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Résumé de l'article

This paper discusses early reflections on a project implementing intersectional praxis across the life cycle of community-based participatory research (CBPR). Drawing on our team's inaugural Co-learning Workshop, which included community and academic partners, we share our initial learnings about developing an intersectional approach to housing security. Specifically, we reflect on three key challenges, or promising puzzles, that emerged as we began our collaboration: co-defining intersectionality (across both theory and implementation), integrating intersectionality into understanding the multi-scaled complexities of housing security, and communicating intersectionality's relevance to a wider network of actors in housing security policy and programming. Drawing from our learnings, we suggest that an intersectional lens is powerful because it attends to the everyday lived experiences of housing insecurity, the interlocking systemic forms of oppression that create differentiated experiences of housing, and the specific contexts in which structural housing inequities take root.

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Abstract This paper discusses early reflections on a project implementing intersectional praxis across the life cycle of community-based participatory research (CBPR). Drawing on our team's inaugural Co-learning Workshop, which included community and academic partners, we share our initial learnings about developing an intersectional approach to housing security. Specifically, we reflect on three key challenges, or promising puzzles, that emerged as we began our collaboration: co-defining intersectionality (across both theory and implementation), integrating intersectionality into understanding the multi-scaled complexities of housing security, and communicating intersectionality's relevance to a wider network of actors in housing security policy and programming. Drawing from our learnings, we suggest that an intersectional lens is powerful because it attends to the everyday lived experiences of housing insecurity, the interlocking systemic forms of oppression that create differentiated experiences of housing, and the specific contexts in which structural housing inequities take root.

KeyWords intersectionality, community-based participatory research, housing insecurity

Housing issues appear almost daily in Canadian newspapers. This crisis is, of course, not new. As Tranjan (2023) has articulated, the housing system in Canada has long been built to prioritize the housing of some over others.[1] This ongoing crisis foregrounds the need for more systematic and more locally responsive approaches to housing insecurity. Intersectionality is recognized as a generative framework for addressing the complexities of housing precarity and homelessness as both specifically experienced and institutionally produced (Bell, 2019; Greene et al., 2013; Schwan et al., 2020; Trochmann, 2021; Zufferey, 2016).

In this paper, we reflect on some of the preliminary learning-in-action from a community-based participatory research (CBPR) project that aims to implement intersectional perspectives throughout the life cycle of two housing research projects. Called the Intersectionality in Action Partnership (IAP), and with links to the Institute for Intersectionality Studies at the University of Alberta, our project brings together two community organizations working on housing security issues with academic partners and collaborators. Our team members have all,

1 As one of the authors has argued elsewhere (MacDonald, 2024), policies—from the reserve system to residential schools—resulting from the establishment of Canada on Indigenous land are in fact housing policies. Further work could be done to consider how immigration policies are also housing policies, as when, for example, immigrants are only allowed to live in particular parts of Canada or must live together because of immigration status.

in different ways, been engaged in CBPR and/or work that addresses housing security. The IAP is guided by the following questions: What are the methodological strengths and challenges of integrating intersectionality throughout the life cycle of CBPR partnerships? What does this process of integration look like in research that seeks more relevant, inclusive, and sustained housing outcomes for multiply marginalized populations?

As these questions suggest, our initial focus was on integrating intersectionality into CBPR, with housing as the social issue through which we would explore and understand the possibilities of doing so. However, several months into the project, and on the heels of our first full-team workshop, our emphasis shifted. Initial conversations and co-learnings showed the importance of grounding intersectionality in the concrete issues and lived experiences of homelessness and housing in the communities with which IAP partners work. [2] As a result, we flipped our research questions to first ask, "How can we best integrate and apply intersectionality to community efforts to develop inclusive, secure housing?" This concrete question has become our basis for learning about the strengths and possibilities of intersectional knowledge and practice in CBPR.

Three *promising puzzles*—challenges that we find exciting and important to tackle—emerged from our initial collective deliberations: co-defining intersectionality across theory and practice and across academic and community perspectives, integrating intersectionality into the multi-scaled complexities of housing security, and communicating intersectionality's relevance to a wider network of actors in housing policy and programming. In our concluding reflections, we suggest that the process of identifying these challenges magnifies the potential of intersectionality as a lens for tackling housing insecurity.

