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Poverty in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit (LGBTQ2S+) populations in Canada: an intersectional review of the literature

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Despite the prominence of poverty in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, and other sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQ2S+) in Canada, studies that centre the material conditions of these groups as sites of inquiry remain scant. Accordingly, in this paper we present an intersectional narrative review of the limited Canadian literature on LGBTQ2S+ poverty. We examine 39 studies, published between 2000 and 2018, that report Canadian data on poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth, older adults, racial minorities and Indigenous groups. We highlight intersectional differences reflected across these axes of social location, and consider research, policy and practice implications of our analysis.

Key words sexual and gender minorities • poverty • intersectionality • Canada • narrative review

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Introduction

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ2S+) populations in Canada have, in recent history, witnessed significant changes in the recognition of human rights relevant to their social conditions and experiences as sexual and gender minorities. In 1996, sexual orientation was recognised as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and, in 2005, marriage equality for same-sex couples became enshrined in federal human rights legislation (Nierobisz et al, 2008). More recently, in 2017, Bill C-16 became law in Canada, which amended the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to mandate federal recognition of gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination (Egale, 2017). Given, in Canada, the significant role of

federal legislation in protecting minorities against discrimination across domains such as employment and housing, these changes have been acknowledged as salient milestones in the development and evolution of Canadian sexual and gender minority rights, respectively (Egale, 2017; Nierobisz et al, 2008). Regardless of legislative progress to improve the social conditions of LGBTQ2S+ groups, sexual and gender minorities across Canada continue to experience profound material disparities and suffer significant social and health inequities (Mulé et al, 2009). These conditions of marginalisation have been theorised, in part, to be related to the exposure of these groups to pervasive and persistent expressions of stigma and discrimination based on sexual and gender identity (Ross et al, 2016; Scheim et al, 2017).

Material disparities are particularly prominent among younger LGBTQ2S+ people (Abramovich, 2016; Gattis, 2011), older sexual and gender minority adults (Brennan et al, 2013), racialised and newcomer LGBTQ2S+ groups (George et al, 2007), and persons identifying as two-spirit (Ross et al, 2016), the latter being a term used by some Indigenous peoples in Canada to describe non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender identities (Lyons et al, 2016; Robinson, 2017). Sexual and gender minority youth, for example, continue to be overrepresented in surveys of homeless populations (Frederick et al, 2011; Gattis, 2011; Kidd, 2017) and report poorer mental health outcomes than same-age heterosexual and cisgender counterparts experiencing homelessness (Gattis, 2011; Kidd, 2017). Racialised LGBTQ2S+ populations, many of whom are also newcomers (that is, recent immigrants and refugees), often report significant disparities in income and employment relative to white sexual and gender minorities and, in turn, fare worse than their white counterparts on measures of health (Lessard, 2016; Millett, 2012). Two-spirit people face particularly complex barriers to basic resources such as housing, employment and social support (Lyons et al, 2016; Robinson, 2017). Settler colonialism, a term used to describe the attempted symbolic and legislated destruction and replacement of Indigenous societies by settler invaders (Wolfe, 2006), continues to intersect with racism and homo/bi/transphobia to produce not only these socioeconomic inequities, but also disparities in health outcomes for Indigenous sexual and gender minorities (Lyons et al, 2016; Robinson, 2017).

Despite the poor socioeconomic conditions reported among LGBTQ2S+ populations in Canada, as well as the social and health outcomes tied to these conditions, the misconception that gay men are generally wealthy persists in Canada and beyond (Mulé et al, 2009). This myth of 'gay affluence' is often used in the scholarly literature to generate incorrect inferences about socioeconomic status among gay men and LGBTQ2S+ populations more broadly (Albelda et al, 2009). Possibly as a result of this phenomenon, there continues to be a dearth of studies exclusively dedicated to the study of poverty as a structural determinant of social and health inequities in sexual and gender minorities. In addition, given the recognised methodological challenges of collecting data from LGBTQ2S+ people – individuals who are often reluctant to disclose their status as sexual and gender minorities for fear of experiencing various social repercussions such as stigma and discrimination – the effective collection of large quantities of data required to make inferences about material disparities among sexual and gender minorities remains complex and wrought with barriers (Mulé et al, 2009). Indeed, although there exists some Canadian inquiry on LGBTQ2S+ issues and experiences that occasionally and peripherally includes data on poverty, there is a notable scarcity in empirical studies that reflect dedicated attention to poverty as a central analytical concern.

Further to these issues, within the limited literature, few attempts are made to examine how poverty intersects with social forces such as homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, gender- and age-based discrimination, neo-colonialism and/or racism to shape the distinctively precarious conditions of those affected by interlocking systems of stigma and discrimination. This tendency has, in part, been attributed to the underrepresentation of particular groups, including bisexual, trans and racialised sexual and gender minorities, within the scholarship on LGBTQ2S+ issues (Mulé et al, 2009; Robinson, 2017; Ross et al, 2016). Given the aforementioned challenges of collecting data from LGBTQ2S+ people, it is perhaps not surprising that sexual and gender minorities who are marginalised on multiple grounds, and are thus more likely to have concerns about the social consequences of engaging with research on sexual and gender minority status, are often less represented in the empirical literature in this area (Mulé et al, 2009).

In this paper, we review the literature examining poverty among LGBTQ2S+ populations in Canada at salient intersections (that is, younger age, late adulthood, racial minority and newcomer status, and Indigenous identity, with gendered differences foregrounded in each category), and highlight relevant intersectional distinctions shaping LGBTQ2S+ poverty. In so doing, we hope to address the lack of literature that centres LGBTQ2S+ poverty as a relevant concern for Canadian social science scholarship. As Canada is a relevant comparator for many advanced economies with human rights legislation for sexual and gender minorities (Browne and Nash, 2014; Smith, 2008), our intersectional review of LGBTQ2S+ poverty also promises to inform research, policy and practice in jurisdictions at comparable stages of social and economic development.

Although we do recognise the existence of non-Canadian works in the area of LGBTQ2S+ poverty, in this study we focus exclusively on Canadian scholarship. Given that much of the non-Canadian literature in this area is US-based (for example, Albelda et al, 2009; Badgett, 2003), we have intentionally excluded this body of work from our review to account for notable differences between the broader policy contexts of poverty across the two nations. For example, the availability of universal social programmes, including state-subsidised healthcare, publicly administered pension benefits, and other transfer payments, often mitigates some of the effects of income inequality in Canada, relative to the US (Foster and Wolfson, 2010; Gorey et al, 2015). This distinction renders insights from Canadian scholarship in the area of poverty translatable to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with comparable systems of social infrastructure, including the UK, but less so to the US context (Foster and Wolfson, 2010). With respect to LGBTQ2S+ issues specifically, while current human rights legislation across all Canadian jurisdictions reflects protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in domains such as employment, housing and healthcare (Government of Canada, 2018a), such legal protections are presently available to sexual and gender minorities in certain US states and not others (GLAAD, 2019). Given the relationship that is believed to exist between exposure to discrimination and poverty among sexual and gender minorities (Mulé et al, 2009; Ross et al, 2016; Robinson, 2017), we also exclude non-Canadian studies from our review to account for the potentially distinctive influence of limited human rights protections on LGBTQ2S+ poverty.

Intersectionality as a theoretical framework

Intersectionality considers the role of multiple interlocking systems of oppression in shaping social experiences (Bowleg, 2012; Cho et al, 2013; McCall, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2006). This theoretical tradition originates in the oral and written scholarship of racialised women, including black (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989) and Indigenous (Clark, 2016) women in North America, who have drawn attention to the historical silencing of groups marginalised on more than one basis (that is, race and gender) in mainstream feminist and critical race inquiry. Although much intersectional scholarship has, indeed, traditionally centred the interlocking of gender- and race-based oppression (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989), theorists have identified the utility of this lens for informing inquiry at any intersection marked by multiple axes of marginalisation (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

In this paper, we use an intersectional framework for a number of reasons. First, this lens enables us to foreground manifestations of disadvantage that reflect the interrelationship of oppression based on poverty and LGBTQ2S+ identities, and attend to distinctions in the social conditions and experiences of poverty among diverse LGBTQ2S+ populations. Given, for example, that bodies of research and social policy addressing LGBTQ2S+ communities have commonly failed to account for differences in the issues of diverse groups of sexual and gender minorities (Mulé, 2009; Skinner, 2015), this lens is particularly useful in helping us to challenge this tendency, and to draw attention to relevant idiosyncrasies in the realities of LGBTQ2S+ poverty. In particular, as our literature review reveals salient differences at several intersections – namely young age and late adulthood, racialisation and newcomer status and Indigenous identity, and also highlights gendered and other distinctions within these categories – we use an intersectional lens to highlight these specific sources of variability in our findings. Our second reason for using an intersectional framework is to account for important material disparities existing within the larger ‘LGBTQ2S+’ collective. For example, the larger category of ‘sexual and gender minorities’ includes white men, a group whose social location has historically been closely associated with social, political and economic advantage (Collins, 2009), while it also includes trans people of colour, disproportionate numbers of whom are often found to live well below thresholds of poverty (Scheim et al, 2017). Our use of intersectionality is necessary in highlighting the relativity of marginalisation across these and other groups of sexual and gender minorities encountering varying levels of material disparity (that is, socioeconomic conditions and outcomes that are systemically poorer relative to those of dominant reference populations).

