Policy Frontiers: City-Regional Politics of Poverty and Drug Policy Mobility

by

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Abstract

As service-dependent groups are increasingly located outside established inner cities, this thesis examines the territorial and relational politics associated with suburban and city-regional geographies of poverty, drug policy, and addiction services. Drawing on a mixed-methods case study of Surrey, BC, this thesis explains the politics of suburban social marginality through drug policy mobility, specifically the regional mobilization of harm reduction, a public health approach to drug use and an alternative to criminalization. By conceptualizing Surrey as a *policy frontier* where competing drug policy approaches are mobilized, I map the constrained mobility of harm reduction as it encounters resistance. The political-institutional barriers to harm reduction include 1) redevelopment pressures and policy responses to constrain and displace harm reduction services for marginalized people who use drugs, and 2) a burgeoning private recovery house sector which is a key site of provincial abstinence-based social policy experimentation.

Keywords: Urban geography; policy mobility; poverty; harm reduction; Surrey, BC

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Surrey, British Columbia, is a changing suburban landscape, poised to surpass Vancouver as the region's largest municipality. Yet, like many cities, Surrey is a site of significant political struggle over local responses to poverty and addiction in the post-welfare age. As inner city gentrification continues, the region's very poor are increasingly located in more affordable suburban communities. For political and business elites, visible poverty and addiction—and concerns over crime and street disorder—are imagined as barriers to the city's growth and economic prosperity. Key policy actors frame the redevelopment of this post-war suburban landscape as a solution to poverty, addiction, and crime, and also necessary for the transformation of the suburban municipality into the region's leading and competing *urban* centre. Marginalized groups––particularly homeless and street-entrenched people who use drugs (PWUD)—are seen to be "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996) with the local growth coalition's vision for the new Surrey, where development, displacement, and punitive drug policy approaches are believed most appropriate to address these longstanding (and intensifying) challenges.

Yet, policymakers are searching for a politically expedient solution to address the contradictions of the neoliberal, post-welfare state: social marginality and the lack of affordable housing and public health and addictions services. In response to the perceived inherent criminality of these "urban outcasts" (Wacquant, 2008), scholars have documented an extensive diversity of punitive and revanchist responses often situating the police and criminal justice system as the primary 'fix' to the contemporary structural social and economic problems of the neoliberal state, including poverty, homelessness, unemployment, addiction, crime, and street economies. Yet, these responses enrol a

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messy and often complex assemblage of state and non-state institutional actors, including police, local governments, non-profits, health and social welfare departments, and territorially-dependent business interests. In making sense of this increasingly suburbanized 'crisis' and the upsurge in suburban anger directed as marginal groups, I examine the politics of this post-welfare landscape by analyzing the relational and territorial politics of poverty, drug policy, and the addiction services system. As objects of study, these interrelated fields—poverty, drug policy, and public health/addiction services—provide an incredibly rich and productive space to conceptualize through the empirical findings (McCann & Ward, 2012a). I turn now to briefly outline the conceptual framework for this research project.

1.1. Conceptual framework

The research is informed by but several interrelated literatures in urban political and economic geography, including: critical policy studies and policy mobilities; urban growth politics and relational place-making; state regulatory restructuring and variegated neoliberalization; and, urban revanchism and poverty management. The following discussion is a summary and I will further elaborate on the concepts in the individual chapters.

1.1.1. Critical policy studies and urban policy mobilities

The critical policy studies and policy mobilities literatures provide important theoretical assistance in conceptualizing the politics and socio-spatial dimensions of contemporary policymaking. Critical policy studies is a multidisciplinary, social constructivist literature which understands policy as a contemporary expression of power, social relations, and governance (Shore & Wright, 1997; Shore et al., 2011). Methodologically and epistemologically, "studying up" and "studying through" the sites and situations of policymaking (McCann & Ward, 2012a; Shore, 2011; Yanow, 2011) provides insight into the role of elite policy actors and networks in how they construct

policy rationalities, political subjects, and shape the lived experiences of "the poor" (Roy, 2010, 2012a, 2012b). This approach is supplemented by a relational conceptualization of policymaking and political practice, as policies encounter, and are mobilized by, diverse actors across and between multiple scales and institutions (McCann, 2011b).

The urban policy mobilities literature provides insight into how policies are mobile, circulate across space, mutate as they travel, and are fixed or assembled in place through networks, informational infrastructures, and processes of translocal learning (Gonzalez, 2011; McCann & Ward, 2011a, 2012b, 2013; McCann, 2011b; McFarlane, 2011; Peck & Theodore, 2010c, 2010a, 2010b; Peck, 2002, 2011a; Temenos, 2014). This literature examines how mobile policies shape, and are shaped by, the places, people, and institutions they encounter. It is fundamentally a geographical and power-laden process, shaped by the political-economic and historical contexts in which policies and actors are situated. While this approach emphasizes mobility, relationality, and processes of assembling, it also appreciates that the global-local circulation of knowledge as fundamentally a fixed, grounded, and territorial process (McCann & Ward, 2011a; McCann, 2013). This tension provides productive conceptual opportunities to examine how the local is assembled through its relationships with globally mobile flows and territorial enactments (McCann & Ward, 2010; McCann, 2004b). While understudied, there is also a conceptual interest in the frictions and limits to policy circulation and mobilization (Clarke, 2012; Jacobs, 2012; McCann, 2008; Temenos & McCann, 2013). Some have convincingly argued that we should think beyond the binary of policy mobility/immobility to consider cases of "differential" or "slow" policy mobility (McCann & Temenos, 2015; Temenos, 2014), especially as mobile policy models, knowledges, and practices encounter political and institutional resistance with territorially-fixed actors like local growth coalitions or urban political regimes.

The policy mobilities approach employs the use of assemblage theory in a descriptive and methodological manner to examine the ongoing labour and "purposive gathering of people, institutional capacities, expertise, models, techniques and technologies, political sustenance, etc. from local sources and, crucially, from elsewhere"

(McCann, 2011c, p. 144). This approach helps conceptualize the constitution of 'local' policies and the politics of policy*making*, and more generally, how cities and regions are assembled through the productive tension between global-local relationalities and policy (de)territorializtion (McCann & Ward 2010). Additionally, "assemblage" allows policy mobility, mutation, and experimentation to be conceptualized within the relational city-regional political geography (Allen & Cochrane, 2007, p. 1171). Crucially, then, the "regional assemblage" can show how policies are relationally assembled across city-regional spaces and territories—and how the politics of assembling interrelate with particular political-institutional configurations and extant policy rationalities. For Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 140), the "socioeconomic outcomes of policies" are products of local-institutional contexts, and "policy models that affirm and extend dominant paradigms … are more likely to travel with the following wind of hegemonic compatibility or imprimatur status." Policy mobilization and implementation reflects the ideological terrain encountered, and may also be shaped by urban politics, involving growth coalitions and relational place-making practices.

1.1.2.   Urban growth politics and relational place-making

Growth remains a key concern for local governments. Harvey Molotch (1976, p. 309) opined that "[a] city and, more generally, any locality, is conceived as the areal expression of the interests of some land-based elite." While this land-based elite of "modern rentiers" may disagree on specific issues—how and where development should occur—they unite in their overall support for growth and increasing aggregate land rents. Local growth coalitions engage in a politics of persuasion, working to construct narratives and explanations to convince the urban constituencies of the 'necessity' of growth. Often these discourses—or frames—make the case that growth and development will alleviate place-specific social problems, especially decline and disinvestment. Growth coalitions engage in relational place-framing and place-making practices in order to persuade and convince others of the necessity of growth—and the policy interventions that will ensure that a city remains competitive through state interventions to create the

conditions for development. Importantly, these *discourses* are more than words; they necessitate *material* interventions to ensure growth imperatives are realized. Connecting the discursive and the material, Elwood et al. (2014, p. 126) conceptualize place-making as both discursive and material, as it "refers to the representational practices and material interventions that produce and maintain a place." Moreover, discourses always work through and constitute institutions.

Therefore, place-framing practices may be politically motivating to condition and justify the mobilization of certain political and policy responses constructed as necessary to realize a particular goal. Particular representations of place through terms like 'slum' and 'blight' are politically powerful because they "gather together seemingly disparate groups and ideas into … a *discursive coalition* in order to determine specific actions and policies, to both wield power and be wielded by the powerful" (Schafran 2013, 138; emphasis in original). In sum, the aim of growth coalitions to increase aggregate land rents, by replacing problem people and properties with wealthier residents and higher land rents, involves relational place-making practices intended to identify development-friendly policy interventions as necessary. And yet, underpinning entrepreneurial urban governance and policymaking is the state-regulatory transformation from the Fordist-Keynesian welfare state to neoliberalism.

1.1.3. State regulatory restructuring and variegated neoliberalization

Ongoing rounds of neoliberal regulatory reform have transformed urban landscapes (Peck & Tickell, 1994, 2012). The Fordist-Keynesian era has been followed over the last 30 years with successive waves of experimentation in the search for a regulatory fix. Processes of neoliberalization involve both the "roll back" social programs and protections and the "roll out" of market-oriented policy innovations, including the penalization of social policy and workfare programs in response to the perceived threats of "crime, worklessness, welfare dependency, and social breakdown" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 395). In this way, cities and urban regions are "key sites of economic contradiction, governance failure, and social fall-out" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 395).

A distinctive feature of neoliberal governance is the role of policy experimentation in the search for a post-Fordist regulatory fix. Yet, despite widespread market-oriented regulatory reforms produced through local sites, these landscapes are highly uneven and reflect inherited institutional and political structures (Brenner et al., 2010a). The fact that processes of neoliberalization produce difference between *places* reflects the importance of distinct national and city-regional political economies, institutional structures, and policy regimes. The roll-back and roll-out of market-disciplinary reforms has produced new geographies and strategies of poverty management and containment, ranging from punitive to more accommodative responses intended to manage the social and economic contradictions—specifically poverty and homelessness—of the post-welfare age.

1.1.4.   Urban revanchism and poverty management

Geographers have a longstanding interest in the spatialities of poverty, welfare provision, and social policy (Milbourne, 2010) across different welfare regimes and changing state governance forms (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Jessop & Sum, 2006; Mohan, 2002, 2003). The pioneering work of geographers demonstrates how political-economic restructuring and deinstitutionalization in US cities produced concentrations of service-dependent populations in inner city locations (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Wolch & Dear, 1993), where access to cheap residential hotels, shelters, soup kitchens, and other social services were central to survival. In many respects, the services necessary for survival are delivered by "shadow state" institutions, namely the voluntary sector (Wolch, 1990), at a time of ongoing and public welfare retrenchment and regulatory experimentation (Brenner & Theodore, 2002a, 2002b; DeVerteuil, 2003; Fyfe & Milligan, 2003; Peck, 2001; Pinch, 1997). With the hollowing out of the national welfare state, there has been an emergence of new spaces of local welfare state experimentation.

Importantly, attention has been paid to the punitive and revanchist policy responses to urban marginality and homelessness in cities of the global north (Davis, 1990; D. Mitchell, 2003; Smith, 1996, 2001, 2002), while others advocate an alternative

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framework of "poverty management" (Wolch & DeVerteuil, 2001) to conceptualize homelessness and poverty regulation in a more ambivalent and managerial way, acknowledging the diverse and sometimes conflicting state and institutional logics in response to impoverishment. Of particular note is the work of Robert Fairbanks (2009, 2011a, 2011b) in innovatively connecting street-level ethnographic accounts of Philadelphia's "recovery house movement" as an informal poverty management system as it articulates with the broader regulatory restructuring and policy experimentation of the post-welfare age.

1.2. Research objectives

My overarching concern is to draw on these literatures—and build upon them—in order to explain how competing approaches to poverty and drug policy are mobilized, contested, reworked, and advanced in Surrey through the governance of sites of addiction service provision. Far from seeing the emergence of a stable and coherent 'Surrey model' in response to poverty and addiction, (extra)local approaches are assembled through diverse policy actors and resources drawn from 'near' and 'far'. Political struggles over policy responses to poverty and addiction are constitutive of broader struggles over social reproduction, health and welfare, and social inclusion/exclusion of marginalized citizens across this politically unstable, and often contradictory, post-welfare suburban landscape. Surrey's political geography of poverty and drug policy is best conceptualized as a messy, deeply political *policy frontier*, constituted through the assembling of competing policies, discourses, and strategies mobilized by ideologically opposed networks of actors with different institutional capacities to advance policy change. Moreover, I am interested in how conflicting policy approaches and experimental state-regulatory practices aimed at managing poverty and addiction have produced a particular frontier space within the region, where political struggles mark the landscape and outcomes are not predetermined.

To conceptualize Surrey as a policy frontier, I specifically map the movement of harm reduction, a public health-oriented approach to illicit drug use, to examine how this

policy model is met with significant political resistance in the face of preferred abstinence and criminalization approaches. The political-institutional barriers to harm reduction include over 200 private, abstinence-based recovery houses and programs. For (extra)local policymakers, these "shadow welfare state" institutions are imagined as a politically expedient solution to homelessness, addiction, and criminality, which can be subsumed into an extant economic rationality of austerity and public welfare retrenchment. Surrey's burgeoning private recovery sector serves a key *local* site of provincial social policy experimentation, increasingly aligned to serve the needs of the criminal justice system and the sub/urban social control and criminalization of the region's marginalized classes. Despite political barriers, harm reduction is cautiously and incrementally advanced by a network of policy actors drawing on resources and expertise from across the region.

In order to achieve the empirical and conceptual aims of this research, this project has five objectives, accomplished in the chapter(s) noted:

- catalogue and examine the policy actors, institutions, documents, political and policy contexts, statistics, and media accounts relevant to the management of poverty, social marginality and addiction-related health and social services in Surrey (Chapters 3, 5, and 7);

- explain how particular knowledges, rationales, practices and relational place-making strategies are assembled and mobilized by policy actors in response to poverty and addiction (Chapter 3)

- explain 1) how Surrey's landscape of addictions services is produced through the networked politics surrounding drug policy and poverty, and 2) how harm reduction drug policy is constrained (Chapters 5 and 7)

- explain how Surrey's approach to drug policy and addiction is relationally assembled through city-regional and extra-local institutional configurations, practices, and politics (Chapters 5 and 7); and,

- explain and conceptualize Surrey as a *policy frontier* where harm reduction drug policy is constrained and met with institutional resistance (Chapters 3, 5, and 7).

1.3. Thesis organization

This thesis is written and assembled with a hybrid approach in mind, it predominately adheres to a paper format with a methodology chapter, self-contained empirical chapters, and short chapters to conceptually and empirically ensure coherency across the thesis, followed by a conclusion. In Chapter 3, I explain how growth and redevelopment are constructed by the local growth coalition as the solution to suburban poverty and decline. As inner cities gentrify, the suburbanization of poverty presents distinct problems for growth coalitions interested in the reimagining, redevelopment, and revalorization of 'declining' post-war suburban landscapes. Yet just as inner cities were constructed as dangerous and morally deficient slums to justify post-war urban renewal programs, similarly powerful relational place discourses are mobilized to legitimize new forms of *suburban renewal*.

In Chapter 5, I argue that the political resistance to harm reduction must be explained in relation to Surrey's burgeoning abstinence-based recovery houses, which are localized sites of marketized social policy experimentation in which the provincial government seeks to *legitimize* a predominately for-profit, informal recovery sector—not through an existing regulatory and funding structure—but by *circumventing* the health authority's more expensive, harm reduction-oriented, and professionalized substance-use housing program and licensing regime. In its place, provincial policymakers have established a parallel—but much weaker, cheaper, and politically flexible—regulatory regime with limited oversight. Contradictorily, as the provincial government produces a lucrative market opportunity, informally operated recovery houses emerge as sites of criminality, and yet, are imagined as an idealized policy fix to addiction, crime, and the lack of affordable housing. In this way, Surrey is an important site through which recent rounds of welfare state restructuring are underway, providing insight into the importance of the scalar politics of social policy experimentation—and failure—across neoliberalizing urban regions. Nevertheless, the malleability of this experimental policy reform project is built upon an ideological agenda of sub/urban social control of the

marginal classes through a custodial, abstinence-based "therapeutic community" policy model.

In Chapter 7, I examine the frontier politics constitutive of this *drug policy frontier* where the harm reduction model is met with resistance as it moves across the city-region and into Surrey. I argue that this public health approach to addiction is constrained as policy actors struggle over institutionalizing punitive, abstinence programs and approaches while resisting the institutionalization of harm reduction practices and policy learning. These struggles involve policy actors with differing institutional capacities to initiate urban policy learning and change. Despite ongoing attempts to resist the embedding of harm reduction knowledge and practices, harm reduction policy activists operate within a constrained political-institutional environment and advance harm reduction through *cautious incrementalism*.

More broadly, I aim to explain how attempts at progressive policy change encounter friction with dominant neoliberal policy orthodoxies by demonstrating how Surrey imagines itself as a distinct policy innovator in competition with Vancouver, therefore serving as a key site for market-disciplinary policymaking and punitive-institution building. If Vancouver represents one node in an urban imaginary of alternative approaches to addiction and poverty through harm reduction policy (however debatable this might be), then Surrey stands as its foil as the region's emergent *centre* of punitive and market-oriented policymaking. Yet, it also emerges as a frontier of political struggle, jurisdictional conflict, and institutional contestation over the region's social policy futures.

Chapter 2.

Methodology

Through a critical realist approach, this project adopts the ontological and epistemological position that a knowable social reality is attainable through the reflexive combination of intensive and extensive mixed methods and the use of iterative abstraction and triangulation (Elwood, 2010; Sayer, 2000, 2010; Warshawsky, 2013; Yeung, 1997). This position rejects the belief that social science is either nomothetic (seeking to develop general laws) or idiographic (concerned with documenting the unique) (Sayer, 2000, p. 3). Crucially, through the reflexive extended case method approach, this research project uses the case study for its explanatory power rather than its typicality or representativeness. As sociologist J. Clyde Mitchell (1983, p. 190) argues, "[t]he essential point about making inferences from case material [is] that the extrapolation is in fact based on the validity of the analysis rather than the representativeness of events." Certainly a case must be appropriately positioned as a site for empirical scrutiny, but it is primarily through case analysis that 'micro' processes are connected with 'macro' forces.

Michael Burawoy's extended case method (ECM) (Burawoy, 1998; Burawoy et al., 2000), Peck and Theodore's (2012) "distended" case, and McCann and Ward's (McCann & Ward, 2012a) assemblage and 'studying through' approaches provide the methodological foundation for this project. ECM is particularly appropriate because it explicitly looks to "extract the general from the unique, to move from the 'micro' to the 'macro', and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory" (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). Burawoy (2001, p. 149) argues that "[w]hat we understand to be the 'global' is itself constituted within the local[,] [and] it

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emanates from very specific agencies, institutions and organizations whose processes can be observed first-hand." Specifically, ECM embraces four reflexive principles of science: extending the observer to the participant; extending observations over space and time; extending out from process to force; and, extending theory through refutation and reconstruction (Burawoy, 1998).

Although this research project focuses on Surrey, BC as the empirical field site, I found it empirically and conceptually productive to "study out" (Burawoy, 1998) from the geographical site in order to examine the relational city-regional politics and causal (necessary) mechanisms producing this politically and institutionally scaled and relationally assembled policy frontier. The extended/distended case method, assemblage, and 'studying through' are complimentary approaches since they reflexively acknowledge the many (institutionalized) sites that often constitute the field and the need to "study through" the sites and situations of policymaking. This entails studying through the diverse sites, situations, spaces, and events that are necessary to see how policy and practices are assembled—from council chambers to community forums to boardrooms (McCann & Ward, 2012a; Shore et al., 2011; Yanow, 2011).

Furthermore, "assemblage" is used as a descriptive tool and in a methodological sense to follow flows of people, ideas, and practices (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011; McCann, 2011c). This orientation seeks explanation through rich, local depth with translocal/extra-local reach (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 25), and furthermore, this "methodological openness and flexibility" is an attempt to balance the tension between careful research design and "the reality of unexpected connections, mutations, and research sites emerging during the [project]" (McCann & Ward, 2012a, p. 43). Drawing on these approaches, this project employs reflexive ethnographic approaches supplemented with archival, content, and quantitative analyses.

2.1. Study design and methods

Specifically, the mixed-methods research project employed 45 semi-structured interviews (43 unique interviewees) with key informants (policymakers, political and economic elites, activists, front-line workers and administrators from the health authority and non-profit service providers) (see Appendix A for sample interview questions), typically lasting 45–90 minutes, participant observation of 14 business community and police-convened neighbourhood meetings and one focus group with a peer drug-user group, as well as descriptive statistical analyses to supplement the qualitative evidence. Interviews are catalogued in Table 2.1. Moreover, this one-year project benefited from numerous informal conversations and email exchanges with informants. Methods also included substantial archival research. Key sources were government records (primarily correspondence and internal memos) obtained through five Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, and 315 media articles and over 100 policy and planning documents and meeting minutes. Interviews and documents were coded, analysed, and triangulated for recurrent and divergent discourses and themes (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005).

Table 2.1.   Key informants

Key Informant Category	Number of Interviews
Service Provider	11
Health Authority	10
Advocacy Organization	5
Provincial Politician	5
Local Government Bureaucrat	4
Local Government Politician	4
Business Organization	2
Provincial Government Agency	2
Neighbourhood Activist	1
Federal Politician	1
Total	**45**

I catalogued and examined state and non-state documents on regional poverty, public health, service provision, and drug policy, as well as media accounts, policies, plans, bylaws, and related meeting minutes from the state, non-profits, and the business community to broadly frame the empirical and historical context for interviews and participant observation. The archival and document research will also illustrate policy development around drug use and the regulation of low-income services, specifically for addiction and mental health. Discourses, rationales, institutions, policy actors, and events were extracted and recorded from the archival and document research phase.

Following the media and policy document cataloguing and coding, key informants were identified and contacted for interviews. A reputational referral approach was used in the interviews (Cochrane, 1998): at the end of the interview, informants were asked to refer possible participants to me based on the significance they attribute to that person in relation to local politics, drug policy, poverty, and addiction and health services. Additionally, I used a referral approach to ask personal contacts to pass along

the study details and contact information to possible participants that fall within the aforementioned categories of key actors.

Drawing on Burawoy's ECM, I carefully extended myself from observer to participant in an effort to question and disrupt dominant proto-explanations—or "folk concepts" (Wacquant, 2008)—in order to generate more candid responses. In my engagement with (possible) informants, I carefully judged situations in which a more disruptive posture would be helpful, and other situations where it might unnecessarily restrict my access. Due largely to the multiple FOI requests (which consecutively 'built' on the previous one), I had a great degree of insight into the politics of poverty and addiction through internal correspondence, meeting minutes, and ministerial policy recommendations. This proved to be incredibly important in allowing me to enter interviews with an informed and cautiously disruptive posture in which I would reveal the depth of my knowledge of the often messy, 'backroom' politics to generate more productive 'political' conversations. However, in some cases, a disruptive approach to interviews, in fact, produced more guarded interviews and a well-rehearsed political line. In this project, I was explicitly interested in "studying up", since poverty and policy research often fails to focus adequately on elite policy actors "to the extent that they do undeniably shape policy and lived experience" (Yanow, 2011, p. 306). FOI requests and subsequent "access brokering" reveal a great deal about the "internal dynamics and everyday work of government organizations" (Larsen, 2013, p. 6) and are an indispensible research method to understanding the deeply political nature of policymaking and the scalar political conflicts between state agencies which are often intentionally kept out of interviews and public documents.

2.2. Analysis

Interviews were recorded and personally transcribed and coded in word processing documents and spreadsheets. A field notebook was kept throughout the duration of the project, and notes were kept throughout observation of meetings. For

analyzing interviews and observations, I identified key themes (from the initial archival and document analysis) and emergent themes occurring in interviews (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). The analysis of field notes involved coding for expected, emergent, and recurrent themes, with attention to the relationship between actions in political spaces and the stated positions and rationales of informants in the interviews, often revealing what issues were particularly political if informants provided inconsistent or entirely false statements. Through coding, the identified discourses, rationales, explanations, and actors often prompted me to ask new questions, examine an issue from a different angle, and lead me to "follow the policy" in fruitful directions.

Statistics were analyzed in ArcGIS and Excel spreadsheets. Ultimately I decided that cartographic representation of the data was not necessary and descriptive statistics would suffice. Throughout the duration of the data collection phase, iterative abstraction was used to constantly move from the concrete to the abstract, isolating a particular "side" of a social object, event or process, in an attempt to establish the causal mechanisms and distinguishing necessary/internal from contingent/external relationships (Sayer, 2000). Furthermore, triangulation among data enabled cross-examination and reliability tests, helping to reflexively challenge proto-explanations (especially dominant in the media) and construct *analytical* concepts. While I only pursued one follow-up interview (one informant pursued a follow-up interview with me), it allowed me to return findings to key informants in the continued process of iterative abstraction and triangulation, especially for Chapter 5. Empirical data collection and analysis does not occur in isolation from conceptual development. Rather, mid-level theory is stretched, challenged, and reconstructed in an ongoing and reflexive manner with data analysis. Ultimately, the validity of the research findings and analysis is supported by the rigour of this mixed-methods project, which allowed me to constantly triangulate across data and uncover the messiness of urban and regional politics and policymaking often (purposefully) hidden from view.

Chapter 3.

Making the case for suburban renewal: discourses of poverty and decline and the politics of redevelopment

3.1. Introduction

> *With the less expensive accommodations, there has always been a population of lower-income people and lower rents [in Surrey]. And it becomes a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy.* (BIA official, No. 2)

North American suburbs and metropolitan regions are changing. Inner city gentrification and devalorized post-war suburbs are transforming the spatialities of poverty. Yet, these processes pose specific challenges for suburban political and economic elites hoping to transform peripheral locations into more densely urbanized and economically and culturally significant places within city-regions. As the suburban business improvement association (BIA) official suggests, the suburbanization of poverty presents distinct problems for growth coalitions interested in the reimagining, redevelopment, and revalorization of 'declining' suburban landscapes. Yet, just as inner cities were constructed as dangerous and morally deficient slums to justify post-war urban renewal programs, similarly powerful relational place discourses are legitimating new forms of *suburban renewal*. Discourses of poverty and decline, while long associated with inner city neighbourhoods, are being repurposed to serve the political aims of suburban growth coalitions while also obfuscating the structural roots of poverty (Beauregard, 1993; Schafran, 2013). Despite a language of market-led growth, interventionist suburban renewal policies facilitate capital accumulation through the clearance of marginal people and land uses and their replacement with affluent residents and more profitable property uses.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how growth and redevelopment are constructed as the solution to suburban poverty and decline. Urban-political scholarship remains largely silent on the significance of business interests and growth coalitions in the governance of "newly emerging [suburban and exurban] spaces within urban and regional systems" (N. Phelps & Parsons, 2003; N. Phelps et al., 2006, p. 362). In reimagining devalorized post-war suburban landscapes as new urban residential and economic centres, suburban growth coalitions' place-framing discourses are mobilized to legitimate state renewal policies. Drawing on a case study of Surrey, British Columbia, the largest suburb in the Vancouver region, I demonstrate how the growth coalition discursively frames the remaking of a predominately low-income inner suburb into the region's next downtown centre. Growth and redevelopment are imagined as the solution to the problems of poverty, a 'declining' built environment, and criminality. These place-framing and place-making practices legitimate suburban renewal policies in which state interventions through land use and demolition, public investment, development subsidies, and 'quality of life' policing strategies are intended to eliminate barriers to market-led development and capital accumulation. Discursive practices reveal how local growth coalitions—comprised of political actors and business interests—influence policymaking in order to transform devalorized inner suburban spaces into affluent and more profitable regional centres.

