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Knowledge and Policy About LGBTQI Migrants: a Scoping Review of the Canadian and Global Context

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Abstract

This article aims to share key findings from a scoping review of the literature about LGBTQI migrants from a global context. The scoping review methodology allows for rapid assessment of a broad range of literature while also highlighting key knowledge and policy strengths and gaps. Although this review focuses on the Canadian-specific literature, it also compares the Canadian context with the broader global context. Upon presenting a synthesis of the knowledge produced about LGBTQI migrants, implications on Canadian refugee and newcomer settlement policies are critically assessed. This review presents how the Canadian literature has shifted over the past decade from a focus on legal scholarship to broader knowledge from multiple disciplines about the social, political, economic and transnational contexts for LGBTQI migrations to Canada. Although there have been key improvements to Canadian refugee policy, there remains a lack of federal and provincial policies and settlement programs designed to attend to the particular needs of LGBTQI migrants. The relevance of the Canadian knowledge and policies in relation to knowledge emerging from the Global South and elsewhere in the Global North will also enrich the discussion about present and future research and policy directions in this area.

Keywords LGBTQI · Sexuality · Gender · Migration · Forced migration · Canada

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Introduction

On a global scale, there are currently uneven levels of societal acceptance, active exclusion and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans,[1] queer[2] and intersex (LGBTQI) people. In their yearly report, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) suggests that 78 (out of 193) UN member states, the majority from the Global South, have laws which criminalize promoting or engaging in same-sex sexual activity, resulting in imprisonment and in some cases, the death penalty (Carroll and Ramon Mendos, 2017). Simultaneously, the contemporary global context of migration suggests a continued increase in forced migrations, people who are forced out of their countries of origin due to interconnected factors such as political violence, dictatorship, war, environmental disaster and development (Castles et al., 2014).

However, there remains scant literature about how these social and economic conditions shape the kinds of homophobic and transphobic violence which often compel LGBTQI people from the Global South to migrate to the Global North. The experiences of LGBTQI migrants living in Canada and elsewhere in the Global North, especially those who have sought refugee status, have received increased media and scholarly attention. The term migrant includes those who arrive to Canada as permanent residents (i.e. refugees, economic class, family class, etc.) or with precarious status (visitors, temporary workers, international students, refugee claimants, undocumented, etc.).

This article aims to share key findings from a scoping review of the literature about LGBTQI migrants living in the Global North with a particular focus on the Canadian context.[3] The central objective of this article is to draw from this scoping review to critically assess the extent, range and quality of the empirical literature about LGBTQI migrants living in Canada as well as map out key themes and tensions that emerged across research findings. A focus on the Canadian literature allows for a more thorough examination of the ways in which knowledge production and policies related to LGBTQI migrants living in Canada have shifted and changed over time. Subsequently, a comparison between Canada and elsewhere in the Global North (in particular the USA, Europe and Australia) enriches the discussion about present and future policy directions and implications for this population across geographic, political and socio-economic contexts.

Overview of Scoping Review Methodology

A scoping review methodology (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005) allowed for rapid assessment of a broad range of literature while also highlighting key knowledge and

[1] Trans is used as umbrella term to describe individuals who identify and/or express their gender as different from the gender they are assigned at birth. Trans theory engages with term trans as an analytical tool and anti-normative politics.

[2] Queer has historically used within Anglophone contexts as a derogatory term but it has been re-appropriated by some people as an umbrella term or to signify sexual and gender fluidity. Queer theory engages with term as an analytical tool and anti-normative politics.

[3] This scoping review examined four bodies of literature: (1) LGBTQI people living in the Global South, (2) LGBTQI migrants living in Canada (3) LGBTQI people living in US (4) LGBTQI people living elsewhere in the Global North (Europe, Australia, etc.). A total of 241 publications were included, with 56 from Canada, 74 from the US, 50 from elsewhere in the Global North and 61 from the Global South.

policy strengths and gaps. To our knowledge, this is the first scoping review to be conducted and published with a focus on the LGBTQI migrant literature. This scoping review was conducted in four phases: (1) development of the scoping review protocol, (2) collection of literature, (3) completion of data extraction forms and (4) data synthesis. The following section summarizes each of these phases.

