

**COMMUNICATION AS ADVOCACY:
THE GOALS, CONTEXTS, AND STRATEGIES OF NON-PROFIT
COMMUNICATION SURROUNDING ISSUES OF HOMELESSNESS
IN FOUR CANADIAN CITIES**

by

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ABSTRACT

This research interrogates the goals, tactics, and contexts of non-profit advocacy, or those acts of communication taken by non-profit organizations intended to effect social and/or political change. Specifically, it employs documentary research and qualitative semi-structured interviews with 40 non-profit executive directors and communication managers of varied non-profit organizations communicating on issues of homelessness, elected politicians, and key city staff in four Canadian cities (Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Ottawa), to examine how non-profits accomplish multiple and sometimes conflicting advocacy goals within existing organizational, social, and political contexts.

The study contributes empirically and theoretically to the study of non-profit advocacy. Empirically, it reveals that many different types of non-profit organizations engage in advocacy with varying goals and tactics. Moreover, organizations adopt both instrumental and dialogic practices as strategies to achieve advocacy goals. For the non-profits in the study, the choice of practice is influenced by organizational perceptions of the role and function of communication and advocacy, organizational capacities for communication, and myriad external contexts. These findings expand current scholarly and political perceptions that limit non-profit advocacy to specific organizations, a narrow range of tactics, and particular goals. Theoretically, drawing on the negotiated order paradigm (Strauss, 1978) and Habermas's (1984) conceptualization of instrumental and communicative action, the study offers an expanded analytical framework that moves beyond dominant representations of non-profit advocacy as an outcome or function of organizational form or as epiphenomenal of the organization's relationship with government. It posits non-profit advocacy as a negotiated order, accomplished at the

intersection of myriad organizational, social, and political contexts that are, in turn, negotiated through communication practices. The study reveals that many organizations adopt a dialogic ethos for much of their communication that does not recognize the strategic and tactical imperatives of structural and systemic change required for many of their goals. Yet, this communication may contribute to longer-term dialogic goals surrounding the issue and to long-term systemic change.

This research directs scholars and practitioners to attend to the communicative nature of advocacy, the interaction among the varied factors that influence advocacy, and to the tensions and tradeoffs that arise within these interactions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCAP	Carnegie Community Action Project (Vancouver)
CCEH	Calgary Committee to End Homelessness
CHF	Calgary Homeless Foundation
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
CUPS	Calgary Urban Project Society
DERA	Downtown East Side Residents Association
The DI	The Drop In Centre (Calgary)
DTES	Downtown east side (of Vancouver)
GVRSC	Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee
HEAT	Homelessness Emergency Action Team (Vancouver)
HPI	Homelessness Partnering Strategy
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
ITA	Income Tax Act
MP	Member of Parliament
MFI	Multifaith Housing Initiative (Ottawa)
NDP	New Democratic Party
SCPI	Support Community Partnership Initiative
TDRC	Toronto Disaster Relief Committee
VANDU	Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users
VANOC	Vancouver Olympic Committee

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

I have worked professionally for over 20 years in the non-profit sector, most recently with a national agricultural industry organization. I have proposed, applied for and managed government funded projects and research, developed and helped my organization cultivate relationships with government officials, worked to create policy positions, developed and executed public information and educational campaigns, developed position papers for government consultations, industry consultations and legislative committee meetings, and directly lobbied in favour of a variety of regulatory initiatives. A key part to all of these processes was ongoing and effective communication and consultation with board members, staff, the association members, other organizations, policy makers, and members of the general public. Although we recognized our role as an “interest group” or a “lobbyist organization”, we never saw ourselves exclusively as such. Our primary goals were to produce the best and safest food possible and to sustain our industry over the long term. Governments and members of the general public were important audiences for our advocacy efforts. Because key aspects of our industry were impacted by legislation, we recognized a need to communicate our organization’s goals and to ensure that the views of our members were taken into consideration in the policy process. In some cases, we discussed our issues face to face with policy makers. In others, we rallied industry supporters and encouraged the public or other groups to support and promote our position. We also recognized the need to maintain an ongoing relationship with consumers and to educate them about our industry, food production, and quality and safety issues. We measured our success by

how the public viewed our products, our industry and the degree to which our efforts impacted government decisions and public discourse, not solely by whether a specific piece of legislation was passed or not. Above all, decisions about which goals to pursue and which action to take were determined within our long-term goals, the need to maintain an ongoing relationship with our association members, different levels of government, and citizens over the long term, the available opportunities for funding and support, the stated positions and needs of our members, and our own organizational capacities.

I have also been an active volunteer with various non-profit organizations for more than 25 years. I have served non-profit clients and members of the public, fundraised, managed campaigns, and participated on various committees and boards. As a volunteer, I have decorated parade floats, sold 50/50 tickets, packed Christmas baskets, served dinners in homeless shelters, managed other volunteers, organized public events, sold memberships and sponsorships, spoken at public lectures, developed communications plans, created organizational newsletters, pitched and managed media coverage, lobbied institutional and government leaders, and contributed to organizational policy, to name just a few. Many of the organizations for which I have volunteered are charities with a primary mandate to deliver government services or offer programs and services not directly funded by the state. Although focused primarily on the delivery of service, the success of these non-profit organizations, like the advocacy and lobby organizations that I have worked for, is contingent on their ability to effectively communicate with government, funders, donors, volunteers and other groups and individuals. Similarly, their viability requires them to maintain these relationships over

the long term, taking into account both the needs of those they represent and the larger social and political environment in which they operate. Often, this communication is focused on affecting public policy and government or private funding decisions. Equally as often, it is designed to educate policy makers and citizens on important social issues and to create a shared vision of society.

In my experience, non-profit organizations, regardless of their political or service mandates, share a common goal for much of their external communication efforts: to advocate for social and political change. Sometimes these efforts are directed at specific short-term policy objectives or organizational needs. At other times, they seek public or political attention to initiate discussion and debate on the issues important to their mission and to effect change in the long term. Underpinning all efforts is an ongoing desire to create shared cultural understandings of issues and solutions for those affected by them. Non-profit advocacy, thus, is not solely focused on self-serving ends, but is also oriented for the common good.¹

To what extent are these short-term, long-term, instrumental and discursive goals commensurate and achievable through external communication practices within existing organizational, social and political contexts? How are they prioritized and represented in the day-to-day communication activities of different non-profit organizations advocating on the same issue? What tactics are used to achieve these varied goals? What communication strategy or strategies are adopted? How do these communication practices reflect existing organizational, social, and political contexts? And to what

¹ I recognize that there are non-profit organizations that have intentions and actions that are primarily self-serving. Nonetheless, as I argue in this thesis, to be successful in their efforts, these organizations must recognize and negotiate existing political, social and cultural discourses and contexts.

extent do organizations negotiate these contexts to ensure the success of their advocacy practices? This dissertation explores these questions by examining the communication practices of non-profit organizations in four Canadian cities that are working in the poverty, social housing, and homelessness sector. It recognizes non-profit advocacy as a communication practice, adopting multiple tactics that are informed by and negotiated within myriad evolving and sometimes conflicting organizational, social and political contexts that can effect short-term instrumental returns as well as contribute to shared cultural understandings of the issue and longer-term social and political change.

WHY HOMELESSNESS ADVOCACY?

Like many Canadians, I often saw or passed “street people” in the course of my day, sometimes giving them change, oftentimes not. Seeing individuals in distress tugged at my conscience, but I paid little attention to it either as a citizen or a researcher, largely assuming that homelessness was an inevitable part of urbanization. This changed in 2006 - 2007 when homelessness and homelessness advocacy appeared to burst onto the social and political scene. In Calgary at the time, it felt like homelessness and the work of the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness led the news agenda for a 2 – 3 month period. One could hardly open the paper or turn on the evening news without reading or hearing about this unique multi-stakeholder committee that was developing a plan to end homelessness in a 10-year period. Moreover, it was not just the interest groups but a variety of non-profit organizations speaking out on the issue. At the same time, news stories and discussions about the upcoming Winter Olympics Games in Vancouver regularly raised the issue of homelessness and how that city would address the problem

of homelessness in the downtown east side prior to the Games. In 2006, in Ottawa, an all-candidate mayoral debate held prior to the municipal election focused on the issue of homelessness and how the city should address it. Homelessness emerged as an election issue not only for Ottawa that year, but also for Toronto, and then for Vancouver in 2008. Also in 2008, civil liberties advocates celebrated a surprising BC Supreme Court ruling that struck down a by-law in Victoria that denied homeless individuals from sleeping in parks. Homelessness, for me, was no longer just a passing thought in the street.

As a citizen, this media and political discourse was increasing my knowledge and awareness of the issue. I began to pay more attention to the issue of homelessness and became involved with local charities and organizations addressing it. I participated in a consultation for an Ottawa supportive housing organization. I volunteered for the Mission and the Salvation Army. I also signed up as a volunteer tutor for Discovery University, an education program specifically developed for homeless and low income individuals in Ottawa. Through these experiences, I have learned that homelessness is not an inevitable feature of modern society but a problem that can and should be solved.

As a researcher interested in non-profit advocacy, I was struck by the local differences in approach to solving the issue, the different types of non-profit organizations involved and their respective advocacy efforts, and the different ways in which homelessness is framed. Advocacy relating to homelessness does not entail a one-size-fits-all message. Nor does it fall within the purview of a single advocacy organization or special interest group. Multiple organizations are involved, with different messages, presenting to different audiences, seeking various short-term and long-term outcomes. Yet, a common desire to solve homelessness in Canada is evident. What

outcomes are these organizations accomplishing through this communication? Is the larger goal of ending homelessness being achieved? How do the differing organizational, political and social contexts influence the outcomes? What challenges do they pose? The communication activities of non-profit organizations advocating on issues of homelessness offer a valuable research opportunity to examine how different and sometimes competing goals are achieved in the context of unique organizational, social, and political contexts.

WHAT IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION?

Defining “non-profit organization” is not an easy task. The non-profit sector encompasses a diverse group of organizations. The term “non-profit”, “voluntary sector”, and “civil society” are often used interchangeably (e.g. Deacon, 1996) to refer to the group of organizations that inhabit the “third sector” or those enterprises distinct from the government and corporate realms.² Non-profit organizations typically have formal structures (i.e., some form of organization and process); operate separately from the government and business sectors (although they may sometimes be dependent on them); are non-profit distributing, meaning they reinvest earnings back into the organization; and are self governing and voluntary (Dreessen, 1999; Febbraro, *et al.*, 1999; Handy, 1998; Salamon & Anheier 1992; Salamon *et al.*, 1999). Deacon (1996) further asserts “non-partisanship” as a defining feature of non-profits, thereby excluding trade unions,

² Historically, “non-profit” relates to a tax classification for organizations that have registered as such under tax legislation, agreeing to reinvest any profits back into the organization (Muukkonen, 2009). The term non-profit has become the general term used to name the sector, although not all organizations hold the same tax status or register under tax legislation.

political parties and other professional interest groups.³ Moreover, non-profit organizations seek to achieve a collectively determined normative goal or mission (Febbraro, *et al.*, 1999). Cheverton (2007) argues that this non-commercial collective effort is a key point of differentiation of non-profits from their private and public sector counterparts. It is also a primary motivation for volunteers (Hwang *et al.*, 2005) and employees (deCooman, *et al.*, 2009) to actively engage with the sector.

The commonalities end there. Non-profits organizations range in size, organization and funding from 10 - 20 member, local, volunteer-managed groups operating out of a Board member's basement with annual budgets of only a few hundred dollars to large international organizations with professionalized staffs and multi-million dollar budgets (Etherington, 1996). Mandates and organizational missions range from supporting the development of skills and interests of individual members, to providing for the needs of individuals in society, to facilitating and maintaining community, entertainment, or cultural groups, to seeking social and political resolution of important issues. They "provide services, advocate for social and political change, protect rights, lobby for and against various causes, monitor public activities, transmit art and culture, build knowledge and educate", just to name a few (Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998, p. 490).

The expanse and diversity of the non-profit sector has resulted in attempts to develop typologies or differentiate groups of organizations based on their mandate, relationships with government, or organizational characteristics. However, as illustrated

³ The professional interest groups that Deacon excludes are those focused solely on selective benefits for their members. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, this distinction is not always clear.

above and further argued in Chapter 3, these classifications artificially delimit the advocacy contributions of many of these organizations and what are in effect fluid and interacting goals and mandates.

THE LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP FOR ANALYZING NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a form of communication that seeks social and/or political change and is directed at audiences external to the organization (see Chapter 3 for an expanded discussion). Research in the area of civil society recognizes advocacy as one of the essential contributions of the non-profit sector. Reid (2000), for example, states that the collective nature and decision making processes inherent to non-profit organizations contributes to “wider notions of public good” (Reid, 1999). Stated differently, non-profits allow for multiple voices and views to be included in larger public discussions and debates. Civil society scholarship further recognizes multiple venues and forms of non-profit advocacy. These can range from advocacy directed at policy processes to that which seeks to educate and inform members of the public (Reid, 2000).

Public policy studies, social movement scholarship, and communications research have explored non-profit advocacy by focusing on specific goals, organizations, methods, and tactics; yet, little attention has been paid to how specific goals are shaped in and through broader organizational missions and practices. Across this literature, a picture of advocacy is presented as short-term, instrumental communication with strategic political objectives, practiced by a limited group of organizations, directed at a narrow range of audiences, using a limited range of tactics. Moreover, empirical studies of non-profit advocacy have largely accepted this framework. Here the focus has been assessments of

specific advocacy campaigns to better understand how groups overcome structural disadvantages to achieve social change. Missing has been an examination of the situational practices and contexts of non-profit advocacy. Wallack & Dorfman (1996), for example, focus on “media advocacy” as a strategy for policy change, to the exclusion of other goals and practices. What results is a limited view of which organizations advocate and why, and the communication activities they select and why they use them. There is also scant attention paid to the communication strategies adopted by the organizations and their effectiveness for meeting varied short-term, long-term, instrumental, and discursive advocacy goals.

While there has been some movement in recent scholarship to recognize a broader group of non-profit advocates (Cruz, 2001; Donaldson & Shields, 2009; Mosley, 2006), and more expansive communication practices to facilitate advocacy (Dimitrov, 2008; Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008), the concept of non-profit advocacy remains theoretically underdeveloped. Advocacy efforts beyond those directed at changing the media agenda or influencing policy change are largely unexplored.⁴ How these practices contribute to the broader social vision or mission of the organization is uncharted. There are few in-depth studies of non-profit advocacy which go beyond mass media or direct government lobbying. Moreover, knowledge of the full range of factors and contexts that influence non-profit advocacy and how they impact an organization’s external communication

⁴ There is a large body of scholarship related to “case advocacy” within social work and nursing studies. While arguably “public” in nature, this dissertation focuses on those acts specifically directed at larger social and political change.

practices are limited.⁵ Consequently, scholarship exploring the communicative nature of non-profit advocacy is wanting.

APPROACH AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation seeks to contribute both theoretically and empirically to a more complete understanding of non-profit advocacy. First, it offers an expanded *conceptual framework* to explore the process and implications of non-profit advocacy. This framework recognizes communication as the central mechanism of advocacy, social, and political change. It also recognizes the multiple and varied goals and contexts that comprise non-profit advocacy. Second, it examines and analyzes the *advocacy practices* of numerous non-profit organizations to identify which groups advocate, for what purpose, using which tactics and strategies, and how these tactics and strategies arise in relation to broader organizational, social, and political factors. Finally it analyzes various communication tactics and strategies with a view to developing an understanding about how desired organizational, policy, and social goals relating to homelessness, social housing, and poverty in four Canadian cities is achieved.

This study draws on the negotiated order paradigm (Strauss, 1978) and the theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984; 1987) to develop a more comprehensive conceptualization of non-profit advocacy. The negotiated order paradigm (Strauss, 1978)

⁵ One recent doctoral dissertation (Mosley, 2006) has explored how institutional factors (size, age professionalization, formalization and collaboration) interact with environmental factors (government funding, funding declines and government policy changes) to explain advocacy participation and tactics among a group of service non-profits in Los Angeles. While providing an important analysis of contextual influences for advocacy, its focus on policy advocacy excluded a thorough examination of these organizations' advocacy efforts.

posits that social orders are in a constant state of emergence and are the result of the interactions or negotiations between structural conditions (legislation, rules, organizational policies) and the actions and beliefs of individuals operating in the context of that social order. This framework moves beyond dominant representations of advocacy as an outcome or function of organizational form or as epiphenomenal of the organization's relationship with government. It recognizes advocacy as a process that is negotiated by organizations in relation to shifting and conflicting internal and external factors and influences. Habermas's theory of communication differentiates instrumental communication, which is purposively intended to coerce or control outcomes, from communicative action, which seeks to create understanding and consensus among participants and within societies. It allows for an analysis of the form and nature of different advocacy communication practices and provides insight into the implications of the communication for contributing to positive social and political change.

Empirically, I examine and compare the public communication activities of a diverse group of non-profit organizations in the homelessness arena. The study examines their communication goals and objectives, how they prioritize and align short-term with long-term goals, as well as how they balance the tension between instrumental and deliberative practices. Ultimately, it seeks to better know how non-profits accomplish these goals within existing organizational, social and political contexts.

RESEARCH STUDY

For the empirical study, I analyzed the goals, contexts, tactics, strategies and outcomes of non-profit external communication practices in four Canadian cities:

Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa. These sites were chosen for several reasons: first, in each city homelessness has received sustained media attention and gained prominence on the social agenda, and non-profit organizations are actively engaged in the debate (see Chapter 2 for an expanded discussion). Further, at the political level, local governments are at different stages of committing to action plans to end homelessness with varying degrees of non-profit sector involvement and community consultation. At the grassroots level, non-profit advocates are directing their advocacy efforts at both policy makers and the public, through multiple venues, and to secure both short- and long-term objectives. The range of organizations, tactics, practices and contexts across the four cities provide an excellent research opportunity to analyze non-profit advocacy within differing social and political contexts.

Research for the study comprised two phases. The first phase of the study entailed a document review of the major policy decisions and actions of governments and advocacy groups in each city relating specifically to homelessness. This provided me with background on the social and political contexts and approaches to the problem in each city. It also revealed which non-profit organizations are active on the issue of homelessness and insight about their relationships to governments and each other.

I then conducted 40 interviews across the four cities with executive directors and communications managers of varied non-profit organizations communicating on issues of homelessness, and with elected politicians and key city staff. Organizations and policy makers invited to participate in the study were those identified in the documentary analysis phase as actively communicating on issues of homelessness, social housing and poverty. Care was taken to ensure diversity in the size, mission, and communication

approaches of the organizations chosen for the study. The interviews with non-profit organizations provided important insights into the goals each organization has for their external communication efforts, the tactics used, how they were determined and measured, the perceived social and political contexts of each city, and the internal and external factors that they felt impacted the effectiveness of their communication activities. The interviews with policy makers provided insight into how non-profit policy and program advocacy efforts are received. The interviews with policy makers also supplemented the document research to provide a more complete picture of the broader socio-political context in which these organizations operate.

The study reveals a number of important findings. First, many different types of non-profit organizations engage in non-profit advocacy about homelessness, and their goals and tactics are anything but uniform. Second, myriad organizational, social, and political factors inform and are informed by the advocacy practices of non-profit groups. Moreover, the negotiation context for advocacy is unique to each organization presenting unique tensions, challenges and opportunities for negotiation of existing practices and structures. Third, organizations adopt both instrumental and dialogic practices as strategies to achieve advocacy goals. The choice of practice is influenced by organizational perceptions of the role and function of communication and advocacy, organizational capacities for communication, and myriad external contexts. Many organizations don't recognize the strategic and tactical imperatives of structural and systemic change, instead adopting a more dialogical approach to achieve these mandates. This often results in these organizations being disappointed in the outcomes they are able to achieve. Yet, this communication may contribute to longer-term dialogic goals

surrounding the issue and to contribute to long-term systemic change. What is most evident is that the contexts and opportunities for external communication to achieve advocacy goals surrounding issues of social housing, homelessness, and poverty are not yet fully understood by many of the non-profit organizations communicating in this arena.

These findings have important implications for non-profit communication research and practice, and for advocacy in particular. They extend our definition of what advocacy is, which organizations advocate, and for what purposes. They direct needed attention to the communicative nature of non-profit advocacy and to a larger range of activities that contribute to advocacy. They recognize the interacting internal and external factors and contexts through which non-profit advocacy goals and practices are negotiated. Finally, they recognize the tensions and tradeoffs faced by non-profit organizations addressing homelessness, and the utility of tactics and strategies to address and negotiate these aspects of the negotiation context.

DISSERTATION OUTLINE

The remainder of this dissertation will pursue the questions and arguments outlined in this introduction as follows:

Chapter 2 provides the contextual background for examining non-profit public communication practices in the homelessness and housing sectors. First, a definition and brief history of homelessness in Canada is provided, along with scholarship of how the media in Canada and the United States frame the issue. I then present a short overview of the political and organizational contexts in each city examined for this study. This

information, drawn primarily from public documentation, offers insight into the political and cultural contexts of each research site as well as an introduction of the key non-profit actors, their organizational contexts and the relationships among them. For the examination and analysis of non-profit advocacy practices, these contexts must be recognized as an integrated or interacting environment that frames and influences the efforts of organizations and the sector as a whole.

Chapter 3 examines the concept of non-profit advocacy and troubles the dominant representation of the concept in both academic and political discourse. It argues that these representations artificially associate “advocacy” with only a narrow range of non-profit organizations and tactics. I then review literature examining non-profit advocacy practices from the fields of civil society research, policy studies, social movement studies, and communication. I argue that while each field provides important insight into the processes and challenges faced by some non-profit organizations, they are all limited in their discussion of non-profit advocacy. Much of this research is policy-centric, ignoring the “society-centred” (Reid, 2000) advocacy undertaken by many non-profit organizations. It also reports on only a limited number of tactics, reducing the scope of advocacy communication efforts undertaken by non-profits to “government relations” or “media advocacy”. Finally, and most significantly, it fails to examine the internal and external factors that contribute to the choice, execution, and impact of non-profit advocacy.⁶ I conclude the chapter with suggestions for expanding the analytical

⁶ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, social movement studies has begun to address these contexts and the inter-relationship between them (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996) but only for social movement organizations, not the non-profit sector in general.

framework to address these gaps and to present a more fulsome account and analysis of the communication, practices, goals, and contexts of non-profit advocacy.

Chapter 4 offers a review of the conceptual frameworks that I draw on for this study. First, the paradigm of negotiated order is presented, followed by an analysis of its utility and shortcomings for exploring non-profit advocacy relating to homelessness. Then the concept of communicative action is introduced and debated as a model that provides deeper analysis into the nature of non-profit advocacy communication practice and its utility to achieve both strategic and dialogic goals. Drawing on emerging scholarship, I challenge the traditional delineation between the two forms of communication and the opportunity for non-profit advocacy to achieve both instrumental and dialogic goals. Together, these conceptual frameworks provide the lens through which the empirical data for the study is analyzed and discussed.

Chapter 5 provides an expanded overview of the methodology that informed and directed the research. It discusses the benefits and limitations of qualitative interviews with non-profit managers and policy makers to examine non-profit advocacy practices. It reviews how the research was conducted, my position and reflexivity as a researcher, and the ethical considerations followed.

Chapter 6 reports the findings of the study as they relate to the negotiated order of non-profit communication and advocacy. It explores the dominant factors informing the negotiation context, how these factors interact to create unique negotiation contexts for each organization, the tensions inherent within these interactions, and how some non-profit organizations negotiate these tensions and contexts within and through their communication practices. The analysis reveals that many non-profits have a narrow

conception of advocacy that is regularly institutionalized in the organizations and reflected in the capacities of the organization surrounding communication and advocacy. It further identifies myriad structures and contexts that inform the advocacy efforts and are negotiated by them as well as the tensions and tradeoffs that emerge across these structures and contexts. These tensions and tradeoffs include a lack of knowledge surrounding communication and advocacy versus the need to pursue a communications and advocacy agenda; tradeoffs between service and advocacy; tensions between short-term needs and long-term solutions; and a tension between the desire to promote collective understandings and solutions for homelessness versus the need to strategically acquire limited resources to maintain organizational viability.

Chapter 7 draws critically on Habermas's theory of communication to report and analyze the utility of the tactics employed by the non-profits in the study to achieve the varied advocacy goals relating to homelessness. It shows that non-profit organizations utilize a wide range of tactics for advocacy. It argues that a commitment to dialogue and a belief that fostering deeper understanding and awareness will lead to changes in public policy direct many of the efforts and choice of communication tactics. Many organizations adopt this approach to address both short-term instrumental goals and long-term goals to create shared understandings of issues. Often-times these organizations are disappointed by their lack of immediate results, and they believe the problem stems from a lack of understanding and awareness about the problem by politicians and citizens, not their communication practices. Organizations that are more strategic in their communication activities often achieve more success; yet, these successes tend to be shorter term and do not appear to have longer-term social and political impacts. The

research reveals the tensions and tradeoffs faced by non-profit organizations between service delivery and advocacy, the relationship between strategic and dialogic modes of communication and the opportunities for a “realm” to be occupied between the two (Schlosberg, 1995).

Chapter 8 offers discussions and conclusions for the study as a whole, including what was learned and how it contributes to scholarly understanding of advocacy and of non-profit communication more broadly. It problematizes the re-conceptualization of non-profit advocacy as presented in this dissertation and its utility for both academe and the non-profit sector. It explores some of the theoretical and practical dilemmas that arise in the study and suggests opportunities for them to be resolved. The implication of this study for non-profit and communication scholarship and practice are examined. Finally, the limitations of the study and future directions for research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2 THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF HOMELESSNESS

This chapter examines social and political contexts relating to homelessness in Canada broadly and in the four research sites for the study in particular. It also explores the organizational contexts of non-profit organizations advocating on the issue of homelessness in each centre. First, I present an abridged history of the rise of homelessness as a social issue in Canada and the response of federal government to it. This is followed by analysis of how homelessness has been discursively constructed through media generally and in the four research cities. I then explore each city's social, political, and institutional contexts for non-profit homelessness advocacy. This includes statistics on the extent of homelessness in each city, an overview of the policy actions taken by municipal governments, public opinions about homelessness, an introduction to the non-profit organizations that are active in each city, and their relationships with each other and with various levels of government. Drawing primarily from document research, this chapter offers important background and context for the issue of homelessness. This information, which will be supplemented with interview data, offers a comprehensive map of the myriad factors that, to varying degrees, construct the communication environment in which non-profit organizations are advocating.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Governments and non-profit organizations do not share a common definition of homelessness. Some suggest that attempts to define the concept itself are inherently

political and fraught with difficulty (Hulchanski, 1987). Definitions range from the most basic -- individuals without a permanent place to live -- to that adopted by the United Nations for the International Year for Shelter for the Homeless:

a homeless person is not only someone without a domicile who lives on the street or in a shelter, but can equally be someone without access to shelter meeting the basic criteria considered essential for health and human and social development (Begin *et al.*, 1999, p. 5)

Narrower definitions limit the problem to those who are *visibly* homeless. Broader definitions, such as the UN definition, include individuals at risk of homelessness and those without adequate housing. Many non-profit organizations serving and advocating on issues of homelessness adopt the broader definition, recognizing that solving issues of homelessness is contingent on addressing other systemic issues such as poverty and lack of appropriate social housing.

HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

Homelessness is a “national crisis” (Wellesley Institute, 2007). According to Miloon Kothari, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, the estimated 150,000 to 250,000 Canadians who are homeless⁷ (Laird, 2007) is a “disgrace” (Wellesley Institute, 2007). In his report, Kothari calls on all governments, and particularly the federal government, to take action to meet its international obligation

⁷ The estimate of 150,000 to 250,000 homelessness in Canada is regularly cited (e.g. Laird, 2007; NDP, 2008) and sourced to Human Resources and Social Development Canada (www.homelessness.gc.ca). Human Resources and Social Development Canada no longer offers this estimate of homelessness, stating that “Canada does not have any accurate national statistics” (HRSDC, 2008, n.p.).

to provide adequate housing.⁸ A coordinated national response has not resulted, largely due to federal devolution of responsibility for the issue supported by federal funding programs, and a lack of willingness by various federal governments to recognize social housing as an integral social support.⁹

There is a long history of transient or street involved populations in Canadian urban centres. As argued by Canadian homelessness expert David Hulchanski (2009), although called “the homeless”, these individuals were largely accommodated in cheap rooming houses or, in emergency situations, through charity efforts. “Homelessness” as a social problem, in contrast, refers to a “de-housing” process where individuals who were once adequately housed lose or no longer have access to adequate or affordable housing. Although homelessness has been a feature of industrial societies, including Canada, since at least the early twentieth century, homelessness in Canada emerged as a major social problem in the 1980s when the federal government, responding to high debt and recession, reduced and eventually eliminated¹⁰ its social housing policies and programs (Hulchanski, 2009) while hollowing out the social safety net. Concurrently, the corporate sector responded to the recession by “tightening their belts”, freezing or minimizing wage

⁸ Canada has ratified numerous UN human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, which protect the housing rights of women, aboriginal people, the disabled, minorities and children. Further, in 2001, Canada adopted the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, which recognized adequate housing as a distinct human right. (Kothari, 2001)

⁹ Hulchanski (2002) argues that decline in social housing is an ideological issue as successive governments (both Conservative and Liberal) refused to institute social housing programs as part of the welfare state.

¹⁰ In 1985 the federal government announced a new housing policy that supported housing subsidies and cancelled direct financial support for social housing. Federal support of social housing was completely eliminated in the 1993 budget (Hulchanski, 2002).

increases, and activating job elimination programs. The hollowing out of the social safety net, and its subsequent pressure on provincial programs, also affected support and programs for youth, and individuals struggling with psychiatric and addiction issues. Victims of the economic downturn and those unable to provide for themselves struggled to maintain an adequate standard of living, lost affordable housing choices, and were offered decreased government supports.

In 1996, the federal government began to transfer responsibility for social housing to the provinces¹¹, many of which, in turn, offset this responsibility to municipalities with little accompanying funding. To assist municipal governments in Canada's major cities to tackle the growing problem of homelessness, the federal government introduced a number of funding programs. In 1999 it announced a national homelessness prevention strategy investing \$753 million over three years. A cornerstone of this program was the Supporting Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI) with \$305 million dedicated to the development of local plans to address homelessness (HRSDC, 2009a). In 2006, with homelessness rising, the federal government announced the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPI) providing an additional \$269.6 million over two years to prevent homelessness. In 2009, with still little resolution in sight and in the face of growing opposition from the homelessness, anti-poverty, and housing sectors to the prospect of further reductions in support, the Government of Canada extended the HPI funding for another five years (HRSDC, 2009b). These programs treat homelessness as a temporary

¹¹ The transfer of social housing responsibility was part of the request for and devolution of federal responsibility to provinces for social programs following the Quebec referendum. In 1996, the federal government announced that provinces and territories could assume management of federal and social housing through signing "Social Housing Agreements". Provinces formalized these agreements between 1997 and 1999 (CMHC, 2010).

problem and fail to provide a coordinated national strategy to address the issue. Today homelessness remains a “wicked problem”¹² in many Canadian communities, although Hulchanski (2009) suggests that the solution to homelessness is simple: recognize an adequate standard of living as an essential human right. An adequate standard of living includes adequate housing, employment, and essential support services (Hulchanski, 2009). Others are not so certain of an easy solution. Jeffrey Turnbull, incoming president of the Canadian Medical Association and long-time anti-poverty activist, claims that in Canada, homelessness is institutionalized to the point that it is tolerated and even expected (2009). Nonetheless, homelessness advocates and experts call on governments to re-institute a national housing policy as a means to re-house individuals affected by homelessness (Hulchanski, 2009), while at the same time address systemic issues that institutionalize poverty and homelessness.

Re-instituting a national housing policy requires the agreement by the federal government and many of the provinces, many of which do not endorse the notion of state-subsidized housing. In 2009 and 2010 two important documents were tabled at the federal level. Private member bill C-304, introduced by MP Libby Davies (NDP), called for the federal government to begin the process of developing a national affordable housing strategy. The bill, notwithstanding the lack of support from Conservative MPs, passed second reading and has been sent to committee for review. In January 2010, Senator Art Eggleton (Lib) released a Senate Committee report entitled *In from the Margins; A call to action on poverty, housing and homelessness*. Despite multi-party

¹² Rittel & Webber (1973) identify “wicked problems” as those that are difficult to solve due to a lack of clear problem definitions and different perspectives of stakeholders.

support for the document at the Senate level, it received little positive response from the Conservative government.

Solving homelessness requires funding commitments by all levels of government – an ongoing challenge especially in the current economic climate. Moreover, Hulchanski's (2009) call to ensure adequate employment and support services impacts almost every social program at the local, provincial, and federal level, thus requiring a near-complete overhaul of the Canadian social safety net. At a more fundamental level, developing agreement about what constitutes the problem and what would be considered an "adequate" response among governments, citizens and those affected, is a considerable undertaking. Without a doubt, solving homelessness in Canada is a daunting task that first requires a common vision among citizens and policy makers and then multiple policy and program changes to realize the vision.

REPRESENTATIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

Mainstream news media provides insight into how communities perceive and create meaning around social issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). While not an impartial information source,¹³ it informs and reflects which issues are prioritized, what aspects of those issues resonate the most with citizens and governments, and which organizations are legitimized by the news gatherers to speak and act on that issue. News coverage of homelessness has regularly been indexed to episodes or events, with causes linked to individual decisions rather than to social structures, and policy solutions given only short shrift (Buck, *et al.*, 2004; Klodawsky, *et al.*, 2002; Reynolds, 2006; Shields,

¹³ See discussion on media framing and media and non-profits in Chapter 3

2001). Such discursive patterns do little to inform and educate the public on the complexity of the issue or to keep long-term solutions at the forefront of the debate. However, recent studies (Greenberg, 2010; Greenberg, May & Elliott, 2006; Schneider, *et al.*, forthcoming), suggest that while these patterns may be typical, they are not constant across time or even across media outlets, positing representations of and social understandings of homelessness may be more local than global.

Homelessness as a social issue, until recently, received little sustained media attention except during the winter and holiday season when the charity efforts of local organizations are highlighted (Lind & Danowski, 1999; Reynolds, 2006; Shields, 2001). This pattern of coverage has the implication of normalizing homelessness, normalizing charity as the best solution, and normalizing the lack of direct involvement by municipal governments to fix the problem (Klodawsky, *et al.*, 2002). Over the past decade, increased attention to the issue outside of this “cold weather frame” (Shields, 2001) is evident (Greenberg, 2010; Schneider, *et al.*, forthcoming). A longitudinal media analysis of the largest circulating newspapers in Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto, and the largest circulating national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*, found that this increased coverage was indexed primarily to political events and to advocacy efforts by non-profit groups and other civil society actors (Greenberg, 2010). For example, both Calgary and Toronto saw increased news attention to the issue after the mayor in each city appointed a task force to explore the problem. Vancouver news coverage spiked during the municipal election, especially after mayoral candidate Gregor Robertson announced his intentions to end homelessness. It also reflects increased focus on the infamous downtown east side as the city planned for the 2010 Olympic Winter games. While spikes in local coverage

reflect increased attention to homelessness in each city, the increase in coverage in the *Globe and Mail* over the same timeframe does not reflect a national recognition of the importance of the issue. Instead, it reflects a national concern with the issue of homelessness in local settings, i.e. as the Vancouver Winter Olympics drew near. More than half of the stories published in 2008 focused on Vancouver's homelessness problem (Greenberg, 2010).

Shifts in the nature of coverage are also evident. Earlier coverage of homelessness primarily focused on the charity efforts of voluntary organizations and downplayed the social or political causes and implications (Shields, 2001). In recent coverage, increased attention to policy issues is more apparent, although articles focusing on charity/fundraising efforts remain dominant (Greenberg, 2010). Yet, the coverage maintains a consistent lack of "thematic framing", with most news reports episodic in nature (Greenberg, 2010; Shields, 1991). Thematic framing directs attention to the social and political contexts that give rise to an issue (Iyengar, 1990). Episodic frames focus on discrete events or individuals, providing little background or contextual information for understanding the circumstances surrounding the issue. This pattern of coverage, it is argued, presents an overall lack of analytic attention to the systemic or structural causes of homelessness and the need for more effective policies to resolve it.

Despite the over-representation of episodic coverage, more news reports are questioning the role of governments in perpetuating problems and calling for resolution of the issue (Greenberg, 2010). Non-profit organizations are also more prominently

identified in the coverage as “authorized knowers” (Ericson, *et al.*, 1989).¹⁴ Recent coverage also has seen a slight increase in the number of non-profits making political statements (Greenberg, 2010) as opposed to only being recognized for their service and good deeds (Deacon, 1999).

A similar depth of coverage is not evident in the representations of individuals who are homeless. Past analysis reveals that news coverage of homelessness regularly focus upon single, white, males with debilitating mental or drug problems (Klodawsky, *et al.*, 2002; Lind & Danowski, 1999; Shields, 2001) downplaying the diversity of people who are homeless (Campbell & Reeves, 1999; Klodawsky, 2004; Klodawsky, *et al.*, 2002; Shields, 2001). It also narrowly defines the scope of the problem and locates blame for housing loss within an individual’s medical or drug condition. This common construct is perpetuated today (Greenberg, 2010) although some studies suggest that the coverage is more sympathetic or “positive”¹⁵ than it was in the past (Schneider, *et al.*, in press).

This sympathetic coverage may reflect an increasing trend in the news reports to focus on the “worthy homeless” (Campbell & Reeves, 1999) or “deserving poor” (Klodawsky, *et al.*, 2002; Platt, 1999). Unlike the coverage that marginalizes individuals who are homeless, these news reports provide in-depth attention to the circumstances and causes of homelessness for certain individuals, allowing the individuals to comment on their own circumstances and present their story. Often-times this coverage connects the

¹⁴ Although other than in Calgary, few organizations received more than a handful of mentions (see Appendix A – E).

¹⁵ “Positive” was defined as “presenting homeless people as deserving, more positive portrayals of homeless individuals, and fewer negative associations with homelessness” (p. 13).

circumstances of the individual to bad luck (e.g. illness, housing loss due to natural disaster, etc.), showing how community supports can assist the individual to become, or seek to become, a contributing member of society. As lamented by Klodawsky, *et al.* (2002), this coverage does little to impress the critical and extended nature of the problem and further marginalizes those experiencing homelessness as victims of their own poor choices.

Although negative stereotypes of individuals who are homeless persist in news representations of homelessness, increased coverage of the problem and potential solutions reflect increased activity and activism at the local level to resolve the problem. Differences in local coverage as it relates to when and why the issue emerged, which organizations are regularly sourced, and the potential solutions posed, suggest that there are differing social attitudes and understandings of homelessness across communities and media outlets. There is further suggestion that these differences may be indexed to local social and political contexts. The next section examines some of these local political and social contexts. It also introduces the most prominent non-profit actors advocating on the issue of homelessness in each city, and their institutional contexts and relationships with local governments and with each other.

LOCAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

The four cities chosen for the study, Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa, have all experienced rising levels of homelessness. Yet different objectives, approaches, and legislative positions among policy makers and non-profit organizations are evident in each city.

Vancouver, British Columbia

In 2008, there were approximately 3,000 homeless individuals in the greater Vancouver area (Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee, 2009).¹⁶ The downtown east side (DTES), otherwise known as Vancouver's "skid row" or Canada's poorest postal code, has long been associated with transient, homeless, and hard-to-house populations (those affected by substance abuse, mental illness, etc.). Today, there remains a high percentage of this population in the DTES due to the availability of single room occupancy low-rent accommodations and services for those who may have underlying medical or mental health problems or dependencies in the area (although, homelessness and services for individuals experiencing homelessness are not excluded from outlying areas). Formal policy and action at the municipal level has been ongoing since the 1960s (Hasson & Ley, 1994). Recently it escalated in anticipation of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and with the installation of a new mayor who ran on a platform that prioritized addressing homelessness in Vancouver.

The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee (GVRSC) on Homelessness was formed in 2000. This committee convened representatives from different sectors in all of the Greater Vancouver municipalities to develop an action plan to address homelessness. The Committee also manages the federal SCPI and HPI funding for Vancouver. In 2001, and then updated November, 2003, the GVRSC presented *Three*

¹⁶ The methodology used for the Vancouver count is a physical count of homeless or suspected homeless during a 24-hour period in shelters, visible public areas or who utilize agency services. The count is recognized as being an undercount as it does not include those individuals who are located in parks or other public areas or who do not use agency services.

Ways to Home, a regional plan focused on ending homelessness in the Greater Vancouver area. The plan has a three-pronged approach to ending homelessness – adequate income, housing and support services. The plan guides the committee’s funding activities in the Greater Vancouver region. The GVRSC is also responsible for conducting the homelessness count every three years and for overseeing Homeless Action Week every October. Homelessness Action Week coordinates programs and activities across the municipalities to provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness and to raise public awareness about homelessness. A large media campaign is launched during this week, funded by the Steering Committee.

In June, 2005, following a consultative process with more than 300 individuals, groups, and organizations, the *Homeless Action Plan* was adopted by the City of Vancouver.¹⁷ The plan aligns its approach with the GVRSC *Three Ways to Home* plan, articulating specific recommendations and responsibilities for all three levels of government over the next 10 years. Policy and funding commitments at provincial and federal levels are required for the successful achievement of the plan. City commitments include amending local policy and enforcement actions to protect existing low income housing stocks and zoning for more private sector rental housing. The City of Vancouver also funds and supports local services for individuals who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness. The city has donated 14 sites for renovation into low income housing and called on the province to provide funding to complete the projects. At the end of 2009, the provincial government had committed funding for six of the sites. Further

¹⁷ My research concentrates on non-profit advocacy efforts for the municipality of Vancouver only.

commitments were made just prior to the Olympic Games; however, at the time of writing, no work has yet commenced.

In Vancouver, both citizens and governments have prioritized affordable housing and homelessness. In a 2008 survey of 1,070 residents, 56% listed affordable/low cost housing as one of two top priorities that the city must address, and 33% listed homelessness (Vancouver Foundation, 2008). Not surprisingly, homelessness was a key election issue in the 2008 municipal election. Gregor Robertson, running on a platform to end homelessness, was elected. One early activity of the new government was the appointment of a HEAT team (Homelessness Emergency Action Team), a group of government and housing organizations, that provide shelter and housing support for individuals who are “absolutely homeless”¹⁸ in Vancouver. The new mayor has also convened a homelessness advisory group consisting of representatives from various stakeholder groups in the city to identify goals and priorities for the government.

The 2010 Winter Olympics also recently generated attention to the issue of homelessness. In its bid to host the Games, the City of Vancouver committed to a number of actions to address the issue of homelessness. Most prominent were creating employment programs for homeless and low-income residents and leaving a legacy of low-income housing. Following the successful bid, a group called the Inner City Inclusivity Housing Table, consisting of representatives from the city, province, private, and non-profit sector was struck to create an action plan to meet these commitments.

¹⁸ The United Nations defines two forms of homelessness. “Absolutely homeless” refers to “individuals living in the street with no physical shelter of their own”, whereas “relative homeless” refers to “people living in spaces that do not meet the basic health and safety standards” (Gardiner & Cairns, 2002, p. 33). The UN definition of “absolute homeless” includes those individuals living in emergency shelters. The Vancouver HEAT team reserves this term for those individuals with no shelter options.

Despite clear targets and expectations, there were few resulting successes as the City and the Vancouver Olympic Committee (VANOC) struggled, as a result of the 2008 recession, to meet its larger commitment to hosting the games. The lack of action to address the issue of homelessness raised concern among B.C. civil liberty groups that individuals in the DTES would be displaced for the games as part of their effort to “clean up” the city (personal interview, Laura Track, March 16, 2009). These concerns were proven to be unfounded. Leading up to the Games, the municipal and provincial governments, with VANOC, opened an “information kiosk” providing information for visitors and journalists about homelessness in the city and the DTES (CBC, 2010).

In early 2009, a B.C. Supreme Court ruling proclaimed that it was legal for homeless people to camp in Victoria parks because the municipality does not provide adequate shelter. This ruling is precedent-setting, overturning municipal legislation prohibiting tent cities on public lands. The ruling creates additional pressure for Vancouver municipal governments to address homelessness as residents and businesses make it clear that they are not supportive of public parks being used in this manner. Until the issue can be resolved, the City of Vancouver expends by-law and police enforcement time to rouse campers every morning at 7:00 a.m. and move them out of the parks (personal interview, Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009).

