

Gadamerian Hermeneutics with Intersectionality as an Analytical Lens

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Abstract

For decades, hermeneutics has been used as a qualitative research approach to enhance understanding of the experiences of individuals within a particular context. However, after reviewing the literature, it became evident that only a few published articles use intersectionality as an analytical lens along with Gadamerian hermeneutics. This article draws on examples from a 2021 study that explored experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants with healthcare providers. Utilizing the philosophical underpinnings of Gadamerian hermeneutics and the theoretical foundations of intersectionality, the confluences and the tensions between these two approaches is explored. Moreover, suggestions are provided for how intersectionality as an analytical lens can expand understandings and interpretations of research findings using Gadamerian hermeneutics.

Keywords

Gadamer hermeneutics, intersectionality, complexity, LGBTQI+ migrants, underserved population, healthcare professionals

Although historically, hermeneutics originated as an approach to interpret sacred religious texts (Abram, 1996; Polit & Beck, 2017; West, 2010), present day Gadamerian hermeneutics focuses on developing a deep understanding of human experiences in particular contexts (Annells, 1996; de Witt et al., 2010; Dowling & Cooney, 2012; Gadamer, 2007a). In this article, we discuss Gadamerian hermeneutics, in combination with intersectionality, as an approach to

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understanding the experiences of underserved people whose experiences are poorly understood through many traditional research methodologies (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Kwok, 2021; Semlyen et al., 2018). Here, key examples are shared from a research study conducted in 2021 which explored the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants with healthcare professionals in Canada. LGBTQI+ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit, queer, questioning, and intersex, and “+” is inclusive of diverse sexual orientations (e.g., pansexual) and gender identities and expressions (e.g., nonbinary) that are not named in the initialism. Migrants, broadly, refers to individuals who have relocated from one place to another (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2010).

Exploring conceptual ties between intersectionality and Gadamerian hermeneutics can potentially yield new insights into how these theories have utility for gaining understanding of human experiences with a view of social and systemic contexts. It is argued that both theoretical perspectives can be used for anti-oppressive and social justice aims. In what follows, we start with a background, afterwards examine the philosophical underpinnings of intersectional theory, and then provide an overview of Gadamerian hermeneutics. Thereafter, we discuss how this methodological approach may be used in the context of LGBTQI+ migrants’ experiences with healthcare professionals.

Background

Increasingly, theorists and researchers acknowledge that research with underserved people benefits from anti-oppressive theoretical perspectives which aim to produce systemic change by understanding intersecting positions of power and privilege using a social justice praxis (Davidson, 2016; Lopez & Willis, 2004). The term praxis here means that research and practice are intertwined, that they inform one another, and that inquirers and practitioners reflexively strive to highlight areas for improvement (Cho et al., 2013; Collins et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2016). The integration of intersectionality as an analytical lens with Gadamerian hermeneutics sets a path for critical and nuanced understandings of the realities of diverse underserved populations in health research. Underserved people are defined as individuals who:

May experience difficulties in obtaining needed care, receive less care or a lower standard of care, experience different treatment by healthcare providers, receive treatment that does not adequately meet their needs, or that they will be less satisfied with healthcare services than the general population. (Health Canada & Bowen, 2001, p.7)

Past and continuing traumatic experiences may lead LGBTQI+ migrants to experience mental and physical health challenges (Hall & Sajnani, 2015; Lee, 2021). Intersectional researchers do not assume the vulnerability or the homogeneity of groups but categorize underserved people because it allows the recognition of needs and differences within groups while attending to the structural contexts which shape disadvantages (Collins et al., 2021; McCall, 2005). The term “strategic essentialism” was coined by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a post-colonial South Asian theorist and activist, and refers to a political position that is adopted to advocate for minority groups (Spivak, 1996). In this article, the term LGBTQI+ migrant is used to underscore the common experience of being underserved while acknowledging the diversity of the experiences of migration trajectories within LGBTQI+ communities. In other words, it is strategically crucial and advantageous to temporarily “essentialize” LGBTQI+ migrants as a group to understand

their experiences with healthcare professionals in an effort to inform practice, education, and policy.

