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Housing Responsibility and Advanced Liberal Government: Programs for the Homeless in Ontario

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**HOUSING RESPONSIBILITY AND ADVANCED LIBERAL
GOVERNMENT: PROGRAMS FOR THE HOMELESS IN ONTARIO**

by
Silke Schaefer

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through Sociology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

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2009
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the politics of homelessness in Ontario by examining two programs, the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP) and the Hostels-to-Homes (H2H) program, that were created in 2006 and 2007 respectively by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The CHPP program is designed at the local government level and provides funding and social services to the homeless and hard-to-house. The H2H program is a pilot project directed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and uses a ‘Housing-First’ approach to get chronic shelter users into more permanent housing. From a governmentality perspective, this thesis examines how these two programs fit into the current political framework of the Ontario government. This research concludes that these programs, with a focus on community and individual responsibility, are symptomatic of advanced liberal governance and that the responsabilization of the homeless has social justice implications.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHPP	Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program
H2H	Hostels-to-Homes
HIFIS	Homeless Individuals and Families Information System
HPI	Homelessness Partnership Initiative
HPS	Homelessness Partnering Strategy
HRSDC	Human Resource and Skill Development Canada
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
OW	Ontario Works
PHIF	Provincial Homelessness Initiative Funding
RFP	Request for Proposals

INTRODUCTION

Even in this fully developed and industrialized part of the world, we see and experience poverty on a daily basis. Daly (1996) suggests that Canada's homeless population grew and diversified exponentially in the 1980s and even though the rate of individuals becoming homeless has been reduced, it continued to grow throughout the 1990s. The number of homeless individuals on the streets and those surfing couches is difficult to estimate because of the sheer complexity of the issue (p. 17). There are countless ways for an individual to end up on the streets and in need of assistance. With a great demand for social services, those working through poverty issues are reliant upon not only the services offered by the federal, provincial, and local governments, but also the services provided by local community organizations that aim to assist those living on the margins. Through the increasing demand for social services over the years, the politics of homelessness has become equally as diverse and complex in nature as homelessness itself. While the federal government was the first to offer support services to those facing a life on the streets, this responsibility has trickled down to the provincial government and most recently to local communities. Each level of government has their own mandate and legislation and provides services in different capacities. The research presented here focuses on two programs created by one of the provincial ministries in the Province of Ontario that works with homeless individuals.

For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen to look at how the governmental move to advanced liberalism has influenced two specific programs, the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Hostels-to-Homes program, created for those who are homeless and hard to house under the Ministry of Community and Social

Services in the Province of Ontario. Through the analysis of these two programs I aim to contribute to a larger discussion of advanced liberal governance by highlighting the effects that political transition has had on the programs recently developed to assist those on the margins in Ontario. With the critique of the welfare state beginning in the 1970s, a new form of liberal political government developed. This new political government moved away from the public service provisions that had been offered by the welfare state and as a result produced a new relationship between government and civil society.

Advanced liberal government emerged as the dominant form of thought with a focus on community and consumers and has guided the decisions and policies of many state programs and initiatives (Dean, 1999, p. 164) within and outside of Canada. Its focus on getting the private sector involved and its interest in establishing a market for the selling and purchasing of public sector services and goods have resulted in drastic changes to past and current social service provisions (Iltan, Oliver & O'Connor, 2007, p. 76). The withdrawal of many forms of social assistance over the past 15 years by western liberal states has forced local community organizations to play a greater role and take over a large amount of service provisions. While in recent years some social services have been picked up again by the provincial and federal governments, in what has been referred to as the 'roll out phase' by Peck and Tickell (2002), the need for non-governmental organizations has not lessened, but rather increased (p. 389).

Advanced forms of liberalism have been highlighted and extensively discussed in the works of Rose (2006; 2000) and Dean (1999). Rose (2000) defines advanced forms of liberalism by suggesting that,

Central to these are the revised ambitions of political government, the aspiration to govern ‘at a distance’, the fragmentation of sociality and subjectivity into communities and identities, the emphasis upon creating active individuals who will take responsibility for their own fates through the exercise of choice, and the organization of socio-political concern around the management and minimization of risks to lifestyles of contentment and consumption (p. 337).

The advanced liberal move to download social service delivery to the local level has required more input from the local communities and has been justified with the notion of “the community knows best”. The use of community agencies has expanded in recent years and through the use of contracts they have become the primary service delivery agents that ensure that those on the margins are taken care of. With the decentralization of services by the federal and provincial governments, has come a greater need for accountability and transparency by the agencies and local governments, resulting in a more tedious administration process.

The first part of the thesis maps my conceptual framework and demonstrates how the governmental aspects of advanced liberal rule has shaped current policies around homelessness in Ontario. A discussion of the methodology and further background on who the homeless are and the complexities they are faced with then follows. The final section of the thesis discusses the research findings, which show that this downloading process through decentralization of services has been welcomed by most government employees of all different levels as well as by community members but has also created some problems. In addition, the move to “contract governance” is highlighted and the increased need for accountability through different reporting elements is discussed.

Finally, the Housing First Initiative and the Hostels-to-Homes program illustrate the priorities of the provincial government and its inclination to responsabilize the individuals in the program. I will argue that having only recently been created, the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Hostels-to-Homes program offer a unique look at how the Province of Ontario under the Ministry of Community and Social Services has administered programs for the homeless and hence this thesis makes an unique contribution to the growing literature on homelessness.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past two centuries three major political forms of government have been identified in Western liberal democratic nation-states, namely, classical liberalism, social liberalism, and advanced liberalism (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006; Dean, 1999). Rose et al. (2006) employ a genealogical approach in their work by exploring the transitions in types of governance in the 'English-speaking world' and they suggest that Foucault's concept of governmentality, or governance 'at a distance' is an underlying feature in all forms of recent government (p. 83). This thesis will draw on the main ideals of the latest forms of governance, advanced liberalism. Advanced liberal forms of government have been defined by Dean (1999) as,

A number of different types of government that are assembled from similar elements and resources. These include the contrivances of markets in areas of formerly public provision, the employment of indirect means of regulation such as the calculative technologies of auditing and accounting, the dispersion and individualization of the management of risk, and the construction of multiple forms of agency through which rule is accomplished. Key forms of agency of

advanced liberal rule include the consumer and the community. Advanced liberal forms of government can also include paternalistic and coercive measures for those deemed not to display the capacities of responsible and prudential autonomy (p. 209).

While literature on neo-liberalism by numerous other authors highlights similar themes as those mentioned by Dean (1999, p. 209) and Rose (2000, p. 337) above, there is a distinguishable difference in definition. Dean (1999) suggests that in regard to neo-liberalism there are

several different governmental rationalities [that] might be described as variants of neo-liberalism. They are modes of problematization of the welfare state and its features such as bureaucracy, rigidity and dependency formation. They recommend the reform of individual and institutional conduct so that it becomes more competitive and efficient. They seek to effect this reform by the extension of market rationality to all spheres, by the focus on choices of individuals and collective, and by the establishment of a culture of enterprise and responsible autonomy (p. 209).

