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Research

Intersectional Analysis of Food Insecurity for 2S/LGBTQIA+ Communities in Canada and Implications for Dietetic Practice

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Abstract

The right to food is a fundamental human right, as established in international conventions and declarations. However, Canada has not explicitly protected the right to food in its Charter or National Food Policy. Food insecurity is a multifaceted issue requiring collaboration across different policy arenas and jurisdictions such as healthcare, housing, social assistance, and agriculture. For Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and other sexually and gender diverse (2S/LGBTQIA+) populations, intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers to health, including ingrained cisheteronormativity, must also be considered.

We approach the topic of food insecurity among 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations and the associated policy implications through the lens of Kimberle Crenshaw's critical theory of intersectionality. Intersectionality theory recognizes that marginalized and polymarginalized groups experience discrimination along multiple axes. Policies which fail to recognize this serve to distort polymarginalized people's lived experiences with issues such as food insecurity and may result in their legal and structural erasure.

We aim to peel back the layers of policies affecting 2S/LGBTQIA+ Canadians experiencing food insecurity to reveal points of intersection that may have been rendered functionally invisible. First, we will describe the current national policy context related to food security and 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities. Then, we will undertake a multi-axes analysis to attempt to illuminate the complex and multi-dimensional experiences of 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations living

with food insecurity, using Nova Scotia as a regional case study example. We conclude by exploring the implications for dietetic practice across health and food systems in improving the health of 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations.

Key Words: food insecurity, food policy for Canada, dietetics, health equity, food justice, 2S/LGBTQI+, LGBTQIA+

Introduction

The right to food has been recognized as a fundamental human right on the global scale as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, amongst others (De Schutter, 2012; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) & Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2010; Special Rapporteur on the right to food, n.d.). Despite being a G7 country and in partnership with the FAO, Canada has yet to explicitly address food insecurity by protecting the right to food in its Charter or national food policy (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), 2020; De Schutter, 2012; OHCHR & FAO, 2010; Special Rapporteur on the right to food, n.d.). Food insecurity is an urgent, critical issue across Canada, with 15.9% of the population in the provinces reporting some degree of food insecurity in 2021 (Tarasuk et al., 2022). In contrast to the national average, 17.7% of Nova Scotians were reported to experience household food insecurity, including 11.6% reporting to be moderately to severely insecure (Tarasuk et al., 2022). Food security is a complex, multifaceted issue necessitating collaboration and involvement across several policy arenas and jurisdictions. It has implications for, but not limited to, healthcare, housing, social assistance, agriculture, food service, and Indigenous policy.

2S/LGBTQIA+ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and other sexually and gender diverse) people are disproportionately affected by poverty, housing insecurity, unemployment, and by extension, food insecurity. Adverse experiences of this population are closely tied to cisheteronormativity, homophobia, and transphobia in all aspects of society (Casey, 2019; Conron et al., 2022; Gahagan & Subirana-

Malaret, 2018; Gibb et al., 2021; Leslie et al., 2022; Lumens, 2022; McReynolds & Wilson, 2022.; Russomanno & Jabson Tree, 2020). Overt discrimination and microaggressions against 2S/LGBTQIA+ identities compound barriers to accessing food, community and social support, social assistance, housing, and healthcare (Casey, 2019; Gahagan & Subirana-Malaret, 2018). When examined with an intersectional perspective, these barriers are further magnified for individuals experiencing additional forms of marginalization, such as racism, sexism, ableism, or colonialism.

Despite strong advocacy efforts towards both food security and 2S/LGBTQIA+ issues on both a national and provincial level, little research or advocacy has been conducted that examines these concerns concurrently. Given recent rising food prices, food insecurity rates, and political advocacy for food security and 2S/LGBTQIA+ rights, this topic is particularly relevant and timely (Alabi & Ngwenyama, 2022; AAFC, 2020; Women and Gender Equality Canada (WGEC), 2023). This paper is intended to serve as a broad but comprehensive background of 2S/LGBTQIA+ food insecurity issues in Canada, with a focus on the Nova Scotian food system as an example of how to examine this issue within other provincial or territorial contexts. The goals of this paper are to a) examine the Nova Scotian and Canadian food systems within a right to food framework, b) highlight food insecurity implications as they relate to 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations, and c) identify relevant recommendations for registered dietitians in practice.

Positionality Statement

It is important to acknowledge that this paper was written from a position of 'urban queer privilege' as referenced by Marple (2005). Urban queerness, which is the dominant

paradigm in academic queer theory, idealizes individualism, visibility, outness, and pride (Marple, 2005). However, these same ideals do not necessarily apply in more collectivist rural contexts. Instead, queerness is deemphasized in favour of community, interdependence, social inclusion, and safety for 'rural queers' (Marple, 2005). It is likely that food security programs and policies targeted to 2SLGBTQI+ populations need to be flexible to accommodate differences between communities and avoid causing further harm in their efforts to improve lives.

