Notes

1 Introduction

1 Willison considers Housing First to be the evidence-based response to homelessness.

2 The federal government was an important partner for provinces in the postwar era, and when the federal government left the field of housing, eight out of ten provinces followed suit.

3 There is overlap between these groups, of course; third-sector groups include Indigenous-led organizations, and Indigenous-led groups are also involved in networks to administer federal funding, for example. The same can be said for third-sector groups that are not Indigenous-led; they are considered to be third-sector actors but also are involved in networks to administer federal funding.

4 Not all actors are necessarily involved in homelessness governance in each case. The municipality is minimally involved in Calgary, the province is minimally involved in Ontario, and Indigenous actors are minimally involved in Montreal. But in each case, I looked at the actions of these actors or of groups representing them.

5 In this book, I generally use people first language (person who is or who has experienced homelessness), but in some cases I use identity first language especially when that is the language used by people interviewed. There are debates regarding these terms, and it is increasingly common to talk of people who are unhoused and underhoused. For a thoughtful discussion on people versus identity first language, see Withers 2021 and Prince 2009.

6 Thank you to Nadège Compaoré, Martha Balaguera and Phil Henderson for conversations about this and for contributions to this section.

7 Indigenous actors in Montreal can apply for funding to the designated community, or interface directly with the federal government for Indigenous Community NHI/HPS funding.
2 Homelessness

1 Colonialism does not just affect Indigenous individuals (Maynard 2017; Owusu-Bempah 2021). Colonialism is considered specifically, in this book, with respect to Indigenous homelessness as defined by Jesse Thistle, but future work should more centrally consider how colonialism contributes to the experience of homelessness among non-Indigenous individuals as well. Thank you also to Riley Yesno for conversations about this.

2 La fédération européenne des associations nationales travaillant avec les sans-abri.

3 Salubre.

4 Tellingly, he did not want his name on the definition, because it involved the contribution and knowledge of so many others (Winter 2017).

5 “Homelessness is the situation of an individual who does not have a permanent address or residence; the living situation of an individual or family who does not have stable, permanent, appropriate housing or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is often the result of what are known as systematic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural, or physical challenges and/or racism and discrimination” (ESDC 2019b).

6 Turner, Albanese, and Pakeman propose a series of indicators to track progress toward absolute and functional zero, noting the importance of “interventions across levels of society rather than restricting these to the individual or the homelessness-prevention system” (26). This has since been used to track progress in efforts to fight homelessness in Canada. Officials in Medicine Hat had claimed for several years to have ended homelessness; the CAEH used this measure of ending homelessness to certify independently that Medicine Hat achieved functional zero (As It Happens 2015; CAEH 2021).

7 Gaetz is a long-time supporter of Housing First, using the COH platform to conduct and share extensive research on the practice, particularly as it relates to youth (Gaetz 2014).

8 This is consistent with Erin Dej’s recent book, A Complex Exile (2020), in which she highlights the importance of inclusion and integration, as well as housing, in the fight against homelessness.

9 These studies are limited to people using emergency shelters of course, and do not include people sleeping outside, an important limitation that should be considered when unpacking what these results say about the overall homeless population.
85 per cent of shelter users were homeless temporarily, 14 per cent were home-
less episodically, and 2 per cent were experiencing chronic homelessness.
Meaning three hot meals and a bed.
This history is reviewed more fully in chapters 3 and 4.
Histories of the involvement of BC, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec are re-
viewed more thoroughly in chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 respectively.
BC and Quebec were the only two provinces to continue funding housing.
Canadian Confederation was in 1867.
To the extent that information about gender exists, it has historically been
binary and has only considered male and female. More recent attempts to
measure and track homelessness include non-binary gender identities as well.
The highest occupancy rate was 94.6 per cent in 2009, a likely result of
the financial crisis that resulted in an increase in homelessness across the
country (Falvo 2020).
Because homelessness is so hard on a person’s physical and mental health,
many studies and government reports consider people over the age of fifty
to be seniors when it comes to homelessness.