The central difference between advanced liberalism and neo-liberalism, however, is the focus on community, accountability, individual responsibility and the management of risk that advanced liberalism brings to light, as will be discussed below.

After the Second World War changes in political practice were necessary to accommodate the post war rebuilding of the economy. Nation building became a priority and placed great emphasis on redistributive welfare system (Donald, 2005, p. 263). In order for all provinces to be on an equal level, the federal government's goal was to

spread provincial funds to enable each province to have adequate welfare, education and health care provisions (Donald, 2005, p. 267). Instead of blaming individuals for their social position or problem, the welfare state saw life's tribulations as a problem of the state, not as the individual's fault (Hutchinson & O'Connor, 2005, p. 128). As a result, the welfare government began to stress the importance of the wellbeing of each individual and emphasized the importance of social solidarity. Liberty and freedom of citizens became central themes in this paradigm shift; here, citizens of liberal welfare states would be 'protected' through health, education and safety provisions for all society members. Those with the greatest disadvantage, the sick and poor, were seen as requiring the most help by the government in order to alleviate their problems and provide them with equal opportunity for prosperity. Not providing social provisions for the disadvantaged would be a threat to liberty and a violation of rights (Shaver, 1996, p. 11).

The post-war boom began to level off in the 1960s and fears of an economic recession were soon realized. The market began to suffer and critics of the welfare state suggested that the total responsibility and control over all of public welfare created several problems in terms of a complete government overload, a certain rigidity and a significant accumulation of debt (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006, p.91). Capital and labour were again faced with a second period of restructuring that implemented old ideologies adapted from the classical liberalist era (Gamble, 2001, p. 127). The writings of Milton Friedman and others placed an increasing emphasis on free market economies and a return to individualism. These were reintroduced in the political platforms and subsequent policies of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 388; Gamble, 2001, p. 129-130; Shaver, 1996, p. 14).

This departure from what had been called Keynesianism led to the beginning of the advanced liberal era.

Welfare politics, with the critique by the Thatcherites in Britain and the Reaganites in the United States, became problematized. The state's responsibility for social, demographic and economic security, a responsibility associated with the welfare state, was replaced with a new rationality of governance that focused on the freedom of the individual. This also ensured greater responsibility, autonomy, and choice (Rose et al., 2006, p. 91). As a new alternative, welfare critics developed new techniques that took away the social responsibilities of the liberal state and instead pushed these responsibilities increasingly to the civil state. The control over society, previously directly associated with the government, became less visible and governance at a distance became the new technique of governance (Rose et. al. 2006). The study by Rose et al. (2006) delves deeper into the key characteristics of governmentalities that initially developed out of Foucault's concept of political power. They suggest that freedom works well with government "as choice, autonomy, self-responsibility, and the obligation to maximize one's life as a kind of enterprise" is one of the key ideas of advanced liberal strategies (p. 91). While these strategies may be associated with advanced liberalism, it is also suggested that governmentalities and governance-at-a-distance are not only limited to advanced liberalism but provide an analytical tool for further studies of governmentalities in other political perspectives (Rose et al., 2006, p. 101)

Advanced liberal supporters suggested that Keynesian ideology was the reason for the rise in inflation rates and growing government involvement that had been seen as problematic in the 1980s. As an alternative to the direct involvement of the government in

social politics, the advanced liberal framework proposed other ideals that included cutbacks on social welfare spending, increased privatization of resources and activities, and the breaking down of trade barriers (Herbert & Brown, 2006, p. 756). According to Peck and Tickell (2002), the first “roll-back” stage of neoliberalism, which began in the early 1970s, worked to decentralize and dismantle the previously established social programs. Peck and Tickell (2002) have referred to this as the ‘destructive’ phase of the neoliberal process (p. 384). Their study brings forth a similar conclusion as that of Rose et al. (2006). Peck and Tickell (2002) conclude that advanced liberalism has been underrated as a political approach. It has been much more resilient than expected and found to be quite flexible. Dean (2002) has suggested that there are three types of foldings that explains the process of advanced liberal governance. The first folding is the ‘unfolding’ process that seeks to push the political sphere away from the state and toward civil society. This is accomplished by the formation of partnerships with governmental departments and more specifically, communities. This can be seen as empowering to the community and at the same time allows the state to retreat from governing too much (Dean, 2002, p. 45). The second folding is the ‘enfolding’ process where civil society has organized itself in a quasi-market structure and put together ideals of the market that include the contracting of work to the private sector that was previously within public responsibility (Dean, 2002, p. 43). The third and final folding, according to Dean (2002) is the ‘refolding’ where newly established values come from civil society to reshape the political sphere again. The focus of the refolded values brought forth by civil society does take on a different focus than before by concentrating on individuals and the risks posed to society by increasing the surveillance (Dean, 2002, p. 45). The reorganization of the workforce that began in the 1980s as part of the necessary restructuring has meant that the

wage labour force identified with the classical liberal state has been reincarnated to fit the contemporary market model (Gordon, 2004, p. 35). The reform to the labour system has facilitated a growing divide between the managers and the workers of the workforce. This has brought with it a greater level of inequality in society (Shaver, 1996, p. 14).

The individual, in the neo-liberalist framework, is given more freedom to move within the state and act but their activities still remain governed through increasing and diverse surveillance techniques of the government. As with the individual citizens, private enterprise is liberated of trade barriers and other obvious controlling features. However, as governmentality would suggest, the control of the private industry by the government has not lessened but rather changed in its composition. The government regulates the industry by deciding what a market actor can and cannot do and through that the individual worker becomes regulated. Responsibility, therefore, gets downloaded from the top down to the bottom. This becomes the basic idea of governmentality. The government provides freedom to the individual but controls them rather than coercing them which draws on Foucault's idea of power through knowledge (Foucault, 1984, p. 209).

Public knowledge and advocacy of poverty related social problems have increased over the past two decades and placed greater pressure on the federal and provincial government to take some action to resolve these concerns. The necessity and re-emergence of some government spending on the previously cut social programs has done its best to incorporate the ideals of advanced liberal forms of government (Peck & Tickell 2002, p. 389). Individual responsibility, one of the facets of advanced liberalism mentioned above, became an important aspect of change in the types of policies that were

re-created and in the new expectations of the individuals that emerged (Dean 1999, p. 166). The re-implemented programs have now increasingly focused on the responsibility of the individual. Social programs that used to focus on helping individuals in becoming healthier or financially stable have provided little assistance and instead targeted individual behaviours, such as diet or tobacco for poor health (Raphael, 2003, p. 398). By shifting the blame of the particular problem to the individual, the government can more easily withdraw their support and justify the continuation of a social problem. This has been most evident in newly implemented social programs of the Western nations. Recent studies have shown that programs put in place for drug users (Fraser, 2004) and prisoners (Silverstein & Spark, 2007) for example, have increasingly placed the onus on the individual and their behaviour rather than focused on the social determinants of their position. Drug users have become responsabilized for their Hepatitis C and HIV infections because of their unsanitary practices when injecting or smoking drugs in glass pipes (Fraser, 2004; Rantala, 2004). Prisoners, who are already excluded, have also been responsabilized through various programs creating a further divide to 'normal society' (Silverstein & Spark, 2007). This focus on the behaviour of the individual is characteristic of what Dean (2002, p. 45) explained as the 'refolding' process where individual responsibility becomes regulated in the political sphere and the community becomes involved in risk management.

