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Please cite as: Lee, E.O.J., Kamgain, O., Hafford-Letchfield, T. *et al.* Knowledge and Policy About LGBTQI Migrants: a Scoping Review of the Canadian and Global Context. *Int. Migration & Integration* (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00771-4

# Scoping the literature about LGBTQI migrants: Exploring policy implications within the Canadian context in relation to the global context

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## Introduction

The contemporary global landscape of diverse sexual and gender expressions and identities is marked by uneven levels of societal acceptance, active exclusion and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people. A yearly report published by the *International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association* (ILGA) suggests that 78 (out of 193) UN member states, the majority from the Global South, have laws which criminalize promoting or engaging in same-sex sexual activity, resulting in imprisonment and in some cases, the death penalty (Carroll & Mendes, 2017). Simultaneously, the contemporary global context of migration suggests a continued increase in forced migrations, people who are forced out of their countries of origin due to interconnected factors such as war, dictatorship, persecution, development, environmental disaster and human trafficking (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014).

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

This article aims to share key findings from a scoping review of the literature about LGBTQI migrants living in the Global North with a particular focus on the Canadian context. A scoping review methodology (Arkey & O'Malley, 2005) allowed for rapid assessment of a broad range of literature while also highlighting key knowledge and policy strengths and gaps. In this article, we report on the Canadian literature and provide a comparative analysis of the knowledge and policies that shape the lives of LGBTQI migrants living in Canada in comparison to other regions across the Global North. This focus serves to more thoroughly examine the ways in which Canadian knowledge and policies related to LGBTQI migrants have shifted and changed over time. Subsequently, the comparison between Canada and elsewhere in the Global North enriches the discussion about present and future policy directions and implications for this population.

## Overview of scoping review methodology

This scoping review examined four bodies of literature: (1) LGBTQI people living in the Global

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South, (2) LGBTQI migrants living in Canada (3) LGBTQI people living in US (4) LGBTQI people living elsewhere in the Global North (Europe, Australia, etc.). A total of 241 publications were included, with 56 from Canada, 74 from the US, 50 from elsewhere in the Global North and 61 from the Global South. This paper reports on a review of 56 Canadian publications, and 124 publications from the US and elsewhere in the Global North. Key themes and tensions that emerged within the selected literature were mapped in order to assess the extent, range and nature of knowledge about this topic. This scoping review also compared and contrasted policies and practices about LGBTQI migrants across geographic, political and socio-economic contexts.

A scoping review protocol was developed which included the following information: primary research question, aim and objectives, outputs, definitions for key terms, eligibility criteria, search strategy and data sources, data extraction, rigour, data synthesis plan. The team examined the titles and abstracts of these publications to verify if they fit the established inclusion criteria. A challenge during this phase was identifying the inclusion criteria for the review. Notably in Canada and the US, various categories included LGBTQI migrants, including Latinx, Asian, Arab or Middle Eastern, African American and LGBTQI people of color. The research team subsequently refined the inclusion criteria to ensure that all qualitative research that included nearly all LGBTQI migrants in their sample would be part of this review. Parameters set for the inclusion of scholarship and policy documents also included those texts with an explicit qualitative research methodology and participants so as to assess a broad range of knowledge as possible. This enabled capture of scholarship that engaged in text-based analysis and was more theoretical or activist oriented as well as some key Canadian policy documents that would help situate the Canadian literature. The review protocol was applied iteratively through a process of revision and adaptation in order to respond to emergent issues that arose.

*Table 1: Key features of scoping review protocol*

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

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A common data extraction form (including title, methods used, summary of findings, etc.) was used by the research team to ensure consistency of information collection. These forms were compared and discussed as necessary. For the data analysis phase, the included literature were divided up amongst team members based on region (Global South, Canada, US, elsewhere in Global North) in order to develop an initial synthesis. Some of the priorities of the data synthesis plan included identifying key themes within each section and then to compare and contrast across sections. Finally, policy and practice recommendations across sections were synthesized and knowledge strengths and gaps were identified.

**Data synthesis of the Canadian literature**

This section presents the scoping review findings of the Canadian literature. The Canadian literature was organized into three parts: (1) refugees and the refugee claimant process, (2) newcomers and immigrants, (3) migrants with precarious status and detention. Most scholars applied critical, community-based and participatory research methodologies. Although a multitude of theories were used (i.e. ecological, feminist, queer, minority stress, trauma, homonationalism, etc.), intersectionality emerged as a key theoretical framework used by a number of scholars.

