

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]



**The Power of Place: The Effects of Productivity Discourses on Single Homeless
Males in Ottawa**

By

Matthew Cosgrove

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

© Matthew Cosgrove 2010



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-71671-7
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-71671-7

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

Abstract

The experience of and ability to escape homelessness varies depending upon one's age, gender, mental and physical abilities as well as other factors. Social and geographical place further play into one's ability to access stable housing. At the same time that there exists a scarcity of below market rent housing in Ottawa, commonly held ideas about able-bodied males as productive and self-sufficient result in homeless single males facing discrimination from landlords and the public at large. Left to occupy substandard housing settings such as shelters and rooming houses, this group exists in a marginal position to exercise power and effect positive change over their lives. This thesis engages the perspectives of homeless youth and men in order to consider the effects that discourses about homelessness have upon these homeless subgroups. This is achieved by drawing on information collected for the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa and through interviews with homeless service providers in Ottawa. Outcomes of this analysis indicate that productivity discourses have both positive and negative effects on homeless males, and that adult and youth male homeless subgroups each experience homelessness in distinct ways.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my primary thesis supervisor, Dr. Fran Klodawsky, Associate Professor of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University, Ottawa. Your continued patience, availability, encouragement and support throughout my time at Carleton helped me take the daily small steps that over time accumulated into what has become this thesis.

I would also like to thank the staff at the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, especially Natalie Pressburger whose good nature and diligence responding to my many bureaucratic inquiries saved me both time and money.

Thank you to everybody involved in the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa: the respondents especially, but also the coordinators, funders, data collectors and administrators.

Thank you to my fellow graduate students, whose parallel experiences I drew positively from.

Finally, thank you to my family members, who have supported me in many ways over the course of my graduate work. Angela, Michael, Kevin and Judy, you have all helped me complete this challenge in both obvious and subtle ways and should be proud of the influence you have had on my graduate student experience.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction	1
Towards Scarcities of Non-Market Housing and Assistance	4
Discovering the Extent of Homelessness in Canada	8
Defining the Problem	9
Homelessness as a Complex of Place-Based Factors	11
Structure and Aims of Thesis	13

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction	20
Becoming Homeless: Two Ends of the Spectrum	24
Being Homeless, Being Disaffiliated	27
The Power of Place 1: Property and Practical Political Economy	30
The Power of Place 2: Is the Ideal To Re-Place Homeless Males?	37
Conclusions	47

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction	49
Positionality	51
Methods	55
Introduction to the Panel Study on Homeless in Ottawa	56
Secondary Analysis of Panel Study Data	58

Research Design and Organization of Data Sets **59**

Interpretation of Data Sets **62**

Semi-Structured Interviews **64**

Conclusion **66**

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

Introduction **67**

Analysis of Panel Study Interviews **68**

Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews **70**

Qualifying Remarks About the Data **70**

 Desired Housing **71**

 Desired Change in Life **77**

 Broad Ideas About Homelessness **79**

Key Categories and Interviews With Service Providers **86**

Conclusions **92**

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

Introduction **94**

Discussion of Key Results **95**

Specificity of Research **100**

Areas for Further Research **102**

Conclusions **103**

References **105**

Appendix **113**

List of Tables

Table 1: Youth and Adult Male Desired Housing Type **73**

Table 2: What Would Enable Your Desired Housing? **74**

Table 3: What Prevents Your Desired Housing? **74**

Table 4: What Changes Would You Like in Your Life? **78**

Table 5: What Are Your Broad Ideas About Homelessness? **85**

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the time since the end of the Second World War, western nations have had over 50 years experience dealing more or less effectively with the housing needs of their populations. In Canada, measures were in place prior to 1945 to attempt to help its population's housing needs. However, the return of soldiers at this time initiated a marked change both in what was required for the population and what the federal government, as a response to this need, would do. A major step taken by the Federal government was the establishment of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in 1946 – indeed as a direct response to the housing needs of returning World War II soldiers (CMHC 2010). The CMHC has since been involved in a wide range of housing market programs, including funding urban renewal projects, conducting housing design and technology research as well as housing market analysis. Today, however, the main function of the CMHC is its provision of insurance for residential mortgage loans to Canadian homebuyers (*ibid.*). By insuring lending institutions against the risk of homeowners defaulting on mortgage payments, the CMHC has helped bring about the realization of Canada as a 'homeownership society' (Dalton 2009).

At the same time, as Hulchanski (2002) points out, depending upon one's housing tenure, Canadians are very much divided into two groups: those that own property and those that do not. Homeowners are able to accrue rights and benefits not allocated to renters. The exemption of capital gains tax on a primary residence, the accumulation of wealth on a tax-sheltered basis as a mortgage is paid off, and the ability to use an RRSP to put a down payment on a home have had the result that

in Canada, there exists a 'pervasive cultural and institutional bias against renting' (Hulchanski 2002: 6). Moreover, this distinction, insofar as it denotes standing, responsibility and self-control, is reflected in our language: 'owners *reside* in settled neighbourhoods; renters *occupy* units of housing' (Blomley 2005: 126). As such, it might be understood that the above institutional and cultural practices serve to stratify individuals and families based upon an inability to secure money for a down payment on a home. In Canada, as in other nations that offer tax-based and other economic incentives to homeowners, this division between the propertied class and the unpropertied reflects 'a nasty and pervasive property bias in our society with roots that run deep, just as other strong biases of gender, race and nationality still do in spite of our efforts to outlaw them' (Krueckeberg 1999: 26).

Following in part from this bias, the ballooning gap between rich and poor Canadians can increasingly be measured as a function of the housing system (Hulchanski 2002). In 1999, homeowners spent 18% of their annual median income (\$43,478) on housing. Conversely, renters spent 28% of theirs (\$20,947) on housing (Canada 2000). This means that far from being income sensitive, housing costs force low-income renters - those least able to afford private market rents - to direct a larger share of income towards shelter. At the same time that there exists little support for the private rental market in the form, for example, of public investment and rent support, social housing, defined as 'non-market housing that is owned and managed by government, non-profits or non-equity cooperatives' (*ibid.*: 8-9), is both 'declining as a proportion of all housing and declining absolutely' (Dalton 2009: 67). Whereas 40% of Dutch, 22% of British, and 15% of both French

and German households reside in social housing, only 5% do so in Canada (*ibid*). As a result, low-income households are often forced to occupy residences that might otherwise be filled by individuals attempting to exit homelessness. Failing this, low earning households face the risk of being forced into emergency shelters if they are unable to make monthly rent payments.

So then why, in a society that has repeatedly professed the intention to increase prosperity through the provision of more affordable housing (Ontario 2007), is there a housing *system* that is the most private-sector market-based of any Western nation including the US, that in fact, creates and functions to reproduce the problem of homelessness in Canada (Hulchanski 2002)? The answer lies in part in the fact that the housing system is itself market-based, rather than being need-based. When a household is unable to pay market-rent for housing appropriate to their needs this generates a social need for housing rather than a market demand for it. However, as it is organized around market mechanics, Canada's housing system is presently unable to respond to the social need developed by these types of households (Hulchanski 2004).

Canada's housing system has not always been unable to respond to the socially generated need for housing. However, the process that has led to this conjuncture today exacerbates the problem of homelessness. While this thesis is focused mainly on the experiences of single homeless men, a nuanced account of these experiences needs to involve the historical development of socialized housing in Canada. Indeed, this is because while homelessness is a complex problem, it is *always* in some way or shape a problem of housing (Rossi 1989). However,

experiences of homelessness can vary a great deal from person to person, depending on any number of one's personal characteristics. As such, at its broadest, this thesis asks: 'How do the experiences of homeless men and youth differ from other homeless subgroups'? With this in mind, I use this thesis to advance an understanding of the experiences of homeless single males, by focusing on the ideas of such a group of marginalized adults and youth in Ottawa. Their ideas come from responses to questions about what sorts of changes this group aspires to, the reasons why they believe they are homeless and, (among other things) how they cope with an absence of stable housing. This attention to individuals' experiences of homelessness attempts to bridge an analysis between broad ranging political-economic decisions, commonly held beliefs about homelessness, and the effects or influence of these phenomena on individuals in Ottawa.

Towards Scarcities of Non-Market Housing and Assistance

To understand the evolution of housing policy and the housing system in Canada it is useful to view 1984 and the election of Brian Mulroney's federal conservative party as a decisive time in the Canadian housing trajectory. Prior to 1984 there seems to have been an attempt made by the Canadian federal government to create an inclusive, needs-based housing system. Amendments made to the National Housing Act (NHA) in 1973 reflected a belief by Parliament that all Canadians should be availed access to suitable housing. Among other things, the amendment established an assisted homeownership program, a native housing program and new non-profit and co-op housing programs (Miron 1988). Further evidence

supporting the inclusive-housing ideology exists in urban affairs minister Ron Basford's statement in the House of Commons at the time of the NHA amendment concerning the government's role in supplying affordable housing:

'When we talk about people's basic needs – the requirements for survival – society and the government obviously have an obligation to ensure that these basic needs of shelter are met. I have already acknowledged this obligation in stating that good housing at reasonable cost is a social right of every citizen of this country. ...[This] must be our objective, our obligation and our goal. The legislation which I am proposing to the House today is an expression of the government's policy, part of a broad plan to try to make this right and this objective a reality (Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, March 15, 1973: 2257, quoted in Hulchanski 2002: 10).

There exists in the minister's statement language pertaining to the role of the state as an intervening presence in the lives of its citizens, in order to bring about a reality in which the less well-to-do are cared for and afforded housing as a social right. Insofar as adequate housing is one of the most basic of all human needs (Layton 2000), under such a rubric, the state assumed a central position in providing for the well-being of its population. Assumption of this responsibility meant that the state was acting to mitigate the risk that homelessness posed to members of its population by providing for the availability of affordable housing. A decisive shift, however, occurred in 1985 when the federal government entertained the option of switching from a policy of providing new social housing units on an annual basis to providing shelter allowances in the form of cash transfers. This would have meant that rather than constructing new units, which would be maintained as below-

market rate housing, the government would instead subsidize private-market units. This move would have satisfied the private-sector housing lobby by avoiding the subsidization of non-market housing (Hulchanski 2002), by passing instead the subsidy on to the landlord. While in the end this option was not selected, the presence of the debate signaled an ideological shift in the federal government's role in housing. In the time between 1985 and 1993, the federal government devolved housing responsibility to the provinces, with the provinces attempting to deal variously with the specific needs of each of their populations. In Ontario, the New Democratic Party 'tied housing to job creation programs through construction of non-profit and cooperative rental projects' (Carroll and Jones 2000: 282). The provincial Conservative party upon their election in 1995, however, canceled this project. And, at the federal level, the supply of social housing was reduced from an annual level of about 25000 new units in 1983 to zero in the 1993 federal budget (Hulchanski 2002).

Another such decisive shift occurred two years later when, in 1995, the federal government replaced the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). Under the former, the federal government was required to match every dollar that provinces spent on social assistance. The arrival of the CHST resulted in an annual fixed federal payment, well below what provinces typically directed towards social assistance (Hilowle 2004). This was in effect a retraction of the federal government's collective responsibility towards those dependent upon such payments, and in turn increased both the pool of those at risk

of homelessness as well as the absolute number of those living without stable housing (Hulchanski 2002).

A third significant shift, in part aided by the CHST, is the degradation of social assistance rates paid by Canadian provinces. This shift is an illustration of the change from an entitlement based welfare model to one whereby financial assistance is considered not as a right but rather as a privilege to be earned (Peck 2001). The installation of the CHST allowed for this movement towards workfarist policies, in part by downloading costs of social assistance to municipalities in Ontario, which in many cases negatively influenced the ability of Ontario cities to provide necessary social services. As a result, social assistance recipients in Ontario experienced 21 percent cuts to rates in 1995 (National Council of Welfare 2007). By 2006, a single Ontarian on welfare was receiving just over \$530 per month (*ibid.*).

These intersecting factors – a property bias that stratifies owners and renters, and a market-based housing system – in combination with significant changes in the ways social assistance and social services are delivered, have had the result that many Canadians today face extremely precarious housing situations. It can thus be understood that the combination of limited social assistance resources and the structural inability of Canada's housing system to supply the population's housing demands, function to contribute to homelessness existing as a chronic social problem in Canada. When these factors intersect with one or more problems experienced by individuals – for example family breakdown, interpersonal violence, the loss of a job, physical or mental health difficulties (including addictions and

substance use disorders) – individuals become extremely vulnerable to experiencing a homeless episode. One aim of this thesis is to consider the varying experiences of different homeless subgroups once these factors intersect and cause one to become homeless.

Discovering the Extent of Homelessness in Canada

Despite being aware of some of the structural features that impact upon homelessness, awareness of the extent of homelessness in Canada has been largely unknown. Indeed, the evolution of statistics regarding homelessness in Canada reflects the extent to which it has only recently become a recognized chronic social ill – a social ill that has proven rather difficult to enumerate. On census day in 2001, over 14000 people were residing in shelters in Canada, with nearly 8800 of them being male. In the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA, there were 750 men staying in shelters on census day (Canada 2002). Statistics from the 2006 census show that by this time, over 19000 people were staying in 905 shelters across the country (Canada 2010). The first numeration of the homeless in Canada wasn't conducted until 1987, with the effect being that researchers today possess only a partial understanding of the long-term trajectory of the problem in Canada. Carried out by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), by polling all the agencies that provided shelter and other services to the homeless, this first attempt sheds light on the immensity of the problem. According to the agencies surveyed, in the year preceding the survey, there were between 130000 and 250000 homeless people in Canada (Canada 1999). Employing a similar methodology, a second enumerative attempt was made

by Statistics Canada in 1991. Owing in part to the 'mediocre quality of the data', no results we published from this attempt (*ibid.*). As such, even while the accuracy and validity of the 1987 CCSD estimate has been disputed, influential housing researchers pointed out that as a result of its broad definition of homelessness that included not only living in a shelter, 'the CCSD figure represents the best and, to date, only estimate of the number of homeless people in Canada' (Peressini et al. 1996: 2). More recent assessments estimate that there today exist between 150000 and 300000 homeless people in Canada (Echenberg and Jensen 2008; Laird 2007).

Defining the Problem

These forays into homelessness enumeration reflect the methodological difficulties related to gathering data on an often transient and highly mobile population. Further complicating the enumeration of homeless individuals, homelessness can be considered as both a 'visible' and an 'invisible' problem. The visibly homeless are those that function, stereotypically, to constitute popular ideas of homelessness as a problem of addicted, mentally ill men. This is reflected in academia as well as in literature and film, through notions of 'alcoholic and vaguely crazy men', 'the hobo' as well as inhabitants of 'skid row' (Begin et al. 1999: 17). Conversely, the invisible homeless, often consisting of families and single women, are those that lack shelter adequate for their everyday needs. This group consists of people who are couch surfing, staying in improvised or perfunctory housing or, otherwise, out of the public gaze (*ibid.*). The multiplicity of homeless experience has the result that any attempt to comprehensively enumerate Canada's homeless would be prohibitively

expensive – costing up to \$10 million (Girard 2006), at the same time that it would be subject to interpretation based upon whatever definition of homelessness was used.

Indeed, bound up with the methodological difficulties in enumerating the homeless is the problem of how to adequately define homelessness itself. There exists a broad range of definitions, some of which constitute homelessness as a rather narrow experience, and others that posit it as a broad problem made up of complex interrelated factors. One way of organizing these definitions is through the idea of a continuum of types of shelter. This could consist of *absolute*, *hidden* or *concealed* and *relative* homelessness (Echenberg and Jensen 2008). Being quite narrow, absolute homelessness includes only those that live on the streets or in shelters. To conceive of homelessness as hidden or concealed is more inclusive in that this second perspective acknowledges those that are staying with family or friends, in a car or in long-term institutions. Finally, relative homelessness signifies a progressive understanding of the problem, in that it includes those that are at risk of becoming homeless and/or who reside in substandard shelter. This continuum is useful insofar as it posits homelessness as a broadly experienced phenomenon.

Homelessness, then, can be defined generally as 'living on the street, staying overnight in temporary shelters, staying in places not meant for human habitation, or moving constantly between temporary housing arrangements provided by strangers, friends, and family' (Klodawsky et al. 2009: 2). In pointing out what homelessness *is*, this definition of homelessness is nuanced insofar as it acknowledges homelessness as a broadly experienced phenomenon. It follows

from this broad definition that one's *place* plays an important role in contributing to the phenomenon of homelessness. Concerning the homeless experiences about which the above authors write, 'Adults were likely to be homeless as a result of economic factors, while family conflicts were the main reason for youth becoming homeless' (*ibid*). Indeed, in the following chapter, I aim to develop a nuanced understanding of how, for *single men specifically*, once homeless, one's social *and* geographical places influence one's ability to access housing.

Homelessness as a Complex of Place-Based Factors

Geographical considerations of place take into account the physical makeup of a given space, the various meanings different groups attach to a space as well as the daily practices that take place therein (Cresswell 2004). These factors have a very serious effect on how, for example, the presence of homeless people in an urban area is dealt with. While certain actors might be interested in providing care and services for the marginalized, other groups might be concerned primarily with displacing the homeless, for reasons of commerce or in order to move individuals from being homeless to being housed. Depending then on the balance of power in a given area, the visibly homeless can find themselves in very different subject positions with regards to how they are treated.

At the same time, *social* place is considered to result from an intersection of factors – including gender, age, class, race, disability, sexual orientation and cultural practices and expectations. The concept of intersectionality can be used to help understand the complex interactions between multiple forms of oppression and

social hierarchy (Josephson 2005). The concept has been used variously to show the problems that minority women face in trying to demonstrate workplace discrimination on the grounds of both gender and race, as well as to highlight the interaction of racism and sexism in the lives of women of color who are victims of domestic violence (Crenshaw 1991). Somewhat counter intuitively, however, I believe it might also be used to draw attention to how homeless males, who themselves possess multiple identities, face intersecting problems that magnify their difficulties.

The first problem results from dominant beliefs about men as economically productive citizens. Because of the way men are typically placed as the heads of households, members of the single male homeless population are discriminated against due to their inability to live up to their socially defined expectation as 'breadwinner' (Passaro 1996). This results in a form of sociocultural discrimination from landlords and others. At the same time, single men face a second, 'structural' trap, or problem of housing scarcity. Here, a lack of appropriate and affordable bachelor or one-bedroom housing traps men in shelters or rooming houses - two living situations which are often unsafe and can provide ready access to harmful or addictive substances. Indeed, given that this problem results from a scarcity of accessible and appropriate shelter in a given space, for present purposes this is a problem of urban geography¹. The first problem *places* homeless males at the lowest rungs in a number of social hierarchies – the bottom of social housing

¹ Affordable housing is also a problem of rural geography. For example, see Peters and Robillard (2009) for an account of homelessness on First Nations' reserves in rural Saskatchewan.

priority lists and the bottom of class based society. The second problem *displaces* males from legitimate and personal domestic spaces in which necessary services or supports might be delivered. While homeless single women face similar difficulties accessing stable housing, due to their smaller sizes, women's shelters in Ottawa are differently situated when trying to provide their clients with the levels of service and supports that they require. In addition, literature surrounding masculinity and the 'normal' activity of men posit that when removed from these normative social roles as economically productive 'breadwinners', men 'often face tremendous psychological consequences' (Liu et al. 2009: 133). In conjunction then, these place-based problems situate homeless males at a particular disadvantage when attempting to upgrade their everyday experience.

