THE EXPERIENCES OF LGBTQ+ MIGRANT YOUTH WITH DISCRIMINATION IN CANADA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS GRANT – GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Relative to the general population, members of LGBTQ+[1] communities experience disproportionately higher rates of violence, stigma, and discrimination. When discrimination is considered in the context of racialization and migration, even higher rates of discrimination can be seen. Discrimination can take many forms, including gender- and/-or sexual harassment, in which derogatory language is used toward members of LGBTQ+ communities, for example. Discrimination may also manifest itself in restricting one's access to housing or employment opportunities. Given the pervasive nature of discrimination, it is crucial to explore how various forms of discrimination can occur at the intersections between sexuality, gender identity, race, and ethnicity manifests among migrants[2] who identify as LGBTQ+. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the experiences of discrimination among LGBTQ+ individuals with a migration background in Canada, particularly among youth. Gaining a deeper understanding of LGBTQ+ migrant youth experiences is particularly important given immigrants will represent up to 30% of Canada's population by 2036 (Government of Canada, 2023). Moreover, 22% of the Canadian population currently self-identifies as a 'visible minority' and 4% identify as LGBTQ+ (Statistics Canada, 2022). Therefore, there is a significant proportion of LGBTQ+ migrants, including youth, in the Canadian population who are at risk of discrimination and violence based on the intersection between gender, gender identity, race and/or ethnicity. Further research is warranted regarding how LGBTQ+ migrants youth experience various forms of discrimination before, during and after migrating to Canada.

Objectives

This knowledge synthesis aimed to achieve the following goals:

- Assess the current state of knowledge on the experiences of migrants, particularly young migrants, who identify as LGBTQ+ with discrimination in Canada.
- Understand how youth LGBTQ+ migrant experiences with discrimination may be influenced by power dynamics associated with being young, a migrant and LGBTQ+ at the interpersonal and structural levels.
- Explore the types of support services being provided for LGBTQ+ youth migrants who are experiencing or have experienced discrimination.
- Identify gaps in research and practices regarding LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination in Canada.

[1] In this research, LGBTQ is conceptualized as being representative of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit and other gender and sex diverse categories.
[2] In this research, the term 'migrant' is used to include immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.

By achieving these objectives, the knowledge generated by this synthesis can be used to inform policymakers, researchers, and frontline service workers on best practices in supporting LGBTQ+ migrants, including youth, in Canada.

Methodology

In order to meet the study objectives, this study conducted a systematic review of academic (i.e., peer-reviewed) and grey (i.e., non-peer reviewed) literature. The review process followed six key steps outlined by Templier and Paré (2015), including: a) formulating the research question(s), b) searching the literature, c) screening for potentially eligible studies, d) assessing the quality of studies, e) assessing the quality of studies, f) extracting the data, and g) analyzing the data. While these steps were primarily followed in a chronological order, the literature review process was also iterative in nature, involving moving back and forth between steps to make necessary adjustments to research objectives and/or literature screening methods, for example. Strings of key words based on the categories of LGBTQ+ identity, migration identity, discrimination, and location were entered into various databases. Academic databases included PsychINFO, CINAHL, LGBTQ Source, Medline, Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. Grey literature was searched via Google. These searches captured a range of studies and grey literature which were further filtered using a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. After screening the titles and abstracts of the obtained studies, a specific sub-set of sources were included in the next step. Full-texts of potentially relevant sources were subsequently screened according to the criteria, resulting in 18 peer-reviewed studies matching all inclusion criteria. No grey literature met all inclusion criteria.

Findings

The 18 relevant articles were thoroughly analyzed to explore the experiences of migrants who identify as LGBTQ+ with discrimination in Canada. All included studies were homogenous in their use of qualitative research methodologies and primarily relied on interviewing to collect data from LGBTQ+ migrants and/or service providers (e.g., healthcare providers, advocates). While most studies recruited young and adult migrants, most migrant participants were 20 years and older. Studies were heterogenous in their use of theoretical approaches towards their research. Most studies drew on intersectionality theory, social determinants of health frameworks and queer and/or feminist theories. Moreover, the majority of studies were conducted across multiple Canadian provinces, while four were conducted in Ontario and two in British Columbia.

The included papers discussed various forms of discrimination that LGBTQ+ migrants experienced before, during and after migrating to Canada. A key distinction could be made between migrants' experiences of discrimination at the interpersonal (e.g., within communication with peers/LGBTQ+ and/or migrant community members) and systemic level (e.g., reflected in federal, provincial, and institutional policies and procedures). The narratives of LGBTQ+ migrants also shed light on their responses to discrimination in the forms of building social networks of support and concealing markers of their personal identities in everyday community

settings and asylum-seeking procedures. The findings also revealed structural inequities in terms of the negative impacts of discrimination on migrants' wellbeing, and decreased access to and quality of care and support services.

Key Messages

- While a growing body of literature has explored LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination, the unique challenges and sources of support for LGBTQ+ migrants among specific ethnic, racial and/or LGBTQ+ communities remain underexplored (e.g., experiences of Trans youth, migrants from Asia).
- There is limited explicit recognition of the unique experiences, risk factors and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ migrant youth in Canada.
- A sub-set of studies focus on the mental and/or physical wellbeing of LGBTQ+ migrants, including their experiences in healthcare service delivery. The perspectives of service providers were also sought to provide additional insights into the barriers and facilitators of quality healthcare services, including care providers who identify as LGBTQ+ migrants themselves.
- The academic literature on LGTBQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination in Canada demonstrates a commitment to intersectional ways of thinking about migrants' identities and experiences. As a result, the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants are broadly characterized as diverse, dynamic, and complex.
- Most studies were conducted between 2017 and 2022 – emphasizing an apparent recent increase in interest in this area of research.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Overview

From 2016 to 2021, 1.3 million new immigrants settled permanently in Canada – the highest number of immigrants recorded in a Canadian census (Government of Canada, 2023). By 2036, it is projected that immigrants will represent up to 30% of Canada's population, compared to 20.7% in 2011 (Government of Canada, 2023). The federal government has underscored the value that immigrants can bring to Canadian society by stating that; "newcomers enrich our communities and contribute to our economy by working, creating jobs and supporting local businesses" (Government of Canada, 2023). In turn, Canada, as a high-income migration destination, is often celebrated internationally as a "successful model of immigration" (Guo et al., 2021). Canada is often perceived as "tolerant and welcoming to society" and has been lauded internationally for its 'pioneering' commitment to multiculturalism[3] (Gomá, 2020, p. 82).

Despite its multicultural rhetoric, Canada remains characterized by contested racial and ethnic relations, conflicts, and divisions (Guo et al., 2021). Insights into the lived experiences of migrants demonstrate that discrimination and/or violence[4], often in the form of racism[5], manifest itself in various ways in Canadian societies and institutions (George et al. 2021; Williams et al., 2022). On an interpersonal basis, racism can occur in day-to-day situations through cognitive and behavioral practices and microaggressions that reinforce power relations (Williams et al., 2022).

On a structural level, racism is organized in the structures and societies and can permeate policies and practices that serve to maintain racial inequities and disadvantage people of colour (Williams et al., 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, a surge in racism and xenophobia also occurred across Canada, particularly towards those of Chinese descent (Guo et al., 2021). Many migrants experience pre-migration stressors and traumas (e.g., war, human rights violations) coupled with post-migration experiences of racism, low income and unemployment, among other challenging circumstances (Williams et al., 2022). Migrants' experiences of racism suggest that Canada's multicultural policies can be problematized for "merely celebrating cultural diversity" and obscuring institutionalized racism and socio-economic inequalities (Gomá, 2020, p. 82).

Migrants' integration and everyday experiences in Canada are not only shaped by their social identities based on race, but also by the intersections between gender, gender identity, and ability, social class, and other sociodemographic factors (Este, 2020). Migrants who identify as

[3] In this review, 'multiculturalism' is defined as "a biopolitical form of governance that regulates the following triangulation: Canadian settler society (English and French), Indigenous populations, and racialized immigrants" (Gomá, 2021, p. 82).
[4] In this review, the terms 'discrimination' and/or 'violence' are used on an interchangeable basis to refer to any action or decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons such as their race, gender, sexual identity, gender identity or expression, age or disability (Canadian Human Rights Coalition, 2023).
[5] In this review, 'racism' is defined as "a system of beliefs (racial prejudices), practices (racial discrimination), and policies based on individuals' presumed race, which operates to advantage those with historical power in most Western nations including White people in the USA and Canada" (Williams et al., 2022, p. 18).

LGBTQ+[6] (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people of colour) are faced with unique social and psychological stressors because two or more aspects of their identities (i.e., sexual orientation and race and/or ethnic culture) are subject to oppression and discrimination in Canadian society (Williams et al., 2022). While existing literature has underscored LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences of racist and heterosexist discrimination in Canada (Ghabrial, 2017), a paucity of studies has explored the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth migrants with such discrimination (Burton & Arscott, 2020; Munro et al., 2013). Narratives on how LGBTQ+ migrant youth demonstrate agency and resilience in the face of heightened marginalization and discrimination are also absent (Gooding et al., 2023). Thus, it is imperative to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of youth LGBTQ+ migrants with various forms of discrimination in Canada.

1.2 Literature Review

Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ can be exposed and subjected to discrimination, persecution, exclusion, and violence (Koko et al., 2018). From a human rights perspective, discrimination represents a violation of sexual minority rights and has occurred in countries with (e.g., Canada, South Africa) and without (e.g., Nigeria, Qatar) progressive LGBTQ+ laws (Bigini, 2019; Kjaran, 2017; Booysen et al., 2016). Instances of violence that are based on gender norms and unequal power relationships are frequently encapsulated under the term 'sexual- and gender-based violence' (SGBV) (Bigini, 2019). Literature has distinguished between six types of SGBV, including psychological abuse, rape, sexual assault, physical assault, early or forced marriages, and withholding resources and services (UNHCR, 2016). Those who identify as LGBTQ+ can face inequalities that can lead to SGBV in various settings because they "do not fit conventional gender roles or sexual orientations" (Bigini, 2019, p. 3).

