

Université de Montréal

Filling the Gap: Cities and the Fight Against Homelessness in Canada

par Alison Smith

Département de science politique, Faculté des arts et des sciences

Thèse présentée à la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales en
vue de l'obtention du grade de Ph.D. en science politique

Avril 2016

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Résumé

L'itinérance est un domaine à la fois passionnant et exigeant de la politique publique. C'est un domaine nouveau, très complexe, mal défini et mal compris. Du milieu des années 1990 au milieu des années 2000, l'itinérance chronique a augmenté au Canada, et jusqu'ici, tant le gouvernement fédéral que les provinces n'ont pas réussi à la contrer sérieusement. En l'absence d'initiatives de la part du fédéral et des provinces, les groupes locaux de partout au pays se sont unis pour lutter contre ce qui était de plus en plus appelé la crise de l'itinérance.

L'ampleur de l'itinérance chronique est très similaire dans les grandes villes du Canada. Confrontés au même problème, les décideurs locaux des quatre plus grandes et plus importantes villes du Canada – Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto et Montréal – se sont unis pour constituer différents modèles de gouvernance de l'itinérance. En d'autres termes, il existe différents pourvoyeurs de protection sociale pour les itinérants chroniques, soit l'autre 1 %, dans chacune de ces villes.

Les modèles de gouvernance locale présentent deux différences principales : le rôle du gouvernement local, et la centralisation ou la fragmentation du modèle. À Vancouver et à Toronto, le gouvernement local est très impliqué dans la gestion de l'itinérance et y a fait d'importants investissements politiques et financiers. Tandis qu'à Montréal et à Calgary, le gouvernement local joue un rôle bien moins important. Ensuite, la gouvernance de l'itinérance est centralisée dans un seul organisme ou une seule agence à Calgary et à Toronto, alors qu'elle est divisée en plusieurs intervenants à Vancouver et à Montréal. Je me penche sur ce qui pourrait expliquer cette grande différence entre les modèles de gouvernance de l'itinérance, et j'analyse les conséquences théoriques et pratiques que cela peut avoir sur la protection sociale au Canada.

Je conclus que le rôle du gouvernement local dans la coalition gouvernante est déterminé par les pouvoirs des villes en matière de logement et par l'engagement des politiciens locaux pour lutter contre l'itinérance. À Vancouver et à Toronto, il y a soit des pouvoirs importants en matière de logement, soit un engagement politique solide à l'égard de l'itinérance, soit les deux. À Montréal et à Calgary, il y a comparativement moins de pouvoirs formels en matière de logement, et l'engagement politique à l'égard du problème est relativement faible.

Dans chaque ville, c'est l'organisation des forces sociales locales qui détermine la fragmentation ou la centralisation de la coalition gouvernante. À Vancouver et à Montréal, les forces locales et sociales sont fortes et organisées, mais elles sont divisées, ce qui fait que la gouvernance de l'itinérance est fragmentée. À Calgary, les forces sociales locales sont dominées par le secteur privé, alors qu'à Toronto, les forces sociales locales sont mal organisées et la Ville est un intervenant fort, et en quelque sorte dominant. Cela explique la centralisation de la gouvernance de l'itinérance dans ces deux villes.

Malgré leur engagement et leur créativité, aucun des modèles de gouvernance locale n'a réussi à réduire fortement l'itinérance. Aucun ordre de gouvernement seul ne peut résoudre le problème de l'itinérance, et l'absence du gouvernement fédéral des discussions concernant les politiques en matière de logement et d'itinérance était suffisante pour limiter le succès des initiatives menées à l'échelle locale.

Ces deux conclusions à la fois confirment et remettent en question les théories existantes de l'État-providence. D'une part, cela confirme l'argument que l'évolution de l'État providence est le reflet l'évolution du fédéralisme, et qu'il y a de plus en plus un nouveau

concept du capital social et humain en politique sociale. D'autre part, toutefois, il met au défi ces écrits, en soulignant le rôle que joue le niveau local dans la production de la protection sociale. Les études sur l'itinérance et l'État providence devraient accorder une attention particulière non seulement aux paliers de gouvernement fédéral et provincial, mais également au niveau local aussi.

Mots clés : État providence ; itinérance ; gouvernance urbaine ; gouvernance multi-niveaux ; relations intergouvernementales ; politique canadienne

Abstract

Homelessness is a challenging and fascinating area of public policy; it is new, very complex, poorly defined and poorly understood. From the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, chronic homelessness was growing throughout Canada, yet federal and provincial governments failed to respond to it in any meaningful way. In the absence of federal or provincial leadership, local groups across the country have come together to fight against what was increasingly called a crisis of homelessness.

The scale of chronic homelessness is very similar in big cities across Canada, yet facing the same problem, local actors in Canada's four biggest and most important cities – Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal – came together to form different models of governance of homelessness. In other words, there are very different producers of social protection for the chronically homeless, the other 1%, in each of these cities.

There are two main differences in the local governance models: the role of the local government and the centralization or fragmentation of the model. In Vancouver and Toronto, the local government is highly involved in governing homelessness and has made significant political and financial investments, whereas in Montreal and Calgary the local government plays a much smaller role. Further, the governance of homelessness is centralized in one single body or agency in Calgary and Toronto, whereas it is divided among a number of actors in Vancouver and Montreal. I ask what explains these very different models of governance of homelessness, and I consider the theoretical and practical consequences this has for social protection in Canada.

I conclude that the role of the local government in the governing coalition is determined by its housing related powers and the local political commitment to homelessness. In Vancouver and Toronto, there are either significant local housing related powers, a strong political commitment to homelessness, or both. In Montreal and Calgary, there are comparatively few housing related powers and the political commitment to the issue is relatively weak.

The fragmentation or centralization of the governing coalition is determined by the organization of local social forces in each city. In Vancouver and Montreal local social forces are strong and organized, but divided, making the governance of homelessness fragmented. In Calgary, local social forces are dominated by the private sector whereas in Toronto, local social forces are poorly organized and the city is a strong and somewhat domineering actor. This explains the centralization of the governance of homelessness in these two cities.

Despite their commitment and creativity, none of the local governance models has been successful at significantly reducing homelessness. No one level of government alone can solve homelessness, and the absence of the federal government from policy discussions regarding housing and homelessness has been enough to limit the local level successes.

These conclusions both confirm and challenge existing theories of welfare state. On the one hand, it confirms the argument that the evolution of the welfare state has mirrored the evolution of federalism, and that there is increasingly a new human or social capital paradigm of social policy. It challenges this literature, however, by highlighting the role that is played by the local level in the production of social protection. Studies of homelessness and the welfare state should pay careful attention not just to federal and provincial governments, but to the local level as well.

Key words: welfare state; homelessness; urban governance; multilevel governance; intergovernmental relations; Canadian politics

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Abbreviations

10YP:	10-year plan
ACL:	<i>AccèsLogis</i>
AHC:	Alberta Housing Corporation
AHI:	Affordable Housing Initiative
AISH:	Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped
CAP:	Canada Assistance Plan
CHF:	Calgary Homeless Foundation
CHST:	Canada Health and Social Transfer
CMHC:	Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
DTES:	Downtown Eastside
EPF:	Established Programs Financing
GAIN:	Guaranteed Annual Income for Need
GVRD:	Greater Vancouver Regional District
HEAT:	Homelessness Emergency Action Team
HPS:	Homelessness Partnering Strategy
IAH:	Investment in Affordable Housing
LIM:	Low Income Measure
LSR:	Local Services Realignment
MBM:	Market Basket Measure
MMFIM:	<i>Mouvement pour mettre fin à l'itinérance à Montréal</i>
NHI:	National Housing Initiative
NPA:	Non-Partisan Association
OHC:	Ontario Housing Association
PQ:	<i>Parti Québécois</i>
PRS:	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RAPSIM:	<i>Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal</i>
RSCH:	Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness
SEP:	Single Employable Person
SHQ:	<i>Société d'habitation du Québec</i>
SRO:	Single Resident Occupancy
STHF:	StreetoHome Foundation
TDRC:	Toronto Disaster Relief Committee
VV:	Vision Vancouver

Dedications and acknowledgements

Je savais qu'Alain allait être un excellent directeur de recherche quand, quelques mois avant de commencer mon doctorat en 2011, je lui ai envoyé un courriel pour demander si il avait quelques livres à me recommander. Il m'a suggéré deux livres « académiques » (*Municipalities and Multiculturalism* et *The Spirit Level*) et, à ma surprise, un roman aussi (*The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*). J'ai lu tous les trois ! He sees the world through a wide-angle lens, always pushing me to think about the bigger picture and significance of the questions I was asking. Not just for his appreciation of fiction, he was my ideal supervisor. He was calm and patient always, but most notably with my gradually improving French and with my understanding of my own research. He gave me space to figure things out on my own, but stepped in at the most important moments to provide much needed advice and encouragement. *Merci.*

Other faculty provided advice and guidance on this project. Laurence Bherer's course *Villes et politiques publiques* in many ways set my research agenda and influenced my dissertation, and her comments on various projects (including this one) have provided valuable insight into the urban dimension. Richard Nadeau is, to translate how a classmate put it, very good at saying what you want to say but aren't quite able to say yet. It takes a brilliant political scientist to provide comments and advice on a wide range of projects, which is exactly what he does in the *Seminaire de thèse*. His appreciation for the full diversity of political science (no matter how many Ns) is something I will strive for.

I long considered Denis Saint-Martin and Keith Banting (two jury members) to be part of my thesis family, and their comments on this work will certainly be reflected in future projects that flow from it. While not directly related to my thesis, André Blais was key in my decision to come to UdeM. He convinced me that it was the best place for me, and he was not wrong. His discipline and work ethic are second to none, yet he always has time for the department's students and he helped me on countless occasions. Jean-François Godbout, Vincent Arel-Bundock, and Martin Papillon gave me advice on my research agenda but more importantly, support and confidence when I needed it the very most.

Over the course of this research, I spoke with over one hundred people, either formally or informally, regarding their work in this area. These people are busy and often are working on a shoestring budget, but found time to speak with me about their work. I thank them for their passion and commitment to meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable citizens, and for their willingness to give me some of their time.

The past year in particular, finishing up our theses and entering the job market, would have been much more difficult and less enjoyable without talking through everything with Chris Cooper. Jean-Philippe Gauvin, Joanie Thibault-Couture, Alejandro Angel-Tapias, Kasia Virtuoso, Benoît Morissette, Alexandre Blanchet, and Martin Beddeleem, as well as Maroine Bendaoud, though numerous presentations and the *Seminaires de thèse*, saw various versions of this project and helped push it along with comments and comradery. Beyond this project however, and outside of the classroom, these classmates have taught me countless lessons about political science and about Quebec.

Many many friends and family members generously hosted me during fieldwork and different stages of writing. Thank you to Solanna, Dan and Cliff, Ritu, Fahr, Auntie Marilyn

and Uncle Alan, Joy and Peter, Adam, Heather and Robert, Aunt Susan, Aunt Pat and Uncle David for welcoming me into your home over the course of this long journey.

Alexander Sculthorpe knows this thesis so well he could have defended it on my behalf. (I, on the other hand, definitely could not have written the New York bar exam on his. Our interest in each other's most recent degrees was rather lopsided.) Every idea in here has been discussed with him, making the final product better and the journey to it so so much more fun. For making me feel smart, strong, interesting, funny and always loved, thank you. Our sweet and beautiful baby boy Bo, born 20 days after I submitted this thesis, puts everything into perspective. His curiosity and utter delight at the world around him are an inspiration for how to live.

And finally, this thesis is dedicated to two dreamers and givers, my mom and dad. For teaching me to ask questions; to love to read; to get stuff done; but above all, to care.

From the heart.

Chapter 1: Puzzle and Research Design

“For a growing number of Canadians, the city is their safety net.”
Mending Canada’s Frayed Safety Net
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2006.

In the last three local elections in Vancouver (2008, 2011, 2014), homelessness was front and centre in mayoral campaigns. This was particularly the case for Gregor Robertson and his political party Vision Vancouver, who campaigned in the 2008 campaign on a promise to end street homelessness by 2015. After Robertson and Vision Vancouver were elected to City Hall in 2008 (and subsequently in 2011 and 2014) homelessness has been one of the city’s top three priorities. Immediately following their election in 2008, Robertson and Vancouver city council began acting immediately, first by opening a number of new low-barrier emergency shelters and eventually implementing a 10-year housing and homelessness plan. Compare these local political dynamics with Calgary, a city with as much if not more homelessness than Vancouver; Calgary’s city council is comparatively very silent on the issue of homelessness. Homelessness does not come up often in local political campaigns, and city council does not have a homelessness plan or strategy. Rather, it is a non-profit foundation with strong ties to the oil and gas sector called the Calgary Homeless Foundation that has taken on responsibility for fighting and ending homelessness in the city. Looking around the country, it is clear that big cities and other local actors are involved to very different degrees in the governance of homelessness.

This dissertation considers how local actors are responding to chronic homelessness in four of Canada’s biggest cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. These four cities

are all responding to the same problem of chronic homelessness at a similar scale, but the governance model, the question of who is developing and implementing the response to homelessness, varies from city to city. There are two main differences in the governance models. First, local governments are involved to varying degrees in the fight against homelessness. Vancouver and Toronto make significant political and financial commitments, whereas Calgary and Montreal do not (though this is changing in Montreal). Second, in Calgary and Toronto, the governance of homelessness is centralized in one body or agency, whereas in others, it is fragmented between a number of different actors in Vancouver and Montreal.

In this dissertation, I ask what explains these different models of governance of homelessness in these four big Canadian cities. Through semi-structured interviews, archival research and participant observation, I conclude that the degree of involvement of the city governments is determined by their very different housing and homelessness related powers and incentives to use them. Further, building on theories of urban governance, I conclude that the centralization or fragmentation of the governance of homelessness results from the organization of local social forces, meaning the private sector and the third sector. Where local social forces are divided, there are multiple actors and plans to govern homelessness, which is the case in Vancouver and Montreal. In Calgary and Toronto, local social forces are dominated by one particularly powerful force, which explains the centralization of the governance of homelessness in those cities.

The pages that follow will mostly focus on explaining why these four cities have such different governance models. The conclusion, however, will consider briefly whether one local governance model works better than any others when it comes to the objective of reducing or

ending homelessness. The short answer is that, while there are some benefits to each model, there are also important flaws in all four governance models. There have been important achievements in the fight against homelessness to be sure, such as reducing the rapid growth of homelessness in Calgary. However, no major Canadian city has come close to the goal of ending or even significantly reducing homelessness.

To suggest that this is the fault of local actors, however, would be unfair and untrue. A “wicked” problem, homelessness is too complex for one level of government, or one sector of civil society, to solve on its own. Because it touches in a wide range of policy areas – including housing, health, justice, income support, to name just a few – it requires the support of all levels of government. For over 20 years, the federal government was largely absent from discussions related to housing and homelessness. This alone, given the federal government’s share of taxation power, is perhaps enough to ensure the failure of local or even provincial efforts to end homelessness. This thesis will end on an optimistic note, however; a new federal government with a commitment to investments in social infrastructure and an understanding of the needs of Canada’s major urban centres, is a very good sign for those fighting homelessness.

My conclusions show that while city governments continue to be extremely constrained by provinces in terms of their autonomy and financial powers, some cities are nevertheless innovating and have made themselves important policy actors in the fight against homelessness. Cities are not merely creatures of the provinces, implementing provincial social policies, but many are acting like governments and are developing their own policies. But local governments are not the only local actors who are innovating; the private sector and the

third sector are also crucial producers of social security for the other 1%. To understand the welfare state and how it has evolved, we must also look at the local level.

Definition of Chronic Homelessness

The word homelessness is itself very vague and can mean different things to different people. Every year in Canada, an estimated 235,000 people experience homelessness (Gaetz, Gulliver, and Richter 2015). For these 235,000 Canadians, the other 1%, public policy has failed and they have fallen through the cracks in the welfare state. The majority of these people, around 85% (Aubry, Farrell, Hwang, and Calhoun 2013), experience one brief episode of homelessness; for a few days, they have nowhere to go so they spend a brief amount of time in on the street or in an emergency shelter. The reason people experience this type of “transitional” homelessness varies, but is most often economic. Very quickly, these people find somewhere to live and they never again experience homelessness. A very small minority of the homeless population, 2-4% (Aubry et al 2013), is chronically homeless, meaning they are on the street or in emergency or other provisional housing for 1 year or more. This is often the group of people we associate with the word homelessness; they tend to be most visible on the streets and suffer frequently from severe mental illness and/or substance abuse. Groups seeking to raise awareness of homelessness will often use an image of an iceberg to send the message that what we see on the streets is a mere fraction of the broader problem of homelessness. While this thesis considers primarily what has been done regarding chronic homelessness, it recognizes that homelessness takes many shapes and forms, and that people experience homelessness for a variety of reasons but far too often due simply to poverty.

The chronic homelessness that we see in major urban centres throughout the country is a new problem of public policy. Canadians, and citizens of other developed countries around

the world for that matter, did not always experience chronic homelessness (Hulchanski 2009). True, over the course of Canadian history, there have been people living in extreme poverty and who have relied on front line, emergency support. Some of these people were so poor that they did not have permanent, safe, adequate housing of their own. Indeed, the Old Brewery Mission in Montreal, the city's largest homeless serving organization, has existed as an emergency shelter for over 125 years. But it would be a mistake to say that the homelessness we know today has existed for 125 years. Fallis and Murray note in their book *Housing the Homeless and the Poor*, "a cynic – or a person with a strong historical sense – might well ask if homelessness is just the 1980s' word for poverty" (1990, 12). Answering their own rhetorical question, they insist, "things are not the same; things are qualitatively different" (*ibid*). Hulchanski agrees, writing, "while it is true that all societies through history tend to have some people who are homeless – without a home – we have not always had the set of social problems we associate with the word *homelessness*" (2009).

Given the vagueness of the term, it is difficult to know exactly how much homelessness there is today compared to 125 years ago, but Canadian and international studies alike clearly show an increase in all types of homelessness throughout the 1980s to the mid-2000s. In other words, there has been a quantitative increase in the number of people experiencing all forms of homelessness (Gaetz, Donaldson, Richter, and Gulliver 2014; Hulchanski 2009; Layton 2008). But there has also been a qualitative change; the profile of homelessness, or the question of *who* experiences homelessness, is also different today than it was prior to the 1980s. The people who relied on emergency shelters and other front line services before the 1980s and 1990s, such as those provided 125 years ago by the Old Brewery Mission, were mostly white men in their 40s and 50s who were unable to work due to

physical injury or alcoholism. Beginning in the 1990s, this began to change rapidly, and today, a wide variety of people experience chronic homelessness, including women, youth, children, aboriginal people, and seniors (City of Toronto 2013; Gaetz 2015; Latimer, Macgregor, Méthot, and Smith 2015).

An advocate who was interviewed for this dissertation recalled seeing this change take place right before his eyes. He said of his work as an advocate in the 1980s, “I was a good advocate. I was out on evenings and weekends. I never, ever, ever, ever saw children homeless. I never saw seniors homeless” (interview #50). Fast forward to his future work in the mid-2000s, he spoke of the shock he felt when he saw a pregnant woman living on the streets of Toronto for the first time. Today in Canada, babies are born into homelessness, and children are raised in homelessness; a Canadian shelter recently tweeted a request for donations of soothers, saying there are many babies staying with them. This is new; babies, seniors, youth, and women have not always experienced homelessness, but they do today.

This changing profile of homelessness has been directly linked to government action and inaction (Fallis and Murray 1990; Hulchanski 2004, 2009; Turgeon 2009). Following the Second World War up until the 1980s, the government built approximately 10,000 units of social housing per year, and provinces had the resources and the freedom to offer social assistance levels that provided an adequate living income. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, however, the federal and most provincial governments cut funding in housing and social assistance. The provinces of Quebec and BC invested much more in affordable and social housing than other provincial governments, but as the remainder of this dissertation will show, this did little to stop the growing problem of chronic homelessness in those two provinces.

There was, by the mid-1990s, a gap in *all* provincial safety nets through which homeless people fell.

Community groups and local governments began to fill this gap and respond to what was increasingly called a crisis of chronic homelessness (Layton 2008; Monsebraaten 2012). The local level is not often associated with the development and implementation of social policy in Canada, so it is interesting to see leadership and innovation to end homelessness coming from local actors. But the lack of provincial and federal response to the new social risk of homelessness made the local level – including city governments, the private sector and the third sector – more relevant and important producers of social protection in Canada. This can be seen from a quick scan across Canada. In big and medium sized cities in Canada, from Halifax to Vancouver, local actors are doing what they can to end homelessness, making significant political and financial contributions to that end. This dissertation compares local governance models of homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montréal, but these are by no means the only cities with local plans on homelessness. Halifax, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Victoria, and many other cities are doing what they can do reduce or end homelessness.

Puzzle

The model for governing homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal varies significantly. The two main differences are the role of the local government in the model and second the centralization or fragmentation of the model. This is puzzling, because local groups are responding to the same problem at a similar scale; homelessness is not just a Vancouver problem, or even just a Downtown Eastside problem, but it touches all four cities under study fairly equally. Table 1 presents the results of the most recent Point-in-Time

homeless counts in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. The first set of numbers (Total and Ratio [total]) presents the overall results of the homeless counts, which can be compared across the four cities with the ratio of homelessness as it relates to the overall population of the city. This first comparison is problematic; each city used a slightly different methodology, a different definition of homelessness, and conducted the count at a different time during the year (meaning differences in weather between winter and spring counts, for example, will make results difficult to compare). These and other factors affect who is counted as homeless in the counts and therefore affects the overall comparability of the results (Smith 2015a).

A better way of comparing the state of homelessness in the four big cities, and more relevant to this dissertation, is to compare the amount of *chronic* homelessness, defined as anyone who has been homeless for one year or more or who has experienced multiple short episodes of homelessness within a one year period. The Point-in-Time methodology has limits, such as its ability to measure hidden homelessness (including couch surfing and overcrowding), but it is recognized in Canada and around the world as providing an accurate estimation of chronic homelessness. The second set of numbers (Chronic and Ratio [chronic]) compare the extent of chronic homelessness in each city and show that the level of homelessness is very similar. It is clear that there is less chronic homelessness in Montréal than there is in other cities, but the ratio is overall highly comparable.

Table 1: Homelessness in Canadian Cities¹

	Total	Ratio (total)	Chronic	Ratio (chronic)
Vancouver ² Pop:607,000 (Mar 24 2015)	1,746	1:345	784 (45%)	1:768
Calgary ³ Pop:1,097,000 (Oct 16, 2014)	3,555	1:309	1,457 (41.2%)	1:752
Toronto ⁴ Pop:2,615,000 (Apr 17, 2013)	5,253	1:497	2,941 (56%)	1:884
Montreal ⁵ Pop:1,650,000 (Mar 24, 2015)	3,016	1:547	1,809 (60%)	1:912

It is curious to see such similar rates of homelessness in these four cities; they are, after all, in very different provinces with very different social policies, notably those relating to housing and poverty. Québec and BC have built more affordable and social housing than other provinces, for example, and Québec has been very active in the area of poverty reduction since the early 2000s. Yet it is clear that, despite these social policy differences, there is a significant gap in the safety net in each of the provinces. The first two empirical chapters will explain why this is the case; I argue that chronic homelessness is a very specific and complex problem. Responding effectively to it requires a very targeted and specialized intervention; at time of writing, but especially in the early to mid-2000s, none of the provinces were doing this

¹ The date under the city population is the date on which the most recent homeless count was conducted

² (Thomson 2015)

³ (Turner 2015)

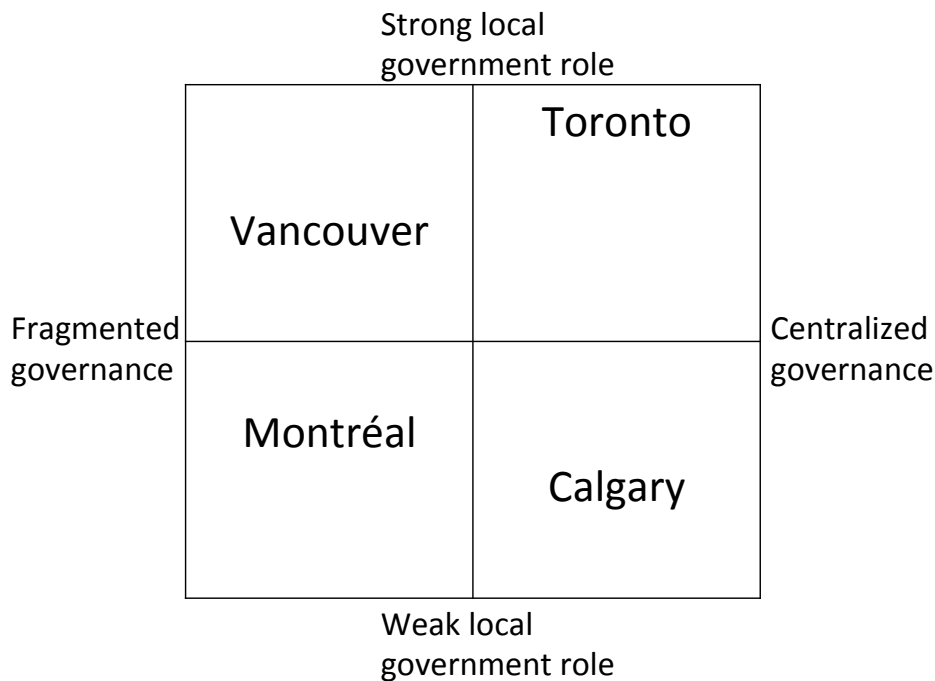
⁴ (City of Toronto 2013)

⁵ (Latimer, Macgregor, Méthot, and Smith 2015)

well. Thus, despite significant differences in provincial welfare regimes, the level of chronic homelessness in each city was very similar in the mid-2000s and remains similar today.

In Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal, local actors stepped up to fill the gap created by the provincial and federal governments, but the governance models are very different, notably in terms of the role of the local government and the degree of centralization or fragmentation of the models. Image 1 visually presents these differences. The details of each case are presented more comprehensively below. In some cities, there are regional plans on homelessness; these plans, though important, are not considered in the analysis that follows. The existence of a regional plan is largely the result of the regional structure of the metropolitan area; for example, there is no regional plan on homelessness in Calgary because there is no “region” of Calgary. For this reason, the regional plans are acknowledged below, but the analysis that follows considers only the local plans on homelessness, meaning those that are confined to the physical space of the municipality.

Image 1: Local governance models



Vancouver

The provincial government is very engaged in the area of housing and homelessness in Vancouver and throughout BC. At the local level in Vancouver, however, there are two important actors involved in the governance of homelessness: the City of Vancouver and the StreetoHome Foundation (STHF). Current Mayor of Vancouver Gregor Robertson pledged in 2008 to end street homelessness by 2015⁶ and to improve housing options all across the housing continuum, ranging from emergency shelters to home ownership (City of Vancouver 2011). In addition to this specific homelessness promise, the City of Vancouver has a ten-year plan on housing and homelessness, which was introduced in 2012. Specifically, the plan aims to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the needs of street homelessness by providing

⁶ The March 2015 homeless count confirmed what many had long been suspecting; that the city did not attain this goal of ending street homelessness by 2015.

enough shelters and Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) units; to develop 2,900 units of supportive housing; 5,000 units of social housing; 5,000 units of purpose built rental housing; and 6,000 units of rented condos and suites and laneway houses. The most recent annual report card, which must be provided by city staff to city council every year, writes, “the targets were intended to be *aggressive* but at the same time *achievable* through focused and coordinated efforts between the City and our partners (senior government, private sector, and non-profits)” (Chief Housing Officer 2015, 6 emphasis added).

In its first three years of implementation, the City invested significantly in the plan financially but also through lost revenues and in-kind contributions. For the housing and homelessness projects that were enabled in Vancouver between 2012-2014, the city contributed a total of \$321 million. Of this funding, \$208 million was in-kind contributions, which included affordable housing units acquired through density bonusing agreements or inclusionary zoning (see Chapter 5). The remaining \$85 million was in land contributions, \$9.6 million was in the form of exemptions or waivers of certain fees (to incentivize private investment in affordable housing), and \$19 million was capital grant funding. The report card writes, “the City has contributed \$321 million to leverage around \$651 million of partner funding to deliver 3,455 units of social and supportive housing valued at around \$973 million. This represents 33% of the total investment or around \$93,000 per unit” (Chief Housing Officer 2015, 18).

The city acknowledges that it cannot solve homelessness or the housing crisis in Vancouver without support from other sectors; “while significant, the City’s contribution alone cannot create the deeper affordability that is required to ensure our most vulnerable residents are sustainably housed” (*ibid*, 16). The plan and subsequent report cards highlight

the importance of partnerships with other governments and sectors. The STHF is, in a sense, an important partner for the city, but the STHF also has its own sources of funding and policy priorities; most notably, the STHF does not distinguish between street and sheltered homelessness unlike the City's plan (StreetoHome Foundation 2010). The budget for the STHF plan is \$26 million, much of which was fundraised from the private sector. Every year, the STHF spends around \$2-3 million. The goal of ending homelessness proposed by the STHF is ambitious, but the financial contribution that the STHF makes to the fight against homelessness in Vancouver is not as significant as the City's. For this reason, I argue that the City is a more important actor in the governance of homelessness than the STHF.

A regional body, the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) oversees approximately \$8.9 million annually in funding for the entire Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) (Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness 2014a). The funding that the regional body oversees through its plan on homelessness comes from the federal government through its Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) program. To guide its stewardship of this federal funding, the RSCH has a regional plan on homelessness. The RSCH plan distributes the federal funding to the entire GVRD, which has a population of approximately 2.5 million and is comprised of 23 municipalities.

In Vancouver, there are many cooks in the kitchen (or policy-makers around the table, as it were). The City of Vancouver, however, has demonstrated significant leadership in creatively using local tools to work towards the Council goal of ending street homelessness, and has invested substantially in the area as well, in terms of funding and in-kind

contributions. For this reason, the governance model is characterized by a strong degree of involvement of the local government, but is fragmented between the City and the STHF.

Calgary

Unlike the City of Vancouver, the local government plays a very small role in the governance of homelessness in Calgary. The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), a non-profit organization with close ties to the oil and gas sector, has become the most powerful and influential actor in the governance of homelessness in the city. In the first few years following its creation in the 1990s, the CHF served mostly as a facilitator between different actors who were involved in responding to homelessness around Calgary. In 2008, however, it developed and implemented a 10-year plan to end homelessness, the first such plan in Canada (but common in the United States). Through its plan, the CHF sets priorities, issues contracts to local service providers, and is ultimately responsible for ending homelessness.

The CHF has rewritten its plan to end homelessness twice since 2008, meaning there are three versions of the plan. All plans aim to end homelessness, though the final version of the plan is overall more modest and more realistic about the costs associated with ending homelessness and about the investment that is needed from provincial and federal governments (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2015a). The first version of the plan was much more ambitious and even arrogant (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2008), but following a few years of implementation, the CHF realized that its targets were much too aggressive. Through this learning process, the CHF has remained the single most important body in the governance of homelessness and has maintained the legitimacy needed to continue implementing its ever-evolving plan.

The CHF has an annual budget of \$22-26 million; around \$3 million is operating with the remaining money going to different homelessness projects (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2010, 2013). The CHF funding is not, however, used for the construction of social or affordable housing, but rather is for operating budgets and Housing First programs. This funding comes from various sources; the CHF oversees federal HPS funding for Calgary, the majority of provincial funding for homelessness in Calgary, but it has also fundraised significantly from the private sector. There was some opposition to the plan in its early days (2008), notably from the largest homeless shelter in Calgary, the Drop-In Centre (see McLean 2008). This opposition has gradually weakened, however, and there is currently no government or non-governmental plan that challenges or complements the CHF's plan at the local level. Up until 2008, the province was completely uninterested in housing and homelessness, but this changed when introduced a ten-year plan to end homelessness. At the local level, however, the degree of involvement of the local government in the governance of homelessness is very weak, and the governance is highly centralized in the CHF.

Toronto

In Toronto, homelessness is fully governed by the local government; the city has full policy responsibility for housing and by extension homelessness. In the late 1990s, Mike Harris's Progressive Conservative government embarked on an ideological project to reduce the size and scope of the provincial government. Part of this so-called "Common Sense Revolution" involved downloading the responsibility for social housing to the newly created mega-city of Toronto⁷. The trade of social housing and childcare to the municipal level in exchange for uploading education costs to the province was intended to be revenue neutral,

⁷ The amalgamated city of Toronto is made up of 6 former municipalities; North York, East York, York, Toronto, Etobicoke, and Scarborough.

but in hindsight many actors argue that this gave the city much more than it could handle without other more significant structural and financial reforms (interview #54 and #46; Suttor 2014). Doing what it could with limited resources, the City of Toronto has come to fully occupy the policy space regarding housing and homelessness, though its responses have, in recent years, come to a relative standstill.

The city's main response to homelessness is the Streets To Homes Program, introduced in 1999, which was one of, if not the, first Housing First programs in Canada (Falvo 2009). David Miller's local administration expanded the program in 2005. The City government also has a housing policy, Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT), which spends approximately \$700 million per year on housing and homelessness services (City of Toronto 2009a). This funding is mostly operating funding for affordable and supportive housing, but it also includes the Streets to Homes program.

The City of Toronto is overall unchallenged as the main homelessness policy making body in the city, though at key moments in the city's history, the private sector and the third sector have respectively exercised important influence. In the 1990s, a group of activists formed the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC), which at the time was an active and powerful group that defended the rights of the homeless in Toronto. It never had a plan to end or reduce homelessness, but was a strong voice advocating for better standards in emergency shelters and more government investments in social and affordable housing. In 2012, the TDRC officially disbanded, though many of its former members, including Cathy Crowe, Michael Shapcott, and David Hulchanski, remain very active in the area of homelessness.

Up until very recently, the advocate or activist void that was created when the TDRC disbanded was not filled; the City of Toronto had exclusive and unchallenged ownership of the

issue of homelessness from a policy and political perspective. In 2014, however, the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) was created as a body to represent the interests of community groups, researchers, and service providers. The TAEH has come to enjoy a productive relationship with the city, though in its early days it was very critical of and even hostile to city policy. The TAEH does not have a plan on homelessness, but rather, like the TDRC it is an advocacy body that aims to influence policy. It is included here therefore not as a group that challenges the City in the actual governance of homelessness, but as a potentially important voice in determining what the city decides to do.

The province currently has a poverty reduction strategy, which includes a goal to end homelessness in ten years (Government of Ontario 2014). These developments are reviewed more fully in Chapter 5. Despite this re-engagement of the province, the City remains the single most important body that governs homelessness in Toronto. The local government is highly involved in the governance of homelessness in Toronto, and has strongly centralized that power.

Montreal

The province of Quebec has historically exercised significant leadership in social policy, even when governed by right-of-centre governments (Noël 2013). Unsurprisingly, homelessness in Montréal has up until recently been largely governed by the province, and specifically by *the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux* (MSSS), which sets priorities and allocates funding throughout Québec through its agencies. The Province of Quebec introduced a comprehensive and multi-stakeholder policy on homelessness in 2014, one that was received well by many service providers and advocates in Montreal and throughout the

rest of the province (Montpetit 2014). This move by the provincial government underscored the continued provincial interest in the social policy landscape.

Despite this provincial plan, there are a number of groups at the local level who exercise significant influence in the governance of homelessness. The *Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal* (RAPSIM) is a very influential advocacy body that represents over 100 organizations that provide services to the homeless population in Montréal. Not all service providers in Montréal are members of the RAPSIM (notably, the Old Brewery Mission, Montréal's largest homeless shelter, has never been a member of the RAPSIM), but it is a powerful and effective voice when it comes to influencing government decisions around homelessness. It does not have a plan to end or reduce homelessness, but it has a preferred solution to homelessness – social housing with community support – for which it lobbies at all three levels of government.

Recently, another group called *Le mouvement pour mettre fin à l'itinérance de Montréal* (MMFIM) has emerged at the local level in Montréal, which aims to respond to chronic homelessness. The MMFIM aims to respond to homelessness in a way that moves away from “managing” homelessness to “ending” it, language that is not unlike that heard in other cities in Canada and throughout the USA (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2015b; National Alliance to End Homelessness 2015). The MMFIM has developed a comprehensive plan to “end” homelessness in 10-years, which is based on lessons learned and best practices from Canada and Europe. The plan comes with a significant price tag; the MMFIM estimates that ending homelessness for the estimated 2000 chronically homeless people in the city will cost approximately \$80 million; at time of writing, the plan remains unfunded.

Mayor Denis Coderre is also taking a great deal of interest and leadership in the area of homelessness, notably by announcing his own action plan on homelessness (CBC News 2014b). Prior to introducing the plan, the City spent approximately \$1 million per year on homeless services, mostly by supporting organizations or small projects throughout Montréal. With the new plan, the budget has more than doubled to a total of \$2.2 million per year for three years. The City of Montréal's action plan contains 4 priorities, 12 actions, and 44 recommendations, including creating a local watchdog over issues relating to homelessness and the implementation of the Point-in-Time count of the homeless population. The introduction of this plan is a historic step by the City of Montréal; in the past, the city has had a plan or policy on homelessness, but it lined up point for point with provincial actions (see Ville de Montréal 2009). For the first time, the City of Montréal now has its own plan with its own priorities and actions, which do not line up with the provincial plan. In addition to the city's plan, provincial plan, and MMFIM plan, there is also a regional plan on homelessness, which was introduced in October 2015. The plan was developed and is being implemented by the *Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux* (CIUSSS) from the South Centre of the island of Montréal. This plan comes with approximately \$4 million of public funding per year for three years.

There are a number of actors who are involved in the governance of homelessness in Montréal. The City is becoming more involved, but its plan does not have specific targets, and is not accompanied by much funding. For this reason, I argue that the degree of involvement of the City of Montréal is relatively weak in the governance of homelessness. Further, the MMFIM and the RAPSIM are also engaged in the area of homelessness. The governance of homelessness in Montréal is therefore, highly fragmented.

In this thesis, I seek to explain these different governance models of homelessness adopted in these four cities. This question of who does what in the provision of social protection is a classic one in the study of the Canadian welfare state, and in the study of Canadian politics more generally (Skogstad 2003). The literature on the Canadian welfare state, and specifically on who does what in the provision of social protection, has been strongly influenced by the study of federalism, meaning the focus has mostly been on the role of provincial and federal governments. Housing policy has not often been studied in the context of the Canadian welfare state, but when it is has, authors have also highlighted the importance of federalism. For example, Albert Rose, in his classic study of housing policy in Canada wrote, “the most important background fact in the Canadian housing experience is that Canada is a federal state” (Rose 1980, iii). Keith Banting, writing about social policy more broadly, has written “Canadians developed their version of the welfare state in the context of a vibrant federal state, with strong governments at both the federal and provincial level” (Banting 2005a, 89).

To understand who decides and oversees policies in the Canadian welfare state, we must understand federalism and its unique dynamics in Canada. It remains an undeniably important factor in understanding what Jenson calls “the distribution of responsibility among the producers of welfare” (Jenson 2013, 46). The constitutional division of powers, and how intergovernmental relations have evolved over different periods of Canadian history, explain why the federal and provincial governments provide the social services that they do. Yet, this literature has been silent on the role of local governments; from the perspective of federalism, cities are not orders of government and have no constitutional protection or policy responsibility.

Changes to the welfare state in much of Canada through the 1980s and 1990s, however, compel us to take another look at this question of who does what in the welfare state, this time considering the local role as well. Through cuts, downloading, and retrenchment, many senior governments – both federal and provincial – have backed away from the provision of social services such as housing, and have reduced social assistance benefits. Rice and Prince write, “social safety nets are now badly frayed and closer to the ground” (2013, 137). Noël has shown how Quebec took a different route by making different decisions throughout this period, expanding important parts of the welfare state while governments were retrenching in other provinces, but even Quebec has struggled with increasing poverty and homelessness, especially among single people (see Chapter 4).

In short, changes to the welfare state in the 1980s and 1990s made local actors more powerful in the provision of social services. Of course, provincial governments play an important role in structuring what happens at the local level, both in terms of how their social policies shape the needs at the local level and through the powers that they grant to local governments. But to truly understand what explains the different governance models, we must dive right down to the local level. Though structured by the provinces, I argue that the different governance models are the result of unique local dynamics in each of the cities.

Research Design

This section outlines the research design of the project, including methods and theoretical contributions. This thesis is a small-N comparative study of the governance of homelessness in four large Canadian cities. Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal are the biggest and most important cities in Canada, and they are all at the forefront of the struggle with a growing homeless population. Through interviews, archival research and participant

observation, I test three hypotheses derived from the literature on the welfare state and urban governance (see Chapter 2). The first two hypotheses relate to the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness. Specifically, the *first hypothesis* is that *cities have different housing related powers*. The *second hypothesis* is that *cities have degrees of different political commitment to the issue of homelessness*. The *third hypothesis* is that *the organization of local social forces determines whether the governance of homelessness is centralized in one body or fractured among various groups*.

These hypotheses were tested through a mixed-method, qualitative approach using interviews, participant observation, and archival research. Between January and October 2014, I conducted over 100 semi-structured interviews with actors involved in the governance of homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. This included but was not limited to elected officials and bureaucrats at the municipal, provincial and federal levels; activists; service providers; the police; and private sector representatives. I identified the actors with whom I conducted interviews in part through primary document research. For example, in 2008 Mayor Gregor Robertson set up a task force on homelessness. Members of the task force were listed publicly, so I contacted them all for an interview request. I also asked interviewees to identify any other key actors with whom I should speak, a method called “snowballing” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). In some cases, certain names came up again and again in interviews. When this was the case, I requested an interview with that person. The majority of people I contacted for interview requests agreed, though a limitation of this methodology is that some important actors did not consent to an interview. Often it was high profile individuals with busy schedules; where possible, I have sought out their public statements on homelessness.

The interview method is often described as “a conversation with a purpose” (Berg 2011, 89). In the case of this thesis, the purpose of the interviews was to understand the development of the local homelessness governance networks and also to contribute to my analysis of the organization of local social forces. The questions and overall interview structure were designed in accordance with social science interviewing principles and guidelines so that they would yield systematic and comparable data, but they were flexible enough to be adapted to different people. Specifically, I conducted semi-structured (or semi-standard) interviews. In this type of interview, a number of questions are systematically asked to all interviewees. However, this interview method allows for flexibility as well; “the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress; that is, the interviewed are permitted (in fact, expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions” (Berg 2011, 95).

When conducting semi-structure interviews, it is a common practice for researchers to develop a “topic guide” (Jelen 2013) or an “interview schedule” (Berg, 2011) for the interview. This allows for the in depth discussion of relatively broad, open-ended questions. My topic guide contained four questions, which were asked to all interviewees:

1. Why did you become involved in the area of homelessness in your city?
2. What is your role in the overall fight to end homelessness in your city?
3. What causes homelessness?
4. What is the solution to homelessness?

I also asked many follow up questions to each interviewee and, in some cases I prepared specific questions for certain actors. Each interview was recorded (with the knowledge and permission of the interviewee), and was transcribed fully to allow for accurate, detailed analysis.

An important weakness of the interview method is that memories of important events may fade, or alternatively, actors may consciously omit or change parts of the story. Further, when doing a limited number of interviews, there is always the possibility of selection bias, which can lead to a skewed representation of reality. This problem is often at the heart of social science research questions and qualitative research designs, especially those related to an intensely personal and complex question such as homelessness. One way of responding to this concern is to conduct interviews to the point of saturation (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Jelen 2013). This is difficult to achieve in general in qualitative research, and in an area of public policy that is as broad and as poorly defined as homelessness. For these reasons, it is useful for qualitative researchers to triangulate. Triangulation involves testing facts against one another, which results in a more complete reflection of reality; “every method is a different line of sight directed toward the same point, observing social and symbolic reality. By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality” (Berg 2011; 5).

Archival research was one of the ways I triangulated. By reviewing primary documents, such as annual reports, policies, plans and newspaper articles, I was able to put the interviews in a broader context and relate what one person said to another data source. I also used books and secondary sources to check facts. In addition to the formal interviews, in all four cities I also had a number of informal meetings with journalists, academics, and activists to test ideas and evidence that was presented during the interviews.

The final method I used to triangulate was participant observation, primarily in Montréal. Patton (2002) calls participant observation “an omnibus field strategy” (265) because it allows the researcher to gather information in various formal and informal ways.

Denzin (1978) specifies that participant observation “simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection” (183). This method was only available to me in Montreal, where a new actor – the *Mouvement pour mettre fin à l’itinérance de Montréal* – began to form and gain influence as I started my fieldwork in 2013. Upon interviewing a number of members of the network, I was invited to their meetings to present my research. With the permission of the leadership of the new movement, I eventually began to observe most network meetings; I took notes during the meetings and breaks, I had informal conversations with members of the movement and asked questions regarding homelessness in Montreal. Further, as my role became more that of a participant, I was invited on calls with national leadership (including the Homeless Hub and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness), and was involved in a number of email chains discussing the movement and its place within Montreal’s policy community. I also attended a number of meetings regarding homelessness with the City of Montreal, notably regarding the 2015 Point-in-Time homeless count. This provided crucial insight not only into the actions of key public policy actors, but also into how they fit with respect to one another.

The risk of participant observation is that the researcher might, consciously or unconsciously, become biased in her analysis. Indeed, I was not able to observe the meetings or emails of the other main Montreal actor, the *Réseau d’aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal*. To prevent such bias, I was able to conduct a number of interviews with actors aligned with this group, and I conducted significant archival and primary document research to fully understand the role of the RAPSIM in the governance of homelessness in Montreal.

Theoretical Contributions

This dissertation makes four main theoretical contributions. First, it supports the growing literature, mostly on urban governance but also on federalism, that cities are becoming more powerful actors within the Canadian intergovernmental system. They are not just implementing provincial policies (taking policy), but are also developing their own (making policy). The paucity of powers, notably financial, has seriously limited the ability of cities to fully engage in the public policy process, and they are actively demanding more powers from the provinces. But municipal authorities are not sitting around and waiting for the provinces to comply, but rather are innovating and acting, often with insufficient and inappropriate tools, to develop public policy. Further, in taking a close look at their role in the governance of homelessness, it becomes very apparent that local governments are not all behaving the same; they are making political decisions and calculations, and in some cases are building and leading coalitions of other local actors in the fight against homelessness. In short, cities are acting very much like governments. This thesis is therefore a part of a larger story about the place of cities in the intergovernmental framework.

Related to this first contribution regarding the intergovernmental framework, this research also sheds light on the place of the local level more broadly in the production of social protection. Rice and Prince have written that the welfare state is badly frayed and close to the ground. This is an important comment, especially when we compare the current welfare state with what existed following the Second World War when social policies were expanding rapidly. But as the federal and provincial governments failed to respond to the new social risk of homelessness, local actors began developing their own responses to fill the gaps created by the senior governments. They were and are doing so with wholly inadequate tools, but they have been having some success. The social safety net remains close to the ground, to be sure,

but local actors – including governments, the private sector and the third sector – are doing their best to mend the nets, plug the holes, and fill the gaps that have been created by the two orders of government. To fully understand who is doing what with respect to homelessness and to grasp how the welfare state has evolved, we must look not just at provincial and federal levels, but at the local level as well.

Thirdly, this thesis brings the study of housing and homelessness into Canadian studies on the welfare state. In Canada and abroad, housing has been studied more as an economic policy than a social policy (Bacher 1993; Torgersen 1987), even though it has been and continues to be an important part of the welfare state (Béland 2010). Yet the rise of chronic homelessness around the world as a new social risk that affects all kind of people has forced a re-think – of both policy and scholarship – of housing as an important part of the social safety net. Bringing the study of housing and homelessness directly into the literature on the welfare state will strengthen our understanding of social protection in Canada, and result in more complete theories of the welfare state and its evolution. Indeed, studying housing from this perspective both confirms and challenges existing theories of the evolution on the welfare state.

On the one hand, it confirms how the evolution of the welfare state has mirrored the evolution of federalism, with federal and provincial governments asserting more leadership at different points in Canadian history, depending on the nature of federalism. It also confirms existing theories regarding what Banting (2005b) calls the new paradigm of social policy. This new paradigm invests more in human capital than in redistribution; “education and training are carrying too much weight in the new social discourse, and a successful strategy of investing in human capital cannot be divorced from issues of poverty and inequality” (Banting 2005b,

421). This new paradigm, Banting argues, does not include a redistributive complement to the investments in human capital; this is seen quite clearly with homelessness, where policies focus on investments in health and social supports, but do not include any meaningful income security complement. As the chapter on provincial social policies will demonstrate, the social assistance incomes offered to chronically homeless people in all provinces is 40-50% below the poverty line. Indeed, chronic homelessness and the policy responses to it is perhaps the most obvious evidence of this shift towards a new welfare state, which focuses on investments for the future and less on poverty alleviation for those who are presently poor.

But studying housing policy within the context of the welfare state also challenges this literature, notably by highlighting the very important role that is being played by local level actors. Much of this literature, which focuses just on provincial and federal governments, misses a significant part of the picture. Whether it is municipal governments using by-laws and zoning powers to create more units of affordable housing, the private sector contributing capital funding to new developments, or community groups innovating in new forms of social supports, the local level is a vital player in the production of social protection for the other 1%. As more and more complex social problems are concentrated in Canada's biggest cities (Bradford 2005), scholars should continue to look at what is happening not just at the provincial and federal levels, but they must also consider the local level as well. In other words, a multilevel perspective on new social risks and challenges will be increasingly relevant in today's context where the local level is very active and important.

There are also practical implications to this research. Looking at these different governance models, one might ask if it is "better" to be homeless in one city rather than another. The short answer is no. On the one hand, homelessness is experienced very

differently by different people; the experience of a woman on the street is different than the experience of a man, aboriginal people have different experiences than do non-aboriginal people, for example. Looking at the services that are offered and how they are organized, Vancouver is perhaps slightly “better” for an aboriginal person than Montreal is, but Montreal is perhaps better for women than Vancouver, though homelessness is of course a nearly universally negative, stressful, and undesirable situation.

The discussion chapter will consider this question more fully, but ultimately concludes that each governance model has important flaws, which make it difficult for the most vulnerable people to find and keep housing. The governance models should not bear exclusive responsibility for the failure of local actors to “end” homelessness, however. As the pages that follow will make very clear, homelessness is a very complex and challenging area of public policy, one that no single level of government or no single sector of society can solve on its own. The fact that the federal government has been absent from discussions regarding housing and homelessness for over 20 years is perhaps enough to ensure that the successes of local fights against homelessness will be limited at best. This thesis ends on an optimistic note, however, as powerful actors at all levels of government now seem to recognize the importance of investments in housing and homelessness services; with the federal government back at the table and promising important investments in housing, local and provincial actors will have much needed support for their efforts and might expect to see greater successes in the coming years.

Thesis Outline

The remainder of this thesis is divided into seven chapters. In the following chapter, I review the literature on the welfare state and urban governance and present my theoretical

framework. I argue that existing theories of social protection in Canada tend to focus on the federal and provincial levels as the main producers of social protection. But by ignoring the local level, theories of the welfare state in Canada are incomplete. These existing theories fail to capture new actors in the welfare state, notably local governments and other non-state local actors, and the role they play in developing and implementing social policies. I therefore review the small literature on urban public policy to build a theoretical framework for the first part of this empirical puzzle regarding the different degree of involvement of local governments in the governance of homelessness. The theories of urban governance provide further insight into the governance of homelessness in these four cities and why it is fragmented in some cases but centralized in others. This second section of the literature review thus reviews different theories and models of urban governance in Canada and other developed countries and presents the second part of the theoretical framework, which relates to the centralization or fragmentation of the local governance model.

The third chapter is primarily descriptive; it the history of homelessness in Canada and then reviews the historic role of the federal government in housing policy and more recently in homelessness policy. The next four chapters are the empirical heart of the dissertation. The first two empirical chapters present and compare the provincial social policy environments that structure the local responses to homelessness. The first of these chapters compares provincial housing policies. The second compares provincial efforts to reduce or alleviate poverty and consider poverty reduction strategies and social assistance benefit rates in the four provinces. These chapters conclude that while the provincial environment is an inevitably important factor that influences local responses to homelessness, there is clearly a gap in all four provincial safety nets, the most extreme manifestation of which is chronic homelessness.

The question of who fills this gap is a distinctly local question. Digging down to the local level, the third and fourth empirical chapters argue that local community groups and governments have mobilized in a way that is unique not to their respective provinces, but to their cities. The third empirical chapter compares the local housing related powers and political commitment to the issue of homelessness in the four cities; these factors explain the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness. The final empirical chapter argues that the governance model reflects the broader distribution of power at the urban level among local social forces. In other words, I conclude that the organization of these social forces determine the centralization or fragmentation of the governance of homelessness.