Additionally, a number of authors identify with queer communities. Several members are RDs, some are nutrition students, while others are nutrition faculty. Several members are from a community food security organization. The authors' lineages include white European settler, Chinese settler, and mixed Indigenous ancestry.

Theoretical Approaches

Key Terms

We would like to start by briefly elaborating on some terms used in this paper relating to systemic anti-2S/LGBTQIA+ discrimination. There are many ways to categorize those who fall outside the dominant binaries of both sexuality and gender. Among them is the category 'cisgender,' which refers to a person whose gender aligns with that which they were assigned at birth. A transgender person, then, is someone whose gender differs from that assigned at their birth. An important related term is 'cisnormativity,' which is the social expectation and/or assumption that all people are cisgender. Similarly, heteronormativity is the societal assumption that all people are heterosexual (Howe, 2019; Marshall et al., 2023). The positioning of heterosexual and cisgender people as the assumed default may lead to the

'othering' of both non-heterosexual and transgender people and affect how 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations interact with the society around them. Cis-heteronormativity shapes identities and ways of being through pressures to conform to normative standards. This can result in additional mental and emotional labour in day-to-day interactions for 2S/LGBTQIA+ people, which can be further compounded with other intersecting marginal identities (Joy & Marie McSweeney-Flaherty, 2022; Marshall et al., 2023).

2S/LGBTQIA+ is used as an umbrella term to encapsulate the various communities and identities that fall outside of cisgender and heterosexual norms. These include, but are not limited to: Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, and intersex communities. We acknowledge the great diversity within this umbrella and between these communities, and that that each subgroup has experiences, challenges, and strengths that are distinct from other groups. Additionally, many individuals may categorize themselves within multiple subgroups; their membership is not mutually exclusive. This paper examines trends across 2S/LGBTQIA+ experiences more broadly. However, further subgroup-specific research is needed for a more comprehensive understanding of each population's experiences.

Crenshaw's Critical Theory of Intersectionality

We approach the topic of food insecurity among 2S/LGBTQIA+ people who live in Canada and related policy through the lens of Kimberle Crenshaw's critical theory of intersectionality. In her seminal 1989 paper, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," Crenshaw argues that, in law and policy, there is a historical tendency to silo axes of oppression (sexuality, gender, class, and race, for example) as though they are "mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" (Crenshaw, 1989, p.139). Intersectionality

theory also holds that those on the margins of society may experience multiple forms of oppression, meaning that they are *polymarginalized*. That is, marginalized groups' experiences are multidimensional and, consequently, the discrimination they face may also be multidimensional (Crenshaw, 1989).

Most legal and policy frameworks in Canada have, until relatively recently, been built upon what Crenshaw calls 'single-axis analysis.' A single axis of oppression, when considered in isolation, may leave additional factors contributing to a person's total experience of discrimination unexamined. For example, policies designed to lessen food insecurity may fail to account for the experiences of food-insecure people who are 2S/LGBTQIA+. Conversely, policies designed to lessen systemic discrimination against 2S/LGBTQIA+ people may fail to account for the experiences of 2S/LGBTQIA+ people who are also food insecure. Crenshaw argues that, in many cases, single-axis analysis serves to distort the material experiences of polymarginalized people. More, this distortion can result in legal and structural erasure of these groups. That is, legal and policy frameworks addressing discrimination along a "single categorical axis" are frequently inadequate for capturing complex, multidimensional, and intersectional experiences of discrimination, thus rendering them functionally invisible (Crenshaw, 1989, p.140).

Mori & Onyango (2023) used an intersectional lens in their scoping review investigating the multiple social determinants of health that act as barriers preventing Black individuals in Canada from obtaining sufficient and suitable food. They suggest a pressing need to create policies through an integrated approach that tackles food insecurity within Canada, especially within minority communities (Mori & Onyango, 2023). In the context of food insecurity and 2S/LGBTQIA+ people, researchers note that trans people in the Southeastern United States face

significant challenges with inadequate housing, low income, and social discrimination that hinder their access to food (Russomanno & Jabson Tree, 2020), highlighting the intersections between location, sexuality, gender, discrimination, income and food security. Lumens (2022) also reports that, for university students, the experiences with food insecurity and being 2S/LGBTQIA+ further intersected with their academic status, economic background, race, ethnicity, and religious beliefs. With this critical approach, we aim to peel back the layers of policy affecting 2S/LGBTQIA+ Canadians experiencing food insecurity to reveal points of intersection which may have been heretofore obscured. To do this, we undertake an explicitly multi-axes analysis to illuminate the complex experiences of 2S/LGBTQIA+ Canadians living with food insecurity and to situate those experiences within extant policy frameworks.

