

## **Abstract**

### **The Role of Social Services in Supporting LGBTIQ Migrants - A Queer, Decolonial Approach.**

An Abstract of the Thesis by

*Hannah Ellis*

LGBTIQ+ migrants in Western Europe face unique challenges due to their intersecting, marginalised identities. Nevertheless, comprehensive social work research which engages with queer migration scholarship to explore this issue is lacking. This qualitative study conducted expert interviews with social service workers to explore challenges and available social support for LGBTIQ+ migrants settling in Germany, as well as barriers which may limit the social support provided. Engaging with a queer, decolonial perspective, the study demonstrated that LGBTIQ+ migrants face varied, complex challenges which are often maintained and exacerbated by expectations to navigate and present within Eurocentric, cis-heteronormative expectations. Findings show that social workers hold responsibility in supporting LGBTIQ+ migrants in overcoming these barriers and building community; however, Eurocentric and cis-heteronormative expectations can also limit social support available for this group. The study recommends incorporating a queer, decolonial perspective within social work practice and education, including the fostering of critical reflection to address biases and improve services. Findings also indicated that there are insufficient resources within social services to deal with the complex needs of LGBTIQ+ migrants. To develop support, social services should adopt an intersectional approach by establishing collaborative networks between organisations to develop services which are tailored to meet a range of complex needs. The exploratory nature of the study provides a number of recommendations for future practice and research.