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Sexuality and migration in the Global South: an overview

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Abstract
Migration studies used to neglect sexuality as a key factor during the migratory process. However, in the past three decades, the literature has evolved to take into consideration gender and sexuality. Scholars have found that sexuality plays a role in the migratory experience from its origin, during transit and upon arrival in the country of reception. Likewise, they have also argued that migration can shape sexuality. The incorporation of sexuality as an analytical framework has allowed the study of queer migrants, heteronormative migration policies, sex workers, sex trafficking, heterosexuality and masculinities. Nevertheless, gaps remain, since the literature has been heavily focused on South–North migration, somewhat neglecting South–South experiences and voices, and there are scant official data on sexual migration. The objective of this paper is to provide a general critical overview of the scholarship on sexuality and Global South migration, based on its relevance, content and the inclusion of sexuality as an analytical element in migration. In its conclusion, the paper identifies gaps and includes a number of recommendations for future research.

Keywords
Migration, sexuality, gender, identity, queer, LGBT

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1. Introduction

Migration studies used to assume that the average migrant was a cisgender heterosexual man who left his country primarily for economic reasons (Mole, 2018). However, in the past three decades, the academic literature on migration has evolved to take into account gender and sexuality (Palmary, 2021). Since then, several studies written from an intersectional perspective have shown how sexuality shapes the migratory process from the beginning to the end of the migration journey, affecting the identities and personal experiences of migrants, but also impacting the social, cultural and political dynamics of destination communities (Carrillo, 2004; Cantú, 2009; Luibhéid, 2002; Manalansan, 2006). The incorporation of sexuality as an analytical framework has chiefly allowed the study of queer migrants and heteronormative migration policies, but it has also been expanded to include the analysis of sex workers, sex trafficking, heterosexuality and masculinities, and the study of how sexuality may motivate or affect the migration journey of any person (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017).

Thus, the critical assessment of sexuality facilitates a more accurate and inclusive depiction of gendered migration (Manalansan, 2006). Sexuality, like gender, is "an axis of power that structures all aspects of international migration" (Luibhéid, 2004, p 232). Nevertheless, even though the two are intertwined, scholars warn against subsuming sexuality under gender and they insist that sexuality ought to be analysed as a distinct axis that configures the migration process (Luibhéid, 2019).

Human sexuality can be defined as the way in which people experience and express themselves as sexual beings; this includes their sexual behaviour, sexual orientation and gender identity (Kalra & Bhugra, 2010, p 118). International migration may be motivated directly or indirectly by the sexuality of those who migrate, a concept defined as "sexual migration", while those who migrate because of their sexuality could be called "sexual migrants" (Carrillo, 2004, p 58). The study of sexuality and migration tends to highlight the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT[1]) migrants, although many scholars prefer to use 'queer', an umbrella term for individuals who do not fall into a strict heterosexual or cisgender identity. These terms (queer, gay, lesbian, trans) are also seen as Western terms that may not accurately reflect the life experiences of gender and sexual minorities in other parts of the world (Mole, 2021, p 2). Moreover, some authors consider that the queer perspective which emerged in the 1990s is also useful for the analysis of sex workers or other migrants outside the LGBT community, since it advocates diversity and a plurality of sexual identities (Valadier, 2018, p 505).

With these considerations in mind, this working paper aims to elaborate an overview of the literature on sexuality and migration in the Global South. As usual, the term 'Global

[1] This paper will use both LGBT and LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and more) acronyms. The terms are not interchangeable. The use of both of them is to reflect the evolving nature of literature and conceptualisation.

South' creates challenges. First, it is a debatable concept because it includes countries that are north of the Equator, like Mexico, while excluding territories in the Southern Hemisphere like Australia. As a term, it is commonly used to group together Latin America, Africa and Asia (Donzelli, 2013). Second, there is a risk of reinforcing a false dichotomy in which the North is perceived as 'modern' and 'tolerant' regarding the inclusion of sexuality, while the South is uniformly stigmatised as 'backward', a preconceived bias that could affect research results (Wieringa & Sívori, 2013; Gontijo, 2021). Additionally, on a separate point, South–South migration is still neglected in scholarship compared with the analysis of South–North flows (Izaguirre & Walsham, 2021; Caarten et al, 2022).

Other challenges encountered during the review relate to the diverse notions of sexuality and migration, and the variety of themes encompassed by 'sexual migration'. Many parts of the paper focus particularly on issues relating to LGBT+ migrants, while others address sex workers, primarily cisgender women. This is because most of the literature on sexual migration addresses these two groups of people in particular. Nevertheless, the paper tries to adopt a more intersectional and open-ended approach to the effects of sexuality in migration processes, including wherever possible other topics and groups that are currently under-researched. This is a conceptual limitation acknowledged by the author, but at the same time it reveals research gaps that need to be addressed and reinforces the calls made in the paper's conclusion for a more systematic research framework on sexuality and migration.

The main objective of this document is therefore to provide a general overview of the scholarship of sexuality and South–South migration and, at the same time, to identify gaps in the literature and topics for further research. It will do so through a critical literature review, which is a useful method for providing a critical assessment and interpretive analysis of scholarship to discuss strengths, contradictions, inconsistencies and other important issues (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). The main questions guiding the present review are as follows. What are the main issues addressed by the existing research? What is missing from this literature? What is distinctive about research on migration within the Global South? How does this build on or contrast with research on South–North or other migration flows? What differences in approaches and findings exist across different regions?

The main existing studies were selected based on their relevance and content, and on the inclusion of sexuality as an analytical element in migration. A systematic search was conducted on Google Scholar, Scielo Databases and Google Books. The search was conducted in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Italian, aiming to include the largest possible number of authors from the Global South. It should be admitted that, as a result of limitations of time and space, the review cannot be absolutely representative or comprehensive, but it addresses the main points and raises questions for further research.

After this first section, which concludes with an overview of global migration statistics and trends, the paper is structured as follows: section 2 addresses the introduction of

sexuality within migration studies and key concepts. Section 3 discusses key research about sexuality and migration from the Global South, using literature that identifies sexuality-related motives for migration, discrimination during transit, LGBT asylum, and global trends and statistics in sexual migration. The next section includes a comparison of regional perspectives to identify contrasts in the literature between Africa, Asia and Latin America, while, before the final conclusions, section 5 discusses the contributions that research on sexuality has made to migration studies in general and persisting gaps.

1.1 Global statistics and trends

The most recent *World Migration Report 2022* from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that there were 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which represents 3.6% of the global population (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021, p xii). Of this total, 135 million are female migrants, who account for 48% of total migration (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021, p 3). Even though international organisations emphasise the importance of having reliable statistics on sex and gender-disaggregated data, they recognise the scarcity of information regarding sexuality, sex work and the experiences of LGBTQI+ people, a fact that complicates the identification of global trends about sexuality and migration (Hennebry et al, 2021, p 5). The United Nations also recognises that LGBT individuals are at higher risk of becoming victims of trafficking but government reports, particularly in countries that criminalise homosexuality or do not recognise the gender identity of trans people, hinder the collection of accurate data (UNODC, 2021, p 38). Likewise, as explained before, counting queer migrants is an intricate task, since it requires formal institutions to be inclusive and it needs migrants to be explicitly open about their sexuality, gender identity and sexual orientation, something they often hide for fear of stigma and discrimination (Chossière, 2021).

Similarly, there are meagre comprehensive and official data regarding queer asylum, although the Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration (ORAM) estimates that fewer than 2,500 LGBT people per year are granted asylum or refugee protection based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, while more than 175 million LGBT people live under conditions of peril and violence (Grungras, 2014). In spite of the lack of exhaustive data, the US and the EU are identified as major recipients of LGBT asylum seekers from the Global South. A report from the Williams Institute of the University of California, Los Angeles calculates that between 2012 and 2017 there were 11,400 applications for asylum in the US from people from 84 different countries on the basis of being LGBT, with at least 4,385 fear claims leading to interviews, of which 98.4% resulted in positive determinations (Shaw et al, 2021). In contrast, in the UK, a Stonewall report notes that around 99% of gay and lesbian asylum seekers had been refused protection in 2010 and had been deported to countries like Uganda (Bachmann, 2016, p 7). In the EU, according to a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2017) report, none of the member states provided data on asylum seekers based on sexual orientation and gender identity but researchers

estimate that the numbers could be significant because of the arrival of migrants from countries with anti-LGBT legislation, such as Libya, Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal, Eritrea, Guinea, Ghana, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Zappula, 2018). Countries in the Global South have also been identified as receivers of queer asylum seekers; they include Mexico, Argentina, Turkey, Kenya, South Africa and Thailand (Yarwood et al, 2022).