In my (Roya Haghiri-Vijeh [RHV]) nursing practice as a bedside nurse and as an educator, I was struck by the limited knowledge of some nurses in caring for patients who identified at the intersections of LGBTQI+, migration, race, and religion, just to name a few. I have an understanding of the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants with nurses through hearing nurses' LGBTQI+-phobic and racist comments. Both stigma and discrimination, including a lack of knowledge of and a sense of comfort in providing care to LGBTQI+ migrants manifested itself in my encounters with some nurses, nursing students, faculty, and administrators. I heard comments such as, "They are in Canada now. It is safe here!... So, they are trans – what is a big deal!" For this reason, to have a deeper understanding of LGBTQI+ migrants' encounters with nurses and other healthcare professionals in Canada, I pursued my doctoral research in situating these experiences through Gadamerian hermeneutics with intersectionality as an analytical lens.

The University of Victoria's human research ethics review board approved this research study (Approval number 19-0591). In this article, we draw on key examples from the first author's doctoral dissertation in which she conducted 18 semi-structured interviews on Zoom with LGBTQI+ migrants (13), non-migrant nurses (2), and migrant LGBTQI+ nurses (3). Rather than focusing on a singular "theme," the interpretations of interviews strengthened our understanding of informants' experiences. The in-depth interpretations will be published elsewhere (Haghiri-Vijeh, 2022), and here, the methodological grounding is provided. Given that some readers of the *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics* may not be familiar with intersectionality, the next section begins with a discussion of intersectionality, follows with a discussion of Gadamerian hermeneutics, and then examines the ways in which intersectionality and Gadamerian hermeneutics share a common set of principles. Both approaches attend to reflexivity, historical context, and critical inquiry, and in the case of my study, do so in an effort to understand the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants with healthcare professionals (Bright, 2015; Davidson, 2016; Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Situating Intersectionality Within a Critical Theoretical Paradigm

Intersectionality is situated within an emerging critical theoretical paradigm with roots in Black, Latinx, post-colonial, queer, and Indigenous scholarly work which reveals the complex factors that shape human lives (Collins, 2019). The earliest cited iteration of intersectionality came from the Combahee River Collective (Collins & Bilge, 2016). In 1977, the Combahee River Collective, a Black lesbian organization, challenged homophobia and heterosexism, and argued that the experiences of Black non-heterosexual women were different from those of white women (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Following this, in the 1980s, scholars continued to provide a voice for the intersecting experiences of underserved people. In 1989, legal studies scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality as a metaphor for complexity (Crenshaw, 1989), and in 1990, sociologist Patricia Hill Collins initiated the integration of intersectionality as a critical social theory (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Hancock, 2019; Potter et al., 2019).

Intersectionality as an analytical lens is used to address complexity, and is underpinned by such concepts as relationality, power, social inequality, social context, and social justice (Collins,

2019). However, not all inquirers are guided by the same assumptions when using intersectionality (Collins et al., 2021). The core argument of intersectionality is that dominant structures of power are embedded in policy and practices which systematically exclude individuals or groups from privileges based on their identities and social contexts (Collins, 1993; Crenshaw, 1989). Hancock (2019) identified critical race theory as an avenue to critique American structural and institutional hierarchies that produce injustices, inequities, and marginalization. Intersectional scholars note, however, that race alone cannot be understood as a distinct category of analysis apart from class or sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) (Collins, 2019b; Hankivsky et al., 2019); instead, these social categories intersect to shape people's experiences within systems of power (Crenshaw, 1991; Hankivsky et al., 2019).

In intersectional analysis, categories and locations are socially constructed and fluid, and are not limited to race, ethnicity, class, SOGIE, dis/ability, mental health or religion (Collins et al., 2021; Hankivsky & De Leeuw, 2011). Categories are dynamic, diverse, intertwined and in continuous interaction with one another, and understanding them should not follow normative binarizations (Hankivsky et al., 2019; Hay et al., 2019; Heise et al., 2019). The diversity of experiences of those oppressed is perpetuated by the unique contextual situatedness of individuals. In this way, intersectionality can be used as an analytic lens to uncover influences of power (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Hankivsky et al., 2019). Consequently, intersectional scholars call for transformation, collaboration, social justice, and equity praxis.