Development of the Scoping Review Protocol

This scoping review protocol included the following information: primary research question, aim and objectives, outputs, definitions for key terms, eligibility criteria, search strategy and data sources, data extraction, rigour and data synthesis plan. A challenge during this phase was identifying the inclusion criteria for the review. Notably in Canada and the USA, various categories were used for LGBTQI migrants, including Latinx, Asian, Arab or Middle Eastern, African American and LGBTQI people of colour. The research team subsequently refined the inclusion criteria to ensure that all qualitative research that included nearly all LGBTQI migrants in their sample would be included.

Parameters set for the inclusion of English and French scholarship and policy documents also included those texts with an explicit qualitative research methodology and participants so as to assess a broad range of knowledge. This enabled the capture of scholarship that engaged in text-based analysis and was more theoretical or activist oriented as well as some key Canadian policy documents that would help situate the Canadian literature. Literature from 2007 to 2017 (the scoping review was completed between 2017 and 2018) was included, in order to focus on knowledge produced over the past decade. However, this article has also integrated literature published in the last couple of years, in order to ensure that the policy implication section will take into consideration the most current scholarship, policy and practice trends.

Collection of Literature

In this phase, the COVIDENCE software (www.covidence.org) was used to manage and keep track of the included publications up until the data extraction phase. The COVIDENCE software was especially useful because the international research team was geographically located across two sites: Montreal (Canada) and London (UK). The team examined the titles and abstracts to verify which articles would be included versus excluded with two research members needed for a publication to ultimately be included. However, it is important to note that the review protocol was applied iteratively through a process of revision and adaptation during this literature collection phase in order to respond to emergent issues that arose.

Completion of Data Extraction Forms

A common data extraction form (including title, methods used, summary of findings) was used by the research team to ensure consistency of information collection. The form included the following sections: study title, authors, type of empirical knowledge source, country of origin, year of publication, objectives, theoretical framework, methodological approach, duration of study, recruitment strategy, participant sample,

participant numbers, key inclusion or exclusion criteria, migrant status, participants' country of origin and other demographics (i.e. age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.). The form also included a summary of main findings including main themes and key recommendations related to policy and practice implications, identified knowledge gaps and study limitations. The team first tested out an initial draft of the data extraction form and subsequently modified it in order to better fit the needs of this scoping review. These forms were compared and discussed as necessary.

Data Synthesis

For the data synthesis phase, the included literature was divided up amongst team members based on region (Global South, Canada, USA, elsewhere in Global North) in order to develop an initial synthesis. Some of the priorities of the data synthesis plan included identifying key themes within each section and then to compare and contrast across sections. Policy and practice recommendations across sections were synthesized and then knowledge strengths and gaps were identified. At different points during the data synthesis phase, the research team would discuss and debate the emergent themes and tensions, as they would go back to the completed data extraction forms to re-assess the literature.

Scoping Review Limitations

One limitation of this scoping review was the exclusion of the experiences of LGBTQI migrants whose country of origin was from Eastern Europe. The main reason for this decision was due to the focus of this scoping review being migration from the Global South to the Global North (and in particular to Canada). Given the recent criminalization of LGBTQI rights in some Eastern European countries (i.e. Russia, etc.), this is an important area of research and policy development. Another limit included the challenges of navigating migrant/ethnic/racial categorizations in research. Since there is overlap between the experiences of a first-generation racialized migrant and 2nd (or 3rd or more)-generation racialized person, it is difficult to decide whether to develop research projects that are based on migrant status versus ethnic/racial identity. Although a number of articles focused on the Latinx population were included in this scoping review, very few studies focused on African American/Black and Asian populations were included, even though some of these did include LGBTQI migrants. This is due to the proportion of population samples with migrants in these studies. There is no easy answer to this dilemma, but it is a challenge that researchers will need to continue to grapple with in the future.

Data Synthesis of the Canadian Literature

This section presents the scoping review findings of the Canadian literature. The Canadian literature was organized into three parts: (1) refugees and the refugee claimant process, (2) newcomers and immigrants, (3) migrants with precarious status and detention. The decision to group the literature into these categories was partly shaped by how various researchers articulated the parameters of their target population.

On one hand, the sole focus by some researchers on LGBTQI refugee claimants allowed for a more rigourous analysis of the refugee process. On the other hand, the other categories included a wider array of LGBTQI migrant realities, resulting in different themes and policy implications that extended beyond the refugee claim process. In addition, most scholars applied critical, community-based and participatory research methodologies. Although a multitude of theories were used (i.e. ecological, feminist, queer, minority stress, homonationalism, etc.), intersectionality (Collins, 2002; Crenshaw, 1989) served as an emergent theoretical framework used by a number of scholars.