Resulting from these converging factors I feel the intersectionality of social and geographical place to be a useful way to approach homelessness research. Indeed, an intersectionality approach draws attention to 'how experiences of domination can change and can vary for subpopulations within larger groups' (Josephson 2005: 86). The experiences of homeless men as a subpopulation of the homeless vary greatly as compared to homeless women and families. As such, acknowledging the converging forms of hierarchy and domination that influence the experience of males highlights how the experience of homelessness is well suited to analysis that acknowledges the multiple levels of individual and structural factors at work, as well as the complex interplay of a number of place-based contingencies.

Structure and Aims of Thesis

This thesis seeks to investigate the problem of homelessness in Ottawa in a number of novel ways. By focusing on males, I consider how, as a function of the effects that the production of truth through discourse has upon populations, single men and youth experience homelessness in ways distinct from other homeless subpopulations, including women and families. This is achieved by analyzing adult male and youth male responses regarding questions of homelessness in parallel, in order to determine what similarities and differences exist in their experiences and perspectives. Additionally, by examining whether homeless men and youth position themselves as being in control over their lives and thus subjects of their own self-conduct, I aim to decipher whether these groups express feelings of being socially dominated and the absence of day-to-day life control. At the same time, I aim to consider whether power and discourses have positive effects on these groups. All of this is achieved through reference to the results of the multi-phase Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa (Aubry et al. 2003, 2007). The Panel Study itself can be understood as a technology of power² wherein homeless individuals were constituted as objects of knowledge and characterized according to their statistical dispersion as compared to the activities and health performance of the 'normal' population.

In its attempt then to examine longitudinally the health and housing trajectories of homeless persons, the first phase of the Panel Study consisted of interviews with people staying in homeless shelters and using homeless services in

² Technologies of power can be understood as the methods used by state and non-state actors to gather information and generate knowledge in order to constitute subjects and territories as governable and administrable (Rose-Redwood 2006).

2002/03. In its second phase in 2004/05, respondents were sought again for interviews in order to identify factors that influenced their ability to access stable housing, and to assess the possibility of linkages between housing status and health functioning (Aubry et al. 2007). Four hundred and twelve individuals were interviewed in phase one, with a total of 255 participants (62%) being re-interviewed in the second phase. The single male adult and youth sample in the second phase consisted of 92 individuals.

Overall, the Final Report of the Panel Study (Aubry et al. 2007) presents a wealth of quantitative information regarding the five homeless subgroups that were part of the research. However, while there does exist a portion of the results section in the Final Report that presents qualitative responses to Panel Study questions, it is my contention that the true nuance of the qualitative data collected is left somewhat understated. With this gap in mind, drawing upon these data sets, as well as responses from homeless service providers in Ottawa, the first question that this thesis seeks to answer concerns the production of truths regarding populations through discourses: *Do contemporary discourses negatively influence homeless single men's ability to escape homelessness?*

A discourse can be understood as an organized and accepted way of thinking about and representing the world. As a system of ordering, discourses operate through spoken and written languages, and often reflect normative considerations about the objects over which they propose order. Different perspectives on the world – be they cultural, political or otherwise – in the process of ordering their reality, make use of different systems of meaning. The process of ordering reality,

or of systematizing meaning through language makes use of a number of central functions, two of which include defining something in relation to what it is not and the use of metaphors. In the case of homelessness, while the language used by researchers, policy makers, the media and others might differ, they do indeed make use of these organizing functions. As pointed out above, the term homelessness itself lacks a precise definition. What it is to be homeless is unclear. It is an absence of home, but for how long? And what exactly does 'home' entail? Notwithstanding these unknowns, to be without a stable home is indeed to differ, in a very fundamental way, from the stably housed population.³

At the same time, the usage of metaphors in homelessness language is ubiquitous. Fopp (2009) points out how terms like "pathways", "careers", "revolving doors" and "safety nets" are used both popularly and by researchers to refer to the experiences of the homeless and carry with them certain moral values and worldviews. The phrase "safety net", for example, 'is not merely a descriptive or neutral metaphor. [It] is not for everyone who "falls" but those who behave in a certain way, who were on the tightrope and deserve or merit the safety net' (Fopp 2009: 280). The 'safety net' itself is a slippery concept, one that varies in time and space, depending upon the political and economic particularities at play; the abundance or scarcity of resources available to provide populations protection against risk in part determines the breadth of the net. However, that the metaphor focuses on a person "falling" rather than being "pushed" reiterates the popular belief of homelessness as an individual shortcoming, rather than the result of a complex

³ Yet it remains the case that notwithstanding the chronically homeless, many people who experience homelessness are usually housed.

interaction amongst factors (*ibid.*). That different groups, with different ends in mind, articulate different value-laden ideas about homelessness reflects the extent to which language influences relations of power. Insofar as power can be understood as productive – of truth, reality, and individual subjectivity, and as emanating from individuals, community organizations as well as the state – it does so through the establishment of ideas, activities, and *ideals* concerning the ways in which individuals relate to themselves and to others (Miller and Rose 2008). The question that animates this discussion is whether the language and hence ideas employed by various groups that produce ideas regarding homelessness in Ottawa have a limiting effect on homeless men seeking access to housing.

The second question that this thesis seeks to address approaches the notion of the productivity of power from a different perspective, that of homeless men and homeless youth themselves: *Do homeless men and youth in the Panel Study position themselves as subjects of their own self-conduct and self-control, and as being able to effect change in their lives?* Reports from Ottawa's Social Housing Registry suggests that homeless singles are at the bottom of the list when it comes to accessing subsidized housing, facing a waiting list of up to five years (Social Housing Registry of Ottawa 2010). Given this below market-rent housing scarcity, it would seem that men are, to a rather large extent, reliant on private market housing. Additionally, single homeless men face a further hurdle through discrimination from landlords (Novac et al. 2002). How then do males relate, as expressed through the Panel Study responses, to this situation?

The final question that this thesis seeks to answer concerns the differences present in adult male and youth male Panel Study responses: *Do adult and youth males' perspectives on and experiences of homelessness differ?* This aims to look at whether one's social place as defined by age, gender and class plays a significant role in one's experience of and ideas relating to homelessness. Research conducted by McCarthy and Hagan (1992) indicates that homeless youth in Toronto experience homelessness in ways distinct from adults. Surveyed youth indicated less dissatisfaction than adult males with social service agencies. Additionally, youth reported fewer difficulties with mental health and alcohol use. It is my intention, through this final research question to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the differences in homeless experience between adult and youth males.

Chapter two draws attention to academic literatures that consider the reasons for which people become homeless. The chapter aims to develop a scaled perspective that considers the influence of structural, place-based, and individual factors on individuals' experiences of homelessness. This is intended to show how multiple levels of factors contribute to persons' experiences of homelessness: wide-ranging socioeconomic factors, individual traits and activities, as well as the important role that place plays – both geographically and socially – in affecting one's ability to escape homelessness.

The process of developing a suitable set of questions and methodology for the present research was a difficult and time consuming task, given the immensity of the information contained in the Panel Study of Homelessness. The aims of this project differed from that of the Panel Study and as such, it was necessary to

develop sufficiently narrow research questions that a selected portion of the Panel Study data would be able to answer. Chapter three describes this process and illustrates why, given the theoretical framework developed in chapter two, the specific questions from the Panel Study were selected for analysis.

Chapter four exposes the key categories to emerge from the selected Panel Study questions. These include control, stigmatization, and social and geographical place – each of which is shown to occupy a central position in the accounts of homeless males. Research on homelessness has faced recent critiques for, on the one hand ‘being too narrow, relying heavily on small-scale, intensive studies’ which fail to set research against larger socio-economic assessments (DeVerteuil et al 2009: 307). At the same time, as a banality of everyday life, the ‘discourses of homelessness can be seen as part of a certain way of perceiving and explaining homelessness, which is problematic [if]...the metaphors do not accord with the experiences of people who are homeless and may, in some instances, sanction aspects of the pejorative dominant stereotypes of homelessness’ (Fopp 2009: 273). The analysis and discussion of the research in chapter four thus aims to move beyond these critiques by examining homelessness for single men and youth in Ottawa as consisting of a nexus of ideas/discourses concerning homelessness and housing realities for the homeless - each of which affects the other, and effects change upon the other.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Literature regarding the reasons why people become homeless can be organized through reference to a number of dimensions. On one level, individual elements are cited as contributing to the problem. Conversely, structural shortcomings are heralded as being the key factors resulting in homelessness. What I aim to show in this chapter is that there exists an intermediate level between these two extremes that complements and provides nuance to an analysis of homelessness in Ottawa. This intermediate dimension takes into account the varied ways in which *place* affects one's situation of homelessness – specifically the ways in which one's *geographical* and *social* places influence one's pathway into homelessness and one's ability to escape homelessness.

One's *social* place can be considered as a result of intersecting factors of age, class, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and cultural practices. Speaking at the level of population, each of these variables has an impact upon the likelihood that an individual will experience homelessness. The types of relationships one is surrounded by, the availability of networks of care and support and the ways in which different groups of individuals are cared for all bear, in turn, upon the ability of one to escape homelessness. Practically speaking, each person's individual experience of homelessness is of course unique; however research has indeed centered on questions of race (Hanselmann 2001; Passaro 1996), questions of gender (O'Grady and Gaetz 2004; Parker and Fopp 2004), matters of mental health

(Bonin et al. 2010), physical and sexual abuse (Tyler and Milander 2009), as well as matters of age (Day and Paul 2007; Martijn and Sharpe 2005).

At the same time, *geographical* considerations of place combine matters of materiality, meaning and daily practice (Cresswell 2004) – resulting in place being a concept that has as much to do with the social landscape as it does with the physical, built environment. Regarding questions of homelessness, place is important, for it provides openings into the ways in which ‘power is implicated in the construction, reproduction and contestation of places and their meanings’ (*ibid.*: 5). The means through which the problem of homelessness is dealt with and experienced ‘in place’ can take many shapes and forms. Geographers have, for example, highlighted punitive landscapes of homelessness, wherein place and the meanings ascribed thereto can be used by the ‘powerful’ in order to exclude certain types of bodies from certain types of places, based on personal appearances, activities or other individual traits (Sibley 1995; Mitchell 1995; Merrifield 2000). The limiting of the activities that the homeless can carry out in certain types of public space, often under the authority of Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) or other business interests, in order to maximize the economic potential of an area to tourists and other consumers, has emerged as an example of the way that the construction of place is often ‘the result of decisions made by the very powerful to serve their ends’ (Cresswell 2004: 5).

Meanwhile, often existing in parallel, other places exemplify much more compassionate perspectives on homelessness. It would seem that more often than not, the majority of governmental and non-governmental, community-based

services for the homeless are located in or around a city's downtown core – the very same space that hosts restaurants, shops, hotels and other places of importance to urban economies. It is precisely the economic interests of these commercial actors that are served by the wishes of BIAs to 'cleanse' urban space and keep it free of any such 'deviant subculture' such as that of the visibly homeless (Amster 2003). The presence in this example of the multiple meanings of an urban landscape – from a place of interdiction to a place of welcoming for services and support (see Cosgrove 2005) – draws attention to some of the central characteristics of 'place': its contested nature, its connection to relations of power, and its varied experience depending upon one's personal characteristics.

Place hence exists as one in a set of analytical dimensions available in the geographer's toolkit. Indeed, I aim to show how, based in part upon the above characteristics, place can be a highly useful concept in the process of mediating amongst structural and individual causes of and solutions to men's experiences of homelessness. While the literature on scale is vast⁴, for present purposes I want to highlight just one of its features: specifically that the social production of scale relies on the use of boundaries in 'delineat[ing] relationships of inclusion and exclusion across a wide range of social, cultural, economic, and political processes' (Miller 2009: 53). The process of accessing stable housing is itself a practice that is bound up in multiple scales. With this in mind it makes sense to consider how place-based boundaries - for example, what sorts of bodies are availed access to scarce subsidized housing - exert varying effects on homeless subpopulations.

⁴ For a useful overview of the development and impact of scalar thinking and analysis in political economy and human geography, see Keil and Mahon (2009).

The aim of this chapter then is to set up a theoretical framework for the present research. As such, the chapter moves first from an overview of structural and individual accounts of what causes homelessness, to a survey of literature that links one's attachment with certain forms of social organizations to one's vulnerability to homelessness. This connection is shown to be a useful avenue of investigation because it draws attention to the influence that one's 'social place' plays in regards to homelessness. Further, it moves away from the tendency of some academics and politicians to blame the victims of chronic social problems (Wright 1993), by instead pointing to 'social power differentials' as resulting in homelessness. At the same time, it is found to be somewhat wanting due to its inattention to the question of what specifically 'power' consists of and in.

It is in light of this shortcoming that, in the second half of the chapter, attention turns towards considering how, once homeless, place-based factors affect the ability of males to escape homelessness. One such factor is housing policy in Canada, which has evolved through specific power relationships that work through multiple scales, and which have in turn led homeless single females and males to extremely precarious housing positions. This analysis situates 'power' as operating both from within individuals and from outside sources, including the state and community groups. The salience of power as an important analytical category exists in the way that it is productive; productive of ways of thinking about and acting upon individuals and populations. Power can hence be understood as productive of truth. However, it is specific institutions and individuals operating in localities that

constitute such regimes of truth, hence the important role place plays in the scalar analysis of homelessness.

One such regime of truth that operates in Ottawa concerns the production, delivery and prioritization of scarce subsidized housing. Given the placement of single males and females at the bottom of this delivery model, in conjunction with socially defined truths that regard men as being strong and able to fend for themselves, the final section aims to expose how homeless males find themselves in an extremely marginalized place in society when attempting to exercise individual power and escape homelessness. The chapter concludes by highlighting how homeless males, as a result of scarce housing resources, today find themselves displaced from affordable and appropriate living spaces. This is shown to have resulted both from the evolution of property geographies in Canada and the ways successive governments in Canada have dealt over the past two decades with housing policy.

Becoming Homeless: Two Ends of the Spectrum

Fitzpatrick (2005) points out how, up until the mid 1960s, explanations of homelessness in the UK tended to focus on persons' individual shortcomings. Here, individual pathologies such as substance use, an unwillingness or inability to engage in 'productive' labor, and/or the presence of ill health are favored as the reason for one's homelessness. Pleace (1998) describes two variations on the individualist perspective. As it goes, the extreme version of such an individualist approach essentially blames the person for his or her situation. Here one's homelessness

ultimately boils down to personal choice. Conversely, the less extreme individualist position considers the possibility that certain individuals are more vulnerable than others to losing their housing.

From the structural level, homelessness results from wide ranging social and economic factors, for example a scarcity of low-income housing in relation to low-income individuals and families. Hence, scarce resources in relation to the demand for services and supports result in homelessness as a chronic social problem (cf. Robson and Poustie 1996). Main (1996) calls this perspective the 'structural theory of homelessness'. According to some commentators, in a somewhat crude fashion, this theory likens homelessness to 'a game of musical chairs in which the players are poor people and the chairs are the housing units they can afford' (Shinn et al. 2001: 102). Indeed, in the UK, from the mid-1960s until the early 1980s 'this was reinforced by a series of academic studies which forcefully put the case that homelessness was the result of malign social and economic forces' (Fitzpatrick 2005: 4). Economic factors such as labour and housing markets, and the condition and location of available housing, combine with social variables such as family violence or crisis (coupled with a lack of social networks) and the increasing tendency of singles to reside alone rather than share accommodation. These forces, while often present in cases of homelessness, interact in complex and unpredictable ways, therefore making it difficult to establish linear, cause and effect-type interpretations of homelessness (Watchman and Robson 1989: 20-24).

Today there exists a mainstream academic view of the causes of homelessness that navigates the space between these extreme positions. This is reflected in the

'New Orthodoxy' of homeless research in both the US and the UK. As Fitzpatrick (2005: 4) shows, the central tenets of this new orthodoxy are as follows:

- Structural factors create the conditions within which homelessness will occur; and
- People with personal problems are more vulnerable to these adverse social and economic trends than others; therefore
- The high concentration of people with personal problems in the homeless population can be explained by their susceptibility to macro-structural forces, rather than necessitating an individual explanation of homelessness.

In their longitudinal study concerning women in New York City shelters, Metraux and Culhane (1999: 372) use a similar individualist-structuralist approach, and point out that 'certain persons and households, because of individual factors – disabilities, family dynamics, misfortune or some other circumstances – are particularly vulnerable to experiencing homelessness and account for the unusually high prevalence of these individual factors in the homeless population'.

I wish to forward the idea that a nuanced analysis of the problem of homelessness considers these individual and structural characteristics, in conjunction with the contingencies⁵ that exist in the given place in which analysis occurs. As such, the next section considers the links between marginalization and an absence of social affiliations. This begins to develop an understanding of how personal empowerment, and the ability to effect positive change in one's life are

⁵ I intend here an understanding of contingency as: something that may happen, and something set aside for what may happen.

affected by geographical and historical features that affect different types of bodies in contrasting ways.

Being Homeless, Being Disaffiliated

While the risk of homelessness in Canada increased dramatically in the 1980s as a result of a number of factors, including stagnant production and depleting available levels of affordable housing, deinstitutionalization of persons with mental disorders, and the ascendance of wage suppression and part time labour without benefits (Hulchanski 2009), there nonetheless existed a homeless 'problem' prior to the more recent expansion of the phenomenon. Influential writing from the 1960s-70s considers homeless men specifically as experiencing 'a condition of detachment from society characterized by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of interconnected social structures' (Bahr 1973: 17). At this time, homeless men - existing as they did as the typical homeless person - were considered as disaffiliated, or disconnected, from the social institutions that provide shelter, work, support and the like (Bahr 1970). Indeed, homelessness was defined by a lack of connections with certain social institutions: 'Homelessness is best visualized as a relationship to society at large. The fully homeless man is unaffiliated in all six sectors [of society]' (Bahr 1973: 7-8). According to Bahr, the major types of affiliative bonds that are characteristic of an individual's attachment to developed societies are: family, school, work, religion, politics and recreation (Bahr 1973). The author goes on to point out the relationship amongst 'power', affiliations and forms of social organization. From his

perspective, 'the powerless are persons without relations to other men or persons lacking offices within a system. In short, *power derives from affiliations; the powerless are the disaffiliated*' (*ibid.*: 30, emphasis added). Later, the author points out that

'As long as a man has viable social ties, i.e., has other persons bound to him by reciprocal rights and obligations, his defectiveness is, at worst, only partial. But the more disaffiliated he becomes, and the more powerless, the less "needed" or "expected" or "obligated" he is, the easier it is for the adjectives "lost", "forgotten", "passed by", and "surplus" to be applied to the self. With the passing of obligations go also rights, and the new self-definition is imprinted via stigmatization, victimization, and discrimination in interaction with others. If a man has visible stigma – marks of his being "damaged goods" visible to all – the impact on the self of his powerlessness and disaffiliation may be even greater' (*ibid.*: 286).