McCall (2015) has organised the growing body of intersectional scholarship into three primary types. The first, concerned with addressing anti-categorical complexity, comprises analyses that deconstruct or interrogate categories of ‘othered’ difference to which the lived experiences of marginalised groups are often relegated. The second category, which McCall (2015) describes as intracategorical inquiry, encompasses attention to differences in experience, particularly those that pertain to social location, among members of a group already marginalised on multiple grounds (for example, black women’s exposure to oppression based on sexual minority status (Bowleg, 2012)). Lastly, intercategorical analyses (McCall, 2015) entail comparing the social conditions

of multiple marginalised groups against those of dominant groups, yielding insights on the interrelated effects of exposure to multiple systems of oppression.

We prioritise intracategorical analysis in our review of the literature on poverty in LGBTQ2S+ populations across Canada. This enables us to highlight commonalities in these populations' experiences of poverty, while simultaneously accounting for differences in expressions of material disparity encountered among these groups at various intersections. In line with anticategorical thought, we also recognise the historical pitfalls of essentialising 'LGBTQ2S+' as a homogeneous category of marginalisation. We recognise that 'LGBTQ2S+' communities have, to varying extents, often historically and strategically cohered to organise against comparable systems of oppression affecting sexual and gender minority groups, and are therefore now identifiable as a somewhat unified, yet heterogeneous collective within social policy discourses (Mulé et al, 2009). While we draw on language that is indicative of a cohesive 'LGBTQ2S+' collective, primarily to render our analysis translatable for research, policy and practice addressing the issues of groups referred to as 'LGBTQ2S+' both socially and politically in the Canadian context (Mulé et al, 2009), much of our work is dedicated to foregrounding relevant distinctions in conditions of poverty across these groups.

Methods

Search strategy

Our search strategy was developed by the senior author (LER), in collaboration with a large team of investigators interested in cultivating a programme of research on LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada. A professional librarian reviewed the search strategy to ensure an exhaustive list of keywords and their combinations. The following databases were used to execute the search: MedLine, PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, Social Science Abstracts, EconLit Search, and a custom Google search for relevant government reports. A number of search terms pertaining to LGBTQ2S+ identities, poverty and related indicators (for example, homelessness), and the Canadian context were entered into each of these databases. A list of search terms, examples of which include 'sexual orientation', 'gender identity', 'poverty', and 'Canad*', appears in Table 1.1, and these were modified as appropriate to account for cross-database differences in indexed subject terms. We included, for the purpose of initial screening, all studies written in English containing at least one term from across each of our three search categories (LGBTQ2S+ identities, poverty and Canada), that were published between 1 January 2000 and 1 May 2018. We restricted our search to literature published in or after 2000, given the scarcity of studies predating this year and concerns over the transferability of earlier work to a contemporary context (Albert and Williams, 1998; Chuang et al, 1989).

Study selection

We used Covidence (www.covidence.com), a systematic review application, to screen the 365 abstracts of peer-reviewed works and grey literature encompassing the results of our initial search. We conducted screening in two stages. First, we screened titles and abstracts to identify sources that presented original empirical data on measures

Table 1.1: Sample key terms

<i>LGBTQ2S+-related terms</i>	<i>Poverty-related terms</i>	<i>Canada-related terms</i>
'Sexual orientation' (SU)	Poverty (SU)	Canad* (SU) *note that SU includes location
'Sexual minority' (SU)	'Homeless people' (SU)	Toronto (SU)
'Sexual identity' (SU)	Homelessness (SU)	Montreal (SU)
'Sex role identity' (SU)	'Low income groups' or 'low	Ontario (SU)
Bisexual* (SU)	income' (SU)	Quebec (SU)
Lesbian* (SU)	Poor (SU)	Vancouver (SU)
Homosexual* (SU)	'Wage gap*' (SU)	'British Columbia' (SU)
'Sexual preference*' (SU)	Education* (SU)	Alberta (SU)
'Sexual behaviour' OR 'sexual behavior' (SU)	Employ* (SU)	Manitoba (SU)
'Gays & lesbians' (SU)	Unemploy* (SU)	Saskatchewan (SU)
'Transgender persons' (SU)	Welfare (SU)	'New Brunswick' (SU)
'Gender identity' (SU)	Shelters (SU)	'Nova Scotia' (SU)
Transsexual* (SU)	Income (SU)	'Prince Edward Island' (SU)
'Sexual minority' (title/abstract)	'Financial support' (SU)	Newfoundland* (SU)
Lesbian* (title/abstract)	Wealth (SU)	Yukon (SU)
Gay (title/abstract)	Housing (SU)	'Northwest Territories' (SU)
Bisexual* (title/abstract)	'Antipoverty programmes' (SU)	Nunavut (SU)
Non-monosexual OR nonmonosexual (title/abstract)	Deprivation (SU)	Canad* (title/abstract)
Plurisexual* (title/abstract)	Social class (SU)	Toronto (title/abstract)
Men who have sex with men (title/abstract)	'Socioeconomic status' (SU)	Vancouver (title/abstract)
MSM* (title/abstract)	Poverty (title/abstract)	Montreal (title/abstract)
Women who have sex with women (title/abstract)	Poor (title/abstract)	
WSW* (title/abstract)	'Wage gap*' (title/abstract)	
Transgender* (title/abstract)	Income (title/abstract)	
Transsexual* (title/abstract)	Unemploy* (title/abstract)	
Queer (title/abstract)	Employ* (title/abstract)	
Two-Spirit* (title/abstract)	Homeless* (title/abstract)	
LGB* (title/abstract)		
GLB* (title/abstract)		
'Sexual orientation' (title/abstract)		
'Gender identity' (title/abstract)		

of socioeconomic status (that is, income, wealth, utilisation of benefits, employment, occupation, education, housing, homelessness) or phenomena pertaining to poverty or class (that is, lived experiences of poverty or homelessness, or experiences in school and higher education) among LGBTQ2S+ populations in Canada. Each abstract was then screened for eligibility by two reviewers, and differences in opinion were resolved by the senior author on the basis of fidelity to the study's inclusion criteria. Following this process, 102 studies proceeded to full text screening.

For the purposes of this paper, we specifically included studies that reported Canadian data on socioeconomic indicators among LGBTQ2S+ individuals who were (1) youth (those <25 years of age), (2) older adults (those >49 years of age), (3) self-identified as non-white (often times also as newcomers), or (4) self-identified as Indigenous or two-spirit. Our definition of 'youth' (<25 years of age) is consistent with conceptualisations of this age category in the literature on younger LGBTQ populations in Canada (Frederick et al, 2011; Gattis, 2011); our definition of 'older adulthood' is similarly aligned with parameters in the literature on LGBTQ aging (Addis et al, 2009; Fredriksen-Goldsen and Muraco, 2010). What is important is that as part of our review of poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth, we also included studies that reported Canadian data on the conditions and experiences of LGBTQ2S+ individuals in the school system or higher education, given the known link between poor educational attainment and/or adverse school experiences and poverty in sexual minority adults (Albelda et al, 2009).

We focused on these particular categories of intersectional difference on the basis of our preliminary review of the literature, which indicated the distinctive role of age (Abramovich, 2016; Brennan et al, 2013), racial minority and newcomer status (George et al, 2017), and Indigeneity (Robinson, 2017; Ross et al, 2016) in influencing variability in experiences of LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada. As gendered differences were foregrounded in each category of literature, we did not create a separate category for studies that centred analyses of gender.

This second stage of study selection yielded a total of 39 works for inclusion in the current review, and was executed via consensus among the current paper's four authors.

Data extraction

We extracted data related to LGBTQ2S+ poverty into three tables representing each of the categories of intersectional difference, namely age and early experiences with education, racial identity (not including Indigeneity) and newcomer status, and Indigenous identity. We recorded each study's geographic scope, period of study, sample size, inclusion of poverty-related variables or phenomena in data collection instruments and analytical procedures, and findings related to socioeconomic status and/or poverty among LGBTQ2S+ populations in Canada. Additionally, we categorised each study as either peer-reviewed, or as grey literature on LGBTQ2S+ poverty. As we did not analyse literature on gendered differences separately, we prioritised extraction of intersectional insights on gender across each of the three categories of literature. Namely, for any study that contained analyses pertaining to gender and/or gender identity (either in the findings or discussion), we extrapolated these insights and included them in our summary of the literature. The three tables discussed in this section are consolidated as Table 1.2 and appended as supplementary information.