At the grassroots level, The Vancouver Foundation, in addition to their ongoing funding of youth homelessness projects, provided start-up funding for a new initiative, the StreetoHome Foundation. The StreetoHome Foundation emerged from a recognition by Vancouver Foundation executives that private sector involvement in tackling homelessness was largely absent in Vancouver. This absence was believed to be a

missed opportunity for attaining resources and political influence to solve the issue. The StreetoHome Foundation was incorporated in 2008, and, under the direction of Jae Kim, a lawyer previously with the New York State Department of Economic Development, has positioned itself as the facilitator of provincial government, corporate sector, and municipal action on the issue. The Foundation has committed to creating a 10-year plan to end homelessness by 2010. It is unknown how this plan will align with the *Vancouver Homeless Action Plan* or the Greater Vancouver *Three Ways to Home* plan.

Non-profit advocacy organizations in Vancouver include Pivot Legal Society, the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP),¹⁹ Downtown East Side Residents Association (DERA),²⁰ Portland Hotel Society, and to a smaller extent, The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU). All of these groups have a primary mission to defend the rights of homeless and disenfranchised individuals and groups. The Portland Hotel Society and its founder Liz Evans, a community nurse by training, was one of the first organizations to actively lobby local and national governments to provide harm reduction facilities for individuals who are homeless and suffering from addictions (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009). These efforts resulted in the establishment of InSite, North America's first supervised safe injection site in 2003. The facility's exemption from national drug control laws is currently being challenged by the federal government. A January, 2010 B.C. Court of

¹⁹ Carnegie Community Action Project declined an invitation to be interviewed for the project.

²⁰ Downtown East Side Residents' Association Executive Director, Kim Kerr agreed to be interviewed for the project but did not show up at the appointed interview time nor returned my repeated calls to set up an alternative interview time.

Appeal decision found in favour of InSite, although the federal government has announced it plans to appeal the decision.

In 2007, the Citywide Housing Coalition emerged as an independent advocate with the mission of putting housing on the election agenda and raising public awareness. A driving force in the Coalition is CCAP Executive Director and community advocate Jean Swanson. Member organizations include advocacy groups, shelter providers, charities, and other stakeholders. The co-coordinator for CityWide Housing Coalition is Laura Stannard, Housing Coordinator with Jewish Family Services in Vancouver.

Shelter providers in the city range from multiple site organizations like Lookout Emergency Aid Society, RainCity Housing, and the Salvation Army, to independent and directed population shelters like Covenant House and the Downtown East Side Women's Shelter. Shelters in Vancouver are smaller than in other cities, usually with fewer than 50 beds. The larger organizations often have a transitional housing or supportive housing component to their operation. Also active in Vancouver is Lu'ma Native Housing Society, which provides emergency and low-income housing for aboriginal populations. Lu'ma Native Housing Society is also responsible for the management of the SCPI/HPI federal funding for aboriginal housing in Vancouver. Lu'ma's activities and funding is separate from the GVRSC because housing for aboriginal populations remains a federal responsibility (and program cost). Nonetheless, because 30-40% of the homeless population in Vancouver is of Aboriginal descent, (personal interview, Marcel Swain, March 17, 2009), Lu'Ma finds it advantageous to actively participate in local initiatives and discussions about homelessness.

Overall, Vancouver has an active non-profit and municipal government agenda to address homelessness although there has been little coordination of larger activities and goals among the various non-profit organizations or between the non-profit organizations and municipal government. The StreetoHome Foundation is seeking to fill this void and to bring corporate attention to the issue; however, as an organization self-appointed to coordinate the city's response to homelessness, their legitimacy among the other non-profit organizations and the municipal government has not yet been established.

Calgary, Alberta

In Calgary, 4,060 individuals were believed to be homeless as of May 14, 2008 (City of Calgary, 2008).²¹ Like the other major cities in this study, homelessness in Calgary exploded as a result of federal and provincial social program cutbacks and a lack of affordable housing exacerbated by the influx of new residents during the oil-boom in late 1990s and 2000s. A concentration of homeless shelters and services for individuals who are homeless has built up in the "east village" at the fringe of the downtown core. This area differs from Vancouver's DTES because of the lack of concentration of low-income housing and single room occupancy hotels in the area.

The City of Calgary's official policy on homelessness is that it is not responsible to provide for the shelter needs of residents, except in emergency situations: that responsibility lies with the provincial government. Due to extreme weather conditions, the city regularly provides emergency shelters during the winter months. It also commits to actively encouraging affordable housing development in the city; although at the same

²¹ The Calgary count uses a different methodology than the Vancouver count and thus cannot be used for comparative purposes.

time, much of the available rental property in the downtown core has been rezoned for condominiums and the municipal government has not implemented policies to protect tenants against unaffordable rent increases. This city-sponsored gentrification and landlord support has reduced available low-income housing stocks and increased the risk of homelessness for many Calgarians.

The issue of homelessness has been on the municipal agenda, to varying degrees, since 1992 when the council of the day asked staff to provide background and information on the problem (personal interview, John TeLinde, February 26, 2009). This prompted a biennial count of homeless individuals starting in 1994. In addition to managing the count, the city's Community and Neighbourhood Services Division provides additional information to council members on the issue. In early 2007, the mayor, in conjunction with the United Way, struck a committee to explore the issue and Calgary's response to it. The Calgary Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH) was established with the mandate of developing a 10-year plan to end homelessness. The committee, consisting of 24 community leaders from business, government, and the non-profit sector, delivered the plan in January 2008 appointing the Calgary Homeless Foundation to implement it. The plan is based on a "housing first" philosophy, which commits first to provide permanent shelter for individuals who are homeless and then to align them with supports and services to maintain their domicile. It calls for a 50% reduction in emergency shelter beds within five years, which has raised concerns with local shelter providers, many of whom were not part of the committee to develop the plan. The CCEH disbanded following the delivery of the report.

The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) has a mandate to raise funds for and implement the 10-year plan, in cooperation with local service groups. Tim Richter, previously with TransAlta Energy and who was the project manager for the CCEH, was appointed the president of CHF. CHF has exponentially increased its staff to implement the 10-year plan, shoring up its research, community, and government relations capacity. The Calgary Homeless Foundation actively lobbies all levels of government for funding. It also seeks to raise awareness about homelessness in the community through its Project Homeless Connect days, where individuals experiencing homelessness are connected with community services.

Calgary is home to Canada's largest shelter, the Drop-In Centre (the DI). The DI opened in 2001 with a capacity of 1,250 beds. It also provides meals and various day services. Other shelters providers include The Mustard Seed, the Salvation Army, and the Inn From the Cold Emergency Shelters. The DI is a non-sectarian service agency. The Mustard Seed, Salvation Army, and Inn From the Cold have faith-based roots. The DI and the Mustard Seed have recently incorporated transitional and long-term housing programs into their service provision mix. Both organizations also have education and re-training programs for individuals experiencing homelessness. One unique program at the Mustard Seed is the Mountain Aire Lodge, a drug and alcohol treatment program that also teaches business skills to participants.

In addition to services provided by the shelters, there are several outreach programs offering emergency health and re-training facilities for individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. The largest is the Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS), recently rebranded CUPS Health and Education Centres. CUPS began in the

1980s as a joint project among faith communities to provide medical and referral services to poor and at-risk individuals. Today, in addition to this outreach service, the organization provides training and education services, focused on families and with a goal of breaking the cycle of poverty. As part of the 10-year plan to end homelessness, CUPS provides a rapid exit program to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness to find immediate housing.

The appointment of The Calgary Homeless Foundation as the lead agency to implement the 10-year plan has resulted in the CHF becoming the central voice of advocacy in Calgary. This mandate has been legitimized by municipal and provincial government representatives who were original stakeholders in the plan. It is interesting to note that this role was in effect, appointed, and did not emerge organically from within the non-profit sector. As a result, groups like The DI, the Mustard Seed, CUPS, and to some extent, Homeless Awareness Calgary, have had to reposition their advocacy activities and missions to align with the work of the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Homeless Awareness Calgary, the only other group in Calgary with an expressed policy advocacy mandate has struggled with funding and viability since its inception in 1994. Homeless Awareness Calgary emerged as a coalition of service agencies dedicated to raising awareness of the issue in Calgary. In 2002, it received funding and hired a part time coordinator who was a social worker by training (personal interview, Bonnie Malach, February 23, 2009). Homeless Awareness Calgary's most visible effort has been to organize the city's yearly Homeless Awareness Week, an event where local organizations raise issues of homelessness within the community.

In Calgary, the municipal government shows little enthusiasm for actively managing the issue of homelessness, instead allowing the Calgary Homelessness Foundation to take the lead in coordinating government and sector activity around the 10-year plan. Non-profit groups who are active in emergency aid and support are re-evaluating their mandates, roles and relationships with the Foundation and the 10-year plan as the Calgary Homelessness Foundation emerges, among governments, as the lead organization in the city. Of concern for many of the shelter providers is the housing first philosophy and the lack of prioritization of emergency relief in the plan, especially in light of increased rents and decreasing affordable housing stocks. The Calgary Homeless Foundation, in turn, has taken on the mammoth job of lobbying for and coordinating the funding and support from all levels of government and within the city's service-providing organizations to implement the city's 10-year plan.

Ottawa, Ontario

The City of Ottawa does not track or count its homeless population, although it does record the number of unique individuals utilizing shelter services each year (7,445 in 2009) and the number of people living in and on the waitlist for supportive housing (10,235 in 2009) (Alliance to End Homelessness, 2008; Leadership Table on Homelessness, 2009). Centralization of shelters and services for individuals experiencing homelessness has occurred in the Byward Market, a downtown tourist area with both upscale residential housing and a high density of social services.

The City of Ottawa created the Homelessness Community Capacity Building Steering Committee with the mandate of developing five-year actions plans to address the

problems associated with homelessness. The fourth plan was presented to Council in September, 2008 and covers the period 2009 – 2014 (Dinning & Davis, 2008).

Development of each plan includes wide-scale consultation with community leaders and service providers. Key recommendations of the plan include increasing the supply of affordable housing in Ottawa, providing prevention programs for individuals who are at risk of being homeless, and advocating for legislative and policy changes for more affordable housing and support services. Similar to Calgary, the City of Ottawa argues that financial responsibility should be placed at the feet of both province and federal governments on issues of homelessness and affordable housing, focusing municipal efforts on local by-law changes and emergency supports.

Responsibility for advocacy, research, and public education on the issue has been assumed by a coalition called the Alliance to End Homelessness. This coalition is supported by virtually all non-profit organizations in the homelessness sector in Ottawa. The coalition is managed by a Steering Committee and has two working groups: the Research and Evaluation Working Group and the Public Awareness Working Group. Staffed by one coordinator, the Alliance has quickly grown to become the authoritative voice on homelessness in Ottawa, producing an annual *Report Card on Homelessness*, a series of public education and information products,²² and keeping members up-to-date on legislative issues relating to housing and homelessness at all levels of government through a list-serv. They have also emerged as a primary media source on the issue. The Alliance evolved from within the non-profit service sector as a way to pool resources to

²² One such initiative is the *Homeless to Home* film that communicates some of the structural and social reasons for homelessness and relates the personal experiences of individuals who are homeless in finding and maintaining adequate housing.

raise awareness about homelessness among the public and policy makers. The Alliance does not promote a single philosophy or approach but seeks broad-based reforms and supports to end homelessness in Ottawa. There is some evidence that the Alliance has been successful in raising the profile of homelessness among politicians and citizens. In 2006, they successfully initiated an all-candidates mayoral debate on the issue, which was broadcast live by CBC radio and earned extensive media coverage. In 2010, a municipal councillor lobbied city council to agree to a plebiscite on the issue of homelessness. The most notable detractor of the Alliance to End Homelessness is Jane Scharf, an independent activist and former mayoral candidate who has organized demonstrations to protest legislation or enforcement strategies affecting individuals who are homeless.

In June, 2008 the United Way of Ottawa convened the Leadership Table to End Homelessness. The goal of the Table was to “engage all sectors of the community, including the business sector, to forge a broad-based consensus on visibly reducing the problem of chronic homelessness in the community” (Leadership Table to End Homelessness, 2009, n.p.). In May, 2009 the Leadership Table tabled a report called *Destination: Home*, which presented recommendations to address “chronic homelessness” in Ottawa. Since its inception, the Table has found it difficult to align with the larger homelessness effort in the city. At the beginning of 2010, the recommendations had yet to secure government support or move forward.

Among the non-profit service providers, there are a number of emergency shelters, the most prominent being the Union Mission and the Salvation Army. The Shepherds of Good Hope also runs an emergency shelter program. These shelters have also developed various forms of outreach and supportive housing. In addition, the

Ottawa Youth Services Bureau provides emergency, transitional, and long-term shelter for homeless or street-involved youth and a number of independent shelters provide emergency and transitional housing for women and families. The Ottawa Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association has recognized homelessness as a central issue affecting its population and has an active program in public education and supportive housing. The Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Marion Wright, also acts as Chair of the Alliance to End Homelessness and is a regular media spokesperson.

Within Ottawa, a small group of organizations are active on the non-profit housing front. Options Bytown is the largest organization, having just celebrated its 20th year of providing supportive housing for individuals with low incomes, special needs, or medical or addiction issues. Lorraine Bentley, the organization's Executive Director since 2000, is an urban planner by training and is an active member of the Ottawa Supportive Housing Network (HousingPlus). The Multifaith Housing Initiative (MFI) is a coalition of faith-based organizations that manages and promotes affordable housing. MFI is a small organization coordinated by a former church outreach worker. While they are a recent addition to the low-income housing movement, they have successfully undertaken three low-cost housing initiatives in the city.

Among the non-profit organizations serving homeless and otherwise "hard to house" populations there is great collaboration and cooperation. In addition to the Alliance, Ottawa Inner City Health stands out as a model organization. Funded by the LHIN (Local Health Integration Network) of the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, an Ontario government agency, Inner City Health provides specialized and long-term

medical services to individuals within the shelter system to ease the draw on community medical services by the homeless population. Ottawa Inner City Health, whose membership consists of shelter providers and other service organizations, promotes a harm-reduction approach to addictions and co-occurring medical issues. They successfully established an internationally recognized program for chronic alcoholics and seek to establish a supervised injection site in Ottawa.

Of the four cities, the Ottawa municipal government is least active in the local effort to reduce homelessness. Although they manage and fund low-cost housing and shelters, they have yet to take a strong position on ending homelessness in the city or take a leadership role in obtaining supports for this agenda from other levels of government. Actions taken under the current administration further frustrate the efforts of homelessness advocates: in 2007, Mayor Larry O'Brien likened individuals who are homeless to pigeons, suggesting that if residents stopped "feeding" them, they would go away. In 2009, a reorganization of the Housing Branch by the City of Ottawa, undertaken without consultation, was posed to amalgamate housing and homelessness services and responsibility under a larger portfolio, eliminating existing senior administrative positions focused on the issue.²³

Toronto, Ontario

The City of Toronto reported 5,052 homeless individuals in 2006 (City of Toronto, 2006). The street needs assessment report, conducted every three years,²⁴ is

²³ The Alliance to End Homelessness successfully lobbied to maintain the housing branch and senior administrative authority for the portfolio.

²⁴ As of April, 2010 the 2009 Street Needs Assessment Report had not yet been released.

part of a larger program to end homelessness called the Streets to Home project. The Streets to Home project, managed by the city's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, adopts a housing first approach to ending street homelessness in Toronto. The Streets to Home project was endorsed by Toronto City Council in 2005 and works in partnership with many community non-profit agencies to achieve its mission and provide follow up services for its clients. The issue of homelessness became prominent on the municipal agenda in 1998 when newly elected mayor Mel Lastman struck the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force, chaired by the Executive Director of the United Way, Anne Golden. In the same year, the City Council, pressured by lobbyists from the social sector, declared homelessness a national disaster and brought forward the same motion at the big city mayor's caucus of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, encouraging them to pressure the federal government to instigate policy and funding for the issue.

The Golden Report, tabled in 1999, offered 105 recommendations to address the growing homelessness issue in Toronto. One important recommendation was the appointment of an external facilitator to coordinate action on homelessness and provide public accountability. The facilitator, it was suggested, should establish priorities, define action plans, track progress, produce an annual report card, and report to the Mayor and Council. While the City of Toronto adopted a number of the recommendations, it rejected the appointment of the external facilitator, instead opting to delegate responsibility to the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, which is also responsible for managing the majority of the shelters in the City. The City published a Homelessness Report Card in 2000, 2001, and 2003. The report card was replaced by the Street Needs Assessment Report in 2006, to be conducted every three years. The primary

objective of these reports is to provide basic statistics on homelessness and shelter use, report government response to the issue, and measure any progress in activities. Little progress is evident. The stock of affordable housing has not significantly increased, nor has the reliance on shelters decreased.

Toronto has a long history of advocacy relating to homelessness. Street outreach workers Michael Shapcott, Cathy Crowe, and Beric German, are most prominent and have successfully coordinated coalitions, as needed, to address specific issues within the community. Advocacy on the issue of homelessness began in the 1980s, to bring recognition to the poor conditions of the emergency shelters and the lack of adequate emergency and permanent housing. A number of groups (e.g. Street Health, Wellesley Institute, St. Michael's Hospital) have more recently coalesced around quantifying the social, health and economic costs of homelessness and poor quality housing in an effort to pressure governments to commit to social housing programs.

The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) and its many offshoot groups (e.g. Housing Not War) is the most visible advocacy organization in Toronto. They are a loose coalition of service providers and outreach workers that regularly hold vigils for individuals who have died of exposure or complications related to homelessness and were a key player in convincing the Toronto City Council to declare homelessness a national disaster in 1998. They were active in the tent city demonstration of 2002 where homeless squatters inhabited land owned by Home Depot, garnered sympathetic media coverage, and subsequently forced local government to find alternate accommodations for them. Complementing the TDRC's advocacy efforts are a number of poverty reduction groups

such as the “25 in 5” campaign.²⁵ Where the TDRC is primarily focused on municipal concerns, these other groups approach the issue at a provincial or national level. A now defunct group that was also active in the municipal advocacy effort was the Homeless Action Group, a faith-based organization dedicated to keeping homelessness on the political agenda. The Toronto Anglican Diocese has similarly identified homelessness as a social justice issue and is an active advocate on the issue. Another group that has become active in the lobby effort around homelessness, but working at a national level, is the Wellesley Institute, a research and social policy think tank focused on finding solutions for housing and economic disparities in Canada. The coordinator of the homelessness initiative for the Wellesley Institute is Michael Shapcott, a former journalist turned outreach worker who was active with the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee. The Wellesley Institute has been very active on the federal front, promoting private member Libby Davis’ Bill C-304 to institute a national housing strategy.

Local emergency and service organizations in Toronto include private groups such as Street Health, a group dedicated to improving the well-being and health of individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, YWCA, and other population specific housing and service organizations. There are also public institutions like St. Michaels’ Hospital dedicated to serving people who are homeless and conducting research to provide for more responsive policies around homelessness in the city.

In the city of Toronto, the majority of the emergency aid services are provided by or partnered with the city’s Shelter, Support and Housing Administration. There are a

²⁵ The 25 in 5 campaign is a network of more than 1500 organizations lobbying for provincial policy to reduce poverty levels by 25% in five years. In 2009, the Ontario government committed to a plan to reduce child poverty by 25% in five years.

few independent service providers, although they tend to be focused on the health issues of street-involved populations. Toronto has the most active lobby group of the four cities in this study, with prominent individuals and organizations actively pursuing both support for emergency aid and long-term solutions to the issue at all levels of government.

Summary

Each of the four cities in the study has a unique approach and configuration of non-profit organizations serving the homeless population. In Vancouver and Toronto, the municipal governments are active in seeking or implementing a solution for homelessness and in lobbying other levels of government to support local initiatives. In other cities, municipal governments are less active in these areas.

Similarly, grassroots efforts in the various cities have differing levels of cooperation and integration. In Ottawa, for example, there is a tight alliance among virtually all of the non-profit service and advocacy organizations, banding together to support advocacy and public education efforts. In Toronto, by comparison, there is communication among the various groups yet little formal coordination among organizations serving or advocating for individuals who are homeless.

These factors combined with the historical roots of homelessness and the social discourses discussed earlier, are the contexts in which non-profits organizations operate and seek to achieve their advocacy goals. Past research analyzing the practice and outcomes of non-profit advocacy has largely attended to organizational, social, and political contexts individually rather than as an integrated or interacting environment for communication. The next chapter reviews this literature and the limitations and gaps that

it poses for examining how non-profit organizations achieve both short-term organizational and policy goals and long-term solutions and social understandings of issues through external communication practices.

CHAPTER 3 NON-PROFITS, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

Examining and analyzing how non-profit organizations achieve advocacy goals in relation to existing organizational, social, and political contexts requires a theoretical lens that recognizes advocacy as an integral component of non-profit activity, does not limit advocacy activity to only some non-profit groups, attends to the communicative nature of advocacy, and recognizes and problematizes the multiple goals that non-profits seek to achieve. Research in the areas of civil society, public policy, social movements, and communications provide theoretical foundations to draw on for the study of non-profit advocacy, yet significant gaps still exist. First, across these areas of scholarship, advocacy remains narrowly defined as those actions focused on policy change but does not include actions related to creating shared understandings and solutions for issues – a definition that becomes replicated in categorizations and typologies of non-profit activity. Second, the myriad contexts that inform analysis of non-profit public communication practices are often analyzed in isolation or assumed to be common to all organizations. Some recent efforts in social movement and communications scholarship attend to multiple contexts that inform advocacy. However, these studies isolate specific tactics and goals, ignoring the full range of communication practices by organizations while offering little insight into how they interact. What results is an incomplete understanding of what non-profit advocacy is, the many goals that it seeks to achieve, which organizations advocate, the contexts unique to the organizations and issues that inform

advocacy, and the communication tactics and strategies that are used to accomplish it. Moreover, there is scant attention paid to exploring and analyzing the effectiveness of communication strategies for achieving the varied goals within the internal and external contexts that inform each issue and organizations' communication practices. This chapter argues for an expanded approach to non-profit advocacy that considers the complexities of the organization and its communications environment and practices.

What follows is a review of the pertinent literature that contributes to available knowledge about non-profit advocacy. It begins with a discussion of what constitutes "advocacy", and the limitations of attempts to categorize the organizations that comprise the sector, based on their advocacy function. It then provides an overview of how civil society, public policy, social movement, and communication scholars have studied non-profit advocacy. It concludes by identifying the key gaps that exist and offers suggestions for expanding the analytical framework to address these gaps.

DEFINING NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

Advocacy "describes a wide range of individual and collective expression or action on a cause, idea or policy" (Reid, 2000, p. 1). Non-profit advocacy is a series of communicative actions taken by an organization to inform, educate, and persuade others to consider and incorporate recommended positions on social issues and to encourage social and/or political change. In this view, policy change is but one outcome of advocacy. Advocacy is facilitated through acts of communication directed at audiences that exist outside of the organization and success is contingent on the ability for the communication to effect action in that audience. Not all external communication is

advocacy; however, advocacy is contingent on external communication and thus the two cannot be separated.

The bulk of non-profit advocacy scholarship focuses on policy advocacy (Mosley, 2006). Often, definitions focus only on this dimension (e.g. McCarthy & Castelli, 2001). Wallack and Dorfman (1993), for example, state that the purpose of non-profit advocacy is to “change attitudes generally and policy specifically” (p. 28). The policy-centred nature of existing scholarship is partly attributed to disciplinary paradigms. It may also be a reflection of the modern emphasis on legislation as a means to maintain basic citizen and social rights (Habermas, 1987). However, the focus on policy advocacy captures only a small portion of what many advocates do (Cress & Snow, 2000; Reid, 2000).

Non-profit advocacy includes both “government-centred advocacy” and “society-centred advocacy” (Reid, 2000, p. 4). The first seeks to change government policy or actions and the second seeks to influence societal attitudes and beliefs. These strategies are not always distinct. For example, media advocacy efforts can simultaneously influence societal attitudes and pressure governments to take policy action (Soroka, 2002). Moreover, success in one realm can influence success in the other. For example, residential by-laws that promote mixed housing among high and low-income residents and those with multiple abilities and needs can help break down stereotypes of the causes and circumstances of poverty for those in the community. Similarly, widespread public understanding of the causes of homelessness and calls for its resolution can pressure governments to include it on their policy agendas.

There are multiple venues of action and anticipated outcomes for advocacy (Cress & Snow, 2000; Reid, 2000). Policy advocacy is directed at key government decision

makers (Reid, 2000), although Jenkins (1987) expands this avenue of action to include “institutional elites” both inside and outside government. Administrative advocacy and program advocacy occurs “during the implementation phase of the policy process and program design” (Reid, 2000, p. 5). Program advocacy also includes the day-to-day activities of the organization in serving their clientele or providing social services (Reid, 2000). Society-centred advocacy seeks to influence public opinion, set public priorities, and mobilize civic action (Reid, 2000). Finally, state and local advocacy is distinguished from national advocacy to reflect the differing proximities (Deacon, 1996) between non-profits and various orders of government. Recognizing these multiple avenues and outcomes, and their integrated nature, expands non-profit advocacy beyond government lobbying and demonstrations directed at specific policy outcomes to include other activities like public education and stimulating civic and community participation and how these activities contribute to long-term solutions around the issue (Boris & Mosher-Williams, 1998). Advocacy, thus, is not an *outcome* but a “set of skills used to create a shift in public opinion and mobilize the necessary resources and forces to support an issue, policy or constituency” (Wallack & Dorfman, 1993, p. 27).

DELIMITING THE ADVOCACY ROLE OF NON-PROFITS

The expanse and diversity of the non-profit sector has resulted in attempts to categorize groups of organizations based on mandate, relationships with government, or organizational characteristics. These classifications are problematic because they attribute advocacy to only a small group of organizations and define advocacy only in

policy related terms. What results is a narrow understanding of which organizations advocate and to what ends.

Van Til (1988) initially “mapped” the non-profit sector, distinguishing between service organizations or those “aimed at the alleviation of distress and the enhancement of quality of life of those population groups identified in need of such service” (Van Til, 1988, p. 206) and advocacy organizations “aimed at the clarification and advancement of interests of citizens at the local level of social-political organization” (Van Til, 1988 p. 207). Within this framework, advocacy and service provision are presented as distinct mandates of organizations. This delineation pervades non-profit scholarship (Smith, 1997). Consequently, the scholarship fails to recognize the political contributions of non-profit service organizations and community groups that have a rich, historical tradition of advocacy (Cruz, 2001; Elson, 2007).²⁶ It also fails to recognize contemporary social and political contexts that increasingly require service organizations to speak publicly about social issues to enhance their legitimacy and viability (Deacon, 1999; Phillips, 2005).

Non-profit organizations similarly have been differentiated as advocates or service providers based on their tax status or funding relationships with government. Under the *Income Tax Act* an organization can register as a non-profit (and therefore be exempt from corporate taxes) if it commits to reinvesting profits back into the organization and adheres to general standards of conduct. Non-profit organizations wanting to issue charitable tax receipts to donors – an additional tax benefit and incentive for raising private donations – must apply for charitable status. To be recognized as a

²⁶ Donaldson & Shields (2009) argue that the reform roots of service-providing agencies can be traced back to the late 19th C. but that this tradition largely waned due to contemporary trends in social policy development and government funding.

charity, organizations must demonstrate that their purposes provide a “public benefit,” as defined under the common law, and that their activities are ‘substantially ‘charitable, which has been interpreted to mean that registered charities must restrict any “political activity” to less than 10% of their total budget (CRA, 2003).²⁷ Political activity is defined as any activity that “furthers the interests of a particular political party; or supports a political party or candidate for public office or; retains, opposes, or changes the law, policy or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country” (CRA, 2003, n.p.).²⁸ Non-compliance with these regulations can lead the CRA to revoke an organization’s charitable status. Across the sector, this restriction is referred to as the “advocacy” restriction, revealing a narrow conceptualization of advocacy in policy-related terms. In practice this creates a two-tiered system that provides charity organizations with a greater advantage over those that conduct policy advocacy. The common law test of charity (particularly as applied in Canada) combined with the advocacy restriction on charities reflects a larger assumption that advocacy promotes selective interests and must be guarded against. While there are certainly non-profit

²⁷ Canada draws its determination of which purposes qualify as charitable on the four ‘heads’ of charity as categorized by the Pemsell case in the late 1800s (drawing on the Statute of Charitable Uses in the 1601 Statute of Elizabeth). These are: advancement of religion, advancement of education, relief of poverty, and other purposes beneficial to community (in a way the law regards as charitable). The determination of charitable status has been criticized in Canada as being unduly conservative, in part because the case law is poorly developed and in part because the primary mandate of the tax agency, which the de facto regulator, is to protect the integrity of the tax system and is thus seen to be conservative in granting charitable status (Phillips 2010; Wyatt 2009). Canada has not moved to develop a modern public benefit test that is codified in legislation as England and several other common law countries have done in recent years (see Morris 2010). The 10% rule was amended in 2003 to a sliding scale that allowed lesser resourced organizations to commit a larger percentage of their funds to this purpose (Canada Revenue Agency, 2003, n.p.).

²⁸ The Act also prohibits any partisan political activity; however, this is not a problem for most charities as they are not actively engaged in supporting political parties.

organizations that seek selective benefit, this distinction overlooks non-profit advocacy practices that promote collective interests and more society-related advocacy goals. It also improperly assumes that charity organizations *never* act in their own self-interest.

Government contracts further delineate between organizations that provide services and those that push for changes in legislation or engage in other “political activities” (Canada Revenue Agency, 2003, n.p.). Federal service contracts prohibit non-profits from utilizing public funds for the pursuit of policy objectives. What results are organizational mandates directed by government funding relationships. Advocates, in order to sustain their organizations, must raise the bulk of their funding privately – a difficult task given that they are unable to issue charitable tax receipts. Organizations focused on public service works, on the other hand, are rewarded with government funding as well as an advantage in the form of tax receipts to attract private funding (Webb, 2000).²⁹

In a related discussion, scholars have attempted to characterize the organizations involved in policy advocacy. Chambre (2005) differentiates lobbyist organizations, social movement organizations and non-profit organizations based on: membership; funding; selective or collective benefit; organizational structure; volunteer, staff, and citizen involvement; relationship with government; and tactics. For many of these dimensions, characteristics are assumed unique to the organizational form. Similarly,

²⁹ Existing funding relationships and legislative restrictions have also blurred distinctions between non-profit organizations and the corporate and political realms of society. Cutbacks in public funding have increased non-profit “social enterprise” or the development of commercially viable enterprises to raise funds. What results are non-profits increasingly adopting corporate practices and principles. The devolution of government services to the non-profit sector increasingly connects the activities of non-profit and government sectors. (see Taylor & Langan, 1996).

advocacy practices become extensions of the organizational form and of the organization's relationship with government. Non-profit organizations assume a primary role of public educators with policy lobbying of secondary importance. Contentious political action, on the other hand, is a defining characteristic of social movement organizations due to their lack of direct engagement with policy makers (Adamson, 2005; Snow *et al.*, 2004). While offering a neat classification of the different organizational forms and advocacy tactics, this approach does not recognize the full range of advocacy activities that include education and public awareness efforts. Similarly, it does not recognize that different organizations utilize different tactics and approaches depending on the issue, need, and opportunities available to them at different phases of the issue and mobilization cycles (della Porta & Diani, 1999; Tarrow, 1998). Moreover, recent scholarship (e.g. Goldstone, 2004) argues that contentious politics and government lobbying are active and mutually reinforcing tactics for contemporary advocacy groups (see expanded discussion below). The typology also neglects to recognize how diverse the non-profit sector is; organizational mandates vary such that one organization can be a special interest group, voluntary organization, and social movement organization all at once.

In practice, most organizations do not neatly fit into "service" or "advocacy" classifications, especially when an expanded definition of advocacy is adopted. The greater majority have a more complicated mandate. Most non-profit organizations respond to internal and external pressures, achieving their mandates and maintaining their capacity to act over the longer term through both service and advocacy activities (Cruz, 2001; Etherington, 1996).

Existing attempts to define an advocacy mandate or approach based on organizational form, relationship with government, or goal of policy change is limited. Organizational traits can be common or distinct depending on the social and political environment in which different groups operate. Advocacy practices extend beyond policy change. Moreover, advocacy practices are not contingent on organizational form alone, but evolve in relation to organizational, social and political contexts. What results is a limited understanding of advocacy, and a narrow account of which organizations advocate, for what purpose, and with which tactics. These limited understandings pervade non-profit research about advocacy and advocacy practices.

NON-PROFITS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society scholarship theorizes the social and political contributions of non-profits to the development of a democratic culture. However, it is limited in its presentation of idealized notions of non-profit organizational practice and almost entirely avoids discussing the contexts in which they accomplish advocacy.

Civil society, as defined by Van Til (2000), is “where people create and/or find spaces to come together to meet with each other, share feelings, thoughts and observations, and then follow these considerations with action, when they should so choose” (p. 206). The study of civil society has important social and political implications, directing attention to relationships between the “private and the public, the individual and the social, public ethics and individual interests, individual passions and public concerns” (Seligman, 1992, p. 5). Scholars in this area recognize a direct relationship between the non-profit sector and civil society. For some, the non-profit

sector is the realm or site within which civil society is enacted (Salamon, Sokolowski & List, 2004; Van Til, 2000). In this view, the nature and structure of non-profit institutions, i.e., that they are autonomous and distinct from government and corporate sectors, non-profit distributing, self-governing, voluntary, and serve normative mandates (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004), uniquely positions them to interact equitably with individuals in the community and contribute to social and political debates. Others see non-profit organizations as merely one site or facilitator of civil society (e.g. Putnam, 2000). In either case, non-profits are recognized as having a direct relationship to civil society in their function of socializing and supporting citizens, offering opportunities for democratic association and discussion, and in communicating the views of those who associate with them to political institutions.

Eikenberry and Kluver (2004), drawing on Salamon (1997) and Kramer (1981), argue that non-profits enhance civil society in their capacity as value guardians, as service providers, as advocates, and as builders of social capital (p. 133). As value guardians, non-profits offer a space separate from the corporate or government realms for individuals to freely express themselves and take action on thoughts and ideas. This ensures that the values and morals of independent citizens have room for expression within society. As service providers, non-profits help and support individuals facing social or economic problems. As advocates, non-profits actively communicate the need for change to political and social institutions. Finally, as builders and enablers of social capital, non-profits develop and sustain bonds of trust and reciprocity among citizens, creating more workable and democratic communities (Putnam, 2000).

These accounts are problematic. The above characterization of non-profits is an idealized, romanticized image with little attention paid to the social, political, and cultural contexts in which non-profits operate. The degree to which non-profits are independent of government and corporate actors is debatable. In Canada, they are regulated by governments and rely heavily on both sectors for their sustainability. Corporate influence is increasing as non-profits solicit board members and staff from the corporate sphere, actively engaging in strategic collaborations with businesses (Austin, 2000), and as business looks to the third sector as an “investment site” for corporate responsibility programming.³⁰ As governance structures become more “corporatized” (Edwards, 2008), they are arguably less open to free expression and action by individuals and members. Moreover, this account pays little attention to how organizations accomplish the multiple goals for enhancing civil society within these existing organizational, social, and political contexts.

NON-PROFITS AND PUBLIC POLICY

The public policy literature provides the most detailed examination of non-profit advocacy. This body of scholarship maintains an important advocacy role for non-profits in the political process, arguing that non-profit advocacy ensures that collectively determined values and beliefs are instilled in “wider notions of public good or public interest” (Reid, 1999, p. 291). This literature recognizes the multiple roles that non-profits play in civil society but largely focuses on their policy contributions, emphasizing

³⁰ This is also actively promoted by the voluntary sector. Imagine Canada, a national non-profit dedicated to third sector capacity building actively promotes the “Caring Companies” program that endorses corporations that actively partner with (and fund) the non-profit sector.

the efforts, tactics, and limitations of special interest groups and advocacy organizations on legislative and regulatory processes (see Browne, 1998; Grossman & Helpman, 2001; Young & Everitt, 2004). A smaller component of this literature specifically examines the policy advocacy activities of non-profit organizations, and more recently, non-profit social service and charity organizations.

These scholars argue that in the contemporary environment of increased competition for issue attention, funding, and legitimacy, many social service and charity organizations are finding it necessary to develop an advocacy component to their work, communicating their goals and objectives to external audiences (Deacon, 1999; Dimitrov, 2008; Mosley, 2006; Phillips, 2005; Reid, 1999; Schmid, Bar & Nirel, 2008). Reid (1999), for example, suggests that many smaller non-profit groups “back into” political activity out of necessity. Deacon (1999) argues that public communication “is the lifeblood of charitable and voluntary activity ... is essential for the economic viability of voluntary organizations and one of the key mechanisms by which they gain public credibility and exert political influence” (p. 51). Dimitrov (2008) agrees, suggesting “policy advocacy ... provides leverage for a non-profit organisation to get more funding, multiply its model, gain credibility and change legislation” (p. 19). Despite these strong arguments for service-providing organizations to integrate a policy advocacy component into their work, few non-profit service organizations view themselves as advocates or dedicate needed resources to this function (Berry, 2003; Phillips, 2007). Those that do, often lack defined goals for government relations (Belfall, 1995; Phillips, 2007). Mosely (2006) found that these deficiencies are often addressed as non-profits professionalize

resources and staffing capacities; however, overall it remains a “low” to “moderate” level of activity for most organizations (Schmid, Bar & Narel, 2008).

Berry (2003) reports that when social service and charity non-profits undertake government lobbying, they do so to either secure new government policies that benefit clients or to protect existing government programs. These two objectives reflect different policy processes: “normal or routine” for continuation of existing policies and “paradigmatic” for new policy directions (Bryant, 2002, p. 90). Phillips (2007) suggests that most non-profits lack basic understandings of government processes.

The limited advocacy efforts and capacities of non-profits generally, and social service and charity organizations specifically, are regularly attributed to funding and capacity pressures within individual organizations (Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008; Greenberg & Walters, 2004) and to an “advocacy chill” (Phillips, 2007) that characterizes the relationship between government and non-profit actors in the public policy process.

Capacity and funding pressures

In Canada, non-profit organizations encounter numerous funding and capacity challenges that impact upon their ability to advance their mandates (Hall, Barr, Easwaramoorthy, Sokolowski, & Salamon, 2005). Stretched budgets and project-directed government funding³¹ limit resources available to deliver programs and underwrite advocacy campaigns (Bonk, Griggs & Tynes, 1999). For many organizations with a primary mandate of social service delivery, board members and staff often consider

³¹ Government funding in the form of project-directed funding as opposed to core funding became more prevalent in the 1980s and 1990 as governments sought to balance their budgets and become more accountable for their spending (Phillips, 2007)

advocacy to be a lesser priority (Dimitrov, 2008; Helgel, 2003) and limit or challenge the resources that are dedicated to this function.³² Understaffed operations often limit the organization's ability to dedicate time to networking, coalition building, and creating the evidenced-based research required to support policy objectives (Phillips, 2007). Moreover, staff knowledge and skills relating to advocacy are often unavailable in-house or too expensive to contract out (Dimitrov, 2008; Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008; Phillips, 2007).

Sector-government funding relationships further impact the willingness of many non-profits to undertake advocacy activities. In Canada, government funding accounts for almost 50% of non-profit revenues (NSNVO, 2006).³³ Many scholars argue that this heavy reliance on funding limits the voice of non-profits in public policy debates (Schmid, Bar & Nirel, 2008); although others suggest the relationship is not so deterministic (Cruz, 2001; Chaves, Stephens & Galaskiewicz, 2004; Nicholson-Crotty, 2007; 2009). Nonetheless, loss of funding remains a primary concern among non-profit executives when undertaking policy advocacy, especially for those with official charity status (Pross & Webb, 2002).

Political relationships and regulatory challenges

Public policy scholarship asserts that the nature of the relationship between governments and non-profits, in part, defines the range of activities across the two sectors

³² Although the research shows that organizations with larger budgets allocate more resources to the function than those with smaller budgets (Schmid, Bar & Nirel, 2008).

³³ This is not evenly distributed across all organizations. Larger organizations rely more heavily on government funding (58%) while smaller organizations with incomes of less than \$30,000 are more dependent on earned income.

and their mutual responsibilities. Young (2000) classifies non-profit/government relationships into three analytical ideal-types: complementary, supplementary, and adversarial. In complimentary relationships, non-profits partner with governments to deliver government-financed programs. Shelter services are an example of this relationship. In the supplementary view, non-profits provide needed social services and programs that governments no longer take responsibility for. An example is the provision of social or creative outlets for individuals experiencing homelessness, such as the art program at the Drop In Centre in Calgary. Finally in the adversarial view, non-profits actively pursue changes to public policy and hold governments accountable for the public policy and programs that exist; such is the case with the efforts to forward homelessness action plans. Government/non-profit sector relationships are often presumed to align with one of these ideal-types. In practice, these relationships are not so clearly delineated: government/non-profit sector relations are a multilayered “composite” of the three models (Young, 2000, p. 168) and in some contexts, all relationships are possible. The relationship is, above all, dynamic and changing over time (Boris, 1999; Young, 1999; 2000).

Similarly, a body of scholarship explores the nature of the policy making process and the degree to which it invites or allows the participation of non-profit groups. Phillips (2001; 2006; 2007) examines the impact of “new public management”, and more recently, “horizontal governance” for non-profit advocacy in Canada. Horizontal governance, premised on a flattening of traditional political hierarchies and the active involvement of non-government actors and citizens, is characterized by three main features: evidence-based decision making, network development, and the ability to

function and exert influence across multiple and disparate levels of government (Phillips, 2007). Phillips argues that this new form of policy development requires a highly evolved and “complex mix of expertise in both policy and process” (p. 503).

Furthermore,

a non-governmental actor seeking to influence policy has to be not only a specialist in a policy field but a sufficient generalist to know how to make connections with those in different policy fields. But policy substance is not enough ... understanding of process is as important as policy substance in enabling a non-profit to navigate through interconnected and multi-level government channels (p. 503).

Phillips (2007) points out that this capacity is severely lacking in the non-profit sector. The policy advocacy function is often tacked onto the job description of the Executive Director or the responsibility of members of the Board of Directors or volunteers, who rarely have the policy knowledge required to effectively engage the process.

Savoie (1999) and Aucoin (2008) also recognize the exclusionary nature of the policy process to non-government actors. Savoie’s thesis of “court governance” (p. 635) posits that policy debate and development in Canada no longer functions at the parliamentary and senate levels but is almost exclusively managed by the Prime Minister, the PMO, and a few key advisors – a practice he suggests was introduced in the Trudeau era and has become more pronounced under successive governments.³⁴ Aucoin (2008), in tracking the development of what he calls “new public governance” also sees a concentration of power at the executive, elected level of parliament. The InSite challenge (noted on p. 33 above) illustrates this trend. Critics believe that the current government’s refusal to extend the organization’s exemption from drug laws, despite overwhelming evidence in support of the program’s public health objectives, is an example of the

³⁴ Savoie’s analysis only extended to the Chretien government.

ideology of a select group of advisors directing government policy and action. What results are fewer individuals making policy decisions, narrower policy agendas, and slim access for non-governmental actors to influence policy makers. Under this arrangement, parliamentarians elected to serve their communities have very little influence in the actual process of government, resulting in an inability of the federal government to adequately address regional issues. This lack of “place-based” policy in Canada is lamented in Bradford’s (2005) analysis of effective policy-making frameworks. Place-based policy frameworks promote the participation of local knowledge and community organizations in public policy development and recognize and legitimize local governments as part of the policy development mix. For Bradford (2005), the local-federal link is crucial to effectively address existing social issues: “place-based policy-making, properly designed and implemented, can help governments meet the key challenges and opportunities currently converging in urban spaces” (p. viii). Canada has few instances of successful place-based policy initiatives. Indeed, the practice of government devolution of social policy, as is the case with social housing and homelessness, moves the notion of collaboration in the wrong direction.

The off-loading of social responsibility from federal to provincial and then from provincial to municipal governments in the 1980s and 1990s had significant political, social and governance effects on the voluntary sector. It directly tied available funding to pre-determined policy priorities, affirmed the service function of the voluntary sector, and muted organizations that vocally opposed the cuts in programs and services (Elson, 2008, p. 137). The across-the-board cuts resulted in less funding for the non-profit service sector while at the same time increased pressure on service provision. Funding that was

not cut was subjected to increased levels of accountability (Phillips, 2006), recasting the role of government program managers to that of “auditor” (Phillips, 2007, p. 512).³⁵ This process created increased competition for available funding while at the same time distancing relationships between non-profit organizations and federal policy makers. While non-profits maintained access to local levels of government who had been delegated the responsibility to deliver programs locally, channels to reform or overhaul federal policy, what Bryant (2002) calls paradigmatic change, became more complex, requiring tri-lateral involvement and agreement. Non-profits were faced with fewer operating resources, more accountability, and a complicated labyrinth of policy development through which they had to navigate their advocacy practices.