2 Sexuality in migration studies

Migration studies used to be constrained by two research approaches that neglected sexuality: an economics and sociology perspective focused on costs and benefits, and on the working lives of migrants; and an anthropology and cultural studies angle addressing sociocultural positionality and identity (Mai & King, 2009, p 297). During the early stages of migration studies, the literature used to analyse migration solely from a heterocentric and gender-blind perspective centered on the male migrant who moves for economic reasons (Pereira, 2021). Therefore, migration scholars did not discuss sexual difference, assuming *de facto* that the 'typical migrant' is a cisgender and heterosexual male (Mole, 2018, p 1). Even after the emergence of gendered and feminist perspectives, the mainstream literature tended to portray migrants as "asexual accumulators of capital" primarily driven by a "rational commitment to material betterment" without acknowledging the role sexuality plays in the push, transit and reception of migrants (Ahmad, 2016, p 3).

The field has evolved in the past few decades. Historian Nancy Green (2020) identifies the focus on sexuality as a "fourth age" of migration studies, which emerged at the beginning of the 2000s, after previous stages centered on male workers (1960s–70s), migrant women (1970s–80s), and then on a more thorough perspective on gender. In her view, the interest in sexuality arose because of policies that criminalised migrants' sexualities, particularly prostitution and homosexuality, or as a result of researchers' realisation of how migration represented sexual liberation for some people. Manalansan (2006, p 226) argues that the analysis of sexuality in migration surfaced in the 1990s as a result of two main phenomena: the rise of the AIDS pandemic, which also catalysed the sociological study of sexuality in general, and the consolidation of feminist intellectual perspectives, race and ethnic studies, and queer studies. Both these events awoke interest in studying the sexual practices and sexual identities of migrants.

The appearance of HIV in the 1980s prompted epidemiologists and sociologists to try to understand the non-mainstream sexuality and identities of immigrants and communities of colour, particularly in the US, where they were disproportionately vulnerable to the disease (Manalansan, 2006, p 228). In addition, societies and governments conceived migrants, especially sex workers and queer people, as a metaphor for disease, which resulted in barriers to migration and health care services (Fakoya et al, 2008). In sum, the conjunction of the AIDS pandemic and globalisation encouraged researchers to study sexuality from a global and transnational perspective, with many investigators turning their attention to the developing world and sexual rights (Altman, 2004).

Additionally, quite early on, feminist scholars had argued for the separation of gender and sexuality analytically to obtain more accurate reflections and stop treating sexuality as a derivation of gender (Rubin, 1984, p 170). Proponents of the study of sexuality in migration saw the gender studies approach as still perpetuating a binary of 'men' and 'women' that overlooked dissident sexual identities (Weston, 1993). Considered one of the pioneers of the field, Luibhéid (2004) criticised the fact that, when sexuality was addressed in migration studies, it was generally conflated with gender, and therefore with cisgender straight women. She claimed that heteronormative policies "subordinate immigrants not just on grounds of sexual orientation but also on grounds of gender, racial, class, and cultural identities that may result in 'undesirable' sexual acts or outcomes" (Luibhéid, 2004, p 227). Further to this, Mai and King (2009) argued for a "sexual turn" and "emotional turn" in migration studies, calling for an intersectional perspective that recognises all migrants as sexual beings, and acknowledges that emotions like love and affection motivate and define their migratory process. Like gender, sexuality became an element for evaluating migrants; states also used these factors to regulate mobilities, implementing discriminatory policies that treated migrants such as pregnant women, sex workers, homosexuals or trans people differently (Vidal-Ortiz, 2013). Scholars began to examine as a whole the way in which states regulated both gender and sexuality and how phenomena such as gender-based violence affected women and sexual minorities (Puri, 2012). The sexuality approach has also been scrutinised for dealing "too often" with homosexual cisgender men (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2018, p 29). But these studies are not limited to gay or LGBT migrants. Other recent researchers posit a framework of masculinity and sexuality that includes heterosexual cisgender men who migrate for sexual motivations (Vasquez del Aguila, 2018).

2.1 Key concepts

A key concept introduced by sexuality and migration literature is 'sexual migration'. This term was first used by epidemiologists studying the HIV pandemic, who used it to describe the sexual behaviour of gay males (Wallace, 1991, p 1160) or the "spatial movement accompanied by a change in sexual partners" (Mason, 1994, p 223). Later, investigating the epidemic in Brazil from an anthropological perspective, Richard G Parker (1997, p 56) used the concept of sexual migration as a tool to analyse patterns of migration and how they affected sexual behaviour and the spread of HIV. Lionel Cantú first talked about sexual migration within migration studies after conducting ethnographic research with gay men in Mexico and the US between 1997 and 2000, although his work was published posthumously. Cantú (2009, p 21) claimed that "sexuality, as a dimension of power, shapes and organises processes of migration and incorporation". Héctor Carrillo, who was familiar with Cantu's work before it was published, conceptualised sexual migration as "international migration that is motivated, fully or partially, by the sexuality of those who migrate" (Carrillo, 2004, p 59). These motivations, which may have a direct or indirect effect, include sexual desires and pleasures, the pursuit of romantic relations, the exploration of sexual identities, the need to get away from discrimination or violence based on sexuality, and the search for

greater sexual equality and rights (Carrillo, 2004, p 59). Both these authors proposed an intersectional framework in which sexuality intertwines with economic and personal motivations, with Cantú (2003, p 265) emphasising that LGBT individuals face discrimination that limits their socioeconomic opportunities: “thus, when immigrants who are a sexual minority say that they immigrated for financial reasons, part of the analysis must include sexuality”.

Around the same time, sociologist Manuel Guzmán (1997, p 227) created the term ‘*sexilio*’ (sexile), which “refers to the exile of those who have had to leave their nations of origin on account of their sexual orientation”. The concept was coined after observing the displacement of homosexual Latin Americans who migrated to the US (Bourasseau, 2001, p 790). These migrants often had divergent experiences from those of the typical economic migrant – such as a lack of support from their families, fear of violence motivated by their sexual identities and discrimination experiences based on their sexual orientation and gender identities – which pushed them to look for sexual freedoms and equality or to seek a place with greater legal and health protections for those living with HIV (La Fountain-Stokes, 2004, p 144). Although, at first, *sexilio* was a term mainly used to describe homosexual migrants, it evolved to also include trans people who migrated to live their gender identity in the US (Vidal-Ortiz, 2008). Although this concept has predominantly been used in Spanish, it has also featured in English language scholarship that links ‘sexile’ with both forced migration as a result of sexual alterity and economic considerations (Luibhéid, 2019), and borderland studies, particularly in the US (Kaur, 2021).

Careaga and Batista (2017, p 110) offer a broader conceptualisation of sexile as “an expulsion based on sexuality” that acknowledges that displacement is not a one-time event but a constant experience for migrants, especially but not limited to those who are queer. Government officials and researchers had warned that LGBT migrants were “especially vulnerable to danger and abuse at every stage of the displacement cycle” (Lewis & Naples, 2014, p 912). At the same time, scholars saw a connection between displacement and the formation of sexual identity, particularly queer identity, since the movement process was influencing how institutions and migrants themselves perceived their own sexuality (Di Feliciantonio & Gadelha, 2016, p 3). This has provoked calls for a wider understanding of queer displacement, which is conceived as a constantly shifting process that is an intrinsic part of the marginal queer experience (Winton, 2019, p 95). Thus, the conceptualisation of queer displacement recognises forced migration “as a heteronormative exercise” in which “forcibly displaced queer migrants face ongoing forms of displacement based on various dimensions of ‘non-belonging’ from country-of-origin to relocation” (Bhagat, 2018, p 1).