The core arguments of intersectionality assist in seeing that LGBTQI+ migrants may well experience oppression as a result of intersecting marginalization in society and in the healthcare system. For example, a trans informant who came to Canada on a student visa shared their experience of being placed in a mental health facility. Prior to migration, they ("they" is the pronoun used by many people who identify outside of a constructed gender binary) had experienced discrimination and trauma due to their sexual orientation and gender expression. After migration to Canada, as they started their gender transition, the realities of their multiple identities resulted in a complex experience of being poorly understood and supported. Although they identified as trans, they felt that non-migrant trans people did not understand the unique challenges of identifying as trans *and* migrant *as well as* having temporary precarious migration status. At the same time, they felt excluded from their own cultural community due to their trans gender identity. Additionally, with limited financial resources, they were afraid of deportation. In desperation, they experienced suicidal ideation and were brought to a mental health facility by police officers. They felt uncomfortable with being placed "in the same sack" with other patients, and felt that their intersecting experiences of migration, trans identity, mental health challenges, along with financial and language barriers were not acknowledged or understood by healthcare professionals. When they tried to communicate their fear of deportation most healthcare professionals and nurses, who were in positions of privilege, dismissed their concerns without making a meaningful attempt to understand their fears as well as their past and current experiences.

Intersectionality and Structural Systems of Power

A particular strength of intersectionality is the focus it brings to structural influences such as language barriers, poverty, citizenship status, and human rights laws that shape the social lives of some groups versus others (Clark & Vissandjée, 2019; Crenshaw, 1991; Manuel, 2019). When the needs of underserved individuals are not named as a priority in policies, resources are not allocated to meet their needs; and at times even when needs are named, services are not distributed (Alessi et al., 2020; Crenshaw, 1991; Fox et al., 2020; Gupta & Raj et al., 2019; Hankivsky et al., 2019; Kahn et al., 2018). Public policies and laws can magnify the voices of underserved individuals or silence them further. It is particularly relevant to this work that structural systems of power limit the inclusion of individuals who do not conform to normative identities and orientations (Lee, 2019; Lee & Brotman, 2013). Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery (2019) added that those in dominant positions may use policies, unconsciously or consciously, as an apparatus to direct and regulate the experiences of marginalized individuals. For example, “normative” sexuality, or what constitutes accepted sexuality, is regulated by policies and overemphasized in institutional arenas (Cisneros, 2018; Hankivsky & Jordan-Zachery, 2019a; Lee, 2018; McDonald et al., 2011). In addition to public policy, it also becomes apparent that educational and institutional policies that directly influence the practice of healthcare professional are put in place through structural systems of power (Dickman & Chicas, 2021). Intersectionality provides the lens to view and to account for complex and marginalized lives in the policy arena. Finally, Manuel (2019) and Collins et al. (2021) asserted that qualitative intersectional approaches provide an avenue to gain a deeper understanding of individuals’ lives, as they are shaped by health and public policies. In this case, Gadamerian hermeneutics is guided by intersectionality in understanding the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants.

Gadamerian Hermeneutics

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 - 2002) was a German philosopher in a significant line of male European philosophers of phenomenology, whose works both informed and departed from Gadamer’s (Gadamer, 1975b; West, 2010). In particular Gadamer expanded the philosophical position of his teacher Martin Heidegger in a number of ways that have become relevant to research approaches drawing on Gadamerian hermeneutics. Heidegger is well known for his movement away from the reductionistic and objective view of knowledge acquisition relying solely on the “scientific method” towards an ontological understanding of the world (Gadamer, 1976). Gadamer located his own philosophy in a decidedly ontological, rather than epistemological position, with implications for how those following him philosophically engage in the process of inquiry (Koch, 1995; Shaw & DeForge, 2014). Or perhaps more accurately, Gadamer moves beyond focusing on the epistemological meaning of individual experiences; he is also concerned with the formation of understanding by drawing ontologically on the present and past experiences of individuals and the inquirer (Gadamer, 2007a).

Ontological Presence in Dialogue

For Gadamer, it is not only about the epistemology of one’s language, but also having an ontological presence in dialogue (Gadamer, 1976, 2007c; Gadamer & Ricoeur, 1991). The ontology of Gadamerian hermeneutics is concerned with being and understanding through experiences (Ho et al., 2017). This ontological underpinning of Gadamerian hermeneutics is expressed in the hermeneutic circle, central to the process of interpretation and understanding

(Gadamer, 1981b, 1986, 1998). Additionally, Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics is informed through his use of the concepts of historicity and prejudices. These concepts, which we explore shortly, contribute to an ontology in Gadamerian hermeneutics that illuminates multiple, evolving, and changing realities; therefore, understandings themselves become varied and transient (Cohen et al., 2000a; Fleming et al., 2003; Gadamer, 1976).