3 Governance Matters

The production of social protection can be understood as a policy, program,
or service response to a social risk. For example, social assistance would be
social protection against the risk of income insecurity (if it is entirely inade-
quate at protecting against poverty); provinces administer social assistance
and are thus responsible for the production of this type of protection.
The constitution was amended in 1941, 1951, and 1964 to give the federal
government responsibility for unemployment insurance, pensions, and
survivor and disability benefits respectively (see Banting 1990).
A term often attributed to Patrick Johnston (see Menzies 2010), the Sixties
Scoop refers to the decade (1960) when Indigenous children were removed
by child welfare from their homes and placed in non-Indigenous homes.
BC and Quebec were the only two provinces that did not cut funding for
social housing.
Third-sector actors in this work are considered to be analogous to what
Rachel Laforest calls “voluntary associations” and identifies as “a rich
array of organizations, institutions, and associations including charities,
cooperatives, interest groups, community organizations, health and social
services providers, social clubs, self-help and mutual aid groups, religious
groups and research-oriented organizations” (Laforest 2011b, 14).
For the years 2006–10, I used 2006 population data; from 2011–15, I used
2011 population data, and so on.
Police are a dominant presence in the lives of people who are unhoused, experience homelessness, and live in poverty. This is particularly the case for Black and Indigenous people (Cole 2020; Maynard 2017; Owusu-Bempah et al. 2014; Owusu-Bempah 2017, 2021; Walia et al. 2020). Over the course of this research, I interviewed a number of police officers across the country, usually those involved in units or areas of patrol that put them in regular contact with people who are unhoused. In many locales, police are involved in the development of responses to homelessness, including on task forces and boards of directors, and liaise with elected officials through formal and informal channels. They are also clearly involved in implementing responses to homelessness. In the pages that follow, however, I do not consider them as distinct actors. The framework I have adopted is informed by critical political economy approaches to the study of the welfare state – its architecture and governance as well as how it produces social protection (Esping-Andersen 1990; Jenson 2013). States, markets, families, and community groups are all primary producers of social protection. To the extent that police were interviewed during my research, it was in the context of developing and implementing policy responses in relation to these primary producers of social protection. (For more on the role of policing in responses to homelessness and the consequences of criminalizing homelessness, see Bellot 2010; Bellot and Sylvestre 2017; Berti 2010; Boyd, Fast, and Small 2016; Cheng et al. 2013; Chesnay, Bellot, and Sylvestre 2013; Dej 2020; Goldman-Hasbun et al. 2019; Kouyoumdjian et al. 2019; O'Grady, Gaetz, and Buccieri 2013; and Sylvestre 2019.)

When citing these interviews, I do so anonymously. To do as much as I can to protect the anonymity of research participants, I use they/them pronouns when referring to specific interviews.

4 Federal Government

This process is reviewed more thoroughly in the Montreal chapter.

There are disagreements among service providers, advocates, scholars, and people experiencing homelessness regarding this particular methodology – most notably, that it recruits vulnerable people to participate and then gives only half of them the treatment. Another way of testing the effectiveness of a particular policy intervention is a pilot project designed without a control group. Ontario started one such project to study a guaranteed minimum income, but it was cancelled by the Ford government.

Funding decreased to $119 million per year (from $134.8 million), though government officials insisted this wasn’t a substantial cut: “This is the result of administrative savings absorbed by ESDC. Communities will continue to receive the same amount of funding for programs to prevent and reduce homelessness as they did previously” (ESDC 2013).
Seven “allied” networks also work with the CAEH. They include a newly formed Advisory Council of People with Lived Experience, the Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness, and the National Alliance to End Rural and Remote Homelessness, as well as networks dedicated to the right to housing and the right to health. Together, these networks work with community groups and policy-makers in the fight against homelessness.

Plans to end homelessness were introduced in Alberta prior to the CAEH’s national efforts; indeed, these Alberta plans influenced the CAEH as it developed A Plan Not a Dream.