Drawing on the extended case method approach (Burawoy, 1998), this article is based on one year (2014–2015) of research on the relational politics of suburban poverty and regional social change. The mixed-methods research project employed 45 semi-structured interviews (43 unique interviewees) with key informants (policymakers, government officials, economic elites and business officials, non-profit service providers, and activists), observation of 15 neighbourhood and stakeholder meetings, as well archival research. Key sources were government records (primarily correspondence and internal memos) obtained through Freedom of Information requests, and 315 media articles and over 100 policy and planning documents and meeting minutes. Interviews

and documents were coded, analysed, and triangulated for recurrent and divergent discourses and themes (Cochrane, 1998; Flowerdew & Martin, 2005).

The next section provides the empirical and historical context of the case study, situating Surrey's political-economic and demographic profile within the city-regional context, and also illustrating local shifts in the political framing of poverty, decline, and growth. I then turn to the paper's conceptual framework, which brings together critical urban-political literatures on suburban and city-regional change, urban growth politics and entrepreneurial governance, and discursive framing and relational place-making. The paper then examines the empirical case of Surrey, Canada and concludes with a discussion of the findings and their broader significance for urban and regional theory.

3.2. Surrey, BC and the socio-economic transformation of the Vancouver region

The Vancouver region is the third-largest in Canada, following the Toronto and Montreal metropolitan regions. The Vancouver metropolitan area, consisting of 21 municipalities, has a population of over 2.3 million people. The two largest cities, Vancouver and Surrey, had populations of 603,502 and 468,251, respectively. Surrey has also experienced the largest regional share of population growth from 2006-2011 (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). In 2005, Vancouver's median household income was $47,299 and Surrey's was $60,168, while renter households median incomes were $34,872 and $37,090 respectively (Metro Vancouver, 2014). In Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood has the city's lowest household incomes (City of Vancouver, 2014), while the post-war 'inner suburban' Whalley neighbourhood remains one of the region's lowest income areas (Ley & Lynch, 2012). The geographic distribution of public welfare provision is an indicator of where very low-income people live. To illustrate the changing regional geography of poverty, in 2013, 71% of income assistance (welfare) recipients lived in suburban municipalities, while 29% resided in the City of Vancouver. The City of Surrey has seen the most significant percentage increase in regional share of income

assistance recipients, rising from 17% to 22% from 1995 to 2013, while the City of Vancouver has seen a decrease from 35% to 29%.[1] Put another way, in 2013, over one-fifth of the region's welfare recipients lived in Surrey, especially in Whalley. Data from 1995–2013 suggest that this trend will continue: the region's very poor will increasingly seek housing in Surrey for its relative affordable and accessibility.

Whalley is approximately 35 kilometres from Vancouver city centre and located at the terminus of the region's Skytrain rapid transit system. The built environment can be characterized as an "in-between" landscape (Keil & Young, 2011; Young et al., 2011) with a mix of land uses, including new and older high-rise condominium and apartment towers, low-rise commercial and industrial buildings, and predominately post-war single-family homes. In 1991, the City of Surrey approved its *City Centre Plan* which identified Whalley for development as a regional downtown centre, and in 2011, the regional planning authority designated the area as the region's second metropolitan downtown (Metro Vancouver, 2011).

Over the last 20 years, Surrey has been governed predominantly by a conservative pro-growth coalition. During this time, discursive framing of the problems and solutions in Whalley have remained consistent, despite a change in tone under different mayoral leadership. As one city councillor described it, "…they've been doing things the same way for a very long time. We've had 20 years of pretty much the same group" (interview, local politician, No. 2). In 2005, a coalition of conservative and centre-left pro-growth politicians, led by a charismatic mayor, swept city hall on a strong anti-crime and city-building agenda intended to transform Surrey from a poorly regarded, crime-ridden suburb into a modern, higher density, and economically significant regional *urban* centre. Whalley's transformation from a suburban locality into the region's second downtown has been central to the reimagining of Surrey as a new economic centre for the metro area. One mayor's "war on drugs" in Whalley (Spencer, 2003) from the 1990s into the

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[1] Figures are calculated by the author from unpublished BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation data obtained through a request. Calculations are based upon annual average caseloads.

early 2000s took an overtly confrontational and punitive approach to the problems of Whalley, including public battles between the city and social service providers (interviews, staff members, service providers, No. 2, 3, 8). Surrey's accessibility by rapid transit and its aging post-war housing stock make it a relatively affordable location for the region's very poor to seek accommodation, and yet, political and economic elites are hoping to redevelop Whalley into a new gentrified downtown district through the wholesale redevelopment of the area.

3.3. Suburban frontiers of 'decline' and growth

This paper draws upon—and contributes to—three interrelated literatures in urban political geography, including 1) suburban and city-regional governance, 2) urban growth politics and entrepreneurial governance, and 3) place-framing and place-making. In bringing these literatures into conversation with each other, I provide insight into changing suburbs and city-regions and new modalities of governance by conceptualizing the role of local growth coalitions and how political and economic elites engage in discursive place-framing and place-making practices in order to legitimize policy interventions intended to facilitate growth and capital accumulation.

3.3.1. Taking suburbs and city-regions seriously

There is growing recognition of the importance of suburbs within today's changing metropolitan regions (Nijman, 2015). If, as Keil (2013b) suggests, we are to adequately conceptualize changing urban regions and increasing peripheral population growth and economic activity, then we must take suburban and city-regional spaces, politics, and imaginaries seriously. This endeavour requires conceptualizing the *relational* politics of sub/urban and city-regional change by understanding, for example, inner city gentrification in relation to the suburbanization of poverty.

Recent attention on the variegated processes of suburbanization challenge longstanding readings of suburban form, governance, and politics through the American suburban ideal (Keil, 2013a). Suburbanization is defined as "the combination of non-central population and economic growth with urban spatial expansion" (Ekers et al., 2012, p. 407). For Phelps et al. (2010, p.372; see also Phelps & Wood 2011; Phelps 2012), suburban geographies are more productively conceptualized as *post*-suburban in order to advance more complex understandings of the (dis)continuity in processes of suburbanization and contemporary edge development, as well as "the shifting constellations of actors involved in [the] construction" of post-suburban politics and ideology. Moreover, post-suburban politics are constituted through attempts to resolve the tensions "between growth and conservation, over the pursuit of growth versus provision for collective consumption, and over governmental secession or amalgamation in processes of place-making" (367). In understanding how these tensions and problems are struggled over, we are reminded to "[focus] on different policies, practices, ideologies, coercive actions and the role of aesthetics" (Ekers et al., 2012, p. 407).

A renewed focus on 'forgotten' suburban spaces, lives, and politics also demands that we take the relational politics of city-regions seriously. Examining the importance of discursive framings in city-regional politics, McCann (2007) identifies the political nature of liveability discourses articulated by elites as particular state strategies which often elide questions of social inequality and gentrification. Similarly, Etherington and Jones (2009) draw attention to the uneven development and socio-spatial inequalities across city-regions, as peripheral areas beyond regional centres may experience widening disparities. Post-suburban and city-regional approaches highlight the importance of moving beyond definitional debates over what is 'urban' and 'suburban'. In this way, attending to *how* places and politics are relationally produced, contested, and reworked across variegated city-regions is a productive endeavor.

Suburban and peripheral city-regional geographies also demand greater attention due to new metropolitan spatialities of poverty and inequality. After successive rounds of gentrification and the loss of affordable inner city housing, low-income households are

increasingly located in older inner suburban and peripheral environments (Cooke, 2013; Cowen & Parlette, 2011; Goodling et al., 2015; Howell & Timberlake, 2014; Hulchanski, 2010; Ley & Lynch, 2012; Nijman, 2015; Randolph & Tice, 2014; Short et al., 2007; Young, 2013). While this is not to suggest that inner city locations are wealthy, homogenous enclaves (and suburbs the opposite), there are a variety of forces driving the suburbanization of poverty. Inner-ring suburbs are experiencing increasing heterogeneity and impoverishment, which in recent years, has fuelled dystopian discourses of decline (Schafran, 2013) in which state interventions to facilitate market-led renewal and growth may be constructed as the antidote.

3.3.2. Growth politics and entrepreneurial governance

Growth and economic development are perhaps the most significant concerns for local governments. Nearly four decades ago, Harvey Molotch (1976, p. 309) opined that "[a] city and, more generally, any locality, is conceived as the areal expression of the interests of some land-based elite." While this land-based elite of "modern rentiers" may disagree on specific issues—how and where development should occur—they unite in their overall support for growth and increasing aggregate land rents. The growth coalition is a loose organization of political and policy actors, including political elites, media, business association members, finance and real estate industry professionals, local businesses, and neighbourhood organizations. Business interests are often the most active in urban politics, as they attempt "through collective action and often in alliance with other business people, to create conditions that will intensify future land use in an area" (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 32). This agenda is sustained through the cultural power of growth boosterism through which growth and development are the source of immense local celebration and pride. In recent decades, allied place entrepreneurs and economic elites, with the support of politicians, may form place-based business improvement associations (BIAs), to strategically advocate for development and the improvement of a particular area to capture tax revenue for their small area (Ward, 2006, 2007). The rise of local growth coalitions, and pro-growth politics, generally, is part of the broader

transformation from urban managerialism to entrepreneurial governance (Harvey, 1989) and the neoliberalization of cities (Brenner & Theodore, 2002a; Peck & Tickell, 2002).

Crucially, members of the local growth coalition are engaged in a politics of persuasion and representation in which narratives are constructed in order to convince others of the growth imperative. These discourses identify how development will improve the *whole* community and alleviate social problems, especially decline and disinvestment. In this way, concentrated poverty is perceived to be "damaging to exchange values" and may require particular interventions to eliminate these barriers to growth (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 112):

> Indeed, efforts at urban 'revival' are often schemes to break, through either wholesale land clearance or selective destruction, just this chain of complimentary relationships within poor areas. The only strong debate revolves around strategy: whether to close the tavern, arrest the prostitutes, relocate the mission, or destroy a group of physical structures that serve a use for the useless. (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 113)

Importantly, elites represent development as beneficial for the whole community, as it attracts new business, brings middle-class residents, and increases property values. Yet as Logan and Molotch note, these *discourses* necessitate *material* interventions to ensure growth imperatives are realized. As Weber argues, "spatial policies, such as urban renewal funding for slum clearance or contemporary financial incentives, depend on discursive practices that stigmatize properties targeted for demolition and redevelopment" (Weber, 2002, p. 519). In this way, elites' discursive practices perform political work through which poverty and decline may be framed as problems and policies enacted to create the material preconditions necessary to realize growth.

3.3.3. Discursive place-framing and relational place-making

Representational practices have material effects (England, 2004). As a form of representation, discourses reveal how social actors and coalitions construct meaning to achieve ideological aims (Beauregard, 1993; Lees, 2004). In a Foucauldian sense,

discourses also operate and circulate through institutions. Discursive framing, as relational place-making practice, may be conceptualized in terms of the political strategies through which social groups (not always consciously) diagnose place-specific problems in order to motivate and justify particular responses and 'solutions' (Pierce et al., 2011). Through relational place-making, places are ideologically constructed in relation to each other in ways that motivate particular political aims. McCann (2003, p. 160) defines discursive framing as "the process through which interest groups involved in urban politics seek to convince others of the merits of their particular understanding of how the world is, how it should be, and the policies that will make it better in the future." Furthermore, Elwood et al. (2014, p. 126) conceptualize place-making as both discursive and material: "[p]lace-making refers to the representational practices and material interventions that produce and maintain a place." Therefore place-framing practices may be politically motivating to condition and justify the mobilization of certain political and policy responses constructed as necessary to realize a particular goal.

Examining place-framing discourses provide an opportunity to analyse how problems and solutions are imagined *in relation* to other places through the longstanding city-suburb dialectic (see also Elwood and Lawson 2013). As Schafran (2013) suggests, the destructive post-war framing of the urban through a lexicon of blight, slum, decline, and crisis is being re-spatialized and repurposed through an emergent (American) 'slumburbia' discourse. These portrayals or frames "merely [root] our imagination of a problem in a specific geography rather than exposing the roots of the problem itself" (Schafran, 2013, p. 131). In effect, these practices are "designed to convince a constituency that particular policies are best implemented and discussed at a specific scale and not at others" (McCann, 2003, p. 163). For example, sub/urban 'blight' may be constructed as a *local* or *neighbourhood* problem simply requiring demolition or land use interventions, rather than structural interventions such as increased funding for urban social infrastructure, better employment opportunities or greater income redistribution. Particular representations of place through terms like 'slum' and 'blight' are politically powerful because they "gather together seemingly disparate groups and ideas into...a

discursive coalition in order to determine specific actions and policies, to both wield power and be wielded by the powerful" (Schafran 2013, 138; emphasis in original).

Similarly, Niedt (2006) examines the significance of homeowner groups and business interests mobilizing popular support for *suburban* gentrification through a politics of revanchism. As a discourse of community improvement, gentrification is articulated as the replacement of problem people and land uses with "affluent property owners and higher-value land uses" through which suburban space is reclaimed from "people from the city" (Niedt, 2006, pp. 100–104). For the local growth coalition, suburban poverty may be scripted as a problem of a 'declining' and 'blighted' built environment simply in need of entrepreneurial and visionary developers to reconstruct the derelict suburb into a modern, high-rise city. As growth and development are represented as the solution, cities are encouraged to "aggressively implement strategies to make the city attractive to prospective investors and corporations" (Wilson & Wouters, 2003, p. 124) often through a variety of state interventions including planning and development policies, as well as the regulation of poor and 'dangerous' social groups through policing (Beckett & Herbert, 2008; Herbert & Brown, 2006; Herbert, 2010; MacLeod, 2002; Raco, 2003; Wacquant, 2009).

Place-framing and place-making practices are always works in progress. They are never fixed or complete, and they are always in the process of being reworked as conditions change and the constellation of actors shift. Place-frames are often internally differentiated—as *relational* discursive constructions—according to the structural position of actors and fractures within the growth coalition. The relationality of place-framing practices, constitutive of broader attempts to normatively 'make' and construct places in specific ideological ways (place-making), is central to my argument. Political and economic elites may construct place-frames to represent a neighbourhood largely as a place of market transactions and exchange value where the homeless are "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996) because they do not have the means to engage in this way. Conversely, activists, social service providers, and the homeless themselves may construct place-frames based on their understanding of a neighbourhood imbued with use values—a

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place of services and survival for the economically marginalized. For developers and real estate professionals, they may attempt to convince others of the merits of large-scale redevelopment and attracting corporations able to pay higher rents, which may compete with, and ultimately push out, smaller developers and businesses. Small business owners, reliant on street traffic, may be more intent on strategies to evict the homeless and poor believed to be detrimental to business (Logan & Molotch, 1987, pp. 83, 113). Despite ongoing contestations in place-framing and place-making practices among actors, particular frames are successful if they achieve their political aims through policymaking. Put another way, place-frames are only as successful as the political work they legitimate.

I turn now to the empirical case study examining three consistent place-frames constructed by political elites and the local growth coalition in Surrey. In each, growth and development are identified as the solution to poverty, decline, and crime. Importantly, these place-frames are not discrete, but are overlapping and interrelated.

3.4. "Capitalism is going to clean the area up": the growth machine defining problems and solutions, 1990-2015

Political elites and members of the local growth coalition—from developers to small business owners—are engaged in relational place-framing and place-making practices in which growth and redevelopment are central to the transformation of suburban Surrey into a modern, high-density metropolitan centre. Key members of the growth coalition articulate the problem of decline through a language of poverty, drugs, and crime. Growth and redevelopment are represented as the solution to these problems, and yet these problems and the proposed solutions present barriers to the realization of the new urban Surrey.

3.4.1. Place-frame #1: on the edge of inner city problems

Surrey is represented to be both *far* and *near* from 'inner city problems'. The inner suburban neighbourhood of Whalley, designated as the new downtown, is

simultaneously distanced from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside but always feared to be on the edge of becoming an inner city. First, I provide the context necessary to understand how and why Vancouver's inner city performs a particular political function for suburban political and economic elites.

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside remains one of North America's most intact inner city districts with concentrated poverty. The neighbourhood experienced post-war disinvestment and was labelled 'skid road' with a large stock of single-room occupancy residential hotels housing men working in the resource sectors (Sommers, 1998). In the 1950s and 1960s, discourses of poverty, morality, and decline, constructed through the figure of "the derelict", legitimated urban renewal schemes and the construction of public housing built on demolished 'slums' and 'blight'. To this day, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside remains the poorest urban neighbourhood in Canada with a median household income of $13,691 (2005) compared to the city median of $47,299 (City of Vancouver, 2014, p. 12). As a "service-dependent ghetto" (Dear & Wolch, 1987), the neighbourhood retains substantial supportive housing and social services for very low-income individuals struggling with mental health issues and addiction. Although parts of the Downtown Eastside are experiencing residential and commercial gentrification, market pressures have been impeded due to neighbourhood activism, restrictions on condominium development, and highly visible street poverty (Ley & Dobson, 2008).

The neighbourhood has a history of progressive political activism in response to housing and gentrification concerns (Blomley, 2004b; Hasson & Ley, 1994) as well as HIV and drug overdose deaths (McCann, 2008) and gendered and racialized violence against Indigenous women and sex workers (Culhane, 2003). In the wake of drug overdose deaths and an HIV epidemic, Vancouver developed a "four pillars" drug strategy drawing on European drug policy models as an alternative to enforcement approaches and the criminalization of illicit drug use and sex work. Harm reduction prioritizes the reduction of harms for people engaged in high-risk activities through access to services including outreach, food and housing, needle exchanges, and methadone maintenance programs (MacPherson et al., 2006). North America's first

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supervised drug consumption room—Insite—is the most controversial aspect of this approach. People who use drugs may inject illicit, street-bought drugs, and use sterile needles under medical supervision with the intention of connecting street-entrenched drug users with social supports and detox. Overall, the concentrated and highly visible nature of poverty and addiction in the neighbourhood remains a popular and contested topic in Vancouver and across the region (Liu & Blomley, 2013).

Surrey's political elites and the local growth coalition represent local problems as distinct from Vancouver's inner city problems. Yet, Surrey is feared always to be on the edge of becoming 'a Downtown Eastside'. This relational imaginary serves particular political aims. For political elites, the Downtown Eastside is imagined as a failure, where Vancouver's policymakers have failed to address the problem of concentrated poverty and redevelop the neighbourhood. In this way, Whalley is discursively *distanced* from the low-income Downtown Eastside. To identify Whalley's challenges as similar to those of the Downtown Eastside would be to admit failure:

> I look at the Downtown Eastside and I shake my head. When you compare Surrey to Vancouver in that perspective, *we don't have a problem*. When people talk about, oh it's terrible here [in Surrey], I'm sorry, have you actually been to the [Downtown] Eastside of Vancouver? Man … just driving down Hastings [Street], is just absolutely eye opening and shocking that we allow that waste of humanity to occur. (Local politician, No. 1; emphasis added)

This response reflects a dominant reaction to the highly visible nature of poverty and addiction in Vancouver, and specifically the belief that social services, due to the 'honeypot' effect, *concentrate* social problems in the neighbourhood. In this way, Whalley is understood to be distinct from the Downtown Eastside because there are fewer services and visibly poor bodies, but yet Whalley is always feared to be on the edge of becoming the Downtown Eastside if social services remain:

> We were talking [at a meeting the other day] about a model about dealing with the homeless, and I said, I have to tell you quite frankly my prejudice. And my prejudice is this, if the model came from Vancouver, I'm opposed to it … You know because the reality is most everything that comes from the City of Vancouver is a very, very

different model than how we want to deal with things in Surrey. And I'll use the Downtown Eastside as an example. *We don't want a Downtown Eastside in Surrey. We've got 135A [Street]*[2] *and that's too much.* Okay? We want to get rid of the problems at 135A [Street], but it's not chase them to Vancouver. It's to, in fact, distribute the solutions, so that we get every town centre has the resources necessary, so you take care of the people in their situation, in their home, in their whatever, so that we don't get this concentration. (Provincial legislator and former local politician, No. 2; emphasis added)

In this place-frame, Whalley is both *near* and *far* from the Downtown Eastside. Surrey is distanced from Vancouver's inner city, but if suburban social services remain then Surrey risks becoming another 'Downtown Eastside'.

This place-frame performs political work. By claiming not to have a Downtown Eastside, Surrey is immediately distanced from Vancouver's inner city problems in which seemingly *different* policy approaches are believed necessary if the suburban municipality is to avoid the 'failure' of Vancouver's inner city. These discursive place-making practices have material effects. If Surrey is to avoid Vancouver's fate, then the solution is to limit service provision in the neighbourhood, displace existing health and social services and their clients. Therefore, relational place-framing serves political aims: Whalley must not 'concentrate' services like an inner city because it leads to further decline and is a barrier to growth.

Low-barrier homeless shelter services in Whalley are an example of this place-framing. In 1998, a year-round shelter opened in response to growing homelessness in Surrey and across the region. In response, the City's bylaw department, backed by the mayor, shut down the shelter, citing failure to meet fire and zoning requirements. The mayor believed that locating the shelter near rapid transit would encourage the homeless to leave Vancouver for the suburbs. Although the shelter provider ultimately complied and spent $30,000 in fireproofing upgrades, prohibiting the shelter from operating by

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[2] Health and social services, including the homeless shelter, drop-in centre, health clinic, and needle exchange, are located on135A Street in the Whalley neighbourhood of Surrey.

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citing bylaw concerns was interpreted as a tactic to prevent the shelter from re-opening (Munro, 1998b, 1999). More recently, in 2012-2013, a temporary homeless shelter opened to address unmet winter shelter needs. As a non-profit service provider recounts, a prominent developer subsequently purchased the property used for the winter shelter:

> One of the big developers went out and bought the winter shelter site from the previous year in order to make sure…so he purchased the winter shelter and was laughing with his business friends on the BIA board about "now they can't have a shelter there because I own it." (Staff member, service provider, No. 2)

In this case, a prominent member of the growth coalition intervened to prevent the expansion of social services. And for the subsequent two winters, temporary winter shelters have not opened. This individual incident is consistent with the collective political aims of the growth coalition. Following the developer's action, the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association (DSBIA) remains opposed to a winter shelter because of "the proliferation of social services in the area":

> We accept that there is a need for a winter shelter in Surrey but locating the shelter in the north end of the city centre does not alleviate the problems in the area and has been shown to create more issues. (DSBIA quoted in City of Surrey 2014a, p. 6)

To further illustrate beliefs that social services concentrate problem people and land uses and serve as a barrier for growth, the existing permanent shelter, operating on city-owned property, will be relocated to a DSBIA-supported location away from an area intended for intensive redevelopment. Ultimately, political elites and the growth coalition frame Surrey both *far* and *near* from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside: Whalley is represented not to have the same problems, but it is always imagined to be on the edge of 'becoming a Downtown Eastside' if services are allowed to concentrate. This place-frame performs political work by necessitating social service displacement, since these services are believed to be detrimental to growth and market redevelopment.

3.4.2. Place-frame #2: dilapidated and declining Surrey

In a second discursive place-frame, Whalley is constructed as a dilapidated and declining landscape, requiring economic development interventions to improve the housing stock, attract higher-value businesses, and beautify the streetscape. I first begin by unpacking the discursive framing of Whalley as an area in economic decline. Second, I demonstrate how this discourse legitimates policies to remove blight, unsightliness, and stimulate private sector investment and growth through upzoning[3] and land use changes and development subsidies.

Since the early 1990s, political elites and the local growth coalition have represented Whalley as a place in decline, eliciting frequent comparisons between north Surrey and the Downtown Eastside. An aging post-war housing stock, a low-end business mix, and lack of public investment are believed to be driving the area's decline. In this way, a declining *built environment* is believed to induce decline and neglect in a vicious cycle, reducing investors' interest in new development. For a business owner and BIA founder, Whalley's identity declined precipitously in the early 2000s: "Whalley has always had the reputation of going downhill. But the last few years especially, it has become really, really bad" (Skelton, 2003). Indeed, Surrey's mayor identified dilapidated houses as a prime cause of an unsightly and unhealthy neighbourhood: "We can't have derelict houses and flop houses around. We want to make sure they're taken down and the area is kept clean" (The Leader, 2007c).

Similarly, in interviews, local political elites identify older rental houses—held for speculation—as the cause of many problems including nuisances and unsightliness. A local official noted that the majority of the city's bylaw enforcement activities are spent addressing properties rented to poor people: "[W]e've got some older homes that a lot of people are holding for development and there's renting, there's our transient community

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[3] Upzoning is an urban planning land use practice of increasing the allowable height and/or density of future development on particular property, increasing future land rent.

kind of going in and out, right, so that causes some issues" (interview, local government official, No. 1). Rental properties housing Surrey's poor constitute significant challenges for city officials to regulate. A provincial politician close to local political elites explained how a declining built environment—older, low-cost rental housing and low-end businesses—further perpetuates the problem by attracting the poor and preventing change (growth):

> Surrey hasn't changed in 60 years in some ways. Whalley is still a hell-hole. Newton is the second biggest hell-hole … The social conditions there, it's lousy housing, it's disproportionate number of poor people, it's run-down businesses, it's all of those things that go into making an environment which is conducive to attracting people who have one issue or another … You can't be renting out suites for $200 a month and expect you to have people who are making a decent living, you know? So they sort of perpetuate it in that regard. (Provincial legislator, No. 3)

The declining built environment is understood as a self-perpetuating problem that is best addressed through the replacement of poor people and marginal land uses with wealthier residents and higher land rents. A prominent economic elite constructed the poor at odds with the transformation of Surrey in which the movement of the middle classes to Whalley is key to its "evolution":

> What I see happening especially in the north part of Surrey … is the butting up against two cultures––the evolution of the city, the positive moving forward of the physical development, but also the evolution of the community itself with things like [the university] and young families, young people moving [in], an energy growing that moves forward. But at the same time there is increasingly evident poverty and drug and mental health issues. (BIA official, No. 2)

Crucially, for local political and economic elites, Surrey's ability to attract new development and more affluent residents and shed the dilapidated and declining representation of Surrey is tied to Whalley's remaking. For the growth machine, the struggle to construct a new modern, urban identity for Surrey hinges on the transformation of Whalley into the region's new downtown. In this way, the BIA frames the Surrey's future growth potential on the ability to change Whalley:

The adage that you are only as strong as your weakest link was on everyone's mind––if people looked negatively on the Whalley area, they would look negatively on Surrey. What was needed was an investment in the City Centre that would show developers and businesses our City was committed to creating a Downtown Core. (Downtown Surrey BIA, 2011, p. 4)

If the decline of north Surrey is constructed as the problem, political elites and growth boosters represent the redevelopment of Whalley as the solution, in which blight is demolished and market development incentivized.