Following the early work of Schleiermacher and later expanded by Heidegger, Gadamer viewed the movement of the hermeneutic circle as an ontological element of understanding (Crotty, 1998). The movement between the parts and whole, sometimes viewed as a “spiral” (Moules et al., 2015, p. 44), can be seen as an account of the way in which understanding is achieved. Gadamer maintains “the circular movement is necessary because nothing that needs interpretation can be understood at once” (1998a, p. 192). The hermeneutic circle is set in motion as the interpreter begins to reflect on the prejudices that accompany them to the work; the movement is perpetual, visiting and re-visiting understandings throughout the hermeneutic project.

Historicity Shaping Understanding

According to Annells (1996), Gadamer noted that the hermeneutic circle is present when what has occurred in the past, when rediscovered, becomes new again. In addition to being ontological in nature, hermeneutics is shaped by the historicity, universality, and fluidity of each interpreter. Historicity, in the hermeneutic sense, means people are “not merely in history; their past including their social past, figures in their conception of themselves and their future possibilities” (Audi, 1999, p. 673). As historically located, we cannot act or understand without the influence of the history in which we are imbued. In this way, the hermeneutic project of “understanding is, essentially, a historically affected event” (Gadamer, 1998b, p. 300). It is this situatedness, historical and in a sense unknowable position that forms the horizons from which the interpreter and the topic begin. This approach, assuming an ontological nature, places *understanding* within the historicity, the tradition, and the context of both informants and inquirer (Cohen, 2000).

As an inquirer (RHV), my historicity is informed by the experience of a traumatic escape from my country of birth as well as experiences of navigating social, cultural, and religious communities as a first-generation settler. Additionally, this hermeneutic project is informed by my location as a nurse, an educator, and a resident in a country that legally supports LGBTQI+ people. All of this context, past and current, comes into play in the process of interpretation, beginning with my interest in the topic. Similarly, each informant brings to the interview process, their unique historical location. For a number of informants, their ontological reality included living in a birth country where being LGBTQI+ is forbidden and punishable by death. Their lives before migration to Canada included living with trauma and daily fears of having their identity discovered. For one trans Muslim woman, their religious tradition included wearing a chādor (a long head and body covering) when reciting obligatory Islamic prayers. While this tradition was not available to them to enact prior to their gender transition, they also were stigmatized and ridiculed by their cultural and religious community after migration to Canada and beginning gender transition. Hence, in this situation it is the inaccessibility of tradition, the inability to participate in cultural and religious gatherings that shape their ontological experience.

Gadamer (1976) emphasized that the hermeneutical situations of individuals have historically been rooted in their prejudices. Rather than elevating an ideal of autonomous objectivity, Gadamer embraces the prejudices and foreknowledge of the interpreter as productive in mediating understanding (Gadamer, 1976). The idea of prejudices as a ground on which to begin understanding extends not only to the interpreter but also to the subject/objects of interpretation. While Gadamer noted that the influences of our prejudices are unknowable in advance in their completeness, he nonetheless suggested that we should endeavour to make our prejudices conscious and available to critique. He noted that active reflection on a particular prejudice “brings before me something that otherwise happens behind my back” (1976, p. 38). Additionally, he rightly noted that once something is known to us, it is impossible to “unknow” it. Gadamer (1976) insisted that prejudices can play a critical role in moving toward new understandings, and that rather than “bracket” understandings or knowledge of a topic, as in the case with other approaches to phenomenology, prejudices should be questioned and revisited.

Exploring my (RHV) prejudices were crucial as Gadamer (1976) asserted, “It is not really we ourselves who understand: it is always a past that allows us to say, ‘I have understood’” (p. 58). My knowledge and understandings garnered from my experience as a migrant, a refugee, and a woman of colour, as well as through my close relationships with people who identify as LGBTQI+ migrants, furthered my understandings in hermeneutic conversations with participants. My prejudices propelled the process of engaging in questioning in a particular direction, just as the prejudices of the informants are embedded in their dialogue. LGBTQI+ migrant informers, may carry with them from their past, fear of discrimination, stigma, or of being denied residency status if they disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation, even in the context of the interviews. Similarly, based on norms and personal history in their country of birth they may be reluctant to criticize their experiences with healthcare providers (Etengoff & Rodriguez, 2021; Massaquoi, 2020; Semlyen et al., 2018). These are tacit examples of ways in which the influence of history and prejudices can directly play out in the hermeneutics research process. Prejudice is rooted in the inquirer’s and informants’ historical-spiritual being, their past, their culture, all of which influence their being in the world. For this reason, an absence of bracketing is evident during in-depth interviews, in conversing with the transcriptions, and in the dissemination of the findings, as understanding will arise from the movement of the hermeneutical circle, mediated by past and present experiences (Annells, 1996; McCaffrey et al., 2012).