Context and Method

The IAP has three main components. The Urban Housing Team (UHT) and the Rural Housing Team (RHT) are each carrying out CBPR projects that integrate and explore intersectional approaches; simultaneously, the Meta-study Team (MST) is deploying constructivist-grounded theory to document and analyze what is being learned in and across the RHT and UHT about the "doing" of intersectional CBPR in housing-focused research. These streams of research activity are interwoven and sustained through a series of collaborative workshops (Muff, 2017; Narayanan & Takhellambam, 2022) fostering mutual learning and knowledge exchange among the full IAP team. Since we are in the early stages of our project, our reflections focus on our first half-day Co-learning Workshop for the whole team, held in September 2023.

The UHT project connects with an ongoing affordable housing needs assessment partnership that the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative (MCHB) has entered into with the City of Edmonton (Alberta). This City initiative asserts that "multiple intersectional identities can

2 This paper uses the word "homeless" since it is more often used by our community partners and representative of the work they are trying to do. We do note, however, that there have been important interventions suggesting the use of "unhoused" or "houseless" to capture not having a physical address, troubling the use of "home" and "house" as synonyms. While people may not have houses, they may have homes. Additionally, Jessie Thistle offers 12 dimensions of Indigenous experiences of homelessness that contrast with the Western concept of housing that equates housing with home (Thistle, 2017).

significantly influence housing needs" and that it is necessary to engage individuals with lived experience (Community and Public Services Committee [CPSC], 2022, pp. 2-3). However, approaches to holistic housing in Edmonton have fallen short, partially due to inattention to the policy drivers that marginalize newcomers in multiple ways. Racialized single mothers and senior refugees with disabilities are examples of two such groups. While specific outcomes of the UHT study are still emerging from the ongoing work of the MCHB-led research collaboration, they will likely include a) a model for holistic, socio-economically inclusive housing supports; b) tools for engaging various government and community entities in this model; and c) results that are shared with community participants.

The RHT project builds on the Rural Development Network's (RDN) development of improved estimations of unstable housing aimed at more inclusive rural housing policies and practices. While the RDN has a guide for conducting estimations and is currently revising it to decolonize the data-gathering process, there is little data, and few approaches to collecting data, that consider the experiences of equity-seeking groups who face intersecting barriers—e.g., LGBTQ2S+ youth and newcomer women. The RHT thus seeks to identify gaps and exclusions in data-gathering on rural homelessness in central Alberta and to develop resources to help communities use this expanded data to address an ever-more complex set of housing challenges. While specific outcomes of the study are still emerging from the ongoing work of the RHT, they will likely include a) recommendations for revising the estimations guide to better capture the diverse intersecting experiences of homelessness; b) resources for translating more inclusive data into more inclusive funding and policies; and c) results that are shared with community participants.

The MST focuses on facilitating and exploring the learning of all team members throughout the life cycle of the two projects, with special attention given to building inductive, hands-on knowledge about the integration of intersectionality into CBPR. This includes facilitating workshops every year and conducting ongoing data collection. Expected outcomes include publications about, and resources for, implementing intersectionality in CBPR. As suggested above, however, the MST has shifted its focus to facilitating the exploration of an intersectional lens in housing and homelessness.

Our first Co-learning Workshop was a half-day event with 17 participants from all three teams (UHT, RHT, and MST). We primarily met in person, with two collaborators joining online. The workshop's purpose was to build relationships across teams, facilitate co-learning about intersectionality, learn about the work of the respective housing teams, and provide time for the UHT and RHT to meet and begin planning their work. The workshop was designed and facilitated by members of the MST, who have diverse experiences in facilitation, housing, and intersectional research. Field notes were taken throughout the workshop by undergraduate research assistants, and participants completed a short reflection form at the end of the workshop.

Housing Security in Canada

The Canadian housing system is unable to provide housing security to a significant number of people. An estimated average of 235,000 people in Canada experience homelessness each year (see Dionne et al., 2023, for more information about homelessness in Canada or the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness for a robust set of resources). According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC, n.d., in the 2016 census, 13% of renter households were in core housing need, i.e., in need of housing that is affordable, adequate, or suitable.[3] As CMHC breaks down this data, we begin to see the importance of an intersectional lens: Aboriginal households are 1.4 times more often in core housing need than non-Aboriginal households, 28% of female-led households are in core housing need, 26.6% of recent immigrant-led households are in core housing need, and persons with disabilities aged 35-44 had the highest incidence of living in core housing need (CMHC, n.d.). These needs are potentially even higher than suggested by CMHC, which has been critiqued for its reliance on delimited measures of affordability, adequacy, and suitability (DiBellonia & Kapoor, 2023; cf. Whitzman, 2023).