Moreover, researchers have been interested in the phenomenon of queer diaspora, framed as the “mobility of sexuality across the globe” (Patton & Sánchez-Eppler, 2000, p 3). Scholars began connecting diaspora studies with sexuality and migration to better understand the dynamics of sexual migrants and analyse them as a community. Anne-Marie Fortier (2002, p 183) outlined two usages of the term ‘queer diaspora’: one that

refers to “the creation of queer spaces within ethnically defined diasporas”; and a second which describes “the transnational and multicultural network of connections of queer cultures and communities”. Wesling (2008, p 31) argued for the intersection of queer theory and diaspora studies, maintaining that geographical mobility and its diasporic condition “produce new experiences and understandings of sexuality and gender identity”. Most recently, Mole (2018, p 2) has defined “queer diaspora as a heuristic device to think about identity, belonging and solidarity among sexual minorities in the context of dispersal and transnational networks”. As with other concepts using the term ‘queer’, the conceptualisation of ‘queer diasporas’ has been expanded to clearly state that it does not solely refer to homosexual cisgender men, but is an intersectional framework that includes gender, sexual diversity, and all kinds of gender and sexual minorities (Hadriel & Cogo, 2020). The term has been useful for delving into the displacement of queer communities, such as Latin Americans in the US, Africans in Europe, or even internal migrations from rural towns to big cities in countries like Mexico or Brazil (Theodoro & Cogo, 2020).

Additionally, sexuality and migration scholars have been concerned with the study of sexual citizenship. This concept, which originated in feminist scholarship, was conceived as a way of pointing out that claims to citizenship status and rights in the West were associated with heterosexual men and male privilege (Richardson, 1998, p 83). However, Luibhéid (2004, p 233) questioned the literature that treated “all the immigrants” as heterosexual, and “all the queers” as national citizens. Lately, scholars like Epstein and Carrillo (2014), have criticised early conceptualisations of sexual citizenship for being limited to describing LGBT individuals who are already *de jure* citizens but are excluded from civil rights like same-sex marriage and the legal recognition of gender identity. They perceive an increasing presence of sexual rights in immigration policies and politics worldwide as well. Therefore, they propose the study of “immigration sexual citizenship” to bridge the gap between sexuality and immigration studies. They conceive it as a framework to analyse the intertwining of those experiences and status of LGBT individuals as immigrants that define, enable and constrain their citizenship.

2.2 Research frameworks

This subsection will present research frameworks about sexuality and migration. Cvajner & Sciortino (2021a, p 44) maintain that scholars have failed to develop an analytical framework and systematic research programmes for sexuality and migration. They argue that researchers “have subsumed and conflated very different perspectives and research problems under the same generic reference to 'migration and sexuality’” (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2019, p 475). That is why they categorise and identify three broad perspectives.

The first is sexuality as a motivation for migration, or ‘sexual migration’, picking up the definition provided by Carrillo. They see this as the “most popular” line of research, but they perceive it as being mostly focused on LGBT migrants, with some new studies widening the perspective to address heterosexual migrants, like middle-aged women

moving to cities or countries where they think they will be considered more attractive (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2019). Other examples include the analysis of ageing female migrants from Latvia in the UK and other European countries, exploring their experiences of intimate citizenship in migration (Lulle & King, 2016).

The second is the nature, depth, meaning and consequences of sexual change triggered by migration, what researchers call the “sexuality of migration”. This stream of research, as shown by two longitudinal projects on the women pioneers of Eastern European migration to Italy, works under the premise that “geographical mobility may have a powerful influence on sexual change” (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2021b, p1).

The third is what they depict as ‘lovescapes’, which they describe as collective socio-cultural changes in erotic spheres and sexual stratifications resulting from emigration or immigration. By studying Eastern Europeans in Italy, Cvajner (2019) argued that said Europeans’ immigration allowed for new sexual cultures, new erotic narratives and new norms.

In contrast, Audrey Yue (2013, p1) posits a framework of LGBT or queer migration, which she sees as synonymous with the sexual migration perspective that removes the tight focus on economic motivations. She argues that queer migration is an inclusive umbrella that does not refer only to homosexual and trans migrants, since it is an anti-heteronormative term that includes other irregular migrants and sex workers, whose sexuality is considered “peripheral” and defiant of “institutional approved categories" of sexual and gender order (Yue, 2009, p 69). Similarly to Manalansan, she sees three issues that have been central to the analysis of sexual migration: the regulation of LGBT migration, the intersections of race and sexuality, and changing formations of kinship and community (Yue, 2013). Later, she identified three phenomena where the queer migration framework is concerned: studying the migration of LGBT migrants; examining the migration of non-normative sexualities of women, such as prostitutes and those whom societies considered “amoral women”; and the “queering” or “deviant” patterns of migration of all people on the move, such as refugees, workers and students (Yue, 2016, p 125).

These frameworks were introduced years after Manalansan (2006, p.231) highlighted three significant trends that led to the development of theoretical frameworks, concepts and methodologies: queer asylum; shifting notions of female sexuality; and queer settlement and the question of assimilation. The first area of research was buoyed after 2002 when international organisations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officially recognised refugee status based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The second stream was concerned with sex tourism, marriage and shifting notions of female sexuality in second-generation migrant women, while the third dealt with the ways in which queer migrants adapted to their country of destination, and how they reinvented family and social networks while facing discrimination from the host nation and ostracism from their own communities (Manalansan, 2006, p 236).

3 Key research about sexuality and migration

Even though the field has been steadily growing in the past few decades, empirical research in sexuality and migration studies is still considered incipient, particularly from intraregional perspectives in Latin America, Africa and Asia (Pérez Ripossio, 2021). Further, most of the fieldwork done in this regard has been overwhelmingly focused on South–North migratory processes (Stang, 2019, p 19). The field still receives criticism for reinforcing a simplistic idea in which sexual migrants move from the 'oppressive' Global South to a 'liberal' Global North. This is a homogenising perception that ignores the fact that several developed countries have been slower to legally recognise the rights of sexual minorities than have developing regions, particularly in Latin America (Sousa & Chamberland, 2021, p 47). Cvajner and Sciortino (2021a, p 42) found that the sexuality and migration literature is "heavily clustered" around sex work, sex trafficking and a "much smaller" niche centered on the study of sexual minorities who are trying to improve their living conditions or save their lives through migration. Others, particularly within the realm of sexuality studies, have focused on intra-national migration, investigating the migration of sexual dissidents from rural or small urban areas to big cities, and how this process affects the construction of their sexual identity and the formation of new communities (Gorman-Murray, 2007). In contrast to the study of international migration, this work has primarily been done in countries of the Global North, for instance the US, and includes emerging intraregional research among European countries with heterogeneous legislation and public sentiment on sexual diversity (Di Feliciantonio & Gadelha, 2016).

Regardless of the differences in these perspectives and the absence of a defined systematic framework for research, the studies of sexuality in migration commonly aim to examine the role sexuality plays in the migratory experience since its origin, during transit and upon arrival in the country of reception (Masullo, 2016). A paradigmatic case study in this regard was made during the 1990s by the American sociologist Lionel Cantú and published posthumously in the book *The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men* in 2009. Using multi-method long-term research that included ethnographic investigation, participant observation and interviews, Cantú was one of the first researchers to address the gap between migration and LGBT studies, building upon the work of feminist scholars who had previously examined the link between gender and migration (Naples & Vidal-Ortiz, 2009). Cantú analysed the migratory experiences of Mexican men who have sex with men (MSM) who had migrated from Mexico to Los Angeles and Orange County in southern California, but he also researched gay men in Guadalajara, Mexico, who decided not to migrate because they feared losing their social status and capital by moving. His research concluded that sexuality serves as a motivation to migrate because many homosexual migrants perceived a lack of a "gay space" in Mexico and, thus, they "escaped" to the US to "a seemingly more accepting and liberating environment" (Sin & Cantú, 2009, p 119). However, while he showed the "invisible oppression" that LGBT people faced in Latin American countries, he also demonstrated the heteronormativity of immigration policies in the US and the institutional

discrimination faced by homosexual immigrants, who were deemed “immoral” or dangerous because of HIV fears (Vasquez del Aguila, 2011, p 733). Therefore, rejecting the notion that sexuality is just another variable for surveys (Vidal-Ortiz, 2013, p 205), Cantú posited a theoretical framework called the “queer political economy of migration". In this concept sexuality may be understood through a “queer material standpoint" as “a dimension of relations of power (as are race, class, and gender) whereby those sexualities that fall outside of the socially prescribed ‘heteronormativity’ (such as homosexuality) may be understood as marginal and stigmatized” (Cantú, 2009, p 164).

