EXAMINING STRATEGIES OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN HOMELESSNESS POLICY

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Abstract

Examining strategies of new public management in homelessness policy

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This research is a critical analysis of coordinated access as an approach to addressing homelessness focusing on Peterborough, Ontario as a case study. This study is situated in scholarship that explores the presence of strategies of New Public Management in social service and healthcare delivery. Balancing the methods of Smith's (2005) Institutional Ethnography and Bacchi's (2009) What is the Problem Represented to Be approach I investigate the way that Federal, Provincial and Municipal homelessness policies organize themselves as instruments of power and I connect this analysis to the accounts of staff working within the homelessness response system. I discover the frame of vulnerability through which homelessness is addressed to be an individualizing mechanism that facilitates the downloading of responsibility for social welfare to local governments without adequate resources. I argue that the consequence of an under resourced system is that only the most extreme forms of suffering can be addressed, and the tools used to decipher who is most vulnerable do not account for structural inequalities.

KEYWORDS:

Homelessness; homelessness policy; New Public Management; Institutional Ethnography; coordinated access; systems-approach; neoliberalization

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Preface: Addressing Homelessness in the Context of Ongoing Settler Colonization

Addressing homelessness in Peterborough/Nogojiwanong needs to be understood in the context of the political and treaty relationships that first allowed settlers to make a home here, the ongoing dispossession of land, and the resurgence of Michi Saagiig people. The territory that the City of Peterborough occupies has been the home of the Michi Saagiig Nishnabeg since time immemorial. This territory was governed by treaties negotiated with other nations long before treaties with settlers were negotiated (Gidigaa Migizi, 2018; Simpson; 2017). The treaties that allow settlers to occupy this territory as guests today are Treaty 20, signed in 1818 (Government of Ontario, 2018), and the Williams Treaty negotiated in 1923 (Williams Treaty, 1923) . It is well documented that this treaty process was not conducted in good faith on behalf of the Crown and Canadian government and resulted in the loss of traditional territory, way of life, and starvation among other injustices (Simpson, 2011; Gidigaa Migzi, 2018). Scholar Leanne Betasamoke Simspon (2011) describes the treaty process as a process in which the Michi Saagiig Nishnabeg were "tricked into surrendering our life, land, and sustenance" (p. 14). As Metis-Cree scholar Jesse Thistle writes, Indigenous homelessness is not just the result of a lack of housing, "but is best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and dispossessed First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories" (Thistle, 2017, p. 6). In our community, this displacement is a direct result of the settler occupation of Michi Saagiig territory. Christensen (2016) writes, "the story of Indigenous homelessness is therefore also a story of non-Indigenous homemaking, or settlement" (p. 200).

Positionality Statement

Through a process that I am learning about from the generous teachings and work of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011, 2017) and Gidigaa Migizi (2018) I would like to acknowledge my connection to the place that I now call home, to the peoples whose home this has been since it was created, and to the people who are less-a-home in our community. Through this process, I will consider what it means to be here, to be doing this work, and my responsibility to this place and to the people who live here.

I am participating, as a white-settler, in a practice of place-based acknowledgement that has existed for thousands of years, to invoke a personal responsibility and accountability in my relationships with this place. My intent is not to appropriate a place-based practice that is 'inextricable from Indigenous experience' (Carter et al., 2018, p. 209) but to critically engage with the questions of what it means to be here as a white settler so that I may be better prepared to engage in work with my community. The acknowledgement of relationships and an engagement in critical reflexivity is important as an intervention into the extractive hunger (Carter et al., 2018) that plagues settler research. My relationship to the place I live now is one of an uninvited guest. I have lived and worked in Nogojiwanong, traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig people, for the past eight years. To be asking questions about home, in the home of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, requires me to contend with the ongoing processes of settler colonialism that brought me here. I am a settler of Norwegian and British ancestry and the adopted daughter of an Anishinaabe man. I spent the majority of my life in Thunder Bay, Ontario on land that was gifted to the Anishnaabe people by the Great Spirit and was negotiated under The Robinson Superior Treaty in 1850. I have benefited from the knowledge, wisdom, care and connection to my Dad's territory while being complicit in the systems of settler colonialism that allowed me to be there in

the first place. The same system of settler colonialism and my other identities as a middle-class, settler, able-bodied, cis-woman allowed me the privilege of mobility and the ability to make a home for myself here in Michi Saagiig Territory.

I come to my research as someone who has not experienced homelessness. My short professional life has been spent working in shelters and more recently in an administrative role in the homelessness response system. The relationship that I've had with people experiencing homelessness has been one that is filtered through the institution of white middle class social work. This means that these relationships have been predicated on a power imbalance that allows me to look and know about others but never forced me to look and know about myself. I have benefitted immensely from the lessons in resilience, compassion, community, and care that I have learned and continue to learn from the people that I work with. This research is an attempt to gaze back at the institution I am complicit in and hold myself accountable to the relationships that I have developed.

To be here means an obligation to contend with settler colonialism; it means an obligation to take direction from Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg like Leanne Simpson and Gidigaa Migzi, and it means an ongoing commitment to listening and learning. To contend with questions about homelessness in Peterborough is to contend with the institutions that forcefully occupy Michi Saagiig territory and are a pillar in the ongoing dispossession of land that compromises the homes of Michi Saagiig people. While this research does not explicitly address this dynamic, I do address some of the ways this is felt in the homelessness response system and point to scholars who have begun the work of designing Indigenous best practices to addressing homelessness (Bomberry, Maracle Mayo, McLaurin, Montana, McCormak, Ecker & Mifsud, 2020). The end to

homelessness is inextricably tied with a decolonial ethic that includes, but is not limited to, land back (Christensen, 2013; 2016).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Homelessness is a consistent feature of capitalist society that has prompted varying degrees of state response (Bucher & Hulchanski, 1987). The global and domestic economic transformation that took place in the 1980's and 90's led to the increased visibility of homelessness (Gaetz, 2010) and its construction as a field of research and a site of state intervention (Gerrard & Farrugia, 2016). In Canada, at least 235,000 people experience homelessness every year and homelessness is increasingly impacting more youth, women and families than in the past (Gaetz, Dej, Ritcher, & Redman, 2016). Strategies to address homelessness have evolved from punitive approaches that required individuals to meet criteria of 'housing-readiness' to approaches oriented to the philosophy of Housing First which is now a central tenet to the approach to ending homelessness across Canada (Evans, Collins & Anderson, 2016; Turner, 2014). The setting of this current research, Peterborough, Ontario defines Housing First as "a philosophy that guides our service system that states that housing is a basic right for all humans. We believe the first step towards housing stability is finding and securing housing, and that access to housing is not contingent on readiness or compliance" (Peterborough Social Services, 2019, p. 8). Housing First is both a program and a philosophy, the core principals of which are immediate access to housing with no readiness requirements; choice and self-determination; recovery orientation; harm reduction; and community integration (Canadian Housing First Toolkit, 2014).

As a programmatic intervention, Housing First in Canada can be traced to programs piloted in the 1970's, however the widespread adoption of the approach can be credited to the At Home Chez Soi project (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013, p. 4). In 2008, a federal investment of $110 million dollars funded the five year research project to explore the effectiveness of Housing First

in the Canadian context. The Canadian Mental Health Commission implemented a randomized control trial of Housing First in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton that engaged 2,000 participants (Goering et al., 2014). Participants had experienced an average of five years of homelessness over their lifetime. The At Home Chez Soi study provided participants with immediate access to housing, a rent supplement, and supports to maintain their housing. At the end of the study 62% of those in the Housing First cohort remained housed while only 31% of those in the treatment as usual group remained housed (Goering et al., 2014). Participants in the Housing First program reported improved quality of life and observers reported higher community functioning than those in the treatment as usual cohort (Goering, et al., 2014). The final report on the project positions Housing First as a "sound investment" (Goering et al., 2015, p. 5) and outlines the cost savings of the intervention that are a product of participants having less interactions with crisis services and institutions like hospitals and jails. This project has been described as "one of the most important developments to solidify Housing First as a paradigm-shifting approach to homelessness in Canada" (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013, p. 4).

Turner (2014), the principal consultant of Turner Strategies, which has been involved in the development and implementation of community plans to end homelessness across Canada, asserts that Housing First is more than a programmatic intervention. As a guiding philosophy that underpins system planning, Housing First is "a method of organizing and delivering services, housing, and programs that co-ordinates diverse resources to ensure that efforts align with homelessness-reduction goals" (p. 7). A key component of a homelessness service system approach based on the Housing First philosophy is the coordinated access to housing and services. Turner (2014) states that "co-ordinated access requires common means of assessing client levels of need in order to best match them with available resources. This means that a community requires

a way of conducting standardized assessments at entry, as well as developing prioritization processes to allocate finite resources" (p. 13). The elements that Turner (2014) highlights as key to an effective homelessness system are planning and strategy development, organizational infrastructure, system mapping to identify gaps and inefficiencies, coordinated service delivery, integrated information management, performance management, and quality assurance. The widespread adoption of Housing First policy can be attributed to its economic justification as highlighted in the At Home Chez Soi project findings (Goering, et al., 2014). Turner states, "a key reason for the growing popularity of Housing First is the business case that often accompanies it. This makes Housing First a common-sense solution not just from the perspective of what a caring society ought to address but from a financial perspective as well" (p. 3).While Housing First has demonstrated effectiveness as an intervention into homelessness in Canada, it is often positioned as a silver-bullet solution and as a cost-saving program (Katz, Zerger, & Swang, 2017). This framing of Housing First has discursive implications that have the potential to obscure structural and macro-level solutions to homelessness (Katz, Zerger, & Swang, 2017).

Recently Canada has endorsed a systems-planning approach to ending homelessness, that is founded on the principles of Housing First, through *Reaching Home* (Government of Canada, 2019), the nation's homelessness strategy. Designated Communities – those that receive Federal funding through *Reaching Home* – are required to implement a coordinated access system by March 31, 2022 (Government of Canada, 2019). Coordinated access is the systematization of access to housing and homelessness resources. It involves identifying individuals experiencing homelessness, assessing "depth of need" using a common assessment tool, and prioritizing individuals for housing based on community-agreed upon criteria (Government of Canada, 2019). While Reaching Home does not provide an explicit definition for the term "depth of need", it is

used interchangeably with the word “acuity”, to suggest that the term refers to the severity of the household’s condition and indicates what services they might need to exit homelessness (Government of Canada, 2019). Coordinated access is set up to work similarly to the emergency department at a hospital. A household is identified as experiencing homelessness by presenting at a service agency or through outreach. They are assessed to determine the severity of their needs and prioritized against others experiencing homelessness for services. In the same way that a triage nurse assesses the severity of a patient’s illness and triages them for the appropriate care, the coordinated access system matches a household experiencing homelessness with the housing and supports that will meet their needs as they become available. If a household is assessed as being high acuity and needing permanent supportive housing, they will be prioritized for that type of support. If a household is assessed as being mid-acuity and needing short-term case management in order to exit homelessness, they will be prioritized for that type of support. The system is predicated on the Housing First philosophy that says people experiencing homelessness should have immediate access to the housing and supports they need to exit homelessness but coordinated access is not a guarantee that the household will get access to housing or supports as it depends on the adequate supply of those resources. Coordinated access purports to increase the efficiency of access to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness in addition to allowing for progress and outcome measurement (Government of Canada, 2019).

This research is a critical analysis of the coordinated access system approach focusing on Peterborough as a case study. Peterborough is a Designated Community under the Reaching Home national homelessness strategy and subsequently is required to adhere to the systems-planning approach outlined within the policy in order to receive funding. Locally, the system planning approach to addressing homelessness began with the implementation of Peterborough’s 10-Year

Housing and Homelessness plan in 2014, which was mandated by the Provincial Government of Ontario. Since then, the City of Peterborough (2019) has adopted coordinated access in its planning, as "an emerging methodology that helps communities to organize their response to homelessness, and improve outcomes with intentional housing and supports allocation" (p. 14).

Conceptually, this study is situated within a framework of New Public Management, as informed by the documentation of its use in health and social service institutions (Nichols 2008; Griffith & Smith, 2014; Kerr 2014; Corman & Melon 2014; Janz, Ridzi & Nichols, 2014). New Public Management describes the shift in approach to managing public resources that erodes the boundaries between private and public sectors and emphasizes outcome measurement, efficiency and accountability (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Hood, 1995). These strategies and processes can be identified in Turner's (2014) description of the Housing First philosophy as an approach to system planning in her emphasis on addressing inefficiencies, performance management, and quality assurance. New Public Management has been cited as a "major institutional specification of neoliberalism" (Griffith & Smith, 2014, p. 6) and as one of the mechanisms through which neoliberal state restructuring has occurred (Clarke & Newman, 2006). In this context, the state is increasingly operating in the interests of global capital and has downloaded the responsibility for social welfare to local governments (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Clarke & Newman, 2006; Griffith & Smith, 2014).

This research balances Dorothy Smith's (2005) Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Bacchi's (2009) approach to policy analysis which, as will be discussed, are methods that exist in tension with one another. Both methods will be used to explore the ways in which local efforts to address homelessness within Peterborough are influenced by systems-planning and coordinated access at the Federal and Provincial levels. The goals of this project are:

1. To map the network of texts and policies that produce ruling relations and direct homelessness systems planning at the Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels
2. To explicate the accounts of local system workers in Peterborough and determine the ways that frontline efforts to address homelessness are directed by coordinated access policy

This work contributes to the literature on strategies of New Public Management in social service settings and specifically to the literature that uses Institutional Ethnography to explore the process of textually-mediated decision making. In addition, through analysis of the network of policy documents that direct local initiatives to understand the way that homelessness is problematized, this research will contribute to literature on homelessness governance. This research will serve as a timely and critical case study of Peterborough, as one Designated Community under Canada's new national strategic response to addressing homelessness.

Outline of the Thesis

I begin by situating this project in a conceptual framework that includes neoliberal state restructuring, New Public Management, and homelessness governance. I then discuss my method of inquiry which is a balance of Bacchi's (2009) approach that explores the way an issue is problematized by policy formations, and Institutional Ethnography that is grounded in the way texts are activated throughout a system to reveal how rule takes place. This is followed by a section that discusses the findings of my analysis of the policies and documents that direct work to address homelessness in Peterborough. I discuss my findings from interviews with frontline and administrative staff in the section following that. I conclude with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for areas of future research.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

In this section I define the concepts that underpin this research and outline the existing literature. The conceptual framework begins with a description of the transition from the Keynesian Welfare State to the neoliberalized and dispersed state. This process has been described as neoliberal state restructuring or neoliberal scaling by Peck and Tickell (2002). Neoliberal restructuring was, in part, accomplished through strategies of New Public Management. New Public Management facilitated downloading and dispersal of responsibility and power and the subsequent implementation of business practices both as part of the naturalization of neoliberal ideology and as a tool for accountability and evaluation of public services (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Clarke & Newman, 2006; Griffith & Smith, 2014). Strategies of New Public Management have been documented by institutional ethnographers as a ruling relation and way of coordinating work across local settings particularly as a means for objective decision-making about public resources (Janz, Nichols & Ridzi, 2014; Corman & Melon, 2014; Nichols, 2008). The most recent research on coordinated access will be reviewed. This research suggests that the coordinated access texts associated with fair and objective decision-making reproduce existing racial inequities (Wilkey et al., 2019; Cronley, 2020; Bomberry Et al., 2020). The final section of this overview will provide a summary of literature that has traced the presence of neoliberal ideology in homelessness policy including the application of Foucault's (1978) concept of biopolitics in the field of homelessness research.

2.1. Neoliberalization and State Restructuring

Peck and Tickell (2002) define neoliberalism as the "commitment to the extension of markets and logics of competitiveness with a profound antipathy to all kinds of Keynesian and/or collectivist strategies" (p. 381). New Public Management is one of the mechanisms through which

the state was transformed from the Keynesian welfare state to the neoliberalized state. Griffith and Smith (2014) contextualize new forms of public management in relation to processes of globalization and neoliberalization. These processes can be understood through the reconfiguration of states and institutions. The Keynesian Welfare state was pillared by centralized social policy and state intervention in national economies. The processes of neoliberalization and globalization have reorganized state configurations through the embedding of power in international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization and downloading of responsibility to local governments. In this context, capital is highly fluid and states compete to attract investment (Griffith & Smith, 2014).

Peck and Tickell (2002) describe the transition from the Keynesian Welfare State to the neoliberal state and make a distinction between "roll back neoliberalism" and "roll out neoliberalism" (p. 384). As national Keynesian economic policies failed to address the international oil crisis, roll back neoliberalism of the 1970's and 80's deregulated and dismantled the social institutions that made up the Keynesian state. Clarke and Newman (2006) state that "the death of Keynesianism…marked a shift from a view of public spending as collective or social investment to an emphasis on public spending as unproductive cost" (p. 9). The welfare state represented a "non-marketized relationship" (Clarke & Newman, 2006, p. 9) between state and citizens based on collective rights and citizenship. The New Right's ideological erosion of the welfare state that facilitated the rise of neoliberal ideology was an erosion of the social democratic relationship between state and citizens (Clarke & Newman, 2006). Clarke and Newman (2006) argue that the Conservative affront to the welfare state required that the state itself be restructured to eliminate its orientation to social democracy.

Roll out neoliberalism began in the 1990's and is characterized by re-regulation and state building (Peck & Tickell, 2002). The authors describe the logic through which neoliberal economic policy permeated political discourse. Peck and Tickell (2002) state:

> Neoliberal processes of economic management—rooted in the manipulation of interest rates, the maintenance of noninflationary growth, and the extension of the 'rule' of free trade abroad and flexible labor markets at home—are increasingly technocratic in form and therefore superficially 'depoliticized,' acquiring the privileged status of a taken-for-granted or foundational policy orientation. (p. 389).

This statement captures the assumed inevitability of neoliberalization as a response to globalization. Through this statement Peck and Tickell (2002) also define the spaces that neoliberalism has occupied to become the dominant and hegemonic ideology. Through the process of neoliberalization, international institutions gained the regulatory power to police state's economic policy and national governments downloaded responsibility for social regulation to local governments.

Roll-out neoliberalism has included the expansion of neoliberal logic into "extra-market forms of governance" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 390). Public institutions have been saturated by the "pervasive naturalization of market logics, justifying on the grounds of efficiency and even 'fairness' their installation as the dominant metrics of policy evaluation" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 394). Here, policies are developed and public institutions are structured in the image of competitive markets. The naturalization of market logic can also be found in the creation of interurban competition for both private and public resources. Peck and Tickell (2002) state "today, cities must actively—and responsively—scan the horizon for investment and promotion opportunities, monitoring 'competitors' and emulating 'best practice,' lest they be left behind in

this intensifying competitive struggle for the kinds of resources (public and private) that neoliberalism has helped make (more) mobile" (p. 394). This dynamic is exemplified in the way in which communities must apply and compete to become "designated communities" to receive Federal homelessness funding and must adhere to best practice to be eligible.

Griffith and Smith (2014) describe the neoliberalized relationship between governments and capital as one of service. They state that "in the context of a transnationally organized economy, citizens' living standards come to depend on how successful governments are in developing in directions that attract and sustain investment and promote commercial opportunities for transnational capital enterprise" (p. 5). Part of this development has included the reconfiguration of public institutions.

2.2. Neoliberalism and New Public Management

New Public Management is a key thrust of neoliberal state restructuring in that it promotes efficient delivery of public service and allocation of scarce resources according to the market-based logic of competition. In the shift from roll-back neoliberalism to roll-out neoliberalism, Peck & Tickell (2002) state that the focus of the discourse has shifted from one preoccupied with discrediting the welfare state to one focused on the development of new forms of governance. The process of neoliberalization is "more now than merely a deregulatory political mindset or a kind of ideological software, neoliberalism is increasingly concerned with the roll-out of new forms of institutional 'hardware'" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 389). One of those forms of hardware can be understood as New Public Management. New Public Management involves the transfer of private sector management strategies to the public sector with a particular emphasis on accountability, efficiency, and performance measurement (Dunleavy & Hood 1994; Hood, 1995; Clarke & Newman 2006; Nichols, 2008; Aucoin, 2000). Aucoin (2000) attributes the shift in public

strategies as driven by a reduction in public spending as a political priority, reduced public confidence in the public sector, and the perception of public management as being the key to global competitiveness.