While Canada's federal government released a National Housing Strategy (NHS) in 2017, it has been critiqued at various levels for failing to address housing affordability for many people and for its slow progress in achieving even modest goals (Houle, 2022). One important way people in Canada try to access affordable housing is through non-market housing, available through a range of strategies including government and non-profit provision. Non-market housing comprises approximately 5% of the Canadian housing market, which does not reflect the significant need documented by core housing need measures. Layers of bureaucracy in the provision of housing add further complexity: the federal government offers some national oversight and funding; provincial and territorial (and in some cases, municipal) governments determine how housing is provided in their jurisdictions; and municipal governments make decisions on provision, zoning, land provision, and more.[4]

For the purposes of our project, it is crucial to understand the Canadian housing system's increasing inability to provide housing security within the web of policy decisions being made at many levels of governments and communities. We locate our IAP work within this context, understanding ourselves as seeking to create more opportunities for housing security even as we are part and parcel of this entrenched system.

We deploy the terminology of "housing security" to foreground the quest for housing that is socially and economically equitable for all; this is what the IAP's partners seek for their communities. International law uses the U.N. definition of adequate housing, which

3 Core housing need indicates that someone's housing is unaffordable, inadequate, or not suitable and that they would be unable to find an acceptable alternative dwelling within their means. CMHC indicates that 1.4 million households do not have access to quality housing (i.e., housing that is affordable, adequate, or suitable) (CMHC, 2022). Housing is considered unaffordable when it costs 30% or more of before-tax household income, inadequate when it needs major repairs, and unsuitable when there are not enough rooms to fit the size and makeup of the family.

4 For a more detailed overview of Canadian housing policy, see Suttor (2016); for a description of tenant rights in Canada, see Tranjan (2023).

refers to having secure tenure (not having to worry about being evicted or having your home or lands taken away) but which also includes living somewhere affordable, in keeping with your culture, and with access to appropriate services, schools, and employment (DiBellonia & Kapoor, 2023; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014). This definition is enshrined in housing as a human right. In Canada, the NHS and the National Housing Strategy Act (NHSA) have committed the government to a progressive realization of the right to housing, yet there is little discussion about exactly how this will be realized on a practical level. Housing justice scholars and advocates remind us that "the logic of capital accumulation increasingly trumps the right to housing" (Whitzman, 2022, p. 305), elevating the need to address how housing insecurities are systemically entrenched (MacDonald, 2024; Tranjan, 2023; Whitzman, 2022). This robust conceptualization of housing affordability and security resonates with intersectional analysis (McDowell & Collins, 2023; Blatman & Sisson, 2023).

Intersectionality and Community-Based Participatory Research

Intersectional research aims to enhance social wellbeing and equity by specifying social determinants, identifying heterogeneous effects, analyzing interlocking social structures, foregrounding pathways of change, and generating new theories (Kelly et al., 2021; Njeze et al., 2020; Salami et al., 2021). Government and community organizations increasingly emphasize need to adopt intersectional approaches to tackle social, economic, and health inequities (Bauer, 2014; Green et al., 2017; Phillips & Wyatt, 2021; UNICEF Canada, 2020). They recognize that when a social problem is framed and analyzed with an intersectional lens, knowledge about its systemic causes and solutions can be made more relevant, context specific, and actionable (Bauer, 2014; Green et al., 2017; Lapalme et al., 2020). However, the theoretical evolution of intersectionality has outpaced its methodological development, analytical techniques, and applications to programs, policies, and practices (Hall et al., 2015; Hillsburg, 2013; Levac & Denis, 2019). This notable lag in the application of intersectionality is often exacerbated by a lack of deep engagement with intersectional theories and concepts on the part of methodologists (Abrams et al., 2020). The integration of intersectional approaches into community goals, services, programs, and practices has been hindered as a result (Bowleg, 2021; Denis, 2008; Levac & Denis, 2019).