**Table 1.2: Summary of the literature
LGBTQ2S+ poverty across the life course**

Author(s)	Place	Category	Time	Sample	Poverty-related variables and/or phenomena investigated	Methods	Key relevant findings
Abichahine & Veenstra (2016)	Canada	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	2003– 2005	n=149,574 (2,526 lesbian, gay, bisexual respondents, or 1.7% of sample)	LGB identities, Education	QUAN	LGB orientation is associated with a greater likelihood for engaging in regular physical activity among women, especially less educated women, but not among men.
Abramovich (2014)	Toronto	Grey literature/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2010– 2012	n=34 (12 LGBTQ- identified youth [ages 16–29])	LGBTQ youth experiences with shelter systems	QUAL	Regulation across Toronto's shelter system was found either to impede on the access of LGBTQ youth to shelter services, or fail to protect these youth from discrimination.
Abramovich (2016)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2010– 2012	n=32 (11 LGBTQ- identified youth [ages 16–29])	LGBTQ2S youth experiences with shelter systems	QUAL	Experiences of LGBTQ2S youth homelessness are drawn on to inform recommendations for governmental policy in the area of youth homelessness.
Abramovich (2017)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2010– 2012	(n=33 (11 LGBTQ- identified youth [ages 16–29])	LGBTQ2S youth experiences with shelter systems	QUAL	The systematic enactment of homophobia and transphobia, among other phenomena, was found to create barriers to safe and accessible services for LGBTQ2S youth experiencing homelessness.
Bergeron & Senn (2003)	Canada	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	NR	n=254 (all lesbian- identified women)	Lesbian identity, educational attainment, feminism, healthcare utilisation	QUAN	Higher educational attainment was associated with feminist identity and better utilisation of healthcare services.
Brennan et al, (2013)	Ontario	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in older LGBTQ2S+ adults	NR	n=1,103 older adults (ages > 49) living with HIV, including 726 gay men 76 bisexual men)	Gay and bisexual identity among men, income, educational attainment	QUAN	Although 32.8% of gay men, and 30.3% of bisexual men, reported incomes under CAD \$20,000, a higher proportion of heterosexual men (58.2%) and women (50.0%) reported incomes below this threshold. These differences were statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Table 1.2: Continued

Frederick et al. (2011)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2005– 2006	n=147 homeless and street-involved youth (ages 16 to 21) with 44 (30%) identifying as non-heterosexual	LGBTQ2S+ identities, street economy involvement, victimisation measures, drug use, mental health outcomes	QUAN	Homeless sexual minority youth were significantly more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to report childhood sexual abuse ($p > 0.01$), completed sexual assault ($p < 0.05$), and perceived mental illness ($p < 0.05$). The effect of sexual minority status on victimisation and mental health outcomes was statistically greater for sexual minority women than for men.
Gattis (2011)/Gattis (2013)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed (2011)/Grey literature (2013)/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2009	n=147 homeless youth (ages 16 to 24), with 66 identifying as sexual minorities	Sexual minority status, substance use, mental health, sexual risk behaviours, school engagement, stigma, discrimination among homeless youth	QUAN	Sexual minority youth were found statistically much more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to report using 20 of the 21 substances examined (at least $p < 0.05$), to have seriously considered suicide in the 12 months preceding the study ($p < 0.0001$), to report lifetime survival sex ($p < 0.0001$), and to report discrimination in the 12 months preceding the study ($p < 0.0001$). No statistically significant differences were found in levels of school engagement.
Jewell & Morrison (2010)	Western Canada	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	NR	n=286 undergraduate students	Negative attitudes and behaviours of undergraduate students toward lesbians and gay men in a mid-sized campus environment	MIXED	Approximately 43% of students indicated having yelled insulting comments at gay men, while 32% had spoken negatively of gay men to others. In follow-up qualitative interviews with 8 highly homonegative survey respondents, these participants attributed anti-gay behaviours to their need for reinforcement of traditional male gender roles and alleviation of discomfort, among other factors.
Kidd et al. (2017)	Canada	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2015	n=1,103 homeless youth (ages 12-27), with 310 (28%) self-identifying as sexual and/or gender minorities	Quality of life, mental illness symptoms, suicide attempt, substance use, resilience among homeless youth	QUAN	Sexual and gender minority youth reported significantly lower quality of life ($p < 0.001$), poorer mental health ($p < 0.001$), higher rates of substance use ($p < 0.001$) than their cisgender heterosexual counterparts. These youth also reported suicide attempt rates of 70% compared to 39% among cisgender heterosexual youth.

Table 1.2: Continued

Lewis (2012)	Ottawa	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	2010– 2011	n=48 self-identified gay men, with 24 located in Ottawa and another 24 in Washington DC	The influence of intersectional subjectivities (for example, race, class) on migration narratives of gay men who relocated to major urban centres	QUAL	Whereas gay men in positions of socioeconomic advantage often 'scouted' urban environments before relocating to them from rural contexts, those from working-class backgrounds often did not have the means to do so. Migration narratives were, in this way, shaped heavily by class position.
Nierobisz et al, (2008)	Canada	Grey literature/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	1965– 2005	442 sexual orientation human rights complaints and other documentary evidence	The role of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in advancing sexual orientation employment and other equality rights in Canada	QUAL	This policy paper examined the role of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in promoting the designation of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination, and helping to secure access to federal employment-related benefits (including pension benefits) for same-sex couples, among other activities.
Ploeg et al, (2013)	Hamilton	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in older LGBTQ2S+adults	2003– 2005	n=87 adults ages 60 and over (divided into 10 focus groups, with one focus group comprising 6 lesbian- identified women)	Material disparities experienced among lesbian women in older age as reflective of structural violence/abuse	QUAL	Government-sanctioned inequities in the distribution of wages and pension benefits among lesbian women were discussed by these participants as being reflective of structural violence/abuse.
Ross et al, (2016)	Ontario	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	2012– 2013	n=302 bisexual adults ages 25 and over	Bisexual identity, poverty, mental health	MIXED	25.7% respondents reported living below the Canadian Low Income Cut Off (LICO); those living below the LICO were less likely to be 'out' as bisexual. Bisexuality, poverty, and mental health were found to be qualitatively interrelated. For example, stigma surrounding bisexuality impacted employment experiences, which in turn appeared to affect mental health.

Table 1.2: Continued

Saewyc et al, (2007)	British Columbia	Grey literature/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	1992–2003	Approximately 90,000 secondary school students representing three cycles of the BC Adolescent Health Survey (1992, 1998, 2003 [n=30,000 in each cycle])	LGB identities, school experiences	QUAN	LGB students were significantly more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to have experienced physical or sexual abuse, harassment in school, and discrimination in the community. Lesbian and bisexual girls reported feeling significantly less connected to school relative to their heterosexual counterparts.
Taylor et al, (2011)	Canada	Grey literature/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2007–2009	n=3607 high school students across Canada	LGBTQ2S+ identities, school experiences	QUAN	49% of trans students, 43% of female bisexual students, 42% of male bisexual students, 40% of male gay students, and 33% of lesbian students reported experiencing sexual harassment at school in the year preceding the study.
Veale et al, (2015)	Canada	Grey literature/ Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth	2013–2014	n=932 trans-identified youth ages 14–25	Trans identities, school experiences, mental health	QUAN	44% of youth enrolled in schools reported rarely or never feeling safe in change rooms, 40% reported rarely or never feeling safe in washrooms, and 20% reported rarely or never feeling safe in the school cafeteria
Waite (2015)	Canada	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	2001–2016	Confidential 20% samples of Canada's 2001 and 2006 census, and the 2011 National Household Survey	Same-sex households, income	QUAN	Sexual minority wage gaps were found to be larger for younger gay men than older gay men, suggesting a 'coming out penalty.' Although the wages of lesbian women may be higher than those of heterosexual women, these 'premiums' develop over time and do not exist upon entry into the labour market.
Young et al, (2012)	Canada	Peer-reviewed/ LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty	2009–2011	n=1,552 medical students, with 81 identifying as non-heterosexual and only 3 identifying as non-cisgender	Demographic characteristics of medical students, including those pertaining to sexual and gender identity	QUAN	5.4% of medical students identified as sexual minorities, and only 0.2% identified as gender minorities, leading the authors to conclude that LGBTQ2S+ students may be underrepresented in professional degree programmes such as medicine.