As Peck and Tickell (2002) identify, one of the ways neoliberalism is solidified is through the spread of the associated rhetoric and policy into areas of governance outside of economic policy such as social welfare. Peck and Tickell (2002) note that one of the ways that this is achieved is through the interjurisdictional transfer of responsibility for social welfare to urban governments as a part of neoliberal state restructuring. As a form of "institutional hardware", private sector management strategies described as New Public Management facilitate this transfer, as "government funds increasingly flow to cities on the basis of economic potential and governance capacity rather than manifest social need, and do so through allocation regimes that are competitively constituted" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 395).

Clarke and Newman (2006) describe a co-occurring shift to a mixed economy as 'dispersal'. Services are increasingly provided by private and non-profit sectors creating new power relations "exercised through regulation, contracting, monitoring, and surveillance" (Clarke & Newman, 2006, p. 26) The state is now involved in service provision as well as purchasing, contracting, and assessing and evaluating non-state providers. This process has both expanded the reach of state power into other sectors and shrunk the state itself (Clarke & Newman, 2006). Clarke and Newman (2006) state that:

> Managerialism is the ideology that makes sense of such dispersed power in a practical way. It actively seeks 'responsibility' and seeks to further disperse it as a corporate and individual good. It promises 'transparency' within a complex field of decision-making. It

> is committed to the production of 'efficiency' in the pursuit of super-ordinate objectives.(p. 30).

The process of neoliberalization has involved a shift in public management strategies that facilitated the dispersal of responsibility for social welfare while simultaneously increasing requirements for assessment and evaluation to ensure accountability. The post welfare state has naturalized the logics of efficiency and competition in social policy and is characterized by dispersed public institutions and service providers.

2.3. New Public Management as a Relation of Ruling

Neoliberalism and strategies of New Public Management have been documented extensively by institutional ethnographers in healthcare and social services (Kerr, 2014; Corman & Melon 2006; Janz, Nichols, & Ridzi, 2014; Nichols 2008). This research explicates accounts of service providers to determine the ways that their work is coordinated by the ruling relations of neoliberalism and New Public Management. Smith (2005) defines ruling relations as "that extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across time and organize our everyday lives" (p. 10). Campbell and Gregor (2002) further explain the concept of ruling as taking place "when the interests of those who rule dominate the actions of those in local settings" (p. 36). Texts and textual technologies are an essential mechanism for ruling as they coordinate activities across local settings (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Smith, 2005). In the delivery of health and social services, texts and textual technologies have imported the ruling relation of New Public Management as an accountability tool for frontline work (Griffith & Smith, 2014).

The textually mediated ruling relation of New Public Management is demonstrated in Janz, Nichols, and Ridzi's (2014) work that describes the way that texts influence work with clients. For

example, in the context of an organization providing service to individuals living with disabilities in British Columbia, Janz et al., (2014) describe the way that accreditation is necessary to remain competitive to receive government contracts. It has also become an accountability measure. Janz et al., (2014) demonstrate the way in which outcome measurement served to coordinate work rather than meeting client needs. The authors state:

> Accreditation imports an ideological discourse of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) into local settings of human service delivery. As a discursive technology, CQI provides a particular frame that shifts front-line priorities towards gathering reportable and quantifiable outcomes for the evaluation of their, and hence their agency's performance (p. 205).

Similarly, Corman and Melon (2014) examine the way that paramedics and nurses interface with the textual technologies of the Canadian Triage Assessment System (CTAS) and the Patient Care Record (PCR). CTAS was developed in the 1990's as a response to Federal and Provincial demands to justify and account for health care expenditures and manage the increasing volume of patients. The textual technologies of the CTAS and PCR "make the characteristics of patients and the actions of health care providers administratively knowable" (Corman & Melon, 2014, p. 157). These texts accomplish the institutional interests of making frontline work measurable and therefore visible and accountable. Corman and Melon (2014) relate these technologies to a larger project of healthcare reform.

There is some literature that suggests that strategies of New Public Management are at work within homelessness policy. In her book *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile Police and Punish the Poor,* Eubanks (2018) explores three systems that automate human service delivery. One of them being the coordinated access system in Los Angeles, California.

Through interviews with those directly impacted by the systems, as well as policy makers, advocates, and frontline workers, and participant observations, Eubanks traces the impact of automated and data driven systems. Eubanks (2018) challenges the assumption that more accurate and efficient data is the solution to complex challenges like homelessness in her explanation of the antagonistic interests of groups in Los Angeles. She states, "the poor and working class residents of Skid Row and South LA want affordable housing and available services. The Downtown Central Business Improvement District wants tourist friendly streets…The city wants to clear the streets of encampments" (Eubanks, 2018, p.186). She concludes that unless coordinated access is accompanied by adequate public investment, it is just another way of managing homelessness (Eubanks, 2018). Norman and Pauly (2016) reached a similar conclusion in their evaluation of the Centralized Access to Supported Housing (CASH) system in Victoria, BC. Their research found that the number of people referred to the centralized access system greatly outpaced the number of program spots available on a monthly basis stating "CASH then sits at the intersection of an affordable market housing crisis and access to supported housing" (Norman & Pauly, 2016, p. 43). The authors identify the question of how access systems should be involved in lobbying for increased investment in affordable and supported housing (Norman & Pauly, 2016). This research demonstrates the implementation of "institutional hardware" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 389) as a strategy of New Public Management that frames homelessness as an issue of efficient data collection and coordination, leaving the structural concern of the lack of affordable housing out of view.

Other literature speaks to the ambivalence of homelessness policy and argues that it does lead to the alleviation of suffering and substantive reduction of homelessness but only as it adheres to neoliberal rhetoric about cost-saving and efficient allocation of resources (Baker & Evans, 2016;

Stanhope & Dunn, 2011; Evans, Collins, & Anderson, 2016). This research explores the ambivalence of coordinated access as an intervention that seeks to improve efficient access to housing and support for individuals experiencing homelessness while relying on enumeration and assessment to "render objects of government representable, amenable to calculation and hence 'workable'" (Evans et al., 2016, p. 251). The aforementioned concept of ruling relations is employed to draw on the Institutional Ethnographies that document the way that ideological discourses and textual technologies operate in the work of frontline staff in social service and healthcare settings.

2.4. Managing Limited Resources, Knowing Objectively, and Text-Based Decision Making

New Public Management is described by Aucoin (2000) as a strategy for managing limited resources in the face of debt and austerity. Clarke and Newman (2006) attribute the lack of resources to the ideological shift that accompanied neoliberalism in which public spending was considered inefficient. In the context of limited resources, textual technologies are used to facilitate 'fair' and 'objective' decision making about health and social resource distribution. On Smith's concept of ruling that is rooted in a material and Marxist understanding of class power, Campbell and Gregor (2002) state:

> Class and class interests still exist but capitalist business practices, management and governance have changed, and so have relations of ruling. Texts, language, and expertise of all sorts are now central to the technologies of ruling practices. Technologies for knowing objectively…are the basis of contemporary practices of ruling (p. 40).

Coordinated access systems, as a means of distributing scarce housing and support resources, rely on a standardized assessment tool to support decision making. Campbell and Gregor (2002) explain that texts such as assessment tools create a framework for 'knowing

objectively' through the translation of everyday experience into predetermined criteria of defining and measuring that experience based on the goals of the institution. Texts that create objectified accounts provide the benefit of convincing those that use the texts of their objectivity and utility in making rational and fair decisions when resources are limited (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). Through textual technologies that create objective accounts, individuals' needs are made quantifiable and decisions are made accountable. Campbell and Gregor caution that in the face of 'objective' decision making, "what disappears from their view is the whole question of whose interests are being met and whose interests are being subjugated by ruling practice" (2002, p. 38).

Nichols (2008) and Corman and Melon (2014) describe the implications of textually mediated decision making in health and social service settings. Corman and Melon (2014) define triage as a text activated by nurses to accomplish the "institutional interests of creating standardized categories of patients and the relevancy of time, acuity, and risk" (p. 149). Patient needs are translated by the text to ensure efficient use of limited health care resources and management of patients (Corman & Melon, 2014). Corman and Melon (2014) conclude that the texts used in emergency health care do not always adequately capture the work of frontline staff or the needs of patients. Nurses describe an inability to get to know patients and a falling standard of care when they are operating under the institutional interest of efficiency (Corman & Melon, 2014).

Nichols (2008) similarly describes the complex bureaucracy that youth experiencing homelessness must navigate to access services. Nichols (2008) states that "the goals of the bureaucracy – to monitor staff performance and efficiency, and to standardise (and account for) the state's (and individual agencies') economic and management decisions – are often at odds with a young person's immediate social, physical and emotional needs" (p. 687). In this context, the

eligibility for service is determined by texts designed to ensure front-line and institutional accountability rather than need (Nichols, 2008). Corman and Melon (2014) caution that New Public Management and neoliberalism and the tools used to import and support these relations of ruling such as objectivity measures are not inherently bad but present an incomplete picture of how care is delivered.

In the context of Peterborough's Coordinated Access System, the tool that is being used is called the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). It has been widely accepted, in Peterborough and other municipalities, despite only having one peer reviewed study published examining its reliability and validity (Brown et al., 2018). The research that has been conducted on the VI-SPDAT is from the United States. There have been no studies on the VI-SPDAT in Canada. The way that the VI-SPDAT is implemented in homelessness systems and conducted by frontline service providers assumes that vulnerability indicators can accurately predict an individual's ability to live independently and therefore the kind of housing and level of support that they will need. Brown et al., (2018) found that the VI-SPDAT is weak in terms of reliability and validity as it did not accurately predict re-entry into homelessness and did not produce the same retest scores. Brown et al., (2018) suggest that the VI-SPDAT not be used as the exclusive means of prioritizing housing and supports until additional research is conducted.

More recent research has found evidence of racial bias in the VI-SPDAT tool (Wilkey et al., 2019; Cronley, 2020) and that coordinated access as a whole is not aligned with Indigenous values (Bomberry et al., i 2020). In Wilkey et al.'s (2019) examination of coordinated access assessment data from four US communities using the VI-SPDAT, they found that the tool results in inequitable assessment scores that favour white clients over Black, Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC). In an intersectional analysis of VI-SPDAT data from one US county, Cronley (2020) found that white

women scored highest on the VI-SPDAT, followed by white men, then Black women, then Black men. This racial stratification results in white women being prioritized for housing and support resources ahead of Black women and men. Both Cronley (2020) and Wilkey et al. (2019) suggest that the subscales in the VI-SPDAT do not capture the vulnerabilities that BIPOC are more likely to experience, thus reproducing racial inequalities that exist in other systems. Wilkey et al. (2019), using the example of the medication subscale, point to the question's assumption that respondents have access to adequate medical care. Both authors suggest that communities examine other tools for access to housing using a racial equity framework and suggest that more research be conducted to "understand how BIPOC individuals experience vulnerability in the context of homelessness and how to more validly measure vulnerability across racially and ethnically diverse populations" (Cronley, 2020, p.7). In the final stages of writing this thesis, the authors of the VI-SPDAT, OrgCode Consulting, announced that they would no longer be supporting communities to use the tool stating that "OrgCode has no plans at this time to develop a new tool related to Coordinated Entry, and relinquishes that responsibility to experts in racial and gender equity as it relates to homelessness" (De Jong, 2021, n.p.).

Bomberry et al. (2020) highlight that colonial, racist systems will continue to reproduce inequities unless radically transformed in their statement "a systems-based approach will not be effective if these institutions continue to be harmful, inequitable, and inaccessible to Indigenous peoples" (p. 115). Evidence suggests that the coordinated access system, which is used to facilitate fair and objective decision making, reproduces racial inequities and disproportionately harms Indigenous peoples, particularly when developed and implemented without the partnership of the Indigenous communities they are intended to serve (Bomberry et al. 2020). The research of Wilkey et al., (2019), Cronley, (2020), and Bomberry et al. (2020) highlights a consequence of textually-

mediated decision making when the texts are not explicitly anti-racist. This research did not take a specific racial equity or decolonization lens which will be addressed in the limitations section. As part of the mapping of the network of documents used to coordinate the work of frontline staff, this research explores why the VI-SPDAT was adopted as the assessment tool of choice and what institutional or extra-local interests are accomplished through its use.

2.5. Neoliberalism and Homelessness Policy

Homelessness has been problematized in different ways throughout history. The current approach that uses strategies of New Public Management conceptualizes homelessness as a fusion policy issue that requires a coordinated and systematic response (Turner, 2014; Gaetz, 2010). The discourse of system coordination is preceded by historical discourse that conceptualized individuals experiencing homelessness as criminals, threats to civil society, and responsible for their own conditions of marginalization (Bucher & Hulchanski, 1987). Prior to World War One there was minimal public response to poverty. Individuals experiencing homelessness were criminalized as vagrants and jails were used to warehouse those with nowhere else to go (Bucher & Hulchanski, 1987). Post WWI, the mass numbers of single men who travelled looking for work were conceptualized as a threat to civil society. The subsequent policy response was to provide relief through internment camps where single men were housed and paid nominally for their work (Bucher & Hulchanski, 1987). The response to homelessness that occurred later in the 20th Century is described by Gaetz (2010) as the erosion of the welfare state commitment to the provision of affordable housing. This lack of housing created the increased visibility of homelessness in the 1980's and problematized homelessness as a crisis that prompted the development of the emergency shelter and response system.

Evidence of neoliberal ideology in homelessness policy has been well documented by literature on homelessness governance both in historical and contemporary discourse. Some accounts suggest that homelessness policy often works in direct service of capital with the intent of removing the most visible, disruptive, and expensive forms of homelessness (Greene, 2014). Other accounts examine ideological framing of homelessness and subsequent solutions that lie in business practices. In an analysis of how Housing First was adopted and funded by the Canadian government, Macnaughton, Nelson, and Goering (2013) suggest that policy entrepreneurship is important "in translating the homelessness issue into a politically viable policy solution, which was skillfully navigated through an environment of neoliberalism to advance progressive ideas" (p. 106). Critical accounts of Housing First policy are concerned with the emphasis on economic efficiency, the translation of homelessness into cost benefit analysis, and persistence of technologies of governance over addressing structural causes. Katz, Zerger, and Hwang (2017) examine the discursive impacts of Housing First as it is framed as a silver bullet solution to homelessness. The authors outline the ways in which a focus on chronic homelessness obfuscates other types of homelessness, and ignores the policy context in which Housing First exists, specifically the lack of affordable housing. They suggest that homelessness needs to be understood and intervened in as a product of structural conditions, not as separate from them.

The concept of biopolitics has been used by homelessness scholars to explicate the way in which the homeless population is problematized and governed (Willse, 2010; Naimen, 2020). Foucalt's (1978) concept of biopolitics describes the form of rule that takes place at the level of the population through social and economic policy (1978). Willse (2010) describes biopolitics as the place "where political economy meets the population. Biopolitics describes a political

economic analysis of population dynamics, such as patterns and rates of birth, illness and death, in relation to material resources, including food, medicine and capital" (p. 157).

Willse (2010) uses biopolitics to describe the way that Culhane and Kuhn's (1998) research, that categorized people experiencing homelessness and identified those using a 'disproportionate amount of resources,' was implemented in government institutions and used to make economic arguments for addressing chronic homelessness. Willse (2010) demonstrates the way this was taken up by the Interagency Council on Homelessness, in which presentations and communications were based on economic arguments, one specifically demonstrating how to use business principles to address chronic homelessness. Quoting the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness presentation, Willse (2010) states that good 10-year plans to address homelessness include: "business principles, baselines, benchmarks, best practices, budget" (p. 171). Willse's account demonstrates the way that homelessness became measurable according to use of resources and translated into an issue to be tackled with business practices. The concept of biopolitics describes the way that homelessness is typologized and therefore rationalized as an issue to be acted on, particularly through an economic justification.

Willse (2010) also discusses the rise of Housing First policy and its relation to the problematization of chronic homelessness. Willse (2010) states that "the invention of chronic homelessness suggests that social programmes in the contemporary context are themselves economic, which is to say, productive for the circulation and investment of capital and other material resources" (p. 169). Katz et al. (2017) argue that the framing of chronic homelessness and Housing First as the subsequent solution focuses "on afflicted individuals rather than on a system that consistently produces both homelessness and housing instability" (p. 141). The typologization of homelessness and focus on chronicity, is a selective policy solution that ignores the universal

impacts of a reliance on the free market to address social needs (Stanhope & Dunn, 2011). Mass homelessness in Canada was produced by a series of neoliberal policy decisions. Beginning in the 1980's spending on affordable housing was reduced (Gaetz, 2010). By 1993, the Federal government stopped all new spending on affordable housing stock (Gaetz, 2010). This occurred at the same time as the reduction in spending on direct transfers to citizens, and the stagnation of wages. This resulted in households spending more of their income on housing and created the crisis of homelessness that exists today (Gaetz, 2010). Housing First policy has begun to shift the approach to homelessness from one based on emergency services to one based on housing and supports. However, the consistent framing of Housing First as a cure-all that is justified by its cost-saving potential can "serve to construct the scarcity of public resources as a fact, instead of the result of a series of political and economic decisions" (Katz et al., 2017, p. 143). Critical scholars argue that Housing First policies are a project of neoliberal governance and criticize their effectiveness in ending homelessness as they abstract homelessness as a phenomenon separate from the structural and economic forces that produce it (Willse, 2010, Baker & Evans, 2016; Katz, Zerger, & Hwang, 2017)

Naimen (2020) also uses Foucalt's biopolitics (1978) as a theoretical underpinning in her ethnographic study of Housing First implementation in Ottawa, Ontario. The focus of the study is on the way the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT), which is the more comprehensive assessment on which the VI-SPDAT was modelled, is used to determine eligibility and prioritize people experiencing homelessness for resources. Naimen (2020) finds that the SPDAT measures are less about needs and more about public service use. She states:

> But while the SPDAT is said to objectively favour those with 'greater needs' and manage the provision of HF supports accordingly, a closer look at the effects of this

> tool shows how it does not prioritize a person with greater 'needs' per se. Rather, the SPDAT seems to assess – but not explicitly – whether the person's 'need' constitutes an economic risk, that is, to what extent his or her issues are self-managed or involved public care resources. (Naimen, 2020 p. 310).

Naimen (2020) hypothesizes that because the majority of chronically homeless people are older men, that the SPDAT is aimed at reducing the costs associated with healthcare and other public expenditures related to this population. Naimen argues that through measurement of public resource use, as a biopolitical calculation, the SPDAT fails to account for the intersecting inequalities that contribute to experiences of homelessness. The consequences of which are an obfuscation of the structural causes of homelessness thus allowing "governments to tackle the widespread homeless problem at its fringes, where the costs and benefits of public intervention are most visible and measurable" (Naimen, 2020, p. 315).

Other authors use different terms to conceptualize the way that homelessness becomes governable through calculation of cost and allocation of resources. Evans, Collins, and Anderson (2016) use the term "bedspace" to define how homelessness has been problematized using strategies of enumeration, risk management, and cost calculation. The cost of homelessness is measured by calculating emergency-service-use, hospitalization, and shelter-use. This calculation proves that providing housing is a more cost-effective solution to homelessness than reliance on emergency shelters and housing-readiness requirements (Stanhope & Dunn, 2011). Evans et al., state that the problematization of homelessness as bedspace "is an administrative grid of intelligibility within which homeless populations are rendered visible in a way that is amenable to the government of risk understood in financial terms" (Evans et al., 2016, p. 254). This project contributes to research that traces the way that homelessness becomes an object of governance

through the examination of a coordinated access as a technology that captures and quantifies the experience of homelessness to justify the type of intervention that is made.

2.6. Conceptual Framework Conclusion

This research is informed by the concept of New Public Management which is described as a key mechanism through which neoliberal state restructuring occurred. New Public Management involves the importation of private sector management strategies with an emphasis on accountability, outcome measurement, and efficiency (Hood & Dunleavy, 1994; Hood, 1995; Clarke & Newman 2006; Nichols, 2008; Aucoin, 2000). As the responsibility for social welfare was dispersed to local governments, strategies of New Public Management have been documented in social and healthcare settings as a way of accounting for frontline work and ensuring that public resources are used effectively. Institutional Ethnographers have traced New Public Management, as a relation of ruling, that coordinates work across settings to accomplish institutional aims.

This research is also informed by the literature that examines homelessness governance. Related to the literature on New Public Management, but taking a Foucauldian approach, these authors have used the concept of biopolitics to explain the way that homelessness is problematized and the subsequent interventions are rationalized. This research describes the way that experiences of homelessness are categorized and measured based on public resource use, justifying a response that tackles homelessness through this lens. The current project examines coordinated access as a strategy of New Public Management and the ways that it facilitates the translation of homelessness into an institutionally knowable format that can be measured and accounted for in the context of a dispersed economy. The next chapter will discuss the method of inquiry this project has taken.