Knowledge About LGBTQI Refugees and the Refugee Claimant Process

The majority of this literature was focused on LGBTQI refugees and how the refugee claimant process assesses SOGIE (sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression)–based claims (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2012). Out of 56 Canadian publications, 34 were focused solely on LGBTQI refugees. Most of the literature included a mix of cis[4] men and women and an analysis of sexual orientation, with a smaller number also including trans people and an analysis of gender identity and expression (Jordan, 2009; Lee & Brotman, 2011; Murray, 2015). None explores intersex realities. Some of these studies also included service providers and community workers (Lee & Brotman, 2011) or focused solely on service provider perspectives (Kahn et al., 2017). Most of these studies were completed either in Vancouver (Jordan, 2009), the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (Nicol et al., 2014; Murray, 2015) or a combination of Toronto and Montreal (Lee and Brotman, 2011, 2013; Lee, 2015).

In tracing the main themes addressed within this body of literature over the past decade, there was a noticeable shift in the nature and type of knowledge produced about LGBTQI refugees. Although LGBTQ refugee scholarship initially surfaced in Canada in the 1990s, the majority of literature about this topic from 2007 to 2010 was from legal scholars applying case study methodology to assess the degree to which Canadian refugee law, sometimes in comparison to other Global North countries, accounted for sexual orientation based refugee claims.

These scholars critiqued the ways in which the Canadian refugee determination system applied refugee law for SOGIE-based refugee claims. Instead of adhering to the legal definition of sexual orientation as an 'immutable personal characteristic', these scholars suggested that sexual orientation and gender identity needed to be understood as fluid and contextual (Rehaag, 2008, 2009) and contingent on the ways in which LGBTQI people are marginalized as a social group due to not conforming to societal gender norms (LaViolette, 2007). Some scholars also critiqued the ways in which the adjudication process was heavily shaped by stereotypical conceptions of gay and lesbian people (LaViolette, 2007) while other scholars critiqued dominant Western conceptions about sexual identity formation as linear and innate (LaViolette, 2009; Rehaag, 2008). After the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) published a guidance note on SOGI-based refugee claims (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2012), LaViolette (2009) noted (a) that this should have been more authoritative in the form of a handbook

[4] The term cis is used for people whose gender identity has always been concordant with their gender assigned at birth (Serano, 2016; Bauer et al. 2009).

and/or guidelines and (b) that even with this limitation, Canada needed to implement this guidance note as well as gender-based guidelines.

However, some publications did not come from a legal perspective (Jenicek et al., 2009; Jordan, 2009, 2010). Jordan (2009, 2010) applied critical ethnography to analyze the ways in which LGBTQI refugees navigated not only the refugee determination system but also broader Canadian society. In contrast, Jenicek et al. (2009) analyzed Canadian Anglophone media representations of LGBTQI refugees by engaging in critical discourse analysis. This scholarship expanded knowledge produced in this area by exploring social, spatial, psychological and representative dimensions of LGBTQI refugee realities.

The time period of 2011 onwards marked a shift away from law-focused scholarship, as a growing number of scholars across disciplines published in this area. Some of these scholars continued to focus some or all their analysis on how LGBTQI people navigated the refugee determination system (Lee & Brotman, 2011; Ricard, 2011, 2014a, b). A critical view of Canadian refugee policies, social institutions and dominant discourses revealed how refugee status and sexual orientation and/or gender identity interact and result in particular intersectional burdens on LGBTQI refugees, both within and outside of the refugee process (Lee & Brotman, 2013). Some publications critically analyzed changes to Canadian refugee law in 2012 (with the passing of Bill C-31) and the implications of these changes on LGBTQI refugees (Gamble et al., 2015; Lee & Brotman, 2013; Nicol et al., 2014; Sanjani, 2014). At the same time, the scope of the literature expanded to include social and political spheres outside of the refugee process (Lee & Brotman, 2011, 2013; Murray, 2015). These studies explored how LGBTQI refugees navigated housing, educational and employment barriers, access to health and social services (i.e. medical care, mental health) and family and/or community belonging.

Since 2014, there has been a significant increase in publications from a variety of disciplines that have further expanded knowledge about LGBTQI refugees (Fobear, 2016; Murray, 2015; Lee, 2015; White, 2013). Some scholars examined the ways in which the Canada refugee apparatus reproduced homonationalist discourses (Murray, 2015; White, 2013) or expanded a critique beyond the refugee system to the linkages between various types of precarious status (Lee, 2015) LGBTQI migrants with precarious status.

