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INFORMATION, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

What About Us?
Preserving LGBTIQ+ History of Forced Displacement

Renee E. Dixson, The Australian National University, Australia

Abstract

This article outlines the research being undertaken to develop the Assembling Queer Displacements Archive (AQDA). This open digital archive is the central focus of a research project that will address the lack of understanding of LGBTIQ+[1] experiences of forced displacement. These experiences are unique but have not received adequate attention. The existing body of work on 'queering archives' has been focused on challenging the archival approaches and practices in order to either queer these practices and/or make them more inclusive. However, this work has tended to ignore LGBTIQ+ stories of forced displacement. One reason for this lack of engagement is the lack of direct knowledge and experience of such stories by the researchers and archivists themselves. My positionality as an LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced person has motivated me to embark on the present research project and to demonstrate inclusive practices to address these gaps in archives.

In this article I explore the role that positionality plays in creating an LGBTIQ+ forced displacement archive. I offer solutions for creating an inclusive practice to collect stories of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people. These solutions have the potential to support a range of digital archival projects that engage with structurally marginalised and oppressed communities.

Keywords: archival approaches; LGBTIQ+ forced displacement; lived experience; oral history; positionality

Publication Type: research article

Introduction

In December 2019 the first ever historic Global Refugee Forum (GRF) (UNHCR, 2019d) took place at the United Nations (UN) in Geneva. This followed the actions outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR, 2019a) that was adopted a year earlier. The Global Compact on Refugees was designed to be an addition to the UN Convention on Refugees, given the unprecedented number of displaced people around the world. The GRF was intended to bring UN member states, various stakeholders, and refugees together for a mobilised global commitment to address displacement. Attendees were encouraged to make pledges of financial or other commitments, such as pro bono legal assistance, provision of training to decision makers, or increased number of resettlement places as a way to offer solutions to the 'global refugee crisis'.

By the time of the 2019 GRF, I had been living in Australia with my partner Tina for seven years as an LGBTIQ+ refugee. When Tina was invited to attend GRF as one of the six refugee co-sponsors, we knew this was the highest platform to which we could take our advocacy on LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. At the United Nations, her role as a refugee co-sponsor was to elevate and

ISSN 2574-3430, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

promote a particular action area of the Global Compact on Refugees—the protection needs of displaced people (UNHCR, 2019c). This meant that as a refugee co-sponsor she would be invited to speak at various high-level panels and events alongside UN Members States and international non-governmental organisations. Given that we were doing this work together in Australia, UNHCR agreed to support my participation too. Our expectations quickly clashed against reality. In regards to openly advocating for the rights of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people and their ongoing protection needs, the only speaking opportunity allocated to us was a presentation at a speakers corner, an optional side event that lasted for the duration of six minutes.

In preparation, we submitted an abstract proposing a discussion of the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum, their protection needs, and what solutions could be implemented. We titled our presentation *Queer Refugee Women Organising*. Shortly after submitting an abstract (that did not need to be approved, only submitted) we received a call and were asked to reconsider the title of the presentation. We were informed that 'several States' were threatening to boycott the entire GRF if there was a mention of words such as 'queer' or 'LGBTIQ+' in writing on the program. If we were not willing to change the title, we would be pulled out of the program. After much deliberation, we dropped the word in question. On the day of our presentation, everyone who came to listen knew in advance what we would talk about (UNHCR, 2019b, p. 9).

By the end of the GRF only ten pledges[2] out of the total 1400 pledges submitted mentioned LGBTIQ+ persons. Most of these only mentioned LGBTIQ+ people in a long list of diverse groups without a pledge dedicated to this group.[3] The final report, the Outcomes of the Global Refugee Forum 2019, does not contain any mention of LGBTIQ+ populations.[4] In terms of official records, LGBTIQ+ experiences at best are a minor issue, and at worst do not exist at all.

I begin this article with an account of this experience to show the implications of ideologically driven absences of memories and records about marginalised groups from official cultural memory records. Where official records are treated as a proof of existence, the story highlights the role that power plays in selecting whose lives are deemed 'liveable' (Butler, 2009) enough to be memorialised. This story also reaffirms why it is important to collect and preserve oral histories of the lived experiences of people who are absent from written records. This absence is not only due to ignorance. As this story shows, the absence is due to active resistance against preserving them. When the most important human rights institution succumbs to conservative pressures and does not include mentions of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people, how does one resist such erasure and preserve these histories? It is in response to this challenge that I am creating world-first digital archive about LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. Before I describe the development of the archive, I want to outline my positionality as my engagement with it is at the core of my practice in creating the archive.

I was born in one of the world's most isolated settlements in the Arctic Circle during a period of polar nights that last for months. My family was originally from Kazakhstan. My father was a military officer and my mother worked in childcare. In our culture there is a saying that in a military family, the whole family is in service. The values of keeping your word, being reliable, and being resourceful were very important in our family. When my father was deployed to a new place, the family followed. This is how we ended up in Ukraine, a new country with a language we did not speak, and a cultural identity we did not share.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

When the USSR separated, I was seven or eight years of age. Like many other Soviet children, I was growing up in a country that assigned me my nationality in a passport, but gave no guidance on who I was ethnically. The remnants of the Soviet homogeny were all too prevalent, as was the fear of questioning anything - especially history. I do not know much about my family. When I asked my father to tell me anything about the history of my family, he said that he did not know much about them either. In the USSR, just asking a question could result in being sent to GULAG camps. The older my parents get, the more details dissolve in time.

The Great Terror inflicted by the USSR, of forced labour, genocide, ethnic cleansing, classicide[5,6] left a mark and shaped what we remembered about our family. With the collapse of the USSR and Ukraine gaining its independence, a different era began, free from immediate colonial and Soviet grasp, yet full of new challenges. The economy collapsed and my parents, in addition to many people around the country, did not receive wages for their work for many months. My school memories are about doing homework under the light of a kerosene lantern. We baked rations of potatoes in the oven and ate them plain. Cold water and electricity in our apartment building were provided on a schedule, only for several hours per day. My aunty, who lived in a different country, took care of us. Sometimes she sent us parcels with money, clothes, and sweets to share with the whole family. We would share a Snickers chocolate bar, dividing it with a ruler equally between all family members.

At school I was not the best student in class because of my difficulties with reading and writing. I was bullied for not fitting heteronormative expectations of how a 'real' girl should look and behave. I tried to blend in and be ordinary to minimise this, with little success. What saved my life was my introduction to the internet by a classmate. I could search for information about sexuality, and know that I was not alone. I found my community and its support online. This was when I understood that the longer I was silent and tried to blend in, the more chances there were that my death and the deaths of many LGBTIQ+ people would go unnoticed.

By the time of my final exam at university, I had established the first organisation for LGBTIQ+ people in my region and secured several international grants. This organisation successfully provided many services. We engaged in national and international advocacy. Most importantly, it was a safe space where community members could come, have a cup of tea, access the internet, feel safe, and know that they belonged.

As a result of this publicly visible work and the persecution that followed, I was forced to leave Ukraine. I choose not to go into detail of what 'exactly happened' to me, because the experience of persecution was just a final stroke in my displacement. Yet it seems that to become a refugee is to fix your identity in time and space. To obtain the legal status of a refugee, one is put "in a situation where protection depends upon telling one's story" (Zagor, 2011, p. 10). To preserve one's status of deserving protection, the demand for one's story will never cease. Remembering your childhood is no longer of interest; talking about your country fondly is no longer appropriate; only depictions of violence, disavowal of your homelands, and gratitude towards a new country is welcomed.

Coming back to my earlier point about how one is able to preserve their history in the face of resistance, an additional question needs to be asked: how can one preserve their history outside "conventions of model narratives" (Vogl, 2013, p. 64) without being de-legitimised? I do so through the development of the digital archive about LGBTIQ+ forced displacement.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

While we can see increasing representation of LGBTIQ+ stories of forced displacement through articles and interviews (Henley, 2020; J. Jones, 2018; Taylor, 2018; Truu, 2019), art (Keung, 2019; Lynes, 2018; Pujol-Mazzini, 2016; Rose, 2019; *When Home Won't Let You Stay: Art and Migration*, 2020), and documentary films (D'Entremont, 2012; France, 2020; Ring, 2020), these experiences are still presented and told by people without lived experience, those who hold privilege and have the capacity, money, social, and economic status to re-tell the stories of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people.