One important arena in which to address the need for robust intersectional analysis is community-based participatory research (CBPR), which aims to improve the welfare of communities through reciprocal community-driven partnerships and the direct participation of the people affected throughout the life cycle of the partnership (Baum et al., 2006; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; Hacker, 2013; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Whiteford & Strom, 2013).[5] In recent years, CBPR scholars and practitioners have begun to adopt intersectional concepts

5 That said, as Holkup et al. (2004, p.164) point out in their review, CBPR has a number of strengths, including the innovative adaptation of existing resources; the exploration of local knowledge and perceptions; the alignment of research with what the community perceives as social and health goals; the joining of the varied skills, knowledge, and expertise of participants to address complex issues; the provision of resources for the involved communities; the bridging of cultural differences among the participants; and helping to dismantle the lack of trust communities may hold regarding research.

(Jhonel & Smith, 2020; McCauley et al., 2019; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2019; Zlotnick, 2021) to better understand diverse lived experiences and the overlapping vectors of oppression within communities (Creese & Frisby, 2011; Lacharité & Pasquier, 2014).

Still lacking, however, is research that systematically investigates the process and experience of integrating intersectional approaches into CBPR. Some methodological research documents the applications of intersectionality to policy analysis (e.g., Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011; Parken & Young, 2007), the inclusion of diverse communities in policy development (e.g., Christensen et al., 2010; Murray, 2015), and the deployment of feminist intersectionality in secondary analysis (Levac & Denis, 2019). However, there remains limited investigation into the strengths and challenges of enfolding intersectionality into the life cycle of community research partnerships, a quest that requires co-reflection across all phases and within the specific context and goals of a project (Cho et al., 2013; Hacker, 2013; Israel et al., 1998; Salma & Giri, 2021). The IAP project takes up this quest. As discussed above, however, early experiences in the project have prompted us to adjust our framework to start with the question of intersectionality and housing research.

Intersectional Approaches to Housing

Intersectional approaches have been recognized as essential to understanding and addressing the complexities of housing precarity and homelessness (Bell, 2019; Greene et al., 2013; McDowell & Collins, 2023; Schwan et al., 2020; Trochmann, 2021; Zufferey, 2016), including in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Parker & Leviten-Reid, 2022). While some housing policies aim to prioritize the most vulnerable Canadians, gaps in data, research, and policy remain (CMHC, 2017). The NHS employs a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) approach in response to these gaps—an approach that Hankivsky and Mussel (2018) consider a marked improvement on the previous implementation of GBA in Canadian policy making. However, we adopt an intersectional approach over GBA+ because of the capacity and attention in this literature to not only the lived experiences of inequalities caused by housing inequity, but also to the systems of domination that create this inequity, which is absent from the NHS (McDowell & Collins, 2023).

Despite evidence that people experiencing housing precarity belong to multiple and intersecting population groups with different housing needs (CPSC, 2022; Greene et al., 2013; Van Berkum & Oudshoorn, 2019), vulnerable people are often lumped into single-category groups. Further, conventional market-driven housing policies and strategies often reproduce colonialist definitions of land, exacerbating Indigenous displacement and dislocation (Caplan et al., 2020; Thistle, 2017). Still, intersectionality is rarely integrated into scholarship that applies community-based approaches to housing and homelessness in Canada (Christensen, 2011; Drolet & Teixiera, 2022; Kauppi et al., 2015; Oliver et al., 2022).

Research on urban housing—which dominates the literature—finds priority populations experiencing housing instability to include women and children fleeing domestic violence, Indigenous people, youth with mental illness, and immigrants and refugees (CMHC, 2017; Farrell, 2005). However, this research tends to occlude intersectional dimensions of housing

precarity (Callaghan et al., 2002; Greene et al., 2013; Hiebert et al., 2005; Paradis et al., 2008; Thurston et al., 2006; Walsh et al., 2011). For example, little work has been done to distinguish the housing status of immigrants and refugees according to gender (Bell, 2019; Hanley et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2022), despite extant research showing that they are vulnerable to homelessness due to interlocking systemic factors such as discrimination, unaffordable housing, violence, and lack of childcare (Rose & Charrette, 2011; Thurston et al., 2006; Walsh et al., 2011). Edmonton has a slightly higher core housing need than comparable cities in Canada, with those needs affecting multiple groups (CPSC, 2022). Residents experiencing homelessness doubled during the pandemic (2019-2022), with Indigenous peoples, women, and youth most affected (CPSC, 2022).