As suggested above, the basis of neoliberalism is set on a type of distant, laissez-faire kind of governance structure (Donald, 2005, p. 272). In 1995, the Harris Tories in Ontario exemplified these ideals in their economic restructuring. The provincial government suggested that social problems would be best left to the market to regulate

and withdrew the ‘interventionist’ aspects of Ontarian society, which in this instance were any existing social welfare policies (Keil, 2002, p. 588). The Tories preached non-intervention but acted quite differently in reality (Donald, 2005, p. 272; Keil, 2002). As Donald (2005) writes, “they did patently the opposite – practicing aggressive intervention in order to deregulate, eventually to re-regulate many aspects of Ontario society” (p. 272). This “roll-back neoliberalism” followed by “roll-out neoliberalism” (Keil, 2002, p. 580) has made some permanent changes that the present government is now still faced with. The economic restructuring toward a neoliberal concept left a significant number of individuals in dire need of help. The homeless and the poor have been most directly impacted by these policy changes.

Since the days of the Harris government in the 1990s, the provincial, much like the federal, government has started to move away from the harsh retreatist policies and begun to re-establish some social programs for the marginalized. This departure from strict, neo-liberal, non-interventionist programs by the government has been described as a Third Way and aims to find some middle ground between the welfarist and neo-liberalist approaches. Instead, the new discourse has shifted to the decentralization of programs and services where the focus is on the ‘community’ and ‘inclusive partnerships’ at the local community level (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 415; Reddel, 2004, p. 8). This decentralization is portrayed as ‘good governance’ by bringing government closer to the local individuals and, as Véron et al. (2006) suggest, is potentially a cost-effective measure for the government that allows for greater accountability and less corruption (Véron, Williams, Corbridge & Srivastava, 2006, p. 1925). As a result, the community has attained a bit more power and decision-making abilities and policies appear to have

taken on a more 'inclusive' role by including the poor and marginalized, though, as Porter and Craig (2004) suggest, this 'inclusiveness' does relatively little in terms of reducing inequality and bridging the gap between the poor and rich (p. 412). Social services have become more and more decentralized and whether newly developed programs for the homeless were symptomatic of these political processes was a part of this study.

The objective of this research undertaking was to determine whether or not the provincially created CHPP and H2H programs are characteristic of the advanced liberal, third-way politics that have been identified in other, broader examinations of government policies in Canada as well as abroad. This study suggests that these two programs, intended to help the homeless and hard-to-house, take on advanced liberal and third-way trends in their administration and influence those involved in the implementation of the programs with their focus on community and responsabilization of the individual. The widespread agreement that 'the community knows best' has meant that the community has accepted the downloading of work to not only the local government but also the local agencies. With this newly established organization, the local governing body has become a broker in the provision of services by managing the contracts between the provincial ministry and the local agencies. The move to contract governance has ensured that the government has remained flexible and uncommitted in its funding and established an environment open for competition for funds by the local. This increased level of decision-making at the local level has, however, also meant that the provincial ministry requires more detailed reporting to ensure accountability and transparency to the taxpayers and ultimately remains the decision maker even without any stake in direct service delivery.

Theories associated with advanced liberalism and its characteristics, as proposed by the likes of Peck and Tickell (2002), Dean (2002), and Porter and Craig (2004) and discussed above, are directly tied to the findings of this research project. The downloading of federal and provincial government programs to the community level was certainly evident in the analysis of the interviews and documents. Dean (2002) suggests that government fears it is too involved in the governing of society directly and government itself aims to be less prescriptive by involving the community more instead through the use of contracts and partnerships. This has shifted to place more responsibility on others that are outside of government agencies (Dean, 2002, p. 42). In the name of 'good governance' and with a growing focus on decentralization, the power and resources have been shifted down to as low a level of government as possible (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 401), which has provided the community with more freedom to make decisions that affect the local population (Batterbury and Fernando, 2006, p. 1854). This new level of freedom found at the community level does not come without responsibility. In return for the freedoms granted through the advanced liberal policies, techniques of performance have been set in place which has meant that the local level has had to become more accountable and more transparent with the aim of gaining trust from those above (Dean, 1999, p. 169).

The federal and the provincial governments have increasingly modeled their administration on advanced liberal ideals of a market-like economy. This change in administration has meant that there has been increased privatization and corporatization of public services, greater use of performance based measures and that there has been a greater reliance on contracts with private companies and local agencies that were

previously public services, among other things (Dean 2002, p. 43). These concepts of advanced liberalism explored above, namely, accountability, individual and community responsibility, were explored in relation to two provincial programs. In order to discuss the findings, the approaches taken in this study are presented below.

METHODOLOGY

My research undertaking employed a qualitative approach in the examination of the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Hostels-to-Homes program, which were implemented in 2006 and 2007 respectively by the Ontario Government under the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The conclusions of this study were drawn from various forms of data, which included interviews, government documents, legislative acts from the provincial ministry and evaluation reports from CHPP and H2H. The Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program provides funding to agencies and homeless individuals through smaller projects implemented at the local level. The Hostels-to-Homes program is a new pilot project that aims to take chronic shelter users out of the shelter system by placing them in an 18-month intensive program. The program provides them with housing first and then wraps services around them after they have been housed. I relied on semi-structured interviews with professional public figures that have some varying involvement with the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and/or Hostels-to-Homes. A further study of provincial and municipal documents provided to me during interviews offered a supplementary understanding of CHPP and H2H.

In the social sciences as well as in other professions, various forms of interviews have become a mainstream way of extracting and gathering information (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, pp.1-2). In this thesis research I used, what Berg (2001) calls, semistandardized interview questions to obtain direct as well as underlying information about the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and Hostels-to-Homes. I used specific and predetermined questions but allowed room for probing when necessary in order to provide flexibility for the respondent and me, the interviewer. This allowed for different takes on various topics in a conversation-like discussion (Berg, 2001, p. 70). The questions posed in the interviews about these two new programs did not only allow for more factual details to be drawn out but also for personal interpretations and opinions to surface throughout.

My aim at the beginning of this research process was to conduct between 35 and 45 interviews. In getting this research underway, I experienced a number of problems when getting in contact with possible interviewees. Interviewees were contacted by telephone for an interview and often followed up with email communication. However, locating the individuals in each city, municipality, or region that were responsible for CHPP and / or H2H was much more tedious than first anticipated. Most city employees are quite unfamiliar with these two specific programs and were unable to refer me to the appropriate person immediately. Phone calls were often either not returned or delayed by a number of days. These difficulties decreased the number of interviews to 12 with 14 different respondents. Interviews were conducted in person at the beginning but with several scheduling issues some interviews were eventually carried out over the telephone.