Specifically, it included calls for the government to build 300,000 permanently affordable and supportive housing units, to increase investments in homelessness programs specifically, and to create a national guaranteed income that is not exclusive or penalizing (should people choose to work, for example), as well as calls for a separate Indigenous homelessness strategy.

According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, people are considered in core housing need if they are spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent.

I was at the 2014 conference and attended the protest.

**Vancouver**

In 1975, 65 per cent of units were for families earning less than $13,000 per year (or $57,500 in 2017) and 35 per cent were for families earning between $13,000 and $20,000 per year (or between $57,500 and $88,500 in 2017).

The BC Liberals are in general to the right on the political spectrum and are not affiliated with the more centrist federal Liberal Party.

The Liberals would later claim credit for these new units (see BC Housing 2014a), but they only reluctantly agreed to build them in the first place in 2002.

In 2002–3, 1,386 units of social housing were created through the Provincial Housing Program: 305 for seniors requiring supports, 368 for the homeless or at risk, and 713 for low-income seniors and families.

The government committed to creating 3,500 supportive living spaces for seniors by 2006. Of these, 1,500 were new builds, 1,000 were existing social housing units converted into supportive spaces, and 1,000 involved rent supplements for private-market housing. So it is important to note that during this period, the province dipped into the existing stock to convert some existing units into supportive housing for seniors, effectively subtracting from the affordable housing stock available to low-income British Columbians.

The task force never produced a final report, but it widely said to have led to the creation of BC’s 2006 housing policy, *Housing Matters* (BC Ministry of Health 2017).

The MOU agreements continued until at least 2020 and resulted in the creation of thousands of units of supportive and transitional housing across
the province for people experiencing chronic homelessness who also require social and health supports.

8 The province has also sold social housing stock, in some cases to generate funds to build housing, as was the case with the Little Mountain development (see Chudnovsky and Shuto 2016; see also Pablo 2009).

9 Important gains were made with respect to emergency shelter and housing for people exiting homelessness (rising from 3,556 units in 2006 to 11,600 in 2014, including an increase from 2,296 people housed to 8,085 housed), transitional supportive and assisted-living housing (going from 7,078 units in 2006 to 18,839 in 2014), and rent supplements (going from 14,020 in 2006 to 28,163 in 2014). Furthermore, the number of independent units of social housing rose from 34,773 in 2006 to 41,183 in 2014 (BC Housing 2006a, 2014a).

10 Clark’s close relationship with developers is well-documented, including a donation of $400,000 from developer Peter Wall and his nephew (Hoekstra 2017).

11 Modular housing can be built rapidly and comparatively inexpensively.

12 Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users.

13 The original agreement was for 2000–5; it was extended to 2010, the year Vancouver hosted the Olympics.

14 Huge challenges remain. Since the COVID-19 shutdowns began, overdose deaths have reached devastating levels never before seen in BC. This has led many to demand government involvement in ensuring a safe supply (Baker 2021). In 2020, the BC Coroners Service reported that 1,716 people in BC alone had died of an overdose (Nagy and Jones 2021).

15 Federal/provincial housing agreements negotiated in 2001, reviewed above.

16 Officials in the City of Vancouver recognize that they are on unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selíílwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations (Meiszner 2014).

17 Much of this process was guided by Vancouver Coastal Health’s Mental Health and Addictions Supportive Housing Framework in 2007. The framework identified the need for an additional 2,200 units of supportive housing, including 450 new units in as many as fifteen new buildings. The same framework assessed city-owned land to identify areas where housing could be developed. Some of the sites identified required that existing social housing be demolished; thus, new units were created but old units were lost. That said, the quality of the new housing was higher than it had been.

18 I was a volunteer at First United in 2009.

19 Other municipalities in BC have had the same power since 1988 (BC Ministry of Forests and Range Housing Department 2005).