Further, with a handful of notable exceptions (Christensen, 2011; Robertson & White, 2007; Roy et al., 2003; Waegemakers Schiff et al., 2015, 2016), there is very little research on housing instability in rural settings. Rural communities often lack accurate reports of how many people are homeless (absolutely or relatively) due to challenges with enumeration (Waegemakers Schiff et al., 2015). Waegemakers Schiff et al.'s (2016) unique study in rural Alberta identified six distinct sub-populations experiencing homelessness, including victims of domestic violence, youth, newcomers, Indigenous persons, chronic substance abusers, and chronically homeless people. Still, there are only a few examples of Canadian literature on rural homelessness among immigrants and refugees (Anucha, 2007) or among Two Spirit people and Indigenous women (Belanger & Weasel Head, 2013; Kauppi et al., 2015), including the impacts of limited social supports and isolation linked to systemic racism (Callaghan & Turnbull, 1999; Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, 2011). Without a clear understanding of the specificity and complexity of Canadian rural homelessness, efforts to tailor programs and initiatives to meet diverse populations' needs are hampered.

Intersectional approaches to enumeration and assessment of needs are crucial to better serve diverse populations and to inform current and future housing strategies, programs, investment plans, and overall approaches to affordable and stable housing. Also needed is research on locating, designing, and building housing that contributes to sustained social and economic inclusion for people facing multi-faceted, complex circumstances (CPSC, 2022, pp. 2-3).

Key Themes Emerging from Our First Workshop: Initial Findings

Our first Co-learning Workshop included reflexive and team-building exercises, introductions to the work of each research team (RHT, UHT and MST), and group discussions and individual reflections around intersectionality and CBPR. In keeping with the IAP project, the event was designed to create space for collectively learning and raising questions across our diverse perspectives.

As might be expected, this first opportunity to come together at the launch of a three-year project raised important questions. Team members were excited about and deeply committed to the project, but they were also concerned about the uncertain road ahead. As we reviewed both collective and individual reflections from the workshop, three promising puzzles came to the fore:

- finding a shared, actionable understanding of intersectionality that draws on both academic knowledge and experiential knowledge in the community;
- bringing the complexities of intersectionality into understanding and responding to the already-complex field of housing security and homelessness; and
- building resources that effectively communicate and apply an intersectional lens to housing policy and practice (for policymakers, governments, and communities).

Co-defining Intersectionality

CBPR relies on partnerships across diverse kinds of knowledge and expertise. This core tenet was palpable at our launch event, with community partners and academics striving to listen to each other and find common ground upon which to build a partnership while still recognizing different perspectives in the room.

To kick-start the conversation about intersectionality, the MST provided an overview of intersectional theory. The focus was quite deliberately on a structural approach to intersectional analysis, in which particular relations of power, or "isms" (sexism, racism, classism, etc.), intersect to differentiate human experience (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Dhamoon, 2011). People in the room expressed varying levels and types of engagement with intersectional theory, with all agreeing that we needed and wanted to go beyond the popular identity-based use of the concept toward a structural understanding of interlocking forms of oppression.

Discussion during this initial foray into intersectionality pointed to two kinds of disconnects or divides for workshop attendees. First, how could we truly honor intersectionality as praxis, where theory and practice meet? This echoed well-worn questions in CBPR regarding how to work across and cross-fertilize the different forms of knowledge and expertise held by university and community participants. One participant wondered how we would "come to a unifying goal or view about intersectionality," and another wrote, "I think I understand it as a concept but how do we do it?" Some worried that the academic concept would get in the way of listening and attending to actual lived intersectional experience. For example, frontline workers at the MCHB see every day how intersecting forms of power exclude or invisibilize people in the community seeking stable housing. This is invaluable knowledge.

A second and related gap appeared in people's perceptions of what they thought they already knew and what they could potentially learn, especially considering the group's varying viewpoints and perspectives on intersectionality. A couple of people indicated in feedback that they already had a pretty good grasp of intersectionality and did not feel they had learned much new at the workshop about intersectionality and housing. Several people wondered whether or how an enriched concept of intersectionality in housing research could be reached and then made efficacious.

Our analysis of the discussions and interactions at the workshop revealed three emergent and interrelated themes that together might offer a solid starting place for addressing (or perhaps embracing!) doubts and uncertainties around the promising puzzle of co-defining

intersectionality. Importantly, these three themes foreground values found across both intersectionality and CBPR.