This place-frame performs political work. The discursive framing of derelict and declining Whalley has legitimated policy interventions intended to replace marginal people and land uses with affluent residents and higher-value land uses. To achieve these aims and facilitate market redevelopment, the local government upzoned the neighbourhood for higher-value uses, established several development subsidy programs, and made substantial public investments, including new civic buildings. In the following sections, I describe how these policy interventions are intended to transform declining suburban Whalley into the region's new downtown of Surrey City Centre.

In 1991, the *Surrey City Centre Plan* identified Whalley as a future downtown district to serve the southern portion of the metro region. Twenty years later the regional planning authority upgraded its significance by designating Whalley the second metropolitan downtown core. Over these years, land use planning tools have been mobilized to facilitate high-density and higher-value uses through upzoning. In 2014, these land use policies were solidified in *PlanSurrey*:

Surrey's vision for its City Centre is of a Metropolitan Core planned as a primary focus for employment, services, higher-density housing, commercial, cultural, entertainment, mixed and institutional uses that is supported by an integrated rapid transit system. A strong, positive image will act as a catalyst for attracting greater attention to Surrey as a place to invest and do business, which will benefit the Town Centres and the City as a whole. Locating higher-order public buildings, amenities and services in the downtown area, including Surrey's City Hall, signals confidence in the City Centre's future and will help leverage the private sector investments that provide components of a

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quality downtown experience for residents, workers and visitors. (City of Surrey, 2014c, p. 78)

Over two decades, a number of beautification initiatives and development incentive programs have been used in an attempt to stimulate the market-led redevelopment of the area. The 2003 *Whalley Revitalization Strategy*, including street beautification, capital investments in public facilities, and development tax reductions (City of Surrey, 2003a), was viewed as "window dressing" by the BIA (Downtown Surrey BIA, 2011). The subsequent Build Surrey Program included another round of market-oriented policy interventions, and importantly, an iconic new city hall and library (City of Surrey & Downtown Surrey BIA, n.d.; City of Surrey, n.d.-a). After years of limited success substantially redeveloping Whalley, the significant public investments demonstrated commitment the growth coalition had long envisioned (Downtown Surrey BIA, 2011, p. 4):

> It's incredible how fast City Centre is changing and there's no question that there is gentrification occurring here … [There was] also the realization that if we're going to try and attract private sector investment to City Centre, then we need to be there as well. We need to be the catalyst for that investment. (Local politician, No. 1)

Whalley is discursively framed by business and political elites as a dilapidated and declining landscape in need of revitalization and transformation. Despite over twenty years of policy interventions intended to facilitate the wholesale remaking of Whalley, changes have remained too slow for members of the growth coalition. Nevertheless, land use policies of upzoning for higher-value uses and development subsidies have facilitated incremental redevelopment over the years. In this respect, significant *public* investment in new civic facilities is precisely the intervention many have been waiting for and imagined to "naturally lead to accelerated business investment in the City Centre and the city" (City of Surrey, 2008, p. 4).

3.4.3.   Place-frame #3: dangerous and drug-ridden Surrey

In *Punishing the Poor*, Loic Wacquant argues that it is not that criminality has changed in recent years, but that it is "the gaze that society trains on certain street illegalities" and "dispossessed and dishonoured populations that are their presumed perpetrators …" (2009, p. 4; emphasis added). Poverty and marginality, and particularly the *visible* nature of the survival street economy—the drug trade, sex work, and petty crime—are imagined as a threat to the remaking of Whalley. Media clearly plays a role in constructing discourses of places (McCann, 2004a). In Surrey, through content analysis, media discourses consistently construct Whalley through the lens of poverty and homelessness, murders, drug-related violence, and insecurity and danger. Political elites and growth boosters, perhaps in response to media accounts and subsequent public concerns, are also actively place-framing Whalley as a dangerous and insecure place with consequences for the wellbeing of Surrey. Particularly for political and economic elites, perpetrators of crime are represented to be individuals living "high risk lifestyles" typically associated with the drug trade (City of Surrey, 2014b). In these discourses, poverty, addiction, and mental health are reproduced as the "root causes of crime" (City of Surrey, n.d.-b). In this way, local and neighbourhood-scale homelessness and addiction treatment interventions are part of the city's crime reduction strategies. In effect, poverty and addiction are framed as *criminal* matters, in which social marginality, is viewed with suspicion and fear.

For the growth coalition, Whalley's streets, discursively framed as dangerous, disorderly, and drug-ridden, must be cleaned up, policed, and redeveloped into a safe, clean, and prosperous new downtown. These practices are constituted through a place-frame, while internally differentiated among policy actors within the growth coalition. Poverty, homelessness, sex work, and drug use are understood as either criminal or *criminogenic* (crime-causing) problems best addressed through enforcement and order-maintenance policing. Among key political and economic elites cautious to not explicitly criminalize poverty, the visibly street-entrenched homeless are understood as *diseased*, requiring both charitable interventions and coercive treatment. Their visible bodies,

services (drop-in centres, needle exchanges, methadone dispensaries) and housing (shelters, rentals, flophouses, drug houses) are criminogenic, and yet still discursively bundled in a place imaginary of danger, criminality and drugs. For members of the growth coalition, especially small business owners and petty speculators—Logan and Molotch's "serendipitous" and "active" entrepreneurs (1987, pp. 29–30)— homeless drug users are often equated as criminals. A key member of the economic elite differentiated business *leaders* (himself)—'bigger' economic players including developers, lawyers, and professionals—from the business *community* (small shop owners) (interview, BIA official, No. 2). Importantly, this place-frame is perhaps the most contested, since it hinges on relational understandings of poverty, addiction, and the street economy among members of the growth coalition. They agree that these issues are a problem for the area's redevelopment, but they may differ on what is deemed to be criminal or what is merely criminogenic. This struggle plays out most clearly at neighbourhood and stakeholder forums. Despite an internally differentiated place frame within the growth coalition, crime (differently conceived among actors), addiction and drug use, and the visible street economy are framed as barriers to growth and the remaking of "what used to be called the Whalley area of Surrey" (interview, BIA official, No. 2).

Echoing the ongoing problems associated with the street economy associated with the drug trade, meeting minutes paraphrased the city manager's framing of the problem:

> … [T]he problem in Whalley is that all the wants and needs of the drug traffickers and users are being met through the centralized location and easy access to various services … [Whalley] has inherited significant drug infrastructure with the needle exchange, methadone clinics, pawn shops, Skytrain, cheque-cashing businesses, low rental housing, and overgrown bush; and it is not surprising that the drug trade occurs in that area … the next step in attacking this problem area should involve a strategy to deal with the physical infrastructure, which attracts that clientele … [L]and use zoning and licensing have roles to play in breaking up the concentration of this type of infrastructure and dispersing it throughout the city. (City of Surrey, 2003b, pp. 4–5)

Reflecting the differentiated nature of this place frame, the city manager identifies both the criminal nature of the problem—drug trafficking and drug use—and a criminogenic landscape perpetuating the problem.

While the city manager provides insight into the problem as understood by the city's political elites, a place entrepreneur provides a similar framing. This business community member purchased a building when "the City stated the area was being revitalized and improved" (City of Surrey, 2006a, p. 7) and frames drug use and drug users as "the ongoing problem with the neighbourhood" and barriers to the redevelopment of the neighbourhood and ability to retain and increase land rents:

> Specifically with the 'needle exchange clientele and their acquaintances' from now on referred to as the 'the problem'. My tenant has been patiently waiting for years for this area to undergo the planned transition. In the meantime, my tenant ensures [me that] on a daily basis a fairly constant stream of 'the problem' [is] passing through the laneway between [Building ABC and the thrift store]. Many of 'the problem' loiter there, smoking crack and shooting needles as well as performing numerous drug transactions. (City of Surrey, 2006a, p. 9)

Political elites and growth coalition members' framing of a disorderly and drug-infested neighbourhood extends beyond Whalley across other Surrey neighbourhoods.

The problem of drugs and crime is also articulated as an issue of "problem properties" and "high risk locations", typically held for speculation, awaiting redevelopment, and operated as illegal and informal boarding houses, addiction 'recovery houses' or flop-houses and drug houses. A political elite frames the criminogenic nature of low-end rental housing explicitly with criminality:

> It's the people, I hate to say it, but it's the people who live in the basement suites, those are the guys that you have to be really mindful of. 'Cause they are the ones that have free rein, they can be out at midnight smashing up cars. (Local politician, No. 4)

In this framing, consistent across local elites, spaces are criminogenic because they are inhabited by the visibly poor, often equated as criminals. This particular place-bundling of poverty and criminality remains a longstanding discursive construction, often making it difficult then for poverty, addiction, and crime to be disentangled. While there is a strong desire among local elites for Surrey to become a regionally competitive 'urban' place, these discourses reflect deep anxieties and contradictions about how that transformation is to be managed. A municipal government official admitted that there remain strong beliefs around lower-income people, captured through a discourse that rental housing is "eroding the true single-family neighbourhood" (interview, local official, No. 2). By naturalizing poverty and homelessness with drug use and the drug trade—understood as root causes to crime—these people and their landscapes should be contained, managed, and ultimately eradicated.

This place-frame performs political work. Discursively framing Surrey as dangerous and drug-ridden legitimates order-maintenance policing (or "broken windows policing") and situational crime prevention strategies. The motivating assumption is that landscapes emit messages, and if criminal behaviours define these places they will necessitate a vicious cycle of decline, preventing the growth and redevelopment of a safe, secure environment (Herbert & Brown, 2006). Broken windows policing and situational crime prevention strategies include 'quality of life' policing and land-use practices intended to eliminate locations where criminal behaviours occur—discursively constructed as "high risk locations" and "problem properties" associated with drugs.

In 1988, the City of Surrey and police established an "integrated services team" to respond to the problem of drugs and prostitution (City of Surrey, 2011, p. 34). The stakeholder group, which continues to meet monthly, brings together business representatives, service providers, city departments, and property owners. Meetings focus on identifying problems of drug use, sex work, homelessness, and property crime. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the City took a particularly punitive approach to these issues, culminating in "Operation Sweep":

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> ...[A] high visibility policing presence in the form of uniformed and plainclothes members has been in place to deal with persons involved in street-level crime (drug trafficking, prostitution, Liquor Act offences and other activity) detracting from the sense of peace and security for the residents and merchants. (City of Surrey, 2001)

In 2003, drawing explicitly on former New York mayor Giuliani's "zero tolerance" approach to quality of life crimes, the city selectively placed concrete roadblocks in an attempt to stop the "drive-by drug trade" (Kines, 2003). These environmental interventions, perhaps best captured through significant efforts to enroll property owners in Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) (Blomley, 2004a) and close-circuit television initiatives, remain key policy strategies (City of Surrey, n.d.-b, 2011, 2015).

While the City of Surrey has taken a more conciliatory *public* tone surrounding issues of concentrated homelessness and drug use, political elites remain intent on cleaning up the neighbourhood. Exclusionary spatial tactics are used to discourage nuisance crimes, including loitering, open drug use, and camping (City of Surrey, 2014d). In the winter of 2014 and 2015, police and city workers led an effort to dismantle multiple visible homeless encampments while increasing the intensity of daily street "sweeps" where the homeless gather. Fences have been erected on city-owned property and political and economic elites actively lobby private property owners to 'secure' undeveloped lots and issue trespass orders to "squatters".

Complementing punitive policing strategies, the City of Surrey addresses "problem properties" and "high risk locations" believed to be associated with drugs through a regime of bylaw actions and demolitions. The municipality uses its regulatory tools, including municipal bylaws and provincial fire prevention legislation to require remediation or demolition of problem properties "that are or may be associated with drugs" (City of Surrey, 2007b). If the property is identified as abandoned/vacant or "a hazard to the public safety" then the city will order the owner to take appropriate action. If the city is faced with non-compliance from the owner, typically developers and

speculators holding for redevelopment (City of Surrey, 2007b), the city will intervene to demolish the building itself. Speaking in reference to an aggressive campaign against physical signs of decay and disorder, the mayor declared, "I have directed city departments to make the Whalley clean-up a major priority. Unsightliness and disorder will not be tolerated" (Morton, 1998). From 2003–2004, over 60 "flop/crack houses [deemed] unsafe [and] unfit to live in" were demolished (Keating, 2004). In response to the demolitions concentrated in Whalley, the BIA's executive director noted that it "will make it easier for people and families to feel comfortable walking in the area" (Keating, 2004). Demolitions increased in the mid–2000s, and from 2005–2009, 228 drug houses were identified and 194 of these were either demolished or received "appropriate remediation" (City of Surrey, 2010). Commenting on the problem, one city councillor noted that property owners have a "'moral obligation' to secure and demolish their derelict houses so children won't be tempted to play in them and squatters can't come in 'and ruin the neighbourhood'" (quoted in Zytaruk, 2007). This policy response of enforcement, demolition, and displacement remains materially evident upon the landscape, with tracts of vacant land, where houses once stood, awaiting redevelopment.

Following a record number of homicides in 2013, Surrey's mayor promised a "relentless" crackdown on crime, the creation of another crime task force (she had chaired a drug and crime task force ten years prior), more police officers, patrols, and surveillance cameras (Zytaruk 2014; Colebourn 2014). The primary policy response from the mayor's crime taskforce was a "High Risk Location Initiative" to target locations that mirrored where previous homicides occurred, concluding that it is "generally these types of locations where those living high-risk lifestyles involving drugs and other criminal activity" are to be found (City of Surrey, 2014b). This is the political context through which issues and situations (low-end rentals, poverty, addiction, drugs) are pulled together into place-making strategies and imaginaries therefore legitimating environmentally deterministic policies intended to contain and manage problem people and places through policing, as well as rout out 'criminal' places and people through demolition.

3.5. Conclusion: Same discourses, new geographies? Framing decline and the suburban renewal imperative

I have argued that political elites and the local growth machine are engaged in relational place-making through the construction of three dominant and overlapping place-frames in which Surrey is represented to be 1) on the edge of 'inner city' problems; 2) declining and dilapidated; and 3) dangerous and drug-ridden. For the local growth coalition, Vancouver's poor inner city is imagined as a failure, where Vancouver's policymakers have failed to adequately address the problems of concentrated poverty, blight, and criminal behaviour in an effort to transform the neighbourhood. Although Surrey is represented to be far from having inner city problems, a discourse of fear of *becoming* an inner city legitimates interventions to limit and displace social services believed to further concentrate poverty. The visible homeless and drug-addicted are believed to be barriers to the realization of property-led growth through condominium redevelopment, and the remaking of Surrey into a metropolitan centre. The second discursive place-frame constructs north Surrey as a dilapidated, declining, and distressed landscape, requiring economic development interventions to improve the housing stock, attract better businesses, and beautify the streetscape. This place-frame motivates policies to remove blight, unsightliness, and stimulate private sector investment through land use changes (e.g. upzoning) and development incentives.

Finally, in the third place-frame, Surrey's depressed Whalley neighbourhood, earmarked to become the new downtown, is constructed as a dangerous, drug-ridden place where broken windows policing and crime prevention strategies are required to manage and eradicate people and behaviours defined as criminal (drug users and sex workers) as well as criminogenic spaces. Demolition of "problem properties" and "high risk locations" is the dominant policy intervention. Taken together, these three place-frames are deployed to achieve the political aims of the local growth coalition, and through state action eliminate any real or perceived threats to the property-led redevelopment of Surrey from a suburban landscape into a metropolitan urban centre with higher-value uses and more affluent residents.

Political elites and growth boosters construct and celebrate the emergence of the new gentrified city centre. If, as Logan and Molotch (1987, p. 61) suggest, "the celebration of local growth continues to be a theme in the culture of localities," Surrey is the exemplar, as local elites offer celebratory accounts of redevelopment and the remaking of a declining inner suburban environment. Despite the boosterism of the 'new Surrey', slippages and contestations in elites' dominant place-frames reveal how deeply political discursive strategies and representations are. For example, elites are frustrated about the slowness of change and difficulty displacing poverty and the drug trade. For some small business owners, place-frames are dominated by concerns about crime and homeless drug users, whereas 'bigger' agents of capital—developers and professionals connected to real estate development—are increasingly moving away from 'negative' place-frames and pressuring politicians to do the same. For a key economic elite within the BIA, there is concern that continuing to frame Surrey through its 'problems'—specifically crime—is not helpful to realizing Whalley's growth and redevelopment.

North Surrey—reimagined as a new metropolitan centre—remains a predominantly low-income area with longstanding and intensifying challenges with homelessness and addiction. Political and economic elites understand the challenge of remaking Whalley into "the next Yaletown"—a reference to Vancouver's neighbourhood known for its gentrified landscape of condominium towers and high-end businesses. For Peck et al. (2014, pp. 386, 406), Vancouver's condo-led growth strategy ("Vancouverism") is a "neo-suburban [mode] of development" being "re-exported to the city's pre-existing suburbs." In this way, a devalorized post-war suburban landscape with significant poverty (and lacking the cultural and speculative appeal of the central city) is imagined to be a barrier to growth, and yet these problems are also best solved through growth—attracting new residential development and middle class residents.

Within this context, discourses of concentrated poverty, decline, and crime are framed as a problem to be routed out in order to quite literally clear the landscape for revalorization and redevelopment. Again, emphasizing the importance of interventionist 'renewal' policies, "efforts at urban 'revival' are often schemes to break, through either

wholesale land clearance or selective destruction, just this chain of complimentary relationships within poor areas" (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 113). Policies of property clearance are well-served by a politics of suburban renewal, intended to make space for redevelopment and more profitable land uses. A former senior administrator from a non-profit organization summed up the growth coalition's longstanding strategy for a property-led renaissance, not without its own contradictions and challenges:

> [T]he real estate industry got a hold of City Hall, they probably had it for a long time, but they rezoned that whole Whalley district … They had visions of high-rises and mega dollars and all of that. And they rezoned this whole working-class neighbourhood and upzoned it and none of the real estate stuff came and still [hasn't] actually, despite [the mayor's] trumpeting of the 'new Surrey' … What's better in some ways, and I'm only speaking from a gentrified point of view, a lot of the houses that were there have now been demolished. But the problem started when they upzoned this whole area … And the speculators came in and bought the houses and just left them to be rented by people who are into the drug stuff, and just low-income people in general. They created what they hated in a sense. They created a low-income ghetto much like the Downtown Eastside … And some social services moved in, [then the City saying,] "We want to clean the area up." But it was also, "Capitalism is going to clean the area up". That's still the dream. (Former staff member, non-profit service provider, No. 1)

In this competing account or counter place-frame, the City's planning policies and growth strategies—supported by the growth coalition—are implicated in the production of this landscape of suburban poverty and disinvestment, which stand as barriers to be overcome. The 'decline' and devalorization of this post-war inner suburban built environment provides a context for the *revalorization* and new rounds of capital accumulation through an 'obsolescent' built environment (Weber, 2002). Deteriorating rental houses—held as speculative investments and used as boarding houses and drug houses—have fuelled neighbourhood-level discourses about transience, crime and decline, further establishing consensus that growth is good and redevelopment is necessary. Surrey provides an illustrative example of the spatialized process of revalorizing devalued places across the city-region. Since neoliberal governance is "government *through and by* the market" (Weber 2002, 520; emphasis in original), the

local growth coalition constructs discourses intended to mobilize state interventions to reduce barriers to revalorization and hasten accumulation. In this case, the more dangerous, derelict, and crime-ridden Surrey is represented to be, the greater the motivation for state-led 'renewal' schemes intended to deliver the transformation of this declining suburban place into an urban centre with high aggregate rents. Yet, as I mentioned, there may be limits to the political-economic usefulness of particular "discursive coalitions" (Schafran, 2013, p. 138) and place-frames over space and time.

The case of Surrey demonstrates the urgency of taking the political-economic geography of urban regions seriously. The poor are increasingly located in (post)suburban and peripheral locations across urban regions—typically older inner-ring suburbs—as central cities continue to gentrify. Yet, at the same time, older, devalorized post-war suburbs, where regional poverty is increasingly located, are discursively represented through a powerful language of decline, dereliction, and crime. Following Schafran (2013), it is crucial to ask if, and how, discourses and place-frames of suburban poverty serve particular political aims. In this case, political and economic elites relationally frame problems of poverty, decline, and crime to legitimate policy interventions that serve their economic interests. According to their narratives, these problems are best addressed through growth and the redevelopment of depressed landscapes, but are also represented as barriers to an urban renaissance and require substantial state intervention to clean up the streets, displace homeless drug users, and secure (future) downtown growth through land clearance and development incentives.

Elites' discursive constructions of suburban decline and the attendant policy interventions are ideological place-making practices. Ekers et al. (2012, p. 406) note that little "attention has been paid to the question of suburban governance[,] specifically the constellation of public and private processes, actors, and institutions that determine and shape the planning, design, politics, and economics of suburban spaces and everyday behaviour." This case demonstrates how the local growth coalition, including state and private actors, are engaged in a project of *suburban renewal* in which state interventions are intended to literally clear the land(scape) of marginal people and property uses in the

service of the growth machine and real estate capital. In this way, the urban renewal discourses have been repackaged and repurposed for application in poor inner suburban districts with a key difference: without the resultant affordable housing as part of the 'renewal' process, displacement of the poor is all but certain. If clearance, renewal, and market redevelopment are devised as the solution to declining, devalorized suburban spaces, it is imperative to ask *where* in the neoliberal city-region the poor are to be.

Chapter 4.

Landscapes of suburban renewal and recovery: assembling the barriers to harm reduction drug policy

In Chapter 3, I argue that Surrey's growth coalition is engaged in relational place-framing and place-making practices, constructing Whalley, a post-war suburban landscape, as a place requiring redevelopment to stem its decline. Collectively, the three dominant place-frames I describe perform political work by justifying policy interventions intended to facilitate the remaking of the area. These discursive practices—and their material effects—serve as political barriers to the movement of progressive approaches to poverty and addiction in Surrey. For local growth elites, these barriers are erected as planning and policy interventions that function to constrain and displace existing social and health services, especially low-barrier, harm reduction services, in the hope that marginal land uses and low-income, service-dependent groups will be replaced with higher-value land uses and wealthier residents. These discursive place-framing and place-making practices are not the only barriers to harm reduction policies and practices.

In Chapter 5, I conceptually and empirically examine Surrey's burgeoning private, abstinence-based recovery house sector as another significant political-institutional barrier to alternative approaches to addiction service provision. I argue that Surrey's approximately 200 recovery houses are part of an experimental social policy reform project which effectively redirects provincial funding away from health authorities' more expensive, professionalized, and harm reduction-oriented substance use housing programs in an effort to increase the capacity of, and funding for, the private, predominately abstinence-based recovery house sector.

Conceptualized together, Chapters 3 and 5 provide conceptually-driven, rich empirical accounts of the "socio-spatial context of policymaking activities" (Peck, 2011a, p. 774) in order to explain the political geography of poverty, addiction, and policymaking, specifically accounting for the political and institutional friction harm reduction encounters as it is mobilized across the region, and specifically, in Surrey.

Chapter 5.

Searching for the post-welfare policy fix: poverty, addiction, and the suburban recovery experiment

5.1. Introduction

> *Everyone kind of accepts there won't be a huge increase in [provincially licensed addiction] beds in the next little while. Coming in and filling in that need was some very good, reputable non-profits, faith-based groups, and some very unscrupulous people seeing a business opportunity ... So the whole thing has been a bunch of circumstances: the housing stock in Surrey, the price of houses ... size of houses ... the need for supportive housing [and] addictions places. It's all come together. (Local government official)*

In 2001, the BC provincial government abolished its addiction recovery house licensing regime (Spencer, 2001). By 2009, the government introduced a new policy program to fund private recovery housing but without any registration or licensing requirement. It was crafted as a politically expedient response to a crisis in affordable housing and the lack of publicly funded addictions beds in the Vancouver, Canada region. During this time, "recovery houses"—everything from drug houses, boarding houses, and sober-living homes—were booming in Vancouver's more affordable suburban municipalities. As this local government official notes, the state's retreat from public service provision has opened up new market opportunities and modalities of informal poverty management built upon inherited welfare programs and institutional structures. Yet, the case study I present diverges from American accounts examining the rise of this informal sector precariously subsisting on the vestiges of welfare state institutions (Fairbanks, 2009). In the Canadian context, I demonstrate how recent policy reforms provide *increased* public funding and state legitimacy to private recovery houses,

intended to *institutionalize* the role of this informal sector, and how recovery houses operate as an emergent market-disciplinary policy 'fix' to the region's dominant social policy concerns—homelessness, addiction, and criminality.

In this paper, I argue that Surrey, BC is a key site through which neoliberal social policy experimentation is occurring. For policymakers, private, abstinence-based recovery programs can be subsumed with an extant economic rationality of austerity and public welfare retrenchment. I explain how (extra)local policy experimentation is serving to *legitimize* a predominately for-profit, informal, and abstinence-based recovery sector— not through an existing regulatory and funding structure—but by *circumventing* the health authority's more expensive, professionalized, and harm reduction-based substance-use housing program and licensing regime. In its place, provincial policymakers have established a parallel—but much weaker, cheaper, and politically flexible—regulatory regime with limited oversight. Yet, as the state produces a potentially lucrative market opportunity for unscrupulous entrepreneurs, informally operated recovery houses are sites of criminality, generating jurisdictional political conflicts, and fuelling further policy innovation with the hope that recovery houses will ultimately emerge as the preferred spaces of abstinence-based recovery and self-transformation. In this way, Surrey is an important site through which recent rounds of welfare state restructuring are underway, providing insight into the importance of the scalar politics of social policy experimentation—and failure—across neoliberalizing urban regions. Despite its failings, this malleable policy reform project is increasingly being recalibrated and realigned to serve the needs of the criminal justice system and as a social control mechanism of the marginal classes through an abstinence-based "therapeutic community" drug policy model.

This paper is based on one year (2014–2015) of mixed-methods research on the relational and territorial city-regional politics of poverty and drug policy, focusing on Surrey, the Greater Vancouver region's largest and fastest growing suburban municipality. Research methods include 45 semi-structured interviews (43 unique interviewees) with key informants (policymakers, local elites, activists, health authority

staff, and service providers including recovery house operators and staff), observation of 14 business community and police-convened neighbourhood meetings, and a focus group with a peer-run group of current and former people who use drugs (PWUD) with experience living in recovery houses. I also draw on statistical data and substantial archival research, including 315 media articles and over 100 municipal and provincial policy documents and meeting minutes.