In this article, while discussing the development of the Assembling Queer Displacement Archive (AQDA), I have two aims. First, I aim to articulate the importance of preserving the histories of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. Second, I aim to explore the importance of the role positionality plays in creating an LGBTIQ+ forced displacement archive. Both these aims are intertwined, and will offer unique insights into archival methods and practices of collecting oral histories of such structurally marginalised populations. Other archivists might find them useful in embedding inclusivity and trauma-informed approaches in their work.

The Assembling Queer Displacement Archive (AQDA)

The Assembling Queer Displacement Archive (AQDA) is being established to counter the hegemonies that permeate displacement narratives,[7] to give visibility to the experiences of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement, and to offer opportunities for the replication of these methodologies for other similar work with marginalised communities. Its development is underpinned by my professional expertise, my own lived experience of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement, and draws on the collective knowledge of all of those who have experienced, or are still experiencing, these journeys. Starting this work from the premise of lived experience has transformed my approach to archival practice, and resulted in valuable insights that I believe are important to the broader practice of archiving. I create the AQDA as an experimentally born, digital archive of oral histories about LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. This will be the first archive to capture and preserve the phenomenon of LGBTIQ+ displacement. Beyond being simply another archive about a particular phenomena, this archive is a political act of survival (Horak, 2018).

To populate the archive, I am collecting the oral histories of LGBTIQ+ persons who are either refugees, asylum seekers, or migrants from non-Western countries who are over 18 years old. I group these legal categories under the term forced displacement to connote an element of coercion that drives people to relocate to safer countries[8]. For asylum seekers (those still in the process of claiming protection) and refugees (those recognised in the need of protection and granted a visa to stay) the element of coercion and violence is central to their displacement. This is enshrined in the definition as provided in the UN Convention on Refugees (UN General Assembly, 1951). Migrants are more commonly seen as people who are making a choice to relocate to another country[9]. However despite this choice, in the context of LGBTIQ+ rights, globally[10] such definitional boundaries often get blurred. A person may be subjected to violations of their rights and violence because they are LGBTIQ+. The intensity of pervasive homophobia and transphobia will limit the possibility for them to live their lives in safety, dignity, and freedom in their country of origin, so they decide to leave. Despite these experiences being refugee-like, they may have other visa pathways available for them to pursue. Others may not experience a sufficient amount of persecution (UN General Assembly, 1951) to qualify for refugee status, yet still cannot live their lives openly and freely, thus again they use a different visa pathway. In these two examples, it is clear that while LGBTIQ+ migrants seem to have a choice to reallocate, an element of coercion driving the relocation is present, which makes their

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

case refugee-like. Thus, I adopt a broader understanding of the term forced displacement that transcends the constraints of legal definitions. Using the term 'forcibly displaced person' is important for two reasons. First, the use of the word person humanises those to whom it applies. Second, it allows us to move beyond the limitations of the label 'refugee'. 'Forcibly displaced person' encompasses more groups than those recognised as refugees, such as those who are undocumented, still seeking asylum, or those who have had access to other migration pathways with motivation for leaving due to the impossibility of staying in their countries of origins or residency. The term 'forcibly displaced people' is also used by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)[11].

Narrators can contribute their stories to the archive in several ways through participating in an interview recording. I am recording all interviews as either an audio only or a video record. For the safety and privacy of narrators, they may use a pseudonym and apply some additional protections such as voice and video distortion to protect their identities.

The AQDA offers sensitive and respectful representations of oral histories through the use of a "generous interface" (Whitelaw, 2015, para. 3). Drawing on the work of Whitelaw, the concept of generous interface refers to a design that allows users to see and explore all available interviews in the archive, in a way beyond a standard search box. The AQDA is currently a PhD project, and once launched it will be available to access from the internet at no cost.

In this work I am guided by the Feminist Standpoint Appraisal methodology that "explicitly and unapologetically gives epistemological weight (thereby assigning value) to records created and preserved by, and potentially activated in service to, those individuals and communities oppressed by capitalism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy" (Caswell, 2019, pp. 6–7). According to Caswell (2019), this methodology refuses the demand for archivists who are from marginalised communities to "overcome their positionalities" to meet the standards and procedures of archiving (p. 2). Instead, positionality is at the heart of this archive. I am also guided by Jamie Ann Lee's *Queer/ed Archival Methodology* (2015), which offers reflexivity, flexibility, and attentiveness as ways to challenge conventional archival practices.

Literature Review: Defining the Need

Despite being a recognised phenomenon, there is no reliable global data on LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. UNHCR does not disaggregate data on the basis of gender identity or sexuality[12]. Most countries accepting refugees do not collect data on how many LGBTIQ+ people have been granted asylum. This creates invisibility in the data record and contributes to a construction of single narratives about who can be a refugee (it assigns 'compulsory heterosexuality'[13]) and what the drivers of displacement are (it assumes the most common ones such as war conflict). The experiences of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people are being delegitimised in the context of prevailing heteronormativity and cisgenderism in the refugee narratives. Eithne Luibheid has observed that "most scholarship, policymaking, service provision, activism and cultural work remain organised around the premise that migrants are heterosexuals (or on their way to becoming so) and queers are citizens (even those second-class ones)" (Luibhéid, 2008, p. 169). Similarly, Hajdukowski-Ahmed argues that all refugee women are presumed to be heterosexual (Hajdukowski-Ahmed et al., 2008).

Such invisibility in data and refugee narratives flows on to the spaces of cultural memory. Archives and libraries are traditionally viewed as places of authority and truth. However, with

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

little memory preserved on LGBTIQ+ forced displacement, questions remain about whose stories are written in history and remembered. It has been widely argued that the official cultural memory collected and preserved in libraries and archives is a product of judgement and discrimination by those who are in power positions (Caswell, 2019; Mbembe, 2002; Stone & Cantrell, 2015; Zinn, 1977). For example, Mbembe (2002) argues there are no archives that are secular because social processes of normativity reproduce marginalisation, and thus follows the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ materials in archives and libraries. Similarly, Carter writes: "Archivists are constantly confronted with choices about what to include and what to exclude, allowing for some voices to be heard while others are silenced."(Carter, 2006, p. 219)

There is growing body of literature about queering archives and archival practices, including the most recent *Documenting Rebellions: A Study of Four Lesbian and Gay Archives in Queer Times* by Rebecka Taves Sheffield (2020). Yet in this literature, engagement with LGBTIQ+ forced displacement is missing. Caswell (2019) has argued that archival practices are "written almost exclusively by white men working for government archives" (p. 5). In this context, it seems unlikely that the experiences of relatively invisible minorities, like LGBTIQ+ people experiencing forced migration, will be made more visible in the archival record. This problem is not restricted only to large-scale, state-run types of archives. Stone and Cantrell (2015) have argued that even in dedicated LGBTIQ+ archives, the records are dominated by the experiences of the "white, middle-class or upper-class gay man, and visible queer life" (p. 8). In addition, the majority of LGBTIQ+ archives are located in Western countries and therefore privilege the normative experiences of those countries. The politics of respectability[14] implicated by homonormativity (Lee, 2015) have rendered invisible the stories of people of colour, transgender, bisexual, intersex and two spirit people, migrants, refugees, and people from different religious backgrounds in archival records.

Within refugee spaces, a lack of attention to LGBTIQ+ experiences of displacement is also prevalent. For example, the Refugee Project[15], a large-scale data visualisation project, does not provide disaggregation of data by sexual orientation given that they use UNHCR data as a source. The Refugee Rights in Records Initiative, in its framework, also misses the opportunity to acknowledge the existence of LGBTIQ+ refugees. They define their purpose in terms of: "The right to have one's self-identity acknowledged in records about oneself, *including, but not limited* [emphasis added] to name, gender, and ethnicity" (UCLA, 2019). Such omissions are missed opportunities, signalling that no engagement with LGBTIQ+ people formed part of their process. Thus, through the development of the AQDA I aim to make both a contribution to academic scholarship and to the existence of archival records that are told from the point of view of these lived experiences. The AQDA moves away from "consultation with" (as indicated in the Refugee Rights in Records Initiative) to co-design. This approach shifts control to narrators, from the initial expression of interest to undertaking the interview and through to the final product.

