

UNDERSTANDING THE FLOW OF URBAN INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

Examining the movement between treaty 7 First Nations and
Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care



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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Summary	4
Chapter 2: Framing the Research in Critical Context – Gabrielle Lindstrom	13
Introduction	13
Traditional Perspectives	20
Disruption of Traditional Value Systems	34
Literature Review	38
Current Issues and Future Pathways	50
Conclusion	59
Chapter 3: How do Housing Need, Supply and Conditions Contribute to Indigenous Homelessness? – Steve Pomeroy	61
Introduction	61
Brief review of literature on Indigenous homelessness	62
Assessing Indigenous housing need in Calgary	66
Treaty 7 First Nations Consultation	73
Interviews with individuals with lived experience in the homeless-serving system.....	79
Summary and implications.....	80
Chapter 4: The role of Income Assistance – Nick Falvo	83
Canada’s On-Reserve Income Assistance Program.....	84
Benefit levels	89
Pre-Employment Supports	90
Emerging themes	92
Policy recommendations	95
Conclusion	97
Chapter 5: The Role of Jurisdiction – Jodi Bruhn	108
Introduction	108
The Jurisdictional Divide: An Artifact of Colonialism	109
A Living Artifact: Housing, Homelessness and Income Assistance	111
The Homelessness and Housing of Indigenous People in Calgary	121
The Way Forward: A Self-Determined Approach.....	125
Appendix A: Engagement Strategy – Gabrielle Lindstrom	130
Introduction and Purpose.....	130
Ethical Guidelines for Engagement	134

Protocols	136
Interpreting the Data	141
Outreach Activities	142
Sustaining Continuous Engagement	144
Conclusion.....	146
Protocols	148
Appendix B: Institutions Serving Indigenous Homeless in Calgary	150
Indigenous Service Agencies	150
Indigenous Emergency Shelters and Supportive Housing	151
Mainstream Organizations that also serve the Indigenous Homeless Population.....	152
Permanent Affordable Housing	153
Bibliography	155

Chapter 1: Introduction and Summary

In 2018, Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) received a generous five-year donation from Jenny Belzberg and the Belzberg Family to conduct applied research. After discussion of possible topics, CHF determined that it would like to understand factors contributing to the flow of people between Treaty 7 First Nations and Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care. The planned project would explore factors relating to housing need, supply and conditions; the role of income assistance; and the role of jurisdictional barriers. All papers would examine their respective questions in two contexts: both within the First Nations communities and within the City of Calgary.

In December 2018, a team comprised of Steve Pomeroy, Allan Moscovitch (later replaced by Nick Falvo) and Jodi Bruhn were awarded the contract to complete the research. Their proposal added a fourth research paper, to be written by Blackfoot scholar Gabrielle Lindstrom, that could frame the others within a perspective based in Treaty 7 worldviews. Lindstrom would also develop a robust engagement plan to guide the project. Written from a First Nations perspective, the plan addressed the ethical considerations and Indigenous protocols relevant to research engagement with Treaty 7 First Nation communities, including the notion of creating an “ethical space” of engagement between distinct Indigenous and non-Indigenous value systems. The engagement strategy illuminated many of the concerns First Nations hold regarding a lack of meaningful consultation on the part of researchers, as well as an overall lack of inclusion in discussions that are of direct relevance and concern to their communities. Promoting awareness of the ways Western research has been conducted on, rather with, First Nations communities assisted the other members of the project to prioritize respectful and culturally appropriate engagement during all stages of the research—an important endeavour given the project team members' varying levels of experience working in a First Nations research context.

As further preparation for the research, all members of the research team took an online course offered by the First Nations Information Governance Centre on the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®). The researchers took care to observe the OCAP® principles in executing the plan, sharing early drafts of their research with both participating Treaty 7 First Nations and an advisory committee that included representatives of the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre.

On their completion, the papers were consolidated as the four chapters of this manuscript. The engagement plan that informed the research work appears at the end of this manuscript as Appendix A. The manuscript also includes an overview of institutions serving Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness as Appendix B. The content of the four chapters is briefly summarized in the following pages.

Chapter 2: Framing the Research in Critical Context (Gabrielle Lindstrom)

The first chapter provides a critical context to the overall research project. Its author, Gabrielle Lindstrom, is a member of the Kainaiwa First Nation who now also lives in Calgary where she is an Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies at Mount Royal University. Her contribution foregrounds the three pathways to homelessness studied here, with the aim to show how Indigenous homelessness is as much conceptually oriented as it is a material condition. This chapter draws on scholarly and grey literature as well as on data gathered from conversations with urban and reserve service providers within the Indigenous homeless-serving system.

Lindstrom's methodology is inspired by Indigenous scholar Willie Ermine's (2007) concept of "ethical space." When research takes place in Indigenous communities, the communities and the researchers must establish an ethical space by working together to engage in, and jointly 'own' the research, so that it benefits the communities. Lindstrom establishes the ethical space for this research by engaging with both Western ideologies and Indigenous philosophies; this engagement establishes a conceptual framework that ensures that an Indigenous perspective foregrounds the analyses and interpretations of the subsequent research chapters. The ethical space allows us to move beyond a "solutions-focused" framework, to a model of dialogues centred on value systems for strategizing ways to address Indigenous homelessness.

The chapter also uses an anti-colonial conceptual framework. This means that this chapter confronts the many ways that Treaty 7 people's lives, values and beliefs have been disrupted by colonialism—a disruption which continues to this day. Studying jurisdiction, housing, and income assistance without taking into account our colonial history, would give an incomplete picture of Indigenous homelessness (and weaker tools to address it). An anti-colonial theoretical framework offers a way to understand these factors in relation to the continuing impact of our colonial history on the Indigenous homeless population. This chapter highlights the tensions that pervade Indigenous-state relationships, and connects these tensions to the homelessness of Indigenous peoples.

The Framing chapter also illuminates the equivalencies of housing, income assistance, and jurisdiction within the traditional value-systems of Treaty 7 First Nations. This kind of values-based analysis is rarely found in government and organizational reports. It gives us a lens to help understand the homelessness of Indigenous peoples in urban centres, in ways that significantly inform the other papers. Indigenous cultures are not static; the chapter highlights how these value systems, disrupted by colonialism, have evolved to become unique adaptations of contemporary Indigenous culture. Unpacking how Indigenous values ebb and flow from traditional, pre-colonial ways of knowing to the current Western context is critical to understanding the migration patterns of Treaty 7 Indigenous peoples between reserves and Calgary. This 'revolving door' phenomenon is reflected both in the literature and in the perspectives of Indigenous service providers working within the homeless-serving systems on reserve and in the city.

Although the intention of the chapter is not to offer any directives, Lindstrom does outline opportunities that should be considered in the context of this project's overall aims:

- **Include informed First Nations** researchers in research design in ways that would ensure the problems being defined are relevant to band members.
- Consider the **co-creation of a framework**, in collaboration with Indigenous knowledge-keepers/Elders, that would ensure that Indigenous community-based solutions around urban transition models for success, are both heard and supported in non-Indigenous social and governance systems.
- Create an **on-reserve curriculum** that develops the capacity to incorporate Western values of property ownership and financial wellness while still ensuring a place for Indigenous cultural values.
- Ensure that strategic plans to address Indigenous homelessness are deliberately embedded with **anti-racism policies** as one way to tackle the multidimensional aspects of ongoing colonization.

The Framing chapter concludes by highlighting issues for consideration in relation to the three components of this project; housing, income assistance, and jurisdiction.

Chapter 3: How do Housing Need, Supply and Conditions Contribute to Indigenous Homelessness? (Steve Pomeroy)

The chapter by Steve Pomeroy, a non-Indigenous housing policy analyst, examines how prevailing housing conditions on reserves may contribute as a push factor in stimulating flows away from reserve communities. It also explores the housing challenges experienced by Treaty 7 individuals and families moving from reserve communities as they seek to secure safe and affordable housing in Calgary, and how these challenges might contribute to their homelessness.

Building on Lindstrom's framing analysis, Pomeroy first reviews how Indigenous and settler perspectives conceive of housing and homelessness differently. The chapter then confirms that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented among households experiencing housing problems—and especially so for issues of overcrowding and poor condition. It also confirms a disproportionately high representation of Indigenous people in the shelter population.

By contrast to high Indigenous housing need and homelessness rates in Calgary, there is very limited stock of housing that is owned and managed by Indigenous organizations and offered exclusively to Indigenous individuals and families. The 2016 Census identified over 2,300 Indigenous households that were in core housing need in Calgary. In addition, more than 3,000 Indigenous individuals were experiencing homelessness. Despite this, Indigenous housing providers operate only 273 homes for Indigenous residents in the city – although non-Indigenous providers also house Indigenous persons.

While poor conditions and lack of sufficient housing on-reserve work as push factors into homelessness, there is also a substantial lack of affordable, appropriate housing options for Indigenous families and individuals when they arrive in Calgary. The high cost of housing

and the lack of housing options in Calgary leave many Indigenous people vulnerable to unscrupulous slum landlords, and contribute directly to their falling into homelessness.

The research on understanding the flow of Treaty 7 people from reserve communities into the homeless-serving system included two qualitative components: interviews with Treaty 7 First Nation housing administrators and shelter operators, as well as interviews with individuals with lived experience. All First Nations reported a significant waiting list (ranging from 40 families to over 300 families in the three Stoney Nakoda communities, to upwards of 400 in each of Siksika, Piikani and the Blood Tribe-Kainaiwa). Many units – as many as 65% to 80% of homes in some communities – were reported to be in need of substantial repair.

A key feature of First Nations housing is the varying perspective on housing as a treaty right. Some Treaty 7 First Nations indicated that their members believe housing is a right and feel that it is the Canadian government's obligation to support First Nations in providing tribal members with housing at no cost, whereas other First Nations charge rents. This decision, this chapter argues, has significant consequences from a cost/benefit perspective. First Nations that take a treaty right view are beholden to federal funding to build and maintain homes; decades of limited funding have created a large backlog and left many homes in disrepair. Further, as Falvo notes in Chapter 3, Income Assistance recipients in First Nations that do not charge rents (to any members) are not eligible to receive the shelter component of the program. By contrast, First Nations that do charge rent have revenue streams both from tenants and via Income Assistance shelter payments to help fund construction and repairs.

A further consequence where no rent is charged is that First Nation members may be unfamiliar with conceptions of tenant responsibility that prevail in the city (such as adhering to rent conditions, number of occupants, and paying rent in full and on time). Thus, when they move into the city, and contravene these western colonial norms, many are evicted. This initiates a spiral of decline and inability to secure housing – ultimately ending in and perpetuating homelessness.

The overall insight from the interviews with those with lived experience was that few had an interest or desire to move back to First Nations communities. This was due to a combination of concerns centered around lack of opportunity for work and income, exposure to drinking, drugs and violence, and in some cases to lateral violence (especially for those not raised in the reserve community). Most sought instead to find safe and affordable housing in the city, combined with supports to help them find and retain employment there. In Chapter 1, Lindstrom offers insight into issues that lead to the breakdown of urban Indigenous households. As noted, however, there is a severe lack of safe, affordable housing opportunities for them in Calgary.

Given that a flow of individuals away from First Nations and into the city is expected to continue, the chapter recommends managing that flow and pro-actively supporting more successful transition into the urban community. To this end, it recommends two sets of actions:

1. Options to reduce risk of homelessness and reduce the flow of Treaty 7 individuals and families into Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care:

- **Improve and expand** community treatment and post-treatment housing resettlement options within reserve communities.
- Create an **educational rental readiness program** for individuals considering moving into the city, so that they better understand the rules and obligation of "mainstream" tenancy.
- Explore other options (for example, Habitat for Humanity's Indigenous Housing Partnership and with other non-profit housing organizations) to **support housing construction**, whether on- or off- reserve.
- **Review rent-setting practices in the context of treaty rights** versus the reality of securing funding to repair and build on reserve. Currently, where rent is not charged, potential revenues are forgone.

2. Options to create and expand Indigenous transition housing in the city:

- **Create Indigenous-specific transitional facilities.** There is currently only a small amount of Indigenous transitional housing that enables migrating individuals to move into the city. Entry into the shelter and homeless-serving system could be reduced if such Indigenous-specific transitional facilities could be created, potentially in partnership with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary.
- **Create/expand additional Indigenous housing providers.** There are few Indigenous providers of permanent housing in Calgary. It is critical to expand these options by creating additional Indigenous housing providers, or expanding the capacity and stock of the existing First Nations-led non-profit housing providers, such as Treaty 7 Non-Profit Housing Corporation.
- Given that expanding Indigenous provider capacity will take time, it may be beneficial to **create an education/awareness program for "mainstream" housing providers** who also house Indigenous individuals and families. This could increase awareness of issues of transitioning from reserves among mainstream social housing providers.

At a broader advocacy level, it would be valuable for Calgary Homeless Foundation and the City of Calgary to urge the federal government to develop and implement, under the National Housing Strategy, an **urban Indigenous housing strategy** to reinstate and expand funding to Indigenous housing organizations. These could then fund expansion of the stock of homes dedicated to serving Indigenous households in cities.

Chapter 4: The Role of the Federally-Funded Income Assistance Program (Nick Falvo)

Much homelessness research provides insufficient attention to income assistance, even though it is known to have a major impact on both housing affordability and homelessness. The chapter by Nick Falvo, a non-Indigenous research and policy consultant, seeks to better understand the band-administered income assistance program overseen by Canada's federal government—specifically, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). It also seeks to better understand the role of that program in contributing to homelessness in Calgary.

The methodological approach used includes engagement with Treaty 7 First Nations and a literature review. It also includes interviews with officials delivering Income Assistance in Treaty 7 First Nations, former Income Assistance recipients currently accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector, and federal officials knowledgeable about Canada's federally-funded, First Nation-administered Income Assistance program. A total of 26 individuals were interviewed for this chapter.

The chapter begins with a brief history of income assistance for First Nations in Canada. Each First Nation administers an Income Assistance (IA) program funded by ISC. Drawing on interviews with both ISC officials and staff of Treaty 7 First Nations now delivering IA, the chapter provides an overview of the current income assistance framework designed and funded by ISC, as well as of the Pre-Employment Supports Program, a relatively recent policy innovation involving active labour market strategies and available at the time of writing only in select communities. The chapter then turns to the experiences of persons from Treaty 7 First Nations who are currently accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector. Themes generated from the interviews are discussed, followed by policy recommendations with the aim of reducing homelessness in Calgary.

The research finds that Canada's On-Reserve IA Program aligns very closely with provincial and territorial social assistance systems. The Pre-Employment Supports Program, however, is a relatively recent innovation. After an assessment for IA, a client deemed to be highly employable will be referred to Pre-Employment Supports (provided that the First Nation in question offers it). Pre-Employment Supports provide significant funding for training, targeted at specific individuals. ISC expects that, within one year, 70% of Pre-Employment Supports participants will be placed in either employment, training by other bodies, or education (which can include upgrading, trades, vocational training, university or college).

Staff in Nations with the Pre-Employment Supports Program expressed unequivocally strong support for this initiative. Prior to it, they were limited to \$500 per client per year for work-related assistance; with Pre-Employment Supports, they are allocated 10 times that amount – or approximately \$5,500 annually for training and education per eligible client. In spite of Pre-Employment Supports, though, it remains very challenging to find employment in First Nations communities. Even clients finding success with Pre-Employment Supports typically have to leave their community to find work.

This chapter has the following four major findings:

1. Income Assistance does not appear to be a major factor leading to members of Treaty 7 First Nations seeking services in Calgary's homelessness sector.
2. The factors that do lead to First Nations people accessing services in Calgary's homeless-serving sector are complex (they include unemployment, gang activity and violence).
3. The Pre-Employment Supports initiative has been popular and well-received among Treaty 7 First Nations.
4. A lack of publicly-available data makes it challenging to fully scrutinize outcomes pertaining to either IA or Pre-Employment Supports.

In light of these findings, the chapter recommends **more public reporting by ISC** of outcomes. With better public reporting, public officials, advocates, and researchers could look at short-term, medium-term and long-term trends for each Nation, while also comparing and contrasting trends across the Nations. The chapter also recommends the **extension of Pre-Employment Supports** to all First Nations communities and **more generous transition assistance**. Indeed, in cases where a person has confirmed work in an urban setting, it would be helpful to have more assistance for such things as first month's rent and damage deposit.

Chapter 5: The Role of Jurisdiction (Jodi Bruhn)

Jurisdictional barriers are regularly cited as a primary reason why municipal officials and urban agencies do not work together with First Nations to address factors leading to the homelessness of First Nations members. The chapter by Jodi Bruhn examines the contribution of jurisdiction and jurisdictional barriers to the homelessness of Treaty 7 people in Calgary – and potential ways that collaboration among jurisdictions could help them leave that system.

Bruhn is a non-Indigenous researcher from the Prairies, now a consultant in Indigenous-Crown relations in Ottawa. Her chapter draws on research addressing services for Indigenous people who live in Canadian cities, as well as on interviews with representatives of Treaty 7 First Nations, the City of Calgary, the federal government, and staff at local homeless shelters and urban Indigenous organizations. A final source has been the other chapters of this manuscript – particularly the framing chapter by Lindstrom. As with Lindstrom, Bruhn takes the approach that “culture matters,” and that it is important to discern the ongoing presence of our colonial past in how we pose policy questions.

The chapter first addresses Canada's Constitution. How did the jurisdictional divide between federal and provincial governments surrounding “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” help to ensure the separation of First Nations peoples from emerging white settlements? Section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* provides the national legislature with authority not only to conclude treaties with First Nations, but also to pass laws *over* Indians – both collectively as bands and as individuals. The *Indian Act* has been much criticized as an outdated colonial instrument, but the exclusive federal authority to legislate over “Indians and

lands reserved for Indians” often goes unnoticed as an artifact of colonialism. As land was cleared for settlement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the division of powers foresaw two alternatives: protection of First Nations people as wards on pockets of land “set apart,” or assimilation. Few foresaw a future when First Nations people would live beyond reserve boundaries *as Indigenous people*, or when provincial or municipal governments would interact with them as such.

Since 1867, the jurisdictional divide of Indians from settler society has been cemented by successive laws, policies and institutions. Collectively, these contribute to a symbolic and attitudinal divide that continues to “other” First Nations people who live in cities. Research participants for this project attest to a culture shock for First Nations people who relocate to Calgary, due in part to racism of landlords, the attitudes of some fellow reserve members, and the many differences between reserve and city life.

Next, the chapter examines how the jurisdictional divide continues to pervade services to First Nations people in the housing, homelessness and income assistance sectors. Federally funded initiatives still fall into categories of “on” and “off-reserve,” and remain marked by federal ambivalence about the boundaries of its jurisdiction over Indigenous people. Social housing could be seen as another area of federal ambivalence, where the authority for housing is not enumerated as a power in the Constitution. Federal involvement in the sector has ebbed and flowed since the 1940s.

Reviewing the program landscape for Indigenous peoples in housing, homelessness and income assistance, the chapter finds four key features. The first is *scarcity*, with significant shortages of affordable housing both on- and off-reserve. The second (largely positive) feature is a growth of Indigenous service institutions after the early 1990s, forming an “invisible infrastructure” that is able to plan and deliver services in new, culturally relevant ways. A third feature is *competition for funds*, both among First Nations band governments and tribal councils and among urban-based service providers. A fourth feature, finally, is *lacking coordination* across the Section 91(24)/92 jurisdictional divide. There is a further lack of coordination among departments within a single order of government. These still typically operate in silos—despite the “wrap-around” care that vulnerable clients experiencing homelessness have been shown to require.

Specific to Calgary, the chapter reviews local research addressing why Indigenous homelessness persists in the city, despite an overall reduction of homelessness since 2008. As with the national context, the Calgary-based research also notes a chasm in the perceptions of the reserve and the city – as well as a need for cultural supports to help Indigenous people experiencing homelessness feel Calgary as “a place to belong.”

Overall, despite a sense of general improvement in the capacity to serve Indigenous homeless clients over the past decade, this project’s interviews also leave a sense that much work remains to be done. If urban agency leaders and staff – beginning with CHF – seek a better understanding of conditions on reserves, developing effective working relationships with their reserve-based counterparts would seem needful.

Recommended next steps focus on creating a forum grounded in the right to self-determination. This, the paper argues, is the appropriate counter-measure to the colonial cast that still prevails in existing laws and institutions. Discussions around jurisdiction usually focus on which order of the Crown is “responsible” for delivering services to First Nations people. By contrast, Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples would recognize *three* distinct jurisdictions of equal standing: federal, provincial/ municipal and the rights-bearing First Nations, recognized in Sections 91, 92 and 35 of Canada’s Constitution respectively.

This chapter recommends therefore the development of a **tripartite table** that would include representatives of Treaty 7 First Nations, the federal government, and City of Calgary (bringing in CHF and representatives of the Province of Alberta as warranted).¹ The table would provide a Treaty 7-specific framework to address issues of shared concern. **Federal participation would be key** to reaching formal, results-oriented agreements featuring core commitments to report on jointly-identified indicators.

The chapter concludes with five further recommendations:

1. CHF and its Indigenous partners could promote **awareness-building** among all parties responsible for addressing Indigenous homelessness in Calgary on how the prevailing jurisdictional divides and disputes reinforce a status quo based in colonialism and on promising approaches to counteract it.
2. Recognizing the right of self-determination in service delivery, a **Treaty 7 First Nation lead or leads** could bring forward to the tripartite table issues of concern that contribute to the homelessness of members of Treaty 7 First Nations living in the city.
3. Realizing that concerted effort is required to engage across the city-reserve divide, the City could develop **an Indigenous engagement strategy** including a targeted Treaty 7 First Nation engagement component for housing and homelessness issues.
4. The parties on the tripartite table should address **power, knowledge and capacity imbalances** as they arise, through initial measures like the funding of joint research, or exchanges of staff, to see some of the challenges on the other side of the reserve/city divide.
5. The Treaty 7 tripartite table could **chip away at unhelpful silos**, taking care to build in the flexibility required to bring in various sectors on given initiatives. Active involvement of Treaty 7 Elders at such a table could ensure both respect for protocol and a focus on holistic approaches.

¹ This table would not replace the current Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, which has long worked to strategize ways to mitigate Indigenous homelessness in Calgary.

Chapter 2: Framing the Research in Critical Context – Gabrielle Lindstrom

Introduction

In attempting to understand how the nature of urban Indigenous homelessness is experienced by Indigenous people and the factors that contribute to homelessness, one must understand the ways colonization has disrupted the equilibrium of First Nations to the degree that a great majority of communities and individuals have yet to recover from these impacts despite the fact that colonial/settler societies have been well-established in the area of what is now Treaty 7 for at least one hundred and fifty years. Indeed, no exploration of current First Nations issues would be complete without challenging the colonial narrative – a narrative which tells a story of Indigenous peoples in ways that are less about historical truths and contemporary realities and more about justifying power over Indigenous communities and individuals. Utilizing an anticolonial theoretical lens, this paper will offer an in-depth analysis of the historical, political, and social context of the First Nations that entered into Treaty 7 with the Crown. In addition to this, the paper draws on Treaty 7 community perspectives as well as relevant literature which contribute to a deepened understanding of the issues which are of direct relevance to this project. The devastating impacts of colonization are best understood from a First Nations perspective in order to get a sense of the more nuanced and subjective aspects of colonization and how these are embedded within communities. Thus, a standard analysis that reduces colonization to a historical, event-driven phenomena does little to add to the deeply layered ideological components of colonization that remain as a relevant factor in the lives of Indigenous peoples today.

Researcher Self-Location

Positioning self in the context of the research is part of Indigenous research protocols that highlights “the importance for Aboriginal researchers to write about themselves and their positioning within the world at the outset of their work as a promise that the research will not take place without the trust of the community” (Kurtz, 2013, p. 218). Nitaniiko Tsapinaki. My name is Gabrielle Lindstrom (nee Weasel Head). In undertaking this collaborative research project, I bring to bear both my life experiences as a Blackfoot woman born and raised on the largest Indian reserve in Canada, Kainaiwa First Nation, otherwise known as the Blood Tribe, as well as my positioning as an academic and scholar of Indigenous Studies, educational research and Adult learning to inform this research. Having been both directly and indirectly impacted by homelessness in the past and currently, the research approach I have taken for this paper is directly intertwined with who I am as a Blackfoot person. Having the honor of walking in both worlds, I have personally been affected by the devastating impacts of colonization, searched for meaning and identity in my own life and have found renewed purpose in academia and community research endeavors. My goal is to create an ethical space in which dialogue and cross-cultural respect can be fostered. I am aware of the challenges but also inspired by the

potential opportunities for growth and learning that are made possible through a reciprocal research process that is both rigorous and premised in respectful relationship building.

Organization of the Paper

Although this project is concerned with specific aspects related to urban Indigenous homelessness and some of the factors that originate from Treaty 7 communities, specifically jurisdiction, housing and income support, these components of the research are all related and should not be understood in isolation from one another. This paper will foreground the other topic areas and is divided into four major sections.

The first section will offer an overview of traditional cultural practices, perspectives and philosophies prior to colonization which will not only provide significant insight into the lifeworlds of the First Nations but also illuminates the disruption that colonial ideologies and Euro-settler customs, beliefs and values caused in the cultural and environmental equilibrium the Treaty 7 First Nations had established for thousands of years. Moreover, I offer a discussion of the complexities of the distinct tribal worldviews that blanket the Treaty 7 territory and how these worldviews influence how home is conceptualized and how homelessness experienced. This section will also seek to illuminate how the components of this project, (i.e. housing, income assistance and jurisdictional issues) were conceptualized and embodied in traditional worldviews and how they are enacted in current contexts.

The second section will provide an analysis of the colonial ideologies and subsequent policies that were imposed on the Treaty 7 First Nations. This analysis is vital because it not only acknowledges the devastating impacts of colonization as an event in time, but also as a force which has overwhelmed Indigenous lifeworlds and is constantly transforming and re-inscribing power differentials in the relational arrangements between Indigenous and settler-society. Moreover, tracing the policies of dispossession and assimilation demonstrates the disregard that the Canadian government has shown towards Indigenous peoples as a historical phenomenon and one that is deeply embedded in systems' approaches to solving the "Indigenous problems" today. As Indigenous scholar Margaret Kovach (2010) states, exploring the history and context of colonial impacts on Indigenous peoples from an Indigenous perspective involves "acknowledging an Indigenous cultural worldview and identity, which has long been a site of contention in this land. It is about recognizing the unique situation of Indigenous people that differentiates this group from other minorities" (p. 158). For the purposes of this study, understanding this history within a distinct tribal worldview offers a direct connection to how these policies and social structures live in the lives of Indigenous today and how they may contribute to Indigenous homelessness within a framework of Indigenous self-determination.

The third section will provide an analysis and synthesis of relevant literatures as it relates to the Indigenous homelessness in Canada. The literature contributes to the framing paper by offering deliberate connections to the Indigenous paradigms of the distinct Treaty 7 First Nations, the impacts of colonial policies on cultural practices and the current state of Indigenous homeless in the City of Calgary. Whenever possible, scholarship written from an Indigenous perspective will be privileged because it corresponds to the goals of Indigenous

research as grounded in self-determination (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2012), aligns with the OCAP™ (First Nations Information Governance Centre [FNIGC], 2014) and offers a voice of direct experience which is in keeping with an Indigenous epistemology (Bastien, 2004).

Informed by data gathered from a focus group conducted with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary as well as a consultation dialogue with Piikani First Nation, the final element of the framing paper offers an analysis of the current state of issues in the Treaty 7 First Nations communities and how these may translate to an urban context. A focus on some of the more commonly examined phenomena that are clear entry points to homelessness such as Indian Residential School experiences, the 60s Scoop, traumas, addictions and systemic oppression serves to highlight how colonial thought-systems are embedded in today's social and economic structures and are a constant impingement on the lives of Indigenous peoples. Importantly, this section also emphasizes the continued perseverance and strength of the Treaty 7 First Nations in the face of ongoing colonization.

As indicated earlier, this framing paper will serve to contextualize the three other components of this project: the housing, income assistance and jurisdictional analyses. Additionally, by including various First Nations and urban Indigenous voices, it offers a complex dimension to the overall research and provides significant insight into how these components are connected to the experiences of urban Indigenous peoples in the City of Calgary. These insights strengthen the research findings and subsequent recommendations that will not only benefit the CHF's approaches but will ensure that the First Nations communities' will also benefit from this research. Hence, the protocols embedded in Indigenous research and the OCAP™ Principles are maintained with respect to respectful and reciprocal relationship-building powered through Indigenous self-determination. Moreover, the paper employs an Indigenous research methodology based on Ermine's (2007) conceptualization of the ethical space.

Methodology

The methodology for this paper aligns with Indigenous research ethics and protocols and as such, employs an approach that aligns with an Indigenous paradigm. Utilizing the concept of the ethical space as envisioned by Ermine (2007), as well as incorporating methods that are consistent with Indigenous research with respect to data gathering methods and data analysis techniques, ensures that the fundamental principles of doing research with Indigenous communities are being adhered to. Although Indigenous scholars have been advancing Indigenous perspectives in research for at least twenty years or more, it is only within the last ten years that Indigenous research paradigms and approaches are being taken up by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers on a global scale. Linda Smith's (2012) seminal work first published in 1999 inspired other Indigenous scholars to articulate their own research protocols based on their unique tribal paradigms and the distinct history their nation may have had with Western research. The foundational assertion that fuels Indigenous research is that research has been weaponized against Indigenous peoples, has taken place without the consent of Indigenous peoples, has advanced Western society's agenda and propelled Western academics' personal advancement without direct benefits to Indigenous

communities, has defined problems according to Western interpretations and has served to perpetuate stereotypes and colonial policies based on exclusive Western understandings of Indigenous cultures (Smith, 2012; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2004).

This list is by no means exhaustive but for the purposes of this particular study, it is important to centralize the idea that Indigenous research is both a reaction to empirical research and is self-determining. It is a reaction in the sense that Indigenous researchers are pushing back against research as a positivist methodology that privileges detachment and “further objectifies populations that have limited power. Results oftentimes privilege voices of those following conventional research practices with academic training in Eurocentric perspectives, likely excluding indigenous ways of knowing and equitable participation in research processes in general” (Snow et al., 2016, p. 358). It is self-determining because Indigenous researchers are advancing the needs and interests of Indigenous communities, are defining problems according to their direct experience with the issues, and incorporating Indigenous philosophical paradigms, ethics and protocols into the research – they are doing research with the communities and not simply on them.

Moreover, Indigenous research is embedded within a relational paradigm. Accordingly, the chosen methodology and methods will conform to this paradigm and ensure that the creation and maintenance of respectful relationships and that the needs of the Indigenous community are centralized. Indigenous methodologies are fluid and dependent upon the nature of the research topic, who is being impacted and the desired outcomes. Given the history of Indigenous and settler relations within Canada, the factors, both ideological and material, that influence Indigenous homelessness, and the three topics up for analysis in this study, utilizing Ermine’s ethical space as a research methodology is well-chosen and has several benefits. At the most basic level, it confronts the historical and contemporary relationships between the Canadian government/mainstream society and Indigenous peoples within a critical, anti-colonial theoretical construct. Additionally, the ethical space offers a framework within which to analyze past and current challenges and envision opportunities for advancing mutual interests based on shared understandings and a willingness to find common ground upon which to dialogue about the issues central to this study. Further, because of the subjective and interpretive nature of what home means, or what it means to be homeless, from an Indigenous perspective, an equally subjective and interpretive research methodology is called for. More than this though, the ethical space fosters criticality around the issue of Indigenous homelessness that is not solely couched in Western neo-liberal or moral value systems that either work to “mainstream” programming or “save” Indigenous peoples from street life. Dialogue around the issues related to Indigenous homelessness requires understanding these issues from multiple perspectives that move beyond the current social rhetoric of strategies and plans, which are important to be sure, but also considers the condition of homelessness as one that is culturally determined and informed by distinct value systems that make “ending” it next to impossible.

Methods

For this paper, I employ a critical anti-colonial theoretical lens (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001) through which I advance discussions, engage communities and interpret the literature and

findings. Anti-colonial theory offers a “discursive framework [for] the understanding of social reality and practices that is understood from the vantage point of the marginalized and subordinated” (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 298). Western research approaches to Indigenous cultures in the positivist tradition have left out the voices of Indigenous peoples but by centering anti-colonial theory, Indigenous philosophies and community perspectives are given equal regard which immediately illuminates the ways that ethics are of significance within the context of this framing paper. In regard to traditional Indigenous values and principles, Ermine (2007) describes, and it is worth quoting him at length, how –

[T]here are those ethical boundaries established by collective principles, such as our knowledge systems, the autonomy of our human communities, or our treaties. This is a heritage from our past that not only informs us of our roots to antiquity and the rights to traditions entrusted to our people, but it also reminds us of what is important in life as we collectively negotiate the future. The spirit of that existence is inviolable, particularly by the actions of other human communities. The sacred space of the ethical helps us balance these moral considerations as we discuss issues that are trans-cultural, or trans-boundary in nature ... With this notion of ethics, and juxtaposed on the broader collective level, we come to the inescapable conclusion about our own agency in the kind of civilization we create to live in. (pp. 195-196)

The above quotation relates to the aims of this paper in both ensuring the transparency and relevance of Indigenous values and aligning with the goals of self-determination. An anti-colonial theoretical lens is well-suited for these purposes.

The data used to inform the discussions were gathered from two sources, a focus group with the homeless outreach team with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary as well as a consultation dialogue with Piikani First Nation representatives. I travelled to both sites in the urban and Treaty 7 areas and all conversations were digitally recorded, with permission, and then transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed in accordance with Indigenous research methods using a relational approach informed by Lakota scholar Vine Deloria’s (1999) conceptualization of relationality in research methods. In keeping with an Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2004), I used this data analysis approach because it better enabled me to consider how the themes emerging from the conversations were all interrelated and prevented a reductionist approach to coding the data. I have successfully employed this data analysis approach in past research so felt confident in mobilizing it again. Rather than relying on a broad sweeping overview of the scholarship, the literature review was focused on an in-depth analysis of a few key sources gleaned from searches of both academic and grey literatures. Much has been written around Indigenous homelessness so rather than simply aiming to include as much sources according to relevance, I chose to concentrate on a close and systematic review of literatures that were organized in accordance with the topics that are central to this research project as a whole.

To reiterate, the methodology and methods used to plan the discussions and organize the paper engage the Indigenous communities and interpret the findings in accordance with an Indigenous research paradigm. My primary goal as an Indigenous researcher is to ensure that I approach this research with integrity, create and maintain respectful relationships,

honour the dignity of those who shared their perspectives with me, uphold transparency and ensure that this work will benefit Treaty 7 communities and Indigenous homeless individuals. Following an Indigenous research paradigm ensures that issues are approached and interpreted from an Indigenous perspective which reduces the risk of misinterpretation and decontextualization especially with regards to traditional, precolonial perspective, a topic that will be explored in the following section. However, before unpacking traditional philosophical perspectives of Indigenous peoples, it is necessary to illuminate the tensions that are entrenched within Indigenous and Western worldviews.

Tensions within Paradigms

Relying on scholarly sources written from an Indigenous perspective, the following subsections provide a high-level analysis of Indigenous philosophical paradigms. Notably, this analysis is not meant to blanket Indigenous worldviews with a cloak of homogeneity, but instead, is meant to highlight some key features of Indigenous values and beliefs as a contrast to the Western paradigm. Thus, interrogating the Western paradigm is a necessary endeavor since our current social, economic, political and cultural contexts are embedded within a taken-for-granted system of thought that emerges from a distinct cultural perspective which does not originate from the lands of what is now called Canada. Indeed, Ermine (1995; 2007) and other Indigenous scholars (Bastien, 2003, 2004, 2016; Cajete, 1994; Littlebear, 2000) have critically problematized the naturalization of the Western knowledge system as a universal ‘God’s eye’ view on reality that suffocates other ways of knowing. Critically understanding the differences between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems not only leads to a more balanced analysis of current social issues, but also recognizes the validity and strength of Indigenous paradigms as sustainable philosophies that advance First Nations rights to self-determination. Blackfoot scholar Littlebear (2000) furthers this understanding in emphasizing:

No matter how dominant a worldview is, there are always other ways of interpreting the world. Different ways of interpreting the world are manifest through different cultures, which are often in opposition to one another. One of the problems with colonialism is that it tries to maintain a singular social order by means of force and law, suppressing the diversity of human worldviews ... Culture comprises a society's philosophy about the nature of reality, the values that flow from this philosophy, and the social customs that embody these values. Any individual within a culture is going to have his or her own personal interpretation of the collective cultural code; however, the individual's worldview has its roots in the culture – that is, in the society's shared philosophy, values, and customs. (n. p.)

In light of Littlebear’s statements above, what must be critically considered is that our current Canadian social context is premised within a distinct cultural philosophy which emerges from the Western paradigm. To be clear, I am critiquing the dominant ideology of individualism which emerged out of a distinct era most commonly known as the Enlightenment period. Flowing from this ideology are commonly held values associated with contemporary nation-state values premised in neocolonial and neoliberal principles which are in direct opposition to Indigenous philosophies and experiences. Concepts such as truth, justice, morality and freedom are culturally determined and it is neither realistic to assume

these can be universally applied nor are they individually experienced in the same ways. Indeed, the values associated with individualism that flow from Western philosophy are entrenched in our governance, legal and social structures which have in turn been imposed upon the Indigenous peoples of these lands. Failures to conform to a Western paradigm are not the failings of Indigenous peoples, but rather are reflective of power imbalances and the social contexts of oppression (Haskell & Randal, 2009) resulting from these conflicting worldviews. Indeed, Ermine (2007) argues:

Currently, the situation, and very often the plight of Indigenous peoples, should act as a mirror to mainstream Canada. The conditions that Indigenous peoples find themselves in are a reflection of the governance and legal structures imposed by the dominant society. Indeed, what the mirror can teach is that it is not really about the situation of Indigenous peoples in this country, but it is about the character and honor of a nation to have created such conditions of inequity. It is about the mindset of a human community of people refusing to honor the rights of other human communities. (p. 200)

These critical perspectives offered by Littlebear (2000) and Ermine (2007) should serve as reminders that situations of poverty, addictions, homelessness and despair within Indigenous communities are complex conditions deeply embedded in historical antecedents relative to colonial impacts which have transformed into current systemic oppressions. Clearly, conditions such as homelessness cannot be reduced to explanations premised solely on Western values. Moreover, Indigenous philosophical perspectives that shape cultural practices must be held to higher degrees of legitimacy that extend far beyond token regard, especially when attempting to address issues pertinent to Indigenous communities.

Although new information is most certainly filtered through cultural frames of reference, humility in learning is a necessary component when attempting to understand another culture's philosophy and practices. However, given the history of Indigenous relations with settler society, humility has not been an element in these arrangements. Instead, paternalistic posturing seems to be the hallmark of the government's approach to First Nations' appeals for recognizing their right to self-determination. To be sure, 'good' intentions on the part of government, lawmakers and social systems do not translate to good outcomes for Indigenous communities. Although these tensions remain, illuminating the root causes of these tensions using a critical anti-colonial theoretical framework ensures that hidden biases and assumptions do not go unexamined or unchallenged. As Ermine maintains, "the norm of Western existence, the norm of its governance, becomes so pervasive in its immediacy, so entrenched in mass consciousness, that the foundations of its being become largely invisible to itself" (p. 199). Indeed, collectively held beliefs about what is considered 'normal' in terms of governance and other social organizing influence individual and systemic biases, judgements and assumptions in specific ways and to such a degree that conditions such as poverty and homelessness become natural outcomes that are justified through neo-liberal rationales that serve to validate existing power imbalances and push Indigenous peoples further to the margins of society. It is not the contention here that personal bias or assumptions are necessarily a bad or negative characteristic of non-Indigenous societal members since bias is deeply ingrained within our subconscious. However, when the ideologies that lay at the root of

these biases and assumptions go critically unexamined, indeed, when they are allowed to fester through denials of their existence, then they become dangerous and lead to the breakdown of relationships and a common human morality that are then replaced by an objective, distanced and static approach to human relationships. What remains certain is that if any true progress is to be made in addressing social problems such as homelessness, then we cannot leave culture as a determining factor out of the equation. Informed by these critical contentions, an analysis of the traditional Indigenous philosophical paradigm serves to center the relevancy of Indigenous self-determination within the context of this project.

Traditional Perspectives

“What we know matters, who we are matters, how we know makes a difference in who we become” (Meyer, 1998, p. 28).

Relying on Indigenous scholarly and community perspectives, this section of the paper focuses on the perspectives and paradigms of the Treaty 7 First Nations prior to colonial encroachment and serves to provide a distinct approach to understanding the interconnected nature of the research components. In doing so, it becomes apparent that understanding First Nations homelessness is best undertaken within a framework that considers how traditional, pre-colonial worldviews have evolved and are oftentimes reflected in the social structures and cultural practices of Treaty 7 First Nations, structures and practices which have not been lost to colonial assimilationist efforts. What is most important to acknowledge when attempting to understand, let alone address, issues pertinent to any Indigenous community are the philosophical paradigms which have shaped Indigenous cultures in unique ways. The philosophies of Treaty 7 First Nations or put another way, systems of thought, must be understood and approached as distinct from Western worldviews. Significantly, Indigenous people are concerned with advancing an understanding of not only what they know, their knowledge system, but *how* they know – essentially, the epistemological foundations of Indigenous culture because it is at this system of thought that Indigenous peoples have been most misunderstood. Since the time of early colonial settlement, First Nations have been trying desperately to convince the Euro-centred political and social systems of thought that culture matters. Indeed, how we experience our culture matters. How others perceive our culture matters. Whether others care about our culture matters. Indigenous peoples are also preoccupied with dialoguing about what it means to be a human being, perhaps it is because, as Indigenous scholar Linda Smith (2012) has suggested, they have such a deep knowledge of what it means to have their humanness defined for them. Ultimately, Indigenous peoples care about advancing an understanding of their humanity because too often they have stripped of it. Hence, the definition of what it means to be fully human is culturally determined and for Indigenous peoples, understandings of what it means to be human emerge from a distinct cultural paradigm that is shaped within a relational epistemology.

While it is widely understood among First Nations that Indigenous cultures have distinct practices, common ground is founded upon shared cultural principles that formed the basis of treaties, peace negotiation, trade alliances and the creation and maintenance of good relations. A cultural paradigm consists of both an ontology, the nature of reality, and

epistemology, how knowledge is created, which form “a set of beliefs about our world” (Wilson, 2004, p. 175) and our place within it. The cultural paradigm for First Nations peoples in North America is embedded within a web of relational alliances to each other and the natural environment. The value of self is conceptualized within these relational alliances out of which emerge cultural values that guide everyday practices – all in the quest to maintain a delicate balance on individual, collective and universal levels. Actions are considered within a ‘cause-and-effect’ framework with an understanding that one’s actions could cause a cascade of ripple effects that could potentially disrupt the environmental equilibrium of these relational alliance. Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. (1999) aptly explains how the words ‘all my relations’ are literally a blueprint for both the philosophical and practical characteristics of First Nations cultures: “[O]btaining knowledge means that we observe the natural world by looking for relationship between various things in it ... everything in the natural world has a relationship with every other thing and the total set of relationships makes up the world as we experience it” (p. 34). Understanding the intricacies of these relational alliances translates to knowing one’s place within this web and the responsibilities that come along with being an active participant in a universe wherein all things are related and imbued with life; all things are alive and we as human-beings are dependent on our relations with the natural elements, the plant and animal people, and the physical environment to sustain us. Additionally, Indigenous peoples learn through direct experience and observation in relationship to self, others and the natural world. Indeed, wisdom is gained through direct experience which is why a great deal of respect and reverence is given to community Elders since they have a lifetime of wisdom and teachings to offer their community.