Furthermore, this paper draws on five Freedom of Information (FOI) releases, primarily consisting of inter-governmental and inter-jurisdictional correspondence, memos and meeting minutes, and ministerial policy briefings. These FOI releases reveal internal government dynamics (Larsen, 2013) and the deeply political nature of this experimental policy project *between* local and provincial governments and *across* state institutions.[4] The politics of "access brokering" with government staff, acting as data gatekeepers, and the amount of redactions illuminate the political sensitivity and inter-jurisdictional conflict within this policy project. I strategically used FOI requests to subsequently 'build upon' one another as a "follow the policy" approach (McCann & Ward, 2012a; Peck & Theodore, 2012). The extensive use of FOI requests, supplemented by more traditional research methods, is a significant methodological contribution of this paper, and useful for critical policy-oriented research. Interviews and documents were coded, analysed, and triangulated for recurrent and divergent discourses and themes (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005).

I begin by summarizing public welfare, supportive housing, and the addictions services system in British Columbia. I then turn to the paper's conceptual framework, drawing upon literatures in critical policy studies, state theory and neoliberalization, as well as poverty governance studies in a post-welfare age. I then discuss how a suburban landscape of recovery has been produced through social policy experimentation and

[4] The political sensitivity of an FOI release may also be surmised depending on whether the government chooses to publicly post the records on the BC Open Information website (http://www.openinfo.gov.bc.ca/). My request on recovery houses, totaling 247 pages, was not posted on the website.

'worked through' Surrey, ultimately giving rise to an inchoate policy reform project that has broader implications for comparative research on welfare state restructuring in Canada and the US. I conclude by suggesting that this crisis-ridden policy project, rooted in a custodial, abstinence-based drug policy approach, is increasingly being recalibrated to serve the needs of the criminal justice system, serving as an emergent mechanism of social control of the region's marginal classes.

5.2. Changing geographies of poverty, welfare, and addiction services in the Vancouver region

Public welfare, supportive housing, and the addiction services system are institutional programs and settings crucial to the governance of poverty and addiction in contemporary society.

5.2.1. Public welfare, supportive housing, and the addictions services system in British Columbia

In British Columbia, individuals may access means-tested welfare (income assistance), intended to be a form of public assistance of last resort. Income assistance may also be used to pay for approved residential addictions services. The basic income assistance rate of $610/month (max. $375 can be spent on housing) has been frozen since 2007, making it nearly impossible to find safe, clean, and formal housing, and also remain above the poverty line in a very expensive rental market with an extremely low vacancy rate (Atkey & Siggner, 2008; J. Swanson & Herman, 2014). These struggles over social reproduction for the very poor reflect the political orientation and public policy decisions of the provincial government. The governing BC Liberal party, in office since 2001, have enacted a series of neoliberal reforms to income assistance, labour standards, tax policy, as well as privatization of publicly-owned and delivered services, and most recently, a significant liquidation of public assets by downloading non-market housing properties onto non-profit agencies (Lindsay, 2014; McBride & McNutt, 2007).

The addiction services system may be conceptualized as a part of the welfare state (DeVerteuil & Wilton, 2009a). I use the term *addiction services system* to broadly refer to a highly uneven patchwork of public and private, formal and informal actors and institutions involved in addictions service provision, without specifying the programmatic structure or philosophical/political approach at these treatment or residential substance-use facilities (e.g. abstinence vs. harm reduction). Specifically, supportive, harm reduction housing (low-barrier or "housing first") where abstinence is not required can be conceptualized as a site of poverty governance and "regulatory richness" where divergent institutional logics collide (DeVerteuil & Wilton, 2009a). For non-profit organizations, low-barrier and "housing first" approaches may be scripted as compassionate response to addiction, mental health, and homelessness. Yet, for the state, low-barrier housing may serve *both* ambivalent-managerial and revanchist logics of clearing the streets of potentially disruptive populations (DeVerteuil, 2012; DeVerteuil et al., 2009).

Recovery houses and abstinence-based residential substance-use or addictions (I use these interchangeably) programs are also part of the housing spectrum within the addiction services system. Recovery houses are typically run by non-professional operators and former alcoholics or drug users, aptly capturing the idea of the "do-it-yourself welfare state" (Fairbanks, 2009, p. 17; Hyatt, 1997; Wolch & DeVerteuil, 2001). Houses operating with a programmatic recovery structure typically embrace the 12-step approach and may be faith-based; residents are often required to attend Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous meetings. With a high demand for affordable housing generally for singles on income assistance, and affordable, supportive substance-use housing, specifically, the informal recovery house sector[5] is booming, especially in suburban Vancouver.

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[5] I use the term broadly to include flophouses, boarding houses, and houses with a programmatic recovery structure.

5.2.2.　　Inner city gentrification and the suburbanization of poverty

The Greater Vancouver region is comprised of 21 municipalities with a population of approximately 2.3 million people (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). Vancouver (603,502) and Surrey (468,251) are the two largest municipalities, with Surrey expected to growth larger than Vancouver over the next several decades. Surrey is located 35 kilometres from Vancouver and at the terminus of the region's rapid transit system.

Vancouver's historic centre of development—the Downtown Eastside (DTES)— remains one of North America's remaining inner city poverty districts. The neighbourhood experienced post-war disinvestment and developed a reputation as the city's "skid road" with its large stock of single-room occupancy residential hotels (SROs) housing men working in the resource sectors (Sommers, 1998). In the 1950s and 1960s, discourses of poverty, morality, and decline, constructed through the figure of "the derelict", legitimated urban renewal schemes and the construction of public housing built on demolished "slums" and "blight". To this day, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside remains the poorest urban neighbourhood in Canada with a median household income of $13,691 (2005) compared to the city median of $47,299 (City of Vancouver, 2014, p. 12). As a "service-dependent ghetto" (Dear & Wolch, 1987), the neighbourhood retains substantial supportive housing and social and health services for those struggling with mental health and addiction issues. Despite powerful public narratives which serve to marginalize the neighbourhood and its residents (Blomley, 2004b; Liu & Blomley, 2013), it remains a therapeutic landscape for low-income residents who "find support, solidarity, and acceptance in their everyday struggles to survive, even thrive, amidst the structural and physical violence of the urban margins" (Masuda & Crabtree, 2010, p. 656).

Remarkably, with the neighbourhood's proximity to the city centre, it has resisted gentrification for decades (Ley and Dobson, 2008). Yet, in recent years, market pressures have intensified following the redevelopment of a former department store as a state-led "social mix" project (Lees et al., 2008) and the ongoing loss of low-income rental housing and SROs especially for those with addiction and mental health challenges (J.

Swanson & Herman, 2014). To illustrate the significant demand for affordable supportive housing in recent years, the province's waiting list more than quadrupled from 1,165 names in 2011 to 5,642 in 2014 (Lupick, 2015).

In sum, these pressures are shifting—and suburbanizing—the geography of poverty in the region. The very poor are increasingly located *outside* the historic inner city. Although the City of Vancouver retains the region's greatest percentage of income assistance recipients in 2013 (29 per cent), it has decreased by over 5 per cent from 1995–2013 (Table 5.1). Relative to all the municipalities in the region, the City of Surrey has seen the greatest percentage increase in income assistance recipients residing in that community. Put simply, as Vancouver's inner city districts continue to gentrify, this trend suggests that low-income households will increasingly be displaced across the region's suburban municipalities where relatively more affordable housing is available. Yet, these suburban areas often have insufficient supports for the very poor with mental health and addictions concerns.

Table 5.1. **Geography of public welfare provision, Greater Vancouver region, 1995–2013**

	1995	2013	Change (1995–2013)
City of Vancouver	34.9%	29.3%	−5.6%
Suburban Municipalities	65.1%	70.7%	+5.6%
City of Surrey	16.9%	21.5%	+4.5%

Note. Due to the fluctuating nature of welfare rolls, calculations are based on annual average caseloads. Percentages indicate the share of the Greater Vancouver regional total of income assistance recipients, including the eastern Fraser Valley municipalities of Mission, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack (not officially part of the Greater Vancouver region). Figures are calculated by the author from unpublished BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation data obtained through a request.

5.2.3. Uneven regional geographies of public health funding and service provision

With the changing geography of poverty I have illustrated, it is noteworthy that Fraser Health Authority (FHA), responsible for public health provision across Vancouver's suburban communities (including Surrey), receives far less funding, on a per capita basis, compared to the neighbouring Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA) (responsible for Vancouver) and compared to all other regional health authorities across the province. The provincial Ministry of Health is the primary funding source for the regional health authorities, distributing funding to each health authority based on its own formula. A recent report found that FHA receives the least amount of funding of any regional health authority on a per capita basis (Figure 5.1). Compared to VCHA, FHA delivers health services with *half the financial resources*. In numerous interviews with FHA staff, the lack of funding and available resources is experienced on a daily basis, especially within the addictions services system:

> So when somebody makes up their mind that they want to get off drugs and alcohol, we basically say, call every couple of days. It's about a four-week wait. How is that helpful? The intake workers countless times have called to book someone a bed and have been told that person is dead. Like, they died. That's horrible. It's unacceptable. Absolutely unacceptable. (Staff member, health authority, No. 5)

As many key informants note, FHA—struggling to provide even basic medical services for the middle classes—has insufficient capacity (and some argue, interest) to provide adequate addictions services and supportive housing for poor, marginalized PWUD.

Figure 5.1.   British Columbia regional health authority spending, per capita, 2011–2012
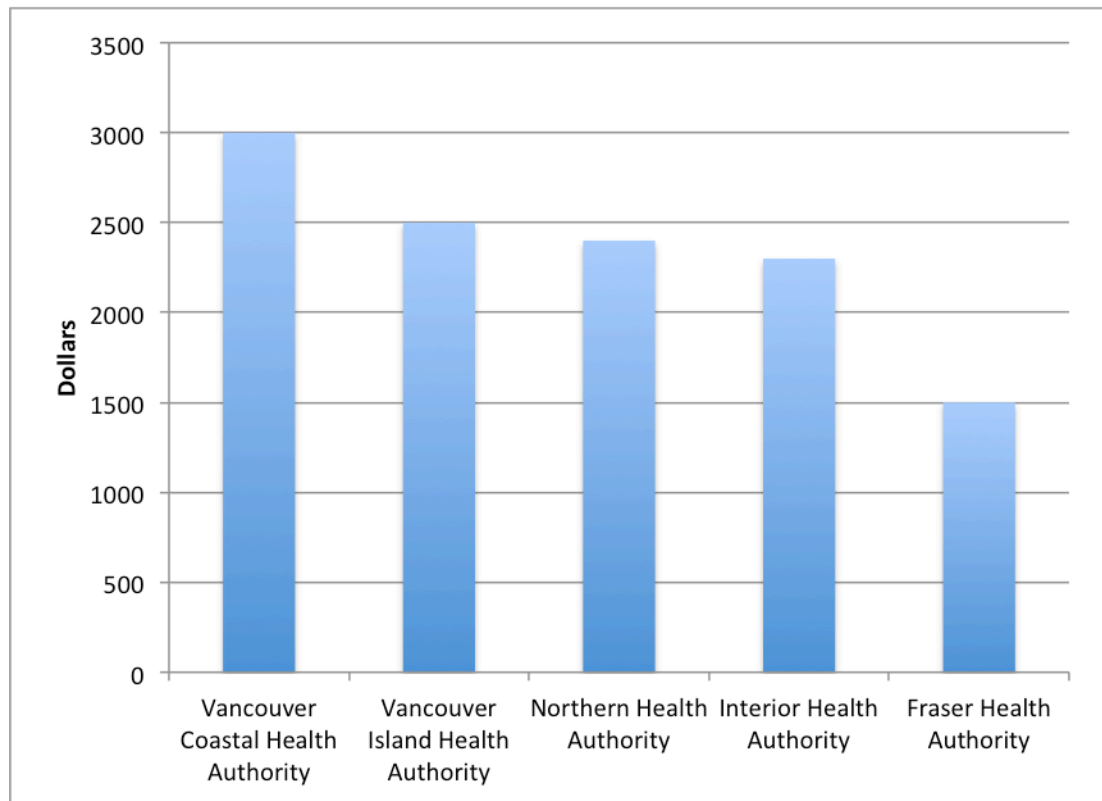
Note. Adapted from Auditor General of British Columbia (2013, p. 22).

5.3.   Geographies of neoliberalization and poverty in the post-welfare age

5.3.1.   Variegated neoliberalization and critical geographies of policy

Ongoing rounds of neoliberal regulatory reform, beginning in earnest in the 1980s, have transformed urban landscapes (Peck & Tickell, 1994, 2012). The Fordist-Keynesian era has been followed over the last 30 years with successive waves of experimentation in the search for a socio-institutional regulatory fix. Processes of neoliberalization involve both the "roll back" and "freeing of markets" as well as the post-1990s "roll out" of market-oriented policy experiments, including the penalization

of social policy and workfare programs in response to the perceived threats of "crime, worklessness, welfare dependency, and social breakdown" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 395). In this way, cities and urban regions are "key sites of economic contradiction, governance failure, and social fall-out" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 395).

Yet, despite widespread market-oriented regulatory reforms produced through local sites, these landscapes are highly uneven and reflect inherited institutional and political structures. As Brenner et al. (2010a, p. 330) note,

> … neoliberalization [is] a variegated form of regulatory restructuring: it produces geo-institutional differentiation across places, territories, and scales; but it does this systemically, as a pervasive, endemic feature of its basic operational logic … [R]ather than expecting some pure, prototypical form of neoliberalization to obtain across divergent contexts, we view variegation—systemic geo-institutional differentiation—as one of its essential, enduring features.

Therefore, urban regions may exhibit distinctive characteristics based on historically and place-specific institutional architectures, but generalized features include trial-and-error experimentation, inter-jurisdictional policy mobility and mutation, and market-disciplinary institutional reforms. Rather than providing moments in which reform projects are questioned, stalled, or stopped, endemic governance failures "[deepen] patterns of crisis formation and [accelerate] cycles of crisis-driven policy experimentation" (Brenner et al., 2010a, p. 329). In contrast to neoliberalism-as-ideology, marketized innovations are deeply dependent on state interventions, as "the power of the state to enact far-reaching welfare reforms is being *extended* under this neoliberal context" (Peck & Theodore, 2001, p. 455). Crucially, neoliberalism must be understood as a utopian and never-complete ideological project, differentiated from neoliberalization *practices* and on-the-ground conflicts and failures.

For Brenner et al. (2010b, p. 209) and critical policy scholars, market-oriented policy experiments are prone to serial failure which "[tend] to spur further rounds of reform within broadly neoliberalized political and institutional parameters." Wells (2014,

p. 475) notes that we ought to take "policyfailing" seriously by "[paying] attention to the interruptions, exceptions, and stalled attempts at policymaking." As a regulatory reform project, the process of welfare state restructuring through social policy innovations and downloading welfare provision and poverty management onto informal shadow state institutions, is "inescapably associated with negative externalities and with downstream consequences that prompt their own counter-flows, resistances, recalibrations, adjustments, alternative mobilizations, and occasional u-turns (Peck, 2013, p. 144). In BC, I argue that the private recovery house sector is a market-disciplinary "boundary institution" at the "interstices between formal and informal institutions, toward rationalities that cannot be reduced strictly to workfare, revanchism, discipline, or punishment" (Fairbanks, 2009, p. 232). The sector functions to informally and (more) cheaply manage sub/urban marginality (criminalized and impoverished PWUD)—not by replacing the functions of welfare and penal institutions—but as a messy, hybridized, and contradictory poverty governance formation.

A distinctive feature of neoliberal governance is the role of policy experimentation in the search for a post-Fordist regulatory fix. The fact that processes of neoliberalization produce difference between *places* reflects the importance of distinct national and city-regional political economies, institutional structures, and policy regimes. Where radically devolved federalism in the United States has provided fertile ground for deepening austerity and localized policy experimentation, Canadian cities are institutionally distinct while displaying many of the same *general* tendencies. If we are interested in both these variegated political geographies and generalized forces at work, it is productive to attend to the "social life" of experimental policymaking in neoliberalizing Canadian urban regions by conceptualizing the

> … life of social policy—a process rather than a thing—as complex and convoluted, tracing and leaving traces of meaning and power as it travels across sites and through persons. These tracings and traces are not accidents or imperfections—places or instances where something has gone awry, the result of incomplete or poor information—but are, rather, inherent to the policy process itself. (Kingfisher, 2013, pp. 3–4)

Tracing the life of social policy across and between the scaled actors and institutions (state, private, and non-profit) through policy development, experimentation, and circulation illuminates how "policy … is also a site of power struggles—over definitions, diagnoses, identities, the proper configuration of society, and sometimes over life and death" (Kingfisher, 2013, p. 3).

Following Catherine Kingfisher, I adopt a similar epistemological orientation to tracing policy from 'development' to 'implementation', demanding a certain methodological and conceptual openness to "follow the policy" as it touches down and circulates through various sites and situations (McCann & Ward, 2012a; Peck & Theodore, 2012). Furthermore, a critical explanation of social policy(making) can benefit from engagement with—and a conceptualization of—the role of middling bureaucrats in the policy process (Larner & Laurie, 2010). But as Kingfisher notes, it is also

> … providers' interactions with policy mandates and clients in the space between bureaucracies and target populations [which] actually determine what policies are, in fact, in operation, certainly in terms of their particular shapes and valences. *The route from policy conception to realization is, accordingly, more convoluted than direct, and the distinction between official formation and implementation less clear than some may think, or wish*. (Kingfisher, 2013, p. 3; emphasis added)

Indeed, echoing interpretive policy anthropologists' interest in the messiness of policymaking and the power imbued within it, policy mobility scholars are, too, interested in the politics involved in policymaking, mobilization, mutation, and experimentation across neoliberal landscapes and policy regimes (Gonzalez, 2011; McCann & Ward, 2011a, 2012b, 2013; Peck & Theodore, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Peck, 2002, 2011a).

A policy mobility approach attends to how mobile policies shape—and are shaped by—the territories, people, and institutions they encounter along the way. Policymaking can be conceptualized as a political and power-laden process that reflects the historical and political-economic contexts in which policies and actors are situated (McCann,

2002). While this approach emphasizes mobility, relationality, and processes of assembling, it also appreciates the tension inherent in policy as 1) a translocal and inter-jurisdictional movement of knowledge, but also 2) a process that must be fixed in place and struggled over territorially (McCann & Ward, 2011a; McCann, 2013). It is this tension through which we can examine how the local is assembled through global-local relationalities and territorialities (McCann & Ward, 2010; McCann, 2004b), and how policies are mobilized, mutate in motion, and encounter barriers and political opposition along the way.

Empirically, the politics of welfare reform, poverty, and health and social policies have been a key focus for urban geographers, including welfare-to-work programs (Peck & Theodore, 2001), conditional cash transfers and anti-poverty programs (Peck & Theodore, 2010b; Roy, 2012a), and urban public health and drug policy (McCann & Temenos, 2015; McCann, 2008, 2011a; Temenos, 2014). Critical policy studies scholars––from geography, anthropology, sociology, and heterodox political science—understand policy as a contemporary expression of power, politics, and governance. As policy anthropologists contend, policies are ultimately windows into wider processes, a means of conceptualizing social relations and power (Shore & Wright, 1997; Shore et al., 2011).

Conceptually, literatures attending to variegated neoliberalization and critical geographies of policy provide insight into how policymaking and market-oriented regulatory experimentation are fundamental aspects of uneven processes of neoliberalization—and necessarily produced and reworked through local sites and place-specific institutional architectures. In the case of the recovery house experimentation in the Vancouver region, and Surrey, specifically, these literatures provide assistance in conceptualizing how the specificities—or "social life" (Kingfisher, 2013)—of a particular policy reform project are necessary to understanding the variegated, institutionally scaled, and deeply political nature of neoliberalization and state transformation in the post-welfare era.

5.3.2.   Managing poverty and marginality in the post-welfare era

Geographers have a longstanding interest in the spatialities of poverty, welfare provision, and social policy (Milbourne, 2010) across different welfare regimes and changing state governance forms (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Jessop & Sum, 2006; Mohan, 2002, 2003). Scholars interested in the governance and management of poverty and marginality examine how poor, often homeless, service-dependent citizens negotiate diverse public, private, formal and informal spaces and services. The pioneering work of geographers demonstrates how political-economic restructuring and deinstitutionalization in US cities produced concentrations of service-dependent populations in inner city locations (Dear & Wolch, 1987; Wolch & Dear, 1993), where access to cheap residential hotels, shelters, soup kitchens, and other social services were central to survival.

In many respects, the services necessary for survival are delivered by "shadow state" institutions (Wolch, 1990)—voluntary sector organizations—at a time of ongoing and multi-scalar public welfare retrenchment and regulatory experimentation (Brenner & Theodore, 2002a, 2002b; DeVerteuil, 2003; Fyfe & Milligan, 2003; Peck, 2001; Pinch, 1997). With the hollowing out of the national welfare state, there has been an emergence of new spaces of local welfare state experimentation. Using the case of public welfare in Los Angeles County, DeVerteuil et al. illustrate the emergence and importance of new, *local* regulatory spaces and strategies to "ration services and depress demand" (2002, p. 241). The contemporary urban poverty management and governance literature explores the variegated state responses to rising poverty and inequality following the neoliberal assault on public welfare regimes—and the formal state institutions which historically regulated and managed poverty and disorder (Piven & Cloward, 1993).

In contemporary cities, these "landscapes of despair" (Dear & Wolch, 1987) can, in part, be explained through the local territorial conflicts (Cox & Johnston, 1982; Cox, 1973), and the politics of the not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) syndrome to facilities and services for poor and stigmatized populations (Dear & Taylor, 1982; DeVerteuil, 2013; Martin, 2013; Takahashi, 1998), which confine these services and groups within "welfare

neighbourhoods" or "service-dependent ghettos" (DeVerteuil, 2005). Yet, as inner cities gentrify, social service institutions may either face entrapment or displacement from these areas, where rents have historically remained low and marginalized groups have been confined (DeVerteuil, 2011).

Importantly, attention has been paid to the punitive and revanchist policy responses to urban marginality and homelessness in cities of the global north (Davis, 1990; D. Mitchell, 2003; Smith, 1996, 2001, 2002). But others advocate an alternative framework of "poverty management" (Wolch & DeVerteuil, 2001) to understand homelessness and poverty regulation in a more ambivalent and managerial way, acknowledging the diverse and sometimes conflicting caring, therapeutic, and punitive logics at work (Cloke et al., 2010; Conradson, 2003; DeVerteuil & Wilton, 2009a; DeVerteuil, 2006; DeVerteuil et al., 2009; Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010; May & Cloke, 2013; Sparks, 2012). Shelters, treatment facilities, and drop-in centres are conceptualized as spaces of care, part of a therapeutic and caring landscape. In an attempt to bridge the seemingly oppositional divide of this literature (caring vs. punitive), Herbert (2010, p. 258) provides a thoughtful discussion on the importance of keeping a "critical vigilance of state action" and attending the specificities and complexities of state and institutional responses to impoverishment.

Conceptually, geographies of poverty and homelessness have been explored through neo-Marxian political economy and neoliberal governmentality approaches, with empirical foci expanding to food banks (Warshawsky, 2010) and "foodscapes" in gentrifying neighbourhoods (Miewald & McCann, 2014), as well as the spaces of public health provision and addiction services (DeVerteuil & Wilton, 2009b; Evans, 2012; Fairbanks, 2009; McCann & Temenos, 2015; McLean, 2012; Tempalski, 2007; Wilton & Moreno, 2012). Crucially, poverty and the spaces of survival are often regulated and governed through different legal technologies and property exclusions (Blomley, 2004b, 2009). Mitchell and Heynen (2013) argue that "legal innovations" in automated surveillance (CCTV), banishment and trespass law (see also Beckett & Herbert, 2008,

2011), and the criminalization of sharing food in public are restructuring the geography of survival in American cities.

Of particular note is the work of Robert Fairbanks (2009, 2011a, 2011b) in innovatively connecting street-level ethnographic accounts of Philadelphia's "recovery house movement" with the broader regulatory restructuring and policy experimentation of the post-welfare state. He concludes that the hundreds of recovery houses operated by non-professional, former substance users are an emergent form of informal poverty management and survival built upon the vestiges of public welfare programs, and emerge through the dual forces of state retrenchment and selective regulatory intervention in which "the contemporary state not only acquiesces to but effectively fosters, constitutes, and deepens its reliance on the … recovery house as a highly localized and informal poverty management system" (Fairbanks, 2009, p. 263). Attentive to the need for comparative, relational approaches to understanding cities (Ward, 2010), Fairbanks' work is especially helpful, both conceptually and empirically, because it elucidates how the inner city Philadelphia and suburban Vancouver cases reflect distinct logics and experimental practices rooted in their own political-economic and institutional contexts but also highlights the similar general tendencies of state retrenchment and downloading of public welfare functions.

In the following section, I begin by explaining the factors behind the growth of Surrey's recovery house sector. I then turn to examine how Surrey has emerged as a key site of policy experimentation, as (extra)local policy innovations have attempted to legitimize and deepen the role of the recovery house sector by *increasing* the reach of state regulatory institutions as well as public funding.

5.4. Suburban landscapes of recovery: social policy experimentation and the growth of the shadow welfare state

The lack of affordable housing for PWUD, an aging post-war suburban housing stock, and recent provincial social policy innovations have produced a market for

unregulated and informally operated recovery houses, serving as a form of housing for the very poor. Yet, while policymakers imagine recovery programs as idealized spaces of abstinence and self-transformation, they have also emerged as sites of criminality, spurring further rounds of experimentation in the search for a post-welfare policy 'fix' to homelessness, addiction, and criminality.

5.4.1. Making the recovery house market

In 1998, an estimated 45–50 unregulated recovery houses dotted the suburban Surrey landscape (McLellan, 1998; Munro, 1998a), and by 2014, this had increased to approximately 150–200 houses, predominately unregulated. The growth of the shadow recovery house sector has been fuelled by the lack of publicly funded supportive housing and substance-use beds, and a general lack of affordable housing for very low income people on income assistance. An inter-governmental recovery house stakeholder group—consisting of provincial and local policymakers—bluntly explained the sector's growth:

> Recovery houses in Surrey are a response to the shortage of [health authority]-funded residential facilities for people with substance use issues; and the lack of housing options for singles on Income Assistance (e.g. no single-room occupancy hotels and/or legal boarding houses in Surrey). The availability of single-family houses for rent or purchase, at more affordable rates as compared to elsewhere in the region, makes Surrey a viable location for individuals/organizations to operate a recovery house. (Government of BC, 2014, p. 12)

In this assessment, the lack of publicly funded residential substance-use beds and affordable housing has generated a *market* for recovery house operators. Yet, with the movement of poverty beyond Vancouver's inner city, the market for low-end housing takes on particular suburban characteristics: recovery house operators take advantage of Surrey's stock of large and aging single-family houses in an area recently upzoned and designated to be redeveloped as the region's second downtown district. In this way, the recovery house sector may allow developers and entrepreneurs to degrade this landscape in anticipation of redevelopment:

> If you look at the ownership of some of these homes, they are basically being run by development companies or private [businesses] … and so … it's led to a big boom where people are purchasing houses in Surrey and then they are being converted into these spaces. I've heard an interesting theory about part of the reason why recovery is being chosen, instead of say renting out to a single family … is it's part of a process or program of actively degrading those homes, running them into the ground, and then being in a position to tear them down and redevelop. (Staff member, provincial government agency, No. 1)

Surrey's bylaw enforcement department discovered that property management companies advertise to property owners to rent to recovery house operators (Government of BC, 2014, p. 10). As many service providers and current and former recovery house residents note, recovery houses at the bottom-end of the spectrum are often in severe disrepair and may lack basic utilities (electricity, running water etc.). For property owners, developers and speculators, renting these houses for 'recovery' is potentially lucrative, as little or nothing is invested to maintain the house while they speculate on the land for the right moment to redevelop. Although it may explain why this particular suburban landscape has been selected for recovery housing, the significant demand for supportive, substance-use housing is another factor driving this sector.