First, participant comments echoed something the MST facilitators had emphasized during the workshop: the centrality of relationality (rather than individual identity locations) to both intersectionality and CBPR. As one participant said, one key thing they learned during the workshop was that "intersectionality isn't a formula or linear, it's a lens, a circle with community." If interlocking forms of power and possibility are already built into, and animate, our relationships with each other–within our teams and the communities in which we work, as well as across the two–it makes sense to start in the concreteness of those interrelationships. Some at the workshop suggested this meant working across our differentiated experiences and knowledges to build consensus around what "inclusion" in housing means. Feedback from several academic participants indicated that they were most looking forward to learning from community partners, whose knowledge of housing insecurity as an intersectional system emanated from their daily work.

Second, and closely related to this insight, was the importance of asking *who* is doing *what*? Who needs what? Who is listening and being listened to? As one participant noted, "Ensuring that the voices of those who have the least power are heard and listened to" is a key challenge. Others pointed to the need within teams to recognize variable capacities to contribute, as well as the need to directly address the limitations resulting from the predominance of white women within the project. Applying these questions within and across both a) the research team and b) the conduct of participatory research could go a long way toward activating intersectional praxis, understanding that relationality requires constant vigilance around voice and representation.

Third, and relatedly, our discussion of intersectional theory sparked conversation in the two housing research teams about the importance of naming and working with the specific context of housing insecurity experienced by the people in their respective communities. In other words, our research with communities should aim to elicit and understand which intersecting forms of power are at work in the production and experience of housing insecurity, and in what systemic ways, for which people, and in what specific times and places. Intersectional analysis is only as meaningful as the places where converging forms of power land, reproduce inequities, and spark transformation: in the case of our project, this means specifying how these forms of power work in the particular contexts of housing and homelessness where we do our community research.

Linking Complexities of Housing and Intersectionality

We know an intersectional lens is powerful and can enhance CBPR. As a general principle, this was something we could collectively wrap our heads around at the workshop. Several participants indicated that our first Co-learning Workshop had deepened their interest in how an intersectional approach might help make the practice of CBPR more inclusive, strengthening its social justice impact.

At the same time, there was concern and hesitation around mapping intersectional theory onto the already complex world of housing. As one participant put it when asked what questions they have about intersectionality, "How can we stay focused on the research topic (housing precarity is already a complex topic on its own) while meaningfully engaging with the complex topic of intersectionality?" Another expressed concern that an academic focus on the intricacies of intersectional analysis might "inadvertently take away from" the research focus on inclusive and secure housing. As the two housing teams gathered into breakout discussions of their respective projects, this question of "bringing intersectionality in" to housing research and justice was front and center.

One tension that arose was the desire and need to understand and make visible the multiple, specific invisibilities and exclusions created by intersecting relations of power in housing while also focusing on housing security as a more generalized systemic problem. Said one participant, "My concern is the different ways that intersectionality can spring off, so it somehow loses the core of what needs to be addressed for social justice." Does an intersectional focus on differentiated experiences potentially lose sight of the overarching structural inequities of housing insecurity, and/or does it reframe how we see the relationship between the two? This goal of working with both broad structural inequities and specific differentiated experiences is not new to intersectional research, but it is one that housing security research needs to pay more attention to, as discussed above in the literature review.

A second and related tension found in data from the workshop rose from the daunting task of attending to intersectional relations of power across the multiple scales and systems of housing insecurity. This concern runs counter to the previous tension, in that it is less concerned with losing sight of core issues than with capturing complexity. As one attendee put it, "It will be hard to scale down to a meaningful level." The ways that the landscape of housing policies and systems shift over time deepened this concern. Referring to the work of Dhamoon (2011)—whose dynamic, swirling visual representation of intersectionality was shared at the workshop—another participant wrote, "I liked the image that was shared that goes beyond intersections to how they shift and change in diverse contexts … and captures some of the shifts taking place in housing today … I think this is useful, but also challenging." How to capture this complexity in data collection became a focal point as the teams started to plan their respective housing projects.

It is important to note that the two housing teams have different research questions and relations to community—one is focused on specifying housing infrastructure for particular populations in one location, while the other is focused on broadening housing enumeration for many communities across a region. These two foci suggest different entry points for tackling complexity on the ground and for understanding the varied contexts in which the research projects will unfold.

Insights and comments from the workshop can help us think about both sides of this coin: how to attend to differentiated lived experiences of housing insecurity within interlocking systems of power and how to attend to the multiple political and geographic scales of housing

programs and policies (including as they shift over time). We note two capacious and hopeful themes that arose in co-learning at the workshop.