The conspicuous gender bias notwithstanding, the author's claim is clear:

homelessness results less from individual characteristics than it does from the extent to which individuals are linked into important social institutions; the more linked into social services and social networks one is (in short, the more affiliated one is), the less likely it is that one will experience homelessness.

Insofar as Bahr's ideas relate to place-based contingencies and individuals' affiliative experiences, this is a useful conclusion. This line of thinking results from the author's conception of power, which he describes as the ability to both influence others and to effect action thereupon. Whereas on the one hand 'activity and

affiliation breed power and esteem' Bahr claims conversely that 'inactivity and disaffiliation merit not merely low status, but negative status' (Bahr 1973: 30). This is also useful in the way that the author remarks about the influence 'visible stigma' has upon the disaffiliated. This idea relates to how others constitute, or "socially place" the homeless as lacking in some fundamental way, which in turn feeds a cycle of marginalization.

The disaffiliation account is nuanced, then, insofar as it draws attention to the influence that ideas about identity and belonging have upon the marginalized. At the same time, it moves away from victim-blaming the homeless. Nonetheless, it becomes problematic when it seeks to generate a generalized account of homelessness, by contending that, generally speaking, where there is a lack of affiliative bonds, there will similarly exist homelessness. The problem with this logic is that in moving from a universal claim regarding causation to specific instances of homelessness, one is left wondering why certain individuals that lack affiliative bonds become homeless and remain unable to access housing, while others do not. I propose, as suggested above, that the answer to this question lies in the intersections amongst place-based contingencies - one's geographical and social experiences of place.

With this in mind, in the section that follows I investigate the operationalization of power through a sociospatial perspective, which, in order to attempt to come to terms with why certain bodies find less success than do others in exiting homelessness, considers both geographical and social 'place' as important factors concerning one's experience of homelessness.

The Power of Place 1: Property and Practical Political Economy

One salient argument concerning the experience of homelessness comes from Nikolas Blomley, who argues that ‘the proscribed condition of the homeless can be partly explained by the geographies of property’ (Blomley 2009: 586). Property rules, insofar as they determine who is allowed to be where, are, for the homeless ‘a series of fences that stand between them and somewhere to be, somewhere to act’ (Waldron 1991: 302). I wish to maintain that in addition to providing a ‘physical’ obstruction in the way a fence does, property laws also separate those with property from those without through a form of discursive obstruction. Owners of private property, as a result of property rights and the benefits and claims derived there from, are afforded ‘an acknowledgement by the state that certain issues are worthy of special protection... Groups and individuals can use rights to mobilize the state and its disciplinary powers, and in so doing, receive an affirmation that the collective recognizes and acknowledges the justice of that claim’ (Blomley 2004: 11-12). In the absence of such ownership and extending rights, ‘people who do not own property’ - homeless males, for example – ‘are treated with a good deal of ambivalence, suspicion, and even hostility’ (*ibid.*: 4).

Relatedly, property can be considered as a ‘social relation that defines the property holder with respect to something of value...against all others’ (*ibid.*:2) The rights of the propertied to maximize an item’s potential value within a free market system – a house or apartment, for example – reveals the detrimental effects that are placed upon the marginalized when private housing properties far outnumber

public housing properties. Indeed, ballooning urban property values push would-be buyers out of the housing market, having them in-turn occupy rental housing, thereby pushing lower income families and individuals further down the housing chain into residences which might otherwise be occupied by those in greatest need – residences deemed ‘the housing of last resort’ (Blomley 2009: 582). This results in leaving many renters vulnerable to displacement, especially if there is an absence of available subsidized or public housing stock.

At the same time, Blomley describes how, once forced into the experience of homelessness, the desire by urbanites to maintain property values compounds the experience of exclusion faced by the homeless. Insofar as city governments compete with one another ‘to project a positive external image to tourists, investors and potential workers, the presence of the homeless produced in part through shifting and intensifying forms of investment, becomes increasingly problematic’ (*ibid.*: 584). As pointed out above, urban space is akin to multiple meanings, from that of a place where individuals with no place else to go perform their daily elemental needs, to that of strict regulation and the site of possibility for the widespread phenomenon of urban gentrification (Slater 2004). Given that property rights enforce the rights of the propertied to, for example, exclude the unpropertied other, gentrification and displacement, as two features of the geographies of property, are legal phenomena that entail ‘a cascading array of legal mechanisms, texts, and violences, including eviction notices, writs of possession, arbitration, and bailiffs, all of them sustained by principles of landlord-tenant law as well as wider common law conceptions of property’ (Blomley 2009: 582).

In Canada, the property rights and relations described above – specifically the scarcity of subsidized housing - have resulted from a quarter century of shifting political responsibilities for various levels of government, including the rescaling of what were once federal policy imperatives and the devolution of health and social programs from the federal to the provincial level. Interest in human geography has paralleled these events, by displaying a central concern with, among a number of other key theoretical areas, the ‘rescaling’ of the state and a ‘new politics of scale’ that has resulted in/from this. The rescaling of the nation state involves a number of key factors. These include:

- The most recent globalization of state economies and a resultant shift in the location of state capacities both ‘upwards’ to the supranational scale, and ‘downwards’ to the scales of the body and the local (Jessop 2003).
- Increases in local forms of governance, and the devolution of planning responsibility from national to local governments, in turn reflecting a retreat of the welfare state (Brenner 2004).
- A resultant shift towards privatized provision of what were, under welfare regimes, publicly funded social services, and an emphasis on individuals as largely self-sufficient; a deepening of economic relations into spheres of everyday life (Miller 2007).

Attention within human geography to scalar modifications has proceeded alongside three other sociospatial lexicons: territory, place and network. Calls have recently been made to bring together these diverse languages by investigating the interconnections amongst territory, place, network as well as scale – specifically

with regards to the ways in which these connections help to make and remake social relations. Indeed, the social relations of homeless males have been hugely affected by each of these factors. In their elaboration of a framework for considering the interconnectedness of territory, place, scale and network (TPSN), Jessop, Brenner and Jones (2008) describe how their TPSN framework is grounded upon and extends a strategic-relational approach (SRA) to political economic considerations. In their words, the SRA 'highlights (a) the contradictions, dilemmas and conflicts that characterize capitalist social formations in specific periods, stages and conjunctures; and (b) attempts to resolve, or, at least displace the latter, and thus to regularize and govern capitalist accumulation and political domination' (Jessop, Brenner and Jones 2008: 395).

It might be argued that in Canada, the political and economic frictions faced at the beginning of the 1980s – subsequent recessions spurred on by high inflation and high interest rates – resulted in a broad attempt to shift Canadian public policy in a path concurrent with the shifting and increasingly integrated global political economy of the time. A significant and influential text from this era is the *Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* (Canada 1985), known as the MacDonald Commission. The Commission was appointed by the federal Liberal government in 1982, driven by a mandate to come to terms with and provide solutions to the existing recession – a recession that proved to be contradictory and conflicting to the Canadian capitalist social formation in the sense described by Jessop, Brenner and Jones above.

Reporting its findings and recommendations in 1985, the Commission outlines broadly the need for amendments to activities undertaken at the governmental level as well as the level of individual citizens. These recommendations exist as responses to the 'one central fact' about which the Report claims to be fairly certain: that there were at present powerful political economic forces around the globe that profoundly affected the lives of all Canadians (Canada 1985: 5). At the governmental level, the report argues that 'governments should pull back from direct intervention in many aspects of the operations of the economy, placing greater reliance, instead, on the operation of market forces' (*ibid.*: 3). Elsewhere, individuals are told that 'in striving to achieve the best possible combination of equity, sharing, opportunity, responsibility and security, we Canadians must also remain mindful of our need to achieve an appropriate degree of economic efficiency' (*ibid.*: 32).

Part of the salience and long-term effect of the MacDonald Commission Report is the way in which it positioned the future possibilities for Canada. The comfortable post-War reality, which included broad ranging social programs and a highly visible role for the federal government in housing and urban affairs (Hulchanski 2002), was, according to the Report, an increasingly out-dated mode of organization. By acknowledging the fact that this massive scholarly endeavor in the end takes a "leap of faith" and points toward continental free trade, state decentralization and the increased reliance by Canadians on market forces (Watts 1986), one can conceive of the Report as an object that altered the conditions of possibility for the ways that Canadian governments and Canadian citizens were

mutually implicated in a public policy issue like housing. As described in the previous chapter, whereas the federal government was a central actor in the provision of social housing prior to the mid 1980s, its direct role was next to nothing less than two decades later.

Another central tenet in the strategic-relational approach to political economy is that sociospatial relations be considered 'in terms of a path-dependent, path-shaping dialectic of strategically selective structural constraints and structurally attuned strategic action' (Jessop, Brenner and Jones 2008: 395). Again, in Canada, this has meant that resulting from constraints variously imposed, housing services are today delivered much differently than in the past. The strategic path was shaped, in part, through language in the MacDonald Commission Report that emphasized the need for efficiency amongst government and individuals, as well as minimized state intervention in the daily lives of Canadian citizens.

Governments have undoubtedly pulled back from direct intervention, as the commission called for. However, it would appear that homeless males specifically exist as a population whose ability to achieve the efficiency that is called for is precluded based on intersecting factors of social and geographical place. Indeed, if it is accepted that geographers' theories of place and place-making result from polyvalent processes that operate within and through broader sets of social relations (Cresswell 2004), the places of homeless men, then, have been made by two decades worth of changes in housing policy. The scarcities resulting from these changes secure homeless males' place at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

In her survey of the experiences of single homeless individuals in the United Kingdom, Isobel Anderson describes how housing policies since the early 1970s have created a hierarchy of need and service delivery, which further marginalize certain homeless subpopulations. Insofar as waiting lists prioritize families and older applicants, 'the homelessness provisions effectively create the circumstances in which the majority of single people have no priority for council housing, due to their exclusion from the main priority needs groups' (Anderson 1999: 159). Local housing access policies in Ottawa similarly prioritize subgroups based on status. Special housing priority status is granted to individuals that are escaping violence, that face serious health risks due to their existing housing situation, or that are presently homeless (Social Housing Registry of Ottawa 2010). As a result, through no fault of their own, but simply because they often fail to satisfy these priority categories, single men and women who apply for housing through the social housing registry in Ottawa can expect to be at the bottom of the up to five year waiting list for this sort of help (ATEH 2008).

At the same time, for individuals seeking the most affordable forms of housing in the private market in Ottawa have faced a number of further problems. These include extremely low vacancy rates over the past decade, yearly average rent increases, including 30% overall from 1993-2003 for one bedroom apartments, as well as a net loss of nearly 1500 rental units since 1995 (Shapcott 2001; Ontario Tenants Rights 2003). By 2009, average monthly rents in Ottawa were \$668 for a bachelor apartment and \$853 for a one-bedroom apartment. This meant that in order for individuals to be spending less than 30% of their pre-tax income on

housing – Canada’s affordability standard - they would need yearly incomes of \$27,520 for the bachelor and \$34,120 for the one-bedroom (ATEH 2010). In conjunction then with the position of homeless males at the bottom of the social hierarchy, this group is in effect displaced from appropriate and affordable types of shelter.

The Power of Place 2: Is the Ideal To Re-Place Homeless Males?

The above discussions regarding property and homelessness and the shifting trajectory of federal involvement in housing provisions shed light on some of the everyday factors and the longer term policy shifts that have resulted in homeless males in Ottawa facing such difficulty accessing housing. However, it is also useful to analyze the government of housing and homelessness in Canada not only with reference to empirical governing activities, but also with ‘thought as it becomes linked to and is embedded in technical means for the shaping and reshaping of conduct and in practices and institutions’ (Dean 1999: 18). Regarding the shifts experienced in Canada beginning in the 1980s, as already noted, much of the policy rhetoric, in Canada and elsewhere, stressed the impact that economic globalization was having upon national economies (Rice and Prince 2000; Canada 1985). This rhetoric in turn functioned to make social and economic policy revamps of the 1980s and 1990s such as minimized social service provision, privatization and workfare seem like necessary and inevitable policy responses to the real and imagined stresses present at the time. These stresses include, for example, international competition brought about through diminished trade barriers and the

challenge to scarce funding faced through annual social assistance recipient increases.

While this constructivist focus on the effect that language has on political life is certainly a useful mode of analysis, it is possible to move one step further by considering the possibility that we are at present witnessing new techniques and rationalities of governing and new ways of posing the problem of government. Indeed, by focusing on the 'changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualized, and the moral justifications' (Rose and Miller 1992: 175) that accompany these policy revamps, one can see that the governmental shifts that happened in Canada over the 1980s and 1990s brought with them changing *terrains* and *territories* of politics.

Drawing on Legg (2005), Michael Brown (2009) considers the truths that buttress the ways populations are governed - or, to use his phrasing, quotidian city politics. In his discussion of the government of venereal disease in Seattle in the 1950s, Brown examines the 'means through which we can observe networks of force relations to trace how power operates not simply as a more "ascendant" form of state power itself but also as a structuration of powers we associate with oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, and class, as well as of "the normal body" itself' (Brown 2009: 4). The use by Brown of the terms 'race, gender sexuality and class' draw attention to the ways his analysis complements a place-based account of the effects of politics and power on bodies in urban spaces. Further, his use of the term structuration implies a consideration of how individuals and social structures interact in ways that are at once predictable as well as unexpected and surprising.

While on the one hand human activity is constrained by the contextual rules under which action occurs, the rules and social structures that function to govern such action are constantly and continuously modified by human activity. Moreover, such rules are both historically and geographically contingent – that is to say that rules concerning conduct relate, once again, to ideas regarding social and geographical place: they are related to socially constructed ideas about types and possibilities of actions, which affect individuals differently, and vary from place to place.

Contemporary ‘post-social’ modes of government provide much room for individuals to shape themselves and exercise power. Foucault (2007) describes the ability of individuals to exercise power through technologies of the self. In parallel with technologies of the market, technologies of the self empower individuals to effect change upon their minds, bodies and lifestyles, in order to attempt a certain state of contentment. However, as a result of the intersecting factors described in the previous section – scarce housing resources, property relations and the marginalized status of the homeless – even if homeless males attempt to exercise power and act in ways that will bring about positive change in their lives, it might often be the case that resulting from the place-based structuration of homelessness in Ottawa, this group will find it extremely difficult to modify the rules and structures through which they are governed. It would seem then that this group is in a contradictory position. Scaled back interventionary measures preclude the forms of employment and housing assistance many require. At the same time, yet as a direct result of this scaling back, males are unable to maximize themselves as the

types of economically efficient citizens that were supposed to flourish in an era of reduced government intervention.

This paradox might be partially explained by considering that the last two decades of the 20th century saw an increase in the explicit desire by governmental authorities 'to design social policies that encourage communities to use local abilities and resources to solve local problems' (Rice and Prince 2000: 207). Here populations are treated not as a unified society, but rather as discrete groups empowered by social policies 'to come together to identify common problems, develop local solutions [and] allocate resources to address problems' (*ibid.*). On the surface, this appears as an effective alternative to social policies organized at the national scale, which in practice did not fit the different place-dependent contexts. However, in the case of highly politicized issues such as homelessness, local opinions regarding the question of deservingness can result in community resources being delivered inequitably, slowly or inefficiently. As Rice and Prince point out, local initiatives are more expensive than broader ranging policies, and on top of this, 'for community members to be willing to share resources, they must believe the person receiving the assistance deserves to be helped' (*ibid.*: 219). While there is help available for single homeless males in Ottawa, it has not been the long term housing help that many need to stabilize their lives. The scarcity of low-income housing in Ottawa exposes one way in which an emphasis on government through community 'weakens the universal rights implied in national social programs' and effectively replaces social rights 'with the bare minimum of social assistance provided [which is] based on needs rather than entitlement' (*ibid.*: 220).

Whereas post World-War Two nationally organized social health and welfare programs attempted a mutual maximization of the economic well being of the nation and of its population, the 1990s saw 'the economic fates of citizens within a national territory [being] uncoupled from one another, and are now understood and governed as a function of their particular levels of expertise, skill, inventiveness and flexibility' (Miller and Rose 2008: 96).

This has real implications for homeless single men and youth in Ottawa. The two-way relationship between government and citizen is organized around 'a new ethical perception of the individualized and autonomized actor, each of whom has unique, localized and specific ties to their particular family and to a particular moral community' (Miller and Rose 2008: 91). For single homeless males, this terrain of government, replete with its emphasis on individual and community self-sufficiency and self-conduct, creates explicit distinctions between the included and the excluded – the affiliated and the marginal. These distinctions hold at both the level of the individual and the community. In a usage similar to Bahr's above, Rose describes how, by affiliation, he means the enterprising groups who invest in themselves and their families. For present purposes, what makes Rose's usage helpful is the way it directs attention towards affiliation as a matter of being able to exercise individual economic responsibility. The included are, he writes, 'individuals and families who have the financial, educational and moral means to 'pass' in their role as active citizens in responsible communities' (Miller and Rose 2008: 98). The marginal, by implication, are those that lack such forms of acceptable activity and 'civilized' links with local community. Indeed, 'either they

are not considered as affiliated to *any* collectivity by virtue of their incapacity to manage themselves as subjects or they are considered affiliated to some kind of 'anti-community' whose morality, lifestyle or comportment is considered a threat or a reproach to public contentment and political order (*ibid.*). Owing, among other factors, to their lack of property ownership and the social and spatial exclusion that results (Blomley 2005; Herbert 2008), homeless populations might indeed be considered as an anti-community occupying a particular disadvantageous position with respect to securing itself against hardship.

Homeless males, insofar as they are placed, along with single homeless women, at the bottom of class-based society, the bottom of socialized housing priority lists and in turn displaced from adequate housing, do indeed constitute a disadvantaged community. In the face of these hardships, recent movement has been made towards recognizing the disadvantaged nature of the homeless in Ontario. As an example, Streets To Homes, a program initiated by the City of Toronto in 2005, provides enhanced services to street-involved people, and has proven to be a highly effective way for homeless individuals to secure the assistance they need to move into permanent housing (Toronto 2009). A second example comes from Ottawa's *Community Action Plan on Homelessness 2009-2014* (Dinning and Davis 2008). The Plan describes, among other things, the need for increased affordable housing in Ottawa, the need for prevention of homelessness, and assistance while people are homeless, as well as legislative and policy changes and a coordinated, comprehensive and accountable community response to homelessness.

Indeed, successful implementation of these key recommendations would go a far way towards aiding the disadvantaged nature of single homeless males in Ottawa.

