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REVIEW

Inuit, urban and unhoused: a scoping review of social worlds

Nmesoma Nweze[1*], Darah Olaogun[2], Dennis C Wendt[2]

[1]Department of Psychology, McGill University, Montreal, Canada
[2]Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

***Corresponding author:** nmesoma.nweze@mail.mcgill.ca

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Colonization, racism, and forced relocation perpetrated in the Arctic, particularly in northern Canada, have had severe social impacts and created barriers for Inuit to housing, employment, and education, leaving many with precarious access to fundamental necessities. The consequences of these decades of conquest by settler-colonial governments are evident in many southern hub cities in Canada and other circumpolar regions where Inuit are greatly overrepresented in populations of unhoused people. However, the interpersonal and cultural systems Inuit have cultivated over millennia to provide care and community for individuals in need persist at the margins of urban centres. This review begins an exploration of the social worlds of unhoused urban Inuit and elucidates what has to date been discussed about the important ways they support themselves and one another in being well in the context of homelessness and on-going colonial violence.

Methods: This scoping review follows the Arksey & O'Malley's 5-stage model, beginning by identifying the research question and relevant publications, selecting publications according to relevance, charting study data, and finally collating, summarizing, and reporting the results.

Results: Analysis of reviewed publications revealed shared push and pull factors that precipitate northern and southern homelessness. Analysis further revealed that Inuit experiencing homelessness in the south contend with distinct structural factors impeding well-being such as housing and substance markets, discrimination, and supporting it like Inuit-friendly service provision, peer support, maintaining kinship and connection with home.

Conclusions: The literature demonstrates that relationships and well-being at the intersection of Indigeneity/Inuit identity, southern urban life, and homelessness are complex and that seeming contradictions of risk and resilience, or conflict and connection are coexisting aspects of life in this context that merit further understanding.

Keywords: Inuit, homelessness, well-being, social worlds, relationships, social life, urban, unhoused.

Abstract in Español at the end of the article

INTRODUCTION

Being unhoused profoundly shapes one's experience—from accessing the necessities of life and risks to personal safety, facing stigma, discrimination, and state violence, to the quotidian rhythms of time and the options one has to survive, cope, or heal on the streets. Being unhoused while being an Inuk person imparts new and different dimensions, challenges, and wise practices for survival and resistance.

Inuit, like other Indigenous peoples, are more likely to have experienced homelessness than the general population and make up a highly disproportionate share of

unhoused people in southern urban areas [1, 2]. Insecure or inadequate housing and related inequities in physical and mental health are precipitated and perpetuated by settler-colonialism and ongoing practices of dispossession. These actions aim to dissociate Inuit and other Indigenous people from their lands, resources, ways of life, family and kinship networks, and mutual aid. The burdens of intergenerational trauma, continuing impoverishment of northern communities, and pervasive discrimination compound to provoke challenges to well-being (e.g., problematic substance use and lateral violence) and stymie access to education, vocation, and appropriate healthcare. These barriers are especially acute for Inuit experiencing homelessness [3, 4].

However, despite systemic and targeted efforts to alienate Inuit and other Indigenous people from their sovereignty and ways of life, Inuit experiencing homelessness co-construct and maintain social networks that support their material and immaterial well-being. These forms of relation, existing on the margins of southern cities, demonstrate the fortitude of Indigenous kinship-making and represent ways of ensuring safety, aid, and community for Inuit experiencing homelessness [5]. The present review aims to describe the existing research on the relationship between social networks and well-being for Inuit living in urban areas, with particular attention to Inuit who experience homelessness.

To our knowledge, no reviews or knowledge syntheses have investigated the social relationships of housed or unhoused urban Inuit and their role in well-being. However, extant primary research with housed southern Inuit suggests that maintaining ties to home while reforming a network in their new urban environment is essential to well-being. A recent publication by an Inuit-led research organization in Montreal entitled *"Qanuikkat Siqirmiut"* ("How Are Those Who Live in the South?") expounded on the emic concept of *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* ("harmonious relations among people who share a place") for *Montrealmiut* (those who live in Montreal) comparing its dimensions to the concept of community developed by the Chicago School [6]. *Inuuqatigiisiarniq* is a dimension of health and is illustrated through qualities and actions (like care, reciprocal acknowledgment, respect, and helping), and feelings (like comfort, generativity, and confidence). By contrast, *nunalik* ("someone who lives in a space") describes sharing a physical location deprived of the agentic and holistic experience. In surveying *Montrealmiut*'s strivings and lived realities of *inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, they found that it intersected with the Chicago School's concepts of community as maintained by both interpersonal and institutional interaction, shared ideologies, and social guidelines. However, it diverges in important ways; *Montrealmiut* embodied *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* by producing and preserving relations based on the qualities they cultivated. Thus, emotional proximity, not simply physical proximity, are the core considerations. Likewise, physical spaces, like airports or downtown squares, and non-physical spaces through telecommunications and mail become sites of volitional closeness, community, and *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* in an urban setting [7].