Chapter 3: Methodological Framework

This chapter provides a framework for the method of inquiry employed in this research. As a feminist methodology, Institutional Ethnography conceptualizes the researcher as an active participant in the way that the research problematic is defined, and the data collection and analysis is approached. This section will describe how I came to know and work with coordinated access policies. After situating myself in the research, I will provide a description of Institutional Ethnography as a method of inquiry and the concepts that will be used to meet the first research goal of mapping the ruling relations that coordinate the work of frontline homelessness workers. The concepts of ruling relations, textually mediated decision making, and institutional circuits will be described and applied to meet the former research goal and the second goal of explicating the accounts of frontline workers. To meet these goals, I undertake a textual analysis of relevant documents using the approach outlined by Bacchi (2009) as well as interviews with frontline workers. The data collection and analysis section will address the tension between Institutional Ethnography as a methodological framework and Bacchi's (2009) method of analysis. The final section lists the texts that will be analyzed using Bacchi's (2009) approach as well as the process for recruiting and conducting interviews.

3.1. Situating Myself in the Research

I came to know and interact with coordinated access policy and the related texts through my work with two organizations in Peterborough and have continued to work with them through my employment in the homelessness response system in a neighbouring municipality. During my employment as Project Manager for A Way Home Peterborough, an organization working to end youth homelessness through system integration, I participated in meetings during the early stages of development of Peterborough's Coordinated Access Process Guide. In addition to this

involvement in the homelessness system, I worked as a frontline staff member at the YES Shelter for Youth and Families for four and a half years. As a part of this work, I used the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) on a daily basis with youth. The VI-SPDAT is the triage tool that Peterborough has adopted to support decision making about housing and support resources as part of the coordinated access system. I have also worked extensively with the Homeless Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS), the database that is used to manage information about individuals experiencing homelessness. This required working with the associated intake and consent texts. Since starting this thesis I have been hired as the Homelessness System Coordinator for a neighbouring municipality. In this role, I administer the coordinated access system and am directly involved in the distribution of housing and support resources for the municipality. I have witnessed and participated in the ways that these texts influence the work of people in the homelessness sector and the lives of people experiencing homelessness.

3.2. Peterborough as the Site of Research

Peterborough is a small city in Eastern Ontario with a population of 84,230 people. The City is geographically located two hours north east of Toronto on the Otonabee River. It is home to Trent University and Fleming College. Peterborough is a Built for Zero community. Built for Zero is a national, campaign style movement that supports communities to implement coordinated access systems with the aim of ending chronic and veteran homelessness. The campaign is part of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and receives funding from the Federal and Ontario governments as well as private sponsors such as CIBC, and RBC Royal Bank (Built for Zero, 2021). Built for Zero provides technical support and coaching to implement data-driven action cycles and “helps communities adopt proven practices, deploying existing resources more

efficiently" (Built for Zero, 2021, np) to improve performance. In the first year that coordinated access was implemented in Peterborough, between 2019 and 2020, an average of 350 people experienced homelessness each month (Forrest, 2020). As of December 2020, there were 241 households experiencing homelessness in Peterborough (City of Peterborough, 2021). Of those, 111 were chronically homeless (City of Peterborough, 2021). In 2019, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment was $942 which represents a 25.8% increase from 2009. The increases in rent are consistently outpacing stagnating incomes and in 2020, a household needed to earn $37,680 to rent a one bedroom affordably (United Way, 2020). The vacancy rate is 2.1% and there are 1,339 applicants on the Rent-Geared-to-Income Waitlist (United Way, 2020).

3.3. Research Goal 1: Mapping the Ruling Relations

The first goal of this project, identified in the Introduction, is to map the network of texts and policies that produce ruling relations and direct homelessness systems planning at the Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels. This work will be methodologically informed by Institutional Ethnography, which was developed by feminist scholar Dorothy Smith (2005) and seeks to understand the ways in which the everyday activities of people are coordinated across social settings. Institutional Ethnography conceptualizes texts and textual technologies as the mechanism through which extra-local interests are imported to local settings and the way that the contemporary Western world is socially organized. More specifically, Smith (2005) defines the aims of Institutional Ethnography as being twofold:

1. "Produce for people what might be called 'maps' of the ruling relations and specifically the institutional complexes in which they participate in whatever fashion" (p. 51)
2. "Build knowledge and methods of discovering the institutions, and more generally, the ruling relations of contemporary Western Society" (p. 51)

Campbell and Gregor (2002) cite Smith as the author of the term "textually mediated social organization" (p. 29) that defines the way that texts operate to coordinate actions. Communication based on texts is embedded in social relations and facilitates social organization. Texts provide a means for coordinating the actions of individuals across settings and are activated as instruments of power through human interaction with them. This coordinated exercise of power is what Smith defines as "ruling" and it occurs when "the interests of those who rule dominate the actions of those in local settings" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 36). Campbell and Gregor state that "to conduct Institutional Ethnography, we must discover the relations of ruling that texts help to organize and describe the connections across sites that are actually operating" (p. 33).

In their work on New Public Management, Griffith and Smith (2014) outline the concept of 'boss texts' and institutional circuits as the structure through which texts and actions are coordinated. Griffith and Smith state:

> Here is a circuit: categories and concepts in the boss text organize selective attention to actualities; the representation of front line work produced becomes thereby readable and interpretable within the frame established in the boss text. People's work, whether they are staff or clients, somehow translates the everyday actualities of their doings (either as staff or clients) into texts that become stand ins for whatever has actually been happening. Such representations have been designed to fit the authorized frames embedded in boss texts. The latter may be identifiable as policies, plans, discourses, laws, and so on (p. 14).

The concepts of textually mediated social organization, ruling relations, and institutional circuits collectively inform the first set of research questions in this study.

1. What are the texts and textual technologies that are currently used to coordinate access to homelessness systems at the Federal, Provincial (Ontario), and Municipal (Peterborough) levels?
2. In what ways do these texts and technologies organize themselves in relation to one another, and as instruments of power that coordinate the actions of those within the system?

Textual Analysis

Literature on Institutional Ethnography does not provide a clear way to perform data analysis. As such, I chose to use a method with more explicit instructions that has been used with success as a part of another Institutional Ethnography (Dalmer, 2019). Bacchi's (2009) What is the Problem Represented To Be (WPR) is an approach that begins from the assumption that through policy "governments are active in the creation (or production) of policy problems" (Bacchi, 2009). In this sense governments are not only made up of traditional state institutions but also informed by individuals and organizations that are privileged as 'experts' (Bacchi, 2009). Both WPR and Institutional Ethnography analyze the way that specific understandings become the official or expert way of knowing about a problem (Bacchi, 2009; Rankin, 2017a). Bacchi (2009) argues that problem representations produced through policy are key to understanding how rule takes place. This method begins from a policy's proposed solution to a problem to determine the way that the issue is problematized. WPR "uses texts as 'levers' to open up reflections on the forms of governing, and associated effects, instituted through a particular way of constituting a 'problem'" (Baachi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 18). Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) explain that the way that problems are produced as objects of governance is a political process that is made visible through WPR analysis. Baachi (2009) and Smith (2005) share the understanding of the world as coordinated through relations of power that exist beyond and outside of individual actions and

interactions. Smith (2005) uses the term ruling relations to describe this "extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across time and organize our everyday lives" (p. 10). Bacchi emphasizes that the WPR approach does not suggest that states are involved in "intentional manipulation" (Bacchi, 2009 p. 30) rather that "these forms of rule develop in order to maintain order within populations" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 30).

Bacchi's (2009) approach is underpinned by four schools of thought: social construction theory, post structuralism, feminist body theory, and governmentality studies. Social construction theory understands the world as constructed by social forces (Baachi, 2009). This understanding informs the examination of the construction of a policy problem as the result of social and historical context and not as a discrete object. Bacchi's (2009) approach challenges the naturalization of the concepts and categories on which policy problems rest. Post Structuralism, as a tradition that "emphasizes the fluidity and contestation in social thought and relations, and the politics involved in assigning meaning" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 277) is applied in the WPR method to trace the political processes that shape a particular understanding of a problem. Feminist Body Theory grounds the WPR approach in the materiality of everyday experience through the examination of the lived effects of a problem representation (Baachi, 2009). The concept of governmentality as a form of rule through social and economic policy informs WPR's examination of the rationales that are necessary to specific kinds of ruling (Bacchi, 2009).

Institutional ethnographers warn that traditional qualitative methods such as coding lead to an excessively theorized account of the data that is not grounded in the experience of informants (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). Institutional ethnographers also suggest that post-structural methods such as Bacchi's (2009) approach to policy analysis create an account wherein concepts become autonomous actors and do not account for the ways that actual people interact with concepts that

are grounded in the material of texts and actions (Smith, 2005). However, Dalmer (2019) demonstrates the utility of Bacchi and Goodwin's approach as part of an Institutional Ethnography that examined family caregiver's information work as governed by texts. Dalmer (2019) analyzes "Aging in Place" policies using Bacchi's approach to organize the analytical process of "teasing out the shape and character of the concepts and categories in the AIP policies" (p. 42).

Similarly, to meet the research goal of mapping the ruling relations I employ Bacchi's (2009) WPR as a method of extracting the ruling relations from relevant policy texts. The texts that have been identified for analysis are part of the complex of policies and documents that coordinate the way that housing and support resources are distributed locally. The texts are authored by governments as well as advocacy, research, and consulting organizations that provide direction and best practice for municipalities across Canada. This list of texts includes *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy; A Place to Call Home: Canada's National Housing Strategy;* the *Ontario Housing Services Act 2011*; Peterborough's *10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2024;* Peterborough's *Coordinated Access Process Guide;* the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness' *Coordinated Access System Scorecard Guide*, OrgCode's *Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool,* and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' *Screening for Housing First* document. A complete list of policy citations can be found in Appendix 1, and further information about these documents is provided in the next chapter that details findings of the document analysis. These documents and the organizations that produce them, each provide prescription or direction for the ways in which housing and support resources are distributed.

In this study I used the six questions outlined by Bacchi (2009) to identify the ruling relations that coordinate the work of frontline workers. For each of the policies and document

identified above, I created an individual word document with the questions as headings. I then proceeded to conduct a close-read of the document and provide answers to each. It is noted that the answers given to these questions were my interpretations and, as such, interviews were subsequently conducted to provide external validation. The questions posed of each document are as follows:

Question 1: What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy or policies? For example, gender inequality, drug use/abuse, economic development, global warming, childhood obesity, irregular migration, etc.

Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)?

Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about?

Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?

Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?

Question 6: How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?

Using the answers to the questions as a guide I have produced a visual map of the way that the texts interact with each other to determine the 'boss texts' and the institutional circuits that are produced through the network of texts. This method of analysis provides insight into the ruling relations that are operating through the network of homelessness policy documents by exploring the way that homelessness is problematized. WPR has been used to analyze neoliberal ideology and frameworks in Australian homelessness policies in the work of Stonehouse, Threlkeld and Farmer (2015) and proves useful in determining the governing framework that underpins homelessness policies in the Canadian context.

3.4. Research Goal 2: Explicate Accounts of Local System Workers

Institutional Ethnography extends from a Marxist tradition that grounds analysis in the material activities of actual people and examines the way that work is coordinated across settings (Smith, 2005). The ontology of IE understands the world as socially constituted and socially organized. Within the social exists social relations that are actively constituted by people. Campbell and Gregor (2002) define social relations as "extended courses of action that take place across social settings" (p. 31). Social relations begin before actual action occurs and extend beyond individual actions. Smith conceptualizes social relations as the practices that constitute social organization.

Institutional Ethnography is grounded in the assumption that the world is socially organized and that relations of ruling operate through texts to coordinate the actions of individuals across settings (Smith, 2005). The concept of social organization informs the third research question:

3. How do the frontline workers, whose actions are organized through coordinated access texts and textual technologies, describe the experience of working within a system of social organization that is (re)produced through the identified ruling relations?

Frontline Worker Interviews

To avoid the criticism of post-structural methods of analysis outlined by Smith, the concepts and ruling relations discovered during the WPR analysis of relevant policies were vetted through interviews with six workers whose work is influenced by coordinated access policies in Peterborough. The interviews provide a means to discover the ways in which the actions of individuals in local settings are coordinated by the identified policy texts, therefore grounding the textual analysis in the actualities of everyday work. This explication of social organization through

frontline worker accounts meets the second research goal of explaining the ways that frontline work is coordinated textually and (re)produced by relations of ruling. The interviews were semi-structured and informed by the results of the textual analysis. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 2. The aim was to explore the ways that workers engage with the relevant texts, how the texts influence their everyday activities, and whether the concepts identified through WPR analysis can be corroborated or expanded upon. The interviews were analyzed to identify commonalities with the textual analysis and ways that the two sets of data diverge. Interview recruitment and analysis strategies are discussed in the interview section of the thesis.

3.5. Methodological Framework Conclusion

In this chapter I pose my research questions and describe the methods of inquiry I have taken to answer them. This study is underpinned by methodological concepts of Institutional Ethnography such as textually mediated social organization, ruling relations, and institutional circuits as well as the concept of problematization that is outlined by Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach. These concepts provide a way into analyzing the network of texts and documents associated with coordinated access in Peterborough to map the way they relate to one another and coordinate workers within the system. The results of the textual analysis will be described in the next chapter. The chapter following the textual analysis further explicates what was discovered in the texts through interviews with workers within the homelessness system.

Chapter 4: Policy Analysis

In this chapter I apply Bacchi's (2009) What is the Problem Represented to Be (WPR) approach to examine the policies that direct work to address homelessness in Peterborough. I will start by providing a brief summary of each policy or text that was examined. I reviewed Federal, Provincial, and Municipal policies. I also analyzed several documents produced by advocacy organizations and consulting firms that provide guidance and technical expertise for the sector including the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, and OrgCode Consulting. Then I will provide an explanation of the steps I took to apply Bacchi's method to the listed policies. I address two components of coordinated access: assessment and prioritization, as well as the outcomes prescribed by Federal policy as stated solutions to homelessness. I focused on assessment and prioritization as the components of the system that determine the way decisions are made about housing and support resources are allocated. What I found is that the network of texts and documents creates an institutional circuit in which homelessness is problematized as an issue of vulnerability, effective resource management, and local accountability. I conclude that the governing framework that underpins homelessness policies is one of New Public Management where the importation of private sector management strategies supports an approach focussed on efficient public resource use and interventions into the most resource intensive forms of homelessness.

4.1. Texts Examined

Canada's National Housing Strategy (2017)

Canada's National Housing Strategy sets out the goal of reducing chronic homelessness by 50% over 10 years and taking 530,000 households out of 'housing need' (Government of Canada, 2017). The strategy details investment in programs such as the Canada Housing Benefit, a rent

supplement designed to provide an average of $2,500 to households in housing need; the National Housing Co-Investment fund to repair existing affordable housing and develop new units; and the renewal of relationships with provinces and territories to protect existing stock. The National Housing Strategy was accompanied by legislation passed in 2019 that requires the Federal government to maintain a national housing strategy that "prioritizes the housing needs of the most vulnerable" (Government of Canada, 2017, p. 9) and supports the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. A report from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the budgetary commitment made in the National Housing Strategy "largely maintains current funding levels for current activities and slightly reduced funding for households in core housing need" (Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2019, p. 1). According to this report, it was unclear whether the investments would reduce the number of households in core housing need (Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2019). This text is considered a "boss text" (Griffith & Smith, 2014) as it establishes a primary focus on vulnerable populations (Government of Canada, 2017) which becomes the frame through which homelessness is understood by other texts. While it establishes some components of a rights-based approach, the strategy does not provide a clear path towards the realization of the right to housing.

Reaching Home: Canada's National Homelessness Strategy (2018)

The National Homelessness Strategy supports the goals of the National Housing Strategy, "in particular to support the most vulnerable Canadians" and to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by 2027-2028. The strategy highlights the main changes from the previous FFederal homelessness strategy, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, as being the implementation of an outcomes-based approach, the introduction of coordinated access, and addressing homelessness

that impacts Indigenous peoples, those living in the Territories, and those in rural and remote areas. The strategy mandates that funded communities implement a coordinated access system by March 2022 (Government of Canada, 2018).

Peterborough Homelessness Coordinated Access System Process Guide (City of Peterborough, 2019)

This document provides a framework for allocating housing and support resources in Peterborough. The way that people experiencing homelessness get access to specialized resources through assessment, prioritization, and matching is explained. The City of Peterborough's goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025 is documented in the Process Guide.

Peterborough Reaching Home: Community Plan (United Way Peterborough and District, 2019)

This was the template required by the national Reaching Home directives to develop a comprehensive community plan that outlines the contributions of funding partners including how Federal investments will be matched by other sources of funding. Total funding allocated for each activity category 2019 – 2024:

1. Support services $401,662
2. Coordination of Resources and Data Collection $352,618
3. Housing Services $349,761
4. Prevention and shelter diversion $289,762
5. Capital Investments $0

Housing Services Act (Government of Ontario, 2011)

The Housing Services Act legislates the provision of housing and homelessness programs for municipal service managers and housing providers. The Act legislates local housing corporations and Rent-Geared-To-Income housing among other aspects of housing and

homelessness service delivery. Of relevance to this project, it requires that each municipal service manager have a plan to address housing and homelessness including objectives, targets, and a measurement plan. The Act does not require that service managers set targets to reduce homelessness or the number of households in core housing need (those spending more than 30% of their income on shelter).

Peterborough 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2014 – 2024)

Municipal service managers are required by the Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the *Housing Services Act* to produce a plan to address housing and homelessness. Peterborough's 10 Year Plan aims to eliminate "long-term" homelessness (City of Peterborough, 2014, p. 2). Commitments related to ending long-term homelessness include eviction prevention, discharge planning, coordinated addiction and mental health case planning, and collaborative priority setting to align services and eliminate duplication. The plan adopts Housing First as a program model for people experiencing long term homelessness. The material commitments for creating housing affordability include the expansion of the rent supplement program by 100 households per year, creation of 500 new affordable rental homes, grants and loans for 200 low-to-moderate income homeowners for repairs and upgrades, improving living conditions in 200 SRO [single-room occupancy] units, and 100 homeowner assistance loans.

Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool Pre-screen Triage Tool for Single Adults (Canadian Version 2.01)

Recall, the VI-SPDAT is a triage tool that is administered to people experiencing homelessness to determine their level of acuity (Orgcode, 2015). The creators of the tool have made clear that the VI-SPDAT is a triage tool and not an assessment tool (De Jong, 2019). In a 2015 blog post, De Jong describes the difference between the two being that a triage tool "looks

for the presence of an issue (2015, n.p.) and an assessment tool "looks at the nuances of the depth and impacts of what is happening in the person or family's life" (2015, n.p.). The intended purpose of a triage tool in this context is to quickly gather information to determine whether a more in-depth assessment should be conducted (Orgcode, 2015; De Jong, 2019). The VI-SPDAT was developed as a "pre-screening tool for communities that are very busy and do not have the resources to conduct a full SPDAT assessment for every client" (Orgcode, 2015, p. 2). Reaching Home requires that communities use a common assessment tool that is "tested, valid, reliable, person-centred, user friendly, strength based, Housing First-oriented, sensitive to lived experiences and transparent in the relationship between the questions asked and the potential options for housing and support services" (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 37). It is used as a component of the prioritization matrix that is used to determine a client's priority status and order clients from most to least acute. In Peterborough, as with many municipalities across Canada, the VI (as opposed to a full SPDAT assessment) is the primary way that the needs of a client are determined.

While a newer version of the VI-SPDAT came out in 2020, the City of Peterborough is still using version two due to restrictions in the Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) that is used to manage homelessness information. The tool includes questions about history of housing and homelessness; risks related to emergency service use, harm, legal issues, and exploitation; questions about socialization and daily functioning including money management, meaningful daily activities, self-care, and social relationships; as well as questions related to well-being including physical health, mental health, substance use, tri-morbidity, medications, and abuse and trauma. Clients are assigned a score based on their answers and the tool recommends an intervention based on the score. The recommended interventions are: for those scoring between 0 and 3 no housing intervention, those scoring 4 to 7 an assessment for Rapid Re-

Housing, those scoring 8 or higher an assessment for Permanent Supportive Housing. In February 2021, during the final stages of writing this thesis, Orgcode announced that the organization was phasing out support for the VI-SPDAT and would no longer be resourcing communities to use the tool.