For Indigenous peoples, being an active participant in one’s universe is complex and although direct experience, observation and relational alliances are components of an Indigenous philosophical paradigm, it also includes connections to the sacred. As Blackfoot scholar Betty Bastien points out (2016), a person’s experiences with the sacred ensures that one’s life is guided through moral and ethical relationships that form a framework that is held intact both individually and collectively through responsibilities, renewal and transfer of knowledge. The notion of sacred cannot be easily defined within a Western philosophical paradigm without equating it to religious dogma often conceptualized within a “good versus bad” or “heaven versus hell” dichotomous framework. The sacred is defined, expressed and experienced in nuanced ways in accordance with the specific tribal paradigm. Language provides the means through which First Nations groups express active participation with relational alliances. For the Blackfoot-speaking nations, Niitsitapi, the sacred encapsulates the fluid and “organic nature of the universe [and] emulated through the powers of life” (Bastien, 2016, p. 15). The spirit of the universe, the powers of life, is referred to as Ihtsipaitapiyo’pa which “structures all relationships among and between humans, nature and the universe” (Bastien, 2016, p. 15); source of life. Thus, the universe itself is alive. Put another way, Blackfoot scholar Leroy Littlebear (2000) states that:

In Aboriginal philosophy, existence consists of energy. All things are animate, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion. In this realm of energy and spirit, interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance ... Aboriginal languages are, for the most part, verb-rich languages that are process- or action-oriented. They are generally aimed at

describing “happenings” rather than objects. The languages of Aboriginal peoples allow for the transcendence of boundaries. For example, the categorizing process in many Aboriginal Languages does not make use of the dichotomies either/or, black/white, saint/sinner. There is no animate/inanimate dichotomy. Everything is more or less animate. Consequently, Aboriginal languages allow for talking to trees and rocks, an allowance not accorded in English. If everything is animate, then everything has spirit and knowledge. If everything has spirit and knowledge, then all are like me. If all are like me, then all are my relations. (n. p.)

Littlebear (2000) highlights the holistic nature of self in-relation to everything else and how the language provides the vehicle for conceptualizing and expressing these relationships in such a way that there is no separation between human-beings, nature and the universe. Thus, plants, animals, earth and the universe are all imbued with the same life force that sustains human beings.

Similarly, Cree scholar Leona Makokis (2009), in her article detailing the impacts of language loss on Indigenous peoples, describes the sacred as the life force of the universe which connects human beings to their responsibilities to the spiritual relationships with everything around them. Everything is interconnected and everything has life. The life force, or Creator, is the source of the sacred and again, individuals are seen as active participants in a universe that is alive. From an Anishnaabe perspective, the sacred is described as the Great Mystery, Kitchi-Manitou, which encapsulates the nature of the universe as giver of life (Johnston, 1995). Indeed, according to Anishnaabe author Basil Johnston (1995), “What little is known of Kitchi-Manitou is known through the universe, the cosmos, and the world” (p. 3). From Johnston’s statement, comes an understanding that in order to fully recognize, or comprehend, self in relation to the sacred, one must value humility in order to accept the unknowable, or the “Great Mystery.” Likewise, from the cultural worldview of the Dene nations, Dene scholar and educator, Fibbie Tatti (2015) describes how, “Right from the moment we were born, we were taught that we are connected to everything around us; that everything around us is alive” (p. 11). The essence of life encapsulates the sacred and is found all around us. Moreover, for the Indigenous scholars highlighted above (Bastien, 2016; Deloria, 1999; Fibbie, 2015; Littlebear, 2000; Makokis, 2009), the sacred is called into existence in the minds and souls and embodied in practices and ceremonies through Indigenous languages. As Makokis (2009) maintains:

Language is the ‘moral compass’ of Canadian Indigenous people. The ability to speak an Indigenous language is an indispensable part of identity, as these languages convey a sense of distinctiveness, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of spiritual relationship to the universe: plants, animals, Mother Earth, rocks, and people.

There is no separation from self and the universe and each being is part of a transcendent universe. Unlike the Western paradigm, humans are not created above the natural world or in opposition to it.

Although Indigenous nations are distinct and self-determining societies, what Indigenous philosophy and the perspectives above demonstrate are a set of shared ontological and epistemological beliefs that highlight common principles which form the

foundations of Indigenous cultures. Thus, for Indigenous peoples, the world is interpreted through a lens which observes a panorama of interconnected relationships within which the individual understands oneself as a participatory entity in the universe. Language expresses these relationships and Indigenous peoples consider language as the “breath of Creator.” In order to appreciate the distinct paradigm of Indigenous philosophical belief-systems, it is necessary to first critically recognize and acknowledge that Western cultural philosophies have served to suppress Indigenous ways of knowing and being and in doing so, created an ideological force that continues to feed power imbalances. Below, is a brief critical overview of the nature of the Western worldview as interpreted through an Indigenous perspective.

The Western Paradigm

Historically, Indigenous knowledge holders have long recognized the inherent danger related to abuse of power that remains deeply embedded in Western thought-systems (Hildebrandt et al., 1996). Today, Indigenous scholars are hard at work to lay bare the ideologies that enable the continued erasure of Indigenous histories, stories and culture from these lands. Bastien (2016) recognizes that “Indigenous and Eurocentric conceptions are diametrically opposite in their approach to relationships and to defining the purpose of human activity” (p. 16). Eurocentred understandings of relationship are limited in the sense that the individual self is seen as the centre of universe. Theological foundations afford man the transcendent authority to rule above all other living creatures and the natural world, which is one fraught with danger and one which must be tamed in order to harness its power for the benefit of man. Social hierarchies are made possible through abstract theories that justify power over the natural environment. Littlebear (2000) critiques Eurocentric values as “linear and singular, static, and objective” (n. p.). He further asserts:

The linearity manifests itself in terms of a social organization that is hierarchical in terms of both structure and power. Socially, it manifests itself in terms of bigger, higher, newer, or faster being preferred over smaller, lower, older, or slower. Singularity manifests itself in the thinking processes of Western Europeans in concepts such as one true god, one true answer, and one right way. (Littlebear, 2000, n. p.)

In today's world, we see linearity in our education, social services, justice and government structures. Typically, abstract engagement with theory and experimentation, documentation and writing are privileged over direct experience within relational networks. Privileging the academic knowledge of non-Indigenous field experts over the wisdom of Indigenous community Elders is one example of how the Eurocentric system of thought maintains its power and authority. Further, emerging out of these socio-cultural theories are ideologies that attempt to stratify societies and make possible the disparities in the distribution of wealth and power, as well as the privileging of abstract constructs such as racial categories and the naturalization of Western systems.

Ermine (2007) critically describes how the Western paradigm is manifest in society as a God's-eye view on reality that can be metaphorically conceived of as “the brick wall of a deeply embedded belief and practice of Western universality. Central to the issue of universality is the dissemination of a singular world consciousness, a monoculture with a claim to one model of

humanity and one model of society” (p. 198). The inability or unwillingness to conform to Western standards are understood not as a deficiency of the Western system but as a failure of non-conforming cultures to meet the Western-defined benchmarks of social, moral, political, economic and cultural organizing. Hence, it is within this narrowly defined framework of humanity that the long-established attempts at assimilating Indigenous nations into Western settler-society has served as the defining feature of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. This has led to a state of dependency on Western systems for the vast majority of Indigenous communities. Within this vision of reality, Indigenous peoples are often blamed as purveyors of their own dependency for failing to conform to Western ideals (Weasel Head, 2011). Indeed, Bastien (2016) argues that this concept of dependency rests within the Eurocentric ideal of power which “automatically victimizes Indigenous peoples since these conceptions continually reconstruct powerlessness, victimization, deficiency or inferiority as characteristics of Indigenous peoples” (p. 16). One need only look at government statistics on Indigenous peoples to understand how a particular narrative is being told over and over that continues to reproduce Indigenous peoples within a deficit frame of reference within which Indigenous peoples continually “lag” behind the rest of the general population in health, education, economics and other social determinants. While one could argue that the statistics are merely numbers that offer a baseline for better understanding problems that need to be solved, it remains crucial to adopt a critical lens that will enable the ability to recognize that “we measure what we value” (Mahi, 2013, p. 51) and if non-Indigenous society continues to focus on measuring and recording the deficiencies of Indigenous peoples, then that becomes the defining story of Indigenous peoples. Thus, we are not focusing on critiquing the measurement or evaluation tools of the Western systems as one emerging from a distinct cultural frame of reference – the Eurocentric paradigm remains invisible.

Although critiquing the Western worldview remains useful in critically examining the dynamics of assimilation and culture loss for Indigenous peoples, unless the hegemony (settler-society) recognizes how the ideological structure of its own system of thought is in large part responsible for the continued disparities and dysfunctions found in Indigenous communities, then little advancement in improving relationships will be made. Illuminating this hidden undercurrent of thought, or as Ermine (2007) puts it, “the enfolded dimension that needs to be acknowledged and brought to bear” (p. 195) within an ethical space is necessary in order for meaningful engagement and honest human to human dialogue to occur. This type of critical dialogue requires no small degree of humility since the Indigenous perspective on Canadian history and current social contexts, as critical educational theorists DiAngelo and Sensoy (2014) point out, challenges settler worldviews and identities in ways that provoke resistance and quite often denial. Bringing to light these conceptual origins of assumptions, interests, behaviors and actions that are characteristic of the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is essential in understanding how and why Indigenous peoples exist on the margins of Canadian society. Hence, in the same vein, critically understanding the multi-layered and complex nature of urban Indigenous homelessness within the framework of this particular study requires a deeper analysis of how traditional Indigenous perspectives on jurisdiction, housing and income support were realized prior to the

imposition of colonization. Employing an analysis of both scholarly and grey literature as well as perspectives derived from Treaty 7 members, the following sections are meant to contextualize Indigenous values that are attached to conceptualizations of authority and control, home and collective well-being, or put within the scope of this study, jurisdiction, housing and income assistance.

Jurisdiction: Values derived from the land

“I wish that somehow we could let them know that we have remembered, but then again, they probably knew all along that we would”

Hildenbandt et al., 1996 p. 27

Stated by Wilton Goodstriker in reference to the First Nations ancestors who were present at the signing of Treaty 7, the quotation above illustrates the responsibility that First Nations have in carrying their history forward, a responsibility that has not been lost to colonial influences. Although much has been lost due to colonization, there remains a vision of the way Treaty 7 First Nations operated their governance systems that has been documented through both scholarly sources and other literatures as well as stories that have been recorded for future reference. However, documented sources must be approached with caution especially with regards to earlier ethnographic studies that were often underlain with a moral slant through which it was believed that the role of ethnography was to create an account or record of First Nations life in order to preserve a dying way of life. Lassiter (2005) refers to this approach as salvage ethnography which, as stated earlier, emerges from a distinct cultural paradigm, the Western worldview, which left Indigenous cultures and practices to be interpreted through a cultural lens that neither fully understands the Indigenous paradigm nor can accurately capture meaning, context and purpose of many of these practices. In her thesis outlining traditional values and practices related to governance and peacekeeping, Kainaiwa tribal member Annabel Crop Eared Wolf (2007) asserts:

The social context of Káínai peacekeeping and peacemaking is rooted in the traditional land and as such traditional political values derive from the Creator and the land ... Leadership was non-hierarchal and situational; leaders were selected based on their skills, knowledge and suitability as dictated by the situation. For example, a seasoned warrior with experience in trade may be approached to lead a trade expedition, or a diplomatic clan leader may be asked to lead treaty discussions. Each clan selected its leaders who represented them within the Tribe. Each of the societies had their own leader. Their roles and functions were interdependent and complemented one another to help maintain peace, order, and balance within the Tribe. (pp. 1-2)

Crop Eared Wolf's seminal written account of traditional Kainaiwa governance structures highlights tribal values rooted in the connection to the sacred and the land. Activities surrounding leadership were fluid and leaders truly represented the voices of the members. Relationships were, and still remain, central in peacekeeping and governance issues with family/clan systems being the primary channel through which processes related to governance, social order and justice were carried out (Crop Eared Wolf, 2007). Crop Eared Wolf provides a broad analysis of the centrality of family describing how –

The family is the primary structure for the inculcation and learning of social values, traditions, customs and rules of behavior. The family also has the responsibility for dealing with any inappropriate behaviors and the wrongdoings of its members, for maintaining and restoring the balance in the relational network of the Tribe. The family dispenses the first order of sanctions for inappropriate behaviors and wrongdoings through counseling, warnings, castigation and other forms of disciplinary action. (p. 56)

Just as individual family members have a responsibility to other members within the family unit, each family has a responsibility to the tribal collective to ensure social values are collectively maintained. Balance with tribal values, norms and protocols is the ultimate goal which then radiates to relational alliances with other tribes and the natural world. Indeed, Crop Eared Wolf (2007) provides an indispensable perspective on Kainaiwa governance and peacekeeping practices that remain a seminal resource when researching primary accounts of how First Nations “traditional” paradigms live in today’s communities. Some of the lessons to be learned from Crop Eared Wolf’s work is that written historical documentation, especially pertaining to ethnographies, which focus on representing First Nations in specific ways that correspond with Western worldviews are insufficient in accurately and authentically portraying the First Nations’ paradigms and practices. Based on early ethnographic studies extensively cited by Crop Eared Wolf (2007), the Blackfoot tribes have been historically understood as primarily warring nations fiercely defending and expanding territories. However, from a Blackfoot perspective, rather than war and defense, the primary objective of governance structures was to pursue peace within the tribal social systems and with those of other First Nations. Moreover, Littlebear (2000) also established that “[c]ustoms with regard to external relations include peace and friendship with other tribes and nations; trade with outsiders; treatment of visitors and adoption of outsiders; and warfare and defence of territory” (n. p.). Clearly there is a stark misalignment between Indigenous perspectives on their own value systems and Western understandings of these values. This decontextualization and misinterpretation must not only be challenged and acknowledge by Western systems’ thinkers, but a reorganization of strategies must be put in place, for as Crop Eared Wolf rightly maintains, “Without the proper cultural context, key aspects [such as] Blackfoot/Káínai peacekeeping and peacemaking [will continue to be] misunderstood and characterized differently” (p. 47).

Just as Crop Eared Wolf took it upon herself to provide a comprehensive analysis of a Blackfoot perspective on tribal governance structures, so did Stoney-Nakota scholar Terry Fox (2017) who offers an analysis of tribal governance that specifically interrogates how any consideration of tribal political systems today must be approached with a clear and accurate understanding of how colonization has impacted these systems. Importantly, she also provides an overview of traditional governance structures prior to colonial contact. Fox (2017) surmises that “[a]s Canadians learned about the history of First Nations, they would see that prior to and during early European contact, First Nations had their own governance systems complete with divisions of power, checks and balances and impartial decision-making” (p.12). As an aside, it is my contention here that these systems need to be recognized and interpreted within the context that they emerged – attempting to understand their complexities through a Western frame of reference will only lead to further misinterpretation at best, and at worst, the

continued devaluation by Western political thinkers who dismiss tribal governance and jurisdictional issues as primitive with nothing that can be learned from or applied to enhance today's political systems. Just as Crop Eared Wolf (2007) asserted, Fox (2017) also outlines that First Nations families were the central governing unit in First Nations communities. Notable to this study is Fox's (2017) general distinction between two basic First Nations' governance structures that were dependent on the environmental contexts and how cultural and social practices emerged from relationships to the land. Sedentary nations often had more structured governance systems with society tending to be more hierarchical in nature. Other nations such as the plains tribes who were reliant on migrating game herds tended to have more fluid governance and social systems (Fox, 2017). What should be kept central in this discussion is that one system is not "more civilized" than the next, for it is the relationship to the natural world which dictates the cultural structure and not a marker used to measure cultural advancement within a dichotomy of civilized versus savage – to do so reduces the complexities of a culture's response to its environment.

Fox (2017) further outlines that for the Stoney-Nakota, governance within the clan system was often led by a senior family member. However, during hunting or the wintertime,

the need for survival made it necessary for several extended families to congregate. The assembly of extended families was said to form a band. Since the congregation of numerous families called for order, the people selected a Chief to provide direction. The Chief, in turn, selected other leaders to aid him. This political body was responsible to ensure that each extended family was represented at the decision making level. On other occasions, a larger group was required where all of the Stoney bands would come together forming a tribe. To govern the tribe, a tribal council was formed that consisted of the leaders from each band. Even though the congregating bands became part of the tribe, they were not dictated to by the tribe in that 'each band would remain under its own Chief.' (pp. 14-15)

Like other nations of the plains, Fox's (2017) description offers a glimpse into First Nations governance and jurisdiction issues that demonstrates an ability to be flexible and adaptable depending on environmental conditions which optimizes the survival of communities and minimizes conflict. Clearly, values related to autonomy, the maintenance of balance, the primacy of the well-being of the collective and the assurance that future generations will also thrive supersedes an individual pursuit of power and control. The Tsuu'tina model of governance provides another example of how these values translate into traditional jurisdictional approaches:

Tsuut'ina bases its governance and legislation on the teachings of Natural Laws, 'Wusa', which means 'the future', anything that is done today must benefit the future of those born and those yet to be born. This generational responsibility is a guiding principle applied to every aspect of Tsuut'ina's governance. (Tsuut'ina Nation T.U.S. Consultation, 2018, para. 3)

Today, many First Nations still hold the belief that each person has a right to determine their own choices and attempting to control the actions of another upsets the balance of relationships affecting not only the current generation but also those yet to be born. Notable to issues related to governance is the fact that although these values emerge from a

precolonial context and had successfully sustained the First Nations of Treaty 7 for centuries, these values, as evidenced in the quotation above in reference to Tsuut'ina perspectives, still influence and guide the jurisdictional and political organizing of Treaty 7 communities today. Indeed, Crop Eared Wolf (2007) highlights that the term –

***traditional** refers to those practices and processes of Káínai that arise from its worldview and culture and have developed over the span of its existence as a society. **Traditional** does not refer to the past [and] in spite of the historical changes, the values, relationships and traditions, for the most part, remain as the foundational base upon which Káínai society operates. (p. 54)*

Although Crop Eared Wolf is referring specifically to Kainaiwa perspectives, as we can ascertain through the discussion above, traditional values continue to form the ground upon which Treaty 7 First Nations build their communities today. As with tribal governance or jurisdictional values, traditional perspectives on housing are equally steeped in principles based on the maintenance of good relations.

Housing: A place for all my relations

Attempting to understand what housing means to Indigenous peoples on a more general level requires an exploration of how the values attached to place, space, and land – Mother Earth – combine to form a distinct perspective that transcends commonly held values related to personal property and the privatization and ownership of individual spaces. Although scholars in the Western tradition are now beginning to recognize the relational function of space/land within an Indigenous paradigm (Alaazi et al., 2015; Habibus, 2011), this recognition emerges from a cultural context, a Western paradigm, within which Indigenous perspectives are filtered through a lens that is neither based on direct experience nor does it authentically capture the essence of subjective knowledge that constitutes Indigenous ways of knowing and living in-relation to others and the natural world. To be sure, “the recognition of Indigeneity in urban housing policy and practice is often lacking” (p. 31). Understanding why there exists such a dearth of Indigenous perspectives in policy and practices requires critically recognizing that Indigenous worldviews are inherently in contrast to Western perspectives. Indeed, conceptualizing policy and enacting practices from a Western lens alone is insufficient to adequately meet the needs of Indigenous peoples today. Dialogue and true partnerships, as well as sharing of power, are necessary components for sustainable improvements for Indigenous peoples in all aspects of society.

In exploring how housing can be understood within a traditional Treaty 7 paradigm, one needs to understand the values underlying the tribal worldviews, how the relationships to land have shaped these values, and how these values were/are translated into social organizing. From a Blackfoot perspective, Weasel Head's (2011) thesis outlining the connection between attachments to traditional land as a factor in Indigenous homeless proves an apt starting point for unpacking the philosophical complexities surrounding how “home” is conceived. Notable to the concept of home is how, for Indigenous groups whose traditional territories are now overlain with urban sprawl, the cities are a place “where a symbolic and physical sense of ‘home’ was conceptualized and understood” (Weasel Head, 2011, p. 120).

Moreover, for the Blackfoot participants in her study, land represented identity and connection to family and community, it represented home despite the fact they were considered homeless (Weasel Head, 2011). Moreover, Weasel Head (2011) offers a definition of homelessness that acknowledges the relational epistemology that remains central in Indigenous worldviews:

[T]o be homeless means to be in a state of existence where there are no family or community support networks. Being homeless does not necessarily mean having a roof over one's head or having a home in the physical sense. Common and generally accepted societal definitions of the term "homelessness" do not reflect the participants' conceptualizations. They are utterly and hopelessly homeless when they feel abandoned by their family and the traditional Blackfoot community. The phenomenon of homelessness is a condition which is fluid in the sense that it changes and takes on new meanings for those who experience it. Focus group participants reiterated this fact in that some shelter guests obtained housing but return to the shelter because they felt so isolated from community. Essentially, they were still homeless because support systems such as family were not present in their lives regardless of the fact that they are housed. (p. 122)

Clearly, housing is tied to tribal values encapsulated within a collective consciousness within which the primacy of relationships to identity, family, and community is captured – relationships that are embodied and enacted within traditional territories. These values emerge from the land and have remained unchanged today.

The Dene perspective regarding how home is perceived is similar to that of the Blackfoot perspective in regard to how the concept of home is deeply connected to land and the relational alliances that are embedded within it. Fibbie (2015) states:

The connection and relationship that the Dene have with the land and the spirit of the living beings is totally embedded and engrained in who we are. We are so dependent on the land, but our feelings go way beyond our needs and dependencies ... 'The land is our mother.' The Elders have reiterated again and again that we the Dene must maintain a respectful, ongoing relationship with the land and all the living beings: our very survival as human beings is dependent upon it.

In this way the Dene peoples, of which the Tsuut'ina nation is historically a part of, conceptualize land within a value-based paradigm which shapes their culture and relationships. Moreover, Fox (2017) establishes an understanding that Creator placed each culture on a particular land-base that shaped the language, customs, practices and paradigms that now constitute distinct First Nations' characteristics and worldviews. Thus, land symbolizes home.

Moving from a conceptual viewpoint, the physical features of traditional Treaty 7 dwellings make it quite obvious and apparent that "[b]uilt structures such as teepees comprised temporary materials that were easily absorbed back into the earth" (Weasel Head, 2011, p. 28) and were practical and portable means of shelter. Quite often though, when the weather was optimal, First Nations would camp under the stars with no need of shelter. The

land and natural environment were not something to shut oneself off from or erect physical, permanent structures that separated humans from the nature. The very nature of the materials, tanned hides and wooden beams, the process of making the dwellings and the ceremonial aspects connected to these processes reveal the values and worldview of the Treaty 7 First Nations. Indeed, the structure of Indigenous peoples' dwellings emerged from the landscapes and were not only a response to the environmental conditions, but also reflected the principles and beliefs of the nations. The Canadian Encyclopedia (Stamp & Warnell, 2019), although based within a Western frame of reference, provides a useful description of First Nations traditional dwellings prior to colonization:

A striking feature of all Indigenous architecture was the consistent integrity between structural forms and cultural values ... In addition to meeting the primary need for shelter, structures functioned as integral expressions of their occupants' spiritual beliefs and cultural values ... Building-forms were often seen as metaphorical models of the cosmos, and as such they frequently assumed powerful spiritual qualities which helped define the cultural identity of a people over hundreds or even thousands of years. (para. 1-2)

How the structures were built and the activities within are also indicative of how societies were organized which in turn illuminate tribal paradigms. For example, it was typically women who were responsible for tanning hides that would cover the poles, as well as erecting and dismantling the tipis. This reveals several key points regarding the roles of women within plains tribal societies. Rather than being relegated to a lower status as is the case with Western, patriarchal societies, women were often very much seen as the backbone of tribal societies. As givers of life, they held positions of authority in both spiritual/ceremonial activities and political decision-making. Beverly Hungry Wolf (1982), Kainaiwa author, provides insight into the varied and complex roles of women within Kainaiwa through stories and descriptions based in experience with cultural traditions which speaks directly to how Indigenous women were valued as much more than drudges. Another example is found in physicist David Peat's (2005) description after having spent a great amount time with the Blackfoot, particularly the Blood tribe:

Unlike most Western organization, which have European origins, within Turtle Island it is the women who bring together the conditions and necessary energy for a ceremony to commence. During the Sun Dance itself, one of the most important lodges would be that of the holy woman who had called the dance that year. Nothing would happen until the Women's Society had finished their meetings. Only then would it be the turn of the men. (pp. 33-35)

Traditionally, the camps made of tipi dwellings were set up in a circle formation. Today, this remains unchanged and some of the tribes of Treaty 7 continue to organize the sacred Sun Dance ceremonies. In addition to revealing roles, Treaty 7 traditional tipi dwellings not only show the structure of societies, such as the gender and age-specific roles, but the designs painted on the outer shell and the inner arrangements of seats and designs on the tipis' inner linings highlight relational alliances within a philosophical paradigm that reinforces the inherent belief held by many Indigenous tribes whose members see themselves as active participants in the universe through acts of "coming-to-know" such as ceremony and the

transfer of knowledge. Hungry Wolf (1982) reveals, “[T]ipi designs among the Blackfoot are very ancient; they get handed down from one family to the next. The tipi itself may wear out and be changed many times, but the design always looks the same” (p. 120). These designs are gifted through dreams and handed down within families. Indeed, within an Indigenous epistemology, dreams are sources of knowledge that often act as a compass for a person’s place within society and truly a connection to the sacred. The way in which the tipis are erected is not based in random positioning of the poles. Rather, the 4 foundational poles that buttress the entire structure symbolize the family structure with the first two front poles (which support the entrance) representing the woman’s family which in turn points to the status of women in society. In terms of the inner arrangement of the tipi, Peat (2005) informs that the “special arrangement of seats are a model, in the deepest sense, of the structure of their society ... the dwelling place becomes a manifestation or a place of containment for a whole cosmology that includes society and the individual” (p. 258). Much more than simply shelter from the elements, each component of the tipi is representative of relationships such as the designs on the inner tipi linings which often symbolize connections to the universe.

Understanding the nature and purpose of traditional dwellings of Treaty 7 tribes as well as how these dwellings, although not lived in today, are still a common feature of First Nations provides significant insight into the value systems of Indigenous peoples. Dwellings for Indigenous peoples are opposite for the Western society and rather than symbols of material wealth and the coveting of personal property, they are representative of tribal philosophies, social structures, and inherent connections to the natural world and a transcendent universe. Today, tipis still remain a “link to our ancestral past” (p. 107). Evidently, the traditional equivalency for housing was far more complex and imbued with holistic meaning than a static structure shut off from the rest of world that must be paid for using a system of wealth that still holds very little relevance or importance to many Indigenous peoples today.

Income Assistance: Sharing, generosity and kindness

As with housing and governance, exploring what could be considered the equivalent of today’s Western system of income assistance, or welfare benefits, within the framework of traditional Treaty 7 values is useful in providing a deepened understanding of the values Treaty 7 nations hold relative to such concepts as collective well-being and generosity. This also demonstrates how today’s Western values regarding property, ownership and personal wealth are in direct opposition to Indigenous beliefs around what constitutes community wealth and security. Income assistance, part of the “welfare state” system as we know it today also originates from a distinct set of values within a Western paradigm which were influenced by religious and social factors. Currently, the concept of the welfare state simply “refers to a web of policies unique to each national context designed to address social problems ... including the distribution of wealth” (Garlington, 2014, p. 287). The Western value of individualism gives rise to other values that are privileged in today’s society such as hard-work, self-sufficiency, individual merit-systems, and accumulation of individual wealth and private property all stand in stark contrast to Indigenous values that emerge from within a relational framework which ensures that social organizing is enacted within a participatory model of wholeness and balance. Although the specific nations of Treaty 7 cannot and should not be approached as

being all the same – indeed, neither should Western culture – there are, as Littlebear (2000) highlights, enough similarities in value systems that make it possible to generalize cultural principles. While Garlington (2014) describes a web of policies entrenched in a contemporary social consciousness of neoliberal values attached to individualism within a Western paradigm, Littlebear (2000) describes a “spiderweb” of relationships within which the concept of “[w]holeness is like a flower with four petals. When it opens, one discovers strength, sharing, honesty, and kindness. Together these four petals create balance, harmony, and beauty” (n. p.). Although these values intermingle and are all interconnected, the principle of sharing seems to be the closest equivalency to what is considered income assistance today.

Littlebear (2000) offers some profound and accessible insights into the value of sharing that can be applied to Treaty 7 communities:

The Aboriginal value of sharing manifests itself in relationships. Relationships result from interactions with the group and with all of creation. Sharing speaks not just to interchanging material goods but also, more importantly, to the strength to create and sustain ‘good feelings’ ... Sharing also brings about harmony, which sustains strength and balance. (n. p.)

Generosity and sharing are not reserved for those who are “deserving” of help, an attitude typically found in the neoliberal value systems attached to Western societies (Garlington, 2014). Instead, these make up the worldview of Treaty 7 First Nations and are a way of “walking” in the world, a way of being that ensures no one goes without. Another closely aligned value is that of equality within Treaty 7 traditional societal structures. Again, Littlebear (2000) provides a useful and relevant description:

Equality pervades Aboriginal societies because of values such as sharing and generosity, the importance of the group as opposed to the individual, and in general the concepts of wholeness and totality. These values and mechanisms neutralize disparity between individual members of the society and therefore reduce wants, desires, and aspirations that may result in the abrogation of the law. In other words, if no person has more than any other does, then no one has feelings of exclusion or being cheated or short-changed. (n. p.)

Equality within an Indigenous worldview is not comparable to Western perspectives since, for Indigenous peoples, the purpose of maintaining equality is to maintain balance within a holistic framework and not to simply treat everyone the same regardless of physical, economic, cultural or social variances. Although in theory this understanding of equality may seem to benefit everyone, from a critical perspective, it does little to address the disparities in distribution of wealth and opportunities and most certainly leaves out other living things such as the land, four-legged and winged creatures as autonomous beings. For example, within a Western system of equality, an under-educated, over-worked Indigenous woman living in poverty should be treated equally to an upper class, wealthy man of European ancestry while clearly, they are not equal.

Sharing is more than the distribution of material goods; it ensures that relational alliances are maintained and honored. Within a Kainaiwa worldview, Crop Eared Wolf (2007) describes how –

Generosity or sharing extends from a sense of compassion and a commitment to one's family, clan and community. Another term used to convey this characteristic is okssi, which is a greater form of generosity. Tribal members are expected to show generosity to family, clan, tribal members, and visitors from other tribes. Generosity to visitors creates new relationships of friendship and reciprocity. It also enhances and maintains the standards and the reputation of the Tribe for accomplishment, excellence and generosity. Gift giving is an important mechanism for the expression of generosity and for the creation and maintenance of relationships. (p. 91)

Gift-giving, sharing and generosity are attached to notions of human integrity that form the basis for a collective morality that defines the worldview of Treaty 7 traditional communities. In contrast, Garlington (2014), in her analysis of the social values that buttress social welfare policies in Western countries, argues that approaches to social welfare are reflective of the socio-cultural paradigms of a nation and is an accurate observation. In contrast to Indigenous equivalencies of welfare, income assistance within Western societies reflects the value of individualism which influences politics, religious and social organizing. Garlington (2014) further argues that income assistance originates from within a value system of individualism which is based on definitions of “need” and dependency on state structures which make it much easier to blame welfare recipients for laziness rather than on a system of power that ensures the unequal distribution of wealth. Moral responsibilities are also defined within a paradigm of individualism that sees the sacred as an individually experienced relationship with a higher power. Specifically, Protestant values reflect an “investment in individual moral responsibility in ways such as temporary, crisis-oriented assistance and services geared toward the ‘deserving poor’” (Garlington, 2014, p. 289).

Although the discussion here does not comprehensively address the complexities of foundational values for both Treaty 7 and Western worldview, it nonetheless offers nuanced insight into how both cultures conceptualize collective responsibilities. It is vital to explore “the significance of social values as a core factor that constitutes welfare policy as a social structure” (Garlington, 2014, p. 294) in order to prevent the naturalization of today's welfare system that has been imposed on Indigenous peoples. Indeed, income assistance is intertwined with the broader history and current socio-political structures of oppression which are hallmarks of colonial countries within which Indigenous peoples are continually marginalized. Most efforts to understand the Indigenous thought systems are filtered through Western neoliberal understandings that define and label Indigenous peoples as deficient and dependent (Bastien, 2016).

This section has served to offer critical analyses of traditional Indigenous equivalencies of the three major components encompassing this study, jurisdiction, housing and income assistance, within the context of distinct Treaty 7 First Nations paradigms as well as a brief, yet critical examination of Western philosophies emerging from an ideology of individualism. One of the most telling insights provided in this section is how it is nearly impossible to understand Treaty 7 perspectives using Western understandings of the concepts central to the research. Indigenous perspectives emphasize how power imbalances, economic and social disparities and separation of humans from the natural world and the land (Mother earth) were non-

existent in traditional Treaty 7 First Nations societies. To assume that Treaty 7 communities and individuals can adapt to Western social systems over the span of 150 years or less is both unrealistic and naïve. As the following section will demonstrate, the process of imposing Western economic and social systems has devastated Indigenous cultures and in particular, disrupted traditional values to a certain degree. Despite the devastation, however, these values have endured and continue to influence Indigenous collective consciousness and, if critically understood and explored, can also be observed in the social organizing of the urban Indigenous homeless population.

Disruption of Traditional Value Systems

The following discussion is not meant to broadly outline the impacts of colonization on Indigenous cultures for that is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, a focused analysis of how colonial processes have unsettled the traditional values relative to those explored in the sections above will serve to offer a deepened understanding of the other components of this study as they relate to urban Indigenous homelessness in the City of Calgary and the on-reserve factors that may influence Indigenous migration from Treaty 7 communities to the urban environment. However, it must be understood that colonization is not a temporal, point-in-time phenomena and the ways it has touched the lives of every Indigenous person in Canada cannot be analyzed in isolation of one another for each aspect has an effect on another. Indeed, as with all issues related to Indigenous cultures, the impacts of colonization are best considered by looking at the whole in order to see the patterns (Littlebear, 2000). Nonetheless, we begin by examining traditional governance, or jurisdiction with a full understanding that we cannot possibly explore the devastation of early colonization comprehensively.

Dismantling of Traditional Governance

As identified earlier, traditional governance of Treaty 7 communities was fluid and, in every sense, was based on relationships. To reiterate, families were the initial site of where moral and social norms were learned and reinforced – they were the central governing structure on a more micro-level scale. The values of the First Nations ensured that order was kept and well-being of all, humans, animals and the natural world, were maintained. Early colonial policies such as the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 not only entrenched a stamp of “difference” on Indigenous peoples but allowed colonial settler-government to legalize a paternalistic posturing and essentially dispossess Indigenous nations of their nationhood. Furthering their progress towards civilization according to Western definitions meant implementing additional oppressive policies that were designed to snuff out traditional governance structures. Stoney-Nakota scholar Poucette (2018) provides insight into this process asserting that:

Civilization was soon coupled with assimilation through the Civilization and Enfranchisement Act of 1859, a law meant to encourage First Nations to enfranchise on a voluntary basis. By 1863, the colonial government learned that First Nations leaders were resisting and not a single First Nation person had agreed to be enfranchised. Government officials concluded that autonomous traditional governance was blocking the civilization of

First Nations ... With the Gradual Enfranchisement Act's abolishment of traditional autonomous governance and imposition of an elected band council system of government, Canada's mission to assimilate First Nations into Canadian society was in full swing. (pp. 502-503)

Later policies would be even more heavy-handed. Poucette (2018) argues that:

The Indian Act forces First Nations to abandon their traditional governance structures and adopt the foreign system of band governance. Traditional clan-based leadership selection, for example, was replaced with elections ... The assimilative mission of the Indian Act forced First Nations to abandon their traditional governance systems and ... many of the western political principles and practices that came with the Indian Act contradicted traditional First Nations political values and principles. (pp. 500-503).

These changes not only disrupted but drastically altered traditional governance systems. In addition, the Indian Act had a direct impact on the governance structures on a more personal level if we consider how the Indian Residential Schools destroyed Indigenous families. Very little attempt was made to understand Indigenous culture and rather than learn from them, colonial settlers, deeply embedded in their own ways of understanding humanness, defined Indigenous nations as lesser human-beings in need of civilizing. Values such as sharing, kindness, and honesty that formed the foundation of traditional governance were not as viable under the new form of colonial jurisdiction and although Indigenous leaders maintained these values when forming new relations with the newcomers, their efforts to share the land were not only met with disrespect but oftentimes, outright dishonesty especially with regard to the negotiations of the numbered Treaties (Crop Eared Wolf, 2007; Daschuk, 2013; Hildebrandt et al., 1996; Fox, 2017). Consequently, the relegation of First Nations to small tracts of land, reserves, served to further disconnect them from practices that connected them to relational alliances.

From Deep Relationships to Static Spaces: Transitioning to Modern Housing

As discussed earlier, traditional dwellings in Treaty 7 communities reflected the philosophical paradigms of the First Nations within a relational epistemology and fluid ontology. It is difficult to comprehend the confusion First Nations tribes experienced when their land was taken and they were essentially corralled onto reserves. Because of the loss of mobility which hindered seasonal migratory excursions in search of game, the result was to move into permanent housing on-reserves and instead of hunting, a shift to agriculture, by no choice of Indigenous tribes, became the priority of the colonial policy with regard to First Nations. Conditions at the time of Treaty negotiations were horrendous for the Treaty 7 nations, indeed, for Indigenous nations across North America. Because traditional sustenance activities were no longer possible due to over-hunting and resource depletion, population imbalances and the unceasing influx of settlers, starvation was a constant threat for First Nations and the withholding of food rations was a common tactic used by the government to force First Nations into signing Treaties. Daschuk (2013) describes how the colonial government, under the leadership of Sir John A. Macdonald, "was well aware of the delicate balance of its policy between starving holdouts into submission and onto reserves and the risk of scandal from

widespread death from hunger” (p. 136). These experiences were not only physically destructive, but the assault on the value systems of First Nations was in itself traumatic given that an entire way of life and philosophical worldview had been intentionally destroyed. Traditional ways of making sense of the world and their place within it were no longer viable.

If one takes into consideration the violent and forced upheaval of First Nations lifeworlds that include social and political organizing such as peacemaking and peacekeeping (Crop Eared Wolf, 2007) and the destruction of family and clan systems, transitioning from the traditional tipi dwellings to permanent housing was not simply a matter of relocation, but instead was part of a pattern of deliberate cultural annihilation that contributed to the cumulative traumas which foreshadowed contemporary issues. Traditional processes of erecting tipis that were typically attached to women’s roles, although not entirely lost, were no longer being practiced on a routine basis. Strong relationships to the land and the natural world were being weakened and First Nations realized that in order to survive, they needed to adapt to new ways of doing things despite the fact that these ways, such as coveting material goods and the accumulation of personal property were counter to their values. Whereas traditional dwellings held deep meaning in both a functional and philosophical sense, permanent housing seemed empty and insignificant and good only for protection against environmental elements. In the same way, collective sharing and the values attached to it were equally impacted as a result of colonization.

From Collective Sharing to Individual Suffering

As emphasized in the section above, traditional First Nations equivalencies to what is today known as income assistance, or welfare, are best understood in terms of values. Littlebear (2000) reminds us that –

The ‘spider web’ of relations ensures that the welfare of the group is the most important thing in Aboriginal societies. The value of wholeness tells the members that, if all do their parts, then social order will be the result. It is as though everybody is a ‘cop’ and nobody is a ‘cop.’ If the ‘whole’ is maintained, then beauty, harmony, and balance result. (n. p.)

This web of relations became entangled with Western perspectives and although First Nations did not abandon a collective orientation to well-being, all were forced to conform to Western standards of attaining material goods just to survive. Although Indigenous groups were accustomed to a trade economy, the fur trade heralded a commodification of natural resources on a scale not before seen. Prior to the colonial encroachment and permanent settlement, First Nations hunting and sustenance were premised on the maintenance of balance and taking only what was needed for survival. Thus, over-hunting and resource depletion were unheard of. However, fierce competition made relations between First Nations tense at best but often resulted in bloody conflicts as they became caught up in the race for the accumulation of furs. Values identified by Crop Eared Wolf (2007) such as “compassion, respect, generosity, courage, achievement, harmony, community, thankfulness, wisdom, and spirituality” are compromised in a capitalist economy that is premised in an ideology of individualism within which the pursuit of wealth and the accumulation of personal property, regardless of need, become privileged over community well-being. Crop Eared Wolf’s (2007)

description of values centers their role in the creation of societies and is a critical reminder of how today's welfare state as epitomized in Western nations stands in stark contrast to Indigenous principles of community wellness:

Values are foundational to the way people perceive and behave within relationships. Values guide how people should behave, for example, the value of respect implies that you should treat people well; this extends to care of the self, including physical and spiritual well being. (p. 87)

Moreover, the values of Treaty 7 nations, for example both Kainaiwa and Tsuut'ina, were conceptualized as law that was handed to the people from Creator. The values emerge from the natural law of the universe and therefore not subject to changing conditions resulting from human decisions or actions upon the environment (Crop Eared Wolf, 2007). The processes of cultural exchange between First Nations and Euro-settlers upset this balance. Respect for the natural world and compassion towards game-animals became compromised as many such as the beaver and bison were hunted to near extinction in some areas of North America simply for their furs. Other values such as harmony and kindness were often abandoned during drunken rages owing to the impacts of the whiskey trade. Starvation on the plains forced many First Nations, out of sheer desperation, to disconnect from traditional relational alliances to avoid perishing. For example, Anishnaabe scholar, artist and author Leanne Simpson (2016) shares how First Nations would enter into Treaty alliances with their four-legged kin – a capitalist and individually-driven system of economy makes these kinds of ancient alliances impossible to maintain. Indeed, in today's modern society we are so disconnected from the natural world that it seems unfathomable to consider that such alliances could have ever existed except in myth. Despite exposure, and for some, eventual conformity to certain values that stand in direct opposition to Indigenous values, many Treaty 7 communities retain their sense of collective responsibility.

Fragmented Value-Systems

Any examination of Indigenous issues requires an in-depth exploration and critical understanding of the differences in value systems between Indigenous and Western worldviews. Attempting to understand many of the issues that continue to impinge on the health and well-being of Indigenous communities and individuals from a lens filtered exclusively through a Western frame of reference oftentimes results in policies that neither have relevance nor any kind of significant meaning for Indigenous peoples. It is also important to bear in mind that many of the values of First Nations have not been abandoned but have transformed in order for communities and individuals to adapt and survive in today's society. Littlebear (2000) offers a useful way of conceptualizing the transition from traditional precolonial worldviews and practices to integration in the Western culture:

Colonization created a fragmentary worldview among Aboriginal peoples. By force, terror, and educational policy, it attempted to destroy the Aboriginal worldview – but failed. Instead, colonization left a heritage of jagged worldviews among Indigenous peoples. They no longer had an Aboriginal worldview, nor did they adopt a Eurocentric worldview. Their

consciousness became a random puzzle, a jigsaw puzzle that each person has to attempt to understand. (n. p.)

The analogy of a jagged worldview in reference to Indigenous peoples offers a unique approach for considering how assimilation, indeed the whole agenda of colonization continues to create a fragmented identity within First Nations individuals today – indeed, many Indigenous homeless people move between Western and Indigenous value systems depending on the situation. Moreover, crucial to the context of urban Indigenous homelessness is a critical understanding and deepened awareness of the values of the Western paradigm and how these have emerged from a system of thought that today continues to justify and rationalize the violence and injustices wrought through colonial processes. Although juxtaposing this knowledge with Indigenous perspectives around similar concepts, such as those that are central to this study, highlights the divergencies in worldviews, this is not enough to create meaningful and sustained change. Being aware of Indigenous historical and social issues does not necessarily mean that we care since caring requires a level of investment that not only considers other perspectives but acts on them through planned policy development that incorporates multiple ways of knowing. Authentic dialogue offers a starting point for change. In addition to offering an Indigenous frame of reference to this research with regards to the conceptual and philosophical nuances, I offer a brief overview of the literature surrounding Indigenous homelessness that broadly situates our study within relevant scholarship.