There may be differences in how *inuuqatigiisiarniq* is conceptualized and practiced in an urban context between Inuit experiencing homelessness and those who are stably housed. Research concerning the social lives of unhoused people in general (i.e., non-Inuit and/or non-Indigenous populations) may illuminate other pertinent facets. To date, there have been a handful of reviews on the social relationships of people experiencing homelessness, and to the authors' knowledge only one has explored this topic at the intersection of Inuit identity exclusively in northern communities [8]. Two reviews that explored social support in the context of chronic homelessness demonstrated that social isolation could precipitate becoming unhoused and be a barrier that perpetuates it [9, 10]. Geographic and social dislocation is nearly universal for urban Inuit, who may move to cities without any pre-existing family or friends. Evidence from these reviews would suggest that unhoused urban Inuit may be at elevated risk for isolation. However, the relationships that Inuit create in faraway cities and maintain back in their home communities may be more complex than what is discussed in these reviews. Additionally, as discussed above, Inuit experiencing homelessness in Montreal report leaving their home communities for various reasons, including fraught relationships at home [3]. Their migration may soothe or unburden the conflictual circumstances in these relationships, implying that such perpetuating factors may not hold.

Likewise, the new social networks that unhoused urban Inuit create in urban centres may have positive impacts on their well-being, as found among other groups of unhoused people. Previous reviews have described social support's positive impacts on mood, self-esteem, and adaptive coping among people experiencing homelessness [9]. Informal social networks have been shown to help unhoused people survive, materially and immaterially, through cultivating mental and spiritual well-being and resilience, and sentiments of love, hope, connection, stability, and security [11, 12]. Love and intimacy were repeatedly discussed by participants and described as a motivation for forgoing services that presented barriers to cultivating their romantic relationships [11]. It is unclear, however, the extent to which unhoused urban Inuit also nurture similarly close and positive relationships, which would have implications for well-being and their use of services.

The above examples help us understand that the needs and priorities of unhoused people as they relate to their well-being and relationships are not always congruous with their needs as addressed by services. Services such as housing interventions are intended to address a person's need for security and safety, privacy, comfort, and aspects of stability that are significantly challenged in situations of homelessness. Thus, it is also critical to understand the role of housing interventions in help-

ing or hindering Inuit people's needs for personal and interpersonal well-being. There is some evidence that housing interventions and services may represent a barrier to people's choice to remain socially connected [9, 13]. Reviews have described the impacts of housing interventions, including permanent supportive housing (PSH), on participants' social functioning, with studies reporting a mix of positive outcomes (e.g., higher quality relationships, more contact with family), negative outcomes (e.g., isolation from social networks formed while unhoused), and equivocal outcomes (e.g., more contact with romantic partners that cause stress, building new social networks) [9]. One study describing the experiences of First Nations people in Canadian PSH programs found that participants hoping to enter PSH often had to contend with the trade-off of being dislocated from their lands and families [13]. Furthermore, individualistic housing models required them to suspend activities that sustain their relationships, such as allowing visitors into their accommodations or traveling to their home communities. Despite high satisfaction, these barriers led some participants to opt out of housing programs to maintain their sense of community. Because urban Inuit share certain circumstances with First Nations people experiencing homelessness (e.g., dislocation from land), it is possible that similar relational dynamics are at play.

Taken together, results from the aforementioned research may resonate with the volition and emotional qualities of *inuuqatigiitsiarniq*. By prioritizing relationships marked by love, material, and immaterial support, as well as a sense of stability and confidence (whether while housed or unhoused), previously researched groups seem to manifest community in ways that may be culturally concordant with Inuit conceptions. However, it is unclear how unhoused urban Inuit manifest these qualities at their unique cultural and socioeconomic intersection. In better understanding how people experiencing homelessness, particularly the large cohort of unhoused urban Inuit, create protect and promote their own well-being in their challenging circumstances service providers, local governments, neighbourhood organizations, and others can collaboratively leverage these strengths to improve the livelihoods of this community.

Evidence from aforementioned studies illustrates that experiences of homelessness exist in rich and complex ways, particularly at the intersection of Indigeneity, but they are not always discussed in research as such. Strengths-based or positive topics such as resilience, romance, or friendship have been understudied compared to adverse experiences such as victimization, deviant behaviour, substance use, health risks, or survival sex [11, 12]. Documenting and researching the violence, dangers, and obstacles that unhoused people face is important to explain their circumstances and experiences; however, these descriptions are incomplete without an understanding of the ways unhoused people make safety, care, and warmth.

Furthermore, previous reviews have not explored how the positions of homelessness and Indigeneity—Inuit identity specifically—may intersect with conceptions of relationships and well-being and have unique impacts. Such intersections may also have important implications for the suitability of various services or housing initiatives. Research examining the relationships and production of *inuuqatigiitsiarniq* among urban Inuit suggests that the social worlds of this group are diverse, uniquely fashioned through physical and non-physical space, and intertwined with land and foodways. Likewise, these social worlds are driven by the agency of their participants, with a striving for healthfulness and reciprocity. Research also suggests that the social worlds of urban Inuit who are precariously housed, particularly if they manage co-occurring substance use, are doubly distinct [6]. These insights, combined with the sparse literature on the intersection of Indigeneity and homelessness, imply that this subgroup produces profound affiliations and networks of interdependence, which may be a particularly crucial factor undergirding well-being. The present scoping review seeks to aggregate and describe what is known about the social worlds of Inuit experiencing homelessness and identify areas for further inquiry.