Confluences of Gadamerian Hermeneutics and Intersectionality

As approaches to research, Gadamerian hermeneutics and intersectionality arise from considerably different contexts and influences. Nonetheless they do hold areas of confluence; ways in which intersectionality aligns with hermeneutics and expands the project of interpretation. These confluences are discussed as reflexivity, experience located in time and context, and critical questioning.

The Practice of Reflexivity

Reflexivity finds common ground in Gadamerian hermeneutics and intersectionality; it influences gaining understanding through the continuous revisiting, reviewing, and questioning of interviews as well as acknowledging the inquirer’s and informants’ experiences of privilege,

strength, and oppression. Qualitative researchers, Sandelowski and Barroso (2002), explained the introspective process of reflexivity: “Reflexivity implies the ability to reflect inward toward oneself as an inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share” (p. 222). Clearly this understanding of reflexivity aligns with Gadamer’s discussion of the process of bringing to consciousness the prejudices and previous understandings of the inquirer that influence the hermeneutic process. Reflexivity in conversing with the data starts from the beginning when conceptualizing the research and continues throughout every stage (Moules et al., 2015; Ryan, 2005). Similarly, intersectional scholars consider their own social position, role, and power when applying an intersectional interpretation to interviews. In fact, this reflexivity starts before setting priorities and directions in research, policy, and activism (Collins, 2019).

Reflexivity was at play in creating a safe environment for the LGBTQI+ migrant informants by choosing to share some of my (RHV) experiences during interviews. I experienced discrimination as a woman and a Baha’i in my country of birth, as a non-status refugee in a transition country, as a new migrant to Canada, and as a racial minority working in the nursing profession. Cautiously allowing myself to be vulnerable led the informants to develop trust on the basis of some of our shared experiences, and this allowed me to delve more deeply into their experiences with healthcare professionals in Canada. Thus, the inquirer can reflexively engender a safe environment during the interview to encourage a flow of conversation about the informant’s unique experiences.

Using intersectionality as an analytical lens, the inquirer reflexively looks specifically for the individual oppressive experiences with healthcare during the interpretive process (Hankivsky & Jordan-Zachery, 2019b; Moules et al., 2015). The inquirer also searches beyond individual experiences and considers how dominant normative ideologies and structural policies shape those experiences (Collins et al., 2021; Lee, 2019, 2021). Hankivsky and Cormier (2019) stated that there is a scarcity of research methodologies that examine the operations of power on individual experiences. Utilizing Gadamerian hermeneutics with intersectionality as an analytical lens address some of these challenges by attending to social contexts as well as institutional and interpersonal power dynamics that surround and shape experiences.

Experience Located in Time and Context

Intersectional and Gadamerian hermeneutics approaches share the view that experiences are shaped by context and time (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2011). As discussed at length earlier in the paper, from a hermeneutic perspective, the lives of the inquirer and informants are understood as constituted within historicity, that is, within particular temporal and contextual realities. These realities deeply influence our understanding of experience. Scholars of intersectionality maintain that social inequities are based on context and are the result of particular oppressive social and institutional structures and policies (Collins, 1993, 2019b; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991; Hankivsky, 2014; Heise et al., 2019). Engaging with the lens of intersectionality to understand the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants, the inquirer converses with informants about their experiences and the contextual influences in their lives as well as interprets these conversations with a view to the temporal and historical context of the social and institutional

structures at play (Burnett, 2019; Collins & Bilge, 2016). In highlighting the impact of time and context in the positioning of LGBTQI+ migrants, both intersectionality and Gadamerian hermeneutics pave the way for critical questioning and are integral to conversing with informants.