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review component of this paper is to offer a focused and thorough analysis of key sources, drawn from both scholarly sources and grey literature, which offer significant critical insights into the issues that frame the overall research and which are discussed in this paper. The intention is not to provide a sweeping or general overview of Indigenous homelessness for that has been done elsewhere (Patrick 2014). Instead, the emphasis for this section is to critically engage literature surrounding three key topic areas in relation to Indigenous homeless and migration from Treaty 7 reserve communities: 1) systemic factors related to colonization; 2) planning perspectives, and; 3) cultural values. A synthesis of the literature will serve to illuminate the gaps in the literature with respect to this particular component of the research project as well as highlight areas for future research. However, if the reader chooses to explore the literature on a broader level, a comprehensive overview of Indigenous homeless was undertaken by Patrick (2014) which engaged a broad range of scholarship in relation to Indigenous homeless with a focus on four areas of inquiry: 1) definitions and concepts related to Indigenous homelessness; 2) causes of homelessness; 3) subjective experience of Indigenous homeless individuals; 4) how to best address Indigenous homelessness. Although this section does address some of the areas identified by Patrick (2014), it does so in a much more detailed and thorough manner in order to illuminate the

complexities of Indigenous homelessness and the relationship between reserves and urban areas.

Systemic Factors – Colonial Assaults

In their article examining the growing rate of homelessness amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada's northern regions, Abele, Falvo and Hache (2010) conceptualize inequality through a lens that considers the impacts of inadequate housing on Indigenous groups in the north. They further assert that the legacy of colonialism casts a shadow over the reality of Indigenous peoples and becomes manifest through poverty, addictions, suicide, high unemployment. The authors argue that "housing is at the centre of the processes that sustain social distress. Lack of housing alternatives traps women and children in unsafe and stressful situations" (Abele, Falvo et al., 2010, p. 21). They offer significant insight into the complexities that connect a lack of housing to inequality and social distress. For example, violence against Indigenous women is compounded because of lack of housing and many are forced back into abusive situations because they have nowhere else to go. The high cost of adequate housing traps working class men, and for those experiencing addictions, recovery becomes difficult because of a dearth of private housing. They argue that the role of the state must be interrogated: "Community settlement, displacement, forced relocation, residential schooling, the introduction of social welfare transfers and other disempowering measures disrupted relations between women and men, as well as between generations. These externally generated processes of broad social change have created long-standing difficulties for the Indigenous societies of the Canadian north" (Abele, Falvo et al., 2010, p. 22). To be sure, the authors offer extensive evidence of the features of Indigenous homelessness in the north referring, in medical terms, to the phenomena as an 'outbreak' which seems to reveal, perhaps unconsciously, the perceptions of policy analysts and researchers around the proliferation of Indigenous homelessness as a social disease.

Harnessing the voices of indigenous homeless youth and using the medicine wheel as a research methodology, Baskin's (2007) study explores structural determinants related to colonization, particularly the child welfare system, that may lead urban Indigenous youth into homelessness. Although she cites a lack of affordable housing as the largest contributor to homelessness, she also states that, "personal factors, such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, addictions, poverty, poor health, and/or dysfunctional family relations, are the cause of Aboriginal homelessness. Other literature states that socio-economic status and the lack of resources on reserves are also causes of homelessness" (p. 33). However, Baskin further argues these factors, although considered 'personal,' can all be attributed to the impacts of colonization. Hence, understanding lifeworlds prior to colonization is crucial in appreciating the amount of upheaval it has wrought on Indigenous cultures. Notable to Baskin's (2007) study is the development of "a framework which addresses the negative impacts of colonization on Aboriginal peoples and emphasizes our strengths needs to be developed. A Eurocentric lens fails to do this as it tends to frame Aboriginal peoples as social and economic disadvantages to the rest of Canadian society while negating our political power" (p. 33). Through the use of the medicine wheel framework, she found that Indigenous homeless youth either did not have the presence of biological families or were fluid in that they moved

between state and family care and because of this lack of family, they created their own support system.

From a healthcare perspective, Campbell and colleagues (2015) undertook a study that sought to better understand the needs and barriers to accessing healthcare for homeless people in general and found that Indigenous homeless population face racism and discrimination in the healthcare system. This finding further outlines the contours of how systemic barriers impact on the health and well-being of Indigenous homeless peoples in the urban environment. In another health-related study that employed a Participatory Action Research methodology, Kurtz, Nyberg, Van Den Tillart and Mills (2008) examined how colonial structures are embedded within healthcare systems in ways that continue to marginalize and oppress Indigenous women in ways that typify structural violence. Specifically, the authors outlined the women's "experiences of marginalization and racism in their encounters with health care providers and recount how their voices are often either silenced or disregarded" (p. 55). They found that ensuring safe access to healthcare through Native Friendship Centres offers a way for Indigenous women to use their voices in asserting healthcare needs in an environment that provides cultural safety. Importantly, the authors assert that "Aboriginal women in particular have substantially higher rates of mortality, injury, suicide, obesity, and chronic disease relative to other Canadian women (Stout et al., 2001). These differences are in part due to the social and economic inequities faced by many Aboriginal people - poor and crowded housing, poverty, and the legacy of colonialism" (p. 54). They further call for a shift in examining opportunities for improving health outcomes for Indigenous peoples living in urban areas since the focus has typically been on those living on-reserves. Notable to this study is how the authors provide a direct connection between colonization and homelessness. This connection, although not explicitly articulated in the study, illuminates how ethical and professional standards are not always aligned with traditional Indigenous values, leaving many healthcare providers unaware that they are perpetuating structural violence. Thus, the roots of their ignorance go critically unexamined. Indigenous voices must be at the forefront of policy decisions and considerations with the authors arguing that "[l]earning from the lived experiences, stories and insights of urban Aboriginal people will prompt new ideas about health care delivery, education, practice, and policy that will help to close the current gap in health status between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" (Kurtz, et al. 2008, p. 60).

From an international perspective, Doherty (2010) utilized the experiences of Indigenous veterans to offer an analysis of Indigenous homelessness, which posits an argument against colonization as a point-in-time event but rather as a condition of colonized countries that is deeply embedded in structural systems in ways that continue to marginalize Indigenous peoples. Doherty's comprehensive report, if anything, demonstrates the fact that culture matters and "those without strong family or spiritual support" (p. 14) often spiral down into addictions and violent lifestyles and are drawn to the street life. The overall tone certainly aligns with the familiar platitude of how misery loves company.

In his seminal doctoral research, Indigenous therapist Peter Menzies (2009) articulates the intergenerational effects of colonial traumas as a possible contributing factor to homelessness amongst Indigenous men. Menzies argues, "While theories related to the cause

of homelessness are beginning to recognize broader systemic factors such as poverty and lack of housing, little consideration is given to the cumulative impact government policies have had specifically on Aboriginal peoples” (p. 1). He unpacks the colonial assaults such as the policies of the Indian Act out of which emerged the IRS, and later, the Sixties Scoop whilst emphasizing how these policies were in direct opposition to the values of First Nations peoples. Menzies (2009) outlines a framework, the intergenerational trauma model, that enables for a more nuanced and critical understanding of Indigenous homelessness based on a series of indicators that include individual, family, community, and nation. The national indicators demonstrate the discord between how Indigenous cultures function, meanings behind cultural practices and the reasons underlying their marginalized status and the ways that Canadian society perceives them based on stereotypes, disinterest and misinterpretation. Further to this, Menzies (2009) proposes a definition of homelessness unique to Indigenous experience: “homelessness is a condition that results from individuals being displaced from critical community social structures and lacking stable housing” (p. 14).

In their critical study, Peters and Robillard (2009) explored the interconnected pathways between reserves and urban areas in the mobility patterns of homeless Indigenous peoples within a conceptual framework that analyses reserves as sites constructed by colonial policies that continue to impinge on the lives of Indigenous peoples today. The authors assert that factors such as lack of employment and housing pushed Indigenous peoples from reserves but structural violence, lack of opportunities and adequate housing, and cultural presence also drove them back to the reserves. Further, Peters and Robillard (2009) offer historical insight into the creation of reserves as sites reflective of trans-cultural misunderstandings owing to the disconnect in purpose and perspectives of the treaties First Nations entered into with early colonial government. The authors state, and as others have asserted elsewhere (Crop Eared Wolf, 2007; Hildebrandt et al., 1996; Fox, 2017; Poucette, 2018), that “[d]espite First Nations’ understanding that Treaty promises would provide a basis for a successful transition to what aboriginal leaders recognized as a changing economy, the federal government failed to invest in First Nations communities” (p. 656). Thus, instead of areas where First Nations can prosper and ensure the survival of traditions and practices as distinct self determining nations, “[t]he legacy of the colonial project was the creation of small enclaves, populated almost entirely by First Nations people, characterized by low levels of economic development and high levels of poverty” (Peters & Robillard, 2009, p. 656). They establish the poor level of housing on reserves as a longstanding issue but it wasn’t the prime reason for high mobility rates. More often than not, relationship breakdowns were the initial cause of movement away from reserves. Employment or education opportunities were also cited as reasons for leaving – not surprising, given the dearth of economic or educational opportunities on-reserves. Other reasons included correctional sentences or accessing treatment facilities. Variances between genders was also cited. Notable in this regard was the authors’ finding that “[p]artner conflict’ was given almost entirely by males and points to gendered differences in access to housing on reserves. Families are given preference for receiving housing on most reserves, and because of the shortage of housing there are almost no accommodations for single individuals. When relationships break up, children are more likely to stay with their mothers, and in cases where these families were in possession of

housing, the break-up results in homelessness for the father” (p. 663). Regardless of the reasons for mobility between reserves and cities, Peters and Robillard (2009) stress that central to the web of interrelated migration factors is the colonial legacy and any attempt to understand the impacts mobility has on Indigenous homelessness must be considered in light of how colonization has constructed reserves as sites of isolated existence and acute poverty. They emphasize, for example, that relationship breakdowns or conflicts are largely influenced by overcrowding, stress, addictions and other factors underpinned by colonial impacts. Reasons for moving back to the reserve are again primarily attributed to relationship breakdowns in the city, as well as precarious income situations leading to unstable housing. The authors also state that “although conditions and relationships on the reserve can heighten a desire to leave, other factors make it an important destination in order to maintain social relationships and a place where income and shelter can usually be found. Taken together, the reasons participants gave for returning to reserves depict them as places where participants circulate through as a way of maintaining family ties and networks, and as places of last resort they can access when their housing or employment options fail” (pp. 665-666).

Planning Perspectives

The Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness (ASCHH) created a strategic plan (2009) that set a lofty goal to end Indigenous homelessness over 5 years. Some of the major features of the plan included an articulation of the historical antecedents of Indigenous homelessness up to the current state of homelessness which confronted systemic barriers emerging from colonial contexts such as racism, poverty, poor health outcomes, mental anguish, and addictions. The committee outlined key challenges with respect to how approaches to addressing Indigenous homelessness were insufficient in meeting the cultural needs of Indigenous peoples. Although there was some incorporation of Indigenous values, the plan itself is conceptualized in accordance with Western models. Notably, at the time of report, 2009, 40% of Calgary’s homeless population were Indigenous while they made up only 2% of the entire urban population. Picking up from the 2009 plan, the ASCHH released their plan to end Indigenous homelessness in 2012 that articulated a plan to end Indigenous homelessness over a 5-year span that addressed cultural relevancy. The plan is premised upon three interrelated assumptions: 1) build supports that bridge rural and urban communities will prevent homelessness; 2) homelessness can be prevented, and 3) culturally safe program frameworks and ongoing consultation, engagement and collaboration with Indigenous reserve communities can mitigate the factors leading to homelessness. The plan (ASCHH, 2012) further outlines how homelessness is different for Indigenous peoples due to the impacts of colonization and what works for nonindigenous peoples cannot simply be expected to work for Indigenous peoples. Moreover, a revamping of the original 2009 plan seemed necessary in light of the fact that despite a decrease in overall homelessness in the City of Calgary, the rates of Indigenous homelessness had increased. The plan emphasized a focus on incorporating Indigenous cultural traditions, working with rural Indigenous communities and leaders as well as prevention. Notable is how the ASCHH considers the voices of Indigenous homelessness as the guiding perspective of the plan and emphasizes that addressing Indigenous homelessness involves a holistic approach. The background regarding

the history of colonization situates it beyond an event-driven moment in time and further establishes it as a present-day factor in the lives of the Indigenous homeless population. The plan also cites multiple structural barriers that compound homelessness as well as insight into what makes Indigenous peoples different than other homeless population, such as preference for Indigenous peoples to sleep outdoors. This fact alone is telling for it provides connections to current-day Indigenous value systems in regard to connections to the natural world. Although loss of identity and impacts of colonization have been identified in multiple sources (Abele, Falvo et al., 2010; ASCHH, 2012; Menzies, 2009; Peters, 2012; Peters and Robillard, 2009), the lifestyle preferences of the Indigenous homeless population may suggest that the value of land and being close to it may remain intact.

In 2010, a report released by the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (Bird et al., 2010) highlighted the outcomes of a community gathering that focused on better understanding the pathways to Indigenous homelessness in order to develop a research agenda that illuminates the fluidity of these pathways as Indigenous peoples move in and out of homelessness. The authors offered significant insights into the pathways to homelessness for Indigenous people that include trauma and its associated historical and cultural antecedents, the influence of self-concept/personal beliefs and systemic factors that emerge out of a social context of oppression. They identified pathways out of homelessness to include the support of wrap-around, co-located services, overcoming systemic factors such as racism by developing and/or improving self-concept/self-esteem, and finally emphasized that strength-based approaches work to improve self-capacity and cultural capacity. They assert:

For Aboriginal peoples, the systemic nature of homelessness has much deeper roots with complex historical and cultural connections, linked to jurisdictional disputes across governments that continue to debate areas of responsibility for Aboriginal peoples, both on and off reserve. Chronic underfunding of basic needs, such as housing on-reserve, contributes to further exacerbating the state of poverty. (p. 9).

Based on this work, there is a need for research reform around issues related to Indigenous homelessness.

In Durbin's (2009) critical analysis, she uses multiple streams – problems, politics and policies – to conceptualize an analysis of housing failure on reserves that fell under the jurisdiction of the Kelowna Accord of 2005 and offers solutions to inform increased advocacy of First Nations housing issues. For our purposes, the value of Durbin's study resides in the focused analysis on the failure of one case of policy, the rise and fall of the Kelowna Accord, aimed at mitigating the impacts of inadequate housing on-reserves which in turn illuminates the major role of the federal government in on-reserve housing policies, especially the consequences that result from a change in governments. Durbin (2009) emphasizes the importance of housing to the well-being of all Canadians as a basic human right, but also establishes that Indigenous Canadians on-reserve have the lowest availability of adequate housing. Regarding reserves, Durbin further establishes: "These lands are owned by the federal government, in accordance with provisions from the Indian Act which limits private home ownership opportunities for First Nations" (p. 183). The effects of colonial policy have led to poor housing conditions, which in turn lead to poor health indicators and low quality of life

(Durbin, 2009). Indeed, by depriving Indigenous peoples of the right to private ownership of land and property under the policies of the Indian Act, the government continues to knowingly and intentionally relegate on-reserve Indigenous peoples to the ranks of the poorest of society. To be sure, Durbin's (2009) analysis offers a unique way of conceptualizing public generosity towards Indigenous issues which depends on the government in power. For example, a Conservative government equates to a less generous public perception which is telling of national values overall. On the other hand, Durbin also establishes that "[i]n previous reports, improving the living circumstances of Canadian Aboriginals was viewed as charity ... The Kelowna Accord, however, was presented as an attempt to eliminate gaps between non-Aboriginal Canadians and their Aboriginal counterparts, portraying the Kelowna Accord not as charity but as an equalizing force" (p. 189). Clearly, a national attitude shift is needed that involves government, media and social systems to reframe the image of Indigenous peoples from barriers to progress and problems to solved to partners in creating a vibrant and equitable country. Durbin (2009) suggests that leveraging advocacy efforts that move beyond legislative forces by unifying interest groups is one possible solution. Given this article was written in 2007 and the same issues are being talked about today, these factors point to the fact that we are still continuing to "spin our wheels" with regards to mutually beneficial policy arrangements.

St'at'imc First Nation member and CEO of Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), Adam Leach (2010) offers an analysis of the historical and structural causes of Indigenous homeless and attributes the phenomena to colonial antecedents such as land displacement, assimilation and structural violence in the form of racism and discrimination. Leach (2010) maintains that cuts in affordable housing investments coupled with rising mortgage costs over twenty years have led to a rise in homelessness in the general population, but Indigenous peoples have felt it more keenly due to their already marginalized status. Regarding the violent upheaval of Indigenous culture attributed to colonization, Leach (2010) argues that "[n]o other Canadian group experienced this terrible legacy. No other Canadian group experiences the same degree of homelessness. On and off reserve, Aboriginal Canadians are disproportionately poor and vulnerable to homelessness" (p. 12). Asking, "who are the Indigenous homeless peoples," Leach (2010) outlines the characteristics of homeless individuals within the Indigenous population to include men, women, the young, the old, the employed, and the unemployed. Significantly, high numbers of homeless Indigenous peoples who have attended the Indian Residential Schools (or are second-generation residential school survivors) have had difficult and/or abusive childhoods, have been disconnected from communities due to child welfare intervention, have lived in poverty their entire lives, have low education levels and have profound struggles with addictions and patterns of instability. Of particular significance to our study is his contention that constant migration between reserves and cities is seen as a revolving door problem (Leach, 2010).

From an international perspective, Memmott, Birdsall-Jones and Greenop's (2012) comprehensive report responds to the perspectives of non-Indigenous government policy makers, service providers and organizations working within the context of Indigenous homelessness provisions delivery and housing program as to why they should be taking a different approach to address Indigenous homelessness in Australia. This report is a good

example of both the disconnect between non-Indigenous government, public and private sectors and Indigenous lived-realities as well as the typical efforts that are made to ameliorate this lack of knowledge using a one-sided, Western-based approach. The authors (2012) argue that policy makers, service providers and others working directly in homeless and housing policy need to understand why approaches to mitigate Indigenous homelessness cannot be mainstreamed. However, their analyses of colonial impacts are often pathologized and their focus is entirely engaged from a deficit perspective. Despite a brief emphasis on cross-cultural considerations of the issues that incorporate the social values of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the rest of the report is not reflective of a cross-cultural approach. Instead, the authors (Memmott et al., 2012) rely on labels and categories to buttress their policy recommendation which reproduce colonial attitudes of paternalism.

Cultural Values

In her study with Australian Indigenous peoples, Habibus (2011) examined and developed a framework for conceptualizing temporary mobility issues within Aboriginal homeless population using a case study methodology which focused on specific geographical regions. Habibus (2011) argues that temporary mobility is an underexplored area that could offer unique insights into the relationship between mobility and homelessness that could inform policy developments to improve housing outcomes through early identification of risk factors and overall prevention. Her study offers a unique perspective on current approaches to address Indigenous homelessness and asserts that “[o]ne contributor to Indigenous homelessness is the inappropriateness of housing services predicated on the needs of a sedentary population, rather than those generated by the more fluid relationships to place that characterise Indigenous lifeworlds” (p. 402). She argues that temporary mobility – “defined as short-term geographical movement of Indigenous individuals and groups, in ways that impact on service demand” – (Habibus, 2011, p. 402) needs to be understood in relation to the value systems of Indigenous peoples as opposed to assuming that those who are caught up in the fluidity of movement between urban and reserve landscapes can fit into predefined categories of homelessness. Notable is Habibus’ (2011) contention that “[k]inship relationships form the medium and the motivation for a great deal of temporary mobility with visits to kin essential for the maintenance of social identity, for relationships and social interaction” (p. 403). Habibus’ (2011) work is important for this study in that there is a general lack of understanding around the driving-factors surrounding Aboriginal temporary mobility, as it is all too often misinterpreted and decontextualized by simplifying it to “cultural” tendencies of nomadic wanderings as well as an overall “lack of interest in Indigenous sociality and relationships to space” (p. 405). Moreover, resistance of Indigenous peoples to conform to ‘White’ standards coupled with a fierce determination to hang onto the cultural value of autonomy may influence Indigenous homeless situations. Habibus (2011) also highlights how data inconsistencies and interpreting data through an inaccurate conceptual lens contributes to the confusion around how to best address Indigenous homelessness.

Drawing on pedagogical experiences that are informed by a decolonizing theoretical frame of inquiry, Haig-Brown (2009) critically engages the factors associated with Indigenous diaspora and the differences in how land is conceptualized in Indigenous and Western thought

systems. The aim is to provoke critical reflection to foster a deepened understanding of land for members of settler society. Haig-Brown (2009) offers an analysis around the values underpinning colonization and the misalignment with Indigenous cultural values and asserts that theorizing diaspora using a decolonizing lens illuminates how “[t]oo often Diaspora theory ignores the presence of Indigenous peoples who were already in place when the first and the last diasporic peoples were forced or chose to come to a land” (p. 15). The author further argues that if Canadians persist in approaching history and social issues as originating from settler consciousness, Indigenous cultures and the values that have shaped them will continue to be erased. For the purposes of critically approaching our study, clearly, we must “move beyond simple binaries and complicate ways of thinking about people and places in all their complex relations with each other” (Haig-Brown, 2009, p. 16).

In her study which employed an Indigenous research methodology, Peters (2012) interviewed over 50 Indigenous peoples who were staying with families and friends in the city, instead of shelters, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of homelessness and dynamics of relationships; the factors that push Indigenous peoples towards homelessness, and the proliferation of ‘hidden’ homelessness. Peters (2012) asserts that hidden homelessness is more prolific in First Nations populations and many are staying temporarily with family until housing becomes accessible. This speaks to the strong relational aspects of First Nations cultures and relates directly to the philosophy and value systems of the culture, but also presents unique challenges in terms of maintaining their status as guests in the home of relatives who may also be experiencing housing risks. In terms of instrumental factors, Peters (2012) highlights that “[h]ousing insecurity is a primary characteristic of hidden homelessness. Despite the fact that hidden homeless individuals have shelter, they lack security of tenure” (p. 323). To be sure, hidden homelessness is difficult to measure given the inability to include numbers in census data. This implicates the values of government, especially in terms of the privileging of quantitative data that is used to define problems – if it cannot be measured, then how can it be considered a problem? This lack of reliable measurement prevents Indigenous hidden homelessness from becoming a need worthy of addressing. Again, there is a misalignment in values.

Synthesis

In the following subsections I critically highlight some of the gaps in the literature, not to point out deficiencies or flaws in the work, but rather to both emphasize how all angles of the issues are not always considered in the research and stress how elements of this framing paper may give voice to those silent areas. In addition to identifying what is missing in the research, I also identify areas that require future research.

Gaps

This subsection underscores how much of the literature surrounding Indigenous homelessness offers very little critical analysis or exploration around traditional Indigenous values as being a factor influencing today’s homeless situation. Although Abele, Falvo and Hache (2010) offer significant insight into the structural and instrumental factors influencing Indigenous homelessness in northern Canada, there is no interrogation of how a move to

modern housing may have disrupted Indigenous value-systems. Indeed, they offer a number of useful assertions but little else is left to be done beyond further housing analyses. Despite articulating Indigenous values, many Indigenous-led organizations employ a Western framework to strategize ways to address Indigenous ‘problems’ (ASCHH, 2009). The 2012 plan put forth by ASCHH cites lack of affordable housing as the main reason Indigenous peoples are homeless but does not offer a critical exploration of what housing means for Indigenous peoples. It seems reasonable to conclude that if it was simply a matter of housing, then rapid housing programs such as Housing First would be more successful. Habibus’ (2011) insights around temporary mobility are extremely useful in helping to conceptualize Australian perspectives, but because it is not written from an Indigenous perspective, it does not address the value-systems associated with how Indigenous peoples conceptualize and experience housing. The report prepared for the AFCC by Bird, et. al (2010) highlighted common factors that paved a clear pathway to homeless but a stronger focus on strategizing ways that Indigenous values could intersect with Western values was missing. Doherty’s (2010) work focuses solely on the sorrow of trauma, addictions and other barriers without a deepened analysis of how value systems live within the homeless community and Kurtz, et al. (2008) also fail to address how Western and Indigenous values are implicated in service delivery, health outcomes and access to healthcare.

From a planning standpoint, although writing in 2010, Leach asserts that Housing First models appear to be the most successful with Indigenous peoples but does not say why this is so. Moreover, the strategies identified to address the homeless crisis seem to be couched in Western modalities such as evidence-based, quantitative studies and problem-definitions which have not led to any discernable success if we consider the homeless situation today. Indeed, with AMHA’s focus on meeting government funding criteria, there is little to no critical consideration of how the needs and voices of Indigenous homeless peoples and Indigenous community members rarely align with government requirements, despite the fact that Leach recommends including them in data gathering forums such as ‘talking circles,’ as well as asserting that “[c]ulturally appropriate solutions to Aboriginal homelessness should support Aboriginal values and traditional practices” (p. 13). However, culturally appropriate solutions based in traditional values are neither government solutions nor are they Canadian values, so again, the misalignment between value systems is left unexamined.

Although Memmott, Birdsall and Greenop (2012) offer a more nuanced and complex discussion of Indigenous homelessness in Australia, their analyses are not foregrounded by the voices of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness and instead attempt to understand the issues solely from a Western lens. Much of the language used is couched in either neoliberal, anthropological or biological understandings of culture and relies on terminology such as social and cultural capital and currency of the “camping lifestyle”. Historical descriptions of Indigenous lifeworlds are presented in salient discourses emerging from an anthropological lens which do little to foster an appreciation of complex and multifaceted philosophies and value-systems of Indigenous nations. Indeed, Indigenous occupancy on the land both traditionally and contemporarily is often simplified to “camping” out. Albeit there is a succinct section on Indigenous values, the perspectives and resultant recommendations do little to encourage critical reflection or consideration of the colonial

policies that serve to continually force Indigenous peoples into socially and economically marginalized spaces whilst the rest of society enjoys a high standard of living.

Based on these gaps, it becomes clear that analyses need to shift towards critically unpacking the colonial ideologies that have shaped societal values in Commonwealth countries in order to illuminate the ideologies that continue to impinge on the lives of Indigenous homeless population.

Areas for future inquiry

The work of the ASCHH (2009, 2012) points to a need for addressing funding and lack of inclusion of Indigenous peoples in urban housing and homelessness prevention plans. In terms of cultural competency, sensitivity and awareness seems to be emphasized in much of the literature. However, there is a need for confronting why cross-cultural responsiveness is not enough. To this end, more work needs to be done around models that pull together factors regarding how colonization has impacted Indigenous peoples and create a framework that outlines the value systems within an anti-colonial context and analyses. Moreover, ASCHH's 2012 plan to end Indigenous homelessness reveals a need to explore the specificities surrounding jurisdictional issues that have led government sectors to "pass the buck" with regards to taking responsibility in fully addressing the problems that have been imposed on Indigenous peoples. Metis, non-Status and Bill C-31 individuals find themselves in a jurisdictional quagmire as do on-reserve Indians who move to the urban areas and find themselves abandoned by on-reserve support networks. To be sure, future exploration is warranted around the 'revolving door' phenomena that besets status Indians moving from the reserve to the city and back again, oftentimes doing a back and forth dance.

Habibus' (2011) study offers a framework that can be used to achieve a more nuanced understanding surrounding the various situations and cultural and structural motivations surrounding the ebb and flow of Indigenous peoples between Treaty 7 reserves and the City of Calgary, which offers another way of perceiving Indigenous mobility beyond a problem to be solved. Modifying Habibus' (2011) framework to suit a Treaty 7 context is worth exploring. Moreover, Baskin's (2007) research points to the need for better understanding the prevalence of Indigenous youth homelessness and reserve-urban migratory factors of their homelessness. Additionally, understanding and exploring the nuances of the jurisdictional issues of Indigenous youth homeless is crucial in informing existing policies.

Bird and colleagues (2010) recommended that further research needs to be conducted around specific impacts of racism, the nature and role of Indigenous family, promising practices in services and supports, better understanding of the role of the Indigenous community both on and off-reserve, exploration of 'traditional' indigenous culture in housing and homeless policy, and finally, examining opportunities for addressing those pathways to homelessness. Further to this and although not explicitly articulated, a notable area for future inquiry that emerges from the gathering is the need for a social analysis of Treaty 7 reserve communities that explores features of healthy families and those who are still struggling with violence, addictions, poor self-concept, poverty and the related issues. Reserve communities are reflecting a stratified structure that stands in the shadows of Western society.

Understanding the degree that values are lived, not just on tribal policy documents, needs to be critically understood.

Durbin's (2009) analysis offers a critical conceptual pathway for understanding the misalignment between how problems are defined in the government, how they are measured, and if these problems are worth measuring. If government is unwilling to accept that the problems within Indigenous communities have emerged as direct results of colonial policies of assimilation – if the roots of the problems remain invisible, or worse yet, denied – then any attempts to meaningfully address them will be lost. Her work also suggests that further research is needed around how data, or lack thereof, inform policy, especially given government's identification of problems using quantitative tools of measurement. Indeed, if we measure what we value (Mahi, 2013), then the fact that government's failure to measure quality of life indicators for Indigenous peoples as it does for the rest of the population reveals a truth that many Indigenous peoples have suspected since early colonial times: that government is not interested or willing to invest in working with and learning from Indigenous communities so everyone, including Indigenous peoples, can prosper. Moreover, Haig-Brown's (2009) critical theorizing around relationships to the land, the connection to Indigenous diasporas and Indigenous peoples' place within society is helpful in providing an alternate lens to interpret Indigenous homelessness and displacement. However, for our purposes, this critical theorizing requires a framework within which to conceptualize the issues central to our research and to interpret the data. Using the framework of the ethical space as the potential for critical engagement ensures that we are considering both sides of the issues and that the voices of Indigenous communities is held in just as much regard as systems' planners.

Menzies (2009) recommends that an expanded and adapted version of his intergenerational trauma model be applied to other factors that are connected to Indigenous homelessness such as family violence or the cumulative impacts of oppressive policies imposed on Indigenous peoples. Finally, based on Peters (2012) work, more research employing Indigenous research methodologies is needed around the phenomena of hidden homelessness, especially given the fact that it impinges on intimate/personal spaces and relational dynamics that are rarely illuminated in the literature and research.

This literature review, although brief, has served to frame the issues that are central to this paper as well as those which are connected to the broader research study. I have focused on literature that offers insight into how colonial ideologies and practices continue to be a destructive force in the lives of Indigenous peoples, how approaches to planning have been taken up, and finally, how Indigenous cultural values emerge within the Indigenous homelessness phenomena. In synthesizing the literature, it is apparent that alternative approaches are warranted in order to ensure mutual understandings are advanced in ways that also address the concerns of Treaty 7 communities. Interrogating the ways that Indigenous homelessness has been taken up as evidenced in the literature helps to illuminate current challenges and future pathways.

Current Issues and Future Pathways

This final section is informed by the voices of those working directly with the Indigenous homeless population both on-reserve and off as well as a Treaty 7 nation perspective. I also draw on anecdotal data and other resources provided by Calgary Homeless Foundation and the Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness. Although the data is not reflective of the entire Treaty 7 First Nations, it offers a valuable starting point to begin considering how jurisdiction, housing, and social assistance intermingle with the experiences of Indigenous peoples in regard to on and off-reserve service providers, on-reserve cultural knowledge keepers, and those who are homeless. I begin by offering insights into how Indigenous traditional values are currently understood and lived out both on and off-reserve.

Current understandings of Traditional values

During my talk with the Piikani Nation representatives, it was expressed that they are working towards re-centering values in the community and ensuring those who are wanting to work with them, such as external agencies and government, are aware of those values and can work within them. This speaks to the notion that communities are defining needs in relation to cultural values. Moreover, Indigenous values still live in the community and are evident in relationships to Elders and to the land, as well as the way people approach their roles in the community. In terms of how values are conceptualized, one Piikani participant asserted:

I'm talking about compassion, we're talking about sense of belonging, talking about family, connection to land all those are still there. When I talk to my urban counterparts and we're talking to people they still identify, and they relate instantly when we talk about our land. When they talk about Blackfoot traditional territory. It might not mean something to them in their immediate life or situation, but they do feel a connection to that ... they're talking about that connection to land and so those things are almost innate where someone is tying onto that connection to land and survival. So, they do feel complete, they do feel that connection and if you can build upon that connection in a positive way I think you are able to overcome some of the barriers.

Although traditional values may not be as evident in everyday living due to the current social context, Indigenous people still recognize them and feel a deep sense of connection to them.

In terms of the Indigenous homeless community on the reserve, a major finding that emerged in my conversation was that many Indigenous homeless people would rather be homeless on the reserve than go to urban shelters. It was mentioned that even those with no connections to family and whose behaviors got them kicked out of the reserve shelter would still rather stay on the reserve, which again points to a deep attachment to community and to the land. One of the participants noted how in traditional society, the land was conceptualized as home, not the actual dwelling for the land provided everything. Today, it is the reserves that now symbolize home and are truly remnants of traditional territories. In this case, for Blackfoot homeless people, a sense of home is deeply connected to traditional values.

Another example of traditional values was around money and how money does not hold the same value for many Indigenous peoples as it does for Western society. Indeed, the shelter manager indicated how money kills the homeless people. This notion was echoed in the focus group conversation with the urban Indigenous homeless outreach team during which the participants emphasized that saving money is not a priority for many Indigenous peoples, with one noting how “[w]e’re taught: when you have money, spend it; when you die, you’re not going to take it with you. That’s the mentality we were taught with. That’s what I was taught. That’s what I took with me to this day.” Understanding what truly matters to Indigenous peoples offers insights into how best to meet effective programming needs. Money is needed for survival, to be sure, but for the Indigenous homeless population, money is not everything and is often used to buy the basics, or, unfortunately, to fuel addictions.

Another aspect of how current traditional values live within communities, both on-reserve and urban, is found in the consultation process. Consultation with Elders and community knowledge holders validates the processes of identifying cultural values which can only be defined and validated by the community. Piikani nation participants reiterated how validation from a community of Elders is required. Ermine (2007) further illuminates the process of validation, highlighting that “[i]n Indigenous societies, the Elders and the oral traditions provide us with the codes of conduct as human beings within our communities” (p. 196). It was mentioned that a Treaty 7 community gathering is warranted in order to determine community/cultural values and how these translate into modern contexts.

Based on my conversations with Piikani nation and the AFCC, it is clear that traditional values need to also evolve in order to be responsive to this new world and retain who we are.

However, the challenge for Piikani, indeed, for all First Nations, is to ensure that all members center the traditional values for living a good life. Sadly, many are still dying and the policies are still embedded within a genocidal framework. Many First Nations people are still fighting to survive.

Evolution of Values in Indigenous Communities

The dialogue and focus group data provided direct evidence of changing value systems within Indigenous communities both on-reserve and urban-based especially with many commenting that values are becoming more individually-driven. Amidst these changes, the Indigenous homeless people who are often being left behind are the second-generation IRS survivors. They are often overlooked in the programming despite the fact that they experienced the brunt of the impacts of intergenerational traumas. Moreover, one of the focus group participants noted that despite the fact there are many Indigenous peoples still living within Indigenous value-systems, such as the participant, the impacts of colonization are hard to overcome and often evoke anger and bitterness that are unleashed within Indigenous families and communities as lateral violence. He sees lateral violence as the biggest barrier to growth and healing further stating that –

That is why we haven't moved forward because none of us get along, that's why tribes don't get along because they've created that separation between each other, that lateral violence

makes it harder for us to do our jobs and get along and be okay in this world ... there's people that want to do things together, that want to help each other, there are people like that. It's just that a lot of us carry a lot of anger, bitterness... That lateral violence again. I guess you could say I see that being our biggest barrier.

It becomes extremely difficult to make effective change when many in the Indigenous communities are experiencing conflict or taking frustrations out on each other, which hinders people from objectively considering community issues and strategizing ways to overcome them. Indeed, instead of focusing attention on the root causes of lateral violence, many Indigenous peoples are often caught up in finger pointing which deflects from critically connecting it to colonial impacts.

The focus group participants shared how many working with Indigenous homeless people are in a constant state of mourning and grief due to the risky lifestyles of the homeless community. One participant remarked, "It's a hard job what we do, we face watching people going down a hard hill all day. Every day we watch that, we work right on these streets all day, they're all dying around us, we're totally in a grief state of mind." Another brought up the Indian residential schools and how that whole experience contributed to how values are different today. The Indian Residential School experience took not only the children, but a way of life. The challenge now is to undo the damage inflicted on culture because of the abuse, suffering and loss of culture inflicted by the schools, but many Indigenous peoples do not want to become 'stuck' in the Indian Residential School legacy.

In terms of transitioning from reserves to urban areas, the focus group participants felt that Indigenous peoples living on-reserves still experience culture shock when they move to the city. On-reserve and city expectations are different, which is a point that is also consistent with the literature (Peters, 2009; 2012). One participant shared the following:

Once you move from the reserve, [where] I mean everybody is living in the grandmother's house. There is a whole bunch of families living together and you don't have to worry about being quiet from neighbors and having the sound levels down after ten, you know and all this sort of stuff. And the house is falling apart and full of mold, nobody thinks, 'Okay I better move into the city, I better be quiet after ten, I have to think about the neighbors, I got to take care of the house I'm living in.' You never see that, so you don't know about it and nobody has ever taught you when you move to the city it's a big culture shock, you got to do this and that. On the reserve, they're so many living in one house and you come to the city. You don't realize, oh I can't have all my relatives and a bunch of people living with me, it has to be just me.

The participant highlights several issues in this statement: overcrowding in on-reserve houses but all families are together; houses are isolated and in disrepair; there are no opportunities, resources or perhaps even the motivation and personal investment to fix the houses; moving to the city carries expectations that if not met, could leave Indigenous peoples at risk of becoming homeless. Additionally, it was brought up that one does not need as much money on the reserve compared to the city since they have families to rely on, a reality which speaks to how generosity and family relationships are still strong values in the Indigenous

communities. Participants also pointed out how for many Indigenous homeless peoples, there exists a great deal of shame in regard to their lifestyle choices which makes them reluctant to see family, while others have no family connections. Indeed, some have no knowledge of where they come from and who their family as a result of having been raised in the child welfare system.

For the Indigenous homeless people in the city, it is oftentimes their family and relationships that motivate them to keep going. Some, despite still searching for who they are as Indigenous people, continue to try their best; to find themselves or to get clean. The odds of survival and success are overwhelming, and many do not survive the street life. Many others, in spite of having very little themselves, continue to be kind, compassionate and generous towards those who are new to the streets. One participant remarked:

[I]f it wasn't for the Aboriginals they probably would never learn how to survive on the streets. Because they stick together, they work together, they feed each other, they help each other, and they do open up their hearts to others. And they have their own groups too. Like alcoholics, the ones that live in shelters, the ones that live on the streets, like in tents, the ones that are into certain drugs, they'll stay away from certain ones because they don't want to get messed in it. The ones that are trying to stay straight are struggling to try to find, to stay away from those other groups.

Based on these statements, it appears that the members of the Indigenous homeless community teach street survival skills, which is demonstrative of a long-established pattern of helping those adjust and survive in a new and unfamiliar environment. This process happened in early settler days and seems to be happening in the urban underground. Significantly, these statements also point to the social organizing of the urban homeless community as well as the dangers in terms of navigating the homeless social milieu.

Systemic barriers

The focus group revealed some other issues related to systemic factors. Participants shared how there is a general lack of trust in non-Indigenous agencies and service providers and many Indigenous homeless people refuse to access services provided by non-Indigenous people because they felt judged and unsafe. This was particularly true for those experiencing mental health issues, who had an even more difficult time trusting. Notable was the assertion that oftentimes, Indigenous women and children can only access adequate housing in the city if they go through the homeless-serving/shelter-system which seems to force them into the homeless-serving systems. One participant described it in the following way:

Because here that is one thing we struggle with, is getting housing for our clients. We go against people who already have a picture painted of us what we're going to do. I could imagine that all these women that come into town with their kids, the only way they can get a place is they got to go utilize another agency and that's the only way they're going to get that housing. It is controlled that way to make it work. So, you got to go utilize, you know, Inn from the Cold, Brenda's House and then that's the only way that these women will get a house to their kids. Why is that? How do you expect people to come to the city and survive

unless you got family? Even then when you go stay at your families again you got the issue. It's hard for a lot of people to do that and that's why you make us, or you break us, one of the two. And that's where social services come in and takes your kids again. Either you make it by utilizing all these agencies or you don't. That's a big obstacle right there because that's where they have to go.

Based on the participants statement, there appears to be a 'revolving-door' phenomenon within systems in that the most vulnerable, women and children, are moving back and forth between the homeless-serving sector, housing/rental, income assistance and child intervention. There appears to be very little hope in breaking free from these systems. Indeed, it is blatantly obvious that the systems are set up to enable dependency and disrupt Indigenous families which provides evidence to reinforce the claims made throughout this paper that colonial ideologies and values still impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples in destructive ways. For the Indigenous working with Indigenous homeless community, the challenge is to try and undo the damage inflicted on culture because of colonial policies such as the Indian Residential School. At the same time, many Indigenous peoples do not want to become 'stuck' in the Indian Residential School legacy or be defined by it. Based on the focus group and dialogue, colonialism is still very much alive in the minds of non-Indigenous peoples.

Another example of systemic barriers is found in the healthcare system and the need for urban Indigenous people to access culturally safe health care, especially those willing to take INAC coverage. These are realities that many members of mainstream society take for granted but are a great source of stress and anxiety for urban Indigenous peoples. Finally, it was brought up that addiction is a way of life for many homeless peoples and their bodies become dependent on it – they would die without it. For many Indigenous peoples on the street, reluctance to access healthcare services means a sure death sentence.

Challenges in Creating an Ethical Space

The data reflected a clear misalignment between Indigenous and Western values, which need to be illuminated in order to better understand the complexities of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the systems and individuals representative of those systems. To be sure, and this was especially apparent in the dialogue with Piikani nation participants, housing is a colonial construct that is based in property ownership and the values Western society places on personal property and material wealth. This is the expectation that Western society has of First Nations, but for many, it is neither an expectation they can live up to nor is it of high priority in their lives. The misalignment in value systems also translates to Western settler society automatically determining that Indigenous peoples are deficient because they are being categorized, judged and assessed based on Western definitions. Interestingly, when one of the Piikani participants described the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the notion that colonial identities are shaped and maintained through the dynamics of codependency became evident. The participant described how:

[M]ainstream society has such a high expectation of us but, yet we are subjugated and oppressed so we are never going to be successful in our own right because we agree to their

fiduciary responsibility on us, so. And with these codependent relationships our Chief and Councils because that subjugated system is developed separatism and corruptness and bureaucracy is a corrupt system and so because the only entity in which they will deal with First Nation people's we have zero choices. So, our people are going to continue to die daily and we just lost another person to OD this past weekend. That's the big picture. The picture is they have such high expectations of First Nations people...ultimately what I'm trying not to say is that these things are processes of termination.

The point to be taken from these powerful statements is not about whether her arguments are right, which reduces her analysis to a black or white binary of opinions, but to actually imagine what it might be like for Indigenous peoples to translate their experience in Canada as being subject to termination policies. To be sure, based on the current state of socio-economic affairs in Indigenous communities, it is difficult to argue otherwise. As two groups, Indigenous and settler, we are deeply implicated and intertwined in terms of our relationships. Our identities are co-constructed within a colonial framework and Treaty 7 communities are forced to operate within a system that many are doomed to fail in. Those who cannot conform, die.