The interviews were conducted with public service employees at the provincial and municipal level that have worked with these programs in its creation, and are presently involved in the administration and implementation of either or both. One of the interviews was conducted with two representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services while seven interviewees were local government employees from five different cities, municipalities or regions. As well, five different representatives from local non-profit organizations collaborating with the local government authorities on this initiative were interviewed.

The questions designed for the interviews were adjusted to the position that the individual held but was focused on their conceptualization, understanding and evaluation of the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and Hostels-to-Homes program as well as their beliefs around personal and public responsibility (See Appendix A). To ensure professional conduct on my behalf, an ethics application was submitted and approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Windsor before any interviews were conducted. While anonymity could not be ensured with public service workers, confidentiality was maintained as best as possible.

Public documents were a secondary form of analysis for this thesis. Government publications at the provincial and municipal level, such as the *Ontario Works Act* (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, *Ontario Works Act*, 1997), Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program *Service Description Schedule Template* (Ontario Ministry of Community & Social Services, *MCSS Act*, 2006), and the City of Toronto's and the City of Windsor's *Hostels to Homes: Emergency Redirection Pilot Initiative* (2007; 2007) and other documents that are directly related to the Consolidated

Homelessness Prevention Program or the Hostels-to-Homes program were analyzed alongside the interviews. In consulting the documents, the language, and themes expressing views, beliefs and assumptions (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995) associated with the goals of these programs and the responsibility of the public, semi-private and private sector in caring for the homeless population provided a further understanding of the ideas expressed by interviewees. Documents published by different levels of government offered a source for comparison of the language used by public figures to attribute responsibility to particular individuals and groups. What became evident in looking at the various documents was that the documents by the provincial government were most often written with an authoritative and legalistic tone. Local government documents, on the other hand, were less legalistic and not only considered the city's, municipality's or region's interests but also that of the agencies contracted through them. Overall, the interviews, in consultation with documents related to the two programs, provided a unique look at the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Hostels-to-Homes program and how these programs draw on advanced liberal ideas of responsibility, accountability and community. A description of homelessness and these two programs and where they fit in the overall governmental structure follows below after which a subsequent discussion of the findings will be presented.

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS AND THE HOMELESS

The concept of homelessness has been widely discussed in various academic journals, books and government documents over the course of the last few decades. A definition of

who the homeless are and what makes a person homeless remains largely debatable due to its wide and encompassing scope. The issue of homelessness has been described as fluid and borderless (Daly, 1996, p.1) and crossing into various realms of politics, economics, health and social justice. Daly's (1996) research has produced a thorough and comparative study by examining the changes in homelessness across Canada, the United States and Great Britain over the last several decades and how these are tied to policy and practice. He suggests that unemployment, economic dislocation, poverty and deinstitutionalization are among the leading causes of homelessness (Daly, 1996, p. 14). What has been firmly established is that there are two general types of homelessness found in Western society. While there remains a grey area, homelessness has been described by the United Nations (Hwang, 2001, p. 229) as either "absolute" or "relative" or as either "literally homeless" or "precariously homeless" (Bridgman, 2003, p. 26). Those that are considered "absolutely" homeless are the individuals that sleep outdoors or in cars and old buildings and have no physical space to call their own. Individuals that may make use of shelters on a frequent basis may also fall into this category. Those that are "relatively" homeless tend to have access to some form of physical shelter that is inadequate and does not meet basic living requirements (Hwang, 2001, p. 229). Those at-risk of becoming homeless tend to be placed in the homeless category as well due to their unstable nature.

Homelessness is complex and is not just the result of any specific factor. Much depends on the personal circumstances that an individual finds him or herself in as well as the political structure in their geographical area. While any combination of factors can lead a person to become homeless or at risk of homelessness, some general links between

certain social conditions and an elevated risk of becoming homeless have been made. Housing costs, whether in a private or rented home, have significantly increased since the 1990s and are consuming greater portions of a household's income. This creates stress for the individual or the family and often forces them to cut costs in other essential areas of life such as food and clothing (Moore and Skaburskis, 2004, p. 395-396). This places individuals on a slippery slope toward becoming homeless.

Affordability of housing is often further implicated with the growing number of single-parent households, which tend to be headed by more females than males (Bridgman, 2003, p. 31). Single parents are often faced with decisions of childcare and are further implicated by the changing demands of the workforce. Part-time employment has begun to replace full-time jobs creating more flexibility for industry but has significantly impacted the family life of workers (Bridgman, 2003, p. 72; Daly, 1996). Knowing the problems that are often associated with being a single parent leads women to often choose to stay in unfavourable situations, such as an abusive relationship, in order to provide shelter for their children. Subjecting oneself to violence within a household in order to avoid a housing crisis technically places these women in the relatively homeless category. However, women in such positions do not become a part of the homeless statistics due to the difficulty in locating them (Scott, 2007, p. 16; Bridgman, 2003, p. 27).

Domestic abuse not only has the potential to keep women in a physically dangerous situation but also has psychological effects that can lead to mental illness. Mental illness, whether present since childhood or developed during a later stage of life, contributes to the risk of becoming homeless. Women with a history of abuse and mental

illness also have a tendency to remain in the cycle of homelessness for longer periods of time (Bridgman, 2003, p. 27). The deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, through cuts to social services, is another significant contribution to current issues of homelessness, particularly amongst women (Bridgman, 2006; 2003). Moreover, the mental and physical illnesses that these women suffer results in a great financial strain on the health care system (Bridgman, 2006, p. 94).

Addictions, at times related to mental illness, pose a further problem to the risk of homelessness. Individuals on the verge of homelessness may begin working for their dealer in order to avoid living on the streets. This however may commit them to a continuous relationship that has potential of becoming abusive if the demands of the dealer are not met. Equally, problematic is the lack of long-term addiction counseling services and detox centers for those on the margins (Scott, 2007, p. 17). Women are again more disadvantaged than men, which highlights the key underlying factor of structural violence that not only facilitates the growing problem of homelessness but also keeps certain populations invisible to most of the public. Aboriginal and black individuals as well as women face greater disadvantages in the social security system and remain mostly unnoticed in the rest of society (Scott, 2007; Bridgman, 2006).

Issues of poverty, housing and homelessness have been topics of public and academic discussion for over a century. Starting in the 1980s however, a rapid increase in homelessness led to greater public discussion and a growing concern for the homeless and poverty stricken in Canada (Daly, 1996, p. 17). Since the 1990s the numbers of homeless people have continued to slowly increase with a varied set of problems that require the help of a diverse range of services. Over the last three decades, the provinces with some

assistance from the federal government, have responded to the public's concerns by implementing new policy initiatives to address problems of poverty and homelessness.

GOVERNING HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

In order to understand the policies, a closer look at how funding currently trickles down through the system is necessary. Presently, funding is contributed by all three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. While the federal government has most consistently funded any policies related to housing and homelessness, increasingly this responsibility has been passed down, or “rolled-out”, to lower levels of government. A brief background discussion of federal and provincial ministries and their respective policies follow below.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is the federal agency responsible for creating and administering the policies, and therefore the funding of services, that directly impact those that are homeless or hard to house. Initially the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) was created in late 1999 to address the increasing problems around homelessness in Canada. In 2001 the federal government began working with individual communities to create a Community Plan that would address local issues related to homelessness and housing for the homeless. The local body responsible for creating this Community Plan, and in charge of SCPI, became what is known as the “Community Entity” (Interview ED & MT, p. 7; Interview BQ1, p. 18). SCPI was in place until 2007 after which the federal government moved on to the second phase of SCPI better known as the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) as part of the federal government's Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI).