Knowledge Focused on LGBTQI Newcomers and Immigrants

Another set of literature explored the experiences of LGBTQI migrants by using the categories of 'newcomer' and 'immigrant'. These terms were sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes included refugees. Most of the research projects referred to by this literature were based in Vancouver (O'Neill & Kia, 2012), Toronto (Adam & Rangel, 2015; Avelar, 2015; Brown, 2012; Serrano Sanchez, 2013) and Montreal (Chbat, 2011; El-Hage & Lee, 2016; Gagné & Chamberland, 2008; Roy, 2013). Most of this literature also focused on permanent residents (i.e. family class, sponsored refugees, economic class), although some also include a very small (usually 1 person) participant sample of 2nd-generation immigrants and LGBTQI refugees (including those who are going through the refugee claim process). Some scholars used the general category of newcomer or immigrant with interviewed participants coming from

a large diversity of regions and backgrounds (El-Hage & Lee, 2016; Munro et al., 2013; O'Neill & Kia, 2012; Yee et al., 2014; Roy, 2013), while others focused on migrants from a particular background, such as Afro-Caribbean (Brown, 2012; Logie et al., 2016), Latinx (Serrano Sanchez, 2013) and Lebanese (Chbat, 2011), or on youth experiences (Munro et al., 2013; Yee et al., 2014). Some literature included population samples of only or mostly cis men (Avelar, 2015; Brown, 2012; Roy, 2013); others included either cis men and women (Chbat, 2011, O'Neill & Kia, 2012), trans people (Logie et al., 2016; Yee et al., 2014) and service provider perspectives (O'Neill & Kia, 2012).

A key theme in the literature explored the ways in which LGBTQI newcomers faced particular challenges in navigating the tension between personal affirmation and/or management of their sexual and gender identity versus external forces (via community members, service providers, etc.) imposing certain ways of labelling and expressing of sexuality and/or gender (i.e. 'coming out'). Although some people publicly affirmed their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (El-Hage & Lee, 2016; Serrano Sanchez, 2013), others either did not want to label themselves from a Western-centric label (i.e. LGBTQI) (O'Neill & Kia, 2012) or they did not feel the need to publicly 'come out' (Chbat, 2011; Roy, 2013). These scholars emphasize how some LGBTQI migrants negotiate the 'coming out' process differently from the standard linear model of sexual identity formation whereby being 'out' about one's sexual orientation to everyone is identified as the ideal. Instead, many LGBTQI migrants negotiate 'coming out' in a more subtle and tacit manner in order to maintain harmony within their intimate and familial relationships as well as ensure access to services, employment and housing (Chbat, 2011; Roy, 2013). Indeed, most literature describes ties to biological family and ethno-racial community members as complex, as they were a key part of LGBTQI migrants' social support network, but also the site of homophobia and/or transphobia.

Another major theme that surfaced in the literature was the structural barriers faced by LGBTQI migrants when accessing health and social services, education and/or immigration and/or refugee-specific services. Scholars suggested LGBTQI migrants navigate post-migration experiences of racism and homophobia/transphobia at workplaces, health and social services, immigration and/or refugee-specific services, educational sites, etc. (Munro et al., 2013; Yee et al., 2014). Although structural barriers experienced by LGBTQI migrants across health, social service and educational sites were similar to those faced by all migrants, factors such as immigration status, being racialized, living with HIV and language proficiency in conjunction with sexual orientation and/or gender identity resulted in new and complex barriers (Munro et al., 2013; Serrano Sanchez, 2013). Some barriers were subtle; for example, O'Neill & Kia (2012) found that LGBTQI newcomers often lacked access to sexual health services and, as a result, had reduced access to information about healthy and safer sexual health practices.

At the same time, other scholars suggested that LGBTQI migrants felt more able to express their sexual orientation and/or gender identity than in their country of origin (Brown, 2012) and identified the importance of LGBTQI migrant–specific support groups and spaces as a way to build community and belonging (Logie et al., 2016). Indeed, Logie et al. (2016) found that a social support group for LGBTQI Afro-Caribbean people helped to reduce social isolation, facilitate knowledge sharing, challenge stigma (i.e. due to race, immigration, gender, sexuality, etc.) and promote dialogue and opportunities for sexual health education. Some literature explored the

particular experiences and barriers faced by trans migrants (Butler Burke, 2016; Bhanji, 2012; Logie et al., 2016; Munro et al., 2013; Ngo et al., 2017).