Another fact that emerged from my dialogue with the Piikani participants was how settler society still operates within a paternalistic framework and that an attitude of paternalism still permeates relations with government. It was mentioned that the government does not trust Treaty 7 governance to take care of their own reserve systems because, according to Western definitions, reserve systems are already deemed as failures. However, government agents continue to try and build relationships with on-reserve leaders, especially during key election times, knowing full well that there will be changes. Governments and systems express a desire for change but continue with the same attitude. Change requires changing approaches and doing things differently but that's not happening. This dynamic was also reflected in the focus group in that many of the participants pointed out how the systems enable dependency. Indigenous people need to find strategies to empower one another and not take the same approach to program delivery as Western systems. However, they have no choice and given that government and funders' expectations for improvement are unrealistic, programs end because of the two-year funding caps. Success and sustainability seem unattainable under the Western systems. Indeed, there is no real sustainability in Western governance systems and as governments change, so do the priorities of their leaders which in turn, translates to a cascade of changes for Indigenous peoples. Amidst the promises, Indigenous people continue to die.

Other challenges in creating an ethical space involve a general inability or unwillingness of Western thinkers to recognize how and why standardization and universalism are privileged. This is reflected in the notion that it is good to treat everybody the same, which in fact dishonors the distinctness of human cultures. Western methodologies premised in standardization are then imposed on Indigenous communities which in turn make little to no sense to Indigenous thinkers. There still seems to be the idea that people can be forced to think and act a certain way without destructive consequences. Moreover, participants were keenly aware of the challenges in attempting to work with non-Indigenous peoples and they all

acknowledged how there are two very different systems of thought. What is apparent is that despite 400 years of consistent presence on Turtle Island (North America), Western thinkers know very little about Indigenous systems of thought. For example, there are marked differences in conceptualizations of home that reveal cultural value-systems that are then translated to practice. These differences are often reduced to arguments based in Western determinants of civilization and progress.

For Indigenous peoples, community validation of values and knowledge through Elder engagement is the ultimate method for ratifying social and moral contracts, to use the rhetoric of Western social theory. For Western society on the other hand, laws enshrined in written contracts and document comprise the basis for social organizations and book learning over direct experience is the privileged method for education. Treaties are a good example of a documented social and economic contract which has resulted in division among the First Nations. There is a difference in worldviews that needs to be acknowledged and recognized – not simply interpreted through a Western lens and dismissed because it is not in alignment with Western values and practices.

Additionally, frustration was expressed around the fact that Non-Indigenous people are constantly dictating how programming needs to happen with respect to Indigenous issues. Indeed, agency and funding approaches have turned into a revolving door in treating ‘hard to house’ individuals. The focus is on quick intake and quick file closure in regard to approaches to deal with the demanding need. The dialogue and focus group revealed how there is a lack of sustainable change and funding is often allocated to agencies reporting high statistics in usage. Moreover, elements of tokenism were brought up in the focus group as many organizations seem to be hiring Indigenous people in order to get more funding. The chronic level of under-funding for clients seemed to point to deeper issues given that one of the focus group’s participants felt that if Indigenous peoples start to get healthy on their own using culture as a framework, they will be seen as a threat to Western systems’ approaches. Moreover, colonial policies and rules are imposed on Indigenous leaders who then impose them on their own people, which are directly misaligned with Indigenous values. Reams of paperwork and documentation is required to prove a service is needed or one was delivered, and these expectations hinder advancement for those Indigenous people who have a difficult time conforming to Western standards. Again, these issues are not here for the sake of debating whether or not they are true. The fact that Indigenous urban homeless service providers feel this way indicates a need for dialogue within a culturally safe milieu, so all perspectives can be honored and respected. Centering the power of respectful dialogue by identifying potential opportunities in the ethical space is crucial to improving relationships between Indigenous peoples and government and the systems.

Opportunities in the Ethical Space

This section of the paper is focused on unpacking and analyzing the potential that engaging in the ethical space holds for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to discover common ground upon which to dialogue around the development of a shared value-system. In speaking with Piikani representatives, it was mentioned that Indigenous peoples’ involvement in

research and problem definitions has largely been absent in the Indigenous communities and the participants were excited and hopeful with the prospect of having their voices and expectations heard. In regard to the engagement efforts related to this project, the homeless shelter manager remarked, “You coming here is the first of its kind that I’m ever seeing in any sector anywhere with First Nations in relations to framing it, our way. You are right, this is good because it is a beginning, because our Elders told us to adapt regardless.” Because Indigenous research is about restoring power back to communities and re-centering our values, it is vital that the outcomes of this project address the needs of T7 communities and not solely non-Indigenous urban systems’ planners. Indeed, this is a critical component of Indigenous research, that it benefits Indigenous communities.

One focus group participant shared how his cultural activities and programming choices are not dependent on external funding which reveals how he values the freedom to practice his culture – one cannot put a price on Indigenous culture. Moreover, discussions around solutions are happening within the Indigenous communities but non-Indigenous systems and government need to be supportive and listen. The history of treaties is one area that Indigenous peoples have been actively challenging Western interpretations of treaty but quite often, their appeals for further dialogue leading to revision of treaties falls on deaf ears.

In regard to on-reserve opportunities, dialogue and planning around the urban program preparation needs to be prioritized. Instead of being forced to learn ‘street smarts’ which can lead people to trouble, the reserves need to start programs to prepare people for off-reserve living, as well as post-secondary education. Clearly, it is not enough to have Indigenous people simply live with their relatives in the city and expect them to be successful with all the racism, discrimination, and easy access to drugs and alcohol. On-reserve curriculum needs to include urban life-skills. What becomes clear through the analysis of the data is that the interconnected factors, such as need for basic housing maintenance skills, cultural supports and pride, and addressing lateral violence are all factors that provide opportunities for on-reserve leaders and community to strategize around in order to transform the current homeless situation that impacts both urban and reserve Indigenous residents in very real ways. One of the questions that emerged from my talk with Piikani nation representatives was around ways to build on positive connections to our traditional Indigenous values. Treaty 7 communities need to create safe ethical spaces to identify those cultural values and generate opportunities for people to engage with them. Cultures evolve, and with them, the values that inform practices and shape worldviews. Incorporating Western values of property ownership and financial wellness whilst still ensuring a place for the Indigenous cultural values is also an area that reserve communities can begin dialoguing around.

Jurisdictional, Housing and Income Assistance Challenges in Treaty 7 First Nations

Based on the data, this final section of the framing component highlights issues that should be considered when addressing the other topics connected to the research. It is vital to keep in mind that although Indigenous planners and service providers want to build programs based

on traditional approaches, many feel their hands are tied due to having to conform to Western systems and standardized approaches. Importantly, it was asserted in the focus group that all First Nations are facing similar issues due to the colonial experience and there are several ways to connect the experience to the other components of this research.

The homeless serving systems are feeling jurisdiction barriers. One participant remarked, “Those barriers between Provincial and Federal government, I think they do that because they want to make things difficult. Things could be more simpler than they make it,” and the constant changing in funding priorities makes it difficult for service providers to do their job effectively. Clearly increased funding is needed to truly address issues, but this is not the only answer and in light of traditional values, one can begin to appreciate how complex the issues are. This is evidenced in the focus group discussion around funding:

People got to realize that. What we do here is we are servants, we take care of our people, we take care of our own. And yeah, we need money to survive that's a given. We need money to live, we got to take care of your families. That's not why we do the job, though, but it's a part of it. I think for me a lot of people need to do a lot of healing before we can move forward in a more economical way. The reason why I believe that is because you know a lot of people in past history there's a thing called you know when we get into colonization, is oppression, oppressing. Either you become the oppressor, or you stay oppressed. And that's what happens in this world today ... And every year when it changes that makes it harder for us, more barriers for us when they do that. That makes it harder for us to do our jobs, stay steady and be consistent with the programing we do because we got these barriers where people are changing the money on us.

These statements highlight the multidimensional ways that colonial policy and ideology is experienced and internalized in Indigenous communities. In addition to jurisdictional barriers, the stress of funding compounds an already stressful work environment. Challenges working with the Indigenous homeless community as an Indigenous-led urban organization include the prolific numbers of homeless individuals and the high rate of recidivism to return to street life, the expectations of funders to house people and keep them housed – a lack of success in this area is seen as the fault of Indigenous case managers and little consideration is given to the colonial connection to homelessness. Although the impacts of colonial oppression may be identified in government reports, the attitude of governments and funders is simply to place blame on the individuals and organizations without taking responsibility for the colonial policies that continue to impinge on the lives of Indigenous people today.

In terms of housing, attitudes that essentially originate from colonial values are translated into structural discrimination, which becomes reflected in the rental market and was a challenge that focus group participants pointed out. Although the housing is poor on-reserves and overcrowding is an issue, many Indigenous peoples would rather stay there than move to the city and face racial violence and discrimination in the social systems. Values attached to money and the paternalistic and oftentimes unrealistic approach to funding adopted by the federal government makes it clear that issues related to income assistance require an analysis that must also consider such factors such as lack of employment, constraints on private property ownership.

Conclusion

Through this paper, I have offered a comprehensive and distinct analysis of the issues that are central to this research project. In employing an Indigenous research methodology based in Ermine's (2007) understanding of the ethical space of engagement, I not only established transparency with regard to my own relationship to the research and the Indigenous community, but also ensured that the perspective of this paper is consistent with an Indigenous paradigm. Taking this approach enabled me to conceptually mobilize the ethical space which in turn allowed for an interpretation of historical and contemporary factors within a relational framework of analysis. The ethical space of engagement is not merely a way of looking at the issues, but brings with it the potential to transform relationships by not only illuminating the ideological roots of the relational disconnect between Indigenous and settler societies at the philosophical level, but centers an examination of cultural values that cannot be divorced from current social realities. Contained within the ethical space lies the original spirit and intent of Treaty 7, which was not realized during the original treaty negotiations. The failure to find common ground has largely been attributed to communication barriers based in interpretation and language discord as well as conflicting worldviews. Today, we have a common linguistic foundation to begin dialoguing around ways to create mutually beneficial relationships, but despite this, Western thinkers still know very little about Indigenous thought worlds. Clearly, conflicting worldviews and epistemic clashes are ongoing challenges. We need to accept that very little progress has been made between Indigenous and settler relations, which requires that we establish rules of engagement through which we can engage in dialogue around value-systems in ways that center human dignity, respect and reciprocity.

The condition of Indigenous homelessness is as much a conceptually oriented experience as it is a material one. As such, addressing it must involve conceptual means and this requires large-scale dialogue to provoke a paradigm shift that is felt in systems' approaches, strategies and plans, and in individual attitudes towards one another. The literature surrounding Indigenous homelessness is already fulsome and growing; yet the recommendations that are offered and the plans that are envisioned are not reflected in the relatively small data sample gathered for this paper. Nonetheless, the data mirrors issues that emerged in the literature, especially with regard to the impacts of colonization. Taken together, the factors influencing Indigenous homelessness cannot be distilled to individual components for analysis. Although jurisdiction, housing and income assistance are part of a larger systemic approach that has been imposed on Treaty 7 communities in ways that continue to challenge the values that have sustained Indigenous culture for millennia, understanding the dynamics of how these components are interconnected within the larger web of historical and current factors is a starting point for envisioning how the data can be used to assuage epistemic clashes and create an ethical space for engaging in dialogue.

Although it is premature to offer concrete recommendations here, this paper – in combination with the other areas encompassing this research project – at the very least speak to the potential for transforming relationships and approaches based in common understandings around Indigenous homelessness. Establishing rules of engagement and

redefining the issues are logical entry points into dialogue. With regard to Indigenous and Western paradigms, Ermine (2007) reminds us that:

[W]e continue stumbling about trying to create clarity of the transcultural issues that confront us without any thought given to what the rules of engagement might be between these two human communities ... we continue the posturing and the status quo remains as it always has because we lack clear rules of engagement between human communities and have not paid attention to the electrifying space that would tell us what the other entity is thinking ... (p. 197)

The challenge issued through this framing paper is to create that ethical space, establish mutual rules of engagement and begin redefining issues and problems in such a way that centers cultural values in order to enable us to deliberately reframe our current frames of reference, shift attitudes and strategize ways to mobilize the strengths of both Indigenous and Western ways of thinking to ensure that the benefits of this research will eventually have direct impacts on those who are most affected by the issues – the Indigenous homeless people.

Chapter 3: How do Housing Need, Supply and Conditions Contribute to Indigenous Homelessness? – Steve Pomeroy

Introduction

This paper focuses on housing issues and how housing need, supply, conditions and circumstances, both in First Nations communities and in Calgary, may contribute to risk or experience of homelessness.

The paper begins with a brief review of the literature on Indigenous homelessness. It then examines existing Census data to identify the estimates of core housing need among Indigenous households in Calgary. The concept of core housing need, as a standardized methodology developed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) does not fit with on-reserve housing, and Statistics Canada and CMHC explicitly exclude on-reserve population from their core need estimates.² Data on core housing need for the non-reserve Indigenous population is available for Calgary, but should also be treated with caution due to levels of non-response and underreporting among Indigenous households.

In order to develop a more complete picture of housing supply and need, the research has utilized structured interviews with First Nations officials and housing staff in addition to collecting information on the current housing stock (quantity and quality in each First Nation). The interviews with First Nations staff and officials also sought the opinions and insight on factors and causes that they believe might contribute to homelessness for their band members that have left the reserve. Subsequently, interviews with individuals with lived experience and currently in the homeless system were undertaken to determine and corroborate contributing factors in their current circumstances.

Drawing on these research elements, the paper draws some conclusions and outlines some recommendations on opportunities to improve the system to reduce the risk of Indigenous homelessness.

Researcher Self-Location

As noted in Lindstrom (2020), positioning self in the context of the research is part of Indigenous research protocols. I am participating as a non-Indigenous male and am not an Indigenous scholar. I have undertaken extensive research into housing and homeless issues, including some work in partnership with urban Indigenous housing organizations. This includes *A Time for Action: A National Action Plan to Address Non Reserve Aboriginal Housing Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Need 2009*; and the *Cost of Remedies: Background Working Paper*

² The core need method utilizes rents from CMHC annual rent survey, but this survey is not conducted on reserve, so data is unavailable to apply the concept in these locations. In addition, because there are inconsistencies across First Nations in charging rent – it is not feasible to calculate affordability on the same basis as is done in off reserve communities.

(2004) for the National Aboriginal Housing Association. I have also worked in collaboration with Indigenous housing organizations as the CMHC Program Co-ordinator in BC (1987-89). In undertaking this work I have been informed by the preceding research by Gabrielle Lindstrom and have complete the OCAP training delivered by the First Nations Information Governance Centre.

Brief review of literature on Indigenous homelessness

In her framing chapter, Lindstrom has outlined a clear perspective on questions of housing and homelessness among First Nations people. This included a review of literature that has explored housing and homelessness challenges in the Indigenous population. The Framing Chapter also sets the context for subsequent research, including this chapter on housing issues. It presents an anti-colonial framework and the associated ideological tensions between the Indigenous and Western worldviews.

Lindstrom (2020) traces the significant pervasive impacts and traumas associated with the process of colonization, including the 60's scoop, residential schools and the multiple impacts of the Indian Act and its focus on assimilating Indigenous persons into Western culture. Belanger et al. (2013) describe how the 60's scoop – which took Indigenous children and placed them in white foster homes within the child welfare system – has led to unstable families and homes.

Lindstrom further notes that the concepts of home, and thus homelessness, have significantly different meaning in Indigenous culture, which is inherently in contrast with Western perspectives. In Indigenous culture, the concept of home is closely associated with a relation with ancestral lands and with family, both immediate and extended. The Western concept of home as a commodity or an asset is alien and inconsistent with this Indigenous perspective. Thus, the way that homelessness is defined and quantified can be very different in Indigenous culture.

These underpinning factors are also reflected in the definition of homelessness adopted by the federal Homeless Partnering Secretariat:

For the purposes of Reaching Home, and subject to revision based on ongoing engagement and consultation with Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous homelessness refers to “Indigenous Peoples who are in the state of having no home due to colonization, trauma and/or whose social, cultural, economic, and political conditions place them in poverty. Having no home includes: those who alternate between shelter and unsheltered, living on the street, couch surfing, using emergency shelters, living in unaffordable, inadequate, substandard and unsafe accommodations or living without the security of tenure; anyone regardless of age, released from facilities (such as hospitals, mental health and addiction treatment centers, prisons, transition houses), fleeing unsafe homes as a result of abuse in all its definitions, and any youth transitioning from all forms of care” (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019)

The contextual analysis in Lindstrom's (2020) Framing Chapter suggests that the HPS definition reflects a Western paradigm and overlooks the more nuanced perspective of an Indigenous view. Lindstrom cites a definition of homelessness articulated by Weasel Head (2011) that acknowledges the relational epistemology central to an Indigenous worldview:

[T]o be homeless means to be in a state of existence where there are no family or community support networks. Being homeless does not necessarily mean having a roof over one's head or having a home in the physical sense. Common and generally accepted societal definitions of the term "homelessness" do not reflect the participants' conceptualizations. They are utterly and hopelessly homeless when they feel abandoned by their family and the traditional Blackfoot community....Essentially, they were still homeless because support systems such as family were not present in their lives regardless of the fact that they are housed. (p. 122)

This suggests that the way homeless counts and estimates are developed, such as point-in-time counts and shelter utilization rates, may not correctly count, or nuance, Indigenous homeless.

As part of a pilot project approach to develop estimates on homelessness in rural and remote communities, the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN, 2019) undertook a survey of homelessness in collaboration with the Kainaiwa First Nation. Distinct from point-in-time methodologies used in many urban centres, this employed a survey over a 30-day period administered to clients of the Blood Tribe Family and Community Support Services and the Moses Lake Shelter. One of the key insights from the development of this survey was that the term "homelessness" carried a stigma that discouraged participation – accordingly, the survey was built around questions that asked about *housing instability*, rather than about homelessness.

Just over 40% of respondents reported some degree of housing instability; almost half said this related to inadequate housing while one-fifth associated this with low income. While issues of health, mental illness, and addictions were also counted, these were mentioned by a much smaller number (total of 17 responses from 98 that identified as experiencing unstable housing).³

So adequate housing and low income are significant contributing factors to instability (and risk of homelessness) in the Kainaiwa First Nation, and likely reflected across other Treaty 7 First Nations. By contrast, issues of addiction and mental health figure much more prominently among non-Indigenous homeless and in urban counts (Gaetz et al., 2013).

Disproportionate representation of Indigenous people in homeless counts

Notwithstanding some conceptual and methodological concerns as noted above, the literature on Indigenous homelessness and housing need does identify a disproportionate

³ In contrast, interviews with indigenous persons with lived experience in the Calgary homeless system conducted in the current research found a much higher identification of substance abuse and addiction issues).

representation of Indigenous persons and families (data for Calgary homelessness and housing need is explored in the next section).

Patrick (2014) has suggested that in some cities (mainly western Canada), Indigenous homelessness may represent one-quarter to one half of the total homeless population. And Belanger et al (2013) found that 1 in 15 (6.97%) Indigenous People in urban centres are homeless compared to 1 in 128 (0.78%) for the general population.

Further, Calgary stands out among larger metropolitan areas with the highest number and relative percentage of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness as well as the highest incidence – 19.7% of the Calgary Indigenous population were reported as homeless (Belanger 2013).

Various authors and Indigenous scholars highlight the antecedent effects of colonization and the related traumas as a critical factor underpinning these relatively high rates of homelessness (ASCHH, 2012). There is less literature covering subsequent factors – influences that come into play once Indigenous families relocate into urban centres.⁴

Again, Belanger et al (2013) highlight that discrimination and racism remain prevalent for urban Aboriginal renters and homeowners. While low income (related in part to education and opportunity) is a factor in sustaining housing, landlord discrimination and risk management are serious barriers making it difficult to access rental housing. This often results in limited choice and poor quality housing (see next section on relative incidence of inadequate housing for Indigenous people living in Calgary).

Further complicating the process of securing and retaining housing in urban settings, traditional Indigenous values and perspectives of home combine to create fractures in housing stability. While Western culture has commoditized housing and implemented a legal structure that includes obligations to pay rent and consequences for failing to do so (eviction), this is in juxtaposition with the holistic symbolic view in Indigenous culture (Peat 2002, Lindstrom 2020). And this may be exacerbated in cases where some First Nations do not charge rent, so the concept and practice of paying the rent in full, and on time, is not a norm among some Indigenous populations.⁵

Related misunderstanding in the clash of Western and Indigenous culture can potentially lead to arrears, or contravening tenancy rules, such as having too many people stay in the unit, causing eviction and a downward spiral that inevitably results in homelessness.

In many communities, and certainly in Calgary, there is an absence of housing and support programming designed specifically for Aboriginal people and their complex combination of structural and individual issues (ASCHH 2012).

4 Again, as discussed later, interviews with indigenous with lived experience reveals some of the factors that exacerbate risk of homelessness in the city.

5 Interviews reported in the later sections explored whether the practice of setting and collecting rent is used across the Treaty 7 Nations, some do charge rent, others do not.

While a key tenet of Housing First programming is the wrap-around supports that enable housing stability and recovery from other life challenges, there is no form of preventive supports to help recently relocated Indigenous individuals and families avoid the pitfalls of urban living. They are challenged by unfamiliarity with Western and market norms, an enduring result from colonial policy that continues to isolate First Nations individuals on reserves, as well as those that move into urban environments.

Much research has explored the underlying causes and pathways into homelessness (e.g. Kneebone and Wilkins 2016; Piat et al, 2015), with a subset more specifically examining Aboriginal and Indigenous homelessness, and how this differs in comparison to non-Indigenous homelessness (Andersen and Collins, 2014; Thurston, Soo et al., 2013; Patrick 2014).

Clearly the aforementioned historical intergenerational trauma and impacts of colonization are critical (Calgary Recovery Services Task Force 2017, Lindstrom 2020). These contribute to associated issues of policy inequity that create concentrated poverty, issues of overcrowding, substance abuse and addictions. The latter are then associated with family violence and separation, resulting in family members leaving their home community (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 2008; Beavis et al., 1997; Belanger and Weasel Head, 2013; Bombay, Matheson et al., 2014).

Arriving in the urban centres, displaced Indigenous people then confront systemic landlord racism and serious challenges finding and securing appropriate and affordable housing. Many also experience discrimination in the labour market and, unable to earn a living wage, are unable to secure housing they can afford.

Traumatic childhood experience, sometimes with overcrowded living conditions, addiction-related abuse and family separation have been found to have lasting effects and are especially significant for Indigenous youth (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 2008; Kneebone et al., 2015; Milaney et al., 2018).

A review by the Calgary Recovery Services Task Force in 2017 confirmed that Indigenous participants reported higher rates of foster care system involvement and had, on average, experienced more adverse childhood experiences than respondents overall (Calgary Recovery Services Task Force, 2017; Williams et al., 2019). And aging out of foster care often leaves former foster children abandoned and without a support network (Turner et al., 2010, ASCHH, 2012).

Issues of family violence are also highlighted in the literature. Many factors are identified as possible causes of violence: loss of identity and way of life, continued impact of residential schools, a “learned cycle,” etc., drug and alcohol consumption (by both parents) are aggravating factors that contribute to intimate partner abuse (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 2008).

The associated issue of violence and childhood exposure to these conditions is replayed in later generations, as Indigenous children may have grown up without role models

to teach sound parenting (Nicholls, 2008; Bingham et al., 2019). These childhood and teenage traumas have also been identified with youth leaving the family home and the reserve, and relocating into urban centres, where they are not prepared to manage challenges of securing work and accommodation.

These various contributing factors are effectively summarized in ASCHH (2012) and highlighted in the text box below.

Primary factors associated with the onset and persistent condition of homelessness among Indigenous persons:

- Lack of employment opportunities that are meaningful and provide a living wage;
- Lack of affordable housing that is safe, stable and sufficient to meet the needs of individuals or families (large enough to prevent overcrowding);
- High prevalence of addictions and substance abuse;
- Low education levels and workplace skills;
- High rates of incarceration with inadequate discharge planning with resulting in being discharged into homelessness and having the added stigma of a criminal record (creating an additional barrier for successful community reintegration);
- Histories of violence and abuse;
- Family breakdown; and
- Reserve conditions.

Notably, while a lack of affordable and safe housing is included in this list, it is the combination of other factors that tend to undermine housing stability. Providing more affordable and safe housing alone appears to be a necessary, but insufficient remedy and response if other causes are not concurrently addressed.

Assessing Indigenous housing need in Calgary

The brief review of literature has noted the disproportionate levels of core housing need and homelessness among Indigenous people in urban centres.⁶ This can be specifically identified in Calgary, drawing on core need and homeless data. The focus here is on setting some context on the representation of Indigenous persons or households in Calgary and the proportion in need (and potentially at risk of becoming homeless) or counted as homeless.

No attempt has been made to draw on standard statistical sources (Census) for the Treaty 7 communities as levels of non-response in Indigenous communities are believed to be high and therefore these data have limited meaning. Instead, for the Treaty 7 communities,

⁶ Core housing need is a concept developed by CMHC in the mid 1980's that has become the primary measure to assess housing need across Canada. It uses a two-step process. First assessing if a household falls below any one or combination of housing standards: affordability (paying over 30% of gross income for shelter), adequacy (dwelling in major need for repair), and suitability (a measure of crowding that compared household composition to number of bedrooms). The second step applies an income threshold, calculated based on spending 30% of income to afford the median market rent for an appropriate dwelling. E.g. if the median rent is \$900, the income threshold is $\$900/0.30 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$36,000$.

information is collected directly via the consultation and interviews with housing officials in each First Nation, discussed later.

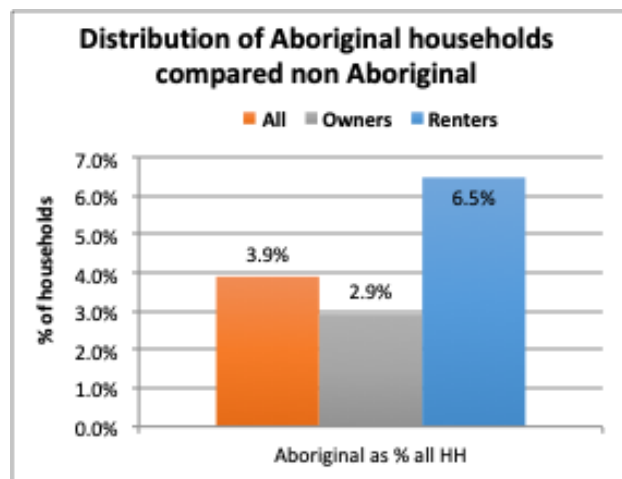
Indigenous Core housing need in Calgary

Core need data distinguish between owners and renters, Aboriginal self-identification (self-reported by census respondent) and type of core need standard.⁷ All data in this section are based on 2016 Census data for the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

It is widely known that Indigenous households are disproportionately represented among those in need and in the homeless population. Using 2016 Census data, we can explore the extent to which this is true in Calgary.

Households identifying as Aboriginal make up almost 4% of all households in Calgary (making up 2.9% of all owners and 6.5% of all renters).

Among aboriginal households captured in the Census, a small majority are owners (54%); renters make up just under half of Aboriginal households in Calgary (46%). This of course excludes all homeless persons, as they are not counted in the Census.

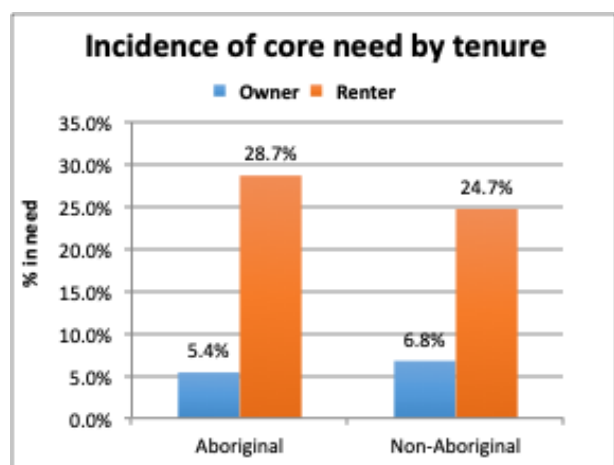


It should also be noted that the absolute count of Aboriginal households in Calgary is quite low (8,000 vs. 116,000 non-Aboriginal renters; and 9,500 vs. 326,000 owners).

Looking more specifically at housing need, a total of 2,305 renters households and 515 owner with Aboriginal identity were counted in core need in 2016.

The frequency with which Aboriginal peoples are in need (the incidence of core need) is slightly lower for Aboriginal (vs. non-Aboriginal) owners and slightly higher among renters:

- Among owners, 5.4% of Aboriginal homeowners are in core need, versus 6.8% among non-aboriginal.

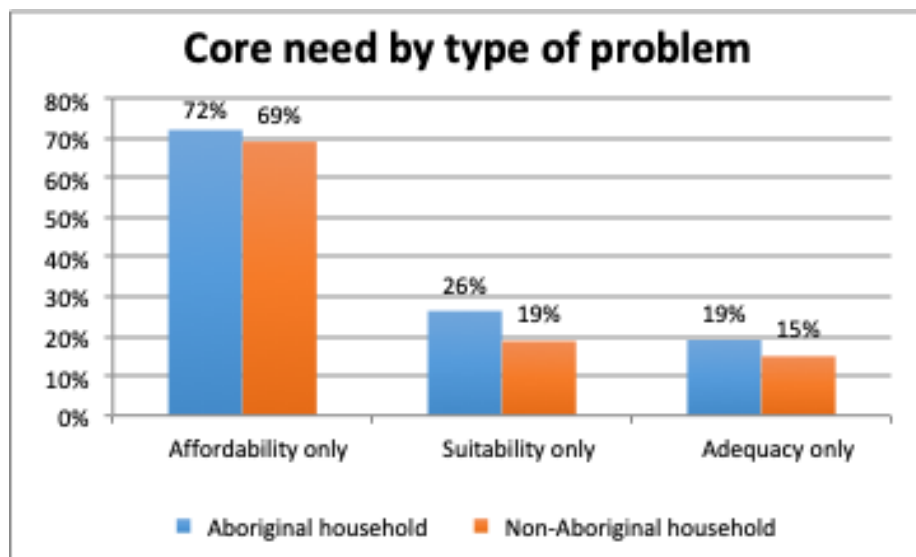


⁷ The census asks if respondents identify as Aboriginal, rather than Indigenous, so the term Aboriginal is used in this review of need.

- For renters the incidence of need is higher among Aboriginal (28.7%) vs. non-Aboriginal households (24.7%).

More notable, however, is the difference by tenure. As shown above, core need is much higher among renters (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) than among homeowners. This is in a large part because renters have much lower incomes, on average less than half that of homeowner households. Thus, the incidence of core need is almost five times greater among renters than owners, and this gap is slightly greater among Aboriginal households: 28.7% of Aboriginal renters are in need vs. 5.4% of Aboriginal owners.

Focusing on renters only, where issues are more acute, we can examine the issues that cause households to be in need.



Core need reflects one of three problems: affordability, suitability (crowding) and adequacy (condition – see footnote on previous page). The primary issue among all renters is one of affordability (paying over 30% of gross income for rent). And the incidence of affordability only problems is slightly higher among Aboriginal renters. Alone, affordability impacts 72% of Aboriginal renter households (vs. 69% of non-Aboriginal).

Most significant though is the higher incidence of suitability (crowding) and adequacy (condition) problems among Aboriginal renters. While all lower-income households face challenges finding housing of an appropriate size and in reasonable condition, those identifying as Aboriginal (in the Census) experience these problems more often (26% and 19% respectively) compared to non-Aboriginal renters (19% and 15% respectively).

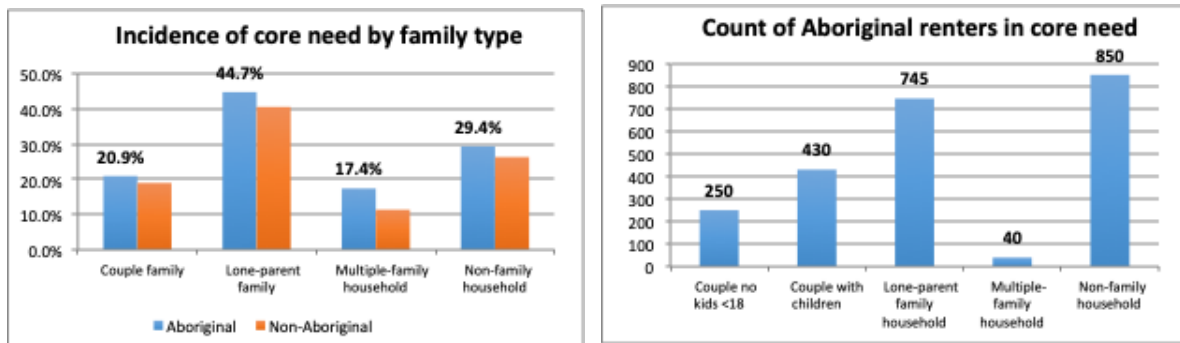
These statistics reveal higher incidence of crowding and poor condition. The former reflecting the demographics of larger Aboriginal family size and the latter, a higher rate of poor condition and the challenge in finding and accessing family housing (the barrier of discriminatory landlord practice).

By Family type

Another aspect of need is how this affects different households and family types. In both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, the incidence of core need tends to be much higher for certain household types – notably lone-parent families and “non-family” households (the latter are mainly single persons along with some unrelated individuals sharing).

The data reveal a much higher incidence of core housing need among lone parents and non-family households mainly because in most of these households there is only one income earner and thus lower income. And this is exacerbated for lone parents who require sufficient bedrooms for children (larger appropriate units have higher rents).

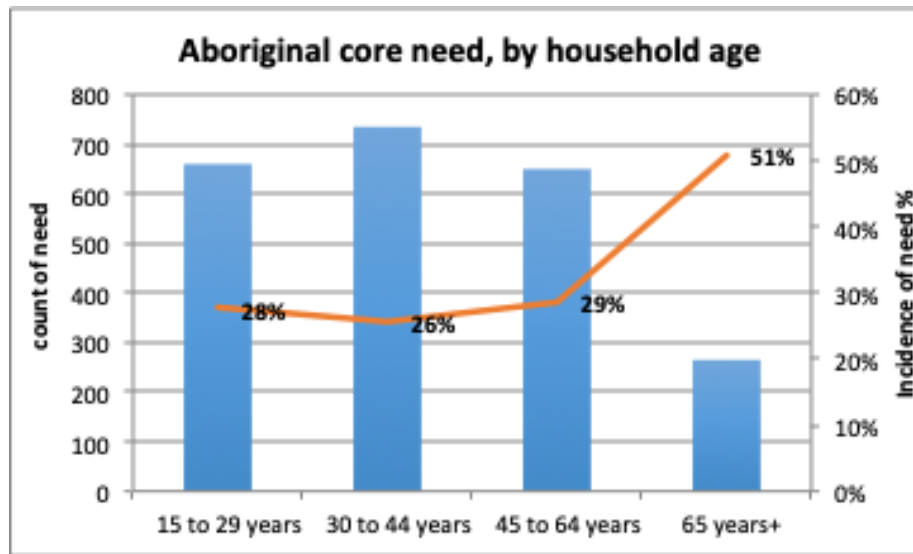
For Aboriginal renter households, the incidence (percentage of all such families) in core housing need is notably high for lone parents (44.7%, so almost 1 in every two lone parent families are in need). Next highest are non-family households (mainly singles, but some may be in shared accommodation), at 29%.



Sometime the incidence rate (left chart) may be high, but this affects only a small number of households, so it is important to take note of the absolute number in need (right chart). Here we see that it is the non-family (mainly singles) category that is the largest group in need (850) followed by lone parent families (745). Meanwhile, although multi-family households (i.e., two families, likely two lone parents sharing) have a high incidence of 17%, there are only 40 such households in Calgary.

Finally, examining the incidence of core need by age of household (captured based on age of household designated maintainer), the incidence of need and absolute count for Aboriginal renter households is presented below.

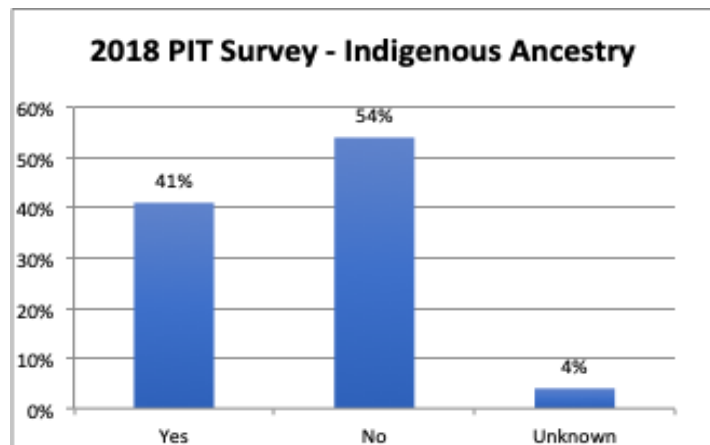
This shows that while the incidence is high among those aged over 65 (one in every two in core need), the count (265) for these older households is much lower than for other age groups, which each have roughly 700 households in core need.



Homelessness

CHF have provided data, first from the 2018 Point-in-Time count and secondly, administrative data based on shelter users.

Looking first at the PIT counts from April 2018, the caveats and limitations noted in CHF's report of this count are acknowledged – the PIT is not a representative sample, it is merely a reflection of who was found and counted in the street count, augmented by administrative data from the shelter admissions data. It is accordingly assumed to under-count total homelessness, due to methodological limitations. With this caveat, a total 2,911 persons were counted, a substantial (32%) decline from 2008, ten years earlier.



Almost half of these (47%) were counted in the emergency shelter and a further 4% in transitional housing. Only a small number (2%) were unsheltered (sleeping rough).

Of these 2,911 persons, almost half, 41% identified as having Indigenous ancestry (and 81% of these were status or non-status First Nations).

So, notwithstanding methodological limitations, the PIT data confirms a disproportionately large representation of Indigenous people in the homeless population.

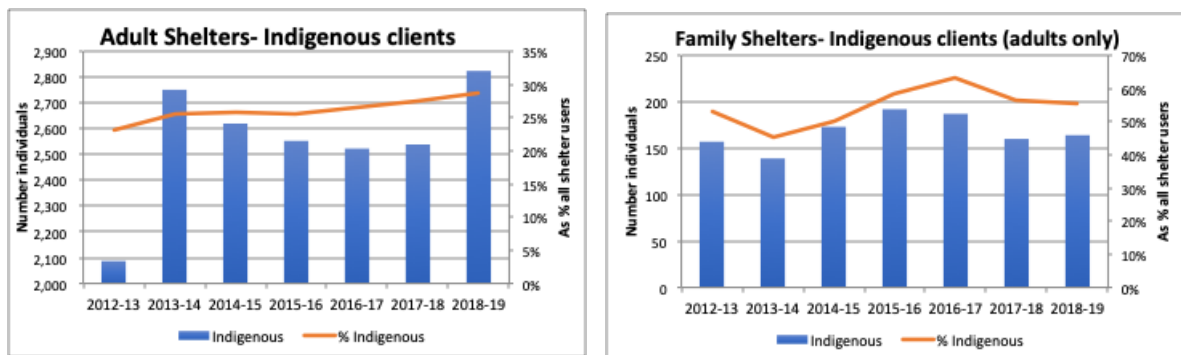
The PIT survey also asked which Indigenous nation or nations the person identifies with. This generated some important insights for the current work, which is framed on flows from Treaty 7 Nations.

A total 205 persons did identify as Indigenous. Of these, 152 specified which nation, but only 36 of these (24%) specified a Treaty 7 Nation, so three quarters of the Indigenous homeless count (on that night) **are not from Treaty 7**, and many come from further away (e.g. Cree, Ojibway, Metis).

Drawing on administrative data collected through the shelter intake process, additional insight is available on the representation of Indigenous persons in this part of the homeless population.

Looking first at the adult shelter data, the overall count of shelter users has fallen marginally from a high of just over 10,000 in 2015 to under 9,900 at March 2019.

However, the pattern for Indigenous users is not as positive: while initially falling, the annual number of adult shelter users in 2018-19 (fiscal year March 30) is up over the same period. And as a share of shelter users, the proportion that identify as Indigenous has continued to increase and is now almost 30%.



In the family shelters (where the absolute count is much lower), the representation of Indigenous families (based on count of adults, as household maintainer) has been more variable, and with a modest decline since 2015-16, both in count and as a share of total family shelter users. However, Indigenous families are grossly overrepresented in the shelter system, compared to their share of the total population. Currently below the peak, the proportion of family shelter users identifying as Indigenous is 56%.

As part of the shelter intake and assessment process, shelter clients are able to go through an assessment process in order to design a program to assist in addressing underlying causes and in transitioning to housing stability. Data from these assessments provides additional information of those that have been assessed.

Consistent with the literature (e.g. Belanger and Weasel Head, 2013; Lindstrom 2020), the data reveals that there is a tendency for Indigenous homeless persons to sleep outside or

couch surf more frequently than non-Indigenous homeless, and the Indigenous clients report a lower frequency of shelter use compared to non-Indigenous. This difference may seem small, but it is actually quite significant if we consider it from a values-based perspective and the way homelessness is perceived and experienced among Indigenous people.

Most notable in the assessment data is the frequency of clients having experienced foster care. Among non-Indigenous, only 15% reported experience in the foster care system; the rate among Indigenous homeless was three times higher (42%). Clearly, issues (including legacy impacts of colonial policy, residential schools etc., as described earlier) that lead to family breakup and intervention by children's services are having a downstream impact in contributing to Indigenous homelessness.

Housing opportunities for Indigenous households/individuals in Calgary

For Treaty 7 and other Indigenous individuals and families seeking to find appropriate affordable housing in Calgary, the options for safe and affordable (and more accepting landlords, other than slum landlords) and more particularly, culturally appropriate housing are very limited. Appendix A lists the existing housing options and confirms that, across existing Indigenous providers, only 273 permanent affordable or subsidized homes are dedicated to Indigenous residents in Calgary. This compares to the 2016 Census data that estimated a count of 2,305 Aboriginal renter households in core housing need (and a further 3,000 homeless seeking an appropriate place to live).

Thistle (2017) discussed the concept of culturally appropriate housing in defining homelessness. He highlights how the Indigenous concept of home extends far beyond bricks and mortar to embrace a series of relationships and responsibilities involving connections to human kinship networks; relationships with animals, plants, spirits and elements; relationships with the Earth, lands, waters and territories, and connection to traditional stories, songs, teachings, names and ancestors. Accordingly, it is important to Indigenous people to secure housing that enables them to sustain or reconnect with these relationships and communities.

These services and supports can also be delivered through partner agencies. In particular, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) provides a range of culturally relevant social, cultural and employment services to indigenous persons and families, and also partners with a number of private and non-profit landlords to reach Indigenous tenants.

Within the homeless-serving system there is a continuum of facilities including emergency shelters, treatment and detox, supportive housing and affordable housing. While there is a disproportionately large representation in the system, few facilities or agencies specifically target or are exclusive to indigenous populations. Appendix A profiles the continuum of facilities that provide shelter and support of various types to the at-risk Indigenous population

So, it is not just the lack of sufficient housing on reserve, there is a substantial lack of affordable appropriate housing options for Indigenous families and individuals in the City of Calgary.

Treaty 7 First Nations Consultation

In order to develop insight into issues contributing to the aforementioned high representation of Indigenous persons in Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care (CHSSC), interviews were conducted with a range of officials and housing administrators in the Treaty 7 First Nations, as well as some staff working in the CHSSC. Representatives from each of the five Treaty 7 nations (including three from each of the separate communities of Stoney Nakoda – Bearpaw, Chiniki and Eden Valley) were interviewed. For this paper, the primary group of interviewees were those working in or with knowledge of housing on reserve, although some officials operating off reserve programs were also interviewed.