The first theme, *highlighting context*, echoes our discussion around co-defining intersectionality. At the workshop, the idea of intersectional research as always situated in context sparked some of the best conversation around housing–from wildfires and forced evacuation to changes in zoning and immigration laws. For us, this reinforces the importance of starting with the specifics of housing experiences in a given context to better conceptualize and identify how intersectional relations are at work.

Second, it became clear that the reflective and practical work of *defining community/communities* was crucial to embracing the complexities of intersectionality and housing. During an exercise in which the housing teams were asked to develop key intersectional questions for each phase of the CBPR life cycle (Milton et al., 2023), the initial phase of "defining a research question of importance to communities" seemed to especially catalyze commentary on intersectional systems and practices. Some of these were external forces, such as policy and environmental changes across time that differentiate who is affected by housing insecurity; others were internal to the research project, such as language and gender barriers to data collection on housing insecurity. Indeed, workshop participants saw real potential in intersectional CBPR for specifying the kinds of supports, advocacy, and resources needed to address housing insecurity.

Amplifying the Power of an Intersectional Lens in Housing Security

A third promising puzzle emerging from the workshop was how to carry and translate these two daunting tasks (developing a shared understanding of intersectionality and applying it to the complex world of housing insecurity) into the ultimate goal of building community capacity. While some team members' concerns were about the immediate impact of their respective (UHT and RHT) projects, most concerns were about how to contribute to longer-term shifts in approaches to housing that reached beyond the end dates of the projects.

One puzzle was around how our two housing research projects could help solidify the case for intersectionality as an essential lens in housing security policy and practice. As discussed above, partners in the IAP project might have concerns about how to deploy intersectionality, but they understand its fundamental efficacy and power and want to "pass it on." This is challenging when the organizations they work with, from municipal governments to social service and housing providers, are not necessarily on board. One workshop participant from the rural housing project wrote that in their group discussions, "it was shared that many rural housing partners do not understand or see the value of using intersectionality in housing." How, many wondered, will we communicate the power of intersectionality so that it is not just a checkbox in consultations and planning but built into how policies and programs are initiated and implemented in a robust manner?

Practicalities related to this broader question arose as the housing teams dug into the details of their respective projects. One such practicality had to do with knowledge translation. Members of the two housing teams were thinking ahead to knowledge sharing, wondering

how they would most effectively present their research in an intersectional way, i.e., so that an understanding of intersectional inequities was illuminated by the community stories and findings. Related to this was the reality that the two teams could not expect to cover all aspects of intersectional barriers and exclusions to housing in their respective projects. At a broader level, there was both high hope and perhaps a sense of burden regarding our project's goal of elevating the importance of intersectional analysis to questions, practices, and research around housing security, including at the provincial and federal levels. One participant asked, "How does intersectional research inform the development of meaningful decision-making?"

As in the previous two findings sections, we conclude here with insights gained from the workshop on what might be needed or helpful to amplify the power of an intersectional lens in housing security for a broader range of social and political actors.

First, we noted that when contemplating how to apply intersectionality to the various phases of the CBPR life cycle, the two housing teams found it easiest when considering the practicalities of 1) carrying out research with people most directly affected and 2) translating the results into action on housing security. In other words, intersectional imaginations were sparked by the "real" practices of doing research and making change. Perhaps working backwards from these practical questions is another way to wrestle (and render manageable) the initial complexities of intersectional housing work in CBPR.

Second, it was the specificity of these practicalities for particular contexts and peoples that seemed to bring intersectionality home. As the housing teams talked about the potential outcomes of their research projects, they emphasized the importance of working against the "one size fits all" tendency of housing policies and programs. This meant conducting and communicating this research through plurality and de-standardization–strengths of both intersectionality and CBPR. This also meant being specific about who is identifying what the need is and to whom findings will be presented. In other words, there were reminders to stay focused on the most immediate circle of relationships, actors, and impacts.

Finally, we suggest a third answer to the daunting task of communicating the power of an intersectional approach to housing security. Participants talked about the power of story; the UHT had already been working on composite stories from community members to demonstrate to their municipal partners how intersectional barriers to housing are at work. It struck us, looking at data from the workshop, that the story of the IAP–our unfolding learnings together–might also prove useful in conveying the meaningful impact intersectional housing research can make. Our own learning processes, whether working out mundane practicalities or experiencing "aha" moments, are their own kind of praxis. This article is an initial foray in that direction.