Similarly, the shift toward direct engagement of individual citizens (Laforest & Phillips, 2007) removes non-profit organizations from the policy process. This approach emerged in the 1990s and seeks direct engagement of individual citizens in the development of policy. In doing so, it actively minimizes non-profit organizations and the experiential knowledge they bring to the program and policy processes in favour of expert scientific knowledge and active participation by citizens, in their capacity as individuals (Laforest & Phillips, 2007). When voluntary organizations are invited to participate, it is in the role of facilitators of citizen consultations or to provide expert, evidence-based research. However, few organizations have the ability or capacity to take on these roles (Gormley & Cymrot, 2006) and when they do they are not “acting as

³⁵ Phillips (2001) notes that devolution also offered an unprecedented opportunity for governments and the voluntary sector to create effective policy and service partnerships. Under the Chretien government, the Voluntary Sector Initiative was dedicated to this end. However, difficulties ensued as the federal government lacked the ability to institutionalize and support a process for partnerships across departments and programs.

political, accountable representatives of their own memberships and constituencies, but as contractors to government” (Laforest & Phillips, 2007, p. 78).

The institutional practices that deny non-profits their essential contribution to civil society is concerning. On the other hand, it emphasises the importance of investigating notions of advocacy beyond the circuit of political decision making. If systems of governance exclude non-government actors from the policy process than “society-centred advocacy” (Reid, 2000) becomes more important.

Legislative restrictions

In addition to the “rules, norms and processes” (Phillips, 2007) of governance that can define the policy process and the non-profit sector’s role in it, formal legislative restrictions can also impact the ability of non-profits to be effective advocates. Pross and Webb (2002, 2003) posit the presence of a “regulatory regime” that restricts or self-censors non-profit policy advocacy practices. These policies “undermine the non-profit sector’s financial sustainability, limit its capacity to advocate, and raise questions about its relevance to leading social issues” (Elson, 2008, p. ii). For many scholars (e.g. Bridge, 2000; Drache, 2002; Greenberg & Walters, 2004; IMPACS, 2002; Pross & Webb, 2000; Phillips, 2007; VSI, 2002) the most pervasive element of this regulatory regime is the *Income Tax Act* (discussed earlier) that sets limits on the advocacy efforts of charity organizations and threatens the revocation of the organization’s charity status for noncompliance.³⁶ While there have been ongoing calls for the reform of the *ITA*,

³⁶ The Parliament of Canada defends this practice, stating that charities receive preferred tax treatment in the form of tax exempt status and being able to issue charitable receipts to donors. They argue that tax exempt status is, in effect, a government subsidy to

Elson (2008) argues that charities have not yet exploited current advocacy limits.

However, others suggest that the ongoing lack of consistency in explaining and applying the rules, combined with a concern over losing one's charitable status, creates practices of "restraint" in the advocacy activities of charities (Webb, 2000, p. 251).

Summary

Public policy scholarship argues that lack of capacity, the form and nature of existing relationships with government, the governance process, and legislative regimes impact the willingness to and ability of non-profits to enter public policy debates. The public policy scholarship provides tremendous insight into how institutional relationships in civil society are facilitated. However, the analyses are often limited to public policy advocacy processes exclusively. They assume common organizational contexts and challenges for all non-profit organizations, despite research that shows differing opportunities for organizations with differing resources and capacities (Mosley, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Ress 1999). They also assume a common political environment for all issues. Carter & Speevak-Sladowski (2008) found that that "even within departments, [relationships] often vary considerably by program and issue" (p. 8). Similarly, Phillips (2006) notes that on some issues, such as the environment, non-profit advocates have been very effective in public policy development. From a non-profit advocacy perspective, the most notable limitation of this scholarship is that the process of

support their charitable activities and thus their efforts should be exclusively charitable in nature. Similarly, they argue that the ability to issue tax receipts conveys legitimacy for an organization and thus the organizations activities should be in the general interest and benefit a significant segment of the public. Current legislative definitions of "political activity" do not accept that these practices are in alignment with the definition of charitable or of benefit to the general public. (Library of Parliament, 2006).

communication, through which advocacy is arguably facilitated, is largely assumed, with little exploration of its form, nature, or implications. A fuller analysis of non-profit advocacy must also examine the communication practices of non-profits within expanded contexts and objectives.

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Scholarly research of non-profit advocacy strategies and tactics bridges public policy scholarship and social movement theory (discussed later in this chapter). This literature identifies the range of strategies and tactics used by non-governmental actors for advocacy and theorizes their availability and effectiveness. Historically, scholars have categorized and associated “insider” and “outsider” tactics with organizational form and/or the organization’s relationships with government; however, more recent scholarship has started to recognize the contingent nature of strategies and tactics.

The public policy literature distinguishes “insider” from “outsider” strategies. Insider strategies include such tactics as “legislative lobbying, legislative testimony and its equivalents in the executive branch of the government” (Gormley & Cymrot, 2006, p. 104). These typically include those actions that place advocacy efforts within governance structures. Outsider strategies involve “efforts to expand the scope of conflict beyond decision makers” (p. 105) and can include public education campaigns, media advocacy, protests, demonstrations and legal challenges. Not all tactics are easily classified. Expert research (Boris, 1999) can support both insider and outsider strategies. Similarly, while social movement scholars often perceive media influence as an outsider strategy, it can also be used to support insider practices (e.g. government relations).

Explanations for why some groups use insider strategies while others use outsider strategies focus primarily on organization form or purpose (and thereby resources) and relationship and legitimacy with government. Those that do not have resources or direct access to policy makers must resort to outsider strategies while those that have developed this relationship are more apt to use insider strategies (Gormley & Cymrod, 2006; Greenberg, *et al.*, 2006). Similarly, and in part due to their relationship with government, organizations that practice contentious politics – like social movements – are limited to outsider tactics while those that take a more cooperative approach utilize insider strategies because of their access to decision makers (Chambre, 2005). Insider strategies, it is argued, are generally effective for policy change while outsider strategies help to raise public awareness of issues. In much of the scholarship, this relationship is uncomplicated although there is recognition that at different phases of organizational mobilization, non-government actors will have access to different strategies and tactics.

The traditional distinction between insider and outsider strategies as epiphenomenal of organizational form or the relationship with government is beginning to break down. Chaney's (2007) study of the New South Wales women's social movement shows effective use of insider strategies by lesser resourced groups. Similarly, Costain and Costain (1987) reveal how the American women's movement, largely contentious in their approach, strategically chose "insider" strategies to be more effective policy advocates. More and more, this scholarship shows that organizations are using both insider and outsider tactics to forward their advocacy agendas. Hilson (2002) argues that while access to government remains an important consideration, some organizations see multiple strategies as equally important for effecting policy change, while others

maintain a preference for protest and outsider strategies, regardless of the political relationship. Taken together, these studies argue that advocacy tactics are not solely determined by organizational form or relationship with government but are influenced by multiple organizational, political, and social contexts.

The few empirical studies of strategies and tactics employed by non-profit organizations for advocacy have not yet bridged the insider-outsider distinction. In a case study, Mosely (2006) found that insider strategies are most prevalent among service-based organizations. Organizations regularly meet with public officials, participate in coalitions, participate in development of public policy, and provide public education on policy issues. She concludes that few organizations regularly participated in outsider strategies³⁷ and, interestingly, that participation in advocacy coalitions led to an increased likelihood of participation in insider strategies. Pross and Webb's (2002) study found similar results. Canadian non-profits most often develop coalitions, disseminate research, brief senior officials, participate in parliamentary committees, and visit MPs.³⁸ Outsider strategies such as advertising and demonstrations were used only "sometimes" or "never" by the 20 organizations interviewed for the study. While important, these studies focus exclusively on policy advocacy (Mosley, 2006) or government relations (Pross & Webb, 2002) and thus touch on only a small fragment of the advocacy work that non-profits do (Reid, 2000). These studies also unproblematically define advocacy strategies as either

³⁷ Surprisingly, Mosely's (2006) study did not identify media relations as a tactic for policy advocacy.

³⁸ Interestingly, one respondent, in line with Savoie (1999), recognized the power of the PMO and that there was "less value in lobbying MPs and other officials" (cited in Pross and Webb, 2002, p. 7)

insider or outsider without exploring the intents and motivations of the organizations for employing them (Mosley, 2006).

Across the literature, there is scant attention paid to the use of tactics for society-centred advocacy. In their survey of Ottawa non-profits, Greenberg and Grosenick (2008) found that many organizations regularly produce communication pieces for public education and information purposes. More research is required to understand in which contexts organizations choose the strategies they do (Mosely, 2006) and the goals that the organizations ascribe to the tactics.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & ADVOCACY

Social movement scholarship explores how groups and organizations advocate for social and policy change through strategic action. Tarrow (1998) defines social movements as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities” (p. 4). While social movements are thus processes, social movement organizations, on the other hand, are formalized entities that are directed to a larger, more distinct goal. Social movements are facilitated by multiple actors, not just organizations. Often social movement organizations are non-profit entities, although they are rarely identified as such. What is common between social movement organizations and non-profits is a collective, external goal to affect policy and/or social change. In traditional social movement studies, changing government policy is the primary goal of collective action (Tarrow, 1998). More recent approaches recognize the need to raise awareness and mobilize citizens into action; although most often this is for the purpose of challenging “institutional elites”

(Tarrow, 1998).³⁹ Social movement scholarship addresses some of the limitations of public policy scholarship for examining non-profit advocacy. It recognizes political contexts (political opportunities), organizational and resource contexts (multi-organizational fields), and social contexts (issue mobilization and framing) as influencing movement outcomes. Moreover, it recognizes the communicative nature of some of the tactics used. However, the focus on selected contextual dimensions, the history of contentious politics, and the limited range of communication tactics explored in the scholarship limits its applicability to non-profit advocacy scholarship.

Political opportunity structures

Social movement research recognizes the myriad political contexts that can influence advocacy efforts of social movements but has also been applied more broadly to other organization efforts, including those of non-profit organizations. “Political opportunities” are those “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people’s expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 77). Political opportunities emerge or fade as a result of socio-economic factors and variations in political institutions. Tarrow (1998) identifies four important sites of political opportunity: elections, divided views among political leadership, alliances with political elites, and form of government. Elections offer opportunities for increased pressure from movements to encourage government action on political issues. Changes in political

³⁹ New social movement literature reflects, in part, a “cultural turn” that shifts away from the Marxist perceptions of struggle in the political opportunity and resource mobilization literature to struggles over meaning and social justice.

leadership, as a result of elections, provide or constrain access to the policy process for movements. Divided views among government leaders allows for multiple views on issues to be debated at the policy level. Hence, alliances with political leaders can facilitate changes within the system and shift political positions on issues.⁴⁰ Similarly, encouraging influential allies, like celebrities (Gamson, 2004), to speak on the issue can help to shift attitudes and approaches within political systems. Finally, the political strength of the state and their strategies for governance can create opportunities for movements to mobilize and garner public support (Tarrow, 1998), or, alternatively, be shut out. Hilson (2002) argues that closed systems invite litigation as a strategy in place of lobbying.

For social movement scholars, “challengers who seize political opportunities in response to openings in the polity are the catalysts for social movements and cycles of contention – and occasionally for revolution and for democratic breakthroughs” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 72). Alternatively, movements that face few political opportunities have little prospect for success. The political opportunity scholarship aligns with and extends the public policy scholarship surrounding governance structures and institutional challenges. However, like the public policy scholarship, it focuses primarily on policy advocacy and hence a limited range of communication activities and strategies.

⁴⁰ Although the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) did not have a formal alliance with Mayor Mel Lastman, his sponsorship of homelessness issues with other politicians following the TDRC’s political action shows how important political allies are for moving an issue forward.

Resource mobilization and organizational networks

Resource mobilization scholarship posits that a social movement's success is directly related to how it manages and acquires existing and potential resources. Resources include moral, material, informational, and human supports. Smaller, less resourced organizations require greater external supports (Cress & Snow, 1996) for their efforts. Organizational networks are a key point of consideration for resource mobilization theorists. "Movements do not so much emerge out of established organizations as they represent a merger of such groups" (Fernandez & McAdam, 1989, p. 317). Organizational networks offer insight into how the breadth, degree and strength of ties among organizations can influence resources and outcomes.

Klandermans's (1992) study of organizational networks, or what he called multi-organizational fields, recognizes alliance systems and conflict systems within social movement organizational networks. Alliance systems provide resources and, most importantly, access to like-minded individuals to support the movement and act on its behalf. The degree of resources provided by alliance organizations varies based on issue and context. Conflict systems drain resources and may require a social movement to negotiate or realign their position on issues. Also included in the organizational network are resources such as media and government, which, depending on the context, can be part of the alliance network or part of the conflict system. Important to note is that organizational networks are fluid and any actor within them can alter the existing level of support. Organizational network scholarship illuminates opportunities available through alliance systems. It also directs attention to the larger web of relationships in which

organizations advocate and the need to address multiple and sometimes competing voices or issues.

The concept of inter-organizational alliances and coalitions has penetrated policy studies and studies of non-profit advocacy. Alliances and coalitions are becoming more prominent and recognized as efficient and cost-effective ways for organizations to address community needs, pool resources, and more effectively achieve advocacy mandates (Cruz, 2001; Gormley & Cymrot, 2006; Hudson, 2005; Kohm & La Piana, 2003). Alliances allow organizations with limited impact and resources to exploit economies of scale, share resources, and attain critical mass through collaboration with other organizations. In her study of non-profit service organization executives, Cruz (2001) found that coalitions help to provide a sense of security to non-profits concerned about their funding. "A funder is less likely to look negatively upon an entire group than it would on a single agency" (p. 81). Coalitions can also play a critical role in keeping members informed and providing feedback about policy initiatives (Cruz, 2001).

Alliances range from loosely structured networks of relatively autonomous organizations cooperating on collective efforts to full mergers where a new organization and management structure is developed. The higher the level of integration the more demanding the management and coordination of the alliance is (Hudson, 2005). Similarly, the broader the alliance, the more challenging it is to gain agreement on tactics and approaches (Greenberg, *et al.*, 2006).

Hence, the ability to mobilize resources interacts with and is influenced by political opportunity structures, organizational structures, capacities and networks.

Resource mobilization is also influenced by social and cultural ideologies, which are discussed below (Cress & Snow, 2000; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996).

Issue mobilization and framing

Mobilizing the support of citizens and other benefactors is essential for achieving social or political change. For many contemporary social movement scholars, this is best achieved through influencing social ideologies. As stated by Gerhards and Rucht (1992), “the best chance for protestors to influence society consists in their capacity to make their definition into a public definition of the problem” (p. 572). This “cultural turn” from traditional Marxist-influenced social movement studies to struggles over meaning and social justice, or what Fraser (2000) calls the shift from the politics of redistribution to politics of recognition, defines contemporary social movement studies. Outcomes are no longer focused on forcing government or institutional elites to act against their will but in creating shared cultural values. These shared cultural values become the catalyst for political and social change.

Movement outcomes are thus contingent on mobilizing citizens and political leaders around issues through “discursive opportunity structures” (Gamson, 2004, p. 249). Discursive opportunity structures are facilitated through strategic issue frames and collective action frames. According to Gamson (2004), “a full fledged symbolic strategy aims not only at increasing the mobilization potential among bystanders but also increasing the readiness of one’s primary constituency to act collectively and thereby neutralizing the framing efforts of one’s adversaries” (p. 259).

First introduced by Erving Goffman (1974), the concept of framing illustrates why certain issue perspectives are accepted while others are ignored. Goffman argued that only certain aspects of society fit within the “frames” that individuals use to define their society. These frames direct our expectations of how society works. In contrast, what falls outside of the frame is delegitimized or excluded from the cultural basis of understanding.

Media scholars expanded the concept of framing to examine which perspectives of issues are included in media texts and to theorize the range of possible effects these texts might obtain on audiences. Gitlin (1980) defines media frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual” (p. 7). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argue that frames are a “central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue” (p. 3). Similarly, Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Biss and Ghanem (1991) define news frames as “a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a content and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (p. 11). Entman (1974) identified four locations where frames are produced – in the text, in the communicator, in the receiver, and in the culture – illuminating the multiple processes that integrate to create central organizing ideas in news coverage. Later scholarship identified important framing trends in news coverage of social issues and found that framing structures can mobilize a call for social or political change (Iyengar, 1990). This scholarship was quickly applied in social movement studies to identify ways that social

movement actors can influence news coverage to both present a more nuanced picture of social issues and to mobilize individuals to legitimize an issue and act upon it.

Benford and Snow (2000) address the issue theoretically, examining what constitutes “collective action frames” or those presentations of issues that will encourage publics to take action. They identify three core framing tasks for communicators. The first is “diagnostic framing” or identifying what the problem is and who is responsible for it. The second is “prognostic framing” or identifying a proposed solution for the problem and clearly communicating what actions need to be taken to solve it. Finally, “motivational framing” is that which inspires individuals to act on an issue (Cress & Snow, 2000). These core framing tasks work together in media messages to mobilize consensus and action on an issue. However, according to the authors, there are constraints and variables surrounding the development of collective action frames. Of tremendous importance is the credibility and salience of the frame. Credibility is influenced by frame consistency, empirical credibility, and the credibility and legitimacy of those presenting the frame. The salience of a frame, or “that which makes an issue more noticeable” (Entman, 1993) is impacted by its “centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 621). Centrality aligns the beliefs of those making claims within the core beliefs of the larger audience. Experiential commensurability refers to how closely the target audience can associate, through their own experiences, with the claims made. Narrative fidelity refers to how closely the claims may align with existing social and cultural ways of knowing and belief systems.

Gamson (2004) proclaimed the mainstream media as the “master arena” where framing contests occur because “all of the players in the policy process assume its pervasive influence” (p. 243; see also Greenberg *et al.*, 2006). Media can also mobilize additional resources through raising awareness (and thereby legitimacy) for the organization among key publics and policy makers (Deacon, 1996). The importance and the multiple benefits of media attention for social and political issue advocacy has resulted in extensive explorations of media framing in studies of social movements and social movement organizations (e.g. Gitlin, 1980; Hackett, 1991).

Summary

Social movement theory offers instructive insight into various political, organizational and cultural contexts within which non-profit organizations advocate. Moreover, the framing literature expands the goal of collective action beyond just policy-centred advocacy, although government action remains the primary focus. With the introduction of the framing paradigm to social movement theory, media have been recognized as a key tactic to be mastered by social movements to mobilize resources and to persuade various audiences to participate in social action.

However, social movement theory provides inadequate resources for conceptualizing non-profit advocacy due to the limited scope of action it promotes and the limited communication tactics upon which it focuses. Moreover, the contentious nature of the action required for policy change does not always align with the complex relationship that many non-profits organizations have with governments (Young, 2000) and the wider social and political goals that many non-profit organizations strive to

address. Despite these limitations, it is from these foundations that much of the communications work surrounding non-profit advocacy draws.

NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION

Communications scholarship of non-profit advocacy has largely focused on examining the challenges and barriers non-profits face in gaining media coverage or promoting media as an advocacy tool for non-profits. While adeptly focusing on the contexts in which organizations communicate, this scholarship remains limited in its focus on what constitutes advocacy and how it is accomplished. An emerging area of scholarship calls for non-profit strategic communication research that moves beyond the current limited focus.

Non-profit organizations and media

The relationship between mass media, issue frames, and the non-profit sector has been a focus of research among sociology and communication scholars in the UK, Canada, and the United States. Drawing from much of the social movement literature, the focus of this scholarship explores how non-profits, as a lesser resourced player, can access the media arena (Gamson, 2004) in an effort to influence social and political change.

Foundational research (Deacon, 1996; 1999) includes content analysis of news media representations of the non-profit sector and interviews with journalists to ascertain the legitimacy and capacity of the sector to contribute to public debate. Specific trends were identified. First, coverage of the sector is more likely to be found in local,

community media than in national news outlets. Second, non-profit organizations are more likely to receive coverage for “their deeds rather than their thoughts” (Deacon, 1999, p. 57). Finally, the sector and specific organizations are overwhelmingly presented in a benign manner. Overall “these findings suggest a surprisingly indulgent treatment of voluntary agencies in the news, but also a broad lack of interest in reflective debate about their actions, motives, opinions and functions” (Deacon, 1999, p. 59). Research in the Canadian and U.S. contexts has reached similar conclusions. Jacobs and Glass (2002) and Greenberg and Walters (2004) found that for the vast majority of non-profit organizations “media publicity is an incredibly scarce resource” (Jacobs & Glass, 2002, p. 245).⁴¹ These studies also identified the key characteristics of non-profit organizations which receive media publicity, reporting a correlation between media coverage and the size of an organization, its issue focus, and its resource capacity.⁴²

The focus on the charity actions of non-profits in news reports reflects, in part, how journalists rate the news value of non-profit organizations. News value relates to journalists’ and editors’ perceptions of which issues and topics are most news worthy and thus of most interest to their readers (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978). Hackett and Gruneau (2000) argue that stories that are more timely, have political significance, include an element of drama, conflict or sensationalism, and involve recognizable individuals, are more likely to be considered newsworthy. Softer, human interest type stories are valued for their ability to showcase goodwill and community support to local readers but are often relegated to less prominent placements in the

⁴¹ Greenberg’s (2010) longitudinal media analysis confirms these findings, except for the *Calgary Herald*.

⁴² Generally, the larger, better resourced organizations with in-house libraries and publications promoting charitable activity are most often featured in news reports.

newspaper or broadcast line-up. Interviews with journalists reveal that the news value of non-profit organizations lie in their ability to provide localized, community news stories (Deacon, 1999). This explains why the episodic charity actions of an organization presented through a soft news or human interest frame is the norm for news stories about the non-profit sector.

Sourcing practices may also help to explain why non-profit organizations are rarely sought out by journalists as primary definers for addressing social and political issues, let alone the policy contexts that envelope them.⁴³ Deacon (1996) argues that journalists perceive news sources in two ways, either as advocates or arbiters. Advocates are those groups that represent a view or constituency to raise issues, criticize actions of others and provide the conflict that is central to news value. Arbiters are expert sources who comment authoritatively and “objectively” in issues debates. Arbiters have less ability to frame or interpret issues than do advocates, but have greater “evaluative” influence on issues. It is also less likely they will be portrayed as self-promoting. Yet, the charity focus of most non-profit news denies non-profits both advocate and arbiter status (Deacon, 1999).⁴⁴ This focus may be due to journalists’ uncertainty about the credibility of the organization to speak about matters of policy (Deacon, 1999). It may also stem from a failure on the part of non-profit organizations to frame their issues and proposed policy solutions in a manner consonant with traditional news values (Brindle, 1999). Finally, it may be rooted in journalistic norms and routines that “operate as

⁴³ Deacon’s study did find that voluntary organizations are sometimes recognized for their “signalling” role or their ability to highlight issues and concerns for wider public debate. This does not translate, however, to being actively sought out as primary sources on the social issue or cause to which they have dedicate their efforts.

⁴⁴ This practice may be changing. Greenberg’s (2010) longitudinal media study found that, increasingly, non-profits are invited to define and problematize issues.

constraints on voluntary organizations that seek to use the media to advocate for changes in public policy” (Greenberg *et al.*, 2006, p. 138).

Occupational norms and professional routines enable journalists to develop stories appropriate for publication in the time frame available to them. In an environment defined by 24-hour news cycles and inadequately staffed newsrooms, accessibility of informants and the professional packaging of news helps journalists meet these pressures (Manning, 2001). Davis (2002) suggests that this situation has become so acute that journalists rely heavily on “external information supplies” (p. 33). Government and corporate actors have traditionally dedicated extensive resources to communication and public relations efforts to make informants accessible and provide reporters information in a format that can be easily adapted to news reports and have been rewarded as primary news definers. However, as Bronstein (2006) and Davis (2002) argue, in the current political climate, these actors are becoming less legitimate as reliable sources, offering opportunities for non-profits to be active participants in issue discussions and debates in the media.

Most charity and non-profit organizations have yet to develop the capacity to take advantage of this opportunity (Davis, 2002; Kenix, 2008). A survey of service and advocacy agencies in Ottawa revealed that a vast majority of organizations have yet to implement basic practices to support media relations (Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008). While many non-profit executives reported that their organization recognized the importance of public communications and media attention, few had adopted comprehensive communication planning to effectively respond to media attention or to develop the capacity to inform journalists about their organization and efforts. Kenix

(2008) also notes that non-profit websites, a primary information source for journalists, are poorly managed. Not surprisingly, smaller organizations with fewer financial and human resources are more likely to lack media-relations capabilities (Jacobs & Glass, 2002; Greenberg & Walters, 2004). In this void, busy and time strapped journalists regularly overlook non-profits as potential sources (Deacon, 1996). If an organization does come to a journalist's attention, there is little incentive to research the credibility of that organization, chase down information or interviews, or collect data and support for the views expressed. What results are patterns of coverage where "non-profit citizen organizations [are] not noted in either the cause, effect, or responsibility dimensions" of social issues (Kensicki, 2004, p. 66). In the rare event that the views of non-profit organizations are featured, they are usually included as secondary sources, reacting to or confirming the comments of the official, primary defining source.

Communication scholars who focus on the non-profit sector argue that non-profit organizations face significant challenges and barriers as issue advocates in mainstream news media. Overall, they receive very little substantive media coverage, which limits the degree to which they can utilize the news media to present collective action frames. When they do receive coverage, attention is typically focused on their service activities rather than their policy views. Journalistic practices surrounding sourcing and news gathering further divert media attention away from the policy views of non-profits. While opportunities are emerging for non-profits to be legitimized as advocates and arbiters on issues, in large part they lack the capacity to support media relations and develop strategic framing skills. What results is a frame of coverage for non-profit news that focuses on episodic events (e.g. fundraising drives) and lack the background or

insight which would be gained through direct quotes from non-profit organization spokespeople or story information on the social or political roots or solutions to the issue that gave rise to the event in the first place.

Non-profit media advocacy

Davis (2002) argues that non-profit groups have a unique opportunity to apply public relations techniques to increase their media profile and effectiveness. While he recognizes that many non-profits lack economic capital, he posits that media capital can be garnered by organizations within existing resource means. In theory, capacity can be hired in, or contracted out; in practice, however, this rarely occurs (Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008). Similarly, effective public relations can be learned and executed by staff and volunteers. Thus, “outsider and resource poor groups are making an impact in spite of resource inequalities” (Davis, 2002, p. 177). Davis further suggests, contrary to previous findings, that smaller organizations may be more effective at applying public relations techniques than large organizations that have more bureaucratic structures.

This is the theme of a body of applied scholarship dedicated to building the communications capacity of non-profits through public relations principles. This literature advocates the need for non-profits to be more proactive in their media management and to dedicate resources to media monitoring, crisis communication planning, media training, interaction with reporters, and learning how to pitch stories (Bonk, Griggs, & Tynes, 1999). In large part, this approach draws on earlier work promoting media activism for social movements (e.g. Ryan, 1991). For non-profits, two “how to” books are notable: *Making the News: A Guide for Non-profits & Activists*

(Salzman, 1998) and the *Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Non-profits: A Step-by-Step Guide to Working with the Media* (Bonk, Tynes, Griggs & Sparks, 1999). These texts advise non-profit communicators on what makes a good story, how to relate to media and journalists in a manner that aligns with journalistic norms and routines, and how to handle unsolicited media coverage. Non-profits are reminded that they must manage successful media relations and present stories that align with existing news values. As Salzman emphatically states, “don’t expect good intentions to get you space. The fact that you’re trying to fight cancer is great, but it’s not news. If you do something interesting, [they’ll] ... write about it” (1998, p. 7). More specifically, for non-profits advocating on issues of homelessness, one journalist noted the importance of providing appropriate supplies of information:

[come] with reliable information substantiated by more than one source ... perhaps approach the media as a group instead of as an individual. Come to us with story ideas. We talk in story ideas. That’s our language ... understand that the media deals with deadlines, and needs to have story angles and that kind of thing (cited in Reynolds, 2006, p. 55).

Integrating public communication strategies and providing information to journalists in a “language” that aligns with their professional norms and routines makes the information more usable and increases the likelihood that it will be used (Sallot & Johnson, 2005). It also increases the legitimacy of the organization on that issue in the eyes of journalists, making them more sought out sources on the social issue in the future.

Complementing the publications that advise non-profits on how to garner media coverage is research that explores how non-profits can be more strategic in the framing and messaging that they present. Effective framing informs audiences about the structural causes of the problem, the proposed solutions, and what the public needs to do

to contribute to a solution. (Bonk, 2008; Bonk, *et al.*, 1999; Wallack and Dorfman, 1996). Prior to developing their messaging, however, non-profits first need to have a clear understanding of what the purpose of the coverage should be. Wallack & Dorfman (1996), identify important differences between using media as a political tool versus using media as an educational tool. (p. 296). Once the objective is clear, the organization needs to identify strategic messaging that aligns the message with “where an individual [reader/policy maker] is coming from and their background and their history” (Bonk, 2008, n.p.). Bonk (2008) further argues that messaging that does not outright reject firmly held beliefs but instead aligns with existing societal priorities has a higher potential for success in reaching and convincing broader and “unconverted” audiences (Deacon, 1999). This scholarship both parallels and extends the collective action framing scholarship within social movement studies (e.g. Benford & Snow, 2000). Yet, not well explored is the relative contribution of an organization’s messaging to influencing larger publics within multi-organizational fields (Klandersman, 1992).

Some studies suggest that non-profits may be able to generate short-term results by professionalizing and supporting their media relations activities (Fortunato, 2000; Greenberg & Walters, 2004; Huckins, 1999; Jacobs & Glass, 2002). Fortunato (2000) argues that managing the needs of journalists (setting up interviews when required, having personnel committed to communications and media training for key individuals in the organization) provides opportunities for organizations to have “input into and help shape mass media content” (p. 482). Huckins (1999) found in a study of the Christian Coalition’s framing activities that media strategies can impact how organizations and

issues are portrayed.⁴⁵ These conclusions offer support for the position that a strong and directed professional communications program can influence the nature of coverage about an organization and its issues.

While the literature supports the professionalization of media management, a small group of scholars explore some of the unintended consequences of this practice. Bronstein (2006) cautions that non-profits not schooled in the ethical practices of public relations may have missteps that affect their future legitimacy. Vestergaard (2008) explores the tension between the commercialized public relations strategies of non-profits to raise the profile of their organization and their issues and the public's scepticism surrounding "mediated morality" (p. 471), suggesting that professional communication campaigns are not always well received. Kinnick, Krugman and Cameron (1996) and Link *et al.*, (1995) raise concerns about "compassion fatigue", or the desensitization of citizens to social issues as a result of effectively maintaining an issue on the media agenda. Stephenson & Chaves (2006) also remind us that there is a perception of non-profits that increases their public accountability and as a result, organizations that are more visible in the media may be more vulnerable to attack by the media for any transgressions. Finally Deacon (1996) reminds us that the organizations in the voluntary sector are extremely diverse and that different organizations and their political affiliations are regarded differently, with some having more opportunity than others to influence the media agenda.

Communications research on non-profits, in line with the social movement scholarship, focuses almost exclusively on media advocacy. While this scholarship

⁴⁵ Not problematized in the study was that the Christian Coalition was a highly radical group that had tempered their organizational position to be more inviting to media.

deeply interrogates communication contexts and practices of non-profit media advocacy, it also reflects many of the limitations of the social movement literature from which it draws. It focuses on short-term instrumental advocacy goals and tactics, and places little emphasis on the larger communication environments and relationships in which non-profits operate. As Wallack and Dorfman (1996) opine, “media advocacy is a tool and not a complete strategy. The use of media as an advocacy tool must be conceived and developed only in the context of other approaches such as community organizing, coalition building, and policy advocacy” (p. 314).

Non-profit strategic communication

While the bulk of non-profit communication scholarship argues that non-profit organizations face significant barriers to gaining media access and seeks to redress this situation, it also recognizes available opportunities for social and political advocacy (Greenberg *et al.*, 2006). To this end, a nascent body of scholarship has emerged that examines ways for non-profits to raise their issues and organization profiles and to encourage public support for their views. Both are important because, as Dimitrov (2008) reminds us, “more media access does not necessarily lead to stronger public impact. Media access is an output; public impact is an outcome” (p. 4).

An emerging area of scholarly discussion expands non-profit communications scholarship beyond the existing media-centric view (Schlesinger, 1990) or what Dimitrov (2008) calls the “confusion” of non-profit communications with media relations (p. 22). In this view, “non-profits achieve outcomes not only by gaining access to mainstream media but also (and increasingly) through their own direct publicity (such as research

reports, newsletters, websites, and mailing lists)” (p. 12). Creating a four-fold typology for the goals of non-profit communications (advocacy, charity, community services, and public education campaigns), Dimitrov (2008) recognizes the multiple and integrated nature of the communications environment, asserting the need for strategic communication and the use of appropriate tactics across all communication activities. He calls for more focus on developing the communications strategy before applying individual tactics. Through this process, he argues, the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1992) of non-profits can be increased, allowing them to achieve their multiple mandates through advocacy.

Non-profit advocacy, when viewed within this broader perspective, requires scholars to expand the media/non-profit relationship to examine other relationships contingent to the successful outcome of the organization’s mission and goals. It also requires scholars to examine the nature and impact of organizational communication in relation to larger social and political goals and outcomes.

KNOWLEDGE GAPS

This scholarship reveals a range of challenges, dilemmas, and contexts faced by non-profits in their advocacy efforts. Civil society studies illuminate a unique role for non-profits in building social capital and for advocating at the political and social level. Public policy studies offer insight into the relationship between government and non-profit institutions and organizations and how these relationships impact on non-profit policy advocacy. Social movement studies recognize opportunities and strategies for redefining these relationships and for understanding a specific organization’s actions

within larger organizational fields. It also illustrates the importance of strategically framing public messages to mobilize issues and the media's role in delivering these messages. Finally, a small body of scholarship within communications studies explores the contexts in which non-profits construct and accomplish media advocacy. Yet, together this scholarship remains limited in its ability to provide an encompassing framework to examine and analyze the full complex of communication efforts undertaken by non-profit organizations to achieve both short- and long-term goals within integrated organizational, social, and political contexts. There is a dearth of empirically-grounded scholarship that explores the range of tactics that comprise an organization's full communication strategy, how and why those tactics were chosen, if they complement each other, and if they are an effective means to achieve organizational and issue-related advocacy goals. Theoretically, it fails to examine the form and nature of the communication being adopted by non-profit organizations in their advocacy efforts and its ability to educate and/or mobilize publics and policy makers to achieve stated goals. Similarly, a deeper analysis of the implications of utilizing strategic communication for achieving social and moral change is warranted. The next chapter introduces two theoretical frameworks from which non-profit advocacy scholars can draw to address these gaps.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO EXPAND THE STUDY OF NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

Chapter 3 argues that to explore and analyze how non-profits accomplish potentially disparate advocacy goals through communication, a more fulsome analysis of the communication, practices, goals, and contexts of advocacy is warranted. While existing scholarship identifies a range of organizational, social, and political contexts and their influence on an organization's advocacy effort, they are largely studied in isolation. To fully understand the challenges and opportunities of non-profit advocacy, these contexts must be addressed in a more integrated way. Similarly, while current scholarship promotes a strategic ethos and approach as necessary to achieve short-term advocacy goals such as increasing media coverage, funding, and specific policy change, there is little attention paid to how this ethos and approach aligns with organizations' longer-term goals of deepening public awareness and fostering dialogue about the underlying causes of social issues and problems. Deeper analysis into the nature of the communication and its ability to achieve both these purposive and dialogic goals is needed. Augmenting existing scholarship in this way will open up analysis to explore any tensions and trade-offs across contexts and goals, and if and how non-profit organizations negotiate these tensions through their communication activities.

The theoretical constructs of negotiated order and instrumental and communicative rationality offer insights into these questions. The negotiated order paradigm directs attention to the myriad organizational, social, and political contexts that inform and are informed by an organization's communication practices and the tensions

inherent in their interactions. The conceptual framework of instrumental and communicative action directs analysis to the nature of non-profit communication practices and their utility for achieving social and political change.

NEGOTIATED ORDER PARADIGM

The negotiated order paradigm offers an approach to examine how different structures and contexts interact with social practices and how these factors work to construct and change social orders. Grounded in the symbolic interactionist perspective that social organization is accomplished through a dialectical process of meaning creation, it focuses the object of study on the interactions and communications between social actors, organizations, and institutions (Geist, 1995).

Negotiated order theory emerged from a 1960s study of hospitals by Anselm Strauss. Working through the tensions between structure and agency, Strauss argued that organizational processes are not determined by rules and structures per se, but are constructed through human negotiation of these rules and structures. Strauss later expanded the concept into a theoretical paradigm to understand the role of negotiation in constructing social orders. For Strauss, “a social order ... without some form of negotiation would be inconceivable” (1978, p. ix). This is not to suggest that everything within a social order is negotiated, but rather that negotiation processes and how they bear on social orders provides important insights into how social orders are created, maintained, and changed, and how individuals interact both with and within them (Maines & Charlton, 1985).

Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, Ehrlich and Sabshin (1963) devised the term *negotiated order* to describe their model for studying how “order is maintained in an organization in spite of numerous external and internal changes” (Day & Day, 1977, p. 128). In their study of psychiatric hospitals, they recognized that different actors (e.g. doctors, nurses, social workers, administrators) brought different knowledge and ideas related to patient care, treatment, and organizational policy, which implicitly and explicitly “stretched, negotiated, argued as well as ignored or applied [organizational rules and processes] at convenient moments” (Strauss *et al.*, 1963, p. 153). Moreover, hierarchical authority did not always define outcomes as power relationships varied according to specific situations and processes. The researchers concluded that existing orders within organizations are negotiated through the interpretation of rules and regulations by individual actors. Further, they found that social orders were always temporal and that any social order is subject to change as the context, actors, and circumstances change. Negotiated order theory revolutionized organizational studies by recognizing the dialectic between formal and informal power structures within an identified social order (Day & Day, 1977).

The paradigm expanded to account for how external contexts also impacted the negotiation of meanings and organizational processes (Greenberg, Knight, MacNeill & Donnelly, 2005). Later applications recognized coalitions and network structures (Beaulieu & Pasquero, 2002; Bennington, Shetler & Shaw, 2003) and larger social orders (Geist, 1995; Maines, 1982) as a complex of negotiated interactions between formal structures and processes and the creation of meaning among the actors involved.

A major criticism of the early studies was that they did not adequately conceptualize power, over-emphasized human agency, and minimized the influence of hierarchical and institutional power in the social order (Day & Day, 1997). Fine (1984) addresses this concern by suggesting that the concept of power is implicit and important to the negotiated order approach; but, that researchers must recognize that “power and control themselves are open to negotiation, and beliefs about who has how much and what kind of power may not be shared among the parties to an interaction” (p. 251). Put differently, sources of power and control change at different times and within various formal and informal relationships. It also follows that not every negotiation will have powerful consequences, as change in social orders reflects the complex of negotiations, some more able to influence power structures than others.

Strauss expounded the theory of negotiated order in the book *Negotiations* (1978). Here, he outlines both the macro (structure) and micro (agency) influences that contribute to a continual process of negotiation through which social orders are organized. He posits that social orders can be theorized as the “sum total of ... rules and policies, along with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts, contracts and other working arrangements, currently obtained” (1978, p. 5). This paradigm, he contends, helps to locate “comparatively the specific negotiation process under consideration” (p. 101). For Strauss, the paradigm deepens knowledge of both negotiations and the substantive topic or social order under exploration.

While not directly defined by Strauss, negotiation is an inherently communicative process. It involves the “ordering and articulation of an enormous variety of activities

(Strauss, 1978, p. ix).⁴⁶ Geist (1995) later made the connection more direct: “patterns of negotiation occur as individuals make sense of the structures in which they are embedded and communicate to reach agreements with others regarding their versions of social reality” (p. 45).

Strauss identifies three central concepts for negotiated orders: negotiation, negotiation context, and structural context. Negotiation refers to the type of interaction and the strategies used for that negotiation (Strauss, 1978). Strauss has been criticized for not providing an adequate definition of and for “inconsistently” using the concept of negotiation (Maines & Charleton, 1985, p. 294). However, as argued by Maines and Charlton (1985), due to the organic and dialectic nature of interaction in social orders, restrictive definitions “exclude a variety of interactional events” which may be required to understand the negotiated nature of a social order. Hence, integral to understanding the negotiated order is identifying and defining the realm of interactions that contribute to the negotiations.

The negotiation context is “the context in which people interact while taking cognizance of it” (Strauss, 1978, p. 99) or those factors that influence how meaning is created within specific contexts. There are many possible negotiation contexts. Factors that bear on the negotiation context include: the number of negotiators, their experience in negotiating, and who they represent; whether the negotiations are isolated, multiple, or linked; the relative power of each of the parties in the negotiation; their goals in the negotiation; the visibility of the negotiations; the number and complexity of issues; the

⁴⁶ The symbolic interactionist process, contingent on communication, and leading to the creation of meaning, was expanded upon by Strauss in his 1993 book *Continual Permutations of Action*. However, this text is rarely included as a primary source for applications of the negotiated order paradigm.

clarity of the boundaries around the various issues; and the options available for avoiding or discontinuing negotiations (Strauss, 1978, p. 99-100). In general, the negotiation context relates to the capacities and the conditions under which the negotiations are conducted.

Finally, the structural context explores the “salient structural properties that bear on the negotiation” (p. 98). These are the formal and institutional contexts within which negotiation occurs, such as policies, laws, regulations, and procedures. For example, in the psychiatric hospital study, the structural context included the American medical system, its orders and regulations, the rules and regulations for the hospital, and the division of labour in the hospital, among other things. For non-profits advocating for better solutions to deal with homelessness, poverty, and social housing, the structural context includes such factors as organizational structures, regional, provincial and national policies, governance approaches and political opportunities, just to name a few.

To understand a social order and the action that ensues within it, analysis must attend to all of these contexts; to analyze only one context provides an incomplete picture:

larger structural considerations need to be explicitly linked with microscopic analysis of negotiation processes. Negotiations always take place within social settings. The various structural conditions of the settings affect the actions of the negotiation parties, the aims they pursue through negotiation and alternative modes of action, their tactics during the negotiations and undoubtedly, the outcomes of the negotiations themselves – which in turn may affect not only future courses of action but also the social settings themselves. (Strauss, 1978, p. 235).

The negotiated order paradigm has been adopted as a framework to analyze decision-making within bounded organizations. However, according to Maines (1982) its greatest utility is its ability to link “negotiations and their contexts to social orders” (p.

271). Conceptualizing the dialectical process between micro and macro structures and contexts illuminates, on one hand, how existing social orders become a context for negotiations, and on the other hand how individual and organizational actions influence the larger social order. Within larger social orders, it is also important to recognize situational negotiation contexts. Denzin (1977), for example, in an analysis of the American liquor industry, showed different actors and contexts of local and national interactions.⁴⁷ Greenberg, Knight, MacNeill and Donnelly (2005) revealed the situational context of a multicultural news station and its negotiation of broadcasting rights during the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

Recognizing the dialogic nature between the structural and interactional realms of analysis, Maines (1982) introduced the concept of “mesostructure” or “the realm of human conduct through which social structures are processed and social processes become structured” (p. 277). Mesostructure integrates what was previously defined as the micro (interactionist) and macro (structural) level, and in so doing, changes the focus of analysis from how two distinct realms influence or impact each other to how they interact to define a social order. As described by Maines (1982):

The domain of mesostructure does not deny the institutional structures of social order, but it does deny that those structures can be understood without understanding how they are enacted. Nor does it deny the importance of interaction processes. Indeed, it is through interaction that structures are enacted, but in that process, interaction becomes conditional ... the centre of that domain thus consists of mediating processes and the webs of significance and group affiliation that form the interstitial arenas of social life (p.276).

⁴⁷ Denzin's (1977) case study of the American liquor industry did not directly apply negotiated order theory. However, as argued by Maines and Charleton (1985), his conceptualization of organizations as “shifting networks of social relations” (p. 287) aligns with the key principals of the negotiated order paradigm.

Mesostructures are always temporal and in a constant state of flux, although, as Thomas (1984) argues in his analysis of maximum security prisons, they are powerful for directing actions within particular social orders. Thomas concludes that “mesostructures are more than simple, informal arrangements. They take on the character of formal structures ... creating in effect an alternative framework through which the organization operates” (p. 214). In other words, the norms and practices that have previously been negotiated define how individuals interact within structures, not necessarily the established rules and policies. Thus, to fully understand these frameworks, researchers must investigate historical processes and contexts as well as structures. According to Maines and Charlton (1985) “historical processes continually transform spheres of negotiated orders, and this transformation occurs at different rates, affects various spheres differently and has a variety of consequences for the degree of harmony or dissensus in those spheres” (p. 296). Thus, where all social orders are temporal and in a state of flux, the type and nature of the change is often influenced by historically-bound practices and relationships, which are part of the negotiations (Thomas, 1984). Finally, due to the web of relationships within any social order, the effects of situational negotiations may not be realized for some time or may have no effect at all (Maines & Charlton, 1985).