For front-line and middling health authority staff, there is a lack of formal and publicly funded supportive housing, especially for those court-ordered into addictions programs or for those unable to get into publicly funded beds due to the typical two to four-week waiting period. A health authority staff member explained how the private and unregulated recovery houses serve as a stop-gap for an overwhelmed public system:

> The approach from above is we are not allowed to talk about the [unlicensed,] unfunded ones but unofficially everyone has a list in their desk … The non-funded ones can range from horrific to actually not too bad, and our funded ones are all sort of mid- to high-level and have a certain level of quality guaranteed. The disadvantage is you can't get in instantaneously. Actually, the non-funded and the funded kind of work together … Let's say they're ready to go. If they work at it, they can get into a place that night. That's a real advantage to them, at least having a bed rather than sleeping on the street. (Staff member, health authority, No. 2)

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The demand for supportive substance-use residential beds has fuelled what is largely an abstinence-based, non-professional, and for-profit recovery house sector. To the frustration of policymakers and more professionalized, non-profit operators, the "recovery house" label has come to capture everything from drug houses to rooming houses to punitive, predatory or unscrupulous recovery houses. What is similar across the spectrum of "recovery houses" is that it is an emergent *suburban* form of housing for the very poor in the Vancouver region—or the suburban equivalent to inner city SROs. Yet, as service providers, policymakers, and health authority officials note, they often lack the health and social supports available to inner city SRO residents:

> AL: Some people have said that the low-barrier rooming houses or recovery houses play the function of SROs.

> Staff member, health authority, No. 3: Yeah, without the support. I think that's where … there is a need for [harm reduction housing] because these recovery houses may have been acting under guise of like you have to go to AA meetings, but AA and NA [do not provide the] support to deal with trauma and all of these other things that are going on. They're completely inadequate to deal with the complexities of people's lives.

Echoing concerns of many service providers and low-income recovery house residents themselves, one staff member from a provincial government agency characterized the recovery houses as

> … more precarious than in an SRO. You know why? Well if you are living in an SRO you pay your rent and you get to stay there, but in these places your behaviour is monitored so much more closely and if you are perceived as being in violation of a whole range of things, you are out on your ear before the month is over and you have lost your housing. (Staff member, provincial government agency, No. 2)

Moreover, current and former residents, service providers, and policymakers note an all-too-common practice of kicking out residents part way through the month and keeping their income assistance, leaving them without housing or income for the remainder of the month.

The growth of the shadow recovery house sector can be attributed to the following factors: upzoning (rezoning property to allow for greater height and/or density), speculation, and redevelopment pressures in Surrey; and, the lack of affordable suburban housing for low-income people, specifically health authority-funded substance-use beds. I turn now to examine how Surrey has served as a crucial site of recent provincial policy experimentation as attempts are made to legitimize and deepen the role of the private recovery house sector.

5.4.2. Social policy experimentation: the Recovery House Per Diem Program and the Assisted Living Registry

After deregulating recovery housing in 2001, the BC provincial government established the Recovery House Per Diem Program in 2009, as a non-legislative, internal policy innovation (i.e. not passed through formal legislative mechanisms and debated) to allow recovery house operators to bill the provincial Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) at $30.90/day for each eligible income assistance recipient residing in the house. Rather than the recipient receiving their cheque directly (and paying for their housing as in a typical landlord/tenant arrangement), MSDSI directly pays the recovery house operator. Since the assumption is that food and hospitality services are provided, the income assistance recipient only receives $95/month in personal "comfort" allowance.

In 2012, after concerns about the lack of regulatory oversight and standards across the sector, the provincial Ministry of Health's Assisted Living Registrar (ALR) established a registration process for recovery houses; the same office registers seniors assisted living residences. ALR *registered* houses (different from the provincially *licensed* facilities) are required to provide housing and hospitality services and no more than two "prescribed services"; these may include medication dispensing, cash management or psychosocial supports. Facilities *licensed* under the provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act, medically-supervised residential detox, for example, can receive a $40 per diem for each eligible income assistance client residing in

the facility. These facilities must meet a higher threshold of (professional) service provision, they have stricter reporting requirements, and are monitored and inspected by the health authority on a regular basis.

The Recovery House Per Diem Program is intended to incentivize recovery houses to register and agree to a (limited) degree of regulatory oversight by the provincial Assisted Living Registrar. For the operator, the incentive for registering means that their revenue rises to approximately $950 per month, per person, rather than what might be as low as $375/month, paid from the client's regular income assistance. In reality, the ALR does not have the resources, nor is there the political will from the provincial government, to actively regulate the sector and perform the inspections necessary to ensure compliance with the ALR's modest requirements. Many key informants—from both local and provincial governments—concede that the current, complaint-driven, 'light-touch' approach is insufficient to adequately regulate a sector dealing with vulnerable people, especially when recovery houses are predominately driven by profit. Jurisdictional conflicts, between the municipality and the province, have arisen since the municipality finds itself providing much of the oversight, inspections, and responding to complaints, as the province downloads these responsibilities. In fact, the overwhelmed City of Surrey fire department inspects each house prior to registration approval, and the City bylaw department devotes considerable resources addressing neighbourhood complaints.

And yet, the City of Surrey emerges as a crucial—and necessary—*local* site through which the provincial government is realizing this experimental policy reform project. Since the municipality was most affected by the rise of unregulated recovery homes out of all municipalities in the province, and local policymakers are ideologically aligned in their support of abstinence-based recovery, Surrey is an important partner in this policy project with the province. A city official explained that the Per Diem Program originated out of discussions with the City of Surrey in which they made a compelling case that funding private recovery houses would be much cheaper than building supportive housing or funding new substance-use beds.

AL: From your perspective what's the rationale behind the province starting the Per Diem Program? The push from the City [of Surrey]?

Staff member, local government, No. 2: [W]e were told that discussions with the City and other stakeholders in Surrey was what helped to inspire that program ... [T]he point we were making to the [senior provincial government official] in saying [that] this is an incredibly cost-effective approach when you think about it ... Obviously you need to make sure that model you feel ... you can comfortably stand behind ... because when you consider the cost of either building brand new supportive housing projects or funding addiction beds, this is like I don't know what percentage of the costs.

As a policy 'partner', Surrey is assisting in the construction of new marketized social policy innovations intended to, quite simply, do more with less. The provincial government is responding to the crises that have arisen from the lack of affordable housing and publicly funded substance-use beds by creating a market for low-end housing. Provincial policymakers are aware and appear unbothered by the fact that "most recovery houses being registered are privately owned businesses" (Government of BC, 2014, p. 8). As one legislator from the opposition party noted, the Per Diem Program is an attempt to accomplish multiple objectives through a logic of austerity:

> [Ministry of Health] is not going to step up and provide the funding to deal with [addictions], [BC Housing] is not going to step up ... And so what [does the provincial government] do? They take [MSDSI] money which by the way, is not additional money, right, it's money that's with the existing person who gets income assistance and then they are thinking, "Gee, aren't we smart? We can utilize the same pot of money and say that we've achieved this other goal." (Provincial legislator, No. 7)

The Per Diem Program can be seen as an example of "ameliorative firefighting, trial-and-error governance, [and] devolved experimentation" (Peck, 2010, p. 106). Importantly, for local and provincial policymakers, there remains a persistent belief that the poorly regarded recovery house sector—aside from a few favourite examples—will *eventually* come into itself with time, through further policy tweaks, and by building the capacity and professionalization of this predominately informal and non-professionalized

sector. It is a utopian vision that marketizing housing for marginalized PWUD—despite the contradictions outlined in the next section—will both generate sufficient affordable addictions housing *and* remake addicts into responsible and productive subjects. Yet, many service providers and health authority staff remain acutely aware that there is a desperate need for low-barrier, harm reduction housing to provide stability and supports for the many people are who unable to abstain from drugs and alcohol. But for local and provincial policymakers, there is hope that this sector can be made into a reputable—yet market-driven—replacement to publicly funded programs.

Indeed, the introduction of the Per Diem Program, as an *increase* in public subsidies for private recovery houses, and the ALR registration process, exemplify how the provincial government—rather than retreating from state intervention—is actively intervening in an attempt to transform welfare provision in BC. It is *experimental intervention* intended to "grow the capacity" (Government of BC, 2015, p. 9) of the sector through public dollars while starving the public system of funding:

> My belief is it's totally political. I think [BC] Premier [Christy] Clark wants to get re-elected. She's promised to address the addictions issues in BC. The way that she's going to do it, is not to invest money in the health authorities who are running legitimate houses, but to somehow bring into the fold the unlicensed, unregulated ones by presenting a registration process, giving some incentive by giving them that $30.90 [per diem]. (Staff member, health authority, No. 8)

Despite the resistance from key policy actors within the regional health authority, the province's political strategy appears to working, at least if we account for the increase in registered houses and provincial subsidies. Eighty per cent of Per Diem Program-funded houses in the province are in the suburban Fraser region, including Surrey (Government of BC, 2014, p. 241). By October 2013, there were 845 Per Diem Program-funded beds in BC and 310 were located in Surrey (Government of BC, 2014, p. 10). Put another way, provincial per diem expenditures indicate that ALR registered recovery houses have seen their funding increase from $1.67 million in 2009/2010 to $6.21 million in 2013/2014—

an increase of 273% (Table 5.2). During this period, per diems paid to *licensed* drug and alcohol facilities have remained almost stagnant.

I turn now to argue how the provincial government's "roll-back"—retrenchment from supportive housing provision—and "roll-out" of the Per Diem Program have paradoxically produced these houses as sites of criminality and failure, rather than the idealized spaces of abstinence and recovery. The apparent contradictions serve not as a moment for provincial policymakers to pull back and re-evaluate the program, but as an impetus for further policy experimentation.

Table 5.2. **BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation daily user expenditures (per diem charges) for drug and alcohol programs, FY 2009-10 – FY 2013-14**

Facility Type	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Change (2009-10 – 2013-14)
Licensed Drug & Alcohol Facility	$4,994,175	$5,405,506	$4,533,598	$5,086,697	$5,106,780	+2%
Grandparented Non-Licensed Alcohol & Drug Facility	$2,066,034	$3,734,339	$4,079,107	$3,250,740	$2,628,889	+27%
Approved (Registered) Support Recovery Homes	$1,665,764	$3,988,360	$4,013,821	$3,801,759	$6,214,649	+273%

Note. In 2009, the BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation started the Recovery House Per Diem Program, and in 2012, the BC Ministry of Health ALR recovery house registration process began. "Licensed" facilities operate under the BC Community Care and Assisted Living Act and are monitored by the respective regional health authority. "Grandparented" facilities are non-licensed but ALR registered houses that get the licensed rate of $40 per diem per client. Source: BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation Freedom of Information request (Government of BC, 2015).

5.4.3.   Sites of criminality, sites of contradiction

As one non-profit recovery house operator explained, recovery houses are a community-level response to inadequate government social supports and affordable housing, particularly for single men with addictions. Relatedly, but also distinctly, the rise of the unregulated sector, particularly the bottom-end, reflects how the state has produced this recovery house market, attracting entrepreneurs, organized crime, and doctors and pharmacists (who have lost their license to practice) into this potentially lucrative business opportunity (Government of BC, 2014, p. 9). In these cases, few, if any services, are provided and houses may be overcrowded and sites where the sex and drug trade converge:

> I've personally been in recovery houses in north Surrey … They are trying to cram six, eight, ten beds per space in these homes … But none of these places usually get noticed until there [are] multiple visits either from police or neighbours calling about disturbances. Because some of these homes have very, very little recovery-oriented structure, and inevitably are going to have … multiple cases of relapse and … drugs and crime … being brought into the dwelling … [including] selling drugs on site, prostitution, trading and selling of stolen merchandise, threats, coercion, that sort of stuff that you find in a typical crack house, and you're seeing it in something that is supposedly a recovery house. I've personally seen what was once a recovery house turn into a crack house … I used to drive new clients or prospective clients to welfare to get their file switched from wherever they were residing to come to us. There were what we called junkie hawks, an informal term, but there would be vans parked outside of [the] welfare [office] scouting out those that were visibly struggling and say, "Come to our recovery house." And all they really wanted to do was switch the residency of the [income assistance] cheque status to their house so a place that has 16 bunk beds in a four-bedroom house has now 16 cheques coming in. (Former drug user and recovery house staff member, No. 1)

A health authority staff member confirmed that government agencies are aware that these practices occur:

> Absolutely they are coerced, they certainly are. Absolutely they are threatened … Perhaps they are coming into an unregulated house because they have problems with alcohol and the house has close ties with the local pharmacy or pharmacist and now they are being put on methadone for alcohol problems because there is a kickback that

happens. We have some houses out there where the operator/owners are sleeping with their underage clients. That happens in more cases than you can imagine … [S]ome unregulated [houses] for some odd reason think it's okay to run co-ed houses … [M]any of the women [with] addictions are in the sex trade, so how does that feel for them being in a co-ed house with people who just have no self-control or emotional regulation. We have houses that are set up out there that are fronting for other criminal organizations and activities … We know that is happening. Trying to prove it is a whole different thing, but scamming, taking advantage of vulnerable [people] in every way that you can imagine. We had two or three suicides in one house. (Staff member, health authority, No. 8)

Even among ardent supporters of the abstinence-based recovery movement, there is a frustration that "recovery house" is simply a convenient label for low-barrier housing, including flophouses and drug houses with connections to organized crime (Government of BC, 2014), rather than a programmatic space of abstinence-based recovery. For one key political actor, there is a tension surrounding the move to regulate the non-professionalized, informal end of the recovery house sector because the provincial government does not want to put "good people who do good work … out of business" (interview, provincial legislator, No. 3). Local authorities have attempted to address this tension through a police-led crack down of problematic houses operating as drug houses or where there is suspected higher-level criminal involvement.

In 2014, a number of high-profile homicides fuelled public outcry over unregulated recovery houses in relation to crime occurring in Surrey. The mayor responded to this highly political issue (occurring during an election year) with a crackdown intended to shut down unregulated and problematic houses believed to be driving crime (Diakiw, 2014). Surrey's police, the local detachment of the federal Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), with the assistance of the city bylaw and fire department, embarked on a "high risk location initiative" to "execute search warrants and potentially fix, salvage or close houses including known recovery houses operating as drug houses … [and target] the properties where the intersection of high risk and high crime exist" (Government of BC, 2014, p. 168). Upon the conclusion of this 90-day

initiative, Surrey RCMP had 221 high-risk locations on their list, and 104 unregulated recovery houses were shut down (Surrey RCMP, 2014, pp. 28–29).

Despite the very political public response by the local government, there is widespread acknowledgement—even among local elites—that there is little end in sight for these types of local enforcement and regulatory efforts since houses simply close and then re-appear in a different location, characterized by one local politician as a game of "whack-a-mole". A service provider tempered celebratory (public) accounts of the initiative's success, while also reflecting on the need to for a more "expensive solution" (i.e. to build and fund formal supportive housing):

> [T]hey are praising themselves for closing down 100 [houses]. Those beds were opened up somewhere else within 24 hours, that's what I hear. They are scarier, and they are darker. That's it. So we can celebrate things, but by saying that the problem went away without really having an expensive solution … is just crazy making to think that things are better because they are not. (Staff member, service provider, No. 4)

Although this crackdown may have simply moved recovery houses around and pushed these houses further into the shadows, it was a political response to a crisis produced by the state.

Contradictorily, for policymakers, recovery houses may be seen as sites of criminality *and yet* imagined as the policy fix to affordable housing, addiction, and criminality. Recent policy innovations are an attempt to legitimatize this shadow sector through the *state*, with public funding, a registration process, and a light-touch regulatory approach. Yet, a health authority official expressed concerns about making the recovery house business more profitable for entrepreneurs with questionable motives operating on the margins of the law:

> The unlicensed houses themselves…it's kind of a nasty disease in and of itself. I don't know how one routs that out. It has been made more lucrative. I'm not going to say it's easy for houses to get registered. It is a process. There are packages, and there are visits. But these are very smart people. They've been around a long time. Filling out

> packages is nothing for them in return for that they get $30.90/day for clients on income assistance. As much as I've been involved in those provincial debates, "Wow, do you realize what you've just done?" It doesn't matter. [The provincial government has] gone ahead and done it to be seen to be doing something. They've also given [$5 million] to [a provincial agency] to go out and explore how to play nice in the sand with unlicensed houses. (Staff member, health authority, No. 8)

Yet, marketized policy experiments often suffer from serial failure, often inducing further rounds of experimentation. So while the Per Diem Program has made the business more lucrative, provincial policymakers are also investigating additional ways to bring the shadowy, unregulated houses into the fold to enable further downloading of addiction services onto the sector.

In 2013, the BC Ministry of Health awarded funding to an arms-length provincial government agency to "help [recovery houses] enhance their own service capacities and partnerships" (Community Action Initiative, 2014, p. 1). The project is intended to "explore capacity building opportunities for the sector" (interview, staff member, provincial government agency, No. 1) in order to improve service provision, but it is also consistent with the provincial government's "top-down mandate" to build the capacity of the sector in order to download addiction services:

> … [This project is] a bit of a different approach for us … we've been able to offer fairly broad granting opportunities in the past, and let community [organizations] kind of shape that. *Whereas in this case, we're getting a bit more of a top-down mandate for a project* but then wanting to still have those in-depth community conversations to understand exactly what's going on and how we might provide opportunities that will be beneficial to the sector … (Provincial government agency official, No. 1; emphasis added)

The informant expresses how the project has a particular "top-down" orientation from the provincial government—that is, it is less explorative and more prescribed in its aims. The project starts from the normative assumption that an increased role for the sector in addiction services is desired. Furthermore, the informant noted that there is a political strategy by using the arms-length agency to depoliticize an issue that is "highly politicized" and contentious between governmental institutions operating at different

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scales, namely between the regional health authority which "has a real philosophical problem with the support recovery home sector" (interview, provincial government agency official, No. 2) and the provincial government: "[The project is] sort of a strategic way to engage with [the] issue without having to get into a potentially unhelpful politicized place" (interview, provincial government agency official, No. 1).

Using an arms-length provincial agency to build the capacity of recovery houses is an attempt to institutionalize the shadow sector within the addiction services system. The "policy effect" of this capacity-building effort serves to "endow [the recovery house sector] with an aura of institutional authority" (Shore, 2011, p. 172) by extending the "institutional reach" of the state (Allen & Cochrane, 2010) into a sector lacking state and professional legitimacy. Illustrative of the vision to empower the sector, the agency ended up with only three unregistered recovery house operators attending an invited consultation (staff member, provincial government agency, No. 2). In effect, the provincial government's aim to build capacity and the legitimacy of the private, non-professional sector (largely resistant to professionalization) may itself prove to be an elusive endeavour.

In many ways, the emergence of the recovery house sector in suburban Vancouver—and recent policy innovations to legitimize and strengthen the sector—articulates with a hegemonic economic rationality of austerity, but also with a dominant drug policy approach of a governmentalizing, moralistic, and custodial model of abstinence-based recovery, rather than a public health-oriented harm-reduction approach.

5.5. Conclusion: recovery relapses, policy realignments

More often than not, the new neoliberalism learns (and evolves) by doing wrong, having become mired in the unending challenge of managing its own contradictions, together with the social and economic fallout from previous deregulations and malinterventions. It fails, but it tends to fail forwards. (Peck, 2010, p. 106)

In this paper, I have argued that Surrey, BC is a key site through which provincial neoliberal social policy experimentation, aimed at reconstructing the role of public welfare provision, is operationalized. For policymakers, private abstinence-based recovery programs are imagined as a politically expedient solution to homelessness, addiction, and criminality, which can also serve austerity imperatives and public welfare retrenchment. I explained how local policy innovations—produced through a scalar interplay between provincial and local governments—are intended to *legitimize* a predominately unregulated, abstinence-based, and marketized recovery house sector, not through the existing regulatory and funding structure, but by *circumventing* the health authority's more expensive, professionalized, and harm reduction-oriented residential addictions programs and licensing regime. In its place, provincial policymakers have established a parallel—but much weaker, cheaper, and politically flexible—regulatory regime with limited oversight. Unsurprisingly, this has fuelled incredible institutional and jurisdictional conflict, yet policy reforms march on.

By following the policy and triangulating across and between the myriad state and non-state institutions and policy actors through which this inchoate policy reform project 'touches down', I have shown how Surrey emerges as an important and experimental site of welfare restructuring. Contributing to critical policy studies, I have provided insight into the importance of the scaled institutional actors involved in the transformation of BC's addictions services system, and the broader rescaling and neoliberalization of the Canadian welfare state. Recent rounds of Canadian welfare state reform have received inadequate conceptualization or the rich empirical accounts necessary to see the (dis)continuities of urban-regional neoliberalization and policy change in comparative and relational US and Canadian contexts.

In the final discussion, I argue that despite its failures and inherent contradictions, this malleable policy reform project is increasingly being recalibrated and realigned to serve the needs of the criminal justice system, functioning as a social control mechanism of the marginal classes through a market-disciplinary, abstinence-based recovery drug policy model.

5.5.1. Recovery endgame: criminalizing poverty and the "therapeutic community" model as punitive-institution building

As low-income people are displaced from inner city neighbourhoods, they are increasingly located in suburban areas where there is more affordable housing. Suburban recovery houses are often a last resort for very poor PWUD who might otherwise be on the street. Local and provincial governments are acutely aware of this reality (Government of BC, 2014). While this policy experiment can be explained through an economic rationality of austerity, it also articulates with policymakers' *ideological preference* for custodial and abstinence-based addiction treatment approaches— specifically the "therapeutic community" (TC) model. Writing in the US context, Kerwin Kaye (2012, p. 211) notes that "therapeutic communities have become the program of choice within the criminal justice system". This model articulates with the production of neoliberal subjectivities, with an emphasis on "individual pathology", compliance, (unpaid) labour, as well as "a newly restructuring state … increasingly turning toward drug treatment as a low-cost solution [to mass incarceration] … and a means of 'treating' the so-called 'culture of poverty'" (Kaye, 2012, p. 214).

While provincially licensed and funded substance-use housing (either directly operated or contracted by the health authority) must accept people on methadone (a prescribed opioid substitution therapy), ALR registered houses are not required to accept people on methadone (interview, staff member, provincial government agency, No. 1). Collectively, the Recovery House Per Diem Program and ALR serve to legitimize private, abstinence-based houses at odds with the health authority's harm reduction approach and service provision philosophy where "the client is at the centre of their own plan" (interview, staff member, health authority, No. 8). In fact for policymakers, rather than seeing the broader market-driven recovery sector as the source of failure, methadone—dispensed by private, often unscrupulous pharmacies that bill the provincial government (Stueck & Hunter, 2015)—is scapegoated as the source of the shadow recovery sector's poor image and questionable practices. A provincial politician from the governing party aptly characterizes an ideological frustration with the health

authority, providing insight into the provincial government's rationale for supporting abstinence-based and custodial models (through the Per Diem Program and ALR) favoured by the criminal justice system:

> [I]f it's not harm reduction you are not getting funding from [the health authority] … It all comes back to that … They believe that it is the addict's choice to decide what kind of treatment they want. And we [publicly] just don't put any money into abstinence-based [programs]. (Provincial legislator, No. 3)

This legislator—deeply connected to police/criminal justice and recovery networks—is articulating a criminalization and abstinence drug policy approach, especially dominant within the federal Conservative government. In 2015, a federal addiction advocacy organization hosted a national summit, supported by the federal Conservative government, to "develop a collective vision of a made-in-Canada approach that will bring a recovery focus to policies, practices and programs" (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2015). Key individuals from the recovery movement and private abstinence-based addictions service providers in the Vancouver region, with ties to the BC provincial government, were involved in the initiative.

Typical of neoliberal policy experiments, policymakers rarely have a well-defined endgame in mind, much less a roadmap of how to get there. Yet, recent policy innovations to direct public dollars to the abstinence-based recovery sector—while manoeuvring around the health authority—open the door for the health authority-shunned TC model to be adopted, publicly funded, and integrated within the criminal justice system. In internal meeting minutes, the provincial Ministry of Justice notes there is a lack of housing for those involved in the criminal justice system:

> Housing instability is a basis for criminality. *More beds are needed, people leaving the justice system need to go somewhere.* [We] [n]eed to stop people from going to the Courts and representing themselves as reputable recovery house operators. (Government of British Columbia, 2014, p. 238; emphasis added)

While concern is expressed for unscrupulous recovery house operators misrepresenting themselves, the criminal justice system recognizes the need for beds "somewhere". It is no coincidence then that a recent Ministry of Justice report identifies

> [t]he lack of funding for abstinence-based and other recovery support programs … as a serious issue everywhere and as one of the main reasons for the high rates of recidivism observed across the province amongst offenders suffering from substance abuse disorder. (Plecas, 2014, p. 28)

In short, provincial government funding should "prioritize" abstinence-based recovery programs (Plecas, 2014, p. 12).

Building on this conclusion, the report suggests the TC model as the ideal abstinence-based policy response to house criminal justice system-involved people with addictions, often scripted as "prolific offenders" (Damon, 2014; Hansard, 2014). Among the stakeholders consulted for the provincial report, including many from the recovery movement, the Ministry of Justice sees an opportunity to "[offer] more programs for offenders with addiction issues based on the TC model, such as the TC program offered by BC Corrections … and for *community-based residential recovery programs* (Plecas, 2014, p. 29; emphasis added). While these policy pronouncements may seem aspirational and speculative, the recovery sector innovations have established the necessary experimental policy context and funding/registration regime to facilitate the forward momentum of this mutating policy reform project. Key figures within the recovery movement and the owner/operator of a private 150-bed TC program in Surrey sat on several of the Surrey mayor's crime prevention and offender management committees (Reid, 2015). As a provincial government agency staff member noted, these large private recovery and TC model facilities are owned and operated by individuals connected politically to the provincial and federal governments, and some are even former politicians themselves.

Furthermore, the provincial government has bailed out two private, abstinence-based TC programs. In 2007, the province purchased the property for a Surrey-area

recovery organization, so they would not be forced to close their doors. The organization received the endorsement of Surrey's former mayor and a provincial legislator (Government of British Columbia, 2007). In 2011, the publicly funded provincial housing agency bailed out a TC founded by a former politician from the party, now working in the premier's office. The BC government purchased the $3 million site, and committed to providing $277,000 in annual operating funding, as well as a one-time contribution of over half a million dollars (Government of British Columbia, 2010; Times Colonist, 2011).