METHODS

This scoping review follows Arksey & O'Malley's 5-stage model. This began by identifying the research question followed by relevant studies, selecting studies and transparently representing study selection using a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram [14], charting the data, collating, summarizing, and reporting the results [15]. This review integrates principles from Levac et al. to enrich findings [16]. Specific recommendations applied to the present review are a) aligning research questions with the review's purpose; b) ensuring wide comprehensiveness while balancing feasibility; and c) and using a team process of repeated collaborative decision-making in selection and extraction.

Review questions

The primary questions this review seeks to illuminate are: 1) what are the characteristics of the social worlds of urban Inuit as they relate to housing status and, 2) how do these social worlds impact well-being and experiences of homelessness?

These research questions follow from the present gaps in the literature exploring the agency and well-being sustaining practices of poor, unhoused, and Indigenous peoples, specifically here, Inuit. It is the aim of these questions to also capture strengths-focused publications that better reflect the richness of the lived experiences of unhoused urban Inuit in contrast to more conventional and unidimensional accounts of experiences of homelessness and Indigenous life [17-19].

Evidence gathering

Evidence has been gathered via multiple types of sources. A liaison librarian from the author's institution has assisted in developing an electronic search strategy that includes relevant subject heading tags and keywords (see Key Terms below), adapting syntax for each database. The initial search was conducted through the following databases and grey literature sources: PSYCinfo, Medline, Web of Science, CBCA databases, and Social Services Abstracts.

Upon reviewing results for inclusion, bibliographies of publications that referred to potentially relevant sources were also reviewed to identify additional suitable documents, with particular attention to grey literature (reports, government documents, white papers, evaluations, etc.) that the database search may not have reached. In addition, relevant less-indexed journals focusing on Inuit or circumpolar study that may not be as thoroughly indexed (i.e., Étude Inuit Studies, International Journal of Circumpolar Health, and Journal of Arctic and Antarctic Research) were individually searched.

Articles have been screened in two increasing levels of comprehensiveness: title/abstract and full-text screening. The first level of screening (title & abstract) focused on general topic relevance. Studies were advanced to full-text screening if they were about Inuit people, took place in regions of Inuit Nunangat (Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, Inuvialuit Region, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, Alaska, and parts of northeastern Russia) or a southern hub city frequented by Inuit in Canada (including primarily Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal, Edmonton, St John's, Yellowknife, Winnipeg, and Toronto), and mentioned housing or socioeconomic status (SES) and relationships. The full-text screening evaluated documents for substantial discussion of all three topics of interest (Inuit, housing/SES, and relationships; see Key Terms). Publications were also selected if they focused on Inuit and housing/SES primarily but included at least a paragraph of discussion of social life/relationships. The author and a reviewer screened all documents from the database search, bibliography, and specific journal searches. Disputes were addressed through discussion and final resolutions were made by the first author after a consensus decision was reached. The research supervisor was available to resolve outstanding disputes or questions of inclusion, although this was not needed. The number of excluded studies at each stage is recorded in the PRISMA-ScR flow diagram in Figure 1.

Study selection began with the title and abstract screening. Studies meeting inclusion criteria at this stage went on to full-text screening. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for full-text screening are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for full-text screening.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Publication takes place in Canada, the United States, Greenland, or Russia/Siberia	Is not concerned with Inuit
Publication identifies an urban location (see Definitions) in the north or south or a cross-section of multiple communities (urban or non-urban) across any region of Inuit Nunangat	Is not concerned with housing issues or homelessness among Inuit
May be a study in any pertinent field such as psychology, social work, Indigenous studies, health or medicine, human geography, or other social science fields	Not concerned with Inuit peoples' social relationships
Publications that are original research, a review of research, a book or chapter, a theoretical article, a program description, a journalistic article, or an impact evaluation	Publication is a book review, call for proposals, training materials, an announcement about government/organization funding or treaty agreements, an announcement about an initiative or a call to action, or an administrative report

Definitions

Drawing from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness definition, homelessness describes the circumstances of being without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing or the immediate prospect, means, and ability to acquire it [20].

Social networks or social relationships may be used to describe the sets of relationships that individuals or groups have with others, the qualities, patterns, and closeness in these relations, and methods of communicating or interacting [21, 22]. As this review seeks to explore and describe the literature on Indigenous people's experiences of homelessness, relationships with other-than-human relations are also subsumed in this definition.