Table 1.2: Continued
LGBTQ+ Poverty at the intersection of race and migration

Author(s)	Place	Category	Time	Sample	Poverty-Related Variables and/or Phenomena Investigated	Methods	Key Relevant Findings
Adam & Rangel (2015)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in the migration exp. Of racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers	NR	n=25 Spanish-speaking men who had had sex with another man at least once in the 12 months preceding the study	Migration experiences and social/economic capital	QUAL	Participants described simultaneously experiencing greater acceptance of their gay or bisexual identities in Canada, and at the same time incurring losses in social and economic capital upon their arrival in Canada. Language barriers, together with a lack of transferable credentials, represented salient sources of economic disadvantage.
Adam & Rangel (2017)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in the migration exp. Of racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers	NR	n=25 Spanish-speaking men who had had sex with another man at least once in the 12 months preceding the study	Migration experiences, family/social support, social/economic capital	QUAL	The men often reported compromised social and economic support from their families and other social networks as a result of their sexual identities. Participants migrating from rural/non-urban regions reported lesser social and economic capital upon their arrival to Canada, relative to their urban counterparts.
Alessi (2016)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in the migration exp. Of racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers	2014–2015	n=26 adults who had been granted refugee, asylee, or withholding of removal status in the US or Canada as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity; 10 participants were based in Canada	Resettlement challenges (including those related to housing and employment) among LGBTQ+ refugees and asylees	QUAL	'Doing whatever it takes' was a prominent theme – participants discussed having to accept being underemployed, or going on social assistance, to address their material needs, despite many having had professional identities in their countries of origin. Some participants discussed engaging in sex work. Volunteering was described by some participants as a source of resilience.

Table 1.2: Continued

George et al, (2007)	Vancouver and Montreal	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty, race, and newcomer status in studies of LGBTQ+ health	1995–2003	n=1,148 self-identified men who have sex with men. The Vancouver sample was limited to men ages 15–30, whereas men ages 16+ were included in the Montreal sample	Sexual behaviour, race, country of birth, income, education	QUAN	White men born in Canada were most likely to report holding university degrees (38%), whereas non-white men born outside Canada were most likely to report incomes below CAD \$20,000 (73%). Non-white men born outside Canada were most likely to report being unemployed (41%), compared to non-white men born in Canada (24%), white men born in Canada (20%), and white men born outside Canada (15%).
Kojima (2014)	Vancouver	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty in the migration exp. Of racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers	2009–2012	n=14 gay and bisexual men, along with one trans woman, and other participants with identities representing sexual/gender diversity	Immigration and settlement among adults representing intersections of sexual and gender diversity	QUAL	One participant described experiencing chronic unemployment following the onset of mental health issues, and his material dependence on family during this time. This participant also described having to conceal his sexual identity as a result of his dependence on a potentially unsupportive family network.
Lachowsky et al, (2017)	Vancouver	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty, race, and newcomer status in studies of LGBTQ+ health	2012–2014	n=719 gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with (GBM)	GBM status, mental health, race, immigration status, income	QUAN	Lifetime diagnosis of a substance use disorder was found to be negatively associated with having an income of at least CAD \$30,000 (AOR: 0.38). Being a minority other than Latin American, Aboriginal, or Asian was found to be associated with a lifetime diagnosis of a mental health condition (AOR: 2.24).
Lessard et al, (2016)	Montreal	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty, race, and newcomer status in studies of LGBTQ+ health	2012–2013	n=1,353 men who have sex with men	MSM status, immigration status, income, education	QUAN	Despite higher educational attainment among immigrant MSM, those in this group are significantly more likely to report incomes below CAD \$35,000 (48%) than their non-immigrant counterparts (43%). Immigrant MSM are significantly more likely to be unemployed or be students (31%), relative to their non-immigrant counterparts (22%).

Table 1.2: Continued

Logie et al, (2016)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed	NR	n=29 African and Caribbean LGBTQ+newcomers, divided into three focus groups	Social support group participation among African and Caribbean LGBTQ+newcomers	QUAL	Social support group participation was found to address structural barriers experienced by participants. Participants who were engaged in social support groups reported learning about housing rights, gaining access to volunteer opportunities and employment workshops, and receiving informational and emotional support in navigating the immigration system.
Millett et al, (2012)	Canada (meta-analysis of Canadian, US, and UK literature)	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty, race, and newcomer status in studies of LGBTQ+health	1981–2011	n=7 studies from Canada	MSM status, race, income	QUAN	In Canada, black MSM are more likely than other MSM to report low-income (below USD \$20,000) (OR: 1.56).
Murray (2014)	Toronto	Peer-reviewed	2011–2012	n=54 LGBT-identified refugee claimants, approximately 90% of whom were from Caribbean or African source countries	Classed experiences of LGBT refugee claimants with Canada's refugee determination system.	QUAL	The authenticity and credibility of LGBT refugee claims were found often to be evaluated based on their alignment with the perspectives/subjectivities of middle class, white gay men in Canada – and many refugees faced insurmountable barriers in the refugee determination system as a result.
Nakhaie & Wijesingha (2015)	Canada	Peer-reviewed/ Poverty, race, and newcomer status in studies of LGBTQ+health	2004	n=24,000 (respondents of Canada's 2004 General Social Survey)	Sexual orientation, discrimination (including workplace discrimination), health	QUAN	In women, the effect of racial and ethnic discrimination on health was weaker than the effect of discrimination based on sexual orientation, sex, disability, religion, and language.

Table 1.2: Continued
LGBTQ2S+ Poverty at the intersection of indigeneity

Author(s)	Place	Category	Time	Sample	Poverty-Related Variables and/or Phenomena Investigated	Methods	Key Relevant Findings
Iwasaki et al, (2005)	Western Canadian city (not otherwise specified)	Peer-reviewed/Comp. prom. Of poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	NR	n=78, with 26 identifying as First Nations (17) or Métis (9)	Lesbian/gay identities, First Nations/Métis identities, experiences with social exclusion and resilience	QUAL	Participants identified racism in school, settler communities, government programmes and employment practices as causes of poverty. Participants found strength in belonging to Indigenous social groups, attending Indigenous cultural events, educating youth about Indigenous tradition, as well as dancing, art, religion or spirituality, and substance use recovery support.
Lyons et al, (2016)	Vancouver	Peer-reviewed/Comp. prom. Of poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	2012–2013	n=32 trans women and two-spirit individuals, with 22 identifying as First Nations or Métis	Trans women and two-spirit persons' experiences with women-specific health and housing services	QUAL	Participants discussed being discriminated against in women-specific health and housing services when appearing visibly trans or gender non-conforming. Participants also discussed having their appearance/behaviour policed by their peers to conform to normative gender expression.
McCreary Centre Society	British Columbia	Grey literature/Comp. prom. Of poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	2000	n=762 street-involved youth ages 12 to 18, 410 of whom identified as Aboriginal	Aboriginal identity, LGB identities, homelessness	QUAN	54% of youth surveyed identified as Aboriginal, and 56% of girls and 23% of boys identified as not being exclusively heterosexual. Many of the Aboriginal youth surveyed reported also identifying as LGB, but specific proportions were not reported. Aboriginal youth who also identified as LGB were far more likely to have run away from home (80%), compared to their Aboriginal heterosexual counterparts (66%). Aboriginal youth who identified as LGB were far more likely to report sexual exploitation compared to Aboriginal heterosexual youth.

Table 1.2: Continued

Ristock et al, (2010)	Winnipeg	Grey literature/ Distinct. poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity.	NR	n=24 Aboriginal two-spirit, LGBTQ or MSM (men who have sex with men)/WSW (women who have sex with women) adults who had had experience with moving/migration	Aboriginal two-spirit and/or LGBTQ adults' experiences with poverty in the context of migration	QUAL	Participants frequently reported experiencing problems with accessing housing and employment. Participants experienced racial discrimination in LGBTQ communities and LGBTQ2S-targeted stigma and discrimination in Aboriginal contexts. Eight participants had been forced to leave their communities of origin because they were LGBTQ2S+.
Ristock et al, (2011)	Vancouver	Grey literature/ Distinct. poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	2009	n=25 Aboriginal two-spirit, LGBTQ or MSM (men who have sex with men)/WSW (women who have sex with women) adults who had had experience with moving/migration	Aboriginal two-spirit and/or LGBTQ adults' experiences with poverty in the context of migration	QUAL	Racism was particularly prominent among participants when searching for employment and when accessing health services. Migration experiences often shaped mental health for participants: 'I went through [moving] again less than a year later. This time I was totally without and feeling suicidal again, and just by the luck...I got into the shelter, cause otherwise, I don't know. I've been so close to death so many times' (p.16).
Robinson (2017)	Two Ontario cities	Peer-reviewed/ Distinct. poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	NR	n=21 Aboriginal individuals who identified as two- spirit, LGBTQ, or with other sexually/ gender diverse identities	Aboriginal two-spirit and/ or LGBTQ individuals' experiences with their social context	QUAL	Poverty was key in shaping access to social support: 'I noticed when you quit drinking your friends disappear. [laughs]. You ever notice that? You don't have money or you quit lending money or you quit drinking and all your friends are gone' (p. 19).
Ross et al, (2016)	Ontario	Peer-reviewed/ Comp. prom. Of poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	2012- 2013	n=302 bisexual adults ages 25 and over, including 30 Aboriginal/First Nations-identified participants	Bisexual identity, Aboriginal identity, two- spirit identity, poverty, mental health	MIXED	Aboriginal-identified bisexuals were more likely to be living below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) compared to non-Aboriginal bisexual adults (p = 0.05). For one Aboriginal participant, growing up in poverty reduced their ability to advocate for themselves in accessing support.

