

CROSSING THE RAINBOW BRIDGE FROM HELL TO HEAVEN? LIVED EXPERIENCES OF LGBTQIA MIGRANTS ON THEIR WAY TO AND IN SWEDEN

Pelle Pelters^{1*}, Eva-Carin Lindgren², Krister Hertting³ and Catrine Kostenius⁴

¹*Department of education, Faculty of Social Science, Stockholm University, Sweden,
pelle.pelters@edu.su.se*

²*Department of Health and Sports, School of Health and Welfare, Halmstad University,
Sweden, eva-carin.lindgren@hh.se*

³*Department of Health and Sports, School of Health and Welfare, Halmstad University,
Sweden, krister.hertting@hh.se*

⁴*Division: Nursing and Medical Technology,
Department of Health, Education and Technology, Luleå University of Technology,
Catrine.Kostenius@ltu.se*

(*Main presenter and corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

This presentation focuses on the lived experiences of LGBTQ migrants participating in a civil society group in Sweden during the migration process and their reflections on the future. Eleven migrants who self-identified as LGBTQ (seven male/gay, one female/lesbian, one female/bi-sexual, and two transgender/gay persons) from three local support groups for LGBTQ migrants (RFSL Newcomers) were interviewed. Participants came from Guinea, Iraq, Kurdistan, North Macedonia, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Syria, Uganda and Ukraine. Interpretative-phenomenological analysis resulted in three themes: Past: from daily stress to the fear of being killed; Present: safety, belonging and resources to support the transition to a new life; and Future: making a positive difference or being afraid of what's ahead. Participants' health-related journeys and reflections about the future were complex in terms of favourable and unfavourable lived experiences, which become resources and risks for personal development. Study findings offer an enhanced awareness of the complex landscape of, and interaction between, vulnerability and potentiality. We recommend to focus on the LGBTQ migrants' strengths and personal resources instead of assigning weakness and vulnerability to not promote a simplistic view on LGBTQIA migrants.

Keywords: LGBTQ migrants, vulnerability, potentiality, health promotion

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Authors' biography:

Pelle Pelters

Pelle is a senior lecturer in (health) education at Stockholm University. S/he is a sociologist with roots in educational science with a focus on (norm-)critical education and conducting health studies from a critical point of view. Research interests include health as an order of power, its morality and normality, as well as health disparities and the meaning of good health.

Eva-Carin Lindgren

Eva-Carin is a professor at the School of Health and Welfare, Halmstad University, Sweden. She has conducted both qualitative and intervention studies in areas of health promotion (physical activity, body and empowerment, and immigration). She also conducts research in elite sports contexts and children's sports in relation to coach-athlete relationships. She adopts the perspectives of gender, intersectionality, and health promotion.

Krister Hertting

Krister is an Associate Professor in Education at Halmstad University, School of Health and Welfare. His main research focus is on pedagogical aspects of youth sport and civil society, with focuses such as health, migration, and coaching.

Catrine Kostenius

Catrine is a professor of health science at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. Kostenius' research focus is on health promotion and health education with expertise in participatory research, giving voice to human beings of all ages, and making use of their contributions in the fields of health care and education. She is currently leading a national funded research and development project at Norrbotten Association of Local Municipalities with the aim of strengthening health-promoting school development in the most northern region of Sweden. Kostenius is one of the experts in a current governmental assignment about promoting mental health in children and youth at SBU (the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment for Social Services).