Experiences of GBV and fear of persecution based on gender and/or sexual identity have forced many LGBTQ+ individuals to migrate to another country (Bigini, 2019; Government of Canada, 2022). In this regard, intersectionality theory has frequently been employed to understand the interlocking structures of oppression that contribute to forced migration among LGBTQ+ individuals (Golembe et al., 2021; Skinta et al., 2021). Particularly the work of leading critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) is heavily drawn upon to understand the crossroads at which different identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) intersect to shape the individual experiences among LGBTQ+ migrants (Golombe et al., 2021; Dhoest, 2016; Korten, 2019; Munro et al., 2013; Nakamura et al., 2013).

An intersectional lens can structure our understanding of LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences of racism from their LGBTQ+ communities, heterosexism from their ethnic communities, among other forms of oppression (Williams et al., 2022). For example, a study conducted by Giwa et al. (2012) demonstrated that according to LGBTQ+ migrants, racism existed at the individual level (i.e., within a Toronto LGBTQ+ community) as well as at the systemic level (i.e., in institution

[6] In this review, the abbreviation 'LGBTQ+' is conceptualized as being representative of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit and other gender and sex diverse categories.

and social structures). At the individual level, experiences of discrimination can have significant negative impacts on one's physical and mental wellbeing, sense of safety, as well as economic wellbeing (Bigini, 2019). At the systemic level, LGBTQ+ migrants have been faced with inequitable resource limitations and social stigmatization based on their intersecting identities in systems such as healthcare (Bigini, 2019). The negative impacts of violence before, during and after migration can also lead to compounded effects. Migration, economic and labour policies have resulted in an over-representation of migrants in so-called "essential, low paying and precarious work" (Tuyisenge et al., 2021, p. 651).

In addition, a fear of violence can also lead to isolation among LGBTQ+ migrants – increasing one's vulnerability and limits social, economic, and material resources (UNHCR, 2017). Limited resources (e.g., health and social services) can result in decreased agency for LGBTQ+ migrants, particularly women and girls (Bigini, 2019). In turn, decreased social capital and agency can undermine migrants' resilience (Matebeni et al., 2018). In order to gain more social capital, LGBTQ+ migrants can gain social power during displacement when they have a larger control over private and public responsibilities (e.g., by increased participation in financial and health-related decisions) (UN Women, 2018).

In Canada, among other countries, federal and provincial policies, guidelines, and scholarship on forced migration have "historically been organized and reinscribed heteronormative assumptions about migrants" (Matebeni et al., 2018, p. 159). Since the 1990s, a growing body of queer and migration scholarship across the humanities and social sciences has emerged to challenge such heteronormative assumptions (Matebeni et al., 2018). For example, the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada has published guidelines[7] on how to provide a better understanding of the challenges LGBTQ+ migrants may face in presenting their asylum cases to the Board (Government of Canada, 2022). Despite such efforts, migrants' continued experiences of prejudice, discrimination and/or violence based on the intersection(s) between gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and/or ethnic identity signify that existing policies, supports and services are not meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ migrants. Thus, closer attention should be paid to how LGBTQ+ migrants can be best supported to navigate various forms of discrimination.

In addition to a lack of knowledge on how to best support LGBTQ+ migrants, several sub-communities remain marginalized from literature on discrimination among LGBTQ+ migrants. Most published studies have focused on SGBV against women as they experience a higher prevalence of such discrimination (Borges, 2020; Okada, 2022). Due to the predominant focus on women, some have called for increased research on the experiences of refugee men and boys (Bigini, 2019). Furthermore, African-centred scholarship on the intersections between LGBTQ+ identity and forced migration is also lacking (Matebeni et al., 2018).

[7] The guidelines can be accessed via: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee/news/2017/05/immigration_and_refugeeboardofcanadaannouncesnewguidelineonproce.html

A particularly prominent gap in literature pertains to the absence of the perspectives of LGBTQ+ youth who are migrants in Canada (Brockenbrough, 2013; Hailey et al., 2020) – as other studies have focused on regions such as East Africa (Munyarukumbuzi et al., 2022), the Netherlands (Patterson et al., 2019) and the United States (Alessi et al.. 2016). More broadly, research has focused on the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth with various forms of discrimination such as intimate partner violence (Edwards et al., 2013) and in settings such as foster care (Mountz et al., 2020). However, existing literature has predominantly portrayed LGBTQ+ youth in deficit terms with limited acknowledgement of their resilience and agency. For example, there is literature that discusses how LGBTQ+ youth are frequently forced into homelessness when they acknowledge their sexual orientation (Abramovich & Shelton, 2017; Braga et al., 2018; Murphy, & Hardaway, 2017; Rhoades et al., 2018). As such, they are disproportionally represented among the homeless youth in Canada (see City of Toronto, 2013; Ecker, 2016). They have been reported to suffer anxiety, depression, conduct problems, abuse from family members, substance abuse, victimization at school, and skipping school out of concern for their safety compared with housed queer young people (Ecker, 2016; Murphy, & Hardaway, 2017).

Most studies on this topic have therefore documented a heightened magnitude of violence and victimization in a deficit narrative on LGBTQ+ diasporic youth (Gooding et al., 2023). What is not clear in the analyses of these studies are the narratives of resilience and agency of diasporic LGBTQ+ youth. Although some researchers have reported positive outcomes of LGBTQ+ youth navigating violence, such studies have primarily analyzed data about Gay-Straight Alliances in schools (e.g., Toomey et al., 2011). Analysis of the experiences and strategies for coping, surviving, resisting among LGBTQ+ youth (and their family members) is limited. The service providers (e.g., therapists, school counsellors, public health nurses, clergy, etc.) charged with providing care to LGBTQ+ youth as well as the policymakers and political actors charged with creating legal and social frameworks that address the rights and needs of diasporic LGBTQ+ youth (and service providers) are thus left without sound evidence to guide their work. By exploring the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants with discrimination in Canada, this systematic review aimed to provide much-needed systematic and research-based information on the impacts of racism and heterosexism on LGBTQ+ migrants, particularly among youth to inform future policies and practices.

2. OBJECTIVES

This knowledge synthesis aimed to achieve the following goals:

- Assess the current state of knowledge on the experiences of migrants, particularly young migrants, who identify as LGBTQ+ with discrimination in Canada.
- Understand how youth LGBTQ+ migrant experiences with discrimination may be influenced by power dynamics associated with being young, a migrant and LGBTQ+ at the interpersonal and structural levels.
- Explore the types of support services being provided for LGBTQ+ youth migrants who are experiencing or have experienced discrimination.

- Identify gaps in research and practices regarding LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination in Canada.

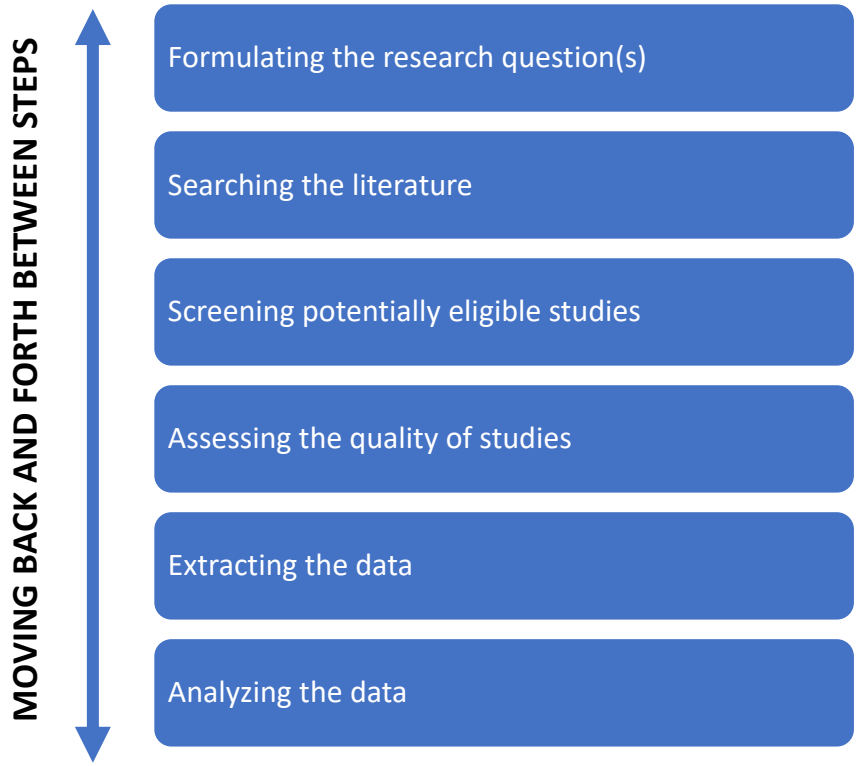
By achieving these objectives, the knowledge generated by this synthesis can be used to inform policymakers, researchers, and frontline service workers on best practices in supporting LGBTQ+ migrants, including youth, in Canada.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to understand how LGBTQ+ migrants experience various forms of discrimination in Canada, a systematic review methodology was selected for its strength in identifying trends and gaps in existing academic and grey literature to inform future research. By identifying current knowledge gaps, systematic reviews are also effective in identifying recommendations for future studies, policies and program developments (Page et al., 2021).

The methodological process for this systematic review was guided by six steps outlined by Templier and Paré (2015), depicted in Figure One. Of note is that these steps were followed in an iterative manner that involved moving back and forth between steps. For example, as noted in Section 3.1, the preliminary results of step two (searching the literature) required retroactive adjustments to be made to step one (formulation of research questions).