Politics of Location and Points of Difference

> "As a radical standpoint, perspective, position, "the politics of location" necessarily calls those of us who participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin to process of revision". (hooks, 1989a, p. 15)

Archivists have long been encouraged to engage with their positionality and ensure the representations of marginalised groups. Jaggar argued that "[w]e can only start from where we

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

are," claiming that everything from our emotions to systems of knowledge has been created and shaped by the "cruelly racist, capitalist, and male-dominated society" (Jaggar, 1989, p. 170). Sharon Crowley wrote that "the illusion of ideological neutrality is a luxury available only to those who espouse a dominant ideology" (1994, p. 15). More recent work includes Ritter (2012) who has argued for adopting principles of archival ethnography, Brilmyer (2018) who offered a "political/relational model of disability" (p. 96) framework to reimagine the archives and their materials, and Dunbar (2006) who writes on the need to apply critical race theory to archival discourses. Attention to positionality and diverse representations go hand in hand as without a critical interrogation of one's privilege and biases, one may not see the exclusions and silence (even if unintentional) to which one may contribute.

Reflecting on my positionality is not just about having reasons to engage in particular work; it is about not having any choice not to. As Hanisch writes, "the personal is political" (Hanisch, 1969, p. 76). Class, gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, culture, childhood experiences, and more shape us and our positionalities. bell hooks (1989) called knowledge producers "to identify the spaces where we begin the process of revision" (p. 15). Engaging with the questions of positionality means initiating a reflexive look at how we as archivists and researchers are engaging with notions of power and vulnerability in our practice when working with marginalised communities. For myself at the AQDA, the attention to positionality is a tool of resistance in the archival practice.

In writing this article, I have chosen to discuss my personal story because, as bell hooks argued, positionality "informs the way we speak about issues, the language we choose" (1989, p. 15). My experience of becoming a forcibly displaced person did not occur in a vacuum. My childhood experiences and background led me to my activism, and my activism in turn led to my displacement. Growing in a country that experienced a different form of colonisation, with no ethnic community or history to hold on to, made the displacement experience more acute. My positionality also shapes how I relate to others who have been through similar experiences. It helps me attain a different standpoint and develop hermeneutical resources[16] to understand the experiences of other LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people differently and more comprehensively. I want to share these learnings here.

The work I have already done on developing the archive has highlighted several key issues that can inform and enrich archival practices. I will discuss these below beginning with challenging the idea of a universal LGBTIQ+ terminology, what a conventional LGBTIQ+ refugee storytelling looks like and why one needs to focus an archive on a specific cohort like LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people. This discussion is then followed by points challenging the sameness of all stories of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people. I then discuss important learnings about what impact a researcher's positionality has on the project and narrators. Lastly, I conclude by examining questions of power, visibility, and vulnerability, all three of which are central to developing an archive that deals with marginalisation. Discussing the findings, approaches to archiving, and lessons learned, I aim to contribute to the ongoing debate on the use of positionality in archival studies and practice. I hope that the approaches I have taken can be replicated in work with other marginalised groups.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

Challenging the Universality of Western Categorisation of Bodies, Identities and Sexualities

It is essential that I begin by addressing the fact that the term LGBTIQ+ itself is a Western term. Gloria Anzaldua (2009) has argued that words like 'homosexual' and 'lesbian' which originated from Western cultures often come with pathologising history. Yet people from non-western backgrounds have had no choice but to operate and live through these concepts. Anzaldua wrote that despite being a part of a category 'lesbian', she was still not equal to her Western counterparts as neither her colour nor her class were part of that category in the Western understanding (2009). Anzaldua (2009) wrote that "*naming* [emphasis added] is how I make my presence known, how I assert who and what I am and want to be known as. Naming myself is a survival tactic" (p. 164). Rawson (2010) in his work has also reflected that some terms have the capacity to inflict 'socio-linguistic violence' on those who become trapped in them (p. 55). Consider my analysis above about the conventions of storytelling imposed on LGBTIQ+ refugees and the opening quote in the beginning of this article.

For narrators who are contributing to this archive the question of identity is prominent. On the one hand, as discussed above, those who are seeking safety become trapped by the 'refugee' label. On the other hand, they also need to identify with the 'LGBTIQ' label, for both legal reasons (to prove to immigration that they are in need of protection) and social reasons (to find communities of belonging). In recognition of these complex positions, in the AQDA I am providing narrators with a choice to use labels, identities, and names according to the Western terminology and to use their own cultural identities if such exist[17]. Examples of other terms include Muxe in Mexico, Hijra in India, and, Fafafine in Fiji, among many others. Through centring self-identification when recording these stories, which reflect wide diversity within communities, we are making ourselves known and remembered.

Stories we are Expected to Tell

There are three persons in the whole world who know most of the details of my story and the events that have left with me with no choice but to seek asylum. They are my immigration lawyer representing my case, the immigration officer assessing the protection claims, and my counsellor helping me recover. Telling my story to these three people seems appropriate as my survival equally depended on all three and their ability to treat my story properly[18]. One of the foundations of trauma theory, originating from Holocaust studies, is the importance of an empathetic listener, who can validate the experience (Felman & Laub, 1992). In the mainstream, refugee stories are treated with entitlement and voyeurism. A refugee must keep providing a justification of their legitimacy through "good stories" (Vogl, 2013) long after their case has been decided by immigration officials. In such stories, a display of gratitude is essential to being recognised as a humanitarian subject in need of protection (Moulin, 2012). The voyeurism comes from a desire to know increasingly more details (Radstone, 2007). Survival testimonies are treated as confessional speech, where this speech is constituted by an imperative to speak, where a survivor should "be given an empowering permission to speak" (Alcoff, 2018, p. 189) and where there is an ever-present power imbalance between a survivor who is in a submissive position and an expert who is there to validate the speech. A refugee story also locks one's identity in time, only allowing a slight movement from "genuine refugees with a right to protection […]" to "successful citizens and devoted workers" (Vogl, 2018, p. 82).

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

Dixson writes:

> There are two expectations of you when you are from a refugee background. The first is that you perform your refugee identity for people in a particular way – in other words, as a victim. The second is that you are keen to tell your story over and over again. The more tragic details you disclose, the better you perform your refugee identity, in the public's view. (2017, p. 81)

In the article, she writes that one's legitimacy as a refugee and one's deservingness of protection are judged based on how well they can perform their 'expected' refugee identity. This adherence to this conventional storytelling comes at the cost of re-traumatisation through remembering and retelling, voyeuristic responses demanding more details to be disclosed, and an absence of justice as solidarity actions rarely follow such storytelling (Dixson, 2017). Defying the pressure to adhere to this conventional storytelling or attempting to challenge those norms, I would argue, results in silencing and erasure. It will move one out of the realm of being a humanitarian subject to being a political one, thus no longer in need of protection (Moulin, 2012).

I decided to engage with storytelling about displacement experiences because I suddenly found myself suffocating in the middle of the single story about forcibly displaced people. This single story was both produced by other refugees, wanting to be intelligible and advocates, assuming they were eliciting empathy. In this story all refugees were either very poor, vulnerable, and damaged or they were high achievers. Regardless of the story line, all refugees in these stories were heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied and mostly male or in a (heterosexual) family unit. There are many examples of such storytelling that never even mention the existence of LGBTIQ+ refuges. For example, the most recent, Temporary[19], an eight-part podcast series showcases stories from those seeking asylum in Australia who are on the temporary protection visas. None of the stories mention LGBTIQ+ issues.

When stories of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement are told, they are often exaggerated. These narratives are still expected to be shaped and curated to fit certain conventional storytelling frames. LGBTIQ+ refugees are either represented as the most vulnerable (where vulnerability is equated with victimhood and passivity), or as very progressive because they were queer in such oppressive (meaning 'backwards' and 'barbaric') countries of origin (Puar, 2017). Thus, in the narratives that are produced about LGBTIQ+ refugees, they are expected to be grateful to live in an egalitarian country. In this instance their queerness is associated with being a desired feature of a refugee because it signals modernity. However, it instead reinforces racist narratives about refugees that see them as a threat – if you are queer, you are like us; if you are just a brown body, you may be a terrorist (Puar, 2007). Yet still in the mainstream of refugee activism, we LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people are treated as insignificant or controversial and as a very small group to care about. LGBTIQ+ spaces provide no respite either. In those spaces, we face similar erasure, compounded by the added stigma of being an LGBTIQ+ person who fled instead of staying in your country of origin to fight for your rights to the death. This invisibility is a double-edge sword: LGBTIQ+ people are either not represented at all (as if they do not exist), or represented as the *Other*, unlikely to come across (again by making them so exceptional, the cohort is made invisible). For example, Fobear (2015) argued that in Canada, because LGBT refugees' stories are constrained by "Western and colonial scripts in the refugee hearing process, they can also be used to dismiss ongoing violence against queer individuals" (p. 109).