Critical Questioning

While both hermeneutics and intersectionality engage the language of critical questioning, the meaning of the term is somewhat different for each. The approaches are however compatible, and the lens of intersectionality can again be seen to extend the hermeneutic interpretation. In hermeneutics, critical questioning has been referred to as asking difficult questions and being open to questions that challenge pre-existing assumptions (de Witt & Ploeg, 2006). The hermeneutic conversation in which critical questioning takes place focuses not only on questions of the informants' experiences but investigates the subject matter *along* with the informants. Such a hermeneutic conversation leads to a hermeneutic circle in which the whole and the parts of the topic spiral in an iterative and continuous format (Moules et al., 2015). As discussed earlier, the inquirer continues to converse with the interview transcriptions during analysis, in relation to the topic, and then the specific informant's experiences by reading and re-reading the interviews iteratively while searching for similarities, differences, what stands out, what is provoking, and even what calls current understandings into question (Moules et al., 2015). The inquirer opens themselves up and listens to what is being said and unsaid — even confronting viewpoints which may be hard to hear and observe (Moules et al., 2015). It is through engagement with others that individuals may become aware of their own assumptions. In meaningful readings of texts, the inquirer questions and is questioned by the text itself. Imagination needs to be rooted in the art of questioning, to see beyond what is presented during interviews and when conversing with the transcriptions. A perfect analysis is not expected (Gadamer, 2007d), but an understanding occurs through detailed, dedicated, and careful interpretation of various factors shaped by the history of each individual (Jardine, 1992) and brought into being through a process of critical questioning.

Engaging intersectionality as an analytic focus deepens the Gadamerian understanding of the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants by being critically attentive to the intersections of various systems of power illuminated during in-depth individual interviews and when conversing with the transcriptions (Bright, 2015; Davidson, 2016). For example, it is evident in the literature that LGBTQI+ migrants' experiences are situated in various intersecting systems of oppression and discrimination based on the identities of race, ethnicity, SOGIE, religion, migration, class, language, dis/ability, and mental health diagnosis (Altay et al., 2021; Brennan et al., 2013; Cisneros, 2018; Collins et al., 2021; Etengoff & Rodriguez, 2021; Lee & Brotman, 2013; Semlyen et al., 2018). Collins and Bilge (2016) noted that critical questioning is an integral skill that scholars using an intersectional lens require and asserted, “[critical questioning] is a way of critically analyzing the world by asking tough questions, problem solving, and critical thinking” (p. 162). Critical questioning as an approach within intersectionality and Gadamerian hermeneutics elucidates that the scientific method cannot answer all the questions (Gadamer, 2000). In a discussion of “natural situations” in science, Gadamer (1976) pointed to the reality that what is socially contextualized as natural, normal, and we add “straight” for a community now may readily differ in another time or context. Following the explanation of the confluences

of Gadamerian hermeneutics and intersectionality, potential tensions between the two are explored.

Theoretical Tensions of Gadamerian Hermeneutics and Intersectionality

Intersectionality and Gadamerian hermeneutics' areas of potential tensions are their historical origins and aims to address the struggle of marginalized people. First, hermeneutics was developed by privileged white European men. Conversely, early intersectional writing and activism focused on Black women's vulnerabilities, oppressions, and experiences of violence (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery (2019a) stated that oppressive and dominant policies have been created and enforced by well-educated white men's worldviews and values. However, the production of knowledge through research is not static (Gadamer & Moore, 2020), and intersectionality has advanced thinking by bringing SOGIE and other inequities to the forefront (Clark & Saleh, 2019; Kassam et al., 2020). Scholars of intersectionality do not dismiss white European men's theoretical work based on their gender, race, or ethnicity (Cho et al., 2013); rather, the inquirer learns from past epistemology to step towards praxis. In addition to historical origins, another area of tension between Gadamerian hermeneutics and intersectionality is the intention of the work regarding disenfranchised or marginalized people.