Table 1.2: Continued

Scheim et al, (2013)	Ontario	Peer-reviewed/ Comp. prom. Of poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	2009–2010	n=433 trans-identified individuals across Ontario, with 32 respondents identifying as First Nations, Métis or Inuit	Trans identity, Aboriginal (First Nations/Métis/ Inuit) identity, income	QUAN	47% of Aboriginal respondents reported living below the low income cut-off (LICO) and 55% reported yearly incomes below CAD \$15,000.
Taylor (2009)	Manitoba and Northwest Ontario	Grey literature/ Comp. prom. Of poverty at intersec. LGBTQ2S+ident. & Indigeneity	2006	n=75 transgender and two-spirit individuals, of whom 27 identified as Aboriginal	Safety and security concerns, overall experiences, and service/support needs of transgender and two-spirit Aboriginal participants	MIXED	48.1% of Aboriginal participants had pre-tax incomes under \$10,000, compared with 25% of Settler (white/non-Aboriginal) participants. 59% of Aboriginal participants had their education interrupted due to their gender identity compared to 12.5% of Settler participants. 6 rented, 1 lived in a rooming house, and 1 person owned their home. 3 had to move because of their trans identity and 1 had been evicted.

Narrative review

Our paper is informed by a narrative literature review approach, sometimes referred to as a non-systematic literature review (Cook and West, 2012). Similar to a systematic review, a narrative review typically involves the synthesis and appraisal of a body of literature. However, rather than comprising a deductive design that usually involves hypothesis-testing and quantitative meta-analysis on an area of inquiry involving a relatively homogeneous population, a standardised intervention, and/or a common outcome measure, as is frequently the case with systematic reviews, a narrative review is often iterative in design and, as such, usually encompasses the qualitative analysis of a field of study involving diverse populations and disparate research designs, and reflecting significant heterogeneity in resultant implications, inferences and insights (Cook, 2008; Cook and West, 2012). Given the diversity of populations, quantitative and qualitative methodologies and outcomes/experiences of interest (for example, income, educational attainment, experiences of homelessness) often reflected in the literature on LGBTQ2S+ poverty, a deductive design potentially involving quantitative meta-analysis was neither possible nor desired. Rather, the goal of our analysis was to identify strengths and gaps in the existing body of both qualitative and quantitative evidence on intersectional differences in LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada.

Further, unlike a systematic review, which involves the development of relatively fixed inclusion criteria to address specific objectives articulated at the start of a review process, a narrative review allows for a more iterative process of adjusting inclusion criteria based on objectives that may be refined and modified in the review process (Cook, 2008). Early in our search process we encountered the tendency for social conditions and experiences associated with LGBTQ2S+ poverty to vary significantly as a function of intersectional difference based on age, racial minority and newcomer status and Indigeneity, and noted the foregrounding of gendered differences within each category. A narrative approach aligned well with the emergent insights that led us to dedicate our attention to the review, synthesis and appraisal of literature addressing these specific domains of variability, which gradually emerged as the central objectives of our study. Thus, we took a systematic approach to the identification of literature on these topics (and did, in fact, include every eligible published study that we could identify in our search), but used a narrative method in arriving at the central objectives underpinning our inclusion criteria, and our approach to summarising the findings. We did not exclude any studies that otherwise met the inclusion criteria specified in the section of this paper entitled ‘Study selection’.

Findings

LGBTQ2S+ poverty across the life course

Altogether, we found 20 studies (14 peer-reviewed) addressing poverty across the life course, with ten of these works explicitly reporting on Canadian poverty-related data among LGBTQ2S+ youth, and two offering data on indicators of poverty among sexual minority older adults in Canada. The remainder of the literature (eight works) outlined data on relationships between a variety of life course factors (for example, early experiences with homo/bi/transphobic stigma and victimisation,

among others) specific to sexual and gender minorities, and material disparities affecting these groups.

Poverty in LGBTQ2S+ youth

The majority of the studies (seven) containing reference to Canadian poverty-related data on LGBTQ2S+ youth were investigations of youth homelessness. These studies highlighted disparities between the health outcomes of homeless sexual and gender minority youth and their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts in Canada (Frederick et al, 2011; Gattis, 2011; Gattis, 2013; Kidd et al, 2017). For example, Kidd et al, (2017), in a national study of 1,103 homeless youth aged 12 to 27, found that sexual and gender minority youth were significantly more likely than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts to report poor quality of life ($p < 0.001$), poor mental health ($p < 0.001$), and higher rates of substance use ($p < 0.001$), and were additionally more likely ($p < 0.001$) to report having attempted suicide. Highlighting gendered differences among homeless LGBTQ2S+ youth, Frederick et al, (2011) found that although both sexual minority women and men were more likely than their heterosexual peers to report lifetime childhood sexual abuse ($p < 0.01$), and perceived mental illness ($p < 0.05$), the effect of sexual minority status on victimisation and mental health was more prominent for sexual minority women than for sexual minority men.

Aside from the above studies, three works reported Canadian data on the adverse social conditions surrounding younger LGBTQ2S+ people's experiences with school systems. In a national study of high school students ($n=3,607$), Taylor et al, (2011) found that 49 per cent of trans students, 43 per cent of female bisexual students, 42 per cent of male bisexual students, 40 per cent of male gay students, and 33 per cent of lesbian students reported experiencing sexual harassment at school in the year preceding the study. Not surprisingly, 30.2 per cent of LGBTQ2S+ students in this study reported skipping school as a result of feeling unsafe, compared to 11 per cent of non-LGBTQ2S+ students. Foregrounding gendered differences, Saewyc et al, (2007), in their analysis of the British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey, found that lesbian and bisexual girls may feel less connected to school compared to their heterosexual female peers, and that this disparity may not be as prominent between gay or bisexual boys and their heterosexual male counterparts. These data merit consideration, given the importance of school experiences and educational attainment among lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations as predictors of socioeconomic status (Albelda et al, 2009).

Poverty in older LGBTQ2S+ adults

We found only two studies reporting poverty-related data on older sexual minorities in Canada. Both highlighted important factors shaping the lived experiences of economically disadvantaged LGBTQ2S+ older adults. First, drawing on data provided by 1,129 HIV-positive Ontario-based adults ages 50 and over, Brennan and colleagues (2013) indicated that older gay and bisexual men were more likely to be educated and to report higher incomes than heterosexual HIV-positive men and all women. What is important is that disproportionately higher numbers of heterosexual men and women in this study's sample of HIV-positive older adults reported being non-white and not having been born in Canada. As such, the

authors noted that the poorer health and socioeconomic outcomes reported by those in these categories could have been explained by the systemic exposure of these groups to unique factors such as racial discrimination, along with pressures related to acculturation.

In the second study, [Ploeg and colleagues \(2013\)](#), explored marginalised older adults' perceptions of elder abuse using focus group data; one focus group comprised six lesbians ages 60 and over. Themes derived from the data foregrounded the role of adverse socioeconomic conditions among older lesbians in heightening their susceptibility to elder abuse. The women discussed their present-day experiences with financial hardship (which some attributed to lifetime gendered disparities in access to employment and income). They also discussed the threat of potentially having to transition into homophobic (and thus potentially abusive) residential care environments in the event that they are no longer able to materially and functionally address their basic needs in the community.

LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty

A number of studies (eight works) used socioeconomic data to consider relationships between life course factors specific to LGBTQ2S+ populations in Canada, and material disparity. One study, for example, which drew on federal income tax data to examine differences between household incomes of heterosexual and same-sex couples, found that gay men and lesbian women report significantly lower wages than heterosexual male earners, and that for gay men and lesbian women, larger wage disparities earlier in life might reflect a 'coming out' penalty (that is, those who disclose sexual identity earlier suffer social and material consequences as a result) ([Waite, 2015](#)). In a study by [Ross and colleagues \(2016\)](#), which was based on data from 302 Ontario-based bisexual adults, 25.7 per cent of respondents indicated living under Canada's Low Income Cut Off (LICO), and those living below the LICO were *less* likely to be 'out' as bisexual. These findings highlight the possibility that although gay men and lesbian women may experience socioeconomic 'coming out' penalties, as studies suggest ([McGarrity and Huebner, 2014](#); [Waite, 2015](#)), the relationship between identity disclosure and material disparity may be different for those with bisexual identities. In particular, they indicate that concealment of sexual identity, due to factors such as internalised stigma, may wield particularly adverse socioeconomic consequences for bisexual people ([Ross et al, 2016](#)).