The negotiated order paradigm offers a lens to expand current knowledge of non-profit advocacy communication practices. It expands public administration and political science approaches focused on the structural and institutional challenges and barriers to non-profit policy advocacy through examining the influence of other contexts within the negotiated process of existing social orders and the interactions between them. Similarly, it moves the analysis beyond situational contexts or factors like media coverage of non-

profit news and government/non-profit relationships, found in communications and social movement scholarship respectively, to their interaction within the larger web of relationships contextual to that communication. Finally, while recognizing the importance of historical contexts and relationships to social orders, in this case, non-profit advocacy surrounding homelessness, it also acknowledges that social organization is ever changing and it recognizes the possibility for change through communication.

Most importantly, negotiated order theory offers a useful analytical framework for identifying and exploring the contexts in which non-profit organizations communicate in the service of social and political change and how these contexts directly and indirectly impact the form and nature of an organization's communication practices. The negotiated order paradigm highlights the realms of interactions, or the negotiation context,⁴⁸ specific to the context in which an organization operates, and within the larger context of how an issue is historically, institutionally and dialogically constructed (mesostructures). The focus thus becomes how non-profit advocacy practices and key messages emerge as an outcome of the interactions between internal and external forces and contexts specific to the organization, site, time, issue, and historical relationships. Comparison of situational interactions across municipalities and organizations provides insight into the level of influence of different contexts, how they interact, and ways that non-profits negotiate them through specific actions. Analysis of advocacy outcomes expose the mode and nature of communication that best negotiate the myriad contexts

⁴⁸ Common usage of the term "negotiation context" includes both the negotiation and structural contexts. As described by Strauss: "the structural context bears directly on the negotiation context" (1978, p. 99).

that define the negotiation context and existing mesostructures surrounding issues of poverty, affordable housing, and homelessness.

The negotiated order paradigm is currently limited in how it theorizes the form and nature of communication required to negotiate social change. Despite Strauss's (1978; 2003) assertion that there is no place for coercion in the negotiation of shared meanings, applications of the theory have yet to interrogate the intents and practices of social actors' communication practices. A few studies recognize the individualistic nature of symbolic meaning (e.g. Bennington, *et al.*, 2003), but fail to recognize shared *understanding* as a primary outcome of negotiation. A more comprehensive understanding of the form and process of social order communication, its impact on the negotiation context, and how this mesostructure, in turn, impacts social orders is warranted. These elements of inquiry can be developed through the concepts of instrumental and communicative action, introduced most comprehensively by Jürgen Habermas (1984).

COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

The nature of communication and its implications for human action and social change have been the focus of Jürgen Habermas's scholarship for more than 25 years. A central argument within this scholarship is that moral and ethical questions of society are best resolved through rational, critical debate leading to "common understandings" of situations (Sitton, 2003). While Habermas illustrates in great detail that contemporary forms of communication do not lead to this normative, ethical standard, he posits that the universal characteristics of language provide opportunities to influence and correct

modern social arrangements and allow for more democratic forms of knowledge development and understanding. His approach integrates explorations of the epistemological and social basis of knowledge, and the nature, possibilities, and limits of language to create social knowledge and the communicative basis of social organization (Edgar, 2005; Honneth & Joas, 1991; McCarthy, 1978).

At the level of knowledge, he argues that there are multiple forms of inquiry, each best suited for different aspects of knowledge generation. At the level of language, he theorizes a universality that allows for the possibility of ethical interpersonal understanding, or what he calls *communicative action*. He further identifies the forms of language under which communicative action is absent, suspended, or replaced by purposive or instrumental forms of communication. *Instrumental communication* seeks to deceive or control understanding among participants. At the societal level, he explores the dialectic between knowledge, language use, and social organization, the historical basis of the widespread integration of technical rationality, and the dominance of instrumental forms of reason in modern society. He then examines the implications of privileging forms of inquiry or language forms that do not seek critical reflection inherent to communicative action, and the possibilities for reintegrating this form of knowledge and communication at political and social levels.

Technical rationality and the public sphere

A recurring critique raised in much of Habermas's work is the dominance of technical, positivist ideology in social knowledge and practice. His book, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971) offers a typology of how knowledge is generated in scientific

inquiry, developing what he called a theory of “knowledge-constitutive interests” (1971, p. 308). This theory identifies the “logical-methodological rules” or the realm of human activity or interests that instigate and therefore inform the process of knowledge generation in various categories of inquiry. Habermas recognizes three forms of knowledge-constitutive interests: empirical-analytic, historical-hermeneutic, and critically-oriented knowledge (Habermas, 1971). Empirical-analytic inquiry utilizes scientific “theories [that] comprise hypothetico-deductive connections of propositions, which permit the deduction of law like hypothesis with empirical content” (Habermas, 1971, p. 308). Historical-hermeneutic inquiry provides “access to the facts ... by the understanding of meaning, not observation” (Habermas, 1971, p. 309). It is oriented to individuals and how they perceive and understand their social arrangements. Finally, critically-oriented knowledge promotes social emancipation and progress through critical self-reflection. In turn, each of these interests creates different forms of knowledge: instrumental, interactive, and critical (Habermas, 1971; Park, 1993). Instrumental knowledge seeks to control and adapt nature and the environment and appeals to knowable facts rather than the moral and ethical implications of the practices being examined (Edgar, 2006). Interactive knowledge is gained through experience and interaction with others. Critical knowledge, lastly, comes from freely debating at both a societal and interpersonal level what is just and right. For Habermas (1971), each of these forms of knowledge has a function in society. Instrumental knowledge is most beneficial to address questions of the natural world, interactive knowledge is best for creating shared understandings among individuals in a community, and critical knowledge interrogates social standards and practices to ensure moral and ethical conduct

(Park, 1993). Moreover, each knowledge system is open to the validation of its arguments (Sitton, 2003). The critical thrust of Habermas's larger argument is that instrumental knowledge has been "rationalized" in society such that its technical objectives have become hegemonic, permeating most forms of social action and public discourse. As explained by Edgar (2005):

Habermas argues that because positivistic science is committed to progressive instrumental rationalization, its values are those of efficiency and economy. As such it suppresses any form of technology, or crucially, any social practice that does not confirm to the ideal of instrumental reason, which is to say any form of reasoning that is not structured in terms of the calculation and assessment of the efficient realization of a given end. (Edgar, 2005, p. 13)

The historical development and implications of instrumental rationality for society and politics are more deeply explored in what are arguably Habermas's best known books, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and the *Theory of Communicative Action*. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* offers both a critique of capitalism and an explication of the ideals of democratic engagement, illustrated through the example of the 18th century bourgeois public sphere. The idealized public sphere "mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion ... [for] democratic control of state activities" (Habermas, 1974 p. 50). The political public sphere closely followed the emergence of a literary public sphere surrounding arts and culture. Commercialization of the arts created an audience among the bourgeois class, which in turn led to discussions and debates in coffee houses, salons, and in literary publications about the merits of different cultural works. This cultivated a form of communication based on logical argumentation or "communicative competence" that easily translated into discussions about laws and governance in the political public sphere (Edgar, 2005). Habermas identifies several

crucial characteristics of these 18th century public spheres that provide for an equal forum for all to discuss and debate issues and determine fair outcomes. These imperatives include: ensuring open access to the debate for all who wish to participate; having the forum free from political and corporate intervention and control; allowing equal opportunity for input from all who participate; and following a form of argumentation that is logical, rational, and critical.

Habermas has been widely criticized for idealizing the public sphere and not recognizing its exclusionary nature (see Fraser, 1992; Calhoun, 1994). Indeed, in later publications, even Habermas recognized that his original account might have been oversimplified (Habermas, 1994; see also Edgar, 2005). Nonetheless, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* introduces a theory of the communicative conditions required for democratic participation by citizens. It also offers historical evidence for why this form of communication does not dominate contemporary political and social discourse (see expanded discussion below). In the final chapter of the book, Habermas asserts that “no attempt to go back to the old bourgeois public sphere can be progressive, for social change has made its contradictory foundations manifest” and “any attempt at restoring the liberal public sphere through the reduction of its plebiscitarily expanded form will only serve to weaken even more the residual functions genuinely remaining within it” (Habermas, 1989, p. 208). Instead, he challenges us to “find a form of democratic public discourse that can salvage critical reason in an age of large-scale institutions and fuzzy boundaries between state and society” (Habermas, 1989, p. 28). What constitutes critical reason is articulated in his work on speech pragmatics and communicative action.

Language pragmatics

Habermas's study of the pragmatics of language "seeks to reconstruct a communicative competence that is common to all language users, and indeed, all competent members of society" (Edgar, 2005, p. 143). Language, according to Habermas, is inter-subjective and establishes and sustains relationships between individuals. The success of any speech act thus rests on achieving mutual understanding between speaker and hearer (Edgar, 2005). In his essay "What is Universal Pragmatics?" Habermas seeks to identify the "illocutionary force" of language, or those aspects of the interaction which lead the hearer to act within the intention of the speaker. Habermas argues that successful "speech acts owe their illocutionary force to a cluster of validity claims that speakers and hearers have to raise and recognize as justified ... to result in successful communication" (Habermas, 1979, p. 66). In other words, it is through a rational process of validation that speakers and hearers authenticate the intention of utterances. When both individuals recognize the validity of the utterance, inter-subjective understanding is achieved. Moreover, social actors enter into communication with others assuming that both parties are willing and able to redeem any claims made (Edgar, 2005).

Habermas identifies truth, rightness, and truthfulness as universal validity claims for all successful speech acts. To validate the truth of a statement, speakers assume an obligation to provide evidentiary grounds for the claim being made. Grounds can be based in empirical evidence or experiences and are determined to be true if everyone who would enter into that discourse, present or future, would deem it to be true (Edgar, 2005, p. 149). In this way truth is not grounded only within the existing knowledge base of

those involved in the communication but is pragmatic and connected to the social world. To validate rightness, speakers assume an obligation to provide justification of the claim in accordance with social norms and practices. To validate truthfulness (sometimes called the sincerity claim), speakers assume an obligation to prove trustworthy. These obligations align with different domains of reality. Truth claims call on representations of facts and align with the natural world. Rightness claims call for the establishment of legitimate interpersonal relations and align with the social world. Finally truthfulness requires speakers to disclose their subjectivity on the issue and align with subjective and internal processes. Hence, “language can be conceived as the medium of interrelating three worlds; for every successful communication action there exists a threefold relation between the utterances and: (a) the external world as the totality of all existing states of affairs; (b) our social world as the totality of all normatively regulated interpersonal relations that count as legitimate in a given society; and (c) a particular inner world of the speaker as the totality of his intentional experiences” (Habermas, 1979, p. 67). Thus “the standards used to evaluate the quality of arguments presented in a discussion transcend the situation itself” (Koerber *et al.*, 2008) and are not limited to one form of knowledge-intuitive practice.

Not all utterances are validated or open to validation. These include those based in institutionally bound illocutionary force and strategic communication (Edgar, 2005). Institutionally bound speech acts directly or indirectly connect utterances to the norms and practices of powerful social institutions such as the state and the church whose authority is recognized by those to whom the norms apply (Habermas, 1987). In the analysis of the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere, Habermas charts how these

institutions and their discursive forces – power and money – become rationalized as the dominant force and languages of society (Habermas, 1984; 1987). Because the dominance of these institutions and discourses are naturalized, validity claims are neither raised nor defended. Strategic communication, on the other hand, is communication directed towards instrumental ends where the illocutionary force is based on coercion or influence and not interpersonal critical dialogue to achieve inter-subjective meaning (Habermas, 1987; Sitton, 2003).

Communicative action and instrumental reason

Habermas's distinction between communicative action and instrumental reason offers a basis on which to differentiate social discourses and their implications. Initially, Habermas differentiated between communicative and instrumental reason. Communicative reason opens itself up to validity claims and leads to inter-subjective understandings. The understanding reached is morally and ethically bound because the process has provided for validity claims to be raised and challenged (Meisenbach, 2006). As part of the process of deliberation, participants uncover any "systematic distortions that ... have spoiled the possibility of pure communication" (Edgar, 2005, p. 24) or are institutionally bound. Instrumental rationality, by contrast, is strategic, goal-oriented, and purposive. Communication is intended to achieve specific outcomes, often through coercion and manipulation. It "coordinates through influence ... and employs inducements other than reasons: threats of force, money, playing on emotional attachments, manipulative rhetoric. In this way reasons become disempowered – words

become the weapons” (Sitton 2003, p. 52). Both types of action are goal oriented and purposive. The difference for Habermas is

how the pursuit of the goal takes place ... In communicative action, a middle term is inserted for goal attainment – that of reaching understanding. ... The strategic use of arguments and language to manipulate individuals is logically secondary. One could not manipulate individuals unless they first comprehend what you are saying (Sitton, 2003, p. 53).

Habermas developed a typology to differentiate the types of communication and their use (see Figure 1). He first distinguishes non-social and social action based on the purpose for and the realm in which the communication occurs. He then distinguishes two orientations of the actor: the orientation of success and the orientation of reaching understanding. Communicative action is a social act (inter-subjective) and oriented to reaching common understandings. Instrumental action is non-social and oriented to success, subscribing to technical rules appraised only from the standpoint of “the efficiency of goal-oriented intervention in the physical world” (Habermas, 1982, p. 264). Habermas is not overly concerned about instrumental actions because they are non-social and thus have little implication for individual or social understanding. However, strategic actions or those social actions oriented to success are grounded in an attempt to “influenc[e] the decision of rational opponents” (Habermas, 1982, p. 264).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Efforts to explain and synthesize Habermas’s theory of strategic, instrumental, and communicative action regularly collapse instrumental and strategic action as a single category. Thus sometimes instrumental action is used to explain communication oriented to success that is social in nature.

Figure 1: Strategic, instrumental and communicative action (Habermas, 1984)

Action Orientation / Action Situation	Oriented to Success	Oriented to Reaching Understanding
Nonsocial	Instrumental action	—
Social	Strategic action	Communicative action

Habermas further expands the category of strategic action to distinguish between covertly strategic communication and openly strategic communication. Openly strategic communication uses force or violence to achieve its goal (Edgar, 2006). Covertly strategic communication can take two forms. The first consciously deceives with speakers adopting manipulative tactics to encourage action by the hearer. Unconscious deception, or systematically distorted communication, relates to those speech situations where “at least one of the participants is deceiving himself or herself ... while he or she has only apparently adopted an attitude oriented toward reaching understanding” (Habermas, 1982, p. 264). In other words, communicators believe that they are seeking inter-subjective understandings but adopt communication practices that are bound to technical imperatives.

In later writings, Habermas (1998) accounted for “strong” and “weak” forms of inter-subjective understanding. Strong communicative action is open to and bound by all three validity claims (truth, rightness, sincerity). Weak communicative action is oriented

only to the claims of truth and truthfulness/sincerity. Weak communicative action is oriented to reaching *understanding* in social interactions, whereas strong communicative action is oriented to reaching *agreement* in these social interactions.

Implications of strategic and communicative action

The implications of the different communication forms are explicated in Habermas's social theory integrating the lifeworld, or the private realm of communication, with the system world or where institutional practices exist and are reproduced. For Habermas, successful social organization is contingent on communication aimed at inter-subjective understanding:

If we assume that the human species maintains itself through the socially coordinated activities of its members and that this coordination is established through communication – and in certain spheres of life, through communication aimed at reaching agreement—then the reproduction of the species also requires satisfying the conditions of a rationality inherent in communicative action. (Habermas, 1984, p. 397).

Communicative action and the practice of debating and testing the validity claims of speech are thus essential for social integration and socialization (Habermas, 1987, p. 139). This process of social integration occurs in what Habermas calls the lifeworld. The lifeworld is those aspects of culture, society, and personality that are all produced and reproduced through communicative action (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxv). As explained by Habermas:

under the ... aspect of reaching understanding communicative action services the transmission and renewal of cultural knowledge; under the aspect of coordinating action, it serves social integration and the establishment of group solidarity; under the aspect of socialization it serves the formation of personal identities (Habermas, 1987, p. 208).

The system, on the other hand, is the technical sphere for the production and reproduction of money and institutional power. Systems are non-social and self-maintaining.

The reproduction of the system and lifeworld are integrated but not “irreducible to each other” (Sitton, 2003, p. 61). The integration balances the reproduction of individual realms within the larger social system. However, as Habermas argues in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, there has been a growing differentiation between the two levels of society or what he calls a “decoupling” of the system and lifeworld. The decoupling results in lifeworld processes, and hence rational, critical debate, being separated from system processes. Social systems thus become more autonomous and open to other and non-social forms of discourse (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxvii). Nonetheless, because there is still some integration between the two realms, non-social forms of communication become rationalized in the lifeworld, resulting in the “suspension” or “neutralization” (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxix) of inter-subjective communication. Non-social forms of communication “encode certain forms of purposive-rational activity, symbolically generalize certain categories of rewards and punishments and make it possible to exercise influence on action by non-linguistic means” (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxx) which are in turn reproduced through social and systemic integration.

In both *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas contends that bureaucracy, finance, and power, as technical systems of meaning, have become rationalized in societal discourse. As these systems are predicated on instrumental forms of reason, communicative action is frequently suspended. As explained by Calhoun (1992), “money and power are non-discursive modes of coordination ... they offer no intrinsic openings to the identification

of reason and will, and they suffer from tendencies toward domination and reification” (p. 6). For Habermas, instrumental rationality has not only become the dominant form of communication in society but has “become the only form of rationalization acknowledged within [the organizing system of] capitalism” (Edgar, 2006, p. 74).

However, this state is not fully determined. “Colonization of the lifeworld only [occurs] when symbolic ... systemic mechanisms drive out mechanisms of social integration from domination in which they cannot be replaced” (McCarthy, 1984, p. xxxi). Language has an internal obligation to validity: “it is a rationally binding force that accrues to illocutionary acts by virtue of their internal connection with reason and the corresponding possibility of inter-subjective recognition based on insight rather than on external force” (McCarthy, 1984, p. xx). Moreover, different forms of knowledge and interests continue to operate in society. Questions of society, ethics, and morality regularly emerge. In these “legitimation crises” characterized by a “loss of meaning” in society (G. Edwards, 2009), communicative rationality is reintroduced.

For Habermas (1981), social movement organizations or those organizations “reacting to the colonization of the lifeworld” (Habermas, 1987, p. 396) are best positioned to challenge instrumental reason and reintroduce communicative action (Habermas, 1981).⁵⁰ Habermas (1981) argues that new social movements differ from their more traditional counterparts that were largely responsible for the rise of the welfare state. New social movements have concerns that extend beyond simple distribution of

⁵⁰ The role of non-profits is unclear in Habermas’s work. On one hand, he sees the actions of special interest groups complicit in the breakdown of the public sphere and the colonization of the lifeworld. On the other hand, the social movement organizations he describes as able to promote communicative action most certainly have non-profit arms or organizing bodies.

wealth to questions of justice and society – questions best addressed through communicative action. He also suggests that they are organized in different ways using non-hierarchical structures operating on principals of inclusivity and deliberative democracy. These claims have been challenged. G. Edwards (2004; 2009) illustrates that new social movements addressing social and institutional inequalities, like the women's movement, are equally concerned with wealth redistribution. Similarly, it is unreasonable to suggest that social movement organizations eschew bureaucracy and hierarchical modes of organization and decision making; without these characteristics they would be ineffective. Not challenged, however is Habermas's claim that internal goals and processes predispose them to a more collective and inter-subjective form of deliberation on social issues.

Bryant (2002) posits that community organizations (in which he includes non-profits and advocacy organizations) are best situated to reintroduce critical deliberative discussion in society. He argues that individuals involved in these organizations possess interactive and critical forms of knowledge construction that promote inter-subjective communication and critical debate. G. Edwards (2009), taking a slightly different approach, argues that communicative rationality is not always the form of communication employed by social movement organizations, but can be strategically adopted as a means for them to promote deliberative discussion on social issues. Drawing on McCormick (2006), she suggests that this form of communication can help to “contest expert scientific knowledge ... influence policy and deploy new frames for thinking about the issue in the wider public sphere” (p. 389).

Recognizing communicative action as an ideal type and the lack of direction in Habermas's scholarship to facilitate it, Koerber *et al.* (2008) argue that Habermas's theory is best adopted as a heuristic for analyzing the form and nature of communication used by social actors. Meisenbach (2006) adopted this approach in her study of the American Red Cross. Drawing on Habermas's universalization principal,⁵¹ she developed a set of principles for organizations to follow in decision making processes to make them more deliberative. She then analyzed the decision made by the American Red Cross to set up a "Liberty Fund" with funding received after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre (Meisenbach, 2006). She concludes that despite the American Red Cross's "violation" of the procedure to ensure the involvement of all pertinent stakeholders, widespread dissemination of information through public communication and media allowed for a form of deliberative debate on the issue, providing opportunity for interested stakeholders to identify themselves and contribute to the decision. She concludes that like many of Habermas's principals, the principle of universalization is not practically attainable; yet, it offers a standard for analyzing communication and action that does occur in the public sphere.

Schlosberg (1995) similarly examines the practices of movement organizations and their correlation with Habermas's ideal of communicative action. He raises three "dilemmas" within Habermas's theory. The first is whether the rules of communicative action are inherent to language or merely something to strive for. The second is whether the consensus reached through inter-subjective understanding is universal. The third is

⁵¹ The universalization principal states that for cultural norms to be valid "all affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observances can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of everyone's interests" (Habermas, 1990, p. 65).

the inherent tension between process and outcome in the communicative action, asking “what is most important... the process of communication or the consensus at the conclusion of the conversation?” (p. 298). Following an analysis of the communication practices of the dispute resolution movement and the direct action movement, he concludes that communicative processes can be artificially constructed by groups addressing issues of social and political justice to promote dialogue, respectful debate, and inter-subjective understanding. Jacobsen and Storey (2004) came to a similar conclusion in their analysis of development processes in Nepal. Moreover, Schlosberg (1995) found that a goal of consensus may not be achievable, however the process of seeking consensus promotes an ethic of understanding among participants, which calls on communicative competence. Finally, on the question of ends versus means, he stresses a “processual ethic of interaction and communication”, whereby “means and ends come together” (p. 311).

These studies align with Habermas’s position that civil society organizations may be well-suited to reintroduce rational, critical, debate on social and moral issues. However, they challenge the rigidity of the communication practices required to achieve these ends, suggesting that there may be a “realm” to be occupied between instrumental rationality and communicative action (Schlosberg, 1995, p. 298). Hendley (2000) theoretically provides for this possibility:

it is not possible ... to use language strategically without first having a competence with its properly communicative use to achieve understanding. The strategic use of language presupposes its communicative use ... it is not as if having learned a communicative use of language to leave its communicative use behind. It is, rather that even as we use language strategically, we must also use it communicatively, if only as a necessary condition for accomplishing our strategic goal (2000, p. 17-18).

Non-profit advocacy relating to homelessness, housing and related issues seeks moral and ethical understanding about the problem, its causes and symptoms, and resolutions. The theory of communicative action places ethical communication at the centre of social organization and change. While it “serves well to define participation for practical change at multiple scales” (Jacobsen & Story, 2004, p. 116), it offers limited insight into how this participation can be applied in a society colonized by instrumental rationality. Recent scholarship exploring the communicative practices of non-profit and social movement organizations suggests that these organizations may offer an approach to social change that is “both an alternative and a complement to instrumentalist systems” (Schlosberg, 1995, p. 303).

SUMMARY

The conceptual paradigms of negotiated order theory, and instrumental, and communicative rationality complement existing approaches to the study of non-profit advocacy. The negotiated order theory provides a grounded theoretical lens through which to explore the interacting organizational, social and political factors that influence non-profit advocacy and how these contexts influence and are in turn influenced by non-profit communication practices. The concepts of instrumental and communicative action offer conceptual frameworks to examine the nature of communication and its potential impact on policy and public understandings of issues. These two frameworks supplement current scholarship examining non-profit advocacy to offer an encompassing framework with which to examine and analyze the full complex of communication efforts undertaken by non-profit organizations to achieve both instrumental and dialogic goals

within existing organizational, social, and political contexts. They also open up the analysis to explore the possible tensions and tradeoffs that non-profit organizations face in seeking both dialogic and purposive goals for advocacy and in negotiating the myriad organizational, social, and political contexts that inform and are informed by their external communication practices.

CHAPTER 5 METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The empirical objective of this study is to identify and analyze the communication activities and practices of non-profit organizations advocating on issues of homelessness, social housing, and poverty in four Canadian cities. To this end, the study employed a combination of document analysis with in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews. The research design ensured that participant recruitment and selection and research practice aligned with the expanded theoretical framework adopted for the study and the goals for the research.

While conducting the research, I remained fully aware of my own subject position as a researcher with practitioner experience, and reflected on this dual identity in the interpretation and analysis of the data. I did not act from the position of a detached, impartial observer. My involvement with non-profit organizations for more than 25 years as a volunteer, board member, employee, manager, communicator, and consultant has impressed upon me the importance of these organizations for social and political development and change. I have been inspired by the passion, dedication and commitment exhibited by many of the staff and volunteers with whom I have worked, who willingly contribute their skills and abilities for a collective goal. My graduate work has, from the beginning, been dedicated to contributing to a body of research that can help non-profit organizations further their goals and mandates and become more active

players in the Canadian democratic process.⁵² While these views certainly influenced the design, execution, and analysis of this research, they do not discount it. Qualitative and post-positivist scholarship has long recognized that pure objectivity is unattainable (Kuhn, 1970; Greenwood & Levin 1998). For non-profit scholarship, Harris (2001) is highly critical of researchers who attempt to bracket their volunteer experiences in search of “objectivity”. She encourages them instead to acknowledge and be reflexive about their volunteer experiences as they are undeniably tied to how they construct knowledge about the voluntary sector. Sound research does not deny the subject position of the researcher but rather ensures that it is reflected upon and accounted for in the analysis and presentation of the research (Miller & Glassner, 1997). Further, adherence to methodological and ethical rigor in the development, execution, and presentation of research ensures that it is conducted in a reliable and professional manner, that the findings are consistent with the data and past scholarship, and that future researchers can critically assess one’s conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My ongoing involvement in applied research over the course of my graduate degrees has provided me with adequate and effective training to meet these criteria.

⁵² The desire to enable research subjects with the knowledge and practices to be more active advocates is most effectively pursued through participatory action research approaches (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Park, 1993). Initially, I had hoped to conduct research in this manner but was unable to secure a non-profit partner that could devote the time and resources required for the project. Nor was such an extended and fluid approach feasible for completing this dissertation within the desired timeframe.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND DETERMINATION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overarching question directing the research study is: *To what extent are the instrumental and dialogical advocacy goals of non-profits communicating on issues of homelessness commensurate and achievable within organizational, social, and political contexts?*

Key to answering this question was gaining insight into what goals the non-profit organizations I examined had for their external communication practices, the strategies and tactics they used and why, how they felt their communication efforts aligned with their stated goals, the contexts that they felt impacted their communication efforts, and the ways that they managed or negotiated these contexts.

These goals, in turn, revealed some of the key considerations to be taken into account when choosing the methodology for the study. First, the study needed to access the *perspectives* of the individuals responsible for the communication and advocacy function in the organization. Second, the study needed to gain understanding of the *complexity* and the range of the communication functions within individual non-profit organizations. Third, these communication functions needed to be *contextualized* within the day-to-day operations of the organization and the larger challenges and opportunities they faced for their advocacy efforts. Fourth, the data must be *descriptive* to fully represent participants' views and expectations surrounding advocacy and communication. Finally, because a primary objective of the study was to recognize the complete range of communication tactics and contexts for non-profit advocacy, the study needed to allow for the *emergence* of unanticipated views and practices related to non-profit external communication.

I chose two complementary methodologies to best align with this criteria: qualitative semi-structured interviews and document research. Qualitative semi-structured interviews provide access to the *perspectives* of the individuals who are involved in the practice and insight into how they *contextualize* it within their experiences and activities. The semi-structured nature of the approach allows for the *complexity* of the issue to be discussed and new lines of inquiry to *emerge*. It also allows for the participant to correct assumptions held by the researcher, emphasize certain aspects of the issue over others, and illuminate aspects of the issue not previously known to the researcher. Unlike more quantitative approaches, the dialogic nature of the interview allows the researcher to probe areas of inquiry and to seek clarification or further *description* of experiences and actions as required (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Miller & Glassner, 1997). Qualitative semi-structured interviews were thus best suited to gain insight into participants' goals, the range of tactics used, their perceived effectiveness of the tactics and the internal and external challenges they faced when communicating about homelessness. The most significant limitation of the method for this study was that the interview time with each participant would be bounded, which would limit the knowledge and insights that could be gained through the process. Document research supplemented the interviews to provide insight into some of the historical and contextual factors surrounding the issue and the individual non-profit organizations at a more general level.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research study was designed to respond to the needs of the research question and the expanded theoretical framework for analysis. Specifically, the focus on understanding the realm of interactions and contexts that contributes to the advocacy practices of different organizations required multiple sites and varied organizational configurations. Similarly, identification and analysis of the tactics and strategies used for advocacy efforts required inclusion of a broad representation of organization types.

Research Sites

Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, and Toronto were selected as the research sites for the study on the basis that each city has unique experiences with homelessness and because non-profits and local governments in each city have approached the issue distinctly. Vancouver was chosen because it has the largest concentrated homeless population in Canada and has a vocal and active non-profit sector. It made progressive commitments to address homelessness when it was awarded the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and recently elected a mayor who ran on a platform to end homelessness. Calgary was chosen due to the recent, highly publicized, development of a 10-year plan to end homelessness, spearheaded by the business community at the request of the mayor. Ottawa was chosen as a site of analysis due to its proximity to the federal government (an important stakeholder in addressing the issue), and because of the presence of a strong, cohesive, coalition of non-profit organizations and academics. Finally, Toronto was chosen because it has a longstanding history of public demonstrations to raise attention to

the issue. It also has the most active municipal government program in Canada to end street homelessness.

Participant recruitment

Interviews were conducted with 30 executives and managers of non-profit organizations active in the areas of homelessness, poverty and social housing. Interviews were also conducted with eight local politicians and city staff responsible for dealing with homelessness issues and for managing municipal responses to it. Potential interview subjects were identified through the document research to identify non-profit organizations active on issues of homelessness in each of the four cities. A list of 12 – 15 potential interview subjects was identified for each city, taking into consideration size of organization, primary mandate of the organization, and type of communication activity performed in the municipality. Effort was made to ensure representation within each city and across the full sample of small organizations and large organizations, social service providers, charity organizations, protest groups, policy advocacy organizations, shelter organizations and long-term housing organizations, organizations that utilize contentious politics to gain the attention of governments and those that pursue more collaborative approaches.

Following the identification of potential research subjects, a formal letter was faxed to each individual, outlining the research project, inviting them to participate, and outlining my expectations of their participation (see Appendix F). The project proceeded with approval by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. Letters were followed up with a personal phone call 7 – 10 days later if a response had not been received.

When individuals agreed to participate, interview details were formalized. Two days prior to the interview, I sent a reminder email to each participant confirming the time and location of the interview. A total of 38 interviews were arranged. Three of the interviews (Calgary Homeless Foundation, Homeless Awareness Calgary, and Shepherds of Good Hope) were joint interviews with two individuals from the organization in attendance. One participant, Sharon Stroick from the City of Calgary, declined an interview but agreed to respond to any questions in writing. One participant, Jae Kim of StreetoHome Foundation, was unavailable for a personal interview, but agreed to a telephone interview. The list of interviews conducted in each city is included as Appendix G.

Interview protocol

For some respondents, interviews can be sites of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1996) if discussing sensitive issues or if they feel an imbalance of power in the research process. To address these concerns, I took care to ensure that interview subjects felt recognized for their expertise and that moral and institutional guidelines for ethical conduct were followed. I was also very diligent to approach potential interview subjects as someone who had been involved in and understood the challenges of non-profit activity and management, rather than a detached expert, seeking to minimize any feelings of unease among interview subjects with the research process or the intentions of the study.

Interviews were held, where possible, at the participant’s place of work. This location allowed for a more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for the participant. It

also allowed me to gain further information about the organization through gathering information circulars or annual reports available on site. At the start of the interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form, a copy of which was left with them (see Appendix H). The consent form, in accordance with tri-council ethics regulations, confirmed that comments made in the interview would be attributed to the individual and/or their organization in the final dissertation. Despite the personal attributions, the research was deemed “minimal risk” as individuals were acting within their professional capacities as non-profit executives and communicators. All participants agreed to being named in the dissertation and signed the consent form. Participants were provided the option to stop the interview at any point or to request that any comments made be struck from the record. Only one participant asked that a comment not be attributed to them. In the writing of this dissertation I chose not to attribute comments that negatively commented on other organizations’ practices or policies, recognizing the fluidity of relationships within the sector and the likelihood that some of the tensions would be resolved by the time this dissertation was published.

To begin each interview, the research participant(s) were asked to talk about the mandates and goals of their organization and to describe their job portfolio. I then asked about the internal structure of the organization, the communication and advocacy tactics used, the goals and measurements of these tactics and how the interview subjects felt that their organization contributed to the larger advocacy effort relating to homelessness (see Appendix I). Although an interview guide was developed, it was not adhered to strictly in each case as some themes and questions were more relevant in some circumstances than in others. Interview questions were largely open-ended, in which the participants

were invited to share their most pertinent insights and experiences about public communication and advocacy.

As an interviewer, I sought to build rapport with the interview subjects through communicating my past experience in non-profit management and communication and the value that I placed in the work that they performed. I made clear that my interest in the research was to further the capacity of non-profit organizations to effect positive social change although I was careful not to reveal how I thought this was best achieved. In most cases, I believe I was successful in establishing rapport with the interview participants. Many of the research participants offered to extend the time of the interview to provide more information or offered to introduce me to other potential interviewees. The comfort of the participants with me as an interviewer was also evident in the informal and candid nature of many of their comments and their willingness to provide additional information even when it wasn't requested.

Interviews typically lasted between 45 minutes and 75 minutes. Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. Following the interviews, transcripts were prepared. Interviews were conducted between February and August of 2009. Calgary interviews were conducted February 23 – 26, 2009.⁵³ Vancouver interviews were conducted March 16 – 19, 2009.⁵⁴ Toronto interviews were completed April 27 – 29, 2009. Interviews in Ottawa were conducted between April, 2009 and August, 2009.

⁵³ Travel for the Calgary interviews was, in part, funded by the Growing Home Conference, at which I presented a paper.

⁵⁴ Travel for the Vancouver interviews was funded by Carleton University Faculty of Graduate Studies Research Bursary Fund.

Management and analysis of data

Interview transcripts were edited, primarily to remove any speech tics and to correct any major grammar errors for written presentation, and loaded into NVivo 8.0, a qualitative research analysis software package. NVivo 8.0 allows researchers to organize large amounts of data, electronically mark up data with relevant codes, memos, and notes, and to compare important results, ideas and themes within different data sets. NVivo 8.0 was useful for this project to manage the large data set and to aid in the retrieval of quotes to illustrate specific themes and findings.

Analysis in qualitative empirical research is always an “interpretive” process (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), thus it is important that researchers be reflective of both the data and their subject position in relation to the research. Reflection considers “the perceptual, cognitive, theoretical, linguistic, (inter)textual, political and cultural circumstances that form the backdrop to – as well as impregnate – the interpretations” (Alvesson & Skodberg, 2009, p. 9). To address interpretation bias, Geertz (1973) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) call for researchers to present wholesome or “thick descriptions” of the phenomenon under study, opening their findings to review by other researchers, in addition to following best practices. Similarly, researchers must constantly turn attention “inwards” to reflect on how their own values, beliefs, intellectual and cultural traditions, and actions impact the research and analysis of research (Alvesson & Skodberg, 2009). In analyzing the data, I followed best practices of reviewing the transcripts multiple times to allow themes and patterns to emerge organically. I also actively sought out and allowed for negative and contradictory findings to emerge. In reporting the findings, I strove for thick descriptions by including the direct voices of my participants.

Throughout the research process, I reflected individually and with colleagues on my personal influences and biases for the research and analysis. I did not attempt to deny these influences but instead acknowledged them and recognized them as a component of the research. In some instances, reflection led me back to the data to seek deeper analysis or to confirm issues. In others, my personal views and experiences helped to inform and interpret the data.

LIMITATIONS

Overall, the research study provided rich data that offered important insights into the goals, strategies, and contexts surrounding non-profit external communication on issues of homelessness and the commensurability of strategic and dialogic advocacy goals. The findings of this portion of the study were limited by the sample. I was not able to secure interviews with all organizations that I contacted. Time, funding, and project scope limited the number of organizations that could be interviewed for the project. Similarly, some key organizations declined the invitation to participate in the research. Interviews with policy makers and elected politicians totaled only two or three interviews in each city. This limited the ability to develop any commonalities or themes among policy makers' views of non-profit public communication practices. However, they were important to conduct, even in this limited scope, as they confirmed which organizations and actions resonated at the political level. I was also careful to ensure that the policy makers and politicians that I interviewed had committee or departmental responsibility for the issue of homelessness and regularly interacted with the non-profit sector on the issue. While the study sample is limited, it nonetheless offers an expanded

view of non-profit advocacy communication practices to that which is currently available and identifies new opportunities for future research.

In the following two chapters, I present the findings and analysis of the empirical study. Chapter 6 explores the negotiation context in which organizations publicly communicate on issues of social housing, homelessness, and poverty. It defines the realm of interactions that contribute to the advocacy practices of non-profit organizations. It also discusses the tensions and trade-offs inherent to this negotiation context that non-profits negotiate through their communication practices. Chapter 7 reports on the goals, tactics, and strategies adopted by the non-profits organizations in each city. It draws on the conceptual framework of instrumental and communicative action to analyze these goals, tactics, and strategies and the possibilities for non-profit advocacy to occupy a unique “realm” between instrumental rationality and communicative action (Schlosberg, 1995, p. 298).

CHAPTER 6 NEGOTIATION CONTEXTS OF NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

As outlined in the previous chapter, central to analyzing the efficacy of non-profit advocacy practices is having a complete understanding of the intentions, goals, tactics, and contexts surrounding non-profit communication. This chapter draws on the negotiated order framework to examine these factors and how they inform and are informed by non-profit advocacy.

The interviews with non-profit agencies and policy makers reveal various organizational, social, and political contexts important to the study of non-profit advocacy relating to homelessness. This chapter explores these contexts, how they interact to create unique negotiation contexts for each organization, tensions across these contexts, and opportunities for non-profit organizations to negotiate these tensions and contexts within and through communication practices. The central questions addressed in this chapter are: what are the organizational, social, and political contexts faced by organizations communicating externally on issues of homelessness, social housing, and poverty, how do they interact, and how do they inform and become informed by communication practices and strategies?

The contexts that were identified in the study include organizational perceptions of the role and function of communication and advocacy, organizational goals for communication and advocacy, organizational capacities, multi-organizational fields and relationships, public perceptions about homelessness, media perceptions of homelessness and the non-profit sector, and political perceptions and motivations. This is not an

exhaustive list: a comprehensive analysis of all elements that comprise a negotiated order is impossible, especially when the fluid nature of negotiated orders is accounted for.

What is reported and discussed are some of the more notable contexts that were identified by the research participants or emerged within the study. Contrary to current scholarship about non-profit advocacy, this chapter does not argue for the primacy of situational contexts in impacting or determining non-profit communication practices. Instead, it recognizes that all contexts contribute, in varying and specific degrees, to the negotiated order for advocacy surrounding issues of homelessness and for individual organizations. Moreover, it asserts that the negotiation context (comprised of the negotiation context and the structural context) (Strauss, 1978) is regularly influenced or negotiated through the external communication practices of non-profit organizations acting in this area.

Analysis reveals that “communication” is recognized as an important function to achieve varied organizational and advocacy goals; however rarely is it employed strategically. The perceptions of organizations about the role and value of communication informs how they plan and strategize about their advocacy objectives. These perceptions also inform how different organizations institutionalize the functions of communication and advocacy, develop capacities around them, and assign funding for them. External contexts such as multi-organizational fields surrounding the issue and organization, public perceptions of the issue, media perceptions of the issue and non-profit sector, and political processes and motivations add further complexity. In the different cities examined in this study, different organizational actors either support or constrain advocacy efforts and these support systems influence and are influenced by public and media perceptions and actions. The myriad contexts interact to create unique

mesostructures and differing negotiation contexts for organizations communicating about homelessness. To be successful, organizations must recognize the numerous elements that inform their communication practices, how they interact, and the opportunities to negotiate them through strategic communication.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Organizational perceptions of the role and function of communication and advocacy and how they are institutionalized are important elements of the negotiation context. How an organization understands the function of communication and advocacy and the relationship between them influences how it is institutionalized in that organization. Most organizations in the study recognize a need to communicate externally, identify social and political change goals for this communication, and develop organizational functions to facilitate it. Few, however, recognize society-centred communication as a form of advocacy and the tactical and strategic implications this raises. In part, this reflects a narrow definition of advocacy that limits it to government relations or policy advocacy. What results is a Balkanization of the policy advocacy function and the communication function in many organizations. In turn, capacities for communication and policy advocacy are developed independently. Organizations with narrow mandates relating primarily to policy advocacy are less likely to separate the functions.

The perception and role of communication

Among the non-profits interviewed for the study, communication was considered to be an essential organizational function. As stated by one organization: “I guess that’s the evolution piece, we just understood that it was critical to the ongoing success of the organization” (personal interview, Tim Stock-Bateman, February 24, 2009). This suggests that non-profits are recognizing the critical role that communication plays in organizational success and viability (Deacon, 1999; Dimitrov, 2008; Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008).

When asked what the function of communication was for their organization, many respondents focused on the need to access external audiences and apprise them of their efforts and goals:

I mean we’ve got to be telling people what we’re doing, what we’re trying to do. We’ve got to be telling people that we, that our whole mission of ending homelessness in ten years is actually achievable (personal interview, Sheridan McVean, February 26, 2009).

There’s a lot of communication work to do in terms of just letting the public know what we’re working on, that we are for example working on this measurable plan, that’s not really out there, I mean the people that are really involved and engaged in the issue know but it’s not the mass public knows so part of our communications work, one piece is kind of setting the, informing the public about what Streets to Homes is doing, what our vision is and what we’re trying to accomplish (personal interview, Jae Kim, March 13, 2009).

This emphasis on public education and creating public awareness of issues and solutions as a strategy to achieve long-term visions was common among many of the organizations interviewed for the study. This reveals a strong preference for interactive forms of dialogue – an approach that is consistent with organizational mandates and practices that seek to achieve collectively determined goals and visions.

Respondents articulated numerous and varied goals for their external communication efforts. Often times, specific instrumental goals were noted. These included fundraising, acquiring resources for their organization, effecting change in existing social programs, and seeking new government programs or public policies. At other times, organizations identified dialogic goals for their efforts such as raising issue awareness among the public, policy makers or media, creating broader awareness and understanding about homelessness and individuals who experience homelessness, and initiating debate among the public or policy makers to prioritize the issue and find long-term solutions. Most often, however, organizations assigned multiple and diverse goals to their communications efforts. This was equally true for the organizations with multiple and diverse mandates as well as those more narrowly focused on effecting policy change.

For example, the Shepherds of Good Hope in Ottawa, an organization with multiple mandates including emergency service provision and program advocacy, identify fundraising and issue awareness as important outcomes of their communication efforts with members of the public:

Angela: Fundraising and awareness [goal of public communication].

Gina: OK, and what type of awareness and who are you trying to make aware?

Angela: Everybody. Absolutely everybody. That there's a really big problem that homeless people are not to be shunned or to be forgotten, that they are people they all have stories that, help us help them. We're also trying to, we're trying to become very much involved with communities so it's all about community helping it's not just us ... if we pitch community they understand then this is also their responsibility to take care of the poor, the impoverished, the homeless, it's their responsibility, it's not just ours (personal interview, Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009).

Similarly, CUPS in Calgary wants their communication with the public to contribute to deeper public understandings of homelessness, in addition to raising their organization's profile and garnering needed financial support:

So our communications don't, we don't stop at just communicating about CUPS, we take the opportunities we have, we hope, to help educate our communities so that they gain a broader and better understanding of some of the realities of homelessness and poverty (personal interview, Tim Stock-Bateman, February 24, 2009).