The eighth chapter brings the conclusions of each empirical chapter together with the literature for the final analysis of the main research question. A comparison of these four cities demonstrates that local government and non-government actors are more important in the provision of social protection than the literature on the Canadian welfare state theorizes. This thesis does not counter in any way the central role of the two orders of government in the development and evolution of the welfare state, but argues that a great deal is missed if we do not also look at the local level. The implications of this increasing role of the local level is discussed in this concluding chapter, including what it means for how Canada is governed as well as the state of social protection in Canada.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This dissertation confronts an empirical puzzle in the Canadian welfare state. In the absence of federal and provincial interventions in the area of housing and homelessness during the 1990s and 2000s, visible and chronic homelessness began to rise rapidly in big Canadian cities. During that time, groups at the local level stepped up to fill the gap that created by federal and provincial governments in the welfare state. Yet despite facing the same problem at a similar scale, groups came together in very different ways to form very different governance models in Canada's four biggest and most important cities.

There are two main differences in the local governance models: the degree of involvement of the local government in the governance of homelessness, and the degree to which the model is fractured among different actors or centralized in one. In Vancouver, the city government is very involved in the governance of homelessness, but another group (the StreetoHome Foundation) has also developed, funded, and implemented its own plan on homelessness. In Calgary, the city government is not involved in the governance of homelessness; power is rather centralized in a non-governmental body, the Calgary Homeless Foundation. In Toronto, the city is very involved, having been given the responsibility for housing and homelessness from the provincial government in the 1990s. There is no other non-governmental body in Toronto that participates in a formalized way in the governance of homelessness. Finally, in Montreal, the city government is becoming more involved in the governance of homelessness, but there are two other groups that are also influential in this area, making its governance highly fragmented. I ask why there are such different models of local governance of homelessness in these four cities. In other words, why are there such

different producers of social security in these four cities, even though they are facing the same problem at a similar scale?

This question of who does what is a classic one in the study of the Canadian welfare state. Because of the constitutional foundation of Canada and the multinational nature of the country, answers to this question have placed particular importance on federalism and on the federal and provincial governments as the main producers of social security. The constitutional division of powers and the evolving nature of federalism over the course of Canadian history have largely determined which level of government is responsible for which social policies. Provincial and federal governments are undeniably important actors in the welfare state, but in the 1980s and 1990s the federal and many provincial governments backed away from important areas of social policy, notably housing, and chronic homelessness increased quickly in urban centres across the country. In this context, the local level – including local governments, the private sector and the third sector – has become a more relevant and important producer of social protection than it has been in the past.

Given these changes to the welfare state, we must again ask the classic question “who does what?” but this time paying particular attention to the local level. Specifically, why are there such different models of governance of homelessness in Canada’s four largest cities? In this literature review, I review the literature and justify the theoretical framework that I use to respond to this question. This chapter begins by briefly reviewing the literature regarding the Canadian welfare state, paying particular attention to the question of who does what and to the literature on federalism and the welfare state. This literature is an important backdrop to this thesis, but it falls short in that it does not adequately consider the role of the local level in the production of social protection in Canada. Finding that the literature on federalism and the

welfare state does not speak adequately to the role of the local level in the welfare state, I turn to the small literature on urban policy-making in Canada and build a theoretical framework to explain why the four local governments are involved to differing degrees in the governance of homelessness across Canada. I hypothesize that two factors determine the degree of involvement of the local government: the local housing related powers of the city government and the political commitment of the local government to the issue of homelessness.

This literature stresses that local governments are important actors in urban governance, but often notes that municipalities do not have enough power or resources to govern on their own. They must therefore work with other local actors where possible, notably the private sector and the third sector, to govern more effectively. Staying at the local level, the final section of this chapter reviews the literature on urban governance more broadly, paying particular attention to the role of local social forces, including the private sector and the third sector, in the urban governance of these four cities. Based on this literature, I hypothesize that the centralization or fragmentation of the governance models is determined by the relative strength of these different local social forces in the overall governance of the city.

Federalism and the Welfare State

The question of who does what is a classic one in the study of the welfare state, and in Canadian politics more generally (Skogstad 2003). In Canada, studies of the governance of the welfare state have typically approached this question from the point of view of federalism. As federalism in Canada has evolved, so too has the division of responsibilities in the welfare state. Indeed, one reading of the history of the evolution of federalism could, in fact, identify the welfare state as the most important battleground between federal and provincial governments. As Banting argues; “provincial governments... fought to recapture tax room to

finance education, health, and social services on their own terms. *In effect, the struggle was for control over the Canadian welfare state*” (Banting 2012, 144; emphasis added).

Authors such as Simeon, Robinson and Wallner (2014); Noël (2001, 2009), Banting (Banting 1987, 1990, 2005a), Rice and Prince (2000, 2013), Battle and Torjman (2002), Pelletier and Tremblay (2009), and Choudry et al (2006) to name a few, have considered how the changing nature of federalism has affected who produces social protection in Canada. To make things more interesting, the nature of federalism in Canada has been and continues to be contested both in the literature and in practice (Rocher 2009; Rocher and Fafard 2013). Studies of the federal welfare state are thus often accompanied by an explicit or implicit assumption regarding who *should* do what. Debates surrounding centralization versus decentralization (Battle and Torjman 2002; Gagnon 2009; Noël 1999; Rice and Prince 2013), the fiscal imbalance (Noël 2009), and the spending power (Choudhry, Sossin, and Gaudreault-DesBiens 2006; Noël 2008) are often at the heart of this literature.

Studies of federalism and the welfare state have been correct to highlight the important role played by provincial and federal governments in the development, expansion, and evolution of social protection in Canada. This literature remains relevant today, and scholars of the welfare state in Canada must continue to consider the many ways that federalism (including its contested and multinational nature in Canada) affects not just who does what in Canada, but also how effective policies are as well as how and why they change. However, it is not the intention of this literature review to settle these debates, nor even to review them fully. Rather, it is to highlight two important blind spots in this significant body of literature regarding who does what in the welfare state, which this thesis aims to fill.

First, it is curious that housing policy is so often ignored in studies of the Canadian welfare state. Given the involvement of federal, provincial and municipal governments in housing policy, and the substantial changes in terms of policy leadership responsibility, this blindspot is troubling. Canadian welfare scholars have been more inclined to study income security (Banting 1987; Béland and Daigneault 2015; Boychuk 1998; Rice and Prince 2013), health policy (Boychuk 2008; Maioni 1997), education policy (Wallner 2010, 2014), and pensions (Myles 1989). Banting's widely cited chapter "Social Housing in a Divided Federal State" in *Housing the Homeless and the Poor* (1990) represents one of the only attempts to analyze the history of housing policy within the context of the evolving Canadian welfare state (Suttor 2014).

The theoretical silence on the place of housing within the welfare state is not unique to Canada; housing has long been called the "wobbly pillar of the welfare state" (Torgersen 1987) in Europe as well. Torgerson writes, "I believe that housing always will occupy a special and awkward position in welfare thinking due to the special nature of the commodity in question" (*ibid* 116). He compares housing to other areas of the welfare state, such as pensions, education, and health; "each of these three domains are thus not just a type of human concern, but a *fairly institutionalized complex*, with well-defined borders, *esprit de corps* and a national director" (118). Torgerson notes that there important differences with housing, such as "no immediate action in the provision for help. This area also has less of a body of professionals" (*ibid*). For this reason, housing is the "odd-man out in the welfare company" (*ibid*).

As is the case in Europe, Canadian studies of housing policy have often emphasized its economic orientation. Indeed, the housing system in Canada is overwhelmingly dependent on

the private sector, more so than any other country in the OECD including the United States (Hulchanski 2002). One of the main books on the history of housing policy in Canada is called *Keeping to the Marketplace*, reflecting the economic theoretical and policy orientation housing policy. Indeed, when the federal government conducted a review of social services in the 1990s, housing was not even considered (Prince 1998).

Yet housing is and has always been an important component of the welfare state (Béland 2010) and is a known determinant of the success of other social policies (Carter and Polevychok 2004). Further, the rise of chronic homelessness around the world as a new social risk, and one that touches an increasingly broad and diverse group of people, has forced scholars and practitioners alike to rethink housing policy as not just an economic policy but as a social policy as well. Homelessness is not just about housing, but at the most basic level it is always about housing, and solutions to it often have the need for more affordable housing at their very centre. Not just an economic good, housing is increasingly seen as a tool for social policy as well.

Bringing housing policy into the literature on the Canadian welfare state makes for an important contribution to the understanding of how federalism has evolved throughout history, and how its evolution has affected the governance of the welfare state. It also gives us a more complete understanding of how the welfare state protects the most vulnerable; in other words, if we look at housing and homelessness related interventions, is the safety net as frayed and as many scholars (see Rice and Prince 2013; Prince 1998) argue that it is? Given the involvement of different governments and the great changes that have taken place in terms of its leadership, the study of housing from the perspective of the welfare state will shed important light on the dynamics of federalism (notably its increasingly multilevel nature) and the evolution of social

protection for the most vulnerable Canadians who have become homeless. In short, bringing the study of housing and homelessness into the literature on the federal welfare state both confirms and challenges some of the main conclusions of this literature.

The second oversight in the literature on federalism and the welfare state is its silence on the role of local governments, and the local level more generally, as producers of social protection. This is, understandably perhaps, because local governments have no constitutional status in Canada and in law are nothing but creatures of the provinces with very few legal and financial powers. As Turgeon writes, “these omissions are nonetheless understandable given the limited economic and political resources available to municipal governments” (Turgeon 2009, 358).

This cursory treatment of the local level is, however, problematic. The changes to the welfare state that will be outlined in the following chapters illustrate how the federal government and many provincial governments backed away from important areas of social policy in the 1980s and 1990s, notably housing, and how this contributed to the rise of poverty and chronic homelessness across the country. The need for affordable housing and adequate social supports did not disappear however, and the tacit assumption that the private sector would create affordable housing ultimately did not prove true. Rice and Prince write that during the 1980s, “faith in the redistributive capacities of the welfare state decreased... It was argued that the state needed to expand the market’s role, not constrain it” (Rice and Prince 2013, 114). They note that the result of these changes was the rise in the number of food banks, which started to appear in Canada in the 1980s, as well as increased reliance on soup kitchens and emergency shelters. Noël agrees, writing that “poverty and economic insecurity increased in Canada in the 1990s, and to a large extent this can be attributed to changes in

income security programs” (2001, 15). In other words, Rice and Prince argue, “social safety nets are now badly frayed and closer to the ground” (2013, 137).

Banting and Myles argue that conscious government decisions to cut social policy spending and programs contributed to the weakening of the social safety net, but so too did government *inaction*. They write, “taxes and transfers are no longer offsetting the growth in equality generated by the market, and Canadian society has become more unequal... policy drift has compounded the problem. Governments have failed to modernize the policy architecture in light of new social risks facing Canadians” (2013a, 412). Throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, both senior levels of government very clearly failed to respond to the new social risk of chronic homelessness. Where they did respond, it was in short-term and woefully underfunded programs, such as the federal National Homelessness Initiative (which has today become the Homelessness Partnering Strategy). Even federal government reviews of these programs conclude that they failed to meet the needs of the homeless population, largely because they were not designed to address the root of the problem: a lack of affordable housing and intensive social supports to help people remain housed (Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada 2008, 2009). In other words, federal and provincial government failed to implement policies to help people exit homelessness, or that would prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Looking at these changes and putting them in the context of changes to the welfare state around the world, Banting (2006) argues that, beginning in the 1980s, has been a paradigm shift in Canadian social policy. The postwar model was one of embedded liberalism, which “combined liberalization of the economy with the expansion of social security programs designed to provide economic security for the population as a whole” (Banting 2006, 417). In

contrast, the new model “places greater emphasis on providing citizens with the knowledge and skills required to prosper in a knowledge-based economy. Wherever possible, we are told, the primary goal of policy reform should be investing in human capital rather than redistributing income” (*ibid*). In practice, Banting concludes that Canadian governments have embraced the discourse of this new human investment paradigm, but have been more interested in cutting income transfers than in investing in education and training. He writes that this has important consequences; “it exposes the unskilled of today, especially older workers, to a harsher world with weakened protection systems” (*ibid*, 418).

There are important theoretical debates surrounding this new social investment welfare state, and this literature review cannot review them fully. But the point made by Banting is an important one to keep in mind; the post-war welfare state was one that aimed to protect everyone from new risks in an increasingly liberalized economy. The new approach to social policy sees social protection not as protection from change but rather as protection as the capacity to change, through education and training programs (Banting 2006, 420). This paradigm leaves certain people behind; Banting notes that older unskilled workers face a harsher world with fewer protections, but the same can be said for many other people who currently live in poverty. The welfare state does not protect low-income Canadians as much as it did in the post-war era; a small minority of this low-income population will become chronically homeless. The new social policy paradigm has little to offer this population, who have been left behind by efforts to invest in training and education at the expense of income security.

The story of retrenchment and policy drift did not play out exactly the same in each Canadian province, of course. The chapters on provincial social policies elaborate on efforts

by provincial governments to stem the rise of poverty. Some of these efforts, such as plans to fight poverty in the province of Quebec and its continuing investments in the construction of social and affordable housing, were in part successful. Importantly, the province's efforts lifted many families and children out of poverty (Québec, Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité et de la Famille 2014). But even in the province of Quebec, where the social safety net expanded while it was retrenching in most other parts of the country and where considerable efforts and resources were deployed to fight poverty, inequality grew and chronic homelessness became an increasingly visible problem, especially in Montreal.

The literature on the governance of the welfare state has in some cases argued that families, the private sector, or the third sector have filled the social policy gaps created by provincial and federal governments during and following this period of cuts and drift. Jenson (2013), for example, builds on the work of Esping-Andersen and colleagues (2002) regarding what they call the architecture of the welfare state. Esping-Andersen and colleagues argue that the responsibility for producing welfare is divided among three sectors: families, markets, and governments. Jenson instead proposes a four-sided image, a "welfare diamond", which includes families, markets, governments, and the voluntary sector as the most important producers of social security. This is an important contribution to the evolving story of who is responsible for providing social protection in Canada, and the private sector and the third sector will play an important role in the story that is told in this thesis. Jenson's welfare diamond does not, however, include local governments. This literature on the governance of the welfare state, even when it expands beyond a look just at provincial and federal governments, misses the very important role played by local actors in the production of social protection in Canada.

Scholars seeking to understand the evolution of the welfare state must continue to pay attention not just to the evolution of federalism, but also to the competing interpretations of federalism. But changes to the welfare state have made local actors more important producers of social protection. In other words, when faced with federal and provincial inaction in the area of chronic homelessness, the local level has become a more relevant and powerful actor in the social safety net in the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly for the most vulnerable citizens. Given these changes to the welfare state, it is clear that it is time to reconsider the question “who does what” in the Canadian welfare state, this time looking not just at senior orders of government, but also taking a close look at the local level as well.

Urban Social Policy

Urban scholars in Canada have long recognized the importance of the local level as a producer of social protection. Graham, Phillips and Maslove, for example, write, “economic restructuring and downloading of responsibilities from federal and provincial governments have a direct impact on urban governments. It is municipal governments that eventually must fill many of these program and financial gaps or bear the social costs of poverty” (1998, 1). Fallis and Murray write, “within Canada, the local level seems to be taking on a larger role in social housing policy, almost by default” (11). Writing specifically on the role of municipal governments in the area of social housing policy, Carter and McAfee (in their contribution to Fallis and Murray’s book) observe, “when community needs are not met, pressure is placed first on local government officials to respond... So municipalities do tackle housing problems, though often with inappropriate tools and inadequate funds” (1990, 227). This dissertation picks up where these and other urban scholars have left off, and brings this discussion into

direct conversation with what we already know about the welfare state and who produces social protection in Canada.

To fully understand the role played by the local level in the production of social protection, we must therefore turn to the literature on urban governance and the growing literature on multilevel governance. Despite the trend of relegating the study of the local level to the margins of political science in the United States and Canada (Eidleman and Taylor 2010; Judd 2005; Peterson 1981; Sellers and Lidström 2007), cities are drawing the attention of scholars for a number of reasons. For example, cities are increasingly important players on the international stage (Bradford and Bramwell 2014; Courchene 2007; FCM 2009; Good 2009; Graham, Phillips, and Maslove 1998; Horak and Young 2012; Magnussen 2015). Thomas Courchene argues that global city regions such as Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver and Calgary, “are home to dense concentrations of knowledge and human capital networks” (Courchene 2007, 215), making cities particularly important players in the knowledge-based economy. And while he argues that democracy at the national level is in crisis around the world, Barber (2013) audaciously advances that Mayors are already starting to rule the increasingly interdependent world.

Further, as this thesis argues, local actors are important producers of social protection in Canada. On the one hand, this is because some provinces have directly offloaded social policy responsibilities to municipalities (Graham et al. 1998). The province of Ontario, for example, formally gave the responsibility for social housing to municipal governments in exchange for the responsibility for education, a deal that many argue gave municipalities excessive responsibility without adequate resources (see for example Sancton and Young 2009; Suttor 2014). On the other hand, however, provincial and federal governments have

placed tremendous stress on municipalities by cutting social programs. In many provinces, cuts to social housing and the introduction of more restrictive and less generous social assistance benefits in the late 1990s and early 2000s created considerable gaps in the safety net. Graham et al. call this the “dis-spending power” of provincial and federal governments, and argue that “virtually every Canadian city has been subject to downloading and shrinking provincial transfers” (181). To paraphrase Graham et al., the need for social services did not disappear when provincial and federal governments stopped funding them. Cities are left to fill the gap in programs and services.

Good notes that there is a third way that senior governments can download responsibility to the local level, making local actors more important policy makers. She writes that this occurs when “upper levels of government fail to consider the place-specific consequences of their public-policy decisions” (Good 2009, 237-38). This is perhaps a type of policy drift, in that it fails to identify and therefore respond adequately to the different iterations of the same public policy problem in different regions or spaces across the country. Good notes that the role that is played by municipalities in multiculturalism policy is an example of this type of downloading; the same can be said for homelessness. Her comparative study of the construction of municipal multiculturalism policies is “one piece of a more fundamental story about the emerging importance of municipal governments in the Canadian intergovernmental system” (Good 2009, 13). My work builds on this important conclusion.

Though they do not have formal Constitutional status as government, cities are increasingly ambitious and audacious in their place in the governance of Canadians. This, despite the fact that they continue to operate under remarkably constrained financial limitations, with their revenue sources largely limited to user fees and the limited and

regressive property tax (Graham, Phillips, and Maslove 1998; Sancton and Young 2009; Smith and Spicer Forthcoming) Despite stretched financial resources, recent changes in many provinces suggest that large cities are on their way to becoming more equal partners in intergovernmental relations as opposed to the “bit players” they have often been assumed to be (Graham, Phillips, and Maslove 1998, 1). While not all provinces have moved in the same direction and at similar speeds towards granting the local level greater local autonomy and therefore control over its affairs, Sancton and Young conclude, “the general picture... is one of significant change in the last few decades, change that has facilitated the emergence of Canadian municipal governments as a full partner in many new forms of intergovernmental collaboration” (18; see also Horak and Young 2012). This greater autonomy makes the lack of financial resources at the municipal level particularly challenging (Robertson and Nenshi 2012).

The fact that scholars of urban politics are convinced that studying cities is important is obviously not surprising. They are not the only ones, however, to call for greater attention to cities; indeed, scholars of federalism and intergovernmental relations are also noting the importance of cities, especially large ones, in Canadian governance. For example, Rice and Prince (2010, 2013) appreciate the increasing role for cities, notably within the social policy domain. They argue that cutbacks in the area of social policy at the provincial and federal levels have “deeply fragmenting effects” (121), and they express concern about a potential situation in which cities offer drastically different social services, including privatized services. Whether one shares this specific concern or not, it is clear that what is happening at the municipal level is important to the structure and effectiveness of the social safety net. Cameron and Simeon’s (2002) article on the evolution of intergovernmental relations in

Canada is another example. They note that cities are not often considered important governments in the study of Canadian intergovernmental relations, but argue, “it will become increasingly necessary to look at the role of local, territorial, and Aboriginal governments and their interface with provincial, national, and international governments” (69).

Thus, while urban scholars are deeply convinced of the importance of cities and the local level more generally, scholars of federalism and the welfare state also recognize the role that cities, especially large ones, are coming to play in the development and implementation of the social safety net. Graham, Phillips and Maslove argue that to understand the role that urban governments are playing in the welfare state and Canadian governance more generally, we must look at urban governments as just that, *governments* and not mere service providers. Leading theorist of local governments Warren Magnussen agrees; “we need to get beyond an approach that identifies the municipality with the local community and treats all municipalities alike. It means taking space and time – geography and history – seriously” (Magnussen 2015, 109). The theoretical framework that has been built does just that: treats local governments as *governments*, with interests, ideologies, and an ability to construct networks and coalitions to achieve their policy goals. To this end, the following section of the literature review focuses on the role of local governments in the public policy process in Canada, and builds a theoretical framework to answer the first question regarding the local governance models for homelessness: why do local governments play such different roles in the governance of homelessness?

Helpfully, some authors of urban politics have written specifically on the role of local governments in the elaboration of social housing policy. While social housing policy and policies to fight homelessness are of course distinct things, the literature review and the

theoretical framework that it leads to draw mostly on studies of social housing policy. This is for two reasons. First, homelessness is a relatively new social problem, and there is little literature on its causes, solutions, and politics, let alone on the question of who does what to respond to homelessness. But secondly, for local governments to be involved in a long-term and sustainable way in the fight against homelessness, they need to have some way of controlling, or at least contributing to, social or affordable housing. In Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal (though less in Montreal), affordable housing is in short supply. Finding adequate housing for homeless people is difficult in these crunched housing markets.

Solutions to homelessness thus often rely on an increased production of affordable or social housing, which is then coupled with intense and highly personalized social supports to help the person remain housed. For this reason, the ability of a local government to be a long-term and influential actor in the fight against homelessness requires it to have some housing related powers. I therefore assume that the factors that explain the local government's involvement in housing policy also explain in part the local government's involvement (or lack thereof) in the fight against homelessness.

In order to compare the housing related powers of local governments, we must build a framework that can be applied systematically to all four cities. The literature on the role of local governments in housing policy and public policy guides the construction of this framework. The main source for the theoretical framework, notably regarding the role of the local government, is the book *Housing the Homeless and the Poor*, an edited book by Fallis and Murray. It is somewhat dated (as noted above, Banting's chapter only analyses housing policy and federalism up until 1990). Given the scarcity of literature in this area, however, it is a tremendously valuable and authoritative resource for this thesis and for other studies of

housing and homelessness policy (see also Suttor 2014). It is, however, complemented with more recent work on urban policy making.

Not all cities are involved in social housing, of course. Carter and McAfee thus identify a number of determinants of local government involvement in this area; “the reasons cities have assumed different roles in the provision of social housing can be traced to varying degrees of affluence, different local development powers, levels of need, and political climates” (*ibid*, 233). The four cities under study here are very similar in terms of their degrees of affluence (see Smith and Spicer forthcoming). They also have very similar levels of need; the Context chapter presents in greater detail the scale of the problem of chronic homelessness, and shows that it is remarkably similar in all four cities. Affluence and level of need are perhaps more important when looking at why cities of different sizes and resources are involved to varying degrees in social housing development. For these four big cities, however, affluence and level of need are very similar. The main lessons to be drawn from this work are therefore regarding the importance of local housing development powers and local political climates.

Based on this literature, I hypothesize that the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness is determined by the local housing development powers and by the local political climates, which I call political commitment to homelessness. While these hypotheses are drawn from the literature regarding the role of local governments in housing policy, they are nevertheless used in this dissertation regarding homelessness because of the very close link between housing and homelessness. It is important to clearly operationalize these two dimensions – housing related powers and political commitment to homelessness – in order to allow for a systematic and reliable comparison of the four cities. The small literature

on urban social policy provides some further insights into each of these factors, and this is what I use to build the remainder of the theoretical framework.

For local housing development powers, I consider four variables: the policy responsibility for social housing, local autonomy, density bonusing, and inclusionary zoning. The first variable is perhaps the most obvious: jurisdiction over housing policy. Horak writes, “whether or not a particular policy field or initiative is within local government jurisdiction clearly matters, since having primary jurisdiction over a policy field (such as local infrastructure development) allows local officials to be involved *de jure* in the policy development process” (2012a, 364). In so far as one variable is the most important in the determination of the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness, it is this one.

Next, I compare the local autonomy of the four cities. Sellers and Lidström have shown that there is “a close relation between decentralization to local government and the character of the welfare state itself” (2007, 610). In other words, the welfare state in cities that have greater local autonomy is more generous than it is in cities with less autonomy. For the purpose of this thesis, and also for the index used by Sellers and Lidström for that matter, it is problematic to directly compare Canadian and European cities; the latter have a great deal more power, including a much more substantial financial resource base, than their Canadian counterparts. But there are still important lessons to be drawn regarding local autonomy and involvement in the welfare state. For this reason, I compare the extent to which local governments are able to freely enact local policies, free of provincial constraints, using the results of an index created specifically to measure local autonomy in the Canadian context (Smith and Spicer forthcoming).

The final two variables are specific local housing development powers. Carter and McAfee highlight the importance of two powers that allow local governments to require or encourage the private sector to create affordable or social housing units, which in turn allows local governments more control over the housing market: density bonusing and inclusionary zoning. These two powers are also referenced throughout the literature as important in determining the local government's role in social housing (City of Toronto 2015; Clayton and Schwartz 2015; Drdla 2014; Fillmore 2012; Mah 2009; Moore 2013; Tsenkova and Witwer 2011; Wake Carroll 2002). Wake Carroll, for example, writes, "the main, and very important, role played by municipalities with regard to housing is in planning where housing is to be developed and in regulating occupancy standards" (2002, 71). Density bonusing and inclusionary zoning are two important tools that allow municipalities do this; inclusionary zoning allows municipalities to determine where social and affordable housing will be located, while density bonusing is a tool to directly regulate occupancy standards.

The second hypothesis is that the local political context, or political commitment to the issue of homelessness, also determines the local government's role in the fight against homelessness. As was the case with the first factor, there are 4 elements that I use to determine the political context and overall political commitment to homelessness, which have also been drawn from the literature on urban governance and social policy. The first factor is whether the regional structure of governance is fragmented or consolidated; in other words, is the region one, large municipality or is it comprised of a number of small municipalities. The debate between those promoting one of the two governance models has been an important one for urban scholars, and the theoretical exchanges between the two sides have been energetic (King 2004; Tiebout 1956). This literature review does not advocate one particular model over

another, but rather recognizes that it is a factor that will structure the local government's response to homelessness.

Dennis and Fish explain the relevance of this variable: “the larger the geographical area covered by a single agency (planning board or regional government), the more diluted the voice of special groups. Diluting a group's voice can result in ignoring the problems created by its special needs and lack of development of or participation in programs suited to those needs. This is true of a variety of services for minority groups in general, and particularly true of services and programs directed toward the low income group, including housing” (Dennis and Fish 1972, 166). This is particularly the case with homelessness; studies of homelessness in Canada, and around the world, have shown that homelessness is concentrated in downtown, urban cores (Busch-Geertsema, Benjaminsen, Hrast, and Pleace 2014; City of Toronto 2013; Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness 2014b; Latimer, Macgregor, Méthot, and Smith 2015). Fragmented structures will therefore provide more incentives for local government involvement than consolidated ones.

The local electoral system is the second factor we consider. Graham, Phillips and Maslove underscore the importance of this; “the biases inherent in an electoral system may well serve to privilege certain groups or classes over others” (1998, 97). Most municipalities in Canada use ward systems, where councilors run for election in a small part of the city. Municipalities in BC (including Vancouver), however, use an at-large system. In this electoral system, all city councilors run for election in the entire city.

In evaluating the effects of ward systems, for example, Graham et al. write, “the main case against a ward system is that it increases parochialism. Councillors focus on local issues they know will sit well with their own constituents rather than legislate with the bigger, city-

wide picture in mind” (*ibid*, 98). Though ward systems are seen as less complex for voters and provide a direct link between citizen and democratic representative, Graham, Phillips and Maslove also note, “log-rolling – whereby a councilor gives support to another councilor on one issue in exchange for support of his or her pet concerns – is easier in a ward system, and this results in one neighbourhood’s issues being traded off against others” (98). The concern with a ward system, therefore, is that it can lead to NIMBYism, with councilors opposing shelters or other services for the homeless in their wards. This NIMBYism might even be strong enough to prevent homelessness from being a priority of City Council. Carter and McAfee observe that this does indeed happen often; “nearly every major city in Canada can document several incidents where projects have been stopped or placed in less than adequate surroundings because of the reaction of resident groups” (1990, 243). Ward systems will therefore provide fewer incentives for the local government to be involved in the fight against homelessness than at-large systems.

The third factor is the local party system. As Sancton writes, “whether or not there are parties in municipal councils is a key question in the governance of our major cities” (Sancton 2010, 179). Some have argued that city councils without political parties are more effective because council members work together more cooperatively (Siegel 1987). But the lack of political parties can also make city council a weak actor in urban politics and can create barriers for those who wish to make the issue of homelessness a political priority. Graham et al. write that it is easier for local elected officials to commit to issues such as homelessness when there is a party structure encouraging and supporting them to do so; “parties are more likely to accomplish the things they set out to do because they can count on the votes of their members in council” (1998, 113). In other words, if the governing party has decided that

homelessness is a priority, the Mayor and her or his party is able to control council to pass changes relating to housing or homelessness. Therefore, the existence of local political parties is an incentive for local commitment to the fight against homelessness.

The final factor is the broader political goals of the local councilors (including, importantly, the mayor). Carter and McAfee write, “a political commitment [is] the one ingredient required to make any role successful” (260). Hulchanski (2005) agrees that politics is perhaps more important than legal or constitutional constraints when it comes to understanding the engagement of the local level in the area of social housing. If homelessness fits with the broader goals of the local government, then there will be a stronger incentive for city council to play an important role in the fight against it.

To summarize, I hypothesize that two factors determine the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness: local housing related powers and political commitment to homelessness. Each of these factors is operationalized through four variables, all of which have been drawn from the literature. For local housing related powers, I compare the jurisdiction for housing policy, local autonomy, density bonusing powers and inclusionary zoning powers. Four more factors – regional structure, local electoral system, local party system, and broader political goals – are used to measure the political commitment of the local government in the fight against homelessness.

Urban Governance

The question of who does what, or who governs, is not quite as present in the literature on urban politics. One of the most distinguished scholars of Canadian urban politics, Christopher Leo, writes, “much has been written about a rich variety of issue areas, from poverty and gender-related questions through land use, housing and immigration, to municipal

finance. But the actual process of decision-making, involving such questions as who governs, how is power organized and wielded, who gains and who loses, has receive much less attention” (Leo 2003, 344). This is perhaps changing recently, with scholars paying more attention to the questions or urban governance and multilevel governance, and specifically to how different sectors (public, private, and non-profit) work together (or in isolation from one another) to achieve policy goals (see Sancton and Young 2009; Horak and Young 2012; Bradford and Bramwell 2015).

This section of the literature review confronts the second dimension of difference between the local models of governance of homelessness: the centralization or fragmentation of the model. In Calgary and Toronto, the governance of homelessness is centralized within one main body, whereas it is highly fragmented among a number of different groups of actors in Vancouver and Montreal. Turning to the literature on urban governance and multilevel governance, and specifically to the role of social actors (including the private and nonprofit sectors) in policy-making, I build the second part of the theoretical framework. Like this literature on urban and multilevel governance, this thesis acknowledges that local governments are not the only actors who develop policy at the local level, but that they often work with (or are sometimes replaced by) other sectors. As Bherer and Hamel write, “cities’ problems are rarely solved by municipalities alone... the study municipal politics requires examination not just of the initiatives and programs municipalities develop, but also those developed by other economic and social actors at work both in and on the city” (2012, 104). Building on this literature, the third hypothesis is that the centralization or fragmentation of the local governance model is determined by the organization of these local social forces.

The debate about who governs at the local level in Canada has been heavily influenced by American theories, notably by those advanced in *City Limits* by Paul Peterson (1981) and *Regime Politics* by Clarence Stone (1989). Canadian studies often engage with this literature, but highlight the ways in which local governance is different in Canada (see Good 2009). In other words, the influence of these theories does not mean that they have become the dominant approach to urban governance in Canada. Rather, a heated and on-going debate has considered whether these theories are even relevant in the Canadian context.

In his influential book *City Limits*, Paul Peterson argues that, as the title suggest, cities are limited in terms of the policies they are able to develop and implement. He argues that local governments are only able to pursue a narrow range of economically-determined interests, which do not include redistributive programs or policies. He writes, “I find the primary interest of cities to be the maintenance and enhancement of their economic productivity” (Peterson 1981, 15). Elaborating on what these interests are, he writes, “policies and programs can be said to be in the interest of cities whenever the policies maintain or enhance the economic position, social prestige, or political power of the city, taken as whole” (20). In his assessment of local governance, local politics is of very little importance in urban governance; rather, economic considerations limit and determine what cities are able to do.

City governments in the USA and Canada are indeed limited in their ability to govern; this dissertation does not dispute that. In Canada, the most important limitation on cities is the severely restrictive financial framework under which they operate, which determines how they can raise and spend money. Smith and Spicer (forthcoming) have demonstrated that big cities in Canada all have remarkably similar, and low, levels of financial autonomy, even though there are interesting differences in terms of their legal and political autonomy. This lack of

financial freedom limits the ability of cities to exercise autonomy in terms of policies and programs.

In fact, much of the literature on urban governance, or the role of local governments in social housing even more specifically, agrees with Peterson's central assertion regarding the substantial limitations on the ability of cities to act autonomously. Carter and McAfee, for example, write, "municipalities do tackle housing problems, *though often with inappropriate tools and inadequate funds*" (1990, 227, emphasis added). Graham, Phillips and Maslove agree; "the resources and policy levers available to urban governments in Canada are often inadequate for grappling with the issues that they face" (1998, 2). Specifically regarding affordable housing in Ontario, Clayton and Schwartz write, "it is generally recognized that the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of lower income households is an income redistribution program most appropriately funded by the senior levels of government... Municipalities are being forced to search for less satisfactory, locally based approaches due to a marked shortfall in funding" (2015, i).

Thirty-five years after the publication of *City Limits*, therefore, Peterson's conclusions are still relevant for the Canadian and American context; it is important to stress the weakness of cities to govern themselves on their own. Peterson has been challenged, however, in his assumption that this means cities only pursue economic-oriented, or "growth", policies. The trend in the literature towards local and urban *governance*, as opposed to just *governments*, highlights the importance of other local level actors who engage with cities in the process of urban governance.

Peterson concludes that politics is of secondary importance to economic factors in urban governance. In his agenda setting work on urban governance in Atlanta, Clarence Stone

(1989) forcefully disagrees with Peterson, and instead postulates that politics plays a central role in urban governance. Responding directly to Peterson in his influential book *Regime Politics*, Stone writes, “Peterson constructed an interpretation of city politics in which, within each policy arena, the type of policy... molds the form of political participation and the character of politics... The regime analysis I am employing offers a different dynamic. Politics in the form of the governing coalition shapes policy, *and* policy also shapes the regime” (1989, 164). In other words, local politics shapes local governance, which can result in different outcomes and not just pro-growth, economically oriented outcomes as Peterson theorizes.

Stone accepts to a large extent Peterson’s assumption about the limited nature of cities. He finds, however, that local governments are still able to make themselves effective actors in local governance through coalition building and long-term partnerships, specifically with the private sector. He writes, “[p]ainting the picture of governance in Atlanta requires a broad canvas. Depiction of government structure is not enough” (ix). He calls the coalition that results of the relationship between city hall and the private sector an urban regime, “an informal yet relatively stable group with access to institutional resources that enable it to have a sustained role in making governing decisions” (4). Stone concludes that this informal but stable partnership, which in Atlanta is between downtown business elites and the black middle class, is the driving force behind urban governance in Atlanta and is what “makes governance in Atlanta effective” (3).

Stone calls this the social production model to the study of urban governance. He writes, “governance requires the power to combine necessary elements for a publicly significant result... the capacity to assemble and use needed resources for a policy initiative is

what I call the social production model” (227). The idea that local actors work together to achieve common goals and ultimately to govern is not controversial. Yet Stone’s theory of urban regimes has provoked a long-lasting debate among scholars of urban governance outside of the American context.

Savitch and Kantor (2004) have argued that the theory is not useful in the European context, where the local level is much less influenced by the private sector than it is in the United States. Also writing from the European perspective, Pierre agrees that regime theory is not applicable; “the European experience paints a rather different picture. Political mobilization is higher in Europe, local authorities are comparatively speaking more resourceful and the political discourse is shaped by ideology to a much higher degree than in the United States” (2011, 4).

Within the Canadian context, scholars tend to agree to a certain extent with Stone regarding coalition building, and the fact that it leads to a stable governing relationship. But there are also criticisms from Canadian scholars. On the one hand, a regime as Stone conceptualized is a strictly local entity. Part of the critique of Stone’s framework stems from the fact that in Canada, provinces and in many instances the federal government are very involved in municipal affairs (Leo 2003; Sancton 2011; Spicer 2010). It is difficult to disentangle provincial influence from what happens at the local level, making many scholars skeptical of the idea that they will find a regime of purely local actors in Canadian cities.

But, as is the case in Europe, there have also been debates regarding the influence of the private sector in Canadian municipalities. In studying urban politics, Young writes that it is important to consider “the involvement of non-governmental actors in the policy process, which is a long standing phenomenon” (Young 2012, 6). Graham et al. agree with Young’s

view on the importance of non-governmental actors in urban governance, but they go farther by noting that third sector actors are also involved in urban governance; “municipal governments are integrally entangled in a variety of co-production and partnership agreements with a wide variety of voluntary associations and business organizations”(1998, 2). Through building coalitions with these other actors, local governments are able to develop policies that they would not be able to on their own. A regime in Stone’s original work was a partnership between local elected officials and the private sector; many Canadian scholars would argue that third sector actors are also important partners in urban governance, which leads them to reject the applicability of regime theory in Canada.

Leo (1995) was the first Canadian urban scholar to apply regime theory to a Canadian city. His study of the policy-making process in Edmonton found evidence of a corporate regime in the city. Looking at Leo’s study and his evidence, however, Sancton disagrees with Leo’s conclusion. He does not see evidence of a stable and sustained regime relationship between the Edmonton city council and local business associations. Pointing to the stated instability and unpredictability of the relationship between the business sector and city hall, Sancton writes, “from Leo’s own description and analysis, it appears that there simply was no regime in place in Edmonton during the period he was studying” (2011, 233).

Another influential attempt to apply regime theory to the Canadian context was Timothy Cobban’s 2003 article, in which he analyzed three instances of local economic development in London, Ontario. He finds that Stone’s theory is of limited use in understanding decision-making in London, concluding that the relationship between private sector interests and the London city council did not result in a stable governing regime. He suggests that there are simply too many differences between urban politics in Canada and the

United States for Canadian scholars to be able to import regime theory: “the absence of an urban regime in London is at least partially explained by structural features of urban politics that make local governments in Canada less susceptible to the influence of business elites than their American counterparts” (Cobban 2003a, 243). American cities are dependent on loans from the private sector whereas this is not the case in Canada, for example, making the private sector a more powerful force in urban governance. Cobban suggests that these structural differences between Canadian and American cities make regime theory ill suited to Canadian studies.

Leo, who has become one of the most vocal Canadian defenders of regime theory, responded to Cobban’s article. Leo criticized Cobban’s findings and objected to his suggestion that regime theory is invalid in the Canadian context. Leo contends that Cobban’s evidence is insufficient to draw such a conclusion, writing, “a finding that, in any particular city, there is no stable regime with long-term staying power does not invalidate regime theory as an approach to the analysis of how development or other local government decisions are made, because, despite its name, regime theory is not, in the first instance, about regimes” (Leo 2003, 344). Rather, he states that regime theory is fundamentally about coalitions. He writes, “a meaningful refutation of regime theory on its own terms would be a finding that there is no coalition-building taking place, that there are no prime movers in achieving particular policy objectives or that the prime movers do not negotiate, strike compromises, and offer incentives to get others on board” (*ibid*, 347). He specifies that the question of whether such a coalition is in fact a regime is one of evidence, but also of judgment. “The story remains untold,” Leo concludes implying that if Cobban had looked dug a little deeper, he likely would have found evidence of a regime in London, Ontario.

Cobban issued a response to Leo's critique; the debate between the two has appropriately become known as the Leo-Cobban debate to scholars of Canadian urban politics. Cobban concludes that the disagreement between him and Leo is a profound one; "ultimately, our methodological disputes are probably symptomatic of a more fundamental disagreement about what exactly constitutes a urban regime analysis" (Cobban 2003b, 351). This question of what is a regime, and what is regime analysis, has remained at the heart of future disputes regarding the theory's applicability in the Canadian context. To some scholars, such as Cobban, a regime is a very specific concept; to others, such as Leo, it is more elastic and simply refers to coalitions. The truth is likely somewhere between; Stone has himself acknowledged that it is a mistake to remain overly faithful to his 1989 definition, writing that the participation of the business sector is not essential in a regime (see Stone 2005). The challenge with taking too many liberties with the theory, however, is that it loses its ability to hold water. As Sancton correctly notes, "the more loosely the term 'regime' is used, the less useful it is likely to be" (2011, 236). Urban regime theory has more recently been used in Canadian studies, notably by Kristin Good (2009) in her important study of municipal multiculturalism policies in eight Canadian municipalities. She finds evidence in many Canadian cities of urban regimes.

The debate about whether urban regimes exist in Canada is not one that we aim to settle here. The idea that the business sector is an important partner in urban governance remains relevant today (Young 2012), as does Peterson's insistence on city limitations and the importance this places on economic development. It is important, therefore, for Canadian scholars to engage with this literature, without necessarily assuming that regimes are impossible (or omnipresent, for that matter), in Canadian cities. Regime theory is not,

however, the dominant framework used in this dissertation, primarily because of the strong involvement of provincial governments in the area of housing and homelessness.

Recent work by Pierre (2011) recognizes that the economic emphasis in urban governance theories is indeed the reality in many North American and European cities, but he argues that there are other influences on urban governance and therefore multiple forms of urban governance as well. To promote the comparative study of urban governance that takes these differences into consideration, Pierre developed a four-part typology of urban governance. The pro-growth model he identifies is most clearly linked to the past traditions in theories of urban governance reviewed above. In this model of governance, the private sector is the most important local partner in urban governance and decisions are made with an objective of encouraging economic growth. Unlike Stone, however, Pierre stresses that this is not the only model of urban governance. He also identifies a managerial form of governance, which has been influenced by the New Public Management reforms. In this model of urban governance, the emphasis is usually on efficiency; public services are frequently contracted out or privatized in this model of urban governance, and managers and bureaucrats are given significant autonomy and discretion.

The corporatist model of urban governance is common in Western European democracies, Pierre argues, where the “third sector” including non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations are given an important role in the decision-making and policy process. Finally, there is a welfare model of governance, which is commonly found in declining industrial cities; Pierre lists Detroit as an example of this type of urban governance, but notes that this model can also be found in European cities as well. In the welfare model of

urban governance, the city depends heavily on support from senior governments, and there are strong local sentiments for “local socialism” (27).

Pierre admits that his typology is best suited for cities in developed countries, and he acknowledges that the models of urban governance that he develops in his book are ideal types. In reality, he insists, “we should expect most cities to display some features of several, if not all, of the models” (26), as different sectors of local government can be characterized by a particular model of governance (distributive sectors tend to be more corporatist, for example).

Pierre’s framework is useful for the study of comparative urban politics for a number of reasons. First, it avoids a historically common pitfall in the study of local politics and urban governance: normativity. Pierre does not suggest that one model is better or worse than another, but rather gives researchers much needed tools to study and compare urban governance. It also builds on important and still relevant theories of urban governance, such as growth machine theories. While growth theory advanced by Peterson does not apply to all cities in Canada or the United States, and perhaps even less so to European ones, it is clear that the theory is far from obsolete. Cities continue to operate in very restrictive legal and financial frameworks, and thus must often pursue directions that will enhance their economic prosperity. But Pierre recognizes that different cities will have different traditions and cultures of policymaking, even for cities within the same country. In other words, his theory responds to critiques of past theories while not simultaneously throwing away their theoretical strengths.

In order to determine which governance model best characterizes a city, Pierre developed a framework involving nearly 20 variables. A full analysis of the local governance models in each of the four cities under study here using this framework proposed by Pierre is,

unfortunately, beyond the scope of this dissertation. Rather, I compare the four very different governance models in one particular sector – homelessness. But the overall governance structure of each big city, while not studied using Pierre’s framework, has nevertheless been subject to consideration lately by Canadian scholars. This literature on urban governance considers how the local government, the private sector, and the third sector work together (or fail to work together) in urban governance dynamics, and is especially useful for this comparative study of the governance of homelessness. Fallis and Murray write, “because of the weakened welfare consensus and because people are increasingly skeptical about the ability of senior governments to solve the housing problem, there has developed a recognition that other parts of society must play a greater role... It is likely that the private sector, third sector, and municipalities will play an even more important role” (9). It is therefore this literature on urban and multilevel governance that guides the final chapter, which explains the centralization or fragmentation of the governance of homelessness.

Studies of urban governance in Canada, reviewed above, do not focus exclusively on local governments, but also on how they interact and work with other sectors and governance. Horak and Young explain, “governance implies that governments are acting within networks of social forces – organized interests of many different kinds, active at different levels” (2012, 6). The private sector has, of course, long been considered an important actor in urban governance. But recent Canadian studies of urban governance recognize that the private sector is not the only important actor at the local level (an assumption made by both Stone and Peterson), but that the third sector is also important in urban governance networks (Leo 1995; Cobban 2003; Graham et al, 1998; Good 2009; Horak and Young 2012; Bradford 2005). Third-sector groups have long been involved in the provision of social services in Canada;

“...religious and charitable agencies, such as church missions and the Salvation Army... are the oldest welfare agencies in Canada and pre-date by far any governmental programs of social welfare” (Wolfe and Jay 1990, 197). They are of central importance in understanding who governs, and who holds power at the local level not only in terms of the governance of homelessness but also the overall governance of the urban space.

Because of the complicated nature of many of the problems that are faced by cities, including homelessness but also immigration, inequality, infrastructure and many other policy areas, urban scholars have also been interested in understanding and comparing how local level actors work with other levels of government as well. Bramwell and Wolfe write, “the dual challenges of maintaining economic competitiveness and addressing the emerging social inequalities resulting from these changes place new demands on local governments that are often too complex for them to meet on their own. In response, novel relations are emerging between various levels of government, and among public, private, and community actors at the local level” (2014, 58). Studies of multilevel governance look at how these three local sectors work (or do not work) with other orders of government to achieve their policy goals. This literature is most useful, as it considers the relative power of the three sectors in the overall governance of urban spaces that are most relevant in the governance of homelessness.

This literature is used to respond to the second question regarding the fragmentation or centralization of the local governance models. Recent studies of urban governance and multilevel governance have done extensive work to document the relative power of local social forces in big cities in Canada, and to evaluate how they work with other levels of government (Sancton and Young 2009; Horak and Young 2012; Bradford and Bramwell 2014). These studies conclude with a demonstration of the relative power of different local

social forces in urban governance in Canada's ten largest cities. The conclusions of these studies regarding the relative strength of different sectors at the local level explain why the local governance models are either centralized or fragmented. In Chapter 7 on the role of local social forces, these studies are used to first establish how the overall urban governance models in each city can be characterized. The third hypothesis, drawn from this urban and multilevel governance literature, is that the overall urban governance model explains the centralization or fragmentation of the governance of homelessness.

Conclusion

The theories reviewed above conclude that structural, institutional, and political factors are important determinants of who has power, and who governs, at the local level in the area of homelessness. Together, the literature reviewed provides insights into what explains the differences between the four governance models. The theories that emphasize the importance of federalism in the development of Canadian social policy are important contributions to our understanding of the welfare state in Canada. However, their primary weakness is the exclusion of the local level as a producer of social protection. Changes to the welfare state, including cuts to social spending and an emerging human capital perspective, have however made these local actors more important actors in the welfare state.

To fully understand why such different governance models have emerged around the same question of homelessness, we need to dive down to the local level. The literature on urban governance is therefore used to build a theoretical framework that explains why homelessness is governed so differently in the four cities. The literature regarding the local role in social policy has led to two hypotheses. The role of the local government in the governing coalition is determined by two things: the housing related powers of the local

government and the political commitment to homelessness. The literature on urban and multilevel governance has led to the third hypothesis, that the centralization or fragmentation of the governance model is determined by the organization of local social forces in each city.

Chapter 3: Context⁸

“We therefore need to be careful when we use the words *homeless* and *homelessness*. While it is true that all societies through history tend to have some people who are homeless – without a home – we have not always had the set of social problems we associate with the word *homelessness*”

Hulchanski, 2009.

This chapter presents some history and context to allow for a better understanding of the local level responses to homelessness across Canada. To this end, I begin by providing a broad history of homelessness in Canada. Future chapters will look closely at provincial and local responses to homelessness, but it would be a mistake to omit federal actions. I therefore also trace the history of federal responses to homelessness, looking at housing and also homelessness policies that have existed at the national level since the end of the Second World War. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully present the origins of homelessness, including its many causes and how it has changed throughout Canadian history; this chapter instead provides a big picture look at homelessness in Canada, including some of its most obvious and clear causes.

History of Homelessness in Canada

As outlined in the Introduction, the local level has recently come to play an important policy-making and implementing role in the area of homelessness. The local level began to play this role because it became clear with the rising homelessness in the 1980s and continuing until the early 2000s that there was a significant gap in the social safety net, the most extreme and visible manifestation of which was homelessness. This gap was created by

⁸ A portion of this chapter has been published by the CCPA and the Harper Decade (Doberstein and Smith 2015a, 2015b).

federal and provincial government cuts to social spending, including housing, and through the failure of these senior governments to respond to the new social risk of homelessness (policy drift).

It is estimated that 95% of Canadians get their housing from the private market, and they are comparatively well housed (Carter and McAfee 1990; Layton 2008; Hulchanski 2009). The Canadian housing system is the most dependent on the private sector of any housing system in the developed world, including the United States (Hulchanski 2002). There was and continues to be, however, a minority of people whose housing needs are not met through the private market system. Housing markets became increasingly crunched as Canada became a more and more urbanized country, rents and home ownership costs rose faster than incomes, and stable housing was increasingly out of reach for these Canadians. By 2014, an estimated 235,000 Canadians would experience homelessness over the course of the year (Gaetz et al 2015). This other 1% lost their housing somewhere along the way and, for a short or long period of time, had nowhere to go. This problem was in large part the result of decisions made by the federal government to cut housing.

There have always been people who have been unhoused, but some scholars and activists argued that the problem had transformed into a new issue by the 1980s and 1990s. To illustrate the new-ness of this problem, housing expert J David Hulchanski presented the history of the word *homelessness* in Canada during his keynote address to the Growing Home conference on housing and homelessness in Calgary in 2009. He noted that over the course of Canada's history, there have long been people who were poor and did not have housing of their own. But he argues that there is an important conceptual distinction between people who were homeless in the sense that they were un-housed, and what we today call *homelessness*;

By the early 1980s we needed a new term for a widespread mass phenomenon, a new social problem found in many wealthy, developed nations. The response was to add yet another suffix to further qualify the word *homeless*, to give us that odd-job word, *homeless-ness*. Adding the suffix –ness makes the simple and clear word into an abstract concept. As such, it allows users, readers, and listeners to imagine whatever they want. It tosses all sorts of problems into one handy term. (Hulchanski 2009).

Other scholars agree that Canada has not always had a homelessness problem. Fallis and Murray ask rhetorically whether this increasingly visible homeless population was really different from the poverty that existed in Canada through the 1980s and 1990s; “a cynic – or a person with a strong historical sense – might well ask if homelessness is just the 1980’s word for poverty” (Fallis and Murray 1990, 12). Answering their own question, they write, “the general consensus seems to answer no. Things are not the same; things are qualitatively different”(ibid). Indeed, they specify, “we had always had hoboes and panhandlers, but something had changed... there were young people and young families without housing” (Fallis and Murray 1990, 5). Gaetz further identifies this change, writing that during the post-war era until the 1990s, “there is no denying that many people were living in poverty in Canada, low incomes coupled with individual stressors (loss of jobs, evictions, health problems etc) did not inevitably mean that individuals and families had to face to prospect of long term homelessness. For the most part, an adequate supply of affordable housing existed” (2010, 21–22). Not only were more people experiencing homelessness beginning in the late 1980s and 1990s, but it was touching a more diverse, heterogeneous group of people including families and young people. Gaetz writes,

With less safe, affordable rental housing on the market, a declining and underfunded social housing stock and no government commitment to ensure housing for all, people with low incomes experiencing personal crises have become more and more vulnerable to homelessness. During this time, the number of people who wound up living on the streets and in parks in communities across Canada (including families, women and youth) began to grow quite dramatically, putting pressures on the homelessness

infrastructure that was largely set up to serve single adult men. The homelessness service infrastructure was not sufficient to respond to this rapid growth in numbers, nor designed to effectively respond to the needs of specific sub-populations such as youth, women and ethno-racial minorities (particularly aboriginal persons). (2010, 23).

Hulchanski specifies what these changes meant for people living in poverty; “starting in the 1980s, it was clear that homelessness referred to a poverty that includes being unhoused. It is a poverty that means being without required social supports. And it is a poverty so deep that even poor-quality housing is not affordable. Canada has always had many people living in poverty. In the 1980s, more and more people were not only poor, but they also found themselves unhoused” (2009, 5).