Figure One. Key steps involved in conducting a systematic review



3.1 Searching the Existing Literature

The search process was initiated by conducting a scan of several pertinent articles to establish the keyword syntax that would be entered into academic and grey literature databases. The final keyword syntax that was entered into databases is depicted in Table One. While the overarching objective of this systematic review initially pertained to exploring discrimination among LGBTQ migrant youth in heteronormative family contexts in Canada, this initial literature scan informed the decision to omit a keyword category related to population age, as the authors observed a paucity of research on the experiences of LGBTQ migrant youth with discrimination in Canada (Brockenbrough, 2013; Hailey et al., 2020). Omitting a keyword category pertaining to age could therefore capture the broadest array of literature on discrimination among LGBTQ migrants in Canada, including among youth and adults. Similarly, this initial literature scan shed light on the rich variety in definitions of 'violence'. Thus, various key terms related to different forms of violence were used to capture the broadest possible array of literature.

Table 1: Keyword searches for each category in academic databases

Category	Keywords
LGBTQ identity	(LGBTQ OR LGBT OR LGBTQ+ OR LGB OR gay OR lesbian OR "bi-sexual" OR bisexual OR trans OR "trans-gender*" OR transgender* OR queer OR "trans- sexual" OR two-spirit* OR 2S OR intersex OR "sexual minorit*" OR "sexually diverse" OR "sexual diversity" OR homosexual OR "non- binary" OR "gender non- conforming" OR asexual*)
	AND
Migration identity	(migrant* OR migrate* OR immigrant* OR immigrate* OR emigrant* OR emigrate* OR refugee* OR "displaced person*" OR "displaced people*" OR "new-comer*" OR newcomer* OR "asylum-seeker*" OR "newly-arrived" OR expatriate* OR diaspor*)
	AND
Violence	(GBV OR "gender-based violence" OR violence OR "family violence" OR "family-based violence" OR coercion OR maltreatment OR neglect OR rejection OR harassment OR victimization OR discrimination OR assault OR "sexual* violence" OR "sexual assault" OR "sexual coercion")
	AND
Location	(Canad* OR alberta OR "british columbia" OR manitoba OR "new brunswick" OR "newfoundland and labrador" OR "nova scotia" OR ontario OR "prince edward island" OR quebec OR saskatchewan OR "northwest territories" OR nunavut OR Yukon)

Variations of the keyword syntax using database-specific truncation methods and/or Boolean operators were entered into seven academic literature databases and one grey literature database (Google). In the Google Scholar and Google databases, shortened versions of the keyword syntax was used: (LGBTQ OR queer OR gay OR lesbian OR transgender OR "sexual identity" OR "sexual minority") AND (migrant OR immigrant OR emigrant OR asylum) AND ("family violence" OR "gender-based violence" OR violence) site:.ca region:Canada after:2003 filetype:pdf or filetype:doc.

In Google Scholar and Google, relevant sources were extracted on a page-by-page basis depending on the relevance of the material. In both databases, the sources listed on the first 10 pages were screened as the relevance of the sources on page 11 decreased significantly. The complete list of databases used and search dates are outlined in Table Two.

Table 2: Literature Databases and Dates of Searches

Database	Date of search
PsycINFO	February 22, 2023
CINAHL	February 22, 2023
LGBTQ Source	March 2, 2023
Medline (OVID)	March 2, 2023
Scopus	March 2, 2023
Web of Science (Clarivate)	March 2, 2023
Google Scholar	March 28, 2023
Google (grey literature)	March 28, 2023

Publication records were imported into Covidence, a web-based systematic review software (Veritas Health Innovation[8]). Covidence automatically removed duplicates and streamlined the organization of publication records in preparation for screening.

3.2 Screening for Inclusion

Once all sources had been uploaded to Covidence, two independent research team members performed title and abstract screening to assess the publications' eligibility for

[8] Available at www.covidence.org

inclusion in this study. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed collaboratively and are depicted in Table Three.

Publications of which the title and abstract did not meet several eligibility criteria were removed. Any publications which met one or more of the inclusion criteria were retrieved in full-text and screened by two reviewers to assess their suitability for inclusion. Discrepancies in the screening process were discussed by all authors to reach consensus. Study screening was completed in April 2023.

Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection process

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Published sources (e.g., peer-reviewed quantitative or qualitative research, books and book chapters) and unpublished (grey) sources (e.g., reports, policy briefs, theses/dissertations)	Sources that are not based on primary research (e.g., literature reviews) or unpublished research
Sources that focus on the experiences of LGBTQ migrants with discrimination/violence and/or the perspectives of those who provide services to LGBTQ migrants	Sources that do not focus on the experiences of LGBTQ migrants with discrimination and/or violence and/or the perspectives of those who provide services to LGBTQ migrants
Sources that focus exclusively on LGBTQ migrants who are either first, second or third generation Canadians	Sources that do not focus exclusively on individuals who identify as LGBTQ and do not have a migration background (first, second, third generation Canadian or newcomer)
Sources that focus exclusively on Canada	Sources that do not focus exclusively on Canada (e.g., studies with participants from Canada and US)
Sources that are written in English (or accompanied by an English translation if in French)	Sources that are not written in English (or without an available translation when written in French)
Sources that were published between 2003 and 2023	Sources published before 2003

Among the criteria that guided the selection process was that sources were required to be full peer-reviewed journal articles or unpublished (i.e., grey) literature (e.g., theses, policy briefs, news articles). Sources also had to be published after 2003 and written in English (or with an accompanying English translation if in French). Sources were required to focus exclusively on the perspectives of LGBTQ migrants (or those who provide services for LGBTQ migrants) with discrimination in a Canadian context. Studies that did not solely focus on Canada (e.g., by recruiting participants from multiple countries, even if this included Canada) were excluded. To capture a broad array of literature on LGBTQ migrants with GBV, no exclusion criteria pertaining to participant age was set.

3.3 Quality Assessment

Once the final set of publications that met all inclusion criteria was collected, two research team members assessed the quality of the eligible papers. The quality assessment tool of the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research (2017) was used to assess the methodological quality based on the possibility of bias in its design, conduct, analysis, and reporting (Wong et al., 2021). The 10-item checklist contained questions on the congruency between philosophical/theoretical perspectives and the research methodology, and the degree to which participants and their voices were adequately represented in the findings, for example. Each question was labelled with 'Y' (yes), 'N' (no) or 'Y/N' (unclear). Following independent review of study quality, the team discussed their level of agreement on study quality. Any discrepancies in agreement were resolved through further discussion.

3.4 Data Extraction

Two members of the research team independent systematically extracted information from each study. Information was extracted on the following categories: author(s), study aim(s), location of the research, study design and methods, sample size, participant characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnocultural identity, country of origin), participant socio-demographic information (e.g., salary, education level), and key findings. The data extraction categories developed according to the authors' ideas regarding what would likely be useful information to answer the research questions. Once the data extraction was completed, two rounds of 'test' extractions were completed to ensure both authors had similar perceptions of what to extract in each study. This process involved independently populating a data extraction category (e.g., socio-demographic information on participants) and cross-comparing the results to resolve any discrepancies.

3.5 Data Analysis

Once data were extracted, we collaboratively used a thematic approach to the data analysis. Thematic analysis is commonly applied to data analysis in systematic reviews to formalise the identification and development of themes in the data (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Harden, 2008). The thematic analysis commenced by two rounds of reading each article, during which (sub)codes were applied to highlight prominent ideas, contrasts and/or similarities in each

article. Codes were subsequently organized in a Microsoft Excel file to facilitate the organization of the (sub)codes. Any disagreements on the naming and content of the codes were resolved through discussion between the reviewers. Once all articles were coded, the team reviewed the information in the Excel file in depth and developed diagrams to map the inter-relationships among (sub)codes to develop (sub)themes. As a final step in the data analysis, four themes and nine sub-themes were developed by engaging in multiple rounds of discussion between members of the research team.

3.5.1 Theoretical Approach to Data Analysis

From a theoretical perspective, the thematic analysis was grounded in the notions of 'queer of colour' (Brockenbrough, 2013, 2016) and 'situated agency' (Panelli et al., 2005). Situated agency revolves around how people's choices, acts, and behaviours can transcend social limitations (Panelli et al., 2005). The data analysis therefore focused on how the social context and spatial locations of LGBTQ+ migrants can provide varied constraints as well as possibilities for them to generate agency on a personal level and how they use this agency to navigate various forms of discrimination.

The queer of colour critique (Brockenbrough, 2013, 2016) challenges the invisibility of queer of colour in scholarly discourses. This concept informed the analysis by providing a theoretical avenue to "unsettle dominant discourses, key questions, and normative beliefs" in the narratives of diasporic LGBTQ+ migrants with discrimination (McCready, 2013, p. 512). A queer of colour analysis also allows for a consideration of how personal experiences of discrimination are influenced by the power dynamics associated with identifying as LGBTQ+ and an immigrant (Ferguson, 2018; McCready, 2013; Munroe et al., 2020). Collectively, a queer of colour analysis and situated agency perspective were selected to emphasize migrants' strength, resiliency, and agency (Follin et al., 2014; Hailey et al., 2020).