More recently, in 2015, the RCMP, provincial and federal governments, and a prominent recovery organization repurposed a *provincial jail* into an abstinence-based TC program for men court-ordered into addiction treatment, intended to take offenders from the Vancouver region to its remote rural location in the interior of BC. Provincial and federal governments provided over half a million dollars in capital funding, the province committed to a one-year operating subsidy, and crucially, the former RCMP deputy commissioner serves on the board of this organization (Government of British Columbia, 2015; Woodward, 2015).

A health authority official contextualized the emergent link between the criminal justice system and the policy innovations which have provided the funding and the legitimacy to the TC model.

> Staff member, health authority: The criminal justice system [and] the police department really favour [Recovery Organization ABC] for example and that's primarily because they have a tendency to take them right out of jail.
>
> AL: It's a step-down [from corrections]?
>
> Staff member, health authority: Yeah … I'll just say at the face value, criminal justice likes that because they can slip them right from here to there, right out of court into there. It's a highly custodial type of model … I would describe that … as a model where the client has less choices. I think the legitimate … provincially licensed, health authority funded [facilities are] where we recognize the client … [needs] to have some choices, probably mostly choices … without being punitive or moralistic, without being abused. The

recognition that you're a vulnerable client. Not providing cult-like activities, which I think a lot of the houses do and other types of criminal activities. So that's the system that's being supported by this government because it's cheaper to buy [and] easier for those houses to get *legitimized* because now they are registered on the Ministry of Health website … [We've] got a government that doesn't really care about people with addictions. They care about keeping municipalities happy by … trying to reduce crime by *increasing* the addictions beds. All of these are the wrong messages. It says addiction is the cause of crime, which is not true.

Although the Per Diem Program and ALR registration process, as an inchoate policy reform project can be understood as an attempt to formalize and legitimize the predominately private, abstinence-based recovery sector, this policy reform project is increasingly mutating into alignment with the criminal justice system, since the political flexibility of this policy project serves as an emergent mechanism of social control of the marginal classes (scripted as "prolific offenders") through the market-disciplinary, abstinence-based TC model. Yet, as I have argued, its architects, supporters, and entrepreneurs rely on the *state* for validation, legitimacy, and perhaps most paradoxically, funding for its very survival.

Chapter 6.

Policy frontiers and political possibilities: incrementally embedding harm reduction drug policy

In Chapter 5, I explain how Surrey's burgeoning private recovery house sector serves to constitute a site of provincial social policy experimentation and public welfare retrenchment, as well as a political-institutional barrier to the mobilization of harm reduction drug policy since it is rooted in a custodial, abstinence-based approach to addiction and the social control of social marginality. In Chapter 7, I complicate the political landscape and socio-institutional context by empirically examining and conceptualizing Surrey as a *drug policy frontier* where the harm reduction model is met with resistance as it moves across the region. I argue that harm reduction is constrained as policy actors struggle over competing drug policy approaches and idealized models.

Conceptually, I move from explaining the abstinence-based recovery house sector as an experimental policy project—supported by key (extra)local policymakers—to demonstrating the assemblage of actors, institutions, political strategies and tactics, and resources mobilized in this policy struggle. Chapters 3 and 5 analysed the socio-institutional and political contexts fuelling resistance to harm reduction, constituted through 1) elites' place-framing practices and attendant policy responses to displace low-barrier services and visible, street-entrenched PWUD (Chapter 3), and 2) the recovery house sector and "therapeutic community" model as emergent policy project serving to entrench and institutionalize criminalization and abstinence-based drug policy approaches while manoeuvring around opponents, namely the health authority (Chapter 5).

Although still attentive to the institutional and political contexts, Chapter 7 adds another layer of analytical complexity to explaining Surrey's political geography of drug policy and poverty by attending to the struggles between key policy actors and institutions from the health authority, non-profit sector, advocacy groups, and PWUD themselves who are working to mobilize and embed harm reduction policies and services into the landscape. Despite their mobilization of resources and expertise from across the region, especially from Vancouver, they are engaged in political struggles with competing actors advocating abstinence-based recovery and more custodial addiction treatment models increasingly aligned with the criminal justice system. This chapter is concerned with the frontier politics, as the mobile harm reduction drug policy model cautiously and incrementally advances in Surrey, despite political resistance and institutional blockages.

Chapter 7.

Political struggles on the drug policy frontier: city-regional geographies of constrained policy mobility

7.1. Introduction

In 2001, the municipal government of Vancouver, Canada adopted the landmark *Four Pillars Drug Strategy*. This new urban drug policy approach endeavoured to comprehensively respond to problems associated with illicit drug use through a four pillars approach of enforcement, education, prevention, and harm reduction. Harm reduction—the most contentious part of the new strategy—is a public health approach to illicit drug use that seeks to reduce the harms of drug use to individuals and society without necessarily reducing consumption of drugs themselves. Policy actors—including drug users, public health workers, policymakers, and even the mayor—mobilized drug policy models from European cities intended to respond to public street disorder, crime, overdose deaths, and the epidemic levels of HIV and hepatitis C spreading through the city's Downtown Eastside neighbourhood (McCann, 2008).

As a key part of Vancouver's four pillars approach, the government health authority, with the support of the City of Vancouver, police, and provincial and federal governments opened North America's first supervised drug consumption room, where drug users may inject street-brought drugs with clean needles under the supervision of medical staff. The drug consumption room—Insite—has undergone significant scientific evaluation and has been found to be a successful public health intervention (Kerr et al., 2009). While this is the most contentious aspect of the city's drug policy approach, harm reduction interventions also include needle exchanges (the distribution of clean

needles/syringes), methadone maintenance programs (an opioid substitution therapy), heroin prescription therapy, and 'low-barrier' health, housing, and social services intended to stabilize the lives of drug users and bring them into contact with the public health system so they are more likely to seek counselling and treatment. Following Vancouver's adoption of harm reduction, the BC provincial government and regional health authorities (responsible for public health service provision) embraced the harm reduction model.

Yet, more than a decade has passed since the official adoption of this public health-oriented approach to problematic substance use, the 'actually existing' geography of harm reduction policy practice remains uneven and politically contested, especially in suburban and exurban areas across the Vancouver region. The purpose of this paper is to examine the city-regional political geographies of *constrained* harm reduction policy mobility. This paper is concerned with the frontier politics of policy mobilization across an urban region: when the harm reduction drug policy model, embraced in Vancouver, BC, is met with resistance across suburban landscapes. Through a case study of Surrey, BC, a rapidly growing suburban municipality, I examine the politics constitutive of this *drug policy frontier* where the movement of harm reduction is constrained as competing drug policy approaches are mobilized. Local and regional policy actors—including policymakers, health officials, service providers, business interests, and activists—are engaged in struggles over the embedding of harm reduction policy learning and service provision within this landscape. Despite ongoing attempts to institutionalize harm reduction practices, harm reduction advocates operate within a constrained political-institutional environment and advance harm reduction cautiously and incrementally. This paper investigates both the relational and territorial nature of city-regional political struggles over policy circulation to conceptualize the contested spaces where mobile policy models encounter barriers and resistance.

This paper adopts the extended case method approach (Burawoy, 1998) and a methodological orientation to "follow the policy" and "*study through* the sites and situations of policymaking" (McCann & Ward, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2010, 2012;

emphasis mine). It is based on one year of research (2014–2015) on the relational and territorial city-regional politics of poverty and drug policy. The mixed-methods research project employed 45 semi-structured interviews (43 unique interviewees) with key informants (policymakers, political and economic elites, non-profit service providers, and activists), observation of 15 meetings (14 business community or police-convened neighbourhood stakeholder meetings and one peer group[6] of people who use drugs (PWUD)), and statistical analysis to illustrate the suburbanization of poverty. Methods also included substantial archival research. Key sources were government records (primarily correspondence and internal memos) obtained through five Freedom of Information requests, and 315 media articles and over 100 policy and planning documents and meeting minutes. Interviews and documents were coded, analysed, and triangulated for recurrent and divergent discourses and themes (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005).

The paper is organized as follows. I first begin by outlining the socio-economic and harm reduction policy contexts of the Vancouver region, specifically focusing on Surrey. In the section that follows, drawing predominately on the policy mobilities literature, I offer a framework to conceptualize *policy frontiers* and the city-regional political geographies of constrained policy mobility. In the third section, "Political struggles on the policy frontier", I conceptualize through the empirical case study of Surrey, and I explain how competing policy actors are engaged in attempts to institutionalize particular drug policy knowledges, practices, and services. I conclude with a discussion of the broader significance of these findings for urban and regional theory and how we might conceptualize the political spaces and contexts of constrained policy change.

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[6] Peer-based groups often work to improve the lives of PWUD through user-based support and education, as well as advocating for peoples' right to health care and access to harm reduction services. Peer-based user groups often engage in social movement organizing (see McCann, 2008; Temenos, 2014).

7.2. Surrey and the Vancouver region in relational context

Following Toronto and Montreal, the Vancouver region is the third-largest in Canada by population. The Vancouver metropolitan area has a population of over 2.3 million people. Vancouver (603,502) and Surrey (468,251) are the two largest municipalities, and Surrey is expected to grow larger than Vancouver over the next several decades. From 2006–2011, Surrey experienced the largest regional share of population growth (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). In 2005, Vancouver's median household income was $47,299 and Surrey's was $60,168, while the median incomes for renter households were $34,872 and $37,090, respectively (Metro Vancouver, 2014). Yet, while Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighbourhood reports the most significant concentration of low-income households, north Surrey's Whalley neighbourhood is comparatively impoverished. To further illustrate the regional geography of poverty, in 2013, 71% of income assistance (welfare) recipients lived in suburban municipalities, while 29% resided in the City of Vancouver. Compared to all other municipalities across the region, the City of Surrey has seen the most significant percentage increase in the regional share of income assistance recipients, rising from 17% to 22% between 1995 and 2013, while Vancouver has seen a decrease from 35% to 29%.[7] Put another way, in 2013, over one-fifth of the region's welfare recipients lived in Surrey, and these trends attest to the suburbanization of poverty (see Ley & Lynch, 2012).

Whalley (north Surrey) is approximately 35 kilometres from Vancouver's city centre and located at the terminus of the region's Skytrain rapid transit system. The built environment can be characterized as an "in-between" landscape (Keil & Young, 2011; Young et al., 2011) with a mix of land uses, including new and older high-rise condominium and apartment towers, low-rise commercial and industrial buildings, and post-war single-family housing stock. In 1991, the City of Surrey identified Whalley for

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[7] Figures are calculated by the author from unpublished BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation data obtained through a request. Due to the fluctuating nature of welfare rolls, calculations are based upon annual average caseloads.

development as a regional downtown centre, and in 2011, the regional planning authority designated the area as the region's second metropolitan downtown (Metro Vancouver, 2011). In the mid-2000s, the City embarked on an entrepreneurial strategy to facilitate the redevelopment and remaking of north Surrey—from a poorly regarded, 'crime and drug-ridden' area—into a gentrified downtown district through a mix of state policies intended to facilitate market development: upzoning, development subsidies, and the construction of new civic facilities, infrastructure, and a university campus. Despite the local state's attempt to transform Whalley from a working class and low-income area into a high-density downtown district, Whalley remains a lower-income neighbourhood with visible homelessness and is known for its open-air drug scene. Yet, even as Whalley grapples with the ongoing and significant issue of illicit drug use, similar to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the municipality does not officially embrace a harm reduction drug policy approach.

7.2.1.   Harm reduction policy at multiple scales

Harm reduction is a public health approach to drug use that focuses on the prevention of drug-related harms, rather than the prevention of drug use itself. It is a multifaceted public health approach that seeks to enhance the lives drug users rather than criminalize their behaviour (Erickson et al., 1997). Furthermore, it is a mobile, transnational and translocal drug policy model—and social movement—with a human rights and social justice orientation recognizing drug users' right to health care and inclusion within society (Temenos, 2014).

The BC government's official adoption of harm reduction is reflected in key policy documents (Ministry of Health, 2005) and followed the City of Vancouver's *Four Pillars Drug Strategy* (2001) and opening of Insite (2003). Regional health authorities are delegated by the province for direct or contracted delivery of harm reduction programs throughout the province. Health authorities are responsible for working with municipal governments to ensure programs are available and equitably distributed across the region. However, numerous local governments in the suburban Fraser Health Authority (FHA)

region, including Surrey, have used zoning bylaws to either prohibit or geographically constrain needle exchange programs and methadone dispensaries (Bernstein & Bennett, 2013). The limited provision of harm reduction programs is evident by the comparatively high rates of blood-borne infection. Between 1995–2009, the Fraser Health Authority, recorded the highest hepatitis C (an indicator of injection drug use) rates in the province. Notably, Vancouver's health authority distributed nine times more needles and syringes than the FHA in 2013 (Katic & Fenn, 2014). In an interview, one health authority staff member provided a blunt characterization of the limited harm reduction service provision in Surrey:

> AL: What's your sense I guess more generally of what's going on around addiction and service delivery particularly for north Surrey? Are there the services available for people in need?
>
> Health authority staff member: No. No. There [are] not enough detox beds. There's not enough step-down facilities from detox like [Vancouver's] Onsite/Insite. It's pretty tough to find needles.
>
> AL: There's a[n] [informal street] market for [clean needles].
>
> Health authority staff member: And that shouldn't be the case, right? Nursing outreach is embarrassing. The fact that we have to have Vancouver street nurses come out to Whalley. Why? That's embarrassing. That's shameful I think.

Although harm reduction services are available in Surrey, they operate in a constrained political and institutional context without official acknowledgement or support from the local government. Instead, traditional enforcement and criminalization policies remain the dominant approach to illicit drug use and drug users.

7.2.2. Criminalization and abstinence policy approaches dominant in Surrey

The criminalization of people who use drugs (PWUD) remains the dominant policy approach in the City of Surrey. Unlike Vancouver, Surrey is policed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a federal law enforcement agency with a history of opposition to harm reduction drug policy, and specifically Vancouver's drug consumption room (Geddes, 2010). Over the last 20 years, Surrey has been governed predominantly by a

conservative pro-growth coalition, with connections to conservative provincial and federal political parties.

The City of Surrey has long mobilized enforcement and criminalization approaches to drug use and other high-risk activities, including sex work. In Surrey, criminalization and medical (addiction-as-disease) models define understandings of illicit drug use and PWUD. The dominant political attitude among local political elites is to characterize PWUD as "addicts" or "druggies", often rendering them criminals because of their "drugs lifestyle" and perceived links to crime (Kaye, 2012). These subjectivities are aptly captured by the construction of the "criminal addict" (Gowan & Whetstone, 2012). For others, particularly religious and conservative charities and service providers, the medical model—largely as an individualizing discourse of addiction—frames their understanding of PWUD as sick, diseased, and "down on their luck". In both cases, drug users are to be treated with a mix of paternalism and coercion, where criminal justice interventions are appropriate for those not *choosing* help, especially if PWUD do not pursue treatment and abstinence.

Police and business officials, local political elites, and some service providers even question PWUD's competencies to safely dispose used needles, therefore legitimizing a dominant belief that it is futile for the City to install 'sharps' containers and needle disposals in public locations (basic street infrastructure in Vancouver). It even fuels fears that these harm reduction interventions will further encourage illicit drug use, which a health authority official characterized as a "naïve" understanding of drug use. One former senior staff member from a prominent non-profit service organization broadly characterized the politics of addiction and poverty:

> …[B]ecause of the religious nature of so much of Surrey … there's a charity sense to dealing with people with addictions and homeless issues … I'm not surprised that it doesn't focus a little bit on harm reduction because it's really not the prevailing political mood out there. It's abstinence. Abstinence and jail. These are the alternatives with some soup kitchens put in there. (Former staff member, service provider, No. 1)

With a significant constituency of conservative charities and service providers and the lack of sustained and organized activism among PWUD, abstinence and criminalization-focused policy approaches have encountered little opposition. This was not the case in the lead-up to the adoption of Vancouver's four-pillar strategy; progressive service providers joined with PWUD to demand drug policy reform.

A certain degree of path-dependency defines Surrey's drug policy context. Since the 1990s, the local government has mobilized traditional criminalization models and resisted harm reduction approaches. In 1992, local political officials brought a Seattle crime consultant to Surrey to discuss the possibility of replicating a program to "[chase] prostitutes, drug dealers, and gangs" out of the city (Munro, 1992). In the 1990s, Surrey's aggressive Clean City, Safe City campaign was an attempt to displace drug users and sex workers from Whalley. The then-mayor declared: "We want to drive drugs and prostitution out of north Surrey" (Proctor, 1999). This strategy was met with mixed success as it displaced the open drug and sex trade into other neighbourhoods, upsetting residents (Proctor, 1999). Since the 1990s, the local government has taken an aggressive approach to demolishing "problem properties", crack houses or boarding houses. As part of the Crime Reduction Strategy, these demolition efforts ramped up in the mid-2000s and specifically targeted houses associated with drug use or production (City of Surrey, 2007a).

During the early 2000s, at a time when Vancouver's current and former mayors were engaging regional policymakers on the merits of harm reduction drug policy to stop overdose deaths and the spread of blood-borne infectious disease, Surrey's policymakers expressed strong disapproval of Vancouver's four-pillar drug strategy (Reevely, 2002). In 2002, in an effort to 'clean up' Whalley, the City of Surrey petitioned the BC provincial government to close Surrey's only fixed-site needle exchange, operating with a low-barrier program for street-entrenched PWUD. City officials wanted the service provided in public health offices and by mobile units dispersed across the municipality (Sarko, 2003). Then-councillor (and later mayor) Dianne Watts justified this request by arguing

that the public health facility enabled the drug trade: "It's a fishing hole for drug dealers … [and] [t]hey know the addicts are going to be there" (quoted in Sarko, 2003).

During these years, drug use, street disorder, and public health were top priorities for Vancouver and regional policymakers. In 2003, the regional local government association hosted a regional drug strategy conference in an attempt to tackle drug issues in a coordinated manner (Spencer 2003). But if there was one outcome of the conference, it was clear that major political differences existed between municipal policymakers on the issue of harm reduction. Surrey's mayor was adamant about the City's position: "If police forces can do [a blitz on] jaywalking, surely they can do something for a month on the drug problem" (Spencer 2003). On another occasion, Surrey's mayor summed up the City's opposition to the Vancouver approach and the opening of North America's first drug consumption room: "We don't believe in harm reduction, and we don't believe in safe-injection sites" (quoted in McMartin, 2003). Surrey's opposition to the harm reduction approach was increasingly evident in following years as the City attempted to make it more difficult for organizations to provide services for street-entrenched PWUD.

In 2006, a delegation of local policymakers, police, a social service providers, and bureaucrats from the provincial Ministry of Justice embarked on policy tourism in London, Manchester, and Liverpool to bring anti-crime 'best practice' policy models back to Surrey. The seven-day trip was an opportunity to examine UK crime reduction urban policy strategies to "deal with the same concerns that Surrey faces (auto theft, drug-related crime, break and enters, drunkenness and disorderliness)" (City of Surrey, 2006b). During this period, a new conservative pro-growth coalition embarked on an ambitious city-building and crime-fighting agenda, intended to transform Surrey from a poorly regarded suburb—associated with poverty, drugs, and violent crime—into one of Canada's fastest growing cities, with the region's second downtown. UK police officials also came to Surrey to provide testimony of the merits of closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance approaches and British policing strategies (The Leader, 2006). In 2007, another delegation of Surrey policymakers and provincial criminal justice officials traveled to New York City where they learned about zero-tolerance policing and the

community court system intended to address "quality of life" offences such as drug use, prostitution, and nuisance behaviours (Jenion, 2010; The Leader, 2007a) and facilitate gentrification.

By early 2007, Surrey approved its Crime Reduction Strategy (CRS), which was touted as a "four strands" approach, in contrast to Vancouver's "four pillars" drug strategy. These "four strands" were aimed at 1) preventing and deterring crime, 2) apprehending and prosecuting offenders, 3) rehabilitating and re-integrating offenders, and 4) reducing perceptions and public fear of crime (City of Surrey, n.d.-b). A local politician noted that "[m]ental health and addiction are common health problems amongst offenders, and addressing these issues is one of the primary focuses of [the Crime Reduction Strategy]" (City of Surrey, n.d.-b, p. 5). In this way, addiction, and mental health are seen through the lens of crime, rather than as a public health matter. Additionally, local policymakers have drawn on key points of punitive policy reference in the development of the Crime Reduction Strategy. The former manager of the National Crime Reduction Strategy and a London Metropolitan Police Inspector was hired to roll out Surrey's strategy (The Leader, 2007b). In 2008, former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, a zero-tolerance and anti-crime policy entrepreneur (Mountz & Curran, 2009), was invited to give Surrey's annual economic summit keynote address. While in Surrey, Giuliani denounced Vancouver's harm reduction strategy and supervised drug consumption room, and affirmed Surrey's crime reduction model (Luymes 2008). In interviews, local political elites fondly recounted their engagement with these models from elsewhere.

Over the years, Surrey's political elites have remained opposed to harm reduction policy interventions, and often evoke an imaginary of concentrated inner city poverty, addiction, and criminality (Vancouver's Downtown Eastside), which Surrey must avoid if it is to successfully develop the region's second downtown district. Despite policy actors' longstanding anxieties about 'becoming a Downtown Eastside', front-line health and social service workers, health authority officials, and activists see the resistance to harm reduction approaches and the lack of service provision as detrimental to the welfare of

marginalized citizens, particularly homeless PWUD. The opposition to harm reduction service provision is legitimated by an imaginary of concentrated poverty in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. As one staff member from an advocacy organization noted, "…there's an awful reflex in the hinterlands to say all drug problems are Downtown Eastside problems, and people should go downtown for services."

7.3. Mapping the policy frontiers of urban policy mobility

Drawing predominately on the urban policy mobilities literature, I turn now to conceptualize policy frontiers and the urban-regional political geographies of constrained policy mobility. For critical human geographers, space is not a bounded territorial entity but relationally constituted through the diverse flows and movements of people, ideas, and politics from 'near' and 'far' (Massey, 1993, 2004; McCann & Ward, 2011b). As a subfield of urban geography, the urban policy mobilities approach endeavours to conceptualize the urban by attending to the spatialities and relationalities of 'making up' or 'worlding' cities through the global-local circulation of policies as well as the territorial politics of fixing policies in place (Baker & Ruming, 2014; McCann, 2011b). The urban policy mobilities literature examines how policies are mobile, circulate across space, mutate as they travel, and are fixed or assembled in place (Gonzalez, 2011; McCann & Ward, 2011a, 2012b, 2013; Peck & Theodore, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Peck, 2002, 2011a).

Empirically, policy mobilities scholars have examined the transfer or mobility of business improvement districts (Cook & Ward, 2012; Cook, 2008; Ward, 2006), welfare-to-work programs (Peck & Theodore, 2001), conditional cash transfers and anti-poverty programs (Peck, 2011b), creativity policies (McCann, 2007; Peck, 2005, 2012; Prince, 2010), urban planning and visioning (Robinson 2011), sustainability and green design (Faulconbridge, 2015; McCann, 2013), transportation (Wood, 2014a, 2014b, 2015), and urban drug policy (McCann & Temenos, 2015; McCann, 2008, 2011a). This literature examines how mobile policies shape, and are shaped by, the places, people, and

institutions they encounter along the way. It is fundamentally a political and power-laden process, shaped by the political-economic and historical contexts in which policies and actors are situated (McCann, 2002, 2007). While this approach emphasizes mobility, relationality, and processes of assembling, it also conceptualizes the global-local circulation of knowledge as fixed, grounded, and territorial (McCann & Ward, 2011a; McCann, 2013). It is this tension through which we can examine how the local is assembled through global-local relationalities and territorialities (McCann & Ward, 2010; McCann, 2004b), and how policies are mobilized, mutate in motion, and encounter barriers and political opposition.

While understudied, the policy mobilities literature is also interested in questions of policy immobility, constrained and differential policy mobilization, and how policies may 'touch down' too fast (Clarke, 2012; Jacobs, 2012; Temenos & McCann, 2013, p. 253; Temenos, 2014). McCann (2008) and Temenos and McCann (2012) examine the local politics of policy mobility and the role of persuasion, expertise, and the use of (urban) points of reference in the local policy development. While the ideological terrain which mobile policies encounter certainly matters, contextually specific "informational infrastructures" shape the mobility or resistance to particular mobile knowledges or policy models. Informational infrastructures are defined as "institutions, organizations, and technologies, that frame and package knowledge about best policy practices, successful cities, and cutting-edge ideas for specific audiences", and they can be categorized as states, educators, media, and professional or activist organizations (Temenos & McCann, 2013, p. 805).

Moreover, a spatially-informed policy mobilities approach draws inspiration from, and complements, critical policy studies. Similarly concerned with questions of power and state transformation, critical policy studies scholars understand policy as a contemporary expression of power, politics, and governance—yet not imposed from 'above' but contested and reworked through everyday practices. Drawing on neo-Foucauldian approaches, critical policy anthropologists conceptualize policies as windows into wider processes, and as a means of conceptualizing social relations and

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power (Shore & Wright, 1997; Shore et al., 2011). Furthermore, social anthropologists and ethnographers understand policies as much more than simply instrumental governmental tools, but rather as objects of study thus illuminating how power relations among actors and institutions are organized and reproduced.

I draw on policy mobilities scholars who use the notion of assemblage as a conceptual and methodological tool (not ontologically) to examine the ongoing labour and "purposive gathering of people, institutional capacities, expertise, models, techniques and technologies, political sustenance, etc. from local sources and, crucially, from elsewhere" (McCann, 2011c, p. 144). Policy actors—a broad term encompassing (extra)local state and non-state actors including policymakers, professionals, and activists—are involved in the politics of assembling and "fixing of globally mobile resources, ideas, and knowledge" (McCann & Ward, 2012a, p. 43). More specifically, *policy activists*—officials and bureaucrats working within state institutions who are committed to the implementation of a policy agenda—are also key actors in the mobilization and adoption of policies (Temenos, 2014; see also Yeatman, 1998 for the original use of the concept). Furthermore, McCann and Ward (2012a, p. 43) employ assemblage in a descriptive manner "to encourage both an attention to the composite and relational character of policies and cities and also to the various social practices that gather, or draw together, diverse elements." This approach helps conceptualize the constitution of 'local' policies and the politics of policy*making*, and more generally, how cities and regions are assembled through the productive tension between global-local policy relationalities and mobilities and (de)territorialization (McCann & Ward, 2010). Additionally, *assemblage* allows policy (im)mobility and mutation to be conceptualized within the relational city-regional political geography:

> Many are 'parts' of elsewhere, representatives of political authority, expertise, skills, and interests drawn together to move forward varied agendas and programmes. The sense in which these are 'regional' assemblages, rather than geographically tiered hierarchies of decision-making, lies with the tangle of interactions and capabilities within which power is negotiated and played out. (Allen & Cochrane, 2007, p. 1171)

Crucially, then, the "regional assemblage" illuminates how policies are relationally assembled across city-regional territories—and how the politics of assembling interrelate with a region's scaled political and institutional architecture. For McCann (2011c, p. 144), this process of assembling demonstrates which ideas, practices, and normative assumptions are privileged: "[t]his 'politics of the assemblage' involves 'a politics of the exemplar', in which certain parts and certain relationships among parts of an assemblage are given more priority than others." While the politics of assembling may illustrate which policy approaches are privileged, we must also attend to *why* certain parts are elevated. For Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 140), the "socioeconomic outcomes of policies" are products of local institutional contexts, and "policy models that affirm and extend dominant paradigms … which consolidate powerful interests, are more likely to travel with the following wind of hegemonic compatibility or imprimatur status."