Screening for Housing First – Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

This document outlines findings from an analysis of 17 tools that are used to assess the needs of people experiencing homelessness. This document was produced to support communities to meet a directive set out in the *Homelessness Partnering Strategy* (now *Reaching Home*). The directive, similarly to the directives set out in *Reaching Home*, required that communities prioritize chronically and episodically homeless households for Housing First resources. The authors state that the rationale for this document is to provide alternatives to the VI-SPDAT. Despite the VI-SPDAT's prolific use across Canada, the US, and Australia, the authors' analysis suggests that the VAT (Vulnerability Assessment Tool) meets more of the requirements laid out by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. These criteria are that assessment tools should be valid, reliable, inclusive, person-centred, user-friendly, strengths-based, have a Housing First orientation, be sensitive to lived experiences, and transparent. This document also emphasizes that screening and assessment is just one component of a robust prioritization process and that assessments should be used in combination other sources of information including client preferences to determine the best match for a housing resource.

Coordinated Access Scorecard Guide 2.0 – Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

The Coordinated Access Scorecard Guide provides a guide for using the Coordinated Access Scorecard, a quality improvement tool developed to support communities to meet the minimum requirements under Reaching Home and work towards meeting 'advanced' quality

targets. The scorecard is "robust enough to help reach and sustain functional zero on chronic homelessness (as the first step to ending all homelessness in Canada)" (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, 2019, p. 2).

Orgcode Literature (2013 – 2019)

I reviewed a selection of blog posts and resources produced by Orgcode that featured discussions about coordinated access, the VI-SPDAT, and assessment and prioritization. The documents provide guidance for implementation of the VI-SPDAT and clarifies its intended purpose in a coordinated access system as one of many factors considered in the prioritization process.

4.2. Applying the 'What's the Problem Presented' Framework

Recall that Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach begins with the solution that a policy proposes to an issue and works backwards to determine how an issue is problematized. WPR hinges on the assumption that governments are active in the construction of policy problems and that the way that an issue is represented or shaped by a policy provides insight into the way that governing takes place. Bacchi's approach challenges the assumption that problems exist as separate from the way that they are constructed by the policies designed to act on them and provides a systematic way to examine the conditions that produce particular problem representations. The six questions that Bacchi outlines as the methodological approach are discussed in the Methodological Framework chapter. Bacchi (2009) provides an expanded list of questions that clarify the intent of each question in *Analyzing Policy: What is the Problem Represented to Be?* To conduct the analysis, I asked each policy Bacchi's six questions and sub-questions.

After each policy was analyzed using the above questions, I combined the answers to each question to examine the policy network as a whole. I read the answers to each question line-by-

line to extract themes in the problem representations. After identifying themes in the policy network as a whole, I checked the themes against each individual policy analysis to ensure that I captured the themes accurately. In addition to the WPR analysis, I conducted a key word search of each document. The key words that appeared in each document suggest a particular approach to policy problems and allowed me to check my problem representation assumptions. The way in which homelessness is problematized in this network of documents is evidence of the ruling relations that are activated by these texts. The documents demonstrate that homelessness is conceptualized as a problem of scarce and uncoordinated resources that need to be managed using a standard process. The following section will elaborate on the ways in which homelessness is problematized and the way in which the documents operate as instruments of power to coordinate the actions of those within the system.

4.3. Policy Analysis Findings

The findings from the WPR approach will be presented as answers to the six questions that Bacchi (2009) poses. WPR questions one and two are taken up together as an examination of how the problem of homelessness is conceptualized and what meanings need to be in place for the specific conceptualization to make sense. Bacchi (2009) suggests that the answer to question one is found by working backwards from a stated solution to a problem to determine how the problem is conceptualized. The stated solutions that are examined are two key components of coordinated access: assessment and prioritization, and the implementation of an outcomes-based approach. Bacchi (2009) states that "the goal of question two of a WPR approach is to identify and analyse the conceptual logics that underpin specific problem representations. The term conceptual logic refers to the meanings that must be in place for a particular problem representation to cohere or make sense" (p. 5). Baachi (2009) asks that the premise of each problematization be scrutinized.

Working backwards from the stated solutions of coordinated access and outcome measurement suggests that homelessness is problematized as an issue of effective resource management. The conceptual logic that supports these problem representations is a neoliberal logic of efficient delivery of public service and allocation of scarce resources. This representation leaves the lack of resources unproblematic and promotes strategies of New Public Management such as assessment, prioritization, and evaluation as a means of ensuring accountability, efficiency, and outcome achievement.

Question three and question six are taken up together in a timeline that traces the problem of homelessness as a resource management issue to seminal research conducted by Culhane and Kuhn (1998). Question three grounds the problematization in historical and spatial context by asking how the representation of a problem has come about through key decisions and developments. Question six asks how the problem representation is produced and defended so that it becomes the dominant way a problem is understood.

Question four expands the ways in which the lack of resources is left unproblematic by the problem representation and question five hypothesizes the effects of conceptualizing homelessness as a resource management issue. This will be expanded in the analysis of interviews. While language about the right-to-housing and ending homelessness is used throughout the documents, the strategies proposed do not provide a means to realize the right to housing or to end homelessness (UN, 2019). The policies provide a means to effectively manage public resources by making homelessness 'institutionally knowable' (Corman and Melon, 2014) through coordinated access and outcomes-measurement. Bacchi (2009) states that policies often contain multiple problem representations embedded within each other and that each needs to be examined. As a multi-faceted strategy, the policies that address homelessness include multiple approaches.

This analysis focuses on coordinated access and outcome measurement as the strategies that are required of communities under Reaching Home, Canada's national homelessness strategy. While Reaching Home outlines five activity areas that are eligible for funding, the mandatory components of the policy are 'planning and public reporting' and 'implementation of coordinated access. Communities are to implement an outcomes-based approach, develop a community plan that outlines how funding will be allocated towards each activity area, report and track progress, and implement a coordinated access system. As requirements under Reaching Home, these strategies provide a framework for how housing resources are organized and concretely direct work to address homelessness across local settings. Reaching Home, in conjunction with the National Housing Strategy can be understood as the 'boss texts' (Griffith and Smith, 2014) that create a frame or 'institutional circuit' (Griffith and Smith, 2014) through which the related policies and work are filtered.

4.4 WPR Questions One and Two: What's the problem represented to be? What deep-seated assumptions underlie this problem representation?

Components of Coordinated Access: Assessment as a Stated Solution to Homelessness

Recall that coordinated access is the systematization of access to housing and homelessness resources. It involves identifying individuals experiencing homelessness, assessing "depth of need" using a common assessment tool, and prioritizing individuals for housing based on community-agreed upon criteria (Government of Canada, 2019). Coordinated access purports to increase the efficiency of access to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness in addition to allowing for progress and outcome measurement (Government of Canada, 2019). Reaching Home states that the key objectives of coordinated access are to:

1. "Help communities ensure fairness and prioritize people most in need of assistance
2. Help more people move through the system faster

3. Reduce the number of new entries into homelessness
4. Improve data collection and quality" (Government of Canada, p. 28, 2019).

Assessment of individuals experiencing homelessness using a standard assessment tool is a key component of a coordinated access system and a requirement of Reaching Home (Government of Canada, 2019). This requirement is supported by organizations such as OrgCode, which produces the SPDAT and VI-SPDAT assessment tools, as well as organizations that provide advocacy and advice such as the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH). The texts analyzed that provide guidance and discussion on implementing standardized assessment tools are Screening for Housing First, the Coordinated Access Scorecard Guide, Orgcode's blog, and Reaching Home.

Problem Representation One: Fair and Objective Management of Limited Public Resources

As a component of coordinated access, the need for a standardized assessment tool suggests that homelessness is a problem of ensuring fair and objective resource management. The purpose of a standard assessment tool is to provide communities with a "shared approach to understanding depth of need" (Government of Canada, p. 37, 2019). Communities have limited resources to deliver homelessness services and therefore need a tool that requires minimal training, is quick to deliver, and removes worker subjectivity from decision making (Orgcode, 2015; Government of Canada, 2019; Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, 2019). Standard assessment tools purport to provide an objective measure to support decision making by quantifying an individual's level of need. De Jong, author of the SPDAT series, states that the SPDAT and VI-SPDAT are "intended to result in informed, objective understanding of current vulnerability and future risk to housing instability" (De Jong, 2015, p. 1). The stated solution of a standardized assessment tool suggests that communities need an efficient way of translating needs into an institutionally recognizable

format. Reaching Home suggests that standardized assessment facilitates the removal of subjectivity in the statement, “under a coordinated access system, service providers shift from delivering services to clients they know to clients that the community has prioritized” (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 29). Assessment tools capture the complexity of an individual’s experiences and characteristics and translates them into a score that can be compared against others. In contrast to the approach outlined by Reaching that suggests the removal of worker subjectivity, other experts suggest that assessment tools be used as a compliment to other sources of information and should not be the sole way that a decision about a program match is made. The authors of *Screening for Housing First* suggest the use of placement committees as a way to avoid “relying solely or narrowly on a number or score provided by a standardized assessment. Placement committees also allow for the continued autonomy of agencies as active participants in the decision-making process of who they ultimately intake into their program” (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness & Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2015, p.4).

In the context of limited resources, textual technologies are used to facilitate the perception of ‘fair’ and ‘objective’ decision making about health and social resource distribution. Recall Campbell and Gregor’s explanation that texts such as assessment tools create a framework for “knowing objectively” through the translation of everyday experience into predetermined criteria of defining and measuring that experience based on the goals of the institution. Through the creation of an objectified account, textually-mediated decision making convinces those that activate the texts of their ability to support fair and objective decision making in the context of limited resources (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). What needs to be examined is whose interests are subjugated through the activation of these texts. Standardized assessment provides a method of translating client experience into terms that can be deciphered by the system. The quantification

of client experience provides a means for decisions about limited resources and represents the problem of homelessness as one of resource management.

Components of Coordinated Access: Prioritizing Vulnerability as a Stated Solution to Homelessness

Reaching Home and the National Housing Strategy are designed to work in tandem to achieve the goal of reducing chronic homelessness by 50% in the next 10 years (Government of Canada 2018, 2019). While chronicity and vulnerability have different meanings, the former refers to length of homelessness and the latter, in this context, to likelihood of death, the terms are used interchangeably as indicators of the population that should be targeted by homelessness policy (Government of Canada, 2018, 2019; CAEH, 2019; City of Peterborough, 2019). Long-term homelessness (City of Peterborough, 2014) and most-in-need (Government of Canada, 2019) are also used to identify the specific population throughout the documents analyzed. All of these terms are a means of categorizing individuals experiencing homelessness. Standardized assessment tools are the means through which this categorization is achieved. For simplicity, I will use the term 'vulnerability' henceforth. Prioritizing the most vulnerable is a strategy that can be identified in all the documents that were examined.

The focus on prioritization of the most vulnerable informs the problem representation of limited resources. Homelessness systems require a way of categorizing the population to determine who gets served. De Jong states that both the VI-SPDAT and SPDAT "inform the work of prioritization. [They provide] objective, evidence-driven advice to the assessors on who should be served next and why. If a community had more staff, time, money, housing or other resources than it knew what to do with the matter of prioritization would not be necessary" (De Jong, 2015, p. 2). Assessment and prioritization, as key components of a coordinated access system, accept that the

number of people experiencing homelessness exceeds the number of resources available (CAEH, 2019). The repeated emphasis on matching individuals with the appropriate and available resources (COH, 2015; CAEH, 2019; Government of Canada, 2019; City of Peterborough, 2019) is leaving the unstated fact that there are not enough resources unexamined. The underlying assumption is that homelessness is inevitable and that the system has to be organized to use limited resources effectively.

Nichols (2008) and Corman and Melon (2014) describe the implications of textually mediated decision making in health and social service settings. Corman and Melon (2014) state:

> Triage, as a managerial site of interest, provides a method for distributing health care resources when patient needs exceed what is available. It was inserted into professional practices and values under the premise that the objectivity of the scale would support more effective management or emergency beds and patients Corman & Melon, 2014, p. 166).

Similarly, the VI-SPDAT is activated by frontline workers to create categories of clients based on their vulnerability as understood by the text. These categories are used to prioritize the most vulnerable for limited resources using an objective decision-making process.

The concept of vulnerability creates an ‘institutional circuit’ (Griffith and Smith, 2014) through which the policies and documents that are related to Reaching Home and the National Housing Strategy are coordinated. In their work on New Public Management, Griffith and Smith (2014) outline the concept of boss texts and institutional circuits as the structure through which texts and actions are coordinated. Recall that an institutional circuit is a concept set up in a policy that defines the way an experience on the frontline is worked up into an account that is recognizable by the institution (Griffith & Smith, 2014). In this way, the texts activated on the frontline captures

and translates what is actually happening in a way that is amenable to the institutional frame (Griffith & Smith, 2014).

Vulnerability, as a categorization defined in the "boss texts" (Griffith & Smith, 2014) of Reaching Home and the National Housing Strategy, structure the related texts and work of those within the homelessness system. The institution of homelessness policy pays "selective attention" (Griffith & Smith, 2014, p. 14) to vulnerability as a frame for translating experiences into a format that can be interpreted and acted upon. Vulnerability creates an institutional circuit that coordinates the work of homelessness systems across the country. The texts that make up each homelessness system are designed to capture vulnerability as the frame through which homelessness becomes knowable and measurable by the institution of homelessness policy. Capturing vulnerability is an institutional interest that allows for the efficient use of resources and accepts limited resources as inevitable.

Problem Representation Two: Local Accountability

The emphasis on coordination and evaluation is evident throughout the policies analyzed (City of Peterborough, 2014; CAEH, 2019; Government of Canada, 2019; City of Peterborough, 2019). The stated solution of supporting communities to develop "data driven system plans with clear outcomes" (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 1) problematizes homelessness as an issue of local accountability. Reaching Home requires communities receiving funding to make progress on standard outcomes. By providing standard outcomes, Reaching Home reinforces adherence to the institutional interest of categorizing and prioritizing individuals experiencing homelessness. Communities are required to work towards the mandatory outcomes of: reducing chronic homelessness; reducing Indigenous homelessness; reducing homelessness overall and for other specific populations agreed upon by community; reducing new entries to homelessness; and reducing returns to homelessness (Government of Canada, 2019). While these are important

outcomes, they are not measures of a community's progress towards realizing the right to housing despite the National Housing Strategy's claims to a rights-based approach.

Reaching Home states "the new outcomes-based approach will keep decision making where it should be, at the local level, and give communities greater flexibility to address local priorities" (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 1). While the development of a Community Plan will allow communities to develop outcomes in addition to the ones required by Reaching Home, they also require communities to demonstrate cost matching for all funds provided through Reaching Home. While Reaching Home states that this strategy allows communities to meet their unique needs it also responsibilizes communities for coming up with the resources to fund programs (United Way Peterborough, 2019). This suggests a transfer of responsibility to communities for the provision of homelessness services veiled under the guise of increased flexibility. Peck and Tickell (2002) identify the interjurisdictional transfer of responsibility for social welfare to urban governments as a part of neoliberal state restructuring. Clarke and Newman (2006) describe this shift to a mixed economy as "dispersal." Services are increasingly provided by private and non-profit sectors creating new power relations "exercised through regulation, contracting, monitoring, and surveillance" (Clarke & Newman, 2006, p. 26).

Coordinated access is the tool through which an outcomes approach is achieved (Government of Canada, 2019). Peterborough's Coordinated Access Process Guide states that increased understanding, monitoring, and evaluation will be achieved through coordinated access. By requiring all services funded by Reaching Home to be a part of the coordinated access system, the state delegates the provision of housing and services to local non-profits while expanding the state's reach through evaluation and outcome measurement. Outcome measurement, as a stated solution to homelessness, suggests that communities need to be held accountable for homelessness

resource management. The representation of homelessness as a resource management issue is further exemplified by the outcomes that are deemed necessary to measure. The UN Special Rapporteur states that local governments are an important part of realizing the right to housing but "they are often allocated responsibilities without a commensurate allocation of the resources, knowledge, capacity and accountability mechanisms" (UN, 2019, p. 15). In the case of the Canadian state, municipal outcome measures are provided for the reduction of population-specific homelessness but not for the realization of the right to housing. The National Housing Strategy states that the Federal government is taking steps to "progressively implement the right of every Canadian to access adequate housing" (Government of Canada, 2018, p. 8). Peterborough's Coordinated Access Process Guide makes a similar statement in the commitment to the Housing First philosophy that states that housing is a "basic right for all humans" (City of Peterborough, 2019, p. 8). However, no policy or document that was analyzed provides the means, including outcomes and accountability measures, for realizing the right to housing. The implementation of an outcomes based approach suggests the importation of private sector management strategies emphasizing accountability, efficiency, and performance measurement and reinforces the way that market logic seeps into public policy through discourse of fairness and efficiency (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Homelessness is problematized as an issue of effective resource management through standard outcome measurement and accountability, this leaves little room to challenge the lack of resources available and imagining the end to homelessness.

4.5. WPR Questions Three and Six: How has this representation of the "problem" come about? How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended?

In answering questions three and six of the WPR method, I created a timeline that traces the development of the problematization of homelessness as a resource management issue and the

concurrent affordable housing policy decisions that cohere to suggest a neoliberal orientation towards the problem of homelessness.

Table 1. Timeline of the Problematization of Homelessness as a Resource Management Issue

1973	The National Housing Act was amended to mandate the creation of 20,000 social housing units every year (Hulchanski, 2009). This policy was underpinned by the philosophy that government has an obligation to ensure adequate housing for all (Hulchanski, 2009)
1984	Canada's housing policy shifts from rehousing to dehousing (Hulchanski, 2009). The National Housing Strategy is dismantled, spending on social housing is reduced (Hulchanski, 2009). Federal housing policy shifts to support home ownership over affordable housing development (Gaetz, 2010)
1992	Dr. Sam Tsemberis founds Pathways to Housing, popularizing Housing First (Evans et al. 2016). Housing First opposes the dominant 'stairway model' that requires people to be 'housing ready'. As cited in Evans, et al. (2016) the Pathways model demonstrated cost savings and addresses the needs of those experiencing chronic homelessness.
1993	Canadian government stops investing in affordable housing (Gaetz, 2010)
1995	Ontario government cancelled the Provincial housing program (ONHPA, 2017)
1998	Culhane & Kuhn (1998) analyze shelter data to produce a typology of homelessness determining that 80% of shelter users are transitionally homeless, 10% are episodically homeless, and 10% are chronically homeless. This typology categorizes the population by public resource-use.
1999-2002	Federal government downloads responsibility for social housing to the province through the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement in 1999. The province

	subsequently downloads the responsibility to municipalities but keeps supportive housing within its purview (ONHPA, 2017).
2009 – 2013	At Home Chez Soi, a Housing First initiative, is piloted in Canada. The pilot demonstrates success in addressing homelessness and reducing the associated costs. Evans et al (2016) demonstrate the project's efficacy in problematizing homelessness as a public spending concern by framing Housing First as an investment that reduces public service use among people experiencing homelessness.
2014-2019	The Federal *Homelessness Partnering Strategy* is renewed and requires communities to develop Housing First programs
2017	The Federal government releases a National Housing Strategy, signalling a recommitment to affordable housing
2019	The *Homelessness Partnering Strategy* is renewed as *Reaching Home. Reaching Home* drops the Housing First requirement for the requirement that communities develop a coordinated access system to support an outcomes-based approach.
2019	The right to adequate housing is enshrined in Canadian legislation through the National Right to Housing Act

As the responsibility for administering and funding social housing was downloaded to municipalities, which significantly reduced stock, social assistance benefits were slashed, and precarious work increased (Gaetz, 2010). Gaetz (2010) attributes the devolution of responsibility and termination of funding to the increased visibility of homelessness that occurred in the 1980's and 90's. As the erosion of the social support infrastructure occurred, solutions to the most visible and resource intensive homelessness emerged. Evans et al. (2016) trace the emergence of Housing First in Canada through the problematization of chronic homelessness as an issue of costs and

benefits. Recall that Housing First is both a program intervention and a philosophy that underpins coordinated access. Coordinated access is the systematization of access to Housing First programs and was formalized as the approach to addressing homelessness in 2019 through Reaching Home. Evans et al. (2016) caution that the widespread adoption of Housing First as a method of addressing the most visible forms of homelessness:

> Institutes a very particular relationship between the state and its citizens. In this case, access to a fundamental health determinant, housing, is not a matter of the state fulfilling individual rights; rather, it is modulated through the government of risk, by linking specific groups in the homeless population to unfavorable health and social care utilization patterns. (Evans et al. 2016, p. 255)

While the recent re-engagement of the Federal government in housing and homelessness is hopeful, the strategies continue to problematize homelessness as an issue of effective resource management. The National Housing Strategy does not provide evidence that the supply of affordable housing will increase (Office of the Parliamentary Secretary, 2019) such that homelessness strategies can shift from a reliance on management and emergency response (Gaetz, 2010).