Knowledge about LGBTQI Precarious Status

This literature included the experiences of LGBTQI migrants with various types of precarious status (i.e. temporary worker, international student, visitor, refugee claimant, undocumented status, detention, etc.). These studies suggest that living with either temporary status or no status (undocumented) results in reduced access to health and social services, employment, housing, civil and political life, etc. (Butler Burke, 2016; Corkum, 2015; Lee, 2015, Lee and Brotman, 2011; Munro et al., 2013; Serrano Sanchez, 2013). As a result, LGBTQI migrants with precarious status live with increased stress, often based on laws and policies that restrict their abilities to have a political voice, access essential services and maintain gainful employment. As LGBTQI migrants often shifted precarious status upon arrival to Canada, temporary visa (student, visitor, temporary worker) applications do not take into consideration the kinds of violence that LGBTQI people living in the Global South encounter and often serve to block LGBTQI people from entry into Canada (Lee, 2015).

For those who are undocumented, there is an increased level of stress that come with being criminalized and the possibility of being detained and deported (Butler Burke, 2016; Jordan, 2009, 2010; Lee & Brotman, 2011, 2013; Lee, 2015; Munro et al., 2013; Serrano Sanchez, 2013). In Jordan's (2010) study, undocumented participants did not realize that they could apply for refugee status, so some participants actually remained undocumented for nearly a decade. However, few Canadian studies focused solely on LGBTQI migrants who have experienced detention and/or are undocumented.

A small number of publications address the experiences of trans migrants with precarious status (Butler Burke, 2016; Jordan, 2009, 2010; Lee & Brotman, 2011; Lee, 2015; Ngo et al., 2017). Butler Burke (2016) found that trans migrants who engage in sex work face particular forms of structural violence and criminalization from the police and immigration authorities, resulting in imprisonment and detention. Ngo et al. (2017) suggests that trans migrants living in Quebec (the only province to have this law) are unable to change their gender marker and name until becoming a citizen, resulting in many years of disproportionate exposure to discrimination and violence.

Comparing Policy Implications in Canada and Elsewhere in the Global North

The previous section explored the Canadian literature about LGBTQI migrants and how this literature shifted and changed over time from a focus on the legal process for SOGIE-based refugee claims to a broader examination of the social, political and economic context that shapes LGBTQI migrant life. Having presented this literature, we now turn to explore the ways in which Canadian-specific scholarship and advocacy about LGBTQI migrants has informed various policy and practice shifts in Canada and elsewhere in the Global North over the past decade. The first section will focus on the implications of this scholarship and advocacy on Canadian refugee law, in particular the refugee determination process. The subsequent section will explore the ways in

which the scholarship has also pointed to shifts towards anti-oppressive and trauma-informed practice for LGBTQI newcomers, more generally. Some key gaps in knowledge will also be highlighted. Finally, the relevance of Canadian research, policy development and service provision for elsewhere in the Global North (such as the USA, Europe and Australia) will be assessed.

Canadian Refugee-Specific Policy Implications

As mentioned previously, there was a shift from a focus on legal scholarship to an increase in scholarship from a wider range of disciplines, shedding light on the broader social, political, structural, economic and transnational context that shape LGBTQI migrations in Canada. Some of these scholars presented critiques of Canada's investments in broader settler colonial, neoliberal and homonational practices (Corkum, 2015; Fobear, 2013; Murray, 2015; White, 2013). A central characteristic of the knowledge produced from these scholars (and research teams) is the policy and institutional critiques presented as well as a cumulative set of policy and practice recommendations that, although divergent in some aspects, were also fairly consistent with each other.

The social change-oriented nature of Canadian knowledge produced in this area, along with on-the-ground advocacy by community organizations and advocates, many of whom were associated with various key scholars and research projects, certainly informed legal and policy changes in Canada (Lee & Brotman, 2011; Murray, 2015; Nicol et al., 2014). Before the passing of refugee reform Bill C-31[5] in 2012, a number of Canadian researchers, community workers and LGBTQI refugees themselves engaged in policy advocacy in order to push for changes to Bill C-31 before it was passed, resulting in some changes being made to the law (Lee & Brotman, 2013; Sanjani, 2014).

Key recommendations from these scholars as well as advocacy by community organizations and advocates also informed the recent implementation of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) based guidelines by the IRB (Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), 2017). Indeed, these guidelines explicitly note the scholarship of the late Nicole LaViolette in its development. Another key inclusion was an intersectional analysis, which has been a key theoretical lens used in this area of research. These advancements clearly demonstrate how engaged research about and with LGBTQI migrants can result in meaningful policy change.