Notwithstanding these recent and incremental movements, when attempting to secure housing, it might be understood that broadly speaking, social stigmatization exists as a hurdle for homeless men and youth. Taylor (2009) describes how 'normalizing norms encourage subjects to become highly efficient at performing a narrow range of practices' (*ibid.*: 47), often aimed at 'promoting the health and protecting the life of society as a whole' (*ibid.*: 50), in turn founding, legitimizing and reproducing specific relations of power. Homeless single males, then, can be understood as going against a number of generally accepted social norms, including the neoliberal tendency towards economic self-sufficiency, as described above. More so, due to displacement and lack of access to private spaces for cleansing and grooming, many of the most visibly homeless may be aesthetically unappealing (Phelan et al. 1997). At the same time that this feature stigmatizes, it also 'may cause people to overestimate the prevalence of these characteristics in the [overall] homeless population' (*ibid.*: 325), in turn reinforcing homeless stereotypes and reproducing stigmatization.

Finally, traditional gender norms often peg single homeless men and women as deviants, thereby resulting in further sources of stigmatization. While shifts have occurred in recent decades, traditional gender roles continue to separate men and women in terms of both where work takes place, and what type of work is deemed acceptable. Males, seen as the breadwinners and providers for the family, traditionally leave the space of the home and travel elsewhere to spaces of paid

labour. Women, conversely, are seen as the dependents and have typically performed unpaid, domestic labour. Notwithstanding incremental shifts in gender relations, such as the appreciation by men of the need to balance work and family time, 'most of the balancing or juggling of home and work continues to fall on women' (Siltanen and Doucet 2008: 116). Such gender ideologies, the taken-for-granted beliefs regarding the roles and relationships of women and men in public and private spheres, have for a long time led to pejorative interpretations of individuals whose activities fall outside of such normative considerations. Indeed, as Passaro (1996) shows in the case of New York in the mid 1990s, the homeless people who are most likely able to get help are the ones who appear as exemplars of traditional gender ideals. More often than not, this means that 'families are generally the only homeless people who stand a chance of moving from the streets to an apartment' (*ibid.*: 3). Indeed, this holds true to a rather significant extent in the case of subsidized housing in Ottawa. At the same time, however, housing wait lists and wait times are growing even for the homeless family subgroups (ATEH 2010). This further advances the notion that the base factors at work in Ottawa that result in scarce below market rent housing development and availability – specifically local and extra local policy decisions regarding socialized housing and social supports that have accrued over the past 25 years – have created a broad ranging problem of poverty that extends beyond individuals simply having inadequate, deteriorated or poor quality housing. What exists in Canada today is a problem of homelessness – a problem summarized by large scale dehousing

processes and a catchall term that draws attention to a host of serious social and economic policy failures (Hulchanski 2009).

However, in light of the discussion above regarding the emphasis on productive, civil communities, men who fail to perform productively in their socially defined role as breadwinner pose a risk to the ideal of the self-sufficient, prudential self-maximizing citizen, in turn finding themselves victims of stigmatization and are in turn marginalized. This is further complicated when one considers the precarious position homeless men face while existing in a society where a lack of property ownership is itself deemed irregular and considered an indication of a lack of responsibility and self-control (Blomley 2005).

In light of the effects that these place-based features have upon the experience of homeless single males in Ottawa I wish to forward a theoretical approach that acknowledges the many ways in which the level of the individual interacts with other levels of analysis. These other levels can include social affiliations and networks, localized or extra-local regulatory frameworks that situate certain persons higher up in the hierarchy of housing need, and discourses pertaining to social norms that operate within and through scales.

Each of the literatures reviewed above is helpful in considering the interplay between homeless single males and the place-based features that impact upon their experience of homelessness. The disaffiliation literature situates homeless men as being disempowered due to a lack of important social bonds, which in turn results in their 'negative' social status and stigmatization. At the same time, literature concerning the geographies of property and the trajectory of social assistance policy

in Canada draw attention to how the place of homeless single males has in part been made by the associations of property relations and policy evolution of the past 25 years. Finally, literature that considers government as consisting of the conduct of conduct, as being dispersed, and as increasingly relying on technologies of the self highlights the disadvantaged position from which homeless single males attempt to exercise power. In synthesis, these bodies of knowledge are intended to provide a framework through which to interrogate the effects that a number of place-based factors have upon the ability of single men and youth to escape homelessness.

Importantly, these factors largely come into play once one is homeless and attempting to establish stable housing. As such, this multi-scalar and place-based perspective is not meant to explain the causes of homelessness broadly, but rather is intended to apply to specific cases of homeless individuals attempting to secure housing. As outlined, I propose that the question of what allows for successful reintegration into housing is best answered by attending to the contingencies that occur in a given place at a given time and that affect various groups in diverse ways. Indeed, this framework proposes that single homeless males specifically, due to both their historically constituted 'place' in society - as productive and self-sufficient, in conjunction with the geography of housing scarcity, find themselves in an especially precarious position with regards to accessing housing.

One hypothesis I intend to explore follows from ideas regarding the structuration of power amongst individuals and social structures and norms. Specifically, if single men and youth find themselves in variously disadvantageous positions compared to other subgroups when seeking housing, and if power is

productive of truth, I hypothesize that attending to the voices of these homeless men and youth will both bring about novel truths regarding the experience of homelessness and challenge the subject position of homeless single male bodies as marginal and disempowered. I intend to examine this through my three research questions. First: Do contemporary discourses negatively influence homeless single men's ability to escape homelessness? Second: Do homeless men and youth in the Panel Study position themselves as subjects of their own self-conduct and self-control, and as being able to effect change in their lives? And third: Do adult and youth males' perspectives on and experiences of homelessness differ?

In a very concrete sense it can often be the repeated daily activities of individuals that prescribe whether one is able to achieve stable housing. Indeed, the framework that I forward acknowledges the idea that based on the types of daily activities homeless single men are required to exercise – as clients in shelters, as thinking about survival on a day-to-day basis and bound up with the stigmatization that results from these factors – men exist in a very precarious place when seeking to access stable housing. However, by engaging with the ideas these men and youth articulate I hope to confront dominant ideas about the visibly homeless and consider the extent to which these groups position themselves as being able to effect change in their daily lives.

Conclusions

Owing to their inability to access subsidized housing, and the stigma attached to having experienced homelessness, compared to homeless families and homeless

women with children, men stand in a doubly disadvantageous position when attempting to escape homelessness. In light of this, and the debates surrounding individual versus structural accounts of the factors leading to, and allowing one to escape homelessness, as well as my desire to provide a multidimensional interpretation of the problem of homelessness, it is my contention that engaging with homeless men's responses in the Panel Study draws attention to the ways in which men and youth attempt to overcome the problematic factors of housing scarcity and social marginalization while attempting to escape homelessness.

In her evocation of the emancipatory potential of scholarship that refuses the self-evidence of reality, that exercises curiosity in the face of historical actualities, and then in turn seeks to innovate new ways of knowing, Dianne Taylor (2009: 63) emphasizes how 'possibilities for change lie neither in despairing in the face of nor trying to gloss over the complexities of modern societies, but rather precisely in acknowledging and engaging the depths of such complexities'. Indeed, by interrogating the ways in which homeless men articulate their experiences of homelessness, and by engaging the strategies this population uses in order to cope with an absence of stable housing, it is my intention that new truths regarding the methods through which to reestablish stable housing might emerge. In the least, it is my aim to constitute this population as possessing a privileged perspective on alternative conceptions of reality; conceptions which might function to alter the difficulties experienced by subsequent homeless individuals when attempting to access housing.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Michel Foucault famously presented knowledge and power as entangled and as emanating from all manner of sources, 'through countless sites, practices, agents, discourses and institutions' (Rutherford 2007: 296). The previous chapters have in part described the shifting place-based relations that result in single homeless men being in highly precarious situations when attempting to secure stable housing. Along the way, 'power' has been considered as a useful means through which to consider the problem of homelessness. I have attempted to show how personal empowerment is based on commonly held ideas about normal activities for different types of bodies in urban settings - specifically the case of single men existing outside the norm of propertied and productive breadwinner, and the disempowerment that results. Here the concepts of power and empowerment exist not as 'the power to dominate' but rather as being productive. Power produces reality, domains of objects and rituals of truths; indeed, 'the individual and the knowledge gained of him belong to this production' (Foucault 1977: 194). Further, this production is place-based and historically contingent. As such, the process of knowledge creation contained within this thesis is productive of homeless identities in Ottawa.

It is inevitable that the methods selected to gather and deliver information regarding this population impact the type of knowledge that is produced. As a

researcher then, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge one's positionality, and the process that led to the production of a certain body of knowledge. With this in mind, and given the highly politicized nature of homelessness in Canadian cities (Klodawsky et al. 2002; Kiel 2002), in which it seems all too familiar for homeless individuals to be the objects over which power is exercised, in the section that follows I want to describe in detail my attempt to undertake research that, as much as it can, considers the experience of homelessness and the manifestation of power from the very personal and localized level of homeless individuals themselves.

As described in the previous chapter, there exists in the homelessness and property literatures a focus on how populations are classified, organized, and acted upon differently depending, for example, upon one's level of individual attachment to societal sectors and productivity. However this interpretation partially obscures the possible ways in which individuals attempt to exercise power on a daily basis, but for reasons of marginalization or otherwise, are precluded from doing so. This gap is somewhat puzzling, given that individuals are today 'required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation of a life of incessant job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self' (Rose 1999: 161). With this gap in mind, the present research seeks to engage homeless single men, a group of people often considered to be powerless, passive and the archetypal homeless person (Lee 1978; Del Casino and Jocoy 2008), through considering their opinions on homelessness and questioning some of what they see as both acting to prevent and enable their housing.

Drawing on the work of Jeff Popke (2003, 2006, 2008), who calls for a reevaluation of the social as a site of ethics and mutual care, it becomes possible to consider that as urban citizens, we all share common vulnerabilities, are in turn interrelated and possess a form of responsibility for the lives of the urban other. From this, and echoed in the assertion that 'the self cannot survive by itself alone, cannot find meaning within its own being-in-the-world, within the ontology of sameness' (Levinas and Kearney 1986: 24), results the notion that researchers possess an ethical responsibility to engage all manner of difference. Engaging the opinions of homeless men and youth contained within the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa (Aubry et al. 2003, 2007) in part fulfills this responsibility. Equally, given the extent to which governmental roles in housing Canadians have been minimized over the past half century it is of utmost reason to attend to the voices of men and youth who find themselves in extremely precarious housing positions and constituting the margins of our urban environments.

Positionality

Engaging with difference does not obscure the fact that there exists a massive gulf between the lives of the homeless individuals drawn upon herein and my positioning as a student and researcher. Naples (2003) considers the concept of positionality as a helpful means through which researchers might artfully reflect upon one's 'position' as the place wherein one's moral framework is constantly and iteratively developed. One's interpretation of and 'position' regarding the world is influenced and constituted by factors such as one's age, gender, race, class, religion

and historical and geographical context. In the case of academic research, the positionality of participants interacts in dynamic ways with that of researchers, often resulting in unexpected outcomes (G. Rose 1997).

From this, and from the need for transparent research methods, it makes sense to ask how my own positionality and experiences have shaped the process of knowledge creation contained herein. It seems to be possible to describe the influence of my identity on the research process in two ways: first through the process whereby I came to be interested in homelessness research broadly, and second through the process which led me to interpret the Panel Study data in the way I have chosen. Before this however, a few words on my own intersectionality. I grew up to middle-class Anglophone parents in an Ottawa suburb. They divorced when I was seven, and it was from this that I was first exposed to some of the difficulties (admittedly quite minor in our case) that impoverishment can thrust upon a household. As a teacher, my mother, with whom I grew up, went on maternity leave when I was born and didn't return to teaching until I was of elementary school age. At that point, in order to be present as much as she could while I grew up she returned not to full time teaching, but rather to supply teaching. While I can't by any stretch say that I was ever in want of anything (indeed as a suburban pre-teen and then teenager I certainly had a surplus of material goods), it was in juxtaposition to the household of my father that I considered our home to be less than magnificent. It is from this observation that I developed an understanding of how differently, often through no fault of one's own, people's life trajectories can turn out.

Even with this understanding of socioeconomic difference, my path into homelessness research from a geographer's perspective was somewhat circumscribed. An interest in human and cultural geography led me to investigate Ottawa's 'Chinatown' for my undergraduate thesis work. Doing research in this area in turn exposed me to a reality that I had hitherto known only partially through spending time in the area as a resident. My engagement with respondents that were themselves homeless yet who derived from the area important feelings of belonging and meaning resulted in an interest in how knowledge, meaning and definition of urban space is differently affected depending upon one's socioeconomic positioning. Indeed, a key finding contained in my undergraduate thesis was that Ottawa's 'Chinatown' meant something very different to the affluent consumers that I found in the area compared to the less well to-do. Whereas the former group interpreted the space as being of primary interest for its east-Asian restaurants and shops, the latter group articulated a somewhat more nuanced definition for the neighbourhood. Owing in part to the presence of the Somerset West Community Health Centre and St. Luke's parish, each of which provide material and moral assistance for those in need, the impoverished group expressed an interpretation of the neighbourhood as one in which all people, whether marginalized or otherwise, were accepted and supported (Cosgrove 2006).

This understanding ties into the second process about which I intend to speak – that is my decision to interpret a portion of the Panel Study data with reference to the power of place. As has been drawn out, ideas regarding the power of geographical and social place hold that one's position in society - and the ability of

one to access governmental and non-governmental services and support - varies depending upon a number of features, including one's gender, whether one has children, the daily activities one undertakes, and commonly held ideas or discourses about 'appropriate' activities for various populations. Put another way, the ways in which people are represented and known through discourse has very serious effects upon the ways in which people are acted upon and transformed (Miller and Rose 2008). This reflects the assertion that began the present chapter: the notion that power/knowledge is productive of truth, social relations and human subjectivity. Hence, resulting from the truth contained in discourses surrounding what sorts of actions 'responsible' or 'civilized' subjects of government should undertake, those that don't fulfill these tenets fall into the category of 'deviant' and are thus precluded from being subjects of their own government. Put concretely, owing to their status as falling outside the 'normal' activities of modern urban citizens, chronically homeless single males and females are among the least empowered populations and least likely to be actively involved in constituting the change they desire in their lives. Indeed, in what is heralded by the authors as a definitive manual for helping America's homeless, Burt et al. (2001) parade out a good number of structural and, importantly, discursive modifications that must fall into place in order to alleviate chronic homelessness. However, nowhere is mention made of the need to engage at the most local level with homeless men themselves. Speaking with and considering the ways in which homeless persons constitute and articulate their experiences of homelessness seems to be one way to explore the nuances of homeless experience. Especially in a time when local, community oriented action is trumpeted as the

solution to local problems (Peck and Theodore 1999), the absence of this seems a terrible irony, given both the stake and the insights that these actors possess.

It seems then that one way to respond to this missing commitment to the very voices that experience homelessness is to interpret Panel Study data as being constitutive of truths regarding the experience of homelessness itself. This can be done by considering the discursive formulations that place men 'within a space of high culpability for their condition, non-productivity and dangerousness or unpredictability', at the same time that other groups (women with dependents, or children, for example) receive sympathy from policy-makers and members of the housed public (DeVerteuil et al. 2009: 647). As such, from these sets of data it was my contention that discourses might emerge that would function to alter interpretations of homeless men as passive objects to be governed. While this type of analysis does rely on homeless males' ability and willingness to be forthcoming and open with their responses, the presence of such discourses would draw attention to men's abilities to exercise power. For example, if they acknowledged that they wanted to change their life situations, this could be interpreted as wanting to regulate and minimize the risk posed to them through homelessness. Indeed, it was my hypothesis that responses to Panel Study questions could expose the varied ways in which homeless men act as creative and insightful subjects of their own government.

Methods

Resulting from my initial reading of sets of Panel Study data, I decided to organize my research in a manner that would allow me to consider the various ways that homeless single men – bodies that exist at the local level – articulate their experience of homelessness, while keeping in mind the broad structural changes that influence their ability to access housing. As such, my research is animated through two methods: a secondary analysis of Panel Study data, and semi-structured, open-ended interviews with key informants from the homelessness service industry in Ottawa. The semi-structured interviews are meant as a complement to, and serve to provide context for, the sets of data gathered through the Panel Study. This is largely motivated by the belief that everyday life is organized through multiple levels, including ‘the local setting where life is lived and experienced by actual people and the extra- or trans-local that is outside the boundaries of one’s everyday experience’ (Campbell and Gregor 2002: 29).

Introduction to the Panel Study on Homeless in Ottawa

As pointed out in the introductory chapter, the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa consisted of two stages of interviews with five homeless subpopulations. Concerning research instrument construction, the questionnaire used in the 1999 survey of persons who are homeless in Ottawa by the Centre for Research on Community Services at the University of Ottawa exists as the starting point for the Panel Study (Aubry 2003: 10). Shortcomings of the 1999 questionnaire were targeted through two mechanisms: the Panel Study Research Team, consisting of faculty members with a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, and the

Community Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from a range of homeless service organizations (*ibid.*). In order to test the effectiveness of the research instrument, a pilot study was conducted with twenty representative participants from different subgroups of persons who were homeless in July 2002. Extensive revisions were made following this pilot, with a revised copy of the interview protocol being submitted to the City of Ottawa's Project Coordinator on September 13, 2002 (*ibid.*: 11). The final interview protocol consisted of the following sections:

- Section A: Housing History
- Section B: Social Support
- Section C: Personal Empowerment
- Section D: Life Satisfaction
- Section E: Living Conditions
- Section F: Health Status
- Section G: Social Services Utilization
- Section H: Health Care Utilization
- Section I: Childhood Stressors
- Section J: Substance Use and Abuse
- Section K: Demographic Information
- Section L: Wrap-Up

Broadly, the aim of the Panel Study was to identify factors that distinguished those individuals who successfully exited homelessness from those who remained homeless or experienced more than one episode of homelessness (Klodawsky et al. 2007: 98).

With reference to Panel Study sampling design, 'quota sampling based on the characteristics of the 2001 Ottawa shelter population was used for single men, single women, and adults within families' (*ibid.*). This meant that a proportionate number of respondents were needed from varying lengths of shelter stays. To use

the case of men as an illustrative example of this quota sampling, twenty-eight men were needed that had been in a shelter for less than seven days, twenty-five were required that had been sheltered for seven to twenty-nine days, thirteen were required in the thirty to eighty day category, and fourteen were needed that had been sheltered for more than eighty days (Aubry et al 2003: 12). In the cases of female and male youth, population sampling was done until the targeted number was reached in each of these subgroups (*ibid.*). For more information regarding the specific quota samples of each subgroup, see Aubry et al. (2003, pp. 11-14).

Regarding recruitment strategies, the majority of adult men were recruited from Ottawa's three major men's shelters: The Salvation Army Booth Centre, The Mission and Shepherds of Good Hope. With reference to the adult women's sample, most of the respondents were recruited from Cornerstone, the women's emergency shelter in Ottawa. For both the male and female youth groups, difficulties were encountered recruiting the necessary 80 from each group. In the case of males, the intention was to recruit 40 each from the Salvation Army Youth Men's Shelter as well as the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) Drop-In Centre. These samples were difficult to achieve, so were supplemented by recruiting from Operation Go Home, The Mission and Shepherds of Good Hope. The inability to recruit 80 female youth from the YSB Young Women's Emergency Shelter and the YSB drop-in centre meant that participants were also recruited from Operation Go Home, Cornerstone and Interval House.