4.6. WPR Question Four: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?

Question four of the WPR analysis asks what is left unproblematic by a problem representation with the goal of identifying how policies are limited by the ways that an issue is problematized (Bacchi, 2009). The solution of coordinated access pragmatically addresses the lack of resources to end homelessness by providing a means to assess and categorize individuals experiencing homelessness to determine who should be served. However, there is little mention of increasing the number of resources available. While the right to housing is mentioned in the

National Housing Strategy and the Peterborough Process Guide, the policies are not a commitment to meeting the demand for housing. The process guide is a commitment to organizing and appropriately allocating and tracking resources (City of Peterborough, 2019).

The National Housing Strategy presents each component of the policy as 'new' when in reality more funding is directed to maintaining and protecting existing housing stock than to the development of new housing (Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2019). The *New* National Housing Co-Investment Fund aims to repair existing housing and develop 60,000 new units. The *New* Community Housing Initiative will protect affordable housing stock by renewing long-term social housing operating agreements with provinces and the *New* Canada Housing Benefit will support 300,000 households over time. In total, the policy aims to create 100,000 new housing units and implement legislation that requires the Federal government to maintain a National Housing Strategy. These efforts do not meet the UN Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing (UN, 2019). This strategy ignores the financialization of housing, only briefly addressing it in the need to change real estate tax laws to increase industry compliance. The UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing states that "states have facilitated and encouraged the role of the private sector in housing… They have deregulated rental markets and encouraged development that primarily produces housing for the wealthy" (UN, 2019, p. 16). The UN Guidelines state that to realize the right to housing, the financialization of housing must be addressed (UN, 2019). Rather than addressing financialization, the National Housing Strategy presents regulatory changes to mortgage loan insurance that "reduce the likelihood that Canadians will take on more debt than they can afford" (Government of Canada, 2018, p. 22). By ignoring the financialization of housing, the strategy entrenches the idea that the market, including the housing market, is a natural and inevitable force. The change to mortgage loan insurance renders

individual Canadians responsible for not being able to afford housing. The housing strategy does not suggest the housing market be regulated which abstracts housing affordability and homelessness from the neoliberal system. This suggests that the National Housing Strategy is a mechanism through which the Canadian government performs as a "service state" (Griffith & Smith, 2014). In the context of homelessness policy, the government acts in service of global capital through non-interference in the housing market to create conditions where the housing industry flourishes and is ideologically disconnected from the issues of homelessness and housing insecurity.

Locally, no Reaching Home funding is allocated to the activity category of capital projects which means no Federal homelessness funding is allocated to create more housing stock in Peterborough (United Way Peterborough, 2019). Despite stating that the success of the coordinated access system depends on "dedicated housing and support resources to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness" (City of Peterborough, 2019), only one sentence of Peterborough's Coordinated Access Process Guide names a commitment to work with housing providers to expand the resources available. The majority of the discourse is about using available resources effectively (City of Peterborough, 2019).

4.7. WPR Question Five: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the problem?

Discursive Effects

Question five of the WPR approach explores the discursive, subjectification, and lived effects produced by a problem representation (Baachi, 2009). The discursive effects are those "which follow from the limits on what can be thought and said" (Baachi, 2009, p. 15). Using question four, I examined what is left unproblematic by the representation of homelessness as a resource management issue. The discourse that leaves the lack of resources unproblematized

suggests that homelessness is a glitch in an otherwise functioning neoliberal society (Farrugia & Gerrard, 2016). Farrugia and Gerrard (2016) argue that construction of homelessness as a "discrete analytical object" (p. 267) removes it from relations of inequality, makes it governable, and positions it outside "normatively legitimate subjectivities" (p. 267). Coordinated access and outcome-measurement are technologies of governance that make it possible to intervene in homelessness in particular ways while facilitating a knowing of homelessness as separate from the conditions that produce it. Farrugia and Gerrard (2016) state "under neoliberalism relations of power and privilege are considered technical problems solvable through targeted and more efficient interventions into different problematic sites" (p. 275). The problem representation of homelessness as a resource management issue abstracts and constructs it as extraordinary to the otherwise normal functioning of neoliberal society. The discursive effect of this representation is that the structural causes of homelessness remain unexamined.

Subjectification Effects

Policy discourse produces subjectivities (Bacchi, 2009). Bacchi states, "we become subjects of a particular kind partly through the ways in which policies set up social relationships and our place (position) within them" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 16). These relationships include who is responsible for the problem. Bacchi draws on Foucault's (1982) theory of "dividing practices." Dividing practices produce a subject, "either divided inside himself or divided from others" (Foucault, 1982, p. 778) to which different interventions are applied and rationalized. The policies analyzed produce two different subjectivities. The first is the way in which categorization according to vulnerability sets up a dividing practice of those that are responsible for 'self-resolving' (Orgcode, 2017 p. 7) their homelessness and those that are prioritized for service. The

VI-SPDAT makes recommendations for level of support based on an individual's score. The recommendation options are:

Score 0-3: No housing intervention

Score 4-7: An assessment for Rapid Re-Housing

Score 8+: An assessment for Permanent Supportive Housing / Housing First

The process of categorization produces subjectivities of those that are in need of support resources and those that are not. This reinforces the representation of homelessness as an issue of efficient resource management and that resources should not be wasted on those that are deemed capable of helping themselves.

The second subjectification effect is the attribution of responsibility to local governments for effectively managing the resources available. The implementation of coordinated access supports the measurement of objectives set out by the Federal government, allows for more accountability for funding, creates the ability to more closely manage and monitor homelessness funding and the ability to report back to voters on progress and spending. Through the Community Plan, the Municipality is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate funding, housing, and support services to meet the needs in their communities (City of Peterborough, 2019). This shift in responsibility for social welfare is consistent with theories of neoliberalization and new public management. The process of neoliberalization has involved a shift in public management strategies that facilitated the dispersal of responsibility for social welfare while simultaneously increasing requirements for assessment and evaluation to ensure accountability. The post welfare state has naturalized the logics of efficiency and competition in social policy and is characterized by dispersed public institutions and service providers.

Lived Effects

The lived effects of a problem representation explore the material impacts of policy discourse. As will be discussed in the interview findings chapter, the required implementation of coordinated access and standard outcome measurement has shifted both the way that communities allocate housing and support and the organizational shape and character of social service departments. The Coordinated Access Scorecard Guide suggests the creation of new employee positions and suggests that the entire system be oriented to the coordinated access system. The way that staff resources are allocated may change as staff are assigned to clients based on their assessment score. Evidence of the way that texts influence material work with clients is explored further in the interview chapter.

4.8. Policy Analysis Conclusion

This analysis has examined the network of policies and documents that direct work to address homelessness in Peterborough. The policies converge to represent homelessness as a problem of public resource management. The boss texts of Reaching Home and the National Housing Strategy mandate the prioritization of the most vulnerable through the implementation of coordinated access. Coordinated access supports communities to meet the second requirement of Reaching Home which is to implement an outcomes-approach. These stated solutions to homelessness ostensibly provide a mechanism for fair, objective, and accountable resource management but leave the lack of resources available unproblematic. The National Housing Strategy, Peterborough's Coordinated Access Process Guide, and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness suggest that coordinated access is the first step in ending homelessness and realizing the right to housing. However, the policies do not provide the means for communities to realize the right to housing according to the UN Guidelines (2019). Rather, they suggest the importation of private sector strategies as a means of downloading responsibility to local governments and

ensuring compliance to Federal policy. The effects of this representation are that the structural conditions that produce homelessness are left out of the discourse and the issue of homelessness is abstracted.

Chapter 5: Interviews with Service Providers

In this chapter I discuss the interviews that were conducted with service providers. I begin by providing a brief summary of Institutional Ethnography as a separate method of inquiry that builds on the policy analysis conducted in the previous chapter using Baachi's WPR method. I describe the way that Institutional Ethnography was used in the design and execution of this analysis beginning with an outline of the ontological underpinnings of the method. I then describe the analytical concepts of standpoint, problematic, and ruling relations and how they were used in the writing of the interview guide and analysis of interview data. The final section of this chapter provides the findings of the analysis.

Institutional ethnography, though used commonly in health and social research, is challenging to execute well (Rankin, 2017a). My intention in selecting it was to link my experience as a frontline worker in the homelessness system with what I understood to be practices of neoliberal governance. I wanted to be able to empirically link 'what was actually going on' in the everyday work of supporting people experiencing homelessness to regain housing with a newly implemented system focused on assessment and prioritization. Institutional ethnography aims to make visible the relations of ruling that coordinate the everyday lives of people. IE moves beyond the institutional discourse and understanding of people's work, to examine how people are hooked into relations of power. Those of us that work in the system had a 'hunch' (Rankin, 2017b) about the contradiction between the ways that coordinated access was being talked about as a way to end homelessness and what coordinated access achieves as a mechanism of hooking into neoliberal power relations.

5.1 Ontology

Institutional Ethnography was developed by Dorothy Smith as a feminist methodology that begins in the actualities of everyday experience (Smith, 2005). IE extends from a Marxist tradition that grounds analysis in the material activities of actual people and examines the way that work is coordinated across settings (Smith, 2005). The ontology of IE understands the world as socially constituted and socially organized. Within the social exists social relations that are actively constituted by people. Campbell and Gregor (2002) define social relations as "extended courses of action that take place across social settings" (p. 31). Social relations begin before actual action occurs and extend beyond individual actions. Campbell and Gregor (2002) use the example of students boarding a bus to illustrate the concept of social organization. An observer can note that university students boarding a bus show the bus driver a piece of plastic with a picture, some dates, and iconography. The bus driver acknowledges the validity of the piece of plastic and the student boards the bus. In this example, the activities of actual people are being organized by the bus pass. However, the organization of actions does not start or stop in the interaction between the student and driver. It is coordinated by an institutional complex involving the university and the transit company and the components of each institution. Campbell and Gregor (2002) explain that Smith conceptualizes social relations as "the actual practices and activities through which peoples' lives are organized" (p. 30). The assumption of an ontology that understands the world as socially organized, extends to the social organization of knowledge (Rankin, 2017a). What is known from a particular standpoint, is "socially constructed and carries particular interests that are embedded in its construction" (Rankin, 2017a, p. 2). IE aims to point to the material ways that certain interests are subordinated and the consequences of that subordination (Rankin, 2017b).

5.2. How is the Social Organization Discovered?

As a method of inquiry, IE uses texts to identify the social organization of a setting. IE is grounded in the assumption that the world is socially organized and that relations of ruling operate through texts to coordinate the actions of individuals across settings (Smith, 2005). Ruling is defined as the way in which power is exercised to enter and organize people's lives (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). IE defines texts as not just documents but "words, images, or sounds that are set into a material form of some kind from which they can be read, seen, heard, watched and so on" (Smith, 2006, p. 66). Texts contain the interests of the institution and are activated by those that interact with them. For example, the use of an assessment tool that determines what kind of services someone is eligible for, brings organizational power into the interaction between worker and client. The worker is driven by the categories outlined in the tool and must translate the experience of the client into those categories. Using this example, Campbell and Gregor (2002) explain that "the questions that the case manager asks relate to the form's categories, and that is how the organization's interests in determining needs and eligibility, etc. are advanced over any other interest" (p. 35). In the context of coordinated access, the forms that are activated by frontline workers and case managers are used to accomplish the organizational interest of determining vulnerability. Rankin states that "people's use of texts gives ruling relations a material form that institutional ethnographers can use to investigate social organization" (Rankin, 2017b, p. 2). Texts and textual technologies are an essential mechanism for ruling as they coordinate activities across local settings (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Smith, 2005).

This study used textual analysis and interviews with frontline workers, administrative and management staff within the institution of homelessness response in Peterborough, Ontario, as data. The process for conducting interview analysis was greatly informed by Rankin's (2017a,

2017b) instructive articles. Rankin instructs researchers to begin with the conceptual and analytic tools of standpoint, problematic, and ruling relations, and provides tangible strategies for conducting IE analysis.

5.3. Standpoint

Standpoint is an analytical tool that identifies a position from which to view the rest of the institution. Researchers are advised to adopt a standpoint as a starting point for analysis. IE also explores the social organization of those not in the chosen standpoint. Institutional ethnography is interested in the ways that the work that happens at a particular standpoint is hooked into the institutional complex (Rankin, 2017a). Standpoint reveals the disjunctures between the authoritative discourse of the institution and what is known materially and experientially by the people that occupy that standpoint (Rankin, 2017a).

5.4 Problematic

Campbell and Gregor (2002) define work settings as socially organized as "things being put together systematically, but more or less mysteriously and outside a person's knowledge, and for purposes that might not be theirs" (p. 18). Defining the problematic involves identifying the site of research where in which the everyday doings of people can be traced to make visible the relations that coordinate those doings (Smith, 2005). Rankin (2017a) explains that the problematic is defined through an examination of the data and that generating the problematic is part of the analytic process. Rankin states that the problematic "often rests on stories (accounts) that reveal troubles arising in (or conflicts between) authorized and experiential knowledge" (Rankin, 2017b, p 3). The problematic is located in the disjuncture between what is happening and experienced on the ground and how the institution abstracts it (Rankin, 2017b).

5.5. Ruling Relations

Ruling relations is a term that describes the ways that lives are organized by institutional interests. Ruling takes place through texts and textual technologies. Smith (2005) defines ruling relations as "that extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across time and organize our everyday lives" (p. 10). Campbell and Gregor (2002) further explain the concept of ruling as taking place "when the interests of those who rule dominate the actions of those in local settings" (p. 36). Ruling relations can be ethnographically described by tracing the use and influence of texts and how they coordinate work (Rankin, 2017a). In addition to dictating how work is carried out, relations of rule also control the way that work is abstracted and represented by the institution (Rankin, 2017a). Rankin (2017a) explains, "often vested in people's work with texts, ruling relations are activities of governing that depend on selecting, categorizing, and/or objectifying aspects of the social world in order to develop facts and knowledge upon which to base decisions" (p. 3). Through these practices of governance, the institutional knowledge of a problem becomes the official way the problem is understood, and supersedes how the problem is understood and experienced by those on the frontline (Rankin, 2017a). IE aims to identify the ways that ruling relations operate in what Rankin (2017a) describes "those occasions when the work being done at the standpoint location does not seem to be supporting the interests of the people *there*" (p.3).

5.6. Interview Methods

There is limited instruction on 'how to do' institutional ethnography analysis. I found Rankin's (2017a, 2017b) articles to be instructive. Rankin (2017a, 2017b) states that defining the 'problematic' or problematics is a methodological tool central to analysis in IE. The problematic is located in the disjuncture between what is happening and experienced on the ground and how

the institution abstracts it (Rankin, 2017b). Rankin describes two strategies that I employed to identify the places of contradiction in the institution of homelessness response. I began by highlighting references to the institution in each interview transcript including institutional language, processes, and texts. I then began indexing the data according to work processes. I indexed what informants told me about their work processes and the accompanying texts by type of work under the following headings: information gathering work, decision making work, housing work, supporting work, trust work, data management and measurement work, and resource allocation work. Through indexing the data, I began to identify disjunctures between what was being said and what was actually happening. In other words, I identified contradictions between the institutional discourse and the experiential knowledge. Rankin suggests that indexing is a way of making sense of the data while not losing site of the materiality (2017b). The final analytic strategy I employed was to write up 'analytic chunks' (Rankin, 2017b, p. 6). Analytic chunks are descriptions of work processes that begin in the information gathering work of the standpoint informants but expand to "include the dispersed talk, policies, schedules and practices" (Rankin, 2017b, p. 7) being implicated in the institutional process. The intention of these strategies is to help the researcher identify the ways in which work is being organized that is not immediately apparent from the standpoint of the informant (Rankin, 2017b). Rankin (2017b) states that "the work of noticing the small problematics that provide direction *for a coherent arc of the larger analysis* is simply learning to notice the occasions when the knowledge generated in the daily *doing* of work is subordinated by or in tension with other (abstract) knowledge that is used or *supposed* to be used to decide and act" (p. 7).

5.7. Interview Limitations

I found it difficult to avoid 'institutional capture' as is warned about by Smith (2005) and Rankin (2017b) in that as someone deeply embedded in the institution of homelessness response, it was hard not to take on the institutional rationalities for the way things are done. As a result of my experience with both frontline and administrative work in the homelessness system, I came to this research with particular interests and ideas that may have influenced the interview data and analysis. Interview informants mentioned texts and documents that direct their work that I chose not to focus on. I chose to focus specifically on the texts and documents related to coordinated access because of my interest in the way housing resources are distributed. Had I focused on the housing work, care and support work, or the other intake and shelter policies that informants mentioned, I would have come up with a different analysis. My limited interview data also made it difficult to identify empirical links or 'generalizing relations' to relations of ruling. If I had more time I would have recruited more frontline informants and returned to my informants to ask clarifying questions.

5.8. Summary of Interview Analysis Results

This analysis will follow the trail of policy introduction from the standpoint of City staff to policy implementation from the standpoint of frontline workers. After detailing the study's standpoint, I will examine the disjuncture between the professed desire of policy-makers to end homelessness and how that is interpreted by people who implement the policies. Administrative staff described the transformation in the homelessness response system that has taken place since the implementation of coordinated access. The authorized knowledge about the coordinated access system is that it allows for data-driven decision making, prioritization of the most vulnerable for the available supports, and a means to track progress and hold other systems to account. The stated objective of coordinated access is to "help communities organize their response to homelessness

and improve outcomes with intentional housing and supports allocation" (City of Peterborough, 2019, p. 14). The Coordinated Access Process guide sets out Peterborough's goal of ending chronic homelessness as part of the City's participation in the national Built for Zero campaign. Each informant expressed a desire to end homelessness in Peterborough. The official knowledge about coordinated access is that it is the key to making progress towards that goal. Despite good intentions and passionate dedication, the informants identified the disjuncture between the desire to end homelessness and the limitations of the system. Informants described a system that is set up to manage limited resources in the Provincial context of stagnating funding and misaligned priorities.

Secondly, this analysis will discuss the institutional interest of creating objectified accounts of homelessness to demonstrate need to Provincial and Federal funders in a way that can be worked up as 'responsible' government expenditures. The authorized understanding of the prioritization process is that it provides a method for objective and consistent decision making and is a mechanism for providing non-judgemental and fair services. Administrative staff also describe the way that the system is engaged in constant self-monitoring of the progress toward reducing chronic homelessness. The coordinated access system creates an institutional circuit in which the accounts of those experiencing homelessness are worked up into a priority category. The total of which (the aggregate of all people whose experiences are captured by the VI-SPDAT and prioritization matrix) makes up the institutional understanding of homelessness. This institutional understanding is based on demonstrating need. A system built on the demonstration of need both at the level of the client seeking service and the municipality seeking funding is one that hooks into an institutional interest where in which housing is not realized as a right but granted based on someone's demonstration of (extreme) need.

One of the consequences of means-testing for limited housing resources is that morbidity becomes the focus of prioritization. The texts that are activated to capture vulnerability assess an individual's likelihood of death based on their indication of co-occurring mental health, physical health, and substance use challenges as well as their risk of death from exposure. The experiential knowledge of the way that objectivity is taken up is that it is a way to justify the inability to house everybody. Frontline workers describe the inconsistencies in the way that vulnerability is captured by the institution that leaves highly vulnerable people unprioritized for resources. Those facing structural discrimination like gender-based violence and the violence of colonization are not prioritized within the prioritization matrix. Here, the ruling relation of new public management can be traced from the frontline activation of a triage tool that allows only the most extreme suffering to be acted on, to the policy framework that emphasizes reducing population-specific homelessness but does little to support rights-holders to realize the right to housing.

Thirdly, to elucidate the ruling relations at play, an investigation of a flashpoint in discussions about homelessness in Peterborough that was raised by interview informants will be dissected in contrast to the authorized knowledge of homelessness. The tent city that emerged in the summer of 2019 was raised by informants as an example of the ways that the official discourse about homelessness in Peterborough, generated from objectified accounts of people's housing status, shelter space, and vulnerability, was used to criminalize and violate the human rights of people in tent city. In the summer of 2019, a By-law was passed that prohibits occupying parks between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. The rights of the residents of the tent city were violated through the passing of the By-law and clearing of the encampment. This issue highlights the question of whose data and evidence matters and what voices are considered in the design and implementation of responses to homelessness.

