

# **Homeless Journeys: Understanding Mobility of the Homeless with Respect to their Survival Strategies**

by

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## Ethics Statement



The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

- a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics

or

- b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University

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## **Abstract**

This study contributes to understanding homelessness in Vancouver by investigating homeless mobility and destinations, two topics that are germane to the motivation to remain unsheltered and travel to Vancouver while homeless. Altogether, 24 persons were interviewed for this study in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). The primary finding is that among those interviewed, a majority were from out of town, not homeless when they first arrived in Vancouver, and have mobility concentrated in the DTES. The exception to this was five individuals who had been street homeless for over one consecutive year and had dispersed mobility all over the city, typically in response to opportunistic survival strategies and desire to sleep in isolated areas. Illegal survival strategies were uncommon, and housing was identified as easy to find though good housing was not. Shelters were universally distrusted. This paper concludes with recommendations for policy and a call to action for future research.

**Keywords:** Homeless; unstable housing; mobility; migration; survival strategies; Vancouver

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the myriad of persons who were there for me through to the end. I dedicate this to my supervisors who inspire me to continue striving to achieve my goals, and to my graduate peers who provided the network I needed to succeed in my degree. Lastly, this thesis is especially dedicated to the twenty-four participants who let me as an outsider into their lives. They taught me innumerable lessons and this research would not be possible without them.

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This research additionally benefitted from consultations with the research librarians from criminology, geography and health sciences at Simon Fraser University. A special thank you to Ehsan Jozaghi is also warranted for his role in introducing me to people who then introduced me to my first participants. To the underappreciated office staff that keep the School of Criminology running: you are all experts at what you do; thank you for making everyone else's lives easier.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

Homelessness is a prevalent issue in Canada and Vancouver especially. Vancouver is one of the three largest metropolitan areas in Canada and has several characteristics that attract homeless persons. Being a metropolitan area in itself causes Vancouver to attract a large proportion of persons from outside of the metropolis who, in turn, may be at higher likelihood of becoming homeless (Fiedler et al., 2006). Additionally, Vancouver receives a very limited amount of snow, that allows homeless persons to remain safely unsheltered year-round and take residence in public spaces such as parks. This, in turn, has caused a great deal of tension between local governments and the unsheltered homeless. For example, in 2008 the Supreme Court of British Columbia ruled in favour of homeless persons being able to sleep in public spaces in *Victoria (City) v Adams* (Tilley, 2008). While that case centered on the city of Victoria, issues had also begun to arise in Abbotsford. During 2013 and 2014, Abbotsford officials became increasingly intolerant of homeless persons using public spaces to sleep and erect tents. The city's drastic measures of damaging the homeless persons' property and spreading both chicken manure and pepper spray over the camp area solicited a legal complaint that made its way to the Supreme Court of British Columbia. That case, *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz* (2015), also ruled in the homeless persons' favour that public spaces should be accessible to all people and that Abbotsford's bylaws restricting an individual's right to sleep in a park were unconstitutional.

The method used for tracking homelessness from one year to the next provides limited insight into nuanced fluctuations of the homeless population. However, the general trend is that more and more individuals are becoming homeless in Vancouver, though it is unclear if the increase is strictly from Vancouverites or Vancouverites and persons from outside Vancouver who become homeless after arriving. Fiedler et al. (2006) found homelessness in Vancouver to be an increasingly visible problem as the

number of homeless persons was reported to have increased from 2001 to 2005. The Vancouver Homeless Count similarly found that homelessness is rising as a whole with a 28% increase in the number of homeless individuals (from 1,364 to 1,746) from 2005 to 2015 (Thomson, 2015). This increase is greater than the increase in the general population in British Columbia (11.6%) and Vancouver (4.4%) over that same period (Statistics Canada, 2016). Additionally, the 2016 homeless count found more homeless persons than any previous homeless count in Vancouver (Thompson, 2016), despite Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson's promise to end homelessness by 2015. The homeless count is likely a conservative estimate, as homeless counts are intrinsically limited given the obvious difficulty associated with counting persons who have no fixed address. Alternatively, there is the possibility that counts are becoming more accurate, resulting in a more accurate understanding of the magnitude of the homeless problem. If homelessness is increasing in Vancouver, and not simply the accuracy of counts, then it could be due to persons traveling to the city and becoming homeless, persons traveling to the city that are already homeless, or persons who were not previously homeless becoming homeless. The Vancouver homeless survey is conducted by gathering and training volunteers who patrol the city recording all homeless persons encountered on one day of the year in March (Thomson, 2015). However, March weather in Vancouver can be anything from balmy to inhospitable, that could result in different counts simply because of year-to-year fluctuations in March weather. Poor weather may reduce the number of homeless on the street compared to more hospitable weather; colder temperatures in March during the year may then influence the homeless count which is used a proxy for the entire year.