The Community Plans are created through community consultations and outline the local goals to address issues around homelessness with the funding that is received through this program. Both SCPI and HPS are limited term programs with a set amount of money that is issued over a given period of time. HPS funding (or SCPI Phase II) ended March 31st, 2009 and a new wave of funding through to March 31st, 2011 has recently been announced as part of the 5-year Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Funding beyond 2011 is expected to be rolled-out to the community itself (Interview DX, p. 11). Each new phase of funding from the federal government requires a new and extensive Community Plan from the individual community. Communities have used the Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding, with its limited term funding, for one-time short-term projects that can come to a “natural end”. A “natural end” would mean that the funding for a certain project could stop without implications at the end of the funding term. These have included capital projects such as shelters and smaller physical aspects such as lockers at community agencies (Interview ED & MT). Though the federal government allows for money to be spent on capital projects, one interviewee suggests that they do not want to see it be the major part of the funding (Interview EQ, p. 8) which suggests that future funding may be more likely to go to services rather than capital projects.

Provincially, policies and programs that target problems around housing and homelessness are addressed through three different ministries: the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

While all three Ministries cater to some of the same individuals, they do not always work together in creating their policies and in administering their programs. Each

ministry is governed by a different piece of legislation, which interviewees have suggested does not always make local administration an easy task. The policies and programs that affect the homeless or nearly homeless under the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care tend to be human support services. These are likely to be directed at individuals with mental health problems and addictions as well as other health related programs commonly affecting the homeless population.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides a mix of services to the hard-to-house and to the homeless. These include not just the human service provisions but also physical housing through the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program for low-income earners that require social housing assistance. In order to prevent individuals from ending up on the streets, some financial assistance through programs such as the Rent Bank program are also in effect under this Ministry. Policies and programs are regulated by the *Social Housing Reform Act*, which came into place in 2000 and is administered at the local level by Local Housing Corporations and or Service Managers.

The focus of this research project has been on the housing and homelessness policies of the third Ministry, Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services. MCSS provides likely the most varied assistance to the poor through human service provisions, financial assistance, and to some extent temporary physical space to reside in time of need. One of the biggest programs that run through this ministry is the Ontario Works social assistance program and the *Ontario Works Act* (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, *Ontario Works Act*, 1997) is its governing piece of legislation. While there are other smaller programs that also aim to help the poor, such as the domiciliary hostels and the Emergency Energy Fund, the focus of this thesis will be

on two particular programs, namely the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP) and Hostels-to-Homes (H2H).

The Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program is a large pot of funding for local governing bodies from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. It is managed by the cities or municipalities and it is intended to fund smaller programs that assist local shelters and local agencies in their daily operations. CHPP was introduced as a program in 2006 as a replacement for the previously existing *Provincial Homelessness Initiative Funding* (PHIF). PHIF had been established in 1999 as a result of the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness that was completed in October 1998 (City of Toronto, 1999). Originally, provincial funding under PHIF had been divided into different pots assigned to specific tasks. Critics of PHIF suggested that the program could be made more efficient by consolidating these specific pots of funding and allowing local governments to make their own location specific decisions. The Ministry of Community and Social Services eventually listened to these requests and combined homelessness funding in one larger pot under the new program title of the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program in 2006 allowing for greater flexibility at the local level (Interview DN, p. 1).

Under CHPP, the Ministry of Community and Social Services provides money to municipalities to address problems associated with homelessness according to three goals outlined in the CHPP guidelines. The three goals are as follows:

- To improve access to and connect households that are homeless with the system of community services;

- To support households experiencing homelessness to obtain and keep longer-term housing; and
- To assist households at-risk of homelessness to retain housing (Ontario Ministry of Community & Social Services. MCSS Act, 2006)

Programs are developed around these goals and are dependant upon local needs by agencies. CHPP funds are given out to local agencies by a Request For Proposal (RFP) process where the city allows for proposals for different projects to come forth and then decides which agencies will receive funding given the three goals and local needs.

Agencies have received CHPP money for providing basic services that include money for emergency shelters, small rent banks, outreach, youth programs, employment help and ID clinics among other things.

Hostels-to-Homes is the second recently implemented program under the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This program was announced in late 2006 and launched in early 2007 as a pilot project for six Ontario cities (Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, London and Windsor). It focuses on getting chronic shelter users out of the shelter system and into more permanent housing, therefore freeing up more space in the shelters if needed. The Ministry's only set requirement for enrollment in this program is that a participant must have been using emergency shelters for more than 30 days (Interview UO & NP; Interview ED & MT, p. 21). Individual participants are then selected by the city or by the local agency in charge of the program and assigned to a caseworker that ensures that s/he gets all the necessary services to maintain housing. This is an intense 18-month program that has recently launched into its second 18-month term as a pilot project. A further discussion of my research on these two programs and their

political ties follows below.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Community Responsibility

The programs this research project has focused on, the CHPP and H2H programs under the Ministry of Community and Social Services, directly fall into the framework proposed by Dean (2002), as discussed above. He suggests that society has transformed through a process of folding. The first of three elements of this folding process, the ‘unfolding’ stage, has shifted the aspects previously tended to by the political sphere to the civil society through the creation of partnerships and networks with organizations outside the government structure (Dean, 2002, p. 45). Much of the responsibility in administering programs for the homeless, as with other social services, has been downloaded to the local government and community level and is the first step in connecting and forming partnerships with non-political organizations. The Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Hostels-to-Homes programs were created by MCSS and have been given to the cities, municipalities and regions to administer and implement. The Ministry provides the funding for CHPP while H2H is currently cost-shared between the Ministry and the local government on an 80/20 basis. In the case of H2H however, an interview with two individuals from MCSS revealed the program is currently under review and that there is a possibility of the funding being rolled out to the communities should the program move past its pilot stage (Interview UO & NP).

Individuals representing different local governments agreed that the downloading to the community level was a positive thing. There was a general consensus among local government officials, as well as with some of the agency representatives, that “the community knows best” and is therefore better fit to decide what is most needed. One regional manager discussed the division of work between the provincial and local government in providing services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless in the following way: “Well, [the Ministry’s] role is to fund us and to write legislation, not necessarily offer support. Which isn’t a bad thing because there’s a lot of decision-making at the local level. We know best what our clients need” (Interview NFN, p. 30). Both CHPP and H2H are administered locally by ‘service managers’, which is the local level of government in most communities. This allows the cities, municipalities, and regional governments some flexibility in deciding what agencies receive funding for which services.