Defining the parameters of urban residence across the regions that make up Inuit Nunangat, northern regions of circumpolar countries, and the southern areas where Inuit migrate requires nuance. Thus, for the purposes of this review, where specific township locations are identifiable, urban will be characterized by a population of 5,000 people or more if located within Inuit Nunangat and 50,000 for areas outside of the regions. If specific locations are not given but described as "ur-

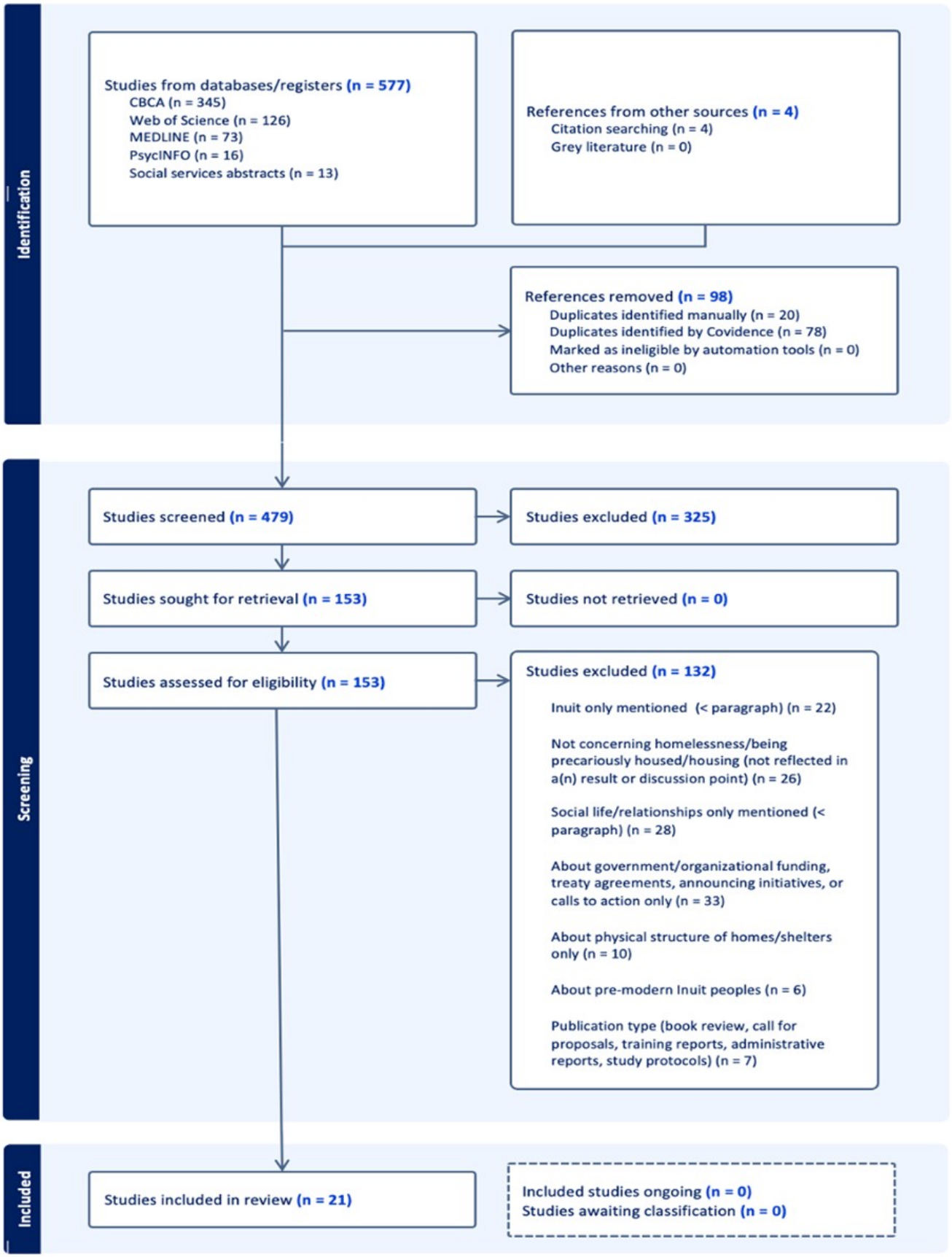

Figure 1. PRISMA-ScR flow diagram of the evidence gathering process from total publications found by data base search to final publications reviewed.

ban" or "city" or captured data from across several communities in a region of Inuit Nunangat, the study was considered to meet inclusion criteria [23].

Key terms

Pertinent search terms may be related to a variety of other similar terms. To facilitate completeness in the evidence-gathering stage, we searched for our key and related terms as listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Key terms by concept.

Inuit identity	Homelessness	Relationships/social connectedness
Inuit OR Inuk OR Inuvialuit OR Inuviat OR Inupia* OR Aleut OR Yupik OR Yupiit OR Yuit* OR Naukan OR Naukanski OR Nyvukagmit (24)	homeless* OR houseless* OR unhoused OR housing OR underhoused OR street-involved OR "unstable hous*" OR "unstably hous*" OR unshelter* OR shelter*	social* OR "social relation*" OR interperson* OR interdepend* OR "social interaction" OR "social support*" OR friend* OR famil* OR kin* OR relation* OR community* OR "community aid*" OR "social aid*" OR "emotional support*" OR "chosen fam*" OR "support group*" OR peer* OR partner* OR parent* OR "social connect*"

Each group (1-3) was searched using the "AND" function in each database. In databases that required further specifications regarding which fields keywords would be searched in the documents, searches were specified as follows:

1. Web of Science: searched by "Topic" (title, abstract, author key words, key words plus)
2. CBCA databases (ProQuest): searched by "NOFT" (anywhere but full text)

Table 3 shows a full summary of the search terms strategy used in Psychinfo (an OVID database).

Table 3. APA PsycInfo full search strategy.