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

Following the conventional storytelling, stories of LGBTIQ+ refugees are required to “go back to the beginning” (Vogl, 2013, p. 63) and to “announce the truth of one’s sexuality (or gender) by coming out” (Hall, 2017, p. 158). The storytelling is expected to follow a coherent narrative, yet be confined to the events that led to one being displaced. There is little understanding that for LGBTIQ+ persons, their ‘displacement’ may have begun long before a border was crossed. Following the conventions of survival discourse, (Alcoff, 2018) it is expected to produce just the right amount of details to prove that one is indeed a refugee and display the right amount of emotions (especially for women (Gilmore, 2017)) to elicit public sympathy and to be believable. Such storytelling is not only re-traumatising but locks people in the refugee identity not allowing them to produce different narratives about their lives. Even two out of four first reviewers of a draft of this article encouraged me to share more details about why exactly I have become displaced. Just stating this as a fact was not sufficient. Traumatic and often violent experiences of displacement are marked by the loss of control. Losing control over the narrative of your life, whether when you are asked to adhere to conventional storytelling scripts or when the stories are told about you, without you, is a re-enactment of that trauma.

The AQDA takes a radically different approach to collecting the stories of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement, taking a great care to avoid re-traumatisation (see a section below for a further discussion on this) and ensuring that stories are not forced to follow the conventional storytelling expectations. Here I am guided by Woodiwiss’s (2014) approach that raises the importance of “challeng[ing] the dominance of any singular story and in doing so creat[ing] a space and a framework in which those who are silenced by dominant narratives are able to tell different stories and draw on different narrative frameworks to make sense of their lives” (p. 3). Preparing for an interview, I do have some guiding questions, but I let the conversation flow without prescribing what a story should look like. I come to an interview with an understanding that my narrators may “have only talked to a handful of people, or none at all, about their sexual orientation” (Berg & Millbank, 2009, p. 198) and thus my role is not to elicit some truth about their grounds for protection, but to witness and preserve their stories in their diversity and complexity. There is a mistaken belief that one needs to tell the story in order to “resolve the symptoms” (Fisher, 2017, p. 46). For example, the Refugee Rights in Records Initiative states that one of its objectives is to “understand […] the role played by archives and storytelling in memory transmission and *recovery from trauma* [emphasis added]” (UCLA, 2019). In the context of refugee storytelling, a request to ‘tell me your story’ or ‘tell me what happened to you’ is too common. Fisher writes that this approach, even in the therapeutic settings let alone in a public space is traumatising:

> “It is the details of memory and chronological scene-by-scene retelling that activates associated implicit memories, dysregulates the nervous system and can have a retraumatising effect on the client.” (Fisher, 2017, p. 47)

Instead, I am asking the question ‘what led you to make a decision to leave?’ Answers that follow do not have to give any details. Some of my narrators did recall what happened to them; others completely refused and discussed an incident that may seem so minor, yet it was the final blow. I ask questions about who they regard as their community. We talk about the future without being too focused on the past. We discuss how their lives look now. Narrators share their critique about the country they are in without a fear they may seem too ‘ungrateful’. I too come with an understanding that not every narrator wants to be identified as a refugee for the rest of their lives. I explain what it means to have your voice, appearance, and name recorded in an open

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

digital archive. I surrender complete control to the narrator to decide how they appear and what is told. Such an approach allows for the collection of stories that are otherwise untold.

The Need for the Visibility of LGBTIQ+ Forced Displacement

The need to collect and preserve these experiences strongly arises from the imposed conventional storytelling scripts. It is, of course, also coupled with the fact that globally the rights of LGBTIQ+ people remain under attack. In 2020, according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World) there are 67 UN Member States with provisions criminalising consensual same-sex conduct. Among them, “the death penalty is the legally prescribed punishment for consensual same-sex sexual acts in six UN Member States, namely: Brunei, Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria (12 Northern states only), Saudi Arabia and Yemen” (Mendos et al., 2020). There are an additional five UN states where the death penalty is a possible punishment. Beyond criminalisation, there is also ongoing stigma, discrimination, and violence inflicted globally on LGBTIQ+ people. Many are murdered before they can make it to safety. Many seek safety, yet in finding it they remain invisible.

Attention to the need for preservation of LGBTIQ+ histories has been growing. Ann Cvetkovich writes that “in the face of institutional neglect, along with erased and invisible histories gay and lesbian archives have been formed through grassroots efforts” (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 8). Yet, it has been common that general LGBTIQ+ archives present narratives that exclusively focus on pride and histories of the liberation movement (Gutterman, 2019). This focus solely on political progress “produce[s] normative narratives about queer pasts” (Lee, 2015, p. 42). Normative queer pasts tend to be inseparable from whiteness. In *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* Jasbir Puar writes that queer sexualities are framed through “the notion of ‘ascendancy of whiteness’ – [which] repeatedly coheres whiteness as a queer norm and straightness as a racial norm” (2007, p. xxiv). This results in the erasure of the diversity of LGBTIQ+ experiences and requires a response. The AQDA has been designed as a response, born out of necessity to resist the erasure and silencing of LGBTIQ+ displaced people. Similar to other LGBTIQ+ archives that have emerged as places of resistance and political strategy (Rawson, 2010), the AQDA is continuing this path and resists the erasure of LGBTIQ+ lives and experiences in non-Western cultures.

In addition to the resistance to normativity of LGBTIQ+ lives, the AQDA challenges the silencing of these experiences within other realms such as migration. Judith Butler (2004) and later Sara Ahmed (2004) have both argued that queer lives in general are not seen as a form of life because they violate the scripts of compulsory heterosexuality. Puar has extended this argument and posits that: “If the ‘turn to life’ for queer subjects is now possible, how queerness folds into racialisation is a crucial factor in whether and how that turn to life is experienced, if it is experienced at all” (2007, pp. XII–XIII). Someone who is non-living cannot be credible either. The possibility to record and represent these stories in the form of the archive is a political act of resistance and attempt to legitimise LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people’s lives that survived “in the face of multiple forms of oppression” (Horak, 2018, p. 104).

The choice to preserve these stories in a digital open access archive is intentional. McCracken and Hogan, in the context of Indigenous archives, write that government or public archives “can be physically stressful, hostile and unwelcoming to Indigenous researchers” (McCracken & Hogan, 2021, p. 97). They often replicate surveillance and colonial practices.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

This bears resemblance to the experiences for LGBTIQ+ persons. For LGBTIQ+ persons, access to an archive may also be impeded by the requirement to show their ID (especially when the name or gender on the ID do not match who a person is) or a requirement to be affiliated with an institution. Rawson (2010) reflects on his personal experiences engaging with the physical environment of archives, and how it can be profoundly influential. Drawing on the report *Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People* (Mottet & Tanis, 2008) he suggests that environmental clues like “the physical environment, bathrooms, the verbal environment, the questions you ask people, and communications materials” (Rawson, 2010, p. 181) indicate to the users of archives, in this case trans people, whether they are welcome in the space or not.

As I outlined at the start of this article, the majority of LGBTIQ+ community archives are located in Western countries. This means that access to them is contingent on having a visa and/or financial resources to travel. There are no guarantees that those archives have an extensive collection about LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. For example, by searching ‘refugee' through the websites of four LGBTIQ+ archives that formed case studies in *Documenting Rebellions: A Study of Four Lesbian and Gay Archives in Queer Times* by Rebecka Taves Sheffield (2020), only two archives, the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (Los Angeles, California) and the ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives (Toronto, Ontario) (Sheffield, 2020) showed one result each. Upon a closer look through their digital collection, a few more titles came up. Overall, when browsing a collection one is presented with a long list assuming that one knows what one is searching for and is familiar with names or key events. It is also impossible to know if there are more records in these archives without physically visiting them or making a research request (and knowing how to make one even if you are not a part of an institution).

The AQDA aims to remove the access barriers and elitism underpinning most existing archives. There are no fees and no need to show ID or prove affiliation. Being a digital open access archive, all the physical access barriers are mitigated. Using the concept of generous interface as described in the beginning of this article, the user experience is improved and made accessible. The AQDA removes a requirement to be anything other than curious, yet preserves all the necessary features for researchers. These include the ability to cite records, the ability to view or listen to part of the record based on a key word, the ability to engage with contextual information, and so on. The AQDA foregrounds visibility.