While considered groundbreaking, Cantú’s work has also been criticised for mostly focusing on gay migrants or cisgender MSM (Ward, 2011). A significant contribution regarding female sexuality was made by Eithne Luibhéid, who with *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* presented the first study of how the US immigration system has regulated the entrance of foreign women based on their sexuality, an outlook that moves beyond the previous gender and migration standpoint that overlooked women’s sexuality (Gemme, 2003). Luibhéid (2002) found that migration policy was to treat immigrant women’s sexuality as a national threat, particularly in the case of prostitutes, lesbians and those having sex across racial lines. Through a broad and intersectional lens, she analysed policies that differentiated Chinese prostitutes from wives during the 19th century, the exclusion of Japanese wives to diminish Japanese American birth rates during the early 20th century, the expulsion of Mexican women because of lesbianism, and the role of rape in women’s border crossings. Her main thesis is that “sexual regulation at the border articulates sexual regulation within” the country (Luibhéid, 2002, p xxi). Her work contributed to the understanding that bodies and sexualities have been central to state interventions and national projects and, consequently, women regarded as ‘moral’, such as wives and mothers, have confronted fewer migratory obstacles than those labelled ‘immoral’, like sex workers or lesbians (Hucke, 2021). Her later work moved beyond the US and addressed migration among West African and Eastern European women into Ireland (Luibhéid, 2013). She researched women who were tarred as ‘illegal’ immigrants because they claimed asylum to enter the country and then became legal residents after having children. Using queer theory, she analysed the emergence of the pregnant migrant as a paradigmatic figure of illegal immigration. Thus she is credited with exposing how the control of women’s sexuality and reproductive capabilities is directly inscribed into contemporary border controls (Holzberg et al, 2021).

An influential work that connected diaspora studies to sexuality and migration was produced by Manalansan, who has researched the adaptation experiences of Filipinos abroad. In *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (2003), Manalansan implements an intersectional perspective that considers gender and sexuality when analysing labour migration from the Philippines, where it is a “highly institutionalized” practice that has made the country the “world’s largest exporter of government-sponsored labor” (Manalansan, 2003, p 11). By pointing out that Filipino labour migration has become chiefly female, with Filipinas overwhelmingly working as

domestic workers, teachers and nurses abroad, he addresses a research gap in the literature about globalisation and transnationalism “that disregards the place of gendered and sexual subjectivity” (Dasig, 2006, p 166). The ethnographic research in *Global Divas* examines the lives of queer Filipinos in New York, where Manalansan concludes that their “transgressive identities” are trapped between clashing notions of nation, culture and gender, with intertwined challenges about race, class and legal citizenship sometimes shared by other people of colour, by immigrants and queers (Ordona, 2005, p 798). While criticising the invisibility of queer migrants in the literature at the time (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017, p 224), Manalansan also warns against the error of viewing queer migration as a simplistic process in which LGBT people move from repression and tradition to liberation and modernity (González-Allende, 2018, p 185). Via the study of the connections between “everyday life” and “diasporic queer identity information”, he also criticised queer scholarship for ignoring the daily life struggles and experiences of queer immigrants of colour (Manalansan, 2005). His work is credited with showing how migrants ‘stage’ different sexual identities in response to diverse factors and contexts like race, gender and family, and he also demonstrates a connection between the quotidian moments of migrants and macro issues like transnationalism, hetero-patriarchal value systems, remittance economies, and discrimination based on gender, race and sexuality (Mishra, 2006, p 128). While he has focused on queer migrants, Manalansan has also examined Filipina migrant workers, providing a critique of the early literature for neglecting to consider how normalising and naturalising ideas about sexuality, gender, care work and reproduction have created incomplete understandings of female migrant labour from the developing world (Manalansan, 2006, p 243).

3.1 Sexuality-related motives for migration

As explained above, apart from this paradigmatic empirical research, a significant amount of literature in the field has emerged to identify sexuality-related motives for migration. Prosecution, discrimination and violence because of sexual orientation and gender identity have been considered one of the main drivers of sexual migration, specifically for the LGBT community and sexual dissidents (Mogrojevo, 2006, p 343). By studying Latin Americans who have abandoned their regions and countries as a result of their queerness, Mogrojevo builds on the concept of *sexilio* or sexile as an exodus that represents a chance for survival, the right to choose, self-determination for people, individual freedom, the right to difference and dissidence, or even a political strategy (Mogrojevo, 2018, p 30). Although LGBT migrants share common challenges with cisgender and straight people, she highlights the fact that sexual minorities also face most ‘usual’ forms of violence from their own families, communities, schools and workplaces (Mogrojevo, 2006). In fact, Didier Eribon argues that one of the main constructors of lesbian and gay subjectivity consists in seeking to flee from violence or migrate to more benign environments, or being forced to hide their true identities (Eribon, 2001, p 33). Queer migrants are displaced as a result of violence and discrimination but also because many of them perceive displacement as the only possibility to live as LGBT individuals (Hernández Galván, 2019, p 36). As Howe,

Zaraysky and Lorentzen sum up in their study of transgender sex workers and transmigration between Mexico and the US, the decision to migrate may originate from the desire to pursue a romantic relationship with a foreigner or could be linked “to hopes of exploring sexual desires or gender identity transformation” (Howe et al, 2008, p 33). They also state that “sexual migration may also be necessary to avoid persecution, or it may be simply a search for more hospitable environs and sexual equality” (Howe et al, 2008, p 33). As pointed out in this section, analysing how sexuality motivates migration has been central to the study of sexuality and migration, whether people migrate because of persecution, violence and discrimination, or in pursuit of freedom and equality.

3.2 The HIV pandemic

Other studies have explored the link between sexual migration and HIV, an epidemic that has disproportionately affected migrant communities, sex workers, gay and bisexual men, and trans women, although, with regard to migrants, there is no consensus on whether immigrants are at a particularly higher risk of contracting it before or after their arrival in the host country (Carrillo, 2004, p 67). Research on migrants in North Carolina showed people with HIV migrate because of push factors like negative attitudes toward seropositivity and pull factors like access to health care and networks of supporting communities (Elmore, 2006, p 571). In countries like Mexico, gay men migrate to the capital, where there are public policies that address HIV (Careaga & Batista, 2017). Studying migrants from developing regions to Europe, Haour-Knipe and Rector (2002, p 2) asserted that “migrants are particularly affected by worldwide differences in HIV patterns and in prevention efforts. Being in a high prevalence country with a low level of HIV awareness can be dangerous.” Although sexual minorities migrate to run away from the stigma that affects their access to health care, they also face anti-LGBT and anti-migrant prejudice when arriving in developed host countries, which often have policies that overlook their access to HIV treatment (Zardiashvili & Kasianczuk, 2020). This stigmatisation hindering access to health care has been found in studies about seropositive immigrants in Europe (Fakoya et al, 2017), Canada (De la Cruz et al, 2022), Latin Americans in the US (Barrington et al, 2017), and migrants to South Africa from other African countries (Faturiyele et al, 2018). Research has even found that HIV stigma has driven African nurses to migrate because of their association as providers for seropositive people (Kohi et al, 2010).