	Searches	NA
1	homeless/ or homeless mentally ill/ or homeless youth/ or poverty/ or shelters/	21423
2	(houseless* or unhoused or housing or underhoused or street-involved or "unstable hous*" or "unstably hous*" or unshelter* or shelter*).mp.	33027
3	1 or 2	48864
4	Inuit.mp. or exp Inuit/	814
5	(inuk or inuvialuit or inuviat or inupia* or aleut or yupik or yupiit or yuit* or naukan or naukanski or nyvukagmit).mp.	178
6	4 or 5	929
7	exp Social Support/ or exp Relationship Quality/ or exp Peer Relations/ or exp Friendship/ or exp Social Networks/ or exp Social Interaction/ or exp Interpersonal Relationships/ or exp Social Behavior/	1362064
8	exp Group Dynamics/ or exp Social Connectedness/ or exp Interpersonal Communication/	190501
9	7 or 8	1362064
10	(social* or "social relation*" or interperson* or interdepend* or "social interaction" or "social support*" or friend* or famil* or kin* or relation* or community* or "community aid*" or "social aid*" or "emotional support*" or "chosen fam*" or "support group*" or peer* or partner* or parent* or "social connect*").mp.	2756856
11	9 or 10	3076729
12	3 and 6 and 11	16

Data charting, extraction and analysis

Citations are managed using EndNote. Screening, data charting, and extraction were completed using Covidence. The first author completed initial data charting, extraction, and analysis. Data were collated, organized by themes, and analyzed in a spreadsheet by both the author and reviewer (25). Data were charted and analyzed in terms of the following characteristics: general information (authors, year, publication type, location), study type (qualitative, quantitative, mixed), study design (e.g., pre-post-intervention, phenomenological, action research), types of evidence gathered (e.g., archival,

interviews, arts-based, standardized measures) and participant characteristics (number of participants, age, gender, relationship status(es), housing status). In-depth charted characteristics were a brief description of the goals or central points of the document, the document's research questions, a description of how the publication discussed the housing status or SES of participants, and a description of how the publication discusses the interaction(s) between all three key topics (Inuit identity, housing/SES and social relationships).

RESULTS

Characteristics

The search yielded 479 (after de-duplication) documents, with 21 publications selected for charting, extraction, and analysis (see PRISMA-ScR in Figure 1). Almost all, 95%, selected publications were set in Canada, with two publications from other jurisdictions of Inuit Nunangat (Alaska, Greenland) [8, 39]. Most of the documents selected represented original research (14 publications) [6, 23, 25-28, 33-39, 41], with another two being scoping reviews [8, 32] or journalistic publications (5 publications) [24, 29, 30, 31, 40]. Qualitative (43%) and quantitative methods (29%) were represented in the selected literature, with interviews and standardized culturally-adapted surveys being the predominant evidence sources. All studies were selected based on substantial discussion of housing or homelessness, and the publications approached this topic in various ways, representing a variety of participants' past or present housing statuses. Many of the publications focused on participants who were living in or trying to access social/public housing, and others explored overcrowding, invisible homelessness, or those who were inadequately or precariously housed or relying on shelter services for some of their needs. Others compared and contrasted changes in housing status or differences between stably and unstably housed participants. More details on the characteristics of the publications included in this review are available in the Supplementary material. Examination of the literature revealed distinctions between the trajectories and experiences of housed and unhoused Inuit in southern versus northern urban locations. The results of this review will focus on findings from and applicable to southern urban Inuit.

Housing and relationships as shared push and pull factors

Almost all publications mentioned the push/pull factors often initiating resettlement in southern or urban centres, particularly for those who are housing insecure. Critically, the literature highlights that people's trajectories out of northern rural hometowns are often intertwined with their housing status and relationships at the outset. For example, commonly cited push factors included poor and insufficient housing, overcrowding, difficult family and social situations, inadequate services, and lack of economic opportunities [8, 28, 33, 37, 38, 40, 42-44]. These factors are compounded by colonialism and systemic inequalities, leading to problems (such as dysfunctional infrastructure and individual- and community-level poverty) that can persist even in urban centres [39, 43]. Critically, gender, family violence, and the lack of resources dedicated to these issues intersect substantially with the downstream effects of colonization, contributing to the growing proportion of women and children among those who are episodically or invisibly homeless [8]. Similarly, urban centers in the north and south also pull Inuit to move to pursue educational or employment opportunities, access healthcare, social services, or more affordable housing, follow children in care, make court hearings, or spend prison terms [28, 30, 32, 35, 36, 43]. These results imply that urban Inuit who find themselves in situations of unsheltered or shelter-accessing homelessness in the south may be considered to have been experiencing some form of homelessness (e.g., social dislocation, overcrowded living/forced co-habitation, couch-surfing) for a substantial time before. Furthermore, their experience of homelessness in the south may be precipitated by a need for critical services or proximity to loved ones accessing services that are unavailable in northern rural communities.