Intersectionality as an analytical lens has two aims that, in a perfunctory sense, may seem to be in tension with Gadamerian hermeneutics. These two aims, according to Collins and Bilge, (2016) are the following: "(1) an approach to understanding human life and behavior rooted in the experiences and struggles of disenfranchised people; and (2) an important lens linking theory with practice that can aid in [the] empowerment of communities and individuals" (p. 36). These are points of contention because neither the "disenfranchised" nor "empowerment" are usually addressed in Gadamerian hermeneutics. However, although not explicitly stated, Gadamerian hermeneutics is seen by some to hold space for the inclusion of these aims and renders to the issues of "large power structures" (Gadamer & Moore, 2020, p. 4). First, Gadamer underscored the importance of looking for the unsaid in each conversation and raising the voices of those who have been silenced. Second, Gadamerian hermeneutics is focused on experiences through the continuous practice of reading between the lines and examining how context and time have shaped peoples' understanding (Gadamer, 2007b; Jardine, 1992). In particular, in the discussion of phronesis as practical knowledge in relation to sensus communis (common sense), Gadamer (1975a) asserted, "the philosophy of sound understanding, of good sense ... contains the basis of a moral philosophy that really does justice to the life of society" (p. 39). Gadamer's later publications articulated concerns with global social issues and used dialogue as a praxis to engage in understanding one another rather than *othering* (Gadamer, 2007a; Johnson, 2000; Padgett, 2017). Had Gadamer been thinking or writing in the present-day historical context, he might have embraced a more explicit critique of power, race, SOGIE, and privilege (Gadamer & Moore, 2020).

Conclusion: The End Game

In line with Gadamer's (2007b) discussion of philosophical ethics and Collins et al.'s (2021) discourse on intersectionality, understanding moves the research endeavour towards practice and policy revision. In a document titled "Intersectionality 101," Hankivsky (2014) provided

practical suggestions for inquirers, policymakers, activists, and educators to integrate intersectional theory to address oppressive taken-for-granted discourses. Manuel (2019) emphasized that employing intersectional theory is not only about what is “good to know” (p. 32) but more importantly requires integration into public policies. Manuel argued that policy makers have been slow to integrate intersectional theory into healthcare practices. Intersectional theory is not only about the oppressed, when the oppressed can also be the oppressor (Collins, 2019a, 2019b). Inquirers using intersectionality also need to highlight the resistance, resilience, and strength in marginalized communities (Hankivsky, 2014; Jordan-Zachery, 2019). Intersectionality is an avenue for the inquirer to be reflective about their own biases and prejudices, and strive to understand the informants’ experiences of oppression, privilege, and strength (Massaquoi, 2020).

While Gadamerian hermeneutics is not always associated with praxis, Gadamer, drawing on Aristotle’s philosophy of practical wisdom, does discuss the place for phronesis and the application of knowledge (Gadamer, 1981, 1996; Moules et al., 2015). Practical wisdom can be understood, for example, as the first-hand knowledge LGBTQI+ migrants gather from their experiences with healthcare professionals. As we come to understand these experiences, we have the opportunity to apply practical wisdom; to use understanding in a way that betters health policy and the education of healthcare professionals. According to Moules et al. (2015), Gadamerian hermeneutics calls for “achievement of some moral good. There is an ethical obligation in healthcare, in education, and in other practice disciplines that its practitioners be guided by an ethic of care” (p. 58). Adopted from Gadamer (2007b) and Hankivsky (2014), intersectionality extends understanding of the experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants beyond a singular focus on identity. This approach to research initiates a conversation about understanding unique experiences and delves into what healthcare professionals can do and learn, thereby helping to strengthen education, practice, and policy (Moules et al., 2015). The inquirer, applying intersectionality as an analytical lens, searches for macro, meso, and micro systems of power at play in relation to experiences of LGBTQI+ migrants. That is to say, the inquirer moves beyond understanding LGBTQI+ migrants’ experiences to an end game that looks for issues of domination, exploitation, resistance, and agency including how these can inform education, practice, research, and policy.

Using intersectionality as an analytical lens with Gadamerian hermeneutics may enable an inquirer to understand that, for example, LGBTQI+ migrants’ health is shaped by migration, mental health, dis/ability, SOGIE, and healthcare as well as structural systems, and these have positioned LGBTQI+ migrants in situations of perpetual institutional surveillance. Engaging with intersectionality as an analytical lens provides an opportunity to delve into untapped and taken-for-granted dominant policies and practices that have marginalized and oppressed individuals (Hankivsky & Jordan-Zachery, 2019a) and underserved populations. In this article, drawing on the philosophical underpinnings of Gadamerian hermeneutics and scholars in the field of intersectionality, the confluences between these two approaches was explored demonstrating the ways in which the hermeneutics project can benefit from an intersectional lens to further research focused on marginalized populations.

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