3.3 Intersection with economic motives

Scholars have also argued that, as for other kinds of migrants, economic precariousness, labour and material conditions are drivers of migration for people for whom sexuality is also a factor (Bula & Cuello, 2019). A study among 482 MSM immigrants from Brazil, Colombia and the Dominican Republic in New York found that the most cited reason for migrating was bettering their financial situation (49%), followed by sexual migration to affirm their sexual orientation (40%), while only 13% declared escaping persecution for homosexuality (Nieves-Lugo et al, 2018). Other

research carried out in Los Angeles reported that the top motives reported by gay Mexican immigrants were improving their financial status (24%) and accompanying family (22%), above the 15% who declared their intention to live their homosexuality more openly (Organista et al, 2004, p 230). A qualitative study among LGBT Venezuelans who migrated to Colombia also indicated inflation, unemployment, food scarcity and family poverty as the main motives for migration (Bula & Cuello, 2019, p 178). However, when considering the economic conditions of sexual migrants, experts in the field warn about the associations between social discrimination and financial hardship (Ayala et al, 2012). For instance, LGBT migrants in Africa "experience discrimination that contributes to pushing them into the informal economy and distances them from familial/communal bases of support" (Reid & Ritholtz, 2020, p 1105), while in Latin America queer people also face exclusion from employers and their own families that prevents them from accessing formal labour and education (García Díaz, 2017). This is why, as referenced before, Cantú argues for always including sexuality as part of the analysis of migration among queer migrants who cite financial reasons, since "groups that are marginalized as sexual minorities are constrained by the limits of discrimination and prejudice that may limit their socioeconomic opportunities" (Cantú, 2003, p 265).

3.4 International heterogeneity in legal LGBT rights

Where queer migration is concerned, another driving factor studied is the increasing legal disparity between countries regarding LGBT rights, with people migrating from territories where homosexuality is criminalised or sexual minorities have no legal recognition to countries in which LGBT rights are legally recognised (Mole, 2021). As of 2020, there were 69 UN member states criminalising consensual same-sex activity and 42 with legal barriers to freedom of expression related to sexual and gender diversity. In contrast, there were 57 countries with legal provisions that confer broad protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and 28 UN members recognising same-sex marriage, with regions in the Global South – particularly Latin America – having made noticeable legal progress (Mendos et al, 2020). Audrey Yue (2016, p 213) identified law reforms that recognised marriage equality as a key global development shaping queer migration in the first 15 years of the 21st century, with gay and lesbian couples moving to countries like Canada and Sweden, which first recognised same-sex couples. Before marriage equality reforms, during the 1980s countries like Australia, Canada, Belgium and The Netherlands were among the first to recognise same-sex relationships as a basis for immigration (Yue, 2008). In particular, Yue (2008) studied the Australian case, after the country introduced an interdependency category in 1991 to admit non-familial migration, a policy that granted more than 7,500 permits from 1991 to 2005, with gay Asian migrants being the group to benefit most. During this period, she adds, Australia and other developed countries receiving migrants from the Global South experienced the gradual decriminalisation of homosexual conduct, HIV health policies that validated gay sex, the recognition of same-sex couples, and the mainstreaming of queer culture. Nevertheless, while rich countries were accepting LGBT migrants, Yue (2012, p 270) pinpointed the rise of "homonational modernity", a

process in which they have championed their superiority through an image of “sexual openness” that paradoxically “marginalizes radicalized and sexualized minorities”.

Moreover, if research on legal reforms that have motivated same-sex migration is considered incipient, much less studied are legal processes regarding trans people, a scholarship that faces the challenge of fast-changing legislation and doctrine (Jaramillo, 2021, p 4). A noticeable case has been the Gender Identity Law of 2012 in Argentina, which has attracted trans people from other South American countries, like Brazil, since it establishes public medical treatment and gender rectification in legal documents (Braz, 2019, p127). However, in practice, challenges for trans migrants remain. because they face discrimination and difficulties when they travel from countries without legal documents that match their identity (Vásquez & Sánchez, 2017, p 48). There is a similar phenomenon in Greece, a known point of entry for refugees, where trans individuals, EU nationals, migrants and asylum seekers alike confront obstacles to obtaining legal recognition because the gender identity law requires them to first correct their gender entry at a foreign registry (Konsta, 2021, p 486).

3.5 Queer asylum

The discussion about the legality of LGBT rights allows the introduction of the topic of queer asylum, which is, as explained above, one of the most prominent areas in the literature on sexuality and migration, although it has mainly been researched through a legal perspective (Manalansan, 2006, p 231). A widely considered first milestone is Article 1-A of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which recognises refugees as people with a well founded fear of being persecuted on account of “membership of a particular social group”, of which some interpretations include members of the LGBT community (Jansen, 2013). A second landmark was achieved in 2002, when UNHCR explicitly recommended accepting members of the LGBT community as refugees; in 2011 it published the first ‘Need to Know Guidance Note on Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons in Forced Displacement’ (Jansen, 2013). Canada was the first country to admit LGBT refugees based on gender identity and sexual orientation; Australia and the US were next in 1994 and, by 2008, a total of 19 countries were known for granting asylum, with Thailand as the sole nation in the Global South (Yue, 2008). Although data remain sparse, research estimates that “the Global South is host to the vast majority of the world’s queer refugees” (Lewis & Naples, 2014, p 916). Nevertheless, scholars have complained that, in spite of rising international attention being paid to queer refugees, particularly those fleeing from criminalising laws in Africa and the Middle East, much of the literature still focuses on asylum-seeking upon arrival at Western borders, with scant scholarship on LGBT refugees’ experiences in first countries of asylum in the Global South (Pincock, 2021, p 844).

Besides legal studies, a significant part of the empirical research on queer asylum deals with the violence, discrimination and obstacles faced by LGBT individuals in their countries of origin and destination (Brum, 2019). As explained by Chávez and Luibhéid (2020, p 5), “LGBTQI people, especially those who are trans and gender-

nonconforming, face exacerbated risks of violence, policing, and containment at the hands of state and non-state identities". A systematic review of the literature found that LGBTQI+ asylum seekers face pressure because of legal prohibitions and stigma in their nations of origin, but also during their process of migrating, since they are exposed to particular forms of violence and exploitation based on their sexuality (Nematy et al, 2022, p.2). Because of their sexual identities, queer migrants have faced trauma, less access to financial resources as a result of discrimination and exclusion, and particular forms of oppression that also complicate their access to legal counsel for asylum (Heller, 2009, p 295). This is why, as with other issues relating to migration, scholars argue for the need to consider sexuality when dealing with queer migrants, even if they are seeking refugee status based on other grounds, such as religious and ethnic persecution (Vitikainen, 2020).

Within the research on queer asylum, a major focus has been on analysing host countries' assessment of queer asylum claims, where the 'performance' of LGBT migrants and the construction of a narrative have been widely studied (Danisi et al, 2021). During the application process, migrants from the Global South have to confront and adapt to Western ideas of what being LGBT ought to look like (Jordan, 2011, p 166). Analysing the Dutch asylum procedure for queer claimants from the Global South, Hertoghs and Schinkel (2018, p 691) found the "facticity of sexuality" to be a "procedure that becomes a test of sexual veracity by means of a truthful performance" in which refugee asylum seekers have to demonstrate their non-heterosexual identities. Researching queer asylum seekers from the Middle East in Germany, Tschalaer (2019, p 5) emphasised the significance of the "the sexual asylum story", meaning that "at the heart of the asylum process rests the asylum interview where the LGBTQI+ asylum seeker is expected to convince the decision-maker of their identity as 'gay', 'lesbian', 'trans', 'bi', and/or 'intersex' and that such identity is 'fateful and irreversible'." Even in countries with policies that are considered more humanitarian, like Canada, this process often results in a "dehumanising" experience for migrants, who are forced to come out among their peers and face a double stigma in trying to detail plausible motives for asylum (Jordan & Morrissey, 2013, p 14).