Following these changes, scholars, activists, and even elected officials began saying that the lack of affordable housing and state of homelessness in Canada had become a “crisis” in the 1990s. Then MPs Paul Martin and Joe Fontana co-chaired a Liberal Task Force on Housing. In 1990, they wrote, “the housing *crisis* is growing at an alarming rate.” They continue, “poverty and homelessness are symptoms of the broader *crisis* in the supply of affordable housing” (Martin and Fontana 1990; emphasis added). The language around the issues of housing and homelessness continued to build and gain momentum throughout the 1990s, culminating in 1998 when the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) successfully lobbied for local governments across Canada to declare homelessness an unnatural disaster. They wrote in their declaration, “when many people are unhoused we have a community-wide *crisis*. When the numbers are allowed to grow, and when all reasonable analyses point to even more homeless people every day, we have a *disaster*” (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee 1998; emphasis added).

Continuing into the 2000s, experts and activists continued to use this type of language. Jack Layton, a former City of Toronto councilor who was, during this period, one of the only politicians in the country paying attention to homelessness, wrote a partisan but informative book on the history of homelessness in Canada entitled *Homelessness: How to End the National Crisis*. The first chapter in the book uses similar language: “Chapter 1: The Making of a Crisis” (Layton 2008). A 2010 editorial by Canadian homelessness expert Stephen Gaetz is called “The Struggle to End Homelessness in Canada: *How We Created the Crisis*, and How We Can End it (Gaetz 2010, emphasis added). The latest State of Homelessness in Canada reports from 2013 and 2014 continue to use the word crisis, noting “homelessness emerged as a significant problem – in fact, as a crisis – in the 1990s” (Gaetz, Gulliver, and Richter 2015, 3). It was not just activists and politicians who began to use the label crisis. The Toronto Board of Trade wrote an influential report in 2000 entitled “Building Solutions to Homelessness: A Business Perspective on Homelessness and Toronto’s Housing Crisis” (The Toronto Board of Trade 2000). For over two decades, activists, scholars and even elected officials from various levels of government and the private sector have been saying that there is a crisis of homelessness.

It is difficult to know exactly how much homelessness, or how many unhoused people there were, before the 1990s compared to what it had become by the mid-2000s. But there are several indications that homelessness was indeed rising rapidly through the 1980s and into the mid-2000s. Though not representative of the entire country, the Church of the Holy Trinity in downtown Toronto has been keeping a memorial with the names of all those who have died “as a result of homelessness” since 1985. According to their tabulations, in most years throughout the 1980s and into the mid-1990s, fewer than 10 people died as a result of

homelessness per year. Ten deaths per year is already far too many in a country as rich as Canada, yet incredibly, the number of deaths per year increased well beyond this during the 1990s and mid-2000s. In 1998, the year in which homelessness was declared an unnatural disaster thanks in large part to activist work by Toronto's TDRC, 19 people died as a result of homelessness in Toronto, but it would continue to increase rapidly. The number of deaths per year peaked in 2005, when 72 people died as a result of homelessness.

The efforts by the TDRC and the Church of the Holy Trinity were perhaps the earliest attempts in Canada to quantify how homelessness was changing and growing over the years in Canada. Recent efforts in large cities across Canada track homelessness through regular Point-in-Time counts of the homeless population, but these counts began fairly recently. The federal government has also started to collect data regarding the number of people who use the emergency shelter system, but this misses people who do not use emergency shelters (a small but important proportion of the homeless population). Looking at the results of the existing homeless counts in Canada, it is clear that homelessness has increased from the late 1990s to mid to late 2000s. In Calgary, for example, the city's first homeless count in 1994 found 461 people experiencing homelessness; by 2008, that number had increased nearly tenfold to 4060 (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2009). In Vancouver, the first homeless count, conducted in 2002, found 628 people; by 2008, the number had nearly tripled to 1,576 (City of Vancouver 2011).

Data for Montreal are more difficult to compare. There have only been two attempts to enumerate the homeless population, which used very different methodologies. The most recent count, conducted in 2015, used the more common Point-in-Time count methodology and found 3,016 people experiencing homelessness on the night of the count (Latimer et al. 2015).

The other count was conducted in the late 1990s; its goal was much broader than the 2015 count, in that it sought to determine how many people had experienced homelessness over the course of a given year. The authors concluded that during the 1996-1997 year, 12,666 people experienced homelessness at least once (Fournier and Chevalier 1998). I have argued elsewhere that these two counts can, in fact, be compared with a bit of care (Smith 2015b), and that homelessness has clearly increased in Montréal between 1998 and 2015.

Toronto began conducting homeless counts in 2006; since then, the number of homeless people in Toronto has remained relatively stable (City of Toronto 2006, 2009b, 2013). This is likely because, by the mid-2000s, homelessness in Toronto had already peaked (as it had in other big Canadian cities like Vancouver and Calgary). While the information gathered by the Church of the Holy Trinity regarding homeless deaths is not perfect, it also suggests that the mid-2000s was the peak of the growth in homelessness. So while it is difficult to say with precision that homelessness increased by a specific amount, beginning in the 1980s, trends in Canadian cities and substantial evidence lead us to conclude that homelessness had unmistakably increased during this period.

There is more homelessness today than there was in the past, and it is a more complex phenomenon than it was previously, taking many forms and having multiple causes. In addition to this quantitative rise in the number of people experiencing homelessness, there is a general consensus that a more diverse group of people experience homelessness today. Gaetz, in the quotation above, notes that by the 1990s, women, youth, and aboriginal people began using the homeless system, which had been set up mostly for homeless men. Today, there are services for all kinds of people experiencing homelessness, including pregnant women,

aboriginal women, seniors, and people with disabilities (see Nichols and Doberstein 2016).

This is new.

While there is no formally accepted definition of homelessness in Canada, the Canadian Homelessness Research Network (CHRN) has proposed a Canadian definition and typology of homelessness that is increasingly used in homelessness research, counts, and policies (Nichols and Doberstein 2016; Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2015a; Turner 2015). The definition highlights that not only are there different types of homelessness (hidden homelessness, street homelessness, sheltered homelessness for example), but that there are also differing degrees of chronicity. Canadian research based on data regarding people who use emergency shelter has shown that the overwhelming majority of people who experience homelessness manage to find and keep housing of their own quite quickly. For these people, homelessness is a one-time event; this type of homelessness is called transitional or situational. A small minority of the homeless population is episodically homeless, meaning that over the course of a few months or years, they experience a number of short episodes of homelessness between periods of being housed.

The most visible and perhaps troubling form of homelessness is chronic homelessness. This is what we usually think of when we hear the word homelessness; it is a very visible and troubling form of homelessness. The people who are chronically homeless have experienced homelessness for over one year, and they tend to have a number of barriers to housing, including mental health problems or addictions. This population is overwhelmingly white and male; that is not to say that women, youth, and people of colour do not experience extreme forms of poverty and marginalization; the conventional wisdom among service providers and the academic literature is that chronic homelessness for this population is too dangerous.

These people will often hide their homelessness; they will stay in violent relationships, exchange sex for shelter, or live in situations of extreme overcrowding or inadequate housing. The chronically homeless individuals who we see on the streets and in shelters, however, tend to be middle-aged men.

The rise in homelessness noted above is primarily related to chronic homelessness, which is the easiest to measure using the Point-in-Time methodology. There are a number of factors that contributed to its rise throughout the 1990s and 2000s, but as Hulchanski argues, “the one thing that the diverse group of people we call *homeless* have in common is that they are unhoused. Otherwise, they are a heterogeneous group of destitute Canadians” (2005, 5). In this sense, the primary cause of the new problem we today call homelessness is linked clearly to government decisions related to the welfare state, and specifically to decisions related to housing. As the following section demonstrates, the federal government made the decision to cut funding to new social housing developments in the 1990s. Following further federal cuts to social transfer payments to the provinces, most provinces also stopped funding new social housing (with the notable exceptions of BC and Québec). Gaetz writes, “beginning in the 1980s and accelerating through the 1990s, a transformation began to take place. Global and domestic changes in the economy (trade liberalization, deindustrialization), coupled with profound changes in government social and housing policies had a direct impact on the growth of poverty” (2010).

Federal Role in Housing Policy

Up until the 1990s, the federal government partnered with provincial governments to contribute significantly to the social housing stock across the country, building up to 25,000 units of social housing per year (Shapcott 2007). Beginning in the late 1980s the federal

government began to cut housing expenditures, and in 1993, the government announced that it would no longer fund new social housing developments. This decision, along with others to cut transfer to the provinces and reduce social assistance benefits, had important consequences on the most vulnerable and marginal Canadians and contributed to the rise in homelessness throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as the previous section argued. This section reviews the evolution of the federal government's involvement in housing, including its limited in engagement in the area of homelessness in the late 1990s.

A number of scholars of housing policy, notably Banting (1990), Carroll and Jones (2000) and Hulchanski (2005) have broken the federal government's post-Second World War involvement in housing policy into different periods or eras. Prior to Second World War, the federal role in social housing was, as was the case in other areas of social protection, "limited and often grudging" (Banting, 1990). Though not a significant priority prior to the Second World War, there were nevertheless some small early federal housing policy interventions. For example, the Dominion Housing Act was passed in 1935 and was followed by the introduction of the National Housing Act (NHA) in 1938 (Library of Parliament, 1999). But this did not yield much in the way of social housing; "from the 1940s-1963, the government had a minuscule social housing program that produced about 850 units a year throughout the country" (Hulchanski 2002; iii). Overall, approximately 12,000 units of social housing were built between 1949-1963 (*ibid*). For Hulchanski, Banting and Carroll and Jones, this period from the late 1940s to early 1960s was the first era of housing policy, a very unproductive period that saw little commitment from the federal government. The federal government's approach to social housing during this time was largely *laissez-faire*. Hulchanski puts this

bluntly, calling the 1940s-1960s the period of “leave it to the market and hope for the best” (2002, 9).

The authors also all agree that the 1960s marked the beginning of a new period of social housing, one where provinces became more engaged and the federal government invested more substantially and intentionally in social housing. Provincial governments began to fight back against federal dominance in area of social policy in the 1960s; control over social housing policy was no exception. As Rose notes, social housing became “an important battle ground” (1980; 16) in constitutional fights between the provinces and the federal government. Beginning with Ontario and Quebec, provincial governments began to establish their own housing corporations, which would eventually become powerful actors and experts in their own right in the area of social housing policy.

In contrast to the previous period, the social aspect of housing policy become more important in determining social housing policy beginning in the 1960s. Hulchanski characterizes the period from 1964-1984 as: “build an inclusive housing system by addressing the social need for housing” (2002; 9). The minister responsible for urban affairs, Ron Basford, is quoted as saying, “when we talk... about the subject of housing, we are talking about an elemental need – the need for shelter, for physical and emotional comfort in that shelter” (quoted in Hulchanski 2002). This philosophy regarding the importance of housing translated into significant social housing developments; during this 20-year period, there were nearly 200,000 units of social housing built across the country (Rose 1980). For Carroll and Jones, this expansionist, social development period lasted only one decade and ended in 1978. Their reading of history is overly pessimistic. Hulchanski and Banting argue that the period of

building and expansion continued into the 1980s. Indeed, the first of the federal cuts to housing programs (specifically to the co-op program) did not occur until the mid-1980s.

Looking at the history of housing policy through a federal lens, Banting writes that the 1970s was a time of competitive unilateralism, as provinces began to develop their own housing programs. For example, there was an intergovernmental meeting to disentangle the different levels of government in the area of social housing in 1978. For Banting, this was the beginning of a long period of accommodation in which the federal government agreed to abandon its unilateral approach to social housing and make way for a more decentralized model, allowing room for provincial action as well. In the late 1970s, therefore, the federal government began to work more cooperatively with the provinces. Written in 1990, this period marks the end of Banting's analysis of the different periods of housing policy, but he does caution at the end of his chapter that this period of accommodation is certain to not last forever.

The 1980s, following a period in which provincial and federal governments were both heavily involved in the area of housing, was the peak in the creation of new units of social housing. In 1983, 25,000 new units were built (Hulchanski, 2002), and the average throughout the 1980s was 20,000 units per year. Up until the early 1980s, there was a political commitment at the national level to ensure there was adequate housing for everyone. Despite this expansion of the social housing stock throughout this decade, Carroll and Jones and Hulchanski emphasize the increasing disinterest in housing on the part of the federal government. Carroll and Jones argue that the 1980s marked a new period in social housing, which was characterized by a federal government that aimed to reduce its involvement in

housing policy. Hulchanski calls the decade between 1983-1994 “From a small federal role to no role at all.”

Not just for housing but also for the whole welfare state, the 1980s was a period of transition towards a less generous welfare state. There was an increasing demand for “a new politics of social policy” in Canada, one that saw a more limited role for governments (Banting and Myles 2013b). This is generally believed to have coincided with the election of Brian Mulroney’s Progressive Conservative government. Immediately following his election, Mulroney put in place a task force to review all government spending (Hulchanski 2002). Housing was identified as a key area needing further review, and in 1985, the government task force insisted, “the record of current programs in meeting social housing needs is dismal. Because expensive, long-term supply programs have been used and programs have not been directed solely at this in need, there has been a minimal impact on resolving the housing problems of low income Canadians” (Canada, Task Force on Program Review 1985, 39). Following the recommendations of this task force, Mulroney announced that his government would introduce a new housing policy that made housing programs much more targeted. Co-operative housing, generally used by low-income families and individuals, was the first program to be cut. While it was seen as an effective system (Wolfe 1998), it was also seen overly expensive and inefficient.

The 1993 election was a landside loss for Mulroney, and the newly elected Liberal party did what Mulroney was not able to do himself, and enacted his promised cuts to future social housing developments. The changes that were made to the financing and administration of social housing policy happened quickly in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The cuts that came in the 1990s were rapid fire: the federal co-op program, first cut in the 1980s was

completely eliminated in 1992; the National Housing Program was cut in 1993; federal support for housing was also withdrawn in 1993; and the CAP was eliminated and replaced with the much less generous Canada Health and Social Transfer. Provinces were left to make up the difference in social policy, including in social housing. The reactions across the country varied. Quebec and BC continued to fund and build social housing, but they struggled to keep up with demand after the federal partner disappeared. Assessing the impacts of these cuts in a broad sense, Wolfe writes, “it was never imagined that a system that had taken 50 years to build-up could be dismantled so rapidly” (1998, 131).

In 1996, the federal government completely removed itself from the area of housing by transferring the responsibility for administration of social housing units to the provinces. In no other area of social policy has the federal government actively withdrawn itself in this way. The federal disinterest in the growing housing crunch and rising homelessness in Canadian cities did not go unnoticed by advocates across the country. One of these groups, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC), led a largely successful campaign to get homelessness and housing back on the public agenda. Former Toronto city councillor Jack Layton was a strong leader in the group, serving as a bridge between passionate Toronto-based advocates and disinterested political leaders. In part in response to increasing pressures coming from advocates in Toronto and throughout the rest of Canada, including the mayors of big cities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the federal government appointed a Minister responsible for homelessness, Claudette Bradshaw in the late 1990s.

After a half-decade of federal inaction facing what many were calling a crisis or unnatural disaster of homelessness, Minister Bradshaw toured Canada to learn more about the issue. In 1999, the federal government took a baby step into the domain of homelessness by

introducing the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). Never intended to be a permanent program, the NHI originally allocated \$765 million for three-years to fight homelessness. More specifically, the federal government wanted this program to build partnerships between the local level, including governments, aboriginal groups, and the private sector (Doberstein and Smith 2015b). Establishing a direct federal-local link, the program effectively bypassed provinces. For this reason, the NHI was not implemented until 2001 in Quebec, following two years of negotiations regarding the transfer of federal funds to the provincial government, which then allocates the funding throughout Quebec.

Significant decision-making authority was given to the local level to decide what their needs were in addressing homelessness, though a recurring complaint about the NHI and its subsequent iterations as the HPS was that it did not provide enough funding to build housing that was desperately needed, particularly in large cities (Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada 2008, 2009). Funding from the first three-year allotment of the NHI was used for initiatives such as pilot projects, to open shelters, or to renovate existing housing. Shortly after introducing the NHI, the federal government also crept back into the area of affordable housing with its Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), which began in 2001 and continued until 2011. Through the AHI framework, the federal government entered into bilateral agreements with all ten Canadian provinces to build affordable housing in partnership with provincial governments. Yet AHI was also a modest program, with \$124 million in annual federal funding; provincial governments matched this money.

Due in no small part to the advocacy efforts of groups and individuals across Canada, the National Homelessness Initiative funding was repeatedly renewed for 1-3 year periods at approximately \$135 million per year until 2006, when the Liberals were defeated. In that year,

the newly elected minority conservative government introduced the Homelessness Partnering Initiative (HPS). The HPS was little more than a name change from the previous NHI (Doberstein and Smith 2015b). An advocate who fought for the renewal of the NHI under Harper agreed; “The original homelessness program was called NHI, which morphed into HPS. Because when Harper came in he had to re-name everything” (interview #50). The original HPS was a two-year program, but as was the case with its predecessor the NHI, the HPS was extended repeatedly for 2-3 year periods. In 2013, the HPS was extended for 5 years, the longest period in the program’s history. Funding levels have remained similar ever since the program’s beginning in 1999 (though recent funding has gone down due to inflation). A federal bureaucrat who works closely with the program notes that this is significant:

“L’enveloppe n’a jamais augmenté mais en même temps n’a jamais diminué... compte tenu du fait de la crise économique... On a quand même pu protéger cette enveloppe-là... et on est très fiers” (Interview #69).

The 5-year renewal of the HPS funding in 2013 also contained a significant policy shift. As of 2013, the majority of funding for big cities must now be used for Housing First projects; previously, under the NHI and HPS, local community groups had a great deal of freedom to decide what they wanted to use the federal funding for. Programs included drop-in centres, bus services to pick up people and bring them to shelters, and other emergency resources. Community groups now have much less freedom in deciding how to use their federal funding.

In contrast to Housing First, other approaches to homelessness are sometimes called “treatment first” (Falvo 2009) or “the staircase model” (Hannele and Frederiksson 2009). These programs require that homeless individuals be considered “ready” for housing by first

addressing any addictions or mental health issues they might be living with. Housing, in this approach, is abstinence based; treatment for any addictions must first be successfully completed. Housing First, in contrast, puts housing at the beginning rather than at the end of an individual's transition out of homelessness. Individuals are housed "first"; intensive wrap-around services are then provided with the aim of helping the previously homeless person become more stabilized and secure, and ultimately recovering from any previous challenges such as addictions or mental illness (see Falvo, 2009; Gaetz et al, 2013).

Part of the wrap-around services that are offered is a commitment to keeping the person housed. If a person is evicted or causes damages to the apartment, a housing worker negotiates with private landlords on the person's behalf and finds new housing for the person so he or she does not end up on the streets or in an emergency shelter. The costs of any damages to the unit are covered by the Housing First program. Because of this, the housing that is used comes largely from private as opposed to public providers. This is one of the most controversial elements of Housing First.

It is often said that this approach was first developed in New York City through the Pathways to Housing program. But many advocates and long-time anti-homelessness workers in Canada argue that the idea of putting housing at the centre of the solution to homelessness is not, in fact, a new idea. The FOHM, for example, has argued and published reports regarding the success of this approach since the 1990s, and advocates in Toronto ran pilot projects that guaranteed housing to homeless individuals, no matter their barriers such as addictions or mental illness, since the 1980s (interview #67). What is new, however, is the dependence on rent supplements that make private market housing more affordable to people who otherwise would not be able to afford it.

This idea that public money goes to private landlords in housing first programs has resulted in significant opposition in a number of Canadian cities, but there is also significant support for Housing First approaches to ending homelessness because it is seen as an effective and cost-efficient intervention. And the federal government has powerful evidence that Housing First is an effective antidote to chronic homelessness. In 2007, in response to a powerful Senate report regarding mental health⁹, the federal government established the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). Twelve provincial and territorial governments endorsed the creation of the MHCC. The Québec government refused to endorse the idea because it was seen as an incursion on provincial jurisdiction over social policy. Nevertheless, the federal government tasked the MHCC with an ambitious pilot project to study the effectiveness of Housing First.

The MHCC was allotted a budget of \$150 million, the majority (\$110 million) of which would go to a cross-country study of Housing First, which was called the At Home/Chez Soi pilot study (AHCS). AHCS tested the Housing First approach through a randomized control pilot study in five Canadian cities; Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal, and Moncton. 2000 participants were recruited across the country from shelters and from the streets to participate. There were eligibility requirements, such as age and citizenship, but participants also needed to have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness in order to participate in the study. Just over half of the 2000 participants received the “treatment”, which was Housing First. Depending on their needs, study participants in the treatment group were given varying degrees of social supports through the Housing First framework; those who were classified as having “high needs”, including but not limited to serious mental illness and

⁹ Out of the Shadows at Last, 2006 (also called “The Kirby Report”)

addictions, were supported through an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) approach. An ACT team is a multidisciplinary team that includes a number of experts who offer personal support to previously homeless individuals. Those who had “moderate” needs were supported through the Intensive Case Management (ICM) approach. In this approach, each previously homeless individual was given a case manager with whom they met regularly and who supported them with their needs.

For the researchers to fully test the effectiveness of Housing First as a response to homelessness, the remaining participants in AHCS were in the control group, or “treatment as usual”. For these individuals, nothing changed; they still had access to all the services and supports that were available in their home community, such as shelters, detox, and counselling, but they were left to navigate the system and try to find housing on their own. They were also classified according to their needs, being either high or moderate so that they could be later compared with the treatment groups. The progress of the two groups was tracked closely with thorough interviews every three months.

The results of the study show that Housing First is an effective intervention for people experiencing homelessness, not just in terms of helping them maintain housing stability and other quality of life indicators, but also in terms of the cost-benefit analysis associated with the program. For high needs people in the Housing First group, there was a net savings of \$9.60 for every \$10 of public spending. These savings came from a number of sources, including correctional facilities and emergency medical services. For the moderate needs individuals, the savings were \$3.42 for every \$10 of public spending. The AHCS report further notes that 10% of the participants were particularly high service users; for that population, the savings

associated with housing first was \$21.72 for every \$10 of public spending (Currie, Monirussaman, Patterson, and Somers 2014).

These findings directly informed the 2013 policy shift towards Housing First in the HPS, which will likely continue until 2018. The ten biggest cities supported by HPS funding (including all four studied here) must now dedicate at least 65 per cent of their HPS funding dollars to Housing First programs. Many big cities, such as Toronto and Calgary, had long been doing Housing First and are thus not overly affected by the change.

The Affordable Housing Initiative, introduced under the Liberal government in 2001, was also continued by the Conservative government, though it was renamed the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program in 2011. Like the HPS, this was mostly a name change, though the investments in housing more than doubled to \$250 million annually in 2011, which will continue until 2019. Though a substantial increase from previous Liberal government commitments to affordable housing, this remains significantly less than what the federal government used to contribute and what is needed to resolve the housing crunch in big cities across Canada. For example, the entire Province of BC received \$30M annually from the Harper government to invest in affordable housing through the IAH. To put this in context, the provincial government's contribution alone to affordable housing in BC in 2013 was \$421M, meaning the federal government commits *less than 7 per cent* of the total expenditures related to housing (BC Housing 2014a). Experts and advocates argue that the expanded IAH under Harper is not even half of what is required of the federal government to adequately address Canada's vast affordability deficit (Shapcott 2014).

The newly elected federal Liberal government has promised to come back to the table as a full partner in the fight against homelessness and in the area of housing more generally.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised \$20 billion in spending over ten years on what he calls “social infrastructure” (CBC News 2015b), including housing. The mandate letter from the Prime Minister to Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of infrastructure and communities, instructs the minister to “work with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to create a housing strategy to re-establish the federal government’s role in supporting affordable housing” (Trudeau 2015). This would include \$125 million per year in incentives to developers to renovate existing rental units, and to build new ones. It has also promised to renew expiring operating agreements with social housing operators, and to make federal HPS funding long-term and predictable. The details of the promises are not yet released.

Conclusion

The previous section has presented a broad overview of the history of homelessness in Canada, and has presented the history of the federal government’s involvement in the area of social housing and, beginning in the late 1990s, in homelessness. The period from 1973-1993 was the high water mark in the construction of social housing in Canada, due to a national housing program that saw the construction of nearly 20,000 units of housing per year. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there was a great deal of social policy change, including cuts to the funding and administration of social housing. During this time, the emergency shelter system expanded and became populated with a more diverse crowd, including young people, women, and children. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a slight re-engagement on the part of the federal government, first through the establishment of the NHI and then HPS, and second through the AHI, which began the IAH. But during this period, from the 1990s-2000s, there was a gap in the safety net and increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness in large cities throughout Canada. At some point during this period, groups at the local level

decided to step up and fill the gap created by federal and provincial governments. The following section presents the different governance models that emerged at the local level to respond to homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montréal.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, there was a clear gap in the safety net that was resulting in an increasingly apparent homelessness problem throughout Canada. In Canada's biggest cities, actors and groups of people at the local level stepped up and began to develop their own responses to homelessness. Four very different models of governance of homelessness emerged in these four cities. In Vancouver, the city is a strong actor, but there are a number of other actors who are also involved, making the governance fragmented. In Calgary, the city is not involved at all; rather, there is one powerful actor, the Calgary Homeless Foundation, which is primarily responsible for governing homelessness. In Toronto, the city is the strongest and most important actor; the governance of homelessness is therefore highly centralized. Finally, in Montréal, the city is a relatively weak actor, and there are a number of other actors who are also involved in the area of homelessness, making the governance highly fragmented. The remainder of this dissertation explains why such different governance models emerged in these four cities.

Chapter 4: Provincial Housing Policy

When the federal government stopped funding social housing in the mid-1990s, provincial governments were faced with a decision: continue funding social housing out of their own coffers, which were increasingly crunched due to decreasing social transfers from the federal government; stop building housing (with the implicit assumption that the private sector would meet the housing needs of Canadians); or offload the responsibility to another sector or government. BC and Quebec chose to continue funding housing, Alberta stopped funding housing altogether, and Ontario went with the latter and downloaded the responsibility to municipalities.

This chapter gives a broad comparative overview of the provincial role in the area of housing policy. I begin with a brief scan back to the post-war era, when the welfare state and social housing stock were expanding rapidly. Particular attention, however, is paid to the period beginning in the 1990s and continuing to the end of 2015. The 1990s was, of course, the decade when the production of social housing slowed considerably, and chronic homelessness began to rise across the country.

Though the four provinces vary considerably in their commitment to housing, with BC and Quebec being much more engaged than Ontario and Alberta, the amount of chronic homelessness in the four largest cities in these provinces is very similar. This is for two housing related reasons. First, investments in housing, where they existed, did not keep up with the increasing demands for more affordable housing in Canada's urban centres; this was especially the case in BC, where the housing market in Vancouver faces significant challenges due to the geographically limited nature of the city. But secondly, the housing that was built

was targeted not just at homeless people, but at other groups as well, such as seniors, people with disabilities, or low-income families. To be clear, housing for these populations is important, and there is an inadequate supply of housing for them. But housing the chronically homeless is a difficult task, and requires a particular type of housing, notably housing with intense supports. Even the governments that were engaged in the area of housing were not responding adequately to the specific housing needs of that population. For that reason, despite different provincial interventions in the area of housing, chronic homelessness is remarkably similar in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

History of Social Housing in BC

Compared to other provinces, and even compared with its own social policy track record, the province of BC has been particularly engaged in the area of housing and to a lesser extent homelessness for the most part of its recent history, with a few important exceptions. Its engagement has often been cautious and not always explicitly related to homelessness¹⁰, but the province has nevertheless taken an active role in the housing sector.

The main provincial body that implements social housing policies is BC Housing, an arm's length public corporation that has existed since the 1960s. BC Housing has long been interventionist and active in the field of housing. For example, there has been an inclusionary housing policy in place since 1975; indeed, BC was the first province in Canada to introduce measures to promote mixed-income social housing. BC Housing's 1980 annual report explains this policy; "[t]oday, to ensure a mix of income levels in each family housing development, and to maintain a balance between working and income assisted residents, the Commission

¹⁰ BC's 10-year plan to reduce the number of people who suffer from mental health and addictions across the province, for example, addresses homelessness as a consequence of addiction and mental health.

strives to offer 65% of its units to families earning \$13,000 or less, and the remaining 35% to families earning between \$13,000 and \$20,000... This policy helps to keep developments from becoming ghettos of the poor and disadvantaged and ensures that residents live in neighbourhoods that reflect community patterns” (BC Housing 1980).

Since 1975 the province has also depended greatly on rent supplements, which help low-income people access stable and adequate housing that they could otherwise not afford. Rent supplements are used not just for co-operative or non-profit housing, but also for private market housing as well. This particular instrument has become an increasingly important component of BC Housing’s housing strategy for low-income residents.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, BC Housing, along with significant financial support from the federal government, produced an average of 1,000-1,500 new units of social housing across the province per year (Klein and Copas 2010). This significant push in the construction of social housing, specifically for “those with low incomes” (BC Housing 1986), was the result of the federal-provincial operating agreement, signed in 1986. The agreement resulted in the creation of 11,046 units of social housing for low-income people between 1986 and 1991 (BC Housing 1991). Future housing developments by BC Housing have become increasingly targeted, specifically towards homeless people. This period was the high point in social housing developments, when approximately 1,800 new units per year of social housing were built for families, seniors, single people, and people with disabilities (Stern 2007, 20).

The production of new units of social housing across BC slowed significantly when the federal government withdrew as a financial partner in 1993. In 1994, NDP premier Mike Harcourt introduced BC’s new provincial social housing program, *Homes BC*. The Minister responsible for housing during this time, Joan Smallwood, was highly partisan in the

introduction to *Homes BC*; “This year marks the first time since the Second World War that the federal government will not be funding new social housing developments for Canadians. This short-sighted approach has been rejected by our government. Unlike the federal government, BC recognizes the importance of continuing to support housing programs that increase the permanent supply of affordable housing for British Columbians” (BC Housing 1994). On its own, the province continued to contribute an average of 600 units of social housing per year throughout the 1990s (Klein 2013).

In its 2001 budget, the NDP government promised another 3,400 units of social housing over the following three years. Following the introduction of this budget, the province went into a provincial election. After 10 years of NDP provincial governance, British Columbians elected the Liberal Party of BC to power. Facing debts and aiming to balance the budget, Liberal Premier Gordon Campbell announced the Core Services Review (CSR) in August 2001. The CSR resulted in significant cuts across most government departments including social housing and social assistance (interview #19). *Homes BC* was immediately cancelled, and in the early years of Liberal governance, from 2001-2004, there were no commitments to build new social housing made in the province (Irwin 2004; Klein and Copas 2010). Previous housing commitments were honoured, however, including the 3,400 units of new social housing promised in the 2001 NDP budget. The Liberals would later claim credit for these new units (see BC Housing 2014), but they only reluctantly agreed to build them in the first place in 2002.

In 2001, BC signed an agreement with the federal government through the Affordable Housing Agreement Framework. The federal government would transfer \$89 million in capital dollars between 2002-2007, which was matched by the government of BC, and was to be used

for affordable or social housing. Analyses of this funding indicate that it was not put towards the development of new units of housing. Rather, the funding was “channelled by the province into the health care system. The funds are being used for assisted living units for the elderly and those with physical and mental disabilities” (Irwin 2004; 4). A senior provincial official during this time confirms that seniors, not affordable housing for the broader low-income population, were the priority during this period; “the province was not as active, especially on the homelessness file, though we did a lot of seniors housing from 2001-2006” (interview #16; see also The Caledon Institute 2002). Critics argue that the money should have been used for the construction of new units targeted at low-income British Columbians. Reports estimate that if the nearly \$180 million in combined provincial and federal funds had been used to build housing, the funding could have resulted in the addition of up to 2,500 new affordable units across the province between 2002-2007 (Irwin 2004).

Homelessness was becoming an increasingly visible and political issue in BC by the mid-2000s, and there was a perception among provincial officials that homeless people were often living with serious mental health and substance abuse issues. In response to this, provincial officials and senior members of Gordon Campbell’s administration slowly began to re-engage in the area of housing in 2004. The province was also in a stronger financial position; a highly placed official in the Liberal government noted, “I think there was a recognition that there was a real problem and a real need. And the government had turned a corner a little on its fiscal situation, so it was in a situation where it could choose priorities, and act on them” (interview #8).

In 2004, Gordon Campbell began a province wide task force on homelessness, mental health and addiction. Getting the province to dedicate time and money to the issue of

homelessness took a bit of convincing by sympathetic insiders, however; “a number of people got the province engaged and committed, I worked to get the Premier committed and on board. [Minister of Housing] Rich Coleman had some kind of come to Jesus moment when he realized that [homelessness] was a real problem. It’s not just that you stop drinking and doing drugs and turn your life around... he began to be very creative about how to create the capital to make it possible to make a significant contribution to new social housing” (interview #8).

The mayor of a mid-sized BC town who was a member of the task force recalled the meetings between the mayors and the premier, “So [Campbell] called 7 mayors together... He called us to a meeting and he said, well he never said it, but I saw it as political damage control meeting... Remember, [Campbell] had a problem to solve that *he had created*, this was an outcropping of the Core Services Review, and he said, ‘Whoops!!’” The Mayor continued, “The whole idea was that we would come up with a strategy to deal with the problem that had been created, without him sort of saying ‘I created a problem, I am now solving it’” (interview #19).

Following the task force’s work and research, the province began to reinvest significant capital spending in the construction of new units of social or affordable housing. The former mayor on the task force explained how this worked; “So [Campbell] said ‘the funds are there... communities that can provide shovel ready housing projects for the drug addicted mentally ill whatever will get the money’”. He continued, “But [Campbell] warned us, he said ‘if you don’t come to the party shovel ready’ -- meaning we had to prove that we are doing something fast -- we would miss out” (interview #19). Through the partnerships with mayors throughout BC, the province constructed a number of supportive housing units in 7 BC cities, providing capital dollars for construction and operational funding for services if

the municipalities could provide properly zoned and shovel ready land. In this way, the province had begun to re-engage in the area of housing in 2004. Provincial interventions had become increasingly targeted, as the supportive housing that was built was targeted at homeless people with mental health problems and/or addictions.

Following the task force, the Department of Housing, and specifically BC Housing, emerged as the lead ministry for future responses to homelessness. Housing was seen as the department that was best equipped to handle provincial efforts on homelessness; “With the addition of shelters to BC Housing you can begin to knit the continuum together so people can move from outreach to shelters to SROs to other forms of housing” (interview #16). The province also amended the Municipal Act and gave municipalities more tools to promote affordable housing, such as the important density bonusing power (see Chapter 6).

The province introduced a housing policy entitled *Housing Matters* in 2006, the first housing policy in the province since *Homes BC* was cancelled in the early-2000s. While not an explicit response to homelessness, the policy addressed the housing spectrum and spoke to the full range of housing needs from emergency shelters to homeownership, notably through the Provincial Homeless Initiative (BC Housing 2006). Within the framework of this policy, the province has contributed to and protected the low-income housing stock across BC, and in Vancouver in particular, since 2006.

For example, the province bought 20 Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) hotels in the DTES in 2007. These hotels were built over 100 years ago and were originally intended to be temporary housing for seasonal or forestry workers (interview #5; see also Campbell et al 2009). Though these housing units are not quality housing by any means, they are at risk of being bought up by developers and being converted into lucrative condos (interviews #4 and

#5; see also Campbell, Boyd, and Culbert 2009). In buying these buildings, the province has protected that affordable housing stock and has committed to repairing and upgrading the units (slowly).

Housing Matters marks a significant departure from the province's previous social housing commitments under *Homes BC*. The introduction to *Housing Matters* emphasizes that the province would take a new approach to housing; "it's clear that the challenges of addressing housing need in BC are much different than they were a decade ago. It's equally clear that we need to take a new direction" (BC Housing, 2006). With this policy, the province moved fully away from building housing for low-income British Columbians, but instead targeted its housing investments at the homeless. Indeed, insofar as the needs of low-income people are mentioned, *Housing Matters* notes that the province will facilitate access for that population to rental market housing.

Housing Matters was updated in 2014. In the introduction, Minister Coleman boasts about the recent track record of BC Housing; "Launched in 2006, Housing Matters BC remains the most progressive housing strategy in Canada" (BC Housing 2014b). While acknowledging that the context has changed, the updated policy "maintains our commitment to supporting those in greatest need" (*ibid*). Homelessness remains an important priority of the plan, and low-income housing needs will continue to be met through facilitated access to private market rental units. The plan is not, of course, a comprehensive plan on homelessness; it does not involve other Ministries, for example, and does not speak to the many causes of homelessness. It does, however, prioritize the reduction of homelessness throughout the province.

Minister Coleman was named Deputy Premier of the province in 2014. Through various cabinet shuffles over his 13 years in public office, he has always kept the housing file. His long tenure as housing minister gives him credibility among many housing advocates as well as provincial and city officials. A senior provincial official emphasized the importance of Coleman's long tenure: "It is very odd to see a housing minister who has maintained a portfolio for so long. You rarely get that level of continuity with a senior cabinet minister on any single file... When you get someone who understands the file that well, is committed to it and is as strong a cabinet player as he is, it keeps the issue front and centre" (interview #16).

In conclusion, BC has been involved in the area of social housing, with one notable exception (2001-2006), from the 1990s to the present. The nature of this involvement has changed, however, as government housing has become increasingly targeted at people with barriers, such as homeless people or people with mental health barriers, as opposed to being for low-income British Columbians as it was in the 1970s and 1980s. The province has increasingly come to rely on rent supplements as a means of facilitating the access of low-income people to rental housing. Despite these interventions in the area of housing, the level of chronic homelessness in Vancouver is similar to what is seen in cities where the province has been much less involved in housing. The province has not been able to keep up with the needs of the homeless population, and the unique nature of Vancouver, where land is limited and expensive, has worked against provincial efforts to create housing for those who need it the most. The lack of affordable housing in general in Vancouver puts more people at risk of homelessness, making provincial interventions extremely important but ultimately inadequate to meet the needs of the homeless population.

Housing policy in Alberta

Prior to the federal withdrawal from the housing sector, the province of Alberta, like other provinces, built social housing in partnership with the federal government. Annual reports from the Alberta Housing Corporation (AHC) indicate that the province slowly but steadily added to its housing supply through the 1970s and 1980s. The priority throughout this period was housing for seniors. The 1981-82 annual report explains; “More than half of the corporation’s unit commitments, 2070, were to the Senior Citizens Self-contained Program; a further indication of the priority which the government places on affordable housing for Alberta’s many *pioneers*” (Alberta Housing Corporation 1982, 3 emphasis added). In addition to the construction of social housing, the province also purchased housing units, which have become a part of the social housing stock.

The province also had a transitional housing program, but it was different from what we understand transitional housing to be today. In modern language, transitional housing is intended for people who are exiting homelessness, either leaving a shelter or another form of street involved life, or people fleeing violence. This housing is temporary (though it lasts up to three years in many cities), and is intended to help a person become more stable before entering his or her own permanent housing. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the transitional housing in Alberta, however, was housing that was built or purchased in Northern “growth” centres, such as Slave Lake or Fort McMurray, for people leaving northern aboriginal reserves; “Assisting our indigenous people in bridging the differences between theirs and an urban society is not a simple undertaking... AHC’s part in all of this is to find or construct homes for the family in its new community... The housing is supplied with rent geared to income and after two years of integration into the new community the family has the opportunity to purchase their home from the corporation... the program’s success is generally

defined as self-sufficiency through gainful employment” (Alberta Housing Corporation 1980, 16).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, therefore, Alberta’s housing stock was small and was largely targeted at seniors (the province’s pioneers), with some smaller programs like the transitional housing for aboriginal people and a program that offered housing to public servants. Provincial documents indicate that by 1992, the provincial stock was comprised of just under 40,000 units of housing, including municipal non-profit housing that was provincially subsidized (Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1992). The majority of this stock, 21,906 units, was for seniors. By prioritizing the province’s “pioneers”, Alberta’s early housing policy, like its present social assistance policy, was geared more towards the deserving than the undeserving . Indeed, because of this emphasis on housing for seniors, low-income Albertans did not benefit as much as they might have from housing construction during this period.

As was the case in other provinces, notably Ontario, reporting on housing statistics became very patchy and incomplete throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. During this time (coinciding with federal cuts to social housing) the province of Alberta stopped funding new social housing developments, though it did continue operating the units that were already in its possession.

Combined with a growing population in Alberta, a federal freeze on new social housing developments, provincial disinterest in the sector and overall cuts to social services, the homeless population began to increase rapidly throughout Alberta in the 1990s and 2000s (Gaetz, Gulliver, and Richter 2014). The plight of this population was initially met with indifference or worse by provincial public officials. A colourful and admittedly flawed leader,

former Premier Ralph Klein had a series of high profile and embarrassing encounters with the homeless population in his province. One of the most famous incidents was in 2001, when the premier was attending an event in Edmonton. Following the event, where he had had a lot to drink (CBC News 2013a), Klein asked his driver to take him to the Herb Jamieson homeless shelter. When he arrived, he got out of his car and reportedly berated a group of homeless men, yelling at them to get jobs before throwing money at them. His office briefly attempted to spin the event, suggesting that the premier was simply inquiring how many of the men at the shelter had jobs (Dabbs 2006). Klein eventually held an emotional press conference, in which he apologized for this behaviour and admitted that he struggled with alcoholism.

The provincial government slowly reengaged in housing in the mid-2000s through the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) a bilateral cost-sharing agreement with the federal government. Between 2001-2011, the government of Alberta claimed (and matched) \$122.58 million in federal funding, which produced 4,308 units of housing over the course of ten years (CMHC 2011). Much of this housing was built specifically for seniors, again keeping with Alberta's past tradition of prioritizing the province's "pioneers".

By 2007, it was impossible for the province to ignore the fact that the growing housing needs across Alberta were rapidly outpacing its investments. Seven of the province's biggest cities, including Calgary and Edmonton, were implementing plans to end homelessness and were constantly referencing the astonishing growth in the numbers of homeless people on their streets. The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) estimated that if nothing was done about homelessness, by 2017 there would be some 15,000 homeless people in the city (Gaetz, Gulliver, and Richter 2014). The numbers are likely exaggerated and sensationalist; the authors extrapolated from the worst economic period in recent Canadian history, the 2008

downturn, and assumed that rates of homelessness would continue to grow at a similar rate in the future. These numbers were successful, however, in getting attention, and in 2007, Progressive Conservative Premier Ed Stelmach announced the creation of a Secretariat that would propose a path to ending homelessness across the province. “It’s an ambitious goal,” the premier is quoted as saying in a CBC news article, “but one that I believe we must pursue to help those most in need” (CBC News 2007).

There was also a sense in the mid-2000s that homelessness in Alberta was quite simply a housing shortage problem. The source of this perception was an influential study by the Drop-In Shelter (the DI), Canada’s largest homeless shelter, with more than 1000 people using its shelter or transitional housing services every night. The study found that more than half the population in the homeless shelter worked the equivalent of a full-time job and could even afford to pay between \$400-800/month in rent (Calgary Drop-In 2007). Looking at these results, many influential provincial and local actors saw homelessness as a casualty of their incredible success in building prosperity in Calgary, and felt a responsibility to do something about it (Scott 2012; interviews #24 and #37). Accepting the results of the study at face value was problematic, however. Indeed, the study was based on a self-selecting convenience sample of 27% of the population at the Drop-In Centre. This type of sample has implications for the findings; the most chronically homeless people at the shelter, for example, likely did not complete the survey. As a result, the study probably overestimated the number of people who were able to work, and discounted those who had serious barriers to housing and employment and needed more than a place of their own to live.

In October 2008, the province introduced a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Alberta. Interestingly, this plan was adopted after the seven biggest cities in Alberta adopted

their own local 10-year plans to end homelessness. The province's plan was greatly influenced by what took place at the local level, as well as the federal At Home/Chez Soi project, and there is indeed a strong similarity between the provincial plan and the local 10-year plans. Like the local plans, the provincial plan emphasizes the Housing First approach to ending homelessness and follows three key pillars: "rapid re-housing of homeless Albertans... providing client-centred supports to re-housed clients... and preventing homelessness" (Alberta Secretariat for Action On Homelessness 2008; 2).

Like the CHF plan, the provincial plan emphasizes "self-reliance" (*ibid*) and stresses that ending homelessness yields significant cost savings when compared to managing homelessness. The upfront investment planned by the plan is \$3.316 billion over ten years (Alberta Secretariat for Action On Homelessness 2008, 11). But based on an estimated growth in homelessness of 7% per year (a very liberal estimation, as indicated above), the provincial plan claims that ending homelessness will save \$7.1 billion by 2019. This is another important similarity with the provincial and local homelessness plans; they all emphasize early and often that eliminating chronic homelessness will save money. The plan also emphasizes the need to collect data about homelessness, and has worked with local governments in Alberta to develop common data collection and reporting standards.

Though the ten-year plan to end homelessness was generally well received and exceeded even some of its early targets (notably to house 11,000 formerly homeless people), there were noticeable gaps in the policy. According to a senior member of the Secretariat, "There are gaps, such as specialized populations that are not being served within the current model of Housing First. So there are groups such as people with disabilities, seniors, aboriginal people – and don't get me wrong, there are people with disabilities and aboriginal

people who are being served, but there are specialized groups that require a unique housing response” (interview #39). In 2013, the province created an Interagency Council on Homelessness (modeled after American Interagency Councils), which was tasked with addressing these gaps in the ten-year plan. Following the recommendation of the Interagency Council, the province of Alberta became the first in Canada to introduce a plan to prevent and reduce youth homelessness in 2014.

The provincial plan on homelessness is not a housing policy, but it does indicate that a priority would be constructing new units of affordable housing. Specifically, the plan promised to house 11,000 homeless Albertans within ten-years, and estimated that it would need to construct some 8,000 new units of affordable housing to do so. In addition to federal funding that was used to construct affordable housing, the province of Alberta has also contributed to the construction of new affordable housing; “the Government of Alberta has provided funding to help develop over 10,790 affordable housing units” (Alberta Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs 2011). In 2011, 2,600 units were completed, with an anticipated 2,400 units to be completed by 2012 and the remaining 5,800 by 2015. Looking more closely at the numbers, however, shows that these units are again often aimed at seniors or at low-income families. Indeed, by 2011, out of 10,970 affordable housing units, only 581 were units committed under the province’s plan to end homelessness, specifically for the homeless (Alberta Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs 2011). This is far from the 8,000 units of affordable housing for the homeless that were promised in the plan.

A similar trend can be seen with the federal-provincial housing funding. The Affordable Housing Initiative was renamed the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program in 2011 by the Conservative government. Not only was the program renamed, but its

funding was also doubled between 2011-2019. By 2015, the government of Alberta had claimed \$80.76 million in federal funding, which was used to support 1,324 units of affordable housing (CMHC 2015). The province has continued to prioritize seniors with this funding, but it has not benefited as much as other provinces from the federal cost-sharing programs, and housing production has remained very slow (CMHC 2015). From 2011-2013, for example, the province built only 644 units of affordable housing using the AHI funding; of these units, 334, or more than half, were for seniors (Government of Alberta 2013b). Forty of the 644 units were for people with special needs and 32 for people with disabilities. The remaining 238 units built between 2011-2013 were for families and individuals, of which 110 were units for the homeless (the majority in Calgary), and 51 for homeownership (through Habitat for Humanity).

By the end of 2015, it has become apparent that while the provincial plan had been successful at helping some people leave homelessness through relying on existing housing, it was equally clear that it had not kept its promise to build affordable and supportive housing. A review of the first five years of implementation of the plan found, “there are risks to the Plan’s success” (Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness 2014). The report by the Interagency Council notes, “the plan is working, but more affordable housing is needed across Alberta.” It continues to emphasize that the construction of new affordable housing is not meeting the needs of the growing homeless population, and writes, “at the very centre of the Council’s advice is that ending homelessness and having an adequate supply of affordable housing are inseparable tasks” (*ibid*).

The lack of provincial engagement in the area of affordable housing, including for the homeless population, has led some media reports to predict that the provincial plan will not

succeed at ending homelessness by 2019; “six years into an ambitious plan to end homelessness, it now appears the goal will have to be moved back” (CBC News 2015a). The article notes that the NDP government hopes to get the plan back on track to succeed by 2019, but by the end of 2015 no official housing related provincial plans had been announced.

The province has thus reengaged somewhat in the area of housing and particularly with respect to homelessness through a Housing First approach. The lack of commitment to affordable housing, however, meant the overall success of the ambitious plan to end homelessness in the province is extremely limited. The provincial NDP government has indicated a willingness to invest more substantially in housing, and federal Liberal government is willing to partner in this endeavor, so this situation might change. But there is so much pent up housing need throughout the province that this will require substantial political will and investment.

Housing Policy in Ontario

The early post-war years of housing construction in Ontario were similar to what they were in other provinces; the federal government dominated the post-war period with respect to housing policy up until the 1970s in Ontario. Ontario was the first province to challenge the federal government’s dominance by taking an active interest in the area of housing policy. The Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) was created in 1964; as Suttor explains, “[then Ontario Premier] Robarts’ Ontario saw itself as a subnational government somewhat parallel to the federal government, expanding its capacity and expertise, and ‘province-building’ was a real theme” (Suttor 2014, 118; see also Banting 1990).

In the 1970s, the other large provinces also began to take an interest in the area of housing. In the face of this provincial challenge, Prime Minister Trudeau to some extent gave

them more space to exercise their powers through, for example, the creation of the Established Programs Financing Act (EPF). Created in the 1960s, the EPF replaced previous cost-sharing programs with a block fund transfer to provinces, giving them more control of their social policies (though the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), a more conditional cost sharing program, remained in place). Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, having taken more control over the area of housing policy, Ontario had a diverse housing policy, which included social housing and subsidies for private rental production, among other programs (Suttor 2014, 155).

In Ontario and the rest of the country, social housing had not been tainted with the same stigma that characterized it in the United States. Rather, housing was an effective tool for promoting mixed neighbourhoods and broader urban development. The type of mixity that was promoted through housing policy in the 1960s and 70s was different from what is today understood to be its main goal; “ideas on mixed-density, nodal suburban development were not focused, as they are today, on urbanity of urban form, environmental objectives, or transit-supportive density; they were explicitly about a mix of prices, tenures, social classes, and stages of the life cycle” (Suttor 2013, 111-12).

When the OHC was created in 1964, there were a mere 6,179 units of social housing in the province (Ontario Ministry of Housing 1977). By 1975, 84,145 units of social housing had been built in the province (Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association 2011), a massive increase in housing production in Ontario. These units were developed through federal leadership in terms of policy direction and funding, though the OHC was involved on the program delivery side. Beginning in the 1980s, the Canadian economy took a turn for the worse and this decade marked a departure from the previous goals of promoting mixity and instead moved to a more targeted approach. There was still great production of social housing in the 1980s, but as

housing became more targeted and oriented towards a smaller and smaller segment of society, the general public increasingly came to see housing as benefitting the few, as opposed to the many. As many authors have noted (Hulchanski 2004; Rose 1980; Suttor 2014), these changes would make future cuts and downloading much easier. Between the mid-1970s and 1985, some 52,189 units of housing were created (Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association 2011).

While the political consensus was coming to criticize the diverse housing policy of the past and was moving to make it more targeted, intense housing and homelessness related advocacy was taking place in Ontario, and notably in Toronto. This advocacy, a number of authors have insisted, was influential not just in terms of Ontario policy, but also in terms of national policy as well (Leo 2006; Crowe 2007; Layton 2008; Suttor 2014). In a sense, however, this advocacy supported the new, targeted orientation of the housing system by highlighting the severe needs of a small group of homeless or special needs people, mostly concentrated in Toronto. Elected in 1990, the Ontario NDP was influenced by this advocacy and proved itself committed to the housing policy agenda, keeping it on the political radar by coupling it with the government's stimulus program.

Between 1986-1995, the province alone funded 37,884 units of housing, and worked in partnership with the federal government to produce another 30,998 units between 1986-1992 (Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association 2011). By 1995, there were approximately 205,000 units of social housing in Ontario (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2009). Housing production would come to slow remarkably during the 1990s, and today, the majority of social housing that exists throughout Ontario was built between 1960-1990.

In 1995, just days after Progressive Conservative Mike Harris was elected premier of Ontario, provincial housing programs were cancelled in what some activists call an

“ideological fit” (Shapcott 2001). Running on a “Common Sense Revolution” promise to cut government spending and social programs, Harris had successfully branded the province’s history with social housing as a “boondoggle”. Not only did Harris cut new planned developments, but he also cancelled some 17,000 units of housing that were under construction at the time, with the exception of those projects that would have been more expensive to cancel than to finish (Suttor 2014). There were no new social housing commitments in Ontario between 1995-2001.