This intersectional multi-axis analysis is an approach that examines how various forms of social stratification intersect and contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege. This type of analysis considers how the different aspects of a person's identity can affect their access to food and their experiences with food insecurity. As Patterson et al. (2020) suggest, more research is necessary to unravel the complex intersectional factors contributing to food insecurity among 2S/LGBTQIA+ people that can be used to shape effective policies and local initiatives aimed at reducing instances of food insecurity. With this type of analysis, we recognize that discrimination based on sexuality cannot be fully understood without considering other factors like gender identity, race, location, and socio-economic status, which may also play a critical role in a person’s ability to secure adequate food.

The Right to Food

The right to food is recognized in multiple international conventions on human rights, regional treaties, and national constitutions (OHCHR & FAO, 2010). It is defined as:

> The right to have regular, permanent and free access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear. (OHCHR & FAO, 2010; OHCHR, n.d.-a)

This definition, provided by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, highlights the right to food as a universal human right and emphasizes the importance of adequate food for both physical and mental health. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur was first established in 2000 “to address the need for an integrated and coordinated approach to promoting and protecting people’s right to food” (OHCHR, n.d.-b). The last Special Rapporteur country visit to Canada was completed by Olivier De Schutter in 2012 (De Schutter, 2012). This section aims to apply the 3-A framework (availability, accessibility, and adequacy) used in his report to analyze the status of food security for 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations in Nova Scotia and identify target areas for change. This framework guides us through a) what foods are produced or available in the province, b) of the food that is available, whether people can access it, and c) of the food that people can access, whether it is meeting their nutritional needs. These three components are not necessarily interconnected in a linear or discrete fashion but provide a starting point to capture a broad picture of the food system in Nova Scotia and, more broadly, Canada.

Overview of the Current Food Policy Landscape in Canada

Food security is dependent on food production, environmental sustainability, population health and safety, financial security, housing security, economic efficiency, and cultural adequacy. Thus, policy reform in this area necessitates a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional approach across levels of government and among different departments and ministries. While there has been collaboration between key federal ministries, Canadian food policy remains cisheteronormative and colonial. Sexual and gender diversity have not been historically recognized, legitimized, or prioritized in food policy in Canada, even though 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations experience unique challenges to food security and experience structural barriers in our food systems.

In 2019, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada announced the Food Policy for Canada, after years of consultation and advocacy, and pledged $134 million to developing food policy (AAFC, 2020). Inclusion and Diversity was established as one of the guiding principles for the policy, where “All people living in Canada are able to be part of an ongoing dialogue on food issues. Decisions are made after gathering and considering diverse interests and perspectives” (AAFC, 2020). The policy includes the establishment of the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council, an emphasis on community-oriented approaches, and a focus on Indigenous-led development of Indigenous food systems (AAFC, 2020). Although some social determinants of health (SDOH) are factored into the policy, sexual orientation and gender identity are identified as target risk factors to address (AAFC, 2020).

In 2022, Women and Gender Equality Canada launched the Federal 2S/LGBTQIA+ Action Plan. It seeks to promote equality and inclusivity, support communities, foster Indigenous

resilience, and develop 2S/LGBTQIA+ research and policy (WGEC, 2023). Raising awareness of "2SLGBTQI+ issues" is mentioned broadly within the Plan's priority areas, though specific issues for consideration – including food insecurity – are not mentioned. The Action Plan called for embedding 2S/LGBTQIA+ issues within the Government of Canada, "to strengthen mechanisms to advocate 2SLGBTQI+ issues and ensure coordinated Government of Canada responses to community priorities" (WGEC, 2023, p.29). The lack of coordination among these two policies and their leading Federal Ministries points to the history of cisheteronormativity and colonialism within our policy systems; where sexual and gender diversity and Indigenous ways of knowing have not been historically recognized, legitimized, or prioritized in policy. At the same time, these two policies may open opportunities to break down institutional silos and address food insecurity for 2S/LGBTQIA+ populations.

Overall, it must be recognized that the institutions involved in this policy area have been historically built within the context of cisheteronormativity and colonialism; sexual and gender diversity and Indigenous ways of knowing have not been historically recognized, legitimized, or prioritized in policy. Moreover, legislation and execution of the food system have been siloed into several separate jurisdictions both vertically (levels of government) and horizontally (departmental jurisdiction within single levels of government). The resulting path dependency from this structure (or lack thereof) necessitates a complex, collaborative effort across a multitude of stakeholders to improve food security. Fortunately, despite these barriers, the recent federal Food Policy and 2SLGBTQI+ Plan represent critical junctures that may open opportunities on the policy agenda for addressing food insecurity in this population.