Moreover, queer migrants in need of refuge do not only migrate to Western countries with more tolerant frameworks for sexual diversity. For instance, when an environment of state-condoned violence against gays and lesbians was created during the public debate on an "anti-homosexuality bill" in Uganda, hundreds of queer people (at least) from that country escaped to Kenya (Pincock, 2021, p 844). Likewise, sexual minorities from the Middle East, particularly from Syria and Iran, have used Turkey, which is defined by UN institutions "as a safe country for queer refugees and asylum seekers", as a first step before seeking shelter in Germany or other EU countries (Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018, p 3). Nevertheless, Grungras, Levitan and Sotek (2009) have warned that Turkey and other nations have become "unsafe havens" for LGBT asylum seekers escaping from countries that punish homosexuality with the death penalty, who arrive in nations that are hostile to both their sexuality and ethnicity. In the case of Turkey, they point out that this is partly the result of increasingly restrictive measures

from the EU to hinder immigration from Africa and Asia (Grungras et al, 2009, p 44). In this context, critics from the Global South have warned against the false dichotomy of a West characterised by its acceptance of sexual diversity and modernity, and an obscurantist East defined by the negation of rights (França, 2017, p 3). Yue (2012, p 269) deems this “homonationalism”, a discourse that “promotes the superiority of a nation through sexual openness” but that “also mobilizes the fear of homophobia to marginalize racialized and sexualized minorities”.

3.6 Sex work and sex trafficking

As mentioned above, a prominent amount of sexuality and migration literature focuses on sex trafficking and sex work, with this particular area studied from a migrant labour perspective (Cvajner & Sciortino, 2021a, p 42). In fact, according to Cvajner and Sciortino (2019, p 474), in the literature the migration of women has often been suspected to overlap with sex work. In media portrayals, public narratives and policy debates, female migration from the Global South to Western Europe and the US is usually associated with the transnational market of sex (Alles & Cogo, 2017, p 2). A significant quantity of scholarship has centred on the debate around regulation and agency, with empirical research comparing the experiences of migrant sex workers in places where prostitution is criminalised, like Vancouver, Canada, and where it is legalised, such as Melbourne, Australia (Ham, 2017). By analysing the debate in India, researchers George, Vindhya and Ray (2010, p 64) found what they called “two polarized stands”: the “neo-abolitionists”, who consider prostitution as equal to human trafficking and needing to be eradicated, and the “neo-regulationists” who argue that sex work is a “legitimate and willing form of labor” that should be legalised or decriminalised, but who deem trafficking “forced prostitution”.

On the one hand, when dealing with migration and sex work, specifically that of cisgender women, immigrants in the Global North have been subjected to racialised representations that treat them “as helpless, child-like, victims that strip sex workers of their agency” (Doezema, 1999, p 23). The idea of ‘trafficking’ is related to international treaties that emerged at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th to deal with women who started to migrate alone (Kempadoo, 2005). The notion of trafficking prompted the victimisation of women who migrated and, at the same time, motivated their criminalisation by deeming them immoral and illegal, stigmas that have expedited their detention and expulsion (Alles & Cogo, 2017). For instance, Miriam Ticktin (2008) has documented that, in France in 2003, the law for internal security criminalised passive soliciting and incentivised deportations with the dual argument that the new legislation aimed to combat human trafficking and thereby “protect female migrant victims" predominantly from Northern Africa. Concurrently, during the early 2000s, the US government championed a vision that linked ‘sexual slavery’ to voluntary prostitution, whether migrant or domestic, a framing that engendered the creation of anti-trafficking laws with an enforcement apparatus that handled all forms of sex work within the US and abroad as the equivalent of slavery (Bernstein, 2018, p 12). Furthermore, the emergence of the AIDS pandemic saw Western countries, but also

countries in the Global South like Brazil, implementing health policies that considered prostitutes and migrants as “groups of risk” and “propagators” of sexually transmitted diseases (Garcia, 2020, p 154). Examples of this perspective include Russia enforcing a 1995 ban on residence for HIV-positive foreigners (Kashnitsky, 2020) and also the media portrayal of HIV-positive refugees as “AIDS assassins” in Australia during the first decade of the 2000s (McKay et al, 2011).

On the other hand, authors warn that people working in street prostitution represent one of the most precarious sectors in society, and female migrants contend with increased challenges because of their vulnerability, which results from the various forms of oppression to which they are subjected (Csalog, 2021, p 163). Scholars from the Global South assert that migrant women from developing countries confront risks and vulnerabilities related to socioeconomic discrimination and informal labour markets that make them susceptible to sexual and labour exploitation (Ramos, 2014, p 434). Studying the experience of migrant sex workers from Latin America, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Europe in the UK, Ruiz-Burga (2021) found the most predominant narratives for leaving the country of origin and engaging in sex work were difficult living conditions and the economic deprivation of their families, with the second most usual cause being poor employment prospects.

However, other authors have argued that scholarship on sex work has overwhelmingly centred on the sale of sex by women, with LGBTQ sex work rarely considered a topic of substantive concern, in spite of a niche literature about men who sell sex to men (Smith & Laing, 2012, p 517). Studies in Latin America and the Middle East have found that a significant number of LGBT people, particularly trans women, engage in sex work because they confront barriers to other forms of employment and material security (Gómez, 2017; Grungras et al, 2009). Further to this, researching Brazilian sex workers in Europe, Vartabedian (2014) found that transvestites and trans women not only used sex work for economic purposes but also to transform their bodies and reaffirm their identities. Meanwhile, Collins (2015, p 213) showed that homosexual men who engage in sex work are regulated differently from other bodies, explaining that gay sex tourism excludes women and pointing out the masculinity of mobility.

Taking into account all these differences, Charlotte Valadier (2018) asks for a clear conceptual distinction between “sex trafficking” and “migration for sex work”. She identifies the role of agency as the key distinctive feature, defining “sex work” as “voluntary sexual transactions”, whereas “sex trafficking” refers to “coerced or non-consensual sexual transactions” (Valadier, 2018, p 502). Additionally, she describes “migrant sex workers” as people who leave their country and work in the sex industry, while “migration for sex work” is a migration project “whose purpose is to enter into a globalized sex work market” (Valadier, 2018, p 502). Other authors draw attention to the challenges of analysing agency when approximating the experiences of trans sex workers, for whom both economic need and the desire to be ‘themselves’ are interdependent motives (Howe et al, 2008, p 33). Sex work for queer migrants, especially those who are trans, signifies a means of surviving in their countries of

origin, and it can even represent a tool for migrating, something shown by the experiences of Central Americans who use transnational sex networks to move to and through Mexico (Gómez, 2017; López Fernández, 2018). In this sense, some argue that sex work is one of the tools that have allowed female and queer bodies to achieve a certain economic autonomy (García Díaz, 2017, p 190) and a "third world feminist perspective" claims that participation in the sex industry and sex work overseas could be thought of as legitimate work opportunities for migrants (Alles & Cogo, 2017, p 2). Notwithstanding this approach, others contend that it is impossible to deny the empirical realities and vulnerability of women who are victims of sex trafficking (Chin, 2013, p 4), with trans women in hostile countries disproportionally susceptible to violence and extortion during sex work (Gómez, 2017). However, "the convergence of oppressive rules against migration and sex work" could have a counterproductive effect, leaving migrant sex workers "greatly exposed to discrimination, social exclusion, and social inequalities to access health care" and other public services (Ruiz-Burga, 2021, p 2).

4 Regional trends and contrasts

The present section will contrast the ways sexuality and migration have been studied in diverse developing regions. For instance, it notes that we have shown that Latin America has allowed for the study of migratory processes that involve people who are close geographically and culturally. Meanwhile, in Asia, the particular history of migration from countries like China and the Philippines has made it a fertile ground for the study of queer diasporas, including the analysis of cisgender women and the sexualisation of labour, while the prevalence of HIV in Africa has marked the study of sexuality and migration in that region. Most of the literature on sexuality and migration concentrates on South–North migratory processes, but it is critical to recognise the heterogeneity of the Global South in terms of legislation, culture and wealth, factors that may produce diverse patterns of sexual migration (Kofman & Raghuram, 2012, p 411). In addition, it is essential to understand that sexual identities and practices in the developing world do not necessarily fit those conceived in the West (Kosnick, 2016, p 15). Moreover, "flows towards the South of the planet are already numerically equated with South–North dislocations, pointing to a redistribution of their dynamics" (Theodoro & Cogo, 2019, p 3). Lee (2018) argues that, while queer people from the Global South suffer homophobia and transphobia in their countries of origin, forcing them to flee their nation, there are differences between regions. He proposes an analytical perspective that attends to "geographically situated specifics, but also power relations on a global scale" quoting a "coloniality" framework that maps out a global matrix of power with distinctive dynamics across Asia, Africa and Latin America (Lee, 2018, p 61).