While this has been a welcome change and the Ministry is no longer involved in the direct administration of services, there has been an increase in the reporting process to the Ministry by the local government and the agencies. This essentially still provides the Ministry with the final decision-making power and control over the end results. The authority of MCSS is quite evident in its major piece of governing legislation, the *Ontario Works Act* (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, *Ontario Works Act*, 1997) which states, “if a delivery agent fails to properly exercise a power or duty under this Act or the regulations, the Minister may deduct from the amount payable by Ontario a portion of the delivery agent’s share of the cost of administering this Act and providing assistance, in accordance with the regulation” (p. 24). The *Ontario Works Act* does

provide some room for local decision-making and allows local government employees some liberties in deciding who is eligible for social assistance. However, the Ministry remains in control over the decisions made by the local administrators and monitors the movements of funds through a continuous reporting process. This position held by MCSS directly supports Foucault's concept of governance-at-a-distance, in that the Ministry has become less visible yet maintained its control by legislating which programs receive funding and under which conditions.

Managing the Community

Even though partnerships between community agencies and local government have existed for a while now, the relationship between them has been officially recreated and with that has, at times, made it hard to distinguish if a service was coming from the public or private sector (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 410). Downloading by the federal government and provincial governments to the community government may not be a novel concept. However, the move to contract governance in combination with the move to rely more heavily on the local agencies as a form of service delivery agent has been a more recent development. This was quite evident in the administration of social service programs examined in this research undertaking. The local governments may still be responsible for a large part of the administration of programs but the service delivery, particularly evident in the case of the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program, has been downloaded to and become the responsibility of the local non-profit agencies. The cities, municipalities and regions have become the 'service managers' and taken the role of a broker between the legislating body that is the Ministry, and the service delivery agents,

that are the local non-profit groups. This was evident in the following words of this city manager who talked about the city's role in providing social housing: "We are the service manager... We have corporations. We have the housing corporation, we have one large one and we have 38 others who are smaller that operate housing programs. So we don't directly deliver any housing. We used to but we don't anymore" (ED & MT, p. 28). This illustrates the changing role of government responsibilities. What used to be a federal and provincial responsibility eventually became a local government responsibility, and has now clearly moved beyond the governmental organizations and become the responsibility of the local community agencies through the increasing partnerships formed between the government and civil society.

Contract governance appears to fit directly into the running of government that advanced liberal ideology has proposed. Using contracts as a form of service delivery allows the government to commit to funding on a short-term basis and enables quick changes to be made to legislation. As a result, the Requests-for-Proposals process has turned into a competition for savings for the government where community agencies put forward proposals for funding and allows the government to decide who provides the most suitable services for the most reasonable price. The ensuing competition among community agencies and private companies for contracts remedies the excess spending associated with the welfare state (see O'Connor & Ilcan 2005, p. 5).

Short-term commitments by the federal and provincial governments have become increasingly problematic at the local level. Interviews with members of city governments in this research undertaking suggest that some of the stresses in the community come from the uncertainty of funding. This is evident with the Consolidated Homelessness

Prevention Program and to some extent with the Hostels-to-Homes program as well, where the funding for programs and services can be cut from one year to the next, potentially leaving agencies without any financial support. Frequent policy changes have become a significant worry for the agencies providing services to the homeless and hard-to-house and do not allow them to appropriately plan for the coming year. When asked just how fast programs and policies can change, one city manager states,

You can cancel... Oh, perfect example! There was a commitment of the liberal government, the federal liberal government, for a universal childcare policy and all the agreements were cancelled when the conservative government came in. So this community lost \$22 million in funding because of that cancellation of that agreement. So yeah, in the stroke of a pen it can be done (ED & MT, p. 10).

The short-term commitments by the federal and provincial governments clearly have serious implications for the local government and the agencies contracted through provincial and federal funding. Without any security in funding and the ability to retract promises for funding, the local administration is unable to plan ahead and left in a limbo, unsure of whether current agreements with agencies and their programs can be upheld or will have to be abandoned for lack of funds.

Funding for most government programs has been distributed to community agencies through a Requests-for-Proposals (RFP) process. If a proposal is successful, the agency receives the funding for a specific period of time. This RFP process has been phased in over the last decade and RFP's are now required from all agencies for all funding under CHPP and, though to a lesser extent, with H2H, regardless of their previous relationship with the Ministry. Instead of providing the services, the local government has become responsible for managing the contracts given out to the agencies

under CHPP, and in some instances through Hostels-to-Homes as well. Their responsibility now is to ensure that the reporting elements, required by the Ministry, are received from each of the agencies funded through these programs and are then submitted to the Ministry. The reporting elements have dramatically increased in the last few years and have become a significant struggle for agencies that are typically not highly staffed and not well established in their administrative areas. The relationship between the local government and the agencies and what effect the increased reporting has had on the agencies is discussed in an interview with a regional manager in the following way:

“Most agencies just go “I’m going to forget about that” and then part of my role is to say “well I still need to... because I’m still answerable to the province and the feds. I still need to know what you’re doing, who you’re doing it with and when you’re doing it.” But that’s a goofy way to work” (EQ, p. 24). In several interviews with local government officials an air of sympathy for the non-profit agencies’ increased workload was notable in their language. However, it is also evident that their hands are tied and that ultimately they too are bound by the policies and legislation of the Province. The administration and organization of agencies has therefore become significantly more difficult in recent years. This is evident in the following discussion with a regional manager, who says,

I’m working with those agencies to help them evolve a little bit in terms of...cause they’ve always received the funding. Different ministry now, different rules. So we’re working with them so they can make a [RFP] submission. They’re nervous because they actually have to put in a proposal and some of them aren’t happy ... “well haven’t I been providing good service?” “Well yes, you have, but the model’s changed. So you have to show me that you can work in a new world” kind of thing. So that’s where we’re at (EQ, p. 4).

With most organizations having less than a handful of employees, the increased amount of time required in fulfilling the increased administrative obligations has created significant hurdles for these organizations taking away valuable time from providing actual services. Also because these RFP requirements are new for many organization employees often require more time to understand and produce these proposals.

Individuals at local agencies have also echoed the difficulties described by the regional manager above and have become increasingly worried about their continued employment.

One community agency member suggest the following:

You know people who are working in the agencies are trying to write grants for their own jobs, right. So “ok my funding is here so...”. For me, for example, someone who’s not staying here ok, but for this position ...they need someone in this position... So I’m here writing grants trying to make sure that there is a staff person in place after me and it’s an absurd reality that we’re experiencing. I don’t know that there is going to be someone there. I have to do the work to make sure that someone will be there rather than just know... like we have... you know a set regional cost forever and that we’ll be able to [fund this position] (BQ1, p. 21).

With the increased administration, not only is time taken away from services delivered by the local agencies but these services are also jeopardized in their existence. The grant writing process has clearly has to become a priority in order to ensure that enough funds are received to cover the costs of the services provided by the agency.

As a result, not only are the employees at risk of losing their job but also those depending on the services of the agency could be affected by a lack of funding.