Secondary Analysis of Panel Study Data

Since the focus of my research addresses the problem of homelessness in Ottawa from a somewhat different angle than the Panel Study, engagement with these sets of data proceeded in the form of a secondary analysis, which refers to the analysis of data 'which the original researchers might not have attempted' (Sarantakos 2005: 296). Indeed, instead of focusing as the Panel Study did on housing trajectories and the relationship between housing status and health functioning of persons who are homeless, the present research examines the effects that both governmental frameworks and discourses that function to establish truths about governable populations have upon the ability of single men to access housing. Additionally, the research questions whether and how the panel study responses position men and youth as being in control of their lives – that is, whether and how homeless men in Ottawa visualize themselves as subjects of government.

Research Design and Organization of Data Sets

Before moving to a description of how I analyzed Panel Study responses I first want to elaborate on the process that led to me a focus on single men specifically. This decision resulted from a long process of going over the Panel Study data sets and considering exactly what would be realistic to focus upon and analyze. At the onset of this process I considered the possibility that each of the five subgroups (adult and youth females; adult and youth males; families) could be analyzed. Even so, I knew that I would have to isolate certain portions of the data for analysis - if not by subgroup then at least by way of a focus only on specific aspects of the qualitative results of the interviews.

My initial engagement with the sets of data from the Panel Study was via SPSS statistical software. Using SPSS, I first organized the data by subgroup: family, adult female, youth female, adult male and youth male. Within each of the groups, I then distinguished between those that were housed 90 days or more at the time of the follow-up interview, and those housed less than 90 days at follow-up. This was done in order to consider whether there existed any broad differences between the two groups. Through this introductory organization and evaluation of the data I came to realize that in addition to limiting the breadth of the questions I would focus on, I would also need to limit my focus to only certain subgroups.

Regarding the analyzed cases, I chose to focus in depth on the single male adult and youth subgroups specifically. This was done for a number of reasons. For one, as indicated above, my desire to analyze the whole of the results was far too ambitious a task. Over the research period of 2002-05, 412 participants staying in shelters were interviewed initially, with 255 being re-interviewed approximately two years later (Aubry et al. 2007). This was simply too broad of a sample to deal with in a Masters project.

Secondly, the results of this longitudinal study reveal significant differences amongst the homeless experiences of single men and the remaining subgroups. Indeed, less than half (47%) of the single men that participated exited homelessness over the two-year period. This stands in stark contrast to 97% of the families and 73% of the single women achieving stable housing over the research period. For the men that did find stable housing, their length of time in this housing was on average the shortest amongst the subgroups (average = 265 days). Additionally, by limiting

my analysis to the single male groups, my research was better suited to attend to a dearth of understanding regarding the links amongst place-specific in-depth analyses of the problem of homelessness, and broader systems of rule and governance (Klodawsky et al. 2007). Significantly, the single male data from the Panel Study was yet to be analyzed in this light.

With the rather distinct experiences of men in mind, a number of qualitative questions from the Panel Study were selected based upon their relation to my conceptual framework. My focus on homelessness as a complex of place-based factors located individual subjectivities as the points of contact between broad structural factors and socially defined ideas about populations – all of which come together in place. As such, the questions from the Panel Study that I chose concerned:

- Factors that enable and factors that prevent stable housing;
- Overall desired life changes; and
- Persons' general ideas about homelessness.

Concerning the questions that dealt with what might prevent and/or enable one's stability of housing, as well as those focusing on desired life changes, it was my assumption that respondents' answers to these would reveal insights concerning the extent to which individuals indicated an ability to effect change upon oneself regarding one's homelessness situation. Alternatively, it was thought that these responses would show whether these are life changes that required the help of additional outside sources. Further, the question of housing prevention/enabling was considered to relate to ideas about how property relations - specifically the

tendency in the core areas of cities towards upper class place making and the minimization of affordable rents - have an influence upon homelessness. Finally, it was anticipated that the question that dealt with individuals' broad ideas regarding homelessness would help put to scrutiny the question of whether popularly held productivity discourses constitute single homeless males in a disadvantageous housing position. Taken together, these responses help reveal the extent to which individuals interviewed for the Panel Study fall in line with the ideas developed in previous chapters - ideas relating to the marginalized social place of single homeless males, and their displacement from access to adequate housing.

Interpretations of Data Sets

Regarding how these men see themselves as existing within the structuration of power that relates to housing access, preliminary investigation into the results of the Panel Study revealed that many individuals described two poles of their experience. On the one hand, respondents described personal characteristics that functioned to either prevent or enable housing. To a large extent these consisted of factors relating to economic and health characteristics, social networks and relationships with social service providers. On the other hand, individuals described how structural characteristics influenced one's ability to exit homelessness. Respondents cited factors such as a scarcity of housing or social assistance as examples of structural characteristics that impeded one's ability to exit homelessness.

However, through a more in-depth reading of the data sets, framed by the literatures developed above, I questioned how the everyday experiences of homeless single males gave shape to their experiences of place – with place being considered as a culmination of materiality, meaning and practice. For example, according to the males who are staying in shelters, I looked at what sorts of truths regarding this group exist, and how these truths affected one’s ability to access housing? Did the shelter setups lead them to be complacent with shelter life? Were men in shelters able to act upon themselves in the process of self-discipline and management? Did single men find their personal experience attached to broader social issues? These questions all related to the broad research question of why single homeless males experienced such difficulty accessing housing, and the three more narrow questions concerning self-control and being able to affect life changes, the impact of discourses on housing access, and the different experiences of youth and men.

By asking these questions I helped answer the call by DeVerteuil et al. (2009) for research that pushes beyond an interrogation of single men’s experiences of public space by instead looking at how this group considers and situates itself within broader socioeconomic processes. The same authors point out that ‘one of the more frustrating aspects of recent work by geographers on homelessness is the tendency to proceed as though the problems of homelessness – and responses to those problems – are the same everywhere’ (*ibid.*: 655). Hence, another salient feature of the present research is its attention to the experiences and voices of homeless men in Ottawa specifically. Finally, if power is productive of truth,

meaning, reality and social organization, and if power/knowledge results and emanates from all manner of sources, then responses of homeless men contained in the Panel Study exist as the discursive property of the respondents. Hence, by stretching the argument made by Blomely (2009), wherein homelessness is in part produced by property and the regulation thereof, putting to use the discursive property of these men perhaps proves to result in altered truths and perceptions regarding the experience of homelessness itself.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Analyzing the Panel Study data in isolation would have been a partial endeavor, insofar as it would have failed to account for the translocal connections amongst individuals and social relations of broader social and economic processes (Smith 1987). As such, semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to consider how the translocal – that is, the area of life outside the boundaries of one’s everyday experience - functions to organize everyday social relations through knowledge, experience, discourse and institutions (Wright and Rocco 2007). My research questioned the effect that discourses through which truths are established regarding various populations had upon the ability of men to escape homelessness. As such, interviews with service providers to the male homeless in Ottawa were intended to shed light on the interconnections between the micro relations that make up the day to day experiences of homeless men and the broader processes of truth creation that result in men facing such difficulty in exiting homelessness.

Respondents were selected based upon their institutional role with Ottawa's male homeless. Interviews took place between November 2008 and May 2009. Interviewees include Perry Rowe, the program director at the Salvation Army; Karen Nielsen, coordinator of the Salvation Army Housing Response Team; Trudy Sutton, the executive director at Housing Help Ottawa; Wendy Muckle, the executive director at Ottawa Inner City Health; and, Ben Mead, housing worker at The Mission. Given their positions as mediating agents between homeless individuals in various stages on a path to seeking housing and the institutions charged with providing support to homeless people in Ottawa, the interviews conducted with these individuals went a far way in complementing the Panel Study data. Some of the information that I hoped to elucidate through these interviews included:

- Whether the shelter experiences of men and women differ;
- Whether there were characteristics that men exemplify that influenced their ability to exit homelessness
- Whether, for landlords, there were different perceptions of men and women as potential tenants;
- Whether men and women accessed services in different ways;
- Whether single men were at a particular disadvantage when looking for housing; and,
- What the most important barriers were that institutions faced when attempting to service their clients.

The process of interviewing individuals was an iterative one whereby each successive interview helped me learn which questions proved helpful, and which

ones needed improvement. The ability to modify interviews as they progressed was in part the reasoning for selecting semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The process of conducting initial analysis of the Panel Study data prior to conducting interviews proved helpful insofar as it allowed me to develop questions for service providers to the homeless that would be complimentary to Panel Study data. This was important, for the aim of my research was altered considerably over the time between the summer of 2008 and the summer of 2009. As stated above, analysis was narrowed to include only men from the Panel Study. At the same time, my research questions were adapted in order to better reflect the bodies of literature I found to be useful when considering the Panel Study data. As a result, I was able to interrogate the gendered nature of shelter experience in Ottawa, specifically with reference to how this impacts on the ability of males to escape homelessness. Additionally, I was able to question service providers about their perspectives on how this group exercises government over themselves, and whether this impacted their attempt to find housing.

Conclusions

Throughout the research process I kept in mind the power derived from my analysis of Panel Study data and the knowledge through this I intended to produce. As such I made sure to avoid the tendency of 'academic victim blaming' (Wright 1993), by considering the ways in which homeless males position themselves vis-à-vis broader socioeconomic systems and relations, and as employing distinct discursive means through which to articulate their experiences. A focus on these factors

moves beyond simply pointing out the socioeconomic and structural factors that contribute to the problem of homelessness and conceives of solutions to homelessness as being derived from the voices of homeless individuals themselves. Insofar as 'the ways in which we govern and conduct ourselves give rise to different ways of producing truth' (Dean 1999: 18), an exposition of homeless men's experiences of place, in conjunction with the insights derived from service providers helps bring about answers to the question of why homeless men face such difficulty accessing housing in Ottawa.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter aims to expose the key categories to emerge from the selected Panel Study questions. These include control, stigmatization, and social and geographical place – each of which are shown to occupy central positions in the accounts of homeless males. The Panel Study data sets present the ideas of a group of homeless individuals with very broad thoughts on their experiences – thoughts that go a long way towards understanding the complexities of the problems of homelessness and scarce affordable housing in Ottawa.

The chapter proceeds with an outline of the quantitative results of the selected Panel Study questions. From this analysis emerged the key categories, which are analyzed after the broad results of the data sets. In conjunction with

interviews conducted with service providers to the homeless, these categories are used first to show that the factor of age does play a significant role in adult and youth men's experiences of homelessness in a number of ways. At the same time, as a function of rooming houses being a frequent and often inappropriate next step along the housing continuum, men are shown to occupy highly precarious housing positions. Following this, popularly held ideas regarding homeless men are shown to result in feelings of discrimination and subordination in this population, in turn compounding the difficulties they face accessing stable and suitable housing. At the same time, these ideas are shown to resound in the responses of males who speak about the need to find employment or seek education, which can lead to feelings of control, stable housing and empowerment. Productivity discourses thus are shown to occupy a dynamic position with regards to males' experiences escaping homelessness.

Analysis of Panel Study Interviews

In this section, the process through which Panel Study data was analyzed is described. The questions that were selected for analysis were organized in SPSS statistical software first by adult/youth status, and second by housed less than/more than ninety days. An attempt was made to decipher whether there were certain factors that appeared more prevalent in either one of the housing subgroups. That is to say, an attempt was made to decode a pattern in the data: did the men who found stable housing list certain desires for housing or lifestyle changes, or general perspectives on homelessness that might be interpreted as helping them

achieve stable housing? After going over the sets of data from both the adult and youth subgroups it became apparent that no such pattern existed. Given this, I attempted to introduce another independent variable – whether the respondent had a child – in order to test the effect on the dependent housed ninety plus days variable. Again, there was an absence of a strong pattern. In the absence of statistical correlations concerning housing status, data was input into Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software. Once in Atlas.ti, starting with the adult males who were housed for more than ninety days, I went over the Panel Study responses and coded them according to a series of variables and factors. This was a process of iteration: each time I went over a new series of responses new ideas for codes emerged. As the process of analysis progressed, codes that were similar were grouped in order to provide greater links amongst the data. These codes allowed me to visualize the connections amongst responses that at first glance appeared highly differentiated. This process highlighted a number of recurring factors that were present in the data in significant number, including individuals' propensity to act creatively as a way of coping with homelessness, and an overwhelming critique of the (lack of) availability of affordable housing, in concert with the impenetrability of the private housing market. By using the network view feature in Atlas.ti I was also able to make links that, while intuitive, point out the relatedness of individuals' struggles to find employment, difficulty with money, and negative critiques of private market housing. This process of discovery was instrumental when faced with such broad sets of data, and allowed me to develop research questions that

could usefully interrogate what I felt to be of interest in the selected Panel Study questions.

Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews with service providers were transcribed and then similarly coded with Atlas.ti. Due to the relatively small number of interviews, and the fact that this coding process was conducted after that of the Panel Study data, the service provider coding process took much less time and exploratory effort. Nonetheless, coding and mapping the responses yielded insights that proved to be highly useful – specifically concerning the extent to which men and women’s experiences in shelters differ, and how chronically homeless men can be understood to occupy a unique social place.

Qualifying Remarks About the Data

Given that I was not present when the Panel Study data was originally collected there does exist a sort of detachment between the research data and myself. Not being present meant that I was not able to shape the way the questions were worded or delivered, and I was similarly unable to read any non-verbal responses delivered by respondents. These factors are important because they can alert the researcher to the effectiveness of the questions being posed. Indeed, being part of the data collection process and being able to influence the direction of the research would undoubtedly have been an asset. However, the influence of these limitations diminishes when one considers the richness and nuance provided by the data sets.

In total, 92 males were interviewed in the second round of the Panel Study – 43 adult and 49 youth. The full transcripts of the Panel Study interviews are an unmistakably large pool of data upon which I am fortunate to draw.

At the same time, as a direct result of the size of information contained in the Panel Study, another limitation exists in that I have had to narrow my focus to very specific factors present in the responses of homeless men. As an example, a number of respondents mentioned the prevalence of physical health problems as directly contributing to people becoming homeless. Indeed, this is widely understood as being among a number of central factors that bear upon one's path into homelessness, and one's experience once homeless (Begin 1999). While there is an abundance of information regarding physical health factors contained in the men's responses, my aim is to engage phenomena about which relatively little is known – hence the focus on language and ideas about homeless men, and the differences articulated between the adult and youth groups. As such, the next section looks at how adult and youth males describe their housing desires, what they want to change in their lives, what they do to cope with homelessness and their broad feelings about homelessness.

Desired Housing

The question concerning desired housing interrogated three aspects: first, what type of housing was desired; second, what would enable this; and, third, what prevents this. Table 1 draws attention to how adult and youth male's responses were largely similar. A significant majority in each group articulated a desire for

apartment housing. The next largest response was a desire to seek housing somewhere outside of Ottawa. Notwithstanding the similarities, there were two areas where the groups differed significantly. While no youth mentioned a desire for hotels or rooming houses, three adults did. At the same time, a significant number of youth (n=5) expressed a distinct desire to return to living at home with parents. Responses to the question of what would enable housing were again relatively similar, and are represented in Table 2. Employment and money were the top responses, with more than half of the adults and a third of the youth articulating a desire to find work. Finally, Table 3 shows the responses to what prevents housing. As might be expected in light of the results of what would enable housing, unemployment, lack of money and the economics of the private market were the most cited factors.

Table 1: Desired Housing Type

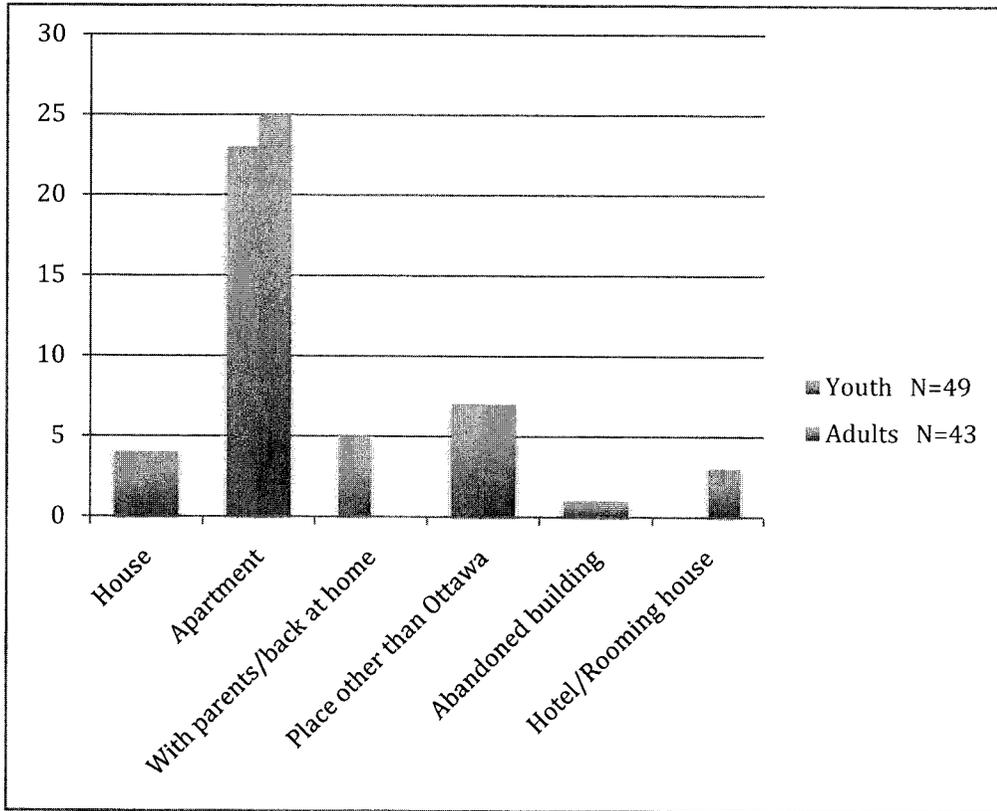


Table 2: What would enable your desired housing?