*Knowledge about LGBTQI refugees and the refugee claimant process*

The majority of this literature were focused on LGBTQI refugees and how the refugee claimant process assess SOGIE-based (sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression) claims (UNHCR, 2012). Out of 56 Canadian publications, 34 were focused solely on LGBTQI refugees. Most of the literature included a mix of cis men and women and an analysis of sexual orientation, with a smaller number also including trans people and an analysis of gender identity and expression (Jordan, 2009; Lee & Brotman, 2011; Murray, 2015). None explore intersex realities. Some of these studies also included service providers and community workers (Lee & Brotman, 2011) or focused solely on service provider perspectives (Kahn, Alessi, Woolner, Kim & Olivieri, 2017). Most of these studies were completed either in Vancouver (Jordan, 2009), the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (Nicol, Gasse-Gates, Mulé, 2014; Murray, 2015) or a combination of Toronto and Montreal (Lee & Brotman, 2011; Lee, 2015).

In tracing the main themes addressed within this body of literature over the past decade, there was a noticeable shift in the nature and type of knowledge produced about LGBTQI refugees[1]. The majority of literature about LGBTQI refugees from 2007 to 2010 was from legal scholars whom applied case study methodology in order to assess the degree to which Canadian refugee law, sometimes in comparison to other Global North countries, accounted for sexual orientation based refugee claims. These scholars critiqued the ways in which the Canadian refugee determination

[1] Scholarship about LGBTQ refugees in Canada initially surfaced in the 1990s, notably with the legal scholarship of Nicole LaViolette (LaViolette, 1997, 2003; LaViolette & Whitworth, 1994). Indeed, LaViolette's scholarship about sexual orientation and later gender identity and expression based refugee claims are central to the knowledge produced in this area.

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system applied refugee law for SOGIE-based refugee claims. Instead of adhering to the legal definition of sexual orientation as an 'immutable personal characteristic', these scholars suggested that sexual orientation and gender identity needed to be understood as fluid and contextual (Rehaag, 2008) and contingent on the ways in which LGBTQI people are marginalized as a social group due to not conforming to societal gender norms (LaViolette, 2007).

LaViolette (2007) argued that Canada should apply its already established gender-related guidelines for women refugee claimants on LGBTQI refugee claimants, especially with respect to gendered-related persecution operating within the private sphere (i.e. familial violence, etc.). In contrast, Rehaag (2008, 2009) analysed bisexual refugee claims and found that Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) adjudicators held negative views about bisexuality, believed bisexual people could remain invisible or simply did not believe the person was bisexual. LaViolette (2009) also noted a shift in the reasons for why SOGIE based refugee claims were being refused, from disbelieving a person's SOGIE identity to (1) availability of state protection and/ or internal flight alternatives, (2) evaluating the harm faced by LGBT people as discrimination versus persecution and (3) a lack of country conditions documentation related to LGBTQI-specific human rights violations. Some scholars critiqued the ways in which the adjudication process was heavily shaped by stereotypical conceptions of gay and lesbian people (LaViolette, 2007) while other scholars critiqued dominant Western conceptions about sexual identity formation as linear and innate (LaViolette, 2009; Rehaag, 2008). After the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) published a guidance note on SOGI-based refugee claims (UNHCR, 2008), LaViolette (2009) noted (a) that this should have been more authoritative in the form of a handbook and/or guidelines and (b) that even with this limitation, Canada needed to implement this guidance note as well as gender-based guidelines.

Other sources did not come from a legal perspective (Jenicek, Lee & Wong, 2009; Jordan, 2009, 2010). Although these scholars drew from the legal scholarship, the aims of these publications diverged significantly. Jordan (2009, 2010) applied critical ethnography in order to analyze the ways in which LGBT refugees not only navigated the refugee determination system but also broader Canadian society. In contrast, Jenicek et al., (2009) analyzed Canadian Anglophone media representations of LGBTQI refugees by engaging in critical discourse analysis. This scholarship expanded knowledge produced in this area by exploring social, spatial, psychological and representative dimensions.