Recognizing that multiple factors come into play (especially legacy colonial issues, employment opportunities, and social issues), the interviews focussed first on how housing conditions and housing availability may contribute to housing instability among individuals or families from the Treaty 7 First Nations. They subsequently explored views on what other factors might contribute to band members flowing into homelessness.

Housing context on reserve

The interviews initially collected information about the prevailing housing situation in each of the five First Nations in Treaty 7 territory. A detailed quantification was not undertaken, rather a general overview of the scale of the band's housing portfolio, conditions and unmet demand was assembled, as suggested by waiting lists for homes.

All of these Nations have substantial portfolios of homes (generally 1,000-plus homes in each, although this combines the three communities of Stoney-Nakoda) developed over many decades primarily through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) capital programs and CMHC on-reserve program, which employs an ongoing subsidy funding to repay the original loan and assist with operating expenses.

One Nation noted that due to numerous fires and damage to existing homes, they were unable to secure property insurance, so this stalled their new construction for the last few years – CMHC would not approve loans or funding without the Band having insurance for the homes.

The existing CMHC/INAC programs tend to support construction of detached homes, so there is a lack of options for individuals/couples, although two bands did report recently building or planning small apartments (6-plex of 2 bed units). The Bloods have six units of town homes. Piikani have some modular units geared to single individuals. Siksika has a men's hostel, which accommodates about 8 people, and both Tsuut'ina and Stoney Nakoda have a women's family shelter.

The vast majority of homes are detached dwellings, most with 3 or more bedrooms. Without some smaller homes, it is difficult to relocate elders from larger homes (and free these up for larger families), nor to house new small families. With a limited number of homes,

and little new construction, younger family members often remain in family home and this can result in crowded conditions.

Also, as discussed below, there are few options when a family goes through separation – usually the male departing member has no choice but to move off reserve. And for those entering treatment for substance abuse (some on reserve but more often off), once they complete treatment, there are few or no housing options for them to stay in (or return to) their community.

All bands reported a significant waiting list (ranging from 40 families to over 300 families in the Stoney Nakoda communities, and upwards of 400 in each of Siksika, Piikani and the Blood Tribe- Kainaiwa). To put this in context, as noted earlier, the existing communities each have approximately 1,000-1200 homes, so the backlog of unmet requirements is very significant.

And all noted that they are unable to build enough new homes to meet expanding demand as well as a backlog of demand. In the larger communities, plans and funding might allow up to 25 new homes to be added over a couple of years. There are also serious challenges in securing funding to build the infrastructure to service new homes, especially in more rural communities.

Given the extensive unmet demand from families, and lack of funding to respond, there is no priority or ability to divert these limited funds to adding homes for childless couples or singles that may be separating and wish to stay close to their children. And for some this is not a priority. One of the First Nations interviewed discussed a survey of band members conducted a few years ago to determine priority between small homes for singles and couples versus a gathering place to bring the community together and to provide services. In an anonymous survey 80% chose the multi-purpose community centre, despite the lack of housing.

“It was surprising, but it talks about people’s commitment to the land and place. They would rather not leave the Reserve, they’d rather us be in community and together. Even though on an individual level a house might be good for me on a communal level, I want us to be together, I want my clan, I want my family, I want my people together.” - [Housing Administrator]

Many units are also in need of repair. It was suggested in interviews that as many as 65% to 80% of homes in some communities are in need of substantial repair.⁸ Some attributed these poor dwelling conditions to the wear and tear generated by large households and overcrowding.

⁸ A review of 2016 Census Community profile data for the five first nations identified more than half of homes in need of major repair in Stoney, Piikani and Kainaiwa.

And overcrowding is pervasive, often involving multi-generation households. Across the First Nations in Treaty 7, housing administrators believed that most have average household sizes of 7 or more, compared to a national average of 2.7.⁹

As children reach adulthood and start their own families, the absence of housing options results in very crowded living conditions. Inevitably, this contributes to health issues (especially respiratory related to damp and moulds), fractured relationships and abuse, and poor educational outcomes – for example, children have no place for quiet time to study and do homework, and fall behind in school (with downstream labour market challenges).

“I always kind of say, a good home produces good outcomes. You know you do well in school, your stress level is good, you’re at a good start if you’re coming from a home. But if you’re living in an overcrowded situation there are other social issues that may arise like drug use, alcohol issues, incestual [sic] relationships and so on....” - [Comments from Housing Administrator].

Poor preparedness for urban markets

An important contextual element in the existing on-reserve housing is the understanding of obligations and responsibilities of tenancy.

While some bands now offer forms of ownership on reserve, most live in homes owned and operated by the Band administration, so are effectively tenants. Across the Treaty 7 Nations, some charge rent (Piikani and Kiawaiwa), but others do not (and even where there is a policy to charge rent, there are high levels of arrears and non-payment). In the latter, there is a perception that housing is provided to them as a treaty right and there should be no obligation to pay rent. This highlights the broader and complex tensions around Treaty in general, particularly around interpretation, which varies across First Nations.

....from the moment you [government] built Reserves you took on ownership, you set people on Reserves you took on ownership, the Crown took on ownership of where people live, right. That’s implicit in that decision. You live here and part of living means accommodation, shelter. I’m of the view that, yes, it is a Treaty obligation. - [Band Housing Administrator]

In other cases, while the band tries to charge rent, some tenants don’t pay and build up large arrears, creating problems in securing new housing allocations, unless the band pays these off from Band funds.

In cases where rent is not charged, or not paid, this also denies the band of potential revenues to use in repair and rehabilitation as well as revenues to use to borrow in order to build more homes.¹⁰

⁹ Again, using 2016 Census community profiles, the data suggest at least 25% of homes are overcrowded (based on national occupancy standards). The Alberta average is 5%.

¹⁰ Also as described by Falvo, in cases of Income Assistance recipients, where the Band has a practice of not charging rent across its portfolio, recipients of IA are not permitted to claim a shelter component and consequently receive a lower benefit amount. At the

The consequence is a dependency on very limited capital funding and few homes are constructed. Bands that do charge rent (e.g. Piikani) can use these to lever financing to support a construction program. In the case of Piikani, loans are secured by a trust fund (set up via a land claim settlement), but it is the rental revenues that enable loans to be repaid – this has enabled Piikani to build over 200 homes in the past three years.

“Understand there are two lifestyles, living on the Reserve is one way. The other one is urban. The expectations are a little bit different, they don't know the responsibilities and liabilities they need to do. They have to pay utilities, they have to maintain buildings, understand what noise bylaws are, damages and so on. It's completely two different concepts of living on Reserve and off Reserve” - [First Nations elected official]

Many families living on reserve are unfamiliar with the obligations of being a tenant in the urban market, and if they subsequently migrate into the city, are ill-prepared for a regulated tenancy where failure to comply with the tenancy agreement/lease and to pay rent in full and on time results in eviction.

Some housing administrations on reserve have taken on a more rigorous landlord role and established tenancy agreements and requirements (e.g. credit history). In these cases, band members can become more aware of the tenancy obligations and may be better prepared if they move off reserve into mainstream housing.

Again, in communities that have established these practices, when the tenant family contravenes their lease, they can be evicted (e.g. non-payment or rent or excess arrears, cause damage to unit, sometimes due to substance abuse and nuisance behaviour). This creates a double-edged sword. On the one hand, this practice generates value revenues for the band housing and does help to prepare band members for the realities of the urban rental market. But at the same time, it places a strike against the household/individuals – they lose their housing on reserve, and at the same time are poorly prepared to access the urban market. It is these families that are more at risk of becoming homeless.

A notable, related initiative being delivered in the Piikani nation is a transitional program for new tenants allocated a newly built home. This is part of a development program run by a separate indigenous develop entity, Ky Naak Ku Kaan (KNKK), which is has built over 200 new homes in the last three years borrowing from private lenders, backstopped by a band Trust Fund. To ensure that these new tenants understand their tenancy obligation, they are first allocated a mobile home in a stepping-stone program for families applying for one of the new homes. They have acquired 37 trailers, as temporary accommodation and a testing phase. Applicants are assigned a trailer home and must complete 6 months in compliance with tenancy agreement, before “graduating into one of newly built homes”. Two of the interviewees commented that there is a need to expand such education programming –

same time, the Band foregoes a potential rent revenue, which could be used to fund housing repair and construction. 2016 Census profiles reveal that over 70% of individuals over 15 receive full or partial IA benefits, so this rent revenue loss is very substantial.

including creating and funding position of tenant relations worker, to assist young families in preparing for tenancies (both on reserve and if they relocate into city).

Reasons for leaving the reserve (moving to city)

Based on insights of housing administrators, there appear to be two forms of migration to the city: the first is by choice, the second is forced.

The first is one related to searching for opportunity, and many do make a successful transition via education and securing employment.

For others, it is more of a forced migration, especially for newly separated singles, youth and individuals struggling with substance abuse and frustration with lack of employment opportunities on reserve. Overcrowded homes, poor condition and the lack of supply were also identified as factors in families leaving the reserve.

Some that have successfully transitioned may have a desire to come back to live on the reserve (especially Tsuut'ina, as the reserve is on the City boundary with access to work in the Calgary). But there is little, or no, availability of homes back on the reserve.

This can also be problematic for those that left for school and were supported by First Nations education allowances – but these allowances end once finished school, and unless they have secured work (at a living wage), they have difficulty remaining in the city. These, however, are not typically the people that become homeless: they have acquired an education and stronger labour market skills so are able to earn a living and survive (or sometimes even thrive) in the urban market.

Most of the administrators expressed the view that the people that flow into the homeless system are more often those experiencing some combination of addictions, family dysfunction and traumas, including abusive family situations, separation, or for young adults, estrangement.¹¹

For young adults living on reserve in families where parents suffer from addictions, abusive conditions may cause the youth to flee into the city. And typically, they lack education, life skills and employment and are vulnerable to victimization.

Without income to pay rent, they may try and stay with friends or family already in city (couch surfing). Many eventually wear out their welcome and have to move on, typically to the street or into the shelter. Often, when in the shelter, they are subjected to further victimization, including lateral violence from other Indigenous persons (reported in interviews with shelter workers and with homeless Indigenous individuals).

The family shelter operators noted that their admissions data reveal a very high (over 50%) proportion of Indigenous families in their family intake. For families, issues of overcrowding and sometimes abuse have forced families to migrate into the city.

¹¹ And these perceptions were confirmed in interviews with individuals now in the homeless system in Calgary, as discussed later.

However, family shelter staff noted that some families use the shelter as a short-term respite from the pressures and traumas related to crowding on-reserve, but then after a few weeks return to their community. This is not persistent homelessness, and many may not consider themselves homeless, reflecting the inappropriate use of colonial or mainstream labels to describe Indigenous practice or behaviour.

In some instances, the mother may be fleeing an abusive situation, but subsequently returns to her home community with her children. Each of the First Nations has an array of social and family services, including counselling and parental support, but when there are abusive situations, it's not possible to provide separate housing for both partners. Housing is the weak link in a system seeking to restore health and family connection.

Exacerbating factors and barriers in the City

Many who flee the reserve—for various reasons, especially addictions and family estrangement, or separation—are lone individuals who are disenfranchised from their community and have no social network or support. They are isolated in a system with which they are unfamiliar. In this sense, they fall under both the mainstream definition of homelessness, but more notably also under the Indigenous definition as articulated by Thistle (2017) and Lindstrom (2020).

Lacking life skills and income, they face formidable barriers in securing accommodation, other than informally: couch surfing if they have friends or family, sleeping rough, or accessing the shelter system.

Fear and risk of victimization in the shelter system may cause some (especially youth) to avoid the shelter system and to sleep outside. And in doing so, they miss opportunities to access supports and help that, for example, could connect them initially to social assistance benefits, and potentially to employment skills training and readiness programs. Or for those with addictions, access to treatment facilities.

Shelter staff also noted a high incidence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) among young Indigenous persons in the shelter system, which is associated with high risk of substance abuse, requiring treatment.

Indigenous families frequently confront systemic racial discrimination in securing housing, and more so when they are also dependent on income assistance (for which benefit levels are very low, which make it very challenging to find housing with rents affordable relative to the shelter component provided). And as those with lived experience reveal, often the only housing they can access is in poor condition with landlords that are indifferent to responding to urgent repairs (water and heat issues).

Perhaps the most common issues highlighted in the interviews is the perceived lack of preparedness among the individuals migrating into the city. Few have experience or familiarity with the tenancy obligations in the urban market. There are few housing options available to

those with no income or very limited income (and thus, as revealed in the previous section, must resort to poor quality options and are victims of slum landlords).

But even for those with work, they have not learned to save to pay rent and often do not understand obligations of a tenancy. While there is clearly an issue of discriminatory behaviour among landlords, this may be motivated by learned experience among landlords of risk of arrears or overcrowding from prior Indigenous tenants (stereotyping).

Interviews with individuals with lived experience in the homeless-serving system

In addition to interviewing officials, interviews were conducted with a cross section of First Nations persons accessing services in the Calgary shelter system (i.e. lived experience). While these interviews were more focused on experience in accessing Income Assistance, they also explored the reasons that these people found themselves seeking assistance in the homeless system, as well as reasons they had left the reserve.

It is noted that a five of the thirteen interviewed were not migrants from First Nations reserves – they considered themselves “city Indians” and had been born and/or raised in the City. This includes time in foster care, although some have over some periods also tried to live in/return to their First Nation Communities. Additionally, others were from Treaty 6 or 8, but their experience is still illustrative of contributing factors impacting indigenous migrants, and some had also spent time in Treaty 7 communities due to relationships with people from these communities.

Many were seeking to deal with addictions, are victims of FAS and foster care and have constrained capacity to work or were victims of violence.

Across this sample, a number of themes were recurrent – all expressed fear and frustration about life in the reserve communities. They felt that there were very few employment opportunities and ability to earn income, and highlighted what they saw as extensive nepotism favouring certain band members in the on-reserve employment system. All highlighted issues of alcohol, drugs and addictive behavior that they feared on-reserve, and in some cases, this was associated with violence.

“I left because there was no work... it was boring doing nothing so drinking and drugs filled time. Lack of housing is not the problem...it was the violence and lack of work” - [First Nation homeless person living in shelter]

Others who themselves were trying to manage addictions noted the limited capacity and availability of facilities on reserve “I tried to get into the men’s lodge on reserve, but no space, so I was transferred to the Mustard Seed in the City.”

In one, case the individual had previously lived in social housing (CHC) with his partner and child, but when they separated, he had nowhere to go – could not get singles housing with CHC nor return to his First Nation community (no singles housing).

A number of these individuals had at various times, and for various periods, secured private rental housing in the City (both when working and with an income, or when on Income Assistance), but all noted that this was almost always poor quality housing, often in poor neighbourhoods where other residents were drinking and abusing and drug dealing was rampant, so hard to escape their own addictions.

And frequently, they were at the mercy of slum landlords. Units were frequently in disrepair and landlords were slow or remiss in addressing issues including lack of heat or water. They highlighted that there is very little housing that they can afford or where a landlord would accept them.

The combination of racism and poverty (welfare discrimination) and neighbourhood characteristics conspire to create formidable barriers to housing stability. A number mentioned that they were forced to move when landlords didn't undertake critical repairs, and others found that they were simply unable to find somewhere to live, wore out their welcome with friends or relatives, and ultimately went to shelter as they had no other options.

The overall insight from this small set of interviews was that few had any interest or desire to move [back] to First Nations communities due to a combination of concerns centered around lack of work and income opportunity, exposure to drinking, drugs and violence and, in some cases, lateral violence (especially for those not raised in the reserve community).

Even if there were greater capacity in the form of treatment centres and affordable or supportive housing on their reserve, the lack of post-treatment housing options and exposure to bad influences in the community make it unattractive to most of those now existing within the homeless-serving system.

For most, being able to find safe and affordable housing in the city, combined with supports to help them find and retain employment may be a more fruitful and preferable option. But as noted, while addictions treatment and support services (including labour skills development) are in place, there is a severe lack of safe affordable housing opportunities. The few existing shelters and affordable housing providers serving Indigenous individuals and families in the city are enumerated in Appendix A.

Summary and implications

The pervasive nature of insufficient, overcrowded and inadequate housing in all Treaty 7 communities reveals serious housing challenges.

The extent to which these directly cause, or contribute to homelessness is, however, not a simple linear relationship. There is a complex and deeply embedded set of factors that interact to raise the risk of homelessness for Indigenous individuals and families.

Multiple social issues, many associated with the persisting effects of colonialism, have a significant influence in elevating risks of homelessness. So, in parallel with housing responses, a more holistic approach with a broad array of interventions and treatment, ideally

designed and delivered by Indigenous entities, is also required to gradually reduce these high-risk levels.

The analysis has found that the key factors contributing to a flow of individuals from reserves into the cities, including to Calgary, are these antecedent traumas and legacies that themselves influence and impact behaviours of First Nations individuals.

Indigenous individuals and families appear to face a conundrum. They have a cultural attachment to their land and community but remaining there exacerbates and reinforces the traumas entrenched in their experience under colonialism. Some (many?) have turned to substance abuse as a form of self-medication. Issues of substance abuse, and domestic violence have been passed down generations and are exacerbated by the lack of opportunities in reserve communities to earn an income. Individuals with lived experience often noted that lack of anything to do (work) results in boredom and substance abuse, sometimes then contributing to violence.

While limited, the interviews with Indigenous individuals with lived experience in the homeless-serving system suggest that improving housing options and conditions on-reserve are unlikely to encourage them to return, nor to stop the flow away from the First Nations communities. The push factors are not the lack of housing (or even supported housing) on reserve – it is the lack of employment and exposure to addictions culture.

What is clear is that there will continue to be a flow of individuals away from First Nations and into the City, and it will be extremely difficult to reverse this flow, even with very substantial investment to improve housing conditions and supply on reserve.

Accordingly, a more effective approach is to better manage that flow and pro-actively support and enable more successful transition into the urban community.

This requires two sets of actions: the first to assist band members in addressing personal challenges while still on reserve and improving readiness to relocate; the second to expand indigenous housing options in the City.

1. Potential options to reduce risk of homelessness and to reduce the flow of Treaty 7 individuals and families into the Calgary homelessness-serving system:

- Improve and expand community treatment and post-treatment housing resettlement options within communities. (This does raise the issue of leapfrogging over others that have been waiting for housing for longer periods).
- Create an educational rental readiness program for individuals considering moving into the city so that they better understand the rules and obligation of a ‘mainstream’ rental tenancy. This could build on the Ky Naak Ku Kaan stepping-stone program in Piikani (complete a successful rent paying tenancy for 6 months).
- And while not specific to homelessness, Habitat for Humanity has created an Indigenous Housing Partnership and works with many First Nations to support self-build housing on reserve. Potentially this could be explored both to help address

shortages of housing and funds to build homes on reserve, but also to create housing options for those moving into Calgary.

- Review rent setting practices in the context of treaty rights versus the reality of securing funding to repair and build on reserve. Establishing a rent regime across all Band housing would generate important new self-generated revenue to fund repair and expansion of housing and can complement and extend the impact of very limited ISC/CMHC funding for housing. It would also enable bands to capture substantial new revenues from ISC via beginning to charge IA recipients the shelter component of welfare as their contribution to rent (in parallel with rents paid by non-IA members). Currently, where rent is not charged, these potential revenues are forgone.

2. Create and expand Indigenous transition housing options in the city.

- There are currently no forms of Indigenous transitional housing that could enable migrating individuals to move into the city. Their only “choices” are couch surfing, the street or the shelter. Currently the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) provides advisory services, but do not have transitional housing to bridge the move into mainstream market housing. Entry into the shelter and homeless system could be reduced if such Indigenous specific transitional facilities could be created, potentially in partnership with the AFCC.
- There are few Indigenous providers in Calgary. And these have very low turnover, so there are very limited options for securing housing operated by Indigenous organizations in the city (only 273 homes, and with low turnover). Many individuals in the homeless-serving system are there due to inability to find safe affordable housing options in the housing market. It is critical to expand these options by creating additional indigenous housing providers (or expanding the capacity and stock of the existing Treaty 7 Non-Profit Housing Corporation and the Metis Urban Housing Corporation).
- And given that expanding Indigenous provider capacity will take time, it may be beneficial to create an education/awareness program for “mainstream” housing providers who also house Indigenous individuals and families. This could increase awareness of issues of transitioning from reserves among mainstream social housing providers. It could also increase understanding and greater appreciation for cultural practices such as smudging and accommodating additional family members (and thereby avoid triggering evictions).

At a broader advocacy level it would be valuable for organizations like Calgary Homeless Foundation and the City of Calgary to advocate to the federal government for the development and implementation under the National Housing Strategy of an urban Indigenous housing strategy to reinstate and expand funding to indigenous housing organizations to expand the stock of homes dedicated to serving Indigenous households.

Chapter 4: The role of Income Assistance – Nick Falvo

Most homelessness research provides little nuanced attention to income assistance frameworks, even though income assistance is known to have a major impact on both housing affordability and homelessness (Kneebone & Wilkins, 2016; Pomeroy, 1995). The present chapter therefore tries to better understand the Income Assistance program overseen by Canada's federal government—specifically, by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). It also seeks to better understand the role of that program in contributing to homelessness in Calgary.

The methodological approach used for the present chapter includes engagement with Treaty 7 First Nations, a literature review, interviews with officials delivering Income Assistance in Treaty 7 First Nations, interviews with former Income Assistance recipients currently accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector, and interviews with federal officials knowledgeable of Canada's federally-funded, band-administered IA program. A total of 26 individuals were interviewed for this chapter. More details pertaining to the methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

The chapter begins with a brief history of income assistance for First Nations in Canada. Drawing on interviews with both ISC officials and staff in First Nations currently delivering Income Assistance, the chapter will then provide an overview of the current Income Assistance framework designed and funded by ISC. This will include a discussion of the Pre-Employment Supports Program, a relatively recent policy innovation involving active labour market strategies. The chapter will then turn to the experiences of persons from Treaty 7 First Nations who are currently accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector. Themes generated from interviews will be discussed, followed by policy recommendations with the view of reducing homelessness in Calgary.

Situating myself.

I am a white man currently residing in Calgary. Prior to pursuing my doctoral studies, I spent 10 years working directly with persons experiencing absolute homelessness in Toronto, some of whom were members of First Nations. While my direct exposure to members of First Nations is limited, I was the primary researcher on one research project in the Northwest Territories and another in the Yukon (in both of these territories, most persons experiencing absolute homelessness are First Nation). Both of those projects had a strong focus on affordable housing and homelessness, were supervised by Professor Frances Abele (Carleton University) and involved community research partnerships. While pursuing my PhD, I was a member of the Curriculum Sub-Committee of the Carleton University Institute on the Ethics of Research with Indigenous Peoples. The committee created summaries of core curriculum modules, learning objectives for those modules, and module descriptions for the Institute. In 2019, I completed Fundamentals of OCAP®, a partnership between Algonquin College and the First Nations Information Governance Centre.

Canada's On-Reserve Income Assistance Program

Some cash relief on reserves began in Canada in the late 1930s, with provincial officials typically taking the view that 'welfare' was a federal responsibility (Papillon, 2015; Shewell, 2004). Historically, the Indian Act "denied bands any decision-making authority over welfare matters..." (Shewell, 2004, p. 244).

Prior to 1950, Canadian provinces played virtually no role in delivering social services on reserve. According to Stapleton (2007): "Social Services needs were deemed to be met by the Federal Government under the Section 91 (24) Constitution Act of 1867..." (Stapleton, 2007, p. 6). The federal government "was paying virtually all Indian social assistance costs both on- and off-reserve" (Moscovitch & Webster, 1995, p. 33).

In 1963, a new Liberal government in Ottawa approved in principle the idea of cost-sharing with provinces, as well as "provincial delivery on-reserve..." (Moscovitch & Webster, 1995, p. 37). And in 1965, a Privy Council Order was approved that gave the federal Department of Indian Affairs

...authority to enter into cost-sharing agreements with the provinces for the extension of welfare services on-reserve. Ontario was the only province to undertake such an agreement: the result was the 1965 Canada-Ontario Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians. Under the agreement, the federal government reimburses the province for 100% of the cost of administering social assistance and a selected list of social services for on-reserve Indians (Moscovitch & Webster, 1995, p. 37).

In April 1965, Canada's federal government announced the creation of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) in the throne speech (Haddow, 1993). An article appearing in The Toronto Daily Star the following day referred to the CAP as a plan to "aid needy people" (Toronto Daily Star, 1965, April 6). Later that week, a Globe and Mail article stated that, under the terms of the CAP, "the federal Government would increase substantially its contribution to welfare services" (Globe and Mail, 1965, April 9).

In July 1966, CAP became law, taking effect beginning in the 1967-1968 fiscal year (Moscovitch, 1988). This had important implications for Indigenous peoples, allowing "for the establishment of agreements to extend welfare services in the province to Indians as defined under the Indian Act..." (Moscovitch & Webster, 1995, p. 38). According to Moscovitch and Webster (1995): "All provinces were unwilling to undertake administration of social assistance for Aboriginal peoples – particularly reserve Indians – until CAP in 1966..." (Moscovitch & Webster, 1995, p. 38).

The general design of Canada's On-Reserve Income Assistance Program has been in place since 1964 (ISC, 2019; Papillon, 2015). Also, since this time, the program "has aimed to align the amount it pays to clients with provincial and territorial Income Assistance rates" (ISC, 2018, p. iii).

Importantly, dependency rates — i.e. the percentage of the working-age population receiving social assistance — have always been substantially higher on reserve than in

mainstream, provincial systems. In fact, dependency rates for the former have historically been between five and 10 times greater (Shewell, 2004).

Today, every Canadian province and territory has its own unique social assistance system — that is, its own legislation, its own regulations and its own policies. And First Nations typically administer an Income Assistance (IA) program that is fully funded by Indigenous Services Canada (Papillon, 2015).

IA is now intended to provide eligible individuals and families residing on reserve with funds to cover “the basic expenses of daily living” and “is available to all individuals and families living on-reserve, regardless of Indian status” (ISC, 2018, p. 1).¹² Rules and benefit levels — all outlined in a policy manual that varies by province/territory — are supposed to align with social assistance systems designed and administered by provincial and territorial governments.

According to an ISC official interviewed for the present study, officials at the ISC Canada Alberta Regional Office in Edmonton are often told in advance when provincial benefit levels may increase, allowing federal officials to adjust their budget. Likewise, ISC officials are typically given advance notice with respect to forthcoming rule changes being brought in by the provincial government of the day. ISC officials endeavour to not only align their rules and benefit levels with provincial ones, but also have them take effect the same day. Advance notice with respect to both benefit-level changes and rule changes is then often passed on from ISC officials to First Nations’ officials.

According to the Government of Canada (Government of Canada, 2019), IA has the following expected outcomes:

1. Men, women and children have access to supports to meet their basic and special needs.
2. Men and women have access to supports that help them to transition to and remain in the workforce.
3. Men and women who are deemed to be employable are able to find employment and remain attached to the workforce.

The program has the following four components: 1) Basic Needs; 2) Special Needs; 3) Pre-Employment Supports; and 4) Service Delivery. These components are outlined in the following Table.

Funding components of Income Assistance Program	
Component	Explanation
1. Basic Needs	Financial assistance for food, clothing and shelter

¹² According to an ISC official interviewed for the present study, in cases where a person is not a band member but still receives IA on reserve, Canada’s federal government provides the full cost and does not bill the amount back to the provincial government.

2. Special Needs	Financial assistance for goods and services deemed essential to client's physical and social well-being, but not included as items of basic needs (e.g., natal allowances, employment transition supports, and other special circumstances)
3. Pre-Employment Supports	Financial assistance for activities such as counselling, life skills, and training.
4. Service Delivery	Funding for First Nations administrators or the host province/territory to cover service delivery.

Source: Government of Canada (2019); ISC (2018).

Across Canada, the IA Program is “delivered in approximately 540 First Nations communities, serving approximately 83,000 clients for a total of 152,000 beneficiaries (children and other dependents). The federal government’s total actual spending for 2016-2017 for Income Assistance was \$923.9 million...” (ISC, 2018, p. 1).

First Nations across Canada sign multi-year funding agreements with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). ISC’s regional offices also have their own program manuals and guidelines (Government of Canada, 2019). There is a different policy manual for each province and territory, written and periodically modified by ISC officials.

ISC officials periodically review case files and make sure requisite information is there, including all required supporting documentation (e.g., identification, SIN, etc.). If such documentation is missing, a timeline is expected to be in the file, stipulating when it is expected to be in place. In some cases, an ISC official might simply remind local officials to be more diligent in keeping files compliant. Where non-compliance persists, ISC might take over the administration of IA — in such cases, a third party might be contracted by ISC to deliver IA, sometimes for several years. One well-placed ISC official interviewed for the present study noted that such case-file review was particularly intense from roughly 2012 until 2015, as a result of directives from Ottawa. This entailed additional ISC staffing than previously.

New applications

When somebody wishes to apply for IA in a First Nation, they must first make an appointment. At their first interview, they are asked a series of questions pertaining to their place of residency, work situation, income and assets. Application questions are standardized across the province and cover the following topics:

Place of residence. To be eligible for IA, a person typically must be living on the reserve in question. They cannot simply live in a nearby community. Case workers ask the applicants for proof of residency and often visit them at their stated place of residence. Case workers sometimes do unscheduled home visits. Applicants can live with family or friends and still be eligible.

Work situation. Eligible applicants can receive some money from paid employment, up to a maximum stipulated by the policy manual. Case workers may ask to see a Record of

Employment and proof that the applicant has exhausted their Employment Insurance benefits (if applicable). The case worker may also ask to see pay stubs.

Income and assets. Case workers ask to see bank statements. Some income is exempt. For example, the Goods and Services Tax rebate, as well as child benefits, are exempt. Pensions and Employment Insurance are not.

In the Alberta context, if an applicant has a serious disability, they are referred to provincial officials who administer Alberta's Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program. Local officials working in the First Nation often assist such persons in applying for AISH. Indeed, persons living on reserve can get AISH in Alberta. However, if a person is receiving AISH while residing on reserve and they are a band member, the cost is billed back to the federal government.

Likewise, IA staff in a First Nation might help a band member apply for Employment Insurance. Service Canada staff might arrange, in conjunction with local First Nations officials, to travel to offices in First Nations at specified times to help band members with a range of issues — e.g., acquiring a Social Insurance Number, applying for federally-administered Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan benefits.

Based on an assessment, staff will determine a client's level of employability, which determines the category of IA into which they fall (categories will be discussed in a subsequent section of the present chapter). Also depending on the outcome of the assessment, as well as the community, an applicant might be eligible for the Pre-Employment Supports Program in addition to IA. Clients deemed highly employable are referred to Pre-Employment Supports in communities where that initiative exists — it is a labour market program that will be discussed in a subsequent section of the present chapter.

Further, IA staff in First Nations often help clients interested in moving to urban settings to understand the requirements they will face when applying for IA. The degree of assistance depends on the rationale for the move. For example, according to an ISC official interviewed for the present chapter, IA can sometimes provide moving costs if a client has confirmed employment in Calgary. Such assistance might be provided under the Special Needs policy (though that may require creative interpretation of existing policy). If a person moves to the city without clearly articulated goals, then such assistance may not be offered. Each Nation is allocated a capped amount per year.

Moving for post-secondary education is not covered by Special Needs assistance. An IA recipient wishing to pursue post-secondary education can access a living allowance (for tuition, books and a living allowance) funded from ISC's post-secondary financial aid program. This funding envelope does not cover moving costs or first month's rent. In many communities, the ISC-funded post-secondary financial aid program is insufficient to meet the need. According to a well-placed official in Blood Tribe, the post-secondary fund for their community never has enough money to meet demand, with many eligible individuals not receiving any funding from it. Recent high school graduates are prioritized.

The Case Plan

Every IA recipient is required to have a Case Plan. According to one ISC official interviewed:

With the Case Plan, you're asking: "What is happening here? What is needed to get this client ready for employment?" If the client dropped out of high school, maybe they need a GED. If they lack a driver's license, maybe they need a driver's license. If they have an addiction, maybe they need a referral to a health program in the local community. And you set timelines. And this is where the linkages come in — the case worker reaches out to relevant officials in the Nation.

The Case Plan must include the following three components:

1. The client's goals
2. Programs and services required by the client
3. Steps necessary for the achievement of the client's goals

In Alberta, each client is assigned to one of four categories: 1) One Time Issue; 2) Expected to Work (ETW); 3) Barriers to Full Employment (BFE); or 4) Learner. The following table elaborates on each category. Local case workers determine which category or subcategory a client is assigned to upon the completion of an Employment Readiness Assessment. The category and subcategory to which each client is assigned influence the goals and expectations of each client's Case Plan (ISC, 2019).

Categorization of Income Assistance clients		
Category	Subcategories	Implication
One Time Issue	Transient: Does not permanently reside on the reserve	Client does not require ongoing benefits.
	Resident: Client permanently resides on the reserve.	
Expected to Work (ETW)	Expected to Work A (ETW-A)	Client is unemployed and not attending training, but has been determined available for work or training.
	Expected to Work B (ETW-B)	Client is working, but deemed underemployed.
	Expected to Work C (ETW-C)	Client is deemed unable to work due to short-term illness or family responsibility.

	Expected to Work D (ETW-D)	Client is attending a full-time pre-employment or rehabilitation program. These programs include life management, anger management, residential addictions treatment, work experience programs, or job training programs.
Barriers to Full Employment (BFE)	Barriers to Full Employment A (BFE-A)	Client's medical issue or disability deemed to be a barrier to employment.
	Barriers to Full Employment B (BFE-B)	Client deemed to have multiple barriers to employment.
	Barriers to Full Employment C (BFE-C)	Client is working, but deemed underemployed. BFE-A or BFE-B clients are reassigned to this category if they become employed part-time, full time or are self-employed.
Learner	None	<p>Client is accepted into an Alberta Advanced Education- or Labour-approved training program on a full-time basis.</p> <p>This is not post-secondary, but rather, on the way to post-secondary.</p> <p>Province pays for tuition, books, travel and childcare, subject to approval by provincial officials.</p> <p>Province provides Learner with a letter that they take to IA officials. IA officials then pay Learner's expenses.</p>

Source: ISC, 2019.

Benefit levels

Core Benefits include Core Essential and Core Shelter benefits. The precise amounts issued to eligible households are determined by household category, family composition, and assessed need.

Core Essential

Core Essential benefits are intended for basic household needs, including food, clothing, diapers, furniture, appliances, telephone, laundry, transportation (including fuel, vehicle registration, and insurance), and residential moves within Alberta. Core Essential Benefits levels for all household types are outlined in Appendix 3.

Core Shelter

Core Shelter benefits are intended to cover rent, mortgage payments, utilities, heating fuel, minor home maintenance fees, and damage deposits for clients living independently as homeowners, renters, or primary occupants.

The IA Program does not issue Core Shelter benefits if the First Nation pays the core shelter costs for all households who do not receive IA benefits. According to the Social Development Income Assistance Policy Manual: Alberta Region: “The Income Assistance Program does not issue the Core Shelter benefit to clients belonging to specific groups if the First Nation pays the core shelter costs for members of that specific group who do not receive Income Assistance benefits” (ISC, 2019, p. 122).

Core Shelter levels for recipient households, when applicable, are outlined in Appendix 4.

Labour market initiatives

Case workers engage in ongoing communication with Expected to Work (ETW) clients. They often ask what kind of job search they are doing and they receive ongoing encouragement. In Piikani First Nation, for example, ETW clients are encouraged to take advantage of Piikani Employment Services/Human Resource Development. They currently offer iron workers’ training and equipment training. They also offer ‘life skills’ training several times per year. Case workers also encourage ETW clients to get their High School Equivalency Diploma (GED) in the local community.

Case workers can provide ETW clients with an Education, Training and Transition Support benefit of approximately \$500 per calendar year, which can be used toward work boots, clothing, and similar job-related expenses. To qualify, ETW clients need to provide confirmation of a job.

Pre-Employment Supports

After an assessment for IA, a client deemed to be highly employable will be referred to Pre-Employment Supports, provided it is offered in the First Nation in question. According to one IA official interviewed for the present study: “If a client doesn’t get assigned to Pre-Employment Supports, it means Income Assistance officials don’t expect them to be doing much training or education in the near future.”

Pre-Employment Supports provides significant funding for training, targeted at specific individuals. Each client has access to approximately \$5,500 annually for training and education.¹³ In the Stoney-Nakoda Nation, much of this funding is used to pay to have a person's car repaired. Staff there have paid up to \$3,000 per person for vehicle repairs, provided the person had a confirmed job. Sometimes First Nations use Pre-Employment Supports funding to arrange for a community college to provide the training in the Nation. Pre-Employment Supports funds can even pay for short-term (i.e., two to three months) childcare (including childcare provided by a relative). Once a recipient's earnings surpass what they would receive in IA benefits, staff close the person's file and the Pre-Employment Supports funds stop.

There is an expectation from ISC that, within one year, 70% of Pre-Employment Supports participants will be placed in either employment, training by other bodies, or education (which can include upgrading, trades, vocational training, university or college).

As of January 2016, 27 providers representing 88 First Nations across Canada had been selected to participate in Pre-Employment Supports (INAC, 2016).

According to the Government of Canada:

[Pre-Employment Supports] service provider's role is to identify clients' individual barriers to employment, and establishing [sic] an action plan to address these barriers through available programs and services. It is focusing on activity areas such as: pre-employment training on basic literacy skills; life-skills training; essential skills training; high school diploma completion/equivalency; psychosocial interventions; and financial incentives for participation in mandatory provincial or territorial intervention (INAC, 2016, p. 5).

Beginning in 2014, Pre-Employment Supports — then referred to as Enhanced Service Delivery — was piloted in 20 First Nations across Canada, including in Blood Tribe. According to an ISC official interviewed for the present study, Blood Tribe is a “high capacity” First Nation, and this one of the reasons they were one of the few First Nations in Canada to pilot it, as well as the only Treaty 7 Nation to pilot it.¹⁴ Stoney-Nakoda began to implement Pre-Employment Supports on 1 April 2019.

To prepare for the delivery of Pre-Employment Supports, staff in Blood Tribe took a one-year course focused on career development and tailored to First Nations in Alberta.

Under Pre-Employment Supports, ISC officials expect a 50:1 client-worker ratio.¹⁵ Under IA, by contrast, ISC has no specific expectation pertaining to client-worker ratios. In Blood Tribe, no more than 50 clients are assigned to any one Pre-Employment Supports case worker. By contrast, with the regular IA program, a case worker in Blood Tribe is typically

13 Strictly speaking, \$6,000 annually is provided per client. However, \$500 per client per year is used for administration, such as counselors.

14 Further, when ISC began to pilot Pre-Employment Supports, floods had just hit southern Alberta, and this would have created significant capacity challenges for both Siksika and Stoney-Nakoda.

15 Having said that, one ISC official interviewed for the present study stated that client-worker ratios are not a major focus of compliance monitoring.

assigned over 100 clients. As a result, meetings with a case worker under Pre-Employment Supports are longer and more frequent. In Stoney-Nakoda, Pre-Employment Supports staff ratios are 70:1, in contrast to the 150:1 ratio in place for their regular IA case managers.¹⁶

Pre-Employment Supports was initially for clients in the 18 to 24 year-old range, but has since been extended to age 64. In practice, however, Pre-Employment Supports participants are rarely over the age of 50.

In Blood Tribe, staff do home visits for Pre-Employment Supports clients, but not just for oversight reasons — staff also use home visits to gauge the living arrangement, which helps staff assess what further supports are needed by each client.

Staff in both Blood Tribe and Stoney-Nakoda expressed unequivocally strong support for Pre-Employment Supports. Prior to Pre-Employment Supports, they had been limited to \$500 per client per year for work-related assistance. With Pre-Employment Supports, they are now allocated 10 times that amount.

Blood Tribe reports an 18% reduction in IA caseloads since Pre-Employment Supports' implementation, as well as raw numbers with respect to how many Pre-Employment Supports participants exit annually to employment, education and "other reasons" respectively. All of these figures can be found in Appendix 5 of the present chapter.

However, there is very little publicly available reporting of outcomes at the local level. First Nations' officials have to do considerable reporting to ISC officials. ISC, in turn, makes *some* of this available to the public, typically on a national level. ISC officials do share some data back to Nations, but this reporting is sporadic (sometimes on a quarterly basis) and not made public. Such reporting provides data pertaining to caseloads, with a breakdown of ages, gender, age and dependency rates. A one- to two-page document with some charts and graphs might be offered to Nations from time to time. Edmonton's ISC office has a data analysis person who conducts such data pulls.

In spite of Pre-Employment Supports, it remains very challenging to find employment in First Nations communities. Even clients who find success with Pre-Employment Supports still typically have to leave the community in order to find work.

Emerging themes

For the present chapter, three types of interviews were conducted. The first type was with staff delivering IA in First Nations communities. The second type involved persons from Treaty 7 First Nations currently receiving services in Calgary's homelessness sector who at one time received IA. The third type involved ISC officials. The methodological approach is elaborated upon in Appendix 1 of the present chapter. Themes stemming from the interviews are now discussed.

¹⁶ It is not clear why Pre-Employment Supports client-worker ratios are so high in Stoney-Nakoda.

Non-linear trajectories

The path between Treaty 7 First Nations and Calgary's homelessness sector is far from linear; to be sure, there are many different ways people end up experiencing homelessness in Calgary. Some of the research participants spent more time as children in Calgary than in their First Nation. Several moved back and forth. Some lived in other First Nations at times. Others spent time in other provinces. One research participant was born in Lethbridge, spent considerable time in child welfare, and then began to live in Blood Tribe as a teenager. Another spent most of his childhood in Calgary, but spent Grades 1 and 5 in Siksika. This back-and-forth dynamic has been discussed in both the national context (Schiff et al., 2016; Thistle, 2017) and the southern Alberta context (Belanger & Weasel Head, 2013; Weasel Head, 2011).

Unemployment

Former IA recipients indicated that unemployment and nepotism are prevalent in Treaty 7 First Nations and played major roles for those seeking services in Calgary's homelessness sector. One research participant noted: "I knew that the jobs situation was 'way better' in Calgary. I wasn't aware of any job opportunities for me in Siksika." They further indicated that unemployment and nepotism had considerably more to do with them seeking services in Calgary's homelessness sector than did IA.

As one research participant noted:

I didn't want to stare out of a window for 12 hours a day, 365 days a year. There just wasn't any work. For the few jobs that are available, you have to be really well-connected. And if you don't have those connections, it's just too hard to support yourself.

Unemployment in Treaty 7 First Nations, as well as its impact on homelessness in Calgary, has been discussed elsewhere (ASCHH, 2012; Thurston, Milaney et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2010). It has also been discussed in the southern Alberta context (Belanger et al., 2019; Belanger & Weasel Head, 2013) and in the national context (Thistle, 2017).

Gang activity and physical violence

Gang activity and physical violence were consistently raised by research participants, with one noting: "I was stabbed in the head in Siksika 11 years ago by a gang member. I needed 14 staples in my skull. It almost killed me." Another noted that they were beaten up by their ex and then decided to leave shortly thereafter. In reference to gangs, one research participant noted:

It stemmed from jail. Guys would come back from jail and try to make a name for themselves. It was getting bad around the time I left. Around the time I left, there was a very violent incident involving my brother. A van of people pulled up to his house and beat him with baseball bats. They smashed all his windows too. It was scary, and I left shortly after that.

Another research participant reported the following:

People are shooting each other in drive-bys, trying to be all New York and shit...I seen my cousin get shot before. I had to drive him to the hospital holding his wound in place. There was blood seeping through my fingers, all over my clothing, on the car seat. I wish I hadn't seen all that. All of this stuff is still happening.