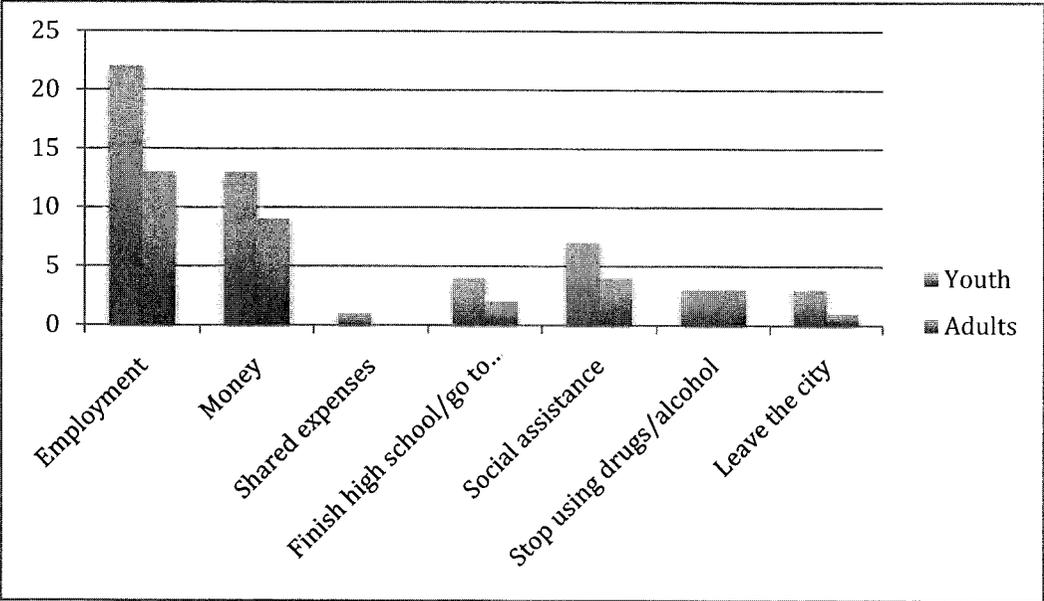
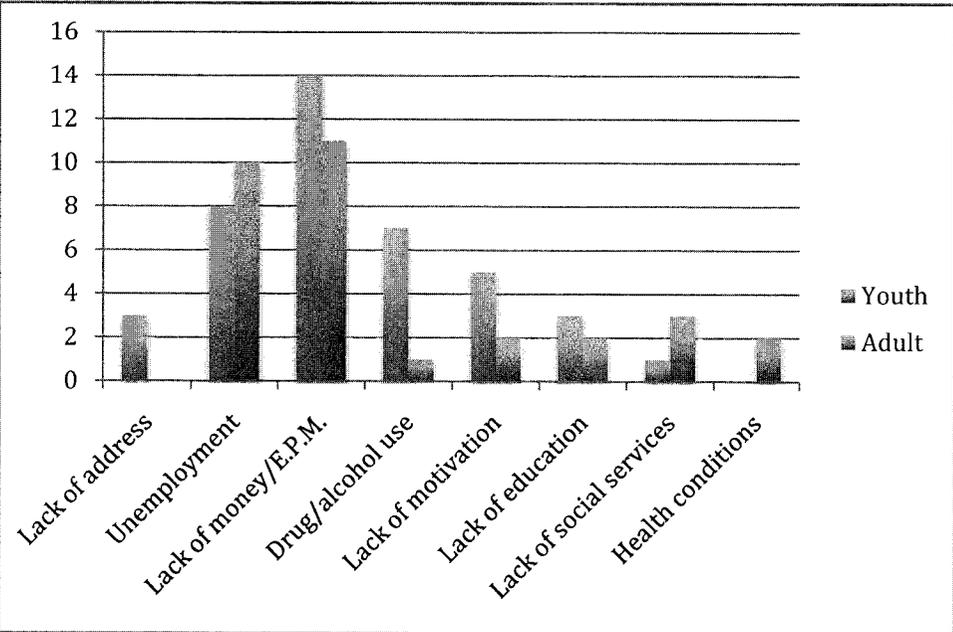


Table 3: What prevents your desired housing?



The tables in this chapter organize responses into categories based on the presence of similar ideas. That 43 of the total 92 youth and men interviewed mentioned unemployment, a lack of money or problems with the economics of private market housing (EPM) as acting to prevent their stable housing is indicative of the pressure a scarcity of affordable housing in Ottawa exerts on this population.

Some of the responses to the question of what prevents housing that were noteworthy, yet which were difficult to capture through the categories in Table 3, included an acknowledgement by youth of the roles that maturity and responsibility play in their struggles with homelessness:

YM4: Mental barrier – knowledge that I must work forever to achieve the small things

YM24: A phone call to my mom to tell her I'm sorry

At the same time, two of the men described the psychological struggles they faced:

AM15: Self-motivation, you go up one step, you go down 25.

AM20: When you're homeless, out of a job, your self-esteem goes down, your body language reflects that.

That the majority of respondents indicated a desire to find apartments at the same time that they listed a lack of money, unemployment and the private housing market as preventing them from doing so denotes a significant lack of control over their lives. In the case of adult males, of the 32 that mentioned a desire for an apartment,

house or rooming house in Ottawa, only 6 described this desire as being either enabled or prevented by their personal activities. Conversely, 12 men stated explicitly that their desire for an apartment was prevented by a lack of affordable housing, with 7 men conceding their desire for an apartment was prevented by lack of money due to lack of employment. The case for youth differed in a number of important aspects. Of the 33 that stated a desire for some form of housing in Ottawa, 9 mentioned that personal actions such as a lack of motivation, shyness and “falling into old habits” (YM45) are what prevent housing. However, the most frequently cited link was between housing and a lack of employment, with 18 youth claiming this is what prevented their housing.

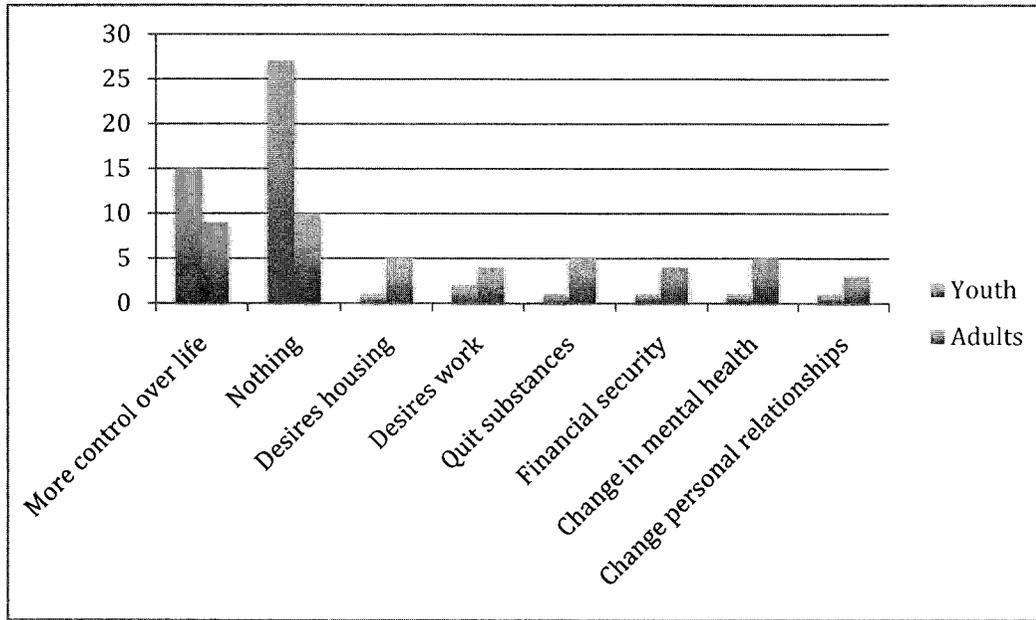
What is striking and what separates this group from the men is the tone in which the youth describe their relation to employment. On the one hand, the men who talk about housing and employment, while mentioning that “nobody will hire me” (AM22), and “no work, no home” (AM32), take on a tone that seems to imply problems with employment come from the actions of other people, not themselves. The youth, meanwhile, when describing their considerations of housing and employment say that “getting steady work with a schedule” (YM21), finding “some stability and a job” (YM40), or “getting a good job and going to college” (YM15) are some factors that might enable stable housing. Here then is a marked distinction between the amount of control the men feel versus the youth regarding matters of housing. These two groups, then, situate themselves in different subject positions relative to power. Whereas the men might be understood to locate power as existing outside of their subjectivities, the youth position themselves as possessing

power over themselves and over their housing and employment situations. This divergence also relates to the groups' differing experiences of social and geographical place. While the men describe bleak feelings regarding employment opportunities, the youth are manifestly more optimistic about their possibilities surrounding jobs in Ottawa.

Desired Change In Life

The question that focused on the changes that individuals wanted in their lives resulted in a high divergence between the responses of youth and adult males (Table 4). Surprisingly, the most frequently cited change amongst both groups was "nothing". Given that two and a half times more youth responded in this way, it is possible that youth feel as though homelessness is a stage that they will eventually overcome. The next most frequent response for both of the groups concerned an explicit desire for more control over life.

Table 4: What changes would you like in your life?



Each group expressed a desire for increased control. For example, two youth expressed the following:

YM8: I need more stability and control because it's hard to trust anyone.

YM11: I wish I had more control over my anger. I wish I had more self-esteem.

No one cares so why should I?

While adult responses to the question included:

AM4: I like to make decisions, not have them made for me.

AM5: It'd be nice to have control over my self. To be able to stand on a street corner without being harassed by cops.

AM26: I would like to have more control on my life. Other people control my life, police, security guards, shelter staff.

Notwithstanding the overlaps, the most obvious difference to come out of this question is the adults' tendency to more frequently mention tangible aspects of their lives that they want to change or control. In this respect, the men were quite specific, for example, saying "I'd like to be able to get into a place with a roommate, make it work. Getting out of the shelter I would have control over my medication" (AM2), and "getting a job, getting out of here, that would give me control" (AM19).

These men make very direct connections between how securing housing and employment can facilitate personal empowerment over their life situations. Some of the youth mention similar tangible desires, such as "getting a place, getting my stuff together, having a good job" (YM 21), yet as a group the youth seem to reflect more of an abstract desire to possess control in their lives. This perspective is epitomized by one youth who states that he "wants a better life – not sure how control would help, but thinks it would" (YM 48). However, as pointed out above, by considering the two questions regarding desired housing and life changes together, a somewhat different picture of the youth emerges. By linking these two categories it becomes apparent that in a manner similar to adults, a significant number of the youth make direct links between how employment, housing and personal empowerment and control are all interlinked.

Broad Ideas About Homelessness

At the beginning of the Panel Study interview session, respondents were asked if they wished to share any broad ideas about homelessness. They were also informed that they would have a similar opportunity at the end of the session to share their

thoughts on the problem. The responses to these questions, presented in Table 6, proved to be the most varied of those analyzed for the present research. Answers fluctuate from highly articulate discussions regarding housing, social and shelter services in Ottawa to simple yet poignant statements like “We need affordable housing” (AM4). Some of the topics mentioned were touched on by both of the groups, including homelessness as a cyclical problem. For example:

YM1: To get a house you need money, to get money you need a job or welfare, to get a job or welfare you need an address. Shelters aren't the answer.

YM40: Some people have difficulty getting shelter because they don't have an address and you can't get welfare without an address. It's a catch 22 situation.

AM37: Housing is the main problem. When you can't pay your rent and get kicked out on the street, you end up in a shelter. You have no references for the next place to rent. Rents are way too high in Ottawa and the rooming houses want employed people or students.

Here, both youth and adult males describe in somewhat comparable fashion how homelessness can exist as a cyclical problem. In the absence of some forms of stability, it can be difficult for these individuals to establish themselves, find employment and escape shelter life.

Elsewhere, the two groups describe in similar detail how private market housing is largely impenetrable. Here both the youth and the men provide nuanced accounts of the problems they have faced with the economics of private market housing:

YM7: They should implement more affordable housing, especially in cities where rent is so expensive - some program that would pay last month's rent, because saving when you're poor is hard and takes a long time.

YM9: Housing is a big issue because it is so expensive and many places are very small. Most places that are available are so hard to get because the competition is stiff.

AM10: Even those that are employed with minimum wages, the rents are too high. Even when I worked, I came here to eat because I was making \$800/month and had to pay \$600 for rent. It's a revolving door - once it happens it's hard to stay out of it. It's a poverty trap.

AM15: Why do social services pay more to keep us in shelters? The shelter received \$640 a month and a [per night allowance] PNA of \$112 that we receive. If I was not in a shelter I would get \$520 no PNA. Nothing else. We are not motivated to get back into the housing market because it is cheaper to stay here. Who can live on \$520 a month? If I have my own place I can't afford to eat.

These responses show the ways that males interpret private market housing as being out of reach, even if they are working. From their perspectives, this is a problem created by a lack of housing supply compared to demand. More so than the youth, the men, perhaps because of their repeated difficult experiences attempting to access housing, express how this struggle results in feelings of discouragement.

Another factor that each group listed as being significant is the need to reformulate men's shelters:

YM25: The shelters in the city are dirty and drug infested. There should be more emergency shelters where you can stay with friends. People's animals are not allowed in most shelters. People without ID can't get into most shelters.

In addition to the problems people with pets and without ID face, this youth points out the prominent access to harmful substances that shelter users are afforded.

Indeed, it is often the case that rather than being drug users prior to becoming homeless, individuals who face the trauma of homelessness begin to struggle with substance use as a coping mechanism and because of their proximity to other users (McCarthy and Hagan 1992).

Notwithstanding the frequency of similar responses, each group did have issues that they spoke about in greater incidence than did the other. For example, the men spoke more often than did the youth about the need for more social assistance and services:

AM15: If they gave us an evaluation about where we really stand, most of us would not be here. Are you mentally ill? Are you a user or abuser of drugs? Our emotional or physical needs are not assessed.

AM20: They should meet each resident, establish the reason why we are here and decide what they can do to help us out of here.

AM37: People become dependent on these shelters. Case workers should monitor our employment - if we're looking for an apartment and if we're supporting ourselves. They could encourage us to move out, move on.

The frequency of men's discussion of this might be due to their having experienced situations where some form of support was needed and either not available or not

accessed. Conversely, the youth spoke a great deal about how past family struggles played into their current experiences of homelessness:

YM7: Homeless youth are struggling to get out of their situations. They need support of family and friends so that they can get on track. [I] wish that parents of homeless youth would encourage their kids to come home. [My] parents seem to have accepted the fact that [I'm] living in a shelter. They don't seem too concerned about this. It's not okay for 16 year-olds to be living on the street.

YM28: People often leave when they don't get along with their family. It would be helpful to homeless kids if they have a place to stay other than with their family. When you're on the streets you do a lot of drugs, both to cope with depression and to fit in.

YM40: Dysfunctional families are largely responsible for youth homelessness because kids from broken homes often feel rejected and they have no other outlets to help them - the housing situation is dismal.

While at first it might not appear so, these two issues are in fact related. Whereas the men describe the lack of social services as being a need for shelters to fulfill, youth talk about the roles that families play in times of need. Indeed, these groups both talk about how a lack of support from these institutions can propel them into increasingly severe housing situations.

Another factor that was mentioned by each group, albeit by the youth in greater frequency, was the tendency of the homeless to be discriminated against. One man who describes a new relationship expresses feelings of inadequacy:

"I can't tell this girl I just met that I live at a shelter, she'll think I'm a loser"
(AM13).

Another man describes how his sense of pride and perceptions regarding the marginalized interfere with his daily necessities:

"If I have my own place I can't afford to eat. They say go to the food bank. I don't want to do that, I am not a beggar" (AM15).

Elsewhere, some of the adults describe how homelessness can entail presumptions being made by persons of authority:

"The staff are labeling us. They judge us. They label me as a bum." (AM 33).

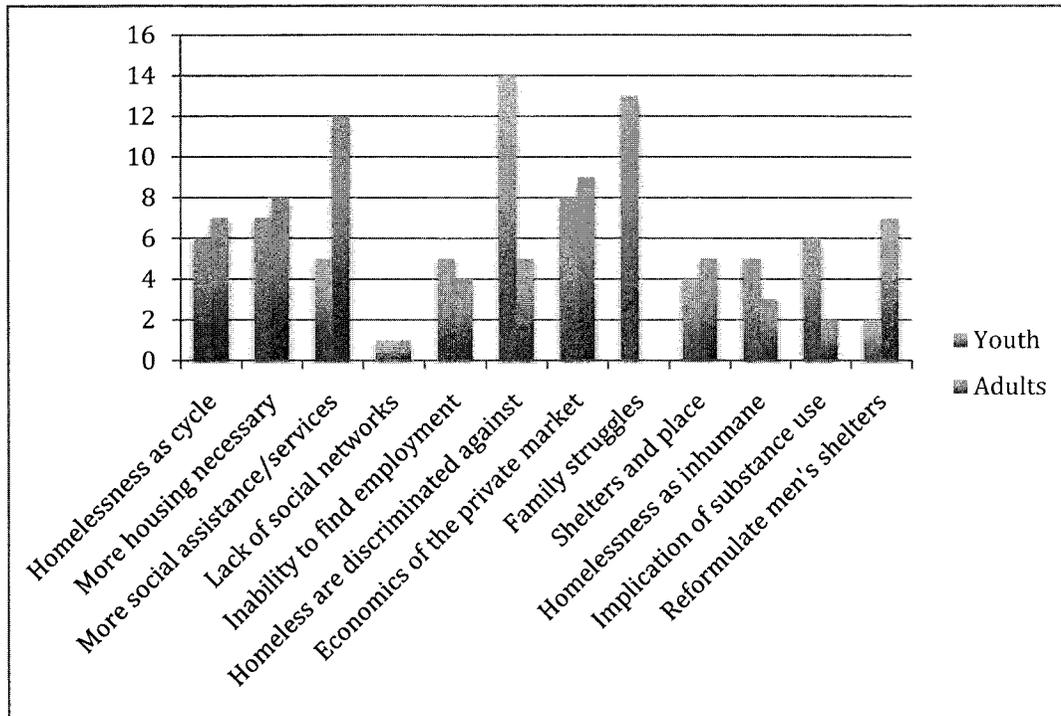
"Even staff seem to assume that everyone is a drunk" (AM 2).

Similar sentiments regarding the treatment of homeless people by authority figures were echoed by a number of the youth:

"People who run services need to stop assuming that homeless people are below them and less deserving of a chance" (YM20).

"Police pick on you if they know you're homeless" (YM44).

Table 5: What are your broad ideas about homelessness?



In sum, the results of males' broad ideas regarding homelessness point out that men and youth both feel that private market housing is largely impenetrable, that homelessness is a cyclical problem and that men's shelters in Ottawa are in need of reformulation. At the same time, each group mentions the need that homeless males possess for social supports; men through shelter care and youth through their families. Finally, the discriminated status of the homeless is an issue that resounded throughout the responses of these two groups. Here then exists support for the position that males' struggles out of homelessness in Ottawa are impeded through contingencies that work at and through multiple levels. Locally, scarce affordable housing is available. However, this scarcity is the result of a quarter century of social housing retrenchment, itself which has operated through federal, provincial

and municipal levels. While this scarcity affects multiple homeless subpopulations, a factor such as discrimination, which regards social place, affects males in distinct ways. The section that follows discusses the ways in which these results come together in Ottawa with reference to interviews conducted with homeless service providers.

Key Categories and Interviews With Service Providers

This section discusses the results of selected Panel Study data and draws upon information gathered from semi-structured interviews with homeless service providers. The results of the Panel Study questions are noteworthy in that the responses and perspectives on homelessness articulated by youth and men do indeed differ in some prominent ways. At the same time, however, both of these groups share similar ideas about the experience of homelessness.