From 2011 onwards, this time period marked a shift away from a focus on legal scholarship, as a growing number of scholars across disciplines within the social sciences and the humanities published in this area. Some of these scholars would continue to focus some or all their analysis on how LGBTQI people navigated the refugee determination system (Ricard, 2011, 2014a,b). For example, Ricard (2014b) explored how gender non-conforming refugee claimant testimonies were read by IRB adjudicators. The *Speak Out! LGBTQ refugee research project* explored the ways in which LGBTQI refugee claimants were, due to a heteronormative and cisnormative refugee process, compelled to systematically 'out' themselves to lawyers, social workers, doctors, nurses, bankers, etc (Lee & Brotman, 2011). Through critical analysis of Canadian refugee policies, social

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institutions and dominant discourses, Lee & Brotman (2011) reveal a central way in which refugee status and sexual orientation and/or gender identity interact and result in particular intersectional burdens on LGBTQI refugees, both within and outside of the refugee process. Some publications critically analyzed changes to Canadian refugee law in 2012 (with the passing of Bill C-31), particularly the implications of these changes on LGBTQI refugees (Gamble, Mulé, Nicol, Waugh & Jordan, 2015; Lee & Brotman, 2013; Mulé & Gates-Gasse, 2012; Sanjani, 2014). At the same time, the scope of the literature expanded to include social and political spheres outside of the refugee process (Lee & Brotman, 2011, 2013; Murray, 2015). These studies explored the ways in which LGBTQI refugees navigated housing, educational and employment barriers, access to health and social services (i.e. medical care, mental health) and family and/or community belonging.

Since 2014, there has been a significant increase in the production of knowledge by multiple scholars from a variety of disciplines that have further expanded the kinds of knowledge about LGBTQI refugees (Fobear, 2013, 2017; Murray, 2015; Lee, 2015; White, 2014). These studies have challenged the predominant ways in which LGBTQI refugees in Canada have been conceptualized. Some scholars examine the ways in which the Canada refugee apparatus reproduced homonationalist discourses (Murray, 2015; White, 2014). Lee (2015) suggests that LGBTQI migrants with precarious status, including refugee claimants, often shift between migrant categories, revealing the volatility and non-linearity of precarious status. An analytical shift from refugee to precarious status thus highlights the interconnections between various precarious status' (Lee, 2015). In 2015, a diverse set of Canadian civil society organizations and individual advocates called the *Dignity Initiative* emerged, aiming to both guide Canada's global role on human rights for LGBTI people as well as LGBTQI refugee rights in Canada (Aylward & Arps, 2016).

*Knowledge focused on LGBTQI newcomers and immigrants*

Another set of literature explored the experiences of LGBTQI migrants by using the categories of "newcomer" and "immigrant". These terms are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes included refugees. Most of the research projects referred to by this literature were based in Vancouver (O'Neill & Kia, 2012), Toronto (Adam & Rengel, 2015; Avelar, 2015; Brown, 2015; Serrano, 2013) and Montreal (Chbat, 2011; El-Hage & Lee, 2016; Roy, 2013). Most of this literature focus on the experiences of people who arrive as permanent residents (i.e. family class, sponsored refugees, economic class), although some also include a very small (usually 1 person) participant sample of 2$^{nd}$ generation immigrants and LGBTQI refugees (including those who are going through the refugee claim process). Some scholars used the general category of newcomer or immigrant with interviewed participants coming from a large diversity of regions and backgrounds (El-Hage & Lee, 2016; Munro et al., 2013; O'Neill & Kia, 2012; Yee et al., 2014; Roy, 2013), while others focused on migrants from a particular background, such as Afro-Caribbean (Brown, 2012; Logie et al., 2016), Latinx (Serrano, 2013) and Lebanese (Chbat, 2011), or on youth experiences (Munro et al., 2013; Yee et al., 2014). Some literature included population samples of only or mostly cis men (Avelar, 2015; Brown, 2015; Roy, 2013), others included either cis men and women (Chbat, 2011, O'Neill & Kia, 2012), trans people (Logie et al., 2016; Yee, Marshall & Vo, 2014), and service provider perspectives (O'Neill & Kia, 2012).

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

Another major theme that surfaced in the literature were the ways in which LGBTQI migrants faced multiple kinds of structural barriers (i.e. laws, service providers, etc) when accessing health and social services, education and/or immigration and/or refugee-specific services. Many scholars suggest LGBTQI migrants navigate post-migration experiences of racism and homophobia / transphobia at workplaces, health and social services, immigration and/or refugee-specific services, educational sites, etc. (Munro et al., 2013; Yee et al., 2014). Although structural barriers experienced by LGBTQI migrants across health, social service and educational sites were similar to those faced by all migrants, factors such as immigration status, being racialized and language proficiency in conjunction with sexual orientation and/or gender identity resulted in new, deepened, and complex barriers (Munro et al., 2013; Serrano, 2013). Serrano (2013) extends this analysis by suggesting that for LGBTQI Latinx who are HIV positive, barriers in the labor market faced by all immigrants are reinforced and deepened for those also living with HIV. Some barriers were subtle, for example, O'Neill & Kia (2012) found that LGBTQI newcomers often lacked access to sexual health services and as a result, had reduced access to information about healthy and safer sexual health practices.