When communicating to policy makers, they also recognize the potential for multiple outcomes. Communication in this realm can promote the value of existing government-funded programs and to lobby for new or continued funding (personal interview, Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009; personal interview, Rob Eady, April 21, 2009; personal interview, Dan Sabourin, June 5, 2009). It can also create increased awareness among governments of the issues relating to homelessness, the individuals experiencing homelessness, and the need for problem resolution.

Organizations with narrower policy advocacy mandates also seek multiple goals for their communication efforts. Homeless Awareness Calgary and Ottawa activist Jane Scharf,⁵⁵ for example, seek immediate changes in programs as well as a more comprehensive understanding of the issue by policy makers (personal interview, Bonnie Malach, February 23, 2009; personal interview, Jane Scharf, April 23, 2009).

What becomes apparent is that non-profit organizations communicating on issues of social housing, homelessness, and poverty recognize the importance of communication

⁵⁵ Jane Scharf is an individual, not a non-profit organization. However, I included her in the study as the protest efforts that she led were formally organized among a group of individuals and youth experiencing homelessness in Ottawa and align with the other common features of a non-profit organization defined by Salamon *et al.* (1999) (see Chapter 1).

and seek multiple goals and outcomes through their external communication practices. Sometimes their efforts seek to affect program or policy decisions taken by governments, what Reid (2000) calls policy-centred advocacy. At other times they seek to create shared understandings of the issue and its resolution among citizens and/or policy makers, what Reid (2000) call society-centred advocacy. In many cases organizations seek both outcomes simultaneously. This was equally true for the organizations that provided social services as well as those that focused on policy advocacy efforts. The findings call into question typologies that delineate between “advocacy” or “service” organizations. In this study, advocacy coalitions, protest groups, housing providers, charities, religious groups, research organizations, and foundations all have an advocacy component associated with their communication efforts, although not all recognize their communication efforts as a form of advocacy (see further discussion below).

Institutionalizing communication and advocacy

How an organization institutionalizes the functions of communication and advocacy reflects and impacts perceptions and understandings of their function and role in the organization. Recognition of the importance of communication for achieving organizational goals prompted many of the non-profits interviewed for the study to formalize a communication function. Yet, many of the organizations did not recognize their efforts to create awareness and shared understandings of issues as a form of advocacy. This resulted in many of the organizations Balkanizing the two functions.

Many of the larger and better-resourced organizations⁵⁶ have long integrated a communication function into their organization. Mid-sized organizations have only recently taken this action. Organizations like CUPS, the Lookout Society, the Youth Services Bureau, and Options Bytown all report formalizing this function in the past year. Similarly, at the time of the interview, the Mustard Seed Ministry in Calgary was hiring a full-time communications staff person.

In some cases, such as the Shepherds of Good Hope and the Youth Services Bureau in Ottawa, the direction to formalize the communication function emerged among staff leadership:

Gina: Where did that direction [communication] come from do you think?

Angela: Our Executive Director, that's primarily her focus, actually. She's an ex-teacher, ex-nun and she loves to talk to the public about the plight of the poor, boy does she like to talk to the public, and that's really I think that's where (personal interview Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009).

I'll give you the reason why. With [Executive Director] Alex Munter and his background, background in journalism, background in politics, not afraid of being in front of the media, I think a lot of the leadership comes from who's leading the agency ... as a result of Alex's position and role and who he is I think that what has resulted in the couple of years that he's been here is a strategy to hire a communications position or director and part-time person so to find areas where we can afford and afford to see the priority in that department and then figure out a way to get it there because it's important (personal interview, Dan Sabourin, June 5, 2009).

In other cases, the need to formalize a communication function emerged from a crisis with external funders (e.g. CUPS) or planning processes that identified a deficiency in this area (e.g. Options Bytown).

The smaller, lesser resourced organizations in the study, like Multifaith Housing Initiative in Ottawa and Homeless Awareness Calgary, have yet to establish a formal

⁵⁶ These organizations include YWCA, the Anglican Archdiocese, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch, and the Calgary Drop in Centre

communications position. Others, like Ottawa Inner City Health and Options Bytown draw on existing partnerships or volunteers to fill this function. Only one organization in the study, Lu'ma Native Housing Society, did not seek to staff this function. The decision is based on lack of resources and what are considered more pressing priorities (personal interview, Marcel Swain, March 17, 2009).

Most organizations with broad mandates that include service delivery and charity delineate public education and awareness efforts from policy or program advocacy functions, not recognizing the public education and awareness efforts as a form of advocacy. "Advocacy" for many of these organizations is limited to government relations and policy advocacy, which aligns with the definition of political activity in the *Income Tax Act*. In line with government delineations between charity and advocacy, Executive Directors or Board members typically fulfil the policy advocacy role and communications staff fulfils the public education role. Some examples of this include CUPS, the Mustard Seed, and the DI in Calgary, the Lookout Emergency Aid Society in Vancouver, and Street Health in Toronto. One organization in Ottawa reported deferring the advocacy function to the local advocacy alliance, of which they were a member: "No, the Alliance to End Homelessness does [advocacy]. We have a number here that are on the Alliance, but no we don't" (personal interview, Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009). In these instances, the Balkanization of "public education" and "advocacy" is institutionalized within the organization, along with the limited perceptions of their role and practice.

In only two organizations with service delivery and charity mandates were there formalized staff positions for advocacy. The Toronto Anglican Diocese employed a

Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant, to reflect the prioritization of this function in the organization. As explained by Murray McAdam of the Toronto Anglican Diocese:

there was certainly an agreement on the part of church leaders, including the Bishops that the root causes needed to be addressed and we needed to make that explicitly a part of our vision for the diocese of Toronto that we wanted to really do more to kind of educate, mobilize Anglicans on the issues and to be a voice with politicians in that regard (personal interview, April 27, 2009).

There was little integration between the communication and policy advocacy functions in the Toronto Anglican Diocese. The YWCA, on the other hand, integrated the two functions:

the director of advocacy and communication position was part of a strategic planning process that was completed in 2001 here at YWCA Toronto ... And part of the strategic, a cornerstone of the strategic plan hinged on being able to sustain this growth required a dramatic increase in visibility of the work of the YWCA but specifically not in the usual sense that sort of corporate communication is hinged on a brand recognition in some kind of hollow sense but rather that the cornerstone of who we were was being communicated through the kind of social justice work we were engaged in, specifically as a reliable voice on issues of relevance to women and girls (personal interview, Amanda Dale, April 29, 2009).

Organizations with mandates focused more narrowly on public policy change were more apt to integrate the communication and advocacy functions. For small- to medium-sized organizations advocacy was typically assigned to the primary staff person, who is also responsible for communication. Examples include Pivot Legal Society, Portland Hotel, the Alliance to End Homelessness, and Citywide Housing Coalition.⁵⁷ The dual responsibility is largely due to limited staffing levels in many of these organizations. One larger, better resourced organization, the Calgary Homeless

⁵⁷ The Portland Hotel's primary mandate is to provide services for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. They are also an outspoken advocate surrounding issues of harm reduction in Vancouver. Portland exemplifies the difficulty of categorizing organizations based on a "service" or "advocacy" mandate.

Foundation, had a separate staff position for advocacy, although responsibility for advocacy extended to the full management team:

Our VPs in different areas have responsibility for policy advocacy as well in their portfolios. So it doesn't, it's not supposed to fall on one person. We're all advocates in our networks ... As long as everybody understands and is on the same page with the same policy agenda and we strategize together to understand where the opportunities are then if the opportunities come up to influence then we all have accountability to do that (personal interview, Sheridan McVean, February 26, 2009).

Narrow conceptions of advocacy inform the integration of the communication and advocacy function in non-profit organizations. Organizations with broad mandates that include service delivery and charity narrowly define advocacy as government relations or policy and program advocacy, disassociating the function from the "society-centred" public awareness and education advocacy efforts that are the focus of much of the communication work. Few of these organizations dedicate more than limited or shared resources to the policy advocacy function; although the more an organization places a priority on it, the more resources that are dedicated to it. Even fewer organizations coordinate efforts among the public education and policy advocacy functions. Organizations who place a stronger emphasis on policy advocacy integrate the two functions more closely, although the integration may be due to limited staffing levels rather than recognition of their interdependence. These findings reflect a general lack of understanding of advocacy and the importance of communication for achieving advocacy goals. It also reveals an underlying tension between service and advocacy efforts, informed by government legislation that pervades non-profit organization and activity.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

The ability for an organization to realize its advocacy goals is contingent on the capacity of the organization to develop and facilitate effective communication messages that create social or political change. Davis (2002) and Phillips (2007) argue that to be effective, non-profits must ensure that they have the skills and knowledge of communication and public policy processes, respectively. Capacity for advocacy thus is contingent on the organization having, or having access to relevant skills, knowledge, and funding to support its communication efforts. Relevant skills and knowledge include not only expertise in the areas of communication and advocacy but also the ability to plan and strategize communication and advocacy efforts to achieve maximum impact (Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008).

Development of skills and knowledge

In organizations with only one or two personnel (e.g. Portland Hotel Society, Multifaith Housing Initiative, and Homeless Awareness Calgary), staff are required to be generalists and often have little background or experience in communication or advocacy and must learn their skills through “on the job training”.

In many of the medium to large organizations with diverse mandates, where communications and advocacy functions are divided, communication positions are staffed by individuals with some background in communications or public relations,⁵⁸ while Executive Directors typically learn public policy processes and skills through their

⁵⁸ For example, Angela Campbell, Director of Fundraising at the Shepherds of Good Hope has a marketing and communications background, Louise Gallagher at the DI has a background in corporate communications, and Karen Young at Lookout Emergency Aid Society has a background in publishing and design.

ongoing engagement with the function (personal interview Beric German, April 27, 2009, personal interview, Margaret Vandenbroucke, April 27, 2009). Where communications expertise is not hired in, developing skills in this area is an identified priority. Rob Eady at the Shepherds of Good Hope in Ottawa, who has a background in corrections, is taking public relations courses at a local college (personal interview, April 21, 2009). In a few cases, organizations with larger budgets augment communications capacity through outsourcing. CUPS and the Citywide Housing Initiative have both hired public relations groups to assist them in their campaigns.

Most organizations report, however, that staffing levels do not meet the expectations for the function. As noted by Louise Gallagher:

I mean that's really what it gets down to is that I am limited by the fact that I am one person with this passionate desire to shift the world-view of what homelessness is really about and one person, ... So ... the challenge is time. And resources more than anything else (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

Some of the organizations increase their limited personnel capacities by taking advantage of partnerships or by deferring some of the responsibility for communications to board members, volunteers and other organizations. Inner-City Health in Ottawa, for example, has an arrangement with the Ottawa Hospital and University of Ottawa to access communication personnel as needed. Similarly, the Alliance to End Homelessness delegates some of the communication function to trained Board members:

People have upped the amount of work that they do and that's been possible partly because we do things like provide media training, we do things like provide speaking notes so that some of the preparation aspects that a person might feel to be onerous are done so that helps put people in position [to talk to media]" (personal interview, Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009).

Organizations with narrower policy mandates typically have more skilled advocates in staff positions. The Wellesley Institute, for example, ensures this capacity is on staff:

Among our senior staff here at the Wellesley Institute, the two people who are most responsible for coordinating our policy agenda are myself and my colleague, Bob Gardner. And we have complimentary backgrounds, Bob's been many, many years in legislative research at the Ontario government so he kind of knows the system from inside and I spent many years as an advocate for organizations and as a government relations manager for a number of groups so I sort of know the outside perspective (personal interview Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009).

Similarly, Sheridan McVean at the Calgary Homeless Foundation has a government relations background and Lynne Browne at the Alliance to End Homelessness has a policy background. Only a few organizations in the study report efforts to actively build their skills and knowledge for advocacy. The Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa, for example, pursues media training for Board members as part of their advocacy training.

Consistent with recent scholarship (Greenberg & Grosenick, 2008), these findings suggest that non-profit organizations, having recognized the value of communications, are seeking to build capacities in this area. Many organizations retain communications expertise through hiring practices, or outsourcing (Davis, 2002), although it remains that the larger, better resourced organizations that have specialists on staff (Greenberg & Walters, 2004; Jacobs & Glass, 2002). Smaller organizations develop this capacity among leadership or through partnerships where possible, either to gain specialist knowledge or to manage limited resources across competing organizational functions. The separation of the communication and advocacy functions in many organizations results in a lack of strategic policy knowledge for communications and a lack of

communications skill in the policy realm. Organizations with narrower policy mandates are more likely develop capacities surrounding knowledge of the policy process although it is often only the larger, better resourced organizations that have the ability to develop specialists in this area.

Resources for advocacy

Funding for communication and advocacy activities is an ongoing challenge for many of the organizations in the study. Karen Young of the Lookout Emergency Aid Society says of her budget: “it’s very small, in the whole scheme of things, it’s a blip” (personal interview, March 18, 2009). Similarly, Tim Stock-Bateman at CUPS says: “It’s not huge, we do what we can” (personal interview, February 24, 2009). In some organizations, there is internal pushback against more active or professional communication activities as was the case at the Shepherds of Good Hope:

A few years ago when we changed our annual report a little bit more, kind of glossier, kind of paper. You’re spending our donors moneys on this, are you kidding me, no, no, no, it’s actually cheaper believe it or not (personal interview, Rob Eady, April 21, 2009).

Dimitrov (2008) calls this the “scarcity management” approach where “investing in communications [is considered] an idiosyncratic self-indulgence” (p. 20). Lu’ma Native Housing Society exemplifies this practice:

First of all, we get scant resources to do a fairly significant job ... What we get is we get funding to deliver a program, we don’t get funding to be an advocate to create policy to engage government to provide new policies” (personal interview, Marcel Swain, March 17, 2009).

These reflections reveal an ongoing tension between service and advocacy in many organizations with service delivery and charity missions. To be effective,

communication efforts need to be supported with appropriate budgets, yet they are not considered a primary mission of the organization. The lack of funding and pushback against spending is a reflection of this larger tendency to prioritize service delivery over communication and advocacy in an environment defined by limited resources.

Across the non-profit sector, there is a lack of public funding for communications and advocacy efforts. Amanda Dale of the YWCA was “unable to secure the kind of investment that would have made it possible for me to have a web writer for instance. So [that] affected what we were able to do [with the website]” (personal interview, April 29, 2009). Erika Khandor of Street Health, explains the broader context:

The problem of course is that funding to do dissemination is little or none, and so if you, we were lucky to actually secure an additional year and a bit of funding beyond the launch of the report, we got funding to do this twofold thing which was partly just disseminating and kind of advocating, not specifically using those words, but on our findings and then other half of it though, and the reason why people were willing to fund it, we did some focus pieces, so we did deeper analysis on some specific issues or population groups from the survey and put out little bulletins on them” (personal interview, April 27, 2009).

The lack of funding for communication influences which tactics can be undertaken and which goals can be pursued. In some organizations, communication personnel seek to negotiate their limited budgets through cost reductions (as is the case for Shepherds of Good Hope), or partnering with organizations willing to take on or share the advocacy work, as is the case with Lu’ma Native Housing Society (personal interview, Rob Eady, April 21, 2009; personal interview, Marcel Swain, March 17, 2009). Some organizations seek to raise private funding to support their advocacy and communication work. In 2008, the Alliance to End Homelessness organized a series of workshops across the country to train community organizations to develop a local report card on homelessness and housing to raise operating funds (personal interview, Lynda O’Neill, August 20,

2009). Other organizations consider fundraising to increase their budgets, although these goals are often tempered by the lack of human resources: “I think some of the things I’m going to actively do, when there’s time to actively do it, is ... get some money donated -- that is for PR purposes” (personal interview, Karen Young, March 18, 2009).

The lack of appropriate funding results in many service organizations dedicating a large component of their communication work to fundraising and to tangible short-term goals that justify the use of resources. This draws expertise away from longer-term efforts such as generating public awareness of issues and shared understanding that many organizations note as equally important to addressing issues of homelessness. Alternatively, organizations seek to maximize resources and achieve multiple goals through individual communication efforts.

Strategic planning

The degree to which an organization employs strategic communication planning reflects the capacities and skills of the organization for advocacy. All organizations, to varying degrees, implement strategic planning processes; however, planning tends to focus on developing strategies for short-term instrumental goals. Efforts related to broader advocacy goals are more reactive.

In many of the very small organizations like Homeless Awareness Calgary and Multifaith Housing Initiative, formal communications and advocacy planning is not an organizational priority, but conducted informally by staff and board members. The informal nature of the planning aligns with the flattened hierarchy of the organization. As explained by Lorraine Bentley:

We're not that formal, you know. It's the same people. We have a Board and the Board has the communications committee and a Board member chairs the committee. And I usually implement the decisions of the committee with the help of the Board chair and anybody else who wants to work on it at the Board level (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009).

Most of the medium to large organizations have some degree of formal communication planning. In those organizations where the communications function is formalized through staff positions or departments,⁵⁹ a yearly communications plan is developed with clear approval and reporting structures. Most often the approval of the plan falls to the Executive Director. On rare occasions, it is reviewed by the Board. These communication plans often cover such activities as the development and launch of website content, fundraising banquets, brochures, annual reports, media relations, outreach, etc. Organizations differ in the degree to which tangible outputs are associated with the plan. The Shepherds of Good Hope, for example, have clearly articulated targets that are reviewed on an ongoing basis, whereas the Lookout Emergency Aid Society views their plan as a "living document":

It has to be kind of a living document because this is not the kind of a business that is static, there's different stuff coming up all the time, even in terms of fundraising for something in particular (personal interview, Karen Young, March 18, 2009).

Other organizations, primarily the smaller organizations that have not formalized a communications function, do not have yearly communications plans but develop individual event or campaign plans. For example, the Mustard Seed has a communication plan for its 25th anniversary, as does Options Bytown for its 20th.

⁵⁹ These organizations include the Vancouver Foundation, Shepherds of Good Hope, St. Michael's Hospital Centre for Research on Inner City, YWCA Toronto, Calgary Homeless Foundation, CUPS, and the Drop In Centre

StreetHealth in Toronto develops plans for the dissemination of their research activities, as does St. Michael's Hospital.

In all of the above cases, communication plans articulate specific instrumental goals and outputs for communication efforts. Only a few organizations note efforts to create strategic messaging around their targets, further illustrating that many of the organizations in the study were unaware of the strategic and tactical implications of communication required to achieve social and political change.

Organizations with a narrow mandate of program or policy advocacy regularly develop strategic communications plans around specific campaigns. Groups like Pivot Legal Society and the Citywide Housing Coalition are examples of this trend. In these cases individual campaigns are part of a larger goal to raise awareness of the issue and effect political change. Smaller, independent advocacy organizations are more reactive:

Well I mean probably it's quite dependent on what's going on in the community. It's not like we're city bureaucrats and sit down and do a planning session about what we think the needs are for the community and develop a plan or strategy for the next three years. It's the other way around. We say here we are in this community and we're housing this group of 70 people, what do they need and then we advocate to get those services and in doing that we learned an awful lot about what the real problems are (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009).

For long-term policy advocacy with governments, few organizations have formal strategies or, if they do, they are considered "living documents". Organizations with formal strategies include the Anglican Diocese, the YWCA, the Calgary Homeless Foundation, and the Alliance to End Homelessness, typically the larger, better resourced organizations with specialists on staff. At the time of the interview, the StreetoHome Foundation in Vancouver was in the process of developing a strategic plan. All emphasize the need to be flexible (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

The Calgary Homeless Foundation explains how its policy advocacy tactics draw from both existing plans and emerging circumstances:

We have this plan but we're also doing a bunch of things on an ongoing basis anyway. But the messaging is going to change. The messaging is going to change depending on whatever is happening at that moment and time so there's some, what I call boilerplate, some messages that will be more umbrella or ongoing messages, that we can use on an ongoing basis but then there's going to be some specific kinds of things and so yeah sure, some of them will be based on issues, some of them we do based on what we do (personal interview, Sheridan McVean, February 26, 2009).

Similarly, the YWCA in Toronto maintains a strategic plan while being open to taking advantage of opportunities that surface:

I'd like to tell you ... everything I do is strategic. I hope, plan, plan is a little, the definition of what a planning period is could be this week, could be today, I have some month to month planning around emerging issues but we need to have our ducks lined up internally so we have a coherent understanding of all the matters that are raised ... and so I'm the one that would take the lead on both the internal and then the subsequent external activities on this (personal interview, Amanda Dale, April 29, 2009).

The need to be flexible on policy issues reflects both the expansive nature of the issue of homelessness and the limited capacities that many organizations have for extensive policy monitoring (personal interview, Amanda Dale, April 29, 2009). On one hand it allows the organization to adapt strategies as new information becomes available on issues. The danger of leaving one's organization open to being "reactive" is that the organizations expend energy responding to issues that emerge and do not develop or contribute to a long-term plan to find a solution to the issue. The focus on short-term instrumental goals also diverts attention away from long-term solutions, and in the case of homelessness can institutionalize emergency responses to the issue and divert discussion and debate about the systemic change required.

The Alliance to End Homelessness was one of the few organizations that developed a strategic communications plan for advocacy: “we developed a strategic plan for engaging media, and it’s a deliberate plan to be public about what we’re doing and what we’re asking for”. Strategic planning occurs at the Steering Committee level and seeks the involvement of all member organizations in the development and approval of the plan (personal interview, Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009). Nonetheless, they remain open to responding to policy issues as they arise, as was the case with the Ottawa Housing Branch restructuring. In this effort, they seek to align short-term and long-term goals and strategize around the best way to achieve them through communication.

Similarly, the YWCA aligns both functions within one plan. However, as Amanda Dale, director of advocacy and communications notes, the day-to-day external communications activities sometimes fall prey to the immediacy of the advocacy function:

In advocacy naturally it’s a little harder to plan ahead. You know certain bills are going through the house, whatever, but they may or may not hit the ground running, they may be, there’s lots of things you can’t predict and stuff that comes up that’s just are totally sideswiped by. So for instance, two years of my work wound up focussing on the changes to the arbitration act in the province of Ontario ... That broadsided me. I picked up the newspaper in June and by September it was pretty much what I was doing full time. Along with all the other tasks I have to do to keep a big place like this running, communication centre for 30 plus programs, now 40 plus programs. But that was not in my plan but it had to be done so that was close to two years of pretty full on activism. So it is a portfolio that needs to be flexible and you can’t be too rigid and in a day, I mean I’m talking about a two year period there, in a day you can’t be rigid” (personal interview, Amanda Dale, April 29, 2009).

To varying degrees, organizations plan and strategize their advocacy efforts. Many organizations undertake situational planning, focusing on identifying outputs for specific communication efforts, devoting little effort to strategizing how these outputs

align with larger advocacy goals. Organizations that recognize the tactical implications of communication for achieving different outcomes are more strategic in their approach. Generally, most organizations remain largely reactive in their efforts surrounding policy advocacy, reflecting the limited staffing available to this function and the more pressing mandates and activities that demand their attention.

The organizational contexts and capacities discussed above uniquely inform the negotiation context for advocacy surrounding issues of homelessness although some commonalities exist. Generally, the larger, better-resourced organizations develop in-house communication and policy skills although these capacities are not always coordinated. Organizations that place a priority on policy advocacy are more likely to be coordinated. Across the sector, funding for communication remains a challenge. For organizations with multiple mandates, this often results in a tension between dedicating needed resources to advocacy and communication and dedicating resources to the provision of services. Capacity and funding pressures also impact the degree to which organizations develop strategic plans for communications and the priorities for and coordination of short-term and long-term advocacy goals.

ORGANIZATIONAL FIELDS AND RELATIONSHIPS

In each city, a dense multi-organizational field (Klandermans, 1972) surrounds the issue of homelessness. Similarly, each organization exists within a multi-organizational field that informs the negotiation context for advocacy. The organizational fields included stakeholders, other organizations serving and advocating

on poverty, social housing and homelessness, corporations, and governments.⁶⁰ In this study, the influence of stakeholders as well as the structural relationships among the organizations addressing homelessness both condition how organizations communicate as well as how they negotiate existing mesostructures (Maines, 1982). These findings move beyond current scholarship that simply maps or identifies the organizational field of an issue or organization noting the positive or negative force of the various actors, as is the case with the social movement literature. Instead, it explores the interactions between the various organizations that inhabit the multi-organizational field.

The non-profit organization itself may be one of the most important elements in the organizational field that influences the negotiation context for advocacy. For most organizations, board members change on a regular basis, which necessitates a regular review and justification of goals and practices. It is also not uncommon, especially in smaller organizations lacking agreed upon policy development practices, for a Board or committee member to “hijack” an organization’s agenda, reprioritizing activities and goals. Some of the organizations in the study report the need to continually educate and maintain ongoing relationships with their Board members to maintain their ongoing support of individual goals and efforts (personal interview, Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009; personal interview Amanda Dale, April 29, 2009).

Many organizations in the study also actively consult and deliberate with issue stakeholders to determine organizational and communication goals. These interactions can also influence internal organizational goals and activities surrounding advocacy and communication, as was the case with Options Bytown and the Youth Services Bureau. In

⁶⁰ Media is also regularly considered part of the multi-organizational field. For the purpose of this analysis, it is discussed separately below.

the case of the Youth Services Bureau, external consultations prioritized policy advocacy, which resulted in them drawing on their existing youth advisory councils (largely internal committees) to be a key voice in advocacy efforts. For Options Bytown, a focus on communication was recommended but could not be fully accommodated due to staffing and capacity limitations (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009).

Formal and informal relationships with other organizations advocating on issues of homelessness and social housing are also part of the multi-organizational field. Formal alliances and coalitions help to define and structure advocacy activities for some organizations, as is the case in Ottawa where virtually all non-profit groups support and participate in the multi-stakeholder Alliance to End Homelessness. Widespread non-profit support of alliances and coalitions is a function of the degree to which the alliance emerges cooperatively from within the sector and the degree to which their approach aligns with the mandate and goals of the member groups. In Ottawa, the Alliance to End Homelessness emerged from within the sector. For the Alliance:

there wasn't a focused group or body that was addressing homelessness and at that point I believe it was at a Community Mental Health Association meeting in the summer or May or June of 1995 the issue of homelessness was discussed at length and at that meeting the coalition was formed. People became members and ... the first five or six years there was an ever-increasing amount of networking that went on so that various agencies and groups would function more efficiently and more effectively in the community ... (personal interview, Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009).

A similar evolution created the Citywide Housing Initiative in Vancouver. However, the two groups take significantly different approaches to their advocacy. The Alliance to End Homelessness communicates directly with politicians and through media, presents evidence-based research to encourage adoption of new social and political approaches to the issue. The Citywide Housing Initiative adopts a more direct action approach,

mounting protests and rallies to raise awareness of the issue among citizens. These differing approaches may be a function of the different cultures in each city or the advocacy orientations of the founding members of the groups (social service organizations for Ottawa and advocacy groups for Vancouver). While both have received large-scale sector support, a second alliance-type group has emerged in Vancouver (the StreetoHome Foundation) focused on policy advocacy, suggesting that the Inner City Housing Coalition is not meeting the policy advocacy needs of the sector in that city.

Among the grassroots agencies in Toronto, sporadic coalitions emerge and re-emerge around combating homelessness. Like the Citywide Housing Initiative, the tactics of these coalitions, especially the Toronto Disaster Relief Coalition, are largely contentious. As a result, some of the more politically moderate organizations are not always comfortable participating. Margaret Vandenbroucke of the Homeless Awareness Group in Toronto explains:

there were always some of us that went out for the demonstrations ... at Queen's Park, and I and others were at the one ... it caused a riot ... there were police on horseback and they started to (inaudible) amongst the crowd, it was scary (personal interview, Margaret Vandenbroucke, April 27, 2009).

The degree to which alliances and coalitions are inclusive of the various organizations and views addressing the issue influences how consistent the message is across the various organizations. In cities where coalitions are not fully inclusive, multiple and sometimes competing approaches are apparent. This is the case in Vancouver where both the Citywide Housing Coalition and the StreetoHome Foundation compete for advocacy voice on the issue. However, even in cities with weak or non-existent advocacy alliances, organizations regularly gather and share information which impacts organizations' advocacy positions and approaches. For example, the Toronto

Archdiocese regularly meets with and seeks to align their position with other social justice groups in the city (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

At the time the interviews were conducted, few organizations had developed or participated in provincial or federal alliances, although the Wellesley Institute has been active at the federal level for a number of years and has organized some national meetings (personal interview, Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009). In 2009, two important initiatives emerged at the federal level: the Homeless Hub and the National Homeless Research Network funded by the REACH3 program.⁶¹ These initiatives will become part of the organizational field surrounding the issue and influence the form and nature of advocacy practices of individual organizations and alliances locally and at provincial and national levels.

The corporate sector also impacts non-profit advocacy on issues of poverty, housing, and homelessness. Groups like the StreetoHome Foundation actively promote the involvement of the corporate sector and invite business leaders to participate in their activities and act as spokespeople with the provincial governments (personal interview, Jae Kim, March 13, 2009). They also recognize the corporate sector as an important stakeholder in moving forward with more affordable housing and actively seek their involvement in this regard. Some organizations, however, feel that the involvement of the corporate sector negatively impacts the grassroots advocacy effort.

And they give away, they get down and everyone kiss their ass, oh there's so and so, the BIA, there's the, and they just turn into these processes where everybody

⁶¹ The Research Alliance for Canadian Homelessness, Housing and Health (REACH3) is a national alliance of academic researchers and community-based organizations focused on expanding understandings of the causes and consequences of homelessness in Canada. It was established in 2006 and is funded through a five-year grant by the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

kowtows to the BIAs, we've got the BIA on side, well hallelujah you know (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009)

Active solicitation – or dissuasion – of the corporate sector as an engaged stakeholder impacts the negotiation context for individual organizations and the mesostructures surrounding the issues in different cities. Those who seek corporate involvement, like StreetoHome Foundation, must account for the corporate sector's views and interests in their communication and efforts (personal interview, Jae Kim, March 13, 2009). Those who discourage active corporate involvement expend communication efforts to counter what are often negative perceptions or claims made by this group of stakeholders, as is the case with many service organizations in Ottawa who continually find themselves at odds with their corporate neighbours. The Shepherds of Good Hope, for example, is regularly identified by its corporate neighbours as the primary source of debauchery and debris in the downtown core. As a result, they are forced to expend communication effort to inform these individuals, as well as other stakeholders, about the inaccuracy of attributing these community problems only to the homeless population (personal interview, Rob Eady, April 21, 2009).

Finally, governments, at all levels, are an important stakeholder in the multi-organizational field surrounding the issue and organization. In many respects, as was discussed in Chapter 2, homelessness is a political issue. Governments finance and support programs that provide services to individual who are homeless. For long-term policy change, they must be convinced to commit to address the problem, dedicate resources to it, and review and change existing programs and legislation. Government openness to addressing the issue and to non-profit advocacy efforts influences an organization's advocacy efforts. In cities where municipal governments have taken the

position that they are not responsible for the issue, advocates find little reception for their policy advocacy efforts and must find ways to negotiate this lack of political opportunity. Two service organizations in Ottawa comment on how unreceptive their municipal government is to the issue. A similar sentiment is expressed by service organizations in Calgary on the issue of social housing and organizations in Vancouver in regards to provincial housing policies. In Toronto, direct action advocacy groups find the municipal council unreceptive to their efforts. Some non-profits address these challenges through direct action, as is the case with TDRC seeking to embarrass governments into addressing the issue. Others try to encourage citizens to elect more responsive governments, as is the case with Citywide Housing Initiative. Others simply “wait it out”, as is the case with some of the Ottawa agencies (personal interview, Wendy Muckle, April 24, 2009). Determination of which strategy to adopt is a function of the skills and capacity of the organization to advocate as well as their history and nature of relationship with the government (Young, 2000). Non-profit organizations differ from social movement groups in that they are not always in a contentious relationship with government; many of them have active interaction with government to deliver services or pursue ongoing relationships. Non-profits can potentially leverage these relationships to advocate on issues despite the limited political opportunities available to them.

Changes in government leadership also significantly shift opportunities for interaction and communication with governments. The recent election of Mayor Gregor Robertson in Vancouver resulted in Pivot Legal Society and Lu’ma Native Housing Society re-evaluating their approach with municipal government and developing more deliberative relationships with policy makers (personal interview, Laura Track, March 16,

2009; personal interview Marcel Swain, March 17, 2009). Similarly, Carlene Donnelly at the Calgary Urban Project Society feels that the new Premier offers new opportunities to prioritize the issue on the provincial agenda:

It comes down to the ethics of the individual. Every premier and every prime minister and every mayor brings their own personal values and beliefs and that becomes quite clear in a very short period of time what kind of person they are and what they fundamentally believe in. And Stelmach is a farmer guy from Saskatchewan, he was in law school and quit to go back to support his mom when his dad was ill. It says a lot about the person he was that his family came first, that the farm came first. He still owns that home that his parents lived in. He believes in those kinds of root values. It comes from the person that you are to the country you want to live in, in many ways and he brings a sense of community and values that money can't buy, quite frankly. And I think that shows (personal interview, Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009).

Government openness to non-profit communication and advocacy efforts is also an important consideration in the multi-organizational field surrounding the issue and organization. Among the many municipal government respondents in the study, there is a strong sentiment that “their [non-profit sector] energies are probably best spent delivering good services to people that are homeless [than in advocacy]” (personal interview, Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009). Moreover, politicians comment that local groups do not recognize the limited capacity of the governments to address the issue (personal interview, Ric McIver, February 25, 2009; personal interview Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009; personal interview, Alex Cullen, June 12, 2009; personal interview, Joe Mihevc, April 29, 2009). Some went as far to say that because of this, their communication tactics were ineffective:

Frankly, as an elected person that wants to make a positive difference, it's somewhat disappointing to see this dog and pony show done by the people responsible for the direct delivery of these very important services being I think reducing themselves to this charade that goes on a regular basis. And I have great respect for them and the work that they do but it seems that they feel that this is the, somewhere in the manual they've been trained that this is how you lobby political

people to get this done and I'm sure that does work to a certain degree but it's not constructive in the long run. It's constructive to continuing the cycle of perpetual homelessness, addiction, mental illness. It's not constructive in actually solving the problem (personal interview, Ric McIver, February 25, 2009).

While these responses may reflect the lack of in-house capacities for policy advocacy among small non-profit organizations, they also reveal that many politicians do not legitimize non-profits as advocates. This supports the argument about an "advocacy chill" surrounding non-profit involvement in the policy process (Phillips, 2007). Some organizations have responded by directing their communication efforts to citizens, or by increasing their legitimacy with government representatives by developing ongoing relationships with them.

In addition to the interactions with local governments, relationships across different governments are an important component of the multi-organizational field. Due to devolution and the "conflictual federalism" that characterize the Canadian system of governance, there is not a clear understanding of who is responsible for addressing the issue. As noted by Michael Shapcott, this allows for individual orders of governments not to take responsibility for the issue:

Which levels of government are responsible and who should be taking the leadership on it a few years ago, Canada West did a poll of eight cities in Canada, their numbers were quite remarkable when it came to that question, it was almost 1/3, 1/3, 1/3, municipal, provincial, federal. And so one of the things that we think is happening, the political dynamic, is that the governments are, of course they're doing their own polling to and I think they're intensely aware that Canadians are concerned about this issue, they want something to be done, but they're not quite sure what needs to be done and who's [responsible], so there's a huge amount of blame (personal interview, Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009).

For non-profit communication to effectively negotiate this impasse, it must assign responsibility for the issue at the same time as lobby for policy change. Some non-profits recognize the long-term nature of this goal:

And that's not necessarily a bad thing but all of change, and I say this ad nauseam [sic!], and all of change, patience is truly the biggest virtue because if you're going in for your whole means to change something, sometimes you're going to be so disappointed when really there's so many elements to change, somebody's going to hold back the reins (personal interview, Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009).

For many organizations with limited funding and the need to justify advocacy activity as benefiting the organization, resources cannot be diverted to the slow and complex process of long-term political attitude and system change. As a result, the full strength of the multi-organizational field is not directed to this end.

The multi-organizational field surrounding the issue is complex and involves varying stakeholders, some positively impacting the efforts of non-profit advocates and some negatively impacting their efforts. How they interact is different for each city in the study. Moreover, each organization communicating on issues of homelessness has a unique relationship with local and national coalitions, government actors, and other stakeholders.

In Vancouver, for example, municipal governments are largely supportive of finding resolutions to the issue and of non-profit efforts to promote policy and social change; yet, the provincial government remains slow to follow (see Chapter 2). There is a strong coalition of non-profits advocating on the issue in the Citywide Housing Initiative, addressing electoral reform. A newly emerging coalition seeking policy reform has not yet gained the full support of the non-profit organizations but has involved the corporate sector, an actor in the organizational field largely absent or a negative force in other jurisdictions.

In Ottawa, there exists a different multi-organizational field. There is a lack of support for the issue at the municipal level and few opportunities to encourage policy

change or develop a plan to end homelessness. There is also little corporate involvement. Yet, there is a strong and cohesive alliance of organizations that cooperatively determine strategy and action on the issue and seek to promote the need for change at both the societal and government levels. The Alliance to End Homelessness has achieved some success in raising the issue with local and federal governments due to their capacity for policy advocacy, although the lack of engaged stakeholders at the corporate and political level tempers what can be achieved.

Multi-organizational fields are important factors in the negotiation context for advocacy surrounding issues of homelessness. While some relationships may be shared, the uniqueness of the connection for each organization makes it impossible to suggest that a common field exists for all organizations advocating or communicating on an issue. Organizations have had some success negotiating structural aspects of this context, such as the advocacy chill surrounding non-profit advocacy efforts and the lack of political opportunity by leveraging relationships within the field. Hence inter-organizational communication is an important consideration in the advocacy practices of non-profits.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE AND ORGANIZATION

Public perceptions of homelessness influence non-profit advocacy practices. In Vancouver, where a public opinion poll confirmed that homelessness is a priority issue (Vancouver Foundation, 2008), the non-profits examined in this study report that they felt little need to focus their communication efforts on raising awareness (personal interview, Laura Stannard, March 19, 2009). Yet, they are concerned that public support for the

issue will wane or that apathy will emerge unless a clear resolution becomes evident over time (Kinnick, Krugman & Cameron, 1996; Link, *et al.*, 1995):

But some of us worry that it's kind of like the flavour of the week right now, everything's about homelessness, talk, talk, talk, it's a huge issue, you're reading it all the time and people are excited in some ways because it's the first time it's really been talked about so that's the good news is that people, everybody, there's this kind of rallying cry but we also worry it's the flavour of the week ... So there's a part of me that wonders how far this will go before people start losing interest again (personal interview, Catherine Clement, March 17, 2009).

To guard against issue fatigue, organizations in Vancouver use a variety of tactics that are designed to keep the issue on the agenda and present viable solutions while recognizing that citizens may become increasingly desensitized. CityWide Housing Coalition promotes election reform for provincial and federal levels of government. Portland Hotel Society, aware that individuals understand the link between substance abuse and homelessness, promote a harm reduction philosophy.

In Calgary, Toronto, and Ottawa, on the other hand, the non-profits interviewed for this research perceive a lack of knowledge among citizens or a lack of empathy for those who are homeless. In Calgary, these sentiments are associated with the culture of the city and the underlying values of entrepreneurialism and success.

There's just a message here that says if you're young or established already and not so young and if you're ambitious, this is the city for you. And I think that feeds into most people's mentality that people from the shelters are just lazy and want to go drink instead of work (personal interview, Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009).

Non-profits strategically seek to align with these values, while at the same time promote understanding, empathy, and long-term solutions. Hence, in Calgary, organizations seek to emphasize the "business case" for solving homelessness, in addition to the social need of assisting the poor. Non-profits are also careful not to be seen to inhibit "growth" or

the entrepreneurial spirit in the city. One local service provider, when asked by a large oil company to move the location of their organization to accommodate the corporation's new high-rise office building, recognized the futility of resisting and used the opportunity to actively partner with the business and use their contacts to expand existing programs. CUPS successfully negotiated a partnership with Encana as a corporate supporter of their organization, generating much needed social and political capital to promote their efforts at the business and municipal government level.

In Toronto and Ottawa, non-profit organizations are concerned that homelessness doesn't resonate with many citizens:

I think it's quite hidden in Ottawa compared to maybe a lot of major cities. Ottawa's got a huge, huge homeless population, very comparable with a lot of the large cities in Canada and but a lot of it is hidden. If you live in Nepean and you work in the east end, you're never going to see this. Same if you live in Orleans, you're not going to see this. It's the people that are collected downtown, they see it (personal interview, Rob Eady & Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009).

The localized nature of the issue in the two cities results in organizations strategically concentrating their messaging on first informing citizens that the issue is significant and widespread and then the need to address it. Efforts to affect public attitudes and create shared understandings of solutions require long-term sustained effort. They are important though, because if successful, they can, in turn, negotiate limited political opportunities surrounding the issue. As Pivot Legal Society notes: "I think the threat of getting thrown out of office is the way [to make change]" (personal interview, Laura Track, March 16, 2009).

Creating citizen understanding of the problem and the need for social and political change requires that non-profits negotiate the constraints and opportunities that existing belief-systems present. In the study, different perceptions of the issue are addressed and

negotiated through different communication strategies and campaigns. As issues evolve and awareness increases, public attitudes change. Organizations must in turn adapt and continually renegotiate their practices to most strategically align with these changing attitudes. A dilemma for most organizations, and for the sector generally, is that there is little funding to measure public attitudes. What is understood as the public's attitude is usually based on impressions or generalized from limited interactions with individuals external to the organization. This impacts the ability of the organization to effectively align their advocacy efforts with public attitudes and perceptions.

POLITICAL PROCESSES AND MOTIVATIONS

Political processes and motivations also contribute to the negotiation context of non-profit advocacy. These can include existing structural policies and practices as well as motivations of individual politicians about the issue and the political process.

Most outwardly constraining for many organizations are existing policies and practices that can impact their communications. The *Income Tax Act* is a good example, legislating limitations on the political activities of charity organizations. The federal government has similarly restricted the actions of organizations under contract to deliver services or programs. Lu'ma Native Housing Society, for example, is expressly forbidden in the terms of their agreement with the federal government to use the SCPI/HPI funds to undertake any advocacy work. This virtually censors any organization that receives the bulk of its funding from government contracts. These restrictions are generally easily negotiated by sustaining relationships with groups and individuals that do engage in advocacy (personal interview, Marcel Swain, March 17,

2009) and working through alliances and coalitions to present their advocacy messages (personal interview, Wendy Muckle, April 24, 2009).

Similarly, government policy relating specifically to homelessness and cognate issues also are important considerations in the negotiation context. Governments that have committed to a particular plan for responding to homelessness are less likely to be persuaded to adopt a different plan. Alternatively, governments that have funded and institutionalized emergency relief measures and programs, often see little value in expending additional funds for longer-term measures.

Informal political processes and motivations are also important considerations for non-profits advocating on the topic of homelessness. Politicians have a number of competing priorities for both their attention and time. Hence, organizations seeking to influence political leaders must recognize the need to sustain contact with politicians and repeat the message often (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009; personal interview, Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009). The Alliance to End Homelessness has actively incorporated this into their approach:

And we certainly know when dealing with politicians that they are overloaded with information and whether or not they'll remember something that you tell them I would never count on it, and that would not be a criticism because at any one time there's 100 issues and people giving them information, they have to make decisions or think about it for such short periods of time that it's hard to fault them for not remembering. To me the correct response is that you just keep reminding them, that's how you have to deal with people who have information overload (personal interview, Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009).

However, this may be challenged by organizational capacities that limit the amount of time that individuals can spend on advocacy and the budgets available to communicate with policy makers.

The motivations of policy makers to maintain their office can also impact how an organization conducts its communication efforts. As Murray McAdam explains, the issue of homelessness holds little political capital:

There's not a lot of folks in poverty to put it bluntly, poor people who control our political life, it's generally the political parties, the political processes are dominated by middle class people I would say and maybe upper income people, low income people are quite busy and preoccupied with survival and they generally tend to be less organized as a political force so that and politicians understandably have to think about re-election and what are the issues of the people I care about, maybe I'll just repeat a story I was once told. A leading provincial politician who I won't name, when we met with him in a constituency north of Toronto he said to us ... I answer all my own email and I get hundreds of email on a range of topics, from people wanting medical care, cut red tape on a wide range of issues, I don't receive any emails about housing issues and he kind of left it at that but the implication was fairly clear and even how he responded generally in our meeting was that, was along the lines of you bleeding heart church people are coming to me about an issue that frankly the people that I represent and that I have to speak to don't really care about (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

On the other hand, there are also politicians who are very supportive of the issue and the efforts of organizations to find resolutions. Organizations need to effectively educate and illustrate the value of the issue to those who see little political value in supporting it while at the same time maintaining the support of political allies. These two efforts may require adopting different tactical and strategic measures.