Structural vulnerabilities to becoming unhoused and high barriers to obtaining housing

Urban Inuit in southern and northern urban centres face many structural vulnerabilities to becoming unhoused and high barriers to obtaining housing. While southern urban centres may offer greater housing stock and higher vacancies than northern centres, Inuit face several barriers to accessing housing in the south. A host of barriers negatively impact the abilities of some urban Inuit to obtain housing, such as having low income or accumulated wealth and lack of knowledge or support networks to help them find appropriate housing. Later barriers include challenges verifying the quality and suitability of housing, establishing safe lease agreements, and budgeting for moving costs and future payments. It is also essential to consider that these barriers can compound for Inuit women and families where childcare availability and cost present significant challenges for parents trying to pursue education or employment in the south, and with childrearing, particularly by Inuit families experiencing poverty, frequently targeted by child protective services [35]. Thus these barriers often initiate or prolong homelessness for Inuit [29]. For Inuit who can access welfare income, these funds are usually insufficient to cover rent and other living expenses, making their housing situations particularly precarious [31]. Some publications also discussed how inaccessibility in the southern context stems from the language barrier that many people who primarily speak an Inuktut language/dialect must navigate, along with conflicts with neighbours or landlords [29, 36]. High barriers to obtaining and keeping housing make it so that for many low-

or no-income Inuit in the south entering situations of homelessness is easy while exiting, especially without support to navigate tenancy processes, is difficult.

Substance use, social stratification and recovery services

The alcohol and drug markets were mentioned as a structural factor in southern and northern urban contexts that significantly impacts unhoused urban Inuit. In the north and south, the wider availability of drugs and alcohol has been reported to undermine the plans that people had established for their journeys to cities [28, 29]. In Kishigami's study, they note that problematic substance use affects 33% to 60% of the unhoused Inuit population in Montreal, often pre-dating their becoming unhoused [29]. They also remark on the complex role that problematic substance use can play in participants' interpersonal relationships such that problematic substance use provides opportunities to share resources and company with peers while also sparking conflicts [29]. Others discussed social stratification linked with substance use among southern urban Inuit, creating distinct social bubbles between those who use substances and those who do not and may try to avoid discomfort from encountering intoxicated friends and family [6]. For southern urban Inuit, housed or unhoused, intra-community relationships are flexible based on overlapping interests, institutional gathering places, and language and culture, and evidently these can integrate substance use as nexus of bonding [6, 29].

Authors note that research and recovery resources have tended to focus more on the individual problem of problematic substance use rather than the sociohistorical factors that reproduce it as a coping mechanism for colonization [8]. Publications that discussed this factor of urban Inuit homelessness point out the double bind many Inuit find themselves in where they are influenced to leave deprived rural communities but, once in urban areas, become vulnerable to poverty, depression, problematic substance use, and criminalization, which can make becoming stably housed more difficult and increase exposure to the aforementioned challenges [28, 29].

Demographic invisibility and resource allocation

The presence of southern Inuit is often undercounted, particularly those who are unhoused or otherwise reliant on social or non-profit services. Estimates in the literature indicate that Inuit are overrepresented among unhoused people [29]. However, many limitations create disparities in official population counts of southern Inuit, such as in-person censuses not accounting for those without fixed addresses, inaccessibility, the relative non-urgency of performing paper/web surveys, and confidentiality concerns that leave some uncounted in smaller southern hubs [35]. The lack of quantitative data about the size and needs of southern Inuit communities has important consequences for resource allocation, where urban First Nation individuals and Inuit are collapsed into one group to be supported by shelters, community organizations, and health services. This pan-Indigenous approach to funding services creates unnecessary competition between and within organizations and further ignores southern urban Inuit [36]. The impact of a lack of resources allocated for organizations that serve this community is felt particularly hard by poor and precariously housed Inuit who rely on various collectives and organizations (i.e., Inuit organizations, shelters, solidarity collectives, street patrol teams, community food programs) to meet their needs in the south.

Discrimination and the centrality of Inuit-specific/friendly services

Inuit-specific/friendly services and organizations in the south are crucial hubs for southern Inuit. Carpenter highlighted how southern urban Inuit, particularly those who are unhoused, become targets for local or provincial action aimed at removing, dispersing, or segregating Indigenous populations [27]. Prejudice and discrimination connect with other structural barriers to housing discussed above, especially impacting employment and rental prospects and experiences with health and social services. Discriminatory practices are reported to extend to certain shelters and service providers such that southern urban Inuit rely on a limited number of culturally safe organizations to meet their needs [29, 35]. Inuit-specific/friendly organizations provide a range of services in accessible languages and formats for the community and help people access welfare benefits and housing opportunities [26, 29]. Evidently, shelter spaces provide clothing, food, facilities for safer sleep and hygiene, and other means for people experiencing homelessness to meet their physical needs. Additionally, and potentially just as crucially, the companionship facilitated through shelters can be sites of empathic understanding, and resistance to southern urban norms of individualism and regular participation in the capitalist economy [29].

Alternatively, the difficulties Inuit face upon moving south in accessing employment and housing without mentors or support may lead to long-term reliance on temporary shelters [35]. For higher-income and stably housed people, contact with Inuit-specific organizations may be more sporadic; nonetheless, organizations are described as providing essential space for cultural connection and community-building [6, 36]. Morris suggests that loneliness and depressive symptoms among Inuit in the south may be mitigated through contact with Inuit organizations, which provide vital social connections [35].