Some of the literature on LGBTQ2S+ life course factors and poverty contained insights on the inaccessibility of higher education for sexual and gender minorities in Canada. One study of homophobic attitudes and behaviours among 286 undergraduate students at a large Canadian university campus, found that 43 per cent of students had yelled insulting comments at gay men, while 32 per cent had spoken negatively of gay men to others ([Jewell and Morrison, 2010](#)). In a study of 1,552 medical students across Canada, only 5.4 per cent of respondents identified as sexual minorities, and only 0.2 per cent as gender minorities, leading the authors to conclude that LGBTQ2S+ populations may be underrepresented in medical education ([Young, 2012](#)). Given the role of higher education in narrowing wage disparities ([Waite, 2015](#)), and the likely influence of higher education on improved health outcomes among sexual minority women

in particular (Bergeron and Senn, 2003), these findings represent salient insight on LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada.

Appraisal: LGBTQ2S+ poverty across the life course

The scholarship on poverty across the life course, overall, appears to foreground health inequities among LGBTQ2S+ youth experiencing homelessness (Frederick et al, 2011; Kidd et al, 2017), experiences of violence and discrimination among LGBTQ2S+ youth in schools, particularly bisexual and trans students (Taylor et al, 2011), the potentially heightened susceptibility to elder abuse among sexual minority women (Ploeg et al, 2013), and the relationship between ‘coming out’ (that is, publicly identifying as LGBTQ2S+) and poverty among sexual minorities (Ross et al, 2016; Waite, 2015). Trans populations are, relative to sexual minorities, less prominently featured in this body of evidence, and older trans adults in particular appear to be absent from works in this area. Inquiry on the intersection of LGBTQ2S+ poverty and old age appears to be the most limited and least developed domain relative to other stages of the life course.

LGBTQ+ poverty, race, and newcomer status

We found 12 Canadian works (all peer-reviewed) that examined indicators of poverty, or phenomena pertaining to poverty (for example, precarious employment, unstable housing), among racialised and newcomer LGBTQ+ groups (excluding Indigenous peoples). Of these, six were studies of health behaviours and health outcomes in racialised and newcomer LGBTQ+ populations in Canada. Four were qualitative examinations of migration experiences, incorporating attention to experiences of poverty. Two were qualitative investigations of LGBTQ+ newcomers’ experiences with policies, programmes, and services providing settlement support, both of which foregrounded poverty in the findings. Although we recognise that not all newcomers are racialised, and similarly acknowledge that not all racial minorities are newcomers, the literature in this area frequently presents data on these two groups simultaneously. As such, in this section, we include inquiry that together addresses both racialised groups and newcomers.

Poverty, race, and newcomer status in studies of LGBTQ+ health

Of studies reporting socioeconomic and health data in newcomer and racial minority LGBTQ+ groups, all but one (that is, Nakhaie and Wijesingha’s (2014) (paper, discussed below) centred on health behaviours and outcomes in men who have sex with men (MSM). Although focused primarily on health, these studies highlighted the tendency for racialised sexual minority men to experience significant employment and income disparities, relative to non-racialised sexual minority men (George et al, 2007; Lessard et al, 2016; Millett et al, 2012). For example, in a meta-analysis of the literature on health behaviours and health outcomes in MSM across the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, black Canadian MSM groups were found significantly more likely than non-black MSM groups to report yearly incomes of under USD \$20,000 (OR: 1.56) (Millett et al, 2012). Although this meta-analysis did not include comparisons between MSM and non-MSM groups represented in the literature, meaning that it

did not consider the potential intersectional effects of race and sexual orientation on the economic outcomes of black MSM, the reported differences in income were nonetheless significant in that they represented prominent racial disparities in income among black sexual minority men. Although employment and income data on sexual minority women are scant in the Canadian context, [Nakhaie and Wijesingha's \(2015\)](#) secondary analysis of Canadian population health data (n=24,000) provides some preliminary insight in this area. This study indicated that, for women in the sample, the effect of racial and ethnic discrimination (including employment discrimination) on health outcomes was weaker than the effect of discrimination based on sexual orientation, sex, disability, religion and language, revealing the likely salience and adverse health effects of homo- and biphobia for racialised sexual minority women in the labour market.

Poverty in the migration experiences of racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers

Four qualitative studies explicitly highlighted lived experiences of poverty in racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers' accounts of migration and resettlement. Adam and Rangel's work ([2015; 2017](#)), based on interview data from 25 gay and bisexual men in Toronto, foregrounded the racist devaluing of participants' social and economic capital as foreign workers in Canada, which often resulted in poverty and unemployment. The study emphasised participants' perceived need to persist at resettlement in spite of these conditions, particularly given the persecution to which they would be exposed in their countries of origin. Similarly, in a study using interview data from ten sexual and gender minority newcomers who endured forced migration, [Alessi \(2016\)](#) illustrated that participants reported tolerating poverty, unemployment and underemployment in Canada to protect themselves from persecution in source countries. A study by [Kojima \(2014\)](#), involving interviews with newcomers (13 sexual minority men and one transgender woman), foregrounded precarious conditions in the context of resettlement, and how participants felt forced to conceal their non-heterosexual/non-cisgender identities in order to continue receiving material support from their sometimes non-accepting families of origin.

Poverty and systems of settlement support for LGBTQ+ newcomers

Two studies, both of which focused on LGBTQ+ newcomers' experiences with policies, programmes, and services related to settlement, foregrounded issues of poverty. [Logie et al, \(2016\)](#), drawing on focus group data from 29 LGBTQ+ newcomers in Toronto, found that involvement in settlement support groups among participants enhanced their ability to navigate structural barriers to resources such as housing and employment and helped mitigate experiences of poverty. [Murray's \(2014\)](#) work, which was based on interview data from 54 racialised sexual and gender minority refugee claimants in Toronto, highlighted issues with settlement policies affecting this population. Non-heterosexual/non-cisgender refugee claimants, in this study, specifically discussed being expected to perform free/voluntary labour in primarily white-led LGBTQ+ organisations to validate their refugee claims (that is, to 'prove' their sexual orientation or gender identity), despite seldom identifying with western LGBTQ+ social movements that had historically given rise to these organisations. This foregrounded the potentially complicit role of

LGBTQ+ community organisations in reinforcing systemic racism and material disparity among sexual and gender minority refugee claimants, and in mandating normative alignment with western LGBTQ+ identities among those seeking asylum in Canada.

Appraisal: LGBTQ+ poverty, race, and newcomer status

This limited body of scholarship, as already noted, largely comprises studies of LGBTQ+ health that address the intersections of race and newcomer status, peripherally include measures of poverty, and primarily (with one exception) foreground MSM groups. Within these studies, income disparities between racialised and non-racialised MSM populations are often recognised (Millett et al, 2012). However, as the incomes of these two groups have yet to be compared against those of non-MSM populations, the intersectional effects of race and sexual orientation on the economic outcomes of racialised MSM groups remain unknown. There is little insight into the socioeconomic conditions of racialised sexual minority women in studies of LGBTQ+ health, and there exist no known attempts at investigating indicators of poverty in non-Indigenous racialised trans populations within this body of literature. The scholarship on migration experiences among racialised LGBTQ+ populations foregrounds the frequent tendency among those in these groups to tolerate precarious socioeconomic conditions within Canada to avoid returning to their countries of origin, where they are often targets of persecution (Alessi, 2016). Finally, the literature on LGBTQ+ systems of settlement support highlights the capacity for organisations in this area to act both as resources that assist sexual and gender minority newcomers with mitigating conditions of poverty (Logie et al, 2016), and as structures that exploit the engagement and labour of those in these groups (Murray, 2014). Both the scholarship on migration experience and the literature on settlement support reflect limited attention to the issues of trans newcomers. What is important is that the larger body of work on LGBTQ+ poverty in racialised and newcomer populations regularly homogenises these two groups, which represents a shortcoming of this scholarship, as not all racialised persons are newcomers, and not all newcomers are racialised. There exists a dearth in studies that delineate between the material conditions of racialised Canadian-born groups, white newcomer populations, as well as those of immigrants and refugees who are also racial minorities, within LGBTQ+ communities.

LGBTQ2S+ poverty and Indigeneity

We found nine works (five of which were peer-reviewed) foregrounding original empirical data on phenomena related to poverty in two-spirit and other Indigenous LGBTQ+ populations. Within this body of literature, six studies compared indicators of health and socioeconomic status in Indigenous two-spirit and LGBTQ+ persons against either those of settler (that is, non-Indigenous) LGBTQ+ populations, or against heterosexual/cisgender Indigenous groups. The remaining three studies investigated the social conditions and experiences of two-spirit and other Indigenous LGBTQ+ groups and foregrounded poverty in this context.