MEDIA APPROACHES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE

As discussed in Chapter 2, the mainstream news media remains a key forum for social and political discussion and debate. Media approaches to the issue, however, do not always align with how non-profits want them to report the issue. Liz Evans provides a relevant example:

I was very naive, I actually trusted media and thought that we were there to tell a story, tell the truth and then I realized very quickly that it's all a big spin, it's all about a bigger agenda, I think part of it is understanding that and not feeling let down, but more about just how to make it work for you ... I learned it the hard way back in the 1990s when some reporter asked me what I was doing in the Portland and I was explaining it to him to the best of my honest ability and then they turned the question to me, on camera, well do you think that if we just gave people enough money and enough of everything, that we'd solve the problem, what are you a socialist? Like I'm sitting there in this hotel room really knee high in this shit and one staff and 70 really crazy, sick people and I'm saying this is where we have a problem in society, we have this sick population that nobody gives a shit about, we're just trying to do our best, they have the right to be housed ... What I learned was that you have to be careful about what you say in terms of being idealistic or optimistic because you can be typed as an idiot ... and the media wants to say everything in a sound bite so you have to decide strategically what sound bite it is that you want them to hear and what the most important sound bite and message is at the time (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009).

On a similar note, organizations often recognize that media draw on negative stereotypes when presenting stories of individuals experiencing homelessness (see Chapter 2 for expanded discussion), yet they also recognize that pitching human interest stories improves their chance of gaining coverage, which is important in raising awareness of the issue and influencing attitudes and belief systems.

Organizations are often faced with the dilemma of either not seeking coverage, pitching ineffective stories, or pitching stories that align with news values and having those stories mediated by journalistic routines and practices. Some organizations negotiate this dilemma by providing media training for spokespeople and individuals experiencing homelessness (personal interview, Linda O'Neil, August 20, 2009). Other seek to develop on-going relationships with journalists and educate the journalists on the issues of homelessness to influence news coverage frames long-term.

Despite the challenges in gaining coverage that adequately presents their views on the issue, many of the organizations in the study recognize that the media has provided

increased attention to the issue and has been helpful for informing the general public about the issue and potential solutions. Lynne Browne at the Alliance to End Homelessness believes that, in Ottawa, media attitudes and perceptions are ahead of the politicians on the issue:

I follow the media, I noticed when over a period of time when the panhandling issue was being covered in the media a lot, in the market, and you see the odd really unpleasant thing come out of a politicians mouth ... Nowadays the media are ahead of the politicians in this town (personal interview, Lynne Brown, May 21, 2009).

Recent research suggests that, overall, the issue has received more sustained and “sympathetic” coverage in recent years (Greenberg, 2010; Schneider, *et al.*, in press) and has increased the voice of non-profit actors. However, still only a handful of non-profits are recognized as “authorized knowers” (Ericson, *et al.*, 1989) on the issue (see appendix A – E). Calls for wide-scale change are still most often attributed to government sources or the journalists themselves (Greenberg, 2010).

Consequently, many communications managers seek a more strategic approach to their media relations, identifying which reporters are more or less receptive to covering the story in a way that aligns with their organizational goals (personal interview, Tim Stock-Bateman, February 24, 2009; personal interview, Paul Ryan, March 16, 2009), pursue relationships with those reporters, and actively pitch stories to them. Many have also learned to better manage media requests, asking questions about the scope and nature of their input, etc. to ensure that they are not just sourced as axe-grinders (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009). Also recognizing that media will not serve all of their goals, many non-profit organizations seek multiple communication forums that also allow for communication messages that are unmediated.

CONCLUSION

The negotiation context for non-profit organizations advocating on issues of social housing, homelessness and poverty includes a complex array of interacting organizational, social, and political contexts. While some elements are common across individual organizations depending on their location or multi-organizational field, each organization has a unique context that informs and is negotiated through their communication efforts. Moreover, some of the elements create tensions or tradeoffs for organizations. These tensions and tradeoffs reflect the complexity of the issue and the multiple and competing goals of advocacy as well as tensions between established structures and efforts by non-profits to produce social and political change.

Important elements of the negotiation context include organization perceptions and institutionalization of communication and advocacy. Generally, a narrow conception of advocacy as policy advocacy pervades organizations' understandings of their efforts and is institutionalized into the organization's structure and the capacities developed around them. The lack of understanding of the many dimensions of advocacy results in missed opportunities to advance advocacy goals through organizations' external communication practices. In part, this is due to existing political and organizational structures that delimit advocacy to only a narrow realm of activity. In other cases, it is because organizations are already stretched too thin and cannot develop this capacity.

Further impacting the external communication practices of non-profit organizations examined in this study are multi-organizational fields, political perceptions and attitudes about homelessness and the homeless sector, public perceptions about the

issue, and media approaches and practices. Multi-organizational fields including other non-profits, corporations and the corporate sector, and all orders of government can structure, support, and hinder individual organizations' communication surrounding the issue. Moreover, tensions or alliances can emerge within the multi-organizational field that must be negotiated. Political perceptions of the issue and structural relationships within the sector influence the opportunities non-profits have to advocate for new policy frameworks. Public perceptions must be accounted for in an organization's communication efforts surrounding both short-term and long-term goals. These perceptions are not always measured, which results in many organizations assuming that certain perceptions exist. Finally, media attitudes and practices pose opportunities and dilemmas for organizations seeking to communicate publicly on the issue of homelessness. Media attention offers unsurpassed opportunities to reach broad audiences to inform and educate about the issue; however, these opportunities are also structured by routines and practices that do not always align with an organization's desired message.

This analysis has offered evidence that non-profit advocacy is not determined by specific political opportunities, regulations, or resources, but exists at the intersection of myriad organizational, social, and political contexts. To achieve advocacy goals, non-profit organizations cannot just address one element of the negotiation context but must recognize the interactions within the larger negotiation context. They also must recognize that their communication efforts regularly impact existing mesostructures; thus, the negotiated order is in a constant state of change.

Some of the tensions and tradeoffs revealed in the analysis of the negotiation context include the lack of knowledge about communication and advocacy against the

need to pursue a communications and advocacy agenda; tensions between service and advocacy, tensions between short-term needs and long-term solutions; tensions between the desire to promote collective understandings and solutions for homelessness versus the need to strategically acquire limited resources to maintain organizational viability.

In the next chapter, I explore the strategies and tactics adopted by the organizations in their advocacy efforts and how they respond to the negotiation context and the tensions within it.

CHAPTER 7

THE STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

Chapter 6 offered an in-depth review of the goals for and the contexts of non-profit advocacy. A range of non-profit organizations seek varied advocacy goals through their external communication practices. Sometimes these goals are related to short-term program, policy or resource needs. Other times they seek to create awareness about homelessness, to dispel negative stereotypes about people who are homeless, and mobilize support for social and political change. Many organizations seek to achieve both short-term instrumental goals and long-term change in public understandings of homelessness through their communication strategies. For many organizations, their perceptions of long-term change and how it is accomplished are related to these broad and multiple objectives. Other organizations, that have narrower mandates, have a more focused understanding of advocacy and how to achieve their goals. Organizations' advocacy efforts are enacted within myriad organizational, social and political contexts, which inform and are negotiated by their communication strategies and tactics. Sometimes these contexts interact with one another; at other times they are in competition.

Past research on non-profit advocacy largely focuses on media advocacy, despite empirical research which finds that for many organizations media coverage is a sparse commodity (Greenberg & Walters, 2004; Jacobs & Glass, 2002). Broader policy advocacy scholarship delineates between "insider" and "outsider" strategies, linking the choice of tactics to organizational form or mandate, or to the organization's relationship

with government. The multiple goals that many organizations assign to their communication efforts calls into question current scholarly practice of narrowly defining advocacy in policy terms and isolating these efforts from other organizational goals and practices (see Dimitrov 2008 for an expanded discussion).

The strategies and tactics employed by the non-profit organizations in this study varied, although media advocacy tended to be common. Some organizations focus on a limited repertoire of communication activities, although most use both insider and outsider tactics. For many organizations, insider tactics serve a larger purpose than just policy or program advocacy. Tactics that serve both short-term immediate goals, as well as longer-term dialogic goals gain more resources than those that serve only long-term priorities.

The communication tactics adopted by the organizations in the study included: public speaking and engagements, direct communication with politicians and policy makers, attending municipal council meetings, participation in consultative processes, direct action, leading by example, mainstream news media, websites/new media and alliances and coalitions. In this chapter, I report on each tactic, the communication strategy that underpinned it and the efficacy of these tactics and strategies for achieving stated goals. Evaluating or analyzing success is problematic in studies of advocacy: it is impossible to attribute changes or *outcomes* in public attitudes or public policy to any single effort or group of efforts. What can be measured, and is most often measured by non-profit organizations advocating on the topic of homelessness, is *outputs*, or the activities undertaken to achieve stated goals. The outputs of the communication activities will be noted as well as self-assessments of the organization's efforts. These self-

assessments are problematic in their own right as they rely on the evaluation of the individuals who were responsible for the communication.

The efficacy of tactics for achieving advocacy goals will be assessed in relation to Habermas's theoretical framework of instrumental and communicative action.⁶² Central to this framework is the position that systemic change is achieved through non-social forms of communication that reproduce technical, positivist ideologies and gain persuasive force through reproducing the norms and values of powerful social institutions. Ethical and moral social change, on the other hand, is achieved through inter-subjective understanding among individuals through communication that operates on the basis of a set of principles that promote open discussion and dialogue.

The study reveals several important findings. First, the process and practice of non-profit advocacy is more complex than the literature suggests. Organizations employ a multitude of tactics to achieve their advocacy goals. Moreover, the adoption of specific tactics is not based on an organization's "insider" or "outsider" status or on the organizational form but to the goals for the communication, the perception of communication and capacity of the communicator, past organizational successes and the ability to adapt to the negotiation context. A dialogic ethic and belief that understanding will lead to a set of desirable outcomes drives many of the efforts and the resulting choice of tactics. Many organizations adopt this strategy to address both short-term instrumental goals and long-term goals to create shared understandings of issues. Often times these organizations are disappointed by the lack of immediate results, believing that the

⁶² Assessment of the communication for achieving advocacy goals is based on the organization's reporting of the approach and strategy for that communication. Discourse analysis of individual texts or campaigns was not attempted but is recommended for future research.

problem is the lack of understanding and awareness on the part of politicians and citizens, and not their communication practices. Organizations that adopt strategic communication practices to achieve specific outcomes see more success, although often this success can only be attributed to short-term instrumental outcomes rather than long-term goals.

These findings reveal some internal challenges and tensions faced by non-profit advocates: tensions between service delivery and advocacy, the relationship between strategic and dialogic modes of communication and the opportunity for a “realm” to be occupied between the two (Schlosberg, 1995), and finally, the tradeoffs organizations make between meeting their longer-term objectives (usually articulated in their core mission statement) and shorter-term priorities and goals.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Many of the organizations in the study regularly initiate or accept invitations to speak to individuals or groups about homelessness. The speaking engagements range from “schools to universities, to corporations to big huge conference events [participating as] keynote speakers, workshop leaders and so forth” (personal interview, Pat Nixon, February 23, 2009). For many organizations, multiple goals are addressed through these efforts: organizational awareness, fundraising, issue awareness, promoting understanding about homelessness, and positively expanding the organization’s multi-organizational field.

Public speaking engagements are often adopted as a means to raise awareness of the organization and its efforts among citizens for the purpose of attracting resources (personal interview, Pat Nixon, February 23, 2009; personal interview Louise Gallagher,

February 25, 2009; personal interview Rob Eady, April 21, 2009; personal interview, Bonnie Malach, February 23, 2009). Increased awareness legitimizes the organization and its programs among members of the public (personal interview, Tim Stock-Bateman, February 24, 2009), which is believed to encourage citizens to donate funds or time to the effort.

For many of the organizations in the study, speaking engagements are initiated by outside sources. This makes it difficult for some of the smaller organizations to plan and allocate resources adequately and effectively to this tactic. In the case of Street Health in Toronto, the launch of a research report resulted in numerous speaking invitations from community partners that required response (personal interview, Erika Khandor, April 27, 2009). While accepting these speaking invitations supports the campaign, diverting the limited resources for communication to these community partners may be at the expense of other tactics that could have proven more effective to move the report's policy recommendations forward. To better manage available resources, some organizations have introduced a speakers' bureau to expand the number of available and informed speakers to respond to external requests. The Mustard Seed in Calgary and the Youth Services Bureau in Ottawa are good examples of this trend.⁶³

A secondary objective of these speaking engagements is more dialogical: seeking to raise awareness about homelessness and of the people that are homeless and to create social understanding of the issue. Rob Eady of the Shepherds of Good Hope comments:

I think it's the awareness and also the understanding. Because people kind of see someone who's homeless and they say why can't they get a job, like I've spoken

⁶³ The Youth Service Bureau, for example, has a youth advisory group that they have supported with training that identify and participate in community engagement opportunities and respond to requests for public speaking.

to a third year social class at Carleton I think it was and I'm telling them about these clients who are homeless who have mental health issues and who have addiction issues and one of the questions is well why can't they get a job. You're missing the whole point here, they're complex people they have a whole bunch of issues that they've got to deal with, no one's going to hire someone whose severely mentally ill, not on medication, to do something ... If people were educated and aware of different people's stories ... So I think we have to make people aware of the stories, that these people are individuals, that they all have lives, ... I think making the public aware that ... these are people first (personal interview, Rob Eady & Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009).

Regularly, presentations relate personal stories about individuals who are or were homeless. These stories are sometimes used to dispel negative stereotypes of individuals who are homeless and to create dialogue about the issue (as illustrated above). The use of personal stories is also a powerful strategy to encourage individuals to donate more readily to the organization. This connection is best articulated by Carlene Donnelly of the Calgary Urban Project Society, quoted here at length:

I do probably about two hundred speaking engagements a year and I always use a specific example and/or have a participant come with me to speak. And every time I've had a participant come, this one girl just recently came and was talking about being up in Fort McMurray with her mom who was in her, around 15th, boyfriend phase and her mom was a drug addict and the stepdad was allowed to do whatever he wanted with the kids and he didn't sexually abuse them but he beat them, pretty bad and if they stood up at all, he'd throw them out. Fort McMurray's a little cold, and we're talking a nine and eleven years old. So at thirteen and eleven they left and came to Calgary and she said before we [left we] went into our mom's room and we begged her to come with us and for once just take our side, come with us and she said no, go away, you guys are always just trying to ruin everything I have. And they came to Calgary at eleven and thirteen, went into a foster care home for a couple of years and then got an apartment together. And she, at this point, has a little girl and is doing very, very well, is clean and sober, both of them. They still live together and the speaker who was talking who was at that point, still only nineteen is now in her second year of social work that we are paying for. And she said, you know, even as healthy as I get, when choosing not to do drugs and alcohol, as healthy as I get from my social work courses that are equally as healing for me I can't forgive and accept that our mother wouldn't pick us just once. She said I live with that every day, if you think that hasn't affected me for the rest of my life, it will right. I'll either make choices good for that or bad for that. I could have easily been a drug addict myself just by saying, forget it, if you don't believe me I don't, she said but I choose to give my daughter a better mother. And so she said,

if you think that someone who comes from this is equal to someone who came from really good parents, it's not. Everything I've done has been a hundred times harder. And I thought her speech was amazing but at the end of it, I'm telling you for the next week droves of people contacted me saying how can we help her, anything you like, we get it that wow, how do you possibly stand a chance coming from that (personal interview, Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009).

Recognizing the opportunities available through speaking engagements and face-to-face interaction with potential supporters, some organizations have incorporated this tactic into their communications planning. The Calgary Urban Project Society, for example, has developed specific campaigns, each with carefully crafted key messages and target audience, to meet and communicate with existing sponsors, potential sponsors, and neighbourhood groups. Similarly, The Shepherds of Good Hope in Ottawa and St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto have created plans to "friend raise" or expand current audiences through face-to-face interaction. In all cases, the goals are strategic: not primarily to raise funds but to grow the support network that, over the longer term, can benefit an organization's effort. As explained by Stephen Hwang:

We've tried to identify influential leaders in the city ... who are interested in the issues that we're interested in. They might not be policy makers but they're CEOs or executives or politicians or influential people that we think will have the ability to affect, who have a wide circle of influence or potential influence (personal interview, Stephen Hwang, April 29, 2009).

Many organizations report regular success in achieving their goals surrounding fundraising and "friend raising". Many of the organizations believe that the success results from effectively creating shared understandings of the issue among the audience members, resulting in them wanting to support the issue. This assessment serves both the instrumental and dialogic goals often assigned to the tactic. There is the possibility, however, that the success of the tactic is due to the rhetoric of the personal stories suspending deliberative discussion among audience members (Habermas, 1987), which

results in them donating to the organization. In either case, the short-term outcome is the same – an increase of resources to the organization.

Non-profit organizations regularly measure the number of presentations they make, and the resources they obtain from them. A few keep track of the different audiences (community partners, schools, etc.) that they speak to and which are the most generous. While many spoke passionately about the effect of these speaking engagements on audience perceptions of homelessness none set out to actually measure this outcome. Nonetheless, organizations *believed* this tactic was effective and promoted it as a strategy to attain both short-term instrumental and long-term discursive goals.

In a related approach, many social service organizations seek volunteer and citizen engagement in their organizations. Organizations view this engagement as a strategy to “break down fences” (personal interview, Pat Nixon, February 23, 2009), create experiential learning about homelessness, and counter apathy or compassion fatigue of the issue (Link, *et al.* 1995):

There was a woman who, she looks like a soccer mom, 35ish, and she comes down to the downtown east side and volunteers once a week with her friends, and she said you know what I used to be afraid to drive down there and now I’ve gotten to know people and made friends and I can make a difference. That’s where the reality is. I think people around here are going I don’t have to be afraid of this, I can come and make a difference and get to know the people and forge a relationship (personal interview, Karen Young, March 18, 2009).

... We do lots of tours. We invite individuals and groups to come in for tours. And that is probably one of the most powerful tools that we have because once they come in and see the depth of what we do, it’s much easier to touch hearts and open minds to the imperativeness of what we do (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

The strategy underpinning the tactic is to use experiential learning to educate the public about the importance of the programs and services they provide. This draws resources to

the organization. Respondents also noted that it is a powerful tool to educate citizens about the issue of homelessness and the need for social and political change. Some organizations believe that these individuals, in turn, will initiate discussion about the issue within their larger personal networks (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009). Like the public speaking engagements, the short-term objectives are easily measured while the effect on individuals and the degree to which this influences public understandings of issues is unknown.

Public speaking and citizen engagement tactics are limited in the number of individuals that can be reached. However, the opportunities they offer for achieving organizational goals are unsurpassed. They are an effective platform for fundraising and resource development. They are also perceived to be effective in terms of generating opportunities to raise public awareness. While the non-profit organizations in the study believe that the dialogic approach to communication serve both efforts, the instrumental success may be equally attributed to the strategic use of personal stories that persuade the audience to act.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH POLITICIANS AND POLICY MAKERS

Many organizations in the study regularly meet with politicians and policy makers to achieve multiple and varied goals. Organizations providing programs and services to people who are homeless perceive regular and direct communication with politicians and policy makers to be effective for maintaining or augmenting funding to their organization, raising awareness of their organization and its efforts, and creating deeper understandings of the issues. Organizations seeking direct policy change adopt this tactic

for both short-term and long-term goals as well as to initiate political discussion about homelessness. Like the strategy surrounding public speaking engagements, many organizations adopt a dialogic mode of communication, believing that educating and creating shared understandings of the issue among policy makers will achieve both their short-term and long-term goals. However, organizations that adopt a more strategic ethic for communication realize greater short-term success.

In all centres, most communication with policy makers occurs at the local level. Only a few organizations communicate at the provincial or federal levels – levels where, arguably, long-term policy change is required to solve issues of homelessness. In line with the public policy literature, this may reflect the accessibility of local politicians and, conversely, the inaccessibility of provincial and federal politicians (Savoie, 1999). It also reflects the devolution of responsibility for many service programs to local governments and the recognition by local service providers for the need to communicate directly with officials in their local environments on these issues.

A widespread tactic for medium to large organizations is to aggressively pursue relationships with local politicians. At a basic level, they seek to educate the politician about their organization and the work they do. This, in turn, is perceived to influence public policy around the issue of homelessness generally, and safeguard existing programs or funding contracts or be first in line for new contracts specifically. One respondent makes this connection:

We're already quite related to politicians ...if you're a politician downtown here, you are really stuck because you've got all those business owners who are screaming at you because there are syringes everywhere, breaking and entering, panhandling that disrupting in front of their shops and their restaurants so they're screaming to him help...So, we're already talking to them on a regular basis, so

they really are community partners, it's not an us and them thing (personal interview, Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009).

Typically, the larger, better resourced organizations have more ability to develop these relationships than do the smaller organizations. This is in part due to resources but also due to how governments view the value of these relationships. In Calgary, following the tabling of the 10 year plan to end homelessness (in which the provincial government participated), local service organizations found their direct access to provincial policy makers closed down (personal interview, Calgary service provider, February 23, 2009). Government program managers preferred to work through the Calgary Homelessness Foundation that had been appointed to facilitate the 10 year plan and manage their funding commitment (to which smaller organizations were required to apply for funds). This suggests that, in part, policy makers' desire to enter into relationships is influenced by the political capital of the organization. Groups representing broader, more influential constituencies are often better received. The Toronto Anglican Diocese attracts the attention of provincial politicians by reinforcing within their messaging that they represent a large number of (voting) Anglicans. The StreetoHome Foundation in Vancouver gains an audience with provincial politicians through its corporate membership base:

He [Chairman of the Board] knows the premier of the province very well and calls him up and says we need your help on this or can we talk about that. And that's helped create all these strong connections so it's a very subtle way of advocacy, it's not loud, and bold and in the media, it's actually through relationships and so some non-profits can do that through relationships, not all of them, we're fortunate in that way because we cross over (personal interview, Catherine Clement, March 17, 2009).

The more political capital an organization has, the more opportunity it has to develop the relationships they believe are important for achieving their policy goals.

For the relationships that are developed, many organizations feel a need to temper any criticism of politicians or governments. Concern about risking existing funding relationships in a political environment that censors non-profit advocacy is one reason for this tempering (Phillips, 2005; Schmid, Bar, & Nirel, 2008). Also, strategically, organizations believe that being a constant critic undermines opportunities to develop effective long-term working relationships. The following two quotes illustrate:

We don't want to bite the hand that feeds us, we want to be careful if they're giving us money. We don't want to say thank you for the money and you're doing an awful job, and we hate what you are doing here (personal interview, Rob Eady, April 21, 2009).

The communications part is the delicate balancing act is on one hand being an advocate for change and on the other hand recognizing that if you stand on top of a soap box and if you're a thorn in the side you actually might not be able to accomplish much so it's that delicate balance in terms of keeping integrity for the work and also, and I guess that's more of a process in terms of the work that we're doing (personal interview, Jae Kim, March 13, 2009).

Policy makers feel much the same way:

Because I'll tell you what, we don't mind being asked for help, we just like being asked intelligently. Just to say you guys are a bunch of yo-yos, you don't give a damn, you haven't done enough, you haven't given enough money, blah, blah, blah. You know, really, it just doesn't resonate (personal interview, Ric McIver, February 25, 2009).

Habermas's ideal speech situation asserts that for shared understandings of issues to emerge, interactions must be open to all potential arguments and all parties must enter the discussion willing to be proved wrong. This is evidently not the case for many non-profits/government relationships. The need to negotiate existing political attitudes and legislative structures preclude a fully open discussion of issues and suggests a more strategic approach is warranted. Yet, organizations believe that the long-term, ongoing

dialogue serves to educate and create shared understandings of issues among policy makers.

Smaller organizations are not as proactive in developing relationships with local politicians, primarily due to resource and staffing issues; instead they tend to react to opportunities as they arise to find ways to make their organization and their work known.

Sue Evans of the Multifaith Housing Alliance provides an example:

Yesterday, I went to a potluck supper for the Vanier Unification Committee and [councillor] George Bedard was there ... and so I made a point of saying this is what we're doing here in Vanier... so that people will hear that there's a sector of the public that's very aware of the problem, they're working together, they're now here in Vanier ... And so Bedard heard all that (personal interview, Sue Evans, June 17, 2009).

Few organizations in the study report direct short-term policy benefits or outcomes from these relationships. This may be due to the inability of the organization to recognize a need to adapt their dialogic form of communication to achieve specific policy outcomes. A glimpse of this tension was revealed by Street Health when commenting on their direct policy advocacy effort: "You kind of, you try to speak their language to some extent, but you speak different languages ..." (personal interview Erika Khandor, April 207, 2009). Still, most organizations are convinced that these relationships benefit their organization directly. They are also convinced that they are successful in educating or creating better understandings of the issue among politicians and other decision makers, which impact long-term policy change. As noted by the Alliance to End Homelessness:

We're very concrete that way ... on the local level we move along in our relationship with a politicians so that the politician is not hostile to homeless agencies or doesn't make maligning comments about homeless individuals any more (personal interview, Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009).

To address specific issues that arise related to funding or program implementation, many organizations also find it beneficial to cultivate relationships with municipal staff who are responsible for both managing existing programs and for making policy recommendations to municipal council. These relationships more directly benefit the organization, because these individuals have more influence in the day to day management of the funds and programs. Lorraine Bentley of Options Bytown reports:

At the city level it's very good, they know us, they know our services and they know that they can count on us so that's a good funding relationship. Could it change with different city councillors? Sure. But I don't go through councillors, ... it's just working with the city staff who are just diligently administering the funds (personal interview, June 5, 2009).

For municipal program managers, these relationships seem to be mutually beneficial.

Dan Garrison, Planner with the City of Vancouver explains:

We have all kinds of informal mechanisms ... we have people like me and we have someone who's a downtown east side housing planner and she's very connected with those groups, she's at all their meetings, she's sitting with them talking about things, we have a downtown east side planning team in the planning department that looks at issues in the downtown east side and is very tight with those groups. So I think, just this morning, Jean Swanson who is one of the heads of the Carnegie and one of the most active people there called me ... (personal interview, Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009).

Similarly, some organizations find it beneficial to meet directly with individuals in local police departments and housing branches to influence the way programs are administered and facilitated. Louise Gallagher of the Drop In Centre in Calgary provides the following example:

I work with ... for example the police, where I advocate strongly for the treatment of our clients, better treatment of our clients and understanding and compassion in how you deal with our clients. And create bridges for us to work together (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

Inner City Health in Ottawa has also developed effective relationships with the police around administering and supporting their managed alcohol program.

These efforts, in contrast to the relationships building, are more strategically targeted to influence or persuade policy makers and program managers to take specific actions that benefit the organization. However, as illustrated in the quote above, often the communication approach is the same: focused on educating and creating shared understandings of issues. Habermas (1979) argues, for instrumental goals, this communication will have little impact. Many of the organizations in the study, however, report that it results in better understandings among program managers, which in turn affects how they deliver the programs and how new programs are developed in the future (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009). This may be an example of how communication can negotiate mesostructures through changing how individuals within the system interpret and act on existing structures. It also suggests that long-term policy success is achieved incrementally and is best supported through ongoing communication and dialogue.

Only a few of the organizations in the study are active at the provincial and federal level. Savoie (1999) and Bradford (1995) suggest this is a reflection of the political context surrounding public policy development in which these organizations are not recognized as partners in policy making. While the study shows that legitimacy is certainly a factor, an organization's ability to act that these levels are also influenced by organizational resources and the dynamics of multi-organizational fields that often delegate responsibility for advocacy to other organizations.

Organizations actively seeking long-term policy change communicate more regularly at the provincial, federal or with multiple levels of government. This is necessary as these levels of government are responsible for policy surrounding social housing and social safety net issues. Organizations active at the provincial level include The Calgary Homeless Foundation and The StreetoHome Foundation. The Calgary Homeless Foundation directs ample resources to meeting with politicians and political staff during the provincial budgeting process to attract the needed funding for their efforts. The StreetoHome Foundation in Vancouver seeks meetings with provincial politicians throughout the year to consistently promote policy and program change, as well as to foster ongoing dialogue. The differing approaches reflect the different political opportunities and attitudes in the two provinces and the different strategic response required by advocates. In Alberta, the provincial government has committed to supporting the local plan to end homelessness, prompting the Calgary Homeless Foundation to focus their efforts on ensuring resources are dedicated to the effort. By contrast, the provincial government in B.C. has yet to commit to a long-term solution, requiring the local non-profits organizations to direct efforts to educating politicians on the issue and the need for long-term solutions.

Only a few of the organizations in the study were active at the federal level. The Wellesley Institute pursues a federal agenda as part of their larger strategy of “uploading” responsibility for homelessness and social housing to provincial and federal governments (personal interview, Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009). Lu’ma Native Housing Society operates at the national level due to the federal responsibility for aboriginal issues and

housing.⁶⁴ The Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa maintains regular contact with federal government politicians. The Alliance however, unlike many of the other organizations, has greater geographical proximity and thus access to this level of government. All of these organizations regularly consult with local organizations in developing the positions that they bring forward at these levels; thus, including the voices of smaller non-profits who do not enjoy or seek direct representation at these levels.

For the most part, organizations focused on policy advocacy at provincial and federal levels recognize the need to adapt their communication to the norms and practices of the political system. Many organizations in the study recognize governments' imperative for evidence-based research in decision making (Phillips, 2007) and, where possible, use research to improve access to government and to justify proposed programs and policies. For all of the coalitions in the study (StreetoHome Foundation, Calgary Homeless Foundation, and The Alliance to End Homelessness) research is a key component of their strategy to promote large scale policy change. Similarly, groups like St. Michael's Hospital and the Wellesley Institute use research as a strategy to support specific policies or program advocacy efforts. As articulated by one respondent:

part of doing advocacy is having the research behind it, if you don't have the research behind it then it is really difficult to do advocacy because what you can talk about is anecdotal, you may have some basic stats, you might have some stories from people describing their experience which really is really, really important but the policy makers, the funders they want to know what the stats are before they have a response (personal interview, Dan Sabourin, June 5, 2009).

The challenge for non-profits advocating for long-term outcomes is that evidence for a comprehensive integrated solution is not possible to attain. At best, organizations can

⁶⁴ Although for strategic reason, they had recently begun to work with local governments on the issue as well.

provide evidence for existing or proposed programs, which often perpetuate the cycle of focusing on short-term emergency measures as opposed to long-term solutions.

Moreover, for many organizations, especially those with limited resources, the need to produce “stats” to implement new programs is a vicious circle. Funding is not available for projects that cannot be proven through evidence-based research; but projects need to be active to collect data. Carlene Donnelly, Executive Director at the Calgary Urban Project Society reports that her organization has, in some cases, underwritten the start up costs for projects to collect this data. For many smaller organizations, this is not an option.

Organizations advocating at the provincial and federal levels have developed some skills and knowledge of the political process, and of tactics that align with the needs and norms of the political system. Some short-term instrumental goals have been realized. The Calgary Homeless Foundation, for example, reports success in directing funding to their efforts (personal interview, Sheridan McVean, February 26, 2009). In some cases these outcomes are extrapolated to suggest they also reflect a change in political attitudes and understandings surrounding homelessness. This may be a confusion of outputs and outcomes associated, as long-term policy commitments at these levels have yet to be realized.

Fewer outcomes have been realized at the federal level, reflecting the political attitudes and opportunities surrounding the issue held by this government. In only one case, did an organization attribute a direct policy outcome to their advocacy efforts:

When Harper was elected, first elected in 2006, the previous parliament had authorized 1.6 billion for affordable housing and homelessness programs but the Martin government had kind of did nothing ... so by the time they were kicked out of office in January 2006, they hadn't moved those dollars and I went to a

meeting with a group of advocates across the country in Ottawa a week or so after Harper was elected and we all said how do we relate to this government and the first thing I said was, we'll let's get them to just honour the commitment that was made by the previous government, it was a vote passed by parliament, and we should simply say it's not enough, but it's a start, honour the commitment ... that's a low level demand we can organize around it and sure enough, Flaherty in his spring budget announced that they were going to allocate that money ... what moved the agenda on that was that we were able to identify a very specific initiative and being able to tie it into federal government and we've been able to do that successfully several times" (personal interview, Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009).

Organizations advocating for policy solutions at the federal level find little reception, resulting in them being more reactive and taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, as was the case with the Wellesley Institute above. Strategic efforts at this level are focused on building public awareness of the issue (see discussion below) and developing relationships to educate politicians on the issue and create understandings of the need to address homelessness in the long term. Recognizing that the success is long term, part of this strategy is to promote efforts as non-partisan. This allows organizations to develop long-term relationships with all levels of government and maintain a presence regardless of which party is in office. Murray McAdam of the Toronto Anglican Diocese and Laura Stannard of Citywide Housing Initiative explain:

We're always quite open and explicit that our efforts are really non-partisan we definitely do not blame any one party or government for these serious issues we have concerning poverty and homelessness ... we certainly meet with and dialogue with politicians of all parties (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

Although many organizations present a non-partisan image, they are cognisant that some parties and politicians are more responsive to their issues than others. Some groups like the Citywide Housing Initiative in Vancouver are careful not to reveal this knowledge (personal interview, Laura Stannard, March 19, 2009).

The non-partisan approach may also negotiate the ideological approach to policy-making that has become more evident (Savoie, 1999). It also offers a strategy that allows

an organization to refrain from criticizing the current actions of government, important for creating long-term relationships. Some organizations, however, are more willing to support opposition efforts. The Wellesley Institute's work with MP Libby Davies (NDP) on Bill C-304 to develop a national housing strategy is an example. Larger, more influential organizations – or those more schooled in the policy process – may be more able to negotiate this line than smaller organizations. Alternatively, a decision not to align with the incumbent government's efforts may cost an organization its political capital, especially at the federal level where policy development is a partisan exercise (Aucoin, 2000). To move policy issues forward at the federal level, non-profits are faced with the dilemma of being non-partisan to sustain relationships in the long term or taking a partisan approach, which may gain them more access in the short term but will put them ideologically offside of newly elected governments.

Many organizations in the study communicate with policy makers to achieve both short-term and long-term organizational goals. Politicians are largely strategic in the relationships that they develop; only entering into these relationships if they feel there is political gain. Non-profit organizations in the issue arena of homelessness largely seek to educate politicians about the issue and of the various supports and activities performed by individual organizations in the short term and the need for policy solutions in the long term. A similar communication approach is often used to secure resource and program goals. There is little evidence that the dialogical approach is sufficient to achieve these desired instrumental goals. They may, however, be effective at negotiating existing political structural contexts through influencing the attitudes and actions of those acting within those contexts. Organizations with a focus on policy advocacy are more schooled

in the policy process and better adapt their communication to align with the technical rationality of the political system. These organizations also seek relationships with politicians but as a strategic measure to place the issue on the political agenda. The effectiveness of this strategy is tempered by the recognition of the long-term, complex nature of the issue and the need to maintain access to multiple political stakeholders, some of which are ideologically at odds with each other.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Municipal council meetings were, for some groups, an alternate or complementary opportunity to communicate with policy makers to achieve their policy goals. All local governments have processes that are open to grassroots organizations to make direct representation to municipal council on issues. It is typically a tactic prioritized by groups that find themselves unable to develop effective relationships with policy makers or who otherwise seek to raise issues that cannot be addressed in “tempered” relationships. These organizations seek to prioritize issues on the political agenda in the short-term and effect public policy around them in the long-term. Organizations with established relationships with policy makers also participate as a strategy to further promote the legitimacy of their organization to act on specific issues.

For some local organizations seeking to raise issues on the policy agenda participation in council meetings is a primary strategy. Beric German recounts one campaign of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee:

The protest went over to a committee and ... then it went to council. ... And then the council chambers were filled with [advocates] and it was the first thing on the agenda and it was passed 53 to 1 (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009).

As noted in the previous section, politicians do not respond favourably to communication focused on embarrassing or speaking out against government actions. However, organizations adopting this strategy recognize that they have little influence with governments to begin with and use this tactic to raise political issues through gaining access to media (who cover the meetings) who will in turn, call governments out on the issue. The communication is often emotionally charged to align with media routines and practices (see discussion below). While less direct, it negotiates the political opportunities available to these organization and aligns with the practice and norms of the political system. Politicians suggest that these tactics are ineffective: “It’s a one hit wonder. Because actually doing the change required [is much more involved]” (personal interview, Joe Mihevc, April 29, 2009). Yet, politicians are forced to respond if the issue becomes a media issue (personal interview, Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009). Protests or presentations to municipal council meetings thus offer opportunities to hold governments accountable and to raise issues that may not be possible through more diplomatic venues. They also provide an opportunity to raise these issues with citizens, through the subsequent media coverage of municipal government debates and actions (personal interview, Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009).

Municipal council meetings also provide opportunities for organizations to affirm their position as a potential policy partner and to increase their legitimacy among the public and politicians. Organizations seeking these objectives take what is arguably a more diplomatic approach to this tactic. They do not seek to embarrass governments, but merely attend to be present and accounted for. As explained by Lorraine Bentley of Options Bytown:

At budget time ... [we] speak at city council like every other dog and pony show. I know it doesn't do any good. I don't know how they're making their decisions but I do want our name to be on the speaker's roster (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009).

For these organizations, their presence affirms their interest in developing relationships and shared solutions to addressing homelessness with municipal councils. This reflects an ongoing tension within the negotiation context for non-profits organizations. On one hand, to effect policy change, arguments need to be instrumental, technically persuasive and align with the governments agenda. On the other hand media, important for initiating political action, report conflict and the opinions of axe-grinders. It is difficult for one organization to play both sides. This is why some organizations adopt the position of agitators to place issues on the agenda, while others seek and defend more cooperative relationships with politicians to effect policy change goals.

Organizations that are unable to muster media attention for their demands to municipal council are often unhappy with the outcome of their efforts. Isolated requests aired at municipal council meetings that do not align with municipal plans or budgets or that have not gone through the committee and staff process can often be easily disregarded in the long term (Dick Stewart, December 7, 2009). The skills and ability that an organization brings to media advocacy, thus, directly impacts success in raising issues in this forum. This output, however, does not guarantee that long-term policy outcomes will follow.

CONSULTATIVE PROCESSES

Consultative processes relating to homelessness are regular occurrences. In some cases they are initiated by a coalition of stakeholders seeking to develop a plan to address

the issue, as was the case with the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness. Often they are part of the regular process of issue management by all levels of government. To varying degrees, non-profit organizations participate in consultations with mixed outcomes.

Generally, the larger, more established organizations are invited to participate in consultations. For Carlene Donnelly, Executive Director of CUPS, participation in the process to develop the 10 year plan to end homelessness was a strategic move to benefit her organization:

One of the things I did this, with the ten year plan which I think was critical and it worked in some ways was my Chair of my board who is Michael Lang ... but there was a leadership committee made up of really high end community players ... but I put my chair on the Board, on that Committee and told him I'd like him to be on that committee. And I think that was a really good thing to do (personal interview Carlene Donnelly, February 24, 2009).

For CUPS, participation in the consultation ensured that the organization's vision was included in the final plan. It also provided opportunities to develop relationships with policy makers and other influential individuals, expanding the organization's multi-organizational field. For those that do not have a seat at the table or do not have the opportunity to communicate their issues in this forum, the process is frustrating. This was the case for many shelter providers in Calgary surrounding the ten year plan.

Governments extensively use consultations when developing issue management plans to present to council (personal interview, Dan Garrison, March 17, 2009; personal interview, Stephen Arbuckle, May 11, 2009). Most processes, however, are by invitation only, thus limiting their reach (personal interview, Iain DeJong, April 28, 2009). Often, the more outspoken advocates find themselves locked outside of the process. As explained by Liz Evans at the Portland Hotel "we're often not invited to have input into

the plan” (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009). Feeling ostracized, some organizations like the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee do not even seek participation in these processes, preferring to undertake more publicly oriented tactics like demonstrations (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009). This affirms the strategic approach of many non-profit organizations identified earlier to not criticize governments if they want to be consulted on policy issues or brought into the fold of decision-making.

Non-profit organizations in this study note a significant increase in the number of “community consultations” around homelessness in recent years (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009). This may be due to the implementation of public management strategies in Canada, that there is a growing pressure for governments to address the issue of homelessness, or that stakeholders at the grassroots level have effectively coordinated their efforts. For some of the smaller organizations, participation in these processes utilizes limited resources, shows little immediate progress, and takes time and personnel away from their daily activities. As noted by Liz Evans “we’re being invited to so many meetings that we’ve almost stopped going to all of those meetings. It became impossible to do our job and attend sometimes five or six a week roundtable meetings” (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009). Because these processes rarely result in immediate outcomes, smaller organizations find it hard to divert resources to them and ignore the immediate needs of their organization and clients. However, in the long term, these consultative processes are central to creating multi-stakeholder plans to address issues that often inform government policy and practice. Non-profits thus face the dilemma of either spending limited resources actively participating in these processes or

risk not having their views and positions incorporated in the plan requiring them to divert resources after the plan has been accepted to have their views heard.

Consultative processes are regularly framed as opportunities to promote inclusive dialogue and debate and to come to shared solutions on issues. However, the degree to which they achieve this is unique to each individual consultation. In Calgary, where the process was initiated and managed by government and corporate interests (which, according to Habermas (1987) do not naturally seek to create shared understandings of issues), many non-profit groups felt that their views were excluded from the process and that the outcomes only represented corporate and government interests. In Vancouver, by contrast, many groups felt that the Inner City Inclusivity Housing Table was inclusive and created shared understandings and goals to address issues of homelessness (personal interview, Laura Stannard, March 19, 2009). In Ottawa, the Alliance to End Homelessness extensively and regularly consults stakeholders to develop policy positions. These findings suggest that the opportunity for inter-subjective, shared understandings of issues is directly related to how inclusive the consultation is and the mode of communication (non-social vs. social) adopted for the consultations.

The outputs or the recommendations emerging from the discussions are often identified as the results of the consultation. However, as evidenced by the Vancouver Inner City Inclusivity Housing Table and the Calgary 10 year plan to end homelessness, recommendations do not always result in outcomes, especially when action needs to be taken at the political level. Even when action does follow, often times the results are not as anticipated or agreed to in the consultation. As noted by Liz Evans:

[recommendations] have to come through a system, a very well entrenched system, long established and structure that has many more than just that one guy

at the top thinking this is a good idea, it's probably 20 other people, or in some cases 50 other people that that really good idea has to go through before the money ever turns into a thing that hits the individual on the street. By the time that quagmire has been navigated it rarely looks anything like at the top when it conceived upon, it often comes out like something very different or comes out having all the money being spent on those 50 people in between so you're like where's the program, where's the So that would be my general view so having seen that for a long time (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009).

Consultations, especially those initiated by governments can be sites of system reproduction. Organizations that engage in these processes hoping to change political processes are often disappointed, primarily because they approach them as opportunities to create shared understandings of the issue, believing they will lead to social and policy reform. Nonetheless, for some organizations, they can be an effective communication tactic to strategically promote the organization's efforts and views within a larger political process. For community groups, initiating community consultations may be an opportunity to negotiate closed political systems or policy systems not willing to engage in interactive debate about issues to identify long-term solutions.

DIRECT ACTION

Direct action includes protests, demonstrations, media events, petitions, letter writing campaigns, etc. For some organizations, direct action is a form of strategic communication to bring public attention to the issue of homelessness and encourage politicians to take action. Not all organizations use this tactic. However, contrary to the scholarly literature, it is not only adopted by those organizations that find themselves "outside" of the political process. Direct action tactics are employed by organizations that have developed relationships with government officials such as the Toronto Anglican Diocese as well as by those that haven't developed relationships such as TDRC.

However, contentious direct action, or those actions that seek primarily to embarrass or shame government is rarely mounted by organizations with established relationships with policy makers or those seeking such relationships. Direct action tactics used by the organizations in the study include letter writing campaigns, petitions, legal challenges, protests and vigils.

A common direct action technique employed by non-profit organizations in the study is petitions. The Toronto Anglican Diocese, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, and independent Ottawa-area protester Jane Scharf all report using this technique. A variation of this tactic used by the Homeless Awareness Group in Toronto was a letter writing campaign to send Christmas cards to (then) Prime Minister Brian Mulroney calling for action on poverty and homelessness. Petitions and letter writing campaigns are often part of a larger advocacy strategy by non-profit organizations to promote a specific policy or action agenda. The documents, usually presented publicly to policy makers, seek to communicate a groundswell of support for the action that is being promoted. New technology has recently brought petitions on-line. Non-profit organizations seeking specific policy changes regularly mount on-line petition campaigns encouraging members and supporters to email their petition to local MPs. None of the non-profit organizations in the study reported using this tactic. In contrast, the Toronto Anglican Dioceses felt that part of the effectiveness of their petition campaign was the visible and tangible documents that were ceremoniously delivered to Queen's Park (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

The effectiveness of using petitions to influence public policy depends on the organization's goals and how strategic it was in employing this tactic. Petitions and letter

writing campaigns that align with political issues and votes before a house, and call for actions that can reasonably be taken at that point in the policy process have more chance of effecting immediate action than do isolated letter writing campaigns seeking to raise an issue with politicians (as the Homeless Awareness Group Christmas card campaign was). This reflects the importance of developing skills and knowledge of the policy process in-house for successful advocacy. The extent to which these tactics will influence long-term outcomes or political perceptions surrounding issues is impossible to know.