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

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promote dialogue and opportunities for sexual health education. Some literature explored the particular experiences and barriers faced by trans migrants (Butler Burke, 2017; Bhanji, 2013; Logie et al., 2016; Munro et al., 2016; Ngo, Lee, Tourki, Benslimane & Agudelo, 2017).

*Knowledge about LGBTQI precarious status and detention*

This literature included the experiences of LGBTQI migrants with various types of precarious status (i.e. temporary worker, international student, visitor, refugee claimant, undocumented status, detention, etc.). These studies suggest that living with either temporary status or no status (undocumented) results in reduced access to health and social services, employment, housing, etc (Butler Burke, 2017; Lee, 2015, Lee & Brotman, 2011; Munro et al., 2013; Serrano, 2013). As a result, LGBTQI migrants with precarious status live with increased stress, often based on laws and policies that restrict their abilities to have a political voice, access essential services and maintain gainful employment. Lee (2015) suggests that LGBTQI migrants often shifted precarious status upon arrival to Canada, first to transition from a temporary status (visitor, student, temporary worker) to file a refugee claim, with some maintaining double status (i.e. as student and refugee claimant and over time, either gaining (permanent resident) or losing status (undocumented). Moreover, policies related to obtaining a temporary visa (student, visitor, temporary worker) applications do not take into consideration the kinds of homophobic and/or transphobic violence (or other kinds of violence) that LGBTQI people living in the Global South encounter and often serve to block LGBTQI people from entry into Canada (Lee, 2015).

For those who are undocumented, there is an increased level of stress that come with being criminalized and the possibility of being detained and deported (Butler Burke, 2017; Jordan, 2009, 2010; Lee & Brotman, 2011; Lee, 2015; Munro et al., 2013; Serrano, 2013). In Jordan's (2010) study, undocumented participants didn't realize that they could apply for refugee status, so some participants actually remained undocumented for nearly a decade. However, few Canadian studies focused solely on LGBTQI migrants who have experienced detention and/or are undocumented.

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

**Comparing policy implications in Canada and elsewhere in the Global North**

The previous section explored the Canadian literature about LGBTQI migrants, and how this literature shifted and changed over time from a focus on the legal process for SOGIE-based refugee claims to a broader examination of the social, political, and economic context that shapes LGBTQI migrant life. Having presented this literature, we now turn to exploring the ways in which

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Canadian-specific scholarship and advocacy about LGBTQI migrants has informed various policy and practice shifts in Canada over the past decade. This section also explores policy and practice implications for elsewhere in the Global North.

*Canadian refugee-specific policy implications*

As mentioned previously, from 2007 – 2010, LGBTQI migrant scholarship were driven mostly by legal scholars (La Violette, 2007; Rehaag, 2008) as well as critical scholars (Jordan, 2008; Jenicek et al., 2009). From 2011 onwards, there was an increase in scholarship from a wider range of disciplines, shedding light on the broader social, political, structural, economic and transnational context that shape LGBTQI migrations in Canada (Ayward & Arps, 2017; Brotman, & Lee, 2011; Nicol et al., 2014). Nearly all of this scholarship has continued to produce policy and practice recommendations, with some scholars presenting critiques of Canada's investments in broader settler colonial, neoliberal and homonational practices (Fobear, 2013; Murray, 2016; White, 2014).

Indeed, a central characteristic of the knowledge produced from these scholars and research teams are the policy and institutional level critiques presented as well as a cumulative set of policy and practice recommendations that, although divergent in some aspects, were also fairly consistent with each other. The social change oriented nature of Canadian knowledge produced in this area, along with on-the-ground advocacy by community organizations and advocates, many of whom were associated with various key scholars and research projects, certainly informed legal and policy changes in Canada (Brotman, & Lee, 2011; Murray, 2016; Nicol et al., 2014). Before the passing of refugee reform Bill C-31 in 2012, a number of Canadian researchers, community workers and LGBTQI refugees themselves engaged in policy advocacy in order to push for changes to Bill C-31 before it was passed, resulting in some changes being made to the law (Lee & Brotman, 2013; Sanjani, 2014).