If the descriptive use of assemblage connotes the politics and labouring over the assembling of mobile policy knowledges and practices, the idea of a policy frontier is a useful addition to the policy mobilities lexicon. As a process and a discourse, *frontier* is used to describe the spatialities of European colonial settlement and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples across North America, as well as the contested movement of capital across urban spaces in processes of gentrification (Leitner, Peck, & Sheppard, 2007a, p. 311). Neil Smith (1996, p. xvi) notes that "the frontier discourse serves to rationalize and legitimate a process of conquest, whether in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century West, or in the late-twentieth-century inner city." Despite these uses of the concept, the idea of the frontier becomes helpful in thinking about how mobile policies encounter resistance, barriers, and challenges as they are mobilized and attempts are made to fix policies in place. Drawing on Leitner et al., I want to argue that these 'frontier politics' are not predetermined and remain politically open:

> [F]rontiers are liminal zones of struggle between different groups for power and influence—each seeking to expand their influence by shaping these zones on their own terms. In this view, the frontier is a fuzzy geographic space where outcomes are uncertain. Whereas borders and walls create well-defined barriers to be breached or defended, frontiers

have a complex geography whose very outlines are the products of contestation. Contestation may break out within seemingly stable localities, threatening to fracture frontier zones from within or to extend them to new territories. (Leitner et al., 2007a, pp. 311–312)

Therefore, a *policy frontier* can be defined as a "fuzzy geographic space" where the future of policy change is neither certain or predetermined. A policy frontier is constituted through the labour of scaled and networked actors and institutions struggling to embed and institutionalize competing policy knowledges, imaginaries, and practices. The use of policy frontier is particularly productive in explaining situations and contexts where mobile policies encounter resistance across geographic scales and diverse political-institutional landscapes. Frontiers—like policies—also move. Conceptualizing the spatialities of a *policy frontier* applies Jessop et al.'s (2008, p. 389) claim that "territories, places, scales, and networks must be viewed as mutually constitutive and relationally intertwined dimensions of sociospatial relations."

Brought together, critical policy studies, urban policy mobilities, and what I have termed the 'policy frontier' provide insight into how struggles over policymaking reflect wider ideological struggles over society, space, and the state. It is no surprise then that policies often affirm regimes of neoliberal urban governance which "[position] cities at the bleeding edge of processes of punitive-institution building, social surveillance, and authoritarian governance" as socio-spatial disparities widen and social insecurities grow in the post-Fordist era (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 395). In addition to the circulation of market-oriented, entrepreneurial policy models, urban policies are increasingly intent on securing a gentrified urban renaissance (Atkinson & Helms, 2007; Smith, 2002) through punitive, exclusionary, and revanchist urban policy responses (Davis, 1990; Herbert, 2010; D. Mitchell, 2003; Smith, 1996, 1998, 2001; Wacquant, 2008, 2009). Atkinson notes that "… many policy instruments are driven by the need in their architects and supporters to relieve the pressure of anxiety through aggression against the socially marginal and the spaces they inhabit" (Atkinson, forthcoming, p. 1). The mobilization and selective adoption of revanchist policies beyond hyper-punitive American cities may be, as MacLeod (2002) notes, "minor league" compared to the "home base" of New York

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City, and may also involve more complex and ambivalent logics of "poverty management" (DeVerteuil et al., 2009; Wolch & DeVerteuil, 2001).

Despite questions over the applicability of punitive conceptualizations of urban policies outside of the US context (DeVerteuil, 2012), broken windows theory, zero-tolerance policing, and situational crime prevention strategies are increasingly mobilized globally, if only for their political expedience as policymakers struggle to 'look tough' (see Mountz & Curran, 2009 and Swanson, 2013 for excellent analyses of the 'export' of punitive policy models). Crucially, though, these policy models, namely broken windows theory and situational crime prevention, are ideologically constructed to assume that "landscapes emit messages" (Herbert & Brown, 2006, p. 758). In this way, visible social marginality is believed to induce crime and disorder, and must be eliminated:

> This assumption, in turn, relies upon another, namely that there is a relationship between community health and territorial behaviour. Neighbourhoods that work make their health plain through geographic activity; residents fix broken windows, they act as 'place managers' to assert informal social control, they exercise effective dominion over their space. Strong communities are thus ones where territoriality is enacted and communicated so successfully that criminals are dissuaded from invading. (Herbert & Brown, 2006, p. 758)

Crucially, practices of *learning* punitive and anti-crime urban policy models—often via policy tourism and informational infrastructures—may reaffirm and institutionalize an existing neoliberal policy orientation. McFarlane (2011, p. 135) notes that "ideology not only shapes the nature of urban policy learning, it all but takes the place of learning, with the exception that local evidence must be located and manipulated through translation in order to support a pre-existing position." Urban policy learning, in this case, may be strategic, politically expedient, translated and represented as a 'new' policy innovation intended to 'solve' a social problem when it may simply be repurposing an existing (neoliberal) policy model. Put simply, policy learning may be a political performance of learning what is already known.

7.4. Political struggles on the drug policy frontier

As the City of Surrey continues to grow at a rapid pace, we are faced with the ever-growing issues of homelessness, drug addiction and crime. Over the years we have experienced grow ops, meth labs, drug dealing, addiction and prostitution and have seen the effects it has had on our community. We have seen prolific offenders returned to the community time and time again with virtually no consequence to their actions. The relationship between crime and drug addiction is complex and intertwined and must be dealt with together. (Mayor Dianne Watts quoted in City of Surrey, 2007a)

In this section, I examine the political struggles over embedding and institutionalizing drug policy learning, advocacy, and addiction services constitutive of this drug policy frontier. Policy frontiers are scaled political geographies where mobile policies are met with significant political and institutional resistance, but are also a "fuzzy geographic space where outcomes are uncertain" (Leitner et al., 2007b, p. 211). In many cases, market-oriented policy models encounter little resistance precisely because they can be so easily mobilized within the extant political-economic context. In this way, the harm reduction drug policy model presents an opportunity to theorize these *frontier politics* of constrained policy mobility.

In the first part of this section, I examine the frontier politics of policy actors struggling to embed and institutionalize drug policy learning, education, and advocacy, and how the problem of illicit drug use and social marginality has been understood primarily as a criminal matter requiring crime prevention policy learning and advocacy. Despite the dominance of criminalization and abstinence policy knowledges drawn from UK and US anti-crime models and the "therapeutic community" addiction treatment model, policy actors are cautiously and incrementally institutionalizing harm reduction policy learning, education, and advocacy. In the second part of this section, I explain how political struggles over institutionalizing divergent drug policy models is reflected in the landscape of addictions service provision—the dominance of abstinence-based services but the cautious and incremental mobilization of harm reduction services as well. I demonstrate how the institutionalization of harm reduction services often rely

strategically on *invisible* service delivery practices which escape scrutiny and political opposition from local policymakers. I also show how harm reduction services may be institutionalized if they are able to be subsumed into the city's extant Crime Reduction Strategy and anti-crime policy approach.

Political struggles constitutive of this drug policy frontier are captured in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Table 7.1 explains the practices of actors and institutions working to embed and institutionalize harm reduction policy learning, advocacy, and services, as well as competing actors resisting these efforts. Following a similar organization, Table 7.2 explains the practices of actors and institutions engaged in efforts to embed and institutionalize abstinence and criminalization policy learning and advocacy, and abstinence-based services within this policy frontier. Notably, the reader will see that there are a number of actors/institutions involved in efforts to institutionalize harm reduction (Table 7.1), yet very few explicitly working to resist the institutionalization of abstinence-based services and criminalization/abstinence policy learning and advocacy (the noticeable grey space in Table 7.2). This reflects the highly constrained context of advocating and struggling for policy change within Surrey. Unlike Vancouver, harm reduction advocates do not have the resources to contest criminalization policies (e.g. court challenges to bylaw or policing practices disproportionately targeting PWUD). Rather, HR advocates and policy activists are primarily dedicated to institutionalizing harm reduction learning within institutions (e.g. internally educating health authority nurses and staff) and embedding services.

Table 7.1.   Political struggles to institutionalize harm reduction policy in Surrey

	Actors and Practices Encouraging Institutionalization		Actors and Practices Resisting Institutionalization	
	Actor/Institution	Practices	Actor/Institution	Practices
Harm reduction policy learning and advocacy	Front line and middling bureaucrats in health authority	HR coordinating committee brings together service providers, peer drug user groups, and front line addictions health authority staff for information sharing and strategy	Police	Control over police-convened neighbourhood forums; keep out dissent and "advocacy" groups
	Local peer drug-user group	Organizing community education series; mobilizing drug policy 'expertise'; engagement with business community; non-adversarial tactics and cooperation with local authorities, service providers, and BIA	Local political elites	Deferring to conservative business community/BIA on policy decisions; owns property leased to HR service provider used to maintain control over service provider
	Extra-local peer drug-user group	Peer drug-user group led by Vancouver organizer convenes meetings with local drug users; attempting to open drug user meeting and resource storefront; attempting to mobilize drug policy and public health 'expertise' from Vancouver; confrontational and adversarial approach with local political elites, police, and local service providers	Senior city management	Pressure landlord to evict peer drug-user group from storefront; use business licensing and bylaws to restrict uses and keep out visible activism
	Middling local government bureaucrats	Educating senior city management and political elites; politically cautious advocacy	Religious and abstinence-based service providers	Refusing to allow peer drug user group to meet in space; affirming city's current drug policy approach
Harm reduction services	Front line and middling health authority bureaucrats	Advocating internally for increased funding; support for peer drug user groups; harm reduction education for public health and addictions staff in health authority; distribution of harm reduction supplies (e.g. clean needles, naloxone) strategically across health authority sites, including city's "sobering centre" and neighbourhood-based public health units	Local political elites and senior city management	Planned closure of existing fixed-site needle exchange operating on city-owned property (following longstanding attempts to displace it); zoning restrictions on methadone dispensaries, including moratorium in city centre
	HR service provider	Operates fixed-site needle distribution program, drop-in centre and shelter; needle distribution and outreach via mobile van; 'scalar promiscuity' by merging organization with larger regional HR-focused non-profit organization	BIA and wider business community	Longstanding attempts to close or displace HR service provider, and needle distribution, low-barrier shelter, and drop-in centre
	Health authority (funded by provincial government)	Funding for harm reduction coordinator position and services (needle distribution, peer drug user groups)		
	Vancouver-based public health nurses	Street nurse outreach in collaboration with HR service provider to reach geographically dispersed and street-entrenched drug-users		

Table 7.2.   **Political struggles to institutionalize abstinence and criminalization policy in Surrey**

		Actors and Practices Encouraging Institutionalization		Actors and Practices Resisting Institutionalization	
	Actor/Institution	Practices		Actor/Institution	Practices
Abstinence and criminalization policy learning and advocacy	Local political elites	Supporting prevention/abstinence events; publicly favouring abstinence-based service providers and private recovery sector; hosting Rudy Giuliani visit; criminal justice policy tourism to New York City and the UK; financial support for crime reduction initiatives and anti-crime organizations		HR service providers and front line/middling health authority staff	Engagement on/with city and police-led committees and forums to advance HR and shift dominant drug policy knowledges
	Senior city management (police, fire, city manager and solicitor, bylaw enforcement)	Integrated program to eliminate "problem properties", "high risk locations", and houses associated with the production or consumption of drugs			
	City of Surrey Crime Reduction Office	Mobilizes in support of City's Crime Reduction Strategy			
	University criminology department	Mobilizes research and policy knowledge/models on crime reduction and drug policy; joint police/university-funded university research position to support current drug policy approach			
	Extra-local recovery/abstinence networks	Hosting events and forums; mobilizing drug policy 'expertise'; connecting like-minded politicians at all scales			
	Police	Mobilize favoured models at neighbourhood and city forums and stakeholder meetings			
	Surrey Crime Prevention Society	Mobilizes in support of current drug policy approach around crime reduction initiatives			
	Neighbourhood associations	Advocate for more policing, neighbourhood groups dominated by anti-crime agenda; affirms current criminalization approach			
	BIA and wider business community	Mobilize models at neighbourhood and city forums and stakeholder meetings			
Abstinence-based addiction services	Local political elites/local government	Financial and public support for abstinence-based and private addiction services		Middling health authority bureaucrats	Internal opposition to provincial government funding and policy support for private abstinence-based recovery house sector and private addictions programs
	Provincial government	Policy support and operational/capital funding for abstinence-based services, including private recovery house sector			
	Police	Support for, and institutional relationship with, abstinence-based private addiction treatment programs and recovery house sector			
	Abstinence-based addiction service providers	Network with local and provincial governments to create 'buy-in' and expand services through provincial government funding			

7.4.1. Crime reduction, not harm reduction: institutionalizing abstinence and criminalization policy learning and advocacy

In the fall of 2005, Dianne Watts, a dynamic city councillor defeated the incumbent mayor, known for his zero-tolerance enforcement approach waged against drug users, sex workers, and the homeless. Dianne Watts, a former member of the previous mayor's political coalition, was elected on a bold crime-fighting and city-building agenda, intended to transform a suburban backwater, associated with poverty and crime, into the metropolitan region's largest city with a new downtown. The mayor's 'new' policy approach was intended to reduce crime by addressing the "root causes of crime", specifically drug and alcohol addiction. She set out on a very public campaign to scan the policy landscape for so-called best policy practices in fighting crime:

> We really needed to change the way that we looked at things ... [B]efore, there was such a large emphasis on enforcement. The frustrating part about enforcement is that you apprehend, you charge, you bring them before the court, and they are out again within hours. So that is the revolving system … You have to have a fundamental paradigm shift from where you were to how you can create and effect change. That speaks to going out and finding what are the best practices out there? What can we make work for our city? Every city is unique. So if you know what is going to work you bring it back and begin to develop a strategy that you feel will speak to your community and the need of your community. (Mayor Dianne Watts quoted in Jenion, 2010, pp. 137–138)

The need for a politically expedient policy fix came in the form of the city's Crime Reduction Strategy—drawing on UK crime reduction programs and New York City's criminal justice system, including "quality of life" policing and CCTV surveillance, specialized "problem-solving" courts, drug testing upon arrest, court-ordered and private treatment programs, youth drug and crime prevention initiatives, among other anti-crime policy innovations. Yet, many of the proposed policy initiatives have not been implemented since they require funding and implementation from senior levels of government and may also be poorly suited to the Canadian legal context. As one local politician conceded, local political elites travelled to the UK as a political performance to

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demonstrate action on crime: "The whole trip around the CCTV cameras … Where did we go to look at those? [Surrey's] Guildford Mall. The highest technology on CCTV cameras was in the new mall. That's it. So I think it's to be able to demonstrate you are doing something, instead of just doing it." Policy actors often engage in policy tourism and learning because "off-the-shelf" policy prescriptions are politically expedient. The mobilization of a particular policy approach to crime and addiction was intended to reinforce and repackage an existing ideological agenda favouring criminalization and abstinence models.

The bundling of addiction and social marginality as "root causes of crime" are constructed by local political elites as problems requiring *anti-crime* and "crime prevention" urban policy learning. As a repurposing of the "culture of poverty" thesis, social marginality and addiction are constitutive of a high-risk "drugs lifestyle" (Kaye, 2012). For local policymakers, drug use is understood as a criminal matter to be addressed through crime reduction policies including "problem-solving courts" and abstinence-based treatment programs. "Therapeutic jurisprudence" emerges as a criminal justice-system policy fix to supposedly address *both* addiction and crime. Through innovations like problem-solving courts as projects of neoliberal governance and social control, the "drug addict is constituted as an 'anti-citizen', a person whose drug dependency is symbolically related to non-productive labour, a leaching of state resources, and criminality" (Kaye, 2012, p. 214). Seen in this way, Surrey's 2007 Crime Reduction Strategy reflects how addiction was constructed *as a root cause of crime* and as the object requiring policy learning in which criminalization and abstinence policy approaches were re-affirmed and institutionalized.

Surrey's Crime Reduction Strategy is a key policy document and political tool—intended for export to other cities in Canada and beyond (Charelle, 2013; Institute for the Prevention of Crime, 2008). It was developed through policy tourism from leading abstinence and criminalization points of reference: New York City for Rudy Giuliani's zero-tolerance policing and "problem-solving courts"; UK cities for CCTV and crime reduction strategies to fight anti-social behaviour and disorder; and, Italy's San

Patrignano rural "therapeutic community" model as a highly custodial abstinence model with mandatory work and "life skills" programs as the basis for treatment. What connects these policy models is an ideological commitment to the neoliberal law-and-order state, with its deepening regulation of socially marginal groups through market rule and *both* welfare and penal arms of the state, or what Peck refers to as the "ambidextrous relationship between the authoritarian and the assistential wings of the state" (2010, p. 105; see also Wacquant, 2010). One local politician supportive of harm reduction explained this drug policy strategy explicitly at odds with the city's anti-crime policy approach: "I believe in [harm reduction] but there are other council members, particularly dealing with the Crime Reduction Strategy and … they won't entertain it at all."

In Surrey, criminalization and abstinence policy learning, education, and advocacy are mobilized through a network of anti-harm reduction and abstinence policy activists from within local and provincial governments. For example, the City of Surrey's Fire Chief has gained the authority to investigate suspected illegal marijuana production under the auspices of an "electrical and fire safety initiative". Even individuals with a legal medical marijuana production license must obtain a city business license—an effort intended to deter even *legal* marijuana production for personal medical purposes. In their book *Killer Weed*, Boyd and Carter (2014) note that the City of Surrey is a policy innovator in using civil/regulatory laws as a thinly veiled attempt at enforcing criminal laws in their drug prohibition campaign. Moreover, the fire chief, along with a police-affiliated researcher, criminology professor, and key architect in the development of the city's Crime Reduction Strategy (Skelton, 2007), testified in federal parliament for US-style mandatory minimum sentences for drug offences (Parliament of Canada, 2009). Both have published in the Drug Free America-funded and US Drug Enforcement Agency-supported *Journal of Global Drug Policy and Practice* which has been characterized by Vancouver-based HIV researchers as part of an "increasingly sophisticated…[effort] to undermine the science specific to HIV prevention for injection drug users" through "the creation of internet sites posing as open-access, peer-reviewed scientific journals" (Kerr & Wood, 2008, p. 964). The fire chief is a key actor within a

wider network of (extra)local drug policy activists, and has been characterized as "a 'policy entrepreneur' promoting particular views of this 'problem' as well as mandating enforcement-related solutions" (Carter, 2009, p. 372).

Surrey exhibits a notably strong enforcement and criminalization assemblage to drug-related issues, bringing together an anti-harm reduction federal police agency (contracted to police Surrey), bylaw and fire departments, and local politicians with close ties to conservative provincial and federal political parties. A provincial politician close to local political elites characterized this networked enforcement approach.

> AL: One angle that I'm quite interested in is the work that's happened across RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], Bylaw Enforcement and the Fire Department and I'm wondering if you can speak to that relationship?
>
> Provincial politician, No. 3: Yeah, I would say that nobody is more a champion of using bylaws than … the fire chief. It's not just about marijuana. How do you deal with undesirable properties by applying bylaws? The [provincial] Community Safety Act would help that as well … The whole business of finding ways to do things. [The fire chief's] approach is, I don't give a shit if somebody gets convicted of anything, all I care about is safety. You take a public safety approach, don't worry about running people up the food chain for violations of the Criminal Code. So I think there is a lot of merit in that. But as fast as he is trying to do that, there's an army of people thwarting his every effort.

Local state institutions—including the federally contracted police force—perhaps motivated by issues of "public safety" are ultimately interested in maintaining a policy regime of enforcement and criminalization. Necessary for local policy change, these are key institutions constraining the movement and adoption of harm reduction.

7.4.2.   (Dis)embedding harm reduction policy learning and advocacy

Despite the aforementioned constraints, harm reduction policy learning, education, and advocacy are being embedded in Surrey through health authority policy activists (front-line and middling staff members), a non-profit HR service provider (health authority-funded), and peer drug-user groups (also health authority-funded)

(Table 7.1). Drawing on Yeatman (1998) and Temenos's (2014) use of *policy activist,* health authority staff members are engaged in struggles to embed harm reduction policy learning and advocacy 1) within the health authority itself, as harm reduction advocates educate fellow nurses, doctors, and substance use counsellors working within the public health system, and 2) through meetings convened by local policymakers, police, and the business community. Additionally, health authority policy activists are connected into (trans)local harm reduction networks where learning occurs from practitioners and drug users across the urban region, as well as through conferences and even experience working within HIV prevention/harm reduction advocacy organizations (Temenos, 2014 terms this the 'insider/outsider' role of policy activists as they move between advocacy organizations and state institutions).

In Surrey, a non-profit service provider, contracted by the health authority to deliver harm reduction services in the community (e.g. needle distribution and collection), is also engaged in struggles to embed harm reduction through policy learning and advocacy. For both health authority staff members (policy activists) and service providers, practices intended to institutionalize harm reduction are primarily aimed at educating sceptical policy actors, including police, business interests, and the wider community, in forums and meetings about harm reduction approaches to illicit drug use. Health authority policy activists and service providers coordinate efforts and their 'expertise' (McCann, 2008) may be mobilized strategically and cautiously by middling local government bureaucrats (see Larner & Laurie, 2010) supportive of more progressive approaches to drug use.

Furthermore, peer drug-user groups play a significant role in political struggles to embed harm reduction. This occurs similarly through policy learning and activism intended to educate policy actors and advocate for policy changes away from the dominant criminalization/abstinence policy approach. As a key part of harm reduction, peer drug-user groups collectively advocate for the welfare and rights of drug users to access life-saving and life-enhancing health services. Efforts often include harm reduction advocacy, peer distribution of harm reduction supplies (e.g. sterile needles),

and education and support intended to prevent overdoses and infections among fellow drug users. Health authority staff members and advocacy organizations identify the significance of drug-user activism in the mobilization of harm reduction in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, whereas this is noticeably absent in Surrey specifically, and suburban communities across the region, more generally:

> The other thing you mention is advocacy in the Downtown Eastside. A lot of users are advocates––strong advocates for the rights of drug users. We don't really have that here [in Surrey]. There's nobody here that has really been standing out and making a point, and having a following here. It's really kept under the thumb and kept down. (Staff member, health authority, No. 1)

Yet, despite this assessment, there are two drug-user groups struggling to institutionalize harm reduction in Surrey. One group, the Surrey Drug War Survivors (SDWS), is led by the long-time lead organizer of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), an organization which played a key role in Vancouver's struggle for the four-pillars drug policy strategy and supervised drug consumption room (see McCann, 2008). This Vancouver-based organizer/organization uses an explicitly 'political' and adversarial approach to organizing, placing them at odds with the City of Surrey, police, senior management at the health authority, and even would-be allies including non-profit HR service providers. Surrey police attempt to keep the organization's prominent organizer from attending neighbourhood stakeholder meetings because of the confrontational tone and the critique of the city's criminalization policy approach. Police view SDWS as an "advocacy organization", and therefore not welcome at the neighbourhood stakeholder meetings.

After several years convening meetings with drug users in civic facilities, including the city library, SDWS leased a commercial storefront for a drug user meeting space and drop-in centre. The space was located in Whalley, adjacent to the homeless shelter and needle distribution in the heart of the open drug market. In just over a month, the lease was terminated and the organization was told to vacate the space (Katic & Fenn, 2014). Interviews and email correspondence obtained through a Freedom of Information

request reveal that the local government pressured the landlord to terminate the lease because the lead organizer was from the *Vancouver* Area Network of Drug Users, and city councillors and the senior management feared they were distributing harm reduction supplies and would operate as a supervised drug consumption room. The significant concern and involvement by the City's senior management team illustrate the degree to which this Downtown Eastside-based organization was seen as a threat to the City of Surrey's drug policy approach. Even one of the City's more progressive councillors justified the city's response:

> Local politician, No. 2: I believe every city should have a harm reduction plan that community buys into. Until you have that community buy-in, forget it. So if any harm reduction plan is willing to come in, and can see that it has to be a made-in-Surrey solution, I'm all up for that conversation … If you want to come into the community as a radical and say that you are all bad human beings for not signing up for this [harm reduction approach], I don't want to talk to you then because you know what, you're not being helpful to anyone. But if you're prepared to come in and have a dialogue about…this is a harm reduction plan … What is the ultimate goal and outcome so that this person stops? If there isn't any … then I understand why local residents and businesses don't want it in their neighbourhood. That's the challenge.
>
> AL: Was there pressure from the [City of Surrey on the private landlord] to end that lease agreement?
>
> Local politician, No. 2: Yes, totally. Yeah.
>
> AL: Even if it's just a space for drug users to meet?
>
> Local politician, No. 2: Yes, absolutely.
>
> AL: So then what does that [harm reduction plan] look like?
>
> Local politician, No. 2: A harm reduction plan is then supervised by [the health authority], is done in an area where there isn't impact on neighbourhoods, and where people who are brought in, people may not like this, are actually counselled to give up the habit. That has to be a part of it.

Interestingly, harm reduction gets translated to ultimately mean abstinence—people need to be "counselled to give up the habit". The local state's explicit strategy of resisting the embedding of harm reduction policy learning and advocacy affirms the dominant criminalization/abstinence drug policy model, and the explicit resistance to harm

reduction advocacy that is seen to be "radical" and "coming into the community" from other places in the region, *specifically* Vancouver. One policy actor from an advocacy organization lamented, "As much as we've gained ground in legitimizing harm reduction, have we legitimized anything really beyond one little injection room in Vancouver if drug users can't even rent a space [in Surrey] to meet? What kind of citizenship is that?" Despite the setback for the SDWS, the peer drug-user group continues to meet and search for a permanent meeting space. One SDWS activist identifies the lack of a permanent drug user meeting space, similar to what exists in the Downtown Eastside, as a significant barrier to drug policy change in Surrey.

In addition to the SDWS's efforts to embed harm reduction in this landscape, the Surrey Area Network of Substance Users (SANSU) is another peer drug-user group that is non-adversarial in its engagement with the local government, business community, police, and the non-profit HR service provider. Middling local bureaucrats will engage with SANSU because of their non-confrontational approach. Although they are a newly established organization, incremental changes are occurring in Surrey. A SANSU organizer is part of stakeholder meetings convened by a predominately conservative business community, and there appears to be a willingness to have the organization at the table, even if some business members are opposed to it. Furthermore, SANSU, with the financial support of the local government, health authority, university, and non-profit service provider, has organized a harm reduction public education lecture series, bringing in a leading public health 'expert' with ties to Vancouver's health authority and academia. The organizers have opted for an arguably conservative title for the seven-lecture series—"Drugs, Families, and Society". In embedding harm reduction policy learning and education, Surrey city council provided financial support for the lecture series upon the recommendation of the city's crime reduction manager.