Pivot Legal Society, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, and Lu'ma Native Housing Society take a different form of direct action. These organizations challenge or seek standing in legal processes surrounding issues of homelessness as a strategy to bring public and government attention to the issue. As explained by Laura Track:

So Pivot's mandate is to take a strategic approach to the law and to try to use the law to address roots causes that really undermine people's quality of life, particularly people living on the margins of society and many of those people in Vancouver live here in the downtown east side (personal interview, Laura Track, March 16, 2009).

For Pivot, legal challenges are mounted as an awareness tactic to supplement local advocacy efforts relating to homelessness. For TDRC, legal challenges create political opportunities to raise policy and program issues surrounding homelessness in a system that is largely closed off to their efforts (Hilson, 2000).

Legal challenges are expensive, time consuming, and often unsuccessful in terms of changing the law (personal interview, Laura Track, March 16, 2009). In all cases but Lu'ma Native Housing Society,⁶⁵ the success of legislative direct action lies in communicating the inequities faced by individuals experiencing homelessness to mass

⁶⁵ Lu'Ma Native Housing Society seeks primarily to address inequities through legal reform and to garner the attention of federal policy makers.

media to incite citizens, who will in turn encourage political action (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009; personal interview, Laura Track, March 16, 2009).

Although specifying a short-term goal to change legislation, the effort seeks mainly to inform media discourse and (ideally) provoke societal and political discussion and debate. Pivot Legal Society, for example, represented the legal interests of more than 200 homeless people camped at the Woodward's building to protest the lack of affordable housing in Vancouver. The legal challenge sued for compensation for the individuals. Although the legal action was unsuccessful, the attention gained by the suit resulted in the provincial government underwriting the cost to retrofit the building for low-income housing units. In the case of Pivot Legal Society and Lu'ma Native Housing Society, legal challenges align with the expertise of the organization executives surrounding public policy and regulation. Both organizations are staffed by lawyers. Pivot Legal Society has supplemented this knowledge with communications expertise to effectively manage media around the event, an essential component of their strategy.

Rallies and protests are the most common form of direct action used by non-profit organizations in the study. Independent protester Jane Scharf, The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) and The Citywide Housing Initiative regularly mount public protests. Scharf considers protest to be an effective means to influence policy and program management for individuals who are homeless:

We got a permit to hold a protest 24/7... We were specifically protesting Brian's Law and the Safe Streets Act ... Like there was another protest, the next summer at City Hall, this time we were protesting the city's treatment of homeless people (personal interview, Jane Scharf, April 23, 2009).

Important for Scharf is that the action is mounted by homeless individuals themselves.

For this group, protest is a response to deficiencies in public policy, an opportunity for

those experiencing homelessness to share their experiences with policy makers, and to persuade policy makers to make change. For Scharf and her group, protest is a form of dialogue, or at least an opportunity to include the voice of individuals who are homeless in the policy process. Protests are organized in such a way that politicians are exposed to them (across from City Hall). In this way the protest negotiates the lack of political opportunity and political capital often afforded to individuals experiencing homelessness. As commented by Michael Shapcott at that Wellesley Institute, protest gives agency to those who are otherwise shut out of the political process:

[protest] is one of the few ways that poor people have to communicate because they can't afford to buy an ad in *the Globe and Mail*, so one of the most effective ways to communicate your situation is to take to the streets and I think that's very powerful, I think that's one reason why it's important, another reason why it is important is that it does create a dynamic that does require attention but unfortunately it's not terribly articulate having a bunch of people standing in front of a provincial legislature, shaking their fists at them, barricading a building doesn't really suggest where we should be going, just that there's a confrontation (personal interview, Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009).

The degree to which these protests change public policy is minimal, although Scharf reports that the protests resulted in a change in how some programs were administered (personal interview, Jane Scharf, April 23, 2009).

For the TDRC, “consistent, constant, constant harassment at all kinds of levels” (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009) is a long-term strategy to keep homelessness and social housing on the political agenda. While some actions are directed at seeking immediate, short-term changes to programs or policies, protests primarily seek long-term solutions to the issue. In addition to mounted protests, TDRC regularly organize vigils to remember individuals who have died as a result of homelessness. For the TDRC, these regular public displays are the means through which

they communicate with governments and “bear witness” to the problem of homelessness. Central to these actions is attracting the attention of media as a strategy to pressure governments to recognize the issues and act on them. In the case of the tent city demonstration in 1998, media attention helped force governments to accommodate these individuals in social housing (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009).

The Citywide Housing Initiative similarly mounts rallies and marches. Their goal is “to get people to be very careful with who they elect and to pressure the politicians that are running for election on their commitment [to end homelessness]” (personal interview, Laura Stannard, March 19, 2009). The rallies and marches, they suggest, provide a forum to engage citizens on the issue, educate them, and create media coverage. They believe this action, in turn, creates awareness of the issue and public debate on the need to find political solutions. This group, in effect, uses protest as a catalyst for creating dialogue among citizens about homelessness and potential solutions for it in their communities. However, journalistic practices that sensationalize coverage and focus on the acts of protest rather than the issue (Gitlin, 1980) challenge the utility of this strategy to achieve its intended goals.

Direct action thus provides a forum for some non-profit organizations to criticize government actions and programs, and to bring forward issues that may not be possible through more diplomatic approaches. However, it has its consequences:

You know it's very hard because there's a perception that you, I guess my sad and good story is that I think that we're the pointy end of the stick and the pointy end of the stick makes a lot of people uncomfortable and at times it has to rail against the machine in a way that others may not be willing or frustrated enough to do, so with that we make perhaps more impact but at the same time when the money starts flowing and those get rewarded for their good behaviour, we're not necessarily the first one that get handed a big wonk of money and they say here

you go honey thanks so much for your support, its everybody else (personal interview, Liz Evans, March 18, 2009).

Still, most direct action groups feel a strong connection to the larger effort. As expressed by Laura Track (personal interview, March 16, 2009) “I think that we’re all working towards the same goal. We might have different tactics ...”

Direct action can take many forms and serve multiple goals. It can be used strategically by organizations actively involved in the issue to encourage policy action. It is also used by organizations shut out of the policy process to voice their concerns over issues, as is the case with TDRC and Jane Scharf and to raise issues and demand action in a way that is not possible through more diplomatic approaches. Finally, either independently or through amplification in the media, it can bring public attention to issues of homelessness, educate citizens and policy makers on the need for long-term social and policy solutions. Through its multiple forums, it expands the nature of the political and social debate and those who are typically allowed to engage in it.

Most organizations measure the success of direct action by the number of people they are able to attract to a demonstration, or the number of signatures they are able to assign to a position. The relationship between these acts and long-term social and political change is unknown. Because direct action relies heavily on media coverage to be successful in raising issues for public debate, organizations that do not strategically address media are often less able to measure their outcomes.

Like the protests at council meetings, contentious direct action that seeks to expand the parameters of the debate or raise awareness of issues is often not successful at effecting immediate policy change. More strategic, instrumental communication is

required. However, it may be effective long term for changing public attitudes and negotiating political structures.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Leading by example is a unique communication tactic that is identified by some of the organizations in the study. These organizations feel that their program actions communicate to governments the need to address homelessness and potential solutions. The Multifaith Housing Initiative, for example, states: “I’m just somebody that figures if we do something well we’ll be noticed” (personal interview, Sue Evans, June 17, 2009). Similarly, Options Bytown states “you know my advocacy work is just by example, do your job here, serve the homeless and show people that you serve the homeless. Let the evidence speak for itself” (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009). Murray McAdam of the Toronto Anglican Diocese believes that the act of speaking for individuals who are disadvantaged communicates a larger and more persuasive message to politicians than just the immediate requests being made:

You could tell we had had an impact on him in the sense that politicians are constantly used to people coming to them who 99% of the time want something for themselves or for somebody they know, some of their own family ... what we need is large numbers of people to say and act, as a good number of Anglicans have, to say to their local politicians I’m concerned about this housing issue not so much because I myself will be directly impacted but I know there’s a lot of people who are and I cannot in a clear conscious stand by and do nothing knowing that so many people have to ensure this (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

Leading by example, for these organizations, is a tactic that supports both dialogic and instrumental goals. It serves instrumental goals in that the exhibition of success persuades governments to continue and expand programs and services to individuals that

are homeless and to continue funding the organization providing the services. It is dialogic in that the actions of the non-profit organizations validate the truthfulness or sincerity of the organization seeking resolution of the issue and raises awareness of the issue among policy makers and members of the public. This may be a form of advocacy unique to non-profit organizations as it is premised on demonstrating that the normative goals of the organization are collectively determined and socially oriented and hence promote “wider notions of public good or public interest” (Reid, 1999, p. 291).

The tactic is largely ineffective for policy change unless augmented with evidence based research that is purposively presented to governments. The belief that “actions will speak louder than words” reinforces the limited capacity that many of the smaller, understaffed organizations have for strategic policy advocacy.

MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA

For many organizations media advocacy is an independent tactic or a complement to other advocacy efforts. It is adopted to achieve both short-term instrumental goals and to raise public awareness and seek shared understandings of issues. Media is a common tactic due to its cost-effectiveness, which speaks to the funding issues faced by many organizations, and its perceived ability to reach the broader audience of the “public”, identified as the target audience for many of the organizations’ goals. The Calgary Homeless Foundation and the Shepherds of Good Hope, for example, identify “everyone” as a target audience. Others like the DI will “talk to anyone who will talk to them ... it’s a broad brush. Because it really doesn’t matter which audience” (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

Local media regularly support the charity efforts of social service and charity organizations in news reports suggesting that, indeed, this is the dominant frame applied to non-profit news about homelessness (Deacon, 1999; Shields, 1991). The Vancouver Foundation provides an example:

A very interesting conversation I had with CBC recently. They were going to do something at the beginning of March, it was going to be a focus on homelessness all that week, they called me up and they said, well we want to partner with a community organization, we're doing this whole thing on homelessness, stopping homelessness and we maybe want to do a sock drive. And I said to her, yeah but a sock drive doesn't really reduce homelessness, you want to really look at things like encouraging people to donate money for example to the youth homelessness fund which actually gets units of, apartments, or StreetoHome which is actually going out and buying units for people to be housed in. I said to me that's addressing homelessness, not another sock drive or another food drive. They didn't go for it. They said it's easier, we know how to do a sock drive and to watch the socks pile up and to tell people the sock bin is almost full or whatever. I said it's just interesting that you're talking about wanting to reduce homelessness in that week but in fact the real way you reduce homelessness is you actually get units of housing, that's how you do it (personal interview, Catherine Clement, March 17, 2009).

Many social service and charity organizations, in turn, utilize media coverage to support their fundraising efforts and goals. Angela Campbell of the Shepherds of Good Hope provides an example:

We ran out of bread, first time in 26 years, ran out of bread and it was a panic situation so we put a PSA out and before you knew it, I mean there were truckloads of bread coming in. Just one example of how the media can help us out (personal interview, Angela Campbell, April 21, 2009).

In another instance, a call for blankets by the Lookout Emergency Aid Society in Vancouver netted coverage and positive results. For these efforts, non-profits achieve their short-term instrumental goals through pitching stories that align with the traditional frames and routines of mainstream media surrounding the issue. Further evidence surrounding their media practices suggest that this success may not be so much a result of

strategy as of circumstance. Media coverage in other areas is not as easily achieved or as effective for the organization.

Many social service and charity organizations seek media coverage of their programs and events in an effort to maintain the “brand” (personal interview, Tim Stock-Bateman, February 24, 2009) of the organization, and to show its relevance, which in turn, they assert, encourages public and private donations. The Calgary Mustard Seed seeks to:

Make it clear to our supporters that we’re a change life organization because that’s what people want to support now days, they want to see things happen ...very much in letting people understand that what they are supporting is making a big difference in the community and identifying how that takes place (personal interview, Pat Nixon, February 23, 2009).

To pitch this coverage, many organizations invite media to view and participate in agency programs or events. As an example, The Drop In Centre in Calgary regularly invites journalists to attend community barbecues and art shows. The Multifaith Housing Initiative organizes a walk-a-thon to raise funds for their housing initiative and the Shepherds of Good Hope hosts a hunger banquet each year. Unlike the calls for donations, media are not so quick to cover the story as the news value is not so evident. However, skill and expertise in media advocacy can increase coverage. There is a direct relationship between the amount of media coverage received and the organization’s effort in actively pursuing media coverage. Two small organizations that lacked communications personnel found their limited efforts of sending out media releases insufficient to garner extensive coverage (personal interview Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009; personal interview, Sue Evans, June 17, 2009). Media coverage of events and programs is more plentiful when communications personnel develop on-going

relationships with reporters and strategically seek to meet journalists' production needs (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009). Organizations that assume media coverage will be forthcoming (like it does with the fundraising initiatives) and do not actively solicit the coverage in a way that convinces media that the event has news value are often disappointed.

For many social service and charity organizations a third goal of media coverage is to mobilize public empathy for individuals who are homeless, which they believe will raise awareness and shared understanding about the problem of homelessness. This is a more dialogic goal. In effect, they are trying to reproduce, on a mass scale, what they are able to achieve through public speaking engagements. Rob Eady of the Shepherds of Good Hope makes the connection:

Educating the public, educating the government, educating everybody that needs to be educated to help us solve this because that's a huge part and to make people understand that if you don't understand the problem you're not going to be able to solve it or even come close to. So I think if we can educate people and help people understand ... these are people first, and that we have, we have an obligation as human being to look after our most vulnerable and a society is only as great as its weakest member and our clients are very vulnerable and weak and I think if we can really show that or get that message out (personal interview, Rob Eady, April 21, 2009).

Similarly, Louise Gallagher of the Drop In Centre wants to "touch hearts and open minds" through "bringing the human face to the issue" and breaking down the myths of homelessness (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

As in their speaking engagements, many organizations seek coverage that highlights individuals and explains the circumstances that led them to homelessness or their path out of homelessness. However, most are disappointed in the coverage. As Paul Ryan recounts:

I was particularly disappointed with the *Globe and Mail* because the reporter asked me for three names for his piece ...and I gave him three, and these three people are doing really well, they're Hope and Shadows photographers, and they're all pretty strong people and I think, like role models for other people, but they were interviewed and their stories were completely one sided and there's a woman whose been here 17 years and came here because she had a mental health problem and they didn't talk about anything she does now, she's involved with community groups, she's training people, she's training people with Hope and Shadows, selling calendars and books, she's gone on with her life and done a really good job, she's got a supportive community around her but if you were to read the story I don't know if you've seen it, it's completely different person that they describe ... I feel guilty that I gave these contact details to the journalists, I felt really disappointed (personal interview, Paul Ryan, March 16, 2009).

In this effort, many communications personnel do not recognize that their dialogic objectives do not align with the norms and practices of news media and that the goals for the communication are at odds with what can be achieved through the system.

Generally, however, many communications staff in the study actively sought to be more strategic and proactive in their media work, developing better relationships with reporters, and more actively pitching stories to news outlets. This may be a reflection of the increased communication skills developed within many of the organizations. Most have identified spokespeople for the organization and many have provided media training for them. The approach to spokespeople differs among organizations. Where the Calgary Urban Project Society, the Youth Services Bureau, and the Mustard Seed seek to expand the number of spokespeople in their organizations, organizations like the Alliance to End Homelessness and Ottawa Inner-City Health have developed specific policies around who is able to speak for the organization. These differing approaches show the tension between wanting to be more responsive to media requests to gain coverage and the need to be more strategic in the messaging that is presented. An interesting approach

adopted by the Drop In Centre in Calgary is to assign spokespeople to different types of stories. As noted by Louise Gallagher:

What tends to happen, and Dermot [the Executive Director] and I have sort of addressed this, is that if it is an instance or a stories that really requires hard-hitting, he wants to do it because he really wants me to stay associated with the good things that happen at DI, with the positive attitude, the positive position of the DI and the community. So he will tend to deal with the more hard hitting issues (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

Some organizations like Lookout Emergency Aid Society and the Alliance to End Homelessness find community papers more receptive to printing stories they have written and pitched than the larger circulating dailies. However, they also require more support: “we have submitted background articles on homelessness issues in the past to community papers ...we were able to do that really well was when we had a Carleton [journalism] student...who had the time and the commitment to do that” (personal interview, Linda O’Neil, August 20, 2009). In these instances, organizations have more control over the message, but need to dedicated limited staff and resources to the function.

Organizations with limited communication staff are often more reactive in their media management practices.⁶⁶ In some cases, relationships develop organically and lead to future positive coverage:

The A Channel ... they’d often just walk over with their cameras because it’s just right down the street and if they had a few minutes to fill or they would do a lunch hour ... I don’t do it just because I want the media (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009).

Overall, few said they decline media requests, although some are cautious, having learned from experience that media may seek them out only as a dissenting voice, for example, a critic of government programs (personal interview, Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009).

⁶⁶ Organizations include Homeless Awareness Calgary, Options Bytown, Multifaith Housing Initiative, and Lu’Ma Native Housing Society.

Those organizations seeking ongoing relationships with politicians would rather not be seen as an axe-grinder (Deacon, 1996).

For organizations that engage in direct action, like the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, Pivot Legal Society, and the Citywide Housing Initiative, news coverage is central to their communication strategy. Media coverage illustrates the social needs relating to homelessness, embarrasses governments to take action on an issue and/or incites public outrage, which in turn (it is believed), pressures governments to take action. As stated by Laura Track “I think the threat of getting thrown out of office is the way [to get politicians attention]” (personal interview, March 16, 2009). These organizations, generally, are more strategic in attracting coverage, are more knowledgeable about media routines and frames, and better align their communication efforts with these routines and frames.

Recognizing both the need to be newsworthy and that media organizations are reluctant to push any one organization’s agenda, a key element of the advocacy strategy of direct action groups is to identify an event that “is going to hook people and going to hook the media” (personal interview, Laura Stannard, March 19, 2009). Pivot Legal Society explains:

They [media] usually want more, more pizzazz, and sometimes the legal stuff can get really confusing and bogged down so that’s always a challenge, how to bring the work that we’re doing on the issues that we’re grappling with which tend to be legal in nature, how to frame them in an accessible way so that everybody understands it. ... In January we did a great media, we called a press conference in front of one of the SROs [single room occupancy hotels] and we called out the owners of what we called the worst of the worst SROs and we did that with a group of other advocates in the neighbourhood. And it was really powerful, I think doing it on the street, in front of this building and we had a woman who lives in the building participate in the press conference and she invited the reporters in and the owners wouldn’t let them in and there was this whole scrum at the front door, it was sad, and the reporters just ate it up, they loved it and it got

great coverage just because it was a really powerful story of the conditions people are living in and how landlords are making quite a lot of money keeping these places in such rough shape. So when we do media we really pick up on the gross violations (personal interview, Laura Track, March 16, 2009).

Moreover, many of the groups employ traditional public relations techniques to promote maximum coverage of their event: “we try to schedule it on a day that’s good for getting media, we try all the things ... to get media to your event, we do follow up phone calls the day of the event” (personal interview, Laura Stannard, March 19, 2009). The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee develops relationships with reporters and offers exclusives to friendly news outlets (personal interview, Beric German, April 27, 2009). Success for these organizations is measured through the number of news reports they are able to secure and the degree to which their collective action frames are presented in the reports. Their alignment with journalistic norms and routines often garner them coverage; however, the degree to which these reports incite public and political discussions and debates about the issue is much more difficult to measure. Often for direct action groups, media reports focus on the “hook”, rather than the issues for which the media event was developed (Gitlin, 1980).

Other organizations, also with a primary goal of political action, seek a more tempered approach in their media coverage, straddling the line between pointing out social and political deficiencies and keeping the doors open for ongoing consultation and relationships with policy makers. For organizations like the Wellesley Institute, St. Michael’s Hospital, Calgary Homeless Foundation, StreetoHome, and the Alliance to End Homelessness, pitching stories about evidence-based research helps them toe this line. As an example, the Alliance to End Homelessness conducts two major media campaigns each year: one for the launch of their annual report card on ending homelessness and the

second to communicate findings from their annual research day. The presentation of research from these two forums communicates the ongoing severity of the issue but provides evidence of the problem in such a way that does not affix blame directly to any single government or program. While the research highlights required courses of action, it is done in an explicitly non-partisan way.

A result of pitching media stories in this rather more diplomatic manner is that these organizations increase their legitimacy in the eyes of the media, validating themselves as arbiters rather than axe-grinders (Deacon, 1996) and raising their profile in the eyes of journalists. Consequently, they are actively sought out for future reports. This is a desirable outcome, especially in light of ongoing findings that non-profits (particularly advocacy groups) only ever receive sporadic news coverage (Deacon, 1999; Greenberg & Walters, 2004; Jacobs & Glass, 2002). However, for groups with limited staffing and capacities, this is a double-edged sword. On one hand they have an increased opportunity to communicate broadly through the media, but on the other hand their capacities are stretched to the limit, making them and their media work more reactive. Most find it productive to support these media requests because of the “media capital” (Dimitrov, 2008) that they gain. Both the Alliance to End Homelessness and Inner City Health have utilized this media capital in negotiations with government personnel achieving key outcomes with the threat of bringing an issue public. This relationship also offers opportunities to educate and create understandings of the issue and solutions with journalists, which in turn can result in more thematic coverage around issues of homelessness in the long term.

The Toronto Anglican Diocese only exceptionally seeks media attention as a strategy to support their efforts, preferring direct lobbying with policy makers and direct communication within their network of churches. In November 2008 they deviated from this strategy and bought a nearly full-page ad in the *Toronto Star* calling on the provincial government to take action on ending poverty. This tactic added critical support to a coalition campaign they were supporting:

I think we wanted to convey, to reach a large public audience to first of all educate them that Anglicans are quite concerned about this issue and then of course, the ad, we sent around to a lot of partner groups, like the 25 and 5 coalition, the ad actually supports that campaign which back in November was very active (personal interview, Murray McAdam, April 27, 2009).

It is interesting that in this instance, they chose to utilize advertising, where they could control the message rather than seek media coverage of their campaign. Amongst many of the organizations interviewed for the study there is a desire to be able to underwrite more extensive advertising and public relations campaigns. Many feel that this would provide them with more extensive media coverage and coverage that more directly aligns with their goals. It also addresses concerns related to journalists oversimplifying, misrepresenting, or sensationalizing the issue or individuals who are homeless. Due to the costs associated with advertising, most organizations, especially the smaller ones, have limited access to this tactic.

Overall, media is extensively used by non-profit organizations as both a strategy and a tactic to achieve their goals. In different instances it serves multiple and varying goals, both instrumental and dialogic. Organizations that serve and support individuals who are homeless have been successful in utilizing media as a strategy to fundraise. In large part, this is because this goal aligns with the existing frames and news-value that

journalists attribute to these types of organizations. The same organizations must work harder or are less successful in generating more self-serving coverage or thematic coverage of the issue. Personal stories are regularly pitched to create public empathy and shared public understandings of homelessness. However, these goals are not conducive to the system and conventional practice of mainstream news media. The desire to also adapt this medium to communicate more dialogically speaks to the ongoing tension between strategy and mission and the ethos central to many non-profits to create productive dialogue and collective understandings of issues.

Organizations focused on strategically communicating the need for policy change better recognize the need to frame and present issues in a way that aligns with journalists' norms and expectations. Direct action groups utilize media events and contentious claims to maximize news value. Once garnered, they seek collective action frames (Benford & Snow, 2000) that will encourage public and policy action, although journalists do not always differentiate between their agitator and arbiter status (Deacon, 1996).

Organizations seeking long-term policy resolutions tend to use evidence-based research, rather than sensational events, as a hook to garner media coverage and communicate the importance of the issue.

Across the non-profit sector, increased media capacity is evident. Organizations are becoming more adept at media management, developing policies around identifying key spokespeople, providing training for personnel, developing relationships with journalists, pitching stories and providing required background information to journalists. Many organizations with broad mandates have not yet recognized the need to adapt their

efforts when using media as a political tool. Organizations more focused on policy-centred advocacy are more strategic in this effort.

Media contact and presence is by far the most common evaluation metric of non-profit organizations. Organizations regularly record the number of journalists attending an event or a launch, the number of news articles printed, the tone and tenor of the news articles, and whether journalists regularly contact the organization or its spokespeople as an information source. From these indices, organizations discern the effectiveness of their media relations practices. As reported by Louise Gallagher at the Drop In Centre in Calgary:

I ... know that its working and that media call us when they need an opinion, they call, they will call me or Dermot directly when something, you know when a story breaks and they want some input, and when we call them, they turn up. So that's a really good measurement to me. And when I get people, people in the media, just calling me to say, hey any interesting stories Louise, that's a good measurement and so I just stick with that measurement (personal interview, Louise Gallagher, February 25, 2009).

While organizations can easily track outcomes of media reports directed to fundraising or charity efforts, less evident is the degree to which these media reports influence how people understand homelessness – an important secondary advocacy goal for many organizations. As articulated by Stephen Hwang:

It's easy to measure in terms of media, just media hits, so we kind of know where we've been covered and how we're covered. You know whether that translates into changing how people think, that's very hard to measure and we ... don't have a way of measuring that (personal interview, Stephen Hwan, April 29, 2009).

WEBSITES/TECHNOLOGY/NEW MEDIA

At the time of research, very few non-profit organizations are making use of online media, social media or technology for their advocacy practices. Many of the

organizations in the study seek a well-designed, informative website but do not have the resources or capacity to manage or maintain one. Only a few organizations, primarily those focused on policy advocacy, actively utilize technology and new media or social media as an advocacy tactic or tool.

Maintaining active and current websites is difficult for many of the social service and charity organizations in the study. While many are displeased with the state of their website, few believe they possess the resources or capacity to change them. Limited resources for communication cannot be further stretched to accommodate these new platforms. These findings are equally relevant for the larger organizations as for the smaller organizations. Amanda Dale of the YWCA in Toronto notes:

That website is not something that I'm particularly proud of. It, when I came, we had no website, this is my defence. I worked for the first couple of years to develop a web presence for us. ... We had very little understanding of what kind of investment a website requires ...I was unable to secure the kind of investment that would have made it possible for me to have a web writer for instance. So all those capacity issues really affected what we were able to do ... (personal interview, Amanda Dale, April 29, 2009).

This confirms the findings of Kenix (2008) who found that due to lack of capacity and skills, non-profits most often use websites as repositories of published information and develop very little strategy around them. For many organizations, this may be a missed opportunity to facilitate educational opportunities to create the shared understandings of issues that they largely seek. Coalitions, on the other hand, place a high priority on maintaining their website as an education resource for media, politicians and members. The Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa, for example, posts relevant information in a timely manner on their website and maintains a very active list-serv that enables them to inform their members about emergent and ongoing issues.

We have made very good use of that [Alliance website] in terms of design, it is widely used, we do keep track of the number of hits and people are still going back and assessing report cards from years ago. ... In addition to the website, there is the Alliance list-serv, which is widely subscribed to I would say by all the organizations that involve homelessness, mental illness, addictions, so all kinds of organizations that are either directly or peripherally involved in homelessness issues (personal interview, Linda O'Neil, August 20, 2009).

Similarly, the Calgary Homeless Foundation and the Citywide Housing Initiative have websites that provide important background and educational material that are intended to educate the public and journalists alike. This becomes more important as journalists rely more and more on the Internet to research their stories (Bronstein, 2006; Davis, 2002).

Yet, none of the organizations in the study reported efforts to track utilization of their site or what information is sourced by which audience. At most, the number of hits to individual pages was identified (personal interview, Linda O'Neil, August 20, 2009).

This calls into question the degree to which they see the site as a strategic opportunity to forward their education and advocacy goals.

Only a few organizations in the study use a broad range of technology and social media strategically. The Youth Services Bureau in Ottawa, as part of their youth engagement program, utilizes video to communicate the success of their program to funders:

so we have a video that was created by one of our young men, it's four kids that are talking about their experiences through the continuum that share why it was successful, and why YSB helped, so sending that information to the MCYS folks so that they see what they're doing is having a huge impact (personal interview, Dan Sabourin, June 5, 2009).

In effect, this organization is drawing on the personal stories that are recognized to be so effective in persuading audiences to support their organization to deliver them in a state-of-the-art forum to program funders. The use of technology may serve to legitimize the

organization as an innovative and creative organization – characteristics that are highly regarded by government funders; however the use of stories may not be perceived by funders as evidence based research.

The Wellesley Institute has begun to incorporate wikis and other collaborative web-based forums to engage and expand the scope of individuals consulted in their process of developing advocacy positions. This process allows for lived experience to be incorporated into the organization's strategic policy positions, in effect introducing interactive knowledge alongside technical knowledge (personal interview, Michael Shapcott, April 28, 2009). For issues of homelessness, this is an unproven strategy and one that will have to be monitored to ascertain its utility. Most certainly, the strategy raises tensions between order (or reproducing the structure) and agency or providing avenues for the system to be negotiated by those affected by it.

Pivot Legal Society most actively engages social media, but mainly uses it to support their fundraising efforts⁶⁷:

All the time. We are going to be moving onto a web 2.0 platform. Hope and Shadows one is being launched in 2 months and that will involve all of the images going onto Flickr and I've started Twittering with Hope and Shadows, PIVOT's started twittering, we've got a twitter account for every campaign. ... are really about getting people engaged. So if you talk about communications, that's what it's all about ...the whole aim is to get people interested and engaged and then hopefully, because we need people to support us financially as well, we can get them onto a higher level, more money whatever, and that's the whole idea behind it (personal interview, Paul Ryan, March 16, 2009).

No organization reported that they use web-based media or other new technologies for direct advocacy campaigns with policy makers although some use email to communicate with politicians and many have websites or portions of their websites dedicated to

⁶⁷ Shepherds of Good Hope has also recently developed a Twitter and Facebook presence, but had not done so at the time of the interviews.

upcoming fundraising events or campaigns. This may be a missed opportunity as some politicians report that email is one of the primary indices of community support on an issue:

And we'll get 10 emails on it. If I get a citation in the paper I'll get an email, we'll get emails on it and whether it struck a chord. It's not like an email tells you that 1,000 people think this or whatever, but somehow you develop your instincts as to what the public is feeling (personal interview, Joe Mihevc, April 29, 2009).

Web-based tactics offer opportunities for non-profit organizations to present and propose potential solutions on housing, homelessness and poverty. While most social service organizations have a web-presence and the opportunity to use this forum as an education and awareness tool, few have the resources or expertise in-house to use it to its full potential. Policy advocacy groups have more actively engaged with this medium, using it not only to inform and educate members and citizens, but to also align their efforts with policy makers' and journalists' needs and expectations. Social media offers an opportunity to invite discussion and debate on issues and include multiple voices; however, few organizations in the study have the expertise or resources to integrate or manage these platforms.

COALITIONS

Many organizations in the study see value in joining alliances and coalitions to support their advocacy efforts. For some, communicating potentially unpopular messages to government is less risky through alliances than through their individual organizations:

Because Options Bytown is so small I think that we benefit from the partnerships that we work within, so there's the Alliance to End Homelessness, the leadership table, the supportive housing network, [we] use all those vehicles to make a

stronger statement. It doesn't have to be promoting Options Bytown because we're all promoting the same cause homelessness and how to solve the problem" (personal interview Lorraine Bentley, June 5, 2009).

The lack of association between a potentially unpopular message and the organization is especially attractive to some of the smaller organizations who are concerned about their funding and seek long-term relationships with politicians.

In Ottawa, a clear delegation of policy advocacy responsibility has evolved among the coalition and individual organizations: The Alliance to End Homelessness communicates the need for wide-scale policy interventions while individual organizations dedicate their efforts to maintaining funding relationships for their organizations and programs. An internal tension with this strategy is that these organizations are potentially at odds with each other in their advocacy practices. The local social service organizations are, in effect, advocating for the status quo and emergency solutions while the larger coalition is advocating for long-term solutions,

In some cases, organizations that are non-partisan in their approach participate in alliances for partisan or political actions. Wendy Muckle explains: "we are part of the Ottawa Carleton Council on AIDS and we're very active in Injection Drug Users Action Team ... Those are more sort of vehicles for us for political things" (personal interview, Wendy Muckle, April 24, 2009). Through these coalitions, her organization can participate in the "political activity" that is frowned upon by current legislation and governments, negotiating these policies and regulatory regimes.

To be sustainable coalitions must attend to and represent the views of their members. To be effective, coalitions must achieve stated goals. These efforts require different approaches. Attending to and representing the views of one's membership

requires extensive deliberation and discussion of policy positions and goals among members (Ress, 1999). The larger the coalition, the more voices it needs to accommodate in this process. As a result, deliberations may not result in only one position:

Sometimes there will be issues of [competing] type approaches and where that happens the Alliance takes more of an information source role so we don't have a formal position on anything really other than what is on the back of the report card A concrete example would be several years ago when the issue became more prevalent of governments responding with rent supplements and there was quite a bit of concern about rent supplements versus money for affordable housing when they first came on the scene. So the Alliance didn't take a position, pro or con, they bore out information, there are x number of and this is this much, so we didn't say we've got to have more and I think over time once you recognize that there will be no government response to the crisis of the magnitude that was needed the various ways of responding to homelessness is quite diverse and they are all going to be needed, they are all needed (personal interview Lynne Browne, May 21, 2009).

Yet, achieving success in policy advocacy requires strategic messaging that clearly identifies specified outcomes. Coalitions must navigate both these needs to be successful. Alternatively they must prioritize one goal over the other, which results in a trade-off of one realm for the other.

Alliances and coalitions provide an opportunity for organizations that rely on government funding to be more vocal advocates for social and political change as it deflects potentially unpleasant messages and actions to the larger coalition. Joining alliances is a strategy of many organizations; however the ability for the alliance to achieve strategic advocacy goals is dependent on the representativeness and legitimacy of the alliance and its ability to effect political change. Alliances must ensure that the voices of their members contribute to positions that are forwarded and often undertake extensive processes to seek consensus. The more widespread the alliance, the more

difficult it is to gain consensus on issues and actions, which in turn weakens the strategic opportunities available for these coalitions to effect the policy system.

DISCUSSION

A wide range of non-profit organizations employ multiple and varied communication tactics to achieve advocacy goals. The tactics that are adopted do not always align with traditional understandings of insider and outsider approaches described in the literature. Moreover, the communication efforts are regularly perceived by non-profit advocates to serve multiple goals and objectives. This challenges much of the current scholarship that asserts that the goals, function, and mobilization of advocacy communication practices is largely related to organization form, resources, or relationship with government.

The study found that the choice of strategies and tactics are related to organizational goals and practices, the knowledge and skills of the communicator, past organizational successes and the negotiation context. Many social service and charity organizations tried to adapt communication developed for fundraising to also educate audiences about homelessness. Few of these organizations saw incommensurability between the instrumental and dialogic goals. To the contrary, they saw them as complementary. In part this was supported by activities such as public speaking engagements where the dialogic approach proved effective in securing resources for the organization. These same organizations were not as effective in achieving short-term instrumental policy goals. For these efforts, the communicative imperatives of the system were not being met by the dialogic ethic of the organizations. Yet to suggest that

these efforts were completely ineffective would be wrong. While not readily measured, many organizations were confident that their efforts to educate the public and policy makers about the issue created change in understanding and perceptions around the issue. The limited evidence available supports this. Studies of media coverage (e.g. Greenberg, 2010) reveal increased attention to the issue and the rise of more thematic and contextual coverage. Governments at all levels have increased activity around the issue. Habermas (1987) argues that for positive social change to occur, communicative rationality needs to be reintroduced into the system world. Non-profits may be contributing to this through their educating and creating shared understandings with individuals within the policy system, which in turn impacts how those individuals interpret and act within these structures (Strauss, 1978). Yet the immediate lack of instrumental policy success suggests that systemic imperatives and mesostructures, which limit the value of non-profit advocacy, continue to be powerful predictors of advocacy success.

In some areas, service and charity non-profits are becoming more strategic in their advocacy efforts. They recognize the value of creating and managing long-term relationships with politicians and journalists to educate politicians and citizens on the issues and to gain access to the public policy process. In large part this reflects increased skills and capacities in the areas of communication being developed within these organizations.

Organizations with a narrower policy advocacy focus were generally more strategic. The strategies and tactics adopted largely aligned with their goals to either raise issues within the political system or to identify and seek specific policy goals. Those focused on raising awareness of issues at the political level often adopted “outsider”

strategies while those focused on promoting specific policy solutions typically sought long-term relationships with policy makers. Each approach supported the other and contributed to the larger advocacy effort surrounding issues of homelessness. The choice to either raise issue awareness or seek policy solutions reveals a trade-off faced by many policy advocates to either focus on immediate needs or long-term solutions. It also reveals recognition that in some cases, seeking multiple and varied goals may not be appropriate. In all cities, a coalition had emerged to advocate for long-term policy goals at all levels of government.

The communication activities of non-profits in the homelessness sector reflect important and interacting elements of the negotiation context. Communication strategies reflect organizations' perceptions and capacities for advocacy. Efforts to influence public understanding and to raise funds reflect diminishing political support for non-profits generally and to issues of homelessness specifically; policy advocacy directed at all three levels of government recognize the integrated and complex nature of the issue and the need for long-term policy solutions; and use of demonstrations and media events align with attitude and practices of media surrounding the issue and the non-profit sector.

In many cases, the efforts also negotiated aspects of the mesostructure. Efforts to influence public attitudes surrounding the issues helped to negotiate limited political opportunities, political capital and structures closed off to advocacy on the issue and individuals who are homeless. Educating politicians and policy makers helped to negotiate political attitudes and practices surrounding individuals who are homeless. Participation in consultations offered opportunities to provide input into the policy process or raise issues on the political or social agenda. Media attention offered

opportunities to negotiate public and political attitudes as well as journalistic processes and routines surrounding the issue. Coalitions offered opportunities to negotiate existing organizational constraints as well as political structures delimiting the advocacy role of organizations and to ensure non-profit stakeholder involvement in policy advocacy. Opportunities surrounding the web and new technologies have the potential to further negotiate some of these contexts, but have yet to be adopted in any significant way.

Across the range of tactics employed, tensions emerge between service delivery and advocacy, dialogic and instrumental communication and the pursuit of long-term visions against achievable and more immediate outcomes. These tensions reflect the contemporary communications environment facing non-profit organizations, the unique position of non-profits in the advocacy process, and the complexity of the issue of homelessness and the negotiation context. In the next chapter, I explore these tensions in more detail as well as the implications of this study for communications and non-profit advocacy.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The goal of this dissertation was to explore how non-profit organizations advocating on homelessness and related issues accomplish diverse instrumental and dialogic goals through external communication practices within existing organizational, social, and political contexts. It sought to accomplish this by way of an empirical analysis of four key research environments and by way of a more robust conceptual paradigm than is currently offered in the literature. The expanded conceptual paradigm recognizes an expanded range of advocacy efforts, an expanded group of non-profit organizations that advocate, and an expanded network of contexts that influence and are shaped by non-profit advocacy. It recognizes advocacy not as determined by organizational factors or political opportunity structures, but as accomplished within a complex and interacting web of organizational, social and political contexts (the negotiation context). Finally, it explores the communication tactics adopted for non-profit advocacy, drawing on concepts of instrumental and communicative action to examine the form and nature of the communication and its potential impact on policy and public understanding.

This study makes a significant empirical contribution to the study of non-profit advocacy. It shows that a wide range of non-profit organizations actively engage in advocacy, not just those assumed to be “special interest” or “lobbyist” organizations. It reveals that the goals and the range of communication tactics employed by non-profit organizations for advocacy are much more extensive than provided in the literature.

Finally, it illustrates that an interactive relationship exists between non-profit advocacy and the negotiation context in which it is accomplished. This empirical contribution offers a more fulsome account of the communication practices, goals, and contexts of non-profit advocacy to that which is currently available.

The study illuminated important insights into non-profit advocacy goals and practices. First, many non-profits have a narrow understanding of communication, advocacy, and the relationship between the two. External communication, generally, is perceived to effect desired outcomes. Not well understood is that different communication approaches serve different advocacy goals. Second, non-profits largely adopt a dialogic ethos in their external communication practices. This ethos aligns with the philosophy and practice of many non-profit organizations (i.e., to seek collectively determined goals) but largely fails to attend to the strategic and tactical imperatives of political, corporate, and media systems. Organizations with a more focused mandate on policy advocacy, and therefore more knowledge of these systems, are better able to recognize these imperatives. Third, many non-profit organizations assign multiple and diverse advocacy goals to their communication practices, reflecting both the density of the negotiation context in which they advocate and the diversity and complexity of the issue of homelessness. However, in doing so, they complicate the ability of individual tactics to achieve desired goals. Finally, despite the inability of many organizations to plan or strategize their communication practices to align with the technical imperatives required for policy change, they may be impacting systems and attitudes and contributing to long-term change.

Recurrent in the study were tensions between service delivery and advocacy, dialogic and instrumental goals and success, and the pursuit of long-term visions against achievable outcomes. These tensions were reflected in the negotiation context for advocacy and in the non-profits' efforts to accomplish their advocacy goals. These tensions reflect the contemporary communications environment in which many non-profits operate, the unique position of non-profits in the advocacy process, and the complexity of the negotiation context surrounding the issue of homelessness for non-profit advocates.

The implications of this research are numerous. For non-profit researchers, it offers expanded spaces to examine the processes and practices of advocacy. It complicates the concept of non-profit advocacy, illuminating inherent tensions and tradeoffs faced by non-profits generally and those advocating on issues of homelessness. It firmly connects non-profit advocacy with communication, illuminating its communicative nature. It explores the instrumental and communicative nature of non-profit advocacy and the possibility that this form of communication may occupy a realm between the two (Schlosberg, 1995). At the same time, it invites future scholarship to delve deeper into the nature, process, and tensions between instrumental and communicative rationality to achieve social and political goals. For non-profit practitioners, it affirms advocacy as an important and unique contribution that the sector makes, not just at the political level but also at the social level. It calls on practitioners to challenge their assumptions about communication and how it effects change. It directs needed attention to the communicative capacities of these organizations and the opportunities to be more deliberate in planning and aligning communication and

advocacy efforts within an organization. Also, contrary to the best intentions of most non-profit communication consultants, it shows that communication capacity entails more than acquiring media skills; it also requires reflection and attention to the various contexts in which the organization is acting. For advocates addressing issues of social housing, homelessness, and poverty, it offers insight into the varied and inter-related external contexts that inform advocacy practices around the issue. It further reveals opportunities where existing attitudes and structures can be negotiated.

This study is the first to explore non-profit advocacy from this expanded perspective. It was limited to identifying and examining the goals and practices of non-profit communication as they relate to advocacy on the issue of social housing and homelessness in four Canadian cities. Analysis focused generally on the tactics, approaches and planning processes for advocacy, and did not include detailed examination of specific communication campaigns or strategic plans. Consequently, it offers new lines of inquiry and opportunities for future research. More research is needed to understand how non-profits strategically determine and execute advocacy goals and the implications of these goals for the organization and for the issue being advocated. Similarly, detailed discourse analysis of organizations' communication efforts and how they contribute to the larger advocacy efforts surrounding an issue is essential. More work is required to better understand the impact of the negotiation context on the nature and form of communication. Moreover, it is necessary to explore and identify the degree to which these findings transfer to other issues and contexts.

The balance of this chapter provides an expanded discussion of the study findings, the implications for non-profit and communications scholarship and practice, and suggestions for future research.

(RE)CONCEPTUALIZING NON-PROFIT ADVOCACY

Scholars, advocates, and practitioners must question the dominant conceptualization of non-profit advocacy as an act to change a specific policy or government program. This dissertation has shown that advocacy is a wildly complex and interacting set of communication goals, actions, and relationships taken in both the short-term and in the long-term within myriad organizational, social, and political contexts unique to the issue and organization, intended to persuade individuals to take specific action and/or to create public awareness and social understandings of issues to effect change at the political and social level.

This empirical research reveals a diversity of advocacy goals for non-profits in the homelessness sector. These organizations seek not only to affect policy outcomes but also to effect changes in public and policy makers' awareness of the issue, perceptions of the issue, and understanding of issues. Perhaps most surprising was the regularity with which organizations identified multiple and diverse goals for individual efforts. It is for this reason that we must recognize non-profit advocacy not as a single objective but as a series of goals that interact and are in dialogue with each other. Recognizing advocacy as a series of interacting goals directs attention to how communication can best be structured to achieve these goals. It also directs attention to how the goals interact with each other and within larger contexts.