Key recommendations from these scholars as well as advocacy by community organizations and advocates also informed the recent implementation of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) based guidelines by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB, 2017). Indeed, these guidelines explicitly note the scholarship of the late Nicole LaViolette in the development of the guidelines. Another key inclusion was an intersectional analysis, which has been a key theoretical lens used in this area of research by a number of scholars (Lee & Brotman, 2011). These advancements clearly demonstrate how engaged research about and with LGBTQI migrants can result in meaningful policy change.

*Canadian newcomer settlement policy and practice implications*

Most of the non-legal literature also addressed various newcomer settlement issues such as access to health, social services and immigration and/or refugee specific services, educational, housing and employment barriers, and family / community belonging. This literature suggests that services are inadequate in their capacity to ensure equitable access to LGBTQI migrants. In contrast with shifts in Canadian refugee law, it is more difficult to ascertain the degree to which this research

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has informed policy and practice changes. This is partly due to the fact that most of these services are delivered through a wide variety of funding programs at the federal, provincial and/or municipal level. With the increase in the number of scholars and research projects focused on this area, there will most likely continue to be an increase in policy and practice shifts at all levels, in particular in the cities and regions surrounding Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

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

With respect to practice implications, it has been suggested that social service providers should engage in anti-oppressive practice (Lee & Brotman, 2013) that attends to the intersectional realities of LGBTQI migrants (Lee & Brotman, 2013; Munro et al., 2013; O'Neill & Kia, 2012; Yee et al., 2014). Yee et al., (2014) also suggests that service providers should also consider the ways in which hybridity and neo-colonialism impact how LGBTQI migrants interact with service providers. Every possible point of contact with LGBTQI migrants needs to be attuned to their realities, survival tactics and social conditions (Jordan, 2009). However, the vulnerability linked to the early stages of arrival means that this is a key time to ensure equitable access to health and social services for LGBTQI newcomers (Serrano, 2013). Mental health services also need to be adapted to apply a trauma-informed approach and recognize the role of childhood trauma in how LGBTQI migrants navigate their realities post-migration (Alessi et al., 2015). An essential pathway to achieve these objectives include increased training for various service providers across sectors in order to promote increased awareness of the multiple barriers faced by LGBTQI migrants (Lee & Brotman, 2013). This training includes intersectionally informed anti-racism / anti-homophobia / anti-transphobia training for personnel within organizations and institutions.

**Knowledge gaps and moving forward**

Upon exploring policy and practice implications, the following section presents key knowledge gaps as well as future directions for researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and activists. The strength of knowledge produced about LGBTQI refugees has made a significant contribution to improvements in Canadian refugee policy, in particular, with respect to SOGIE-based refugee claims, such as the recently implemented SOGIE-based guidelines. However, further evaluation of these guidelines are required in order to assess the degree to which they are able to be implemented, especially considering other structural factors that may diminish their effectiveness (i.e. access to LGBTQI competent lawyers, hearing preparation, access to legal aide, etc.).

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In addition, there remains a significant gap between the knowledge produced about LGBTQI newcomers / immigrants and subsequent publicly funded policies, programs and practices for this population. As a result, there is an uneven distribution of public funding and resources within and across geographic regions in Canada as well as inconsistencies between Canadian and provincial policies and practices. For example, most of the publicly funded LGBTQI migrant-specific services and programming are located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with smaller funded projects in larger cities such as Vancouver, Montreal and Calgary. There is thus a need for additional resources for areas outside of the GTA. Continued collaborations between political leaders, researchers, practitioners, organizations and policy-makers could assist in ensuring funding is allocated to adequately fill these gaps. There should also be closer collaboration between national and provincial policy-makers in order to address inconsistent policies. For example, trans migrants in Canada are able to change their gender marker and name on legal documents at the federal level as permanent residents and in every province except for Quebec, where only citizens can make these changes. This policy discrepancy exposes trans migrants living in Quebec to further marginalization and violence. Federal and provincial dialogue on this matter may help ensure equitable legal recognition for trans migrants living anywhere in Canada.

There is also still a lack of knowledge about the realities of LGBTQI migrants with precarious status, that may include refugee claimant status, but also visitors, temporary workers, international students, undocumented status and detention practices. The degree to which improvements to the SOGIE-based refugee claim process are actually accessible to LGBTQI people living in the Global South have been questioned, especially due to Canada's restrictive temporary resident visa (TRV) and Canada – US Safe Third Country Agreement policies (Lee, 2015)? These gaps point to the possible benefits of developing cross-regional and/or international research projects so that researchers and other actors involved in the research process may learn from each other and develop strategies across borders to improve the living conditions for LGBTQI migrants.