Taking the aforementioned considerations into account, it is possible to point to contrasts among regions regarding the study of sexuality and migration in the Global South. The first distinction is the legal framework for LGBT people. As mentioned above, laws that criminalise same-sex relationships or do not recognise the gender identity of trans people are a push factor for sexual migration (Nascimento et al, 2017,

p 59). For instance, Africa and Asia constitute the majority of the countries that criminalise consensual same-sex sexual acts (Mendos et al, 2020, p 89). Therefore, studies about sexuality and migration from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Central and South Asia, are often focused on the experiences of LGBT asylum seekers in European countries like Austria, The Netherlands, Greece and the UK (Alessi et al, 2018, p 2018). Case studies about migration in the region are also centred on how the migratory experience recomposes sexuality and gender relations in women and LGBT migrants, like the analysis of the sexual debut of Sub-Saharan African migrants in France made by Marsicano et al (2011). Another special feature is the emphasis on analysing the intersection between being Muslim, migrant and queer or being a woman, such as the study of narratives of queer migrants from Muslim backgrounds in Spain (Coll-Planas et al, 2021).

Regarding South–South migration in the region, a prominent case study on the experience of LGBT people has been Turkey, which serves as a “refugees’ way station” for queer migrants who later want to migrate to the EU, although they also suffer in that country similar levels of homophobia and transphobia as in their nations of origin (Kara & Çalik, 2016). Similarly, countries like Kenya and Egypt have been studied as points of destination for African queer migrants, who often need to be resettled in safe third countries because they find their new place of refuge as homophobic or dangerous as the country from which they fled (LaViolette, 2013). South Africa has also been examined as a special case study. It is regarded as a significant country in global debates about migration because it shows that sexuality and gender are deeply intertwined with mobility "from early colonization through apartheid to the present day” (Palmary, 2018, p 1). South Africa has also sparked interest by having LGBT rights legally recognised and therefore receiving queer refugees, but coexisting with homophobic, transphobic and xenophobic discourses that have created a hostile environment (Marnell et al, 2020, p 2). As with other countries in the continent, forced migration, displacement and violence are also common features in the study of sexuality and migration in South Africa (Bhagat, 2017). In addition, since Africa is the region most affected by HIV, according to the World Health Organization, another distinctive trend in the scholarship has been examining whether migration and sexual behaviour in Africa are linked to a higher risk of infection (Brockerhoff & Biddlecom, 1999; Dzomba et al, 2018).

In contrast to the legal panorama in Africa, Latin America is considered the region outside of the North Atlantic with “mo[st] progress in expanding LGBT legal rights", with legislation that recognises same-sex marriage and gender identity, and with protections against discrimination (Corrales, 2015, p 4). Nevertheless, public opinion remains mixed, and in the Central American Northern Triangle, Haiti and the Caribbean there are restrictive laws and public sentiment against sexual minorities and reproductive rights (Chaux et al, 2021). Thanks to these characteristics and to a shared language and colonial past, Ruiz (2017, p 19) claims that Latin America allows for the study of migratory processes South–South that involve people who are close both geographically and culturally, where class and race are not significant dividing lines.

For example, by studying queer and straight women from Colombia and Peru who have migrated to Chile, Stang (2019) has concluded that migration can be a sexually transformative and liberating experience by itself, since at the time there were no considerable gaps between these countries regarding legislation and public opinion. Another flux of migration is that of South American trans people migrating to Argentina, where the national law on gender identity guarantees public health care for reaffirming people's gender identity, although migrants do face discrimination (Pérez Ripossio, 2020). As noted above, Latin America is the region where the most sex trafficking takes place; thus, the study of sex workers has become a distinctive point of interest, with the most prominent examples in the Andean region (García Díaz, 2017; Ruiz, 2018). Mexico has become a case study as a country of origin, transit and destination for women and queer migrants, particularly but not exclusively Central Americans, who face displacement and sexual violence during their migratory journey (Soria-Escalante et al, 2021; Winton, 2019).

While studies in Africa focus on the experience of sexual migration upon arriving in Europe, regional dynamics in Latin America create a focus on migratory experiences to the US (Donato, 2010). Some empirical research centres on Latin queer and female migrants as victims of trafficking (Miller et al, 2007), of gender and sexual-based violence (Gonnella-Plats et al, 2018), or of prosecution because of one's sexual orientation and gender identity (Alessi et al, 2015). Other work has dealt with the interaction and transformation of the sexuality of Latin migrants in the US and how they, similarly, revamp sexual patterns in destination communities (Alvarado & Nehring, 2010). Authors have found that Latin Americans migrate not only as a result of violence, prosecution or precocity, but also because they look for a certain freedom and lifestyle, and they also have economic concerns like other migrants (Rodriguez, 2011). This broader perspective has allowed for comparative case studies on the experience of LGBT migrants in the US and other countries, like Argentina (Rosas & Gayet, 2019). Most recent studies acknowledge new migration patterns in the region, where the US and Canada are no longer the only destination countries for sexual migrants (Avila & Meyer, 2022).

Meanwhile, in Asia, the particular history of migration from countries like China and the Philippines has made it a fertile ground for the study of queer diasporas, including the analysis of cisgender women and the sexualisation of labour (Fortier, 2002). A significant amount of literature addresses the sexualisation of the Asian migrant's body, particularly of those who are domestic workers or in the service industry (Baas, 2020). Scholars have studied how women migrants from countries like Pakistan or the Philippines with jobs as domestic workers in the Global North, but also in Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, transform their bodies and are sexualised (Baas & Yang, 2020). Yue (2011, p 131) has argued that the Asian global pop market and the Asian diaspora have created new patterns of desire and sexualisation. These lines of work have also fostered debates in migration studies "on the fluidity of heterosexuality and how the performance of heterosexuality has particular spatialities within East and South-East Asia" (Walsh et al, 2008, p 575). The impact of

intra-Asia marriage migration has also been profoundly studied, particularly regarding patterns of heterosexual women using marriage to move from less developed to wealthier countries, with Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan being top destinations (Chang, 2019).

On the other hand, thanks to its size, China has been a subject of study of intra-national migration, particularly among queer migrants (Luo, 2020). Researchers have investigated the dynamics and experiences of gay Chinese men who move from rural to urban areas in the country (Gong & Liu, 2022). China's distinctive economic development, accompanied by its restrictive sexual rights, has also led to studies of class-based mobility among elite gay Chinese men, creating unique contributions to the analysis of the intersection between sexuality, migration and class (Choi, 2022). In this context, skilled and educational migration has contributed to researching queer migration across the Sinophone world, in countries like Malaysia and Taiwan (Yu, 2021). Meanwhile, Hong Kong has constituted a case study to analyse how sexual minority expatriates can become agents of change after returning from countries with more progressive policies on sexuality (Suen, 2019).

5 Contributions and gaps

The focus on sexuality and the emergence of feminist and gender perspectives have made key contributions to migration studies in general, notably in the analysis of labour migration, migrant families and social networks, transnationalism and citizenship, and sex trafficking (Nawyn, 2010, p 749). While some criticise the subject as 'too specific' or 'not generalisable', particularly when adopting a queer perspective, the literature helps us understand how "sexuality, as a dimension of power, has in fact shaped all migration in its practice, regulation and study in profound yet invisible ways" (Cantú, 2009, p 26). The field has also demonstrated a "reciprocal relationship between migration and sexuality", in which migration affects sexuality, resulting in the reconfiguration of identities, practices and communities in the receiving country, while sexuality shapes migration because LGBT migrants and others move looking for safer and more liberal spaces (Adur, 2018, p 321). It has also shown that the arrival of migrants with dissident sexualities has an impact on communities, cultures and politics in the receiving territory (Luibhéid, 2005, p 10).