Analysis and Discussion

The following sections use the 3-A Framework to provide a holistic exploration of Nova Scotia's food system by exploring the availability, accessibility, and adequacy of food (De Schutter, 2012). This framework was layered with a critical intersectional lens, particularly to highlight considerations of these facets of food security for 2S/LGBTQIA+ people.

Availability

To provide context for a food system, food availability must first be examined. Within the 3-A Framework, availability entails the source(s) of food supply in the area. This can include factors affecting agriculture, aquaculture, and food imports and how they affect the quantity of and types of food available. Regional climates are a key determinant of the nature and capacity of local food production. In Nova Scotia, temperatures are moderated by the Atlantic Ocean and range between -5 to 14°C (Sangster et al., 2013). The growing season ranges from 100 to 200 days per year depending on the region. The province experiences high levels of precipitation of 900-1500mm per year and high storm frequency, warranting well-draining soils. A wide variety of produce can be farmed given the plant hardiness zones of 5a-6b across the province (Sangster et al., 2013). In recent years, climate change has had significant impacts on regional food availability across the country. In Nova Scotia, farmers now need to quickly adapt to warming temperatures and wetter conditions, which may present challenges or benefits depending on the produce they grow (Waters, n.d.). However, an increasing frequency of extreme weather events, such as large storms or late frosts, are difficult to predict and can have catastrophic impacts on agriculture, particularly for small-scale local farmers (Waters, n.d.).

To help work towards slowing climate change, Nova Scotia's Agriculture Clean Technology Program has been established to "support farmers and food processors in improving their operations … [by] adopting clean technologies that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency, promoting sustainable and clean growth, increasing value-added agricultural production, extending growing seasons and improving costs of production" (Communications Nova Scotia, 2018; Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2022). Although the introduction of this program may be promising for the future sustainability of local agriculture, further program evaluation still needs to be conducted to assess its uptake by large and small-scale producers and subsequent impact on the environment and food production.

Being a coastal province, aquaculture is a significant component of local food economies. Grey literature on the provincial government's position on aquaculture seem to have a greater emphasis on industrial and economic goals rather than food security. The province promotes a "Low-impact/High-value aquaculture" model, acknowledging the importance of promoting environmental sustainability in balance with economic goals (The Doelle-Lahey Panel, 2014). The 2014 Doelle-Lahey Panel Regulatory Report notes subjects including species protection, species health and welfare, environmental impact, and pollution amongst other regulatory topics. However, this report makes no mention of food security or food systems, thus presenting as a largely economic model rather than a social model. Sustainability is more around the long-term sustainability of the industry (The Doelle-Lahey Panel, 2014). Although the Craig government has mentioned food security in discussions around developing the

province's aquaculture, specific and actionable links between how industry development can directly support local food security have not been made clear (Mayer, 2021).

The term "food miles" refers to the distance that food travels between production and consumer (Weber & Matthews, 2008). It is often used in reference to discussions around the environmental sustainability of food, as the greater the food miles involved in a food system, the greater the emissions from transportation, the food waste in production, processing, and retail, and the food prices for the consumer (Weber & Matthews, 2008). This concept can also be applied to the context of food security. When a food system has fewer average food miles, and thus greater self-reliance, a greater proportion of consumed foods come from local producers rather than imported foods. Greater self-reliance stimulates the local economy and fosters community development, minimizes the impact of supply chain issues on food availability, reduces food prices, and increases the nutritional adequacy of foods and diets. All of these results directly contribute to greater food security. Social benefits of buying local have been cited to include "nutritious food, entrepreneurial energy, work ethic, mentorship, mutual reliance, relationship-based economic activity, and maintenance of farming communities" (Scott & MacLeod, 2010).

The majority (>90%) of the Nova Scotian diet consists of imported foods. Unfortunately, the proportion of the Nova Scotian diet that comes from locally produced foods (and thus supporting local producers) has decreased in the past 15 years by 50% (Scott & MacLeod, 2010). The loss of local producers is partly from this consumption pattern, partly from the lack of government support or incentives for new small farmers to enter the industry, policy barriers around food processing making some foods not financially feasible for smaller producers to

produce, and larger industrial farms or corporations pushing or buying out smaller producers. With this shift, the outlook for a locally self-reliant food system is poor for Nova Scotia. Rural farming communities are suffering, and so, by extension, is the availability of locally produced food in the province.