Recognising Similarities Not Assuming Sameness

It is often assumed that when a researcher originates from the same cultural background, it makes it easy for them to get access to a group as they are perceived as sharing the same values, language, knowledge or struggles (Merriam et al., 2010). Expanding on this argument, Merriam et al. (2010) engaged with the typologies of this insider/outsider position and analysed its advantages and disadvantages for research. They argued that researchers’ insider/outsider views “must be accepted as legitimate attempts to understand the nature of culture” (Merriam et al., 2010, p. 415). However, Louise Ryan (2015) has instead argued that these notions of an outsider/insider are unhelpful and should be eliminated in the context of migration research. The assumptions that a shared ethnic identity gives one a better understanding of the group simply does not work in the context of migration research.

In my work I echo Ryan’s (2015) argument that identities are negotiated and re-constructed through displacement experience. My positionality as a researcher is not fixed but fluid, evolving and engaged in a constant process of assembling. In my case, both the narrators’ identities and

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

mine are shifting. When narrators share their oral histories and I bear witness to them and recognise their experiences, together we engage in the process of assembling. We both individually reflect on who we are, and collectively come closer to understanding our stories in relation to each other. New stories are recalled, and we share them. We open up to each other more.

This process of assembling does not foreground one specific identity, instead it captures the complexity of all its layers. In migration research, it is common that ethnic identity is central in epistemology. However, such an approach is rather limiting. For example, Nazroo and Karlsen (2003a) note that "[e]thnicity is just one part of who we are and should not be viewed as operating independently of other elements" (p. 928). They argued that while the attention to ethnicity is important, the way it affects people's lives is "variable and context dependent" (Nazroo and Karlsen, 2003b, p. 928). Similarly, it is common in migration research that "community" is also defined through an ethnic belonging. Yet, Ganga and Scott (2006) argue that what is perceived as a cohesive migrant community needs to also be disaggregated by class, gender and so on. At the same time, Anzaldua (2009) has pointed out that while we can unite under the LGBTIQ+ umbrella, we are not a homogeneous group.

My lived experience as a researcher who has experienced forced displacement makes me more conscious of the need to not assume that narrators have a "fixed collectivity" (Ryan, 2015, para. 1) based on their ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics as well as their displacement history. There are similarities in how we experience displacement, but certainly not sameness.

During my unrecorded conversations, the narrator Vald said that disclosure of their identity depended on the context and statement that they wanted to make. It also depended on their available emotional resources to deal with responses that would follow a disclosure. What Vald alluded to is a common experience of "epistemic exploitation" (Berenstain, 2016) that marginalised groups are subjected to. For Berenstain, epistemic exploitation arises in a situation where a marginalised group is compelled by a dominant group to educate them on the nature of the oppression, yet such accounts are often met with disbelief or dismissal (Berenstain, 2016). In the context of recording an interview for the AQDA, I strive to provide a safe, trauma-informed space, and give control to the narrator in terms of their identifications. I also make sure that my positionality is known to them.

It would be erroneous to assume that even when a narrator knows that I too come with an experience of forced displacement, our stories are the same and thus we immediately connect. A narrator giving an interview for the archive will construct my location and this will set a frame for the start of our engagement. They will construct my location by evaluating my gender, age, skin colour, class, education, the type of my protection visa[20], the country that I escaped from, my sexual orientation and gender identity, the way I use language, in what clothes I will be dressed, and so on. This constructed positionality as a researcher will determine if an interview will happen at all, what dynamics will take place during the interview, and how our "multiple standpoints" (Ryan, 2015, para. 14) will be negotiated during this process. Working within the community of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people is also about the understanding that we all come from different parts of the world with different backgrounds. Thus, the way a narrator constructs my positionality has the potential to create potential tensions, misunderstandings, assumptions, points of connections and belonging, or points of diversion.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

To preserve and record this in detail, after each interview I write notes about contextual information associated with an interview that provide a viewer or researcher with more information to analyse. These notes will include information about how I met with the narrator, how an interview went, what happened after, and any follow up questions that I did or did not ask during the interview. I also write my own personal reflections of myself and the process. Such files will have unified a structure for all interviews and are named according to accession number.

Embedding Trauma-informed Approaches

The development of this archive is embedded in a trauma-informed practice. Telling a story of one's life and voicing traumatic memories, perhaps for the first time, may bring a lot of emotions to the surface. This experience of telling a story affects both the researcher and the narrator. Being trauma-informed means being aware of trauma, being sensitive in operationalising this awareness, and being responsive to survivors[21]. On a practical level, these approaches are manifested in several ways.

Before an interview begins, together with a narrator we develop a care plan. This involves a discussion where I ask them how they would like me to act if they get emotional or upset during an interview. I then share with them what my reactions may be and how I would like them to act. Talking about how we express our emotions and what support we need helps narrators to feel in control, be validated, and feel supported. If something triggers them there is no need for explanation, as this is discussed from the beginning to help build trust. For each interview, together with my recording equipment, I always bring tissues, chocolates, and water. These simple things can provide a sense of care and grounding.

I have a detailed plan explaining how I would ensure other support for narrators. This includes providing a safe space for an interview and offering an opportunity to review their interview to make any necessary changes. I engage with the narrators in filling and checking the information that will go with their interview such as their gender identity, sexual orientation, pronouns, and other details. Narrators themselves choose how they want to be recorded in the interview, and what they will or will not talk about. I also created a tailored a list of different support services that I provide narrators with. This includes LGBTIQ+ services, non-governmental legal support, health and mental health support, domestic, family, and sexual violence support services, services for transgender and gender diverse people, support services for intersex people, other peer-support and entertainment, housing support, and employment support. This list of organisations is not exhaustive. It is limited by my knowledge and ability to find information about a specific country and region, and my knowledge of three languages. For example, for participants in Germany I had a language barrier (I could only search information in English) and a lack of insider knowledge of existing support services and their track record in supporting LGBTIQ+ refugees.

Another important issue to address is vicarious trauma and the impact on a researcher or an archivist in listening to these stories. Recent literature in archival studies demonstrate growing attention to the impact on staff who work with trauma related materials. For example, the UK and Ireland Archives and Records Association[22] have issued Emotional Support Guides and the Australian Society of Archivists has launched an online learning course on a trauma-informed approach to managing archives designed by Nicola Laurent & Kirsten Wright (2020)[23].

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

The attention to the emotional wellbeing of oral historians is evolving.[24] Examples of why this attention is needed include: "The fact that the interview we conducted with this particular person had been bothering us for almost a year" (Sheftel & Zembrzycki, 2010, p. 207)."I was not prepared for the number of stories about sexual abuse and trauma" (Johnson, 2018, p. 7). "I was quite unprepared to deal with the overwhelming feelings of sadness, regret, guilt, and shame that emerged regularly in their testimonies and that lingered with me long after our conversations had ended" (Gutterman, 2019, pp. 49–50).

While recognising these issues indirectly, some major works on the oral history method do not fully investigate them. For instance, Jacob and Furgerson (2012) in *Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research* or Hajek (2014) in *Oral history Methodology* did not raise questions about psychological self-care for a researcher. In *Distressing Histories and Unhappy Interviewing* Jones (1998) wrote: "For interviewers to become exempt from that pain would perhaps be simply to become removed from the conversation and the communication" (p. 56). However, this is not a solution. Oral history methodology has a gap in addressing the need for self-care for a researcher. It is often overlooked. Through my research, I am trying to address this gap and include mechanisms that I will develop for this research.

While researchers like Hajek (2014) have recognised that 'your gender, age, nationality, race, physical appearance and political/religious conviction may have an impact on the progress and outcome of the interview" (p. 7), there is a lack of recognition that a researcher's emotional condition will also affect the interview flow. Taking care of the researcher's mental health is a responsibility to oneself as a researcher and towards the narrator. Researchers should come to every interview not only with charged batteries for their recording device, but they must also come emotionally composed. A researcher should know and be able to identify the signs of stress on themselves as well as upon the narrator, and to be able to deal with them appropriately.

Before starting to record oral histories for the AQDA, I developed strategies for coping with the stress for myself.[25] I undertook a Mental Health First Aid[26] program that provided me with a better understanding of mental health issues and skills to provide initial support to persons experiencing a mental health crisis. It is important that researchers, archivists, or librarians have trauma-informed practices at their workplace and have access to regular debriefing with a mental health professional.