The examination of sexuality has also improved the study of mobilities by demonstrating that identity, sexuality and emotion, beyond material and safety concerns, are also "at the heart of migration decision making and behaviour" of any migrant (Mai & King, 2009, p 296). Exploring the mobility of sexuality across the globe has provided new insights into the individual and collective paths of migration and queer escape and reconstitution (Sánchez-Eppler & Patton, 2000, p 3). Concurrently, it has expanded the emerging field of geographies of sexualities, which explores the relationship between sexualities, space and place, by helping to move away from a perspective that used to be centred on white and cisgender men (Brown et al, 2009; Grant, 2020). Investigating sexual migration has broadened the concept of sexual globalisation, moving from "an initial emphasis on the dissemination of sexuality-related

ideas and practices from the North to the so-called Global South, to one that recognized more complex interactions between global and local sexual discourses" (Carrillo, 2014, p 161). Similarly, the intersection of queer theory and diaspora studies has shed light on the ways in which geographical mobility creates new configurations and ideas of sexuality and gender identity (Wesling, 2008, p 30).

In spite of these contributions, scholars point out that there are topics that remain under-explored, especially in South–South migration dynamics and intraregional perspectives (Gontijo, 2021). Some of these gaps and the related opportunities for future research will be presented here. This section might appear underdeveloped in certain places, but it reflects the point the paper has made throughout that the literature on sexuality and migration in the Global South is still an emerging area. As such, this brief list is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of all the research gaps or the most pressing issues; rather, it aims to elaborate some key topics mentioned by the authors cited throughout the literature review, who see the following as opportunity areas.

5.1 The experience before and after migration

Carrillo (2018, p 26) identifies as a major gap the need to investigate the complete trajectory of migration, meaning the study of queer migrants' lives both before and after the migration process. He observes that groundbreaking empirical studies have developed detailed descriptions of the post-incorporation experiences of sexual migrants, but he criticises the fact that those studies lack a systematic analysis of their subjects' lives pre-migration, which would take into account the diversity of their experiences and the sexuality-related context of their home countries (Carrillo, 2018, p 26). In sum, Carrillo argues that studies have not been able to systematically link the experiences of migrants' pre-migration experiences in the Global South with their post-migration sexual lives in the host country (Carrillo, 2018, p 27). Furthermore, Nawyn (2016, p 163) asserts that the body of work heavily emphasises South–North migration, leaving out most of human migration. Therefore, not studying the whole diversity of the migratory process raises questions about how existing theory should be applied to different migration patterns, specifically South–South (Nawyn, 2016, p 165). This gap is exacerbated by the lack of official statistics and the challenge of collecting data about queer migrants or other people who may be migrating because of sexuality, since both the origin and destination country do not have official statistics about sexual migration and, in addition, migrants may choose to hide their sexuality (Tamagawa, 2020, p 20).

5.2 Masculinities and heterosexuality

As mentioned above, scholars have long warned about the scant empirical research dealing with the relevance of masculinity in international migration and the need to expand the notions of sexuality and migration to include cisgender women and queer migrants (Ahmad, 2008, p 127). Although the term "feminization of migration" has become widespread in recent years, Ali Nobil Ahmad warns that, in some regions, like Pakistan, migrant labour flows are overwhelmingly male, suggesting that masculinity

and male agency could also be major factors in migration (Ahmad, 2008, p 127). Studying male migrants from Pakistan, Ahmad has concluded that risk and fantasy associated with moving to another country are erotic energies that motivate an interest in migration in men, who desire the sexual freedom and status portrayed in Western media (Ahmad, 2016). Similarly, researching Peruvian straight and homosexual men in Peru and New York, Vasquez del Aguila (2014, p 228) has analysed how migration shapes male sexuality. He claims that "migration is a contested field where men negotiate their sexual desires, notions of fidelity, romance, partner expectations, sex and intimacy". For men, he adds, migration expands the possibilities for romance and sexual encounters. Other studies have also noted that straight men who migrate alone to the US engage in new sexual practices that transform their sexuality, such as having sex for money or as a mechanism to avoid loneliness (Rosas & Gayet, 2019, p 6). This is why authors are asking for a more inclusive sexuality framework that includes heterosexuality, since straight individuals and couples also face changes within their sexual practices and identities while migrating (Gonzálvez, 2014).

5.3 Activism, network and alliances

Lastly, Lewis and Naples (2014) point out the scant discussion in the literature of the relationship between queer migration and LGBT activism. Ayoub and Bauman (2019, p 2759) claim that immigration boosts the propensity for queer social movement organisations to mobilise beyond borders and in activists' home countries, but scholarship has rarely explored the role of international migration in LGBT transnational activism. Mayo-Adam (2020) coined the term "queer alliances" after researching coalition building among the organised LGBT movement, immigrants and labour rights activists in the US. Other researchers have begun to explore how traditional civil society actors are creating "hospitality networks" in the Global South, such as those in Mexico, to participate in the reception of migrants who are openly queer, are women travelling alone, or are engaging in sex work (Ortiz-Cadena et al, 2020). Moreover, queer migrants historically have created their own alternative communities of support as a result of the rejection faced both by their compatriots and by locals in the host country, so this network building and these transitional ties are worth exploring (Valenzuela, 2020).

6 Conclusions

This literature review has shown that the inclusion of a sexuality framework has improved the understanding of a gendered perspective of migration. It also demonstrates that an intersectional perspective that includes sexuality can also shed light on other aspects and variables of the migratory process. Nonetheless, even though the field has made meaningful progress in the past three decades, significant gaps remain. The literature has been heavily focused on South–North migration routes, somewhat neglecting South–South dynamics in spite of evidence of a considerable amount of migratory flows within the developing world. At the same time, there are few official data on sexual migration, since it is a challenge to collect statistics about sexual migrants, who may be afraid of disclosing their sexuality, who face government indifference and hostility, or who simply do not state whether sexuality is the main

reason motivating their migratory process or just another factor. New research needs to address ways to collect reliable quantitative data on sexual migrants.

Another criticism has been the disproportionate focus on the migratory experiences of cisgender gay males, although it is important to remember that same-sex relations are still criminalised in almost 70 countries. Other authors have expanded the study of queer migration to place more emphasis on lesbian, bisexual and trans people, while others have gone even further and have included sex workers, heterosexuality and masculinity, since the literature has shown that sexuality can shape anyone's migratory process. Sexuality and migration studies have been successful in making clear that emotion, desire, identity and sexuality are also characteristics that migrants consider beyond material, safety and economic concerns. Future research could expand by investigating the whole migratory process to understand the experience of queer migrants before, during and after the migratory experience. Another avenue of research is the formation of alliances with local activists, the construction of social networks and transnationalism. LGBT migrants and sex worker migrants have the potential to create coalitions with local organisations that fight for labour and sexual rights.

Finally, as pointed out by various scholars, there is no systematic framework for the analysis of sexuality. A gender perspective has been mainstreamed and statistics tend to distinguish between male and female migrants, but there is no similar tool for sexuality. As Luibhéid (2008, p. 169) put it, queer migration is an "unruly body of scholarship". Therefore, a research programme on this subject should, first of all, aim to contribute to generating an analytical framework that clearly defines the scope of sexuality and migration studies. Second, it ought to address ways to develop quantitative methods to collect reliable hard data on sexual migrants. As shown by the regional trends section, it needs to compare in more detail the different regional dynamics to understand nuances and contrasts in the Global South. Thus, a significant suggestion is to conduct more empirical studies on South–South migration. It is also advisable to amplify the scope of sexuality without neglecting LGBT migration. Suggested topics of exploration are how actors who are traditional receivers of migrants in destination countries adapt and react to sexual migrants; analysis of transnational alliances and networks; and the intersection of sexual migration with disabilities and skilled migration.

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