Other sources of food include community gardens and urban farms. In Nova Scotia, various community gardens exist throughout the province, particularly in urban centres where access to backyard agriculture may not be available for many residents. For example, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia's (ISANS) Growing Strong Neighbourhoods community garden program has established 4 gardens in Halifax with the aim of community building and promoting food skills among new immigrants (Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, 2021). An online search found many community gardens in Halifax and the Halifax Regional Municipality area and a few in Truro (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2024. Some gardens are free for residents/community members, but many charge a seasonal fee to rent a garden space. This fee and the time required to maintain a garden space may be a barrier to those with lower incomes or multiple jobs.

Examples of urban farms in Nova Scotia include Halifax Common Roots Urban Farm and Bluenose Urban Farm (Bluenose Urban Farm, n.d.; Common Roots Urban Farm, 2022). Some urban market garden initiatives are also framed as food security initiatives. For example, Fogarty's Market Garden works to encourage people to grow their own food, sell excess produce, build community, and reduce food waste (Ramesar, 2022). Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Boxes are also available for around $30/week on average with delivery options around the province; some are also offered on a seasonal basis ranging from $500-

900/season (Four Seasons Farm, n.d.; Snowy River Heritage Farm, n.d.; TapRoot Farms, n.d.). This may be a more affordable option to receive fresh, quality food and support local agriculture for some individuals in urban areas.

However, many community gardens and urban farms serve as educational initiatives to help increase gardening, farming, and food-related skills and knowledge. For this reason, many individuals using these resources are very new to gardening and farming. The activities at these sites often involve a lot learning but do not necessarily provide or improve direct food access. Moreover, long waitlists, time required to participate (including transportation), and financial barriers (participation fees) also temper the efficacy of these programs on a population level.

As framed by the Food Policy for Canada, food waste and sustainability are important to consider within food systems. In Nova Scotia, initial searches for food waste reduction in the province refer to municipal and backyard composting initiatives (Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2009; Divert NS, n.d.). While these target change at the individual/consumer level, research shows that a significant portion of the issue (approximately 40%) is attributed to the production and processing level of the food system (Research Nova Scotia, 2021). Some reports estimate 34% of Canadian food waste occurs in the processing stage, double that of the household consumption stage. Staggeringly, “25% of produce is discarded purely for cosmetic reasons”, even if that food is safe to consume (Research Nova Scotia, 2021). It is estimated that 13% of produce is ploughed under, discarded, or never harvested in the first place (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2019).

Produce bundles and CSA boxes on a local agriculture level can help divert food waste of quality produce items that may be cosmetically imperfect, while simultaneously supporting

food security initiatives (e.g. donation to food provision services, charity initiatives such as Square Roots that offers discounted programs for those in need) (Keays, 2020; Square Roots, n.d.).

Accessibility

The following two sections on accessibility and adequacy must be prefaced by acknowledging the complex relationships between the social determinants of health (SDOH) as they relate to food security. SDOH are acknowledged as a fundamental component of dietetic practice and nutrition and conceptually fit well with Crenshaw's Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989). Both approaches emphasize the need for a multi-axis lens in order to gather a holistic understanding of critical issues. For 2S/LGBTQIA+ people, their identities serve as an additional barrier to food access, both directly and recursively via other elevated SDOH risks. For example, 2S/LGBTQIA+ people experiencing discrimination in job searching, in the workplace, or in being a parent/single parent can further contribute to food insecurity. This is reflected in the research showing higher rates of food insecurity among this population (Conron et al., 2022; Khoury, 2023; McReynolds & Wilson, 2022; Russomanno & Jabson Tree, 2020).

As demonstrated in the policy overview, the issue of food security is relevant to many jurisdictions. In Nova Scotia and elsewhere across Canada, one of its root causes is poverty or low income available to afford/access food. With an intersectional lens, it should be noted that individuals often simultaneously hold several underprivileged identities that can all individually contribute to food insecurity, but have a multiplier effect when experienced together. For example, it is known that low income is associated with drug use (and by extension, undernutrition), mental illness, housing insecurity, food insecurity, and diet-related disease

(Miewald & Ostry, 2014). Other factors can include access to education, social capital, race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. The greater the number of barriers an individual or a community faces, the greater their risk of facing additional barriers or marginalization. Hence, in order to effectively and comprehensively work to solve food security issues in Nova Scotia and across the country, an intentional, intersectional approach must be used. This approach must also account for sexual and gender orientation, one factor of identity that has yet to be thoroughly acknowledged or explored in this policy arena. Recent acts of homophobic and transphobic violence, particularly in rural areas of the province, demonstrate that outness remains a risk to personal safety in many areas (Armstrong, 2023; King, 2023).

