

Benjamin Owens

PhD Student, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto
Email: benjamin.owens@utoronto.ca

EDUCATION

2023-Present PhD Student, Geography, University of Toronto

2018-2019 Master of Arts, Labour Studies, McMaster University
Thesis: The Customer is Always Right: Violence Against 2SLGBTQ+ Service Workers in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario
Committee – Suzanne Mills (Chair), Judy Fudge, Michelle Dion

2014-2018 Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Labour Studies, Minor in Sociology
McMaster University

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Precarity | Youth Homelessness | Housing | Gender, Sexuality and Work | Qualitative and Mixed Methods

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

Benjamin Owens and Suzanne Mills. (2025). Conceptualizing Discrimination Against LGBTQ+ Workers in the Unbounded Workplace. *Canadian Geographies/Géographies canadiennes*, 69(1), 1-12.

Suzanne Mills and **Benjamin Owens**. (2023). Customer Abuse and Aggression as Labour Control Among LGBT Workers in Low-Wage Services. *Work, Employment and Society*, 37(3), 776-793.

Benjamin Owens, Suzanne Mills, Nathaniel Lewis, and Adrian Guta. (2022). Work-Related Stressors and Mental Health among LGBTQ Workers: Results from a Cross-Sectional Survey. *PLOS One*, 17(10), e0275771.

Amanda Noble, **Benjamin Owens**, Naomi Thulien, and Amanda Suleiman. (2022). “I Feel Like I’m in a Revolving Door, and COVID Has Made it Spin a Lot Faster”: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Toronto, Canada. *PLOS One*, 17(8), e0273502.

Technical Reports and Other Publications

Benjamin Owens and Suzanne Mills. (2022). Research Findings: Customer Abuse and Aggression as Labour Control Against LGBTQ+ Service Sector Workers. *Work in Progress: Sociology on the Economy, Work and Inequality*. [American Sociological Association Blog.]

Benjamin Owens, Amanda Suleiman, and Amanda Noble. (2022). Understanding the Experiences of Youth Who Use Substances: A Needs Assessment of Toronto Youth Experiencing Homelessness. [Technical Report.]

Amanda Noble, Naomi Thulien, **Benjamin Owens**, Amanda Suleiman, Mithula Loganathan, Danielle Ali, Isaac Coplan, Jaime Neal, Enieda Baja, and Kavita Ramkissoon. (2022). The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Shifting to a Collaborative, Prevention-Focused Response to Youth Homelessness in a Large Urban Setting. *The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness*. [Community Report.]

Benjamin Owens. (2021). A Pride Flag by the Door: Creating Safe and Supportive Workplaces. *Our Times: Canada's Independent Labour Magazine*.

Suzanne Mills, **Benjamin Owens**, Adrian Guta, Nathaniel Lewis, Natalie Oswin. (2020). Work, Inclusion and 2SLGBTQ+ People in Sudbury and Windsor. [Community Report.]

Benjamin Owens. (2019). "The Customer is Always Right: Violence Against 2SLGBTQ+ Service Workers in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario." Master of Arts Thesis, McMaster University.

Benjamin Owens and Suzanne Mills. (2019). LGBTQ2S+ Work and Inclusion. [Community Research Brief.]

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND AWARDS

2023-	SSHRC CGS-D Scholarship
2023-	Faculty of Arts and Science Top Doctoral Award
2023	Department of Geography PhD Entrance Scholarship
2023	Elia Scholars Program (declined)
2019	Labour Studies GS Award
2018	Labour Studies GS Award
2018	SSHRC CGS-M Scholarship
2017	Undergraduate Student Research Award
2017	Harry Waisglass Book Prize
2017	Alice and Walter Day Scholarship
2017	Mary C. Shane Scholarship
2016	Larry Sefton Scholarship
2015-2016	Dr. Harry Lyman Hooker Scholarship
2015	OPSEU Global Solidarity Scholarship
2014-2015	Social Science Scholarship
2014	Presidential Award Scholarship, McMaster University