In addition to slashed funding at the federal and provincial levels, the government of Ontario downloaded the responsibility for social housing to municipalities in the late 1990s. This decision has had a long-lasting and devastating effect on the housing market in Ontario, notably in Toronto. The Local Services Realignment (LSR) resulted from the Who Does What panel implemented by Mike Harris, an important part of the effort to minimize government size and expenditures. Numerous accounts highlight Harris was seeking to cut education costs through an overall realignment of responsibilities, and that housing was in many ways an “afterthought” (Suttor 2014; Toronto Social Housing Services Corporation 2007; personal interviews #46, #51 and #52). This further serves to reinforce the fact that this decision was made with little thought to the lasting impact of giving municipalities the responsibility for the one of the most expensive areas of social policy and infrastructure, without affording them additional revenue tools to fully exercise those powers.

Through provincial-municipal negotiations, municipalities were given the responsibility for managing social housing and a number of other social policy areas. In exchange, the province uploaded the previous municipal share of education funding. Since the late 1990s, the City of Toronto has had significant control over the public housing sector, and

has written comprehensive housing and homelessness policies such as Housing Opportunities Toronto 2010-2020 (HOT). This realignment of service provision between the provincial and municipal governments in the 1990s was intended to be revenue neutral, but municipalities protested from the very beginning that they were being given far more than their fair share (interviews #43, #46, #53 and #54). Indeed, the first proposal from the province was met with “intense municipal reaction” (Suttor 2014, p 195), and led to another round of negotiations. Municipalities had little choice but to accept the second deal; “there was further controversy, but the municipal sector reluctantly accepted the May 1997 proposal as the best deal they could get” (*ibid*).

A former mayor of another big Canadian city said of the LSR, “I would have never accepted that deal if I had been mayor of Toronto” (interview #24), but this is, of course, much easier said than done. A senior member of the Toronto bureaucracy highlighted that there was intense dissatisfaction with the LSR and especially with the devolution of housing at the city level; “there was a lot of resistance, because it also came with the cost to fund it... So the mayor was pretty angry about it, and contemplated a constitutional challenge.” The actor noted that a constitutional challenge would most likely have failed, but he still thinks it should have been done; “I think we should have constitutionally challenged it just to highlight the opposition. And it has turned out not to be too terrific, because cities do not have the tax base to deal with [housing]” (interview #44).

The City of Toronto was perhaps the biggest loser of the realignment; not only was there an increasing need for new affordable housing in Toronto, but there was also a high concentration of existing social housing in the city. Built between the 1960s-1990s, this housing was and continues to be in severe need of expensive repairs. Writing in 2012,

Shapcott notes, “the Ontario government downloaded a capital repair liability to municipalities that was estimated at a billion dollars several years ago, and has grown since then” (Shapcott 2012). Suttor’s numbers are slightly different, but serve to reinforce the point made by Shapcott, that Toronto was given a huge repair bill with no way, other than the limited and regressive property tax, to fund it; “the extra annual cost to Metro [Toronto] was \$1,470 in the [rejected] January 1997 proposal; \$665 million in the accepted May 1997 proposal” (2014, 201). That funding is only related to the repairs backlog; the cost of building new affordable housing to meet the needs of low-income Ontarians bring the bill much, much higher.

By 2001, after a half-decade of federal and provincial disinterest in housing in Ontario, the CMHC estimated that there was a need for around 80,000 units of affordable rental housing in Ontario (Shapcott 2001). Had Harris had not cancelled funding for housing in 1995 but rather kept going at the pace of previous governments and commitments, it is estimated that an additional 55,000 units would have been created (*ibid*). This would not have fully met the need for affordable housing across the province, but it would have gone a long way.

The Affordable Housing Agreement between Ontario and the government of Canada was introduced in 2001. A cost-sharing program between the federal and provincial governments, new affordable housing developments would receive a subsidy of \$50,000 per unit of affordable housing. \$25,000 of this funding was federal, and in most provinces the other \$25,000 was to come from the provincial government. But by the time the federal government had introduced the AHA, the provincial government had dissolved itself of any responsibility with respect to housing, and Harris would only commit a paltry \$2,000 per new unit. The municipality and community groups were left to make up the balance of \$23,000 per unit. Between 2001-2011, nearly \$453 million in CMHC funding was claimed (and matched)

in Ontario, leading to the construction of nearly 22,000 new units of affordable housing (CMHC 2011).

In 2010, McGuinty's Liberal government introduced an Ontario-wide Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS). The document urged the federal government to play a more important role in the long-term funding of affordable housing, while promising that the province would build the housing system from the bottom up with municipal and other local partners. The document harshly criticizes Harris's to download housing to the municipal level; "In the 1990s, previous governments decreased funding for housing by transferring responsibility to municipal governments. That approach was short-sighted" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2010, 4). The LTAHS notes that the province has, since Harris's departure, invested significantly in affordable housing since 2001, though this was of course funding that was required by the federal government in order to access the Affordable Housing Program funding. This criticism is thus curious, as McGuinty had been in government for nearly a decade but the LTAHS was the first obvious move by his government to correct this past mistake.

The LTAHS would mark the beginning of a renewed interest on the part of the province in the area of housing. The province did not provide new funding for housing, but rather the LTAHS required local governments to develop ten-year affordable housing and homelessness plans. Though the Strategy announces that the province is contributing to affordable housing, the funding mentioned in the document is funding that had already been allocated to affordable housing through the framework of the IAH cost-sharing program with the federal government.

Repeated calls to upload the funding responsibility for social housing to the province went unheeded (Schuk 2009; Shapcott 2001), the province was nevertheless becoming increasingly engaged in the particular area of homelessness in 2010. Through the LTAHS, five provincial programs were created to provide local service providers with more flexibility and control over their homelessness programs. In 2013, these five programs were consolidated into the Community Homelessness Partnership Initiative (CHPI), a “100% provincially funded investment that allows municipalities to use flexible program funding to develop homelessness programs tailored to community needs” (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2015b). This consolidation was intended to provide municipalities with even more flexibility by becoming a block transfer payment. But as is often the case when funding becomes consolidated into a block transfer, the province transferred less money to the municipalities for homelessness services than it did under the previous system (personal interview 2014).

By 2013, three years into the LTAHS, the provincial wait list for affordable housing had reached 158,445 (72,700 of which were in Toronto) and the Toronto Housing Corporation was reporting a backlog for repairs bill of \$862 million (Monsebraaten 2013). Municipalities were and remain left to shoulder this bill on their own. Provincial CHPI funding cannot be used to fund the construction of buildings nor to convert buildings. Rather, it focuses on projects related to supports, emergency responses, and prevention of homelessness; municipalities were left to deal with their waitlists and repair bills on their own.

The province announced in 2015 that it would update the LTAHS; “we want to ensure that we continue to make progress in meeting the housing needs of Ontarians, and that housing policies are relevant to current realities, reflect new research and best practices, and support the Province’s goal to end homelessness” (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

2015b). Noting that there had been significant accomplishments since the original LTAHS of 2010, the province nevertheless announced consultations to inform an updated plan that “brings together government with the private and non-profit sectors” (*ibid* 5). While insisting that housing is an important priority of the provincial government, the discussion guide directs participants to highlight ways that the private sector or federal government can do more.

In response to this call for submissions, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) stated, “when the costs of social housing were downloaded by the Province to municipal governments, this was done so [*sic*] without the transfer of adequate financial reserves to address capital needs. It is not manageable for municipal governments to address this situation on their own off the property tax base. More provincial help is required” (Association of Municipalities of Ontario 2015, 4). The AMO insists that the province must not just tell others what to do, but must also invest in housing; “the need for more resources into the system cannot be understated [*sic*]. The housing system has been underfunded by the provincial and federal governments for years and the downloading to municipal governments has taken its toll” (*ibid* 15). These and other submissions will be considered by the province for when its updated LTAHS is announced.

Homelessness has become a part of the province’s poverty fighting plan. As will be outlined in the following chapter on provincial poverty policy, the province of Ontario began implementing its first Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in 2008. The first plan was timid and unambitious, seeking only to decrease child poverty by 25% in five years. In part due to the economic downturn in 2008, the province was unable to accomplish even this very modest goal by 2013. To its credit, the province came back in that same year with a more ambitious PRS, one that admitted the shortcomings of the previous plan while setting more aggressive

targets. Notably, the 2013 PRS set the goal of ending homelessness throughout the province. To this end, the province set up an expert advisory panel on homelessness to provide advice on the timeline as well as path forward to this goal. The panel released its report in late 2015, which included its recommendation that the province adopt a definition of homelessness, conduct regular and coordinated homeless counts, and adopt a Housing First approach to homelessness (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2015a).

At the 2015 Conference to End Homelessness in Canada, Ontario Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for the PRS was invited to deliver the keynote address. Matthews was open about her government's failure to deliver on the first PRS; she was, however, also insistent on the fact that the conservative federal government should have played a larger role in the fight against poverty. She was unreservedly optimistic and pleased with the new liberal government, and insisted that the promises in the second PRS, including ending homelessness, were within reach with the new federal partner.

The province of Ontario went from an early and engaged actor in the area of housing to one that absolved itself of any responsibility for housing. That has changed somewhat recently, with the province stating in various reports, plans and policies that housing and homelessness are important priorities. The province has invested in the construction and repair of affordable housing, but this is money that it must spend in order to receive federal housing dollars; this investment has not come at the province's initiative, and the province has not gone beyond what it has needed to do to access federal funding. The decision in the 1990s to download the responsibility for social housing to municipalities, without giving municipalities any financial tools to fund this massive and expensive policy area, has had a lasting effect on poverty and homelessness in Ontario cities. Unless they are given more financial powers or

tools to deal with housing repairs and waitlists, municipalities will continue to fall behind in the fight against homelessness.

Housing policy in Quebec

Like BC, the government of Quebec, through the *Société d'habitation du Québec* (SHQ), continued to fund new social housing following the federal cuts in the 1990s. Quebec has continued building and buying housing ever since the 1990s, making it the only Canadian province to have funded social housing non-stop since the federal disengagement in the 1990s.

The early development of the Quebec welfare state, including housing policy, was distinct from what happened in the other Canadian provinces. The provincial welfare state developed later in Quebec than it did in other provinces, but it also developed differently; the province tends to intervene more, programs tend to be less targeted and more universal, and civil society participates more in policy development. The differences should not be overstated; as the following Chapter will illustrate, the levels of social assistance offered by Quebec are somewhat more generous than what is offered in other provinces, but Quebec is not the most generous province in the federation. There are, however, important differences in social policy in Quebec, not just in the content of the policies, but also in terms of how they were developed. This is also the case for the province's housing policy.

While housing policy has been understudied in the Quebec (Vaillancourt and Ducharme 2001), its story quite closely follows what happened in other areas of social policy development in the province. Vaillancourt et al. (2001) argue that there were three main periods of social housing development in Quebec. The first immediately followed the Second World War, from 1945-1968, when Quebec “used the public housing format favoured by the federal government and CMHC less frequently than other provinces” (2001; 11). For this

reason, government-led housing developments were slower than what they were in other provinces during this period, and there were other non-public bodies that provided welfare for those in need, notably the Catholic Church.

The SHQ was created in 1968, which marked the beginning of the second period of housing, which would last until 1980. Housing developments got off to a quick start following the Quiet Revolution and the creation of the welfare state, and would amount to 35,435 units by 1980 (Vaillancourt, Ducharme, Aubry, and Grenier 2016). There were two main ways of contributing to the social housing stock throughout the 1970s and 1980s: building housing and buying housing. While other provinces contributed to social housing significantly through construction, Quebec more often purchased existing buildings and renovated them to make them suitable for housing. This is a practice that continues today in the province; the effort to convert old hospitals, for example, into mixed-housing communities is an important priority of community groups (interviews #65, #67 and #71).

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the construction and purchase of housing for low-income people and families was done largely through cost-shared programs between the federal and provincial governments, with the federal government contributing approximately 60% of the costs to construction and purchase of housing through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (see, for example, Table 9 on page 58 of Société d'habitation du Québec 1982). The Province of Québec covered the remaining 40% of the costs through the SHQ. The majority of this housing still exists today, and amounts to just under 74,000 units.

Beginning in 1978, the SHQ also began offering rent supplements to low-income families or individuals. The rent supplement program “*fournit également aux citoyens défavorisés, locataires d'un édifice appartenant à une coopérative d'habitation locative ou à*

un organisme sans but lucratif, une allocation financière leur permettant d'absorber l'écart entre le loyer normalement exigible et leur capacité de payer" (Société d'habitation du Québec 1978). As the previous quotation notes, rent supplements were originally only available to citizens living in co-op or non-profit housing. This would change in 1987 when there was a high level of vacancy in the private housing market. The SHQ announced in that year that it would take advantage of the high vacancy rate by extending the rent supplement program, on an experimental basis, to certain private market units. The 1987 SHQ annual report explains this change;

Tirant parti d'un taux de vacance élevé sur le marché locatif privé, la SHQ a pu mettre en place un nouveau volet du programme de supplément au loyer. Cette mesure a permis à 922 familles, inscrites sur les listes d'attente des offices municipaux d'habitation de 23 municipalités du QC de pouvoir disposer rapidement d'un logement convenable pour lequel elles paieront un loyer comparable à ce qu'elles auraient déboursé dans un HLM du secteur public (Société d'habitation du Québec 1987, 42).

Following this change, there was a significant jump in the number of rent supplements offered by the SHQ; by 2013, there are nearly 25,000 rent supplements (Société d'habitation du Québec 2013). Thus, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, we can see a significant and consistent growth in the public housing stock in Quebec, as well as in terms of the number of private market units that were supported by the provincial government's housing policy; this was the case in most other provinces.

The third period of housing development in Quebec identified by Vaillancourt et al. began in 1980 (writing in 2001, the authors end their analysis in the year 2000). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the role of the third sector grew, both in terms of developing and implementing housing policy. The development of housing units in Quebec gradually began to

slow in the 1980s, notably because federal cost-sharing programs were being cut and were ultimately eliminated in the mid-1990s.

Further, with the diversification of the rent supplement program to include private housing units, housing policy became more targeted in the 1980s when federal and provincial budgetary constraints forced the SHQ to reorient and re-prioritize. The 1988 SHQ annual report notes, “*cette souplesse d’adaptation au contexte socioéconomique s’est concrétisée cette année par la poursuite de la diversification amorcée en 1987 et surtout par l’augmentation du nombre des unités affectées au Programme de supplément au loyer sur le marché locatif privé*” (Société d’habitation du Québec 1988). Rent supplements became more oriented to low-income populations, and began taking up a larger share of the SHQ’s annual budget.

Homelessness slowly came on the political agenda of provincial elected officials in the 1980s. The Minister responsible for Housing was the government of Quebec’s coordinator for the UN’s International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) in 1987. Following IYSH, the government of Quebec provided a small amount of funding, \$2.5 million, for community organizations; “*l’objectif visé était de permettre à ces organismes de se doter d’ameublement et d’équipement pour lesquels il n’existait aucune disponibilité financière dans e cadre d’autres programmes d’aide gouvernementale*” (Société d’habitation du Québec 1987; p33). The SHQ also noted the importance of educating the public about the problems related to homelessness. The SHQ made \$310,498.10 available to community groups for this purpose; this money was used for research, videos, colloquiums, and other forms of public education regarding homelessness (Société d’habitation du Québec 1987).

The federal government made its decision to downsize and cut social housing in the mid-1990s, which was a difficult period in Quebec history (Vaillancourt, Ducharme, Aubry, and Grenier 2016). The province had been through a narrowly defeated referendum on sovereignty, and the province's finances were undergoing tough times. Vaillancourt et al (2016) write that this timing made it both likely and unlikely that the province would step up and continue to fund social housing on its own, in the absence of the federal government; “*Sous la direction de Parizeau (94-95) et Bouchard (96-2000), le gouvernement du PQ s’est fait connaître, en matière de développement économique et social, par un ensemble de nouvelles politiques publiques dont certaines paraissent plus conservatrices, voire néolibérales, et d’autres, plus novatrices et progressistes*” (23). In this difficult period of its history, the government of Québec nevertheless reacted to the federal cuts to new social housing developments by creating its own housing policy, which has continued uninterrupted to this day and depends exclusively on provincial funding¹¹.

Led by the left-of-centre and sovereigntist Parti Québécois (PQ), the government of Quebec came to clearly acknowledge the importance of social housing, making significant political and financial commitments to housing developments. This commitment followed two important Quebec-wide Summits on the economy and employment. Bouchard, a right-of-centre leader of the PQ, committed to couple his commitment to zero deficit with a commitment to not increase poverty in the province (*appauvrissement zero*) (see Noël 2013). This commitment came after extensive pressure from civil society groups, who actively participated in the summits. Housing was kept on the agenda during this time by energetic and respected groups like the *Front d’action populaire en réaménagement urbain* (FRAPRU).

¹¹ For a more complete version of this history, see Vaillancourt and Ducharme 2001, Vaillancourt et al 2016 and FRAPRU 2016.

The QC government was significantly influenced by civil society groups (Vaillancourt, Ducharme, Aubry, and Grenier 2016; Vaillancourt and Ducharme 2001) in its new housing policy. The policy was entitled the AccèsLogis program (ACL program), which allows the provincial government to work with community partners to build new social housing, as well as to renovate the older housing stock. The 1997 Housing Action Plan announced that “*le gouvernement du Québec lançait le Programme AccèsLogis, issu du Fonds québécois d’habitation communautaire, doté d’un budget global de 43 millions de dollars par année, pendant cinq ans, provenant de l’engagement gouvernemental*” (Société d’habitation du Québec 1997). The social housing component of the plan consisted of 1,820 units of housing; 1,200 were for low-income households, 500 for the elderly losing their autonomy, and 120 for people with special needs (including women fleeing violence, homeless people, and people with disabilities) (Société d’habitation du Québec 1997; 22). 1,820 units/year was nowhere near the 8,000 per year demanded by the FRAPRU, but it was nevertheless an important political commitment in a time when the majority of the Canadian provinces ignored the area of housing.

The Liberal Party of Quebec (LPQ), upon being elected to power on 2003, fully supported and sometimes even increased the funding for the ACL program. But Arsenault argues that had the LPQ been in power back in the mid-1990s when the federal cuts to housing were made, it likely would not have taken the initial action of funding social housing at the provincial level (2016). Civil society and advocacy groups like the FRAPRU were key in getting housing on the political agenda, and these groups are much closer to the PQ than they are to the LPQ (Arsenault 2016; Vaillancourt et al 2016; Noël 2013). Further, Arsenault notes that the LPQ and its then leader Daniel Johnson were particularly critical of housing and

strongly opposed social housing. The original development and implementation of a housing policy was very much contingent on the left-right power dynamics in the province in the 1990s, which at the time leaned towards the left. Arsenault argues that the ACL program has lasted continuously since the 1990s, however, because of a fragile and ambiguous left-right coalition around the issue of housing. Indeed, right-of-centre LPQ leader Jean Charest nearly doubled the number of units committed under the ACL program to 3000/year in 2007 (FRAPRU, 2015).

There is indeed a strong and lasting consensus among left and right actors, even in times of severe budget constraints and austerity. Indeed, the ACL was born in, and has survived, difficult times. Vaillancourt et al (2016) are deeply critical of the new LPQ government (and its leader Phillippe Couillard), saying that this current Liberal government is obsessed with austerity and is searching for any reason to cut ACL. Yet Couillard, even during the current period of severe budget constraint and austerity in the province of Quebec, has continued funding the ACL program, though the number of funded units of housing was cut in half, from 3000 to 1500. But two points are worth emphasizing. First, many community groups had anticipated with Couillard would cut the program altogether; the fact that it has survived such difficult financial times is significant and speaks to a continuing political commitment to housing. Second, Couillard has increased the amount of rent supplements (PSLs) for the following five years by 1,100 per year. Community groups often criticize rent supplements as temporary measures, but the government of Quebec has relied on this instrument since the 1970s; it is and has been an important part of Quebec's housing policy.

The ACL program was initially a 5 year program, but it has been renewed non-stop since 1997; *“la différence toutefois entre les politiques d’habitation québécoises et celles de*

certaines autres provinces, comme la C-B et le MB, réside dans le fait qu'au QC des politiques d'habitations ont été capables, de 1994-2015, de perdurer sur une période de plus de 20 ans, en dépit de plusieurs changements de gouvernements survenus au QC et du retrait du cofinancement fédéral' (Vaillancourt et al 2016; 51). It is not entirely true that Quebec is the only province to have seen housing policy survive through different governments of competing political stripes; as the section on housing in BC outlined, the BC Liberal Party cut housing but subsequently reengaged in the policy area a few years later. With that nuance, it is, of course, true that Quebec is the only province to have funded housing policy non-stop since the federal government stopped funding it in the mid-1990s. By the end of 2015, the ACL program has resulted in the development of 25,330 units of social housing. Including the promised and developing units of housing under the ACL program, the total number of housing units built or purchased under the ACL program is substantial: 37,296 units (Société d'habitation du Québec 2014).

The government of Quebec has also been engaged in the area of homelessness in an active way since the mid-2000s. Long-existing community groups, such as the *Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal* (RAPSIM) and the *Réseau SOLIDARITÉ itinérance au Québec* (RSIQ) have been active in the area of homelessness since the 1970s, but their demands became much more vocal and ambitious in the mid-2000s. As is the case with many areas of social policy in Quebec, the province's homelessness policy has been very much influenced by these and other important civil society groups (though that is not to say, of course, that the province has always heeded their advice and given them what they wanted).

In 2006, the RAPSIM and the RSIQ began pushing the province to adopt a homelessness policy (*une politique en itinérance*) (RAPSIM 2012). Comparing homelessness

to other social problems, such as domestic violence, these groups argued that a policy must precede a plan so that the issue is properly identified and defined, to specify the government's role in a global sense (ie to involve multiple departments in the solutions) and to make the problem into an issue of concern for the broader public (*un enjeu de société*). Notwithstanding this demand from community groups, the government of Quebec, led by Liberal Premier Jean Charest, insisted that a plan on homelessness, not a policy, was the most appropriate response at the time.

The 2010-2013 plan on homelessness followed a province-wide consultation on the issue. The consultation was guided by a 2008 framework developed by the province, which received nearly 150 submissions and heard directly from 104 people (Québec, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale 2014). Unveiled in 2009, the plan invested \$14 million in homelessness over three years, involved 10 government ministries and contained five priorities and a dozen objectives. The plan was immediately criticized by community groups, notably the RAPSIM and the RSIQ for not investing enough resources in housing and poverty reduction, and for not presenting a global approach to the problem. The RAPSIM again explained the importance of a homelessness policy; *“la volonté contenue dans la Politique est d’avoir une cohérence dans les actions menées par le gouvernement. Bref, que la main droite fasse la même chose que la main gauche, ce qui n’est pas le cas actuellement. Le meilleur exemple concerne l’espace public : de la main gauche, l’État finance des organismes d’aide...; de la main droite, il criminalise et judiciarise des personnes itinérantes”* (RAPSIM 2009).

In the lead up to the 2012 provincial election, PQ leader Pauline Marois campaigned in part on a promise to develop a homelessness policy. Upon winning the election with a

minority government, the Minister responsible for homelessness Véronique Hivon indicated that the government would develop a policy; “*il faut faire vite et il faut faire bien*” (RAPSIM 2013). Using its close ties to community groups, Hivon held a two-day forum on homelessness and conducted extensive community consultations, which led to the unveiling of the homelessness policy in 2014. Shortly thereafter, a provincial election was announced. The policy was important but community groups worried that if the government changed, the policy would be shelved and would not lead to the next step, and action plan. The RAPSIM, among others, noted a concerning “radio silence” on the part of the LPQ with respect to homelessness (2014).

Upon being elected with a majority government in 2014, the LPQ did in fact develop a homelessness plan, which was praised by the RAPSIM for its coherence and continuity with the PQ’s homelessness policy. The plan was nevertheless criticized for not investing sufficient funding, particularly in the areas of social assistance and social housing. Some aspects of the plan were celebrated, notably the training portion for community support workers, but overall there were concerns that the plan’s weaknesses would counteract any reductions in homelessness that the plan might achieve. In 2016, the leaders of the RAPSIM wrote that the two year anniversary of the homelessness policy would be a sad one (Bonnefont and Gaudreau 2016). Noting that the title of the homelessness policy is *Ensemble pour éviter et quitter la rue* (Together to avoid and leave the street), the authors said that austerity measures and cuts to housing indicate that the priority of Couillard and his government is rather *Ensemble pour faire que davantage de personnes se retrouvent à la rue* (Together so that more people end up on the street) (*ibid*).

Despite these important efforts in the area of housing and homelessness, the number of chronically homeless people in Montreal is very similar to what is seen in cities with much less active provincial governments. One reason for this is that the ACL program Volet 3, which is specifically oriented to homeless people, has had a difficult time keeping up with the specific needs of the chronically homeless, which require highly trained and funded service providers; *“la majorité des projets résultent d’un ensemble, souvent fragile, d’ententes formelles ou informelle, d’engagements bénévoles, de contribution financière des locataires, etc... les conditions de travail de ces « nouveaux employés » se caractérisent par des bas salaires et une faible protection sociale...”* (Vaillancourt et al 2016; 40).

In addition to being overwhelmed with the needs of this population, only a small number of the ACL units are intended for people with special needs, including homeless people. The majority of the units are for low-income people and families. This is important, and as the context chapter outlined, has likely resulted in the fact that fewer people experience homelessness in Montreal due just to poverty. The majority of people in homeless shelters, for example, are chronically homeless, whereas in other cities the majority is transitional, a type of homelessness that is much more likely to be caused by poverty or a lack of affordable housing. So while the profile of the broader homeless population in Montreal is somewhat different than what it is in other cities, the extent and profile of chronic homelessness is very similar. Provincial interventions have been successful at preventing some people from experiencing homelessness, but they have been less so when it comes to helping those who are currently chronically homeless to exit homelessness and find housing of their own.

Conclusion

As the above has demonstrated, the four largest provinces in Canada responded very differently to the federal decision to stop funding and then give the responsibility for social housing to the provinces. BC and Quebec continued to fund housing out of their provincial budgets, though BC stopped funding housing between 2001-2006 whereas Quebec has continuously funded housing ever since the mid-1990s. The government of Alberta stopped funding housing altogether, only reengaging slightly in 2001 to benefit from the federal cost-sharing program in housing. Ontario stopped funding housing and downloaded the responsibility for housing to municipalities, without giving municipalities any financial powers to generate the revenues needed to fund such an expensive area of infrastructure and social policy.

Despite these very different provincial roles in the area of housing, the amount of chronic homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal is remarkably similar. This is because even in cases where the province was engaged (BC and Quebec), the housing interventions were not sufficient and were not specialized enough to meet the increasingly complex needs of the chronically homeless. Where there were efforts to develop housing specifically for this population, designed with supports for people living with mental health challenges or drug addictions for example, the investments were simply not enough to keep up with the demand. Housing is a very expensive infrastructure, and even once the housing is built, supportive housing for this population requires a substantial operating budget to keep people safely and permanently housed. Provincial efforts to contribute a few hundred units for the homeless in BC and Quebec simply have not met the needs of the growing homeless population.

An interesting difference when analysing the effect of different provincial roles, however, is with respect to the breakdown of the homeless population in the four cities. As noted above and in the Context chapter, a large percentage of the homeless on a given night in Montreal (according to the recent homeless count) is chronically homeless. In Montreal, approximately 60% of those who experience homelessness are chronically homeless, whereas in the other cities, it is closer to 40% (City of Toronto 2013; Latimer, Macgregor, Méthot, and Smith 2015; Thomson 2015; Turner 2015). This is a significant difference, and indicates that people are less likely to experience homelessness transitionally or episodically in Montreal than they are in other cities. Transitional or episodic homelessness tends to be caused by a lack of affordable housing or poverty.

This is likely because only 10% of the new housing built through the ACL program has been for the homeless; the rest has been for low-income individuals or families. In BC (and in Alberta, where the province began investing slightly more in affordable housing), new housing is intended almost exclusively for the homeless. It is, of course, important to prioritize this population. But it also means that people who are low-income or poor have little government support for housing and are at greater risk of becoming homeless themselves. In Quebec, low-income individuals and families benefit from greater affordable housing options. Housing is, of course, much less expensive in Montreal than it is in the other three cities. This simple fact of the housing market undoubtedly also helps low-income families find suitable housing. But as the following chapter on poverty will demonstrate, people living on social assistance in Quebec receive well below the poverty line according to the market basket measure, making even Montreal's comparatively affordable housing market out of reach for them.

It is difficult to know exactly how the situation would have been different in Vancouver and Montreal had BC and Quebec not been engaged in housing. Had Quebec devolved responsibility for housing to the local level without also transferring important revenue tools, or had been completely abandoned the responsibility for housing, it is likely that the numbers of homeless people would be higher in Vancouver and Montreal. But given the gaps in provincial housing policies, which already relate specifically the chronically homeless population, it is unlikely that the number of chronically homeless people would have been much higher without the provincial interventions. Rather, we would likely see even greater numbers of people experiencing homelessness briefly due to poverty in these cities.

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that chronic homelessness is a very complex and multi-faceted problem, and solving it effectively requires targeted, expensive, specialized interventions. Even the provinces that invested in housing – Quebec and BC – have not been successful at meeting the needs of the chronically homeless population. There are interesting differences in the overall makeup of the homeless population. But when it comes to chronic homelessness, the different housing interventions in the four provinces have not resulted in significantly different results.

Chapter 5: Provincial Poverty Reduction Policies¹²

“Moi, je suis toujours tombée entre les craques”
Homeless woman in Montréal, 2015

This third empirical chapter of this dissertation is a comparison of provincial poverty interventions offered in BC, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, which I define as social assistance (primarily to single employable people) and deliberate provincial efforts to reduce poverty. This chapter does not seek to explain the differences between the provincial actions. Rather, as was the case in the previous chapter on housing, the argument is that chronic homelessness is a very specific, complex social issue, which requires a highly targeted, expensive and specialized intervention. Up until very recently, none of the provinces have responded effectively or adequately to chronic homelessness. Though poverty interventions have been different, the scale and profile of chronic homelessness is remarkably similar. This chapter argues that different provincial poverty interventions, where they have existed, have not led to different outcomes in terms of the scale of chronic homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

Before moving on to the provincial comparisons, a quick note on the measures and data. For the purpose of cross-provincial comparison of poverty, this paper uses the Market Basket Measure (MBM); this is a measure of the cost of a certain “basket” of goods, including food, clothing, shelter, and transportation, that a person needs in order to meet his or her basic needs (Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion 2009). In taking into consideration the cost of living in different provinces, the MBM is a more realistic measure of poverty than other measures, such as the Low Income Measure (LIM), which establishes the low-income

¹² A portion of this chapter, translated into French, has been published as a blog

threshold at 50% of the Canadian median income. It is also, for this same reason, more useful in terms of comparing poverty in different cities or provinces, where the cost of living varies. Quebec has used the MBM to evaluate its poverty reduction strategy since 2009, but Ontario uses a version of the LIM. Further, when comparing social assistance offered in the provinces, this paper mostly considers rates for Single Employable Persons (SEP). While there are families and couples who experience homelessness, it is generally very difficult for couples to be homeless together and, for child protection purposes, it is very rare for homeless individuals to have custody of their children. Indeed, the majority of the chronically homeless population is made up of single men (City of Toronto 2013; Gaetz, Gulliver, and Richter 2014; Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness 2014b; Turner 2015). For this reason, Table 2 includes the social assistance rates only for single employable people.

British Columbia

There were two recent reforms to the provincial social assistance policy in BC: a moderate NDP reform in 1995 and a more aggressive and punitive Liberal reform in 2002. Welfare rates, benefits and restrictions have fluctuated considerably throughout the 1990s and 2000s as a result of these reforms. BC is one of the most restrictive and least generous provinces in the country and has the highest level of overall poverty (Gouvernement du Québec 2014: 32), child poverty (CBC News 2013b) and wealth inequality (The Broadbent Institute 2014) in the country. Further, the province has never adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS); indeed, BC has the dubious distinction of being the only Canadian province to have never even considered implementing one.

Social assistance reforms

Elected in 1991, the NDP made important cuts to social assistance in 1996 with the implementation of *BC Benefits: Renewing our Social Safety Net*, replacing the *Guaranteed Available Income for Need Act* (GAIN), which had been in place since 1972. With *BC Benefits*, the province lowered assistance rates. Single employable people were particularly affected by the cuts, but benefit levels for most other recipient categories also began a slow and steady decline starting in 1996 (see Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2014: 37-39). Rates began to pick up again around 2005-2007, but they have never returned to what they were in the 1990s.

The introduction to the *BC Benefits* notes that GAIN, which was originally implemented in the 1960s, was increasingly inadequate for BC. Repeatedly throughout the *BC Benefits* policy, the government argues that the social assistance caseload had become too high, and explicitly set out to reduce the number of people on welfare. In the face of this rising caseload, NDP Premier Mike Harcourt framed the policy as a renewal; “Some people would respond by severely weakening our safety net, or forcing people to do menial, dead-end work to get a handout... Instead, my government has chosen to renew our social safety net” (British Columbia Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security 1995). The province also aimed to help people to move into the labour market. In a press release announcing the new policy, the government explained, “The B.C. government today announced a major renewal of the province’s social safety net to help people move from welfare to work, and provide ongoing income support for people who need it, including seniors, the disabled, and others unable to work. The province is also, for the first time, extending new benefits to all lower

income working families to make work a better deal than welfare” (Government of British Columbia 1995).

The plan cut social assistance rates for all recipient categories except for seniors, people with disabilities, and those who are temporarily unable to work¹³; the government of BC estimated that these cuts to social assistance benefits would result in a savings of nearly \$50 million/year. The policy also introduced a 3-month residency requirement before allowing people to access benefits, believing that this would reduce the welfare caseload in two ways; “first, a certain number of people who would otherwise receive benefits are no longer eligible to receive them. Second, it is expected that this change will result in fewer people moving to BC without adequate resources” (Government of British Columbia, 1995a: p 19). Another reform was to the welfare appeal system, which made the new system “legally and procedurally complex and inaccessible to income assistance recipients without assistance from a lawyer or a trained advocate” (Legal Services Society 1996). Through these measures, the NDP provincial government sent a clear message that social assistance was to be the option of last resort for those in need; in other words, social assistance would be made accessible only once family and private market options were exhausted.

A three-year review of *BC Benefits* noted an important decrease in the number of people living on social assistance, which the province repeatedly and proudly claimed credit for; “The results speak for themselves. The level of welfare dependence in B.C. dropped from 10 per cent in 1995 to less than seven per cent in mid-1999” (British Columbia Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security 1999b, 5). This decrease, however, has been

¹³ The policy does not, however, index the benefits, which results in a de facto cut

persuasively linked to changing unemployment rates, which largely mirror social assistance rates (Boychuk 2015).

In 2002, the NDP lost the provincial election and Gordon Campbell's newly elected Liberal government would quickly introduce even deeper reaching reforms to social assistance. The province made its changes through two pieces of legislation, the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance Act for Persons with Disabilities Act*. In so doing, assistance and shelter benefit levels dropped for all recipient categories (including families) and significant eligibility restrictions and rules were imposed on recipients. Notably, BC became the first province in Canada to introduce a maximum period of assistance; in any five year time period, a person could only receive support for two (non-consecutive or consecutive) years. Following two non-cumulative years of assistance within a 5-year period, a person was cut off of assistance, a rule that Pulkingham calls "highly punitive and unprecedented (in Canada)" (2015, 207). This rule was ultimately repealed before it was ever implemented.

Another measure that was introduced was a dollar for dollar claw back on income earned while on social assistance, constituting a 100 per cent tax on earned income. Previously, social assistance recipients could supplement their income by up to \$200 every month without penalty. This elimination of earning exemptions was another remarkably harsh reform that even conservative voices criticized. The Fraser Institute, in its Report Card of Welfare Reform in BC gave the province an overall "B" for its welfare reforms that would make welfare into a work-focused system (Schafer and Clemens 2002; 6), but gave the system an "F" on the area of "making work pay", specifically because of the elimination of earning exemptions (*ibid*). Earning exemptions were reinstated in 2004 following loud and severe

criticism of the measure as overly harsh and anti-work. In an analysis of these reforms, the Caledon institute wrote, “the new government is undertaking what many consider to be an overhaul of social programs in British Columbia... taken together, they are among the largest budget and public sector cuts in Canadian history” (Caledon Institute 2002; 1).

BC’s social assistance is currently divided into two programs: disability and temporary assistance. The latter category is comprised of four categories, each of which imposes varying degrees of requirements. The closer a person is deemed to be to reintegrating into the labour market, the more stringent the job search requirements are. For example, someone who is “Expected to Work” does not have any exemptions for the job search requirement, whereas someone on temporary assistance under the classification Temporarily Excused, such as single parents with young children, are excused from these job search requirements for a certain period of time.

Rules for accessing welfare in BC have at times been the strictest in Canada, but today they are relatively comparable to other provinces, notably in terms of liquid asset limits and earning exemptions (Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2014). For a Single Employable Person, social assistance offered by the provincial government is equal to a mere 40.1% of the MBM. This is clearly the least generous amount of support offered by an already ungenerous provincial government; people with disabilities receive 58.6% of the MBM; single parents with one child receive 62.7%; and couples with two children receive 56.3% (Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2015). All of these assistance levels have gone down as a share of the MBM since 2013, likely due to the fact that they are not indexed to inflation (see Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2014).

Poverty and inequality

BC's child poverty rate is the highest in Canada, with nearly one in five children in BC living in poverty (Bramham 2013). Recent studies of inequality in Canada have found that inequality is also highest in BC. The Broadbent Institute, for example, has found that "the concentration of wealth for the top 10% is highest in British Columbia at 56.2% and lowest in Atlantic Canada (31.7%) and Québec (43.4%)" (The Broadbent Institute 2014; 3). The Gini index, an internationally accepted measure of inequality, shows that inequality in BC increased more slowly than it did in Canada overall since 1990, though inequality was comparatively high to begin with. In 1990, the after tax Gini coefficient was .29 and rose to .314 in 2011 (Québec, Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité et de la Famille 2014). No doubt contributing to this comparatively high level of inequality is the fact that provincial tax rates in BC are among the lowest in Canada (The Globe and Mail and Mail 2012).

The province still lacks a provincial poverty plan, which is astonishing given the high and persistent levels of poverty, including child poverty. The closest thing BC has had to a poverty reduction strategy was *Action Against Poverty* in 1999. Far from an explicit plan to fight poverty, the document rather summarized various government actions that were already in place, such as social assistance and school meal programs. "Up until now," the Minister's message says, "there has been no centralized summary of these programs" (British Columbia Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security 1999a). During the 2014 provincial election, the NDP proposed a province-wide poverty reduction plan as a central part of its platform. When the Liberals won the election, any talk of a poverty reduction strategy were put on hold.

Alberta

The percentage of the population that is on social assistance in Alberta has tended to be low in Alberta, largely due to an oil and gas driven economy that has been booming (until recently), and poverty rates in Alberta are among the lowest in the country (Gouvernement du Québec 2014; 32). For those living on social assistance, however, the rates remain the least generous of those considered here. The government has historically been disinterested in introducing measures to reduce poverty, though recent efforts to reform social policy and introduce a PRS came very close to being adopted in 2012. The newly elected NDP government has promised to raise taxes on certain income brackets and increase the minimum wage (Wood and Henton 2015). The province has further announced its intention to work on poverty fighting measures in 2016, while at the time same cautioning that a difficult economic situation in the province might restrict poverty reduction measures (J. Wood 2015).

Social assistance

Ralph Klein, one of the most right-wing premiers that Alberta (and Canada) ever elected, has shaped the recent history of Alberta in important ways. The main reform to social assistance in Alberta came under his leadership in the 1990s, at which point social assistance benefits for single people began a drastic decline that continued until 2009. Rates for other recipient groups, notably families, also declined during this period, though not as drastically as they did for single people. To understand the context that made it possible for Progressive Conservative Premier Ralph Klein to adopt such aggressive budgets that resulted in the nickname “King Ralph the deficit slayer”, we need to look at little further back in Alberta’s history.

The Progressive Conservative party had been in power in Alberta from 1971 until May 5, 2015, at times holding up to 75 of the 79 provincial seats. The dominance of one single

party without an effective opposition for so long posed problems for democracy and accountability, but the PC nevertheless went through internal ideological swings between red and blue conservatism. Peter Lougheed, for example, Premier from 1971-1985, was on the progressive side of the PC spectrum (Wesley 2011; Wiseman 2007). In the 1970s when the oil and gas industry began to boom, Lougheed's government used much of the revenue to invest in an expanded civil service and hospitals. Thinking ahead to potentially less prosperous times, increased revenues were also invested in the Heritage Fund and were set aside as a kind of rainy-day savings account for the future.

When an economic crisis hit in the 1980s, the province of Alberta felt the effects acutely; housing foreclosures, bankruptcies, and suicide rates became the highest in the country (CBC News 2001). The number of people on the social assistance caseload grew, and social spending increased to support the population through the economy's latest bust. When Lougheed stepped down from the Premiership of Alberta in 1985, the province was spending more than many in the province believed was necessary, including on social policies. Newly elected Premier Don Getty enacted a series of measures to diversify the Alberta economy, reduce spending, and generate new revenue sources. Social assistance rate for a single employable person dropped from \$11,500/year in 1986 (2013 dollars) to \$8,000/year in 1989 (Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2014: 34). Families with children also saw their assistance rates cut, but not as dramatically.

Despite Getty's efforts to balance the books, unemployment rates continued to rise and his gamble on new revenue sources did not pay off. By the time Getty left office, Alberta had an annual deficit of \$3.3 billion and a provincial debt of over \$23 billion (Gregg 2006). This economic situation set the stage for a charismatic and populist leader who was prepared to

make significant cuts to provincial spending in the name of a balanced budget. Many within the PCs saw former Calgary mayor Ralph Klein as the best man for the job. With urban roots but also popular in rural Alberta, Klein returned the PCs to power in 1993 with 59 out of 73 seats.

Klein immediately began cutting across all government departments and programs, including social assistance. As Wood observes, “welfare reform was one of the province’s flagship deficit-elimination initiatives” (D. Wood 2015, 163). When Klein first took office in the early 1990s, Alberta was second only to Saskatchewan in terms of lowest social assistance for single employable individuals; by 2003, Alberta was second to none. Indeed, benefit rates dropped considerably throughout the 1990s for all family types except for individuals with disabilities. Remarkably, Klein balanced the government’s books exclusively through 20 percent cuts across government departments; he never raised taxes. Through his cuts and strong commitment not to raise taxes, the government’s fiscal situation improved so much that a surplus emerged by 2006. Rather than reinvesting the surplus or spending it on social or other program, Klein sent cheques, often referred to as Ralph bucks, of \$400 to every citizen of Alberta.

Klein governed as Premier until 2006. His health was suffering and his party indicated through a leadership review that his support was not strong. Ed Stelmach (also a PC premier) would take over in 2006. Beginning in 2008, the province began introducing slightly more generous social assistance benefits, though they still remained the lowest in the country. This was, of course, particularly the case for single employable people. It is interesting to note that throughout the period of cuts to social assistance in Alberta through the 1990s and 2000s, people receiving disability assistance did not see their rates drop or change as significantly as

they did for other recipient categories (see Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2014). For example, a single employable person on social assistance received annual support of approximately \$8,500 in 1991; by 2005, support had dropped to just under \$6,000 but then rose to just under \$8,000 by 2007. In contrast, a person with a disability on social assistance had a much more stable income over this period. In 1991, a person with a disability received just over \$10,000 in annual income support; in 2005, rates dropped to around \$9000 but then returned to what it was in the early 1990s. Rates increased slightly upon the election of Alison Redford, who represented a return to the Progressive side of the PC party. Rates for all recipient categories rose slightly under her leadership.

The Alberta assistance program for people with *severe* and *permanent* disabilities, the Assured income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), is the most generous social assistance program in Alberta. Indeed, it is the most generous assistance program in Canada. Introduced in 1979 under Peter Lougheed's government (the first program in Canada destined to people who are permanently disabled), income supports for individuals on AISH are substantially more generous than they are for a single employable person. Recipients who qualify for social assistance on AISH receive 97.1% of the MBM in assistance. People with severe disabilities are therefore very well cared for by the province; those who do not qualify for AISH, however, face a much harsher reality. This is particularly the case for people in the Barriers to Full Employment (BFE) category or for those on disability but who do not have what the province deems a severe or permanent disability. Many of these people face significant health challenges (both mental and physical), making it very difficult for them to find work. For these people, the assistance levels are significant lower than what they are for those receiving AISH, but qualifying for AISH is very difficult.

Some scholars have concluded that welfare in Alberta remains divided along deserving poor and undeserving lines. People with long-term disabilities are supported through comparatively generous social assistance policies, whereas those who are able to work receive harshly low and restrictive benefits. Wood (2015) writes, “the provincial government readily accepts responsibility for the *deserving poor* – people who are considered as poor through no fault of their own – but provides only marginal support for the *undeserving poor* – for fear of encouraging idleness. This approach to welfare has been consistent in Alberta for almost 100 years” (161).

Social assistance rates for single employable people hit an all time low in 2005, at \$5549/year. In 2013, the rate offered for this recipient category represents 38.9% of the MBM. Liquid asset exemptions for single employable people are the lowest of the provinces considered here at \$627, and the earning exemption is \$230 of net income plus 25% of remaining income. Compared to other recipient groups in Alberta, social assistance rates for single employable people as a percentage of the MBM are low. A single parent with one child currently receives 58.6% of the MBM and a couple with two children receives 58.1% (Tweddle et al. 2015). Compared to other provinces, these levels of assistance remain among the lowest that are offered.

Poverty and inequality

Inequality rose in Alberta faster than it did anywhere else in Canada; in 1990, the after tax Gini coefficient was .289 but had reached .337 by 2011, an increase of .048 (Québec, Ministère de l’Emploi, de la Solidarité et de la Famille 2014). In 2011, PC premier Alison Redford indicated a firm commitment to re-thinking social policy, and notably to reducing poverty and inequality. As Wood notes, “Until Alison Redford became premier in 2011, the

established policy of the governing Progressive Conservatives was that the best social policy for Alberta was for everyone to get a job” (2015, 171). Redford, a political student of Lougheed, represented a swing back to the progressive side of the PCs.

In 2012, municipal governments and community groups were estimating that the annual cost of poverty in the province of Alberta, through health, criminal, intergenerational and opportunity costs was between \$7.1-9.5 billion/year (Briggs and Lee 2012). Responding to these groups and others who were similarly calling for a more interventionist provincial government, Redford announced province-wide consultations on poverty, early childhood development, and inequality. The Speak, Share, Thrive consultations resulted in a series of reports highlighting what Albertans had to say about poverty in their province (Government of Alberta 2013a). The consultation process resulted in the Social Policy Framework, released in 2012, which announced a significant overhaul to social policy in Alberta.

The Framework took a remarkably critical and honest look at the social supports in place; “our current system of social supports is designed and operated based on assumptions that may no longer be true. Over the past decades, social policy efforts have tended to focus on addressing specific deficiencies and filling particular gaps; the results has been programs that address single issues or needs” (Government of Alberta 2013a, 6). Recognizing the role of government in the implementation and ultimate success of these goals and initiatives, the Framework noted, “the Government of Alberta will fulfill its social responsibility in these areas by creating legislation, programs, and standards, as well as by bringing groups together to form new networks and by partnering with others to resolve social challenges” (Government of Alberta 2013a, 20). To these ends, the Framework promised a series of goals and initiatives, including a ten-year plan to reduce poverty in the province.

Alberta was not approaching a Quebec style social assistance regime with progressive taxes and generous social programs, but it was nevertheless on the cusp of a remarkable social policy transformation. Albertans had begun using words like inequality, social protection, and were talking very openly about gaps in the safety net and the need for government involvement in the protection of vulnerable Albertans from new risks. This marked a significant change in the thinking from the Klein years of cuts. None of these reforms, plans, or strategies came to be implemented, however. The project was personally tied to Redford, and her political reign in Alberta came to an abrupt end in early 2014 when a series of scandals emerged regarding Redford's dominating personal leadership style and, perhaps more importantly, unjustified spending of public funds. Redford stepped down from the premiership in March 2014, putting her career and political priorities, including poverty and inequality reduction, on ice.

In May 2015, Albertans made history by electing a majority NDP government. Alberta premier Rachel Notley has indicated that she will introduce progressivity to the fiscal structure of the province, and will raise minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2018. Her government has so far not introduced a comprehensive plan to reduce poverty, but at the end of December 2015 was discussing plans to look at the issue in the new year (Braid 2015; J. Wood 2015). A further indication of this commitment is the appointment of the passionate anti-homelessness advocate and former Calgary City Councillor Joe Ceci as Minister of Finance. Social policies do not tend to change rapidly, however, and while Albertans appear ready for change and understand the important of progressive taxes and government intervention (Carter, Hogan, and Velji 2015), Notley herself has cautioned that the challenging economic reality in the

province is a reality that might limit the success of poverty reduction measures (J. Wood 2015).

Ontario

Social assistance incomes in Ontario dropped significantly for single employable people and for families in 1994/95 and continued a slow downward trend until they began to pick up again in ever so slightly in the mid- to late-2000s. Levels were somewhat more stable for people with disabilities, but rates still declined for this population steadily throughout this period. Radical changes to the structure of social assistance in Ontario have been repeatedly called for, notably in 1988 and 2012. Changes to the social assistance system in Ontario have slowly been introduced over the course of the 1990s and 2000s, notably in terms of rules and rates. Apart from tinkering within the existing system, however, the recommended changes have never been implemented, and many argue that the ungenerous system, particularly towards the undeserving poor, is firmly rooted in Ontario politics (Graefe 2015). Rates slowly began to increase following the province's plan to reduce poverty introduced in 2008 ever so slightly but have never to what they had been in the early 1990s. The province has introduced 2 poverty reduction strategies¹⁴, which have both been targeted at children.

Throughout the post-war period and until the 1990s, social assistance in Ontario was stingy for people who were able to work (single employable people), but more generous for the deserving, such as single mothers or people with disabilities. As Boychuk explains, from 1950-1990s, "the social assistance system in Ontario demonstrates a high level of continuity, based on its well-established historical tradition of highly differentiated assistance provision" (Boychuk 1998, 62). The current system, as is the case in other provinces, continues this

¹⁴ The first for 2008-13 and the second for 2014-19

differentiation between people who are able to work and those who are not, providing more generous support to those with disabilities or multiple barriers to employment.

In 1986, social assistance rates began to rise during difficult economic times in Ontario, as was the case across the country. Facing an increasing caseload of people on social assistance, the Liberal government (governing under a formal accord with the provincial NDP) appointed a review of the social assistance system in Ontario, which was at the time the most thorough review of social assistance in the province's history (Sheldrick 1998). Following two years of review and consultation, the Social Assistance Review Committee (SARC) submitted its final report, *Transitions: Report of the Social Assistance Review Committee*. The report called for measures to lift children out of the welfare system through a national child income program, to decouple people with disabilities from the welfare system, and overall to make the system smaller and more residual.

More generally, the report called for a major overhaul of the system, noting that the foundations of social assistance that were put in place in the 1960s were no longer relevant for the Ontario of the 1980s. Rather, the report argued that the system should be more residual and should encourage and prepare those who are able to work to re-enter the job market. Sheldrick writes, "the report rejected the argument that entitlement to income support leads to welfare dependency and that benefits should be kept deliberately low to compel people to return to the labour market" (Sheldrick 1998, 41). Further, in arguing that benefits should be tied to a "market basket" of goods, the *Transitions* report insisted that the basic needs of low-income people must be met through social assistance. Writing 15 years after the report, Stapleton notes that *Transitions* "created, however briefly, a broad political consensus on what to do about poverty in Canada's largest province" (Stapleton 2004, 1).

The reforms that were proposed in *Transitions* overwhelmed the government; they were, indeed, sweeping. Following pressure from activist groups, then Liberal Premier Peterson established an Advisory Committee on new social assistance legislation in 1990 to look at implementing some of the proposed measures. When the Liberals were defeated by Bob Rae's NDP in 1991, the Committee's work continued and had the immediate support of the new Minister responsible for social services. In fact, the Committee was instructed to advise the government on ways to hasten the implementation of *Transitions*. To this end, they produced two reports, *Back on Track* in 1991 and *Time for Action* in 1992; together, the reports contained over 120 recommendations regarding the implementation of *Transitions*. The NDP government welcomed both reports initially, but a more challenging economic environment in the mid-1990s caused the provincial NDP to change course and to focus more on deficit reduction than on social assistance reform (Graefe 2015; Sheldrick 1998).

As a result of this new economic orientation from the NDP provincial government, the implementation of *Transitions* slowed to a crawl. Cuts were made to social assistance levels throughout the early-1990s, but the most drastic cuts would take place under Mike Harris's PC government, which was elected in 1995 on a Common Sense Revolution of cutting spending and reducing the size of government. Tweddle et al. write, "1995 marked the beginning of a devastating attack on social assistance, with a 21.6% cut in welfare benefits for recipients considered able to work. The erosion continued steadily for the next 12 years because welfare rates were frozen and so lost value every year" (Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2014, 25).