In the area of desired housing a first similarity exists in that each group expressed that overall, they aspire to achieve apartment housing. Both the youth and men claimed that this is prevented by a lack of money or employment and a scarcity of affordable or subsidized housing. This both affects and is affected by single males' place in the social hierarchy. Indeed, according to Karen Nielsen, coordinator of housing response at Salvation Army Booth Centre, Ottawa, for this group of Ottawa's homeless, 'when they're in shelters they are holding out for subsidized units, and that won't work. They do get homeless priority, but a woman [with children] would bump a man off every single time' (Nielsen, personal

communication). This view was affirmed by Perry Rowe, Executive Director of Salvation Army Booth Centre, when saying that single men 'have waited so long on the [subsidized] housing waiting list – you have families, you have singles with children, I mean the men are down there somewhere on the bottom rung of the waiting list. They've waited so long that they've just given up' (Rowe, personal communication). For those that do escape shelters, this absence of below market rental housing means that

'Most of the men go into rooming houses. Women don't tend to go into rooming houses as much because it's so unsafe for them – they're not necessarily safe for men either – but you know, in terms of deciding where they live, women will often refuse housing because they deem it unsafe, whereas it's unusual to see men who refuse housing because it's unsafe, though it usually is. Men are kind of expected to sort of suck it up and walk with it, whereas there is a recognition that women need to, you know, live in places that are safe to live. Their safety is considered to be a higher priority than for men' (Wendy Muckle, Executive Director, Ottawa Inner City Health, personal communication).

Here commonly held ideas about men as strong and being able to fend for themselves result in this group ending up in housing that lacks the services and support marginalized individuals often require. Indeed, according to Ben Mead, Housing Worker at the Ottawa Mission, once men leave the shelter setting in favor of a rooming house, it is often the case that they are unable to sustain themselves

due to the lack of support they are availed (Mead, personal communication). In turn,

‘A lot of times, for the men, they prefer to be in a shelter than in a rooming house. A lot of the cycling back – some of it is because of addictions, but a lot of it is because they’re just too lonely, so they end up coming back. In a rooming house, sure, they have a door that shuts sometimes, but they’re all alone, they have no money and they don’t know where their next meal is coming from. It’s just such a struggle. At least if they’re in a shelter – sure they have no privacy – but at least they’re relatively safe, there are people around to talk to, they know where their next meal is coming from and they know if they get into trouble somebody will help them. It’s not often unreasonable choices that people make’ (Muckle, personal communication).

The idea that rooming houses are not a perfect match for men leaving shelter settings results from issues regarding social networks and safety. Concerning the issue of trust related to moving men along a housing continuum, Perry Rowe details the perspective of shelter clients:

‘If men can feel safe and serviced in a shelter, why should they move on? And then what complicates this more is that what we have to offer them outside of here is typically very marginal – a rooming house. With unregulated rooming houses in a city like this, it just builds towards clients’ mistrust. In a lot of situations they get out there and they realize it’s not a safe place. Landlords take advantage of them and it just feeds into their mistrust. They

have the thinking that “I’m better off in a safe shelter than I am back out there” (Rowe, personal communication).

In sum then, single homeless males in Ottawa are precluded from accessing the type of housing they desire. This would appear to result from two intersecting factors. The first factor is a discernible absence of affordable housing. Secondly, discourses place men as largely self-sufficient and capable contributors to society. These influence the adequacy of housing opportunities that males have. Indeed, the absence of appropriate below market housing means that life in a shelter might appear more appealing than struggling to overcome the dangers rooming houses present. At the same time, the inability to move along the housing continuum out of a shelter has the corollary that men fail to escape the marginalization that accompanies shelter life, two features of which include a lack of long-term control over one’s life and thinking in terms of survival on a week-to-week, or even day-to-day basis.

The desire for control is a second area in which the men and youth exemplified similarities. Drawing on the above discussion, control over one’s life is in large part affected by one’s housing opportunities. Insofar as life control relates to personal empowerment, and housing relates to life control, the responses of men and youth relate back to theoretical considerations of place. As Cresswell and Hoskins (2008) acknowledge, as a material site, suffused with meaning and accommodating practical activity, place is at once a product of and a tool in relations of power. Indeed, regarding home as place, the men make very obvious links between how housing and employment are the most important factors that they feel

will allow them to become empowered and obtain personal control. In the case of youth, a connection in the data between employment, housing and empowerment or control was established by considering the questions concerning desired change and housing in tandem. What is notable here is that a proportion of the men and youth express a desire for increased control over their lives, which they posit might be attained through employment and in turn housing. One key informant described how, for the men that successfully escape shelter life, 'It's all about the motivation, and how much stuff they have to deal with. The ones that get out the quickest are the ones that work at finding housing for hours a day. But it depends on how much they have to work out before they leave the shelter' (Mead, personal communication). An inability or unwillingness to deal with past trauma is one factor that plays into men's success in stabilizing their lives (Nielsen, personal communication), however, for males that describe a desire to move on from shelters, the most important factor can be securing employment. For the youth this was made amply clear by the extent to which they connected housing and empowerment with employment and the pursuit of education. That this group feels their situation will be improved by finding jobs and money – in other words achieving greater economic stability - affirms, to a certain extent, the pervasiveness of 'male breadwinner' discourses. More so than the men, the youth seem to 'take on' the responsibility for what will be required to escape homelessness. This was made amply clear by one of the youth who, when asked what would help him achieve his desired housing, he responded with 'the knowledge that I have to work forever to achieve the small things I want' (YM4). Discourses, then, regarding males as

productive and largely self-sufficient act on males in two distinct ways. That both the youth and the men describe a pathway from employment to housing then to control or empowerment further corresponds to private housing geographies in Ottawa. In the absence of public housing opportunities, these individuals acknowledge that in order to achieve the control that they desire, their pathways out of homelessness require focused activity on a daily basis – whether in the form of paid labour or education.

Existing as an encouraging sign, most of the perspectives described above are similarly present in Ottawa's *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* (Dinning and Davis 2008). Indeed, the Plan lists a need for increased supply of affordable and appropriate housing as Key Result Area #1. The other three key results are:

- Prevent individuals from becoming homeless and assist people while they are homeless;
- Achieve legislative and policy changes to end homelessness; and,
- Ensure a coordinated, comprehensive and accountable community response to homelessness (*ibid.*: 18).

The Plan also includes as an appendix Key Result Area achievements that had occurred as of September 2008. Some of these achievements can be seen to target a number of the specific issues that came out of the Panel Study responses of youth and men. For example, the Rooming House Support Project is a federally funded pilot program that supports rooming house residents while aiming to stabilize and reintegrate this group into the community. Concerning rooming houses still, the City of Ottawa set a target to acquire and renovate 180 rooming house units, and

enacted bylaws ensuring the stability of appropriate rooming house stock within the city. Meanwhile, the City of Ottawa's Employment and Financial Assistance Home Support Services help people maintain their independence, avoid isolation and promote community participation. Additionally, in the local iteration of the 6-city Hostels to Homes project, The Ottawa Mission is leading a pilot to help 45 men move from shelters to supported housing, with the gradual aim to have them living independently without income support from social assistance (*ibid*: 34-8). While there does seem to be a heavy focus in these achievements on rooming houses, it can nonetheless be understood that insofar as Key Areas in this document overlap with those of men and youth in the Panel Study, the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* is targeting issues that homeless populations in Ottawa describe as needing attention.

Conclusions

Analysis of select Panel Study data suggests a number of key findings. The overwhelming desire for apartments, coupled with a lack of affordable housing of this sort can lead men to poorly suited living situations, in turn creating the conditions for a cycle of homelessness. At the same time, both of these groups expressed overwhelming feelings of discrimination directed towards the homeless from a number of sources of authority in particular and the public in general. Thirdly, the desire for control was another issue that was present in each of the groups' responses. However, the key difference was that youth were more likely to acknowledge that personal effort and responsibility would be necessary to

overcome the difficulties they faced at present. Finally, each group described a desire for increased support. Whereas the men called for the need for increased government or shelter support, the youth spoke about how a lack of family support played into their struggles with housing.

Considering these results in tandem leads to a somewhat troubling housing 'place' for homeless single males. For the adults, as the frequent next step out of shelter living, rooming houses often exist as a disconcerting, alienating and dangerous housing option. Notwithstanding the marginal living situations they present on the one hand, for men, shelters provide on the other hand a peer group with which to identify and socialize, daily meals and routines, and at least the most minimal forms of stability. Two other factors play into this troubling position. First, feeling discriminated against can make it hard to feel motivated to take the necessary daily steps that might allow one to escape living in a shelter. Secondly, males who have experienced trauma or who indicate struggles with family as contributing to their homelessness might similarly find that their development of necessary life skills – life skills that will allow them to function independently in a home and in a job – is delayed as a result of having experienced trauma (Muckle, personal communication). While the recommendations and achievements present in the Community Action Plan on Homelessness do appear to begin to make strides towards targeting a number of the factors single males spoke of, and while the most recent Report Card on Homelessness issued by the Alliance To End Homelessness (ATEH 2010) exists as the latest in a string of powerful public awareness tools that advocate to decision makers for policy and funding changes, broad ranging socially

developed and enforced ideas about 'maleness' and the stigmas attached to not living up to such norms exist as somewhat separate issues. Nonetheless, these are issues that play into the homeless experiences of single men. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider how the impact of gendered social values upon the homeless might be altered, however I do believe that bringing this issue to light through the present work satisfies its intended aims.

Acknowledging the continued need for focused research on the varying experiences of homeless subgroups, the final chapter presents answers to the specific research questions posed in the first chapter, and describes the specificity of the present work.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 1 described three central questions around which this research is organized. First: Do contemporary discourses negatively influence homeless single men's ability to escape homelessness? Second: Do homeless men and youth in the Panel Study position themselves as subjects of their own self-conduct and self-control, and as being able to effect change in their lives? And third: Do adult and youth males' perspectives on and experiences of homelessness differ? The answers to these questions are discussed in this Chapter, drawing on the analysis and results presented in the previous discussion.

As has been a central claim through this work, the results and insights drawn from this research follow from the place-based factors experienced by homeless males in Ottawa. As such they cannot be extended to apply to the experiences of homeless individuals in other cities. Instead, the information contained in this thesis highlights the usefulness of attending to a very narrow piece of the extremely broad and rich sets of data contained in the results of The Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa. This final chapter seeks to highlight the distinguishing features of this research as well as describe areas of further research towards which this work points. The chapter concludes by highlighting results of the research that were not anticipated.

Discussion of Key Results

The analysis of questions from the Panel Study, in conjunction with interviews with service providers shed light on the specific homeless experiences of single males in Ottawa. Two key points include: First, when attempting to reestablish themselves in housing, men are much more likely to be able to access space in a rooming house than in subsidized housing. This is problematic due to the often-unsafe nature of rooming house environments. Second, normative ideas about men specifically as productive and self-sufficient breadwinners add a second layer of difficulty to their struggle with housing. Karen Nielsen, Housing Response Coordinator at the Salvation Army Booth Centre Ottawa, described how landlords are often unwilling to rent to single men due to stigmatization associated with homelessness (Nielsen, personal communication). Additionally, Ben Mead, housing worker at the Ottawa

Mission pointed out how being on Ontario Works further works to create a stigma for homeless singles in the eyes of landlords (Mead, personal communication). To respond to the first research question then, it appears that discursive formations regarding the normal activity of able-bodied males do negatively influence the ability of this group to access housing in Ottawa. Placing males at the bottom of the list for priority subsidized housing results in this group being forced to occupy rooms in rooming houses, which, while some are better than others, are far from ideal places to transition after staying in a homeless shelter. This is compounded by the effect that stereotypes have upon the homeless – often resulting in private market landlords being unwilling to rent to those who cite a shelter address as their current residence.

However, at the same time that ‘productivity’ discourses were observed to negatively affect males’ attempts to transition out of shelters, both the youth and the men used language that seemed to reflect their internalization of the sorts of ideals that are constituted through categorizations of men as capable and self-maximizing. As a result, I have to add as a corollary to the above conclusion that, insofar as males acknowledge the personal responsibility they possess in their daily struggles to establish stability through education, employment and creativity, these sorts of discourses might also influence males in positive ways. Given the realization by these individuals that there is a scarcity of support for homeless males, discourses that organize ideas about how men should act might compel youth and men to become increasingly responsible for their own futures. As it is then, formal ways of thinking about and representing ‘maleness’ have a dynamic impact on homeless

male bodies in Ottawa. Externally, these discourses negatively influence males seeking housing. Internally, however, they might actually provide the drive that many males need in order to seek, on a daily basis, employment, education or housing – all of which, in the face of discrimination, can in turn lead to feelings of empowerment and self worth.

This dual impact that productivity discourses have upon males holds with ideas regarding the dispersed and decentralized nature of ‘power’ as well as the role of the contemporary autonomized citizen. That these discourses are constituted around ideals regarding economic responsibility, and the perceived irresponsibility of marginalized males, points towards the extent to which social risks, for example poverty, today exist as risks to be mitigated not by the state, but rather by individuals themselves (Lemke 2001). The males that I have classified as describing the ‘positive’ effect of productivity discourses further demonstrate this individualization of risk and responsibility. By acknowledging that they themselves are in charge of securing employment and finding housing, this group exhibits the knowledge that empowerment and change in their lives are features that they themselves – not only the state or community groups – have the power to effect.

A third key result is that both groups of homeless singles describe a desire for increased control in their lives. While this was a rather transparent and tangible feature of the adults’ responses to the question regarding what sorts of life changes individuals desire, the desire for increased control was not as easily discernible in the youth responses. Whereas the men described very specific aspects of their lives over which they desired increased control, for example control over medication and

daily decisions, the youth were more likely to simply mention a broad desire for control. It is possible that this difference is due to the youths' lack of experience making the sorts of daily decisions that are required of adults. Yes, for this group homelessness is an experience that limits the amount of change one is able to effect over oneself, however the fact that so many youth described family struggles as contributing to their homelessness indicates that a significant proportion of this group might not have yet developed the basic skills they will need to be able to take care of themselves as adults. Indeed, it is often the case that young men develop these skills later in life than do women. Further, the ability to develop these skills can be interrupted by the presence of trauma in youths' lives (Muckle, personal communication). While it is difficult to conclude decisively, it is possible to speculate that the family struggles that so many youth indicated as contributing to their homelessness could well have arrested their development of necessary life skills, in turn limiting their ability to effect change over themselves. In response, then, to the second research question, I have to indicate that both the youth and the men describe a lack of ability to effect change over themselves. However, as drawn out above, the Panel Study responses indicate variances between the amounts of control each group feels they possess. Some of the youth, in describing their desire for employment and education seem to take on a tone that indicates a form of 'responsibilization' through their acknowledgement that these factors will be achieved largely through actions of their own undertaking, rather than from actions of outside individuals or agencies. A tone of this sort was largely absent in the case of the adults.

The above discussions further relate to the third question posed in Chapter 1, which questioned how, as represented in the Panel Study, adult and youth experiences and perspectives on homelessness differ. The contention presented immediately above points out one of the most salient differences in perspective to come out of this research – specifically the indication by youth that control and empowerment are features that they can strive for through seeking employment or education, and in turn housing. An additional difference in perspective exists in the places that each group claim is lacking in support. The adults claim that there should be more services provided by shelters, the community and government agencies – for example, training courses and employment agencies. Conversely, the youth describe how their desire for support is directed towards family members or friends. This could relate to the desire by youth to continue to develop life skills, and the thinking that adults close to them that are trustworthy are best suited to provide for this development.

That nearly all of the perspectives described above are similarly present in Ottawa's *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* (Dinning and Davis 2008) suggests movement is being made toward targeting the specific struggles homeless youth and men face. However, as one front line worker interviewed in the Plan described, 'We need political will. We need to educate the politicians on the matter and get them involved. In the mid-90s both the federal and mostly the provincial government stopped funding the construction of social housing. It's time for them to be serious to eradicate problem' (*ibid.*: 26). Indeed, the place-based framework used to organize this research has attempted to draw attention to the ways in which

homeless males' social and geographical place affects their ability to escape homelessness. Political will to construct affordable housing might go about changing housing geographies in Ottawa. However, the question of how to impact gendered social values and the discourses that constitute such values is a question this research is not well suited to answer. This gap reflects a limitation of the present work.

Specificity of research

The findings discussed here and the previous chapter refer to the distinct experiences of homeless single males in Ottawa. The results reflect the particular ways in which housing scarcity intersects with gendered understandings regarding the 'normal' economic productivity and self-sufficiency of male bodies. Indeed, the gendered values which support the idea that men are expected to, as one respondent put it, 'suck it up' and deal with unsafe options, have had the result that, in Ottawa, this group is barely even left with housing of the absolute last resort. Indeed this was garnered through linking physical housing scarcities with socially constituted ideas about 'maleness' and the amount of personal control over themselves that this group indicates. However, the Panel Study data could have been approached from a number of different perspectives. My approach considered the influence of a number of factors on the ability of males to escape homelessness - including social ideas and values, constituted through discourses, the availability of public housing, the penetrability of private housing and the amount of personal control this group indicates. This was intended to present a middle perspective,

which considered the place-based reasons that play into single males' difficulties in escaping homelessness.

Considering that the selected methodology led to certain findings further reinforces the specificity of the research. Deciding to narrow my focus to particular adult and youth male responses contained in the Panel Study automatically excluded an in-depth understanding of why certain women remained unable to access stable housing. Further, by narrowing in on the questions that I did – questions concerning desired housing, life changes and broad opinions on homelessness – matters of health and the effect of homelessness on health functioning were largely passed over.

An additional concern and issue with which I had to struggle was the fact that I was drawing upon second hand data that was collected by other researchers. While these sets of data are immensely rich, and the results of the present research reflect the quality of insights presented by homeless respondents, the fact that I did not design the questions, but rather had to design my research questions based around select Panel Study results provided some difficulty. This was really a difficulty of having too much information to work through – a difficulty of abundance more so than anything else. While it is not possible to say how the results would differ had I been able to design specific questions that could have been posed for the Panel Study, given the opportunity to ask of these males what I could, I would have interrogated more specifically a number of aspects revolving around shelter life that they felt to be helpful and problematic. I would have asked males who had experienced multiple episodes of homelessness whether their

motivation to escape shelter life had changed over these multiple episodes. I would have questioned whether employment difficulties exist for those that are staying in shelters. Finally, I would have liked to ask about the present state of rooming houses – what sorts of experiences this group had transitioning from being homeless to being housed in rooming houses.

Areas for Further Research

The above questions point to the value of considering the effects that staying in shelters has upon the ability of single males to escape homelessness. Additionally, one area that my results point to, yet which seems somewhat difficult to begin to consider, is the question of how it might be possible to get beyond dominant and dominating ideas about how males and females ‘should’ act. Indeed, that there exist commonly held stereotypes about homeless individuals, and that feelings of being discriminated against were widely held by Panel Study respondents, points to the marginalized and constituted outside status of individuals who, for a number of social, personal, geographical and structural reasons, find themselves struggling daily to meet their basic elementary needs. Further research would do well to consider how ideas regarding visibly homeless males as an anti-community intersect with discourses that position homeless women with children and homeless families as vulnerable, pure, or victimized and thus as housing priorities, and influence the ideas and actions of landlords, policymakers and housing providers. While it is difficult to consider what propels ideas concerning gender to transform over time, I would like to further suggest that longitudinal research

surrounding men's experiences once stable housing is acquired would be a helpful way to begin to approach this. For example, a longitudinal study with men that have received support from a project like the Hostels to Homes project mentioned above would allow me to consider whether and how men's experiences and perceptions regarding empowerment and control change over a number of intervals along their gradual move towards independent living.