Under the 3-A Framework, accessibility involves individuals' ability to access the food available in the food system. The remainder of this section will explore facilitators and barriers to structural accessibility (e.g. policy that regulates access to certain foods), physical accessibility (e.g. transportation of or to food sources), and economic accessibility (e.g. food affordability).

2S/LGBTQIA+ food accessibility cannot be discussed without examining the policies around Indigenous traditional food access in the province. Indigenous nations existed since pre-colonial times across Turtle Island and have diverse traditional food needs based on culture and geography. By extension, different nations will also experience different local policy barriers to accessing their traditional foods. The province of Nova Scotia is Mi'kmaw land. Although the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that "Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia harvesters have aboriginal and treaty rights to hunt and fish and do not require provincial hunting and fishing licences or follow provincial seasons", individuals require "a federal Indian status card associated with a

Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia First Nation or a Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Harvester Identification Card issued by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs" and "cards or identification issued by other organizations will not be accepted" (Government of Nova Scotia, 2021). Prior to 2017, members of the Native Council of Nova Scotia were able to harvest moose under the Aboriginal Rights Treaty Access (ARTA) passport; this right was revoked without consultation with the Mi'kmaq. The ARTA passport recognizes the holder's Mi'kmaq ancestry, their Aboriginality, and thereby the treaty and constitutional rights they are entitled to, regardless of status (Moore, 2022). The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia are also working towards the development of a rights-based fishery, where Mi'kmaq can earn a livelihood without a commercial fishing license as per their treaty rights (Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, 2022; Wien et al., 2021). Like many other regions in Canada, colonial laws still paradoxically prevent the realization of Indigenous harvesting rights that the treaties set out to protect.

The physical accessibility of food concerns whether and how easily people can get to the food that is available to them. The two primary considerations examined in this paper are distance/transportation concerns and the presence of support services or community food programming. The context of the food environment is critical for food access, and the accessibility of a particular context varies from individual to individual. Those with mobility concerns, such as older populations or those with a physical disability may face barriers with carrying food over long grocery trips; those living in rural areas without access to public transportation or a personal vehicle may need to rely on others to access food for them (Miewald & Ostry, 2014).

A 2022 documentary by Wilson et al. examined food deserts in Nova Scotia communities including Middle Musquodoboit, Upper Big Tracadie, Millbrook, Dean Settlement, and outside of Bridgewater, where the commute to purchase groceries can be up to a one-hour drive away (Rent, 2022; Wilson, 2022). Residents often carpool or collaborate in picking up groceries; one participant noted, "It's very common to see on Facebook [a post that says] 'I'm going to town Tuesday. Does anyone need anything?'" (Rent, 2022). This demonstrates the need for strong, supportive communities in food provision, particularly in rural communities or food deserts. Especially in rural areas, there are many informal forms of mutual aid among community members where resources are very limited. These networks are usually very local and relationship based, and often hard to find or quantify through scholarly or grey literature. For 2S/LGBTQIA+ individuals in these areas, ensuring their own food security and survival may likely be dependent on positive relationships with others in their community, potentially resulting in the need to remain closeted or more discreet about their identity if possible (Miewald & Ostry, 2014).

Downstream or 'frontline' food provision services and community programs are essential to emergency food relief. However, they are just a "band-aid solution" and do not effectively address the root causes of food insecurity (Rent, 2022). In Nova Scotia, these programs exist throughout the province to support food security on a small, local scale. One resident in the documentary noted that running these programs feels "like you're snipping at it and not getting to the underlying problems" (Rent, 2022). These initiatives are often small-scale, donation-based, volunteer-run, ad hoc, and have limited/short-term funding, restricting their capacity for broader change (Miewald & Ostry, 2014). Two provincial directories of food

programs, Feed Nova Scotia and 211 Nova Scotia, list 158 and 72 services/partners respectively. Associations are often religiously affiliated (e.g. held by churches, Salvation Army, or with a history in religious work) (Feed Nova Scotia, 2017; NS 211, n.d.). Given the history of trauma inflicted against 2S/LGBTQIA+ people by religious institutions, these initiatives may not be safe – or perceived as safe – by these individuals, resulting in resistance to service use. Harm may not only be inflicted by the services themselves but also could arise from data collection, i.e. through the application/eligibility process to access a service. Members of Feed Nova Scotia's First Voice Advisory Committee (FVAC) have identified that the experience of data collection can be very invasive and can cause a lot of harm. Other initiatives are provided by centers "for women and children" (Feed Nova Scotia, 2017; NS 211, n.d.). This label inhibits inclusivity for trans and/or genderqueer individuals.