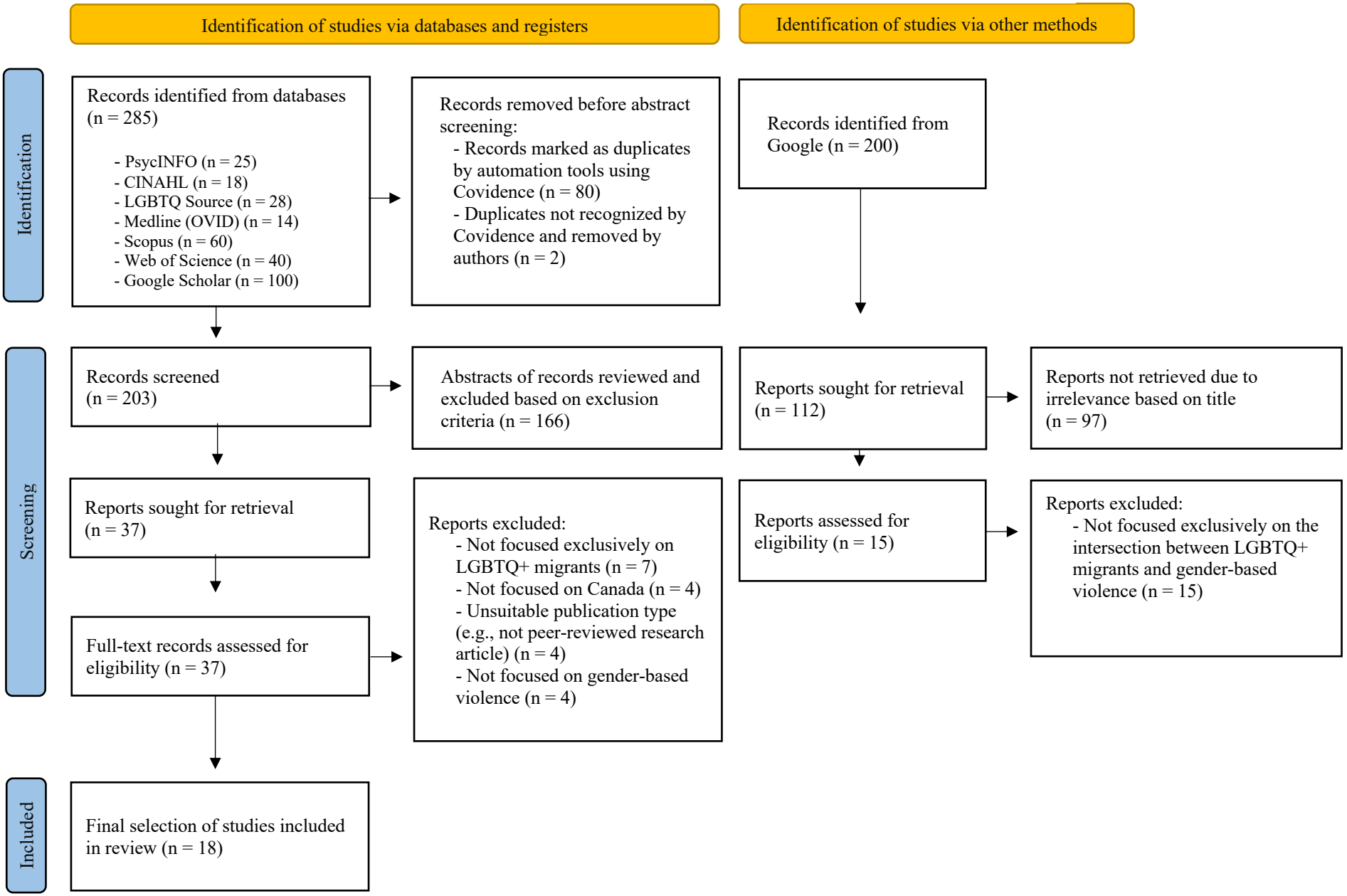
4. RESULTS

4.1 Study Selection

As illustrated in Figure Two, the database searches yielded 285 articles that were imported into Covidence. Eighty two duplicates were removed before screening study abstracts. Using the criteria depicted in Table Three, the abstracts of 203 peer-reviewed articles were subsequently screened – of which 157 were excluded. Full texts of 37 articles were subsequently assessed for eligibility, of which 18 met all the inclusion criteria.

Subsequent to screening the academic literature, the titles of 200 grey literature sources were reviewed on Google. Of these sources, 15 were assessed for eligibility. However, no grey literature sources met all inclusion criteria. All study selection discrepancies between two authors were resolved through discussion and including a third author when necessary. A list of the author(s) names and article titles of all included articles is included in Appendix A.

Figure 2. Overview of systematic review process adapted from the PRISMA template (Page et al., 2021)



4.2 Study Characteristics

Table Four describes the characteristics of the 18 studies that were included in the systematic review. Of the included studies, ten studies drew on unique (i.e., primary) data sets, while four studies utilized repeated (i.e., secondary) data sets. Most studies (n = 6) were conducted across multiple Canadian provinces, while some studies focused only on Ontario (n = 4) and British Columbia (n = 2). Two studies did not disclose the location of their research in Canada. In terms of research approaches, all included studies demonstrating homogeneity in their use of a qualitative methodology.

Research methodologies, however, were informed by various theoretical frameworks/approaches in exploring the experiences of migrants with discrimination. Most studies drew on intersectionality (n = 4), as well as intersectionality and or social determinants of health (n = 1). Queer and/or feminist theory was also employed by three studies, in addition to queer and critical race theory (n = 1). Other studies drew on Bourdieusian theory (n = 1), post-colonial theory (n = 1) and social determinants of health (n = 1). Three studies did not specify their theoretical framework.

In terms of participant sample characteristics, most studies (n = 10) recruited LGBTQ+ migrants and four studies recruited migrants and service providers. Of the recruited migrants, their gender identity/sexual orientation was most often described as 'LGBTQ+' (n = 9), while four studies interviewed gay men, and one study interviewed Trans women. The majority of studies (n = 7) recruited youth and adult migrants, in which the 'youth' age group most often commenced at age 20 and older (n = 4). One study recruited participants 14 years and older. Four studies recruited participants over the age of 50.

Table 4. Overview of study characteristics

Characteristic	Number of studies
Total studies (*n* = 18)	
Number of unique data sets (*n* = 14)	
Number of repeated data sets (*n* = 4)	
Study location in Canada	
British Columbia	2
Ontario	4
Mutliple provinces	6
Undisclosed province(s)	2
Study design	
Qualitative	18
Theoretical framework/perspectives	
Intersectionality theory	4
Intersectionality and social determinants of health	1
Social determinants of health	1
Bourdieusian theory	1

Queer and/or feminist theory	3
Queer and critical race theory	1
Post-colonial theory	1
Unspecified	3
Participant type(s)	
LGBTQ+ migrants	10
Migrants and service providers	4
Migrants' age group	
Adults only	3
Youth (<24 years) and adults	7
Youth age subcategories:	
14 and over	1
19 and over	2
20 and over	4
Undisclosed	4
Migrants' gender identity/sexual orientation	
LGBTQ+	9
Gay only	4
Trans only	1
Migrants' continent of origin	
Asia	3
South America	1
Multiple continents	8
Undisclosed	1

4.3 Study Quality

The quality appraisal assessment outlined in Figure Three suggested that the quality of included studies was generally high. All studies demonstrated congruence between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data, as well as between the methodology and the representation and analysis of data. All except for one study also demonstrated congruency between the methodology and philosophical perspective (Kahn & Alessi, 2018) and interpretation of the results (Marshall, 2021). However, only 5 out of 18 studies met all 10 quality criteria (Gailits et al., 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022, Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022; Lee, 2019, Poon et al., 2017).

The criterion pertaining to the article's discussion of the influence of the researcher on the research was particularly weak as this was missing in six studies (Jordan, 2009; Karimi, 2020; Nakamura et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2011, 2013; Lee, 2018) and unclear in four studies (Kahn et al., 2017; Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Karimi, 2021; Nakamura et al., 2013). Statements locating the researcher culturally or theoretically were also absent from three studies (Lee et al., 2011, 2013; Lee, 2018) and unclear in six studies (Cox et al., 2021; Kahn et al., 2017; Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Karimi, 2020, 2021; Monro et al., 2013). Furthermore, two studies did not include a discussion of ethical issues or approval (Karimi, 2020, 2021).