Yet another noted: "People tried to come to the house with guns; they kicked open the door. I had bad PTSD from this. I couldn't go back there."

It is not difficult to see why such violence would induce a person to leave their community without permanent housing lined up elsewhere. Violence (including domestic violence) and the trauma it induces is a pathway leading Indigenous people into homelessness this has been discussed elsewhere (ASCHH, 2012; Belanger & Weasel Head, 2013; Bird et al., 2010; Thistle, 2017; Thurston, Milaney et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2010).

Lateral violence

Lateral violence was raised by several research participants as a factor pushing them to leave their community. As one individual put it: "They don't like to see someone else do well. They try to break them down." The same individual noted that this guilt-tripping played a major role in him leaving his community and coming to Calgary. Similarly, Bruhn writes of "a stigma on those who move to Calgary from neighbouring reserves – a sense they are 'trying to be white'" (Bruhn, 2020, p. XX).

This has been identified in other community-based research done in Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care. For example, Bird et al. (2010) identify "internalized racism and lateral oppression within Aboriginal communities" (p. 14) as a contributing factor leading to homelessness in Calgary (Bird et al., 2010). Nationally, the connection between lateral violence and homelessness has been discussed extensively (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014; Thistle, 2017).

Excessive use of drugs and alcohol

Substance use is often symptomatic of other social problems, including unemployment. One ex-IA recipient reported struggling to find work for several years. When he was unsuccessful, his drinking increased and he decided to move to Calgary. This phenomenon has been discussed in the national context (Thistle, 2017), in southern Alberta (Belanger & Weasel Head, 2013) and in research looking at Indigenous homelessness in Calgary specifically (ASCHH, 2012; Thurston, Milaney et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2010). For example, Bird et al. (2010) discuss people leaving "the reserve to get away from substance abuse" (Bird et al., 2010, p. 16).

Positive Outlook vis-à-vis Income Assistance

IA staff in First Nations spoke positively about IA, as did persons currently experiencing homelessness in Calgary. Ex-recipients interviewed as part of the present research project indicated no difficulty reaching a case worker while in receipt of IA. On the whole, former recipients indicated that they were treated respectfully by IA case workers. The fact that both

First Nations' staff and former recipients of IA spoke so highly about the program was revealing, suggesting that Canada's band-administered IA system functions decently well in Treaty 7 First Nations.

IA not a major cause of homelessness

Former recipients of band-administered IA who are currently experiencing homelessness in Calgary indicated that neither the rules nor benefit levels associated with IA played a major role in their ending up in Calgary's homelessness sector. When asked directly if IA played a role in their experience of absolute homelessness in Calgary, research participants were quite adamant that it did not play a role. Likewise, staff administering IA in First Nations were quite clear that they did not believe IA plays a major role in individuals becoming homeless. Rather, "reserve conditions" (ACHH, 2012, p. 26) or "reserve life" (Thurston, Milaney et al., 2013, p. 19) or "compounding factors" (Papillon, 2015, p. 324) more generally would appear to be a more important explanatory factor—a type of homelessness referred to by Thistle as "escaping or evading harm homelessness" (Thistle, 2017, p. 12). In the words of one research participant:

The reserves are never going to change. There's never going to be work. There's always going to be the drug problem. And any job I'd qualify for, I wouldn't get because someone living there longer would get it due to nepotism. All the jobs Natives have on reserve are passed down from family member to family member.

Policy recommendations

In light of this chapter's findings, several suggested policy recommendations will now be discussed.

More public outcome reporting by ISC.

ISC receives a considerable amount of client-level IA data from First Nations each year. Specifically, ISC receives the following data on a quarterly basis:

- number of clients and dependants receiving IA;
- number who meet the employability criteria (expected to work);
- number who participated in active measures and Pre-Employment Supports; and
- number who exited to employment or education.

All of this data is disaggregated by family composition, age and sex. Yet, ISC officials in turn release very little of it at the local level. Members of First Nations, public officials, advocates, and researchers could benefit from being able to review such data at the local level.

Questions that could be answered with such data include:

- Is the number of IA recipients increasing or decreasing over time in a specific First Nation?
- Is the number of IA recipients participating in active measures and Pre-Employment Supports increasing or decreasing over time in a specific First Nation?

- Is the number of IA recipients exiting to employment or education increasing or decreasing over time in a specific First Nation?
- Is duration of IA receipt increasing or decreasing over time?
- Does duration vary according to First Nation, education level, gender, age or macroeconomic context?

Such identification would potentially allow analysts to link IA data with shelter data,¹⁷ allowing officials to answer such questions as:

- Are IA recipients from one Nation more likely than those of another to use emergency shelters in Calgary?
- Is duration of IA receipt associated with the use of emergency shelters in Calgary?
- Is participation in Pre-Employment Services associated with reduced use of emergency shelters in Calgary?

Without the data, public officials, advocates, and researchers are left in the dark and unable to assess outcomes. But with the data, they could look at short-term, medium-term and long-term trends for each Nation, while also comparing and contrasting trends across the Nations.

Extension of Pre-Employment Supports to all First Nations communities.

Interviews carried out for the present study suggested that Pre-Employment Supports is functioning well in both Blood Tribe and Stoney-Nakoda. And outcomes-related data shared with the present author by Blood Tribe suggest that the program is bearing fruit (see Appendix 5). Notwithstanding a lack of public reporting of this outcomes data by ISC, it does appear that many other First Nations could benefit from Pre-Employment Supports extension.¹⁸

More generous transition assistance.

If a person has confirmed work in an urban setting, more generous transition-related benefits would be helpful — for example, first month's rent and damage deposit. Right now, even after going through Pre-Employment Supports, a person needs to come up with approximately \$2,000 on their own for this (even though IA may cover moving costs). Local band officials do have the option of 'getting creative' with existing funding allocations; but it is currently a grey area.¹⁹

17 In order for such data linkage to happen, there would have to be informed consent. Specifically, IA clients in First Nations communities would have to sign a consent form stipulating they understand that their data might be linked with emergency shelter data within the province of Alberta.

18 The extension of Pre-Employment Supports to other First Nations communities would require support from local First Nations leadership.

19 In the words of one band official: "I once authorized this under IA's Special Needs policy. That's the only time. I think I approved first month's rent."

Conclusion

This chapter has the following four major findings: 1) IA does not appear to be a major factor leading to members of Treaty 7 First Nations seeking services in Calgary's homelessness sector; 2) the factors that do lead to First Nations people accessing services in Calgary's homeless-serving sector are complex; 3) the Pre-Employment Supports initiative has been popular and well-received among Treaty 7 First Nations, and 4) a lack of publicly-available data makes it challenging to fully scrutinize outcomes pertaining to either IA or Pre-Employment Supports. Each of these points will now be elaborated upon.

1. *IA does not appear to be a major factor leading to members of Treaty 7 First Nations seeking services in Calgary's homelessness sector.* For the present chapter, interviews were undertaken with members of Treaty 7 First Nations who are currently accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector. They spoke freely about the many factors that they feel led them into Calgary's homelessness sector, but did not identify IA as one of them. In fact, when asked directly to what extent IA rules or benefit levels may have played a role in their accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector, key informants were rather adamant that it was not a major factor.
2. *The factors that do lead to First Nations people accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector are complex.* They include unemployment, violence, and gang activity in First Nations' communities. All of these matters are discussed in detail by Lindstrom (Lindstrom, 2020) and have been described generally as "reserve conditions" (ASCHH, 2012, p. 26).
3. *IA's Pre-Employment Supports initiative has been popular and well-received among Treaty 7 First Nations.* Band officials in Blood Tribe, where the initiative is furthest along, were especially positive about the opportunities created by Pre-Employment Supports in their community. They also spoke very positively about their working relationship with all relevant federal officials. Officials in Stoney-Nakoda Nation, where the initiative has begun more recently, also appear to be very optimistic about the employment opportunities this will create for their residents.
4. *A lack of publicly-available data makes it challenging to fully scrutinize outcomes pertaining to either IA or Pre-Employment Supports.* One shortcoming of Pre-Employment Supports appears to be the following: band officials keep track of outputs that are then sent to federal officials as part of reporting requirements, but federal officials do not make most of this data publicly available. This makes it challenging for researchers and advocates to substantiate claims that IA or Pre-Employment Supports are meeting their objectives at the level of each First Nation.

Appendix 1: Methods

A multi-pronged methodological approach has been used for the present chapter. It includes engagement with First Nations, a literature review, interviews with officials delivering IA in First Nations, interviews with former IA recipients currently accessing services in Calgary's homelessness sector, and interviews with federal officials knowledgeable of Canada's federally-funded, band-administered IA program. In total, 26 individuals participated in interviews, a breakdown of which is provided below. A draft of the present chapter was broadly circulated in December 2019, and feedback was subsequently integrated to improve the analysis. Each of these components will now be elaborated upon.

Engagement strategy.

The present chapter is part of a larger study whose researchers include Dr. Gabrielle Lindstrom, herself a member of Kainaiwa First Nation. In March 2019, she authored a paper that outlines our project's engagement strategy in detail (Lindstrom, 2020). That strategy includes: upholding and respecting principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP); ongoing engagement with the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre; a kickoff event with local First Nations that included a pipe ceremony; the circulation of draft documents, and a closing event.

Literature review.

Readings done for the present chapter include: a framing chapter authored by Dr. Lindstrom (Lindstrom, 2020); historical readings pertaining to Canada's income support framework for persons living on reserve; readings about Indigenous peoples in Calgary's homelessness sector; and federal government publications about Canada's federally-funded, band-administered IA system. All readings that were incorporated into the present chapter are listed in the chapter's Reference List.

Interviews with staff delivering IA in First Nations communities.

Interviews with IA officials took place with Blood Tribe (Blackfoot); Piikani First Nation (Blackfoot); and Stoney-Nakoda Nations (Iyarhe Nakoda). Siksika First Nation (Blackfoot) declined to participate, and an interview could not be arranged with Tsuu T'ina First Nation (Danit'ada). All told, 11 such officials participated in interviews.

Interviews with former IA recipients.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with persons currently receiving services in Calgary's homelessness sector who at one time received IA in a nearby First Nation. Interviews with persons who had previously received IA in Treaty 7 First Nation took place at Alpha House, the Calgary Drop-In, Inn from the Cold (IFTC), and Mustard Seed. In light of IFTC's relatively small size, we allowed participation from individuals at IFTC who had received band-administered IA in either Treaty 6, 7 or 8. In total, in-depth interviews were conducted with 13 individuals at Calgary facilities, 10 of whom had received band-administered IA in at least one Treaty 7 First

Nation. One of the individuals was in the 18-24-year-old range, 10 were aged 25-44, and two were aged 45-64. Pre-screening and on-site coordination was done by staff at the relevant facilities.

Interviews with ISC officials.

Separate telephone interviews were conducted with two ISC officials, both based in the Edmonton office. One provided feedback on an early version of the present chapter.

Stakeholder review and input.

In December 2019, a draft of the present chapter was circulated to: other members of the research team; the Calgary Homeless Foundation; all persons who had been interviewed for the present chapter; and persons across Canada known to have subject matter expertise. Feedback was then incorporated to improve the analysis.

Appendix 2: Sample questions for research participants

Interviews conducted for the present chapter were semi-structured. During interviews, I probed at various junctures and often strayed from the original questions. The interviews were guided by the following questions.

Income Assistance administrators in First Nations

- How does the system work?
- What does the application system look like?
- What does the eligibility decision-making process look like?
- What are current benefit levels, and who sets them?
- How do you assess and calculate the shelter component of welfare benefits?
- What are the current rules, and who makes them?
- How much flexibility do First Nations have in changing rules governing income assistance?
- Do you offer your services in any languages other than English?
- Does the Government of Alberta play any role at all in this system?
- What are your client-staff ratios? Are they good ratios?
- What happens when a person loses their housing in the community? Are they cut off Income Assistance?
- If an Income Assistance recipient leaves the community and goes to Calgary, are they transferred onto the mainstream provincial income assistance system? What does that transfer process look like?
- When a person comes back to the community after having been in Calgary for some time, how easy is it for them to get back on to Income Assistance?
- Is your income assistance program connected to education, training or employment initiatives?
- What data is currently available? For example: benefit levels. What percentage of adults in this community receive Income Assistance?

Persons with lived experience in Calgary

- Which Treaty 7 community are you from?
- How do you feel generally about the income support system in your First Nation? Was it a good experience for you? Was it easy to get along with your case worker? Was it easy to get in touch with them? Were they helpful?
- Can you tell me a bit about why you left your community? [Probe: employment, housing, income? family disagreement? overcrowded home? no housing for single people? wanted to pursue education in city? problem getting income assistance?]
- And why Calgary?
- Did you try and find somewhere to live here? What challenges did you have in getting housing? Did you have an income to pay rent? Could you not find anything you could afford?

- Did you encounter a '30 day' rule (re: waiting period before transitioning to Alberta Works)?
- If you've had housing in Calgary, were you staying with family or friends? Why did you leave the housing?
- Did you come to the shelter as a way to access services like health, skills training, addictions management? Do you feel these services are helping you?
- Do you plan to remain in City or return to your community?
- Do you feel it might be possible to find stable affordable housing in the city? If not, why not?
- When you came to Calgary, how much did the employment situation in your home community cause you to move here? What about the income assistance system? How much was your move about that system? Did it factor into your decision at all?
- If it was a factor, what specifically wasn't working for you?
- In your community, was there an income assistance worker that you'd meet with regularly? What was that relationship like?
- In your community, when you received income assistance, were you also offered opportunities pertaining to education, training or employment? If yes, what did that look like?
- Does the employment situation in your home community now cause you to stay in Calgary? What about the income situation in general?
- What can you tell me about the transition from the FN income assistance system to the provincial one?
- What kind of changes to the local employment picture would make you feel like you could return to your community? What about training opportunities? And what about income assistance?
- Is the '30 day' waiting period for new income support applications a barrier to going back to your community?
- What kinds of education, training or employment programs in your community would help you be more successful in moving to the city?
- How important is it to you that income support be offered in Indigenous languages?

Federal income assistance officials

- What's your involvement in Treaty 7 First Nations?
- Are you involved in its administration?
- To what extent do the federal rules align with provincial ones?
- Is the policy manual different for every province and territory?
- Tell me about the adjustment to benefit levels that happens in response to adjustments in provincial benefit levels?
- To what extent do you provide services?
- Do you have expectations re: staff-client ratios?
- How involved are you in auditing the program on reserve?
- To what extent can and does the day-to-day administration of income assistance vary across Treaty 7 First Nations?

- What role does the federal government have in pairing income assistance programs on reserve with education, training or employment initiatives?
- What can you tell me about the transition from the FN income assistance system to the provincial one? How do you feel about the 30-day wait period?
- I've heard very positive things about Pre-Employment Supports. What's the likelihood of this expanding to other Treaty 7 First Nations?
- What data is currently available? For example: benefit levels; dependency ratios.
- How much flexibility do First Nations have in changing rules governing income assistance?
- Does the Government of Alberta play any role at all in this system?
- Have there been any major changes to this system in the past five years?
- Do you have expectations re: service delivery in Indigenous languages?
- Why does Siksika administer Income Assistance out of a Calgary office?

Appendix 3: Core Essential benefit levels for all categories of households

Core Essential benefit levels for Expected to Work (ETW) households		
Number of children	One adult	Two adults
0	\$415	\$670
1	\$615	\$870
2	\$715	\$970
3	\$815	\$1,070
4	\$915	\$1,170
5	\$1,015	\$1,270
6	\$1,115	\$1,370

Source: ISC, 2019.

Note. For each additional child in the household (age 0-17), the additional rate is \$100 per child. For each additional dependent age 18-19, the additional rate is \$205 per child.

Core Essential benefit levels for Barriers to Full Employment (BFE) households		
Number of children	One adult	Two adults
0	\$536	\$851
1	\$736	\$1,051
2	\$836	\$1,151
3	\$936	\$1,251
4	\$1,036	\$1,351
5	\$1,136	\$1,451
6	\$1,236	\$1,551

Source: ISC, 2019.

Note. For each additional child in the household (age 0-17), the additional rate is \$100 per child. For each additional dependent age 18-19, the additional rate is \$205 per child.

Core Essential benefit levels for Learner households		
Number of children	One adult	Two adults
0	\$536	\$851
1	\$920	\$1,235
2	\$990	\$1,305
3	\$1,060	\$1,375
4	\$1,130	\$1,445

5	\$1,200	\$1,515
6	\$1,270	\$1,585

Source: ISC, 2019.

Note. For each additional child in the household (age 0-17), the additional rate is \$100 per child. For each additional dependent age 18-19, the additional rate is \$205 per child. Dependents aged 18 and 19 must be attending high school.

Appendix 4: Core Shelter levels for recipient households

Core Shelter levels for recipient households		
Number of children	One adult	Two adults
0	\$330	\$446
1	\$558	\$588
2	\$578	\$608
3	\$599	\$618
4	\$619	\$639
5	\$640	\$659
6	\$660	\$679

Source: ISC, 2019.

Note. Each additional child: \$21.00

Appendix 5: Outcomes reporting related to Blood Tribe's Pre-Employment Supports program

The following outcomes-related data were shared with the present author by staff administering Pre-Employment Supports in Blood Tribe.

Winter 2017

- Wood Manufacturing: 12 started, 9 graduated (75%), 7 employed or returned to school (78%)
- Spring 2017
- Administrative Services: 20 started and 14 graduated (70%), 10 employed or returned to school (71%)
- Retail Industry Professional: 15 started and 9 graduated (60%), 7 employed or returned to school (78%)
- Hospitality and Tourism Professional: 15 started and 14 graduated (93%), 7 employed or returned to school (50%)
- Residential and Commercial Services: 17 started and 12 (70%), 6 employed or returned to school (50%)
- Wood Manufacturing: 15 started, 11 graduated (73%) and 10 employed or returned to school (91%)

Fall 2017

- Hospitality and Tourism: 12 started and 10 graduated (83%), 9 employed or returned to school (90%)
- Retail Associate: 12 started and 10 graduated (83%), 8 employed or returned to school (80%)
- Front Line Cook: 11 started and 11 graduated (100%), 7 employed or returned to school (64%)
- Administrative Professional: 21 started and 15 graduated (71%), 8 employed or returned to school (53%)
- Wood Manufacturing: 15 started and 13 graduated (87%), 10 employed or returned to school (77%)

Wood Manufacturing (2018/19)

- 4 programs through the year. 42 students started and 36 graduated which is a 85% grad rate, with 30 employed 71%

Spring 2018

- Front Line Cook, 14 started and 11 graduated 78% 8 employed or returned to school 72%
- Social Media Marketing: 14 started and 11 graduated 78% 7 employed or returned to school 64%

- Disabilities Support Worker: 17 started and 14 graduated 88% 10 employed or returned to school 71%

Fall 2018

- Addictions /Disabilities Support Worker:13 started, 12 graduated or returned to school 92%
- Customer Service and Hospitality: 12 started, 9 graduated or returned to school 75%
- Front Line Cook: 12 started, 11 graduated or returned to school 92%

Spring 2019

- Landscape Technician: 12 started and 8 graduated or changed programs 67% 8 employed or returned to school 67%
- Front Line Cook: 11 started and 8 graduated 73% 6 employed or returned to school 75%
- Wood Manufacturing Program: 14 started and 13 graduated 93% 12 employed or returned to school 92%
- Solar Panel installation: 15 started and 8 graduated 53% 8 employed or returned to school 53% [recognized this program requires significant academic upgrading]

Fall 2019

- Childcare Orientation Course: underway
- Customer Service and Hospitality: underway
- Wood Manufacturing Program: underway

Winter 2019 (Planned)

- Child Disabilities Support Worker: have employment lined up for full graduating class through AFC child and family supports
- Landscaping & Grounds Maintenance: have employment lined up for full graduating class at projects on reserve
- Wood Manufacturing Program
- Front Line Cook

Chapter 5: The Role of Jurisdiction – Jodi Bruhn

Introduction

What are the pathways of Treaty 7 First Nations people into Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care? Other chapters in this project examine the potential contributions of access to housing and income assistance programs. This chapter examines the role of jurisdiction. To what extent does *jurisdiction* – in particular, divides, disputes and ambiguities surrounding it – contribute to Treaty 7 people entering Calgary's homeless system? Conversely, how might inter-jurisdictional collaboration help them to leave that system?

In seeking answers to these questions, the chapter draws on research addressing services for Indigenous people who live in cities throughout Canada, and in Calgary in particular. It also relies on interviews with representatives of Treaty 7 First Nations, the City of Calgary, staff at local homeless shelters, and the federal government. The interviews help ensure that the chapter and its recommendations will be grounded in local perspectives and realities. A final source has been other research in this project – in particular, the framing chapter by Blackfoot scholar Gabrielle Lindstrom. Lindstrom offers a critique of Eurocentric approaches to understanding Indigenous homelessness as well as understandings of key terms, including of jurisdiction, based in Treaty 7 cultures. And indeed, the distinct understanding of jurisdiction she offers could well provide a more fluid, situational notion of leadership to inform the way forward.

Following Lindstrom's example, it is appropriate to locate myself as a researcher. I am a non-Indigenous woman from the Prairies who has worked in Ottawa, in the field of Indigenous-Crown relations, for the past thirteen years. Though I now work in public policy, my graduate work was in political philosophy. The training I received taught me to take culture seriously as a factor shaping what may first appear to be "neutral" policy questions. In this project too, it is important first to discover and pose the relevant questions of the higher rates of Indigenous homelessness before rushing to offer solutions.

To this end, this chapter is organized into four parts. The first part (I) addresses Canada's Constitution – specifically the jurisdictional divide between federal and provincial governments regarding "Indians and lands reserved for Indians." The second part (II) examines how this jurisdictional divide pervades services to First Nations people in the housing, homelessness and income assistance sectors. Part III provides further local and regional context, describing key elements of Calgary's relationship with neighbouring Treaty 7 First Nations that could bear on current homelessness issues. Part IV finally turns to a path forward – in particular, to approaches that may be fruitful in working with Treaty 7 First Nations on issues of mutual concern.

The chapter's six concluding recommendations are grounded in an approach of rights recognition. Recognizing not two but three distinct jurisdictions, they would also temper an undue focus on jurisdiction in addressing this crucial issue that transcends it: the homelessness of Treaty 7 people, whether they find themselves "on" or "off" reserve.

The Jurisdictional Divide: An Artifact of Colonialism

What is jurisdiction? Breaking down the word's etymology, it is the power to "say" or "speak" the law in a given territory or sphere of action (Lexico, 2020). As such, jurisdiction could be seen as a basic requirement of governing.

There are also equivalent concepts to the Western concept among Treaty 7 First Nations, as Lindstrom describes in her chapter. Beyond recognizing the distinctions among peoples and territories – of the Blackfoot, Dene and so on – Treaty 7 First Nations traditionally have handled different matters at different levels: some at the family level, others at that of the clan, and still others at that of tribe or confederacy (Lindstrom 2020).

Canada is a nation-state organized as a federation. At its founding, the *British North America Act, 1867* assigned the power to legislate to two distinct orders of government: a new national Parliament and governments of the various provinces entering Confederation.

With respect to Indigenous people, the Constitution established a jurisdictional divide that still endures today. Specifically:

- **Section 91(24)** assigned exclusive legislative authority over "Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians" to the newly created national Parliament. Notably, the federal government assumed not only the authority to conclude treaties with First Nations, but also the power to pass laws *over* Indians – both collectively and as individuals.
- **Section 92** assigned, among the legal powers of newly created provincial governments, exclusive jurisdiction over "Municipal Institutions in the Province" (8). Provinces also gained legal authority over most service areas for residents, including health, education, and property and civil rights, among others. Even though they received jurisdiction over provincial Crown land and resources, provincial governments were not empowered to pass laws concerning Indians.

The Province of Alberta did not exist at Confederation. It would gain most provincial powers after its creation in 1905 – and powers over natural resources with the *Natural Resource Transfer Act* in 1930 (Stamp 2019). Interestingly, it was treaties concluded with First Nations – Treaties 6, 7 and 8 – that made it possible to settle the region in numbers large enough to justify creating a new province. And yet, as archival research has by now established, the federal government was already subverting these treaties as it was concluding them (Talbot 2009; Daschuk 2013). The primary instrument enabling it to do this was legislation.

"Indians must be treated either as minors or as white men," said David Laird, then-Minister of Indian Affairs, as he introduced the *Indian Act* in Parliament in 1876. (Hall, 2015, p. 37). With the *Indian Act*, Parliament established a degree of federal control over Indians and reserve lands that political scientist Frances Abele (2007) has equated to that of a prison environment. The *Indian Act* was to provide for the protection of Indians on federal reserves as settlement proceeded around them. Related policies and institutions (including the federally-mandated Indian residential schools) were to help prepare them to enter the civilized, explicitly white, world (Hall, 2015).

The *Indian Act* has been much criticized as an outdated colonial instrument. And yet the exclusive federal authority to legislate over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” often goes unnoticed as an artifact of colonialism, even though it provided the tools for subjugation. The powers assigned to the federal Crown enabled it not only to conclude treaties and land sales with First Nations but to pass laws regulating them, both as individuals (registered Indians) and as collectives (Indian bands).²⁰ The division of powers also envisaged two mutually exclusive alternatives as the land was cleared for settlement: protection of First Nations people as wards on small pockets of land “set apart” on the one hand, or assimilation on the other. Certainly, few foresaw a future in which First Nations people would live outside reserve boundaries *as Indigenous people*, or in which provincial governments would interact with them as such.²¹

Colonization, Lindstrom asserts in her framing chapter, should be understood not simply as past but as a “present-day factor in the lives of the Indigenous homeless population” (2019, p. 35). To point out how this factor still operates in daily life is not to be negative, but rather to ensure that any proposed solutions will be firmly grounded in reality: “If government is unwilling to accept that the problems in Indigenous communities have emerged as direct results of colonial policies of assimilation – if the roots of the problems remain invisible, or worse yet, denied – then any attempts to meaningfully address them will be lost” (Lindstrom 2019, p. 42).

Bearing these words in mind, the jurisdictional divide could be seen as an institutional root of Indigenous homelessness in the city. According to the Constitution as originally designed, *no* First Nations person was to feel at home in the city – at least not while retaining an Indigenous identity. Since 1867, the divide of Indians from the mainstream has been cemented by successive laws, policies and institutions. For example, when status Indians began to move from reserves to urban centres in the 1950s, the federal government set out its position: its authority over Indians, and funding of most services provided to them, would extend only to those “ordinarily resident” on reserves (Morse, 1989).²² With the exception of some health and education benefits, the federal government long interpreted its legal authority and program responsibilities as confined to status Indians living within reserve boundaries.

Thus, the jurisdictional divide has created further ones, noted by scholars in various disciplines:

- A **geographic divide**, whereby municipal settlements and reserves have come to be perceived almost as two separate worlds. This is the case even though cities, Calgary

20 This distinguished the powers that the new national Parliament assumed from those it may have inherited from the British Crown via the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

21 Quite without inflammatory intent, what occurred at this country's founding does meet the basic criteria for colonialism. As the “practice of domination involving the subjugation of one people to another,” colonialism has always involved the conquest of land as well as people, “incorporating adjacent territory and settling its people on newly conquered territory” (Stanford 2017).

22 There is a gender component to movement to the city as well. Through operation of the Indian Act status transmission rules prior to 1985, women who married men without Indian status lost their status. In addition, from 1876 to 1951, the legislation allowed only First Nations men to participate in reserve politics. Often, as Peters emphasizes, it was First Nations women who were moving from reserves to cities (2006).

among them, are located on traditional Indigenous territories (Peters, 2006; Dekruyf, 2017).

- **An attitudinal divide** that works to “other” First Nations people who reside in the city, as though they are alien, incompatible with modern mainstream life, and do not belong (Peters, 2000; Wilson and Peters, 2005; Moore et al., 2011; Belanger and Weasel Head, 2016).

Both the literature review and the interviews conducted for this chapter indicate how the attitudinal divide plays out for First Nations people who move to cities. Encouraged by federal policy, they often see their home reserves as the sole remaining site where they can exercise their rights and practice their cultures (Belanger and Weasel Head, 2016; Dekruyf, 2017). The city, by contrast, is a place to find jobs, skills and opportunities. And yet city life comes with a trade-off, as the city is also a place where a First Nations person can lose his or her identity. One research participant noted a stigma on those who move to Calgary from neighbouring reserves – a sense they are “trying to be white.” Successive participants attested to “culture shock” for First Nations people who relocate to Calgary, due in part to the “blatant racism” of landlords and in part to the many differences between reserve and city life (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012; Bird et al., 2010; interviews).

The perception of two worlds is reinforced by those differences, which have become further entrenched over time. Undoubtedly, one contributing factor has been the longstanding legal position of the federal government – articulated since the 1950s and only now being dismantled – limiting the extent of its legal jurisdiction and service responsibilities to First Nations people living on reserves.

A Living Artifact: Housing, Homelessness and Income Assistance

“When you leave the reserve, you are largely on your own – your First Nation is no longer involved.”

Indigenous housing service provider in Calgary

The previous section established how the jurisdictional divide might be seen as an artifact of colonialism – as something made or given shape by it – embedded in our country’s Constitution. This section will show how programming in the housing, homelessness and income assistance sectors serve to reinforce that divide. On these examples, the jurisdictional divide is revealed to be a living artifact – one that still creates geographic and attitudinal barriers between “Indians” and the rest of us, despite some limited efforts to overcome them through federal-provincial coordination.

As noted above, Canada’s Constitution assigns exclusive legislative authority over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” to the federal government. As also noted, the federal government has long interpreted its authority as extending only to registered Indians living on reserves. First Nations people who leave their communities are considered provincial residents like others, receiving the same services that are available to the general population of that province. Although the federal government has funded initiatives for Indigenous people in

cities, such initiatives have long been marked, in the words of political scientists Frances Abele and Katherine Graham, by “degrees of ambivalence about the boundaries of federal responsibility, both geographical and jurisdictional” (2014, p. 252). Beginning in the mid-1990s, Abele and Graham describe an increase in federal funding for organizations serving Indigenous people in cities. And yet, as perhaps a sign of that federal ambivalence, Canada authorized its new funding in the form of strategies or initiatives, rather than as full-fledged programs based on a comprehensive federal urban Indigenous policy (2014).²³

Some strategies and initiatives undertaken are of direct relevance to the sectors addressed here:

- The *National Homelessness Initiative*, introduced in 1999, included dedicated funding addressing the homelessness of Aboriginal peoples. Administered by Employment and Skills Development Canada, the initiative allowed for a degree of control to designated Indigenous organizations over the projects funded. In 2007, the strategy was rebranded the *Homeless Partnering Strategy*. Emphasising transitional housing and supports, it also continued the Aboriginal homelessness stream. In 2016, the Liberal government doubled funding to combat Indigenous homelessness. Reducing Indigenous homelessness forms a separate stream of *Reaching Home*, the homelessness component of the National Housing Strategy introduced in 2018. (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019).²⁴
- The *Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy*, introduced in 1999, aimed to improve the employment opportunities for First Nations, Inuit, Metis as well as status and non-status Indians living off-reserve. It provided funding to Aboriginal organizations to support human resources development programs, which they would design and deliver to Indigenous clients. Renewed in 2010 as the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, the program was again renewed under the Liberal government as the *Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program*. The program features distinctions-based streams for First Nations, Metis and Inuit, as well as one for “urban/non-affiliated” service delivery.²⁵
- The *Urban Aboriginal Strategy*, introduced in 1998, was distinguished by the premium it set on place-based policy making. Urban-based Indigenous organizations met at tables to identify and fund priority projects in their cities. For twenty years, the UAS marked the federal government’s major source of funds in the urban Indigenous space. In

23 Some examples not treated here include the Aboriginal Head Start Initiative (1995) providing funding for culturally-based programming for Indigenous preschool children, the Aboriginal Justice Strategy (1995) and Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative (1996–1999). Through the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians, the federal government also provided limited core and project funding to Metis, non-status Indian, and urban Indigenous organizations through Basic Organizational Capacity and bilateral and tripartite relationship funding facilitating coordination with provinces.

24 The strategy aims to achieve a 50 percent reduction in chronic homelessness over 10 years. See “Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy,” <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2018/06/reaching-home-canadas-homelessness-strategy.html>

25 The new ISET program was co-designed with Indigenous service delivery partners and gained increased funding. See “About the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program,” <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-skills-employment-training.html>.

2017, the Liberal government launched a redesigned *Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples* (UPIP). Budget 2017 invested \$118.5 million over five years in the UPIP.²⁶

As with programming for Indigenous people living in cities, social housing could be seen as another area of federal ambivalence regarding its jurisdiction. Unlike health, education, and social welfare, legal authority over housing is not enumerated as a specific power in the Constitution. Historically, the federal government has itself designed and administered major social housing programs through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. But provincial governments have also played significant roles – and indeed, assumed larger ones in the context of a federal retreat from social housing beginning in the 1990s.

According to geographer Ryan Walker, the federal government's dominant role in social housing reached a high point in 1973, with amendments to the *National Housing Act*. These amendments set out a federal/provincial/community relationship that he describes in the following terms:

direct and hierarchical, between the federal government (as financier, programme architect and central administrator) and provincial governments (as secondary financial and administrative partners) and community-based organisations (as sponsors and administrators of specific housing developments but with little control over program parameters) (2008, pp. 193–94).

In this context, Canada also introduced the *Urban Native Housing Program* in 1978, as part of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's broader non-profit housing program. Through operating agreements with housing providers (many of them Indigenous-led), CMHC provided subsidies to urban-dwelling Indigenous people who could not otherwise afford market rents in cities. The number of Indigenous-led housing corporations increased from 5 to over 100 from 1978 to 1995, creating just over 10,000 homes nationally.

In 1993, Canada retreated from its former dominant role, announcing that it would honour existing time-limited commitments but discontinue new funding for social housing. Budget 1996 announced its retreat from program administration, and transfer of this responsibility to provinces and territories.²⁷ The federal government also discontinued the Urban Native Housing Program in 1993 and transferred the oversight of pre-existing operating agreements to provinces (Brant and Irwin-Gibson, 2019).

Beyond a modest re-engagement under the Affordable Housing Framework in 2001 (Pomeroy and Falvo, 2013), Canada did not re-engage significantly in social housing until 2017,

26 The new UPIP provides funding to organizations that deliver programs and services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres in six areas: women, vulnerable populations, youth, transition services, outreach programs, and community wellness programs. It also provides funding for capacity-development of Indigenous organizations, coalitions promoting local collaborations, and research and innovation. See Government of Canada, "Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples," 29 May 2019, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1471368138533/1536932634432>.

27 University of Toronto urban studies professor J. David Hulchanski reminds that this was a federal policy decision rather than the settling of a legal question. On this matter on which the Constitution is silent, "It is politics – policy decisions by the government of the day, under the specific realities of the times – and not any legal or constitutional constraints that define the federal and provincial roles in housing" (Hulchanski 2007, p. 4).

when the Liberal government announced a National Housing Strategy, to be supported by a *National Housing Strategy Act*. For the first time, the federal government committed to a national long-term vision and funding of housing, with a particular focus on those in greatest housing need (Young, 2019). Canada also explicitly re-entered the social housing space for Indigenous people, where the *National Housing Strategy* was to include Metis, Inuit and First Nations off-reserve housing components.²⁸

And what is the situation on reserve? Not only legally, but policy- and program-wise, it is indeed a different universe. Under the *Indian Act*, reserve lands are held by the federal Crown, “for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart.” The plots of land where houses are built cannot be owned through fee simple title, as they are off-reserve. Instead, lands can be leased for up to 99 years, or used by the band governments themselves. Sections 24 and 28 of the *Indian Act* work together to prohibit the transfer of lands to anyone other than the band or one of its members. Most houses on reserves – and Treaty 7 reserves are no exception – are owned by the band and allocated to members. Mechanisms for allocating housing vary by community, but do not rely on a housing market as one finds off-reserve (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015).

First Nations with treaties, including some Treaty 7 First Nations and their members, have long maintained that the federal government is obliged to fund housing for individual members under the terms of its treaty with them. For its part, the federal government has long maintained that it funds on-reserve housing as a “matter of social policy” (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples 2015, p. 10). This in itself could be construed as a jurisdictional dispute – centred on interpretation of the Treaty. Who is responsible for providing and maintaining housing on First Nations? What are the roles of the federal and First Nations parties? As the Auditor General of Canada noted in 2003, “key players disagree on their roles and responsibilities” (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2003, p. 9). Arguably, these diametrically opposed positions on the meaning of the Treaty contributes to the poor condition of housing in treaty First Nations – not to mention of the relationship of treaty First Nations to the federal Crown. Further contributors are the lack of legislated building and fire codes for buildings on reserves of the kind that apply elsewhere in Canada.

The federal role in First Nations policy is set out in the *On-Reserve Housing Policy*, which Canada released in 1996. The policy was introduced in the same year that a funding cap of 2 percent was placed on programs for First Nations. Its intention, within these funding constraints, was to provide communities with more flexibility to target their housing needs. Except for First Nations that did not opt into the policy (chiefly in British Columbia and Ontario), the 1996 policy still provides the framework for on-reserve housing programming today.

28 For information on Inuit- and Metis-specific commitments in Budget 2018, see “2019 Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2019) and Government of Canada, “Signing of the Metis Nation Sub-Accord,” (July 19, 2018) <https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs/news/2018/07/signing-of-the-metis-nation-housing-sub-accord.html>. A web search revealed only a draft version of the First Nations strategy, published by the Assembly of First Nations. <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Draft-First-Nations-Housing-and-Related-Infrastructure-Strategy-July-2018.pdf>

What specific programs are relevant to housing and homelessness on reserves? Housing and emergency shelter programs are administered by either Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) or the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Programs are almost always delivered by First Nations under devolved federal authority. Briefly, they are:

- The *Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program*, administered by Indigenous Services Canada. The CFMP is the main program through which the federal government supports community housing, as well as basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, and water and wastewater systems. First Nations band councils develop an infrastructure plan on a 20-year timeline, aligning it with community priorities and incorporating in it any projected population changes. In addition to this major program, ISC supports on-reserve housing through one-time initiatives. For example, from 2009 to 2011, the department allocated \$400 million to address overcrowding and disrepair under Canada's Economic Action Plan. Likewise, the Liberal government invested \$554 million over two years in Budget 2016 and a further \$600 million over three years in on-reserve housing in Budget 2018.²⁹ National housing strategies co-developed with Metis and Inuit guide longer-term social housing development (though the strategy for First Nations remains to be developed).
- CMHC delivers various programs relating to housing to First Nations on reserves.³⁰ The *On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing (Section 95) Program*, funds First Nations to build, buy, repair and administer affordable rental housing on reserve. The *Direct Lending Program* provides low-interest loans and mortgage renewals for eligible social housing projects on reserve. The *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program* provides First Nations with funds to repair or convert homes on reserve (for example, create secondary suites, or modify homes for persons with disabilities). The *Housing Internship Initiative for First Nations and Inuit Youth* provides work experience and on-the-job training for youth living on- or off-reserve. And finally, CMHC provides training and resources to help First Nations communities design, build and manage their housing.
- The *Family Violence Prevention Program*, administered by Indigenous Services Canada, is a homelessness prevention program offered on reserves. It provides funding to First Nations to support the day-to-day operations of 41 emergency shelters across the country, as well as for community-driven proposals to prevent family violence. CHMC's *Shelter Enhancement Program On-Reserve* offers additional funds to First Nations to build and repair shelters and housing for people who are fleeing domestic violence. This program covers the capital costs of shelters only. Here too, Budget 2016 marked a recent boost in funding, of up to \$33.6 million over 5 years and up to \$8.3 million in ongoing funding to support shelter operations, and \$10.4 over three years to support

29 For details on new investments in housing under the Liberal government, see Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "Budget 2016 Highlights – Indigenous and Northern Investments," <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1458682313288/1458682419457> and "Budget 2019 Highlights: Indigenous and Northern Investments," <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1520368281802/1520368298215>. Retrieved October 28, 2019.

30 In effect, CMHC extended its off-reserve programming to reserves by defining First Nation bands as eligible recipients of financing and contributions to rehabilitate, build and subsidize, similar to how the agency defined municipalities and community non-profits. It was not a carefully-designed Indigenous approach.

the renovation and new construction of new shelters in communities (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2017).³¹

Income assistance is one service area enumerated in the Constitution as under the exclusive jurisdiction of provincial governments. And yet, due to the exclusive federal jurisdiction over Indians and lands reserved for Indians, a federal statute is required to enable provincial laws to apply to status Indians on reserves. That statute is the *Indian Act*.

In 1951, the federal government enacted Section 88 of the *Indian Act*, which states:

Subject to the terms of any treaty and any other Act of the Parliament of Canada, all laws of general application from time to time in force in any province are applicable to and in respect of Indians in the province, except to the extent that such laws are inconsistent with this Act... and except to the extent that such laws make provision for any matter for which provision is made by or under this Act.

Section 88 fulfills the purpose of incorporating provincial laws of general application that otherwise could not apply to Indians or reserve lands located in that province (Kickbush and Chan, 2005; Collier, 2016).

On-reserve, again as a matter of policy, the federal government funds First Nations bands or tribal councils – or in some cases, provincial and territorial governments – to deliver income assistance to eligible residents.³² As in other service areas where jurisdiction falls exclusively to provincial governments – in health, education and child welfare, for example – Canada aims to achieve *comparability* of funding levels and program standards. It uses the eligibility criteria and legal standards of the province in question as its guide.

The *Income Assistance Program*, administered federally by Indigenous Services Canada, provides funds to support the basic needs and transitional services for individuals and families who are “ordinarily resident on reserves.” The program provides clients (and their dependents, where applicable) with supports for basic needs, and for transitioning into the workforce. Clients must demonstrate that they live on a reserve as defined in the *Indian Act*, are eligible for income assistance as defined by that province, and have been confirmed by an assessment conducted by the program delivery agent. The federal program includes a shelter allowance to assist with rent and utilities, to be disbursed if the First Nation in question charges its members rent and utilities (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015, p. 17).

Standards and funding associated with delivery of income assistance differ, depending on the province or territory in question. Alberta is one of two regions (the other being Ontario) where delivery of the program is governed by a federal-provincial agreement. According to the “1991 Alberta Reform Agreement,” Canada and Alberta divide responsibilities. Indigenous

31 For further information on these two programs see Government of Canada, “Family Violence Prevention Program,” <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100035253/1533304683142>; and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, “Shelter Enhancement Program,” <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/Developing-and-Renovating/Funding-Opportunities/on-reserve-renovation-programs/shelter-enhancement-program>. Retrieved on October 29, 2019.

32 Eligible recipients who can deliver the Income Assistance program besides First Nations are tribal councils, provinces or the Yukon Territory, Indigenous communities and organizations, and political or treaty organizations. See Government of Canada, “Income Assistance National Program Guidelines 2019 to 2020,” <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1565185888233/1565187157281>.

Services Canada reimburses the Government of Alberta for social services that it delivers to First Nations individuals “who are ordinarily residents on reserve” (Indigenous Services Canada, 2019). In cases where Canada has authorized a First Nation or tribal council to deliver the service, they must do so according to a policy manual closely mirroring the one for the Alberta Works program (interviews). The First Nation also must deliver (and Canada must fund) income assistance to non-members who live on the reserve.

As an earlier chapter in this manuscript has established, the transition from First Nation-administered income assistance and the Alberta Works program works reasonably well – in the perspectives of both former clients and from First Nations administrators interviewed. Further research would be required into *why* the transition is smoother than in other service areas. It is highly possible, however, that the 1991 agreement helps improve coordination between federal and provincial jurisdictions – albeit providing very little latitude to First Nations in designing and delivering the service.