This dissertation adopted the conceptual frameworks of negotiated order (Strauss, 1978), and instrumental and communicative action (Habermas, 1987) to illuminate and explain these elements of non-profit advocacy. The conceptual paradigm of negotiated order reveals an intricate web of structural, organizational, and interpretive relationships that condition advocacy efforts as well as are negotiated by them. The study also found that communication efforts to advance advocacy goals do not neatly classify as either instrumental (purposive, coercive, and/or institutionally-bound speech acts) or communicative action (re-introducing public dialogue and debate into the public sphere). In some cases they were directed at both. And in some cases they were contingent on each other. Together, the two conceptual paradigms reveal the complex, interactive, and fluid nature of non-profit advocacy and inherent tensions across communication goals, actions, relationship, and contexts. Through this expanded lens, the concept of non-profit advocacy is more fully viewed and therefore more constructively analyzed.

The major drawback of this expanded, re-conceptualized view of advocacy is the challenges it creates for empirical study. A comprehensive examination of all intentions, practices, and contexts is impossible. At best, an indication of some of the more forceful elements in the interaction can be obtained. This risks an incomplete analysis. However, despite the difficulties of being comprehensive in the analysis, the multi-layered analysis demanded provides a more fulsome account of non-profit advocacy than what is currently available in the scholarly literature.

COMMUNICATION AS/OR ADVOCACY

A central premise of this dissertation is that advocacy and communication are inextricably linked. Advocacy is facilitated through strategic acts of communication intended to persuade, educate, and inform external audiences. This relationship was not always well understood by non-profit organizations in the study. Many organizations perceived advocacy and communication to be two separate functions and institutionalized them as such. Moreover, communication, largely defined as education or interpersonal dialogue with external audiences, was viewed as the means to achieve myriad organizational goals. Less well understood was the need to adapt or strategize the communication for different objectives or goals. The lack of strategy was more evident among organizations with mandates that included both service provision and policy advocacy than those with narrower policy advocacy mandates. This usually reflected an alignment of their policy knowledge with their organizational goals, not an increased capacity for communication.

Among organizations with mandates that included service and policy advocacy (service providing agencies, charities, housing providers), communication with members of the public was recognized as a strategy to acquire organizational resources, raise awareness of the issue, educate citizens on the issues of homelessness, create empathy for individuals experiencing homelessness, and develop shared understandings of the need to solve the issue. Communication with policy makers was a strategy to acquire and maintain program funding and to promote long-term policy solutions to the issue. For most of these organizations, the latter was understood to be the advocacy function of the organization, while the former was understood to be the “communications” function.

Despite the intent to affect social, and in some cases, policy change in the long term, many public communications efforts were not recognized as advocacy. In turn, these functions were Balkanized in the organization. Executive Directors (or in some cases, volunteers) were responsible for “advocacy” and communications personnel were responsible for the public relations efforts.

The narrow understanding of advocacy within these organizations reflects how this function has been delimited and promoted by government policy and regulations. The perception of advocacy as only that which includes government relations and policy change correlates with the definition of political activity in the *Income Tax Act*. The Balkanization of the two functions reflects the intent in the regulation to separate and limit political activity from service and charity functions. What results is that the communication function does not fully recognize the advocacy implications of their efforts and the advocacy function is not fully skilled in communications. This weakens both functions and ultimately the ability for the organization to effectively achieve their mandates and goals and remain viable. Recognizing how the two functions are integrated and mobilizing existing capacities towards a shared goal could make both the “society-centred” and the “policy-centred” advocacy more effective in these organizations. Recognizing the different forums and realms of advocacy would further reveal the need to adapt communication messages within different realms and the need to strategically communicate to achieve advocacy goals.

Organizations with more directed mandates focused primarily on policy advocacy (activist groups, foundations, coalitions, and direct action groups) had a similar view of advocacy, although they were more apt to recognize the strategic imperatives of the

policy system to achieve these goals. Because of this, their efforts were often more directed and focused than those of the organizations with larger mandates.

The importance of communication for achieving organizational mandates has prompted a call for increasing the communications capacity of the non-profit sector (Bonk, *et al.*, 1999). While this study shows that a communications function is common among most medium to large organizations, there remains a narrow understanding of its nature and function, especially for effecting social and political change. Developing communications capacity means not just institutionalizing a function, but recognizing its role in achieving multiple organizational mandates and acquiring and aligning the skills within the organization to adapt the communication to best achieve these mandates.

DIALOGIC ETHOS

Overwhelmingly, the non-profits in the study adopted a dialogic ethos for their communication practices. The dialogic ethos seeks interactive discussion with audiences to educate them and come to shared understandings of and potential solutions to issues. Habermas (1987) identifies this as the mode of communication required to effect social change and reinstitute moral and ethical deliberation into public institutions. The adoption of this approach as the primary mode of communication is consistent with the underlying ethos of non-profit organization and management dedicated to developing and achieving common, shared, mandates (Febbraro, *et al.*, 1999). Consequently, many non-profits adopt this approach to effect social and political change through public education and awareness. They also adopt this approach for their policy efforts and to attract media attention to their efforts.

According to Habermas, the system world, in which he includes government and corporatized media, operate according to different logics of communication. That is, communication which is purposive, seeks specified instrumental outcomes, and suspends reflective and inclusive deliberation. Most non-profits fail to recognize this and approach their communication intended to achieve instrumental goals in the same way they approach their communication for public education. When they fail to achieve their instrumental goals they believe that the problem is a lack of understanding by audiences and increase their efforts to “dialogue” with them. What results is a negative spiral that uses scant communication resources in an ineffective manner to achieve short-term goals.

But sometimes there is fuzziness between the two approaches that seemingly validates the efforts. As the study reveals, dialogic forms of communication can result in short-term instrumental incomes, as is the case with fundraising. Moreover, long-term changes in both public and political understandings of the issue are evident and likely the result of ongoing education and dialogue around the issue. This dissertation suggests that while these successes may be valid, they are not intended outcomes of strategic communication efforts. Non-profit organizations may be even more successful if they are more deliberate in their dialogic and strategic communication efforts and planning. Further research surrounding the planning and adoption of non-profit strategic communication practices and where each approach to communication is best introduced to achieve short-term and long-term advocacy goals is required.

DIVERSITY OF GOALS

Non-profit organizations have multiple and diverse goals for their external communication practices. Organizations with service and public policy mandates regularly and often seek to generate resources for their organization, raise awareness of the issue of homelessness, create empathy and understanding for individuals experiencing homelessness, create public debate and dialogue around potential solutions, and create policy in the short-term and in the long-term. Often, multiple goals are sought through independent communication tactics. The diversity of goals is in large part due to limited resources and organizations' efforts to maximize the efficacy of their communication practices. The diversity of these goals also reflects the complexity of the issue, and that change is required at multiple levels and by multiple actors. This complexity is reflected in the depth and breadth of the negotiation context surrounding non-profit advocacy efforts, as described in Chapter 6. Setting aside whether the multiple goals are compatible, a larger question asks whether organizations can be effective in chasing multiple goals through individual tactics.

Measurement problematics inhibit determining the effectiveness of an organization's efforts to achieve multiple goals. Short-term instrumental goals such as fundraising, program funding, short-term policy outcomes, media coverage, etc. are relatively easy to measure. More difficult to measure are the long-term dialogic outcomes that are often also associated with organizations' communication goals. When asked what would indicate long-term success on the issue, Catherine Clement of the Vancouver Foundation offers a poignant description:

people will judge success when they sit on that bus [Hastings Street] and go through that area [downtown east side] and it doesn't feel so frightening and icky

... until it actually feels different on the street that these people are stable enough that the street is cleaned up that some of those storefronts are reactivated, reanimated again ... (personal interview, March 17, 2009).

“Feelings” and changes in public or political awareness of issues, shared understandings of issues or solutions, and even long-term policy outcomes are difficult and costly to measure and can rarely be correlated to individual communication practices. So while we are able to measure short-term outputs, it is impossible to correlate these outputs with long-term outcomes (Dimitrov, 2009). Naively, many non-profit organizations try to do just that and often identify outputs as indicators of long-term outcomes. In part, this is a reflection of the emphasis placed on evidence-based research and reporting in the increasingly “corporatized” environment of non-profits. It is also an attempt to quantify efforts that are difficult to measure. Thus, while organizations suggest they are being successful in achieving the multiple goals they assign to their advocacy efforts, it is impossible to confirm that this is the case. It may be the case that organizations that are forced to dedicate limited resources and efforts to short-term outputs want to believe that they also contribute to longer-term effort and goals to effect public and political change around the issue.

The diversity of the homelessness issue requires success in multiple realms. Rather than individual organizations attempting multiple goals through individual efforts, a more coordinated effort may be warranted. In some respects this has emerged organically with direct action groups focusing on raising political issues and other groups developing relationships with governments to address the issue long term. Similarly, in some centres, coalitions have emerged to serve long-term public policy solutions, with service and charity organizations focusing on short-term emergency relief efforts. These

efforts need to work together so that the short-term efforts to raise awareness and fund existing programs support, or at least do not detract from, the longer term issue goals. The diversity of the issue and the lack of agreement on a long-term solution, however, challenge the ability of the sector to identify issue goals and present a coordinated message around them. Moreover, to do this, extensive and ongoing inter-organizational communication is required, which, while important, draws resources away from the efforts dedicated to social and policy change.

COMPATIBILITY OF ADVOCACY GOALS

In this study I adopted Habermas's model of social and system change and the communication required to facilitate it to analyze the utility of organizations' communication strategies to achieve intended goals. Habermas's model maintains a strict delineation between instrumental and communicative action as unique and distinct approaches to communication serving different goals. As noted above, many organizations had multiple, disparate goals for their communication efforts, some focused on strategic objectives and others focused on creating shared understandings. Are these goals compatible?

G. Edwards (2009) suggests that communicative action can be strategically adopted in the system realm to contest scientific forms of knowledge and to introduce new frames for understanding issues. The Wellesley Institute's strategy of incorporating interactive knowledge in the development of their strategic policy position aligns with this approach. At this point, the success of this strategy is unknown. Potentially, the strategic elements of the communication could meet the technical imperatives of the

public policy process, as the new forms of knowledge negotiate how individuals acting within the policy system interpret and act on the issue. This may be an opportunity for non-profits to simultaneously and strategically serve competing and disparate goals, although correlation of outcomes to strategies remains a concern.

According to Habermas (1987), the dialogic mode of communication adopted by many of the organizations in the study is ineffective in achieving instrumental goals within the system realm. However, it is effective for raising issues and affecting public and policy makers' views on the issue in the long term. The negotiated order paradigm asserts that these efforts may, in turn, result in the negotiation of the structures and systems in the long term. This suggests, in line with Jacobsen & Storey (2004), that dialogic modes of communication can be strategically adapted to effect public and policy makers' understandings of issues, and hence there is compatibility between the two. More research is needed to understand whether both can be achieved through individual tactics or whether tactic goals need to be more directed. What is evident is that non-profits need to be more conscious of the communication strategies that they adopt and the ability of those strategies to achieve diverse goals.

TENSIONS AND TRADEOFFS

Evident across the study, were a number of tensions and tradeoffs faced by non-profit organizations in their advocacy efforts. These include tensions between service delivery and advocacy, short-term needs versus long-term goals and the role of dialogic and instrumental communication.

Service delivery and advocacy

As mentioned above, many organizations with multiple mandates that include the delivery of government services delineate the service and advocacy functions. This separation often sets up a tension between delivery of services and the need to advocate politically and socially to maintain legitimacy and viability (Deacon, 1996). This devaluing of advocacy mirrors and is exasperated by political systems that consider policy advocacy to be outside of the public good or benefit and in efforts to censor or punish service organizations that practice it by not awarding them service contracts or charity status. For non-profits in the homelessness sector, this is exemplified in the funding that is available to program and charity efforts versus the lack of funding that is available for communication and research or to create long-term plans to end homelessness.

This “advocacy chill” (Phillips, 2007; Scott, 2003) results in organizations dedicating more planning to service delivery, more resources to service delivery, and less resources for advocacy and communication. It also results in increased self-censorship in advocacy practices. De-emphasizing advocacy, however, does little to maintain or secure public funding for the organization or solutions for the issue. It also creates tensions within the organization for validating and legitimizing communication efforts dedicated to promoting long-term social and political change. Increasingly, organizations are forced into tradeoffs: restrict advocacy and communication efforts to maintain organizational funding or actively advocate to pressure citizens and governments to address the issue, and to maintain organizational viability.

Long-term visions or short-term outputs

Concurrent with and separate from the ongoing tension between service and advocacy is the tension between long-term visions and short-term achievable outputs. For the issue of homelessness there exists a tension between continuing emergency relief measures versus a recognition that long-term solutions need to do away with these measures. The complexity of the issue and the need for large-scale reform to create effective long-term solutions exacerbate this tension. The case of Calgary shelter providers is instructive. The 10-year plan to end homelessness in that city calls for a reduction in emergency shelter services and an increase in social and affordable housing. Shelter operators are reluctant to release emergency shelter beds, which would free up funding for affordable housing projects, because there is no assurance that stakeholders will support these efforts in the long term. Moreover, they recognize that myriad other social and government programs and practices have perpetuated cycles of poverty and are not being addressed. In this case, short-term emergency solutions are more achievable than long-term visions to resolve the issue. What results is a desire to solve the issue long-term, but a need to maintain short-term measures.

More generally, the tension affects non-profit practice. With limited or directed resources, non-profits are often forced to defer efforts focused on long-term visions to react to the immediate needs of the organization and its clients. What results is that the short-term efforts define the focus of the organization's practice and the long-term goal and mission for the organization is lost. It also devalues long-term planning to achieve mission goals, something that was evident across the non-profit organizations in this study

At both the organization level and the sector level, planning and the relationship between short-term outputs and long-term visions need to be better articulated. At the organization level, this requires legitimizing and funding the advocacy and communications functions, which should be central elements to both the operational and long-term organizational plan. At the sector level, this requires a shared vision of the long-term outcome and the commitment of all stakeholders to address it – a daunting task. While an all-encompassing shared vision and plan may not be possible, more planning and more focus on long-term goals on behalf of individual non-profit organizations and the sector as a whole will help to identify strategies that can contribute to long-term solutions and better coordinate the efforts that are being undertaken in this regard.

Dialogic or instrumental goals

Finally, the study reveals a tension between dialogic and instrumental advocacy goals. Many of the organizations in the study adopted dialogic communication to realize instrumental, self serving goals. This dissertation calls for them to be more strategic in their communication efforts: adopting instrumental communication for policy and resource goals and dialogic communication for their goals surrounding public education and awareness. This potentially creates a tension between strategy and mission.

In adopting a more strategic approach to their communication, non-profits may lose what is arguably an essential characteristic of organizations within the sector– their ability to facilitate collectively determined goals and visions. Yet if they don't communicate strategically, then there is less opportunity for them to remain viable, in

which case they will not achieve their mission, which raises a co-occurring tension between agency and structure. Non-profits need to remain viable to promote social and political change. Viability is often contingent on persuasive communication. Social and political change is the outcome of ongoing dialogue and action on an issue, some of which is instrumental in nature and some of which seeks inter-subjective understanding. The task for non-profits is to identify how best to structure communication events and to balance, in their advocacy practices, the promotion of public understandings and coercive efforts to effect strategic outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The implications of this research are many. For non-profit studies generally, this research challenges existing typologies of the sector that classify political, service, and charity roles as distinct. It asserts advocacy as an essential contribution made by a wide range of non-profit organizations as part of their missions and goals. For non-profit advocacy studies in particular, it invites scholars to complicate traditional understandings of advocacy as short-term instrumental actions designed to effect policy or program goals and recognize it as a complex form of communication seeking multiple goals undertaken within evolving and interacting organizational, political, and social contexts. It asserts the need to more directly attend to questions of communication as they relate to advocacy practice and goals, to specify the full range of communication practices adopted by non-profit advocates, and the interactions between them. It also invites scholars to explore these questions of communication within the larger context of interacting organizational, social, and political structures and practices that inform and are informed by this context.

This study recognizes advocacy as the composite of multiple communication acts that interact and interrelate. Thus, to understand non-profit advocacy, scholars must explore the full range of communication actions taken by an organization within the larger contexts in which they operate.

For advocacy and communication scholarship, this research invites a deeper exploration of the advocacy role of non-profit organizations and the organizational and communicative processes that contribute not only to policy advocacy but also to public dialogue and understanding of issues. Non-profit advocacy research must move beyond existing theoretical paradigms borrowed from political science or policy studies to recognize non-profit advocacy as a socio-cultural and organizational process, and interrogate the role and form of communication within that process. In this view, the policy-centric and media-centric views that pervade much of the literature are recognized as only a small reflection of the larger processes of non-profit advocacy.

For non-profit practitioners, this research affirms the importance of the communication function in many organizations, while at the same time recognizing the multiple pressures organizations face in developing capacities and operating these functions. It calls on practitioners to question their assumptions about communication and how social and political outcomes are achieved. In particular it calls for recognition of the integrated nature of communication and advocacy and the need to align these functions. Most importantly, it calls on practitioners to strategically adopt communication tactics to achieve advocacy goals. To do so, non-profit practitioners need to better appreciate the conceptual distinction between public awareness and policy change and the strategic and tactical implications of these differing efforts. This requires

the development of skills and capacities that extend beyond media management, to also include strategic communication planning within evolving and adapting negotiation contexts and knowledge of policy advocacy processes.

This study also offers counsel for non-profit organizations advocating on issues of homelessness. It directs them to attend to the myriad contexts that inform advocacy practices surrounding homelessness and how these practices interact to create mesostructures around the issue. It illuminates some of the tensions and trade-offs inherent to advocacy in this area and the need to ensure that both short-term and long-term efforts are attended to by the sector. Non-profit organizations need to recognize that homelessness is largely a political issue and therefore elements of instrumental response are essential. Yet they also have to recognize that short-term instrumental gains do not secure long-term plans or commitments. Some organizations are better positioned to raise issues in the short term, while others are better positioned to explore long-term solutions. To address the complexity of the issue, advocacy must be strategically adopted, at multiple levels, by all organizations addressing the issue, in a coordinated fashion.

For communications scholars, this research provokes a deeper conceptualization of the relationship between instrumental and communicative action than provided for in Habermas's (1987) theoretical framework. It opens further examination of the application of instrumental and communicative action as a rubric to examine the communication practices of organizations seeking to advance political and social change. It challenges the traditional relationship between the two constructs and explores opportunities for a realm to be occupied between the two through the strategic adoption

of dialogic modes of communication. It suggests that there may be a relationship between individual understanding and systemic change; yet, struggles with the limitations of empirically analyzing the construct of communicative action and measuring its ability to effect change in the social and system worlds. Most importantly, it delves deeper into the nature, process and tensions between instrumental and communicative rationality to achieve social and political goals.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

This research invites follow up introducing new questions to the study of non-profit advocacy and offering direction for future research. Below are the most pressing issues emerging from this study.

More research exploring non-profit advocacy from an expanded perspective and as a negotiated process is required. This research will not contribute to deeper understandings of advocacy as an integrated process informed by contexts unique to the organization and issue, but will also create a body of scholarship on which future research can build. The volume of research focused on policy advocacy and interest groups minimizes the importance of society-related advocacy and non-profit groups in contributing to social and political system change.

Similarly, expanded interrogation of the determinants of long-term social and political change is essential. In this study, the inability to measure long-term advocacy efforts created theoretical and empirical limitations in the analysis. While not an easy task, direction on how to attribute social and political change to advocacy efforts will provide for more robust analysis and practice.

An important direction for future research is to study the specific messages and campaigns undertaken by non-profit organizations and how they interact with larger social and political discourses. Discourse and ethnographic studies of organizational communication practices will provide important insight into the processes of facilitation and negotiation required to achieve advocacy goals, as well as how the discourses interact and contribute to the larger advocacy effort within the negotiation context.

Finally, similar to the scholarship that has developed around non-profits and the media, further research on the form, functions, and opportunities of other non-profit advocacy tactics is required. Most topical would be new media and social technologies and platforms. At the time of the research, only a few organizations were initiating activity in this area. The opportunities for non-profits to effectively adapt these tactics for advocacy within existing negotiation contexts would offer relevant and timely input as more organizations take on web 2.0 platforms.

The goals, contexts, and outcomes of non-profit advocacy warrant further study and attention. Insight into how non-profit organizations can best adopt communication to achieve both strategic goals and public understanding of their issue will make them more viable and relevant political actors. It will also legitimize this important contribution that they make to civil society – a contribution that is too often overlooked or delimited.

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APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED, CALGARY HERALD

Organization	CALGARY HERALD # of articles				
	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
Alpha House			1	2	6
Band Aid					1
Boys & Girls Club		1			4
Calgary Committee to End Homelessness					18
Calgary Dream Centre				1	3
Calgary Foundation					1
Calgary Homeless Foundation			8	15	38
Calgary Women's Centre				1	
Campaign 2000					1
Canadian Mental Health Assoc.			2	2	1
Cdn. Assoc of Foodbanks				1	
Connetion Housing		4			
CUPS		1	17	7	12
Discovery House					2
Drop In Centre		3	21	34	48
Emma House					1
Exit Community Outreach			3		
Fresh Start Addiction Centre			1		
Habitat for Humanity		1	1	1	2
Hockey for the Homeless					1
Homeless Awareness Calgary				1	
Horizon Housing				1	3
Hull Child & Family Services			1		
Inn from the Cold			9	10	19
Interfaith Food Bank			4	2	5
Interfaith Housing			1		
Interfaith Thrift Store			1		
John Howard Society					1
Jubilee Christian Centre			1		
Kairos					2
Kerby Rotary House				1	
Mustard Seed		1	16	23	32
Native Women's Shelter Society		1			
Neighbour Link					1
New Directions For Living		1			
Project Homeless Connect					1
Rainbow Lodge					1
Raising the Roof				1	
Red Cross			2	2	
Safe Haven				1	
Salvation Army		3	13	16	8
Simon House					2
St. Vincent de Paul			1		
Street Light Youth				1	
United Way			1		1
Victory House		1			
YWCA		2	2		
					463
Top 6 organizations: 76.6% of total					

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED, TORONTO STAR

Organization	TORONTO STAR # of articles				
	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
25 in 5 Network					1
519 Community Centre			2		
Access to Permanent Housing Committee	2				
Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario				1	1
All Saints Church	11		2	3	
Anglican Church					1
Anishnawbe Health Centre		2	1	1	
Atkinson Charitable Foundation			1		
Basic Poverty Action Group	2				
Beatrice House			1		
Big Sisters	1				
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives					1
Central Neighbourhood House				1	
Children's Aid Society		2			
Chill Out Program			1		
Christian Resource Centre	4		1		
Christie-Ossington Neighbourhood Centre				1	
Christopher House	1				
City Shelter	2				
Colour of Poverty Campaign					2
Committee on the International Year of Shelter	2				
Co-operative Housing Foundation	2				
Cornerstone				1	
Council Fire		2			
Covenant House	1	1	2		1
Daily Bread Foodbank			3	2	
Dixon Hall Shelter	4		2	2	
Durham House					1
Election Agenda for Canadian Housing	1				
Emergency Housing Registry	1				
End Legislated Poverty		1			
Eva's Place		1			1
Evergreen Mission		1		1	
First Step	1				
Fontbonne Place				1	
Food Not Bombs					1
Fred Victor Mission	1	3			3
Gateway Shelter					1
Good Neighbours Club	1				1
Good Shepherd Refuge	3		1	1	
Hockey for the Homeless			1		
Home Suite Hope					1
Homes First Society	3	1	1	1	
Homes not Bombs					1
Housing Ontario Means Everyone				1	
Income Security Advocacy Centre					1
Inn from the Cold	1				
Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition					1
John Howard Society				1	
Kerr St. Ministry					1

Light Patrol				2	
Lighthouse				1	
Meeting Place	1	1	1	1	1
Muslim Welfare Centre					1
Na me Residence				2	2
National Anti-Poverty Association	1		1		2
National Housing & Homelessness Network				1	
National Youth Cares Network	1				
Native Child & Family Services		1			
Not Far from the Tree					1
Ontario Association fo Food Banks					1
Ontario Campaign 2000					1
Ontario Coalition Against Poverty		2	9	1	3
Ontario Non-profit Housing Corp			3		
Open Door		1			
Our Place Peel		1			
Out of the Cold		1	13	5	1
Parkdale Residence			2		
Pathways				1	
Poor Souls Mission				1	
Porter Place	2		2		
Project Warmth			1		2
Queen West Community Centre			1		
Raising the Roof			2		1
Recession Relief Fund					1
Red Cross			2	1	1
Redwood Shelter			1		
Robertson House			1		
Rotary Club				1	
Salvation Army	7	2	11	3	3
Sanctuary Community Centre				1	
Savard's			1		
Scott Mission	4	1	3	2	
Seaton House	1	3	7	9	1
Second Base Youth Shelter	7				
Second Harvest Food Bank				2	
Serving Charity					1
Share the Warmth			1		
Shelters for Youth Coalition	2				
Sherbourne Health Centre				1	1
Sistering					1
SKETCH					2
Social Planning Council	3				
St. Michaels			1	3	1
St. Stephen's Community House		1	1		
Strachan House			1		
Street City	2	1		1	
Street Haven					4
Street Health	2	2	2	3	3
Street Link			1		
Street People's Association of Toronto		2			
Street Survivors				2	
Streets to Home					5
The Stop - Community Food Centre					1

Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness			1		
Toronto Disaster Relief Committee			12	8	3
Toronto Helping Hand				1	
Toronto Mayor's Homeless Action Task Force			24	3	
Toronto North Supper Service					1
Touchstone Centre			1		
Turning Point					1
United Way	3	1	11	3	4
Up with Women					2
Voices from the Street					1
Wellesley Institute					4
Working Women Community Centre					1
Yellow Brick House	2				
Yonge Street Misison	1	1			1
York Youth Action Committee	1				
Youth Housing Markham	2				
Youth Without Shelter	1	1			1
Youthdale	1				
YWCA	1		1		1
Zacchaeus House		1			
					421
Top 6 organizations: 31.3% of total					

APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED, VANCOUVER SUN

Organization	VANCOUVER SUN # of articles				
	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
10 Avenue Alliance Church					1
412 Women's Emergency					1
Aboriginal Friendship Centre					1
Aboriginal Front Door					1
Aboriginal Homeless Steering Committee					1
Affordable Housing					1
Anti-poverty Coalition				1	1
Atira Women's Resource Society					3
Atlas Youth Treatment Centre					1
BC Civil Liberties Assoc				1	3
Bridge Emergency Shelter					1
Canadian Mental Health Assoc					1
Carnegie Community Action Project		1			9
Citywide Housing Coalition					2
Coalition for the Homeless		1			
Community Advocates for Little Mountain					1
Cool-Aid Society					1
Covenant House			1	1	2
Downtown Eastside Resident's Assoc	1	1	1		1
Downtown Eastside Women's Assoc	1				
Dunsmuir House		1			
End Legislated Poverty		2			
Faith Community Called to Solidarity with the Poor					1
Fearless City					1
First United Church				1	6
Foster Parent's Assoc. Of Vcr	1				
Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee					2
Habitat for Humanity					1
Hyland House					2
Impact of Olympics on Community Coalition					2
Life is not Enough Society				1	
Lookout Society		3	4	4	6
Luc 15 House					2
Lu Ma Native Housing				1	
Mark's Anglican Church					1
Mavis/McMullen Place	1				
National Anti-Poverty Org		1			
Neighbourhood Helpers		1			
Newton Advocacy Group Society					1
North Shore Youth Safe House					1
Options - Services to Community Society			3		
Pathways					2
Pender Youth Housing			1		
Pivot Legal Society					11
Portland Hotel			1	1	4
Potluck Cafe					1
Rain City					1
Richmond Crisis Centre		1			
Richmond House					1
Salvation Army	2	1	1	4	6

Street Kids in Distress		2			
Social Planning & Research Council				2	1
South Fraser Community Service			6		
South Surrey Family Shelter			1		
St. Andrews Wesley United					1
St. Elizabeth House					1
St. James Anglican Church				1	1
St. James Community Service					1
St. Paul's Anglican					3
Streetohome Foundation					1
Street Youth Job Action			1		
Surrey Food Bank			1		1
Surrey Housing & Homeless Society					2
Tenants Rights Assoc	1				
Triage Centre		2		1	
Urban Native Youth Association					2
Union Gospel Mission				1	6
Unitarian Church					1
United Native Nations Society					1
United Way					1
United We Can					3
VanCity Place for Youth			1		
Vancouver Food Bank			1		
Vancouver Foundation					2
VANDU			1		1
Wilson Heights United Church					1
Youth Advocacy Coalition					1
YWCA					1
					184
Top 4 organizations: 28.2% of total					

APPENDIX D: ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED, OTTAWA CITIZEN

Organization	OTTAWA CITIZEN # of articles				
	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
Aboriginal Drop In Centre					1
Aboriginal Women's Support Centre				1	
Action Lodgement		1			
Alliance to End Homelessness					9
All Saints Anglican Church	12				
All Saints Women's Shelter	1				
Canadian Mental Health Assoc	1	1			1
Centre 454	4	1			2
Centre 507	1				
Centretown Citizens Corp	4				
Child Poverty Action Group				1	
Citizen Advocacy					1
Community Foundation of Ottawa					1
Cornerstone					1
Dinners Unlimited		4			
Faith Partners				1	
Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants Assoc	1				
Gite Ami	2	1			
Give Smart					1
Hope Outreach	1				
Housing Help		1		1	
Immigrant Women's Services					1
Les Oeuvres Insidiore Ostiguy				1	
Martha's	1				
Mission	3	2		5	12
Mon Chez Nous					1
National Anti-Poverty Organization	1				1
Ontario Association of Food Banks					1
Ontario Coalition Against Poverty				1	
Ontario Non-profit Housing					1
Operation Go Home				1	4
Options Bytown	4				
Ottawa-Carleton Homeless Coalition		1			
Ottawa Food Bank	1	1			2
Ottawa Housing Help	3				
Ottawa Intercity Ministries			1	1	
Ottawa Panhandlers Union					1
Out of the Cold			1		
Pinganodin Lodge				1	
Red Cross				1	
Rideau Street Youth Initiative		1			
Salvation Army	4	2	1	6	8
Sandy Hill Community Centre			1		
Sheltering Homeless Women		2			
Shepherds of Good Hope	9	3	3	1	8
Social Planning Council	3				
St. Joseph's Women's Shelter	2				
Street Level					2
United Way	2			2	3
Women For Justice	4				

Women's Place	5				
Youth Services Bureau		1	1	1	
Youville					1
YMCA				1	
YWCA				1	
					189
Top 5 organizations: 48.7% of total					

APPENDIX E: ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED, GLOBE & MAIL

Organization	GLOBE & MAIL # of articles				
	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
All Saints Women's Shelter (Toronto)		1			
Amnesty International			1		
Anishnawbe Health Centre (Toronto)			2		
Anna House (Vancouver)					1
Atira Women's Residence (Vancouver)					1
BC Civil Liberties Assoc					5
BC Schizophrenia Society					1
BC Social Planning & Research Council					1
Burnside George Community Centre (Victoria)					1
Calgary Committee to End Homelessness					1
Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS)			1		
Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes		1			
Centre for Equality Rights in Accomodation		1			
Charter Committee on Poverty Issues			1		
Chorale de l'Accueil Bonneau (Montreal)				2	
Christian Resource Centre (Toronto)		2			
Committee to End Homelessness (Victoria)					1
Covenant House (Vancouver)					2
Covenant House (Toronto)			1		
Creating Homefulness (Kelowna)					1
Downtown East Side Resident's Assoc (Vancouver)					1
Downtown East Side Women's Residence (Vancouver)					3
Drop In Centre (Calgary)			1	1	
Eva's Place (Toronto)			1		
Evergreen Centre (Toronto)	1		1		
First Step Non-profit Homes (Toronto)		1			
First United Church (Vancouver)					2
Freed Victor Mission (Toronto)	1				
Good Shepherd Refuge (Toronto)		1			
Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness					1
Housing Network Project		1			
Inner City Health Project (Toronto)			1		
International Women's Day Committee		1			
Kelowna Drop In & Info Centre					1
Lookout Emergency Aid (Vancouver)					1
Low Income Families Together (Toronto)			1		
Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force (Toronto)			5		
Mental Patients Association (Vancouver)	1				
Metro Toronto Tenants Assoc		1			
Metro Vancouver Steering Committee on Homelessness					4
Mustard Seed (Calgary)				1	1
National Action Committee on the Status of Women		1			
National Anti-poverty Org		2			
National Association of Women & The Law			1		
Neighbourhood Legal Services (Toronto)			1		
Northshore Youth Safe House (Vancouver)					1
Northside Foursquare Church (Port Coquitlam)					1
Ontario Coalition Against Poverty			2		
Our Place Soup Kitchen (Victoria)					2
Parkdale Activity & Rec Centre (Toronto)			1		

Pivot Legal Society (Vancouver)					8
Project Warmth (Toronto)	1				
Queen Street West Community Health Centre (Toronto)			1		
Regent Park Community Health Centre (Toronto)			1		
Roomers Association (Toronto)		1			
Salvation Army	1		4	1	2
Seaton House (Toronto)		2	2		
Siloam Mission (Winnipeg)					2
Street Health (Toronto)	1				
Street Kids International	1				
Street Link Emergency Shelter (Victoria)					2
StreetoHome Foundation (Vancouver)					2
Streethaven (Toronto)		1			
Toronto Disaster Relief Committee			1		
United Native Nations					1
United Way (Toronto)			5		
VANDU					3
Women for Justice		1			
Yukon Shelter (Vancouver)					1
					119
Top 6 organizations: 29.4% of total					

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF INFORMATION (NON-PROFITS)

Date:

Full address

Dear:

My name is Gina Grosenick and I am a PhD student in the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University.

I am contacting you to request an interview for my dissertation research project. The project seeks to understand the factors that enable or limit successful public communication campaigns about homelessness by non-profit advocacy groups in four Canadian cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto. My research will include interviews with community groups like yours which seek more responsive public policy for poverty reduction, homelessness and with social housing, municipal policy makers and journalists who write on the issues. These interviews will provide me with insight into the local attitudes to homelessness and factors that influence successful advocacy in each municipality. I am the sole researcher in this study; however, the project is under the supervision of Dr. Joshua Greenberg, an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University and Academic Director of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development in Ottawa.

An environmental scan has identified you and your organization as a leading advocate for people who are homeless in (city name). As such, your views and experience would greatly benefit my study. Your participation in this project will involve an interview where you are asked to share information about how your organization plans and executes its media and public communication campaigns, the challenges and barriers you feel your organization faces in this regard, and how your organization measures success in relation to its advocacy activities. I will be travelling to (cityname) on (dates) and would like to set up the interview at your place of business at a mutually convenient time. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be audiorecorded. I may contact you again later in the spring of 2009 to arrange a follow up interview.

You are being asked to participate in this study in your professional capacity as (name the position). The Carleton University Research Ethics Committee requires me to inform you that your involvement in this research is of minimal risk. Minimal risk refers to the risk faced in everyday life. Any comments made by you in the interview may be included verbatim in the dissertation or other products of the research and will be attributed to you unless you request that your name be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any question asked of you during the interview. If at any point during or up to 30 days after the interview you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the study, you may withdraw. At this point you may decide if I can use the information you have already provided.

The digital recordings and transcripts of the interviews will be kept by me in a locked cabinet on a portable hard drive at my home office. It is possible that this data will be used in future research, presentations or reports. Full transcripts may be shared with my supervisor and/or dissertation examining committee.

Participation in this study may help you to explore the impact of your advocacy and public communication practices. You may also request a copy of the final report which will provide you with in-depth information on how similar groups undertake their advocacy efforts and some of the cultural and environmental factors that may support or limit successful advocacy for groups such as yours. The final dissertation will be made accessible to the public through the Carleton University Library and the Reader's Digest Resource Centre. If you would like to be notified when the results are available, you will be given the option of receiving that information via email.

This project was reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or questions about your involvement in the study, you may direct questions or comments to the ethics committee chair:

Professor Antonio Gualtieri, Chair
Carleton University Research Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2517
E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Please contact me by email at ggroseni@connect.carleton.ca to confirm your participation in this study and to discuss a mutually convenient date and time for the interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

Georgina Grosenick
School of Journalism and Communication
Room 346, St. Patrick's Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
ggroseni@connect.carleton.ca
(613) 599-1920

APPENDIX G: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Calgary, Alberta

Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre (the DI): Louise Gallagher, Manager, Resource Development & Public Relations, February 25, 2009

Calgary Homeless Foundation: Alina Tanasescu, Manager Research & Public Policy and Sheridan McVean, Vice-President, Communications & Fund Development, February 26, 2009

Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS): Carlene Donnelly, Executive Director, February 24, 2009

Calgary Urban Project Society(CUPS): Tim Stock-Bateman, Senior Director, External Relations & Development, February 24, 2009

City of Calgary: Ric McIver, Alderman, Ward 12, February 25, 2009

City of Calgary: John TeLinde, Policy & Planning Manager, Community & Neighbourhood Services, February 26, 2009

City of Calgary: Sharon Stroick, Research Social Planner, email response to research questions, February 9, 2009

Homeless Awareness Calgary: Bonnie Malach & Theresa McDowell Hood, Coordinators, February 23, 2009

The Mustard Seed (The Seed): Pat Nixon, Chief Executive Officer, February 23, 2009

Vancouver, BC

City of Vancouver: Dan Garrison, Planner, Housing Centre, March 17, 2009

City of Vancouver, Jill Davidson, Senior Housing Planner & Homeless Policy Coordinator, March 18, 2009

Citywide Housing Coalition: Laura Stannard, [co-]Organizer, March, 19, 2009

Metro Vancouver Homelessness Secretariat: Peter Greenwell, Senior Planner/Coordinator, March 19, 2009

Lookout Emergency Aid Society: Karen Young, Director of Resource Development, March 18, 2009

Lu'ma Native Housing Society: Marcel Swain, Chief Executive Officer, March 17, 2009

Pivot Legal Society: Laura Track, Lawyer, March 16, 2009

Pivot Legal Society: Paul Ryan, Director of Publications and Hope in the Shadows, March 16, 2009

Portland Hotel: Liz Evans, Executive Director and Founder, March 18, 2009

Streethome Foundation: Jae Kim, President, telephone interview March 13, 2009

Vancouver Foundation: Catherine Clement, Vice-President, Communications, March 17, 2009

Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch: Linda O'Neil, Public Education Consultant and Chair Public Affairs Working Group, The Alliance to End Homelessness, August 20, 2009

City of Ottawa: Alex Cullen, Councillor, Bay Ward, June 12, 2009

City of Ottawa: Stephen Arbuckle, Acting Housing Manager, May 11, 2009

Multifaith Housing Initiative: Sue Evans, Founding Member, June 17, 2009

Options Bytown: Lorraine Bentley, Executive Director, June 5, 2009

Ottawa Inner City Health Inc: Wendy Muckle, Executive Director, April 24, 2009

Shepherds of Good Hope: Rob Eady, Senior Manager, Media and Public Relations & Angela Campbell, Director of Shepherds of Good Hope Foundation, April 21, 2009

Jane Scharf, Activist, April 23, 2009

The Alliance to End Homelessness: Lynne Browne, Coordinator, May 21, 2009

Youth Services Bureau: Dan Sabourin, Director Community Services, June 5, 2009

Toronto, Ontario

City of Toronto, Joe Mihevc, Councillor, Ward 21, April 29, 2009

City of Toronto, Iain de Jong, Manager Streets to Homes, April 28, 2009

Diocese of Toronto, Anglican Church of Canada: Murray McAdam, Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant, April 27, 2009

Homeless Awareness Group: Margaret Vandembroucke, Advocacy & Communications, April 27, 2009

St. Michael's Hospital, Centre for Research on Inner City Health: Stephen Hwang, Research Scientist, April 29, 2009

Street Health: Beric German, Health Promotion Worker and organizer, Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, April 27, 2009

Street Health: Erika Khandor, Research and Evaluation Coordinator, April 27, 2009

Wellesley Institute: Michael Shapcott, Director, Affordable Housing & Social Innovation, April 28, 2009

YWCA Toronto: Amanda Dale, Director of Advocacy & Communications, April 29, 2009

APPENDIX H: LETTER OF CONSENT (NON-PROFITS)

Date

LETTER OF CONSENT

Researcher:

Georgina Grosenick

School of Journalism and Communication

Room 346, St. Patrick's Building, 1125 Colonel By Drive

Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6

Telephone: 613-599-1920, Fax: 613-520-7488

Email: ggroseni@connect.carleton.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Joshua Greenberg

Carleton University, School of Journalism and Communication

E-mail Address: joshua_greenberg@carleton.ca

Telephone: (613) 520-2600 x 1965

Title of Project:

Give me your sick, your poor and your homeless ... and listen to me. Non-profit organizations, advocacy and homelessness in Canada

Information on the Project:

Gina Grosenick, the primary researcher, is conducting in-depth interviews with community groups seeking more responsive public policy surrounding poverty reduction, homelessness and social housing, municipal policy makers, and local journalists who write on the issues. These interviews will provide insight into the local attitudes to homelessness and factors that influence successful advocacy in each municipality as well as the process through which the public communication campaigns emerge and are enacted in relation to these various factors. The research is supervised by Dr. Joshua Greenberg, an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University and Academic Director of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development in Ottawa.

INFORMED CONSENT

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information

Purpose of the study:

This project seeks to understand the factors that enable or limit successful public communication campaigns surrounding homelessness for non-profit advocacy groups in four Canadian cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto. Your organization has been identified as leading advocate for people who are homeless in (city). As such, I invite you to share information about how your organization plans and executes its media and public communication campaigns, the challenges and barriers you feel your organization faces in this regard, and how your organization measures success in

relation to its advocacy activities. The data collected from these interviews will be used in my PhD dissertation that examines non-profit advocacy on issues of homelessness in four Canadian cities. Data may also be used in academic articles, presentations and reports developed as a result of this research.

What will you be asked to do?

The research will involve a semi-structured, open ended interview led by the researcher. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed. You may ask that the interview not be recorded, and instead the researcher will take detailed notes. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time during or up to 30 days after the interview by contacting the researcher at ggroseni@connect.carleton.ca.

What type of personal information will be collected/reported?

You will be asked to provide your name, title/job description, organization and city/province in which your organization resides. In the final research report or any research product developed from the data some of your specific responses or comments may be included verbatim and will be attributed to you. We are including these identification markers as you are being asked to participate in your professional capacity as an advocate. You are invited to withdraw any comment or comments made at any point during the interview or up to 30 days after the interview and they will not be included in any product of the research. The final dissertation will be made accessible to the public through the Carleton University Library and the Reader's Digest Resource Centre. If you would like to be notified when the results are available, please ask the researcher to provide you with this information after the dissertation has been defended.

The Carleton University Research Ethics Committee requires me to inform you that your involvement in this research is classified as minimal risk. Minimal risk refers to the risks faced in everyday life. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. This project was reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or questions about your involvement in the study, you may direct questions or comments to the ethics committee chair:

Professor Antonio Gualtieri, Chair
Carleton University Research Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services, Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2517, E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Signatures (written consent)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (NON-PROFITS)**Researcher:**

Georgina Grosenick
School of Journalism and Communication
Room 346, St. Patrick's Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6
Telephone: 613-599-1920
Fax: 613-520-7488
Email: ggroseni@connect.carleton.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Joshua Greenberg
Carleton University
School of Journalism and Communication
E-mail Address: joshua_greenberg@carleton.ca
Telephone: (613) 520-2600 x 1965

Title of Project:

Give me your sick, your poor and your homeless ... and listen to me. Non-profit organizations, advocacy and homelessness in Canada

Draft Interview Guide:

1. Can you tell me what the primary goals of your organization are as they relate to the support of and advocating for people who are homeless?
2. What are the primary activities/program of your organization to support people who are homeless?
3. What are the primary activities/programs of your organization to advocate on behalf of people who are homeless?
4. What are the target audiences for your programs and advocacy work?
5. How does your organization prioritize its activities?
6. Do you work cooperatively with any other organizations to advocate on behalf of the homeless? If yes, which organizations and what is the nature of the collaboration.
7. What is the process to determine your organizations advocacy strategy? Who develops it? Who approves it? Who implements it?
8. Do you develop a communications strategy surrounding your advocacy efforts? If yes, can you describe that strategy?
9. What do you consider the challenges and barriers to successful advocacy?
10. How do you measure success with your advocacy efforts?