The inclusivity/safety of these programs for 2S/LGBTQIA+ people is not available at face value on these databases. The responsibility is placed on the individual to evaluate their personal risks of accessing these services – that is, whether they may experience violence at those sites. There is no provincial queer health database/directory of providers/programs that exists at this time. These factors all present barriers to 2S/LGBTQIA+ people to accessing immediate food support, exacerbating the elevated food insecurity rates of this population. Individuals may need to remain closeted/try to "pass" within cisheteronormative standards in order to safely access support services, rely on others to access them on their behalf, or may choose not to access these services at all for their own physical safety. Feed Nova Scotia's FVAC has also noted that the harm or violence experienced at these services often leads to distrust and resistance to accessing similar supports in the future.

There exists little to no explicit food/nutrition-related programming at 2S/LGBTQIA+ community organizations or resource lists (including the Youth Project, Sexual Health NS, NS Rainbow Action Project, NS Health Library Services prideHealth Resources) (McLean, n.d.; Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project, n.d.; Sexual Health Nova Scotia, n.d.; Youth Project, 2017). The resources and programming listed center more on sexual health, support groups, and counselling, although "educational workshops" are offered as a general program. This suggests that these topics – and these topics only – are seen as the issues that affect 2S/LGBTQIA+ people, despite the fact that this population experiences health disparities in areas other than sexual and mental health.

There are a few examples of food supports explicitly catered towards the 2S/LGBTQIA+ community. The Community Fridge Halifax is a queer-run group providing free food in Halifax (Community Fridge Halifax, 2022). The United Way Halifax Neighbourhood Kitchen Fund supports community kitchens across the province, suggesting an opportunity to create a queer community kitchen program (United Way Halifax, n.d.). Lastly, although Parker Street Food Bank is listed on the Halifax Pride website under Food Access resources, the Values they list on their website allude to a religious affiliation; a commitment to inclusivity or recognition of the 2S/LGBTQIA+ community or similar statement is not included on their website (Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank, n.d.).

The other type of accessibility that needs to be considered is economic accessibility, sometimes referred to as 'affordability'. The term affordability centers around the prices of foodstuffs themselves, whereas the term economic accessibility centers more around the

consumer's ability to access food with their financial means. This is a more person-centered approach that lends greater focus to the social issues around poverty and financial security.

In Nova Scotia, the living wage ranges from $22.85-$26.50 around the province in 2023 reflective of recent high inflation rates (Saulnier, 2023). The living wage calculation includes all basic necessities to ensure an adequate quality of life, including food, shelter, clothing, childcare, and healthcare, among other needs. Food and shelter together constitute around half of the living wage budget, indicating the primary significance of food and housing security in supporting quality human life. In contrast, the provincial minimum wage is $14.50 and the median hourly wage in Nova Scotia is $22.80, with "nearly 50% of workers earning less than the living wage" (Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 2023; Saulnier, 2022). This means that a significant portion of the population is at risk for some degree of food insecurity for basic financial reasons alone. Given the 2S/LGBTQIA+ wage gap, which is exacerbated in non-metropolitan areas, it can be inferred that this risk is amplified in this population (Denier & Waite, 2017; Human Rights Campaign Foundation, n.d.; Tohl, 2023) .

Adequacy

The final section of the 3-A framework explores whether, of the foods that are available in a food system and accessible to individuals, the food system is able to adequately meet the population's nutritional needs. Nutrition needs can include a general healthy diet, disease-specific dietary requirements, and cultural dietary needs.

Based on the Report of the Standing Committee on Health, the 2S/LGBTQIA+ population experiences a greater prevalence of poor mental health (including mood and anxiety disorders), some chronic diseases, sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, and alcohol abuse,

smoking, and certain drug use in comparison to a heterosexual reference population (Casey, 2019.

The government of Nova Scotia has recognized the burden of chronic disease on the primary care system, and even emphasized the preventable nature of these conditions by adopting “healthy behaviours, such as eating nutritious foods, being physically active, and avoiding tobacco use” (Nova Scotia, n.d.). While the province has released multiple guidelines and policies around the regulation of school food to improve child nutrition, little regulatory efforts seem to have been made to improve nutrition and food security in other populations (Nova Scotia Departments of Education & Health Promotion and Protection, 2006). At present, Nova Scotia has not made any regulatory policy regarding sodium, saturated fat, or sugar content in general foods, although added trans fats have been banned on a national level. For children, the Government of Nova Scotia released the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools in 2006 (Nova Scotia Departments of Education & Health Promotion and Protection, 2006), the Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings in 2011 (Government of Nova Scotia, 2011), and the Managing Diabetes in Schools Policy in 2022 (Government of Nova Scotia, 2022). Of these, however, only the Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings indicates empirical limits of sodium, fat, and sugar per serving (Government of Nova Scotia, 2011). The province also has not implemented policies regarding food advertising towards children or taxation of certain foods (e.g. sugar-sweetened beverages) as have been implemented in other jurisdictions in efforts to combat chronic disease. Evidence of some healthy eating campaigns was found in the grey literature, but none that have been implemented in the past 10 years (Nova Scotia, 2010, 2012).