The workload of the community agencies has not only significantly increased with the RFP process but has also required a more stringent reporting process on outcomes of

specific services. Agencies receiving public funding are now faced with increased demands to be more accountable to the state (Ilcan & Basok 2004, p. 136). This need to be accountable is clearly stated in the *Ontario Works Act* (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, *Ontario Works Act*, 1997), the legislating document of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Objective 1. d. states that the purpose of this Act is to establish a program that, “(d) is accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario” (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, *Ontario Works Act*, 1997, c. 25, Sched. A, s. 1.). With different levels of governments and funding for specific projects by different Ministries, agencies have faced even greater difficulties in trying to respond to multiple funding sources’ data demands. As a result, the amount of administration required by the agencies has become overwhelming at times in trying to complete the rather prescriptive reports for the different government bodies. A regional manager has described the complexities in the following way:

It’s a lot of data. It’s a lot of work. Because that’s what I’m certainly hearing from the agencies and we’ve got someone who is coordinating that for us but it’s really important measures, because you can’t measure that someone’s gone from being on the street to a shelter. There are so many other things that need to happen to make that sustainable. ...So for an agency that’s sitting there relying on all sorts of different sources of funding, it’s incredibly complex. Yeah and they have it a lot worse as well because they’re responding to needs. So right now with the economy going down, if you’re running ...one of my bigger agencies is [agency] in [city] and they do all kinds of stuff, they have food programs, clothing programs, they do our emergency energy fund, they run our outreach program, all this different stuff, and all the complexities that come with it. So if they purchase a computer with the funding, they can’t use... some Ministries will say “you can’t use that computer for this”. Well, right, yeah. (EQ, p. 23).

What this regional manager highlights is not only the difficulty in administering multiple programs but also the complexity of the legislative pieces that are imposed by different Ministries at the provincial level but also by the federal government. Each section of government is regulated by a different Act and therefore requires agencies to report different and very specific data for the various pieces of funding that the agency received. The *Ontario Works Act* is specific in a number of aspects of funding but as interviews with local government employees revealed, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's *Social Housing Reform Act*, that was implemented in 2000, is much more prescriptive and does not work in unison with the *Ontario Works Act*.

In a conversation about the reason for the move from PHIF to the CHPP, one city manager talk about the changes in reporting requirements in the following way,

[the Ministry] was very interested in outcome measures. You still provided the numbers but now the focus is on outcome measures with the province, performance measures, outcome measures. There are more categories to report on. This is the data that is required and also there is a percentage that you have to provide to the Ministry also. So it's a little more intense. ... Well part of it was probably also about accountability for what was being done in the particular communities. So because they went from merely just providing money for their three areas to more flexibility, they obviously, in return, wanted more impact in the community. So that's why it expanded to include all of these numbers and areas. So although it looked like there was more flexibility, we had to make sure we still met these types of targets. (ED & MT, p. 5).

This has meant that CHPP has allowed for more flexibility in making decisions that are appropriate for the local community, which has been welcomed and well received, yet set

greater and higher reporting standards to ensure accountability by the agencies and by the local government. In a recent radio interview Cathy Crowe and David Hulchanski, both experts in the field of housing and homelessness, suggest that the government is looking for more statistical data in their new programs in order to look active and reduce the visible number of homeless on the streets to improve public perception (Tremonti, A.M., CBC's The Current, April 8th, 2009). Greater accountability through more stringent reporting has allowed the provincial as well as the federal government to withdraw from direct involvement of service delivery but remain in control of all things happening at the community level.

Housing First Approach

The provincial government, following in the footsteps of the federal government, has adopted a Housing-First approach to addressing matters of homelessness. The province's Hostels-to-Homes program, the provincial Housing-First initiative, fits directly into the ideals of advanced liberal governance, although it takes a more 'inclusive' approach by assisting the poor compared to the earlier 'frank market' ways of just letting them fend for themselves without supportive services (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 392). This assistance, however, does come with a price and Porter and Craig (2004) suggest that community participation and responsibility are expected in return of those receiving support (p. 393).

As has been discussed above, the administration has been downloaded to the local level, which has issued contracts to local agencies through an RFP process, all while the

Ministry of Community and Social Services has remained distant in the service delivery and uncommitted to continuing this program past the pilot stage. An interview with two individuals at MCSS revealed that the program might be extended beyond the pilot in the current six cities, after the evaluation is completed, but the funding may then have to be rolled out to the community level (Interview UO & NP). The goal of Hostels-to-Homes is to move chronic shelter users into more permanent housing and then provide them with essential services to help them to become responsible citizens again. The responsibility and subsequent success lies with the participant of Hostels-to-Homes. Programs designed to target individuals' behaviours rather than addressing deeper lying social issues has been a part of the advanced liberal strategy and has been noted in other academic articles (Silverstein & Spark, 2007; Fraser, 2004; Rantala, 2004).

Hostels-to-Homes may seek to reduce the number of homeless individuals on the streets, and perhaps aims to be more favourable to the voting public, but the underlying goal of saving money remains obvious. The second of four expected outcomes for the H2H program lists "That the pilot will show savings to both the municipality and the province by transitioning people out of emergency hostels and moving them into sustainable affordable accommodation" (City of Windsor, Hostels-to-Homes Emergency Hostel Redirection Pilot Initiative, January 2007, p. 12). This motivation by the province was echoed by a city manager who when asked what the founding reason for H2H was stated, "The main one was that it would reduce shelter usage. That was a big thing because they thought it would save money. They didn't understand that if you take three people out, five people would fill their place" (DX, p. 25). The criteria for participating in the H2H program in 2007 was as follows,

1. Chronic or frequent emergency shelter users- meaning at least 30 days or more in 2006;
2. Ontario Works eligible;
3. Meet the criteria for subsidized housing as set out by the Central Housing Registry (City of Windsor, Hostels-to-Homes Emergency Hostel Redirection Pilot Initiative, January 2007, p. 9)

Eligibility for Ontario Works support, rather than Ontario Disability Support Program funding or Employment Insurance funding, is essential for ensuring that those selected for the intense 18-month program are physically and mentally capable to work toward becoming responsible citizens in the workforce, as employment is the ideal end result of the H2H program.

In interviews with a number of local government employees it became clear that the criteria for participation have often expanded beyond the ones stated above. For example, one city manager suggested, “They must have been in a shelter for over 30 days in a given time and then we interview them and they have to be ready to participate and willing and then we take them on for the 18 months” (ED & MT, p. 23). In a more elaborate response from another regional manager the criteria and motivation by the local government are more clearly described. She states,

The names [of the participants] come forward through [the agency] and the three of us sit down together and we decide and look at the eligibility and see if they are a good fit for this program. They have to be engaged with community agencies, be looking to change their lives around. So there has to be some commitment. We want successes out of this program. It is a pilot. I mean, we’re not just selecting them based on that but if they are not engaged, we know the success rate... is very little. I think people have to take the first steps themselves. I mean with supports, with the housing support centre, community care, etc.