The Income Assistance Program is to be delivered in close connection with the Indigenous Skills and Training Program described above. The active case management of clients is designed to help ensure that they can obtain the skills and training they require to become employable.

Brief though they are, the above summaries of federal housing, homelessness and income assistance initiatives already convey at least three key features of the program landscape. First, with one exception (the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program), programs fall into two categories – on-reserve and off-reserve – maintaining the jurisdictional divide from the Constitution down to the program level. Second, the programs are administered by three federal entities, meaning that program administration is also divided among federal departments within one jurisdiction. Third, the programs are usually delivered by local organizations (often, but not always, First Nations bands or Indigenous-led not-for-profits) or provincial or municipal governments, meaning that the funder is not usually the same entity as the service provider. As such, the effectiveness of the program as delivered will depend heavily on the capacity of the local institution to deliver it.

Other points of interest cannot be gained from departmental websites but draw on the literature and interviews. Speaking at first nationally, how does the landscape that federal programs help to create look?

One main feature, especially of the housing and homelessness sectors, is *scarcity*. For example, on housing on First Nations reserves, a 2015 Senate committee report states the situation baldly: “There was unanimous agreement among witnesses, including departmental officials, that there is a significant housing shortage in First Nation communities, and that existing stock of housing in many communities is in deplorable condition” (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015, p. 3). The committee’s follow-up report provided specifics about the shelter allowance portion of income assistance, noting that it heard that is inadequate to meet shelter-related costs of housing on reserves when rent is charged, and that there are “significant disparities among regions” (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015, p. 23). In the cases where First Nations and their members regard

housing as a treaty right – including some Treaty 7 First Nations – First Nations collect neither rent nor utilities from their members. In these cases, the income assistance program provides no shelter allowance portion to members and the First Nations do not receive the income they require to maintain their housing stock.

The situation for First Nations people living off-reserve is not as dire, but is also severely pressed. With a rapidly growing population of Indigenous people in cities and limited options, affordable housing need far exceeds supply for all age groups and family situations. People arriving from reserves, who often have fragile support systems to begin with, are more likely to fall into homelessness (Lange et al., 2010; interviews).

Rapid growth of the First Nations population plays a role in the scarcity element, especially in light of the ongoing poverty of a large portion of that population. And yet the priorities of funders – in this case, both provincial and federal orders of government – also play a role. Arguably, the jurisdictional divide itself plays a role in shaping those priorities. To varying degrees across Canada, provincial and municipal officials have not always accepted the federal position that they are in fact responsible for providing services to urban Indigenous people, and especially to new migrants from reserves. In her comprehensive literature review, Dekruyf notes:

[U]rban Aboriginal residents are perceived as being under the jurisdiction of the federal government, resulting in a normative understanding development that underestimates or outright denies their potential self-determination and allows provinces and municipalities to declaim any responsibility for helping to improve their collective well-being (2017, p. 14).

In the housing sector, the perception of “dumped” federal responsibility was compounded by the federal government’s retreat from funding of new social housing projects in 1993 – a move that put provincial and municipal governments themselves in a tight spot. Abele and Graham note the rise of homelessness in the mid-1990s as “one manifestation of this impact” (2014, p. 256). Indigenous people in cities, who had already been at elevated risk of becoming homeless, were now further at risk with the federal government’s retreat from new funding for the Urban Native Housing Program.

On the other hand, the federal approach proved a mixed blessing for development of *Indigenous service institutions* – a second feature of the current landscape. As shown by the description of federal urban Indigenous programs, strategies and initiatives above – and certainly on-reserve since its devolution of most service delivery to First Nations in the 1970s and 80s – the federal government has long relied on local and regional organizations to deliver its initiatives. Six Nations economist David Newhouse reports that the number of Indigenous non-profit organizations active across Canada more than tripled from 1993 to 2000 in response. This development, often overlooked, created a new Indigenous “invisible infrastructure” capable of planning and delivering services in new, culturally relevant ways (Newhouse, 2016). This invisible infrastructure is evident in Calgary as well as other Canadian cities.

A third feature of the landscape, closely related to the first two, is *competition for funds*. This situation holds for First Nations band governments and tribal councils, which find themselves vying for the limited funding available under proposal-based programs on-reserve. It also holds for urban-based service providers of housing and homeless services, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous. By necessity, these institutions must patch together various project-based sources of funds – not only federal but provincial, municipal and sometimes private ones. The endless quest for funding has the side-effect of making collaboration with “competitors” less likely – and this even though collaboration is required to provide wrap-around service to vulnerable clients (Tomiak, 2010; Andersen and Strachan, 2012).

The feature of competition is due largely to the short-term, project-based nature of much of funding for housing, homelessness and employment initiatives – both on- and off-reserve. It only exacerbates a fourth feature of the landscape. With the exception of income assistance which is governed by an agreement between the responsible departments in Canada and Alberta, there is a visible *lack of coordination*. Long-standing divisions put in place through the *Indian Act* band council system mean that First Nations in a single tribal council or treaty organization often do not work together. Municipal and First Nations officials often communicate only sporadically, if at all. Beyond the “two-universe” nature of on- and off-reserve programming is a visible lack of coordination within a single order of government. Social housing and homelessness programs are administered by two different federal entities, as is on-reserve housing. Respecting the latter, the 2015 Senate report indicated that ISC and CMHC “seem to operate in silos” (2015, p. 8). This observation was echoed by First Nations administrators interviewed for this project.

For Alberta, University of Alberta sociologists Andersen and Strachan note a similar effect. Reviewing the many “off-reserve” Indigenous offerings of the Alberta provincial government, they note that activity is strewn across different ministries. In this configuration too, the divide of jurisdictions has played its role:

Given that provincial programs and policies are geared, not toward ‘urban Aboriginals’ as a specific object of governance but rather as members of a provincial constituency...policy has tended to take a piecemeal, sector by sector approach in which each ministry attempts to improve the area under its aegis, whether health, justice, employment, or education, to name but a few (Andersen and Strachan, 2012, p. 130).

Within provincial ministries, short-term, sector-by-sector initiatives arise to fill gaps left by a federal ambivalence about its role in programs for Indigenous people in cities – and in place of the considered, evidence-based policies that *could* come into play if provincial governments were convinced of their role. And indeed, in light solely of the division of powers under Sections 91(24) and 92 – we will come to Section 35 later – their role is not to serve Indigenous people *as Indigenous*, but as individual residents of the province among others.

And yet, too often, Indigenous people are not treated quite the same as other residents either. Whether in long-term housing or emergency shelters, we find various reports of administrative disconnect, dismissiveness, and even outright racism. Some specific examples:

- Nationally, with wide variation across the country, Indigenous housing providers describe a situation where “some provinces and municipalities are loath to engage with Indigenous community housing,” despite the clear cost-savings the organizations provide (Brant and Irwin-Gibson, 2019, p. 33).
- In other Prairie cities, neighbourhood restoration initiatives led by citizen coalitions have occurred with little, if any, engagement of urban Indigenous organizations, much less of First Nations in the region – even though some of those neighbourhoods have very high concentrations of Aboriginal residents (Walker, 2006).
- Indigenous people often need to house large, intergenerational families and require larger houses than can be afforded in most cities. Crowding often leads to evictions (Lange et al., 2010).
- In Alberta, a province-wide engagement with Indigenous participants noted that a “clash of worldviews affects tenant/landlord relationships and limits the access of Indigenous peoples to appropriate housing” (Alberta Seniors and Housing, 2018, p. 7).
- Shelters located in Calgary can be unsure which programs their clients can access. For example, the Alpha House, a charitable agency that serves individuals with alcohol or drug dependencies, notes that different program options may be available, but “often the service may not be the best one for the client. We also see big differences in service options for status and non-status clients, and Métis clients” (Turner et al., 2010, p. 21).
- The director of an emergency shelter located on a Treaty 7 reserve noted a perception among their Calgary-based counterparts that its staff is less capable because they have less formal schooling. Indigenous language fluency and traditional knowledge as a plus in serving Indigenous clients is often discounted entirely (interview).
- Women in First Nations emergency shelters seeking to relocate to Calgary for longer-term housing, even to distance themselves from their abusers, are often disadvantaged. Because they still reside on reserve, they are deemed ineligible to access some of the same provincial programs that could help them leave. Where they are escaping violence, landlords often deem them to be poor potential tenants (interview).

Through examples from both the Calgary research and descriptions of housing issues faced by First Nations in the literature, an entrenched reserve-city divide becomes clear. The “othering” of First Nation people from reserves continues, in both overt and covert ways.

This section has sought to show that a divide that begins in the Constitution itself continues through our country’s laws, policies and programs to inform our very attitudes and cultures. The next section will address the issue that gave rise to this research project – why are so many of Calgary’s Indigenous people homeless in the city? – with the role of jurisdiction in mind.

The Homelessness and Housing of Indigenous People in Calgary

“We have to stand in both worlds. And we have to work together on it being the same story versus two different stories.”

Indigenous homeless shelter service provider in Calgary

We return to the hard ground of statistics. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the city of Calgary experienced the fastest population growth in the country. The economic boom placed enormous pressure on both the housing market and rents. One piece of collateral damage was a rapid rise in homelessness. By 2008, Calgary had the fastest growing homeless population in Canada, rising from 47 people recorded in 1992 to 3,600 in 2008. By 2012, according to a publication by the Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, the city had become “the epi-centre of homelessness in Alberta, driven by migration, and the labour and rental markets” (2012, p. 11).

In the 2016 census, 2.84 percent of the population of Calgary identified as Aboriginal (Alberta Government, 2016). By comparison, according to data analyzed by Pomeroy in the chapter on housing, in April 2018, almost half of the 2,911 people in Calgary’s homeless serving system of care identified as having Indigenous ancestry. 81 percent of those self-identified as First Nations. Of these, about 24 percent of these identified as being from a Treaty 7 First Nation.

Whether speaking of Indigenous people in general or Treaty 7 First Nations specifically, the representation of Indigenous people in the homeless population in Calgary is disproportionately large. Despite an overall slowing in the growth of homelessness in the city, Calgary still has one of the highest rates of Indigenous homelessness of all cities in Canada (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019).

Why does Indigenous homelessness persist – even grow – in Calgary? Early work to address this question was done in 2010. In partnership with researchers from the University of Calgary, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary developed a research agenda to explore it. A first product of their agenda was a background paper explaining how Indigenous people’s experiences of homelessness differed from mainstream ones. The paper also provided a scan of the services available to homeless Indigenous people in Calgary and identified gaps and actions that might be pursued to address them (Turner et al., 2010).

Many of the roots of Indigenous homelessness that were discovered point to the legacy of colonial laws, policies and practices – to factors such as trauma and loss of identity through Indian Residential Schools and the 60s Scoop, to resulting poverty, addictions and mental health issues, and to a lack of housing and other services in First Nations. Yet the paper also noted the jurisdictional divide itself as a factor, including the scarcity even of public policy discussions and research – despite pervasive Indigenous homelessness in Canadian cities. The paper located this scarcity in “conflicting views about governmental responsibilities for urban Aboriginal people” (Turner, 2010, p. 1).

As with elsewhere, the 2010 gathering hosted by the Aboriginal Friendship Centre identified a reserve-city binary as ever-present. “Two communities are juxtaposed in the

conversations: the reserve and the city. The transition between the two can be difficult” (Bird et al., 2010, p. 16). The follow-up chapter identified a need for Indigenous homeless people to feel a positive identity and sense of belonging in the city as an essential pathway to healing – and ultimately to reducing Indigenous homelessness in the city.³³ In sum, this first piece of Calgary-based research noted a chasm in perceptions of the reserve and the city, as well as need for cultural supports to help Indigenous homeless people feel Calgary to be “a place to belong.”

Why? On the assumption that culture matters to public policy, it is worth briefly considering historical and cultural factors at work in Treaty 7 territory. First, colonization in the area was swift and relentless. Fort Calgary, as Dekruyf reminds, originated in 1874 as one of several posts established in a federal push to assert its sovereignty in southern Alberta. After it signed Treaty 7 in 1877, the federal government had sites for the reserves of the seven signatory First Nations surveyed. Both the new reserves and their people would immediately be subject to the *Indian Act*. In 1885, the federal government introduced the pass system, a new federal policy. The policy granted Indian Agents full control over Indians entering or leaving reserves in the area, provided they “had legitimate business to conduct” (Dekruyf, 2017, p. 28).

The pass system kept Treaty 7 First Nations away from white settlers and growing towns – and also from each other – until it was formally repealed in 1951. Added to this, Thurston, Soo and colleagues remind (2013) that Alberta was the province with the highest number residential schools in Canada. The devastating multi-generational effects of the schools on the identity of First Nations people has been well-established, most recently by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

With Treaty 7 people “protected” on their reserves, Calgary grew fast. By World War I, the city had a population of over 80,000 people. The population almost doubled again after 1947, as Calgary became the business epicentre of Alberta’s new oil and gas industry. Successive waves of immigration made the city ethnically very diverse. At present, its visible minority population is about 30 percent (Calgary Economic Development, 2020). Yet despite its diversity, the city has always tended its frontier identity – captured by its defining symbol, the Calgary Stampede.

The Calgary Stampede, Dekruyf suggests, “offers us a way of symbolically discussing the distance between these two distinct groups of people and the unwritten norms that have evolved over time” (2017, p. 32). On an annual basis, the Stampede re-enacts – and arguably re-affirms – the symbolic and geographic gulf between “cowboys” and “Indians. To be sure, Treaty 7 First Nations have been a central feature of the Stampede since its beginning: in 1914, its founder risked jail to bring First Nation members into town to take part in full regalia. And

33 For example, a contribution by the Alex Health Centre, a local agency serving homeless people in Calgary stressed that: “Identity confusion, lack of knowledge of an individual’s cultural ties and practice, and a feeling of not belonging appears to play a large part in homelessness for Aboriginal clients and needs to be further addressed” (Turner 2010, p. 16). An Indigenous staff member of the Mustard Seed, another Calgary shelter, made a similar observation, noting that she had not met a single Indigenous client whose life had not been affected by the Indian Residential Schools or 60s Scoop (interview). The Alex Centre also suggested that the needs of Indigenous homeless clients who come from reserves will likely differ from those who have lived in the city their whole lives.

yet, while flouting the notion that First Nations people should assimilate when in the city, the Stampede lasted only a few days. After the celebrations, Indians were to return to their reserves.³⁴

Together with Lindstrom's framing chapter, we suggest that culture not only matters, it helps frame policy issues. When it became clear that the city had a homelessness issue, citizens set to tackling it in a big way. Responding to yearly increases in the homeless count in 2007, the Calgary Homeless Foundation joined forces with a committee of concerned citizens to develop Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The plan was not solely for government, but promoted "good faith efforts of all levels of government, the private sector, the non-profit and faith community and the public in working together toward ending homelessness" (Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, 2008, p. 2). Guided by a Housing First philosophy, the Plan called for significant affordable housing investments, set ambitious targets and timelines, and established rigorous success measures. Its lead would be the Calgary Homeless Foundation, which would coordinate the efforts of non-profit agencies working in the city.

On questions affecting Indigenous people, CHF has long been advised by the Aboriginal Standing Committee for Housing and Homelessness (ASCHH). Originating in 1996, members of the Committee include Indigenous-led agencies, Indigenous community members, as well as non-Indigenous organizations and governments that are "committed to enhancing, improving, and supporting health and wellness, and the rights of urban Aboriginal peoples" (ASCHH, 2011, p. 1). In 2012, the Committee prepared its own ten-year plan, the Plan to End Aboriginal Homelessness in Calgary, which included several recommendations of its own.

In Calgary, as elsewhere, federal (and usually also provincial) programming for housing and homelessness is delivered by local service agencies. Recognizing the importance of local level capacity to the care provided, this project includes a brief overview of key local organizations – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – involved in homelessness and affordable housing services in an appendix. The survey takes care to note any Indigenous-specific programs or staff that the organizations highlight on their website. Overall, it suggests a general sense of improvement in the capacity to serve the Indigenous clients within the two systems since the ASCHH created its Plan in 2012. That said, our interviews with Indigenous service-providers also leave a sense that much work remains to be done.

As Calgary's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness concluded, Indigenous homelessness rates defied all efforts to reduce them. This was despite a general drop in homeless rates in the city from 2008. Drawing a balance in 2016, a former staff member of CHF identified certain key learnings that could inform the future development of Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care. One learning is the need to balance the leadership role of CHF with "authentic and

³⁴ A similar impression of an as-yet unreconciled divide between settler and First Nation societies is conveyed in the permanent exhibit of Calgary's Glenbow museum. On the one side, *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta*, presents a journey through Alberta's history from the standpoint of the white frontiersmen and women who settled it. On the other side, *Niitsitapiisini: Our Way of Life*, presents the story of the area as told by Blackfoot elders. The two narratives stand side-by-side, as two solitudes, with little of a shared narrative to reconcile them.

respectful community collaboration” and to ensure clearly defined roles among partners. Another is the need to prioritize client choice:

The System Planning Framework and associated tools give us details at the person, program, agency and system level that help us to learn about these gaps [that need to be filled] and to try to fill them, but ultimately there is no true success if we can't be cognizant, responsive and respectful of peoples' wishes and wants in addition to their assessed needs (Milaney, 2016, p. 492).

It is worth considering how these learnings might apply to working with homeless clients from Treaty 7 reserve communities – and indeed, from reserves outside the Treaty 7 region too. For example, in 2012, the Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness found the following:

Difficult conditions on reserve were a frequent topic of conversation in all of the focus groups conducted. Participants expressed frustration that the general population, and agency staff in particular, are not aware of the reality of conditions on reserves or do not adequately comprehend what it was like to grow up on a reserve; consequently, many agencies are not able to understand or adequately to respond to people's needs (ASCHH, 2012, p. 27).

Since 2012, as the survey included in the appendix suggests, awareness of reserve realities may well have grown. That said, participants in this project indicated that a lack of awareness remains. If agency staff – beginning with their lead, CHF – seek a better understanding of conditions on reserves, then developing effective working relationships with their reserve-based counterparts would seem to be required. Three of the seven Treaty 7 First Nations have homeless shelters. All have housing departments as well as dedicated consultation and external relations units. Some of the First Nations have undertaken their own demographic projections and housing need assessments based upon them. CHF, in other words, could find informed counterparts working in reserve communities.

Second, on the element of people's wishes and wants beyond their assessed needs, the question that Lindstrom poses in the framing chapter might be worth asking anew. Namely: to what extent do Indigenous values – traditional ones, prioritizing ties to family, community and land over shelter as “home,” but also as adapted in response to scarcity and trauma – contribute to Indigenous homelessness in Calgary?

For example, one focus group participant cited in Lindstrom's chapter suggests one source of a cross-cultural divide. “On the reserve, they're so many living in one house and you come to the city. You don't realize, 'oh I can't have all my relatives and a bunch of people living with me, it just has to be me'” (p. 66 above). Living with family is a priority – likely also a necessity – even in crowded conditions. On the other side, as successive interviews also pointed out, owning a home or amassing savings may not be a priority. Lindstrom also points to a sense of belonging and mutual instruction among Indigenous homeless people in cities, “demonstrative of a long-established pattern of helping those adjust and survive in a new and unfamiliar

environment.” Surrounded by a kind of family and community, albeit amid danger and trauma, Indigenous people living at a shelter might not consider themselves to lack a home.

If Indigenous people living on the streets have wishes, wants and values, so too do those they interact with. One factor identified by Belanger, Weasel Head and others is NIMBYism, which “might include individual and community-driven resistance to Aboriginal housing initiatives and Aboriginal emigration to the city” (Belanger, Weasel Head et al., 2012, p. 18). A consistent theme identified in interviews was a sense that homeless people from reserves face profiling and are not welcomed as tenants. To what extent divides and disputes around jurisdiction contribute to opinions of this kind was taken up in prior sections.

The Way Forward: A Self-Determined Approach

So what now? The status quo is not working – neither for Indigenous homeless people living in Calgary, nor for those who seek to reduce their numbers in Calgary’s Homeless-Serving System of Care. And yet, that system has also built capacity and knowledge over the past 10 years, to the extent that there is at least potential for an informed dialogue between its representatives and Treaty 7 leaders and officials.

How might federal, provincial and city investments be directed to reducing the homelessness of Treaty 7 First Nations people in Calgary? How to identify and move forward initiatives? Other contributions to this project provide recommendations relating specifically to the housing, homeless and income assistance sectors. This contribution will focus on those relating to governance and jurisdiction. A few key observations offer guidance on this topic.

First, there is a need to counteract the colonial intent lying at the heart of our country’s Constitution. How to begin decolonizing our laws, policies and programs in face of it? It is unlikely that our current constitutional configuration will change soon. But we also have another constitutional provision – one too often ignored in debates about which order of the Crown is “responsible” for delivering services to First Nations people. According to the Supreme Court of Canada’s 1990 *R. v. Sparrow* decision, Section 91(24) must be read in light of Section 35, which protects existing Aboriginal and treaty rights from unreasonable incursions by the Crown. Beyond Section 35, both Canadian and Alberta governments have committed to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which explicitly promotes the right of self-determination. And regardless of any recognition of their rights by Canada or Alberta, First Nations leaders have always asserted their right to assume a central role not only in *administering* services to their members (as, for example, with income assistance) but in governing those services as well.

The first step in addressing the homelessness of Treaty 7 members, therefore, is to place the right of self-determination at the centre of any efforts. This step will by no means “solve” all practical – or even all philosophical – issues involved. Does acknowledging the right mean that the federal government must fund all on-reserve housing as part of a treaty right to housing, for example? Or rather that Treaty 7 First Nations should exercise jurisdiction to self-generate funds through rental and property tax regimes? What self-determination entails in practical terms is a question to be addressed by the parties to any dialogue, rather than

answered here. The point here is to acknowledge that any discussions of responsibilities across jurisdictions must include a First Nations Treaty partner, which represents a community that holds collective rights. With rights recognized in Section 35 and the UNDRIP, the Treaty 7 representative comes to the table with a source of authority that pre-dates Canada's Constitution.

Second, Lindstrom's chapter has noted some distinct understandings of the concept of jurisdiction among Treaty 7 First Nations that might be useful in guiding a future approach. In scholarly sources, other literatures, and stories passed down, "there remains a vision of the way Treaty 7 First Nations operated their governance systems" (2020, p. 16). Annabel Crop Eared Wolf, a member of the Kainaiwa tribe, notes that leadership in the context of peacekeeping and peacemaking "was non-hierarchical and situational; leaders were selected based on their skills, knowledge and suitability as dictated by the situation" (2007, p. 1). Building relationships was central to the governance of this Blackfoot tribe. Likewise, Lindstrom cites the work of Stoney-Nakoda scholar Terry Poucette, who established that defined roles and an ability to "be flexible and adaptable depending on environmental conditions" was key to governing this First Nation (Lindstrom, 2020, 19). Taking into account traditional Treaty 7 governance might prompt the parties to adopt a more flexible, adaptable approach in addressing homelessness in the city.

A third consideration is mobility of First Nations members between reserves and the city. This holds in particular for clients within Calgary's Homeless Serving System of Care (Turner et al., 2010; Belanger, Awosaga et al., 2013). Culturally too, there remains an ongoing sense that reserves are important touchstones for First Nations members, including more affluent ones living in Calgary (Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2010). Added to this, the long-standing legal barriers between reserve and city are diminishing. In a 1999 decision *Corbiere v. Canada*, for example, the Supreme Court established that First Nation members living off-reserve retain their right to vote in band council elections. For mobility, identity and governance reasons, therefore, the reserve remains a central experience of First Nations people who move to the city, whether they move back and forth or not.

A fourth consideration finally, is potential investment. Beyond recent significant federal investments in affordable housing, in 2016, the Government of Alberta made an unprecedented commitment to invest provincially in "off-reserve, non-market, affordable housing for Indigenous peoples in need" (Alberta Seniors and Housing, 2018 p. 2). It is perhaps a signal of the fragility of provincial investment in Indigenous peoples that applications for both planning and construction under this program are on hold. It is not clear either what the next step will be for Alberta's answer to Calgary's 10 Year Plan, *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* (Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, 2008).

But there is also a second potential partner under provincial jurisdiction: Calgary's municipal government. Faced with an unmet demand of 4,000 qualifying households on the waiting list for rent supplements and social housing units, the City developed *Calgary's Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy* for 2016 to 2025. The strategy aims to leverage both federal and provincial commitments to capital investment to build more units. Although it does not mention creating new affordable housing specifically for Indigenous residents, City of

Calgary officials noted the possibility of selling municipal land at below-market value to support urban Indigenous housing projects.³⁵ Officials also indicated their intention to engage with Indigenous representatives and service organizations – including area First Nations, Metis and urban ones – in a sustained way, through the City’s Indigenous Relations Office and the Affordable Housing division.

These considerations could help inform a governance structure to address the homelessness of Treaty 7 people in Calgary. As noted earlier, CHF has long relied on an Aboriginal Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness to guide its work. An urban-based Indigenous body is certainly needed, where most Indigenous homeless people (whether Metis or First Nation) do not come from Treaty 7 communities and many may have spent their entire lives in the city. And yet CHF appears to have limited access to understanding of the experiences of homeless clients from the inside, as it were – whether they come from Treaty 7 First Nations or from ones further away. Both CHF and the City of Calgary also have limited relationships with the leaders and staff of these communities.

Tending CHF’s relationships with its urban-based Aboriginal Advisory Committee is and remains important. That said, it is not likely to be the best means to build and tend relationships with leaders and staff of Treaty 7 First Nations. Achieving this goal may well require a distinct governance structure from the more inclusive urban-based structure that the Aboriginal Advisory Committee represents. It would also help meaningfully to recognize the reality that Calgary is located on Treaty 7 territory.

The pool of potential initiatives to undertake is large. They could range from such short-term ones as collaborations on research or exchanges of staff to long-term, complex undertakings like seeking to establish urban reserves in Calgary. Private/public partnerships to develop housing – whether on- or off-reserve – are also possible, though more likely in cases where a private corporation has a social licence interest in investing in an Indigenous community. Again, though, the focus of this chapter is on the governance that could facilitate a joint development of initiatives in a way that could actively counteract the gaps and silos wrought by the jurisdictional divide.

What kind of governance structure is called for? Though the particulars are best addressed by actors on the ground, a few basic prerequisites appear:

- Recognizing *three* distinct jurisdictions of equal standing: federal, provincial/municipal and First Nations ones, acknowledged in Sections 91, 92 and 35 of the Constitution. The recognition of three jurisdictions is important to establishing a level field for all parties and a source of authority beyond the colonial *Indian Act* for the First Nations one.

³⁵ See, for example, the upcoming sale of five city-owned sites to non-profit affordable housing providers announced in January 2020. Successful applicants automatically qualify for grant funding from both the City and the CMHC’s SEED funding program. The offer of land and funding in one package promises to make it “faster and easier for non-profit providers to build more homes.” City of Calgary, “Sale of five City-owned development sites to affordable housing providers in Calgary,” 15 January 2020. At <https://newsroom.calgary.ca/sale-of-five-city-owned-development-sites-to-affordable-housing-providers-in-calgary/>

- Recognizing, at the same time, that an exclusive focus on jurisdictions can stop dialogue; whereas dialogue, consistently, is what participants have called for. There could be much to learn here from the traditional governance of Treaty 7 First Nations – from their more fluid, horizontal governance in particular – in addressing issues that contribute to the homelessness of people moving between reserves and the city.
- Explicitly including federal representatives in Calgary-based initiatives to address Indigenous homelessness. Whether on-reserve or off-, the federal government still bears primary jurisdiction to interact with Indigenous people as Indigenous – even more so in the wake of the 2016 Supreme Court *Daniels* decision. There is also a federal responsibility to interact with Treaty 7 First Nations as their treaty partner. Historically too, despite its ambivalence, the federal government has provided the majority of funding to urban Indigenous initiatives (Moore et al., 2011).
- Reviewing the tripartite model – in housing and homelessness as well as in other sectors – to see what went well and why, as well as practices to be avoided. One example close to home could be the work to attain an MOU on Jordan’s Principle by the First Nations Health Consortium and governments of Alberta and Canada (CBC News, 2018). There are further examples of productive tripartite tables throughout the country, with well-developed success indicators, funding commitments and mutual accountabilities.³⁶
- The importance of city governments should not be underestimated. Though municipal governments are bound in Alberta by the *Municipal Government Act* and are perhaps “junior” to the provincial government in a legal sense, they can still make a very great difference in improving local Indigenous-settler relationships (Andersen & Strachan, 2012; Walker et al., 2017). A strong city presence is key in cases where provincial governments may be less willing to engage. For guidance, political scientists Christopher Alcantara and Jen Nelles have written extensively on First Nations/municipal partnerships and factors that contribute to successful ones (2016).

The points above are considerations and prerequisites in initiating relationships required to address Indigenous homelessness in any context. Specific to the Understanding Flow project, a handful of specific recommendations suggest themselves:

1. The contribution of the jurisdictional divide to the status quo, and remedial effects of the Section 35 right of self-determination have not been much reflected on. As a first (by no means final) step, CHF and its Indigenous partners could promote **building awareness** among parties responsible for addressing Indigenous homeless in Calgary on how the prevailing jurisdictional divides and disputes reinforce a status quo based in colonialism. Counterexamples of self-determined approaches focusing on shared responsibility to address shared concerns could be provided.

³⁶ Recent studies of the potential and limitations of these forums can be found in Kelly (2011); Papillon (2012 and 2015); Alcantara and Nelles (2013 and 2016); and Bruhn (2018).

2. Recognizing the right of self-determination in service delivery, a **Treaty 7 First Nation lead or leads** could bring forward concerns that contribute to the homelessness of members of Treaty 7 First Nations living in the city. Which leads emerge could depend on their legitimacy among those to be represented – in this case, homeless members of Treaty 7 First Nations – as well as the interest and technical capacity of the First Nations to take part. The Treaty 7 lead(s) would require authority to engage with Calgary Homeless Foundation and other governments on their behalf.
3. Realizing that concerted effort is required to engage across the city-reserve divide, the City could develop **an Indigenous engagement strategy** including a targeted Treaty 7 First Nation component for housing and homelessness issues. One potential element of such a strategy could be to offer to collaborate with Treaty 7 First Nations interested in developing tripartite agreements under the *Family and Community Support Services Act* (which, according to interviews for this project, is possible for First Nations as well as municipalities in Alberta) to support local initiatives.
4. Most of the literature, as well as recent case law, calls for a **robust federal role** to address Indigenous issues in urban centres, and certainly in First Nation communities. Initiatives identified at tripartite tables could be local and regional but also seek federal (and, where feasible, provincial) funding, and could reach formal, results-oriented agreements featuring core commitments to report on jointly-identified indicators.³⁷ Tripartite tables with First Nations could also seek to bring in representatives of the federal Urban Indigenous People’s Program, to help ensure that housing initiatives coincide with other initiatives that Calgary Indigenous residents have identified as supporting a better quality of life.
5. Address **power, knowledge and capacity imbalances** as they arise. Directed at all parties to the tripartite relationship, this could include initial measures like the funding of joint research, or exchanges of staff, to see some of the challenges on the other side of the reserve/city divide. Imbalances will arise – and it will be important to acknowledge and work through them as they do.
6. **Chip away at unhelpful silos.** A consistent theme in both the literature and interviews was a need to serve the most vulnerable in a holistic way. Communication barriers arise when service staff stay within their silos, related lingo and underlying assumptions. A Treaty 7 tripartite forum could build in the flexibility required to bring in various sectors on given initiatives. Active involvement of Treaty 7 Elders at such a table could ensure both respect for protocol and a focus on holistic approaches.

³⁷ Coinciding with this research, the Assembly of First Nations adopted a resolution to pursue a national Action Plan for First Nations Homelessness, both on- and off-reserve, at its December 2019 Special Chiefs Assembly. The draft Resolution is available at <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Combined-Final-Draft-Resolutions-2019-SCA-EN.pdf> The Resolution’s call for federal engagement could offer a further impetus to federal ministers and officials from varying departments to take part in a regional Treaty 7 tripartite table.

Appendix A: Engagement Strategy – Gabrielle Lindstrom

[T]he first stage of any research project is engagement. Whether one is a seasoned researcher – known or unknown to the specific community – or a novice just beginning a research career, and whether or not they are Indigenous to another territory, permission to conduct research in any Indigenous Nation is required and community consent is an ongoing conversation. (Bull & Hudson, 2018, p. 2)

Introduction and Purpose

This engagement plan represents only the beginning of relationship-building with Treaty 7 First Nations. It has been developed with a clear understanding that for First Nations communities, the right to self-determination has been at the forefront of relational arrangements with government both historically and currently. Deliberately acknowledging the right of First Nations as self-determining governing entities is an action that is often missing in many government and non-Indigenous led organizational Indigenous engagement strategies and frameworks (see Canadian Transportation Industry, 2017; Urban Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, 2016). The framework for developing ethical and sustainable relationships occurs through this acknowledgement and a critical awareness of how Indigenous peoples have been left out of the dialogue and decision-making processes regarding issues of direct relevance to their communities. In conceptualizing the engagement process, Cree scholar Willie Ermine's work (2007) in articulating the ethical space provides a blueprint for relation-building and dialogue that critically confronts the challenges in arriving at mutual understandings between Indigenous and Western thought systems. Ermine effectively illustrates how both cultures have been "moulded from a distinct history, knowledge tradition, philosophy, and social and political reality" (p. 194) which simultaneously hinders critical cross-cultural engagement and presents a potential for transforming these relationships. He further describes how:

[t]he 'ethical space' is formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews, are poised to engage each other. It is the thought about diverse societies and the space in between them that contributes to the development of a framework for dialogue between human communities. The ethical space of engagement proposes a framework as a way of examining the diversity and positioning of Indigenous peoples and Western society... (p. 193)

Entering into this theoretical space does not involve simply stepping blindly into relation-building and discussions in the hopes that we will all just get along. Instead, it involves a commitment to engaging with the Indigenous thought-system as a site of establishing right relationships. The conceptual framework of the ethical space (Ermine, 2007) is crucial in the development and sustainment of engagement with Treaty 7 First Nations and Indigenous-led organization since it has been at the system of thought wherein Indigenous people's culture, traditions and practices have been most misunderstood, misinterpreted and

decontextualized. Indeed, Ermine argues that today, little has changed in the relationships between Indigenous peoples and settler-society, and despite over four hundred years of consistent presence of Euro-settlers in what is now known as Canada, “what remains hidden and enfolded are the deeper level thoughts, interests and assumptions” (p. 195) that guide Indigenous and non-Indigenous interactions. Through the creation of this conceptual ethical space, engagement with Treaty 7 First Nations communities, of which this research is focused on, is being approached both authentically and critically. Others such as Bull and Hudson (2018) have employed the ethical space in conceptualizing what effective and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities might look like.

Guided by this conceptual framework premised on the ethical space (Ermine, 2007), the purpose of this engagement plan is to offer a high-level discussion of ethical considerations and Indigenous protocols relevant to research engagement; a summary and purpose of the context/framing paper (forthcoming) that situates Treaty 7 First Nations communities within the other components of this study; the details of outreach activities; identify relevant stakeholders, entities and governing bodies, and outline a strategy for sustaining engagement throughout the duration of this project. Additionally, offering a general sense of the importance of exploring the historical and social factors and cultural protocols associated with each First Nations community illuminates some of the tensions involved with doing research with Indigenous communities employing a homogenous, or pan-Indigenous approach. As part of the path to self-determination, Indigenous communities and individuals want to know what will happen to any data as it pertains to them; thus, a crucial part of the engagement process is ensuring that we consult with and follow the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™).

At its broadest level, Indigenous engagement for this project is purposed to ensure that the Indigenous peoples of whom this research is concerned are provided with a clear pathway to involvement. This begins with a clear understanding of why this research should matter to Treaty 7 First Nations – in other words, why should they care and what benefits will this research bring to their communities? If possible, engagement should involve all members of any organization that is wishing to create meaningful and sustainable partnerships with Indigenous communities. Areas to consider include organizational levels of engagement such as management or where policy-creation and decision-making occur. This requires buy-in by non-Indigenous organizations that are entering into relationships with Indigenous communities, which in turn presents potential for future opportunities such as partnering on research projects or community capacity-building initiatives. However, it is important to understand that building relationships takes time and sustaining them is a continuous process requiring commitment and effort.

In terms of outreach, an initial meeting with the Executive Director of the regional arm of OCAP™, the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre, has been the first point of contact. Other engagement details include invitation to a preliminary meeting that informs Treaty 7 First Nations communities of the purpose and community benefits of this research, regular updates on progress, and ensuring that we are transparent with information and

findings emerging from any data gathered from Indigenous communities. Maintaining transparency and remaining clear on how this research will benefit the Treaty 7 First Nations communities are vital components of this strategy. In terms of the stakeholders, we identify those who may be impacted by the research, and broadly outline what their interest in the research might be, as well as identify the appropriate representative of the entities, governing bodies or organizations that are central to our project. The strategy for continued engagement includes details around how feedback from the Treaty 7 communities and other provincial and municipal stakeholders will be incorporated into the project, as well the processes for reporting back to Treaty 7 First Nations' partners and other stakeholders.

The context component of the engagement plan, which is expanded on in the framing paper, will enhance general understandings of how perspectives, beliefs and cultural differences impact the various ways social issues on Treaty 7 reserve communities could manifest in the urban environment. This high-level analysis will also contribute to a deepened understanding of the issues from those directly impacted, the First Nations of Treaty 7, and is an important step that can offer insights into meaningful and sustainable changes. Additionally, the context also has a relationship to the engagement piece because it demonstrates that we care about Indigenous community perspectives and the values and beliefs that shape community needs as determined by the community. As mentioned in our proposal, to effectively address how we will accurately and respectfully characterize issues, we need to better understand the context of the Treaty 7 region and how the perspectives of the local First Nations communities shape their approach to housing, income support and their relationship to the federal and provincial jurisdictions. These perspectives inform and enhance the analysis of these three components and show the interrelationships – we shouldn't attempt to understand these issues in isolation of each other. Further, if we can address what is important to Indigenous communities and parallel these with what is important to the City of Calgary and Calgary Homeless Foundation, our recommendations hold increased potential for informing meaningful change within the policy approaches pertaining to Indigenous homelessness issues.

Indeed, although homelessness is a broad social issue, factors involved in homelessness are experienced from a worldview that is shaped by culture and there are differences in histories and tribal paradigms within First Nations community that should be explored in order to avoid a cookie-cutter approach to policy direction and implementation. The act of acknowledging and articulating the heterogenous nature of Indigenous cultures is connected to self-determination and the rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada to be recognized as distinct nations. As asserted in the documents outlining the purpose of OCAP™, "The right of First Nations communities to own, control, access, and possess information about their peoples is fundamentally tied to self-determination and to the preservation and development of their culture" (www.FNIGC.ca/OCAP™). Thus, the engagement and consultation processes are conceived of as much more than a box to be checked off or simply framed as a due diligence approach to relationship building, but instead, are meant to be a rigorous, transparent and relevant strategy that is reflective of shared goals. Treaty 7 First Nations have a right to know how this research will directly benefit their communities and

other stakeholders, particularly the funding body, Calgary Homeless Foundation, also require a clear pathway of how this research informs policy development with respect to urban Indigenous homelessness. Hence, an element of reciprocity is made possible by communicating and emphasizing the mutually beneficial partnership arrangements offered by this research. As a value underlying Indigenous research ethics and protocols, reciprocity is necessary in forging respectful relationships which are at the core of any project involving First Nations communities. Understanding the role of Indigenous peoples with respect to research partnerships is vital in ensuring effective communication at every stage of this project.

What is the role of Treaty 7 First Nations?

Engaging with Indigenous peoples on this project is, at the most fundamental levels, both an invitation to become involved in ways determined by the Treaty 7 First Nations, urban Indigenous-led organizations and individuals and demonstrates a commitment to transparency. The primary role of Indigenous peoples is ultimately one that is self-determining. Notable is the point established by Bull and Hudson (2018) that “[a]n inherent part of self-determination relates to decision-making in research” (p. 1), so it is vital that we consider the very real possibility that some Treaty 7 First Nations organizations or representatives may not wish to engage or may decide to take a very minimal role in the research. Alternatively, some may wish to be active participants and be open to sustained engagement. It is imperative that we do not, as researchers, make our own assumptions as to why the Treaty 7 communities or urban Indigenous-led organizations may not want to be engaged in this research based on our own individual biases or perceptions. The nature of this research must be clearly articulated to the Treaty 7 First Nations, so they are better informed in terms of determining their role.

As was clearly established in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007), Indigenous nations are rightsholders, and not stakeholders, due to treaties, policies and specific rights entrenched in laws as well as their status as distinct societies in Canada. Acknowledging this fundamental difference enables for a better understanding of the role of the Treaty 7 First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations in this research project. These inherent rights add to the complexities of engagement, especially around issues of academic freedom and direct control over data and how it is being used. The most reliable way for understanding and translating the role of Indigenous peoples in this research emerges from the Treaty 7 First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations themselves. The First Nations and Information Governance Centre’s Principle on OCAP™ can act as a guiding mechanism for conceptualizing the fluid roles that various Treaty 7 First Nations may wish to adopt. For example, as clearly stated in their brochure, “OCAP™ is also not a doctrine or a prescription: it respects a community to make its own decisions regarding why, how and by whom information is collected, used or shared” (www.FNIGC.ca/OCAP™). Thus, it is vital that we respect the rights of Treaty 7 First Nations communities to determine their level of participation.

Why engagement matters

Given the pattern of extractive research that has taken place and that undoubtedly continues to take place in communities, adopting a critical approach to engagement efforts is warranted, as is an acknowledgement of the importance of Indigenous engagement during all stages of the research. It is precisely how research has been weaponized against Indigenous peoples globally (Smith, 2012) that has provoked a response in Indigenous communities and one that challenges “research practices based on exploitation, racism, ethnocentricity, and harmfulness. These practices, where and whenever they have surfaced in the Indigenous community have undermined Indigenous Peoples’ empowerment and self-dependence” (Ermine et al., 2004, p. 12). This assertion offers significant insight into the general lack of trust for researchers, whether they be non-Indigenous or Indigenous, that has led many First Nations and Indigenous communities to develop their own research ethics boards and guidelines (see Bull & Hudson, 2018; Assembly of First Nations, n.d.) in order to have some control over how research is conducted in communities and how data is used. At its most fundamental level, engagement with Indigenous peoples in research that either directly or indirectly (i.e. how data and statistics are being used) impacts individuals and communities ensures that Indigenous rights protected by treaty and federal legislation are maintained, community interests and protocols are respected, and ethical research with communities is upheld. Moreover, when doing research that involves Indigenous peoples, it is vital to consider definitions of ethics that emerge from the communities and parallel these with institutional ethical guidelines.

In the context of this research project, engaging with Treaty 7 First Nations and Indigenous-led organization is a vital component for both the reasons identified above, as well as building research capacity in the sense that this current study could present future opportunities for collaboration and mutually beneficial partnership arrangements.

Ethical Guidelines for Engagement

As mentioned above, the definition of ethics should not solely be derived from a Western paradigm and as with any philosophical and social construct, ethics are culturally determined and emerge from a specific cultural frame of reference. Various First Nations and Indigenous communities will have their own definitions. Again, in addition to understanding these differences and how to parallel them with institutional ethical guidelines, a critical awareness of how power circulates in research is paramount in engaging with communities.

Over and above the Tri-Council Policy Statement’s (TCPS) ethics guidelines with respect to doing research involving Indigenous peoples, any type of engagement with Indigenous communities requires respectful relationship-building premised on fundamental principles of reciprocity, respect, trust and transparency – principles that form an ethical framework for conducting good research. In analyzing the literature around the ethics of doing research with Indigenous communities, there are key resources that will be consulted to assist in guiding the axiological component of this research (see Assembly of First Nations, n.d.; Bull & Hudson,

2018; Ermine et al., 2004; www.FNIGC.ca; TCPS). Whenever possible, consultation with Treaty 7 First Nations to learn about and implement ethical guidelines distinct to their communities is the ultimate method of ensuring that we are engaging in the research and with communities in a “good way” – an epistemological approach to describing relationship-building within an Indigenous paradigm. Additionally, both the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) and the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC) house significant resources on their websites. To be sure, the Principles of OCAP™ will be translated in the context of this research project.