## Relevance of knowledge and policy implications in relation to the global context

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

### *Relevance of knowledge about LGBTQI realities in Global South on Canadian policy making*

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

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Please cite as: Lee, E.O.J., Kamgain, O., Hafford-Letchfield, T. *et al.* Knowledge and Policy About LGBTQI Migrants: a Scoping Review of the Canadian and Global Context. *Int. Migration & Integration* (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00771-4

Assab, Nasser-Eddin & Greatrick, 2017; Awondo, 2010; Awondo, Geschiere & Reid, 2012; Dutta & Roy, 2014; Ekine, 2012; Rhodes et al., 2014, Zea et al., 2013). One possible reason for this is that much of the Canadian literature has a focus on the legal perspective and LGBTQI refugee claimant realities. SOGIE-based refugee claims inevitably emphasize persecution focused on one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity / expressions. Another possible reason may be due to the challenges that poor / working class LGBTQI people living in the Global South have in accessing visas (or crossing the US border) to enter Canada and potentially file refugee claims (Lee, 2015). Regardless of the reasons, Canadian policy makers, especially those involved in developing Canada's international role in LGBTQI human rights, need to take into consideration the complexities about LGBTQI realities in the Global South.

Community-based and participatory research projects (Lee & Brotman, 2013; Nicol et al., 2014) and civil society organizations and initiatives (Aylward & Arps, 2017) can assist Canadian policy makers to translate the knowledge produced in Canada into the international sphere. However, knowledge driven by researchers and activists in the Global South should also be mobilized (Abu-Assab et al., 2017). Abu-Assab et al., (2017) suggests reconsidering strategies that require increased visibility of LGBTQI rights and supporting local initiatives that are coalition-based and address multiple issues concerning women, sex workers and people who practice non-normative sexualities and genders. A focus on increased privacy rights versus LGBTQI rights, for example, has been advanced by some scholars (Abu-Assab et al. 2017; Awondo, 2010). If visibility is part of a project, preventative measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of individuals most likely will experience public backlash. These kinds of recommendations are especially relevant for Canadian policy-makers as the federal government has recently designated a Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on LGBT2 issues and is co-chair, with Chile, of the international *Equal Rights Coalition*. In 2018, the minister of international relations in the Francophonie in Quebec also announced funding the development of an international Francophone network focused on the defense of LGBTQI rights.

*Relevance of knowledge and policy implication for elsewhere in Global North*

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

A consistent recommendation across regions was to implement required training on SOGIE-based claims for refugee authorities and decision-makers as well as improved access to legal representation (Bennett & Thomas, 2013; Cowen et al., 2011; Raj, 2013; UKLGIG, 2013). For example, European scholars, especially those in the UK, have noted the continued use of

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stereotypes for SOGIE-based refugee claim process (Wessels, 2013). Thus, Canada's recent implementation of SOGIE-based guidelines for IRB decision-makers could be adapted for other refugee determination systems across the Global North.

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

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

**Scoping review limitations**

One limitation of this scoping review was the exclusion of the experiences of LGBTQI migrants whose country of origin was from Eastern Europe. Given the recent criminalization LGBTQI rights various Eastern European countries (i.e. Russia, etc.), this is an important area of research and policy development. Another limit included the challenges of navigating migrant / ethnic / racial categorizations in research. Since there is overlap between the experiences of a first generation racialized migrant and 2$^{nd}$ (or 3$^{rd}$ or more) generation racialized person, it becomes difficult to decide whether to develop research projects that is based on migrant status versus ethnic / racial identity. Although a number of articles focused on the Latinx population was included in this scoping review, very few studies focused on African-American / Black and Asian populations were included, even though some of these did include LGBTQI migrants. This is due to the

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proportion of population samples with migrants in these studies. There is no easy answer to this dilemma, but it is a challenge that researchers will need to continue to grapple with in the future.

## Conclusion

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

This article also examined the policy implications of the Canadian-specific knowledge produced about LGBTQI migrant realities as well as its relevance elsewhere in the Global North. This article thus points to Canada's possible future role and contribution to the global LGBTQI human rights movement. The findings discussed in this paper may be used to assist policy makers involved in developing Canada's international role in LGBTQI human rights to consider the complexities of LGBTQI realities in the Global South.

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

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