Peers, shared-wisdom and cultural livelihoods

The Inuit-specific/friendly organizations that precariously housed urban Inuit frequent are vital meeting places from which important inter- and intrapersonal development is made. Publications underscore mentoring by urban Inuit who have transitioned to a life in the south in helping newer arrivals. Peer mentoring can take the shape of concrete task-oriented guidance

through job counseling, resume assistance, work-related literacy support, practical advice on obtaining housing or offering strength and empathy, role modeling, and sharing accumulated street wisdom [27, 36]. Comradery also extends to urban Inuit supporting each other in learning to confront racial and ethnic discrimination in southern cities. Urban Inuit shared accounts of developing resilience and willingness to speak up against anti-Indigenous, anti-Inuit, or misplaced xenophobic prejudice [31, 36]. Fluency in Inuktitut among urban Inuit is a crucial connection within their communities, fostering unity, visibility, and respect while navigating the southern environment and overcoming marginalization [26, 36].

"Stuck-ness" and connecting with home

Additionally, themes of "stuck-ness" and challenges maintaining connections to home communities were also emphasized in the literature on those in the south. Emotional proximity was highlighted in relationships, particularly for those unable to travel home; emotional proximity was maintained by visiting and calling [6, 30, 31]. However, poverty and associated interactions with the criminal punishment system complicate this, with unemployed individuals less likely to maintain contact with their home communities [29-31]. Access to country food (i.e., hunted game, marine mammals, or fish or wild fruits, vegetables, and medicines from Inuit Nunangat) also represented a key network of exchange between northern and southern Inuit. Authors described that these networks are less accessible for poor or unhoused Inuit who cannot reliably receive or reciprocate gifts of country food, significantly impacting their health and their proximity to home [29, 36].

Impact on well-being and experience of homelessness

As borne by the literature reviewed, the social worlds of unhoused Inuit living in the south and north are precipitated by similar circumstances that are inextricably linked to housing and relationships in their northern rural home communities. Upon reaching a southern urban centre Inuit people's social lives are shaped by structural factors impacting housing precarity, the drug and alcohol market and recovery services, resource availability, and service use through organizations. Unhoused urban Inuit in the south become a part of a community at several intersections of surveillance, overdetermination, and management by police, the municipality, housed neighbours, shelters and charitable organizations, hospitals, social services, child protective services, the criminal punishment system, and substance use recovery and mental health services. Clark, in her work *Shock and Awe: Trauma as the New Colonial Frontier*, incisively discusses the ways that these overlapping authorities of settler-colonialism reinvents forms of and justifications for control over Indigenous people and their communities while maintaining a refusal to listen to them and center their strengths [19]. Rather, urban Inuit experiencing homelessness are positioned as subjects of a "trauma industrial complex" that obscures certain types of violence (e.g., state violence, neglect & dispossession, racism, and land exploitation), while focusing almost exclusively on histories of interpersonal violence or harm and perpetuating images of all Indigenous peoples, and particularly those racialized and experiencing poverty, as helpless, incompetent, and needing intervention from without. Numerous Indigenous and post-colonial authors are pushing back against these narratives of deficit and helplessness to highlight the agency, resourcefulness, and survivance [17, 18, 45-47]. The present review aims to be an early step in describing the social worlds of unhoused urban Inuit with an understanding that agency, mutual care, belonging, and resistance are also to be found within them.

It is evident that a support network to help navigate housing, employment, childcare, health and social services and other systems is essential for Inuit living in the south. Multiple sources discuss the ways that Inuit, through formal institutions or informal peer networks, aid one another in these essential tasks. Beyond these, Inuit enable each other's cultural and personal livelihoods through Inuktut language-use, sharing, acceptance, and empathy. The literature suggests that these indispensable aspects of urban Inuit people's social lives are formed around central meeting places like shelters, but also public spaces like squares downtown areas frequented by street-involved people. This review undercovers some tensions about how accessing shelter services may impact unhoused urban Inuit. Where stably employed and housed urban Inuit may struggle with maintaining language and comment on the lack of central locations that foster community cohesion, these nodes of connection are readily established and accessed by unhoused Inuit by necessity and choice [6, 30, 36]. Contact with Inuit-specific/friendly organizations carry known benefits in addressing loneliness and depressive symptoms, which are prevalent among Inuit living in the south [6, 35, 36]. Furthermore, Inuktut language use helps to re-affirm Inuit identity and combat feelings of isolation and culture shock in the southern urban environment while potentially hindering integration into the wider English/French-speaking community (36). However, these spaces also become sites of social-stratification and risks such as criminalization or other circumstances that can prolong homelessness [6, 28, 29]. The extent to which accessing shelter services represents sites of identity and cultural cultivation, cohesion, and resistance or places where unhoused Inuit may become further marginalized appears to be a murky and is likely a complex and contradictory question to grasp.