They'll take a lot, you know. Individuals have to take those first steps and either go to detox centers or whatever their issues are. (NFN p. 27)

With only a select number of individuals actually eligible and deemed responsible enough, this program is limited in its scope. As is evident in the quotation above, the focus of this program is increasingly on the individuals themselves and their ability to be 'responsible'. Their ability and willingness to become responsible citizens becomes a point of evaluation for those selecting the individuals for this program. Local government representatives have spoken favourably of this program and a general excitement among them was evident in the interviews conducted during this research undertaking. The reported successes over the last two years from the H2H program have brought other local governments, not supported by MCSS's H2H funding, to start their own version of this program. One regional representative had this to say about their own program, "We just opened in June and already we've seen two graduates. And when I say 'graduates', these graduates have gone through [the program] and are healthy enough and engaged enough with community supports that they can go and live independently now" (NFN p. 26).

Some participants of the Hostels-to-Homes program have certainly benefitted through its implementation and become independent and contributing members of society. However, the H2H program has not come without worry and critique. The future of the program beyond the pilot stage appears to be slightly uncertain according to one city manager who suggests, "I don't know where it's going to go now because all the players, all the key players, at the Ministry have changed in the last year. So they don't even know what the original intent was. And to them, they probably don't understand the

issues” (DX p. 12). While she was in favour of this program, it was clear that struggles in the administration of the program do exist and require leadership from above. Opinions about Hostels-to-Homes at the agency level are a little more varied and often more critical of the proposed outcomes that the province has put forth. One interviewee talks about the Hostels-to-Homes program,

These programs aren't very good. Many of the people that get help, yes, they'll say we have helped this many people, but if you look closely most of the people they help are back on the streets within the next few months. They don't deal with people's problems. They just say “Here's a room, stay here” and then they get kicked out of the room for whatever reason, financial, or something they have a problem with, who knows. A lot of these programs that the government puts forward, they are just, they aren't real, they don't do it. So it's anytime the government comes up with something you really have to look at what it's actually doing and why (N p. 13).

With its focus on the individual and individual responsibility, the H2H program appears to support the advanced liberal framework of the government rather than addressing the more systemic problems that those below the poverty line are faced with. One city manager states, “A single person (on Ontario Works) specifically does not receive enough money to even have an apartment, right? I mean \$500 and whatever it is, \$540 or \$550 can't cover a month. I mean it doesn't cover it” (HC p. 9-10). The most pressing issue that emerged in each community consulted in this research project is the lack of affordable housing and transitional housing. With social housing waiting lists of up to eight years for a single bedroom apartment in certain communities, the problem of over-usage of shelters, while still of great significance, affects significantly fewer individuals

than those looking for safe, affordable housing due to financial strain.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of the shift in political rationality to advanced liberalism and the how this has influenced the administration and implementation of the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Hostels-to-Homes program, has been the focal point of this thesis. It has looked at how political practices have evolved over the years and the impact this has had on other policies and programs for the poverty stricken. The study of these two programs suggests that this transition to advanced liberalism, with its focus on decentralizing the social services, has downloaded most of the work for both programs to the local community level. As a result, I have suggested that the city is now taking on the role of the broker in managing the contracts between the provincial ministry and the agencies that are now receiving grants exclusively through an RFP process.

This move to contract governance has increased the workload of the agencies as the Ministry has set higher demands for accountability and transparency as a favourable move for the taxpayers. Having removed themselves from the heavy administration, this burden has been passed down to the local government to some extent and to the agencies more specifically. This provides the most flexibility to the province, especially for the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program, and allows them to not only govern-at-a-distance but to remain uncommitted to any particular funding for a certain period of time. On the other hand, the Hostels-to-Homes program that the province has created is an attempt at being more 'socially inclusive'. Though, as suggested above, this does not

result in greater equality or a dramatic change in social structure (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 412). While the H2H program has produced some successful ‘graduates’, some experts outside the local government realm have critiqued it for its lack of long-term care and its aim to turn program participants into responsible, working citizens. Its specific focus on a select number of individuals may have produced some small successes for those select individuals. Programs such as H2H, however, do little to address the systemic issues faced by a much broader spectrum of people. The ‘chronically homeless’ being helped by H2H may face the most extreme poverty and certainly require the most services but those considered ‘relatively homeless’ are much larger in number and do not benefit from expensive programs like Hostels-to-Homes. Ignoring the ‘relatively homeless’ in an effort to help only a few individuals is a social justice implication that will certainly create much bigger problems in the future.

This research project has only offered a limited analysis of these two MCSS programs. Still relatively new, both CHPP and H2H will certainly be redesigned to better fit the Ministry’s structure in the near future and address any current problems that the Ministerial evaluations discover. The Hostels-to-Homes program, still in its pilot stage at present, is certainly facing some administrative changes within the next few months as it moves past the pilot stage. A closer examination of the H2H ‘graduates’ over a multi year study would likely prove to be worthwhile. Further study of both, CHPP and H2H, and their long-term outcomes would be beneficial to the continued discussion of the politics of homelessness.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Interview Questions for Provincial and Municipal Government:

Background Questions

- How long have you been working at this job?
- Were your previous positions/work experiences influential in your decision to take on this job?

Roles

- Can you describe the work that you do?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have?

The Program

- Not too long ago the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program was created by the Province of Ontario. Could you tell me more about this program and how you are involved?
- What role has your office played in the creation and implementation of this program?
- What are the goals of this program and how do these address the causes of homelessness?
- What does the CHPP suggest is the best way to address these problems of poverty? Do you think this is a good approach?
- How has this program changed the lives of the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless? What improvements have you seen?
- How does this program compare to previous initiatives? How good were previous programs at addressing the needs of the homeless? Any advantages?
- Do you see any problems with the current program? Could you tell me more about this?
- What could be improved? How?
- How has the province/city responded to this program overall?

Governmental Relations

- Do you work together with other offices and departments on this program?
- How are their roles different from your roles?
- What benefits and what setbacks do you see?
- How have other levels of government responded to your department and your actions?
- Who is best fit to care for the homeless population?

Interview Questions for Non-Profit Sector:

Background Questions

- How long have you been working at this job?
- What brought you to this job?
- Were your previous positions/work experiences influential in your decision to take on this job?

Roles

- How would you describe your job?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have?

The Program

- The provincial government has recently implemented the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program. Could you tell me about this program and how your organization is involved in the implementation of this Prevention Program?
- What role has your office played in the creation and implementation of this program?
- What are the goals of this program and how do these address the causes of homelessness?
- What does the CHPP suggest is the best way to address these problems of poverty? Do you think this is a good approach?
- How has this program changed the lives of the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless? What improvements have you seen?
- How does this program compare to previous initiatives? How good were previous programs at addressing the needs of the homeless? Any advantages?
- Do you see any problems with the current program?
- What could be improved? How?

Government Relations

- How has your organization worked with the municipal government? Provincial government?
- Do you receive support from local and provincial governments?
- Is the set up of the Prevention Program an efficient way of addressing the homelessness problems in Ontario?
- Who do you feel is most responsible for the care of the homeless?

VITA AUCTORIS

Silke Schaefer was born in 1985 in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany. She graduated from the Sacred Heart School of Halifax in 2003. From there she went on to Saint Mary's University where she obtained a B.A. in Sociology and Criminology in 2007. She is currently a candidate for the Master's degree in Sociology at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Fall 2009.