Harnessing the Principles of OCAP™

When incorporating the FNIGC’s Principles of OCAP™, the fact that it was created in response to colonialism must be a central factor in determining how it is translated. Importantly, as many Indigenous scholars have attested to, standardization through a universally applied epistemology emerges from colonial ideology and is an approach taken in Western science, education, economy, and social stratification (Bastien, 2016; Ermine, 2007; Littlebear, 1995). OCAP™ is neither meant to be standardized nor does it comprise a template for research with Indigenous communities. Instead, “It represents principles and values that are intertwined and reflective of First Nations’ world-view of jurisdiction and collective rights. Bonnie Healy explained: “We cannot pick and choose which elements of OCAP™ that will be followed. They are one. We cannot ignore ‘ownership’ or ‘possession’ any more than the Four Directions can omit the East or the North” (FNIGC, 2014, p. 5). In the context of engagement, employing the FNIGC’s Principles of OCAP™ is done with an understanding that all elements of it, “ownership, control, access and protection,” are interconnected. However, the role of the Alberta First Nation Information Governance Centre is not one of power or control over this project. If consulted with transparency and clear intent, the AFNIGC can offer a critical and informed community perspective to our research that only serves to strengthen our findings and recommendations and ensures ethical conduct both within the professional and academic scope of the project as well as from the perspectives of Indigenous communities. For example, our work is guided by standard research protocols such as obtaining necessary consent which, according to the discussion paper outlining barriers and mechanisms for implementing OCAP™, can be a process fraught with tension. Further, FNIGC asserts, “One of the most important principles within OCAP™ is that ... information (records, reports, data) that identifies any particular First Nation or group of First Nations should not be used or disclosed without consent of the affected First Nation – regardless of where that information or data is held” (FNIGC, 2014, p. 4). Despite this principle and combined with the fact that government legislation can override this principle, as well as the complexities surrounding First Nations nationhood status (or overwhelmingly, non-status as self-determining nations) in the eyes of the government, First Nations are vulnerable in terms of how data and information collected in their communities is being used.

Additionally, ensuring that Treaty 7 First Nations are aware that researchers have a solid understanding of the complexities of OCAP™ principles and barriers to their implementation is also a determining factor in how relationships are created and sustained.

For example, researchers need to be critically aware that research conducted within academia and then translated to public, profit, or non-profit contexts can pose a barrier to initial engagement efforts with First Nations communities (FNIGC, 2014), given that this kind of extractive research approach is an exclusionary one. The following statement made by the FNIGC highlights this tension:

Assertions of First Nation control or ownership over research data often lead to accusations of stifling research or preventing an un-biased reporting of research results. This reaction is a reflection of a researcher's lack of knowledge or understanding about OCAP™, but it also represents an academic culture that can view research as a commodity and a source of prestige and academic advancement. The biases and assumptions that arise from an academic culture can also be transferred to government when those same researchers become employed in the public service (p. 6).

Understanding how, as a researcher, one can be implicated in this approach requires reflexivity and a critical examination of how research has been used as a weapon against Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012). Illuminating these tensions ensures increased transparency and a respectful, yet critical approach to relationship-building – it certainly detracts from stepping blindly into the ethical space.

Protocols

The protocols, or processes involved in doing research with Indigenous communities, although nuanced according to the First Nation concerned (Wilson & Restoule, 2010), are defined and followed in direct consultation with Treaty 7 First Nations, Indigenous-led organizations and the AFNIGC. When doing research with Indigenous communities, regardless of their tribal and community worldviews, there are two sets of protocols that need to be considered. The first are the more formal protocols associated with research such as ensuring appropriate methodology and methods are used and consent is received in the context of the study. The second are the protocols connected to the maintenance and creation of respectful relationship-building, which emerge from communities, and these are much more fluid in accordance with the First Nations or Indigenous community involved with research.

There is no standardized approach to defining protocols and what may be expected of Kainaiwa members will be different in comparison to Stoney-Nakoda. The OCAP™ principles are useful in helping to understand the fluid nature of Indigenous protocols. As stated in the discussion paper put forth by FNIGC (2014), “OCAP™ must be understood in the context of a particular First Nation or First Nations. It involves consideration of First Nations governance structures, values, history, and expectations. What may work for one community may not be appropriate for another” (p. 5). In addition to this fluidity, which should not be conceptualized as a barrier to building strong research relationships, protocols are defined and enacted within a set of specific tribal values. Knowledge of these values gives insight into not only the protocols themselves but the Indigenous philosophy in which they are contextualized.

The foundational protocol that is commonly held by Indigenous peoples, no matter their tribal affiliation, is that of respectful and reciprocal relationship-building. As Maori Indigenous scholar and researcher Linda Smith (2012) emphasizes, “In Indigenous frameworks, relationship matters... [They] lie at the heart of community life and community development ... Respect is a reciprocal and shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct” (p. 125). The axiological foundation of research with Indigenous communities is directly tied to the protocols associated with respectful relationship-building. Hence, the ethics and protocols are not simply abstract concepts to be mindful and aware of, but are values that must be participated in through a deliberate exchange of ideas, goals, and intent. Reciprocity in the relationships ensures that the research is not a one-sided undertaking through which the interests of the researcher are the only guiding force. Given the scope of this engagement, it is not possible to comprehensively discuss the complexities associated with Indigenous protocols; hence, a list of protocols in relation to engaging with Treaty 7 First Nations can be found in the Appendix. These protocols will be adhered to and participated in where and whenever possible.

Context

Any engagement with First Nations communities should be undertaken with a clear and critical understanding of how the impacts of colonial policy and colonial ideology currently influence social factors related to health and wellness, economic and cultural issues. These impacts must be understood not only from a national perspective, but also from a First Nations perspective in order to get a sense of the more nuanced and subjective aspects of colonization and how these are embedded within communities. A standard analysis that reduces colonization to a historical, event-driven phenomena does little to add to the deeply layered ideological components of colonization that remain as a relevant factor in the lives of Indigenous peoples today. The framing paper offers an in-depth analysis of the historical, political, and social context of the five First Nations that entered into treaty with the Crown. In addition to this, the paper draws on relevant literature as well as Treaty 7 community perspectives that offer a deepened understanding of the issues which are of direct relevance to this project. All of the components of the research are all related.

The framing paper is divided into four major sections:

1. An overview of traditional cultural practices, perspectives and philosophies prior to colonization will not only provide significant insight into the lifeworlds of the First Nations, but also illuminate the disruption that colonial ideologies and Euro-settler customs, beliefs and values caused in the cultural and environmental equilibrium the Treaty 7 First Nations had established for thousands of years. Moreover, a discussion of how the various First Nations came to be in these territories provides insight into their relationship to this land, which contributes to a better understanding of the place that is now the City of Calgary, as well as complexities of the distinct tribal worldviews that blanket the Treaty 7 territory and how these worldviews influence how home is conceptualized and how homelessness experienced. This section will also seek to

illuminate how the components of this project, (i.e. housing, income assistance and jurisdictional issues) were conceptualized and embodied in traditional worldviews and how they are enacted in current contexts.

2. An analysis of the colonial ideologies and subsequent policies that were imposed on the Treaty 7 First Nations is vital because it not only acknowledges the devastating impacts of colonization not simply as an event in time but also as a force which has overwhelmed Indigenous lifeworlds and is constantly transforming and re-inscribing power differentials in the relational arrangements between Indigenous and settler-society. Moreover, tracing the policies of dispossession and assimilation demonstrates the disregard that the Canadian government has shown towards Indigenous peoples as a historical phenomenon and one that is deeply embedded in systems' approaches to solving the "Indigenous problems" today. As Indigenous scholar Margaret Kovach (2010) states, exploring the history and context of colonial impacts on Indigenous peoples from an Indigenous perspective involves "acknowledging an Indigenous cultural worldview and identity, which has long been a site of contention in this land. It is about recognizing the unique situation of Indigenous people that differentiates this group from other minorities" (p. 158). For the purposes of this study, understanding this history within a distinct tribal worldview offers a direct connection to how these policies and social structures live in the lives of Indigenous today and how they may contribute to Indigenous homelessness within a framework of Indigenous self-determination.
3. An analysis and synthesis of relevant literatures as it relates to the Indigenous homelessness in Canada contributes to the framing paper by offering deliberate connections to the Indigenous paradigms of the distinct Treaty 7 First Nations, the impacts of colonial policies and cultural practices and the current state of Indigenous homeless in the City of Calgary. Whenever possible, scholarship written from an Indigenous perspective will be privileged because it corresponds to the goals of Indigenous research as grounded in self-determination (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2012), aligns with the OCAP™ (FNIGC, 2014) and offers a voice of direct experience which is in keeping with an Indigenous epistemology (Bastien, 2004).
4. This final element of the framing paper offers an analysis of the current state of issues in the Treaty 7 First Nations communities and how these may translate to an urban context. A focus on some of the more commonly examined phenomena that are clear entry points to homelessness such as Indian Residential School experiences, the 60s Scoop, traumas, addictions and systemic oppression serves to highlight how colonial thought-systems are embedded in today's social and economic structures and are a constant impingement on the lives of Indigenous peoples. Importantly, this section also emphasizes the continued perseverance and strength of the Treaty 7 First Nations in the face of ongoing colonization.

The framing paper will serve to foreground the three other components of this project; the housing, income assistance and jurisdictional analyses. Additionally, by including

various First Nations and urban Indigenous voices, it offers a complex dimension to the overall research and provides significant insight into how these components are connected to the experiences of urban Indigenous peoples in the City of Calgary. These insights strengthen the research findings and subsequent recommendations that will not only benefit CHF's approaches, but will ensure that the First Nations communities' will also benefit from this research. Hence, the protocols embedded in Indigenous research and the OCAP™ Principles are maintained with respect to respectful and reciprocal relationship-building powered through Indigenous self-determination.

It must be again emphasized that the First Nations of Treaty 7 are diverse, both linguistically, historically and culturally, and each reserve community has its own engagement and protocol structure. The Blackfoot-speaking First Nations include the Kainaiwa, Piikani and Siksika which make up the Blackfoot Confederacy. The Tsuut'ina are a Dene-speaking First Nation and the Stoney-Nakoda are located within the Siouxian language stock. Below is a brief demographic overview of the Treaty 7 First Nations and the Indigenous population in the City of Calgary beginning with the most geographically removed First Nation, the Kainaiwa.

Kainaiwa First Nation (Blood Tribe)

According to the most recent demographic information as per the official website of the Kainaiwa First Nation, the total population as of 2015 was 12,500 (Blood Tribe, n.d.). With a steadily increasing population, those population numbers are on the rise. The Kainaiwa First Nation is the largest reserve in Canada spanning "549.7 square miles with a Timber Limit in the Rocky Mountains of approximately 7.5 square miles. Three rivers, the Old Man, St. Mary and Belly, border the Blood reserve" (Blood Tribe, n.d.). The primary economic activities include agriculture, and oil and gas exploration although opportunities for new industry are continually being explored especially in the tourism and recreation sectors. In terms of education, there are tribal-operated elementary, middle and high schools as well as the Red Crow Community College which offers upgrading and select diploma and degree programs that are accredited through some Alberta post-secondary institutes. Service provision to Blood Tribe members is tribal-operated and includes housing, social services, family and community support services, child services and child protection, ambulance and ambulance, health care, wellness and addictions support, public works. The largest urban metropolis located near Kainaiwa First Nation is the City of Lethbridge.

Piikani First Nation

According to the Piikani First Nations official website, the total population is 3500. As with the population trends, Piikani has a steadily increasing population. Due to challenges related to lack of housing and unemployment, nearly 40% of the tribal membership live off-reserve (Yellowhorn, n.d.). The Piikani land-base spans 46779 hectares or roughly 180 square miles and includes the main reserve and town as well as the timber limits. The primary economic activities include agriculture, ranching, wind power through Piikani Resource Development as well as tourism and recreation. Significantly, the Head-Smashed-in-Buffalo-Jump, a UNESCO

World Heritage Site, is located on the Piikani reserve and is a popular tourist destination. According to the official website, “Economic development continues to be an area where there is a desire to invest in. Currently, the Nation has a high unemployment rate but this is attributed to a variety of external factors that have impacted the people, but there is potential that can increase the success of the Nation” (Yellowhorn, n.d.). Education services include primary and middle schools. Service provision to members is tribal-operated and includes housing, social services, lands department, public works, health and wellness, and external consultation. The largest urban metropolis located near Piikani First Nation is the City of Lethbridge.

Siksika First Nation (Blackfoot)

The official Siksika First Nation website identifies the total population at 7500 members although at least 40% live off-reserve (Siksika Nation, 2020) with a land base of 696 square kms or 431 square miles. The primary economic activities include tourism and small business development, agriculture, and natural resources development. Significantly, the reserve is home to Blackfoot Crossing Historic Site which commemorates the signing of Treaty 7 in 1877 and is a popular tourist destination. The education is operated by the Siksika Board of Education and has elementary, middle and high schools as well as Old Sun College which offers upgrading, and post-secondary programs through affiliated post-secondary institutes. Service-provision to tribal members is carried out through various tribal departments that include public works, health services, housing, community support services, justice, band membership and corporate treasury. Geographically, the largest urban metropolis located near Siksika First Nation is the City of Calgary.

Tsuut'ina First Nation (Danit'ada)

Recent demographic information is not available on the Tsuut'ina First Nations website thus the most recent census information will be used with an understanding that current population fluctuations are not reflected here. According to the 2016 census profile (Statistics Canada, 2019), the total population was 1643 registered members with the reserve spanning 282 square kilometers or roughly 175 square miles. Tsuut'ina borders the City of Calgary and enjoys a vibrant economic development. The Grey Eagle Casino and Resort is a popular business that is accessed by the urban community and other visitors from all locales. Education is managed by the Department of education and includes an early learning centre, and post-secondary adult education programs. As with the Blackfoot Nations, service-provision to tribal members is carried out through various tribal departments including administrative infrastructure, emergency services, education, health, business and public works.

Stoney-Nakoda Nations (Iyarhe Nakoda)

The Stoney-Nakoda Nations, Rocky-Mountain Nakoda, consist of the Chiniki, Wesley, and Wesley First Nations and all the share the same languages and cultural practices. Although

they make up separate bands, the 2016 census data (Statistics Canada, 2019) amalgamates the data on all three reserves. As of 2016, the total population of the three nations was 3713. According to their official website, they are “the only Indigenous people in Canada that, after signing a Treaty, were assigned a single land allocation for three individual groups” (www.rockymountainnakoda.com). In terms of education, the three communities all offer K-12 education as well as an adult education centre offering upgrading and post-secondary preparation courses. Located in the Rocky Mountains range just west of the City of Calgary, the primary economic activities revolved around tourism and small business with the Stoney-Nakoda Casino and Resort being a popular destination site. Service-provision to tribal members is also carried out through tribal departments and includes emergency services, education, health, business and public works.

Interpreting the Data

Engagement with Treaty 7 First Nations and urban Indigenous-led organizations includes, whenever possible, direct consultation with representatives from tribal governance, and relevant departments and organizations. Hence, an element of data gathering is part of this study and as such, not only will consent need to be obtained as guided by the ethical approach outlined earlier, but the data analysis method should correspond to the theoretical framework of Ermine’s ethical space (2007), OCAP™ Principles and Treaty 7 First Nations’ rights to self-determination. Moreover, it is the responsibility of individual researchers to communicate to First Nations how their perspectives will be interpreted and how that data will be used. Although many leaders and managers in First Nations administrative infrastructure may not have a full understanding of the often highly abstract complexities of research such as data analyses methods, it is important to ensure that these methods are communicated nonetheless (FNIGC, 2014). Clarity around how data from this project will be handled and purposed is crucial to creating and sustaining engagement. In accordance with Indigenous research methodologies, the data analysis method is approached by employing a conceptual lens through which relationships between the findings are categorized into interconnected themes and analyzed with the intention of identifying the networks of relationships between themes.

By using this relational framework, the research is not only giving voice to this often overlooked, misunderstood and, indeed, dismissed concept as one that does not belong in Western research (Kovach, 2010). In spite of the confusion, however, understanding this relational epistemology is crucial in understanding Indigenous homelessness from a First Nations perspective. Indigenous scholar Vine Deloria Jr.’s work (1996) is useful in helping to conceptualize the centrality of relationships, experience, observation and interpretation in the thought-systems of the Indigenous worldview in that he harnesses the notion of “all my relations” and employs it as a methodological tool for examining the world around us. Other Indigenous scholars such as Bastien (2004; 2016) and Littlebear (1995) have critically confronted the Western epistemological paradigm and how, instead of honoring the fact that we, as human beings, are deeply connected to our universe and are active participants in it,

seeks to understand the whole through a reductionist stance that fragments knowledge into separate parts for analysis within an objective methodological framework that locates the knower as a static and inert, objective observer of knowledge. Further, Bastien (2016) states that knowing the difference in conceptualizations of self and knowledge between the Indigenous and Western worldviews is critical in understanding how Indigenous peoples have been constructed in Western societies as dependent, deficient and inferior. Notable is her assertion that, “recognizing and distinguishing the construction and dynamics of dependency” (p. 16) begins at the epistemological level. These perspectives ensure that data analyses approaches consider and incorporate the Indigenous thought-system as a valid site for better understanding the issue of Indigenous homelessness.

Outreach Activities

Understanding the needs of Indigenous communities involves reaching out and extending an invitation to participate in research in ways that are determined by the community. Outreach to the Treaty 7 First Nations and various urban Indigenous-led organizations begins with building respectful relationships which not only ensures that accessibility to the project is made available to those relevant tribal government entities and urban stakeholders wishing to take on more active roles with the research, but that the development of partnerships with Treaty 7 First Nations will be an ongoing process. Below is a list of outreach activities that have been undertaken in order to engage the Treaty 7 First Nations as well as relevant municipal stakeholders:

- An initial face-to-face meeting with Bonnie Healy, Executive Director of the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre, occurred on February 23 during which she was informed of the research project and offered insight into the role of AFNIGC and some of the challenges involved with engagement, tribal governance issues and expectations of researchers. Moving forward, William Wadsworth, Research and Policy Analyst for AFNIGC, is the main contact person and email communication with him has been established on March 1. His support and continued guidance on the research have been assured.
- Email communication has been established with Lorna Crowshoe, Aboriginal Strategist with the City of Calgary through which she has passed on information to the Manager of Affordable Housing with the city regarding the research. She has assured support and guidance where needed.
- In-person with Dr. Peter Choate, Clinical Social Worker with Peter Choate and Associates who has extensive networking contacts in the Treaty 7 First Nations communities. He has offered to share information regarding the research and also offered contact names for possible stakeholders.
- Multiple phone calls and messages have been sent to Tyler White, CEO of Siksika Health Services as he has extensive networking contacts within the Siksika First Nation and the research may also be of interest from a health and wellness perspective.

- In-person meeting with Jordan Head, Executive Director from the Treaty 7 Housing Authority in the City of Lethbridge. Treaty 7 offers low-cost rental accommodations to low-income urban Indigenous peoples. Given that he frequently encounters renters who have transitioned from reserve communities to the city, he has discrete knowledge regarding some of the challenges reserve migration poses for First Nations peoples. Further information regarding the project has been provided to him and he will distribute to the Board of Directors.
- Email and phone communication have been established with Piikani Elder Leonard Bastien. He has assured his support – formal ask with appropriate protocols still needs to be arranged.
- Email communication has been sent to Vanessa Eagle Tail, Portfolio Liaison Officer with Tsuut'ina Governance which provides information around research and opportunities for involvement.
- Email communication has been sent to Stoney-Nakoda tribal administration around research and opportunities for involvement.
- Email communication has been sent to Terri-Lynn Fox, Director of Kainaiwa Health and Wellness which provides information around research and opportunities for involvement.
- Email communication has been established with Annabel Crop Eared Wolf, Executive Director of Kainaiwa Tribal Governance.
- Email communication with Stoney-Nakoda community member informing of research initiative who will pass on information to relevant contacts.
- Phone call and email communication has been established with Stephanie Weasel Child, Director of Claims and Research with Siksika First Nation administration who expressed interest in the project.
- Follow-up meeting with William Wadsworth and Saige First Rider from AFNIGC to informally request presence on the project Advisory Committee (Mar. 21).
- Formal invitation extended to Bonnie Healy of AFNIGC to sit on the Advisory Committee (agreed).
- Follow-up email to Annabel Crop Eared with Kainaiwa to share research charter and put forward formal request to engage Kainaiwa in the research project.
- Email communication with Ira Provost and Byron Jackson of Pikanni First Nation to share research charter and put forward formal request to engage Pikanni in the research project.
- Email communication follow-up to Vanessa Eagle Tail of Tsuut'ina First Nation to share research charter and put forward formal request to engage Tsuut'ina in the research project.
- Email communication with Ken Christensen and Dean Cherkas of Stoney-Nakota First Nations to share research charter and put forward formal request to engage Stoney-Nakota in the research project.
- Meeting set with Pikanni Elder Leonard Bastien for April 3 for formal request to conduct blessing for the project.

Further contacts will be established – indeed, this strategy acts as the framework for future relations. Notable, and as mentioned earlier, relationship-building takes time and quite often, “First Nations leadership have many priorities and concerns that they are faced with on a daily basis ... control over data can seem rather abstract when they are also dealing with issues such as clean drinking water and adequate housing” (FNIGC, p. 5). Indeed, despite the most concerted efforts, this is a major limitation in engaging with Indigenous communities and requires patience and understanding on the part of the researchers. Strategies to mitigate this include sustained contact with Treaty 7 First Nations, providing the necessary information to administration to ensure informed engagement on their part.

Sustaining Continuous Engagement

Maintaining relationships with Treaty 7 First Nations communities involves first creating a strong relationship which can take time, and then building in practices that foster transparency throughout the research phases. These practices include deliberate attempts to ensure sustained engagement through regular communication with Treaty 7 administration, providing each First Nation with an opportunity to respond with feedback before finalizing any papers via the Steering Committee, sharing of draft questionnaires or interview guides which offer the Treaty 7 First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations the opportunity to provide clarification, feedback and have a sense, overall, of autonomy over their needs in data collection methods. This approach ensures the research methods are also centred around the needs of Treaty 7 First Nations as opposed to simply providing an objective analysis that is, more often than not, out of touch with the history and current realities of community. Understanding the strengths and capabilities of Treaty 7 First Nations avoids adopting a paternalistic stance in the research which often characterizes research on Indigenous communities in both subtle and overt ways. Further, considering the assets and community capacity of Indigenous culture also avoids representing Indigenous peoples within a deficit lens.

In a document that offers a framework of engagement between First Nations and health care planners, Wilson (2014) describes that sustainable engagement requires a set of deliberate actions. Some of these actions are listed below, in addition to others that are distinct to this particular project:

- respecting the expertise of First Nations members;
- ensuring informed consent is obtained and issues related to ownership are addressed;
- including members of First Nations as active participants on the research project;
- understanding and respecting the capacity of First Nations and helping to build on it;
- ensuring the research responds to the needs of the community which can only be done by listening to and incorporating the voices of First Nations;
- development of a list of engagement protocols that align with First Nations cultural practices and social norms;
- developing a methodology that is inclusive of First Nations perspectives during all phases of the research, and

- having a contingency plan and conflict resolution process in the event communication or misunderstandings occur.

As communicated by AFNIGC, Treaty 7 First Nations are weary of researchers coming into community, extracting data and then failing to follow through with sustainability actions. For this project specifically, understanding the notion of data sovereignty within a framework of First Nations rights to self-determination which, historically, is connected back Treaty arrangements and ensuring that this concept is not only afforded respect, but incorporated into the methodology, ensures that relationships are sustainable. Other strategies include those specific to scheduling updates and incorporating feedback.

Feedback Loop with AFNIGC, Treaty 7 and urban organizations

Incorporating a data management process that provides for an efficient free flow of information between Treaty 7 First Nations and researchers is a vital component in sustaining engagement and differentiates between token and/or surface level, extractive approaches and genuine, meaningful relationship-building that draws on tenets of the ethical space. Moreover, the importance of providing regular updates to Treaty 7 First Nations cannot be understated. When engaging, it is recommended here that researchers simply ask the respective First Nations representatives how they would prefer the information flow to be structured, an approach that ensures autonomy and choice are embedded in this process. Time management is another key aspect. Drafts of interview questions and guides, reports and any other documentation need to be provided to First Nations well in advance, so they have adequate time to review and respond. As discussed earlier, situations on reserves are often crisis-level – indeed, the dynamics of communication differ from Western systems – and attending to the immediate needs of reserve residents is always prioritized. However, this should not be interpreted as a deliberate unwillingness on the part of First Nations to want to be involved in the feedback process.

Accessing the support of the AFNIGC to seek guidance in overcoming any barriers in communication or uncertainty around ethics is welcomed – if unsure, avoid making assumptions that are in direct misalignment with the reality of what Indigenous peoples are experiencing in their communities or in an urban setting. Indeed, it is ethically wise to offer monthly updates to AFNIGC as opposed to simply calling upon them when research or engagement might be going side-ways.

Some key components to consider in developing an information management process for this project are offered below:

- Identify the type of information to be shared with Treaty 7 First Nations and clearly communicate what specific kind of feedback you are requesting (i.e. policy, community needs, perspectives);
- In consultation with Treaty 7 First Nations representatives, plan for the most efficient communication medium;

- Consider the timelines of the project and ensure to offer drafts of documents well in advance – expecting a quick a turn around is not realistic;
- Understand that the feedback may not always align with research assumptions or priorities. Rather than a barrier, this type of feedback should be expected given the needs and priorities of First Nations communities are often vastly different than public policy directions;
- Plan for how the feedback will be implemented into subsequent analysis and report writing – ensure Treaty 7 First Nations are aware of how their feedback will be acted on, and
- Plan for a closing event that reports back to Treaty 7 First Nations to update on the status of the project and any new directions or pathways.

Conclusion

This engagement plan offers a starting point for relationship-building with Treaty 7 First Nations and although it identifies municipal, provincial and federal stakeholders, the central focus of this plan has been on the Treaty 7 First Nations within a critical framework that is grounded in the work of Ermine's (2007) revisioning of the ethical space. A challenging aspect of any engagement with Indigenous community is overcoming a warranted and valid distrust of researchers in general. Outlining the tensions involved with doing research with Treaty 7 First Nations illuminates the basis of this distrust, as well as highlights how First Nations are deliberately positioning themselves within a framework of self-determination that operationalizes cultural ethics and protocols into the research process via support mechanisms offered through pathways such as OCAP™ and the right to data sovereignty. Indeed, more and more Indigenous communities are asserting the right to data sovereignty and control over research processes in addition to refining Indigenous research methodologies. Transparency, building trusting relationships, knowing the history and challenges of Treaty 7 First Nations from their perspectives, respecting the knowledge of individuals and protocols of community and recognizing the right to self-determination are key components in engaging with Indigenous peoples. Moreover, critical to engagement efforts is an understanding that Treaty 7 First Nations feedback and perspectives may be different than government perspectives and work towards building in the necessary analytical approaches to reconcile conflicting perspectives. Finally, the importance of having a clear path to sustaining relationships throughout the research phases has been emphasized and is clearly outlined above.

Despite the lack of standardized approaches to engagement, it is useful to have a plan of engagement that helps to guide the project leads in having a sense of direction of where the research phases correspond within the context of building relationships with Treaty 7 First Nations. Below is a rough sketch of various steps that need to be taken when moving forward with engagement.

Next Steps

1. Project leads create a plan for data collection with Treaty 7 First Nations that offers details around 'targeted interviews' as identified in the project proposal. Who will be targeted? Where will interviews take place? What information will you be wanting? Draft of interview guides – Treaty 7 First Nations will want to see these.
2. Project leads review OCAP™ Principles, FNIGC and AFNIGC website resources to ensure that research methodologies correspond with Indigenous research ethics and protocols.
3. Ensure comprehensive understanding of “data sovereignty.”
4. Project leads take OCAP™ training accessible through FNIGC website.
5. Creation of Advisory Committee (consisting of membership from AFNIGC and CHF)
6. Kick-off event and initial consultation meeting (date TBD).
7. Ensure personal contact with AFNIGC has been established.
8. Project leads review contact lists and ensure to reach out either via phone or email to various Treaty 7 contacts as follow-up to initial engagement outreach activities.
9. Set-up consultation meetings and send off interview guides/questions ahead of time for review to Treaty 7 First Nations.
10. Ensure to follow-up with Treaty 7 First Nations as per protocols around data sharing (transcripts of interviews, data analysis, draft reports).
11. Consult with AFNIGC as necessary.

Although there is no singular or standardized approach to engagement with Indigenous peoples given historical, regional, cultural and contextual variances, an apt starting point for critically approaching engagement is understanding the complexities surrounding the colonial experience, respecting the right to self-determination, and understanding that the challenges and needs of communities emerge from their perspectives. In conclusion, finding ways to balance the diverse perspectives of government, First Nations, urban-led organization and aims of the research are better strategized from a robust engagement plan.

Protocols

Forging new partnerships with Treaty 7 First Nations communities that foster respect, reciprocity and good relations involves not only being aware of community and cultural protocols, but enacting them to demonstrate how we, as the researchers, are invested in the relational commitments that go along with the engagement process. This list is not exhaustive and only acts as a guideline to nurture and foster the relationship-building with the Treaty 7 communities through respectful practices, dialogue and protocols. Protocols are inherently value-based, thus being aware of Treaty 7 First Nations values and as a researcher, your own values are crucial in understanding the importance and relevance of protocols.

Research-specific protocols:

1. Before formal research begins, researchers need to familiarize themselves with paradigm/philosophies, history, current issues of First Nations using sources that emerge from community;
2. Understand how research has been done in the past – do your background research;
3. Ensure you are clear on what it is, specifically, you are wanting from the First Nations (concrete methodology, processes for consent and data collection);
4. Strategize a plan for engagement and relationship building;
5. Consultation with First Nations communities needs to occur at the beginning of the research and sustained throughout;
6. Formal written request to engage First Nation in research;
7. Clear communication to First Nations regarding:
 - Direct benefits of the research to the First Nation
 - Nature of involvement, any risks involved
 - Who the researchers are (self-locate in the context of the research – First Nations are just as interested in whether researchers care and have an investment in the research as they are about the researchers' academic credential, research track-record, professional affiliations, etc.)
 - How data regarding First Nations will be used and disseminated;
8. Critically understand both positive and possible negative outcomes of the research, and
9. Transparency – share interview guides/questions, transcripts, drafts of papers, etc. with Treaty 7 First Nations for feedback and have a plan for how the feedback will be incorporated.

General community protocols:

1. Land acknowledgement whenever necessary;
2. Recognize and acknowledge the importance of Elders and traditional knowledge keepers in the communities;
3. Offering (respectful way to ask for advice, guidance and knowledge for example; tobacco, cloth, blankets);
4. Gifts of appreciation (respectful way to show gratuity for advice, guidance and knowledge);
5. Honorarium (dependant on the what you are requesting from the Elder or knowledge keeper):
 - Opening/Closing Prayer
 - Traditional ceremonial duties such a smudging, pipe ceremony, cultural teachings;
6. Accommodations, transportation, meals, parking, travel expenses may be extra.

Appendix B: Institutions Serving Indigenous Homeless in Calgary

In light of its centrality to the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, any survey of Calgary's institutional landscape must begin with *Calgary Homeless Foundation* (CHF). Founded in 1998 by Calgary politician, businessman and philanthropist Art Smith, CHF serves as the backbone organization leading the integration and coordination of Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care. Using a system-level approach, the Foundation is the community entity that administers federal and provincial funding for local homeless initiatives. CHF also raises significant private funds. In 2019, it funded 23 agencies operating 59 programs within Calgary (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2019). CHF indicates that all of the agencies and housing programs that it funds serve Indigenous clientele, though not all collect data to demonstrate it.

CHF is advised by an *Aboriginal Standing Committee for Housing and Homelessness* (ASCHH). Established in 1999, the Committee arose from work begun in 1996 to bring together Indigenous partners interested in addressing specific concerns around Indigenous homelessness in Calgary. Its members include Indigenous-led agencies, Indigenous community members, as well as non-Indigenous organizations and governments "committed to enhancing, improving, and supporting health and wellness, and the rights of urban Aboriginal peoples" (ASCHH, 2011, p. 1).

Recognized by CHF and Employment and Social Development Canada as "the community entity that is best positioned and prepared to address the issues of Aboriginal homelessness in Calgary," the Committee prepared a Plan to End Aboriginal Homelessness in Calgary in 2012. The plan seeks to integrate and build on an existing array of service organizations, emergency shelters and housing, including transitional and supportive housing. It includes organizations that focus specifically on assisting Indigenous families or individuals as well as organizations with a broader mandate to serve Indigenous people alongside other clients.

Indigenous Service Agencies

The *Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary* (AFCC) is one of 119 Friendship Centres throughout Canada, an Indigenous movement beginning in the 1950s that sought to ease the transition of Aboriginal people migrating into cities. An Indigenous-led non-profit organization, the AFCC provides culturally relevant social, cultural, education and employment services to Aboriginal people living in the Calgary area. Its housing program assists single Aboriginal people in Calgary – many of them with addictions – to find and maintain permanent, supportive housing. The AFCC does not operate a homeless shelter or affordable housing units itself. But it does provide its clients with a rent subsidy and intensive case-management, which includes advocating on their behalf with landlords.³⁸

³⁸ For information on programs of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, see www.afcccalgary.org

While not providing accommodations, the *Treaty 7 Community Futures Development Corporation* has a branch located in Calgary. It delivers the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program to First Nations individuals living within the Treaty 7 catchment area.³⁹

The *Elbow River Healing Lodge*, operated by the Calgary Health Region of Alberta Health Services, is “geared entirely to the needs of the City’s Aboriginal population.” The Lodge provides follow-up and outreach services to vulnerable individuals who have accessed Alberta Health Services programs, especially individuals with addictions.⁴⁰ An Aboriginal advocate/liaison assists many low-income clients and helps new arrivals to apply for funding to secure housing. The Lodge works in partnership with homeless-servicing agencies, meeting with them once monthly to case-manage clients who have consented to it (Turner et al., 2010, p. 23).

Indigenous Emergency Shelters and Supportive Housing

Tsuu T’ina First Nation has operated a men’s shelter called *Nihinasaga* (“Our Home”) since 2009. The First Nation is located within the boundaries of the Calgary census metropolitan area and received a capital grant from the CHF to renovate and expand the shelter in 2018.⁴¹

The *Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society* has a 32-bed, full-service emergency shelter serving women and children fleeing domestic violence. Founded in 1986, it offers a range of “in-house crisis and outreach crisis, healing and prevention programs” as well as children’s program. The shelter is guided by the teachings of the Medicine Wheel. It receives funding from provincial and federal governments as well as private donors.⁴²

The *Sunrise Healing Lodge Society* has provided culturally-based treatment for addictions since 1974. Its healing lodge is an inpatient drug and alcohol treatment centre licenced by the Government of Alberta.⁴³

The *Metis Calgary Family Services Society* provides social services and outreach to Calgary families. Among its offerings is *Rainbow Lodge Community Housing*, a 32-unit housing complex that provides “safe, stable home environments” where families might live for up to two years. The Lodge provides on-site addictions support, a parenting program, child programs, access to elders, advocacy and outreach.⁴⁴

39 Information on delivery of the ISETs program by Treaty 7 Community Futures can be found at <http://www.t7edc.com/>.

40 For information on Elbow River Healing Lodge, see the dedicated page of the Alberta Health Services website: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?id=1009201>

41 Information on the Nihinasagha shelter can be found on the May 6 2019 CHF blog post, “Nihinasagha Brings Tsuu T’ina Men Home,” <http://calgaryhomeless.com/blog/nihinasagha-brings-tsuu-tina-men-home/>.

42 For more information on Awo Taan, see <https://www.awotaan.org/about-us/calgary-shelter/>.

43 For more information on the Native Addictions Service Society, see <http://nass.ca/>

44 Information on Rainbow Lodge can be found on the Metis Calgary Family Services website. See mcfs.ca/development/?page_id=675

Mainstream Organizations that also serve the Indigenous Homeless Population

Indigenous-led organizations serving Calgary's Indigenous homeless are far outnumbered by mainstream ones, although the latter often feature an Indigenous liaison or staff members. These include agencies delivering services, as well as emergency shelters.

For example, the *Canadian Mental Health Association (Calgary Region)* provides front-line services to people living on the streets as well as referrals to other organizations. Two of its four outreach workers are Aboriginal (CMHAC, n.d., 13).

The *Calgary Urban Project Society*, a registered charity dedicated to helping overcome poverty and trauma through an integrated care approach, also has an outreach team. Its website states that a large proportion of its clients self-identify as Indigenous – predominantly Blackfoot and Cree. It too provides a rent subsidy program.⁴⁵

The *Alex Health Centre*, another non-Indigenous registered charity, serves a community that faces complex health needs, “often the result of issues such as poverty, trauma, homelessness or addiction.” Founded in 2007, the Alex was the first organization within Calgary to follow the Housing First model with funding from the CHF. Providing a full-service health clinic, the Alex has an Associate Director of Indigenous Relations.

The *Aspen Family and Community Network Society* is a charity dedicated to tackling social issues of many kinds within Calgary. Founded in 1984 to provide programs for foster parents and support services to youth, the Society receives funding through the CHF, the Government of Alberta, United Way and private donors.⁴⁶

Established in 1981, *Alpha House Society* is a shelter and detox facility that includes outreach, housing programs and case management to men and women addicted to alcohol or other drugs and living on the streets of Calgary. The Society's website states that as many as 57 percent of its clients are Indigenous. Alpha House offers extensive cultural supports to Indigenous clients, and its staff includes an Elder. With two shelters in Calgary and one in Lethbridge, it also operates over 300 community housing and permanent supportive housing units. One unit, The Clayton, is mandated to serve a minimum of 70 percent Indigenous tenants. The charitable organization receives funding from private donors as well (Alpha House, 2019).

The *Calgary Drop-In Centre* is Calgary's largest shelter, providing emergency shelter to an average of 767 people per day. The Drop-In also provides housing supports, health services and employment training. In 2018, the Centre created new programs to provide its chronic homeless population with additional access points to housing resources (Calgary Drop-In Centre 2019). Among its facilities is Greenview Rise, which offers 46 suites to people leaving homelessness, as well as 33 market-value suites. The Drop-In Centre receives funding from

45 Information on these organizations was obtained from their websites: <https://cmha.calgary.ab.ca/about/> and <https://www.cupscalgary.com/about-us>.

46 Information on these organizations was available on their websites: <https://www.thealex.ca/about/> ; <https://www.aspenfamily.org/who-we-are>.

CHF, provincial, and federal governments as well as private donations.⁴⁷ The Centre tracks its Indigenous clients and has partnered with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary and Elbow River Healing to ensure that its Indigenous clients could access cultural supports.

The Mustard Seed is one of Calgary's largest shelters for single men and women, with a capacity for 370 adults at its Foothills Centre every night. Following a Housing First model, the registered charity offers Christ-centred programs and services to Calgary's most vulnerable people. Beyond providing emergency shelter and helping clients meet their basic needs, it offers education and employment programs, health and wellness services, spiritual care and supportive housing. The Mustard Seed operates a total of 285 affordable housing units within the city. The organization has an Indigenous counsellor on staff to serve its Indigenous clients.⁴⁸

Inn from the Cold Society provides temporary emergency shelter for homeless families in partnership with many other community agencies. Started in 1997 by a "small group of passionate Calgarians," the Society works with families for up to two years, providing both emergency shelter and more permanent housing. According to the organization's website, 51 percent of the families served are Indigenous. Families are assigned case workers to help navigate services and housing resources in the city.⁴⁹

The *Salvation Army Centre of Hope* provides short-term emergency housing for up to 329 homeless men in Calgary. Following their short-term stay, men have the option of paying for a transitional long-term bed. The Salvation Army also runs a women's residential program, which provides accommodations for up to 23 homeless women. The Salvation Army is an international Christian charitable organization centred in England. It refers any Aboriginal clients it receives to the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, recognizing – in its words – that it does "not serve the Aboriginal population in the best way" (Turner et al., 2010, p. 22).⁵⁰

Permanent Affordable Housing

In order to support service providers and emergency or transitional shelters in enabling transition to permanent housing, a portfolio of affordable housing is required, ideally with some level of supports appropriate to the residents. Calgary has a very limited number of such housing options dedicated to Indigenous persons or families.

The *Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority* has offices in Lethbridge and Calgary and operates 165 housing units to rent to members.⁵¹ Of these, 43 are in Calgary, primarily detached homes providing affordable housing to families. The authority received its initial funding from the CMHC Native Urban Housing Program, which funded Indigenous-led housing

47 For more information on the Calgary Drop-In Centre, see <https://www.calgarydropin.ca/>.

48 For information on the Mustard Seed, see <https://theseed.ca/about-us/>.

49 For information on Inn from the Cold, see <https://innfromthecold.org/our-work/>.

50 For information on the housing and shelter services offered by the Salvation Army in Calgary, see the organization's website: <https://www.salvationarmycalgary.org/residential.html>

51 For background on the Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority, one of the housing corporations established through CMHC's Urban Native Housing Program, see <https://t7housing.com/about-us>.

corporations to acquire or build homes for urban Indigenous people to meet their housing needs, and provides subsidy assistance (rents-geared-to-income) to low and moderate-income First Nations people.

Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC) is the Métis Nation of Alberta MNA institution that deals with the ownership and management of residential properties. MCHC was established in 2007. To date, MCHC has acquired 341 units in 5 urban centers throughout the province. This includes a portfolio of 195 single detached homes in Calgary, funded under the CMHC Urban Native Program and a further 35 homes of affordable housing without CMHC subsidy.⁵²

The *Siksika Off-Reserve Housing Project (SORAH)* was created by the Siksika Nation to help provide qualifying members of the First Nation with safe and affordable housing in Calgary. With properties acquired through funding from the federal and provincial governments, it works with various non-profit social agencies in the city to make its program known and available to members. With 41 suites in total, SORAH's properties are located throughout the city. The Project is seeking to add further properties to its portfolio.⁵³

Rounding out this survey is the largest provider of safe and affordable housing, the *Calgary Housing Company*. The Company reports to the Corporate Properties and Buildings business unit of the City of Calgary, but is governed by an independent Board of Directors. It directly manages and operates over 10,000 subsidized and affordable housing units and administers rent supplement programs. According to its website, the Company coordinates with other city-wide agencies to ensure that residents obtain programming in other areas as well.⁵⁴ Its statement in the AFCC's environmental scan set out its limits, however: "As the service is for all Calgarians, the organization does not have any current involvement in Aboriginal homelessness and housing initiatives specifically," nor does it track its Indigenous clientele (Turner et al., 2010, p. 19).

Agencies serving Indigenous clients also work with *private landlords* – often, according to interviews for this project, for-profit property management companies – who are often the only providers available to house their vulnerable clients. One service that some agencies provide is advocacy vis-à-vis private landlords. Where necessary, they also pay their Indigenous clients' rent directly in this tight for-profit low-income housing market.

52 For information on the Métis Capital Housing Corporation, see <http://albertametis.com/affiliates/metis-housing/metis-capital-housing-corporation/>.

53 For information on the Siksika Off-Reserve Affordable Housing Project, see <https://sorah.ca/about-us>.

54 For information on the Calgary Housing Company, see <http://calgaryhousingcompany.org/>.

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Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care

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