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

- 2024 **Benjamin Owens**. “The Spatiotemporalities of Precarity: COVID-19 and Youth Homelessness in Toronto, Ontario.” Austerity and Altered Life-Courses Symposium. University of Manchester. Online.
- 2024 **Benjamin Owens**. “The Spatiotemporalities of Precarity: COVID-19 and Youth Homelessness in Toronto, Ontario.” International Geographical Congress (IGC). Dublin, Ireland.
- 2024 **Benjamin Owens** and Suzanne Mills. “Minority Stress in the Unbounded Workplace.” Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Conference. St. John’s, Newfoundland.
- 2023 Katrina Milaney, Amanda Noble, **Benjamin Owens**. “Shelter Diversion in Six Canadian Communities: A Paradigm Shift for Youth Homelessness Prevention.” International Journal of Homelessness (IJOH) Conference. Chicago, Illinois.
- 2023 Amanda Noble and **Benjamin Owens**. “A Dark Intersection: Exposing the Structural Inequities that Lead to Youth Homelessness and Sex Trafficking.” International Journal on Homelessness (IJOH) Conference. Chicago, Illinois.
- 2022 Amanda Noble, Angel Power, Jess Rogers, **Benjamin Owens**. “A Dark Intersection: The Relationship between Youth Homelessness and Sex Trafficking.” Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) Annual Conference. Toronto, Ontario.
- 2022 **Benjamin Owens**, Noah Yang, Suzanne Mills. “Beyond Rainbow Capitalism: LGBTQ+ Workers’ Perceptions of Union Support in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario.” CRIMT Better Work for a Better Society Conference. Montreal, Quebec.
- 2022 **Benjamin Owens**. “The Employment Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic for Young People Experiencing Homelessness in Toronto, Ontario.” Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) Annual Conference. Online.
- 2022 Amanda Noble and **Benjamin Owens**. “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Experiencing Homelessness/El Impacto de COVID-19 en los/las Niños y Niñas, Adolescentes y Jóvenes en Situación de Calle.” Webinar hosted by Covenant House International.
- 2021 Amanda Noble and **Benjamin Owens**. “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Shifting to a Collaborative, Prevention-Focused Response in a Large Urban Setting.” Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) Annual Conference. Online.

- 2021 Suzanne Mills, Adriane Paavo, and **Benjamin Owens**. “A Conversation about Work, Inclusion and 2SLGBTQ+ People in Sudbury and Windsor.” Work in the West Podcast.
- 2021 **Benjamin Owens**. “Work, Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQ+ People/Le Travail, L’Inclusion, et les Personnes 2SLGBTQ+.” United Steelworkers National Women’s Committee. Online.
- 2020 Suzanne Mills and **Benjamin Owens**. “Work, Inclusion, and 2SLGBTQ+ People in Ontario’s Smaller Cities, Sudbury and Windsor.” Community Report Launch Presentation hosted by Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre.
- 2019 **Benjamin Owens**. “The Customer is Always Right: Violence and Discrimination Against 2SLGBTQ+ Service Sector Workers in Windsor and Sudbury, Ontario.” Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) Annual Conference. Vancouver, British Columbia.
- 2017 **Benjamin Owens**. “The History of Living Wage Campaigns in Hamilton, Ontario.” Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) Annual Poster Session. Hamilton, Ontario.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Research Assistant 2023 –
University of Toronto – Cultural Economy Lab

- Conducted systematic literature reviews for publication on work integration social enterprises

Research Supervisor 2022 – 2023
Covenant House Toronto

- Supervised a team of two research coordinators and one research assistant conducting research and evaluation projects on youth homelessness
- Co-authored a grant proposal for a multi-year, mixed-methods project on rental subsidies
- Collaborated with the Research Manager to design mixed-methods research and evaluation projects and data collection instruments
- Presented research findings at academic and community-based conferences