20 This differs from density bonusing, which is an exchange of increased density for these amenities; inclusionary zoning does not require the city to give anything in return.
Developers contribute substantially to the right-of-centre Non-Partisan Association (NPA), with donations in the past reaching nearly $1 million (there are no donation limits in local elections in Vancouver; see Howell 2014). While community groups do not have this kind of cash flow, their allies in the main unions in Vancouver have been strong financial supporters of Vision Vancouver (Howell 2014); the BC division of CUPE, for example, gave Vision a donation of $152,000 in 2014 (Y. Cole 2014). (Vision Vancouver received donations from developers as well, and this became increasingly problematic for the party, which had promised and failed to end street homelessness. However, the donations were nowhere near on the same scale as for the NPA; see Howell 2014; Y. Cole 2014.) The province has since passed campaign finance reforms, so these large donations are no longer possible. Current Mayor Kennedy Stewart disclosed his donation records, which indicated that he raised more than $100,000 from just over 1,000 individual donations to his campaign, the largest of which was from himself ($2,400) (Stewart 2018).

Most notably, the alliance that grew between Mayor Phil Owen, a Conservative, and the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users and other progressive local forces, resulting in the opening of Vancouver’s safe injection site.

The city adopted this same approach with its 2005 Homelessness Action Plan, indicating coordination between different sectors and levels of governance.

A plan for homelessness in London, Ontario, proposes an Indigenized Housing First model (Atlohsa Family Healing Services 2020; see also Distasio et al. 2019).

6 Calgary

1 The development of Calgary’s plan is reviewed thoroughly below.

2 These numbers can be contested as being at the very upper end of the spectrum (Goering et al. 2014).

3 Though province-wide counts did not exist prior to 2016, this shows an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness from 2016, when 5,367 people were identified as experiencing homelessness (Three-Hive Consulting 2017).

4 Mangano had already been invited to Red Deer. Calgary actors say they “captured him along the way and got him to give a talk in Calgary” (personal interview 2014).

5 Following a change in leadership at the Drop-In Centre, ideational disagreements between these two groups have largely disappeared. The Drop-In Centre is now an ally of the CHF.

6 Reflecting on the origins of the 2008 plan, an impact report published in 2018 notes the importance of ideas and also acknowledges how
disagreements at the beginning made implementation a challenge: “A critical mass of leaders, commitment, and passion was galvanized in 2008 at the start of Calgary’s 10 Year Plan, but across the years people moved away, fatigue emerged, and commitment faltered at times. Further, it would be disingenuous to assert that everyone bought into the details of Calgary’s 10 Year Plan when it launched. There were early adopters, mid and late adopters, and at various times, outright resisters” (Turner, Bal-lance, and Sinclair 2018, 80).

By way of comparison, Vancouver’s population grew from 514,008 in 1996 to 631,486 in 2016, Toronto’s population grew from 2,385,421 in 1996 to 2,731,571 in 2016, and Montreal’s population grew from 1,775,778 in 1996 to 1,942,014 in 2016.

7 Toronto

1 There was also an important question of accountability. The 2009 Auditor General’s Report notes that the province was unable to account for more than $300 million of transferred funding from the federal government for housing (Auditor General of Ontario 2009).

2 These were the consolidated homelessness prevention program; the emergency energy fund; emergency hostels; domiciliary hostels; and the rent bank (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2010).

3 The city is the Community Entity and is therefore responsible for distributing funding.

4 Lastman originally asked Barbara Hall to chair the committee. Hall was a former City of Toronto mayor and had run against Lastman for mayor of Metropolitan Toronto in 1997. In a letter to Lastman in late 1997, Hall declined the offer: “Without significant participation from senior levels of government, the ability of municipalities to implement long-term, permanent solutions to homelessness is seriously limited. I do not wish to Chair this Task Force if it simply creates another report left to gather dust on a shelf.” She continued: “As you informed me this morning you have met with Provincial Government officials who will not commit any resources to this effort. Without this essential component I must, with regret, decline your offer” (Hall 1997).