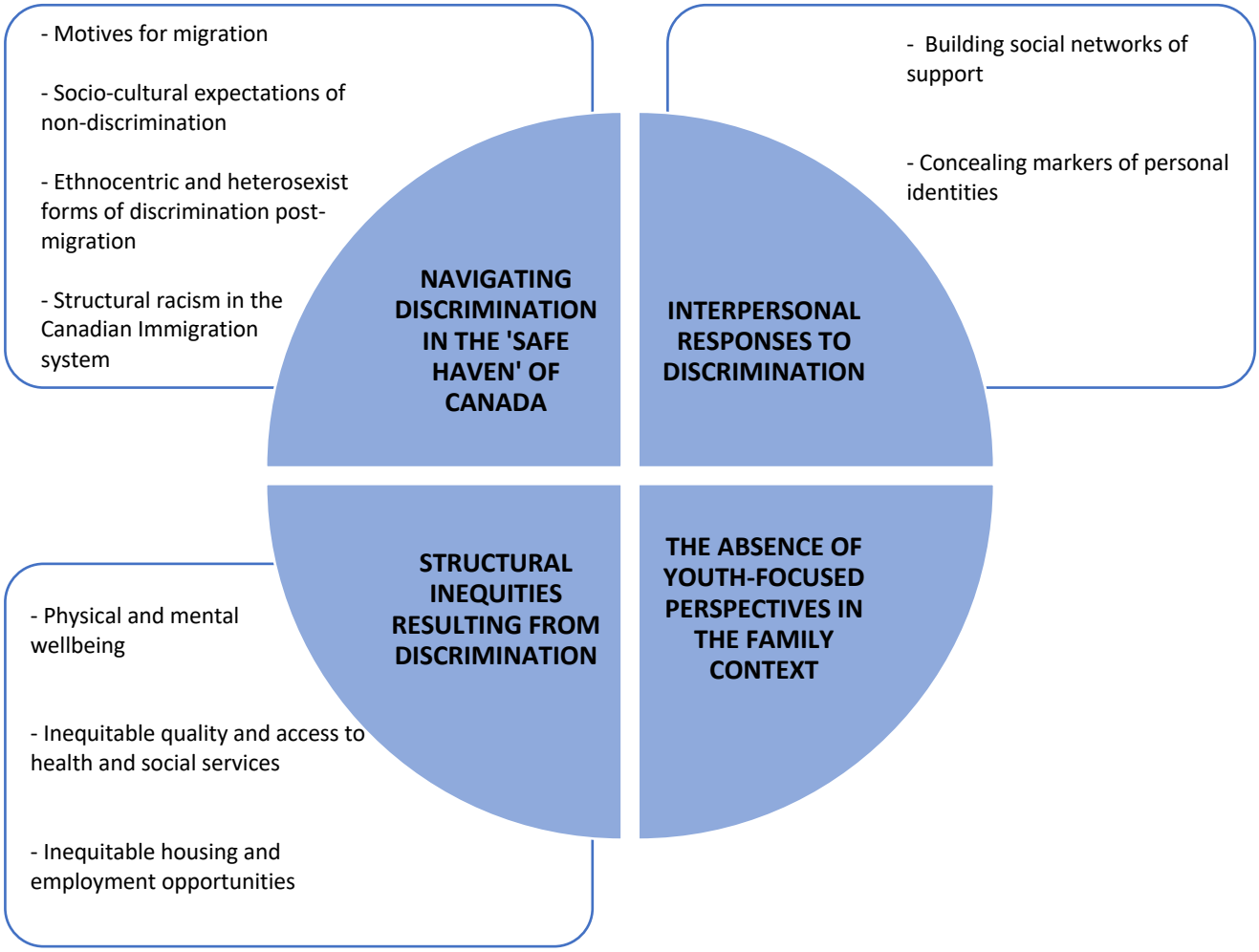
Figure 3. Results of study quality appraisal

Question	Cox et al. (2021)	Gailits et al. (2022)	Haghiri-Vijeh (2022)	Haghiri-Vijeh et al. (2022)	Jordan (2009)	Kahn et al. (2017)	Kahn & Alessi (2018)	Karimi (2020)	Karimi (2021)	Lee et al. (2011)	Lee et al. (2013)	Lee (2018)	Lee (2019)	Marshall (2021)	Munro et al. (2013)	Nakamura et al. (2013)	Nakamura et al. (2015)	Poon et al. (2017)
Is there congruency between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y/N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Is there congruity between the research methodology and the research question or objectives?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y/N	Y	Y/N	Y	Y
Is there congruity between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is there congruity between the research methodology and the representation and analysis of data?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is there congruence between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y/N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is there a statement locating the researcher culturally or theoretically?	Y/N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y/N	Y	Y	Y
Is the influence of the researcher on the research, and vice-versa, addressed?	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y/N	Y/N	N	Y/N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y/N	N	Y
Are participants, and their voices, adequately represented?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is the research ethical according to current criteria, or for recent studies, and is there evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Do the conclusions drawn in the research report flow from the analysis or interpretation of the data?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

4.4 Introduction into Themes and Sub-Themes

In the following sections, the key findings that resulted from the data analysis will be presented. Analysis of the data revealed four themes and nine sub-themes, as illustrated in Figure Four.

Figure 4. Visual overview of themes and sub-themes



4.5 Navigating Discrimination in the 'Safe Haven' of Canada

4.5.1 Motives for Migration

LGBTQ+ migrants held a variety of complex reasons for being forced out of their countries of origin and for selecting Canada as their destination. Migration was predominantly used as a safety-seeking strategy from discrimination and violence based on migrants' sexual orientation and/or gender identity, including in unstable socio-political contexts (Cox et al., 2021; Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022; Gailits et al., 2022; Jordan, 2009; Lee et al., 2011). Migration was also used to avoid legal persecution (Lee et al., 2011), including religious persecution from institutions such as churches (Cox et al., 2011; Munro et al., 2013).

Before migrating to Canada, newcomers from South Asia and East/West Africa described their experiences with homo/biphobia on an individual and systemic level (Cox et al., 2011). On an individual level, they experienced "others making jokes or derogatory slurs about LGBTQ+ people" (p. 2983). On a systemic level, newcomers described government and religious institutions as perpetuating homo/bi/transphobic attitudes, for example, through the criminalisation of LGBTQ+ identity (Cox et al., 2011). An African male who identified as LGTBQ+ further emphasized his experiences of violence in Africa by noting that "they can stone you; they can just burn you and then no one would sue them" (Cox et al., 2011, p. 2983). Furthermore, as a result of experiencing isolation and marginalization in China, Chinese gay men immigrated to Canada in search of 'sexual freedom' (Poon et al., 2017).

Similarly, 17 individuals in same-sex binational relationships immigrated to Canada due to homophobic institutional discrimination and feeling 'unwelcome' in the United States (Nakamura et al., 2015). Involuntarily migrating to Canada was the "only option available to them to remain with their partners" (Nakamura et al., 2015, p. 12). Refugees also fled Latin America, the Caribbean, Middle East, Asia and Africa after having "lived through state incarceration, police brutality, familial and/or community violence" (Lee et al., 2011, p. 256).

4.5.2 Socio-Cultural Expectations of Non-Discrimination in Canada

Before migrating to Canada, the narratives of many LGBTQ+ migrants underscored that they held an expectation of Canada as a 'safe haven' (Lee, 2019; Marshall, 2021). Particularly Canada's legalization of same-sex marriage (Munro et al., 2013) and the "pride Canada takes in its efforts to protect LGBTQ+ rights" (Marshall, 2021, p. 170) were cited as important motives for migrating to Canada. Newly immigrated gay Iranian men therefore expected to build strong social ties with Canadian LGBTQ communities (Karimi, 2021). Similarly, newcomer LGBTQ+ youth in Toronto, for example, described their expectations of Canada as a "safe, multi-cultural, gay-friendly country" with a social welfare system which could provide support on their arrival (Munro et al., 2013, p. 141). Newcomers from South Asia, South America, as well as East and West Africa, also described Canada as "a country that is so open and better educated in a lot of ways and people are more open-minded" (Cox et al., 2011, p. 2984). Migration to Canada was therefore largely used to seek "hope, safety and belonging elsewhere" (Jordan, 2009, p. 174) -

through which migrants could start a "hopeful new chapter in their lives" (Lee et al., 2011, p. 256).

4.5.3 Ethnocentric and Heterosexist Forms of Discrimination Post-Migration

While migration was primarily used as a safety-seeking strategy to escape from gender-based and sexualized violence in their countries of origin, many migrants continued to experience oppression on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and/or race post-migration (Gailits et al., 2022; Karimi, 2021; Kahn et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2013; Munro et al., 2013; Nakamura et al., 2013). Migrants experienced ethnocentric and heterosexist forms of interpersonal discrimination within their own migrant communities, as well as in broader Canadian society (Karimi, 2021). For example, the majority of Asian migrant men who identified as gay perceived their ethnic communities to be discriminatory and unsupportive of their sexual identities (Nakamura et al., 2013). In this regard, migrants' perceptions of the gay community were "slightly more positive compared to the ethnic community" (Nakamura et al., 2013, p. 252). According to these migrants, cultural ideologies that are rooted in Asian culture perpetuated negative attitudes towards homosexuality. These ideologies included "seeing sex as taboo, stereotypes about being gay, and the affiliation with religion" (Nakamura et al., 2013, p. 250). Similarly, LGBTQ+ migrant students also emphasized religious motives for discrimination, as described by one migrant:

> "This is a very heavily Catholic community that doesn't recognize queerness as something that is acceptable, and that's brought here as a cultural norm to Canada even though they are now supposed to be in a place where hate and rejection is not acceptable" (Marshall, 2021, p. 182).

Half of a group of Iranian migrants who identified as gay also described being sexualized, racialized, and marginalized in Canadian gay communities (Karimi, 2021). Some migrants described having the expectation to build strong ties with Canadian LGBTQ+ communities after migrating. However, they underscored that the "reality is quite the opposite" (Karimi, 2021, p. 2866). However, despite experiencing exclusion and discrimination, half of the migrants emphasized feelings of belonging and descriptions of Canadians and Canada as "accepting of gay people" and "truly multicultural", respectively (Karimi, 2021, p. 2865).

The predominant exclusion, fear and guilt that the migrants experienced in Iran also informed their interactions with Iranian communities in Canada - by avoiding interactions with heterosexual Iranians (Karimi, 2021). This finding was also obtained by Munro et al. (2013) and Kahn et al. (2017), who both described migrants' avoidance of people from their diasporic communities due to fear of homophobic persecution or violence. Migrants' own diasporic communities therefore represented a significant source of discrimination, which undermined migrants' feelings of belonging in Canada. After migrating from Latin America to Toronto, some migrants also experienced heterosexism in the form of transphobia and homophobia (Gailits et al., 2022). These experiences of discrimination led to compounded negative effects on their

individual wellbeing and their search for housing and employment - described in more detail in Section 4.7.2.

4.5.4 Structural Racism in the Canadian Immigration System

In addition to experiencing discrimination in Canadian and diasporic communities, the narratives of migrants in several studies also underscored more structural forms of racism embedded in and perpetuated by the Canadian immigration system (Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Kahn et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2013). In refugee determination processes, for example, migrants are often forced to retell their stories of persecution and face constant questioning on the credibility of such stories (Lee et al., 2013). Other migrants have also described being faced with the burden of 'proving' their membership in minority groups on the basis of gender and/or sexuality in refugee claim processes (Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Kahn et al., 2017).