Canadian Newcomer Settlement Policy and Practice Implications

Most of the non-legal literature addressed various newcomer settlement issues such as access to health, social services and immigration and/or refugee-specific services, educational, housing and employment barriers, and family/community belonging. This literature suggests that services are inadequate in their capacity to ensure equitable

[5] Despite opposition from refugee advocacy and migrant justice groups, the (conservative majority) Canadian government passed Bill C-31 in 2012. This new refugee law resulted in the facilitation of removal procedures, lengthier detention stays and the creation of a differential refugee claim process (i.e. limited access to appeal) for individuals identified as from 'designated countries of origin' (DCOs) or so-called safe countries. However, this past year, the (liberal majority) Canadian government removed the notion of DCOs from Canadian refugee law.

access to LGBTQI migrants. In contrast with shifts in Canadian refugee law, it is more difficult to ascertain the degree to which this research has informed policy and practice changes. This is partly due to the fact that most of these services are delivered through a wide variety of funding programs at the federal, provincial and/or municipal levels. With the increase in the number of scholars and research projects focused on this area, there will most likely continue to be an increase in policy and practice shifts at all levels, in particular in the cities and regions surrounding Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

Some policy recommendations include developing strategies to reduce heterosexist and cissexist service delivery for all migrants as well as specialized services and programs for LGBTQI migrants (Lee & Brotman, 2011; Logie et al., 2016; Munro et al., 2013). There is also a need for increased collaboration between settlement, health, youth and LGBTQI specific services (O'Neill & Kia, 2012). Arts and media-based programs for LGBTQI migrants as well as increased access to sexual health education have also been suggested (Avelar, 2015; Fobear, 2016; Lee & Miller, 2014; Lee & Brotman, 2013; Miller, 2010; Serrano, 2013). There is also a gap between the knowledge produced and public funding to increase programs, services and training in this area.

With respect to practice implications, it has been suggested that social service providers should engage in anti-oppressive practice and attend to the intersectional realities of LGBTQI migrants (Lee & Brotman, 2013; Munro et al., 2013; O'Neill & Kia, 2012; Yee et al., 2014). Every possible point of contact with LGBTQI migrants needs to be attuned to their realities, survival tactics and social conditions (Jordan, 2009). However, the vulnerability linked to the early stages of arrival means that this is a key time to ensure equitable access to health and social services for LGBTQI newcomers (Serrano Sanchez, 2013). Mental health services also need to be adapted to apply a trauma-informed approach and recognize the role of childhood trauma in how LGBTQI migrants navigate their realities post-migration (Alessi et al., 2016). An essential pathway to achieve these objectives includes increased training for various service providers across sectors to promote increased awareness of the multiple barriers faced by LGBTQI migrants.

Knowledge Gaps and Moving Forward

There remains a significant gap between the knowledge produced about LGBTQI newcomers and subsequent publicly funded policies, programs and practices for this population. As a result, there is an uneven distribution of public funding and resources within and across geographic regions in Canada as well as inconsistencies between Canadian and provincial policies and practices. Most of the publicly funded LGBTQI migrant–specific services and programming are located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with smaller funded projects in larger cities such as Vancouver, Montreal and Calgary, thus indicating a need for additional resources outside of the GTA. Continued collaborations between political leaders, researchers, practitioners, organizations and policymakers could assist in ensuring funding is allocated to adequately fill these gaps. There should also be closer collaboration between national and provincial policymakers to address inconsistent policies. For example, trans migrants in Canada are able to

change their gender marker and name on legal documents at the federal level as permanent residents and in every province except for Quebec, where only citizens can make these changes. This policy discrepancy exposes trans migrants living in Quebec to further marginalization and violence (Ngo et al., 2017; Tourki et al., 2018).

There remains a lack of knowledge about the realities of LGBTQI migrants with precarious status, which may include refugee claimant status, but also visitors, temporary workers, international students, undocumented status and detention practices (Lee, 2019). The degree to which improvements to the SOGIE-based refugee claim process are actually accessible to LGBTQI people living in the Global South has been questioned, especially due to Canada's restrictive temporary resident visa (TRV) and Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement policies (Lee, 2019). These gaps point to the possible benefits of developing cross-regional and/or international projects so that researchers may learn from each other and develop strategies across borders to improve the living conditions for LGBTQI migrants.