Research and Evaluation Coordinator 2021 – 2022
Covenant House Toronto

- Coordinated local and national research projects on youth homelessness prevention and harm reduction, and led data collection and analysis
- Conducted mixed-methods program evaluations to improve shelter supports and programming
- Designed quantitative surveys using standardized measures and analyzed results using inferential and descriptive statistics in SPSS
- Created presentations for stakeholders and research partners, and wrote technical reports and academic articles

Research Coordinator, COVID-19 and Youth Homelessness Project 2020 – 2021
University of Toronto Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work

- Coordinated a two-year, mixed-methods exploratory study on the experiences of youth experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Conducted over 40 qualitative interviews with youth experiencing homelessness and shelter staff
- Analyzed qualitative and quantitative data and co-authored academic and community research outputs

Researcher, 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion Project 2019 – 2021
McMaster University Department of Labour Studies

- Performed statistical analysis with survey and Statistics Canada data using logistic regression and chi-square analysis to uncover trends for a project on 2SLGBTQ+ workers' experiences of work, mental health, and substance use
- Analyzed qualitative data from 50 participants using NVivo to establish themes
- Co-authored pamphlets, presentations, academic articles, and a comprehensive community report to present the findings in an accessible manner

Research Assistant, 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion Project 2017 – 2019
McMaster University Department of Labour Studies

- Wrote grant and ethics applications for a community-based project on the work and health experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ people
- Designed surveys and interview protocols in conjunction with other researchers and community members
- Recruited participants and conducted interviews with 2SLGBTQ+ workers on their experiences at work
- Analyzed quantitative and qualitative data using STATA and NVivo to uncover trends

Placement Researcher, CUPE 2017 – 2018
CUPE Local 5167

- Developed a labour relations plan using extensive research into municipal policy to prepare the Local for their upcoming round of collective bargaining
- Authored a research paper on public sector collective bargaining in municipalities to support the plan with cutting edge theory

Student Investigator, Municipal Living Wage Project 2017
McMaster University Department of Labour Studies

- Wrote grant and ethics applications for a project on living wage policies
- Conducted and utilized a combination of literature review, archival, and interview research to highlight the forces contributing to the adoption of living wage policies
- Presented findings to peers, professors, and community members at poster session

Research Assistant, Living Wage Project 2016 – 2017
McMaster University Department of Labour Studies

- Conducted semi-structured interviews with employers to generate data for a research project on the living wage in Hamilton, Ontario
- Transcribed interviews with accuracy to facilitate consideration by City Council

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2025-Present Teaching Assistant, Labour Geographies, University of Toronto
Department of Geography and Planning (GGR3281H1)
- 2023-2024 Teaching Assistant, Environment, Food and People, University of Toronto
Department of Geography and Planning (GGR107H1F)
- 2018 Teaching Assistant, An Introduction to Labour in Canada, McMaster University
School of Labour Studies (LABRST 1A03)

METHODOLOGICAL AND RESEARCH TRAINING

Qualitative

- Research Methods, McMaster University School of Labour Studies | Instructor: Katherine Nastovski
- Methods, McMaster University School of Labour Studies | Instructor: Geraldina Polanco

Quantitative

- Introduction to Statistics, McMaster University Faculty of Social Sciences | Instructor: Lonnie Magee
- Quantitative Analysis (STATA), McMaster University Department of Political Science | Instructor: Michelle Dion

Knowledge Mobilization

- MobilizeYU Knowledge Mobilization Program, York University | Instructors: Krista Jensen and Michael Johnny

SERVICE AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

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| Edge/Work: Critical Labour Geographies on the Edge
<i>Conference Session Co-organizer at CAG Annual Conference</i> | 2024 |
| Fight for Fifteen and Fairness McMaster
<i>Organizer</i> | 2018-2019 |
| School of Labour Studies Program Director Selection Committee
<i>Undergraduate Student Representative</i> | 2017-2018 |
| Labour Studies Student Association
<i>Academic Events Coordinator</i> | 2017-2018 |

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Canadian Association of Geographers, American Association of Geographers, Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies

SOFTWARE

STATA; SPSS; NVivo; Dedoose; Quirkos; Survey Monkey; Qualtrics