5 As explained in the film Shelter from the Storm, the original plan proposed by the activists was to move people living in the Tent City encampment to a temporary location owned by the city, but this plan did not work out.

6 The City of Toronto also has the power to enter into density bonusing agreements, though this is not often used to increase housing affordability. As outlined in Section 37 of the Planning Act, municipalities in Ontario can allow developers to surpass normal height and density by-laws in exchange for community benefits. Richard Drdla explains that these community
benefits are comparatively small in Toronto: “The value of the community benefits provided is assessed only against the added density or height, and not against the entire development” (Drdla 2014). This significant detail limits the extent to which this power can be leveraged into affordable or supportive housing. Another important detail is that city councillors have significant input into the community benefit that is obtained; the process is not negotiated by city staff, as is the case in Vancouver (Moore 2013). Affordable housing is desperately needed, yet it is hidden, and its direct benefit to the community (and to a councillor seeking credit and re-election) is also hidden. Studies have found that only around 9 per cent of the amenities acquired through density bonusing agreements in Toronto are housing (compared to 48 per cent in Vancouver) (Clayton and Schwartz 2015).

7 Under the latest provincial legislation, however, municipalities can only enforce inclusionary zoning near transit (“Protected Major Transit Station Areas”) – in other words, city-wide inclusionary zoning in Toronto is not possible (City of Toronto 2020). By 2021, the City of Toronto was considering details regarding implementation, including a proposal to require between 3 and 10 per cent of a development’s floor area to be affordable housing, defined as 80 per cent of market rent for 99 years.

8 OCAP organizers and members declined to be interviewed for this project, noting a preference for direct action. OCAP-allied individuals were interviewed, and to the extent OCAP is considered an actor in homelessness governance, I rely on their accounts, primary documents, as well as the book *Fight to Win: Inside Poor People’s Organizing* by A.J. Withers (2021).

9 In full, the declaration and TDRC founding document reads: “We call on all levels of government to declare homelessness a national disaster requiring emergency humanitarian relief. We urge that they immediately develop and implement a National Homelessness Relief and Prevention Strategy using disaster relief funds both to provide the homeless with immediate health protection and housing and to prevent further homelessness. Canada has signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights guaranteeing everyone’s right to “an adequate standard of living … including adequate food, clothing and housing.’ Homeless people have no decent standard of living; our governments are violating these Human Rights. Despite Canada’s reputation for providing relief to people made temporarily homeless by natural disasters, our governments are unwilling to help the scores of thousands of people in Canada condemned to homelessness. Morally, economically, socially, and legally, we cannot allow homelessness to become ‘normal’ in Canadian life. Inaction betrays many thousands of us to a miserable existence and harms our society for years to come” (TDRC 1998).

10 For an interesting discussion of the need for advocates and activists to be grateful, see Withers (2021), 168–70.
8 Montreal

1 The distinction between the two is important, and will be explained below.

2 For example, Quebec was the first province in the country to pass a “law against poverty,” which strove to bring down levels of poverty in Quebec, particularly among children. In an impressive process of community engagement, non-governmental actors wrote draft legislation, adopted it in a symbolic people’s parliament, and applied pressure to elected officials to adopt the law formally. In 2002, members of all political parties in Quebec’s National Assembly formally adopted the law against poverty; in 2004, a plan to fight poverty was adopted (Noël 2002, 2005).

3 1,200 for low-income households, 500 for the elderly losing their autonomy, and 120 for people with special needs (including women fleeing violence, homeless people, and people with disabilities).

4 To the surprise of many advocates at the time, upon being elected in 2003 the right-leaning Parti libéral du Québec (PLQ) fully supported and at times even increased funding for housing. Indeed, in 2007 PLQ Premier Jean Charest committed to nearly doubling the units built through AccèsLogis, to 3,000 per year (FRAPRU 2015).