Discussion

It became clear from these co-learning discussions that our research partnership depends on building a shared way of seeing intersectionality in the structural dynamics and lived experiences of housing. And further, it became clear that the quest to build intersectionality into all stages of CBPR, from building a team and forming a research question to carrying out analysis and

sharing results, would follow from the concrete focus on housing security. It is through the shared experiences of working on housing insecurity that we are able to take up, discuss, and understand intersectionality and its implications for relationships, projects, and interlocking oppressions. In short, lived experiences and relationships of housing insecurity will show how intersectional power works; and lived experiences and relationships of intersectional power will guide the practices of our community-based research. We imagine that the different questions and goals of the two housing teams will provide unique, complementary examples of defining and applying intersectionality in CBPR, while perhaps also co-generating a shared map of intersectional relations of power in housing security.

The complexity of working on housing security and its related dimensions can be both overwhelming and rich for intersectional work—it enables our team to examine the complexity of viewpoints and lived experiences, as well as the multiple scales of housing policies and practices that impact those experiences. For example, we want to be deeply attentive to how bureaucracies and institutions require people to identify in particular ways, which can then impact how people navigate the world and see themselves (Green et al., 2003). In the case of the RHT and UHT, these dynamics impact enumeration data, eligibility for particular kinds of affordable housing, and how need is assessed, but they can also normalize particular identities and reify populations as inherently vulnerable (MacDonald, 2024; McDowell & Collins, 2023).

Intersectional praxis asks us to attend to both/and: it demands that work and theory inform and shape one another. In our work of co-defining intersectionality, it is becoming clear that this definition will be deeply entwined with housing security as the context in which we are connected and through which intersectional analysis occurs. What's more, we anticipate that co-defining intersectionality—including its complex relationship to decolonial praxis (Jaramillo & Carreon, 2014; Mignolo & Nanibush, 2018)—will return us to refining and grappling with the very concept of housing security.

As we continue in our co-learning, we will continue to explore the tensions articulated by participants about the need to centre both intersectionality and housing security and the worry that doing this carries the risk of dividing attention. How might developing a shared understanding of intersectionality be embedded in our understanding of housing security so that conversations about housing are also questions about intersectionality? Through the workshop, it became clear that participants were already thinking about housing in intersectional ways, even if not yet articulated as such, and that these understandings were best articulated in the concrete tasks of creating relations and planning research. So, our collective task is not to begin to understand an academic concept but rather to develop shared understandings and practices through implementation of the UHT and RHT.

As Tranjan (2023) has cogently argued, the housing crisis "is a permanent state of affairs that harms people in, or in need of, rental housing, which is roughly one-third of the country's households" (p. 2). While this important intervention into understanding the Canadian housing crisis centres tenants as a class, our work takes up intersectional praxis to both map and address the ways housing need is differentially felt by people depending on their social

locations; this is a re-imagining of what the NHS talks about as "priority populations." We are beginning to see how an intersectional lens highlights the *impacts* of the housing crisis (differential housing need), as well as the *roots* of this crisis (interlocking forms of oppression), and we are eager to see how this informs the work of the teams.

Conclusion

Housing justice work is complex and pressing. As we write this article in Edmonton, Alberta, the weather is getting colder and there are not enough shelter spaces or kinds of spaces for people to access while rents continue to rise across the country. The urgency of this work is felt by everyone on the team as our projects unfold. The work of the RHT and UHT offers multiple entry points into housing justice through an intersectional lens, as well as new points of connection: while homelessness and affordable housing are connected issues, they are often funded and studied in different streams. Intersectionality as a powerful research lens will bring these CBPR teams together to consider the continuum of housing. On the heels of this first workshop, we are curious to see how an intersectional lens will enable analysis of scales—to consider how an enumeration of homelessness and the development of inclusive housing will illuminate lived experience, housing systems at multiple governing levels, and structural injustice all at once.

As our collaboration unfolds, we will focus on developing a shared, evolving understanding of intersectionality that is informed in and through housing security and the work in which all three teams are engaged. We are especially interested in how a persistent commitment to intersectional praxis in these projects will attend to both the immediate and pressing concerns of housing needs, as well as the systems through which housing needs and the housing crisis are produced. As discussed at the outset, the housing crisis is not something new but is rather how the housing system was designed. To address housing insecurity, we must both support the need for housing access now, as well as examine and address the systems that create housing insecurity in and through interlocking forms of oppression.

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