Having never achieved the complete overhaul that *Transitions* called for, the social assistance system remained flawed and in need of revision according to many observers. In 2010, the provincial government reluctantly appointed another Social Assistance Review

Advisory Council as a part of its Poverty Reduction Strategy (see below). The introduction message from the commissioners explained the mandate of the review; “the overarching goal of the review was to identify ways to remove barriers and help people move into employment” (Lankin and Sheikh 2012, 10). The report recommends a total overhaul of the social assistance system towards one that “focuses on ability, not disability... the starting point of the new system is that all social assistance recipients, including people with disabilities, should be supported to participate in the workforce to the maximum of their abilities and that *income security* should be guaranteed for those who cannot work” (*ibid*, 11, emphasis added). The report proposed to do this by collapsing the various categories and supports into one basic level, and then adopting a building block approach by adding on other benefits, such as additional supplements for people with disabilities or families with children, where warranted. The review contained a total of 108 recommendations. It proposed an ambitious agenda for reform, and in using the language and logic of income security and encouraging government to adopt one level of support for all recipients, is similar to the majority report of the 1996 Quebec social assistance review (see below).

While some measures from this review have been adopted, such as an increase in the liquid asset exemption limit for single employable people from \$606 to \$2500, the fundamental nature of the social assistance system remains unchanged. For decades, scholars and practitioners have said the social assistance reform is a political non-starter in Ontario. Deeply engrained beliefs and deserving and undeserving poor that characterize conservative types of social assistance regimes (Boychuk 1998) represent an important obstacle to the implementation of income security for all Ontarians (Graefe 2015).

Social assistance in Ontario today remains divided along lines of deserving and undeserving recipients. Single employable people received 41.8% of the MBM in 2014. This is comparable to rates offered in other provinces for single employable people, but is very low compared to other recipient categories in Ontario. People with disabilities receive 69.2% of the MBM, single parents with children receive 66.1% of the MBM, and couples with children receive 63.8% (Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2015). With the exception of single employable people, for whom benefit levels remained the same, social assistance rates went down as a share of the MBM between 2013 and 2014 (see Tweddle et al 2014). Liquid exemption levels have been raised to \$2500 for single employable people, as noted above, though following three months of receiving social assistance, social assistance recipients are only able to keep 50% of additional earned revenues. Inequality in Ontario rose faster than the national average; in 1990, the after tax Gini coefficient was .28 but was .311 in 2011, representing an increase of .031 (Québec, Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité et de la Famille 2014).

Poverty and inequality

In 2007, the Government of Ontario announced that it would introduce a PRS for the province. The five-year plan was released in 2008, and had as its main target the reduction of child poverty by 25% by 2013; “it’s a plan that marks a bold new direction. It sets an aggressive target – reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25 per cent over 5 years” (Government of Ontario 2008, 1). The plan came with a budget of \$2.5 billion over five years; only \$300 million of this, however, was new funding. In addition to lifting children out of poverty, the plan also stressed the importance of moving people back into the labour market; “children should have the opportunity to succeed in life, and people facing challenges should be given the tools they need to get ahead” (*ibid*).

Some measures were successfully implemented, such as full day kindergarten, an increase in minimum wage, and modest increases in social assistance benefits for all recipient categories (though the increase was marginal for single employable people). By 2014, however, the government admitted that it did not meet its objective of reducing child poverty by 25%. At the outset, the PRS set to lift 90,000 children out of poverty, but the most recent data available from statistics Canada (2011) indicates that only 46,000 children were in fact lifted out of poverty, a little more than half of the original goal¹⁵. The Minister places a significant portion of the blame for the PRS's failure at the feet of the federal government; "We did everything we said we would do when we released the strategy in 2008 and had the other elements of the strategy, particularly the responsibilities we believe lie with the federal government, had the federal government done its part we believe we would have come very close, if not had achieved, our goal of a 25% reduction in child poverty" (Jones 2014).

What the government did not acknowledge was the fact that among adults, poverty rose faster than it did in any other jurisdiction. The Ontario Poverty Progress Profile, written by Canada Without Poverty, writes, "Ontario's Plan Against Poverty has been seen as a positive step towards addressing poverty and has demonstrated initial results in reducing child poverty. However, the plan has met criticism for its lack of action to address poverty among adults, including people with disabilities and seniors" (Canada Without Poverty 2013, 6). The most significant cracks in the Ontario PRS are related to single adults.

In its most recent PRS, *Realizing our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2014-2019*, adopted in 2014, the Government of Ontario acknowledges again that the original plan was not successful. In a speech to the 2015 Conference to End Homelessness attendees in

¹⁵ The province stresses, however, that the PRS measures introduced prevented 61,000 children from falling into poverty.

Montreal in November 2015, Minister responsible for the poverty reduction file (and Deputy Premier) Deb Matthews expressed a renewed optimism in the province's ability to fight poverty. The new federal Liberal government, Matthews said in no uncertain terms, will be an important and active partner for the province.

The 2014 plan goes much further than the 2008 plan; "we are also turning our attention to transitional youth to meaningful employment, education, and training opportunities, while expanding our focus to support employment and income security for the most vulnerable in our province" (Government of Ontario 2014). This move towards income security is new and significant, but without significant reforms to the sticky and change resistant social assistance system, it is not yet clear that this concept will translate into reality in any meaningful way. The plan also commits to ending homelessness in 10 years. As will be outlined below, Alberta and Ontario are now the only two provinces that have committed to *ending* homelessness.

In conclusion, the social assistance regime in Ontario remains stingy, particularly for single employable people, and imperfect. Activists and researchers continue to call for structural reforms to the system, but are not overly optimistic about the likelihood of their proposed changes being implemented. Social assistance offered to families and people with disabilities are low when compared to what is required according to the MBM, but they are generous compared to what Ontario offers to single employable people. The province indicated a cautious interest in poverty reduction in 2008, but failed in its goal of reducing child poverty by 25%. The province has not used this failure as an excuse to shy away from efforts to reduce poverty, but rather introduced a much more ambitious and far reaching PRS in 2014, one that includes the goal of ending homelessness. It will be difficult for the province

to live up to these expectations, but provincial officials are publicly very optimistic now that there is a new federal Liberal government with whom to partner.

Quebec

Depending on the program or policy under consideration, aid to the poor offered by the province of Quebec can either be seen as similar or significantly different from what is offered in other provinces. Social assistance *levels*, for example, are very similar. As has been the case in other Canadian provinces, single employable people in Quebec have seen a stable decline in their social assistance incomes between 1993-2012. There have been small bumps in assistance in certain years, such as in 1999 and 2004, but overall there is a steady downward trend in assistance rates, reaching a low of \$7,686 per year in 2008 (Tweddle et al. 2013). Support offered for families is notably more generous in Quebec than it is in the other three provinces. That said, families with children, both single and two parent families also saw a dip in their assistance rates beginning in 1993, but levels for these recipients begin to rise earlier than they did for single employable people in 2003/04. As is the case in most provinces, aid for people with a disability is both more generous and more stable throughout this period, at around \$11,500 per year.

Looking beyond social assistance, Quebec stands out for its concerted efforts to reduce poverty and inequality. In 2004 Quebec implemented its first plan to fight poverty, which focused mostly on families with children but also aimed to get single adults back into the labour market. It is with respect to its PRS that Quebec stands out as most different from the other Canadian provinces, as much for the content of the plan as for the process that led to its adoption.

Social assistance

The main reforms to social assistance took place in the 1990s and again in the early 2000s. Québec is among the most generous provinces in Canada when it comes to social assistance rates offered to all recipient categories, though its assistance levels do not by any means stand out dramatically from what is offered in other provinces. Quebec is also similar to other provinces in that it makes a distinction between social assistance recipients; there are different levels of assistance offered to people based on their ability to work, with people who are unable to work due to a disability or a severe barrier receiving more generous benefits.

The early development of the Quebec welfare state was different from what was seen in other provinces. Throughout the post-war era when the welfare state was expanding throughout most Canadian provinces, welfare in Quebec was based primarily on a charity model, and churches rather than the provincial government played a significant role in its provision. The Quiet Revolution, which began with Jean LeSage's government in the 1960s, marked a rupture with this past and led to a transformation of the social, political, and institutional landscape in the province. French became the official language of business and government throughout the province including in Montreal (Béland et al. 2010), citizens began to trust in their institutions (Noël 2010), and the state became more interventionist (Rigaud et al. 2010). The role of the state in the provision of welfare was solidified in 1969 with the Social Aid Act, which provided support to all those in need of it, regardless of their ability to work. Like other social assistance programs at the time, this support was provided provincially with federal financial help through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP).

The more recent evolution of social assistance in Québec has, in some ways, similar to what happened in other provinces. In the 1980s, rising unemployment, particularly among youth in the province, caused the government to draw into question its social assistance

regime. In that context, Bourassa's Liberal government embarked on a redesign of the social assistance system in the 1980s. The new system that resulted from the redesign, like those in other provinces, contained two tracks: one for those who were able to work; and another, more generous track for those with severe barriers, such as disabilities, to employment.

In the 1990s, the newly elected, left of centre Parti Québécois (PQ) government appointed a panel of experts to again review the system and to bring forward proposals for improvements. The panel of five experts yielded two reports; while there were some similarities in the reports, they were divergent in their philosophies and overall view of social assistance. The majority report insisted that income security (rather than differentiated tracks based on one's ability to work) should be at the heart of the redesigned system, and advocated for a move towards more active labour market policies (Bouchard, Labrie, and Noël 1996). The minority report emphasized the responsibilities of aid recipients towards the state (as well as state responsibilities to aid recipients), and advocated that individuals who did not wish to conform to regulations (such as mandatory job searches, even for single mothers) should be excluded from the system (Fortin and Séguin 1996).

The PQ government made reforms to social assistance based on these reports. Active policies to help "trampoline" people on assistance back into the labour market were introduced, which are seen today by some as a social investment turn. But the PQ kept the distinction between recipient categories. Noël writes, "in many ways, this reform completed the transition initiated by the Liberals. In the process, the idea of income security was abandoned" (2015, 186). In this sense, the changes to social assistance in the 1980s were similar to what they were in other provinces in their emphasis on employment (and punishments if people do not conform to the regulations), though Quebec also invested more

in active social policies to help people get back into the labour force through education, training, or apprenticeship programs. The social assistance regime was again reformed in 2005 under a centre-right Liberal government, at which point incomes for families with children increased slightly, but incomes for single adults continued their slow downward trend.

Quebec is among the most generous provinces when it comes to social assistance offered according to the MBM for all recipient categories (including single employable people), but it is not the *most* generous province in the country. According to the MBM, the income support offered to the single employable person category is 48.7% of the MBM. People with disabilities receive 70.6% and families with children fair even better; a couple with two children receives 72.6% and a single parent with one child receives 79.1% of the MBM. With the exception of Alberta's AISH program for people with disabilities, which offers nearly the full MBM rate (97.1%), support offered to single parents with one child in Quebec is the closest to the MBM rate, at 79.1%.

Poverty and inequality

In many ways, reforms to social assistance reflected what was happening in other provinces in Canada, which were also faced with limited resources and rising unemployment throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Quebec stands out, however, in a number of important respects, notably if we look beyond social assistance rates and reforms. The introduction of active social policies, which encourage those who are able to work to enter the job market, a universal childcare policy, and a law against poverty are some of the important changes that were introduced in the 1990s and early 2000s (when the welfare state was generally being cut in other provinces). Looking through the 1990s and 2000s, it is also clear that poverty and inequality grew more quickly in the US and other Canadian provinces than in Québec (Noël

2013; Paquin and Lévesque 2014; Québec, Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité et de la Famille 2014). In 1990, the after tax Gini coefficient was .269; by 2011 it had grown by .022 to .291 (*ibid*). But the efforts to reduce poverty did not benefit all Quebecers equally. Indeed, the most positive effects tend to be concentrated on aid recipients who are able to re-enter the job market and for families with children (*ibid*).

This paper does not have the time to review fully the events that led to the development of the law against poverty, law 112¹⁶. Briefly summarized, the law was unique in its content, which ambitiously sought to make Quebec a place with the lowest levels of poverty in the developed world, but also in the way it was developed. In a truly bottom-up process, hundreds of community consultations and street parliaments, in consultation with legal experts, led to a draft law against poverty that was symbolically adopted by 2000 people in front of the National Assembly in Quebec City in the year 2000. A committee of three Members of the National Assembly (MNAs), from each of the three major parties, subsequently sponsored the introduction of the law in the national assembly; the law passed with unanimity.

It took some time before the National Assembly implemented a plan to fight against poverty. In 2004, two years after the adoption of the law against poverty, the government of Quebec (then a Liberal government) adopted its first Action Plan to fight against poverty and social exclusion. Perhaps reflective of its orientation, the plan was entitled *Concilier liberté et justice sociale: un défi pour l'avenir*, or Reconciling Freedom and Social Justice: A Challenge for the Future. Noting demographic changes throughout the province, including importantly an aging population, the Minister of Employment, Social Solidarity and Family Welfare Claude

¹⁶ For the full history of the adoption of the law, see Larocque 2011 and Noël 2002

Bécharde wrote, “employment is the key to personal autonomy and social integration – and the best way to increase our collective wealth” (Government of Québec 2004, 5). At the foundation of the Action Plan are the principles of economic security and social inclusion through employment. Believing that measures that promote these principles would at once reduce poverty and improve social solidarity, the introduction to the plan concludes, “This Action Plan is a beacon of hope. It will mean richer lives for all Québécois, individually and as a whole” (*ibid*).

The plan was accompanied with \$2.5 billion in funding, which would be used to increase the income offered to low-income families and individuals, and to invest in social housing. The Action plan notes that certain social assistance benefits would be indexed and supplemented in various ways, such as through a higher minimum wage and child assistance measures. A work premium was also introduced to “make work more profitable,” and provided an incentive for people to increase their revenue through income. For example, if a single person earned \$5,000 per year, the government provided a work premium of \$182; if the person’s income was \$10,000, the work premium would jump to \$481. The premium is much higher for single-parent families with one or more children. In addition to this work-related measure, the government also introduced a universal Child Assistance measure targeted at low-income families.

Community groups greeted this first plan with mixed responses. Some measures, such as the full indexation of some (but not all) benefits as well as new income supplements for the working poor, regardless of whether they had children, were welcomed. The *Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté*, the group that mobilized around the idea of a law against poverty in the first place, said that the plan was a positive step, but was concerned that there were oversights

and that there would continue to be barriers to employment for the most vulnerable (Noël 2005).

A new plan to fight poverty was introduced in 2010; in the introduction to this new plan, then Premier Jean Charest writes, “Under the first Action Plan... significant strides were made of which all of us can be proud... today, with this second government Action Plan, we are opting to make our social safety net even stronger and our solidarity more effective through congruity and mobilization” (Gouvernement du Québec 2010, 5). The 2010-2015 Plan was accompanied with a budget of \$7 billion over five years, \$1.3 billion of which was new funding. Some measures from the old plan, such as the work premium and the child assistance measure, were renewed in the 2010 plan; new measures, such as a Solidarity Tax Credit, were also introduced.

Looking at the results of ten years of efforts to fight poverty, government reports and academic analyses have indicated that the two PRSs were most successful at reducing poverty among families, single- or two-parent, with children. Single people who are able to work did not fair so well, however. A 2014 Government of Quebec evaluation of the changing profile of poverty over ten years provides excellent and nuanced research on the results of the plans to fight poverty. In 2003, prior to the plan’s implementation, there were around 747,000 people in the province who were low-income according to the MBM. Of these 747,000 people, 36.9% were single, 19% were couples with children, 19.7% were single parent families and 24.4% were other families (for example couples without children or intergenerational families). By 2013, the number of low-income people in the province rose to 842,000, but of this population, 43% of whom were single people. All other family types had gone down in terms of the percentage of the overall low-income population by 1-2%. In other words, while

poverty had decreased among families with children, it increased significantly among single people.

In a *Centre d'étude sur la pauvreté et l'exclusion* study of the state of poverty in Quebec in 2013, former president Alain Noël writes that Quebec has made significant progress in reducing poverty among families since the introduction of the law against poverty. Nearing the end of the second plan to fight poverty, he writes that it is an opportune time to think about the next steps. Thinking ahead, he asks if it is possible to accomplish for single people in the future what had been accomplished for families with children. At time of writing in early 2016, the province was beginning consultations for the third government action plan on poverty reduction. The third plan announces itself as a continuation of past plans, which have aimed to make the Quebec one of the places in the industrialized world with the lowest amount of poverty.

The level of social assistance offered by the province of Quebec, for all recipient categories, is comparatively generous when compared with the other big Canadian provinces. Quebec is not the most generous province in the federation, however, and its levels of assistance do not stand out as being much more generous. While the assistance offered to single employable people in Montreal is comparatively generous, it is still not even 50% of the MBM, making it very difficult for a single person on social assistance to meet her or his basic needs, let alone escape poverty. Where the province of Quebec is most different from other provinces is with respect to the fight against poverty. This is both in terms of the content of the policy, and also the process that led to its eventual implementation in 2004. Despite putting poverty on the provincial agenda in 2004, and keeping it there to this day, the successes that

these plans have had have been concentrated on families with children. Poverty among low-income single people has grown since the introduction of the first PRS in 2004.

Summary

Below is a summary table that compares the current information regarding poverty and inequality in the four provinces reviewed above. It includes the recent Gini coefficient for each province, as well as its change since 1990. It also presents social assistance levels for four recipient categories (as of 2014) and eligibility rules for accessing social assistance (Tweddle, Battle, and Torjman 2015). The four lines regarding the MBM represent the percentage of the MBM that is met through the social assistance rate offered for that recipient category. For example, in BC, social assistance for a single employable person is only 40.1% of what that person needs in order to meet her or his most basic needs according to the MBM.

Table 2: Poverty and inequality

	BC	AB	ON	QC
Gini coefficient (2011) ¹⁷	.314	.337	.311	.291
Change in Gini coefficient since 1990 ¹⁸	+.024	+.048	+.031	+.022
MBM (Single person, employable) ¹⁹	40.1%	38.9%	41.8%	48.7%
MBM (Single person with permanent disability) ²⁰	58.6%	97.1%	69.2%	70.6%
MBM (Single parent, one child) ²¹	62.7%	58.6%	66.1%	79.1%
MBM (Couple, two children) ²²	56.3%	58.1%	63.8%	72.6%

¹⁷ Data from Gouvernement du Québec, 2014

¹⁸ Data from Gouvernement du Québec, 2014

¹⁹ Data from Tweddle et al., 2015 for the year 2014

²⁰ Data from Tweddle et al., 2015 for the year 2014

²¹ Data from Tweddle et al., 2015 for the year 2014

Earning exemptions ²³	\$200 (recipients)	\$230 of net income plus 25% of remaining net income	50% net earnings after 3 months of assistance	\$200
Liquid asset exemptions ²⁴ (single person considered employable)	\$2000	\$627	\$2500	\$1500 (recipients)

BC has been stingy with benefits and has at times been the most restrictive and difficult to access system in the country. Most of the harshest rules, such as the 2 in 5 rule (where recipients only receive support for two years out of a five year period) and zero earning exemptions, have been eliminated. The level of assistance offered to a single employable person in 2014, however, remains well below half of what is should be according to the MBM. Assistance levels for other recipient categories are more generous, but also remain very well below the MBM. The province has historically been completely disinterested in introducing deliberate measures to reduce poverty and inequality, leaving ample space for other actors to innovate. BC today is a one of the most unequal parts of Canada and tolerates remarkably high levels of poverty, including among children.

Alberta’s story is similar to BC’s; benefits levels are low and are difficult to access. The province cares comparatively very well for people with permanent disabilities, who receive 97.1% of the MBM in benefits. But the reality is very different for those who are able to work and even those with temporary disabilities. Single employable people receive approximately 41% of the MBM; benefits for families with children are somewhat higher, but remain well below the poverty threshold. The province has been disinterested in poverty or

²² Data from Tweddle et al., 2015 for the year 2014

²³ Data from Tweddle et al., 2015 for the year 2014

²⁴ Data from Tweddle et al., 2015 for the year 2014

inequality reducing measures, though this has changed recently with the near adoption of a PRS. The new NDP government is an indication that Albertans might be willing to pursue these ideas further.

Social assistance in Ontario is seen as a complex, costly, and unfair system that does not meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Elaborate reviews and studies of the system have led to excellent recommendations for reform, some of which have been adopted, but the most fundamental of which have never left the paper they were written on. Assistance levels for single employable people are very comparable to what they are in BC and Alberta, hovering around 42% of the MBM. Assistance for families with children are well below the MBM, but are higher than what is offered in BC and Alberta. This is likely the result of the two PRSs, which prioritized lifting children out of poverty. The first iteration of Ontario's PRS mostly targeted children, and was not terribly ambitious in its objectives and ultimate impact. The success of the first plan was only partial, as the government failed to meet its original target of reducing child poverty by 25% in five years (by 2013). The government is learning from past mistakes, however, and has committed to another PRS including a plan to end homelessness.

Quebec's efforts to reduce poverty are the most aggressive and comprehensive of those studied here. Compared to the same recipient group in other provinces, Quebec's support can surprisingly be called generous in this stingy group of provinces. It is still, however, less than half of the MBM, making it very difficult for single people in Quebec to meet their most basic needs. Further, when compared to other recipient groups within the province, social assistance offered to single employable people in Quebec is low; families with children receive benefits reaching nearly 80% of the MBM. Quebec governments, both left- and right- of centre, have confidently stepped into the poverty policy area with two PRSs and one more in the making at

time of writing. There have been important results from the PRS in Quebec, notably for families and children. Where the plan has fallen short, and where cracks have emerged, has been with respect to single employable people.

Conclusion

As the introduction explained, the purpose of this chapter is not to explain the differences between provincial efforts to reduce poverty. Rather, the purpose is to explain why, despite different provincial efforts to reduce poverty, levels of chronic homelessness are remarkably similar the four cities under study. Provincial social policies and interventions vary greatly across these four provinces, as has been noted above. Quebec in particular has been very active in the area of poverty, for example, though Ontario is beginning to become more engaged and committed as well. Yet it is clear that, despite these differences, there is a significant gap in the safety net in each of the provinces. The most obvious manifestation of this gap is chronic homelessness.

An important fact to bear in mind when considering why different provincial efforts have not had different results in these four provinces is that the majority of chronically homeless people are single people. It is very rare for a couple to be homeless together, and families with children do not often experience homelessness; if this is the case, children are usually taken from the parents. Where there have been direct efforts to reduce poverty, which is the case in Ontario and Quebec, poverty among single people actually grew, even though it decreased somewhat among families. Poverty reduction efforts have not focused on lifting single people out of poverty, which is an important reason for why these different interventions have not resulted in different levels of chronic homelessness. In other words, up

until very recently, provincial governments, despite efforts to reduce poverty, have not responded effectively to the specific issue of chronic homelessness.

Further, even though Quebec is more generous than other provinces when it comes to social assistance offered to single employable people, the amount of support offered remains very well below the poverty line. Single employable people are the most likely to experience homelessness, but they have the least amount of resources at their disposal in all four provinces. It is not difficult to see how poverty can quickly become a trap when people receiving social assistance are not even able to meet 50% of their most basic needs. This conclusion is very similar to what was drawn in the previous chapter on housing; despite the differences in provincial social policies, chronic homelessness is very stable in big cities across the country because those interventions were not targeted and not generous enough to meet the needs of the chronically homeless population.

Chapter 6: Role of the Local Government

The previous two chapters presented and compared provincial contexts in terms of housing and poverty policy. I argued that despite different provincial interventions in these areas, the amount of chronic homelessness was and remains very similar in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. This is primarily because those interventions were not targeted enough to meet the specific and complex needs of the chronically homeless population. There are notable differences in these cities in terms of the amount of temporary or episodic homelessness, which is likely the result of these different interventions (notably a more affordable housing market in Montreal coupled with substantial and sustained provincial investments in the construction of affordable housing). But when it comes to chronic homelessness, throughout the 1990s and 2000s no provincial government in Canada was responding adequately.

In response to the policy gaps created by the provinces, the most visible manifestation of which is chronic homelessness, groups have formed at the local level to develop and implement locally driven responses to homelessness. In this chapter and the one that follows, I argue that the question of *who*, exactly, fills the gaps created by the provinces is a distinctly local question. In order to understand the unique dynamics of the governance of homelessness in each case, we turn in this chapter to the local level.

There are two main differences in the local governance models that have emerged: the role of the local government and the degree of centralization or fragmentation of the governance model. What explains these differences? This first chapter tackles the question of the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness. In Vancouver and

Toronto, the local government is central and powerful in the governance of homelessness, whereas in Calgary and Montreal, the local governments play a much more marginal role (though Montreal is more involved than Calgary). I argue that the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness is determined by the local housing powers of the city and by the local elected officials' political commitment to make homelessness a priority.

Framework

As the literature review (Chapter 2) explained, this chapter could take a number of approaches to this question. We could compare political culture, political economy, or we could use typology tools developed by urban scholars such as Kantor and Savitch (2004) or Pierre (2011) to compare types of local governance. These typologies, though valuable, are beyond the scope of this thesis; this chapter does not seek to establish and compare the *overall* governance of each city, but rather it seeks to explain the different governance models that have formed around a particular issue: homelessness. To this end, I look at each city's local context and compare which local governments have the ability and the interest in stepping into the homelessness policy space.

I do this by comparing the housing powers of local governments and the local political commitment to the issue of homelessness. These two dimensions are comprised of eight factors. Drawn from the literature, the housing related powers of the local governments is measured with four factors: the local autonomy of each city; density bonusing powers; and inclusionary zoning powers; and which level of government (provincial or municipal) has the official responsibility for social housing. Data for this dimension is drawn mostly from primary sources, including provincial legislation regarding municipal powers, as well as interviews conducted with key actors in 2014. This first dimension looks specifically at

housing related powers, instead of powers related to homelessness. This is intentional. On the one hand, chronic homelessness is a very new phenomenon and there is as a result not a lot written on the subject. But there is a second important reason; while chronic homelessness is about much more than housing, it is, at the most basic level, always about housing. The lack of affordable housing in big Canadian cities means that long-term solutions to homelessness must involve some way of contributing to or controlling the housing market. In other words, for local governments to be serious and long-term actors in the area of homelessness, they must have some powers of housing.

The second dimension that explains the local government's role in the governance of homelessness is the political commitment to the issue of homelessness. Again using a framework that has been developed based on the literature on local governance, I evaluate this dimension by comparing four factors: the regional governance structure of the city; whether there are political parties at the local level; the local electoral system; and the broader political goals of senior local elected officials. Data for this dimension is also drawn from primary and secondary sources, and is greatly supplemented by interviews conducted in 2014.

In what following, I first justify and explain the significance of each of the eight indicators, including a broad overview of the results of the local autonomy index (for a much more thorough theoretical justification of the framework, please see Chapter 2: Literature Review). I then compare, case by case, the housing related powers and the political commitment to the issue of homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

Eight factors

Dimension 1: Local housing related powers

1. Local Autonomy: To measure the local autonomy of each city, I use an index that was developed by Smith and Spicer (forthcoming) to measure the local autonomy of the largest Canadian city in each province, which essentially measures the relationship between cities and their respective provincial governments. This index allows us to compare the ability of these four cities to act on their own, free from provincial constraints. Though Canadian cities are often treated as having very similar powers and interests in the literature on intergovernmental relations and federalism, Smith and Spicer find interesting differences in the dimensions of autonomy of different big cities. The index contains three dimensions of autonomy – legal-administrative, financial, and political – and is comprised of 12 indicators, all of which were drawn from a vast review of similar indices from the international and Canadian literature on local autonomy.

Local autonomy is measured from 0-1, where 0 is low autonomy and 1 is high autonomy. The results of the cities are presented on a six-part scale, “low-low 0.0-0.19, low-high 0.2-0.36, medium low 0.37-0.52, medium-high 0.53-0.68, high-low 0.69-0.84, and high-high 0.85-1.0”. The absolute values of 0 and 1 are in practice impossible; looking at the factors, it would for example require that the city have 100% of the province’s public employment and be responsible for 100% of its public expenditures. The scale is useful, however, in that it allows for a relative, side-by-side comparison of all 10 cities.

The results of the local autonomy index show that there is some interesting variation in the overall level of autonomy. The breakdown of the index into its three component dimensions reveals more nuances to this overall result. First, it shows that Canadian cities have remarkably similar, and low, levels of financial autonomy. In fact, all ten big Canadian cities fall within the low-high (0.2-0.36) category for financial autonomy (see Smith and

Spicer forthcoming for the results of all ten cities). This is perhaps the most important takeaway of the study of local autonomy in Canada, as the low financial autonomy across the country severely limits the ability of all cities to fully exercise their powers.

There is, however, more variation for the other two dimensions of autonomy. Calgary scores the lowest on the legal administrative dimension (.13), Vancouver scores the highest (.63), while Toronto and Montreal are in the middle (.38). Vancouver again is the highest scoring city for political autonomy, scoring .55 in the index, while Montreal is the lowest (.14) and Calgary and Toronto are in between (.26 and .27 respectively). Table 1 compares the levels of autonomy of each of the four cities side-by-side, in terms of individual dimensions and overall level of autonomy. These are the results that will be considered below for the local autonomy factor of the housing related powers dimension.

Table 3: Local autonomy of Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal

	Low-low (0.0-0.19)	Low-high (0.2-0.36)	Medium- low (0.37- 0.52)	Medium- high (0.53- 0.68)	High-low (0.69- 0.84)	High-high (0.85-1.0)
Legal- admin	Calgary (0.13)		Toronto (0.38) Montréal (0.38)	Vancouver (0.63)		
Financial		Vancouver (0.29) Calgary (0.32) Toronto (0.32) Montréal (0.35)				
Political	Montréal (0.14)	Calgary (0.26) Toronto (0.27)		Vancouver (0.55)		
Total		Calgary (0.24)	Vancouver (0.48)			

		Toronto (0.34) Montréal (0.30)				
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Source: Smith and Spicer, forthcoming.

2. Density bonusing: Through density bonusing powers, cities can increase the allowable density in new private housing developments in exchange for public amenities, such as affordable housing, parks, libraries, or public art. Moore explains, “density for benefit agreements (DBAs) allow municipalities to secure cash contributions or amenities from developers in return for allowing developers to exceed currently prevailing height and density restrictions” (Moore 2013, 1). The power itself is important to the city’s ability to contribute to affordable housing, and therefore to be an important actor in the governance of homelessness, but certain contextual factors (including the availability of land and the rules of the negotiation process) are also important to consider. In other words, density bonusing is a more powerful power in some cities than it is in others.

3. Inclusionary Zoning: Another tool that cities can use to encourage other actors, notably the private sector but also provincial governments, to invest in affordable housing is inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning policies do not necessarily require developers to build affordable housing units, but it means that cities can require that developers provide the city with land that can be used for future affordable housing developments. A CPRN report specifies; “the sites were either vacant land or air space parcels over a parking garage or other structure” (Mah 2009, 25). Once provided to the city, the city can lease this land to a non-profit, which is responsible for securing funding from a senior level of government to build

housing. Again, the strength of this power depends on some contextual factors, including the availability of land and the details of the negotiations between private developers and the city.

4. Responsibility for housing: If a municipality has been given the responsibility for social housing through provincial legislation, this responsibility extends implicitly to homelessness. Municipalities that do not have the responsibility for social housing can, of course, be involved in this area, but they do not have a mandate and a responsibility to do so. Insofar as there is one factor that is one most important factor in determining the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness, it is this one.

Dimension 2: Political commitment to homelessness

5. Regional structure: This factor considers whether the broader regional structure is fragmented or consolidated. In other words, does the municipal government encompass the suburbs around the city, or are those suburbs their own municipalities? This factor is important for two reasons. First, research has shown that downtown cores tend to be more progressive and socially minded, in federal as well as municipal elections, than suburbs (Fiedler and Addie 2008). For example, “inner cities have become more likely to vote for left-wing parties, whilst suburban areas increasingly support right wing parties and exhibit attitudes consistent with right-wing politics” (*ibid*, 10; see also Walks 2004; Walks 2006). Indeed, the rise of Rob Ford’s populist, “stop the gravy train” brand of conservatism was largely a suburban phenomenon.

Secondly, homeless counts across Canada have shown that chronic homelessness is concentrated in the downtown core of big cities (City of Toronto 2013; Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness 2014; Latimer et al. 2015). Where there is

homelessness in the suburbs, it is much more hidden and does not tend to be chronic (Sengupta 2015). In local elections, mayors (and political parties, where they exist) seek to campaign on issues that affect and concern as many people in their city as possible. In a large city that contains both urban and suburban areas, the fight against homelessness is likely to be a less salient issue because it does not resonate as much with suburban voters, who are not confronted with the uncomfortable reality of homelessness on a regular basis. Further, voters in suburbs tend to be more skeptical of government intervention and social spending. In fragmented systems where downtown cores are separate from suburbs, homelessness is more likely to be on the agenda of local politicians, as a greater proportion of the voter base (including citizens and businesses) will have direct contact with homelessness. The voter base in these downtown, urban municipalities also tends to be more progressive and open to government solutions to social problems. Fragmented regional structures therefore contribute to a local government's political commitment to homelessness.

6. Political party system: A small number of local governments in Canada feature political parties. Political parties, in order to be elected to power, must create platforms that appeal to a broad range of voters throughout the city. Where there are no political parties, candidates are free to campaign on whatever local issues they want, because they are less constrained by the need to align their message with that of a political party that needs wide-ranging appeal. Given the geographically concentrated nature of homelessness, it is unlikely that many city councilors or mayoral candidates will make it a priority without a party structure and platform behind them. The existence of a party system at the local level therefore increases the likelihood that the local government will make homelessness a priority. Further, political parties are in a stronger position to make commitments and promises to reduce

homelessness; if elected to a majority on City Council, candidates of the same political party usually vote together and are thus more powerful in dealing with a complex issue like homelessness than individual counselors.

7. Electoral system: There are two types of electoral systems at the local level in Canada: ward and at-large. In ward systems, councilors campaign in a single district (as is the case in provincial and federal elections). If elected, that councilor is responsible to and represents that particular part of the city. In at-large systems, councilors campaign in and are elected by the entire city. Citizens vote directly all city councilors, and if elected, councilors are not responsible to a particular ward but rather to the entire city. (Mayors are always elected in at-large systems and must campaign in the entire city.) This is important for homelessness, which tends to be concentrated in certain areas, notably downtown. In ward systems, the concentration of homelessness in a few wards makes it less likely that a sufficient number of local elected officials, and therefore City Hall, will make homelessness a priority. The electoral pay-off is too small. In at-large systems, however, where councilors are responsible to the entire city, the concentration of homelessness in a few parts of the city is less of a barrier, and homelessness is thus more likely to be on the political agenda of local officials.

8. Broader political goals: This final factor relates to the overall goals of the local elected officials, notably the mayor. In some cities, homelessness may not be a direct priority of the mayor, but it might fit very well with another goal or priority of the mayor. In these cases, homelessness can become a powerful weapon in another battle, for more financial powers, for example. If homelessness does not fit with the broader goals, the local political commitment to it will be weaker. To compare the broader political goals, I consider the main

priorities of the mayors in the four cities, and evaluate whether homelessness can help to further than political agenda.

Hypothesis 1: Housing Related Powers

Vancouver

The index of local autonomy clearly shows that Vancouver is the most autonomous city of the four under examination here. Indeed, Vancouver is the most autonomous city in all of Canada, and by a significant margin, a finding that is consistent with the literature on municipalities in Canada (Hutton 2012; Sancton and Young 2009; Smith and Stewart 2009). In terms of its overall autonomy, Vancouver scores 0.48; the second most autonomous city (Toronto) scores 0.34. On the fiscal dimension, of course, Vancouver remains as restricted as every other city in terms of its ability to borrow money, to raise revenues, and in terms of expenditures.

In terms of its legal-administrative and political capacities, however, Vancouver is significantly more autonomous than other cities. One of the autonomy enhancing tools considered by the autonomy index is the Vancouver Charter, which gives the city a special status within the province (compared with other municipalities). Vancouver also has considerable political autonomy. There are, for example, no provincially imposed limits to donations and for spending in municipal elections. Further strengthening its autonomy is the fact that all municipalities in BC have strong representation to protect their interests through the unified and powerful Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), one of the strongest such bodies in the country (Smith and Stewart 2009). Municipalities must be consulted by the

province on matters that directly affect them, including on issues relating to municipal structure and finance (British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs 2000).

The severe financial constraints highlighted in the index, however, seriously limit the city's autonomy and ability to invest in the construction of affordable housing. These constraints mean that the city must constantly look for affordable housing partners who are able to bring substantial capital funding to the table. This brings us to the second and third indicators, density bonusing and inclusionary zoning. Vancouver is the only city under study here that has both of these important housing powers, which it actively uses to find partners who will invest capital dollars in the construction of affordable housing. Further, the City of Vancouver is able to decide *who* is prioritized for these new units of housing; because of Vision Vancouver's promise to end street homelessness, new housing has become highly targeted to homeless people, many of whom come directly from the street.

Each density bonusing agreement (DBA) is negotiated separately, and city staff lead the process. Moore uses a comparison with Toronto to explain the significance of this; "while Vancouver's process is largely driven by city staff, and to some extent insulated from politics, councilors in Toronto largely direct the use of DBA contributions in the city. Toronto's councilors tend to focus on securing visually desirable amenities for their residents close to the developments. In contrast, Vancouver focuses on security amenities such as affordable housing and community services" (Moore 2013, 35). This had had a real consequence on what cities are able to get in exchange for density. Clayton and Schwartz have found that housing contributions make up 48% of the contributions that Vancouver is able to acquire through negotiations, whereas in Toronto, only 9% of contributions are housing (Clayton and Schwartz 2015).

Introduced in Vancouver in 1988 when core housing need in the city was 20%, the inclusionary zoning policy in Vancouver requires that the equivalent of 20% of the units in new developments be affordable (half of those units must be for families). The ability to impose this requirement is provided by law in the Vancouver Charter, Section 565.1; other municipalities in BC also have this power (British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range Housing Department 2005). Through its inclusionary zoning policy, the city does not require that developers necessarily build the affordable housing units themselves, but rather that they provide land upon which future housing developments can be built.

Because the city obtains land and not units through inclusionary zoning, the construction of affordable housing through inclusionary zoning in Vancouver is heavily, if not exclusively, dependent on funding from senior levels of government. When funding for affordable housing was cut federally in the 1990s and then provincially in the 2000s, the development of affordable housing through inclusionary zoning powers in Vancouver slowed considerably (Mah 2009). As the province and private sector have since regained interest in building affordable housing, this land has subsequently been used to develop new affordable and supportive housing through a partnership involving the city, the province, and the Streethome Foundation (STHF).

In comparative terms, Vancouver's mandatory inclusionary zoning power and density bonusing power are significant; the local context in Vancouver makes these powers meaningful. For the inclusionary zoning power, it is significant that land in Vancouver is very limited and expensive; water, mountains, and suburbs surround the city. In order to be able to build in Vancouver, a profitable enterprise given the housing market in Vancouver, developers must first get permission from the city. If the city is willing to exercise its housing related

powers, which it is because housing and homelessness is currently a priority of city hall, this requires that developers conform to the city's demands and provide the city with land for affordable housing.

Further, as land prices have gone up, so too have the profits associated with building condos or other developments. Developers who are interested in making money (and most are!) seek greater height or density to cover the expensive costs of building in Vancouver and to make their development as profitable as possible; the best way to do this is to build higher or denser buildings. To do this, developments must first get city approval and agree to some sort of exchange to add this increased height or density. Again, if the city is committed to affordable and supportive housing, which it currently is, the developer may have no choice but to contribute to the affordable housing stock in exchange for this desired density.

A city councilor in Vancouver explained this strategy; "We're plugging the holes. The quickest way for us to plug the holes without us having to pay for it was to use our by-laws to incentivize. I think we pushed the envelope in terms of what we can do without government funding" (interview #3). A senior member of the city of Vancouver's housing staff reiterated this point; "We use every tool in our box... we'll provide a bunch of relaxations, fast track the process, we are using rezoning to get developers, in exchange for additional height and density, to provide us with additional turn-key social housing units that they can give to the city. So we are using our regulatory land use tools to create housing" (interview #5).

When the province reemerged as an eager partner in the area of affordable housing and homelessness in the mid-2000s, city-owned land (acquired often through the inclusionary zoning policy) became a hot commodity, and the city was able to use it to negotiate with the province to build new supportive housing units. A city bureaucrat emphasized this strategy of

provoking further action by the province: “we are trying to do the most we can with our tools, but really, for social housing, we need the province to come and provide some level of operating subsidy... And that’s what we try to do. We say, ‘oh look! We have [land]! Come!’ I would say we have been quite successful in doing that” (interview #5). Another bureaucrat put this in different terms. When asked how to characterize the relationship between Vancouver and the province when it comes to working together on issues such as affordable housing, the bureaucrat made the following analogy: “it’s like big brother, little brother. Little brother is going ‘come on, come on, let’s do this! And big brother keeps saying ‘stop being so annoying and shouting about it all the time.’ But it’s Vancouver making the noise and trouble... drawing attention to and measuring the problem” (interview #4).

Finally, the provincial government has kept (and has fully exercised) the responsibility for social and affordable housing. This is the one housing related power that the city of Vancouver does not have. The city is not able to build affordable housing and end homelessness on its own; but indeed, no level of government or sector can do that. As the above has demonstrated, the city has significant tools and powers – notably heightened autonomy, inclusionary zoning and density bonusing – that allow it to negotiate and leverage other actors into partnering in the construction of affordable housing. Much of this happens in a non-political way, such as the process for negotiating additional density agreements by city bureaucrats, which makes it more likely for the city to obtain affordable housing from developers and from the private sector. The local context of Vancouver’s expensive and limited housing market makes these powers even more meaningful by providing strong incentives for the private sector to give something back to the city when investing in a new

development. Through exercising these powers aggressively, the city has made itself an important actor in the fight against homelessness.

Calgary

Of the four cities studied here, the overall autonomy of the City of Calgary is the lowest according to the index of local autonomy (though in the context of all ten Canadian cities, it is in the middle of the municipal pack). Calgary is particularly low on the legal-administrative dimension, in part because it does not have a City Charter. Big city mayors in Alberta, including Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi and Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson, have been advocating powerfully for City Charters, and met with Premier Rachel Notley to discuss Charters. But as of 2015, Albertan cities do not benefit from Charter legislation. As is the case with all other cities, Calgary's financial autonomy is also very low. On the political dimension, Calgary has a moderate level of autonomy, in part due to the fractured way in which Alberta cities organize themselves to advocate for municipal interests at the provincial level (Lesage and McMillan 2008).

Looking at Calgary's housing related powers, it is clear that Calgary is also in a weak position to lead, or even be a powerful actor in a governing coalition around housing and homelessness. In short, the city has few housing related powers; the powers that it does have are not very meaningful in the Calgary context (as is explained below), making the city a weak actor within the policy area of housing and homelessness. To understand why, it is first necessary to look at recent changes to the city since the 1990s to put these housing powers into context.

Compared to the other cities studied here, Calgary has grown (in terms of both physical size and population) the most rapidly. Census data indicates that the population of

Calgary was 768,082 in 1996, but had exploded to 1,096,833 by 2011 (Statistics Canada 2001; 2011). Throughout this period, very little affordable housing was built by the private sector, and as previous chapters illustrated, the province was completely disengaged in the area of affordable housing from the 1990s until 2008. Rental housing was also not a priority of developers during this period, and the majority of the new housing developments were large detached houses. Indeed, between 2001-2009, the city actually lost 7,500 units of rental housing, an important source of affordable housing (through conversions to condos) (CMHC 2010). As the population of the city began to rise and the housing market struggled to keep up, rents and housing prices also grew, causing a massive housing crunch throughout the city. The vacancy rate in Calgary was .5% in 2006 (Stroick and Hubac 2007) and has continued to hover around 1% ever since (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2015a). Rental prices in Calgary have become the highest in Canada, surpassing even Vancouver in some cases (CBC News 2014a).

In the present environment, rental housing is becoming somewhat more profitable and sought after, developers have begun to see value in constructing rental housing. It is significant, therefore, that the City of Calgary recently obtained density bonusing powers in 2013. The ability of the city to exchange density for benefits is limited to certain neighbourhoods, but more importantly, developers are given the choice of what public amenity they give. As affordable housing is highly expensive, public projects tend to be public art (Barrett 2014). Further, developers are not often interested in entering into DBAs, which eat into their profits, because they can always build profitable large detached houses at the edge of the city (where land is plentiful, unlike Vancouver). Density bonusing therefore does not often result in the creation of affordable housing; it is a relatively weak power. As is the

case in Vancouver, the strength of this power can in large part be explained by the unique geographical nature of Calgary.

A senior official at the Calgary Housing Corporation explained this in an interview. Walking over to his corner-office window, he said, “look anywhere you want, look at the skyline. The only place that has high-rises is the core of the city. When you look everywhere else you won’t see more than 2 or 3 stories... When you get ten feet out of Vancouver heading east, you run into Burnaby, then Coquitlam, and on and on. Ten feet outside of Calgary in any direction, you are in fields. So the land has a different pressure. Toronto, you are in Brampton; you can’t go out, so you have to go up. In Calgary, we can keep going out, there is no one for hundreds of miles... You can’t do that in Toronto or Vancouver” (interview #30). The value of the density bonusing power in Calgary is therefore mitigated by the endless supply of land on which to build new developments.

A *Globe and Mail* article noted in 2014, “there are 12 rental towers in the works now, compared to only three that were constructed over the previous 2 decades” (Mason 2014). This is not nearly enough to meet the pent up need for rental and affordable housing in Calgary, but it indicates a new interest on the part of the private sector to build rental housing. The Mayor had previously tried to use the power of persuasion to convince developers to contribute to affordable housing in the city, but had no luck. The City of Calgary does not have the power over inclusionary zoning, which would leverage these and future developments into affordable housing contributions. In the context of a severe housing crunch and an increasing interest in rental and condo developments, Mayor Nenshi has come to fully support inclusionary zoning, and is asking the province to give the city the power to mandate it for new developments. He told the *Globe*, “I think this kind of zoning must be part of the

solution... You don't want to interfere too much with the private market but you want to make sure something is in place. This is something where regulation is required. A total free market doesn't work" (Mason 2014). There is, however, fierce opposition to inclusionary zoning in Calgary, which could undermine its effectiveness if it is ever given to the city by the province.

Finally, the provincial government has the official responsibility for housing policy. The province has not, of course, fully exercised that power since it was downloaded in the 1990s. But municipalities in Alberta, including Calgary, do not have the mandate or responsibility to develop and implement housing policy, meaning their involvement in housing (and therefore homelessness) policy is not required.

Toronto

According to the local autonomy index, Toronto is the second most autonomous city of the four studied here; in fact, Toronto is the second most autonomous city of all ten large Canadian cities, though by a very small margin (Toronto scores .34 overall and Winnipeg scores .33). Toronto's fiscal autonomy is of course as limited as it is for other cities, but the city scores relatively highly on the legal-administrative dimension, in part because it has a City Charter, which enhances its autonomy. Politically, Toronto's autonomy is fairly limited; there are strict provincial guidelines for municipal elections, for example, and the association that represents municipal interests at the provincial level is not as strong as it is in other provinces such as BC.

The City of Toronto has the power over density bonusing. As outlined in Section 37 of the *Planning Act*, municipalities in Ontario can allow developers to surpass normal height and density bylaws in exchange for fairly minimal community benefits. Drdla explains, "the value

of the community benefits provided is assessed only against the added density or height, and not against the entire development” (Drdla 2014). He goes on to note that this has not led to significant affordable housing contributions. Further, as was mentioned above, city councilors in Toronto have significant input into the community benefit that is obtained through a density bonus agreement (Moore 2013). Affordable housing, even when desperately needed, is hidden and its direct benefit is limited. Seeking reelection or credit for positive contributions to their communities, councilors in Toronto usually seek visible and publicly accessible benefits, such as public art or community space. As a result, only around 9% of the amenities that are acquired through density bonusing agreements are housing (compared to 48% in Vancouver).

Many at the local level are advocating for the inclusionary zoning power. The battle for inclusionary zoning powers in Toronto has been going on since at least the Golden report on homelessness in 1999; recommendation 93 stated, “The City of Toronto should request and the Province of Ontario should approve amendments to the City of Toronto Act to permit the City to require the inclusion of affordable housing in new residential developments” (Golden, Currie, Greaves, and Latimer 1999, 165). The province, however, repeatedly expressed very little interest in giving Ontario cities inclusionary zoning powers, without explaining why (Drdla 2014). More recently, City Councilors Mike Layton and Ana Bailao (the chair of the affordable housing committee) introduced a motion to city council in May 2015 that would require the city to develop a mandatory inclusionary zoning strategy.

The Layton-Bailao motion notes, “there appears to be an appetite for inclusionary zoning from some Members of Provincial Parliament and across political party lines” (City of Toronto 2015). This is referring, among others, to NDP MPP Cheri De Novo and Liberal MPP Steve Milczyn. Milczyn, a member of the governing Liberal party, introduced a Private

Member's Bill (Bill 39), which would require the province to give municipalities inclusionary zoning powers (among other planning related powers). Bill 39 includes changing section 37 of the *Planning Act* so that it includes the following: "The council of a local municipality may, in a by-law passed under section 34, (1) require that a specified percentage of all housing units described in subsection (2) be affordable; and (b) specify the percentage" (Milczyn 2014).

Cheri De Novo has similarly used Private Member's Legislation to encourage the government to give cities this power. Land is expensive in Toronto, particularly in the downtown core, making developments and condominiums profitable. Leveraging these developments into affordable housing contributions would be a meaningful power in Toronto, as it is in Vancouver. Yet despite its broad support across parties at the provincial and local level, as of 2015, inclusionary zoning powers continue to be denied by the province²⁵.

The City of Toronto is the only city of the four examined here to have the official responsibility for social housing. As the chapter on housing policy outlined, this responsibility was given to all Ontario municipalities in the 1990s, through the Local Services Realignment policy of Progressive Conservative Premier Mike Harris. If for no other reason, the fact that Toronto has the official responsibility for housing means that it will by necessity be involved in this policy area. The Housing Stability Service Planning Framework clearly explains the city powers over housing, which were given to the city by the province in the 1990s; "the City is responsible for planning, administering and delivering affordable and social housing programs and service initiatives that help individuals and families at-risk of or experiencing

²⁵ This chapter, and dissertation more generally, consider events up until the end of 2015. An important development in the spring of 2016 was that the province finally agreed to give Ontario municipalities (not just Toronto) the power over inclusionary zoning. This development is not considered in this dissertation, largely because it has not come fully into effect, but future studies of the local role in housing should pay attention to how this new power affects the city's ability to contribute to the affordable housing stock.

homelessness to find and maintain permanent housing” (Toronto Shelter, Support & Housing Administration 2014, 8–9). The annual budget of the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration is around \$670 million, which includes funding from all levels of government (including federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding and provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding), but the most important source of funding is the municipality itself. Approximately 70% of this budget goes to social housing (Toronto Shelter, Support & Housing Administration 2014; interviews #46, #52 and #53).

Even though Toronto has jurisdiction over housing, its ability to fully exercise this power is severely constrained by the fact that its revenue base is largely limited to the property tax. As a senior administrator with the city of Toronto explained, “have you noticed the elevated expressway at the bottom of the city? The Gardener Expressway is falling down and it needs hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollar to keep it standing up. Our subway system needs billions and billions and billions of dollars of investment. That is what we are up against. And City Council makes those kinds of choices. Money is an issue” (interview #53). So this is not to say that Toronto spends all that is *should* in areas such as social housing; as this chapter has repeatedly stressed, financial restraints severely limit a city’s ability to exercise the powers that it does have. When revenues are scarce, cities must make decisions about how to use their limited funds, and the city has not dedicated as much funding to housing as many (including many city councilors and bureaucrats) would like.

Montreal

Local autonomy in the city of Montreal is low according to the index. This is unsurprising, in light of literature that has highlighted the restrictive framework that governs

Quebec municipalities (Belley et al. 2009). The financial autonomy in Montreal is limited and is highly similar to what is seen in other cities. Political autonomy is the lowest of the cities examined here; this is in part due to provincial regulations on local elections in Montreal (and other Quebec municipalities) and comparatively weak municipal representation at the provincial level.

The next two factors are density bonusing and inclusionary zoning. In Montreal, the line between the two is fuzzy and confusing at times; the city has density bonusing powers and not the power for inclusionary zoning. The confusion comes from the fact that Montreal has an inclusionary housing strategy, which some call a non-mandatory or incentive-based type of inclusionary zoning (Drdla 2010). This strategy uses existing provincial legislation to incentivize the private sector to construct affordable housing. The City does not, however, have the power to mandate inclusionary zoning for new affordable housing in new developments (as is the case in Vancouver). In 2005, advocates pushed the city to try to obtain this power from the province so that affordable housing could be mandated in all new developments, but the city decided to use existing legislating to create the inclusionary housing strategy, thinking that it would take too long to get the formal power from the province (Drdla 2014). Instead, the city opted to use existing powers on a voluntary basis, and to provide incentives, including selling land at below market value and increasing the allowable density in new developments, to obtain more affordable housing. For these reasons, the strategy and the power is best characterized as density bonusing; indeed, according to the CMHC, incentive-based inclusionary zoning powers are considered density bonusing because they incentivize the contribution of affordable housing (CMHC 1999).