5.9. Standpoint: Frontline Workers

The interviews conducted provided a means to discover the ways in which the actions of individuals in local settings are coordinated by the identified policy texts, therefore grounding the textual analysis in the actualities of everyday work. Interviews were conducted with six people working in the homelessness response system in Peterborough. Interview informants were recruited based on their interaction with the VI-SPDAT at various points in the coordinated access system. Some interview informants gave their consent to use their real names, some requested the use of a pseudonym. One informant was strictly a frontline worker. Two informants were involved in both frontline and managerial work. Two informants were administrative staff, and one informant was an executive director. To recruit informants, I contacted the executive directors of each shelter in Peterborough as well as management and administrative staff for the City of Peterborough. This included the youth and family shelter, the men's and women's shelters, the domestic violence shelter, and the organization that has historically provided the overflow shelter service. In my emails to executive directors, I asked them to put me in touch with frontline workers that were interested in participating in my research and provided a recruitment script that explained the research and interview process. I intended to recruit five to eleven interview informants that occupy front line and administrative roles in the homelessness response system. As a result of my recruitment strategy and the fact that I didn't offer compensation for participation, I ended up with more administrative informants than frontline informants. Administrative staff could participate in the interview as part of their daily paid work whereas the frontline staff participated in the interviews during their off hours. All of the interview informants were people I had previous professional relationships with which highlights the benefit of conducting research in community but also highlights a potential limitation in the data. I sent follow up emails to all parties I did not

receive a response from. Each informant participated in an interview over Zoom video teleconferencing software. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

The interviews were semi-structured and informed by the results of the textual analysis (see Appendix 2 for the research guide). The aim was to explore the ways that workers engage with the relevant texts, how the texts influence their everyday activities, and whether the concepts identified through the textual analysis can be corroborated or expanded upon. The aim of Institutional Ethnography is not to generalize but to discover the "social processes that have generalizing effects" (Devault & McCoy, 2006, p. 4). One way of accomplishing this is to follow a 'chain of action' within a system to determine the ways that work is coordinated by a text. Informants were recruited based on their participation in the chain of action that follows the activation of the VI-SPDAT triage tool from frontline worker to administrative staff. People with lived experience of homelessness were not recruited for this study. While the work involved with navigating the institution of homelessness response to get ones' needs met and homelessness resolved is not insignificant, I chose to focus on the paid workers in the institution. This decision was made not to discount or subjugate the knowledge of those with lived experience but because within the confines of a Master's thesis I did not have time to develop the relationships of reciprocity and mutual benefit I felt necessary. I did not want to leverage the power I have as a researcher to extract knowledge and information from people who are already questioned about their lives on a daily basis, for my own benefit with little to offer them in return. The standpoint of lived experience of homelessness within the institution of homelessness response is the most important as it is those experiencing homelessness who are most impacted by homelessness policy.

This standpoint should be considered in the design of future research and systems that have the time and resources necessary to build relationships of mutual benefit.

The textual analysis and my working knowledge of the documents and processes associated with coordinated access, informed the questions I asked informants. In developing interview questions I followed McCault and Devoy's (2006) instructions on asking about texts to learn about the way the texts in question are taken up. I asked questions about how the VI-SPDAT informs workers' thinking; what workers are looking for when they read a VI-SPDAT; and what future decisions or resources rely on the VI-SPDAT. To get beyond the institutional language of vulnerability, I asked all informants to explain what vulnerability means and what someone who is highly vulnerable might need and how the category of vulnerability operates in the institutional setting. I also asked informants questions about outcome measurement, fairness and objectivity, and the resources available to address homelessness, all of which were points of interest identified in the policy analysis.

5.10. Problematic: The Desire to End Homelessness in a Misaligned Provincial Context

Peterborough's Coordinated Access Process Guide sets out the commitment to ending chronic homelessness as part of the City's participation in the national Built for Zero campaign. This commitment builds on the goals of reducing chronic homelessness defined in Federal housing and homelessness policies. The Federal government has since committed to ending chronic homelessness in the speech from the throne delivered in the fall of 2020 (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020). This commitment is shared by the City's administrative staff who understand coordinated access as the key to achieving that goal. Coordinated access allows the homelessness response system to make data-driven decisions and prioritize those who meet institutionally defined markers of vulnerability for available housing and supports. One informant,

in her discussion of the importance of data-driven decision making, told me "we're truly able to measure the differences we're making… That's how we're going to win, we're looking at stuff that we never would have looked at before and we're not just assuming we're doing it right because we're having an ok time at work" (Erin). A second administrative staff echoed the ways that the homelessness system aims to achieve measurable gains towards ending homelessness. She stated, "for us it's really trying to build a system where individuals hopefully never become homeless. If they do become homeless, it's short and temporary and they have somewhere else to go" (Andrea). The authorized knowledge about the coordinated access system is that it allows communities to understand the problem of homelessness in a quantifiable way and make targeted interventions based on that understanding. A secondary objective is that having data that can speak specifically to failures of other systems such as discharge from Provincial institutions into homelessness, allows the homelessness response system to hold other sectors accountable.

Despite the official commitment to making measurable reductions in homelessness, all informants including administrative staff, highlighted the contradictions evident in working with limited resources. When I asked about how the implementation of coordinated access will lead to the end of homelessness, Andrea, an administrative staff stated:

> Uh… that's a tough question. There's a theory and a practical piece there. So I think theoretically it's around some of the other pieces we've talked around like making sure we're supporting the most vulnerable individuals in the community and matching resources that will be most successful to them…I'm also conscious that we have very limited resources in our community.

Andrea highlights the conflict between the authorized knowledge of coordinated access and the reality that there are not enough resources to meet the need that exists. This contradiction is even

more evident from the standpoint of frontline staff. Sarah told me about the frustration of using the VI-SPDAT triage tool that recommends a course of action based on the client's score:

> I think when it first started and a client was getting a score and if it was something super high and it was like oh they need supportive housing well then now what? Because there is no supportive housing. And now it's like well there is supportive housing but there's eight spots and there are 30 of you in the shelter and you all need supportive housing.

Sarah describes the situation that many clients and their support staff face in which clients enter the coordinated access system, are assigned a score that suggests the appropriate resource that will support them to end their homelessness, but the resource does not exist. Coordinated access intends to match the right people with the right resource (Government of Canada, 2018) but it is not equipped to increase the number of 'right resources' available. So instead, people experiencing homelessness are triaged and prioritized for available housing based on their likelihood of dying and only the most acute clients are matched with available resources. Herein lies the conflict between the expressed desire to end homelessness and what actually happens in the day-to-day experience of supporting someone to access housing and support. This is explored further in the following section.

Comparatively, the staffing resources dedicated to the expansion of housing stock are less than those dedicated to operating the coordinated access system. At the time interviews were conducted (Fall 2020), there was one temporary position dedicated to expanding the housing available to people experiencing homelessness by leveraging relationships with private landlords. Erin told me that the recent merge between the Social Services and Housing Divisions at the City of Peterborough has led to more housing being allocated to people experiencing homelessness but

that “We’re just starting with two landlords and two units so I guess you could say that there’s a couple people in the Housing Division who are doing that off the side of their desk kind of thing.” Recent media coverage exploring municipal budget allocations for housing and homelessness quoted the Manager of Social Services, Dorothy Olver, discussing the time and energy that is going into accessing capital to support housing development. Referring to the increase in capital available due to the COVID 19 pandemic, she stated “We’re trying really hard to work with folks in the community to make sure we jump on those opportunities” (Olver, as cited in Peterborough Currents, 2020). Andrea described the lack of coordination between government funders that makes affordable housing development difficult. She stated, “It’s really hard to build housing because you can’t combine one pot of funding sometimes with another pot of funding which would actually allow you to build something. Then from a service perspective because there’s this huge misalignment between Federal, Provincial, and Municipal stuff it also leads to like the inability to actually make the most of the resources that we have…we’re all doing the best we can but it isn’t going as far as it can.” Andrea describes the misaligned priorities and levels of bureaucracy that constrain the municipality’s ability to access and leverage other levels of government funding. The disjuncture is that the priority on the ground is to end homelessness but the focus of work to end homelessness from the standpoint of administrative staff is primarily around triaging clients for currently available housing and support resources in a climate that limits the capacity to expand those resources.

The municipal homelessness response system is operating in the context of Provincial interests (or non-interests). Locally, the biggest funder of homelessness programs is the province. The province has demonstrated a lack of interest in ending homelessness through a stagnation of Home for Good (Peterborough Currents, 2020) a significant envelope of homelessness funding, a

lack of action in legislative arenas that would increase the affordability of housing, as well as a blatant move to erode tenant rights which has led to an influx of evictions province-wide with the introduction of Bill 184 (Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, 2020). Inclusionary zoning legislation is often cited as the key to cities having a mechanism to force housing developers to include a portion of affordable units in new developments (Peterborough Currents, 2020). One informant expressed frustration at the lack of cohesion between Municipal, Provincial, and Federal priorities in a statement about the municipality's limitations around affordable housing. She stated, "If something comes forward for the council around like a housing development, we should be finding a way to either mandate that a percentage of it gets designated to the By Name List or it's affordable or working with the building department or the planning department to make it easier for investors to actually follow through with those processes" (Andrea).

Informants also reported that lack of coordination between Provincial ministries makes it difficult to use resources effectively. Andrea discussed one of the intentions of coordinated access as being able to better integrate with other systems through the collection of data that can be used to advocate to the mental health and justice systems for better service. However, ministries at the Provincial level lack a coordinated strategy. This recently resulted in funding for supportive housing for those experiencing homelessness and exiting incarceration not being connected to the homelessness response system. Andrea explained, "If it's going to be connected to homelessness, then it should be connected to your By Name Priority List….they're all (the Provincial ministries) funding different things that might be connected to homelessness but they're pretty disconnected from the homelessness system to be honest so I think for me that's a huge gap on a Provincial level." While the municipality is tasked with moving more people through the system faster and

reducing new entries into homelessness, the same level of efficiency and system integration is not prioritized between Provincial ministries.

A second area of misalignment for informants is the relationship between the coordinated access system and the administration of the Ontario Works (OW) program, which provides financial support to individuals experiencing unemployment. Both are administered by the City of Peterborough's Social Services Division. Christian described the way that clients who are connected to the homelessness response system are hooked into the Ontario Works system by virtue of the programs being operated by the same department. The implications of which he described as people experiencing homelessness being subject to increased surveillance:

> I think that the problem with, especially in Peterborough, with the coordinated access system as a whole is that the social services mandate by the Provincial government is a punitive mandate. And there's no denying that. It has nothing to do with the people themselves that are running it but with the Harris government changes of what OW is. It's a punitive program, its goal is to make sure people aren't abusing the system. And then when you have the City of Peterborough running the By Name List, of course, surveillance, even and again it's not about the people themselves. Of course it's a surveillance model. So what happens is that the first thing that is looked at when someone is added is 'are they receiving their full cheque or not?' Right like are they receiving, and if they're not they'll lose that piece. So the first act is always surveillance and punishment.

Christian is describing the institutional process in which a household enters the coordinated access system. Through this process they consent to their Ontario Works worker, among other agencies in the system, to have access to information about their housing status. This sometimes

has the consequence of the client's Ontario Works shelter benefit (their 'full cheque,' as Christian put it), being revoked since the client is assumed not to be in need of that money to pay rent. The relationship between the homelessness response system and the Provincial income supports also highlights the unaffordability of housing to anyone in receipt of social assistance. In Peterborough, no individual or family earning less than $30,000 annually can afford any type of apartment (United Way, 2020). There is an implicit contradiction between the aim of administrators of the homelessness system in Peterborough and the system's connection to Provincial programs with conflicting mandates.

Informants described conflicting priorities and lack of coordination that results in the responsibility for addressing homelessness falling to the municipality which lacks the resources to adequately address it. Andrea stated "So I think the burden falls first and foremost on our community partners, then the municipality and there just is this huge disconnect around what we're actually trying to do and there never seems any kind of alignment of any level of funding." She went on to say, "I think that our municipality is told to kind of do a lot of things with very limited funding from our own municipality if we do get a funding allocation." This process describes the interjurisdictional transfer of responsibility for social goods such as housing that is characteristic of neoliberalization. The disjunctures between the stated aims of coordinated access policy, administrators of the system, and the Provincial context thwart local efforts to end homelessness. This section of the analysis described the context in which the coordinated access policy was introduced. The next section will examine the ways that it operates within this context.

5.11. Ruling Relations: Objective Decision Making, Evaluation, and Capturing Vulnerability

The Provincial context of limited resources and conflicting legislative and policy directives means that the system needs to come up with a way of maximizing the resources available. This

results in a system that operates to capture and quantify the needs of a population in order to make decisions about limited resources that can be measured and accounted for. The stated goal of coordinated access is to "help communities organize their response to homelessness and improve outcomes with intentional housing and supports allocation" (City of Peterborough, 2019, p. 14). This involves identifying and assessing people experiencing homelessness using a standardized tool, and matching them to available resources using a prioritization matrix that takes into account things like length of episode of homelessness, age, and sleeping location. Coordinated access is understood locally and by national organizations to be the key to ending chronic homelessness and subsequently ending all homelessness in Canada (Built for Zero, 2020). With the goal of ending chronic homelessness, the coordinated access system uses the categories of chronicity and vulnerability to make decisions about housing and support resources.

The two texts that are central to this decision making are the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) Version 2, and the locally created prioritization matrix (see page 21 of the linked document) (City of Peterborough, 2019). The VI-SPDAT was developed as a "pre-screening tool for communities that are very busy and do not have the resources to conduct a full SPDAT assessment for every client" (Orgcode, 2015, p. 2). In Peterborough, as with many municipalities across Canada, the VI (as opposed to a full SPDAT assessment) is the primary way that the needs of a client are determined. The VI-SPDAT serves several functions in the homelessness system in Peterborough including determining which housing and supports will be offered to a client. The VI-SPDAT is also a component of the prioritization matrix that is used to determine a client's priority status and order clients from most to least acute. The client's chronicity, sleeping location, tri-morbidity, age, VI-SPDAT score, and intake date are used to determine those that should be prioritized for available resources. Those in

the highest priority group are those that are chronically homeless (they have been homeless for six or more months in the past year), sleeping outside, are experiencing co-occurring mental health, physical health, and substance use challenges, and are either a youth or a senior. The clients that meet those criteria are then prioritized by descending VI-SPDAT score, and descending intake date.

This institutional process is understood by those within the institution as a way to determine who should get access to the finite and specialized resources available to address homelessness. The categories of chronicity and vulnerability are those that are used to make these determinations. Chronicity is defined by the length of someone's homelessness but is also imbued with the understanding that if someone has been homeless for longer than six months they may be experiencing more complex issues that require the support of a housing worker or Intensive Case Manager to help them find and maintain housing. Vulnerability is an institutional categorization that takes into account an individual's VI-SPDAT score as well as whether they are sleeping outside, which puts them at additional risk of death from exposure. The institutional understanding of vulnerability as defined by the City of Peterborough's (2019) matrix also takes into account whether someone is experiencing tri-morbidity (co-occurring mental health, physical health, and substance use challenges) and whether they are a youth or a senior. When I asked about why the categories of chronicity and vulnerability were chosen as those that would be used to prioritize clients for resources, Andrea explained:

> For us it was attached to being committed to ending chronic homelessness. So in order to be able to do that we have to be using that [chronicity] as a matrix or a data point. I think also evidence would suggest that individuals that are chronically homeless might need more supports to be housed or stay housed on-going. And if we've got these

> really high ICM (Intensive Case Management) or support services but very few of them, how do we then figure out how to connect those individuals?

The authorized or institutional knowledge about the VI-SPDAT and the prioritization matrix is that it supports objective knowing and consistent decision making so that the highest needs clients can be connected with the very limited high-needs supports.

This decision-making process is also discussed as a mechanism for providing non-judgemental, fair services. It is "literally a mathematical decision" (Erin) that determines who gets access to a specialized resource. There is little room for individual workers to impart their judgements about clients into the process. This allows those who are highly vulnerable or have exhausted their sheltering options to actually be prioritized for resources. This is a shift that Reaching Home (Government of Canada, 2019) describes as "service providers going from delivering services to clients they know to clients the community has prioritized" (p. 29). Erin explains that the process "essentially takes out all those questions that we think of when we're talking about clients like 'why don't you just do this' or 'why did you make that decision' or blah blah blah and, like you know we're not here to judge; at the end of the day, the answers to those questions don't matter and they shouldn't matter from a Housing First stand point".

The experience of frontline workers in working with clients subject to this decision making process is that there are inconsistencies in the way that vulnerability is captured by the institution. Some frontline workers expressed that the language around fairness and objectivity is a way to justify not being able to house every one that is experiencing homelessness and that the conception of fairness was developed without consulting those with lived experience of homelessness who may have different ideas about fair and just distribution of resources. Workers described experiences with clients in which real vulnerabilities were not captured by the institutional metrics.

One vulnerability that is not considered by the prioritization matrix is the vulnerability of fleeing gender-based violence. Sarah spoke about a client who was a victim of human trafficking:

> "For example, the individual who's been trafficked for 3 years. There's nowhere to highlight that onto her SPDAT or onto HIFIS or the BNL 'hey this poor girl was just traumatized oh and her abuser is getting released from prison this month' she needs to be top priority over somebody else. So not fair to her but I'm assuming myself and 10 other workers in the community could voice that they have someone that's just as high needs as my client."

The VI-SPDAT does include one question that asks about exploitation. Answering a 'yes' to this question would result in a point towards the total VI-SPDAT score but is not made a priority in any other way in the homelessness system. While the risk of harm at the hands of a past abuser is real and would be intensified by a lack of adequate housing, this is not taken into account by the prioritization matrix. Other informants talked about vulnerabilities created by the colonial and heteropatriarchal system such as being Indigenous or LGBTQ2S+:

> We know someone who is Indigenous is much more likely to be homeless and have a harder time getting housed, someone who is trans, we don't see that as vulnerability in how we officially rate someone. I don't understand that because there is all kinds of research around that. Even the fact, I was just working with someone who is trans, a couple weeks ago, who really couldn't access, like shelter access was virtually impossible, because we don't have anywhere that's great for someone who is trans. So I don't know. How we set vulnerability seems selective in what makes someone vulnerable in our system and what makes them not (Christian).

Informants also spoke about the ways that being charged with a sexual assault makes clients vulnerable in ways that are not captured by the prioritization matrix. Christian stated, "You know even someone charged with a sexual offense is much more vulnerable when they're homeless…that's going to be the person who's most likely to get beat up in shelter, going to be targeted, those sorts of things. That's a really vulnerable group that wouldn't affect the system's decision making."

The institution pays selective attention to the actualities of everyday experience and identity that make someone vulnerable. Administrative staff within the system spoke about the purpose of understanding vulnerability as preventing death. Preventing death is only explicitly mentioned as an aim of coordinated access and housing first policy in one of the documents I analyzed. However, the emphasis on tri-morbidity in the VI-SPDAT as well as the prioritization matrix and the administrative staff's explicit mention of this aim highlights the institutional priority of preventing a specific type of death related to homelessness. Erin told me:

> Again, we're just trying to look at how close to death someone is to be quite frank…And at the end of the day we can't help everybody today we just don't have the resources to fix everyone's problems today. So how do we choose between person A and person B, who's going to die first? It's just like a really, it's hard to think of it that way but that's what we're doing. Who needs it more. At least that's the way that I perceive it.

The emphasis on preventing death from homelessness was echoed by Andrea. Andrea explained that the use of a standardized tool and matrix for prioritization allows the system to know and serve those who are most likely to die from their experience of homelessness rather than those who are best known to the system or have workers who are strong advocates.

> And then I think the vulnerability piece again is based on evidence from other communities or Orgcode's work in the sense of, we have very few resources available and being able to have some sort of matrix or data to make sure that were prioritizing those individuals as opposed to 'I work at OW and I'm just going to keep calling Katie until someone gets in.' Whereas Erin could be out in the community and not have a worker but is probably maybe more likely to die of her experience of homelessness in that moment. So I think that's what we're hoping. Those two factors combined increase someone's likelihood of dying, of their experience of homelessness (Andrea).

The institutional understanding of vulnerability is focused on a particular kind of vulnerability. Recall the way that Corman and Melon (2014) explain the ways in which the triage system used in hospital emergency departments is used as a tool of institutional interests. They state, "what becomes known is limited by the conceptual frames that are deemed institutionally important while other ways of knowing are ideologically captured / closed, considered 'irrelevant' and are not *counted* when it comes to resource allocation" (Corman & Melon, 2014, p. 170). In the same way, the VI-SPDAT is used by frontline staff to capture a particular kind of vulnerability that is focused on whether the client is experiencing multiple disadvantages. This priority is also outlined in Reaching Home (Government of Canada, 2019). The VI-SPDAT inserts the institutional interest of having a standardized and quantifiable way of making decisions based on likelihood of death from experience of homelessness. Aspects of people's identity and experiences that make them vulnerable such as Indigeneity, LGBTQ2S+ identity, racialized identity, being convicted of sexual assault, or having experienced gender-based violence create real risks of harm and violence and yet are not captured or considered priority by the homelessness response system. A strategy of New Public Management is evident here in the necessity of creating an objectified

account of a client's 'needs.' This account may not necessarily reflect the embodied experience of vulnerability at the frontline but it allows the institution to make decisions about how limited resources should be prioritized based on the likelihood of death. This collection of data on the frontline hooks clients and frontline staff into the institutional interest of demonstrating need through reliance on the objectified and quantifiable accounts of homelessness.