By being forced to recall the history of their persecution, migrants were required to disclose extremely private information and retrieve 'painful' memories that can extend back to childhood (Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Kahn et al., 2017)**.** Even long after refugee claim decisions were made, LGBTQ+ forced migrants and service providers (e.g., lawyers, advocates, mental health practitioners) involved in the claim processes described long-term psychological impacts on their wellbeing (Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Kahn et al., 2017).

Several studies also pointed to the powerful force of Western conceptualizations of sexual and gender identity that are embedded in legal Canadian refugee processes (Kahn & Alessi, 2018; Kahn et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2013). Some migrants may not identify with sexual and gender categories as they are understood in Western contexts (Kahn et al., 2017). Upon their arrival in Canada, migrants may therefore face "a crisis of identity" by having to align with dominant Western, white, middle-class, and male cultural norms of sexuality and gender in a matter of months (Kahn et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2013). An advocate further emphasized this finding:

> "I think now, for a lot of folks, two to three months is way too short, particularly for those who are claiming status that's linked to sexual orientation/gender identity because sometimes the ways that people understand their sexual and gender identity will change over time, and there'll be an evolution in how people understand their identity, being in a new environment" (Kahn et al., 2017, p. 32).

Thus, in contrast to many migrants' expectations of Canada, migration was an "imperfect solution because systematic racism is also present in Canada" (Gailits et al., 2022, p. 9).

4.6 Interpersonal Responses to Discrimination

4.6.1 Building Social Networks of Support

As a result of LGBTQ migrants' experiences of discrimination, a dominant sub-theme pertains to the ways in which migrants' narratives pointed to feelings of loneliness,

marginalization, as well as reduced social capital and agency (Poon et al., 2017; Karimi, 2020, Nakamura et al., 2013). Particularly during the beginning phases of migrants' arrival in Canada, migrants described having decreased access to social support (Nakamura et al., 2013). Despite their decreased access, many migrants actively sought to build informal social networks of support with 'allies' who shared elements of their intersecting identities in terms of sexuality, ethnicity and/or migration background (Gailits et al., 2022; Poon et al., 2017). These networks represented 'safe spaces' and opportunities for LGTBQ+ migrants to exercise agency and enhance their reduced sense of social capital in Canadian communities, particularly during their initial days in Canada (Karimi, 2020).

For example, gay Iranian migrants tended to distance themselves from their families in Iran and co-ethnics in Canada, but made strong bonds with other gay Iranian men in Canada. While awaiting the results of their asylum claims, the men also formed 'transitionary communities' in Turkey to connect with other gay men in their vicinities in Vancouver and Toronto (Karimi, 2020). Similarly, Asian gay men in Vancouver described their social involvement in gay communities by "spending time in gay neighborhoods, participating in recreational activities, or attending events such as Gay Pride" (Nakamura et al., 2013, p. 252). Some migrants, however, felt discriminated against and disconnected from the gay community (also described in Section 4.5.3) – leading to difficulties in forming social connections (Karimi, 2020). Despite such difficulties, migrants' search for a sense of connection and support represented 'sophisticated strategies' to care for themselves and each other, and resist asymmetrical power relations (Gailits et al., 2022).

4.6.2 Concealing Markers of Personal Identities

Several studies reported on LGBTQ+ migrants' use of 'concealment strategies' to 'hide' various visible (e.g., skin colour) and/or invisible (e.g., sexuality) markers of their personal identities from family members, co-workers, community members, and/or service providers (Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022; Karimi, 2021; Khan et al., 2017b; Lee et al., 2013; Poon et al., 2017). As a protective strategy, some migrants refrained from "sharing their stories" (Karimi et al., 2021) due to fear of cultural stigma, including being disowned, or losing financial support (Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2017b).

For example, three out of 19 Iranian gay refugees across Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa described their unwillingness to share their asylum experiences with others and hiding their sexual orientation to avoid exclusion and discrimination (Karimi, 2021). This was used as a strategy to avoid expressions of 'pity' and 'superiority' in which "white Canadians are 'heroes' who have saved the Oriental" (Karimi et al., 2021, p. 2865). In negotiating 'racial boundaries' and seeking proximity with white citizens, some Iranian men would identify as 'Persian' instead. One refugee underscored this finding by stating: "…I saw that Iranians, gay and straight, talk about themselves as Persian because it is not as negative as Iranian to Canadians" (Karimi et al., 2021, p. 2865).

Avoiding revealing elements of migrants' sexual/gender identities was also apparent among LGBTQ+ newcomer students in Canada. They described "risking losing everything [when] they run out of money because their parents found out they were queer" (Marshall, 2021, p. XYZ). In turn, Marshall (2021) described a "culture of silence" among queer newcomer, refugee and immigrant youth in Canada who are reluctant to disclose or explore their queerness due to fears of discrimination and violence (p. 170). Similarly, Chinese immigrants described hiding their sexuality in fear of being ostracized and discriminated against by others (Poon et al., 2017). Overall, hiding (in)visible elements of migrants' identities prevented them from "truly be[ing] themselves" (Poon et al., 2017).

In the process of applying for refugee status, however, migrants are 'forced' to share elements of their personal lives to be accepted as refugees in the legal determination process (Lee et al., 2013; Kahn et al., 2017 - also described in Section 4.5.4). Thus, some LGBTQ+ refugees were not able to 'hide' certain elements of their identities when speaking to doctors, psychologists, and social workers, for example. The forced nature of such disclosure goes against the ways in which migrants had been conditioned to hide aspects of their personal lives (Kahn et al., 2017).

4.7 Structural Inequities Resulting from Discrimination

4.7.1 Physical and Mental Wellbeing

In multiple Canadian provinces, the stigma experienced by LGBTQ+ migrants in everyday life negatively impacted their mental, physical and social wellbeing in various ways (Gailits et al., 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022). Of note is that such decline in wellbeing occurred at a rapid pace post-migration. The narratives of some migrants described how they were in 'good physical health' upon their arrival in Canada, but that their health worsened over time (Gailits et al., 2022). For example, in Toronto, nine Trans women from Latin America described experiencing "depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, trauma and self-harm" (Gailits et al., 2022, p. 12).

In refugee claim processes, Khan and Alessi (2017) underscored that "refugees who identify as a LGBTQ+ have the added burden of proving that they are members of a sexual or gender minority group" (p. 22). The difficulties in navigating the refugee claims process, including completing the persecution narrative and disclosing private information, compounded negative psychological consequences for this population (Khan & Alessi, 2017). In this regard, both service providers and LGBTQ+ migrants discussed "lingering psychological effects of the asylum-seeking process for claimants" (Kahn & Alessi, 2018, p. 32), including trauma (Nakamura et al., 2015) and 'retraumatization' (Lee et al., 2011). Particularly compressed timelines lead to significant mental health impacts for LGBTQ+ claimants (Kahn & Alessi, 2018). In turn, mental health providers in various Canadian provinces also conceptualized their clients as victims of trauma and concluded that the demands of the claims process exacerbated migrants' psychological symptoms (Kahn et al., 2017).

In several other studies, migrants' reduced social connections and minimal social capital, and associated feelings of isolation were identified as a key reason for poor health and wellbeing post-migration (Gailits et al., 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022; Karimi, 2020; Nakamura et al., 2013, 2015). Coupled with migrants' experiences of discrimination, reduced social support was described as "making it challenging to develop positive self-identity", leading to detrimental effects on mental and physical wellbeing" (Nakamura et al., 2013, p. 254).

4.7.2 Inequitable Quality and Access to Health and Social Services

An additional sub-theme under the theme of structural inequities pertained to how migrants' health and wellbeing was closely intertwined with experiences of discrimination in health and social services. LGBTQ+ migrants experienced a 'structural challenge' of accessing services in a timely and 'unbiased' manner (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Karimi, 2021). For example, when migrants expressed a need for mental health support, the stigma they faced negatively impacted their mental wellbeing (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022). Migrants also identified a lack of affirming spaces or therapeutic environments to support their mental health, including difficulties in interacting with healthcare providers (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Lee et al., 2013). Some migrants described experiencing trauma when healthcare providers "did not have the sensitivity to provide affirming care" (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022, p. 1186). Of note is that healthcare providers who also identified as LGBTQ+ migrants experienced 'secondary' negative mental health and a need for increased support as well (Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022).

However, migrants' experiences of stigma contrast with service providers' narratives on the delivery of health services. For example, according to mental health providers and settlement workers in various Canadian provinces, their services were intended to improve wellbeing of their LGBTQ+ forced migrant clients (Kahn et al., 2017b). In these services, the "first and most important step in that process was to engender a sense of safety within the provider-client relationship", involving empathy and self-interrogation of differences in power and privilege (Kahn et al., 2017b, p. 1170).

Despite experiencing 'cultural stigma' in healthcare services, some LGBTQ+ migrants discussed several forms of support to reduce inequities in healthcare services. They identified that 'supportive' care providers (e.g., nurses, physicians) "helped [them] feel accepted when healthcare providers heard and acknowledged them and when healthcare providers stood up against LGBTQIA+ phobic comments or when they corrected misgendering by others" (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022, p. 1180). Supportive healthcare providers were also characterized as those "who listened and asked appropriate questions, nurses who wrote letters for refugee claimants' court hearings, and nurses who followed up after LGBTQIA+ migrants' appointments, surgeries, or discharges" (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022, p. 1185).

Lastly, migrants' reduced or inability to access and afford resources to improve their wellbeing (e.g., therapy sessions) was also identified as a source of stress and inequity (Gailits et al., 2022; Karimi, 2020). Overall, the stigma surrounding mental health and LGBTQ+ people

contributed to LGBTQ+ migrants feeling 'deviant' and 'abnormal' - perpetuating exclusion and reinforcing cis-heteronormativity (Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022).