Reflections on Power, Visibility and Vulnerability

The aim for the AQDA is to be a radically open archive that will preserve and collect stories in queer ways that can contradict each other, resist and "recover, reconcile, reunite and renew" (hooks, 1989, p. 16) history about LGBTIQ+ displacements. However, ensuring that stories are collected in this way is challenging due to existing expectations and norms about how stories are told. According to Fanon, as forcibly displaced people, we arrive in places of meaning that pre-exist us (Fanon, 1952). This means that, even though we may not know it, we end up telling stories according to expectations of how such stories should be told. This can lead to the reproduction of normative stories. Hence, it is important to reflect on the power that is present in research as well as questions of visibility and vulnerability.

Merriam et al. (2010) argued that in some models of research, a "researcher holds all the power" (p. 413). Those who practice a strict separation between research participants and the

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

researcher remove power and agency from the former. In developing the AQDA, I am guided by the feminist scholarship to foreground people with lived experience, engage them in decision making about their interviews, and ensure that they have control over the process. In the AQDA narrators have an opportunity to exercise power, being recognised as active agents. Narrators' exercise of power is strongly linked to the choices that narrators have during the process of sharing their oral histories. They make choices from the moment they agree to contribute to the archive to the final stage of a record creation. I approach potential narrators to explain what research is about and what benefits there are. I spend time discussing the potential risks that can be associated with giving an interview and what steps we can take to minimise these risks. I do not rush people; instead, I prefer to give them time to decide. Sometimes there may be a period of several months between the first discussion and recording of the interview. The narrator can also choose the type of interview.[27] They can request changes to a record's metadata at any point, even after it has been published. For example, in 2019 I conducted my first interview where a narrator signed research documents and agreed to a video interview and a use of a pseudonym. The interview was recorded, and it went well. Several days later they contacted me and asked me to blur their face on video. They took a decision to still appear and not simply to be converted into an audio interview. I complied with their request.

I also engage the narrators in the process of record creation (i.e., their interview and its subsequent entry into the archive). I share the recording of their interview to give them an opportunity to review it. They may provide written clarifications that can be included in the contextual information, and they can request deletions of parts of the interview if they think they disclosed information that could cause harm to them or people they discussed. Such changes are possible before an interview is published online. Often, personal relationships are developed with narrators during the interview process. This too can influence how much information they share with me. At times an interview can be very personal, and narrators can disclose more information than they would otherwise tell to strangers. The revision of the interview and cool down period can help them look at an interview with a fresh eye. Sometimes narrators do not want to do this though, and the responsibility to make a decision about certain parts of the interview rests with me.

There is no pre-determined script or expectation about how one's history should be told. There are guiding questions, yet narrators are in control of what they tell and what they deem as important to be recorded and preserved in the archive. The goal is not to examine or analyse themes, but rather to record oral histories in an attempt to legitimise our lives and our history. In developing this archive, I am aware of my power position as a researcher, no matter how much I attempt to blur the boundary. Thus, I give narrators space to decide on the content, refuse any questions, be flexible with time, day, and place, or even withdraw their interview from the archive. Telling the stories of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement in narrators' own voices is an essential task in preserving history.

My examination of the power relationship between researcher and narrator also seeks to unpack the notion of vulnerability. This is relevant to both my research and broader archival practice. The first challenge is to understand vulnerability, and the second challenge is what we do with it. It is common for people who have experienced forced displacement to be referred to as vulnerable by default. Think, for example, about university ethics committees and who they have on their list as vulnerable groups. Forcibly displaced people are deemed vulnerable in research due to their precarious visa status or lack of language skills. This label of vulnerability is intended

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

to offer protection, however it also has the effect of denying agency and can end up making diverse experiences less visible.

My research challenges this notion of individualistic vulnerability arising from one's experience, and instead aims to highlight the systemic and structural conditions that create this vulnerability. This means that an LGBTIQ+ person seeking asylum, who is still on a temporary visa, is not vulnerable because they are on a temporary visas per se, but because the politics and regulations of migration deprive them of equal access to services and support and render their lives as disposable and ungrievable. Engaging with vulnerability is crucial, however it must be done through this systemic lens rather than a simplistic application of this status to certain identities.

The way researchers engage with vulnerability depends on our understanding of it. Sometimes vulnerability is exploited. This is particularly true in the context of forced displacement where, as discussed above, refugee stories are desired only under certain conditions. These types of stories and their reception are linked to the display of vulnerability: the more a narrator performs their vulnerability, the more credible their story is perceived to be. This can lead to researchers intentionally or unintentionally privileging such accounts as the only credible refugee stories. This then contributes to the construction of a single story about the displacement experience. It also benefits researchers more than the narrators, as researchers are seen as the ones bringing those stories to the forefront. The engagement with vulnerability as simply an individual phenomenon creates only individual benefits for those who exploit it. Shared stories no longer belong to those who lived them, both because they are told only in ways that are intelligible for the audience (no control over content from a displaced person) and because their ownership is mediated through those who 'discovered' those stories. bell hooks (1989) powerfully writes:

> Silenced. We fear those who speak about us, who do not speak to us and with us. We know what it is like to be silenced. We know that the forces that silence us, because they never want us to speak, differ from the forces that speak, tell me your story. Only do not speak in the voice of resistance. Only speak from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, an unfulfilled longing. Only speak your pain. (p. 23)

However, if we approach vulnerability from a structural point of view, we can use it for a different purpose. Laura Horak (2018) has argued that the visibility of an issue is inextricably connected with issues of vulnerability. Increased visibility can trigger and make LGBTIQ+ communities vulnerable to further violence. Narrators engage with visibility differently. For some it is a political statement and testimony of their survival. Thus, I have encountered participants who insisted that they do a video interview. For some, this is a different kind of resistance and an exercise in agency: not necessarily defiant yet still effective[28]. While some participants have hidden their faces and names in the recording, they are still producing resistant narratives.

When engaging with questions of power and vulnerability, I am not creating a separation between me and narrators or presenting myself as an 'objective' researcher. I open up to the narrator in the same way they open up to me. With many of them, I continue to have different levels of connection. I hold myself accountable and believe that the LGBTIQ+ community will hold me accountable too. I will treat their story with care and respect without inflicting unnecessary vulnerability. I am sharing my vulnerability with narrators by making my story visible too, and therefore also possibly placing myself at risk of attacks from homophobes, TERFs[29] or nationalists.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

Recommendations and Considerations for Archival Practice

In developing the AQDA I have drawn on Caswell's (2019) feminist standpoint appraisal that offers us a possible approach to make archives inclusive "and help liberate a profession whose theories and practices have done far too much damage to oppressed communities" (p. 31). At the core of this methodology is using one's own privilege to dismantle oppressive practices. I wish to further share more recommendations and considerations for archival practice:

- Inclusion: make use of existing theories and methodologies of queering archives (such as Caswell, 2019; Lee, 2015), to enact inclusive collection policies and practices.

- Positionality matters: record your positionality and reflections on the process and yourself, and add this to a research project or an archive. Record contextual information records. Reflect on what you do not know (and why) and which types of knowledge you privilege.

- Meaningful engagement: support peer run programs; co-design programs and projects with communities; fund community co-designed collections. When you bring a person to the table ensure all possible supports and guidance are in place so that a community can benefit as much as possible. Meaningful engagement must embed an intersectional framework.

- Mental health and trauma-informed practice: provide a list of available and tailored support for those who share their experiences with you. Look after your mental health too. Practice trauma-informed approaches.

- Collect stories respectfully: reflect on which stories are not being told. Rethink what constitutes a 'good story' about one's marginalisation. Relinquish control over the narrative.

Conclusion

I began this article with an example of participating in the Global Refugee Forum, which illustrated how often active and wilful resistance is present and rejects the need for visibility of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people. I have argued that if we as researchers are relying only on the official cultural and institutional memory as a proof of one's existence, we may erroneously treat an absence of mentions about LGBTIQ+ people in that context as an absence of the group at all. Such an absence is then further justified by the group vulnerability and the risks of violence to the group when they are publicly seen. I have also outlined the damage that imposed conventions of storytelling can cause when all that is desired from a refugee is their story.