In this way, middling bureaucrats (Surrey's crime reduction manager) are important policy actors, even when operating within highly constrained political contexts, as they can advance policy change through cautious incrementalism. Despite this notable advancement, it is yet to be seen whether political elites will advocate publicly for a harm

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reduction drug policy approach and engage police and the business improvement association—as key policy actors—in this discussion. Interviews suggest that local political elites will not erect explicit barriers to harm reduction services—such as bylaws preventing clean needle distribution—but will use more mundane tactics to restrict the movement of harm reduction into Surrey by supporting abstinence-based addiction service providers.

7.4.3. Struggles over the institutionalization of harm reduction services

I turn now to explain how political struggles over the institutionalization of harm reduction are reflected in the material landscape of addictions service provision. I illustrate how local political elites' attempts to institutionalize abstinence-based addiction services function to further constrain harm reduction service provision. In this way, it is less about an overtly political pushback against harm reduction services, than an attempt to embed an abstinence approach and 'keep out' HR-based services. Yet, similar to how harm reduction policy learning and advocacy is advanced through cautious incrementalism within a constrained political and institutional context, the struggles to institutionalize harm reduction services have been successful despite resistance. I demonstrate how the success of embedding harm reduction services often relies on the *invisibility* of these practices or the appearance that these services are abstinence-based or serving existing crime reduction objectives. Due to space constraints, I take two illustrative examples of the harm reduction service infrastructure: mobile needle distribution and Surrey's "sobering centre".

In 2005, the City of Surrey attempted to force the closure of the Surrey HIV/AIDS Society and needle distribution program by requiring a costly and lengthy "community impact study". The organization successfully challenged the city in provincial court, but local elites have long seen the needle distribution and low-barrier homeless shelter and drop-in centre as a "communal hang-out for druggies" (interview, local political elite, No. 2). Indeed, the HR service provider, which operates the services on leased city-owned property, will be displaced to a different part of the city; a new

purpose-built facility will be constructed in a new location and condominium towers are planned for the existing site. Yet, there are no future plans for the relocation of the health clinic and fixed-site needle distribution program; political elites intend for the fixed-site needle distribution to cease. Recently, with health authority funding, the service provider has started operating a mobile needle distribution and health outreach van. It is a pragmatic response to the expansive suburban geography and the dispersed nature of poverty and PWUD across the municipality compared to inner city Vancouver. Additionally, these services are also made relatively invisible (compared to *fixed-site* needle distribution with a 'storefront') and are not subject the same type of political contestation from political elites and the business community. Street nurses, based out of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, partner with the service provider to provide mobile nursing care to the homeless and marginally housed drug-using population in Surrey. In one way, the mobile van demonstrates a strategic attempt to institutionalize harm reduction service provision, and yet it escapes political contestation because of its relative *invisibility*.

Second, Surrey's "sobering centre" is a health authority-operated facility intended to divert intoxicated individuals—largely chronic substance users—out of the emergency room or jail cells. For local political elites it is primarily characterized as a crime reduction intervention, originating as a policy recommendation from the Crime Reduction Strategy (City of Surrey, n.d.-b, p. 26). While the facility is exactly what the name suggests—a place to sleep and sober up under medical supervision—it operates under a low-barrier, harm reduction philosophy aiming to provide non-judgemental care, counselling, and supports for those actively using substances. Additionally, alcohol or illicit substances may not be consumed on-site, but can be stored on-site until people discharge from the facility. Sterile needles and syringes are informally distributed from the sobering centre, which is located on the same site as an abstinence-based residential addictions recovery program; it is operated by an abstinence-based non-profit funded by the health authority and strongly supported by local political elites. The non-profit service provider is uneasy about the sobering centre's harm reduction approach, yet in many

ways, the co-location of abstinence-based *and* harm reduction services are illustrative of Surrey's drug policy assemblage: criminalization, abstinence, and harm reduction drug policy approaches drawn from disparate places co-exist in tension. Abstinence is favoured by local government, but nonetheless, harm reduction is cautiously and incrementally institutionalized by a network of scaled actors and institutional arrangements (i.e. health authority staff and funding from the provincial government for delivery of harm reduction services in partnership with a HR non-profit service provider). These services rely politically on limited visibility and the ability for local policymakers to publicly represent the sobering centre as an abstinence-based program and crime reduction intervention, even though they may know it functions otherwise. Nevertheless, a local politician expressed frustration with the philosophy of the low-barrier or harm reduction service approach, which allows—and encourages—repeat visits among chronic substance users who are at risk of harm:

> According to [the health authority], and they are the experts, I'm not, but every opportunity to interact with one of those folks is yet another opportunity to just sort of steer the ship just a little bit. So I've got to take them for their word on that. I don't see the big success stories coming out of that at all. (Local politician, No. 1)

7.5. Conclusion: Policy frontiers and the constrained regional mobilization of harm reduction drug policy

Harm reduction is slowly getting out to [Surrey's health authority]. Vancouver may be way ahead of us in that sense. (Staff member, health authority, No. 1)

This paper examines the spatio-temporal dimensions of slow and constrained policy movement across an urban region, and in a sense, picks up where McCann's (2008) analysis of Vancouver's mobilization of harm reduction left off. Although European harm reduction models were mobilized and adopted in the City of Vancouver in the early 2000s, there is a slow and constrained movement of this drug policy model across the region. McCann identifies the significance of local policy actors *and* extra-local agents and institutions in supporting the adoption of a European-style harm

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reduction strategy in Vancouver, but also explains how a competing network of policy actors advocated for an abstinence-based "therapeutic community" model, originating from Italy, which has been embraced in Surrey (see McCann, 2011a). Despite the short distance between Vancouver and Surrey (35 kilometres), attitudes and approaches to illicit drug use are considerably different. I draw a number of important conclusions about the significance of the urban-regional spatialities and temporalities of constrained policy mobility.

By conceptualizing *policy frontiers* through the scaled and networked politics through which mobile policy approaches are struggled over, this paper contributes to understandings of constrained or "differential mobility" (Temenos, 2014) rather than the dualistic notion of policy 'immobility', which problematically suggests policy is either mobile or immobile. By attending to contexts of political and institutional resistance to the embedding and mobilization of policy knowledges, we are better equipped to conceptualize how *regional policy assemblages*—productively drawing on Allen and Cochrane (2007)—are constructed and actively struggled over. In the case of harm reduction across the Vancouver region, I shed light on the networked and scaled institutional actors 'making up' this regional drug policy assemblage. Surrey is policed by a national police force operating under an anti-harm reduction conservative federal government; Vancouver has a local police department supportive of harm reduction. Surrey lacks a strong history of progressive political activism and organizing, and local politicians, with ties to conservative provincial and federal policymakers, construct powerful imaginaries of a permissive Vancouver drug strategy as a threat to moral and family-oriented Surrey. Despite Surrey's continued association with crime and the ongoing political challenge to quell fears about drug-related violence spilling out onto the streets (Cooper, 2014), political elites remain fixated on "off-the-shelf" crime-fighting policy fixes, and the same repertoire of law-and-order policy 'solutions'—more police officers, CCTV surveillance, "problem-solving courts", and court-ordered, abstinence-based addiction treatment in custodial (rural) settings resembling prison.

In this paper, I have examined the frontier politics of policy mobility: when a mobile policy model encounters political and institutional barriers and resistance. These political struggles over the institutionalization of the harm reduction drug policy model are constitutive of this *drug policy frontier* where there are competing attempts to institutionalize criminalization policy approaches and abstinence-based addiction services. Despite the dominance of criminalization/abstinence policy approaches, actors are cautiously and incrementally institutionalizing harm reduction through strategic practices which render harm reduction invisible and able to be subsumed into the city's extant crime-reduction urban policy strategy. From the outside, harm reduction in Surrey might appear to be a case of policy 'failure', where the mobilization of this policy model has failed. Yet, as I have shown, this drug policy frontier is a "fuzzy geographical space" where the politics are not predetermined and where policy change is occurring, even if it is slow, incremental, and cautious.

Importantly, the conceptual concern has not been about how harm reduction is 'kept out' of Surrey, but rather *how* a policy model, even within a highly constrained political and institutional context, moves across this diverse regional policy landscape. With limited and constrained informational infrastructures, the institutionalization of harm reduction in Surrey depends upon a certain amount of "scalar promiscuity" (Schafran et al., 2013) as a regionally-scaled network of policy actors and activists rely on resources, knowledges, 'expertise', and tactics (though sometimes at odds with one another) to improve and expand harm reduction service provision. More broadly, this requires sceptical local policymakers, senior health authority staff, and service providers to *learn* harm reduction or face sufficient political pressure, so that these key policy actors themselves may then be mobilized as part of a broader movement for policy change.

The constrained mobility and institutionalization of harm reduction across the Vancouver region empirically and conceptually contributes to explaining how and why mobile policy models encounter political and institutional resistance. In their examination of HR's global circulation, McCann and Temenos consider the mobilization of HR and

associated services— specifically drug consumption rooms—as a case of "differential" or "slow policy" mobility (McCann & Temenos, 2015; see also Temenos, 2014) in contrast to the "fast policy transfer" of neoliberal models (Peck, 2002, 2011a, 2011b). Indeed, the speed and ease through which policies move and are adopted—and adapted—locally can be explained by the ideological orientation contained within these policy models on the move and the resources behind them. I have attempted to contribute to a blind spot in the policy mobilities literature. There has been a tendency to focus on the rapid circulation and speed at which policy models circulate, without attending to cases of impeded or slow policy change. The idea of the *policy frontier* provides conceptual utility in explaining the political-institutional contexts where mobile policies are constrained, and encounter barriers or resistance to institutionalization. It is a concept that requires us to take the contextually-specific local institutional and regulatory architectures and path-dependencies seriously, but also to remain open to what Robinson calls the "local potential of global policies" (2011, p. 35). If we are interested in alternative urban futures, we have much to learn from instances of constrained—yet incremental—progressive urban policy change.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion

Surrey, BC is a changing suburban landscape. For local political and economic elites, it is being reimagined as the region's next *urban* centre and largest municipality. Yet, as the geography of poverty is increasingly suburbanized due to gentrification pressures, many low-income people are increasingly located in relatively more affordable places like north Surrey's Whalley neighbourhood. This is not to suggest that low-income people are only now ending up in suburban municipalities, which contributes to a dangerous narrative that the poor are always from somewhere else and therefore "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996). In fact, many Canadian suburbs first emerged as working class districts (Harris, 2004), and neighbourhoods like Whalley have long been home to lower-income people. But for political and economic elites, the visibly poor—particularly street-entrenched people who use drugs (PWUD)—and the services they rely upon, are believed to be barriers to the redevelopment and remaking of this devalorized post-war suburban landscape. In this way, elites mobilize discursive place-making practices, which frame market-led growth and landscape renewal as the solution to 'decline', crime, and social marginality, justifying policy interventions intended to facilitate redevelopment and capital accumulation.

These representational place-making practices, and their "policy effects" (Shore, 2011), function as a political barrier to the mobilization and adoption of the harm reduction drug policy model, as a progressive political intervention intended to provide low-barrier, supportive services for homeless or marginally housed PWUD, as an alternative to revanchist responses to criminalize and displace drug use/rs. Furthermore, the political and institutional barriers to harm reduction include Surrey's over 200

private, abstinence-based addiction recovery houses and programs, imagined by provincial policymakers as a cheap and politically expedient solution to homelessness, addiction, and criminality—and yet, increasingly 'failing forward' through ongoing experimentation (Fairbanks, 2012; Peck, 2010) to be aligned with the criminal justice system.

Collectively, the chapters attend to the 'frontier politics' of poverty and drug policy mobility, across a particular suburban landscape. In Chapters 3, 5, and 7, I catalogued and examined the policy actors, institutions, political and policy contexts relevant to the governance and management of poverty, social marginality and addiction services through an exhaustive mixed-methods approach and rigorous data triangulation and analysis. In Chapter 3, I explained how particular knowledges, rationales, and relational place-framing and place-making practices are assembled and mobilized by policy actors in response to poverty and addiction. In Chapters 5 and 7, I shifted to explaining 1) how Surrey's landscape of addiction services is produced through the networked politics surrounding drug policy and poverty, involving competing policy actors and institutions, and 2) how harm reduction is politically and institutionally constrained, yet advanced cautiously and incrementally. Finally, I explained how Surrey's approach to drug policy—as a window into state responses to poverty and marginality—is relationally assembled through city-regional and extra-local institutional relations and experimental policy practices (Chapters 5 and 7). Bringing these individual chapters in conversation with each other, I have conceptualized Surrey as a *policy frontier* where harm reduction approaches and services are constrained and met with institutional resistance.

Despite political barriers, harm reduction is cautiously and incrementally advanced by a scaled network of policy actors, drawing on resources and expertise from across the region. By examining the contested terrains of policy mobilization where progressive policy change is constrained by neoliberal policy orthodoxies, I provide insight on the emergence of new spaces of political possibility, and specifically, the importance of frontiers of political struggle and institutional conflict over urban and

regional social policy futures. Empirically, what I have presented could be interpreted as a case of harm reduction policy failure or what Wells (2014, p. 473) terms "policyfailing"—"the interruptions, exceptions, and stalled attempts at policymaking". Rather, harm reduction policy in Surrey is contested and constrained, but mobilized in an iterative and ongoing fashion. Therefore, I have conceptualized *policy frontiers* and *constrained policy mobility* to assist geographers and critical policy scholars to analyse and explain the often complicated and messy terrains which mobile policies and knowledges traverse, and the important role that policy actors, and specifically, institutions (Philo & Parr, 2000), play in political struggles over policy circulation. My focus on struggles between policy actors embedded within particular institutions—state agencies, non-profit organizations, business improvement associations, etc.—attempts to contribute to mid-level theory development and bridge neo-Marxian and post-structuralist approaches to understanding changing urban and regional political geographies.

Empirically, studying the politics of drug policy and addiction services for street-entrenched PWUD provides a window into the political geographies of policy and poverty. These politics involve many diverse institutions, operating with their own logics and rationales, from public health authorities to local governments to the criminal justice system. Methodologically, interviews and participant observation may be insufficient to studying policymaking. Uncovering and analysing policymaking, especially its impact on vulnerable and marginalized citizens, becomes increasingly difficult since policy elites are not fond of being objects of study (Shore, 2011, p. 186) and post-democratic techniques of governance increasingly extend to how state agencies (refuse to) engage with researchers and may constrain access. Alternative methodological approaches—consecutive Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, as an example—are not only helpful, but I argue increasingly necessary, in revealing how deeply power-laden and thoroughly political policymaking really is. The politics of FOI access brokering can be exhausting and frustrating, but also very instructive in illuminating the intensity of state-institutional conflicts over policymaking and state restructuring, as well as policy elites' anxieties

surrounding the release of information on politically sensitive and contentious policy processes.

Critical policy research can benefit from a mixed-methods orientation and a methodological openness to follow policies and networks, and to study through the sites, situations, and institutions of policymaking (McCann & Ward, 2012a). As I have demonstrated, it can be fruitful to conceptualize these political struggles in relational, comparative context (Ward, 2010), methodologically tracking back and forth across divergent political spaces of the region and turning to interviews, participant observation, archival and statistical analyses, and FOI requests to construct rigorous empirical portraits and uncover the political, messy, and diverse assemblages 'making up' regional political geographies of policy mobilization and contestation. In what follows, I provide four concluding insights arising from this research project.

8.1. Policy frontiers of political possibility

First, following progressive policies across seemingly 'resistant' and 'inhospitable' landscapes opens new conceptual and empirical terrain for understanding the politics of changing urban regions and policymaking dynamics. I have contributed conceptually by complicating the critical policy studies and policy mobilities literatures, dominated by accounts of market-oriented policy, their circulation, mutation, and failure. Instead, tracing the movement of harm reduction and its attendant progressive politics of inclusion and social justice, offers a political opening to conceptualizing policy mobility beyond accounts of neoliberal policy circulation and austerity urbanism. Neoliberalism is indeed a productive explanatory lens to characterize the structuring and organization of power and social relations, but there are important—and alternative—analytical frames to consider if we are to account for progressive circulations of knowledge and political practices making alternative urbanisms possible. As urban geographers, we may need to look to seemingly 'forgotten', overlooked or depoliticized institutional spaces for the

urban-political (Temenos, 2014).[1] This may take us to public health institutions and emergent social movements or networks of "policy activists" working carefully 'behind the scenes' to improve the lives of those living on the sub/urban margins. It also demands an appreciation of the contextual specificities and seemingly mundane practices, regulatory powers, legal technologies, and actors implicated in policymaking and governance.

In this way, I have attempted to narrate the complicated, and often messy, story of progressive policy mobility across an urban region—analysed empirically through harm reduction and beyond the conceptual frame of neoliberalism to capture the slippages, contestations, and progressive potentialities. But as I have demonstrated, especially in how Chapters 3 and 5 relate to Chapter 7, that it is prudent to engage with questions of neoliberalization and conceptually grapple with how progressive alternatives intersect, disrupt, and complicate the hegemonic status of neoliberalism, and perhaps even challenge market rationalities. I make this point by conceptualizing *policy frontiers*, as a "fuzzy geographical space" (Leitner et al., 2007a) where outcomes of policy change are neither certain or predetermined. This contribution to the policy mobilities lexicon offers assistance in explaining how progressive knowledges and practices encounter (neoliberal) barriers and blockages.

Building on this, and extending the discussion specifically to poverty and marginality, the idea of the policy frontier opens new conceptual avenues for theorizing city-regional geographies of political struggle over social reproduction. This demands a commitment to characterize the consequences of poverty, exclusion, and marginalization as it manifests itself in new regional spaces. It is worth echoing Herbert's (2010) call to remain "critically vigilant" of state responses to poverty. Indeed, attending to these geographies of policymaking and poverty politics can open new lines of empirical and conceptual questioning in the search for the multiple and often overlooked spaces of "the

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[1] I want to acknowledge and thank Cristina Temenos for cogently making this point, which I draw on.

political" (Mouffe, 2005) at a time of "post-political" or "post-democratic" closure (MacLeod, 2011).

8.2. Emergent geographies and struggles over poverty and social reproduction

Second, following progressive policy knowledges and models across urban regions requires that we ask new questions about the politics of social reproduction, political struggle, alliance building and the scalar dimensions to these new formations. Urban regions are changing, and yet there remain few 'low-flying' accounts of the politics surrounding the suburbanization of poverty and service provision, despite recent attention on "global suburbanisms" (Keil & Young, 2011; Keil, 2013a). The ongoing gentrification of inner cities presents new challenges for low-income groups as they are displaced and excluded from central city locations with services, presenting emergent geographies of everyday survival for the very poor (D. Mitchell & Heynen, 2013).

I do not romanticize new city-regional social and political geographies emerging through gentrification and displacement, but it is necessitating new political struggles and regionally scaled social movements and institutional alliances to demand better services and opportunities for socially excluded groups across these suburban and exurban environments. Schafran et al. (2013) have opened important new conceptual and empirical spaces to grapple with these new regional realities. In the Vancouver region, similar to the San Francisco Bay area, new spaces of political possibility and progressive anti-poverty organizing have emerged, demonstrating the "scalar promiscuity" of these actors and institutions drawing upon resources and infrastructures from across the region. These new (or reworked) political formations hold potential for regionally-scaled demands for improved living conditions and services in these (post)suburban environments.

8.3. Relational territorialities and spatial (re)imaginings

Third, a striking feature of the territorial politics of poverty and drug policy in Surrey is the extent to which the predominately reactive and oppositional territorial politics are informed and produced through *relational* framings and understandings of inner city poverty landscapes represented to be bereft of morality, social order, and economic vitality. Although I am not arguing that suburban poverty has been politically constructed as a 'crisis' in the Vancouver region, the increasing suburbanization of poverty emerges as a challenge for local elites hoping to 're-centre' the region through the redevelopment and revalorization of these 'declining' post-war suburban built environments. As one service provider lamented, "poverty is not a word that [Surrey] city council often uses in my view" (interview, service provider, No. 5), alluding to elites' tendency for boosterish talk of the 'new Surrey'. Yet, elites may no longer be able to avoid questions of poverty and service provision much longer.

These changing city-regional geographies of poverty and the politics of social reproduction increasingly complicate dominant spatial imaginaries of class, poverty, and drug use as an 'inner city problem'. As Elwood and Lawson (2013, p. 103) note:

> [S]paces and spatial imaginaries are implicated in the production of poverty and class difference and their reworking in times of crisis. Places named 'suburbs' or 'inner city', for instance, and their particular geohistories, play a role in constituting identities. Crisis disrupts not just individuals' identities but broadly held societal notions of the spaces and subjects of poverty and 'middle class-ness'.

Importantly, this research contributes to a conceptualization of the politics and power-geometries of place as mutually constituted through these changing relationalities and territorialities, and also implicated in city-regional assemblages of policy, power, and governance.

8.4. Assemblages of policy, power, and governance

Policy serves as a window into conceptualizing power, social relations, and governance (McCann & Ward, 2011a; Shore et al., 2011). Specifically, the contested politics of mobilizing competing drug policy knowledges and models illuminates the deeply ideological nature of governing and managing poverty and social marginality in the post-welfare era. Studying the politics of policy institutionalization and adoption uncovers the rationales, motivations, and normative beliefs of how society—or specifically, "criminal addicts" (Gowan & Whetstone, 2012)—*ought* to be governed, since "[p]olicy not only gives the legal-rational coherence and direction to individual aims, [but] it also endows that course of action with a dignity and morality it might not otherwise possess" (Shore, 2011, p. 172).

Harm reduction's constrained mobility across the Vancouver region indeed reveals tendencies to criminalize poverty and institutionally contain, discipline, and punish the "criminal addict" through policy approaches like "therapeutic communities" and "recovery". As one sceptical politician from the opposition party noted, these are, in fact, predominately criminal justice interventions strategically re-purposed as 'new' policy models: "We have made so many gains [in drug policy], and [provincial policymakers] are walking it back and they are dressing it up to look really nice and pretty … and presentable in that way …" (interview, provincial politician, No. 6). For many harm reduction advocates and policy activists, this alternative approach to addressing problematic substance use and engaging with marginalized PWUD is an attempt to open up the black box of addiction to address questions of structural inequality and legacies of racialized violence and trauma, and seeks ways to ensure that inequality, domination, and punishment are not reproduced through drug policies and addictions services.

It perhaps comes as no surprise that harm reduction encounters barriers and resistance since it challenges deeply entrenched class-based political beliefs which individualize and pathologize poverty and addiction (Kaye, 2012). Harm reduction, for

many, is also about wrestling power and authority away from the criminal justice system and institutions of social control and punishment. One informant from an advocacy organization thoughtfully encouraged me to strengthen my analytical frame to consider *how harm reduction 'works' and is mobilized in these highly constrained contexts* since abstinence and criminalization, in most communities, are the dominant and territorially embedded policy approaches. Indeed, political struggles over drug policy and the marketization of welfare reflect ideological struggles over the management of the visibly poor. Particular policy approaches and modalities of social control are operationalized unevenly across space, and depend on particular assemblages of power and authority:

> I think like lots of municipalities, Surrey has decided covertly to criminalize poverty and the way that they are policing that is with these soft bylaws that pull people in, and they are supported by a federal government with a 'tough-on-crime' agenda that sends people to jail for just about anything. And looking like you are poor is the discriminatory way to deal with the problem of poverty [in] the city. (Staff member, advocacy organization, No. 2)

As discussed in Chapter 7, Surrey's local political elites have important relations with key conservative provincial and federal policymakers and institutions, and they have established aspirational relationships with topographically distant law-and-order policy entrepreneurs (former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani and UK police officials). Yet, as Surrey's drug "policy assemblage" (Prince, 2010) draws together "'parts' of elsewhere, representatives of professional authority, expertise, skills and interests … to move forward varied agendas and programmes" (Allen & Cochrane, 2007, p. 1171), it also reflects the local and regional institutional realities, including health authority officials and service providers committed to drug policy reform and the institutionalization of harm reduction services.

Surrey's assemblage of drug policy knowledges, models, and practices—from actors and institutions 'near' and 'far'—is constitutive of the regional drug policy assemblage, where policy actors are distinctly situated in relation to flows and networks of advocacy, social action, and policy knowledge. Within the region, Surrey is both

topologically 'close' and 'distant' from Vancouver. Surrey's economic and political elites aspire to 're-orient' the region through the transformation of this suburban municipality into the region's leading *urban* centre, but through the same neo-suburban, class-exclusive, property-led growth model pioneered in Vancouver (Peck et al., 2014), mixed with a more explicitly punitive policy response to poverty and addiction.

Taken as a whole, this research deepens understandings of "the governance of regions, and its spatiality, [which] … works through a looser, more negotiable, set of political arrangements that take their shape from the networks of relations that stretch across and beyond given regional boundaries" (Allen & Cochrane, 2007, p. 1163). Studying policymaking, then, as it is constituted through relational and territorial city-regional politics, illuminates the political potentialities of frontiers of policy mobilization, the contours of emergent struggles over poverty and social reproduction, and the shifting and ever-changing regional assemblages of power and governance.

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Appendix A.

Sample interview questions

Describe your position and what you do. How long have you been in the current position?

Describe what your organization does.

How would you characterize the City of Surrey's approach to drug use? How would you characterize the City's approach to poverty? Is drug use a significant issue in Surrey?

How would you characterize the addiction services available in Surrey? Quantity? Location? Appropriateness?

Is Surrey's approach to drug use working? What is not working? Is there anything that should change? Why is the current approach successful? *OR* Why would a different approach be effective? Why does drug use need to be addressed?

What organizations/institutions do you believe have had the most significant impact on Surrey's approach to drug use?

Vancouver adopted a drug strategy that focuses on harm reduction, which includes needle exchanges, methadone maintenance programs, the supervised injection site, counselling services etc. Why do you believe Surrey's approach differs? Why hasn't Surrey embraced the harm-reduction model? Are there particular reasons for this?

[Specific to interviewee] Surrey has modeled itself off of UK cities and looked to New York City around issues of crime reduction and dealing with drug use and street disorder. Why these cities and not Vancouver? Is there communication with Vancouver about approaches to some of these challenges?

There are growing concerns over crime, safety, and street disorder in Surrey with the record number of homicides and concerns about unregulated recovery houses, drug use, sex work, and mental health. With this in mind, is Surrey's approach to drug use working? Is the Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy working?

As Vancouver changes, there is evidence that poverty getting pushed across the region in places like Surrey. How might this affect Surrey particularly? Is this a concern? How should it be dealt with? Is there (do you believe there is adequate) coordination among municipalities across the region to address issues like drug use, mental health, and poverty?