Limitations

As with any review of broad topics (well-being, social relationships, housing issues) particularly involving smaller demographics of a given population, such as urban Inuit, there are limitations born of the authors' process of compiling, selecting, and summarizing the present findings. First, this review includes texts writ-

ten almost exclusively in English; while French publications were included and evaluated according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria previously described, the research team did not have the ability to gather (given that the databases known and accessible to the team do not commonly index non-English or French content) or evaluate texts written in any Inuktut language or dialect. This may substantially limit the researchers' engagement with emic concepts and terminology that could have enriched the present review and its conclusions beyond the information gathered. Importantly, issues of bias in selecting articles in the final corpus were mitigated by having two reviews separately evaluate each document and decide on initial disagreements through discussion using our pre-determined criteria. However, even in light of actions taken by authors to minimize sources of bias, it is important to refrain from viewing the findings described in this review as representative of all or most of the lived experiences of urban Inuit experiencing homelessness. This is also borne out by diversity of subjects and participant groups the authors of the documents reviewed highlighted; it is clear that the experiences and challenges of this group are variable and even a summary such as this may only partially describe their essential elements.

Conclusions

Taken together, the results of this review make clear the structural challenges that shape southern urban Inuit experiences with homelessness and begins to demonstrate the ways that they support each other in these circumstances. As elaborated by post-colonial scholars globally, it is imperative to retreat from deficit-based narratives of Indigenous peoples [48-51]. Valuable knowledge and practice lie dormant when the lifeways of Indigenous people, particularly those who are economically marginalized, remain misunderstood. There is much to be learned by highlighting the copious ways that unhoused Inuit continue to make community and carve spaces of dignity and belonging into urban life. Centering and building upon the extant practices that sustain well-being in this community, rather than imposing "solutions" or "best-practices" based in settler-colonial logics, is key to creating policy and services that support unhoused urban Inuit in actualizing their own goals in ways that are congruent with their lived realities and priorities.

The literature reviewed here serves as a critical first step to illuminating agency and strengths regarding unhoused urban Inuit. Nonetheless, like previous inquiries of other groups experiencing homelessness, investigate factors like resilience, well-being, healing, or safety and the ways that unhoused urban Inuit actualize these through their social networks are not thoroughly explored. Research that centres the goals and agency of this group would allow a fuller picture of key emic concepts like *inuuqatigiisiarniq* at the intersection of southern urban living and homelessness.

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AI utilization

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Author contributions

N. Nweze is the primary researcher on this publication, having designed and executed the project from the questions, search strategy, data analysis, and writing stages. D Olaogun contributed as a research assistant, aiding in data analysis and collation. D Wendt is the first author's doctoral supervisor and provided guidance on all aspects of the project and assisted with reviewing and editing the manuscript.

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ORCIDs

Nmesoma Nweze 0000-0002-3838-3719
Darah Olaogun 0009-0007-6494-603X
Dennis C Wendt 0000-0001-9652-1182

ABSTRACT IN SPANISH

Inuit, urbanos y sin vivienda: una revisión exploratoria de los mundos sociales

Introducción: La colonización, el racismo y los desplazamientos forzados perpetrados en el Ártico, especialmente en el norte de Canadá, han tenido graves repercusiones sociales y han generado barreras para que los inuit accedan a la vivienda, el empleo y la educación, dejando a muchos con un acceso precario a necesidades fundamentales. Las consecuencias de estas décadas de conquista por parte de los gobiernos colonizadores son evidentes en muchas ciudades centrales del sur de Canadá y en otras regiones circumpolares, donde los Inuit están sobrerrepresentados dentro de las poblaciones sin vivienda. Sin embargo, los sistemas interpersonales y culturales que los Inuit han cultivado durante milenios para brindar cuidado y comunidad a las personas necesitadas persisten en los márgenes de los centros urbanos. Esta revisión inicia una exploración de los mundos sociales de los Inuit urbanos sin vivienda y aclara lo que hasta ahora se ha discutido sobre las formas importantes en que se apoyan a sí mismos y entre sí para estar bien en el contexto de la falta de vivienda y la violencia colonial continua.

Métodos: Esta revisión de alcance ssigue el modelo de cinco etapas de Arksey y O'Malley, que comienza con la identificación de la pregunta de investigación y de las publicaciones pertinentes, la selección de publicaciones según su relevancia, la sistematización de los datos del estudio y, finalmente, la recopilación, el resumen y la presentación de los resultados.

Resultados: El análisis de las publicaciones revisadas reveló factores compartidos de empuje y atracción que precipitan la falta de vivienda tanto en el norte como en el sur. Además, el análisis mostró que los Inuit que experimentan la falta de vivienda en el sur enfrentan factores estructurales específicos que obstaculizan su bienestar, como los mercados de vivienda y de sustancias, la discriminación, y al mismo tiempo factores que lo favorecen, como la oferta de servicios adaptados a las necesidades Inuit, el apoyo entre pares y el mantenimiento de los lazos familiares y las conexiones con su lugar de origen.

Conclusiones: La literatura demuestra que las relaciones y el bienestar, en la intersección entre la identidad Indígena/Inuit, la vida urbana del sur y la falta de vivienda, son complejos, y que las aparentes contradicciones entre riesgo y resiliencia, o entre conflicto y conexión, son aspectos coexistentes de la vida en este contexto que merecen una comprensión más profunda.

Palabras clave: Inuit, personas sin hogar, bienestar, mundos sociales, relaciones, vida social, urbano, sin vivienda.

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