I have argued that meaningful engagement with positionality and foregrounding the lived experience can bring a potential to rectify power imbalances and provide representation of marginalised groups on their own terms. Reflecting on and using my positionality has led me to find frameworks to create an archive that can become a space of resistance to the intentional forgetting, misrepresentation, and omission of LGBTIQ+ experiences. Developing the AQDA by applying the Feminist Standpoint Appraisal methodology and Queer/ed Archival Methodology has offered possibilities for creating the archive as open, with new ways of seeing an archive and the records in it. It has allowed for the recognition of injustices in normative archival practices.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

Resisting dominant narratives, the AQDA aims to open the possibility for social justice for LGBTIQ+ people in forced displacement. At the heart of the AQDA is the refusal to be erased, and as such it is a deliberate act to queer and disrupt institutional archival practices. By actively and meaningfully engaging with power and vulnerability, the archive will open up more spaces of resistance.

Endnotes

[1] It is important to acknowledge that LGBTIQ+ acronym is a Western terminology, which has become adopted in non-western countries for a variety of reasons (Anzaldua, 2009). These reasons include this terminology being a legacy of colonisation, a potential lack of respectful terminology in country languages and out of necessity to adopt commonly used language when engaging globally. These reasons are not limited to those above and may vary in different contexts. When using a term 'LGBTIQ+' in this article I am referring to the diversity of sex, gender, sexual orientation, bodies and relationships. The 'plus' sign in the acronym signals fluidity and further possible identifications.
[2] Note that this number only includes those pledges made in December 2019. Since then, more have been added.
[3] See more at https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[4] See more at https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/5ecd458c4. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[5] Classicide refers to a systematic destruction of a particular social class. In the context of USSR, it was a goal of the Stalin regime to destroy the class of farmers that had more land and livestock than the majority of other farmers. They were declared enemies of the state and to communist rule.
[6] For example, after the famine in the territory of Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians, ethnic Russians were resettled in their empty homes.
[7] This includes both the 'compulsory heterosexuality' of refugees and the ways refugee stories are expected to be told.
[8] See the full definition here: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/forced-migrant_en. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[9] For example, see an explainer 'What is the difference between a refugee and a migrant?', available at https://www.ssi.org.au/faqs/refugee-faqs/148-what-is-the-difference-between-a-refugee-and-a-migrant Accessed on 2021-03-22 or 'Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants: What's the difference?', available at https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference
[10] Here I am alluding to the fact that in around one thirds of UN member states there are different levels of discrimination and persecution in place against LGBTIQ+ people, according to the ILGA International. You can find the most recent reports here: https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[11] See more at https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[12] See more here for key indicators used in the data collection: https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/
[13] I use the term 'compulsory heterosexuality' to draw on the work of Adrienne Rich (1980) and Butler (1990)

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

[14] The politics of respectability refers to assimilationist ideas that seek to see LGBTIQ+ persons replicate heteronormative ideas as a desired norm and to be included in a wider society.
[15] See more at https://www.therefugeeproject.org. Accessed 2021-07-26
[16] In making this point, I am thinking of Miranda Fricker’s (2007) concept of hermeneutical injustice, a form of epistemic injustice, where a marginalised group is lacking hermeneutical resources to conceptualise their experiences, often due to unwillingness or resistance from a dominant group to regard those as true and credible.
[17] It is important to note that I am still actively using and engaging the Western terminology in order to make this archive accessible for the governmental structures in the hope it will assist with the preparation of country reports necessary in the process of refugee status determination.
[18] Yet, even my counsellor does not fully know everything as this is not essential for my successful engagement with a therapeutic process.
[19] https://temporary.kaldorcentre.net. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[20] Currently Australia offers permanent or temporary protection visas based on the mode of arrival. For more information visit: https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/refugee-and-humanitarian-program/onshore-protection. Accessed on 2021-07-21
[21] My understanding draws on the resources developed by the Blue Knot Foundation https://www.blueknot.org.au/.
[22] The United Kingdom and Ireland Archives and Records Association Emotional Support Guides https://www.archives.org.uk/what-we-do/emotional-support-guides.html Accessed on 2021-07-21
[23] Although a positive move, this course costs 300 AUD to access. The price can be prohibitive for community based archives. See more at https://www.archivists.org.au/events/event/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-managing-archives Accessed 2021-07-26
[24] I am focusing on the subject of oral histories, as this is the main methodology for the collection of interviews in this archive.
[25] Stress Management. Approaches for preventing and reducing stress. https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/34619/Strtess+Management-textbook/444b08a2-2a23-48ba-a527-79fd8640092e Accessed on 2021-03-22; https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/stress-management-strategies Accessed on 2021-03-22; https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/34679/dealing-with-critical-incidents-and-trauma-staff. Accessed on 2021-03-22
[26] See more at Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) https://mhfa.com.au/ Accessed on 2021-03-22
[27] I have discussed the options in the introduction.
[28] I am guided here by Saba Mahmood’s (2005) work in her book *Politics of Piety* where she critiqued Western conceptualisations of agency that only saw it being legitimate when it was resistant. Mahmoud on the example of Muslim women who exercised their agency through following the rules of piety, has argued that agency could also take non-resistant forms.
[29] TERF refers to a feminist who excludes the rights of transgender women from their advocacy of women's rights.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

Alcoff, L. M. (2018). *Rape and resistance*. John Wiley & Sons.

Anzaldua, G. E. (2009). To(o) the queer reader. In A. Keating (Ed.), *The Gloria Anzaldua reader*. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822391272

Berenstain, N. (2016). Epistemic exploitation. *Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy*, *3* (22). https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0003.022

Berg, L., & Millbank, J. (2009). Constructing the personal narratives of lesbian, gay and bisexual asylum claimants. In *Journal of Refugee Studies, 22*(2), 195–223. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fep010

Brilmyer, G. (2018). Archival assemblages: Applying disability studies' political/relational model to archival description. *Archival Science*, *18*(2), 95–118. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-018-9287-6

Butler, J. (1990). Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity Routledge. *New York*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-13213-2_87

Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.

Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso.

Carter, R. G. S. (2006). Of things said and unsaid: Power, archival silences, and power in silence. *Archivaria*, *61*(SE-Articles), 215–233.

Caswell, M. (2019). Dusting for fingerprints: Introducing feminist standpoint appraisal. *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, *3*(1), 1–36.

Crowley, S. (1994). Let me get this straight. In V. J. Vitanza (Ed.), *Writing histories of rhetoric* (pp. 1–19). Southern Illinois University Press.

Cvetkovich, A. (2003). *An archive of feelings: Trauma, sexuality, and lesbian public cultures*. Duke University Press.

D'Entremont, P. É. (2012). Last chance. *National Film Board of Canada (NFB)*. https://www.nfb.ca/film/last-chance/

Dixson, T. (2017). In exile: Finding home as a queer woman from a refugee background. *Archer Magazine*, 78–83. https://archermagazine.com.au/2017/12/in-exile/

Dunbar, A. W. (2006). Introducing critical race theory to archival discourse: Getting the conversation started. *Archival Science*, *6*(1), 109–129. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-006-9022-6

Fanon, F. (1952). Black skin, white masks. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (Translated). Pluto Press.

Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. Routledge.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
CC BY NC ND

Fisher, J. (2017). *Healing the fragmented selves of trauma survivors: Overcoming internal self-alienation*. Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315886169

Fobear, K. (2015). "I thought we had no rights"–Challenges in listening, storytelling, and representation of LGBT refugees. *Studies in Social Justice*, *9*(1), 102-117. https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v9i1.1137

France, D. (2020). *Welcome to Chechnya*. https://www.hbo.com/documentaries/welcome-to-chechnya

Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001

Gilmore, L. (2017). *Tainted witness: Why we doubt what women say about their lives*. Columbia University Press.

Gutterman, L. J. (2019). "Not my proudest moment": Guilt, regret, and the coming-out narrative. *Oral History Review*, *46*(1), 48–70. https://doi.org/10.1093/ohr/ohy059

Hajdukowski-Ahmed, M., Khanlou, N., & Moussa, H. (2008). *Not born a refugee woman: Contesting identities, rethinking practices* (Vol. 24). Berghahn Books.

Hajek, A. (2014). Oral history methodology. *Oral History Methodology*, *805*. https://doi.org/10.4135/978144627305013504183

Hall, K. Q. (2017). Queer epistemology and epistemic injustice. In *The Routledge handbook of epistemic injustice* (pp. 158–166). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315714523

Hanish, C. (1970). The personal is political. *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation,* 76-78.