4.7.3 Inequitable Housing and Employment Opportunities

Several papers described the ways in which discrimination resulting from LGBTQ migrants' intersecting (in)visible identity markers contributed to challenges in obtaining secure housing and employment (Gailits et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2017b; Karimi 2020b; Lee et al., 2011; Nakamura et al., 2015; Marshall, 2021; Munro et al., 2013). For example, many Trans female refugees in Toronto and Montreal described the profound impact of transphobia in blocking their employment opportunities due to having a masculine name while presently as feminine (Lee et al., 2011). Similarly, among Trans women from Latin America, the intersections of their experiences as Trans women and immigrants resulted in economic exclusion in the form of un- and/or underemployment (Gailits et al., 2022). The financial instability resulting from unemployment also impacted their gender identity expression as they were not able to purchase gender affirming products (e.g., make-up, clothes) (Gailits et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the challenges of being an undocumented immigrant (with limited English fluency) or refugee with social insurance numbers that differ from permanent residents also made it difficult or impossible to secure employment (Gailits et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2011). Migrants' lack of Canadian work experience was also identified as a barrier to employment (Lee et al., 2011). When migrants were able to find employment, they often found themselves "trapped in low-paying jobs that do not provide them with sufficient social or economic capital" (Karimi, 2020, p. 95). The intersections of their multiple locations of oppression also often produced unsafe or precarious working conditions with occupational health and safety hazards (Gailits et al., 2022).

In several studies, many migrants also experienced challenges in finding stable and safe housing (Kahn et al., 2017b; Karimi, 2020; Lee et al., 2011). These challenges were particularly apparent during the first few months after arrival (Lee et al., 2011). Some migrants resided with family, friends, or refugee/youth shelters, social housing or welcome centers, and others were transitioned into a rental apartment within a few months of arrival (Lee et al., 2011; Karimi, 2020). In social housing, some migrants described limitations to their networking chances, as noted by one migrant:

> "Living in social housing limits my networking chances to others who live under similar conditions here because the neighbourhood is a tag… that tells other people how much I earn or if I went to school…" (Karimi, 2020, p. 95).

During the search for stable housing and in welcome centers, some migrants also described experiences of racism and (hetero)sexism – also noted in Sections 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 (Lee et al., 2011). Based on such experiences of discrimination, Iranian LGBTQ+ migrants described

that housing policies fail to consider the concerns of racialised LGBTQ+ refugees (Karimi, 2020). Forced migrants also attempted to secure housing and financial resources to cope with the psychological effects of discrimination and victimization noted in Section 4.7.1.

4.8 The Absence of Youth-Focused Perspectives in the Family Context

The final prominent theme that emerged from the data analysis pertains to the absence of the perspectives of youth LGBTQ migrants with violence and/or discrimination in Canada. No studies focused exclusively on the perspectives of youth - defined as those below 24 years of age. Six out of 18 studies incorporated the perspectives of youth but also incorporated the experiences of adults (up to age 59) (Cox et al., 2021; Gailits et al., 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022; Kahn et al., 2017; Karimi, 2020; Nakamura et al., 2013). Solely one study focused on the perspectives of 39 LGBTQ youth (aged 14-29) with a migration background – in addition to the perspectives of service providers who were working with youth in Toronto, Ontario (Munro et al., 2013). Munro et al. (2013) describe this study as "one of the first studies to offer some insights into the life issues and challenges post-migration of Canadian LGBT newcomer youth" (p. 137). Furthermore, while Marshall's (2021) study explored LGBTQ+ migrant students' experiences in Canada, data was collected from staff members from organizations that supported or researched LGBTQ+ migrants' access to post-secondary education in Canada.

In terms of various forms of violence, most studies that recruited youth as participants primarily distinguished between the experiences of youth with violence in their sexual and/or ethnic communities and/or in broader Canadian society. No studies addressed the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrant youth specifically within the family or home environment.

4.9 Research Strengths and Gaps

A predominant strength of the data included for analysis in this review pertains to the ways in which several studies demonstrated transparency on the social position(s)/identities of the (co)authors in shaping the research process (Cox et al., 2021; Gailit et al., 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Haghiri-Vijeh et al., 2022). Haghiri-Vijeh et al. (2022) noted that the first author identified as a cisgender female, heterosexual and academic first-generation settler who experienced forced migration herself. In exploring Latin American Trans women's health in Canada, Gailits et al. (2022), for example, noted that their research team was composed of academics and practitioners (e.g., mental health specialists and students) and a community advisor from a support group titled 'Trans Latinas Ontario'.

In some studies, research team members also disclosed having personal frontline experience with LGBTQ+ youth and/or migration. Karimi (2020) distinguished between "my immigration background and my informants' experiences of asylum-seeking" (p. 95). Munro et al. (2013) also identified past frontline experience with LGBTQ+ youth in shaping the data analysis process. Similarly, Kahn and Alessi (2018) emphasized that their study was "unavoidably coloured by the biases of the researchers who worked as service providers and advocates for LGBTQ+ refugee claimants. On the other hand, in exploring the experiences of

LGBTQ+ newcomers in Ontario, Cox et al. (2021) stated that the research team had racialized and non-racialized members, and that "those with the greatest power and influence over the decision-making process were white people" (p. 2986). In this regard, Marshall (2021) engaged in critical reflexivity to "reveal the ignorance that can accompany one's place of privilege and power in society... as something that is particularly important for White straight cisgender colonial settlers in Canada to come to terms with" (p. 180). Overall, the lack of decision-making authority among racialized team members, however, represents a weakness of the data included in this systematic review. Moreover, the lack of LGBTQ+ migrant youth-focused perspectives on experiences with discrimination (also discussed in Section 4.8) also represents a weakness in the data.

An additional strength of the data pertains to the use of intersectionality frameworks/lenses to explore the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants with discrimination in five studies (Cox et al., 2021; Gailitset al., 2021; Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Lee et al., 2011; Nakamura et al., 2013). By drawing on intersectional frameworks, these studies can begin to address the varying needs of diverse populations by acknowledging that there is no singular LGBTQ+ youth experience (Lee et al., 2011; Lee & Brotman, 2013; McCready, 2015).

Lastly, the ways in which several studies demonstrated reflexivity about recruitment challenges/barriers for LGBTQ+ migrants represent another strength of the data. Cox et al. (2021) acknowledged that racialized LGBTQ+ newcomers, as an underserved population, may not have known about the study because they were not accessing services at the time of recruitment due to barriers and systematic oppression, or because they might not be 'out' yet. Some studies (e.g., Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022; Jordan, 2009) also discussed the use of interpreters in research as migrants were required to speak English to participate in the studies. The use of interpreters can represent a limitation due to the challenges associated with using translators in research (e.g., they can act as gatekeepers in editing dialogue). Thus, Haghiri-Vijeh (2022) noted that: "when using a translator in research, the researcher needs to recognize that the translator brings experiences that have the potential to impact and compound how understandings are exchanged and cultivated" (p. 1190).

5. IMPLICATIONS

In this systematic review, analysis of the 18 articles that met the inclusion criteria allowed for an exploration of the varying experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants with various forms of discrimination across Canadian provinces. Our analysis revealed that many migrants experienced discrimination at the individual and systemic level before, during and after migrating to Canada. While the data were characterized by various strengths and weaknesses, the quality of the data (described in Section 4.9), the quality of the data was generally high (as described in Section 3.3). Thus, the included sample of studies represents a rich data set to appraise the current state of knowledge on LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences of discrimination and how they may be best supported to navigate the negative impacts of discrimination on individual health and wellbeing. In the following sections, the implications and associated

recommendations of our findings for practices and policy developments on LGBTQ+ migrants are discussed.

5.1 Implications for Practices with LGBTQ+ Migrants

- Social- and health-based services should prioritize the implementation of culturally safe, as well as trauma- and violence-informed approaches to better serve LGBTQ+ migrants. These approaches require conscious awareness of the connections between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes and behaviors (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022).
- Particular attention should be paid to the needs of LGBTQ+ migrants who are young (e.g., 24 years and under) – given that young LGBTQ+ migrants experience unique barriers and challenges upon settling in Canada and accessing health and social services in particular (Munro et al., 2013).
- Culturally-safe practices require practioners to demonstrate reflexivity about their own social location and historical processes of exclusion (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022). Therefore, in social- and/or healthcare institutions, increased training opportunities could be designed to enhance providers' critical self-reflexivity on their cultural biases and assumptions.
- Trauma-informed and culturally-safe approaches to care should also be grounded in LGBTQ+ migrant experiences to destigmatize interactions with service providers and promote better client experiences, satisfaction, and trust.
- In the delivery of trauma-informed care, practitioners can use and familiarize themselves with scholarship regarding 'complex trauma' (Kahn & Alessi, 2018) to capture the mental health impact of prolonged trauma exposure among LGBTQ+ migrants.
- In addition to trauma-informed and/or culturally-safe care, focused anti-homophobia and anti-racism training can make a difference in the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants, including youth in encountering social- and health services.
- The hiring practices of social- and/or health institutions could aim to recruit LGBTQ+ migrants to ensure that LGBTQ+ are represented in the services that are designed to support them and ensure that services are optimally tailored to meet LGBTQ+ migrants' needs.
- Professionals who can help LGBTQ+ migrants find safe employment and/or housing opportunities should be readily available to all LGTBQ+ migrants upon their arrival in Canada. For example, temporary housing staff can provide information about the housing market and long-term legal support (Karimi, 2020).

5.2 Implications for Policy Developments

- Policy and intervention developments must incorporate an intersectional approach to confront the invisible heteronormativity that underlies politics, professions and knowledge (Marshall, 2021) and account for the unique forms of oppression LGBTQ+ migrants may experience within LGBTQ+, diasporic and/or broader Canadian communities.