5 Philippe Couillard’s successor Liberal government maintained funding, though the number of funded units of housing dropped to 1,500 per year. This is somewhat surprising in light of criticisms by Vaillancourt and colleagues (2016) and others, who accused Couillard of being obsessed with austerity and searching for any excuse to cut social spending.

6 The health system has since been reorganized. The HPS is now administered by regional social service centres that go by their acronym CIUSSS (Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux).

7 CPHPS members include service providers, city officials, Service Canada officials, and agency officials.

8 The Comité liaison en itinérance has existed in Montreal since the 1990s. It was created to fulfill the mandate of participating in the policy-making process. It has a broader mandate than the CPHPS and exists to help the City of Montreal address the issue of homelessness in various ways – for example, by developing its own plans (notably the 2010–13 plan and Montreal’s 2015–20 regional plan). It is comprised of community members, Indigenous-led service providers, institutions that work with the homeless population (such as child protective services and hospitals) and officials from the city, the agency, and the federal government.

9 The membership of the regional committee is diverse. It includes bureaucrats from the city and the agency, as well as community members and a representative of the health and social services sector (there is no federal representative on this committee).
10 The commission also recommended the creation of social housing and improved access to it, especially for people at risk of losing their housing, as well as increased and stable funding for service providers.

11 It is led by the Minister for Social Services but also involves the Ministers for Public Security, Education, Employment, Immigration, Health and Social Services, Justice, Municipal Affairs, and Aboriginal Affairs.

12 Réseau d’aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal and the Réseau SOLIDARITÉ itinérance du Québec, respectively.

13 A second *Portrait of Homelessness* was set to be released in 2020 (but has not been released at the time of writing).

14 “D’entreprendre une nouvelle étape.”

15 More commonly referred to (in English and French) by their acronym, CIUSS, which stands for centres intégrés universitaires de santé et de services sociaux.

16 One senior official with the City of Montreal pondered why the private sector is much more involved in homelessness governance in Calgary than in Montreal: “We don’t have the same tradition of philanthropy here in Quebec. I think Quebec is less rich, we don’t have the same kind of big business-people; it’s more recent in Quebec history that we have a business class that has the means to do that kind of thing” (personal interview 2014).

17 Private-sector representatives are also often involved on the boards of individual shelters or social services, as is the case in many other cities (see Arsenault 2016).

18 I was the lead researcher for the homeless count, and researched for the MMFIM’s plan as well.

19 An important reason for the lower cost of this plan compared to other plans is that it does not contain provisions to build housing, but rather relies on rent supplements; recall that private-sector housing is more available and more affordable in Montreal than in other cities.

20 The MMFIM’s objective was to create two more plans, which would focus on transitional homelessness and prevention, though at the time of writing it has only produced one plan on chronic homelessness.

21 “Une richesse.”

22 There are exceptions, of course, notably the fact that housing is a municipal responsibility in Ontario and has been since the 1990s. But this specific example was not mentioned in these conversations.

23 Accueil Bonneau; la Maison du Père and la Mission Bon Accueil.

24 This internal coordination is significant and merits further study (and perhaps comparison with Alberta, where under the Interagency Council on Homelessness there was internal coordination within the province as well).
Conclusion

1 Paradis identifies a third approach, service provision, but notes that the service provision approach is not concerned with addressing root causes of homelessness, so it is not included here in terms of approaches to advocacy.

2 For a different perspective on engaging with government, and especially the idea that advocates should express gratitude, see Withers 2021, 168–70.

3 I will also discuss the CHF as a private-sector actor below, given its origins and the strong influence of private-sector actors.

4 Systemic racism manifests in a host of other ways that are not directly related to governance, including over-policing, underfunding of Indigenous services and education, a lack of access to health care, etc.

5 People living in encampments point out that there are safety concerns with other government-supported forms of housing as well. For example, a woman with a disability was placed on the fifteenth floor of a building. She insisted that this was a fire hazard and requested that she be moved to the ground floor, but was not (Jewell 2021).