Henley, J. (2020). *LGBT asylum seekers' claims routinely rejected in Europe and UK*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jul/09/lgbt-asylum-seekers-routinely-see-claims-rejected-in-europe-and-uk

hooks, B. (1989). Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness. *The Applied Theatre Reader*, *36*(36), 80-85. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44111660

Horak, L. (2018). Visibility and vulnerability: Translatina world-making in *The Salt Mines* and *Wildness*. In A. Koivunen, K. Kyrölä, & I. Ryberg (Eds.), *The power of vulnerability*, (pp. 95–115). Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526133113.00012

Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(42), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1718

Jaggar, A. M. (1989). Love and knowledge: Emotion in feminist epistemology. *Inquiry (United Kingdom)*, *32*(2), 151–176. https://doi.org/10.1080/00201748908602185

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

Johnson, E. P. (2018). *Black. Queer. Southern. Women. An oral history*. The University of North Carolina Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/62066

Jones, D. W. (1998). Distressing histories and unhappy interviewing. *Oral History Society*, *26*(2), 49–56.

Jones, J. (2018, August 8). *'Mistreated, tortured, harassed': How Australia is failing LGBTI refugees*. Star Observer. https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/national-news/australia-failing-lgbti-refugees-asylum-seekers-manus-ronnie-mugisha/170972

Keung, N. (2019, May 28). *'Brave and courageous' LGBTQ refugees come out in photo exhibit*. https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2019/05/17/brave-and-courageous-lgbtq-refugees-come-out-in-photo-exhibit.html

Laurent, N., & Wright, K. (2020). A trauma-informed approach to managing archives: a new online course. In *Archives and manuscripts, 48*(1), 80–87. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2019.1705170

Lee, J. A. (2015). A queer/ed archival methodology: Theorizing practice through radical interrogations of the archival body. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 232.

Luibhéid, E. (2008). Queer/migration: An unruly body of scholarship. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *14*(2), 169–190. https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2007-029

Lynes, K. (2018). *Between a rock and a hard place: Performative politics and queer migrant activisms*. Adanewmedia.Org. https://adanewmedia.org/2018/11/issue14-lynes/

Mahmood, S. (2005). *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton University Press.

Mbembe, A. (2002). The Power of the Archive and its Limits. *Refiguring the Archive*, 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2

McCracken, K., & Hogan, S.-S. (2021). Laughter filled the space. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion (IJIDI)*, *5*(1), 97–110. https://doi.org/10.33137/ijidi.v5i1.34648

Mendos, L. R., Botha, K., Lelis, R. C., López de la Peña, E., Savelev, I., & Tan, D. (2020). *State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation Overview Update*. (Geneva: ILGA, December 2020)

Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M.-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M. (2010). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *20*(5), 405–416. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370110059537

Mottet, L., & Tanis, J. E. (2008). *Opening the door to the inclusion of transgender people: The nine keys to making lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizations fully transgender-inclusive*. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. https://transequality.org/issues/resources/opening-door-inclusion-transgender-people

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

Moulin, C. (2012). Citizenship, migrant activism and the politics of movement. In P. Nyers & K. Rygiel (Eds.), *Citizenship, migrant activism and the politics of movement* (pp. 54–72). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203125113-9

Nazroo, J., & Karlsen, S. (2003a). Patterns of identity among ethnic minority people: Diversity and commonality. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *26*(5), 902–930. https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987032000109087

Nazroo, J., & Karlsen, S. (2003b). Patterns of identity among ethnic minority people: Diversity and commonality. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 26*(5), 902–930. Taylor & Francis Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987032000109087

Puar, J. K. (2007). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Duke University Press.

Pujol-Mazzini, A. (2016, July 13). *Refugees in Britain hope telling their stories through a photo exhibition will change public perceptions*. Thomson Reuters Foundation News. https://news.trust.org/item/20160713153620-msnfu

Radstone, S. (2007). Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics. *Paragraph (Modern Critical Theory Group, 30*(1), 9–29. Edinburgh University Press. https://doi.org/10.1353/prg.2007.0015

Rawson, K. J. (2010). Archiving transgender: Affects, logic, and the power of queer history. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 328.

Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5*(4), 631-660. University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.1086/493756

Ring, T. (2020, June 29). *LGBTQ+ refugees tell their stories in 'Unsettled,' now streaming*. Advocate.Com. https://www.advocate.com/film/2020/6/29/lgbtq-refugees-tell-their-stories-unsettled-now-streaming

Ritter, K. (2012). Archival research in composition studies: re-imagining the historian's role. *Rhetoric Review*, *31*(4), 461–478. https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198.2012.711201

Rose, L. La. (2019, May 15). *Photo exhibit turns lens on LGBTQI refugees in Canada*. UNHCR. https://www.unhcr.ca/news/photo-exhibit-turns-lens-on-lgbtqi-refugees/

Ryan, L. (2015). 'Inside' and 'outside' of what or where? Researching migration through multi-positionalities. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, *16*(2). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-16.2.2333

Sheffield, R. T. (2020). *Documenting rebellions: A study of four lesbian and gay archives in queer times*. Litwin Books.

Sheftel, A., & Zembrzycki, S. (2010). Only human: A reflection on the ethical and methodological challenges of working with 'difficult' stories. *Oral History Review, 37*(2), 191–214. https://doi.org/10.1093/ohr/ohq050

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524
cc BY NC ND

Stone, A. L., & Cantrell, J. (2015). *Out of the closet, into the archives: Researching sexual histories*. State University of New York Press.

Taylor, J. (2018, August 29). *Here's what it's like to come to Australia as a gay refugee*. Buzz Feed. https://www.buzzfeed.com/joshtaylor/heres-what-its-like-to-come-to-australia-as-a-gay-refugee

Truu, M. (2019, November 15). *This is what it's like to be an LGBTIQ+ asylum seeker in Australia*. SBS News. https://www.sbs.com.au/news/this-is-what-it-s-like-to-be-an-lgbtiq-asylum-seeker-in-australia

UCLA. (2019). *Refugee rights - UCLA Center for Information as evidence | UCLA Center for Information as evidence*. UCLA. https://informationasevidence.org/refugee-rights-in-records

UN General Assembly. (1951). *Convention relating to the status of refugees*. https://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html

UNHCR. (2019a). Global compact on refugees. *International Journal of Refugee Law, 30*(4), 744-773. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eez010

UNHCR. (2019b). *Global refugee forum agenda*. https://www.unhcr.org/5e1dd4747

UNHCR. (2019c). *Refugee co-sponsors*. https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-co-sponsors.html

UNHCR. (2019d). *UNHCR: Global refugee forum*. https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/global-refugee-forum.html

Vogl, A. (2013). Telling stories from start to finish: Exploring the demand for narrative in refugee testimony. *Griffith Law Review, 22*(1), 63–86. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/10383441.2013.10854767

Vogl, A. (2018). The genres and politics of refugee testimony. *Law and Literature, 30*(1), 81–104. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/1535685X.2017.1346961

When Home Won't Let You Stay: Art and Migration [Video]. (2020). Minneapolis Institute of Art Home. https://vimeo.com/showcase/6957005

Whitelaw, M. (2015). Escaping the search box: Contexts and precedents for generous interfaces. *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly 9*(1), 1–16. http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/9/1/000205/000205.html

Woodiwiss, J. (2014). Beyond a single story: The importance of separating 'harm' from 'wrongfulness' and 'sexual innocence' from 'childhood' in contemporary narratives of childhood sexual abuse. *Sexualities, 17*(1–2), 139–158. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460713511104

Zagor, M. (2011). Recognition and narrative identities: The legal creation, alienation and liberation of the refugee. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1906507

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524

Zinn, H. (1977). Secrecy, archives, and the public interest. *The Midwestern Archivist 2*(2) 14–26. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41101382

Renee E. Dixson (renee.dixson@anu.edu.au) has been working as a human rights defender at international and national levels since 2004. As a result of visible work, they were forced to leave the country where they lived. The process of settling down in Australia and their position as both outsider and insider have given them an opportunity to see how discourses shaped stories around LGBTIQ and refugee communities. Currently, Renee Dixson is a PhD candidate at the Australian National University. In their PhD research, Renee is building the first in the world queer digital archive of oral histories about LGBTIQ forced displacement. Renee continues their work as an emerging academic and activist by trying to build bridges and make a systematic change to support LGBTIQ displaced people.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v5i4.36524