Erin explains how the coordinated access system has made it possible to consistently monitor progress on the reduction of homelessness. Erin compares it to the previous way of working when the division engaged in evaluation less frequently in her statement, "Are we doing what's required? Sure. Could we do better? Probably. And that's not only happening once every year when we have to re-do our budget and that's the big difference I think." In this way, the work of frontline staff to create objectified accounts of experiences of homelessness which are then aggregated into data that can be managed and tracked hooks into the institutional interest of reducing population specific homelessness. All levels of government have the quantifiable data that can demonstrate tangible reductions in the most visible and extreme forms of suffering as evidence that investments are being used strategically. While this is an important aim, the consequence of a sole focus is that it creates an individualizing relationship between the state and those experiencing homelessness that is based on need and not a relationship of responsibility to citizens as rights-holders.

One additional consequence of knowing people experiencing homelessness through the lens of vulnerability is that they are not given the opportunity to view themselves as rights-holders. Tammy explains:

> One of the things that is important to us is knowing what people's gifts and skills are and I think that that's an important conversation to have from the beginning and it isn't

> part of any of the paperwork or conversations that you're asked to have with people. In my experience it just helps folks to start to imagine that they could be helpful or that they deserve housing or that there is somewhere in the future for them that there they are housed and they're helping to fix a broken door or something.

Tammy explains the way that institutional knowledge of experiences of homelessness, that is solely focused on needs and vulnerability, does not capture the positive aspects of clients' identities and does not support them to imagine themselves as being housed. What is understood at the institutional level as an opportunity for continuous improvement and monitoring of progress is experienced at the frontline as a reduction of experience to the category of vulnerability. In the context of healthcare reform in the province of Alberta, Corman and Melon (2014) describe the consequences of this focus in their statement, "These reform and restructuring practices objectify and generalize the work of those on the front line, making what they do the object of continuous quality improvement in the domains of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of care, based on objectified forms of information" (p.152).

5.12. Tent City: Whose Evidence Matters?

The consequence of this objectified understanding is explored in a discussion of a flashpoint that was raised by informants around the criminalization of homelessness in Peterborough through the passing of a By-law in 2019 that allows homeless encampments to be cleared. The authorized knowledge of homelessness in Peterborough, generated from objectified accounts of people's housing status, shelter space, and vulnerability, was used to criminalize and violate the human rights of people in encampments.

The issue of choice was explored in the interviews with informants. City staff explained that the system needs to improve the options that are available for clients. If a client is selected for

a program spot their choice is limited to accepting or refusing the spot. If they do refuse the spot they can maintain their position on the By Name List. Sam, a shelter manager, explained what this looks like from the client perspective:

> A youth might actually prefer to live in our 12 plex and identify that they don't want high intensive support but because their name comes through the BNL and that's where it's lined up, that's the offer they're going to get. They're not going to get offered the Abbott House [a program with less supports] or whatever. They're going to get offered the high acuity program …there's no choice in terms of where they're going to start, it's start in this program here or you find something in the private market.

Sam is describing the process by which clients are prioritized for housing through the coordinated access system. Clients will only be offered the supports that align with their suggested score regardless of what their preferences might be. The issue of client choice was also raised in the context of clients having the ability to choose with whom they live. One City, an organization that operates housing outside of the coordinated access system, developed an alternative process in response to client frustrations about not being able to choose whom they live with. One City offers housing based on making sure the prospective tenant is a good fit with the existing tenants in the house and allows them to lead the tenant selection process. This process allows for more autonomy of current tenants than the coordinated access system but may not address the lack of available housing and support options to meet clients' preferences.

The issue of choice was embedded in the large tent city that emerged in the summer of 2019. After a local shelter called the Warming Room closed residents, with nowhere else to go, gathered in a downtown park for the duration of the summer. Christian, Executive Director of the

former Warming Room, now called One City Peterborough, explained the way that tent city allowed the residents the opportunity to create community and choice in whom they lived with. Christian told me, "Some of what we heard at tent city was that what worked about it is that people were able to select who they lived with even though it was in tent communities. I mean you know in tent city itself there was various communities within where people huddled together. And we heard over and over again individuals saying we don't ever get say in who we're housed with." The way that homelessness and the solutions to homelessness are understood by the institution do not account for the totality of the experience of homelessness or the experience of being housed. In Tammy's discussion of the objectives that are being measured by the system, she stated that the system examines the number of people who are housed:

> But whether that person like felt safe in their housing or was even sleeping there at night or returned to shelter like those numbers were never connected…It needs to be a lot more than getting people housed but getting people housed in a way that's going to help them improve their wellbeing and a place where they feel safe, so I think that it's crucial that those are also our objectives and not just get people out of the shelter system.

The objectives measured by the coordinated access system are abstracted from the objectified accounts of people's housing status, shelter space, and priority within the prioritization matrix. In the summer of 2019, this institutional story was used to pass the "Parks and Facilities By-law" that prohibits any person from being in a City park between the hours of 11:00 pm and 5:00 am (City of Peterborough, 2019). The By-law also prohibits erecting or being within a structure, hut, or tent (City of Peterborough, 2019). Non-compliance with the By-law can result in a fine of up to $10,000. While City officials attempted to create alternative solutions such as an

overflow shelter, councillors were still met with delegations from residents of the tent city stating that they had nowhere else to go. Local media coverage quoted residents of tent city explaining why the overflow beds being offered did not work for them, particularly if they were using substances (Peterborough Examiner, 2019). Christian explains the way that the data collected for the coordinated access system was used to create a public dialogue about tent city that ignored what the residents of tent city were asking for.

> I think we can look at during tent city last year and look at the language the city used while implementing coordinated access. These things are happening at the same time, and the first thing that happened was, you know HIFIS and all those things are a part of coordinated access and they use that to say to the media, there are 20 empty beds and yet all these people are camping they're just saying no to it. So that was to delegitimize the voice of those that are experiencing homelessness. That information that they gathered through HIFIS, and the BNL was used to delegitimize what they were saying. But they didn't give all the information because we also know because most of those beds were Cameron and YES beds [designated for women and youth]. And most of the people that were outside were men that couldn't use those beds. And so they used that information under the guise of objective knowledge to turn the community against people, against those that are experiencing homelessness and delegitimize their voice and then criminalize it by passing the by-laws.

The By-law has continued to be used as a mechanism to clear encampments. A downtown encampment was recently cleared while city councillors stated at a November 25th, 2020 council meeting that people staying there had alternative places to stay and most were there to use drugs

(Joelle Kovach, twitter communication). These instances are a demonstration of the way that experiences of homelessness get worked up into an account that justifies the clearing of encampments. People's experiences are captured by the institution, inflows and outflows are measured, and shelter beds are tracked. This official data about homelessness does not include the experiences of people who are homeless or even the frontline staff who work with them.

This series of events highlights the question of the data and evidence that matters. While the administrative informants outline the strides that have been made in the arena of outcome measurement, accountability, and progress towards ending homelessness, the informants on the frontline describe the ways in which their knowledge and the experiences of those who are homeless are subverted. Christian talked about the way that the outcome measures being used are not accounting for the structural issues that contribute to homelessness and the consequences of a narrow focus. He stated,

> Without having conversations around how much people are getting on social assistance, the rising economic inequality, all those sorts of things, this is just as much a band aid as anything else. So will it end homelessness? I don't think so. Say this year compared to last year someone might be able to look and say I think homelessness is down. We know that's not the case. It's just a lot of people hiding right now because the City criminalized sleeping in parks. So, people are hidden now. So we can pretend, but let's not pretend like things are way better…I think the goal of efficiency and reducing costs and not actually doing major changes to the system is sort of what's happening. I don't want to say people haven't been housed by it and I don't want to understate that, but I think there is damage being done by it as well.

While people with lived experience were included in consultations during the development of the *10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan* and *Reaching Home: Peterborough's Homelessness Plan,* the documents analyzed did not provide evidence of ongoing engagement or leadership of people experiencing homelessness. What the institution of homelessness response knows about homelessness and successful housing is based on a mathematical calculation. Tracing the way that homelessness gets worked up by the institution has revealed the way that the mathematical calculations involved in the system can be used by downtown business owners, concerned citizens, and city councillors to subvert the interests of those experiencing homelessness. Tent city made the homelessness crisis in Peterborough visible to those who were not previously aware of it. It also suggested that we need to be considering "what is it that people are looking for, what does successful housing look like, who is it that has less access to it, and how do we begin to address those things that allow for more of a voice from those who are [experiencing homelessness]" (Christian).

5.13. Interviews with Service Providers Conclusion

This study began from the standpoint of frontline workers who work with people experiencing homelessness. The work that occurs here is coordinated from the standpoint of those occupying managerial and administrative standpoints. Through interviews with people occupying both standpoints, I discovered the disjunctures between the institutional discourse about coordinated access and the way that those on the frontline experience it. The homelessness response system in Peterborough exists in the context of misaligned Provincial policies and legislation at odds with the local goal of ending chronic homelessness. I also found disjunctures in experiences of vulnerability that are not captured by the logic of the institution, and the favouring of the official understanding of homelessness that discounts the experiences of those

who are homeless. These disjunctures cohere to suggest a problematic wherein which, frontline workers are hooked into the ruling relations of New Public Management through the work of translating experiences into institutionally knowable formats.

I noticed instances of contradiction that were described by both frontline and administrative staff between what the coordinated access system purports to do through policy discourse and how it is used to subvert the interests of those experiencing homelessness, as well as those working in the system. The consequence of this subversion is that the system, that is understood by those administering it to be that which is the key to ending homelessness, is co-opted by the interests of capital. The system creates an individualizing mechanism that addresses the most extreme forms of suffering but does not provide a pathway for ending homelessness. The consequences of the way that homelessness is abstracted by the institution is a lack of choice and a favouring of the institutional knowledge that has allowed for the criminalization of homelessness and the violation of human rights in Peterborough.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This section provides a discussion of the policy analysis and interview findings to answer the research questions that were posed at the outset of this study. I begin by summarizing the findings of the policy analysis and interviews, followed by a response to my research questions. This section will also address the limitations of this research and proposes direction for future research. This project did not take a racial or gender equity approach or specifically explore how racial and gender inequities are produced and reproduced by the local homelessness response system. While informants described the impacts of a system that does not account for the vulnerabilities associated with being racialized, Indigenous, or LGBTQ2S+ in a racist, colonial, and heteropatriarchal system, this research did not set out to explicitly explore these dynamics. I point to scholars who have begun this work and suggest that future research explores how anti-racist and decolonial approaches can be taken to address homelessness locally.

Finally, this section will provide recommendations for future research and changes to the local system based on the suggestions from interview informants on how to disrupt the ruling relations at play. These recommendations include: the implementation of a decision making framework that considers both strengths and vulnerabilities of people experiencing homelessness as well as the structural conditions that subject racialized, Indigenous, and LGBTQ2S+ people to homelessness, the implementation of a human rights based approach including a mechanism through which people experiencing homelessness can realize their right to housing, and the embedding of lived expertise leadership in the homelessness system.

6.1. Summary of Findings

The network of policies that directs work to address homelessness at the local level proposes coordinated access and the introduction of an outcomes-based approach as solutions to

homelessness. Working backwards from these policy propositions, as Bacchi (2009) suggests, the problem of homelessness is represented as one of fair, objective, and accountable public resource management at the local level. The "boss texts" of the National Housing Strategy and National Homelessness Strategy set up an institutional circuit in which vulnerability becomes the way that homelessness is addressed at the local level. The Federal policies define the institutional interest of reducing chronic homelessness which is accomplished through the assessment, categorization, and prioritization of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. While the policies analyzed mention the right to housing and the implementation of a rights-based approach, the relationship that is set up through the framing of homelessness as an issue of vulnerability is not a relationship that allows for the collective or individual realization of the right to housing. The focus on vulnerability is a translation of homelessness into an account that can be worked into a cost-benefit analysis (Evans et al., 2016). This exemplifies the marketized relationship between state and citizens that is characteristic of the neoliberal state restructuring that disperses responsibility for social welfare to local governments (Clarke & Newman, 2006). The findings from the policy analysis suggest that New Public Management, as a relation of ruling, is evident in the way that homelessness is problematized as an issue of effective public resource management.

Interviews with administrative and frontline staff in the local homelessness response system highlighted the disjunctures between the authorized understanding of coordinated access and the way it is experienced on the frontline. Coordinated access is understood by the institutional discourse as the key to ending chronic homelessness, as a step towards ending all homelessness. Administrative staff expressed their intention and desire to end homelessness but acknowledged the limited capacity of coordinated access to achieve this aim in the context of limited housing and support resources and conflicting Provincial program mandates. Interview analysis provided

additional evidence to the policy analysis findings that suggest that coordinated access is a strategy of New Public Management that supports the institutional interest of creating objectified accounts of homelessness in a way that can be worked up as responsible government expenditures. The institutional discourse that describes the system as a fair and objective decision making process, is challenged by experiences of frontline staff that describe the structural conditions that are not accounted for by the system. The ruling relation of New Public Management can be traced from the frontline activation of the VI-SPDAT triage tool to the administrative staff's activation of the prioritization matrix that determines who should be served next and why, to the policy framework that emphasizes addressing the homelessness of only the most vulnerable Canadians. Interview informants' description of the conditions that lead to the emergence and clearing of a tent city in the summer of 2019 provide another example of the way that the ruling relation of New Public Management operates in the homelessness response system. A tent city, that emerged after the closure of a local shelter, highlighted the system's inability to accommodate client choice and a reliance on the authorized account of homelessness. The authorized account provided evidence for the enactment of the Parks and Facilities By-Law that criminalized the occupation of parks between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Through the coordinated access system, experiences of homelessness are captured and quantified, leaving out the voices of those who are homeless and the frontline staff who work with them.

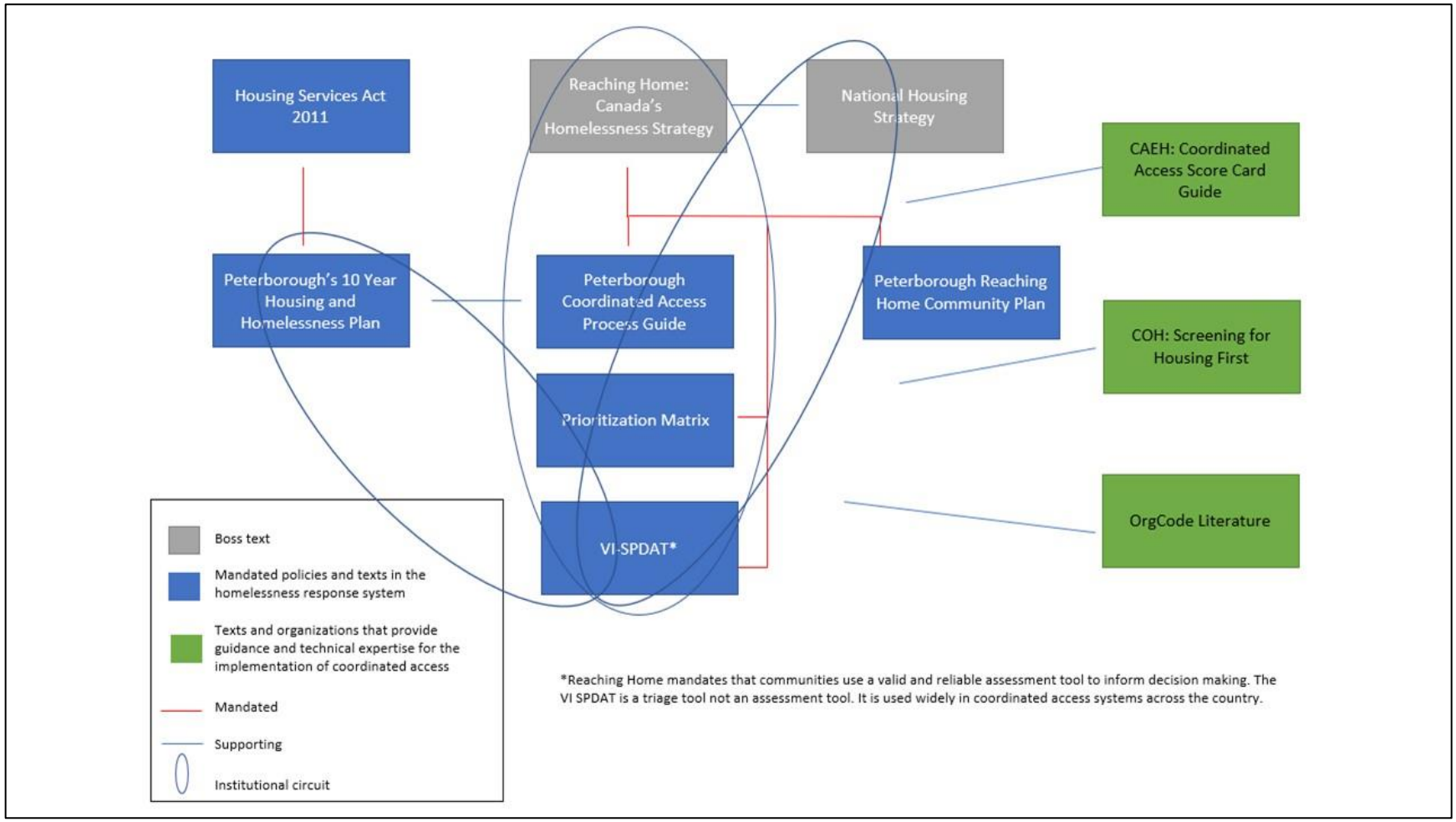
6.2. Addressing the Research Questions

Question 1: What are the texts and textual technologies that are currently used to coordinate access to homelessness systems at the Federal, Provincial (Ontario), and Municipal (Peterborough) levels?

Smith (2005) states that creating a map of the ruling relations that operate within an institution is one of the objectives of Institutional Ethnography. The texts that coordinate work to address homelessness through the coordinated access system in Peterborough are primarily Federal policy directives, despite the majority of funding for homelessness programs coming from the Province. Federal texts set the goal of reducing population specific homelessness and mandate the implementation of coordinated access and an outcomes-based approach. The Province of Ontario mandates that municipalities develop 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plans but does not require specific targets.

I discovered the institutional circuit of vulnerability that is set up by Federal directives and implemented through local process guides and assessment tools. Federal directives outline the goal of addressing homelessness for the most vulnerable Canadians, subsequently setting up the frame through which homelessness is addressed at the municipal and individual level. Federal, Provincial and Municipal texts contribute to an institutional circuit that coordinates work to capture and prioritize homelessness according to the institutionally knowable category of vulnerability. By setting up the frame of vulnerability through which homelessness is addressed, the Federal government disperses responsibility to the most individual and local levels. A visualization of this process is shown in Figure 1: Policy Map, that follows on the next page.

Figure 1. Policy Map



Question 2: In what ways do these texts and technologies organize themselves in relation to one another, and as instruments of power that coordinate the actions of those within the system?

The texts and technologies analyzed cohere to address homelessness as an issue amenable to the New Public Management strategies of effective resource use through assessment, prioritization, and outcome measurement. As solutions, these approaches problematize homelessness as an issue of fair and objective decision making, prioritizing vulnerability in the context of limited resources, and providing a means for ensuring local accountability. As instruments of power, the texts direct the work of local staff within the system to translate experiences of homelessness into quantifiable accounts. The texts create an authorized knowledge of homelessness that is made up of the objectified accounts of each individual's experience. Locally, this authorized account subverts the interests of workers and people experiencing homelessness.

As a strategy of New Public Management, coordinated access is the "institutional hardware" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 389) that disperses and solidifies the responsibility for addressing homelessness at the local level. The National Homelessness Strategy and National Housing Strategy provide the directives, mandating communities to implement systems to support constant self-monitoring on progress towards the reduction of chronic homelessness. However, these directives are not accompanied with adequate funding. Each interview participant highlighted the contradiction between what the system purports to do and what it is able to do in the context of limited housing and support resources.