The comparative prominence of poverty at the intersection of LGBTQ2S+ identities and Indigeneity

The literature suggests that two-spirit and other Indigenous sexual and gender minorities experience profound material disparities, relative to LGBTQ+ settler groups and to heterosexual/cisgender Indigenous populations. For example, in one study of 762 street-involved youth in British Columbia, 54 per cent of the youth surveyed identified as Indigenous (McCreary Centre Society, 2008) (despite Indigenous-identified people comprising only 3.3 per cent of Canada's population at the time of the study [Statistics Canada, 2006]). Among Indigenous respondents, sexual minority youth were significantly more likely to have fled home (80%), relative to their Indigenous heterosexual counterparts (66%) (McCreary Centre Society, 2008). Similarly, in a study of 75 transgender and two-spirit individuals in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, 27 of whom identified as Indigenous, 48.1 per cent of Indigenous-identified respondents reported annual incomes below CAD \$10,000, compared with 25 per cent of settler respondents (Taylor, 2009). Whereas 12.5 per cent of settler respondents indicated having their education interrupted due to their gender identity, 59 per cent of Indigenous respondents reported this phenomenon (Taylor, 2009). Work by Ross and colleagues (2016), drawing on data from 302 bisexual-identified adults (30 of whom identified as Indigenous/First Nations), indicated that Indigenous bisexuals were significantly more likely than non-Indigenous counterparts to report living below the LICO ($p = 0.05$).

Qualitative insights on poverty in this body of scholarship highlighted mechanisms that limit access to basic resources such as housing and employment. Lyons and colleagues (2016), in a qualitative study of 32 trans women and two spirit individuals (22 of whom identified as Indigenous), found that Indigenous two-spirit individuals and settler trans women discussed commonly being denied emergency housing and other practical assistance in women's service organisations. Aside from emphasising the significance of inaccessibility to housing and employment, qualitative research in this area has highlighted sources of resilience distinctive to LGBTQ2S+ Indigenous people experiencing poverty. For example, work on social exclusion and resilience in marginalised groups by Iwasaki and colleagues (2005), which featured interview data from 26 First Nations and Métis participants, highlighted the tendency to draw strength and resilience from belonging to cultural groups among those involved in the study.

The distinctiveness of poverty at the intersection of LGBTQ2S+ identities and Indigeneity

Three studies focused on poverty-related phenomena in two-spirit and other Indigenous sexual and gender minorities. Ristock and colleagues (2010; 2011) examined the social conditions of Indigenous two-spirit and other sexual and gender minorities who had experienced migration/relocation, in Winnipeg ($n=24$; 2010) and Vancouver ($n=25$; 2011). Across both cities, Ristock's team found that participants' experiences were uniquely shaped by the intersection of racism, homo/bi/transphobia, and poverty (2010; 2011). Participants frequently experienced racism in settler LGBTQ+ communities, while simultaneously encountering stigma and discrimination surrounding their LGBTQ2S+ identities in Indigenous contexts,

and endured housing instability and income insecurity stemming from lack of informal support (Ristock et al, 2010; 2011).

Robinson (2017), drawing on qualitative data from 21 Indigenous participants who identified as two-spirit, LGBTQ+, or used an Indigenous-language sexual/gender identity, highlighted experiences of poverty. By discussing the potential for poverty to limit the ability of Indigenous people to participate in LGBTQ2S+ communities, in part due to social expectations of material reciprocity in these contexts (for example, purchasing drinks for friends), her work foregrounded specific features of poverty at the intersection of LGBTQ2S+ identities and Indigeneity.

Appraisal: LGBTQ2S+ poverty and Indigeneity

The scholarship in this area highlights the profound material disparities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ populations, including inequities in domains such as housing (McCreary Centre Society, 2008) and income (Taylor, 2009). This body of work also draws attention to the various ways in which Indigenous sexual and gender minorities are regularly discriminated against in organisations that broker access to resources such as housing and employment (Lyons et al, 2016), and the role of cultural groups in potentiating strength and resilience for Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ people (Iwasaki et al, 2005). Last, and of great significance, the literature addressing the distinctiveness of poverty at the intersection of LGBTQ2S+ identities and Indigeneity emphasises the tendency for Indigenous sexual and gender minorities to simultaneously experience stigma and discrimination on the basis of their LGBTQ2S+ identities in Indigenous communities, while also experiencing racism in LGBTQ+ communities (Ristock, 2010; 2011), thereby compromising their access to the support and resources often needed to mitigate conditions of poverty. Other than the work of Iwasaki and colleagues (2005), there exists little insight on specific sources of strength and resilience that Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ groups draw upon to resist the intersecting material effects of settler colonialism, racism, and stigma and discrimination targeting LGBTQ2S+ identities.

Discussion

Although there exists a small body of literature in which data related to LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada are reported or described peripherally in studies of health, social care, and settlement experiences, there exists a lack of studies, both in Canada and beyond, that are exclusively dedicated to the study of poverty among sexual and gender minorities. This paper represents the first known attempt at synthesising and engaging with the available data on LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada to identify gaps in this body of evidence and identify potential areas for future inquiry. Table 1.3 provides a comprehensive summary of themes represented in the available literature.

Consistent with our focus on intracategorical inquiry (McCall, 2005), our findings reveal that material disparity is reflected distinctively across axes of difference within diverse LGBTQ2S+ populations. Beginning with intersections between LGBTQ2S+ identities and age, for example, we find that sexual and gender minority youth experience systemically adverse social conditions in the school system, including discrimination and harassment (Saewyc et al, 2007; Taylor et al, 2011), lowering the likelihood for these groups to benefit equitably from education as a mechanism of

Table 1.3: Key insights on LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada

Specific subdomain	Key insight(s)
LGBTQ2S+ poverty throughout the life course	•Sexual and gender minority youth experience systemically adverse social conditions in the school system, including discrimination and harassment, lowering the likelihood for these groups to benefit equitably from education as a mechanism of social mobility.
	•Older LGBTQ2S+ adults, particularly women, may be affected by lifetime exposure to inequities in income and employment, while simultaneously fearing vulnerability to violence, stigma, and discrimination if poor living conditions force them to transition into contexts of institutional care.
	•Socioeconomic penalties appear to be incurred among bisexuals who conceal their identities, whereas lesbians/gay men may instead experience such penalties upon coming out, particularly in early adulthood.
LGBTQ+ poverty, race, and newcomer status	•Racialised LGBTQ+ communities in Canada experience income disparities relative to their white counterparts.
	•Some racialised newcomer LGBTQ+ people may be uniquely likely to tolerate poor socioeconomic conditions in Canada, including precarious employment, particularly given fears of experiencing persecution based on LGBTQ+ identity if they return to their countries of origin.
	•Organisations mandated to support LGBTQ+ newcomers function both as sources of support and as structures involved in the exploitation of those in this group.
LGBTQ2S+ poverty and Indigeneity	•Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ persons experience profound material disparities relative to other LGBTQ+ groups in domains such as housing and employment.
	•Cultural groups may function as sources of strength and resilience against poverty for Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ people.
	•Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ peoples' experiences of homo/bi/transphobia in Indigenous contexts, and colonial racism in LGBTQ+ communities and Canadian society at large, isolates these groups from the formal and informal systems of support often required to mitigate poverty.

social mobility (Albelda et al, 2009). At the other end of the age spectrum, older LGBTQ2S+ adults, particularly women, may be affected by lifetime exposure to inequities in income and employment, while simultaneously fearing vulnerability to violence, stigma and discrimination if poor living conditions force them to transition into contexts of institutional care (Ploeg et al, 2013). Little is known about trans aging in the Canadian context, though a systematic review of the limited research in this area reveals that poverty may be a common experience for older trans adults in the United States and Europe (Finkenauer et al, 2012); thus, future Canadian research is required to address this research gap. Our data also indicate that being 'out' as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or two-spirit may have an impact on socioeconomic status differently, depending on one's specific identity (Ross et al, 2016), and the stage in life at which one comes out (Waite, 2015). Given, for example, that socioeconomic penalties appear to be incurred among bisexuals who conceal their identities (Ross et al, 2016), whereas lesbians/gay men may instead experience such penalties upon coming out, particularly in early adulthood (Waite, 2015), this reality exemplifies intersectional variation in experiences of LGBTQ2S+ poverty throughout the life course. It also reflects the inherent intersectionality of LGBTQ2S+ communities, with each group represented in this acronym experiencing material disparities and other expressions of marginalisation in unique ways.