- As the Canadian refugee regime organizes the everyday lives of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, provincial and federal policies must acknowledge the intersectional, complex, diverse and multidimensional experiences and forms of self-expression among LGBTQ+ migrants. Broader understandings of sexual identity, gender identity, and gender expression is required in the refugee claimant system to facilitate the settlement process (Munro et al., 2013).
- Procedures used to assess the legitimacy of refugee or asylum-seeking status claims on the grounds of violence/discrimination should recognize the complexity and diversity of sexual and gender expression among LGBTQ+ migrants. In short, LGBTQ+ claimants should not be coerced to conform to locally bound (Western) norms and identity labels to identify themselves.
- In refugee or asylum-seeking procedures, policies and procedures requiring LGBTQ+ migrants to produce 'proof' of their identities based on race, ethnicity and/or gender can have significant mental health impacts on migrants. Therefore, increased caution and sensitivity is required in helping LGBTQ+ migrants construct their narrative in claim processes. Migrants should also not be expected to recount past traumatic experiences publicly in the absence of emotional safety.
- The compressed timelines in refugee or asylum-seeking procedures warrant that newcomers should be given sufficient time to prepare for their hearings upon arrival in Canada in order to minimize the negative impacts on migrants' physical and mental wellbeing.
- Upon migrants' arrival in Canada, federal and provincial policymakers should identify and develop opportunities for migrants to access safe spaces in welcome centers for migrants, including youth, to form social connections and access relevant information on the migration/integration process.
- Policies, guidelines and support services should prioritize migrants' access to suitable, safe and affordable housing and employment opportunities upon their arrival in Canada. These policies and guidelines should also be readily available to migrants in translated formats for migrants to take an active role in finding housing and employment.
- Systemic institutional efforts should be targeted towards educating healthcare providers on delivering inclusive, culturally-safe and trauma-informed care to LGBTQ+ migrants through education and professional development opportunities. Support should also be secured for healthcare providers who identify as LGTBQ+ migrants (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022).

6. CONCLUSIONS

This synthesis aimed to explore the current state of knowledge regarding experiences of discrimination and/or violence among LGBTQ+ migrants in Canada, particularly among youth. This review conducted a systematic search of pertinent academic (i.e., peer-reviewed) and grey (e.g., policies, websites, news articles) literature across seven academic databases and one grey

literature database. A preliminary scan of the literature revealed a paucity of literature on the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth (i.e., under 24 years of age) migrants in Canada. Therefore, the inclusion criteria for this review were extended to include migrants of any age. Literature on various forms of discrimination and/or violence were also included. As a result of this search, 18 peer-reviewed articles were identified and incorporated in this review. No grey literature met the inclusion criteria. The 18 included studies were analyzed through theoretical perspectives rooted in queer of colour (Brockenbrough, 2013, 2016) and situated agency (Panelli et al., 2005) to highlight migrants' strengths, resiliencies and agency in navigating various forms of discrimination in Canada.

Analysis of the data demonstrated that migrants who identify as LGBTQ+ can experience various forms of discrimination before, during and after migrating to Canada on an interpersonal and systemic level. The narratives of migrants predominantly distinguished between discrimination based on ethnocentrism and heterosexism within migrant communities and in broader Canadian society. Ethnocentric forms of discrimination were also apparent within LGBTQ+ communities in Canada. Particularly in Canadian refugee claims processes, structural racism was embedded in and perpetuated by procedures and policies. Most notably, migrants experienced significant negative impacts on their wellbeing as a result of being (forcefully) questioned by immigration officials about 'sensitive' and 'private' information such as their gender identity and migration background.

Before migrating to Canada, migrants held specific socio-cultural expectations regarding the 'safe', 'friendly' and 'welcoming' nature of Canadian society towards LGBTQ+ and/or migrant individuals. Their experiences of discrimination therefore stood in direct opposition to their expectations of migrating to Canada. On an interpersonal level, migrants responded to their experiences of discrimination by building social networks of support in LGBTQ+ and/or migrant communities who shared similar ethnic/racial backgrounds. However, migrants' experiences of discrimination also led some migrants to 'conceal' elements of their personal identities as a form of self-protection during the migration process (e.g., concealing LGBTQ+ identity to immigration officials) and within their ethnic/LGBTQ+ communities (e.g., due to fear of stigma and discrimination). On a more systemic level, analysis of the data also revealed several structural inequities affecting LGBTQ+ migrants in Canada. Despite experiencing significant negative impacts on their physical and mental wellbeing as a result of discrimination, many migrants described inequitable access to healthcare services and poor quality of healthcare services (e.g., in 'unsupportive' and 'stigmatizing' interactions with healthcare providers, for example).

Lastly, the narratives of LGBTQ+ migrant youth with discrimination in Canada were missing from the data. While several studies incorporated young adults (19 years and over) in their participant samples, only one study solely focused on the perspectives of LGBTQ+ youth between the ages of 14 and 29 with a migration background.

Based on these findings, there are several recommendations can be made for future research initiatives on LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination across Canada. The recommendations for future research include:

- More research is needed to explore the unique challenges faced by racialized LGBTQ+ migrants, particularly among diverse groups of youth and among Asian communities in Canada (Nakamura et al., 2013).
- Among LGBTQ+ migrant youth, the voices of transgender youth are particularly important for future research as their experiences remain absent from research and can differ from cisgender (non-trans) youth (Munro et al., 2013).
- Increased research is warranted to explore LBGTQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination/violence specifically in a family context.
- Additional research could focus on the experiences of LGBTQ+ migrants with discrimination with larger, more geographically and demographically diverse samples, including in small urban areas in Canada (Cox et al., 2021; Nakamura et al., 2015).
- Given the challenges that LGBTQ+ migrants can experience in healthcare, future research could explore the experiences of diverse LGBTQ+ migrants and healthcare providers in various healthcare settings in Canada to inform appropriate interventions/support services.
- Future research is needed to determine the longer-term consequences of 'proving' one's individual identities based on gender/gender identity/migration status on claimants' mental health wellbeing after attaining refugee status (Kahn et al., 2017).
- As immigration officials/providers (e.g., refugee lawyers) are often the first point of contact for LGBTQ+ migrants and hold power in determining their fate (Kahn et al., 2017), increased research could explore how these providers could adopt cultural humility in serving LGBTQ+ migrants which involves interrogating Western conceptualizations of sexual and gender identities, as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (Kahn et al., 2017).
- Future research could draw on critical literature such as queer, feminist and critical race scholarship to revisit predetermined categorizations regarding gender identity and/or race/ethnicity, in favour of more relational, complex and dynamic understandings of LGBTQ+ migrants' experiences with discrimination (Karimi, 2020).

7. KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

A key objective of this synthesis pertained to exploring the types of support services being provided to LGBTQ+ migrants who have experienced various forms of discrimination. Therefore, this research had a practical objective in being able to inform practices and policies regarding the delivery of health- and/or social-services for LGBTQ+ migrants. In this section, a knowledge mobilization plan is presented with the aim of disseminating the findings in manners that are easy to understand for LGBTQ+ migrants, practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

In turn, this plan is intended to help increase knowledge uptake and improve the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ migrants across Canada.

As an initial knowledge mobilization strategy, the authors of this synthesis will participate in the SSHRC forum in June 2023. This forum is attended by interdisciplinary scholars, policymakers and practitioners from around Canada and thus represents a unique opportunity to mobilize the knowledge gained from our study. Similarly, the findings will also be presented at a nationwide online dissemination webinar – followed by a recorded audio podcast that will be disseminated to various audiences via social media platforms.

In addition, the research findings will be published as a peer-reviewed journal article, a conference, and a popular press publication or a blog post. Lastly, the key findings and implications will be translated into an infographic outlining 'promising practices' that will be distributed and made easily accessible to various groups practitioners and researchers.

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APPENDIX A

List of included articles in systematic review

Author(s)	Article title
Cox et al. (2021)	Experiences of discrimination and its impacts on well-being among racialised LGBTQ+ newcomers living in Waterloo region, Ontario, Canada
Gailits et al. (2022)	Fighting for inclusion across borders: Latin American Trans women's health in Canada
Haghiri-Vijeh (2022)	Experiences of LGBTQIA+ migrants with nurses and other healthcare professionals in Canada
Haghiri-Vijeh et al. (2022)	"If you can just break the stigma around it": LGBTQI+ migrants' experiences of stigma and mental health
Jordan (2009)	Un/convention(al) refugees: Contextualizing the accounts of refugees facing homophobic or transphobic persecution
Kahn & Alessi (2018)	Coming out under the gun: Exploring the psychological dimensions of seeking refugee status for LGBT claimants in Canada
Kahn et al. (2017)	Promoting the wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender forced migrants in Canada: Providers' perspectives
Karimi (2020)	Limits of social capital for refugee integration: the case of gay Iranian male refugees' integration in Canada
Karimi (2021)	Sexuality and integration: A case of gay Iranian refugees' collective memories and integration practices in Canada
Lee (2018)	Tracing the coloniality of queer and trans migrations: Resituating heterocisnormative violence in the global south and encounters with migrant visa ineligibility to Canada
Lee et al. (2011)	Identity, refugeeness, belonging: Experiences of sexual minority refugees in Canada
Lee et al. (2013)	Speak out! Structural intersectionality and anti-oppressive practice with LGBTQ refugees in Canada
Marshall (2021)	Queering CYC praxis: What I learned from LGBTQI+ newcomer, refugee, and immigrant student experiences in Canada
Munro et al. (2013)	A bed of roses?: Exploring the experiences of LGBT newcomer youth who migrate to Toronto

Nakamura et al. (2013)	"Hard to Crack": Experiences of community integration among first- and second-generation Asian MSM in Canada
Nakamura et al. (2015)	Immigrants in same-sex binational relationships under the Defense of Marriage Act
Poon et al. (2017)	Queer-friendly nation? The experience of Chinese gay immigrants in Canada