Density bonusing agreements (DBAs) are therefore voluntary, in part because the ability to mandate it has not been given to the city from the province. They are also voluntary also because of the two-tiered structure of local governance in Montreal, where there is a municipal government and also 19 borough councils. In order for the city to enter into density bonusing negotiations with developers, the boroughs must agree. If the boroughs agree, and many do (notably the South -West borough, see Arrondissement du Sud-Ouest Montréal 2012), inclusionary housing requirements can effectively be imposed on all new developments over 200 units, though this is always through an incentive-based negotiation. The borough structure can, however, weaken the city's ability to contribute to affordable housing by not agreeing to density bonusing agreements, and municipal reviews of the inclusionary zoning strategy note that greater borough buy-in is needed to make the strategy more effective (Ville de Montréal 2008).

The Strategy for the inclusion of affordable housing in new developments was adopted in 2005, when the city of Montreal was facing a variety of pressures on the real estate market; the city was looking for ways to encourage the private sector to contribute more to the affordable housing stock. As outlined in the Strategy, Montreal aims for 30% of new developments to be affordable, a higher percentage than what is required in Vancouver. Developers are not responsible for actually building these affordable housing units, but rather must provide land upon which affordable housing can be built. This allows the city to leverage the land and incentive other actors – non-profits, the provincial government, or the private sector – to bring capital dollars to the table. This is one of the reasons the line between DBAs and inclusionary zoning in Montreal is at times blurred; in Vancouver, for example, DBAs

often require that developers provide the units of housing, whereas inclusionary zoning results in the city obtaining land from developers.

The definition of “affordable” in Montreal, however, is different than what it is in Vancouver. Half of the affordable units that are developed through DBAs are for social housing, and the other half are for affordable home ownership, which in 2006 was defined as homes worth up to \$170,000. The housing that is obtained through density bonusing is therefore for low and moderate incomes, which “assist[s] households at the margins of market affordability” (Gladki and Pomeroy 2007, 25). The policy applies to developments with 200 or more units (Ville de Montréal 2005); in other cities in Canada and the US, smaller developments with 50 or more units can also be included in either optional DBAs or mandatory inclusionary zoning policies, but this is not the case in Montreal. Recently, the city of Montreal has allowed developers to give the city cash in lieu of affordable housing (Drdla 2010). This usually occurs in large condominium developments where an income-mix of residents is seen by some to be more difficult.

In leveraging the land obtained through DBAs, Montreal (like Vancouver) depends a great deal on funding for housing from senior governments. Montreal’s inclusionary housing strategy has thus benefited greatly from long-term, predictable housing funding from the provincial budget, which has allowed the city to take the final step of transforming the land obtained from the private sector through the DBA into affordable housing.

The majority of the units that have been built through this policy have been for families or seniors, with a small number for people with special needs, though the most recent comprehensive review was conducted several years ago in 2007 (Ville de Montréal 2007). This is another difference between the policy in Vancouver and Montreal; in Vancouver, the

majority of the housing obtained through DBAs and inclusionary zoning is targeted at homeless people, in keeping with the city's priority of ending street homelessness. In Montreal, the units are targeted much more broadly, even benefiting moderate-income households.

The final indicator for this first dimension is the responsibility for social housing. As the previous chapter on provincial housing policy demonstrated, the province of Quebec has developed and funded housing policy ever since the federal government downloaded the responsibility for housing in the 1990s. The province maintains, and fully exercises, the power for social housing policy.

Summary - Housing related powers

Table 4 summarizes the first dimension that determines the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness: the housing related powers of the four local governments. The bolded result in the table indicates a power. The City of Toronto is the most involved government in the governance of homelessness; the other housing related powers are relevant to consider, but in this case, the fact that the city has the official responsibility for social housing largely explains its significant involvement in the area of housing and therefore in the fight against homelessness. Vancouver does not have the power for social housing, but it has the most other housing related powers and is the most autonomous city studied here. Calgary and Montreal have few housing related powers and comparatively low local autonomy.

Table 4: Housing related powers

	Vancouver	Calgary	Toronto	Montreal
1. Autonomy	0.48	0.24	0.34	0.22
2. Density Bonusing	Yes (strong)	Yes (weak)	Yes (weak)	Yes (strong)
3. Inclusionary Zoning	Yes	No	No	No
4. Responsibility for social housing	Province	Province	Municipalities	Province

Hypothesis 2: Political Commitment

The housing related powers begin to explain why these four local governments are involved to such different degrees in the governance of homelessness. Vancouver and Toronto clearly have more housing related powers than Calgary and Montreal do, making the former two cities more likely to become powerful actors in the governance of homelessness. But this is only part of the story; Montreal and Calgary have similarly few housing related powers, but Montreal is more involved in the governance of homelessness than Calgary is. To explain this, and to further explain why Vancouver and Toronto are so involved in the governance of homelessness, we turn to the second dimension: the local political commitment to homelessness. The four indicators that are compared are the regional structure, the party system, the electoral system, and the broader political goals of the local elected officials.

Vancouver

The regional governance in Vancouver is highly fragmented; the City of Vancouver is itself very small both in terms of size and population. With a population of 600,000 and a total size of 115 km², Vancouver is the smallest city studied here. The suburbs around Vancouver (such as Surrey and Burnaby) are their own municipalities, and the Greater Vancouver

Regional District (GVRD) is comprised of 23 municipalities. The fact that Vancouver is such a small and urban city is significant for the governance of homelessness for two reasons. First, voters in Vancouver elections are a very downtown, urban population; research has shown that this type of voter tends to be more progressive than his or her suburban counterpart. Second, in such a small urban city like Vancouver, the majority of the population lives downtown, which is also where homelessness is concentrated. This voter base is therefore likely to be in regular contact with chronically homeless people. This type of regional governance structure, where there is no urban-suburban divide, is important and makes it more likely that local elected officials will see a benefit in prioritizing the fight against homelessness.

The second factor in this dimension is the local electoral system. In most Canadian cities, the electoral system is ward-based; city councilors, like federal Members of Parliament, are responsible for a ward or defined territory of land. In contrast, in Vancouver (and most other cities in BC) the mayor, city councilors, park and school board representatives are all elected through an at-large system. In other words, each citizen in Vancouver votes directly for each and every one of these positions. Including the mayor, ten councilors, seven school board trustees, parks boards and other local representatives, citizens in Vancouver cast a total of 27 votes in municipal elections; one for the mayor, 10 for councilors, seven commissioners for the Board of Parks and Recreation and nine for school trustees (City of Vancouver 2014).

This electoral system makes it more likely that an issue like homelessness will become a priority of city council. Former mayor of Vancouver Sam Sullivan explains; “wards are inherently conservative and parochial. You don’t get many points for being parochial here in Vancouver... You have to campaign in the whole city. So broader issues like homelessness have more traction; politically, there is more emphasis given” (interview #21). In a small,

urban, downtown city like Vancouver, many citizens are affected by chronic homelessness on a regular basis, making homelessness an issue that councilors are able to put on the political agenda without alienating a large portion of their voter base.

The local party system is the third factor in this dimension. Vancouver is also one of the few big cities in Canada that has a local party system (Montreal is another). There are currently two main parties in Vancouver: the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), which has existed since the 1940s and sits to the centre-right of the political spectrum; and Vision Vancouver (VV), a new centre-left political party. Throughout various periods of Vancouver's history, there have been different political parties, but there is often a left-right divide at the local level (see Campbell et al. 2009). The party system makes local elected officials more likely to commit to fighting homelessness because a party platform must have broad appeal to citizens not just in a single part of the city, but throughout it. Combined with the at-large system, the party system makes it so that political parties must campaign on topical, citywide issues, rather than on highly localized issues that are only relevant to particular parts of the city, like stop signs in particular neighbourhoods (interview #21). Vision Vancouver councilors wagered in 2008 that homelessness would resonate with Vancouver's downtown, progressive voter base throughout the city, and they were right.

Because of the party system, the city also has significant control over shelters, including where in the city they are located because the majority party has enough votes at City Hall to implement its priorities. The party system therefore allows the leaders at City Hall to be bolder in their promises regarding homelessness; once elected, a mayor can effectively control city council through party discipline. This was particularly evident in 2008, when, immediately following Robertson's election with a Vision Vancouver majority, City Council

voted to open 4 new emergency shelters. Mayor Robertson had control of Council and a mandate from the people of Vancouver to end street homelessness, and was thus able to bypass the lengthy process and quickly obtained permits for four new emergency shelters that would be located in city operated facilities, and began opening them shortly after his first day in office. (There was, however, considerable controversy surrounding these shelters, notably because they were opened so quickly and without public consultation²⁶.)

The final factor is the broader political goals of local elected officials. In Vancouver, homelessness does not just fit with the broader political goals of the Mayor and local officials, but it is, in fact, one of Robertson's three main political priorities. The fact that homelessness has become such a high priority is likely a function of the fact that the city has important housing related powers and due to the fact that the issue resonates well with a downtown, progressive voter base.

Calgary

As noted above, the City of Calgary has grown extraordinarily fast since the 1980s. Not only has the city's population exploded, but the physical size of the city has also sprawled significantly. Across this very large territory, the regional governance structure is consolidated, though there are no official municipal suburbs and no borough councils. However, because the city is so large, many urban planners and scholars have come to characterize the city as having an urban-suburban divide. The downtown core, while not as densely populated as Vancouver or Toronto, is nevertheless the urban centre, and the remainder of the city surrounding the small core is more accurately characterized as suburban

²⁶ Eventually, the mayor closed two of the shelters, citing community opposition.

(Cooper 2006). Calgary's regional structure is thus a barrier to the city becoming a strong actor in the governance of homelessness.

The physical aspect of the city does not lead local elected officials to make homelessness a priority. This is further affected by the fact that the electoral system, a ward system, does not offer strong incentives to politicians to make homelessness a priority either. Councilors are responsible to small wards, and thus run on highly localized individual platforms. Unless the councilor is running in one of the few downtown wards that is affected by a high concentration of homelessness, it is not likely something that her or his electors are concerned about as a ballot box issue. Because suburban wards are far more numerous than downtown ones in a city as sprawled out as Calgary, even if homelessness is the priority of a few downtown councilors, it is unlikely to become a priority for all of City Council.

There are no political parties in Calgary. Some city councilors see this as a strength; as one Calgary city councilor who has been active on the homelessness file explained in an interview, "I don't work within a party system. I can get stuff done, I am a free-agent in the world... I am a free agent and that is really fabulous" (interview #23). In this context, however, it can be difficult to make homelessness a priority and to do something about it. To make homelessness a priority, this councilor would have to convince other councilors, also free agents, to work with him. If homelessness is not a top concern to their electors (which it likely is not), building a coalition to fight homelessness without a party structure to bring some cohesion to the group is difficult.

The final factor is the broader political goals of the local elected officials. The mayor, who must campaign in the whole city, must make an electoral calculation in choosing his or her priority issues; in the majority of the city's electoral districts, homelessness is not a

winning strategy because it is only relevant to a minority of voters in the downtown core. The mayor must, to get elected, campaign on issues that are relevant to a broader range of people in this urban-suburban city. Indeed, the main political goals of the current mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi, have been issues that affect a broad range of Calgarians, including public transport and transparency at city hall. The fight against homelessness does not fit easily within this agenda, and it is too risky to make it a top priority in a city like Calgary, where only a small portion of electors is affected by it.

Overall, therefore there are no real electoral incentives to make homelessness a political priority in Calgary. To illustrate how the above factors have combined to affect homelessness services, consider the following: Calgary is unique in that its main homeless shelter, the Drop-In Centre, regularly accommodates up to 800-1000 people per night. No other city has such a concentration of homelessness in one building; the largest homeless shelter in Toronto (which has a larger overall population and homeless population than Calgary) is Seaton House with 500 people. A former senior official with the Calgary Homeless Foundation explained how city councilors in Calgary would respond to homeless shelters in the late 1990s and early 2000s; “It should have been easier to disperse things, but it wasn’t. I think council had an unofficial veto for each individual alderman. Because they trade... it was easy for an alderman to say ‘well I’ll support you on this and you support me on that.’ It was easy to organize opposition [to new shelters] in their ward” (interview #33). He continued, “it was the worst case of a weak council combined with NIMBY thinking. It was easier for councils to say no to having more shelter beds in their ward and pushing to have more at the Drop-In site.”

In Calgary, a large, sprawling city with a strong concentration of homelessness in the downtown core and a ward electoral system without political parties, local candidates have few reasons to take the risk of making the fight against a priority. In other words, the electoral system, party system, and physical landscape of the city do not offer any kind of incentive to politicians wishing to make homelessness an electoral issue. The main priorities of the current mayor are issues that unite a broad group of Calgarians: transport and transparency. For these reasons, the city plays a minor role in the overall governance of homelessness. It is, of course, a partner, and was involved in the development of the plan, and gave input and lent public support. But the content of the plan, its financial resources, and implementation is not driven in any meaningful way by the city; this is because the political commitment to homelessness in Calgary is very low.

Toronto

The City of Toronto is sometimes called a “mega-city”. As a part of his Common Sense Revolution, Progressive Conservative Premier Mike Harris amalgamated a number of Ontario municipalities in the late 1990s; in a four-year period, the number of municipalities in Ontario was reduced from 850 to 445. Siegel explains, “The Harris government felt that service delivery and accountability would be improved if municipalities were consolidated into larger units” (Siegel 2009, 28). The City of Toronto as we know it today was created by merging five former municipalities: North York, East York, York, Scarborough, and Etobicoke. This created a large and consolidated regional governance structure with a very strong urban-suburban divide. Today, the city is the largest in Canada, with approximately 2.8 million inhabitants and a population that is projected to continue growing rapidly (City of Toronto 2014).

The vast majority of homeless shelters, drop-in centres and out from the cold sites (churches that offer shelter during winter months) are concentrated in the downtown core of Toronto; social housing is more evenly distributed throughout the city, but services for the chronically homeless are mostly downtown, reflecting the concentration of needs in that area (see page 14 of SSHA 2014). The City of Toronto's 2013 Street Needs Assessment homeless census, which takes place throughout the city including in the suburban parts, confirms the concentration of needs in the downtown core. The 2013 homeless count found 447 people sleeping outdoors on the night of April 17; 363 were in downtown Toronto or East York, compared with 24 in Etobicoke and York and 16 in North York (City of Toronto 2013, 13). This regional structure is a barrier to making the fight against homelessness a priority of City Hall, as it is only salient with the small urban portion of the mega-city's population.

The local electoral system in Toronto is a ward system, meaning city councilors campaign on localized issues in a particular area of the city. Because the city is so large, a significant number of City Council seats are in the suburbs, where the voter base tends to be less progressive and where homelessness is less salient as a political issue. The electoral system therefore makes it less likely that local elected officials will see a political payoff in making homelessness a priority. Further, there are no political parties in Toronto, which encourages councilors to campaign on localized issues that are important to their individual wards. The City of Toronto does often see informal coalitions of progressive councilors and conservative councilors (Horak 2012), but in a ward system with no political parties, it is difficult for councilors to make homelessness a priority for colleagues who represent wards that are not affected by homelessness.

Mayors must win a majority of support of the entire mega-city of Toronto; it is therefore risky to campaign just on issues that affect the downtown core (such as homelessness), but must rather prioritize issues that affect the entire city. In the most recent municipal election in Toronto (2014), one of the most significant issues was public transit, an issue that bridges downtown and urban voters. This most recently election was also somewhat unique in that it featured a strong movement of citizens who were intent on making sure Rob Ford, or later his brother Doug Ford, was not re-elected to power. The questions of trust and integrity therefore were also important questions in the 2014 municipal election. Homelessness was not one of the top priorities of this election, nor was it strongly linked to one of these priorities.

The City of Toronto is a very large city with a strong urban-rural divide. There is no party system and the electoral system is ward-based. The most recent election saw a prioritization of public transport and integrity among the candidates. It is politically risky for a mayor or for local city councilors to make fighting homelessness a key priority in this context; it simply does not resonate with a large portion of the City of Toronto voters outside of the downtown core. The city does, of course, have the official responsibility for housing, making it the most involved local government in the governance of homelessness, but as the conclusion and discussion will explain, the city has not innovated or expanded its homelessness policy since 2005. This is, I argue, largely due to the lack of political incentives to make homelessness a priority and to seek a mandate to invest in expanded homelessness services.

Montreal

Like Toronto, the City of Montreal is a large city with a strong urban-suburban divide. The City of Montreal's local governance structure is consolidated on the regional level, but it also features a second tier of governance: boroughs (*arrondissements*). Both of these features of the local governance structure in Montreal make it difficult for a mayor or City Council to make the fight against homelessness a priority. In terms of the regional structure, homelessness is an issue that only directly affects a minority of Montreal citizens (those who live downtown). Further, in order to act in this area, the municipal government needs the consent or support of the borough mayors, of whom there are 19. This is also the case, as noted above, with respect to density bonusing (Drdla 2014; see also Belley et al. 2009). Some boroughs might be willing partners, notably the most downtown boroughs, but homelessness is not likely to resonate with more suburban boroughs on the outskirts of the city.

The local electoral system in Montreal is ward-based. Citizens vote directly for the Mayor of the City of Montreal, the Mayor of their Borough (who is elected at-large throughout the borough), and for a City Councilor to represent their ward. The Mayor, as is the case in all big cities, must appeal to citizens throughout the city, but individual councilors must only appeal to the residents of their own wards. Some cohesion is nevertheless brought to local elections through the party system, which has been in place since 1977. This party structure, which assumes a party platform that is ambitious and appealing to a wide range of voters, encourages local candidates to think not just about issues that are salient to their particular wards, but also to other Montrealers. Councilors must therefore balance the needs of their individual wards with a party platform, which must have broader appeal throughout the entire city, making it somewhat more likely that homelessness could make it onto the agenda of City Hall.

Further, once elected to power, Montreal's City Council features a powerful executive committee, much like a federal or provincial Cabinet. The members of the executive council are appointed by the Mayor and are usually members of his (or her) own political party, though Mayor Denis Coderre recently appointed the leader of the opposing party Projet Montréal, Richard Bergeron, to the executive committee (Radio-Canada 2014). Individual councilors on the executive committee are very influential, and the governing party, through this structure, is highly organized and powerful. This means that local elected officials can be more ambitious and bold with their commitments to homelessness; once elected, the Mayor and the majority party control City Hall and can make changes and implement policies by depending on party discipline.

One of the top priorities of Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre, and his political party (Team Denis Coderre for Montreal) is to gain more political and financial powers from the province. The main way Coderre is seeking to do this is through metropolitan status for the city, which would give City Council much more control over the municipal budget and would allow Councilors and the Mayor to set the city's priorities with much more autonomy from the province. Mayor Denis Coderre often highlights the importance of metropolitan status for the City of Montréal. According to Radio-Canada, "*le maire a rappelé que Montréal doit jouer son rôle de locomotive économique « pour l'ensemble du Québec », mais qu'il « ne dispose pas des outils nécessaires » pour le faire pleinement*" (Radio-Canada 2015).

A City Councilor and member of the Executive Committee explained the significance of metropolitan status in Montreal; "*Avec le statut de métropole, on peut faire ce qu'on veut avec l'argent. On va pouvoir mettre moins quelque part et transférer nos budgets plus facilement... Parce que ça va être un budget global et ça va être la ville qui va l'administrer*"

au lieu d'avoir de l'argent d'un ministre qui dit « tu fais ça avec, tu es obligé de faire ça ». Donc présentement le ministère de santé nous donne de l'argent mais ça doit servir à la santé. Mais si on avait un budget global, à la ville, on va administrer ce que le gouvernement nous donne, à notre façon” (interview #71).

This is a strong priority that was announced during the municipal election, and one in which the fight against homelessness has become an important weapon. With more financial and political powers, Coderre argues, the City can respond more adequately to the needs of its homeless citizens. Indeed, before I even had a chance to bring up the metropolitan status in an interview with the City Councilor and member of the Executive Committee responsible for homelessness, she brought it up herself, mentioning that homelessness is a part of the broader negotiations for metropolitan status; *“Le statut métropole va aider avec ça. Ça touche tout, tous les domaines de la ville. L'itinérance est comprise dans le développement social et communautaire. C'est un ensemble – les infrastructures, transports, on négocie tout ça dans un ensemble. Ils ne vont pas demander juste l'itinérance, c'est compris dans un tout”* (interview #71).

Coderre himself has very directly drawn the link between homelessness and the need for metropolitan status, saying that the fight against homelessness would be much more effective if the city had greater powers and control over its budget. He further notes that the city has the expertise and the knowledge of the housing needs of its population, making it the best suited government to respond to these needs. Referencing a study of the housing situation in Montreal that found that 40% of renters pay more than 30% of their income on housing (meaning they are in core housing need and pay too much for housing), Coderre recently told *Le Devoir*, *“On est indignés par ça. On a les chiffres, on sait quels sont les enjeux. La solution*

concrète, c'est d'avoir la capacité de pouvoir les réaliser. Le statut de métropole d'ici 2016 va nous permettre de réaliser ce qu'on veut faire. Il faut avoir non seulement les pouvoirs, mais les moyens pour travailler en ce sens'' (Paré 2015).

In terms of the political commitment, therefore, the situation in Montreal presents some obstacles but also some opportunities for those who wish to make homelessness a priority of the local government. Montreal is a large city with a strong urban-suburban divide, and one that elects its City Councillors through a ward system; in this environment, homelessness is therefore not the most obvious choice for a political priority. The party system means that local candidates and elected officials do need to have a broad appeal throughout the city and not just in their own ward. The final factor, the broader political goals, is personally linked to the ambitions of the current Mayor, Denis Coderre. Coderre has been an aggressive and outspoken Mayor, one who is openly asking for more powers for the city from the province; his preferred vehicle for this transfer of power is metropolitan status. He further argues that homelessness is best dealt with at the local level, and has made fighting homelessness more effectively an important component of his broader political goal of obtaining more powers for the City of Montreal. For this reason, the city of Montreal has become more involved in the governance of homelessness, despite lacking many of the tools that would make it a more powerful actor.

Summary - Political Commitment to Homelessness

Table 5 summarizes the four factors that were considered above. It is clear that there are many incentives in Vancouver to make homelessness a priority for local elected officials. The bolded results indicate an incentive. In Calgary and Toronto, making homelessness a key priority of the local government is a risky enterprise, as there are few, if any, incentives to do

so. This is why, combined with its lack of housing related powers, the City of Calgary is not involved in the governance of homelessness. Toronto, of course, is responsible for social housing, which explains its significant involvement in this area, but the lack of incentives mean that updating or expanding homelessness policy in the city is not a significant priority. In Montreal, some factors make it so that the political payoff of making homelessness a priority of City Council will be worth it, but there are still some barriers (notably the regional structure and electoral system).

Table 5: Political Commitment

	Vancouver	Calgary	Toronto	Montreal
5. Regional Structure	Fragmented	Consolidated	Consolidated	Consolidated
6. Electoral system	At large	Ward	Ward	Ward
7. Party system	Yes	No	No	Yes
8. Broader political goals	Yes	No	No	Yes

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that local housing related powers and the local political commitment determine the role of the local government in the governance of homelessness in these four cities. The emphasis on housing in the first dimension has been purposeful; in order for big cities to contribute meaningfully and sustainably to the fight against homelessness, they need to have some power over housing. This chapter has also focused on the political commitment to the issue of homelessness at the local level, a dimension that is comprised of four factors: regional structure; local party system; local electoral system; and the broader political goals of local elected officials. Cities can become actors in the area of homelessness if there is a strong political will to make it a priority, even when they do not have significant

housing related tools (as is the case with Montreal). Indeed, the cities under study here have demonstrated that they are not simply waiting for more housing related powers from the provinces, but are also being very creative in how they make homelessness a priority. Table 6 summarizes these two dimensions and explains why Toronto and Vancouver are such powerful actors whereas Montreal and Calgary are less so (though the City of Montreal is more powerful than Calgary).

Table 6: Summary of housing related powers and political commitment

	Vancouver	Calgary	Toronto	Montreal
1. Autonomy	0.48	0.24	<i>0.34</i>	0.22
2. Density Bonusing	Yes (strong)	Yes (weak)	Yes (weak)	Yes (strong)
3. Inclusionary Zoning	Yes	No	No	No
4. Responsibility for social housing	Province	Province	Municipalities	Province
5. Regional structure	Fragmented	Consolidated	Consolidated	Consolidated
6. Electoral system	At large	Ward	Ward	Ward
7. Party system	Party system	No party system	No party system	Party system
8. Broader political goals	Yes	No	No	Yes

It is clear from this table that the city of Vancouver is powerfully positioned to become an actor of significant influence in the development of affordable housing and the fight against homelessness. Toronto has significant control over housing and homelessness, though those powers are limited by financial constraints and a lack of incentives to innovate or expand the city's policy. There are a few incentives that can increase the likelihood that the City of

Montreal would risk making homelessness a priority, but the lack of housing related powers means that the city is not in a very strong position to lead in a housing or homelessness related coalition. The city has, however, become a more important actor in the governance of homelessness recently, in part because homelessness fits with the broader political agenda of the Mayor: metropolitan status. The City of Calgary has the fewest powers and incentives to prioritize homelessness.

In Vancouver, a small, urban city with strong political parties and an at-large electoral system, local politicians have correctly wagered that homelessness, including effective responses to it, is an issue that citizens care about. Local dynamics, including the regional structure, the electoral system and the party system, have made it so that fighting homelessness can be a winning electoral strategy for the city because it is an issue that appeals to a significant portion of Vancouver voters. Importantly, the city has various powers that give it a real ability to incentivize and promote the development of supportive housing units (by either the provincial government or the private sector), units that are then targeted at the formerly homeless. Combined with its strong legal-administrative and political powers, the city has come to occupy the central policy space surrounding homelessness and is a powerful actor in this area of public policy.

The City of Calgary, in contrast, has few tools to encourage the development of affordable housing. The one existing tool, density bonusing, is limited largely because there is no real pressure for increased density in Calgary; there is ample space at the edge of the city for more new housing developments meaning increased density is not valuable to developers the way it is in Vancouver or Toronto. The seemingly limitless ability of the city to grow has further weakened the value of Calgary's one housing powers. This is beginning to change as

the housing crunch in Calgary has created a pent up need for affordable or rental housing, but the province has so far been reluctant to give cities powers to leverage these new developments into affordable housing contributions. Combined with the lack of housing related powers, the political landscape of the city, including its urban-suburban divide and ward-based electoral system, means that finding creative ways of fighting against homelessness is not likely to be a winning strategy in Calgary.

The City of Toronto has the official responsibility for housing and homelessness, as is the case for all Ontario cities. For this reason, the city is the most involved in the governance of homelessness of all the cities studied here. There are, however, few incentives to exercise those powers due to the ward electoral system and the urban-suburban nature of the city. There is no significant electoral or political incentive for the city to innovate in the area of homelessness. Political constraints related to the ward electoral system and the urban-suburban divide limit the city's ability (and willingness) to make homelessness a key priority; it is not likely an issue that appeals to a broad base of voters in such a large, urban-suburban city. Making homelessness a key plank in any local election and getting a public mandate to invest in its reduction is therefore unlikely given the political and electoral structure of Toronto.

Montreal has some housing and homelessness related powers, including a comparatively successful density bonusing strategy. There are some electoral incentives to prioritize homelessness, such as the local party system, but the urban-suburban nature of the city and the ward electoral system are barriers to making homelessness a priority of City Council. Importantly, one of the main political objectives of current Mayor Denis Coderre is to gain metropolitan status for the city; homelessness fits in very well with this agenda and

indeed has become a powerful weapon for the Mayor in this fight. Because of this, there is an incentive for the city to engage in the area of homelessness, which it has done.

This chapter has therefore made clear that the cities of Vancouver and Toronto are well positioned to be lead actors in a coalition governing homelessness, whereas Montreal and Calgary are much less so. Though the City of Vancouver is a powerful actor in this area, the governance of homelessness is fragmented. The governance of homelessness is similarly fragmented in Montreal, whereas it is highly centralized in Toronto and Calgary. The question of why this is the case is the subject of the next chapter of this thesis, which relates to the organization of local social forces (including the private sector and the non-profit sector) in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

Chapter 7: Local Social Forces

The local government is not the only important actor in the governance of homelessness, but civil society, including the private sector and the third sector, is also important²⁷. As Bherer and Hamel write, “cities’ problems are rarely solved by municipalities alone... To study municipal policies requires examination not just of the initiatives and programs municipalities develop, but also those developed by other economic and social actors” (2012, 104). Bramwell and Wolfe agree that cities must work with other actors in order to develop effective responses to new problems; “the dual challenges of maintaining economic competitiveness and addressing the emerging social inequalities resulting from these changes place new demands on local governments that are often too complex for them to meet on their own. In response, novel relations are emerging between various levels of government and among public, private, and community actors at the local level” (2014, 58).

As this chapter argues, the organization of these local social forces explains why the governance of homelessness is fragmented among many actors in Vancouver and Montreal whereas it is centralized in Toronto and Calgary. In other words, the power dynamics between the private sector and the third sector at the local level determines whether the governance of homelessness is centralized in one sector or fragmented among many bodies. This final empirical chapter argues that the governance of homelessness in Vancouver and Montreal is fragmented because local social forces are strong but discordant and divided. In Calgary and Toronto, there are some divisions among the local social forces, but these divisions are trumped by the

²⁷ In this chapter, civil society and local social forces both refer to the private sector as well as the third sector.

dominance of one particularly strong actor: the private sector in Calgary and the municipal government in Toronto.

Drawing on the limited but very useful literature on urban governance in Canada, this chapter reviews the role of the private sector and the third sector in the urban governance structure of Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. I use the framework and results of recent urban scholars, including those who contributed to the edited collection of Bradford and Bramwell (2014) as well as to that of Horak and Young (2012), to first establish the overall structure and relative strength of local social forces. I then argue that this organization of local social forces has determined the fragmentation or centralization of the governance of homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. This qualitative analysis of the strength of the private sector and the third sector is primarily based on interviews conducted with key actors involved in the governance of homelessness in 2014 and 2015.

Vancouver

In Vancouver, there are two main actors involved in the local governance of homelessness: the City and the StreetoHome Foundation (STHF). Though they work together regularly, they nevertheless have two plans on chronic homelessness. The city's plan involves a promise to end street homelessness, and aims to achieve this through ensuring that there is enough emergency shelter space for homeless people in Vancouver. The city has a broader housing and homelessness plan, but its main objective has been ending street homelessness, which has relied extensively on the emergency shelter system. The STHF's plan aims to end chronic homelessness by 2018, and aims to do this by moving homeless people directly into housing. The city does this as well, where possible, but the main difference between the two plans is the role of the emergency shelter system. The City sees shelters as a part of the solution and has continually opened new emergency shelters to meet the needs of the street homeless

population. The STHF, in contrast, does not support opening new emergency shelters and does not fund shelters as a part of its long-term strategy on homelessness.

This section argues that the two plans are the result of a civil society that is divided between private sector developers on the one hand and community groups, a division that breaks down fairly neatly along partisan, ideological lines. These two sectors are not equally powerful in the local governance of Vancouver, with the private sector wielding more influence. But the third sector is nevertheless strongly organized, particularly in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. Further, the third sector is aligned with the political party that is currently in power, Vision Vancouver, which has served to increase its influence in the governance of homelessness.

The City of Vancouver has changed greatly since the 1970s, going from a resource-based economy (fishing, lumber) with a small “skid row” in the East Side of Vancouver, to a “transnational metropolis” with a “new economy” (Hutton 2012). In the city with “the most geographically constricted land base of all Canada’s major city-regions” (Hutton 2012, 266), this transformation of Vancouver’s economy has been contentious and has often pitted private developers against community groups and activists. Developers have considerable political influence and financial resources, and they have great interest in the future of the city; profits associated with development in Vancouver are significant. As Hutton writes, “the private sector has wielded a preponderance of influence in the city’s growth” (2012, 270). However, community groups and the third sector in general are strongly organized and have powerful legal advocates, including the BC Civil Liberties Association and Pivot Legal Society. This is particularly the case in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) where there is a high concentration of homeless people with significant support needs and where there are over 260 service providers

and non-profits, including housing providers (Culbert and McMartin 2014). Though developers have been successful in transforming many previously low-income neighbourhoods into upscale communities with high-rises and condominiums, such as Yaletown (see Barnes and Hutton 2009), community groups have at numerous times exercised enough influence to force the end of lucrative private sector plans.

This discord between the private sector and community groups can be seen in a number of projects over the course of Vancouver's history. Project 200 in the 1970s is seen by many as a "seminal experience in the evolution of social movements in Vancouver" (Hutton 2012, 273). Proponents of Project 200 sought to build a large freeway through Vancouver, including through parts of the DTES. Developers, the private sector, and local politicians with strong business ties supported the project, but there was significant opposition in the DTES because of concerns that the freeway would displace low-income people. As Hutton writes, "an increasingly assertive and confident public opposition to this plan and its project externalities contributed to the abandonment of most elements of Project 200" (273).

Another example of successful community opposition to developer interests was the redevelopment of the Woodward's building. Up until the early 1990s, Woodward's was the main retail store in East Vancouver. When it went bankrupt in 1993, there was extensive conflict and tension over what to do with the site, which, given the limited availability of land in Vancouver, was worth a lot of money; "the original developer wanted to refurbish the building and construct 350 separate market-based condominium units. Downtown Eastside community groups wanted social housing" (Barnes and Hutton 2009, 1263). The provincial NDP bought the Woodward's building in 2001, but when the Liberal Party of BC was elected to power shortly thereafter, the building was put on the market and open to private bidding. This resulted in a strong backlash

from community groups, including nearly 200 homeless people who squatted in protest in the building (interview #2).

Left-wing Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell eventually negotiated for the city to purchase the building from the province (for much less than the province paid for it originally, see Barnes and Hutton 2009). The development that resulted is not as focused on social housing as many community groups wanted, but of the 700 units of housing that have been built on the former Woodward's site, 200 are non-market. Further, the space contains a number of community spaces and amenities, including childcare facilities.

These and various other development projects, including the Canada Line and the Olympics, saw continuous and heated opposition between developers and community groups. Through years of contentious local politics, Vancouver has become "a city typified by coincident processes of professionalization and polarization" (Hutton 2012, 269). Developers have had their fair share of wins and have been more influential than the third sector in the city's development, but community groups have continued to put up an energetic and influential fight.

These private and third sector local social forces can broadly be understood as being divided along the left-right political axis, or along the lines of the two main local political parties: the long-existing centre-right Non-Partisan Association (NPA) and the progressive opposition to it (Vision Vancouver currently or previously the Coalition of Progressive Electors, COPE). There are of course nuances to this; there are shades of conservatism and progressivism in the city, and there are more than two local political parties in Vancouver. With that caveat, however, the private sector and the third sector are broadly aligned with one of the two main local political parties. Developers contribute substantially to the right-of-centre Non-Partisan Association (NPA), with donations sometimes reaching nearly \$1 million (there are no donation

limits in local elections in Vancouver, see Howell 2014). While community groups do not have this kind of cash flow, their allies in the main unions in Vancouver are strong financial supporters of Vision Vancouver (*ibid*). The BC division of CUPE, for example, gave Vision a donation of \$152,000 in 2014 (Cole 2014). (Vision Vancouver does receive donations from developers as well, but not at the same scale as the NPA, see Howell 2014 and Cole 2014).

The local party system also lines up ideologically with provincial politics. There are very close ties between the centre-right NPA membership and the BC Liberal Party, and are there close ties between Vision Vancouver (and its predecessor) and the BC and federal New Democratic Party. Two former NPA mayors of Vancouver, Gordon Campbell and Sam Sullivan, went on to provincial politics in the BC Liberal Party. Former BC Liberal Auditor General Geoffrey Plant served as the NPA's "commissioner" of homelessness while Sam Sullivan was mayor. Current Vision Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson was an NDP MLA in the province, and many prominent Vision Vancouver figureheads, such as David Eby, are current BC NDP MLAs. Another Vision Vancouver city councilor touted his NDP roots in a personal interview; "I've been an New Democrat my whole life. I am from a labour family. Growing up my dad was one of the first Chinese plumbers, the only reason he got to be a plumber is because the union stuck up for him" (interview #3). Libby Davies, a powerful force within the federal NDP, ran for Mayor of Vancouver with the left-wing Coalition Of Progressive Electors (COPE).

Civil society in Vancouver is highly fragmented along the local partisan or ideological lines. There are notable exceptions to this; harm reduction and the creation of InSite, North America's first safe injection site in East Vancouver was broadly supported by both conservative and progressive political parties, the private and the third sectors at the local level. But overall, local social forces line up neatly with the local party system. Because of these partisan ties, the

local party system has historically helped to tip the balance of power towards either the private sector or the third sector in the Vancouver's urban governance (as was the case with Larry Campbell of COPE when he purchased the Woodward's site from the province).

This left-right, developer-community group division has led to the fragmentation of the governance of homelessness in Vancouver. Developers, powerful private sector interests, and their political allies in the NPA worked together to create the StreetoHome Foundation (STHF) and its ten-year plan to end homelessness. Vision Vancouver is politically opposed to the NPA and was originally opposed to the creation of the STHF. Upon becoming elected, Vision Vancouver brought community groups and the third sector into the homelessness policy-making and implementing process to implement its own emergency-shelter focused plan on chronic homelessness.

The STHF, which began its work in 2008, was one of the results of former NPA Mayor Sam Sullivan's controversial plan to reduce street disorder, Project Civil City. Sullivan said in an interview, "my trick, when I have a cause that I care about, is to set up a foundation" (interview #21). The board of the organization was, in the words of a prominent volunteer, "self-appointed". Specifically, Frank Guistra²⁸, a powerful mining executive and philanthropist in the City of Vancouver, took an interest in the issue of homelessness. He offered \$5 million to start up the STHF and helped bring together the STHF board. A prominent official with the STHF said, "it takes important incubators, like Frank. He was able to bring [the board] together" (interview #11). Guistra relied largely on the NPA and private sector network to do so; founding members of the STHF board include people from private law firms such as Heenan Blaikie and Fasken Martineau, business associations such as the Business Council of British Columbia, and

²⁸ Like many of the STHF board members, Giustra has strong ties to the BC Liberal party (Mackin 2013).

international development firms including Colliers International and Strand Properties Corporation. There are some government and third sector representatives on the board, but the balance was and remains tilted towards private sector representatives, many of whom have ties to the NPA.

The founders of the STHF and those currently involved in on its board see themselves as playing an important and unique role. A number of actors highlighted the value of bringing private sector money to the fight against homelessness; “we brought money... So when we went to talk to the Premier, he said ‘everyone comes and asks me for money, no one bring me money and says if I give you this, what will you do?’” (interview #11). The “newness” of the money was also often emphasized in interviews; “we bring new money, this is all private sector money” (interview #13).

Influential members of the STHF are also of the opinion that finding a solution to homelessness is not the job of government alone, reflecting a centre-right ideological approach that favours a smaller role for government. A senior member of the STHF board said, “we are a frank, free enterprise people. I don’t think the government should do everything. And the government seems to agree on some level... when you leave it to the government, it’s a cop out” (interview #11). When I asked another senior official with the STHF if the private sector was letting the government off the hook, he responded; “I think the government is looking for direction” (interview #13), and suggested that the STHF and its private sector leadership was providing that direction.

Largely due to its powerful connections in the business and philanthropic community, many community groups see the STHF as a source of competition for limited funding dollars (interview #18). But it is also criticized by some for being overly reliant on the private sector for

its vision and leadership; “often the people who are on the board... know nothing or next to nothing or worse than nothing about what they are talking about. So they are in a high position but have never actually worked in the street, they have never experienced what it’s like” (interview #2). The actor continued, “they should have had actual outreach workers and supportive housing staff on the board of StreetoHome. I think that would have cut out a lot of mistakes”. Community groups are involved with STHF projects, though the board remains dominated by either senior government officials or business sector leaders. Community groups are consulted in the STHF decisions and strategic directions, but have little institutionalized say in the high-level governance of the STHF.

In contrast to the STHF, which is heavily weighted to the private sector and to the NPA network, the plan on homelessness put in place by Robertson and Vision Vancouver was more dependent on the support of community groups. Ensuring that there would always be enough emergency shelter beds has become a crucial plank of Robertson’s approach to ending street homelessness and even his broader ten-year housing plan. This action requires the support of the homeless serving system. Having campaigned on a promise to end street homelessness, the first action Robertson took as Mayor of Vancouver in 2008 was to open four low-barrier emergency shelters for the winter months. To do this, he assembled the Homelessness Emergency Action Team (HEAT), which was comprised of prominent community leaders and service providers, such as Atira housing for women, the head of the aboriginal steering committee on homelessness and a member of the BC Civil Liberties Association. The HEAT team also involved three elected members, all of whom from Vision Vancouver (Gregor Robertson, Raymond Louie and Kerry Jang). There was, it is important to note, some overlap with the STHF board, notably Shayne Ramsey, the CEO of BC Housing and John MacKay, president of Strand Properties Corporation.

The balance, however, on the HEAT team was heavily weighted towards community groups and the centre-left Vision Vancouver councillors and network.

Community groups, either being sympathetic to Robertson's plan or being active supporters of Vision, were keen to help. An actor involved with the HEAT team described the mood of the community groups around the table when the HEAT team first got to work; "We were excited. We were really excited... We were able to participate in the political process and make a difference. We were trying to be effective in what we were doing in the DTES and so it seemed like an opportunity" (interview #14).

There are some important differences between the approaches to homelessness that are taken by the STHF and Vision Vancouver, notably in their understanding of homelessness and in their belief in the role of emergency shelters in the solution to homelessness. These differences are of consequence, but they are not completely irreconcilable. The two groups work together regularly and relatively harmoniously. But when I asked a prominent board member with the STHF how the two plans fit together on a high level he laughed and said, "they don't" (interview #11). The two plans, and groups behind the plans, have different funders, supporters, and ideologies in terms of what to do about homelessness and even what kind of homelessness should be prioritized.

Indeed, the two plans and groups have not merged together. This is because of the partisan origins and ties of the plans. Both the NPA and Vision, along with their respective homelessness fighting allies, see the other side as using the issue of homelessness to score political points. In an interview with an actor aligned with the STHF and the NPA, the actor asked me a question following my interview with him: "I was wondering if, in some of your other interviews, if the undercurrent of the politics of this came out at all?" The actor noted that

there was a “liberal sprinkling of politics” in Robertson’s HEAT response, notably in “the need to be seen acting quickly” (interview #16).

Another actor closely associated with the NPA and the STHF did recognize the merits of Vision’s approach, which focused very heavily on emergency shelters (which the STHF opposes quite strongly). But this actor also argued that the move was very political:

But I do want to say, to be a politician for a moment, that [Vision Vancouver Councilor] Raymond Louie and the other members of the Vision Council, when they were in opposition, would have screamed, they would have shouted from the rooftops that shelters are not the answer. When Gregor campaigned for office, it was on the basis that he would fix homelessness. It was the moment after he was elected that end homelessness got changed to end *street* homelessness, and the insertion of that word let him off a huge hook and gave him the opportunity to do the shelter thing... He gets into office and either he then realizes or he always knew that homelessness is an expensive, complicated problem, and he’s got people sleeping on the streets. And his constituents will kill him if he doesn’t get people off the streets (interview #8).

The NPA and the STHF recognize some of the merits of the HEAT approach, but firmly underscore how political the issue was as well. Similarly, Vision Vancouver and its allies criticized the STHF, especially when it was first created. Meeting minutes from City Hall in 2007 show that all Vision Vancouver members voted against a motion to support in principle the creation of the STHF (City of Vancouver 2007). David Eby, then a housing advocate with the progressive and influential Pivot Legal Society and prominent Vision member, said of the STHF; “I agree that it is important that there be some private sector funding of social housing. But the idea of forcing charity to pay for it is both unworkable and un-Canadian” (quoted in Paulsen 2007). Eby further politicized the STHF by questioning then NPA Mayor Sullivan’s motives in pushing for its creation. Referencing an important report written by Ken Dobell (a strong proponent of PPPs, see Hutton 2012), which led to the creation of the STHF. Eby stated; “I don’t understand how this report is worth \$300,000. I do understand that it was written by a friend of

the premier. That leads me to the question, ‘did Mayor Sullivan believe he was buying something else?’” (*ibid*).

The two groups have worked together in the past and exist relatively harmoniously in Vancouver. But the fact remains that they are two distinct groups involved in the governance of homelessness. This is because, like the overall urban governance dynamics in Vancouver, the governance of homelessness is characterized by a strong opposition between the private sector and the third sector. Each of these groups has its own powerful partisan connections at the local level. Local social forces in Vancouver are organized and energetic, and have a strong stake in the future of the city. Urban governance is strongly influenced by both of these groups of actors, who must interact with a city government that is, within the Canadian context, very strong and autonomous. Combined with the ideological division of local social forces in Vancouver, the party system in Vancouver (also unusual in a Canadian city) means that the party in power at City Hall can result in a shift in the balance of power between private developers and community groups. This has been the case with homelessness; when the NPA was in power, Sullivan was able to leverage mostly right-of-centre business connections that resulted in the creation of the STHF. Vision, upon getting elected, gave more influence to community groups, as was seen with the HEAT team. The ideological and partisan divide in Vancouver is strong and goes well beyond the parties at City Hall; it has also resulted in the fragmented governance of homelessness.

Calgary

The governance of homelessness in Calgary is highly centralized in the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF). Public and privately raised funding flows to community groups through the CHF, which determines priorities and decides which projects will get funded. The CHF has long-standing ties to the private sector, and while the CHF seeks the input of

community groups in the development and implementation of its plan on homelessness, its board is heavily weighted with representatives from the private sector. This is keeping with the urban governance model in Calgary, which sees the private sector (notably oil and gas) exercise considerable influence, even in relation to the local government.

Like other major cities in Canada, Calgary has changed remarkably in the past quarter century, though the direction and speed of the change has been somewhat unique as previous chapters have noted. The massive growth of the city, in terms of its economy, size, and population, has been directly tied to the booming (and at times busting) oil and gas sector. This has given the private sector strong interest in the urban development of Calgary, and significant power in the governance of the city. Community groups have at times challenged or even thwarted the private sector's development ambitions, but overall, the private sector exercises far more influence in the urban governance of Calgary than the third sector. Its influence is so strong that it even eclipses the role of the local and provincial governments at times.

Since the discovery of oil in Alberta in 1947, "the oil industry has dictated the overall pace of investment and development in the Calgary region" (Ghitter and Smart 2009, 630). One example of the influence of the industry on the city's development was Imperial Oil's decision to relocate from Toronto to Calgary in 2005, a move that was directly responsible for the relocation of 3000 employees to Calgary. In addition to this move, there was also an "avalanche" of a further 2200 people moving to the city *per month* looking for work in the oil and gas sector since 2001. Given this intense oil and gas related migration, Ghitter and Smart write, "it is easy to see how development pressures – the need for housing, infrastructure, schools, utilities and so on – are in turn influenced by increased oil industry activity" (*ibid* 640).

Developers looking to accommodate a growing population have sought influence over urban development in terms of housing, neighbourhood design and entertainment venues. These initiatives have at times been challenged by the third sector, and some of the challenges have indeed been successful. The Beltline Initiative is an example of this. Rather than see a declining and low-income community gentrify or slowly fade away, “activists successfully pressured City Hall to begin a full-fledged planning update” (Miller 2007, 242), including increasing affordable housing, diversity, and density in the neighbourhood. Examples such as this, where local community groups drive development over private sector interests, are relatively rare in Calgary, however; “social forces are clearly dominated by business interests” (Miller and Smart 2012, 46).

Looking more closely at the influential private sector in Calgary has led some authors to conclude that there is, even more specifically, “a relatively small group of well-connected citizens [that] has influence over which social initiatives gain momentum and traction in the city” (Feng, Li, and Langford 2014, 199). They continue; “this group, sometimes nicknamed ‘the 300’ for its estimated size, is composed mainly (but not exclusively) of private-sector leaders who act as community leaders and civic entrepreneurs. These are the well-connected, influential members of Calgary society whose support is crucial if one wishes to launch a new social initiative” (2014, 199).

In Calgary’s local governance network, “where entrepreneurs draw primarily on informal, personal networks rather than formal, institutionalized networks,” (Feng et al 2014, 184), it is very difficult for groups in the third sector to spearhead initiatives on their own. To be successful, they must find allies in “the 300”. To do so, community groups have come to rely less on moral language to make their case, but rather, “NGOs need to make a business case that

shows that action is in the interests of business, highlighting the benefits for business or the city as a whole” (Miller and Smart 2012, 30). Feng et al agree, writing, “invariably, a business case must be made to support any investments” (2014, 201).

The private sector is so influential that it is often seen as even more important than the local government; “Calgary’s business leaders are active in the community and are arguably more effective than municipal or provincial governments in bringing about social change at the community level” (Feng et al 2014, 197). Miller and Smart draw the same conclusion; “the NGOs also feel that, without corporate support for their initiatives, it is difficult to get sufficient support from city council to move forward” (2012, 30).

Some accounts of urban governance in Calgary have argued that recent initiatives, such as demands to raise the minimum wage or to build more affordable housing, have in fact found support at the local level for moral reasons. Noting that certain initiatives have been defined in moral terms, Miller writes, “broad civil umbrella organizations, such as Vibrant Communities Calgary and the Alberta Urban Municipal Association, have played vital roles in promoting such measures and have in fact achieved a degree of success” (Miller 2007, 244). Yet Miller’s account of the successful moral case is misleading. Both of the groups mentioned by Miller in fact made a business case in order to win the support business leaders. While there was moral language in Vibrant Communities Calgary’s messaging around the minimum wage and poverty, the group also used very clear economic language to make its point. As noted in the chapter on poverty, VCC’s reports were entitled “Poverty Costs: An Economic Case for A Preventative Poverty Reduction Strategy.” The reports estimated that poverty costs between \$7.1-\$9.5 billion per year in Alberta, drawing attention to the *economic* cost of poverty in Calgary, and insisting that reducing poverty in Calgary and Alberta would ultimately save money.

It is clear that the balance of power in Calgary is strongly tilted towards the private sector. Community groups can exercise influence and build support for their preferred initiatives, but to do so, they must first make an economic case to win over powerful private sector representatives, ideally those among “the 300”. The literature on urban governance in Calgary also notes that this urban governance style is informal and relies on chance encounters as opposed to institutionalized meetings between groups. This is the case for the fight against homelessness in Calgary²⁹.

The CHF, which has become the single most important actor in the governance of homelessness in Calgary, has clear financial and personnel ties to the oil and gas sector, which date back to its creation in the 1990s. From the beginning of its work on the 10-year-plan on homelessness, the CHF has argued repeatedly that “managing” chronic homelessness is expensive and that ending it will in fact save money. Continually making a business case for ending homelessness, a small group of policy entrepreneurs won the needed support of oil and gas leaders, who then built the CHF into the influential foundation it is today. The largest homelessness fighting groups or services that did not make a business case for their work (because they do not believe that ending homelessness will, in fact, save money) have been marginalized in the local homelessness governance network.

Though the CHF had existed since the 1990s (and was originally set up by prominent Calgary businessman Art Smith), homelessness only became an important issue on the public agenda in the mid-2000s when it became a much more visible and troubling problem. The interest of a few key entrepreneurs, including oil and gas mogul Jim Gray and then President of the CHF Terry Roberts, slowly spread throughout the influential private sector. An important

²⁹ The argument advanced in this section is not entirely novel; the issue of homelessness is in fact often used to illustrate Calgary’s overall governance style, see Miller and Smart 2012.

event that galvanized the private sector into constructing the CHF network was Phillip Mangano's visit to Calgary. Mangano was invited to Calgary by then CHF President Terry Roberts, who, knowing the governance culture in Calgary, knew that he needed private sector buy-in to his project. He further knew that Mangano was the best placed person to convince the private sector to support the CHF. Mangano was President Bush's point-person on homelessness in the US. He wasn't someone that community groups naturally trusted; "[w]ith his dark suit, silver hair and bronzed complexion that likely owed more to a lotion or a tanning salon than nature... Mangano is curiously uncomfortable in the presence of individual people experiencing homelessness" (Scott 2012, 73–74). He was unabashed about the business case for ending homelessness, which he promised would ultimately save money. Early results were indicating that his idea of a 10-year-plan (10YP) to end homelessness was having extensive success in the American cities (Scott 2012; interviews #22, #24, #34, #37 and #39).

Highlighting the power dynamics in Calgary, the event where Mangano shared the 10YP formula is described in Scott's book about the history of the CHF: "the social service people mainly sat at the back; some with legs apart, their arms across their chests, skepticism and disbelief writ large across their faces... Excitement rippled through the business crowd, they looked like they 'had discovered the moon,' recalls a social worker" (2012, 74-75). The business people in attendance were sold on Mangano's formula. An important actor in the development of Calgary's 10YP said, "we were importing a model directly from the US, hook line and sinker. Everything was off the shelf" (interview #34).

Following the event, oil and gas mogul and entrepreneur in the area of homelessness Jim Gray took it upon himself to build an influential board to oversee the development of a 10YP in Calgary. The network he built was mainly comprised of his oil and gas friends. His top choice

for chair of the committee to oversee the development of Calgary's own 10YP was Steve Snyder, himself an influential oil and gas executive with TransAlta. Snyder admitted that he was skeptical at first; "I'm just an observer. I don't know the facts. I'm not qualified. I'm just a business guy" (quoted in Scott 2012, 92). But Gray was convinced that Snyder was the guy to chair the group that led the 10YP; "we need a more visible member of the community, someone who can attract other people and focus us" (quoted in Scott 2012, 92). A highly respected executive in the oil and gas sector in Calgary, and Gray and Roberts knew that if Snyder was on board, he could bring the other influential players to the table.