There is also emergent knowledge produced about access and continuity of health and mental health care as well as social and community services for LGBTQI migrants (Alessi & Kahn, 2017; Kahn et al., 2018). Recently, scholars have mapped out key features of a mental health practice framework for LGBTQI migrants who are asylum seekers or forced migrants (Alessi & Kahn, 2017; Kahn et al., 2018) (Table 1). Recent studies situated within implementation science and practice evaluation related to HIV prevention, care and treatment for LGBTQI people and/or migrants, indicate research focused on intervention as an object of study can also result in innovative practice shifts during the knowledge building process (Fuller et al., 2020; Lee & León, 2019; Martinez et al., 2019).

Relevance of Knowledge and Policy Implications in Relation to the Global Context

This section will critically assess the relevance of Canadian-specific research and policies in relation to knowledge about LGBTQI migrant realities on an international scale. This examination includes contrasting Canadian research with knowledge produced about LGBTQI realities in the Global South and LGBTQI migrants elsewhere in the Global North.

Relevance of Knowledge About LGBTQI Realities in Global South on Canadian Policymaking

There is a discrepancy between how LGBTQI realities in the Global South are articulated within Canadian-specific literature and the complex conditions that are presented in most of the Global South scholarship. A significant amount of the Canadian literature tends to focus on pre-migration experiences of homophobia and/or transphobia as driving LGBTQI migration to Canada while the Global South literature identifies a complex set of historical, political, social, economic and transnational conditions that shape LGBTQI migrations and in particular, forced migrations (Abu-Assab et al., 2017; Awondo, 2010; Awondo et al., 2012;

Table 1 Key features of scoping review protocol

Use of data extraction and organization software	COVIDENCE (used across two research sites: Montreal, Canada and London, UK)
Review of academic databases	PubMed; MEDLINE; PsycINFO; CINAHL; Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection; Web of Science, Social Care Online, SCOPUS, Education Research Complete and Proquest
Review of online search engines outside of academic databases	Google and Google scholar (search for theoretical literature, organizational, policy and practice documents)
Inclusion criteria	Nearly all LGBTQI migrant in the sample, qualitative research (including textual analysis), theoretical and activist literature, policy analysis, articles published from 2007 onwards
Exclusion criteria	Wrong population sample (inclusion of non-migrant people of colour), duplicates, publication date (too old), language criteria, quantitative research, and mainstream media articles, articles published prior to 2007

Dutta & Roy, 2014; Ekine, 2013; Zea et al., 2013). One possible reason for this is that much of the Canadian literature is focused on LGBTQI refugee claimant realities. SOGIE-based refugee claims inevitably emphasize persecution focused on one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expressions. Another possible reason may be due to poor/working class LGBTQI people living in the Global South not being able to access visas (or crossing the US border) to enter Canada and potentially file refugee claims (Lee, 2019). Regardless, Canadian policymakers, especially those involved in developing Canada's international role in LGBTQI human rights, need to take into consideration the complexities about LGBTQI realities in the Global South.

Community-based and participatory research projects (Lee & Brotman, 2013; Nicol et al., 2014; Lee & León, 2019) and civil society organizations and initiatives (Aylward & Arps, 2016) can foster the participation of directly impacted people in the research process while also assisting Canadian policymakers to translate Canadian knowledge production into the international sphere. However, knowledge driven by researchers and activists in the Global South should also be mobilized (Abu-Assab et al., 2017; Awondo, 2010; Ekine, 2013). For example, Abu-Assab et al. (2017) suggest reconsidering strategies that require increased visibility of LGBTQI rights and supporting local initiatives that are coalition-based and address multiple issues concerning women, sex workers and people who practice non-normative sexualities and genders. A focus on increased privacy rights versus LGBTQI rights, for example, has been advanced by some scholars (Abu-Assab et al. 2017; Awondo, 2010). If visibility is part of a project, preventative measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of individuals most likely will experience public backlash.

These recommendations are relevant for Canadian policymakers as the federal government has recently designated a Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on LGBT2 issues and is co-chair, with Chile, of the international *Equal Rights Coalition*. In 2018, the minister of international relations in the Francophonie in Quebec also announced funding the development of an international Francophone network focused on the defence of LGBTQI rights.

Relevance of Knowledge and Policy Implication for Elsewhere in Global North

This section will critically assess the relevance of Canadian-specific research and policies in relation to elsewhere in the Global North (i.e. US, Europe, etc.) to critically assess its relevance on Canadian policymaking and service provision. A rigourous comparison of various countries' refugee claim processes is outside the scope of this review. However, there are general similarities and contrasts between the Canadian context and elsewhere in the Global North.