Moving on to intersections between LGBTQ+ and non-Indigenous racialised identities, we find that racialised LGBTQ+ communities in Canada experience income disparities relative to their white counterparts (George et al, 2007; Lessard et al, 2016; Millett et al, 2012). This finding is particularly significant in substantiating recent work that has, by theorising the prominent role of racism in underlying potential disparities between white and racialised LGBTQ+ populations in Canada, problematised the frequent homogenisation of sexual and gender minorities in Canadian social policy and social science scholarship (Mulé, 2009). What is important is that as not all newcomers are racialised, and conversely not all racialised people are newcomers, future work in this area is needed to distinguish between expressions of material inequity specific to racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers, and those experienced among racialised non-newcomer sexual and gender minorities.

Despite the Canadian government recently prioritising the mitigation of poverty in Indigenous communities (Government of Canada, 2018b), our review reveals that there continues to be a limited evidence base on poverty in two-spirit and other LGBTQ2S+ Indigenous populations. These groups, whose social conditions and experiences we examined distinctively to account for the effects of settler colonialism on poverty (Robinson, 2017), experience particularly profound material disparities compared to both settler sexual and gender minorities and relative to cisgender/heterosexual Indigenous groups. Our review highlights, for example, that Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ peoples' experiences of homo/bi/transphobia in Indigenous contexts, and colonial racism in LGBTQ+ communities and Canadian society at large, isolate these groups from the formal and informal systems of support often required to achieve socioeconomic stability (Ristock, 2010; Ristock, 2011; Robinson, 2017). Red intersectionality, which is a body of scholarly work that has been developed to foreground the past and ongoing effects of settler colonialism on Indigenous girls and women (Clark, 2016), may be used to conceptualise these findings as reflecting the contemporary impacts of colonisation on Indigenous sexual and gender minorities. Given, in particular, that scholars writing in this tradition believe the denigration of two-spirit people in Canada may have originated with European imperialism, and then been continually reinforced with systems of colonial power (Clark, 2016), the present day material inequities affecting Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ people in Canada may be understood as products of this sociohistorical context.

The intracategorical differences highlighted above offer insights into intersectional conditions of LGBTQ2S+ poverty in Canada and beyond. As noted, there is a dearth of studies dedicated to poverty as a determinant of social and health inequities affecting LGBTQ2S+ groups in Canada and beyond. By consolidating the limited available evidence, this review presents a compelling case for inquiry into material disparities among sexual and gender minorities in Canada, and in particular, for the use of an intersectional lens to ensure attention to the LGBTQ2S+ groups most affected. To our knowledge, the limited body of non-Canadian literature on LGBTQ2S+ poverty has yet to highlight intracategorical variation among sexual and gender minorities (Badgett, 2003; DeFilippis, 2016; Thomeer, 2013), and as such our use of this approach is an important theoretical contribution to international literature in this field.

Our findings hold several implications for research, policy and practice. First, given the prominence of LGBTQ2S+ poverty at the intersections we addressed in our review, we hope that our findings will encourage scholars with interest in LGBTQ2S+ poverty to advance inquiry on the life course, on race and on Indigeneity as sites of

analysis, both in Canada and beyond. In particular, in light of the dearth of scholarly inquiry on material disparities among older LGBTQ (particularly trans) adults, bisexual and two-spirit populations, and among distinct groups of racialised LGBTQ+ people (most notably women), these areas reflect priorities for ongoing investigation. In the realm of policy, our findings substantiate recognition of sexual and gender minorities as populations affected by poverty, and support poverty reduction strategies targeting these populations both in Canada and in comparable economies (that is, OECD member states). In Canada, for example, where poverty reduction has been recognised as a priority by the federal government ([Government of Canada, 2018b](#)), our work draws attention to LGBTQ2S+ populations as socioeconomically marginalised groups and supports their inclusion in initiatives intended to alleviate poverty.

Although Canadian social programmes such as employment insurance (EI) have, since the 1990s, undergone reforms to increase their accessibility to sexual minorities (for example, changes to ensure equitable access to spousal EI benefits for same-sex couples) ([Nierobisz et al, 2008](#)), our work supports the need for more targeted initiatives, including housing and employment programmes, that specifically function to recognise and improve the socioeconomic conditions of LGBTQ2S+ groups in Canada. For instance, given the federal government's recognition of the unique housing needs of LGBTQ2S+ populations in Canada ([Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019](#)), federal programmes specifically dedicated to funding community-based LGBTQ2S+ housing initiatives can be developed and implemented to address the needs of these populations. To use another example, given that many Canadian provinces, including British Columbia, subsidise and offer job placement programmes intended for youth, these programmes could be modified to recognise the unique barriers experienced among young LGBTQ2S+ people and, in so doing, prioritise these groups in processes for recruiting and placing programme participants ([Government of British Columbia, 2019](#)). At the level of practice, both in Canada and beyond, our findings reveal the need for healthcare and social service providers to challenge the myth of 'gay affluence' by prioritising interventions that account for and address the basic income, housing, and other socioeconomic needs of LGBTQ2S+ people in their practice.

Reflection on our use of Covidence

Given that Covidence, and other similar applications, are becoming more widely used in systematic reviews of this nature (for example, [Ross et al, 2018](#)), we offer here some reflections on the advantages and limitations of implementing such applications in light of more traditional systematic review approaches (that is, relying on team-created databases alongside reference management software). We found Covidence helpful in streamlining our search, strengthening the rigour of our study selection process, and ensuring accurate records of study inclusion/exclusion processes and reasoning, given that this information is automatically recorded by the application. Further, given that each of the co-authors had complementary insight on the various intersections of LGBTQ2S+ poverty reflected in the literature, the application's collaborative functions enabled individual team members to independently review articles corresponding with areas that reflected their specific domains of expertise and, where necessary, seek consultation with peers with other research interests (who in some cases were located elsewhere in the country) to appraise the suitability of including literature with which they may have had less familiarity. Thus, the application facilitated a more collaborative

approach alongside meticulous record keeping. With respect to limitations, Covidence and other analogous applications are primarily developed to serve in conducting systematic reviews of intervention research, and as such, some modifications (for example, to the reasons for study inclusion/exclusion) were required. Further, given that our narrative review incorporated aspects of iterative analysis, including the development of selection criteria that were refined gradually to reflect our emerging attention to intersectional differences along dimensions of age, race and Indigeneity we saw represented across the literature, our use of Covidence was only effective in conjunction with offline dialogue between team members to reach consensus about such decisions. Accordingly, while we believe applications such as Covidence have the potential to greatly enhance various aspects of our review process, we recommend researchers complement the use of these applications with real time deliberation between team members to account for idiosyncrasies specific to the design and execution of a specific review project.

Strengths, limitations, and future directions

As already noted, this paper represents a first attempt at consolidating the available evidence on LGBTQ2S+ poverty in the Canadian context. Despite variations in how poverty appears to shape the social conditions and experiences of diverse groups of sexual and gender minorities, our review does highlight the salience of poverty across communities collectively referred to as 'LGBTQ2S+' and, in so doing, challenges the myth of 'gay affluence' that has historically stymied the growth of scholarship on LGBTQ2S+ poverty (Albelda et al, 2009). Drawing on the findings of our review paper, we emphasise the relevance of ongoing inquiry on the material disparities affecting diverse sexual and gender minority populations.

Certain limitations of our work should be noted. In particular, we were limited by the scant body of evidence (39 studies) from which to draw our conclusions. Thus, the axes of difference foregrounded in our review do not represent the full extent of intracategorical variation in LGBTQ2S+ poverty. There is a need for additional exploratory studies across social locations that remain underrepresented in the existing literature. While some of the conceptual work in this area has highlighted methodological challenges of collecting large enough quantities of data required to effectively compare material conditions along multiple axes of difference reflected in LGBTQ2S+ communities (for example, age, race, Indigeneity), between specific LGBTQ2S+ populations (for example, between cisgender and trans groups), and across geographic contexts (Mulé et al, 2009), we believe studies involving small ($n < 40$) samples, typically incorporating use of qualitative methods, may be useful in generating insights that remain underrepresented in the scholarship on LGBTQ2S+ poverty. For example, given the scarcity of research involving dedicated attention to bisexual, trans and Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ communities, particularly with respect to conditions of poverty, such exploratory studies within this area of inquiry would begin addressing significant gaps in the literature.

Several areas of future inquiry merit special consideration in the growing field of LGBTQ2S+ poverty. Specific projects that we believe need to be prioritised in this area of study include, among others: (1) research on the social conditions and experiences of poverty in trans populations, particularly among older racialised and trans adults; (2) inquiry that provides a basis for comparing the material conditions of non-Indigenous Canadian-born racialised LGBTQ2S+ groups against those of non-Indigenous racialised sexual and gender minority newcomers; and (3) scholarship

that further investigates conditions of poverty, along with sources of strength and resilience against poverty, among Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ populations. We hope that ongoing research in this area will contribute to a growing evidence base on material disparities affecting LGBTQ2S+ people both in Canada and beyond, and that our work will serve to encourage scholars pursuing this research to draw upon an intersectional lens to foreground variation across important dimensions of difference.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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