Conclusions

The ideas to come out of this research suggest that single homeless men in Ottawa attempting to escape homelessness and shelter life face rather precarious options. In the absence of affordable and appropriate housing males can be made to feel unmotivated. Homelessness is a politically and emotionally charged issue precisely because of ideas regarding what able-bodied working age males 'should' be doing. As it is, these socially constituted ideas seem to exist in contradictory positions in the lives of males. Externally, insofar as males face discrimination from landlords and the public in general, productivity discourses negatively influence this group. Resultant unstable and dangerous housing, and the negative effects upon health that these have, indicate that these discourses have, in turn, material effects upon males. These material effects play back into discourses that constitute visibly homeless males as being outside of the norm. At the same time, however, the language used by males in the Panel Study suggests that internally, productivity discourses propel males to expound a desire for control and empowerment in the face of their material lack. Hence the importance of attending in scrupulous detail to the Panel Study

responses of these subgroups. Prior to this research, I would not have predicted the presence of this contradiction. Instead I would have hypothesized that productivity discourses would influence homeless males in mostly negative ways. This indicates the extent to which involving oneself with the varied experiences of others often forces one to call into question one's own predetermined notions.

This work has also shown that males do indicate a desire to possess greater control over their lives. However, regarding control, as Perry Rowe, executive director of The Salvation Army Booth Center, Ottawa describes:

‘Without having spaces to put men in, without having viable shelter alternatives to offer them, without having the supports to move them into, we may move a small portion of that population, but we will tend to move them around in a circular manner, to the point where they become so disillusioned with it that they don't want to try anymore. Every time they experience that they're less likely to trust, to want to try it. Youth and women, once bitten, tend to become more adaptable. Adult men, you do that once or twice and all of a sudden they're into a rut. Just by the nature of “the man” (personal communication).

Prolonged interrogation of males' Panel Study responses reveals that it is perhaps not the 'nature' of men to accept the marginalized surroundings and living situations that shelters present. Instead, as I have pointed out, this acceptance might be a function of a certain proportion of men never fully developing the life skills they need to operate effectively in independent living situations. Repeated experiences in rooming houses, presenting as they do loneliness and isolation,

perhaps have made shelters appear as much more welcoming and comfortable than an outsider could ever conceive. Constantly renegotiating their marginalized places, the insights presented by homeless single males in Ottawa reveal that escaping homelessness successfully might include social supports, employment opportunities and opportunities to develop life skills that will allow men to reside independently. In the presence of these opportunities, perhaps the younger men interviewed will be precluded from reaching the levels of disillusionment Perry Rowe described.

References

- Amster, R. (2003) Patterns of Exclusion: Sanitizing Space, Criminalizing Homelessness. *Social Justice* 30(1): 195-222.
- Anderson, N. (1923) *The Hobo*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ATEH (2008) *Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa, Jan-Dec 2007*. Accessed online September 23, 2009: <http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/>.
- ATEH (2010) *Report Card on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa, Jan-Dec 2009*. Accessed online March 22, 2010: <http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/>.
- Aubry, T. F. Klodawsky, R. Nemiroff, S. Birnie and C. Bonetta. (2007) *Panel Study on Persons Who Are Homeless: Phase 2 Results*. Ottawa: Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services.
- Aubry, T. F. Klodawsky, E. Hay and Sarah Birnie. (2003) *Panel Study on Persons Who Are Homeless: Phase 1 Results*. Ottawa: Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services.
- Bahr, H. (1973) *Skid Row: And Introduction to Disaffiliation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bahr, H. (1970) *Disaffiliated Man: Essays and Bibliography on Skid Row, Vagrancy and Outsiders*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Begin, P., L. Casavant, N.M. Chenier and J. Dupuis. (1999) *Homelessness*. Ottawa: Parliamentary Research Branch.
- Blomley, N. (2009) Homelessness, Rights and the Delusions of Property. *Urban Geography* 30(6): 577-90.
- Blomley, N. (2008) Enclosure, Common Right and the Property of the Poor. *Social Legal Studies* 17(3): 311-31
- Blomley, N. (2005) Remember Property? *Progress in Human Geography* 29(2): 225-27.
- Blomley, N. (2004) *Unsettling the city: urban land and the politics of property*. London: Routledge.
- Bonin, J.P., L. Fournier, R. Blais, M. Perreault and N.D. White. (2010) Health and Mental Health Care Utilization by Clients of Resources for Homeless Persons in Quebec City and Montreal, Canada: A 5 Year Follow Up Study, *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research* 37(1): 95-110.
- Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, M. (2009) Public Health and Urban Politics, *Urban Geography* 30(1): 1-29.
- Burt, M. Aron, L.Y., Lee E. and Valente, J. (2001) *Helping America's Homeless: Emergency Shelter or Affordable Housing?* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
- Campbell, M.L. and F. Gregor. (2002) *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. Aurora: Garamond Press.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2010) *History of CMHC*. Accessed online August 8, 2010: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/about/hi/index.cfm>.
- Canada, Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (1985) *Report on the Royal Commission*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada.
- Canada, Statistics Canada. (2000) *Survey of Household Spending*. Ottawa.
- Canada, Statistics Canada. (2002) *2001 Census: Analysis Series, Collective Dwellings*. Ottawa.
- Canada, Statistics Canada. (2010) *Selected Collective Dwelling and Population Characteristics*. Accessed online March 3, 2010: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/index-eng.cfm>.

- City of Toronto (2009). *Shelter, Support and Housing Administration: Streets To Homes*. Accessed online, March 15, 2010: <http://www.toronto.ca/housing/about-streets-homes.htm>.
- Cosgrove, M. (2006) *Emergent Patterns of Definition in an Ottawa Neighbourhood: 'Chinatown' as a Place of Cultural Celebration and Social Support*. Honours Thesis, Carleton University.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991) Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241-99.
- Cresswell, T. (2004) *Place: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cresswell, T. and G. Hoskins. (2008) Place, Persistence and Practice: Evaluating Historical Significance at Angel Island, San Francisco, and Maxwell Street, Chicago, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98(2): 392-413.
- Dalton, T. (2009) Housing Policy Retrenchment: Australia and Canada Compared. *Urban Studies* 46(1): 63-91.
- Day, C. and C. Paul (2007) Protecting Young People from Homelessness and Escalating Drug and Alcohol Use. *Housing, Care and Support* 10(2): 15-22.
- Dean, M. (1999) *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society*. London: Sage.
- Del Casino, V. and C. Jocoy (2008) Neoliberal Subjectivities, the "New" Homelessness, and Struggles over Spaces/of in the City. *Antipode* 40(2): 192-99.
- DeVerteuil, G., J. May and J. von Mahs. (2009) Complexity not collapse: recasting the geographies of homelessness in a punitive age. *Progress in Human Geography* 33(5): 646-66.
- Dinning, L. and C. Davis (2008) *Community Action Plan on Homelessness 2009-2014*. Ottawa: The Homelessness Community Capacity Building Steering Committee.
- Echenberg, H. and H. Jensen. (2008) *Defining and Enumerating Homelessness in Canada*. Ottawa: Parliamentary Research Branch.
- Fitzpatrick, S. (2005) Explaining Homeless: A Critical Realist Perspective. *Housing Theory and Society* 22(1): 1-17.
- Fopp, R. (2009) Metaphors in Homelessness Discourse and Research. *Housing, Theory and Society* 26(40): 271-91.

- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault M. (2007) *Security, Territory, Population*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Girard, M.C. (2006) Determining the extent of the problem: the value and challenges of enumeration. *Canadian Reviews of Social Policy* 58: 104-??.
- Hanselmann, C. (2001) *Urban Aboriginal People in Western Canada: Realities and Policies*. Calgary: Canada West Foundation.
- Herbert, S. (2008) Contemporary Geographies of Exclusion I: Traversing Skid Road. *Progress in Human Geography* 32(5): 659-66.
- Hilowle, O. (2004) *Lifetime Ban: The End of the Welfare State and the Return of Laissez-Faire*. M.A. Thesis, Carleton University.
- Hulchanski, D. (2002) *Housing Policy for Tomorrow's Cities*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Hulchanski, D. (2004) "What Factors Shape Canadian Housing Policy? The Intergovernmental Role in Canada's Housing System" in Young, Robert and Christian Leuprecht (eds.) *Canada: The State of the Federation. Municipal-Federal-Provincial Relations in Canada*. Institute of Intergovernmental Relations. Montreal and Kingston.
- Hulchanski, D. (2009) *Homelessness In Canada: Past, Present, Future*. Accessed online May 13, 2010: http://www.cprn.org/documents/51110_EN.pdf
- Jessop, B. (2003) *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Malden: Polity.
- Jessop, B., N. Brenner and M. Jones. (2008) Theorizing Sociospatial Relations. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26: 389-401.
- Josephson, J. (2005) The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Welfare in the Lives of Poor Women. In Natalie J. Sokoloff and C. Pratt (eds.) *Domestic Violence at the Margins*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Kiel, R. (2002) Common Sense Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada. *Antipode* 34(3): 578-601.
- Keil, R. and R. Mahon. (2009) *Leviathan Undone? Towards A Political Economy of Scale*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

- Klodawsky, F., S. Farrell and T. Aubry. (2002) Images of Homelessness: Implications for local politics. *Canadian Geographer* 46(2): 124-41.
- Klodawsky, F. T. Aubry, R. Nemiroff, C. Bonetta and A. Willis. (2007) What Happens Over Time: Researching Homelessness Longitudinally. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 16(1): 93-111.
- Klodawsky, F. T. Aubry and J. Greenberg. (2009) *From Homeless To Home*. Accessed online May 3, 2010: <http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/>
- Krueckeberg, Donald A. (1999) The Grapes of Rent: A History of Renting in a Country of Owners. *Housing Policy Debate* Vol. 10, No. 1: 9-30.
- Laird, G. (2007) *Shelter: Homelessness In A Growth Economy*. Accessed online August 8, 2010: <http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/files/pdf/SHELTER.pdf>.
- Layton, J. (2000) *Homelessness: The Making and Unmaking of a Crisis*. Toronto: Penguin/McGill Institute.
- Lee, Barrett A. (1978) Residential Mobility on Skid Row: Disaffiliation, Powerlessness and Decision Making, *Demography* 15(3): 285-300.
- Legg, S. (2005) Foucault's Population Geographies: Classifications, Biopolitics and Government Spaces. *Population, Space and Place* 11: 137-56.
- Lemke, T. (2001) The Birth of Biopolitics: Michel Foucault's Lectures at the College de France on Neoliberal Governmentality. *Economy and Society* 30(2): 190-207.
- Levinas, E. and R. Kearney. (1986) 'Dialogue With Emmanuel Levinas'. In Cohen, R., (ed.), *Face to face with Levinas*. Albany: State University of NewYork Press, 13-33.
- Liu, W.M., R. Stinson, J. Hernandez, S. Shepard and S. Haag. (2009) A Qualitative Examination of Masculinity, Homelessness, and Social Class Among Men in a Transitional Shelter. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 10(2): 131-48.
- Main, T. (1996) Analyzing Evidence for the Structural Theory of Homelessness. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 18(4): 449-457.
- Martijn, C. and L. Sharpe. (2005). Pathways To Youth Homelessness. *Social Science and Medicine* 62(1): 1-12.
- McCarthy, B. and J. Hagan. (1992) Surviving on the street: The experiences of homeless youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 7(4): 412-30.

- Meltraux, S. and D. Culhave. (1999) Family Dynamics, Housing, and Recurring Homelessness Among Women in New York City Shelters. *Journal of Family Issues* 20(3): 371-96.
- Merrifield, A. (2000) The Dialectics of distopia: Disorder and zero tolerance in the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24: 473-489.
- Miller, B. (2007) 'Modes of Governance, Modes of Resistance: Contesting Neoliberalism in Calgary', in *Contesting Neoliberalism*. Leitner, H., J. Peck and E. Sheppard (eds.), New York: Guilford, pp. 223-249.
- Miller, B. (2009) 'Is Scale a Chaotic Concept?' in *Leviathan Undone? Towards A Political Economy of Scale*, (eds.) Keil, R. and R. Mahon, pgs. 51-66. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Miller, P. and N. Rose. (2008) *Governing the Present*. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.
- Miron, John R. (1988) *Housing in Postwar Canada*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Naples, N. (2003) *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourses Analysis and Activist Research*. New York: Routledge.
- National Council on Welfare (2007) *Poverty Profile*. Accessed online October 13, 2009: <http://www.ncwcnbes.net/en/research/poverty-pauvrete.html>.
- Novac, S. J. Darden, D. Hulchanski and A.M. Seguin. (2002) *Housing Discrimination in Canada*. Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- O'Grady, B. and S. Gaetz. (2004) Homelessness, Gender and Subsistence: The Case of Toronto Street Youth. *Journal of Youth Studies* 7(4): 397-416.
- Ontario, Government of Ontario (2007) *Speech From the Throne: Moving Forward the Ontario Way*. Accessed online September 22, 2009: maytree.com/ppti/2007/ThroneSpeech2007.pdt
- Ontario Tenants' Rights. (2003) *Average rents for Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Ottawa & Toronto*. Accessed online February 23, 2010: <http://www.ontariotenants.ca/research/rents-vacancy.phtml>
- Parker, S. and R. Fopp. (2004) 'I'm The Slice of Pie That's Ostracized...' Foucault's Technologies, and Personal Agency, in the Voice of Women who are Homeless, Adelaide, South Australia. *Housing, Theory and Society* 21: 145-54.
- Passaro, J. (1996) *The Unequal Homeless: Men on the Streets, Women in their Place*. New York: Routledge.

- Peck, J. (2001) *Workfare States*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Peck, J. and Theodore, N. (1999) Welfare To Work: National Problems, Local Solutions? *Critical Social Policy* 19(4): 485-510.
- Peressini, T., L. McDonald, and D. Hulchanski. (1996) *Estimating Homelessness: Towards a Methodology for Counting the Homeless in Canada*. Ottawa: CMHC.
- Peters, E.J. and V. Robillard. (2009) "Everything You Want is There: The Place of the Reserve in First Nations' Homeless Mobility. *Urban Geography* 30(6): 652-80.
- Phelan, J. B. Link, R. Moore and A. Stueve. (1997) *The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label "Homeless" on Attitudes Towards Poor Persons*. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60(4): 323-37.
- Pleace, N. (1996) Single Homeless as Social Exclusion: The Unique and The Extreme. *Social Policy and Administration* 32(1): 46-59.
- Popke, J. (2003) Poststructuralist Ethics: Subjectivity, Responsibility and the Space of Community. *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(3): 298-316
- Popke, J. (2006) Geography and Ethics: Everyday Mediations Through Care and Consumption. *Progress In Human Geography* 30(4): 504-12.
- Popke, J. (2008) Geography and ethics: non-representational encounters, collective responsibility and economic difference, *Progress in Human Geography* 33(1): 81-90.
- Quebec, Ministere de la Sante et des Services Sociaux. (1992) *La Politique de la Santé et du bien-être*. Quebec City.
- Read, J. (2009) A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity. *Foucault Studies* 7: 25-36.
- Rice, J. and M. Prince. (2000) *The Changing Politics of Canadian Social Policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Robson, P. and M. Poustie. (1996) *Homelessness and the law in Britain*. London: Butterworths.
- Rose, G. (1997) Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities, and Other Tactics. *Progress In Human Geography* 21(3): 305-20.
- Rose, N. and P. Miller. (1992) Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government. *British Journal of Sociology* 43(2): 173-205.

- Rose-Redwood, R.S. (2006) Governmentality, Geography and the Geo-Coded World. *Progress in Human Geography* 30(4): 469-86.
- Rossi, PH. (1989) *Without Shelter: Homelessness in the 1980s*. New York: Priority Press Publications.
- Rutherford, S. (2007) Green Governmentality: Insights and Opportunities in the Study of Nature's Role. *Progress in Human Geography* 31(3): 291-307.
- Sarantakos, S. (2005) *Social Research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Shapcott, M. (2001) *Made in Ontario Housing Crisis*. Ontario: Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives.
- Shinn, M., J. Baumohl, and K. Hopper. (2001) The Prevention of Homelessness revisited. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 1: 95-127.
- Slater, T. (2004) Gentrification in Canada's Cities: From social mix to social tectonics. In R. Atkinson and G. Bridge, (eds.) *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*. New York: Routledge, 39-56.
- Social Housing Registry of Ottawa. (2010) *The Registry – Priorities*. Accessed online August 15, 2009:
http://housingregistry.ca/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=31
- Stiltanen, J. and A. Doucet. (2008) *Gender Relations in Canada: Intersectionality and Beyond*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, D. (2009) Normativity and Normalization. *Foucault Studies* 7: 45-63.
- Toronto (2009). *Shelter, Support and Housing Administration: Streets To Homes*. Accessed online, March 25, 2010: <http://www.toronto.ca/housing/about-streets-homes.htm>.
- Tyler, K.A. and L.A. Milander. (2009) Discrepancies in Reporting of Physical and Sexual Abuse Among Homeless Young Adults, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 18(5): 513-31.
- Waldron, J. (1991) Homelessness and the issue of freedom, *UCLA Law Review* 39: 295-324.
- Watchman, P. and P. Robson. (1989) *Homelessness and the Law in Britain*. Glasgow: Planning Exchange.

Watts, R. (1986) 'The Macdonald Commission Report and Canadian Federalism'. *The Journal of Federalism* 16: 175-99.

Wright, S. (1993) 'Blaming the victim, blaming society, or blaming the discipline', *The Sociological Quarterly* 34(1): 1-16.

Wright, U. and T. Rocco. (2007) *Institutional Ethnography: A Tool for Interrogating the Institutional and Political Conditions of Individual Experience*. Accessed online November 7, 2009: <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/cnf2007/Proceedings-2007/AERC%20CASAE%20Wright%20Rocco-2007.pdf>.

Viexliard, A. (1957) *Le Clochard*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

APPENDIX A: Qualitative Questions From the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa used for this research

1. What sort of housing would be the best/most desirable place for you to live?
2. What would help you achieve the best/most desirable place for you to live?
3. What prevents you from getting regular housing?
4. Is there anything you would like to change about the amount of control you have over your life right now?
5. *At the beginning and the end of each interview, respondents were given an opportunity to share their broad ideas about homelessness. The questions were:*
 - a. Before beginning to ask you questions we thought that you should have the opportunity to first tell your ideas about the problem of homelessness and what might help people who are homeless.
 - b. At the beginning of the questionnaire, we gave you the opportunity to tell your ideas about the problem of homelessness and what might help people who are homeless. Now that we are finished is there anything else you would like to mention?