The consequence of an under resourced system is that only the most extreme forms of suffering can be addressed, those that are deemed able to help themselves must resolve their own homelessness, and the tools used to decipher who is most vulnerable do not account for structural

inequalities. The mechanism through which homelessness is acted upon at the local level is through the demonstration of extreme need or vulnerability to death. The texts organize themselves in relation to one another in an institutional circuit that sets up "selective attention" to homelessness as an issue of vulnerability. This attention is further focused by the VI-SPDAT and prioritization matrix that place particular emphasis on the vulnerabilities associated with physical health, mental health, and substance use challenges. These particular vulnerabilities, referred to as tri-morbidity, attempt to assess an individual's likelihood of dying as a result of their homelessness. While deaths associated with homelessness should be prevented, this highlights what is missing from the institutional definition of vulnerability. The structural conditions that make someone who is racialized, Indigenous, or LGBTQ2S+ more likely to experience homelessness are not addressed or counteracted by the institutional of homelessness response despite the research that highlights the uniqueness of these experiences (Cronley, 2020; Thistle, 2017; Abramovich, 2013). This renders the individual responsible for demonstrating need or resolving their own homelessness, if they are not deemed vulnerable enough. While rights-based approaches also address the needs of the most vulnerable first, they are accompanied by a framework that empowers rights-holders and obligates the state to address the collective right through positive actions that maximize available resources (United Nations, 2020). This includes addressing the unique needs and the structural barriers of groups who have been subject to structural violence and discrimination (United Nations, 2020). The Report of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing states "'Housing first' programmes, for example, may reduce homelessness among persons with disabilities, but they need to be supplemented by adequate social protection programmes, barrier-free design, access to affordable housing options and measures to ensure that persons with disabilities are reasonably accommodated by housing providers" (United Nations, 2018, p. 7).

Coordinated access follows the neoliberal logic that public spending is inefficient and must be closely accounted for. As a strategy of New Public Management, coordinated access focuses on the efficient resolution of homelessness for the most vulnerable, and sets up a framework for measuring the success of that intervention making the local government responsible for the efficient delivery of services and reduction of homelessness. In Nichols and Doberstein's (2016) edited collection of research on systems responses to homelessness, they suggest that communities have limited capacity to end homelessness without structural and material support. The authors state:

> It is also evident that efforts to improve service delivery coordination at the community level will not end homelessness. The chapters in this collection illustrate the high level structural or technical supports that implicate funders, governments and policymakers in the resolution of homelessness in Canada (Nichols & Doberstein, 2016, p. 519).

The texts and technologies associated with coordinated access operate as an instrument of power to facilitate the downloading of responsibility for homelessness to the local level through selective attention to vulnerability which allows the local system to address only the most visible and extreme forms of homelessness. Other researchers have pointed to the tendency of homelessness policy, specifically Housing First policy, to make targeted and marginal interventions into homelessness (Evans et al., 2016; Naimen, 2020). Coordinated access, as the latest iteration of homelessness response, continues to frame homelessness as a resource management issue, without adequately resourcing communities to address it.

Question 3: How do the frontline workers, whose actions are organized through coordinated access texts and textual technologies, describe the experience of working within a system of social organization that is (re)produced through the identified ruling relations?

Administrative staff are energized and passionate about ending homelessness but describe an intergovernmental context that is uncoordinated and under-resourced. This context results in the municipality and community organizations being made responsible but not adequately resourced for the task. Other informants described the disjuncture between their accounts of their clients' vulnerabilities and what the system captures, and the way in which the authorized knowledge of homelessness obscures the experiences of those living it. These workers also described the necessity of having *a* system for making decisions about limited resources, but expressed concern about what is missing from the decision making texts and processes. These disjunctures, as described by interview informants, highlighted the ruling relations of objective decision making, evaluation, and capturing vulnerability which cohere to suggest a strategy of New Public Management that is evident in coordinated access policy.

6.3. Limitations of the Study

This research did not explicitly address the racial inequities produced by coordinated access that have been highlighted by other scholars (Wilkey et al., 2019; Cronley, 2020; Bomberrry et al., 2020). While participants highlighted what happens at the frontline when the institution does take an explicitly anti-racist or decolonial approach, this research did not set out to explore the racial inequities reproduced by the system. What can be highlighted is what is known at the frontline about texts and policies that do not address the unique strengths and vulnerabilities of being a racialized or Indigenous person in a racist, colonial system.

Reaching Home specifies that Designated Communities must report on Indigenous homelessness (Government of Canada, 2019). The research of Bomberry et al. (2020) was developed in response to this directive with the understanding that experiences of homelessness for Indigenous peoples differ from the experiences of settlers and that responses to homelessness

must address the ongoing colonization and racism that contribute to and perpetuate disconnection from land, culture, and community for Indigenous peoples (Thistle, 2017). The Indian Act 1876, residential schools, and the ongoing crisis of the child welfare and justice systems have systematically converged to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their territories and created homelessness for Indigenous peoples (Bomberry et al., 2020). Bomberry et al. (2020) highlight the ways that the homelessness system is complicit in the reproduction of homelessness for Indigenous peoples. A system that does not partner with Indigenous peoples to explicitly address their needs ignores and therefore erases the way that the system itself is implicated in the production of homelessness. Bomberry et al. (2020) emphasize that partnership building between mainstream and Indigenous service systems is integral to addressing homelessness and that this process must be involve ceremony, trust-building, and a sense of humility and respect.

Bomberry et al. (2020) provide recommendations for supporting local Indigenous communities to design approaches to homelessness in the context of coordinated access. While the results of their research found that coordinated access is not aligned with Indigenous values, they suggest "rather than 'Indigenizing' coordinated access, where Indigenous values, knowledges, and traditions are used to infuse culture into coordinated access procedures, current coordinated access procedures should be modified to align with Indigenous values, knowledges, and traditions" (p. 20) through meaningful engagement and partnership building. Recommendations include adequately resourcing models that support Indigenous leadership, increased funding for Indigenous housing stock, and addressing the racism that exists in the systems that Indigenous peoples interact with. Another integral component that is missing from the Reaching Home Directives and local policy is data sovereignty or stewardship (Bomberry et al., 2020) The authors warned of the state's history of using data to control Indigenous peoples and state that the OCAP

(Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) principles need to be integrated into coordinated access process including providing communities with the resources necessary to execute these principles (Bomberry et al., 2020). Regarding racial equity, Wilkey et al. (2019) recommend that a community specific racial equity analysis be performed to identify racial inequities in local coordinated access systems. Part of this analysis includes addressing whether the identities of those accessing services are reflected in those delivering services, ensuring that service providers are trained in cultural competence, and embedding a racial equity framework in system leadership (Wilkey et al., 2019).

The current project highlighted what is known on the frontline: that the texts associated with coordinated access do not capture the full picture of clients' experiences. Interview informants described experiences of working with clients with vulnerabilities related to being an Indigenous or LGBTQ2S+ person that were not acknowledged by the system. The consequence of a system that seeks to efficiently capture and quantify client needs through the frame of vulnerability is that both structural inequities and clients' strengths and gifts are missed. Future research should continue to explore how to address the structural inequities that make Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQ2S+ people more likely to experience homelessness as well as the ways that the homelessness response system can eliminate the ways it reproduces these inequities.

6.4. Opportunities for Future Research and Local Recommendations

Orgcode's withdrawal of support for the VI-SPDAT tool presents an opportunity for doing coordinated access differently. As a system that is imposed by the Federal government, the Municipality has limited flexibility in the implementation of the system itself but can begin to imagine an approach that accounts for homelessness differently. Informants discussed the need to develop approaches to fair resource distribution with people with lived and living experience of

homelessness in a way that incorporates more client choice. It is important to note that any text that is used to create an objectified account of experience on the frontline is an activation of a ruling relation or institutional interest. The use of a different tool will not necessarily disrupt the institutional interest of assessing and prioritizing clients through a textually-mediated decision making process that rationalizes the distribution of scarce resources. Recall that Campbell and Gregor (2002) ask us to consider "whose interests are being met and whose interests are being subjugated by ruling practice" (p. 38) that takes place through textually-mediated and so-called objective decision making. An opportunity for further research and investigation is to explore how the interests of people experiencing homelessness can be embedded in the design of decision making processes for homelessness resources.

As a Federally mandated approach, Designated Communities must implement coordinated access to receive Federal funding. Coordinated access could be optimized by ensuring the system is engaged in fulsome evaluation practices. To address the concerns about the vulnerability of different priority groups that was raised by interview informants, the community should conduct a racial and gender equity review that includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators to determine whose needs are unmet by the coordinated access system. Bomberry et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of partnership building to ensure that unique local needs are met. Similarly, At Home Chez Soi demonstrated the utility of taking a location-specific approach in developing a program designed to meet each community's needs through partnership building (Goering et al., 2017). Building equitable partnerships requires that each partner is adequately resourced, equipped to participate, and that their perspectives are respected (Bomberry et al., 2020). In the Peterborough context, this means dedicating the resources necessary to support the leadership capacity of people with lived experience and grassroots advocates. This could involve

training and compensating people with lived experience in data analysis and qualitative evaluation practices to build local evaluation and advocacy capacity. This would require making more data-sets publicly accessible. There is a dearth of qualitative metrics in the coordinated access approach. To address the concerns raised by interview informants about how the system measures progress, qualitative indicators and opportunities for feedback from system participants and frontline service providers should be developed. These recommendations can help to build external accountability mechanisms and support Designated Communities navigate their role as local advocates and Federal funding recipients.

The City of Peterborough should work towards the realization of the right to housing at the local level. The Right to Home Municipal Working Group provides recommendations that include increasing the interjurisdictional transfer of funds to cities so that they are adequately resourced to end homelessness through supportive housing and deeply affordable housing development (Right to Home, 2020). The recommendations also address the issues of financialization and require that spending be evaluated based on human rights outcomes (Right to Home, 2020). The implementation of an approach that is adequately resourced would negate the need for prioritization. Rather than an institutional circuit of vulnerability, selective attention could be paid to the ways in which homelessness is a violation of human rights. In addition to requiring adequate resources, a rights-based approach condemns the criminalization of homelessness (United Nations, 2020). Interview informants not only spoke about how coordinated access contributed to the passing of the local bylaw that criminalizes homelessness, they also spoke about the ways the bylaw makes it more difficult to reach people that are sleeping rough because they are hiding. To know whether the system is serving the most vulnerable people, it should not further marginalize people out of sight and reach. To address the concerns of local informants about the safety and

rights of those experiencing homelessness and to meet the system's goal of prioritizing the most vulnerable for available resources, the City of Peterborough should repeal the Parks and Facilities By Law.

I have referenced rights-based approaches throughout this thesis both because they are proposed by the policies analyzed and because they are an alternative to the current frame through which homelessness is understood. But rights-based approaches are not without their drawbacks particularly when the implementation of the approach relies on the state and market-based interests (Bay-Palmer, 2016). Taylor et al., (2020) explore the lack of progress towards ending homelessness in the context of the right to housing in France that provides legal recourse for those whose rights have been violated. The authors highlight that the political will to address homelessness in Finland, that is underpinned by the principle that housing is a right, has been more successful than the approach that directs resources to enforcement of the right in France, in part because of the existing social infrastructure. Taylor et al. (2020) conclude by discussing the market forces that constrain housing supply, facilitate housing being used as an investment, and emphasize the need for rights based approaches to be accompanied by approaches that address the financialization of housing. This is to suggest that a rights-based approach, while useful for shifting the frame through which homelessness is currently addressed, is not a silver bullet solution to homelessness and must also be accompanied by regulation of the housing market (United Nations, 2020; Taylor et al., 2020).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Through this thesis I set out to explore why coordinated access is the approach to homelessness response in Peterborough and how coordinated access influences the way staff within the system work with people experiencing homelessness. I situated the project in the conceptual framework of neoliberalization, New Public Management, and homelessness governance. New Public Management, as an instrument of neoliberal state restructuring, imports business sector strategies into the public and social sectors. Through an emphasis on accountability, efficiency, and outcomes measurement, New Public Management ensures public spending can be rationalized, and facilitates the downloading of responsibility for social welfare to local governments (Clarke & Newman, 2006). Research on homelessness governance has highlighted the ways that homelessness policy has followed suit in the framing of the issue as one of public resource management.

Through an analysis of Federal, Provincial, and Municipal policies and texts produced by homelessness industry juggernauts, I discovered the frame through which homelessness is addressed. Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable is set out as a priority by the Federal housing and homelessness policies. This institutional circuit is activated at the frontline through the use of the VI-SPDAT, at the administrative level through the prioritization matrix, and at the policy level through the Coordinated Access Process Guide, all of which support the understanding of homelessness as an issue of vulnerability. While the texts analyzed all mention the principle of housing as a human right, the mechanisms for addressing homelessness are not mechanisms for realizing the right to housing. This frame, as a strategy of New Public Management, is the way that homelessness spending is accounted for and rationalized. It supports addressing homelessness

at the margins (Naimen, 2020) but, without adequate housing and support resources, does not substantively address homelessness in Peterborough.

Interviews with frontline informants and administrative staff revealed the disjunctures between the authorized institutional understanding of homelessness and how it is understood on the frontline. Informants talked about the frustrations of working within a misaligned intergovernmental context that is both uncoordinated and underfunded. Administrative staff talked about the value of being able to closely track progress towards reducing chronic homelessness through the implementation of coordinated access. However, the experience on the frontline is that clients are often assessed as needing a particular support resource but not enough of those resources exist. This highlights the disjuncture between the desire to end homelessness, and what the system is set up to do: assess and prioritize for the most vulnerable not expand the number of resources available. Informants also highlighted the way that the system is set up, through the frame of vulnerability, and how it prevents people experiencing homelessness from being able to imagine themselves as rights-holders. Informants were interested in the ways that the system could re-orient itself to account for people's strengths and gifts in a way that would support them to imagine themselves as housed and deserving of housing. Finally, informants highlighted a critical example of the way that the authorized understanding of homelessness through the coordinated access system was used to subvert the interests of residents of an encampment that arose in the Summer of 2019. The abstracted accounts of people's experiences, their sleeping location, and their needs were used in the passing of a By-law that criminalizes homelessness. These points of contradiction, between what the system purports to do and what it accomplishes, highlight the institutional interest of addressing the homelessness of the most visible and vulnerable. Each interview informant demonstrated their passion, dedication, and care for people experiencing homelessness

in Peterborough but their desire to end homelessness is met with lack of resources and an individualizing institutional circuit of vulnerability that does not provide a mechanism for ending homelessness in Peterborough.

The principle of housing as a human right is mentioned throughout Federal and Municipal policy documents. A meaningful implementation of the right to housing involves the cooperation and commitment of all levels of government (United Nations, 2020). While right to housing is not the only component to ending homelessness, the implementation of institutional processes that allow people experiencing homelessness to view themselves as rights-holders, and the positive approaches to addressing collective housing need through market regulation and social housing investment can shift the frame through which homelessness is addressed. Through a rights-based approach the City can become a partner of community members experiencing homelessness in the pursuit of the realization of the right to housing and not just the resolution of the most extreme and visible forms of homelessness.

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Appendix 1: List of Policies Analyzed

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Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Administrative Staff:

Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities. First I would like to ask you some questions about your role within the homelessness system.

1. Can you describe your role as it relates to addressing homelessness?

2. What policies direct your efforts to address homelessness? What documents or policies direct your work on a daily, monthly, yearly basis?

3. How are decisions about housing and support resources made? Walk me through what that looks like.

Section 2: Assessment and Prioritization. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about assessment and prioritization as a part of the coordinated access system.

4. Why was the VI-SPDAT adopted as the standardized assessment tool? (As opposed to other assessment tools)
   a) What does the VI-SPDAT achieve?

5. When is the VI-SPDAT conducted? By whom? What resources and future activities depend on the VI-SPDAT?
   a) Once the VI-SPDAT is filled out, what do you do with it?

6. When you are looking at a VI-SPDAT that's already been filled out what are you looking for when reading it?
   a) What information does the VI-SPDAT give you?
   b) Why is this information important?
   c) Is there any information that is missing from the VI-SPDAT assessment that would help your work?

7. What is the purpose of the VI-SPDAT? How would you change the process / form if you could?

8. How does the VI-SPDAT inform your thinking?

9. Fairness and objectivity are mentioned a lot in OrgCode literature, and throughout Reaching Home. How does the coordinated access process deal with the issues of fairness and objectivity?
   a) Why are objectivity and fairness something that is important to the delivery of homelessness services?

10. Why is prioritization necessary?

11. Why is vulnerability the category that is used to determine how resources are distributed?
    a) Can you describe what vulnerability means? What might someone who is highly vulnerable need?

Section 3: Outcome Measurement. Next I'd like to ask questions about how outcomes are being measured.

12. Prior to coordinated access and standard outcome reporting, how were communities measuring and reporting on progress?
    a) What outcomes, in addition to the ones required by Reaching Home, has Peterborough chosen to work towards?
    b) How were these outcomes chosen?
    c) How do these outcomes support the Housing First philosophy that recognizes housing as a human right as mentioned in Peterborough's Process Guide?

13. The Coordinated Access Process Guide sets out the goal of ending chronic homelessness. Built for Zero states that coordinated access is the first step to ending all homelessness.
    a) Can you explain how the implementation of coordinated access locally will lead to the end of homelessness?
    b) How does coordinated access lead to the resolution (rather than the management) of homelessness as stated in the Guiding Principles of the Coordinated Access Process Guide?

Section 4: Coordinated Access and Available Resources. The last set of questions I'd like to ask pertain to the resources available to address homelessness in our community.

14. How is the responsibility for addressing homelessness shared between Federal, Provincial, and municipal governments?

15. How has the availability of resources to address homelessness changed in the context of COVID-19?

16. Peterborough's Reaching Home Community Plan outlines how resources are allocated to the 5 activity categories laid out in Reaching Home. The activity categories are: housing services, prevention and shelter diversion, client support services, capital investments, and coordination of resources and data collection. An (almost) equal amount of funding was designated to each category except capital projects to which no funds were allocated.
    a) What was the decision making process to determine how to allocate funding?
    b) If Reaching Home requires that communities implement coordinated access how much funding is left for the other eligible activities?

c) The Coordinated Access Process Guide states that the system is dedicated to expanding the inventory of housing and support resources. What staff resources are being dedicated to expanding housing and support inventory vs. operating the coordinated access system?
d) Page 18 of the Coordinated Access Process Guide states that 'by developing a By Name Priority List we will be able to advocate for policy and resource changes'. What advocacy efforts have been taken since the development of the By Name List? What future advocacy efforts are planned? What are some barriers to advocacy?

17. How has coordinated access changed the delivery of homelessness and housing services locally?

    a) How does coordinated access policy influence your work?
    b) How is this policy intended to impact individuals experiencing homelessness?

18. Is there anything that I didn't ask that I should have?

Front Line Staff:

Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities. First I would like to ask you some questions about your role within the homelessness system.

1. Can you describe your role as it relates to addressing homelessness?

2. Walk me through what your work with someone experiencing homelessness looks like?
    a) Can you explain your step by step process for securing housing with/for them?
    b) Has this changed since the implementation of the coordinated access system?
    c) How has this changed in the context of COVID 19?

3. How are decisions about housing and support resources made? Walk me through what that looks like.

Section 2: The VI-SPDAT. Next I'd like to ask you some questions about how you use the VI-SPDAT

4. How do you use the VI-SPDAT?

5. When is the VI-SPDAT conducted? By whom? What resources and future activities depend on the VI-SPDAT?
    b) Once the VI-SPDAT is filled out, what do you do with it?

6. When you are looking at a VI-SPDAT that's already been filled out what are you looking for when reading it?

d) What information does the VI-SPDAT give you?
e) Why is this information important?
f) Is there any information that is missing from the VI-SPDAT assessment that would help your work?

7. What is the purpose of the VI-SPDAT? How would you change the process / form if you could?
8. How does the VI-SPDAT inform your thinking?

Section 3: Coordinated Access. The last set of questions I'd like to ask are about the coordinated access system as a whole.

9. What is achieved by using the VI -SPDAT as part of the decision making process for housing and support resources? Who's interests are served?

10. Can you describe what vulnerability means in terms of how you work with someone, what they might need?

11. Why is prioritization necessary?

12. Has the coordinated access process changed your work? Changed the way you work with people? How?

13. Fairness and objectivity are mentioned a lot in OrgCode literature, and throughout the Federal homelessness policy, Reaching Home. How does the coordinated access process deal with the issues of fairness and objectivity?

14. Why are objectivity and fairness something that is important to the delivery of homelessness services?

15. Is there anything I didn't ask you that I should have?