Miewald and Ostry (2014) framed housing security as a "safety net for food security" and a significant factor in achieving food adequacy. Access to safe, secure housing with food preparation and storage facilities is key to empowering individuals to prepare their own food. Not only do cooking facilities and appliances (e.g. fridge, microwave, stove/hot plate, oven) need to be present, they must also be sufficient and safe. Miewald and Ostry note that more precarious housing situations may not have clean or safe food preparation facilities – whether in-room or communal, and residents' food may be at risk of infestation or theft. Improved housing security and kitchen facilities can lead to reduced reliance on food support programs and thus increased food security. Furthermore, due to the limited capacity and funds of food support programs, the food provided is not always guaranteed or not always nutritionally adequate (Miewald & Ostry, 2014).

Moreover, food adequacy may be a challenge in more remote areas where food deserts are present. In the Wilson documentary, one participant noted that "his community is surrounded by farms and yet getting fresh food into the community was a challenge … while there's food at convenience stores, it's mostly processed foods, and pop and chips" (Rent, 2022). The food environment, tying in both availability and accessibility factors, is critical to determining whether nutritional adequacy can be achieved.

Conclusion and Relevance to Practice

Food insecurity is an issue that sits at the intersection of multiple social movements, political jurisdictions, and areas of study. At the government level, work has just begun for the development of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary national food policy. Many efforts from civil society groups and academia alike have contributed to our awareness of the relationships between food security and other social factors, including housing security, income, and physical and mental health. On the other hand, 2S/LGBTQIA+ research and social movements have been gaining significant momentum in recent years, including the development of a federal action plan (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2023). However, very little has been done in the Canadian context to examine food security in the 2S/LGBTQIA+ population, despite known associations between their common interrelated factors. Further research is needed to elucidate the complex relationships between queerness, food security, and the social determinants of health.

The discussion in this paper has multiple implications for dietetic practice. On one hand, multiple facets of food security have been highlighted, including food system sustainability, supporting local food production, reducing food waste, the impact of food deserts, poverty, and housing security. Ultimately, broader system-level changes to address these root causes of food insecurity are needed, alongside intentional consideration of the unique needs of different vulnerable populations. These unique needs in the context of 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities have been explored in this paper. From a policy perspective, collaboration both across government jurisdictions and food system sectors is critical to create a comprehensive and truly effective food security strategy.

On the other hand, the intersectional approach highlighted the need for dietetics to consider the unique, overlooked barriers to food security and nutrition for 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities, such as inaccessibility of food support programs, increased marginalization due to socio-economic exclusion, and higher disease morbidity due to insufficient culturally safe health care. Dietitians can apply this lens in many ways, including but not limited to providing ethical, client-centred, and trauma-informed care when working with 2S/LGBTQIA+ patients in clinical practice; partnering with agencies serving 2S/LGBTQIA+ clients in creating gender-inclusive nutrition and food programming in community settings; creating inclusive spaces for mealtime/dining experiences in institutional food services; and collecting 2S/LGBTQIA+ data to inform policy-making in population health. Dietetics, as a field with a diverse range of practice areas and levels of jurisdictional influence, can play a key role in advocating for and leading structural and systemic changes towards 2S/LGBTQIA+ inclusive health and food systems. Lastly, similar analyses can be conducted for other Canadian provinces and territories to highlight key facets relevant to different local food systems.

Recommendations for potential programs include the addition of a “2S/LGBTQIA+ friendly” filter on food support program databases; identification of organizations deemed safe spaces listed on-site program listings; collaboration between civil society organizations to deliver joint programming (e.g. partnerships between food security and 2S/LGBTQIA+ organizations to deliver targeted programming); and the creation of a 2SLGBTQI+ health database where individuals can find queer-friendly healthcare services, including dietitians, on a centralized site.

Overall, the results of the present analysis show that many of the barriers to food security for this population lie in the accessibility domain. Programs at the organizational and governmental levels should seek to improve physical and economic accessibility of food for 2S/LGBTQIA+ people alongside targeted, integrated initiatives to address disparities in other related social determinants of health. Greater practical integration between concepts of food security and 2S/LGBTQIA+ marginalization is needed, whether in individual clinical practice or at a broader population health policy level.

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