A consistent recommendation across regions was to implement required training on SOGIE-based claims for refugee authorities and decision-makers as well as improved access to legal representation (Bennett & Thomas, 2013; Cowen et al., 2011; Raj, 2013; UKLGIG, 2013). For example, European scholars, especially those in the UK, have noted the continued use of stereotypes for the SOGIE-based refugee claim process (Wessels, 2013). Thus, Canada's recent implementation of SOGIE-based guidelines for IRB decision-makers could be adapted for other refugee determination systems across the Global North.

Researchers across countries (including Canada) also noted the negative impact of detention and fast-tracking processing on LGBTQI refugee claimants (Bachmann, 2016; Cisneros, 2015; Raj, 2013; UKLGIG, 2013). These scholars argued that detention either is not necessary or should only be used as a last resort. In the USA, some scholars advocated for changes to US law in relation to detention and undocumented status by arguing for the regularization of undocumented people (Cisneros, 2015; Terriquez, 2015). Scholars have also called for improved access for LGBTQI refugees to adequate employment, housing, income support, etc. (Cowen, et al., 2011). Possible measures to address employment and housing barriers include changing legislation to better attend to the particular needs of LGBTQI refugees.

Similar to the Canadian literature, US scholars have used critical, participatory and intervention research methodologies, resulting in calls for improved integration of services (i.e. immigrant, LGBTQI, general health care, NGOs, etc.) to foster holistic services (Bennett & Thomas, 2013; Cowen, et al., 2011; Raj, 2013). Chavez (2011) suggests the creation of an LGBTQI migrant taskforce led by directly affected people in order to ensure that LGBTQI migrants, their families and allies can communicate their needs and priorities to service providers and policymakers. Some US scholars also suggest the use of anti-oppressive practice (Heller, 2009) and support and therapy groups for LGBTQI migrants (Higgins & Butler, 2012; Reading & Rubin, 2011; Tiven & Neilson, 2009). US scholarship focused on the LGBTQI Latinx migrant population identifies the need for improved programs and services for this population that address cultural and structural factors (Melendez et al., 2013) and culturally competent and/or Spanish language services (Chavez, 2011), applying HIV and substance abuse prevention strategies (Rhodes et al., 2010) and fostering informal social networks (Rhodes et al., 2010). These scholars also suggest increased training for service providers (health care, lawyers, etc.) and community workers related to mental health, cultural issues and LGBTQI issues (Chavez, 2011).

Conclusion

The central aim of this review was to critically assess the state of knowledge about LGBTQI migrants living in Canada and to scope the international qualitative literature in order to assess the range and quality of knowledge about LGBTQI migrants. The research team used the scoping review methodology (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) to rapidly assess a broad range of literature; explore key themes and tensions; and map out the extent, range and nature of knowledge about this topic. This scoping review also compared and contrasted policies and practices about LGBTQI migrants across geographic, political and socio-economic contexts. Although the scoping review organized the literature across 4 regions (Global South, Canada, US, elsewhere in the Global North), this article focused specifically on the Canadian literature.

This article also examined the policy implications of the Canadian-specific knowledge produced about LGBTQI migrant realities as well as its relevance elsewhere in the Global North, pointing to Canada's possible role and contribution to the global LGBTQI human rights movement. The findings discussed in this paper suggest that Canadian policymakers must consider the complexities of LGBTQI realities in the Global South as well as local needs and issues when participating in international initiatives. The findings from this scoping review could indeed be useful for researchers that focus on LGBTQI migrant realities in Canada and elsewhere in the Global North as well as policymakers and practitioners who wish to better understand not only how knowledge about LGBTQI migrant realities has shifted and changed over this past decade but also key areas for policy and practice improvements.

Overall, a clear strength included the degree to which Canadian researchers engaged in community-based and participatory research methodologies. The use of intersectionality theory and other critical social theories by Canadian scholars was also a knowledge strength. Recently, the IRB implemented SOGIE-based guidelines for decision-makers (IRB, 2017). The implementation of these guidelines serves as an excellent example of how policy can be informed by research and a democratic consultative process with various stakeholders including community organizations, coalitions and directly affected people. However, there are still many knowledge and policy gaps especially with respect to LGBTQI migrants with permanent status and migrants with precarious status. There remains a lack of literature elsewhere in the Global North that has documented the linkages and tensions between researchers, policymakers, practitioners, political leaders and civil society actors in the creation of LGBTQI migrant–specific laws and policies.

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