Snyder was aware of the problem of homelessness in Calgary. One actor noted, "Steve's office was... a big corner office, he looked out right at the Mustard Seed [a local shelter], and every day he'd see men lined up, a line a block and a half long at lunch time" (interview #37). Snyder was shocked and dismayed every day when he saw the same scene. Like Snyder, the oil and gas CEOs that he recruited undoubtedly felt a human concern for homelessness. But there was also a sense that homelessness was getting in the way of the business community; "the people at the oil and gas companies were saying, 'look, we have got people coming in and out of here every day, and they were very concerned about this, about the appearance.' A lot of women going to work every day being panhandled" (interview #24). The same actor noted, "we had to do something because it was in your face". Oil and gas leaders saw Calgary as on the cusp of becoming Canada's economic engine and an international city; the appearance of homelessness was, for many of them, embarrassing.

There was a further belief that homelessness, because of its newly discovered economic cost, was holding the city back from reaching its truly great potential (interviews #24, #34 and #37). An actor involved with the CHF said that the money saving potential of ending

homelessness was a key reason why the group came together so quickly; “it costs you less money, you save money. There are people out there who have got no faith but they understand economics. The current situation costs \$110,000 but our solution costs \$45,000. They understand there’s a big change there, there is a lot of savings here. So we tried to use some economic arguments. We just said ‘hey, this is a cost saving measure’” (interview #73).

Snyder eventually agreed to be chair of the 10YP committee, and he immediately began assembling a board for the CHF. Scott writes that Snyder was indeed effective at recruiting other oil and gas executives; “December is a busy month, but when Steve Snyder, president and CEO of TransAlta, makes a call to Tim Hearn, president and CEO of Imperial Oil, there’s always time to listen” (2012, 101). With a strong business case to make for ending homelessness and regarding the benefits to the private sector that would result from it, oil and gas executives such as Tim Hearn became involved in determining the work of the CHF, including the content of the plan and the personnel who would lead its development. A former President of the CHF explains the importance of one of his first hires, Tim Richter, a former government relations specialist for TransAlta; “the chair of the leadership committee was Steve Snyder, and I had to go with Steve and say I want to hire one of your guys.” Snyder gave his blessing, and Richter was hired to direct the development of the 10YP. “Richter was key, he was government relations, a really important guy in the energy business” (interview #37). Richter would oversee the development of the 10-year plan and became a future president of the CHF. Today, he is one of the most influential people in the country in this area, having built the influential Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

The CHF board welcomed a few people from the non-profit and NGO community, notably from the United Way. But a former president of the CHF emphasized that the board was

ultimately comprised of the most powerful people in town; “We said we will put together a group that no one can say no to” (interview #37). Referring to the third sector, this actor recalled, “we said ok, we’ll get input from [community groups], but not on the leadership team. So they were on the subcommittees”. The balance of power on the committee was thus very strongly tipped towards the private sector. This private sector leadership was also key in getting the province on board. Another former President of the CHF recalled, “I met with Ed Stelmach recently, I said to him why is it that you have been so supportive of what we were doing? A couple reasons he said... he said I knew that if Imperial Oil and Suncor were behind the plan, you couldn't possibly **** it up” (interview #34).

The private sector was also influential at getting the local government on board, a fact that was confirmed by a former Mayor of the city; “I said look, I was born and raised in the city, this will not be successful if it is the mayor standing up and saying I am going to run it. It needs to be seen as a community driven initiative. It needs to be owned by the community. And it needs a private sector business leader to lead” (interview #24). This sentiment, and the need for private sector leadership, is also reflected in Scott’s book; “Snyder also knew that a social solution wouldn’t appeal to a broad spectrum of the community; that in this city the demand would be for a performance-based plan that would ultimately save taxpayer’s money” (2012, 93).

A former CEO of the CHF with a history in both the private sector and the non-profit sector, said that this leadership model was inevitable; “We know that in Calgary. We know that is how you get things done” (interview #37). He told the story of a pilot project that the CHF wanted to run, but was held back by a lack of funding. “It was going to cost \$400,000 and we didn’t have the money. We had a sense that the money was coming, we had put in a grant

application. Then one of the guys on the committee said, ‘\$400,000 eh? If you don’t get the money, I’ll write you the cheque. Just start.’” Linking that story to the current poverty reduction strategy run by the city of Calgary, the actor concluded; “But see the mayor constructed the Poverty reduction strategy and it had to represent all facets of community... He has two co-chairs, they are pretty good, but they are not CEOs... Neither one of them could write a cheque for \$400,000. So we are fumbling around, playing on the edges, running pilots, and I don’t think we have helped a poor person yet. My view is we haven’t done a friggin thing. So that is the difference, see. That is why you take it outside of government” (interview #37).

The governance of homelessness in Calgary is thus dominated by the private sector. It has been this way from the very beginning, and this has been intentional. In light of this, some community groups felt excluded from their own turf, and they voiced early opposition to the CHF’s plan. A former president of the CHF was not overly concerned with this opposition. He compared the fight against homelessness to the world of politics; “In a process of change like this, you are going to have 20% of the people with you and enthusiastic and kind of evangelical about the work you are trying to do. Then there will be 50% of the people in the system in the mushy middle... and then 30% are just a vocal, active opposition. No matter what. So I worked with the supporters, and then tried to get the undecideds on board, and I didn't spend a lot of time on people that had dug in their heels” (interview #34).

Of course, some community groups were offended by this approach; “we are the largest shelter in Canada we have been in the business for almost 53 years... look at the homeless foundation, they have had a number of people leading the organization, CEOs, who wanted to bring in a business model. The board was more heavily weighted with people from the business community. They felt that we didn’t know what we were doing. That it needed a business model

to turn homelessness around. What they didn't realize is just how complex human behavior is" (interview #25).

The opposition from these groups touched a number of areas of the CHF's plan. Indeed, for these groups, ending homelessness will not save money; "in the end, it is going to cost money" (interview #25). Another actor with no involvement in the private sector agreed that the CHF's calculus was wrong; "they said that homelessness is too expensive, all these people who use all the services. One of the figures is over \$135,000 a year. That is nonsense. If you multiply that by 3000 [homeless people] that is like billions per annum, which isn't true. There are some people who [cost that much], but it's not everyone. So they used an economic argument, which demeaned the humanity of the person... there are some people who will save money if you put them in a house, but not all of them" (interview #35).

A former CEO of the CHF, without a background in the private sector, agreed with this sentiment and lamented the lack of third sector involvement. But in a nod to "the 300", he noted that this how things happen in Calgary; "Calgary has some very big, wealthy, heavy hitters who try to run things. They only get one vote but they have tons of influence, more than anywhere I have ever worked. And they want it their way, so you have got to get those guys on your side. It is really tricky" (interview #28).

By continually making the business case for ending homelessness and overshadowing the opposition from community groups, the CHF has come to fully dominate the governance of homelessness ever since the mid-2000s. The majority of federal, provincial, and local funds for homelessness flow through the CHF, which sets the priorities and decides how that funding will be distributed. The city and community groups were at included in the development of the plan,

but the balance of power was, as is the case with urban governance more generally in Calgary, heavily weighted towards the private sector.

Oppositions and challenges to the CHF's dominance were strong at first, but they have largely faded from the public eye. Philosophical disagreements still exist just below the surface, but they are muted (Rassel 2014; interviews #22, #25, #31, #34 and #35). Groups opposed to the CHF have failed to build a powerful network of private sector supporters for their vision of homelessness (and solutions to it). Previously powerful actors, including community groups with significant influence and experience in the area of homelessness, have been marginalized from the CHF's governance network because they were unable and unwilling to make an economic argument but relied more on moral language. In Calgary, a city where local governance networks are dominated by the private sector, this line of argumentation is not successful at bringing the necessary private sector support onside.

Toronto

The governance of homelessness in the City of Toronto is centralized in the city. This centralized governance structure can be explained by the fact that local social forces in Toronto, while vibrant, are disorganized, scattered and lack institutionalized influence. In the late 1990s, a powerful group of service providers, community groups, and academics formed the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC), which was successful in influencing city (and national) policy on homelessness. The TDRC disbanded in 2012, however, and many of its prominent members have become much less critical of city policy than they were in the 1990s. Very recently, the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) has emerged to give a greater voice to homeless serving groups. It is still too early to judge how powerful this group has been, and as such it will not be fully considered below, but future studies of homelessness policy in Toronto should pay careful attention to the role of the TAEH. The private sector has also at times

influenced city policy, notably in the area of urban poverty, exclusion, and housing. Like the third sector, however, this influence was limited to a short period of time.

The lack of a formal and powerful role for either the private sector or the third sector in the governance of homelessness in Toronto is in keeping with the overall governance structure in the city. In their contribution to the book *Governing Urban Economies*, David Wolfe and Allison Bramwell write, “our research reveals ongoing obstacles to collaborative efforts in Toronto, specifically the challenges of regional unity, the weak organization of societal interests, and the absence of municipal political support” (Bramwell and Wolfe 2014, 59). There are a number of factors that make it difficult to collaborate among sectors in Toronto, including the sheer size of the GTA. Bramwell and Wolfe write that the governance of an area as large as the GTA requires some “key supports and administrative structures” (62) to allow for the coordination among the different regions, supports and structures that are lacking in Toronto. The authors also note that the third sector is very weakly organized, with few regular or institutionalized occasion to work together. This is partly a function of weak leadership, but also is the result of discord among the community groups.

Studies of urban governance in Toronto or of the dynamics of civil society in the city have highlighted these divisions among community groups. Isin writes that these divisions have become more prominent in the late 1990s; “the amalgamation of the constituent municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto has sharpened, and brought to the fore the main political fault lines in the city” (Isin 1998, 179). Hudson and Graefe noted the ideological divisions among the third sector, which separated into “social democratic” and “social liberal” groups leading up to the adoption of the provincial PRS (Hudson and Graefe 2012). These authors write that “while these programs can coexist peacefully, and there are ways that they do...” (2012, 12), tensions remain and the

two sides have created different vehicles that they use to continue to advocate for and represent their interests in an ongoing way.

Wolfe and Bramwell highlight the Greater Toronto Civic Action Alliance (CivicAction) as one important counter-example to this narrative. CivicAction is an example of strong civic leadership as well as lasting and productive relationships between the third sector and the private sector. Interestingly, however, CivicAction has few direct links with the city government; “there was little evidence that the mayor or senior staff sought to build linkages with the original [CivicAction], and there was some suggestion of political competition between the mayor and the civic leaders for political control and legitimacy, and that the senior city staff were not keen to share or relinquish control over the city’s political agenda” (79). While CivicAction has “gone a long way towards filling the civic governance gap in the city” (76), the authors nevertheless conclude there continue to be major challenges with coordination and concerted governance between the private sector, the third sector, and the local government.

The weakness of third sector groups in the governance of Toronto is also highlighted in Martin Horak’s chapter in *Sites of Governance*. Or perhaps more accurately, their weakness is implicit in the fact that community groups and service providers are barely mentioned in his analysis of urban governance. Horak writes, “Toronto’s constellation of local societal actors also influences the landscape of policy-making power and agendas in the city” (233), yet the majority of his discussion regarding “local societal actors” is dedicated to the private sector; “the City’s business elite thus has tremendous influence in multilevel policy processes, which it has increasingly chosen to participate in in recent years” (*ibid*). This influence is mostly related to local development. Where Horak does mention community groups, it is with respect to immigrants, who are largely absent from governing tables; “the striking absence of ethno cultural

concerns also suggests that recent immigrants tend to remain outsiders to politics in a city where the voices of established resident groups dominate the ‘community’ agenda” (234). The strength of the private sector is also noted by Keil (2002) and Kipfer and Keil (2002), who highlight the important role played by local private sector actors in the implementation of Premier Mike Harris’s neoliberal agenda.

The private sector has not only been involved with development projects, but has also occasionally ventured into social issues. The private sector in Toronto has at times used its influence to advocate at the local (and provincial and federal level) for urban renewal and social inclusion (see Hanna and Walton-Roberts 2004). In an interesting parallel with Calgary, the private sector has done this in part, perhaps, out of the goodness of its heart, but also when there is a perceived private sector interest.

An example of such private sector involvement in urban governance in Toronto was the 2002 TD Bank report, “A Choice Between Investing in Canada’s Cities or Disinvesting in Canada’s Future”. In the early 2000s, then CEO of TD Bank, Charles Baillie put forward the challenge that the Canadian quality of life should surpass the American quality of life within 15 years. Recognizing that cities would be key to this agenda, he tasked TD Economics with a study of cities in Canada. The final report highlights the many ways that cities are necessary players in this goal of helping Canada to achieve a superior quality of life, but it notes that because of financial, legal, and constitutional constraints on cities, Canada risks falling behind; “Canada’s cities face certain threats that, if left untended, could choke off economic expansion and gains in living standards down the road” (TD Economics 2002, 9).

Noting that infrastructure is in need of repair in part due to the lack of a national housing strategy since the 1980s, the report calls on federal and provincial governments to give cities

more financial tools, but also insists that there is an important role for the private sector; “one key ingredient that must be added to the mix to ensure success is a greater contribution by the private sector... the entrepreneurship of the private sector must be leveraged to bring cities closer to achieving their long-term goals” (*ibid* 27). The report insists, “we are all stakeholders in our nation’s future,” but sees a clear objective to reinvesting in infrastructure, including housing, in cities; “*without robust and vibrant cities, we will not achieve the goal of beating US standards of living within 15 years*” (TD Economics 2002, 2; emphasis original).

Examples of strong private sector involvement and leadership such as this, however, are hard to find. And while this shows a willingness on the part of the private sector to engage in the governance of certain social policy questions, it also illustrates that the private sector’s involvement has been limited to one-time interventions as opposed to long-term involvement. The characterization of civil society as weakly organized, divided, and lacking in influence is also true when it comes to the governance of homelessness in Toronto. The third sector and the private sector have at times been influential, but neither of these sectors has been able to maintain long-term involvement in the governance of homelessness. The story of the city government jealously guarding its powers is also in evidence with respect to homelessness.

The private sector in Toronto is strong as the authors cited above observe, and it has at key moments provided important advocacy around the questions of homelessness and social inclusion. In 2000, the Toronto Board of Trade wrote an influential report on the business perspective on homelessness. The Board insisted that homelessness is the responsibility of all three levels of government, who should come together to create a national housing strategy. The Board was clear that the private sector should be involved, but should not lead the solutions to homelessness, which is the job of the government. Nevertheless, the Board insisted that the

entrepreneurship of the private sector should be drawn upon; “traditional programs designed, funded and implemented exclusively by government will not suffice. The Board believes that innovative approaches, particularly the use of PPPs are a far more efficient and cost-effective way” (The Toronto Board of Trade 2000, 10).

The report notes that homelessness in Toronto has become a crisis, and it emphasizes how homelessness negatively impacts businesses in Toronto; “For Toronto’s business community, homelessness affects the size of our productive and motivated workforce. It has an impact on tourism and business, particularly the retail sector” (*ibid*, 2). The report continues to highlight how homelessness will negatively impact Toronto’s future; “unless it is addressed, homelessness will reduce Toronto’s global competitiveness.” Like the TD Bank report, and like the private sector’s involvement in social issues in Calgary, the private sector’s involvement in this area of social policy is driven at least in part out of self-interest.

Not all the recommendations of the Toronto Board of Trade report were implemented, but the report was nevertheless influential at the local level (Hanna and Walton-Roberts 2004). While prominent private sector representatives provided an important kick-start to the issue, there has been no sustained private sector involvement in the issue. This was in keeping with the private sector’s vision, which is that government is ultimately responsible for homelessness, but needed a push in order to act. A former senior bureaucrat with the city confirmed this. In the early 2000s, when the city was developing its homelessness policy, the city cautiously approached the private sector regarding a partnership in the area of homelessness; “[The response of the private sector] was very clear: ‘we pay our taxes already. You are asking us to pay more?’ And we said ‘hmm, good point.’ So we knew there was probably someone out there

with deep pockets... But the business community said ‘we’ll support you, but don’t ask us to pay because we already pay our taxes.’ Fair comment” (interview #52).

The private sector in Toronto is powerful, and is recognized by many involved in the fight against homelessness as having “deep pockets”. But for the reasons described above, they have not been overly involved in the governance of homelessness, preferring to leave that job to the local government. Community groups and the third sector, however, have a more diverse history, going through periods of strong organization and influence in the 1990s to their relatively weak organization today.

In the late 1990s, there was a very strong and active group of activists and service providers, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC). The TDRC sought to influence homelessness policy through protests and highly (and surprisingly, by their own admission) successful stunts, such as getting big city mayors to declare that homelessness was an “unnatural disaster” in the late 1990s. One former member of the TDRC described the role the organization played in policy-making at the local level. Referring to the influential Golden Report (named after its author Dr Anne Golden), written for the City of Toronto in the late 1990s about homelessness: “we kind of stood on the outside and we pushed and pushed and pushed. We said, ‘not good enough, you have to do more’. Because Dr Golden... would have her finger in the wind and would say ‘I think I can push this far but I can’t push any farther. It won’t work’. And we would say ‘no, you have got to push farther’. So we created a political space for her to be a lot more bold” (interview #50). Many of the recommendations of the Golden report were not implemented, but this example shows the role that the TDRC often played in Toronto: pushing politicians and other prominent public figures to go farther in their interventions and solutions. In this way, the TDRC was successful in pushing through reforms regarding shelter standards,

which ensured a minimum standard of care in shelters, including capacity (interviews #42 and #54).

The TDRC's role was recognized by a number of senior bureaucrats and politicians who were involved in the area of housing and homelessness in the 1990s and 2000s. A senior political official said, "we listened to them and tried to make sure that they were a part of the broader thinking" (interview #43). A senior bureaucrat confirmed their influence: "the TDRC played a significant community advocacy role in first identifying what were historically issues of concern around quality of facilities and services. No question that community activists played a central role in helping to advance progressive change" (interview #49). Another senior bureaucrat, who had a number of high profile (and not always positive!) interactions with the TDRC, insisted, "I think the advocates are terrific. They help make better public-policy" (interview #54).

The troubles of the TDRC that led to its dissolution were in part related to funding. A senior bureaucrat noted, "it is hard to sustain any type of political organization... They were not able to get donations" (interview #54). This was confirmed, in somewhat more bitter terms, by a prominent former member of the group; "advocacy is extremely extremely weak in Ontario right now... because of the funding situation" (interview #42). Discussing work regarding the sexual abuse of homeless women, the actor said, "I work with a few people, but it is a very small number compared to the old days. Agencies are very much silenced by the funding streams they have got" (interview #42). The actor went on to explain how funding is tied to particular approaches or philosophies, notably Housing First, and that groups that do not agree with that approach will face consequences: "an agency will be ostracized or have their funding cut because of advocacy".

Further, an important source of influence for the TDRC was Jack Layton, who was a city councilor in Toronto in the 1990s. At the time, he was one of the only politicians in the entire country paying attention to the issue of homelessness (see Layton 2008). Layton provided an important bridge between advocates and city council, greatly increasing their influence. This informal (ie non-institutional) link to City Hall was key, and losing Layton to the national level certainly weakened the TDRC at the local level.

In addition to losing their key bridge to city hall, important divisions arose within the group, divisions that are not uncommon at the local level among community groups as Hudson and Graefe and Isin write. Interviews for this thesis did not probe the full extent of the disagreement, but a number of former TDRC members brought up competing interpretations of their history and what they had accomplished. Some former members are pessimistic and bitter about the state of homelessness in the city, sarcastically saying, “a positive step is that shelters are now closer to refugee camps than they were. It is not a big win...” The actor continued, this time regarding warming centres for homeless people in the winter, “we fought tooth and nail, and we finally won. Well, we call it a win, but we won mats, blankets, and one meal a day that a church has to provide.” The actor then reflected on the current situation in Toronto: “we are taking a draconian right wing approach based on the work of people in the US. It is totally inappropriate and it is violating human rights, diminishing any possibility that you’ll ever get national or provincial housing programs” (interview #42).

Another version of the story, told by a different member of the TDRC, is more optimistic and is worth quoting at length:

Most of the people I have worked [in the TDRC] with have gone by the wayside. I feel sad about that. Many of them are bitter, and when they look at the history I just told you, they see it as a history of failure. That despite all our incredible efforts, the conditions are still worse, more people in poverty, more people are precariously housed, more are

homeless than ever since the end of WW2. So objectively, we have failed. I think slightly differently. This is a very personal thing for me, and I don't want to discount that there are lots of people who are suffering and dying, we know that. Many of them are people I have known. I go to the homeless memorial every month. I feel strongly a continuing sense of anger and loss... but one of the dangers of housing advocates is that we start to really believe our own rhetoric, like the world is ending and so on. It *is* terrible, objectively. The conditions are awful. But in the midst of these terrible conditions, we have actually had some important successes... (interview #50).

Some former TDRC members remain active in terms of advocating on behalf of the homeless in Toronto, and even continuing some of their previous work, such as the Toronto homelessness memorial every month. But these disagreements and the end of the TDRC have created a void in the area of homelessness that has never been filled. Interestingly, some senior city bureaucrats lament this fact, one of whom said, "We have a deficit on so many levels. That is why the advocacy is so important, I'd like to see a TDRC reinvent itself and come back" (interview #54).

Even when the TDRC was active, there was, however, a belief among senior elected politicians and senior bureaucrats that the issue of homelessness was (and continues to be) the government's job. This was especially the case in the 2000s, when the issue of chronic homelessness became more visible and concerning. During this period, which would set the tone for many years to come³⁰, Toronto's Mayor was a left-of-centre politician who believed in government intervention. In an interview for this thesis, a former Toronto mayor said, "in the bottom half [of the income scale] it is very very hard to find housing. And that has to be subsidized somehow by government... the only way the market will provide it is if we create slums. So if we don't want people to live in slums where they are going to catch on fire and die... and you might think I'm exaggerating, but that is what happened to me when I was a city

³⁰ In part because of Mayor Rob Ford's total disinterest in the area of homelessness, at which point the policy essentially went into autopilot

counselor. Twice in my ward rooming houses caught on fire and people died. So there is a very important place for government” (interview #43). A senior bureaucrat agreed; responding to a question about whether the private sector could play a larger role in the governance of homelessness in Toronto, this person responded, “I think charities and the private sector can help point the way. But they cannot substitute for the role of government” (interview #54).

Even when the community sector was organized and when the TDRC was active, the City of Toronto was jealously guarding its power over housing and homelessness. This is also consistent with the overall story of urban governance in Toronto, where the local government does not go out of its way to institutionalize the input of community groups. A bureaucrat praised the TDRC for its advocacy role, but also insisted that the city’s role was of central importance; “[a]ctivism always has a central role in terms of identifying issues, identifying solutions, being part of that process. But it also takes leadership at senior levels in government to establish and support policy change. And that did happen. There was a seismic shift in terms of the approach of service delivery and the interpretation and understanding of service delivery... It really is the obligation of senior public servants to identify needs, to make recommendations to council, and to advance responsive approaches to serving marginalized communities” (interview #49).

Indeed, the city government had a clear idea of where it wanted to go in terms of homelessness. The city would, and continues to, consult with community groups and non-profits regarding the development and implementation of homelessness policy, but in the early 2000s, the city was firmly committed to a Housing First approach to homelessness and to conducting regular homeless counts, which were controversial among community groups, including TDRC members (German 2008; Toronto Disaster Relief Committee 2006). When I asked local actors

about the origins of the Housing First Streets to Homes program, they all pointed to the bureaucracy; indeed, one bureaucrat, in response to the question “whose idea was Streets to Homes?” raised his hand: it was his idea. A former mayor confirmed this story; when asked where the Streets to Homes idea came from, he responded; “mostly from the civil service doing really good work” (interview #43).

The city is the most powerful actor in the area of homelessness in Toronto, because it was given the responsibility for housing and by extension homelessness by the province in the 1990s. The city has been influenced at key moments by civil society and the private sector, notably during the 1990s and early 2000s. But these sectors have been either too disorganized, too divided, or too disinterested to remain influential over the long term in the governance of homelessness³¹. Yet in the 1990s and early 2000s, the city was committed to a course of action, with powerful, senior bureaucrats pushing a particular response: Housing First. The city took its responsibility for housing seriously and saw itself as the main actor in the development of housing and homelessness policy.

This conclusion is also interesting in light of the evidence found by Wolfe and Bramwell, that the city government sees strong advocates as a challenge to its power. The city sees itself as a full-fledged government and takes the few responsibilities it has very seriously. This was particularly true in the area of housing, where the city was advocating for a seat at the intergovernmental table on housing with provincial governments; “one of the things I said is that Toronto is Canada’s biggest landlord. How can you have a conference on housing without having the biggest landlord there?” (interview #43). Despite its attempts to attend the

³¹ Future research should keep a close eye on the relationship between the newly formed Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, which hopes to regain some influence for the third sector, and the City of Toronto.

intergovernmental meeting on housing, Toronto was not allowed to go (even just as an observer). Indeed, in the late 1990s, the city of Toronto grew in terms of size and powers, and was feeling very much like a government. It was open to third and private sector influence, but did not make significant efforts to institutionalize those voices in the governance of homelessness because city officials believed that the responsibility for housing was with the city government.

Montreal

The governance of homelessness in Montreal is fragmented among a number of actors. Of all of the cases, the governance of homelessness in Montreal is the most divided at the local level, with three different groups advancing different agendas. At the local level, one of the most important actors is the *Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal* (RAPSIM), an advocacy body that has existed since the 1970s. Like the TDRC, the RAPSIM does not have a plan on homelessness but is very influential in the policy-making process and in advocating for its preferred solution to homelessness, social housing with community support. As the previous chapter presented, the city government has recently become more involved and authoritative in this area, introducing a plan on homelessness in 2013. The city has had homelessness plans in the past, but the 2013 plan is new in that it breaks completely from provincial priorities and advances the city's own agenda for the first time. Another relatively new group, the *Mouvement pour mettre fin à l'itinérance de Montréal* (MMFIM), recently released a plan to end homelessness. The plan is fully costed and has some financial support from the city, but does still not have the funding it needs in order to be fully implemented. This chapter argues that the existence of these three groups is due to the unique configuration of local social forces involved in urban governance Montreal, notably a weak private sector and a strong, but divided, civil society.

Studies of local governance in Montreal illustrate that the third sector is very influential, though this has not always been the case. Prior to the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, the Catholic Church was a very important actor in local governance. Klein et al write, “the local level was structured as a strong institutional framework based on a coalition between civil municipalities and religious parishes” (Klein, Tremblay, and Fontan 2009). Fougères notes the importance of the Church prior to the 1960s, but his two part series on the history of Montreal also pays great attention to the role of cultural institutions. He notes that the Church along with the Anglophone elite were dominant in the governance of Montreal; *“le clergé catholique et les élites économiques anglo-protestantes contrôlent en fait, directement ou indirectement, les principales institutions et entreprises culturelles locales”* (Fougères 2012, 1290).

This local governance structure, which gave significant power to the Catholic Church and a small Anglophone minority, underwent a total transformation in the 1960s. A broad coalition of actors modernized the institutions of governance and worked to increase public trust in those institutions through what is known as the Quiet Revolution (see Noël 2010). Not only was there institutional change at the provincial and local level, but Fougères notes that there was radical cultural and identity change as well, which saw the emergence of *“une nouvelle forme de pouvoir culturel, proprement québécois, modern et laïque, à la fois plus hétérogène et plus diffuse”* (ibid 1289).

During this period and the decades that followed, there was also an important linguistic transformation throughout the province of Quebec, but particularly in Montreal³². During the 1960s, the dominance of the Anglophone elite meant that *“l’économie de Montréal se caractérisait par une nette hiérarchie linguistique”* (Levine 1997, 255). A movement to

³² For this full history, see Levine 1997

transform this linguistic dynamic in Montreal began, one that had as its main objective to “*faire du français la langue normale et habituelle du travail*” (ibid 294). This battle over the linguistic dynamic of the city was not just for economic means, but was also deeply cultural: “*il est évident que des raisons matérielles motivaient la communauté francophone à vouloir éliminer la division linguistique dans l’économie de Montréal. La question du lien entre la langue et l’économie était d’ailleurs culturelle dans la mesure où le pouvoir économique des Anglophones semblait menacer la langue et la culture françaises*” (Levine 1997, 225).

By the 1980s, and continuing today, there was still a fair bit of English spoken in the business world in Montreal, but there was also a new francophone elite³³. A study of the pay gap between anglophones and francophones in Montreal has shown that more recently, the gap between the economic power of the two linguistic groups has closed (Béland, Forgues, and Beaudin 2010). Scholars of urban governance in Montreal note that during the 1980s and 1990s, Toronto emerged as the main business centre of Canada. The private sector in Montreal is as a result not as vibrant as it once was; “Montreal no longer has the lustre it enjoyed at the end of the 19th century” (Bherer and Hamel 2012, 105). Of the four cities studied here, the private sector exercises the least influence in the urban governance of Montreal.

In addition to this linguistic and cultural transformation, the 1980s saw a shift in power among actors in Quebec that eventually resulted in what is often called the Quebec model (see Bourque 2000). The Quebec model is a “partnership-based socio-economic regime... characterized by the participation of a plurality of actors and multiple and diverse hybrid forms of governance” (Klein, Tremblay, and Fontan 2014, 40; see also Bourque 2000). This is the case

³³ While the official language of Montreal is French, tensions between pressures for the city to become more bilingual or Anglophone remain, though they are not as contentious as they once were (Cooper 2016; Laporte and Gagnon 2015; Valiante 2015).

at the provincial level (as the chapters on housing and poverty demonstrated), but also for the local level of governance; “the evolution of local development shows the importance of the actors representing civil society in the governance of development and in the definition of the public policies in domains that matter to the community” (Klein et al 2014, 51). These authors argue that community organizations do not just protest government decisions but have become important policy actors in their own right, equipping themselves with the necessary tools to participate fully in the policy-making process.

Bherer and Hamel agree with this characterization of a strong civil society while also emphasizing the relative weakness of the private sector in Montreal’s structures of urban governance; “while the agglomeration does show a general lack of economic vitality, it must also be acknowledged that Montreal’s civil society shows remarkable energy and resilience” (Bherer and Hamel 2012, 107). Laforest explains that this energy has come from a history of conflicted relations with the provincial government; “*L’État québécois a historiquement eu tendance à vouloir saisir ou coopter les projets du tiers secteur, donc le secteur a cherché continuellement à protéger son autonomie, sans pour autant compromettre sa participation au processus politique*” (Laforest 2011, 49). While the private sector exercises the least influence in Montreal of all the cities studied, the third sector in Montreal is perhaps the strongest: “*le tiers secteur occupe une place privilégiée dans l’arène politique québécoise*” (*ibid*).

These are the most important historical forces that have shaped urban governance in Montreal, which is characterized by a strong and highly organized civil society, on-going (though muted) tension surrounding questions of language and identity, and a relatively weak private sector. These same divisions and governance dynamics can be seen with respect to the governance of homelessness in Montreal. The private sector is a relatively weak actor, though

this has been changing recently with respect to homelessness. Some private business representatives have become involved with the MMFIM, such as the Chamber of Commerce. Further, the *Société de développement social de Ville-Marie* (SDSVM), created in 2008, seeks to promote the involvement of Montreal businesses in social questions, notably homelessness, through philanthropy. The SDSVM has, for example, created a program where homeless or formerly homeless people are hired in downtown Montreal as local guides and interpreters. Private sector representatives are also often involved on the boards of individual shelters or social services, as is the case in many other cities. But the private sector is much less influential in the overall governance dynamics of homelessness in Montreal than it is in other big cities; in other words, there is no organization like the Calgary Homeless Foundation or the StreetoHome Foundation in Montreal, which gives significant governance and decision-making power directly to private sector representatives.

In Montreal, it is rather civil society that has wielded the most significant influence in the governance of homelessness at the local level, though these local actors are always vocal in their demand that the provincial government should play a key and leading role in this policy area. Actors at both the provincial and local level confirmed the important place of community groups in the creation of homelessness policy. An actor involved with the *Société d'habitation du Québec* described the consultations that took place throughout the province, which led to the adoption of the provincial homelessness policy in 2014; “à partir de ce forum et les consultations il y a eu la politique... justement les membres de la table on n'avait pas le droit de parole, mais il y avait les groupes communautaires d'à travers la province au complet, qui avaient le droit de parole pendant deux jours... on était des backbenchers” (personal interview 2014). Another important actor from the third sector noted his constant contact with government

officials; “We have something to say. So yes I have been in contact with the Minister’s office this week... I saw the Minister of Health on Tuesday, the mayor a week and a half ago... we are influencing policy, we see it as a responsibility of our organization” (interview #65).

At the local level, the RAPSIM, the MMFIM and the city are the most important actors in the governance of homelessness. It would be simple to say that the divide between these local groups is linguistic; indeed, for this thesis, all interviews with actors aligned with the RAPSIM or who work for the city were conducted in French, whereas interviews with MMFIM actors were all in English. But two points are worth noting. First, divisions among community groups are clearly in evidence in all three other anglophone cities, even Calgary (especially at the beginning). For example, one Calgary-based actor who is very closely aligned with the CHF expressed profound disagreement with the very central goal of ending homelessness by 2018; when asked if he thought it was possible, he said, “No no no no no. A big resounding no” (interview #31).

Secondly, there are disagreements among actors of the same language group regarding some fundamental questions about homelessness. For example, regarding whether it is possible to “end homelessness,” one actor closely associated with the RAPSIM said, “*moi je pense qu’on peut mettre fin à l’itinérance, je ne suis pas du tout pessimiste là dessus*” (interview #60). Another actor closely associated with the RAPSIM was of a different opinion: “*Je ne sais pas. Je ne sais pas si on peut complètement envisager qu’il n’y aura plus jamais... je trouve ça difficile à croire... il y aura toujours les gens qui décrochent, les gens qui s’opposent, les gens qui ont des familles qui sont incapables de s’en occuper... je ne sais pas. Je ne sais pas*”. Finally, the actor concluded simply, “*non*” (interview #67).

There are perhaps some ideological divisions between the two groups as well, with the RAPSIM being more social democratic in its approach. Yet the MMFIM features some prominent left-of-centre members, including James Hughes who ran in the 2015 federal election for the NDP, and his campaign was actively supported by senior members of the MMFIM. The divisions between the RAPSIM and the MMFIM are in fact more accurately defined as being along identity lines. The RAPSIM is a very Quebec-based group and defends a particular way of responding to homelessness in Montreal, whereas the MMFIM is more closely linked to Canadian groups and approaches to homelessness.

Today there are over 100 members of the RAPSIM, though the largest homeless service provider in Montreal, the Old Brewery Mission, is not and has never been a member of the RAPSIM. The RAPSIM is highly critical of federal policy, including the federal government's decision to cut funding to housing in the 1990s (though groups across the country were critical of this). The RAPSIM has also been intensely critical of the federal decision to orient a majority of its homelessness funding to Housing First interventions, and more recently of its decision to implement a federally coordinated point in time homeless count, which it criticizes as being "*au courant*" in English Canada.

The approach that the RAPSIM favours is "*logement social avec soutien communautaire*", a model that was, according to RAPSIM actors, developed in and for Montreal. One actor insisted that Housing First is in fact the same as social housing with community support; "*Le Housing First, c'est une copie. Ils n'ont rien inventé*" (interview #67). Another actor agreed that the solutions to homelessness in Montreal were developed in Montreal, and not by the federal government, and was offended that Housing First was suddenly announced throughout Canada as *the* new solution to homelessness; "*ça fait comme si ça faisait 30 ans que*

les gens travaillent en itinérance mais qu'ils n'avaient pas compris comment faire et là, tout d'un coup il y a une pensée magique qui peut régler ça.” He continued, “*Le logement social, ce n'est pas le gouvernement fédéral qui a inventé ça. Le développement du logement social avec support communautaire, c'est fait de manière très précise dans les années 80 ici dans la région de Montréal*” (interview #60).

Another actor involved with the RAPSIM noted that RAPSIM members are proud of the approaches to homelessness that they have developed and do not want to be told what to do; “*ils ne veulent pas se faire imposer des modèles top-down.*” He spoke directly of the MMFIM's approach to homelessness; “*ils s'inscrivent en rupture avec la manière dont on travaille. Eux, ils souhaitent travailler autrement, ils souhaitent un modèle plus canadien avec les trois paliers de gouvernement autour de la table. Malheureusement, ce n'est pas une façon de travailler qui est possible au Québec... C'est un peu les deux solitudes*” (interview #58).

The MMFIM, on the other hand, has close alliances with Canadian organizations and its members have strong ties to Canadian projects, including the At Home/Chez Soi project and the 20,000 Homes Campaign. (The RAPSIM as an organization opposes both, though some of its members have been involved in them). Matthew Pearce (CEO of the Old Brewery Mission) is on the board of the MMFIM and on the board of the national Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, for example.

There is a sense among members of the MMFIM that homelessness in Montreal is not all that different from homelessness in other Canadian (or American) cities. It follows for these actors that solutions to homelessness (such as Housing First) should work just as well in Montreal as they do in other cities. One actor who has not always worked in Montreal put this in the following terms; “this is one of the problems I find in this sector in Montreal, the reluctance

to lift up your head and look around and find the best practices. There is a comfort in the sense that we are very different here, those things might work there but they won't work here" (interview #65). Saying that chronic homelessness in Montreal is very similar to what it is in other Canadian cities, the actor insisted, "I'm pretty sure that if they found a cure for cancer, it would work here, even if it was discovered in New York" (interview #65).

Another actor with the MMFIM said that the Montreal way of doing things seemed absurd; "we are really good at feeding people, good at providing clean environments, hot showers. But we are not very good at actually clearing the place out. It is a kind of *porte-tournante*" (interview #64). After looking around Canada and internationally, he noted that inspiration for a new approach to homelessness came in part from Trois-Rivières but also from other Canadian and American cities as well. Proposing change within his organization was difficult – "we lost some board members" – but he worked with other community groups in Montreal to bring the change within his organization to the broader Montreal community. "I would say we are behind in Montreal," he said, and he stated that eventually the MMFIM formed to fill what was perceived to be a leadership void in the province; "the community has been calling for the province to take leadership. And the province has been putting up its hand politically to say that it will take leadership, but it hasn't... so a few of us kind of said 'ok, we'll do it'" (interview #64).

There is clear disagreement between the MMFIM and the RAPSIM, notably on what the solution to homelessness should be and even on the definition of homelessness. There is considerable overlap in the membership of the two groups, including members of the RAPSIM's board who are also members of the MMFIM. Both organizations, at the board level, are driven mostly by the third sector. The difference between the two is in terms of their identity. Simply

put, the RAPSIM is a nationalist, Quebec-based group, whereas the MMFIM strongly identifies with both Quebec *and* Canada.

The City of Montreal has done a good job interacting with the two groups. The city is an actor in its own right as explained in the previous chapter, but also provides important funding and political support to both the RAPSIM and the MMFIM (interviews #63 and #71). The ability to coexist with two groups that are, in their mission and philosophy quite different, can also be explained at least in part through an understanding of identity. Denis Coderre, current mayor of Montreal, is a former federal Liberal Cabinet Minister. He is a federalist and not skeptical of Canadian responses to social issues, including homelessness. But he is also, as Mayor of Montreal, the number one defender of the city within Canada. This job often leads him to highlight how unique Montreal is, a line of thinking that is compatible with the RAPSIM's narrative of a unique Quebec and Montreal approach to homelessness.

With three local plans or approaches to homelessness, the governance of homelessness at the local level in Montreal is the most fragmented of any city under study here. As the previous pages have illustrated, this fragmentation is the result of a strong, but divided, third sector. Identity disagreements, while not as contentious as they have been in the past, have led to a fractured and poorly organized system of urban governance in Montreal. This has in turn created a fragmented model of governance of homelessness.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the centralization or fragmentation of the governance of homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal is determined by the broader urban governance dynamics in each respective city. In Vancouver, the private sector and the third sector have often been on opposing sides of development projects for much of Vancouver's recent history. These groups are, overall, largely aligned with one of the two main political

parties at the local level. This dynamic has resulted in a fragmented model of urban governance and also of the homelessness governance. The StreetoHome Foundation was created during a Non-Partisan Association government, and is comprised mostly of private sector and NPA actors. Vision Vancouver's plan at city hall has depended more on Vision's left-of-centre allies in the city, including those in the third sector. Though these two plans are by no means irreconcilable, and the two groups do work together on projects, they both continue to exist and to promote their own plans. This is because of the partisan and ideological origins of the plans.

In Calgary, the oil and gas sector exercises significant influence in the city's urban governance, so much so that the third sector and even the local government, to develop and implement social projects, must have the support of the key private sector representatives. This is very clearly the case for the governance of homelessness, where even large homeless serving groups were sidelined from the CHF's plan and the overall governance of homelessness. Two policy entrepreneurs, one non-profit (Terry Roberts) and one private (Jim Gray), worked to bring other influential oil and gas leaders on board with their goal of ending homelessness. To do so, they made a carefully crafted business case that appealed to this private sector crowd: ending homelessness will save money.

The city government is the main actor in the governance of homelessness in Toronto. At times, the city has been strongly influenced by the private sector or by the third sector, but neither sector has maintained the organization and capacity to become a long-term influential actor in the governance of homelessness. This is in keeping with the overall governance structure in Toronto, where there are few formal, institutionalized interactions between the city and civil society. The City would appear, in some respects, to like it this way; deeply annoyed by its status

as a creature of the province, the City of Toronto sees itself as a full-fledged and powerful government and thus guards its few responsibilities very jealously.

In Montreal, the third sector is very strong and vibrant, whereas the private sector is comparatively weak. Third sector actors have become important policy actors in their own right, influencing and crafting provincial and local social policies, including in the area of homelessness. The third sector is, nevertheless, divided along identity lines, which has led to the fragmentation of the governance of homelessness. The RAPSIM is very proud of and attached to the way of doing things in Montreal, and defends its model against federal (and sometimes provincial) attempts to impose new approaches. The MMFIM is more Canadian in its identity, seeking to bring lessons from other cities to Montreal (and to share Montreal practices with other Canadian cities as well). For this reason, the governance of homelessness in Montreal is highly fragmented.

Chapter 8: Analysis and Conclusions

There have always been people unable to find housing of their own in Canada.

Montreal's largest homeless shelter, the Old Brewery Mission, has served the homeless in the city for over 125 years. The people who were homeless 125 years ago were mainly white men unable to work due to a physical limitation, such as an injury or alcoholism. The profile of this population has changed recently, necessitating the creation of a new word: *homelessness* (Hulchanski 2009). *Homelessness* is a vague and complex problem that affects a large group of people – including not just men but also youth, women, children, and aboriginal people – and for many different reasons – not just a physical inability to work but also mental illness, domestic violence, anti-LGBT attitudes, and poverty.

To give a clear example of this change, many homeless shelters in Canada are on social media and often Tweet regarding their donation needs. A Canadian shelter, Inn from the Cold, has tweeted more than once about its need for baby supplies, such as soothers or diapers. This has not always happened in Canada. Emergency shelters have not always needed to provide a safe space for homeless women and their babies. Demographic and societal changes have certainly contributed to this (greater independence and equality of women, for example, leading to family breakdowns and single parent households), but political decisions have also been made to cut supports offered to low-income or vulnerable people. Previously, vulnerable women with babies had options other than homelessness; today, that is not always the case. The federal and provincial governments have been slow to respond to this new reality, and this thesis has looked at how local level actors have sought to fill the gaps in the safety net that have resulted in more people experiencing homelessness than was the case in the past.

Thesis Overview

This thesis confronted an empirical question in the study of Canadian politics. When faced with the same problem of chronic homelessness at a similar scale, why have actors at the local level in Canada's biggest cities come together to form very different local governing coalitions? In other words, in the absence of federal and provincial interventions in the area of homelessness, actors at the local level have come together to respond to homelessness, but they have done so in very different ways. Why?

Before answering this main research question, the first two empirical chapters explained why the level of homelessness in each of the cities studied is similar despite different social policy interventions by the provinces, a mini-puzzle in itself. I argued that this is because none of the provinces was responding adequately to the specific problem of chronic homelessness. Quebec has been the most active in the areas of poverty and housing, building affordable and social housing non-stop since the federal disinvestment in the 1990s and prioritizing the fight against poverty since the early 2000s. These interventions in Quebec have made a difference in terms of the profile of poverty and the housing security of low-income Montrealers, but they were not targeted or specialized enough to make a difference in reducing or even preventing chronic homelessness. Further, the income support offered to people through social assistance is comparable across the four provinces, which is to say it is comparably stingy and inadequate. For these reasons, the level of chronic homelessness in Montreal is very comparable to what it is in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. In other words, holes in the safety net might have been somewhat smaller in Quebec, preventing some people from experiencing temporary homelessness, but they were still big enough for chronically homeless people to fall through.

With that in mind, there are two main differences in the local governance models in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal: the role of the local government (is very involved in

Vancouver and Toronto but less so in Montreal and Calgary) and the degree of centralization or fragmentation of the local governing coalition (fragmented in Vancouver and Montreal, centralized in Calgary and Toronto). I argued that the role of the local government in the governing coalition is determined by its housing related powers and the local political commitment to homelessness. In Vancouver and Toronto, there are either significant local housing related powers, a strong political commitment to homelessness, or both. In Montreal and Calgary, there are comparatively few housing related powers and the political commitment to the issue is relatively weak (though it is stronger in Montreal than it is in Calgary).

The fragmentation or centralization of the governing coalition is determined by the organization of local social forces in each city, which includes the private sector and the third sector. In Vancouver and Montreal, where the governance of homelessness is fragmented, local social forces are strong and organized, but divided. In Calgary, local social forces are overwhelmingly dominated by the private sector. In contrast, local social forces are vibrant but poorly organized in Toronto, and the city government is a strong and somewhat domineering actor. This explains the centralization of the governance of homelessness in these two cities. Before discussing the implications of these findings for the study of Canadian politics and the comparative welfare state, as well as the practical implications for those involved directly in the fight against homelessness, I will first put all the chapters together and present the final argument for each case.

The City of Vancouver has many housing related powers, including mandatory inclusionary zoning and density bonusing, and has relatively strong overall autonomy (within the Canadian context). In exercising these powers and autonomy aggressively, the city has been able to leverage private development interests into affordable or social housing units, and has made

itself a powerful actor in the fight against homelessness. Vancouver also has unique incentives to use its housing related powers and even to make homelessness a priority, in and of itself, in elected politics. In such a small, urban city, local politicians do not need to campaign on issues that appeal to both an urban and a suburban population; homelessness is an issue that is salient to the majority of Vancouver's downtown electorate, a population that is regularly confronted with chronic, visible homelessness and is also generally less skeptical of government intervention. The local party system and local electoral system (at-large instead of ward) provide further incentives for local councilors to make homelessness a priority. There is nothing inevitable about the fact that local elected officials have made homelessness a priority; it was a political choice, and a risky one at that. But the City of Vancouver's toolbox is uniquely well equipped for the fight against homelessness.

The City of Vancouver is a powerful actor, yet the StreetoHome Foundation (STHF) has its own plan for Vancouver on homelessness. The STHF has a ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness by moving people directly from homelessness into permanent housing, a difficult task in a city where affordable housing is severely limited. The city's promise, in contrast, has been to end *street* homelessness and Robertson's coalition at City Hall has focused its efforts in part on ensuring that there is enough shelter space so that no one has to sleep or live on the city's streets. These two approaches are not irreconcilable, but the STHF generally opposes shelters, believing they do not have a role to play in the solution to homelessness.

The city and the STHF work together regularly, and coexist fairly harmoniously, yet they continue to exist as two distinct groups with two distinct plans. This is because the third sector and the private sector are both strongly organized, but divided. Further, they are, in general, aligned with one of the two main political parties in the city. The STHF has strong links to the

private sector and the centre-right Non-Partisan Association (NPA) political party. The city, currently controlled by the centre-left Vision Vancouver, has stronger ties to community groups (though Vision Vancouver also works with and receives donations from developers). The two groups and plans have never merged into one because of their partisan origins and strong ties to particular segments of civil society.

The governance of homelessness in Calgary is very different; it is centralized in the Calgary Homeless Foundation, an NGO with very strong ties to the oil and gas sector. As the 6th chapter explained, the city has few housing related powers. The one power that the city does have – density bonusing – is severely weakened by the physical landscape of the city. There is always space at the edge of the city for new developments, meaning density is not something that developers need in order to build a profitable project. Further, there are few political incentives to make homelessness a priority of city council. Calgary is a large city with an urban-suburban divide, where the majority of the electorate lives outside the downtown core (where homelessness is overwhelmingly concentrated). The lack of a party system and the ward electoral system has made the campaign for public office in Calgary, notably for councilors, very focused on highly localized issues that resonate with particular wards; homelessness is not a relevant issue for the majority of Calgary wards. The mayor must campaign in the whole city, but given its sprawled nature, mayoral candidates must campaign on issues that are salient to a diverse electorate. In Calgary, the issues of public transit and transparency resonate throughout the city and are more commonly on the public agenda than homelessness.

The organization of local social forces in Calgary is unique. Simply put, the private sector exercises unusual influence in the overall governance of the city, even when it comes to deciding which social issues will become priorities. Community groups, to advance their social causes,

must win over influential private sector oil and gas executives. To do so, they must make a “business case” for their cause, which generally means illustrating how solving a particular social problem will be good for economic development or will save taxpayer money. Policy entrepreneurs concerned about homelessness in Calgary employed this strategy very effectively and were able to convince the private sector to buy into the cause of ending homelessness. By winning over some of the most influential oil and gas CEOs in the city, the CHF made itself the most powerful body in the governance of homelessness, even marginalizing some large and long-existing homelessness services from the governance of homelessness. Those who have been marginalized are those who have not agreed with the business case for ending homelessness and have been unable to win over private sector support for their vision.

Ontario cities were given the responsibility for housing (and by extension homelessness) from the province in the late 1990s. For this simple reason, the city of Toronto is the most important actor in the governance of homelessness at the local level. (However, cities were not also given the financial tools that are needed to adequately invest in the renovation and construction of affordable housing and in the fight against homelessness, a fact that has been lamented by the city, the private sector, and the third sector alike.) The city guards its power over housing and homelessness jealously. Local officials have at times been open to private or third sector influence, but it has not made significant efforts to institutionalize either of those voices in the governance of homelessness.

The private sector and third sector are both vibrant and strong in Toronto, but they are also poorly organized. While they have at important points in Toronto’s history exercised influence in the governance of homelessness, neither sector has developed a lasting and institutionalized place in the governance of homelessness. This is in part because of the logistical

challenges to collaborative governance that are created by the massive scale of the city. But there are also ideological divisions among social actors, notably those in the third sector. The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, which existed until 2012, dissolved following a lack of funding and disagreements among members. Divisions among third sector actors is common in Toronto, and this is another factor that has made it difficult for these actors to develop and maintain an active role in Toronto's urban governance and in the governance of homelessness. Finally, as noted above, the city has taken its responsibility for housing very seriously, and has historically taken a "command and control" approach to working with community groups (informal interview 2016). In other words, the city has been open to input and has appreciated the work of activists in the past, but it has not actively sought community contributions to its homelessness strategy.

The third sector in Montreal is very strong and influential, and has been at the heart of local (and provincial) efforts to combat homelessness; the private sector has been much less influential. The City of Montreal is becoming a more important actor, but it is still playing a comparatively limited role in terms of its financial and political commitment to the issue. The city has some housing related powers, including density bonusing, but its toolbox is quite limited when it comes to the fight against homelessness. The local party system helps the issue of homelessness to gain traction in Montreal by making local elections about city-wide issues as opposed to highly localized issues in particular wards. But another reason the city has recently become more involved in the area of homelessness is because it fits nicely with the broader political goal of the Mayor: Metropolitan status, which would allow the city greater financial freedom and autonomy to govern itself. Mayor Coderre has taken an interest in homelessness no doubt because he cares deeply about the issue, but also because, to make his argument to the province, he needs to be able to say that he needs more powers to solve problems that are unique

to Montreal. He has invested significantly in understanding and measuring homelessness and housing insecurity, and has used this information to make a case to the province for why he needs greater political, legal, and financial resources to adequately respond to the unique housing needs of Montrealers (which, he would argue, are different from those needs in Quebec City or Sherbrooke, for example).

But the city is not, however, the only local actor involved in the governance of homelessness. The third sector is very powerful in Montreal, but it is also deeply divided, which has led to the fragmentation of the governance of homelessness. The division of community groups is largely the result of competing identities. The RAPSIM, a long existing advocacy body in the area of homelessness, identifies strongly with the Quebec model and its preferred approach to homelessness in Montreal, social housing with community support. Members of the MMFIM, in contrast, identify more with the Canadian and even North American context, and have strong ties to other Canadian cities and to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. Many members of the MMFIM were involved in the federally funded At Home/Chez Soi project, which was a test of the effectiveness of Housing First throughout Canada and has been very influential in determining the (limited) federal program for homelessness. The RAPSIM was very much opposed to the project and its emphasis on Housing First, which was seen as being imposed on Montreal from above. Because of these disagreements, the governance of homelessness in Montreal is highly fragmented among three groups.

Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal have thus developed very different models for governing homelessness. There are a number of important lessons to be drawn from this study of homelessness in Canadian cities, which touch on the question of the role of cities (and the local level more generally) in Canadian intergovernmental relations, the current state of the

welfare state in Canada, and of course the question of what can be done about homelessness in Canada. The next section considers the practical implications, and the following will look more closely at theoretical implications.

Practical implications: What works?

Looking at these four very different models of governing homelessness, it is natural to ask if one “works” better than another, or if it is better to be homeless in one city than another. The short answer is not really. There are drawbacks to each governance model, as well as some advantages. This section reviews each governance model and considers the implications that it has for the social protection of the homeless in each city, before considering two successful plans on homelessness from Medicine Hat, Alberta and Finland.

The City of Vancouver is often seen as a Canadian leader when it comes to municipal responses to homelessness. This is true, and it took a great amount of political and financial capital to put homelessness on the local agenda in 2008. It further took great conviction for the city to continue to prioritize homelessness when it became increasingly clear that it was fighting a losing battle. The fight against homelessness requires great political will, and for demonstrating that will, Gregor Robertson and Vision Vancouver should be commended. In the process of putting homelessness on the city’s agenda, however, the issue became politicized in a very polarized city. This has arguably harmed the effectiveness of the response. Robertson’s HEAT team and emergency shelter system were very much set up in opposition to the Non-Partisan Association’s (NPA) previous strategy, Project Civil City, which was seen by many community groups as criminalizing homelessness. Robertson sought a new approach, which depended much more heavily on emergency shelters and on moving people from the streets into those shelters.

Some NPA operatives admit that this was a compassionate policy move on Robertson’s part; it is important that Robertson’s initial launch into municipal politics came after a man died

in a fire on the streets of Vancouver after he was denied a bed in an emergency shelter. But the NPA aligned STHF has a different perspective on the role of emergency shelters in the solution to homelessness. Rather than depend on the emergency shelter system, the STHF prioritizes getting people directly into housing. This is, in theory, a noble effort. But the limited availability of housing means that people cannot get the help they need as quickly as they need it.

Robertson's promise to end street homelessness was intended to be the first step in the broader fight against homelessness. Ideally, shelters are the first point of access to a broader "system," which should help a person to exit homelessness. In Vancouver, however, the severe lack of affordable housing means that there is often nowhere for a person to go once they are in shelter, and they end up being caught in homelessness. The city does have considerable housing related powers when compared with other cities, but it has nowhere near the resources to change this important reality of housing unaffordability.

NPA representatives became increasingly critical of Robertson's approach to homelessness as Robertson's 2015 deadline approached. Confronted with this mounting criticism, Robertson doubled down on his promise. Moving people from streets into shelters became a goal in itself so that the annual homeless count would find fewer people sleeping on the streets. This is an expensive response, and one that only pushes the problem of chronic homelessness under the carpet. Further, as new supportive housing buildings – built in partnership between the province, the city, and the STHF – began to open in the city, Robertson saw an opportunity to accelerate the decrease in street homelessness. As mayor, he has control over the people to whom these new units are targeted. Originally, these new buildings were intended to be for a mix of low-income people and homeless people. As the 2015 deadline approached however, Robertson dramatically changed the formula for the occupancy to "50-30-

20”; 50% of the new occupants would come directly from the streets, 30% from shelters, and 20% from the at risk population. Service providers in charge of providing social supports in these new buildings note how disastrous it was to put so many high needs people in one building without the adequate supports, and the police were called multiple times a day (personal interviews 2014).

The fact that homelessness is so political in Vancouver is in some ways a good thing; for example, all political parties, during the most recent election in 2014, had developed their own homelessness strategies, prompting debate and innovation. And indeed, an effective solution to homelessness requires an urgent, rapid response. But the specific goal of ending street homelessness in contrast to the STHF’s goal of ending chronic homelessness in 2018 meant that some decisions were rushed. Further, once politicized, it created divisions among actors who, to be truly effective, ought to be more thoughtful and pull in the same direction. This is not to say that Robertson should have never prioritized homelessness, but rather to highlight how, when lacking the adequate tools to properly respond to the problem (and in the absence of a federal partner to help with this), the issue of homelessness became politicized to the detriment of its proper solution.

The CHF has a great deal of control over the issue of homelessness. Because of the funding that it controls, it is effectively able to impose its plan throughout Calgary. This ability to impose solutions top-down in a city where resources and housing are greatly limited has forced agencies to align their efforts to a certain extent, but it has also caused problems for homeless people. Agencies in Calgary are free to align with CHF priorities or not, but those that do not risk having their funding affected. One of the main priorities of the CHF recently has been “systems planning,” an approach to homelessness developed in Australia and the United States,

which attempts to un-silo the responses to homelessness. Systems planning is defined in the following terms; “rather than relying on an organization-by-organization, or program-by-program approach, system planning aims to develop a framework for the delivery of initiatives in a purposeful and strategic manner for collective group of stakeholders” (Turner 2014). Some authors argue that is “arguably necessary to better understand and improve the coordination, integration and intersection between and amongst specific service components” (Milaney 2016, 483). This seems intuitive for an issue such as homelessness, which involves a wide variety of policy areas such as housing, health, criminal justice, and welfare; each of these parts, to be effective, must work together or at the very least not contradict one another.

Implementing a systems approach to homelessness is difficult and controversial (Milaney 2016; Turner and Rogers 2016), as different services have developed their own approaches to homelessness that they believe work. They might even have pride in their way of doing things, meaning they will resist outsiders telling them what to do. The CHF nevertheless worked hard to implement a systems approach to homelessness throughout the city, and has been successful in doing so. Prior to the systems approach, homeless services through Calgary were poorly organized and difficult to navigate, making it difficult for homeless people to find the supports they needed. The system was also seen as wasteful and ineffective; “homeless individuals were often being served by multiple agencies and sat on multiple waitlists for housing, each of which was accessible only through the program itself” (Dressler 2016, 19). The systems planning framework was designed to address this problem.

An important component of the systems planning effort was the development of the Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) system, “a single point of entry for Calgarians experiencing homelessness” (Dressler 2016, 18). If homeless people give their consent, their

personal information is shared with other services and systems through a centralized data-gathering tool. This tool creates one file for each homeless person, which is shared among various service agencies. This allows them to coordinate and to prioritize those in greatest need for services. Previously, some services were “cherry-picking” their clients, helping people with moderate needs (who were therefore easier to help) as opposed to prioritizing those who required the most support.

The details of the CAA are technical and space does not permit a full discussion here³⁴. But these efforts to coordinate at the local level can prevent people from getting lost in a system or from bouncing around from service to service without ever getting the help he or she needs, because the person’s interactions with the system are being tracked and shared. But there are also important weaknesses with this approach. First, even actors involved in the implementation of the CAA note that the lack of health and social resources in Calgary makes it difficult to actually provide the supports for those who need it the most. Once the highest-needs people are identified through the CAA, there is often no organization that has the capacity or resources to provide the person with the supports that he or she needs. In a case study of Calgary’s CAA, one author noted, “on several occasions it was observed that the majority of spots available at both high- and mid-acuity placement committee meetings were available only to clients interested in or already maintaining sobriety from drugs or alcohol” (Dressler 2016, 27). The author continues to note that this mismatch meant that those in greatest need do not always get the services they need; “much lower acuity clients interested in sobriety received placement above those who were higher in acuity and in greater need of housing” (*ibid*). In a city where the crucial supports, notably housing and health supports, are lacking, even the fanciest state of the art systems design

³⁴ See Dressler 2016 for details

will not ultimately help those who need it the most. Real investments in housing, social and health services are needed before a systems response can work.

Another problem with this highly centralized system was raised during an interview with an actor who is very closely aligned with the CHF. The actor said that, because services are so centrally controlled, people who are at risk of homelessness or even those with few support needs have a very difficult time finding support because they are not identified as priority people through the CAA. The system prioritizes the most chronically homeless with the most severe barriers, meaning those who are homeless simply because they are poor have little support in Calgary. The actor said, “say you were poor and you’re going to get evicted. It is easier to go to a shelter and wait your time to get subsidized, if you are ok with that... For some people who are really poor, you’ll hear caseworkers here say ‘go to the shelter for a few days, or else we can’t help you’” (interview #31).

There is no doubt that these caseworkers are trying to help as best they can. And it is true that the majority of people who use an emergency shelter are there for a very short period of time before finding and maintaining housing (Aubry et al. 2013). But this advice – go to the shelter for a few days – can be potentially disastrous for an already vulnerable person. The social and health risks of homelessness are well known; “street homelessness and institutionally mediated homelessness (e.g. shelter living) make it very difficult for people to take care of their physical health, access labour market opportunities, establish trusting relationships, self-advocate or exercise their rights as political citizens” (Doberstein and Nichols 2016). For some people, a few days in a shelter can lead to a rapid deterioration in their mental and physical health, and it can very quickly become a trap. This highly controlled and centralized system has of course helped

many chronically homeless people, but given its limited support to those with fewer needs or for prevention, it might also contribute in some way to the creation of more homelessness.

The city is the most important actor in the governance of homelessness in Toronto. This is in many ways a logical governance choice; homelessness is an intensely localized phenomenon, taking different forms even from one neighbourhood to the next. Local governments have deep knowledge of the local needs and how services should be adapted throughout the city, and they have the legitimacy to enact citywide policies. Though Harris's decision to download housing to the local level was partly an after-thought and partly a cost reducing measure, the local level of government is very well placed to address homelessness given its proximity to the issue. But it is simply a pipe dream to expect local governments, with their current resource base, to deal adequately with homelessness. The province set the city up for failure, and the city is barely keeping its head above water when it comes to meeting even the most basic needs of the homeless population. This is the single most important weakness of this governance model; giving any actor or agency a mandate for housing and homelessness without sufficient resources to meet the needs of the homeless population is a recipe for failure. One former bureaucrat, looking back on the city's role, noted: "Could we have done better? Absolutely. But we needed more money" (interview #52).

With an under-resourced city, a substantial homelessness problem and a poorly organized civil society, a network of faith communities has emerged to fill the service gaps created by the city³⁵. Out of the Cold (OOTC) is a network of 17 faith communities. Each of the 17 services opens its doors one night a week (during the winter months) to provide shelter to the homeless. St Matthew Our Lady Peace at Dundas and McCaul, for example, is open Sundays from 5:00pm

³⁵ Gaps that, to be fair, exist within the bigger gaps created by provincial and federal governments

- 8:00 am; The Holy Blossom Temple on Bathurst is open Thursdays from 6:30pm - 7:30am.

Many of the locations are for men only, and none are for women only. OOTC trained staff are present at each location to help with particular needs of the homeless population (such as mental health or to help with deescalation).

OOTC was originally designed to be “an emergency stop gap program so the city could figure out how to figure out housing” said an actor involved in the program, “but that never happened. So this is our 24th year.” The program receives little financial support from the city – “we just cobble together different kinds of funding” – and the faith communities themselves contribute substantial funding and volunteers (there are nearly 5000 volunteers involved in the program). The actor said that OOTC is unlikely to disappear in the coming years; “in the near future, [homelessness] is not going to end... this program is here for a while” (personal interview 2014). Indeed, OOTC has expanded in the past few years as a result of a growing, and more diverse, clientele (interview #47). The program continues out of the goodness of the hearts of the volunteers, whose commitment to and compassion for the less fortunate is commendable. And by providing a warm space to sleep inside in the freezing winter months, when city shelters are at or above capacity, OOTC has undoubtedly saved lives.

But a “cobbled together” system such as this has a number of weaknesses. Each centre is open only one night a week, so every day, homeless people must pack up their belongings and move to another next site. They are given a bus token so they can get to the next location, which may be on the other side of town. In most institutionalized shelters, such as city run shelters, people do have to leave every day and are usually required to take their belongings with them, but they do not need to travel around the city during the day to get to the next location. They can stay at the shelter’s drop-in centre, for example, or go to a coffee shop or public space near by. In

a large city like Toronto, people must in some cases spend considerable time and energy commuting from one shelter to the next. Packing up and moving around the city every single day for the entire winter season is extremely demanding, considering the fact that homeless people have a number of other priorities, such as job interviews, housing appointments, medical appointments, etc. The OOTC system, while well intentioned and successful, is barely filling the gaps in the system, and is possibly making day-to-day living more challenging. But the city has come to rely on the program during the winter months.

The OOTC system also illustrates that community groups who are familiar with the homeless population are so busy responding to emergency needs of homeless people that they do not have the time to participate in the development of a longer-term solution. Indeed, one actor I interviewed for this dissertation said that his church was a part of the OOTC network in the past, but the congregation found it too draining in terms of energy and resources. Where there is coordination among homeless serving groups, it is to respond to the emergency situation that presents itself every winter, rather than using their expertise and passion to participate in the governance of homelessness and the creation of long-term solutions.

The governance of homelessness in Montreal is highly fragmented among a number of different groups with very different priorities and approaches. In a city with over 100 homeless service providers, disagreements can allow for the space to innovate and develop diverse responses to homelessness. The homeless population being itself very diverse, a multiplicity of responses is in some respects a strength of the Montreal model. As one actor put it, *“on pense que la diversité des interventions est une richesse. Oui, il y a des petits organismes mais qui vont répondre à des besoins qu’un autre organisme n’arrive pas à combler”* (interview #58).

But in Montreal, there is no one agency or organization in charge of homelessness. In this situation, people can easily get lost in the system, which has very real consequences. The recent inquest into the death of Alain Magloire is a case in point. Magloire was a microbiologist whose life was slowly unraveling in 2013 due to a severe and untreated mental illness. He was killed on the streets in February 2014 by Montreal police following a mental health crisis. An inquest into his death reveals just how disorganized the system is for homeless people, particularly those with mental illnesses, and how preventable Magloire's death was. In his final report, Montreal coroner Luc Malouin wrote that Magloire's mental health was clearly deteriorating in the months preceding his death. In late 2013, Magloire had been admitted to a number of different Montreal hospitals for psychiatric care, where he had two psychiatric examinations and one evaluation by a social worker. There was no mechanism for sharing this important information regarding Magloire's mental health, a fact that is repeatedly raised in Malouin's report as a contributing factor to Magloire's death. Malouin writes, "*Si le dernier médecin l'ayant rencontré avait eu toutes les informations médicales, il aurait noté une augmentation de la fréquence des crises de M Magloire et aurait pu proposer un autre traitement.*" He continues, "*Je suis convaincu que ce dernier aurait pu le soigner de façon beaucoup plus efficace et qu'on aurait peut-être évité les événements de février 2014*" (Malouin 2016, 31–32).

The lack of communication between hospitals regarding the mental health of someone clearly in need in Montreal was a big problem underlined by the Coroner, but the overall silo-ed nature of homeless services is also an important theme of his report. Concerns over privacy play a central role in current discussions regarding the organization of homelessness services in Montreal, where agencies gather information regarding their clients but do not share this information with other services or agencies. In a system where no one is responsible, someone

like Alain Magloire can have a mental health crisis, and can display several cries for help, but can remain completely lost and unassisted.

The expertise and innovation that exists in Montreal, among RAPSIM and MMFIM members alike, is extraordinary. This is, as noted above, the great strength of the Montreal model. In this system, it is very unlikely that anyone would ever be told that in order to get help, he or she must go to a homeless shelter in order to be prioritized (as is the case in Calgary). Concerns over privacy are important and must be considered seriously, but the at times fatal flaw in this model is an unwillingness of agencies to talk to one another (a strength of Calgary's more controlled and centralized model).

There have been important successes in the fight against homelessness in these four cities – in Calgary, homelessness stopped growing after the CHF put its plan in place, for example. But the promise to end homelessness appears to be largely unfulfilled so far. As the above has argued, this is in part due to weaknesses inherent in each of the governance models. But it is entirely unfair to place exclusive blame for this on the local level. The local level, though engaged and passionate about fighting homelessness, is simply not equipped with the legal and financial resources it needs to fight homelessness effectively. Indeed, no single level of government can adequately respond to homelessness on its own. Good will goes a long way; existing services can be reorganized to make it easier for homeless people to find housing (and stay housed), and rules can be changed to allow greater access to emergency shelters.

In all four of these cities (though less so in Montreal), affordable housing is in short supply. Housing is one of the most expensive areas of infrastructure and requires some form of long-term commitment financial from provincial and federal governments, if only because these are the levels of government with sufficient taxation and revenue generating powers. For over

twenty years, a key player – the federal government – has been absent from long-term policy discussions regarding housing and homelessness. Further, given the sometimes very challenging health needs of chronically homeless people related to addictions and severe mental illness, an effective solution to homelessness requires very trained and flexible medical professionals, notably psychologists. Psychologists are not cheap and cannot be hired by the local level alone. For a complex problem like homelessness, the unwillingness of the federal government to engage and to commit funding is enough to almost guarantee that any efforts to reduce homelessness will be limited or short-lived.

Homelessness is an example of a wicked problem or what Bradford (2005) and Smith and Torjman (2004) call a complex file. A wicked problem is one that “cross[es] departmental boundaries and resist[s] the solutions that are readily available through the action of one agency” (6 et al. 2002). Bradford gives the example of income inequality as a pressing wicked problem, and notes “any effective solution to social exclusion and spatial isolation will need to co-ordinate the efforts of many actors, agencies and governments” (2005, 4). The very same thing can be said for homelessness. The local level cannot respond adequately to homelessness on its own, but must also work in coordination with other governments and local actors. Some provinces (notably BC and QC and more recently Alberta) have been willing to invest and partner with municipalities, but their interventions have been inadequate without the resources and support of the federal government as well.

Horak (2012), considering the effectiveness of multilevel governance policy processes in Canada, concludes, “two basic things need to be coordinated in multilevel policymaking: policy power (that is, authority and resources) and policy agendas. Each of these can be more or less fragmented in relation to a given set of policy objectives” (2012a, 361). He continues to stress

the importance of aligned agendas; “agenda fragmentation appears to be a particularly strong determinant of policy failure” (362). Effective solutions homelessness require the agenda coordination of all levels of government as well as local social forces, which has not been the case throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

The results of Horak and Young’s cross-Canada study conclude that the private sector is very involved in multilevel policymaking, but third sector actors are less so (see Horak and Young 2012). Further, the private sector tends to be involved not just in policy implementation, but also in policy development, whereas the third sector, due largely to a lack of resources, tends to be involved just in implementation. But Horak notes that for multilevel policy making to be responsive to local needs, local social forces must be involved throughout the policy process and not just during implementation. Though the third sector is limited in terms of financial resources, it is often rich in expertise, which is a valuable contribution to the policymaking process. Horak notes that for policies to be responsive to local needs, the third sector should use this expertise to contribute not just to policy implementation, but to policy development as well. These two conclusions regarding the importance of agenda coordination and third sector participation are important in understanding why most plans to end or reduce homelessness in Canada have not succeeded, and also in understanding why Finland and to a lesser extent Medicine Hat have been more successful.

What Has Worked?

Effective, lasting solutions to homelessness require big commitments from the provincial and federal governments and strong input from all aspects of the local level. Because of competing agendas and priorities among these groups, the fight against homelessness faces an uphill battle, and that is the case not only in Canada but also in the United States and in Europe. Some cities or states in the US have been successful at reducing veterans’ homelessness (which

has been an important priority of the Obama administration), but this is only a small fraction of the overall homeless population. Looking around those two continents, there are only three examples of successful homelessness fighting plans: Medicine Hat, Alberta; the State of Utah; and Finland.

Utah got major coverage in 2015 when it announced that it had ended chronic homelessness. Reports from NPR (McEvers 2015) and even Jon Stewart of the *Daily Show* (Goldberg 2015) praised the Housing First model for lowering the number of chronically homeless people in the conservative state from 2000 in 2005 to 200 in 2015. Recent reports and analyses have, however, suggest that this huge drop in homelessness is “fiction” (Cortez 2016) and that it is due more to changing math and technical issues (such as definition) than it is to a real reduction in homelessness. Medicine Hat and Finland are better examples of successful plans to end homelessness. These two examples are of course very different from the four big cities studied here, but there are nevertheless governance lessons to be learned from their successes.

Finland³⁶

Finland has been tracking and studying its homeless population since the 1980s, and has been able to track not just those who are visibly homeless, but also those who are hidden. This hidden homeless population finds housing with families or friends (often couch-surfing or living in overcrowded environments), but has no adequate, affordable housing of their own. For this reason, they are considered homeless; Finland’s definition of homelessness is comparatively very broad.

³⁶ A portion of this section, translated into French, has been published as a blog

In 1987, just over 18,000 people experienced some form of homelessness in Finland (at the time, the country's population was 4.9 million people). By 2010, following efforts to reduce homelessness, the number of homeless people in Finland had decreased significantly. Despite this success, the number of *chronically* homeless people remained relatively stable throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and was making up a larger and larger portion of the overall homeless population; of the 7,877 people who were homeless in the mid-2000s (including those who were hidden homeless), 3,079 were long-term homeless. To address this problem, in 2007 the central government set up a four-person "group of the wise" to write a plan to reduce long-term homelessness. The members of the group of the wise were a Member of Parliament, the director of Helsinki's social services, director of the influential housing agency the Y-Foundation, and the Bishop of Helsinki (Busch-Geertsema 2010). The group of the wise introduced a 3-year strategy on homelessness from 2008-2011 (PAAVO I) and then a second plan from 2011-2015 (PAAVO II), funded with 200 million Euros. The majority of this funding (170 million Euros) came from the national government, with the municipalities and lottery commission contributing the rest.

The 2008-2011 policy set out to reduce long-term homelessness by 50% and to provide 1250 new units of supported housing, while the second plan aimed to eliminate long-term homelessness and provide another 1250 supported housing units by 2015³⁷. Between 2008-2014, Finland was able to reduce the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness by 26%; in so doing, some emergency shelters in Helsinki were closed and, amazingly, turned into supportive housing. Given the broad definition of homelessness, this reduction of 26% is, by North American standards, incredible. These plans were, however, not fully successful in their

³⁷ For a longer history of Finland's efforts to end homelessness see www.housingfirst.fi

stated goals of ending homelessness, and there is still some homelessness in Finland. A review of the two policies notes, “[w]hile Finland has brought down the numbers of people experiencing long-term homelessness by 26% between 2008 and 2014, and reduced the proportion of homeless people who are long-term homeless from 45% in 2008 to 29% in 2014, long-term homelessness was still occurring at what, from a Finnish perspective, was an unacceptable rate” (Pleace et al. 2016, 434–435).

It is important to put this “failure” into context. While there is still homelessness in Finland, it is, by international standards, a very small amount. Pleace et al. estimate that while approximately 5.6% of the Canadian population experiences homelessness over the course of a given year, only .14% of the Finnish population does. They write, “Finland has moved from a position in 2008 when it had a comparatively very small homelessness problem to a position where it has *further* reduced homelessness” (2016, 434 emphasis original).

Part of the success of the Finnish experience with the fight against homelessness is undoubtedly its broad definition of homelessness, and its ability to track the evolution of hidden homelessness. This is common in most Scandinavian countries, where the method to enumerate the homeless population is much more rigorous than what is done in North American Point-in-Time counts (Smith 2015a); this is in many ways the result of less information sharing and restrictive privacy frameworks in North America. A Europe-wide study of homelessness policies notes that a broad definition is very important; “it is important that indicators for monitoring are rooted in a broad definition of homelessness and a clear ambition to reduce progressively all forms of homelessness. Without this, there is a risk that progress in one area may create or mask an increase in another area” (FEANTSA 2012, 24).

This is no doubt part of the failing of Robertson's plan to end *street* homelessness in Vancouver. Moving chronically homeless people into a shelter might reduce street homelessness, but those people, even when they are in shelters, remain the most vulnerable of the homeless population. In other words, they could very easily slip back onto the streets if they are not immediately connected with housing and social supports (which, in Vancouver, is difficult). Finland carefully monitored and aimed to reduce all forms of homelessness, including hidden, while prioritizing chronic homelessness. This is important because efforts to fight chronic or visible homelessness could be undermined by a huge but unnoticed increase in hidden homelessness, which would be just a ticking time bomb if untreated.

The second element of success in Finland was the coordination between the national government, municipalities, and important third sector organizations³⁸, and the important financial contributions that they all brought to the fight against homelessness. Paavo I and II, created by the group of the wise, brought together highly respected representatives from each of these sectors, and together they created Finland's plan; "[i]t was through the building and maintenance of political cooperation that the strategy was able to deliver significant reductions in homelessness" (Pleace et al. 2016, 436). The fact that Finland is a unitary country certainly made this coordination easier; in Canada, any national strategy must also coordinate with ten provincial governments, many of whom might have different agendas of political goals. Community groups in Finland were also treated as full partners all throughout the policy process; group of the wise member Juha Kaakinan, president of the influential housing organization the Y-Foundation, was directly involved in not just the implementation but also the development of the homelessness strategy. The coordination of the agenda of the different levels of government

³⁸ The private sector was not very involved in the fight against homelessness in Finland.

and third sector involvement at various stages of the policy process is, for Horak, key to making a policy successful and responsive to local needs. While Finland has not fully ended homelessness, its efforts have resulted in the most significant reduction of chronic homelessness in Europe.

Medicine Hat³⁹

The one Canadian city that has seen success in ending homelessness is Medicine Hat, a small city in Southern Alberta, with a population of around 61,000 and, in 2010 a homeless population of 1000. By 2015, the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness in Medicine Hat was nearly zero in (The Economist 2014; Wong 2015) The city only tackled the problem of chronic and visible homelessness and has been silent on the question of hidden homelessness. The Finnish experience tells us that this might be a problem in the future, and that celebrations of Medicine Hat's success at ending homelessness might be premature. But to be sure, the story of the fight against homelessness in Medicine Hat is an impressive one, full of twists and turns and changes of heart.

As was the case in other cities throughout Alberta, homelessness was growing rapidly in Medicine Hat during the mid-2000s. Actors at the local level had long been concerned about homelessness in their community, but faced important obstacles when they tried to get it onto the public's agenda. The electorate in what is sometimes called Canada's most conservative city had been taught to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and to believe others should do the same; spending taxpayer money on homelessness did not immediately resonate with them.

This portion of the electorate found a loyal representative in then City Councilor Ted Clugston, who opposed Housing First and homelessness spending as a matter of principle. "I

³⁹ A portion of this section, translated into French, has been published as a blog

used to say things like ‘I don’t have granite countertops, why should they?’” he told *The Tyee* (Wong 2015). But homelessness activists worked hard to change his mind, relying largely on the economic arguments for ending homelessness that were also used in Calgary. By the time he had become Mayor of Medicine Hat, Clugston was convinced that ending homelessness was the right thing to do. Once Clugston was fully on board, activists worked with the city to develop Medicine Hat’s homelessness plan, which relied greatly on Housing First and systems planning.

Canadian researchers and practitioners alike have asked Medicine Hat for its “recipe” for ending homelessness, hoping to repeat its success. A case study of Medicine Hat’s experience highlights certain key ingredients, such as the importance of coordinating efforts, collecting data, and being flexible if things do not go as planned (Turner and Rogers 2016). The case study also notes the importance of shared community ownership and focusing on the homeless people themselves, and further credits the plan’s success to an early transition to Housing First (compared to other Canadian cities). There is, of course, no secret recipe to ending homelessness, and Turner and Rogers are clear while that these are some of the important ingredients to success, each city and community will be different.

Skeptical councilor turned supportive Mayor Ted Clugston brings another perspective to the success seen in Medicine Hat. Following the promising signs that Medicine Hat was about to end homelessness, Clugston’s office was inundated with interview requests from around the world with news sources that called him the Mayor who ended homelessness – “not bad for a guy who tried to scuttle the project” he told *The Globe and Mail* (Maki 2014). Speaking through international news sources such as *The Economist*, Clugston’s comments on the success in Medicine Hat are insightful and point to the importance of resources, coordination and alignment. He first highlights the city’s unique resource base, meaning it was uniquely well

suited to end homelessness; “This city is a wealthy city. We have advantages over other cities” he told *The Tyee*, highlighting the fact that the city owns its own oil and gas companies (Wong 2015).

Many researchers and activists are quick to note that, on a per capita basis, the scale of chronic homelessness in Medicine Hat was very comparable to what it was in other Alberta cities. But Clugston himself notes that the size of Medicine Hat, 61,000 people, was a key factor that allowed the important actors to come together quickly and easily. “We’re small enough that we can work together and large enough to make a difference,” he said (Maki 2014). This is not the case in a larger city, where there is often a high concentration of homelessness in particular neighbourhoods, which can create entrenched problems that are more difficult to resolve (the Downtown Eastside is perhaps the most obvious example of this). Further, as Clugston alludes to, getting everyone, even just from the local level, on the same page about an approach and a plan to end homelessness is more difficult in a large city. In other words, coordinating (or aligning agendas, as Horak would say), is easier in a city of 61,000 people. This is certainly the case for many of the cities under study here, where early divisions between actors meant that key voices were not always included in the policy-development process. Medicine Hat was able to reduce chronic homelessness without substantial support from the federal government, which is impressive and speaks to great commitment of the local actors. But the small size of the city was likely a very important factor in the success that was seen in Medicine Hat, making a repetition of its experience in other bigger Canadian cities unlikely.

These two cases, but particularly Finland, illustrate the importance of coordination and of agenda alignment, as Horak argues. Repeating this success in Canada’s largest cities will be difficult, in part because of the sometimes very deep divisions between local level community

groups that were highlighted in Chapter 7. There is room in an effective solution for disagreement, and of course information and passionate debates between competing points of view can make policy solutions much more effective. A local actor opposed to a plan on homelessness that is supported by the majority of the other major actors might not be enough to lead to its failure, but it can impose obstacles. Because Canada has an extra layer of government to coordinate with – the provinces – repeating the success seen in Finland will be difficult, but with a federal government willing to commit resources to housing and homelessness, the future will likely see interesting and successful collaborations across the country.

Theoretical Implications

When I first worked on this subject, I was vexed by the tendency – among political scientists, activists, theorists, observers, and commentators – to dismiss “the local” as a venue for political activity and to ignore what local government did, how it worked, and how it shaped our political possibilities. I am still vexed about these things. I look at textbooks on Canadian politics that say nothing at all about the local state and offer no analysis whatsoever of the ways in which people engage – or fail to engage – with it, and I sigh in despair (Magnussen 2015, 16).

It is undeniable that cities, and local actors more generally, are playing an important role in the Canadian welfare state and within the Canadian intergovernmental framework. Cities and their respective urban governance dynamics are not the same across the country, but rather reflect a different distribution of powers, contrasting interests, and even ideologies. In short, cities are behaving very much like governments, and as Graham et al argued nearly 20 years ago, they should be treated as governments in the literature (1998).

There are two important conclusions to be drawn from this conclusion regarding the role of cities in the intergovernmental framework. The first is that cities, and the local level more generally, are important producers of social protection in Canada. The federal and provincial governments are, and always will be (and always should be) main actors in the welfare state. But

the inability (or unwillingness) of these levels of government to respond to the new social risk of homelessness has made the local level a more important producer of social security, and actors at the local level are being remarkably creative at stitching the frayed safety net back together with a severe shortage of funding and tools. The local level is a particularly important producer of social security for the other 1%; they are the first and last line of defence for these most vulnerable Canadians, and in order to fully understand the welfare state, their role should be fully considered.

The second conclusion to be drawn, however, is more in line with traditional studies of intergovernmental relations and the welfare state. A quick look at the results of Chapter 6, notably those regarding housing related powers, clearly shows that Canadian cities have very different legal and political powers, but they remain remarkably constrained by a lack of financial tools. The housing related tools that cities have and the financial resources at their disposal are determined by the provinces. Some provinces, notably BC, have been permissive with their municipalities and have given them some useful tools and autonomy and have even recognized municipalities as an order of government. Many provinces, however, have chosen to keep municipalities on a very short leash by refusing to grant certain powers, such as inclusionary zoning (though this has changed recently in Toronto). Cities are innovating with the few tools that they have, and they are proving that they are capable and knowledgeable actors, but they ultimately do not have the powers or the resources to engage and fully autonomous and equal partners. This is the result of provincial decisions and the fact that provinces still wield extraordinary power over municipalities.

The frustration with this situation of continuing provincial control is palpable at the local level across the country. A current city councilor explained that this situation is wildly outdated:

“When I look at who we are as a country, 80% of us live in urban areas now, and I say we have a governance structure that no longer reflects the reality of where we live. The governance structure reflects who we were 100 years ago, but not who we are now” (interview #23). When asked what he thinks should happen to change this situation, he responded, “I think the federal and provincial orders need to recognize that municipalities are grown ups. As simple as that. I work very hard not to say ‘other levels of government’ because that implies a hierarchy, so I say ‘other orders of government’. There is a very patriarchal relationship with other orders of government that has to stop. We are grown ups”. The same sentiment was present in other cities, where municipal actors feel that the other orders of government do not trust them to make decisions on their own.

To give an analogy, big cities in Canada seem to feel like young adults returning to live with their parents after finishing an undergraduate degree away from home. The parents, in this analogy, are of course the provincial and to a lesser extent federal governments. This young graduate, call him X, has finished an undergraduate degree in a city that was not his hometown. He lived on his own, did his own laundry, cooked decent food for himself, made some mistakes and bad decisions, but finished his degree on the Dean’s list. While at university, he used some of his free time and income to support local social initiatives, including raising awareness and a small amount of funding for homelessness, but he wants to contribute to more sustainable solutions through some type of socially-minded career. He has now moved back home to live with his parents while he figures out what to do next. His parents are glad to have him home but worry about him and his future. They do not think he is ready to live life as an autonomous grown up and have implemented a number of autonomy limiting rules. They make him take out the garbage and do his own laundry, but they also buy his groceries and constantly remind him to

clean his room and tell them where he is going whenever he leaves the house. X and his parents fight a lot, mostly at home but sometimes in public as well.

X is caught in a very uncomfortable transition between being a youth and being a grown up, and feels deeply the frustrations and insecurities that come with being neither fully. Like Canada's big cities, X has ambitions, a sense of responsibility, and some training from his university days to become an autonomous adult. However, while he is capable of living on his own independently and while he usually makes the right choices, he has not been faced with the truly difficult decisions, responsibilities and consequences of adulthood. Further, like Canada's big cities, X does not have a sustainable source of income; he has a minimum wage job that does not nearly cover what he wishes to do, including travel and buy an environmentally friendly car. For these broader goals, he is financially dependent on his parents (or provincial and federal governments), who are not keen to write him a blank check.

In reality, X is neither a youth nor a grown-up; rather, he has the ambitions of a grown up with the resources and responsibilities of a youth. This situation is frustrating for both X and his parents. A similar frustration – “we are grown ups” – is felt at the local level across Canada, where municipalities have great ambitions – to fight homelessness and climate change for example – but do not have the resources to do so. A former mayor of a big city explained, “you are a professional beggar when you are a mayor. That is what you do, you are always on the hunt for money. There are only three places to go. Either the current taxpayer, the province or the federal government. So every time you go, it is cap in hand and you are always asking for support” (interview #24).

This frustration is perhaps most strongly felt in Toronto, where elected officials and bureaucrats alike mentioned at a number of points in various interviews that Toronto is Canada's

5th largest government. Elected officials and bureaucrats alike feel very much like government officials (or grown ups), and are annoyed that they are not treated that way by other governments in the country. Miller spoke of his efforts to get Toronto a seat at the table at provincial intergovernmental meetings on homelessness, and remains perplexed at their refusal to allow “Canada’s largest housing owner” a voice, or even observer status. Further, while praising the influence of activists, city bureaucrats insisted that the real responsibility for housing lies with the government, and they are very protective of that responsibility. In this case, Toronto is like the first of her youth/grown-up friend group to get a car. She is fiercely proud of her car, and is intensely protective of it; she never lets her friends, and certainly not her parents, drive it. She sees it as a sign of adulthood, responsibility, and independence, and her friends (and some of their parents even) agree. In this way, the city has been protective of its turf in other policy areas as well (see Horak 2012); in areas where the city is treated as a real government with real responsibilities, the city takes that very seriously. Having a real power, like the power over housing, is, to Toronto, a sign that it is capable of dealing with grown up responsibilities. The city guards that power very carefully, as though to prove to itself and to others that it is indeed a grown-up government.

This situation would appear to be changing, though it is not at all clear that cities will get all the tools they are seeking, nor is it clear that the change will happen at a pace that the cities want. In early 2016, however, the province of Ontario finally announced that it would give municipalities the power to mandate inclusionary zoning in new developments, a tool that has been requested for years. The provinces of Quebec and Alberta are considering special status for their largest cities, which would allow them more autonomy and freedom. This might well be a transition to a reality where municipalities play a more important, and more formal, role in the

governance of Canada. For now, however, resources and responsibilities are limited by the provinces, who continue to treat cities as their creatures. Cities have been creative and have had to work with other local sectors to build coalitions to develop policies regarding homelessness, looking beyond just the private sector and involving third sector actors as well. Even with its limited resources, the local level is an important actor in the intergovernmental system. To fully understand governance in Canada, studies should look not just to the usual suspects (provincial and federal governments) but also to the local level.

There are two further theoretical implications to be drawn from this thesis when it comes to the study of the welfare state. The first is regarding the importance of studying housing policy as a component of the welfare state; this means bringing the study of housing into the literature on federalism and intergovernmental relations and the welfare state. Historically in Canada (and around the world), the literature on the welfare state has been curiously silent on housing policy. The rise of visible homelessness across the country, however, has forced policy-makers and theorists to rethink housing as not just an economic policy or good, but also as a social policy. Indeed, most solutions to homelessness insist that housing must be at the heart of the solution.

Studying housing from this perspective in many ways confirms what has already been written about the welfare state; the evolution of federalism has, up until the 1990s at least, largely determined which level of government was primarily responsible for housing policy. Banting's confirms that this is largely the case for housing as well (1990). But studying housing policy from the perspective of the welfare state also highlights how there are new actors producing social security in Canada, primarily those at the local level. Bradford (2005) has noted that there is increasingly a concentration of "complex files" or "wicked problems" in cities, meaning problems that require broad partnerships across different levels of government and

sectors. Homelessness is a very obvious example of this, but there are others as well. A full understanding of solutions to this type of complex file, including the important question of how it is governed, requires that we also pay attention to the local level. This is not to take away from the provincial and federal orders of government, but rather to suggest that a multilevel governance perspective will become increasingly relevant to students and scholars of a welfare state that is as urbanized as Canada's is.

The second implication relates to the state of the Canadian welfare state, and its ability to protect vulnerable citizens from new social risks. Following decades of cuts and downloading by federal and provincial governments, the Canadian welfare state, especially for the bottom 1% who experience homelessness, is disorganized, patchy, and indeed very close to the ground. This is the case in all provinces and all cities, even in places where inequality and poverty have grown relatively slowly (like Quebec). Where there have been responses to homelessness, they have been either by actors with nowhere near the resources necessary to respond adequately to the problem (as is the case with the local level), or short-term and insufficient resources from provincial or federal projects.

The National Homelessness Initiative, renamed the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, is a good example of this. As the context chapter outlined, this program was intended to be an emergency response measure for local communities, and the funding cycle was never made permanent. Rather, the NHI/HPS has been funded continuously since 1999 but only ever for 2-5 years at a time. This has meant that local level actors using the funding have had to work on short term projects, which are often not their real priorities (Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada 2008). Further, the funding that the federal government has allocated (which is matched by local level actors), cannot be used to build or purchase housing; this is in

part a policy decision to only focus on emergency responses such as shelters or drop-ins. But the funds available through the NHI/HPS are also wholly inadequate to build even a modest amount of housing. As Leo (2006) accurately notes, the program was “doomed to be less than satisfactory” because it had nothing to do with housing. These interventions, due to inadequate resources and unrealistic timelines, did little to reduce chronic homelessness and ultimately protect the other 1%. Local actors have done their best to stitch the safety net back together for the most vulnerable people, but their resources are simply too limited to be able to provide adequate protection for this population.

Solutions to homelessness have more recently become targeted and specialized, notably through investments in Housing First, a promising approach to helping the most chronically homeless individuals find and keep housing (Currie et al. 2014). Many of the people who have successfully exited homelessness through a Housing First program remain vulnerable and poor, but safely housed. It is important to consider this in light of what Banting and others have identified as a new social paradigm that invests in human capital (Banting 2005b; Jenson and Saint-Martin 2003). The move to Housing First fits in many ways with this new paradigm. While the goal of Housing First is not necessarily to support people as they reintegrate in the labour market, it rather seeks to provide them with supports (mental health, detoxification, social services) that will help them exit the street. The promise of Housing First is that just doing this, investing in the person through social and health supports, will save the taxpayer money.

Many actors intimately familiar with Housing First note that it is not a poverty reduction program, and many people who are housed through this program remain reliant on food banks, soup kitchens, and rent supplements. In short, they remain poor and vulnerable. As Banting writes of the overall trend in the welfare state towards investment in human capital, this turn has

not been accompanied by the equally important emphasis on income security and redistributive measures. In Housing First, there is no redistributive complement to this investment in human capital; social assistance benefits remain well below the Market Basket Measure, keeping people firmly trapped in poverty and vulnerability.

Further, the very existence of chronic homelessness (which grew during the same time as the welfare state was retrenching and changing to a human capital paradigm) is powerful evidence of the concern that many scholars have with this investment in human capital paradigm. In investing in education and training, while failing to complement this approach with some form of income security for those who are currently poor or homeless, the new paradigm fails to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable people today. As Banting notes, “it exposes the unskilled of today... to a harsher world with weakened protection systems” (2006, 418). This narrative of the weaknesses of the new social policy paradigm is confirmed by the study of homelessness.

Conclusions

While this research has taken an explicitly and intentionally urban look at homelessness, it is clear that the local level alone cannot solve the problem. Up until recently, the story of the fight against homelessness has had a pessimistic ending regarding the possibility of ending homelessness in Canada, but that seems to be changing with new governments at all levels with policy agendas that include housing and homelessness. At time of writing, it seems that agendas of various levels of government (including federal) and actors are aligning, a key factor in determining the success of multilevel policy initiatives such as this. In Toronto, for example, it is clear that the Mayor, the Premier and the Prime Minister have strong relationships and have committed to making the fight against homelessness and the construction of more affordable housing a priority. The same is the case in many other major cities across the country.

Groups are also emerging, with or without the initial blessing of the local government, to institutionalize the voice of the third sector in the local governance of homelessness. The recently formed Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, aims to bring the voice of service providers to the city's policy making process, which should, according to Horak, increase the local responsiveness of Toronto's policies. The City of Montreal has recently hired Serge Lareault to be the first "protector" of the homeless. This position was inspired by the role played by Judy Graves, a City of Vancouver bureaucrat who became a widely respected advocate for the homeless. Though she created the role for herself, when she retired, the city hired someone to replace her. Lareault's role in Montreal will be to bring some coordination to the homeless serving system, but also to be a bridge between the experts in the fight against homelessness on the streets with the policy-makers at city hall. Institutionalizing the voice of the street in the governance of homelessness in Montreal will not end homelessness on its own, but it should make policies more responsive and sensitive to local needs.

There will always be disagreements between the orders of government; Vancouver's Mayor for example has fought very publicly with the Premier and with the housing Minister, even though the BC government is more engaged than most in the area of housing. And there will always be disagreements among community groups, if only because their passion for what they are doing to help the homeless is so strong. But current trends indicate that political agendas are aligning, in terms of recognizing the importance of housing and homelessness, and local governments are increasingly open to an institutionalized place for third sector experts in the governance of homelessness. The promise to end homelessness in Canada has so far (other than Medicine Hat) been unfulfilled, but optimists do not have to look too hard to find reasons to believe that that might have started to change.

A final word on the welfare state

My reflections on this research have recently been supplemented by my own interactions with the Quebec welfare state, beginning in September when I learned I was pregnant. My experiences with the welfare state stand in very stark contrast to the anecdotal experiences of homeless people here in Montreal and around the country. Quebec, and Montreal in particular, is a great place for women of all income levels to be pregnant. This is perhaps for political reasons: in the 1990s, the government of Quebec wanted to both increase its population and grow its economy. Helping women re-enter the labour market after having children was seen as the best way to do so, and the welfare state has thus been organized around these goals. To this end, women are supported by the welfare state throughout their pregnancies, immediately after through a provincially run maternity and parental leave system, and upon their reengagement with the labour market with the famous universal child care system.

Two important themes characterize my experiences with the Quebec health and social security systems: trust and choice. First, the health and social services I have used have trusted me when I said I was pregnant, and immediately provided me with the services and support I was entitled to. At 3-months pregnant, I went to my neighbourhood *Centre local de services communautaires* (CLSC), a provincially run health and social services clinic, to learn what supports they had. When I told the receptionist that I was pregnant, she put me in touch with a social worker, with whom I met within 5 minutes. The social worker signed me up for free prenatal courses, gave me information about other resources available in Montreal, and made sure I had some key pieces of information. No one asked for proof that I was pregnant (and at 3-months, I did not look pregnant); they just believed me.

I later signed up online for maternity benefits, which in Quebec are run through the province. To sign up for the benefits, I simply gave my expected due date and some other personal information, and the system immediately went into action and started directly depositing my bi-weekly benefits into my bank account. Again, the government did not ask for proof that I was pregnant (even though I have a doctor's note to that effect); they just asked that I update my dossier when the baby is born by inputting his birthdate into the system.

This is not the case with homeless people, many of whom (particularly women) do not look homeless. They are not trusted, but rather they are asked time and time again to prove their status, to prove that they need support. They are met with skepticism regarding their need for assistance. Of course people can take advantage of a system if it blindly trusts anyone who says he or she needs help, but the same could be said for the way the maternity benefits system is set up. But the system, organized around the goal of supporting women, errs on the side of trust. Of course, pregnancy is highly time sensitive, and it is important the supports be provided immediately for the health and well-being of both mom and baby. But the same again could be said for homelessness; the longer people stay homeless, the more difficult it is for them to find and keep housing. At the same time, the system for homeless people has been designed very differently. A choice has been made to not trust homeless people, and it is very difficult for them to get the supports they need as quickly as they need them. It is difficult to conclude that this is not because of assumptions regarding who is deserving and who is undeserving of support from the welfare state.

The second theme in my experience with the Quebec welfare state is choice. At every interaction I have had with the welfare state, I have had a choice. Whether it was medical support through a midwife or a doctor, birthing location (home, birthing centre, or hospital), the timing

of my maternity benefits, the organization of my benefits (larger sums for 40 weeks or smaller sums for 52 weeks), I have had options and my choices have been respected. I even had the choice of when to receive my benefits, which were available following 26 weeks of pregnancy. Following the baby's birth, nurses from the CLSC will come *directly to my home* to support me if I choose to breastfeed.

The system is not perfect of course; my benefits are contribution-based and as a result are very low. The wait-time to see my doctor or to complete blood tests is often very long. This is, however, the case in other provinces as well. The important point is that the system has been organized to maximize my choices and to support my decisions. At a very high level, Quebec policy-makers have made a deliberate decision to prioritize young women with children, with the hope that through its social policies it can both increase the province's population and increase the labour market participation of women (through the universal childcare program). Once the political commitment was there, different social and health services became coordinated around those goals. Rather than telling women what to do, the system has instead been designed to be flexible to help women of various income levels to have a family and work. This flexibility, which maximizes choice, has undoubtedly contributed to the success of the system (Liu 2012).

Homeless people have comparatively very few choices. I remember learning this very quickly while volunteering at a homeless shelter in East Vancouver in 2009. People staying at the shelter would often ask me in the morning what we were serving for lunch. One day, after telling a woman what was for lunch, she responded, "There's pizza at the Union Gospel Mission, I'm going THERE for lunch". Offended that what we were offering at the shelter was not good enough for her, I later told a colleague at the shelter what the woman said. My colleague responded simply, "what to eat for lunch is probably the only choice she has today".

Often, homeless people are told what they need, what they should do, what they should not do. Their choices are intensely limited - the type of income support that is offered, where they will sleep, even *when* they will sleep, are all pre-determined. The social service supports that are available are also limited. Like my attitude back in 2009, the system seems to think that homeless people should be grateful for whatever they are offered. It does not consider how the limitations placed on their choices, and the fact that this means services will often be mismatched with people, will ultimately affect their success at finding and keeping housing.

To a certain extent, the new policy orientation towards Housing First gives homeless people more choices, notably in terms of what kind of housing they have access to and the supports that they are given. In reality, however, these choices are severely limited by a lack of affordable housing and quality social supports. The choices can also be limited by people who adhere strictly to the original Housing First model (developed by Canadian psychologist Sam Tsemberis in New York City), and thus believe that people in Housing First programs should only have access to scatter site private housing. If choice is at the centre of this model, all forms of housing – co-op, congregate, social – should also be available.

While Housing First provides more choices (in theory), the welfare state contains contradictions that make it difficult for people to permanently leave homelessness. Compared to maternity benefits, social assistance benefits are highly inflexible and keep people well below the poverty line. A political decision has been made to support women with children, and the relevant components of the welfare state have been organized around that goal. There is no reason that a political decision could not also be made to prioritize the reduction (or the end) of homelessness.

The direct comparison between pregnancy and homelessness is, of course, not perfect. But there are nevertheless important parallels to be drawn between these two interactions with the welfare state (which, it bears noting, is designed not just for the poor or for the homeless, but for everyone). A Calgary-based actor who opposed the Calgary Homeless Foundation's approach told me in an interview for this thesis that the business heavy board "felt that it needed a business model to turn homelessness around. What they didn't realize is just how complex human behaviour is" (personal interview 2014). This is an insightful point, and is true not just of homeless people but all people. Human behaviour is complex. Looking at the success that the province of Quebec has had with its family oriented policy and at supporting women during and after pregnancy, it seems that a key ingredient to successful policy outcomes might be linked to this complex human behaviour. Social policies can incentivize certain behaviours, of course. But rather than attempting to control or change complex human behaviour, policy-makers might rather take that complexity into consideration by maximizing and supporting the choices that people make for themselves, erring on the side of trust and autonomy.

Appendix 1: List of interviews

1. Member of Vancouver Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, Aboriginal steering committee on homelessness
2. Member of Vancouver Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, senior City of Vancouver official working in the area of homelessness
3. Member of Vancouver Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, City of Vancouver councillor
4. Senior City of Vancouver official working in the area of housing
5. Senior City of Vancouver official working in the areas of housing and planning
6. Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on homelessness member
7. Vision Vancouver member, Provincial MLA
8. Former Provincial MLA, former senior City of Vancouver official working in the area of homelessness, former StreetoHome Foundation Board member
9. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Vancouver
10. City of Vancouver police
11. Member of the StreetoHome Foundation board
12. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Vancouver
13. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Vancouver
14. Former Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Vancouver
15. Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on homelessness member
16. Senior official with BC Housing
17. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Vancouver
18. Director of a faith-based organization, Vancouver
19. Former mid-size city Mayor
20. Senior City of Vancouver official working in the area of housing
21. Former City of Vancouver Mayor
22. Former Vice-President, CHF
23. City of Calgary Councillor

24. Former City of Calgary Mayor
25. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
26. Senior City of Calgary official working on the Poverty Reduction Strategy
27. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
28. Former President, CHF
29. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
30. Senior official with the City of Calgary Housing Corporation
31. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
32. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
33. Former President, CHF
34. Former President, CHF
35. City of Calgary Social Worker
36. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
37. Former President, CHF
38. Director of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
39. Provincial Interagency Council on Homelessness member
40. City of Calgary police
41. Senior member of the City of Lethbridge's homelessness taskforce
42. City of Toronto activist
43. Former City of Toronto mayor
44. City of Toronto, Street to Home staff
45. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Toronto
46. Former Senior City of Toronto official working in the area of housing
47. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Toronto
48. Senior City of Toronto official working in the area of housing
49. Former Senior City of Toronto official working in the area of housing
50. City of Toronto activist

51. City of Toronto Councillor
52. Former Senior official with City of Toronto Social Services and Housing Administration
53. Senior official with City of Toronto Social Services and Housing Administration
54. Senior official with City of Toronto Social Services and Housing Administration
55. Toronto researcher and physician
56. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Toronto
57. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Montreal
58. City of Montreal official working in the area of housing and homelessness
59. City of Montreal police
60. Former Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Montreal
61. Director of a homeless serving organization, Montreal
62. City of Montreal official working in the area of housing
63. Montreal area researcher
64. Former Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Montreal
65. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Montreal
66. Official with the Provincial Housing association (*la Société d'habitation du Québec*)
67. Former Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Montreal
68. Former Canadian Prime Minister
69. Senior official with the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy
70. Federal Member of Parliament responsible for housing and homelessness
71. City of Montreal Councillor
72. City of Lethbridge department of housing and homelessness
73. City of Calgary faith-based organization
74. Former City of Vancouver mayor
75. City of Vancouver official working in the area of housing
76. Journalist, Megaphone magazine
77. Former City of Calgary Councillor

78. Calgary based researcher
79. Calgary based social worker
80. Director of External Relations of a homeless serving organization, Calgary
81. Calgary based journalist
82. Executive Director of a poverty fighting organization, Calgary
83. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Kelowna
84. Executive Director of a homeless serving organization, Trois Rivières

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