Concerns about homeless persons traveling to Vancouver and using additional services are borne from the NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) syndrome (Dear, 1992). The NIMBY syndrome affects persons when human services facilities open near where those services are believed to affect negatively the pre-existing persons, homes or businesses in the area. Mayor Robertson pointed to weather-motivated homeless mobility from across Canada to Vancouver to explain the increased number of homeless and the city's inability to end homelessness completely (Hopper, 2015). Meanwhile, current homeless shelters are unsettled as their funding is diverted to assisting homeless persons from outside of Vancouver who traveled to the city instead of local people who have been in

the city for some time (Hopper, 2016). How well-founded these concerns are is still unclear, though the concern exists and is at the heart of one aspect of this thesis: namely, how and why do homeless persons travel to where they do. There is research pertaining to different classifications of mobile homeless persons, though this thesis focuses on the migratory homeless as it pertains to the issues already discussed, and intra-city homeless mobility, that may affect homeless visibility, concerns of a growing phenomenon and fluctuation between sheltered and unsheltered homeless.

Specifically, this thesis set out to answer two questions that pertain to the homeless. The first question is: where do the homeless regularly travel? This question has been asked by previous scholars looking explicitly at homeless in shelters (Rollinson, 1998), and it is believed to be an important consideration for the types of activities that the homeless participate in, that include legal as well as illegal activities. Understanding daily mobility, intra-city mobility, may also provide insight on motivations to be sheltered or unsheltered given that previous research has documented homeless discontent with restrictions while living in shelters (Wasserman & Claire, 2009). The second question this thesis set out to address is: how far do the homeless travel to participate in survival strategies? Implicit in this question is the assumption that there are motivations affecting the willingness to travel certain distances to conduct certain activities. Despite previous research studying homeless mobility (e.g., Jocoy & Del Casino, 2010; Rollinson, 2003), there is no research on how far the homeless travel to particular kinds of survival strategies such as panhandling or scavenging for goods to sell. Snow and Anderson (1993) describe places facilitating some survival strategies, but the distance that homeless travel to get to those places is still elusive. Due to the paucity of homeless mobility research, intra-city mobility is considered as well as migratory mobility; both forms of mobility are suspected to influence, and be influenced by, survival strategies.

## **1.2. Homelessness and Housing**

Homelessness has a clearly understood meaning but no universally accepted definition. Definitions may or may not include situations in which an individual has no place to live but lives with friends or family, or is in temporary housing. The Australian

Bureau of Statistics, for example, distinguishes primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness; the last category includes persons who reside in boarding houses for more than 13 weeks and survive below the community standard of living (Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2008). The Australian definition differs from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2012) that adds the fourth category of people fleeing domestic violence households with limited housing alternatives. In Vancouver a homeless person is defined as a person who “did not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and if they did not pay rent,” (Thomson, 2016; p.7) though it also includes persons without physical shelter, in temporary housing such as boarding houses, transition houses or shelters, persons staying at someone else’s place, persons in hospitals or transitioning into or out of jails with no fixed address (Fiedler et al., 2006).

Research on homelessness at times also parallels research on “unstable housing.” Corneil et al. (2006) indicate unstable housing includes persons who live with no fixed address, in shelters, on the street, in temporary accommodations or in single room occupancy (SRO) hotels. Persons with stable housing meanwhile are those in apartments or with their own homes and, presumably, with the financial means to provide housing for themselves. Like unstable housing, precarious housing also includes persons in “marginal accommodation,” such as in SROs, with two or more periods of homelessness in the previous 12 months (Somers et al., 2016a; 2016b). Living in precarious housing, in addition to making someone homeless by some definitions, has been shown to have numerous negative health outcomes.

Single room occupancy (SRO) hotels are a common sight in downtown Vancouver, with 171 buildings downtown that share the city’s classification as “single room accommodation;” these building house thousands but remain highly contentious and problematic (SRA, 2017). Shannon et al (2006) found residency within an SRO in downtown Vancouver to be positively correlated with HIV infection, emergency room use, having been physically assaulted, having been recently incarcerated, and engaging in cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine injection. Indeed, persons living in SROs in Vancouver have been regarded as homeless in the literature because SRO occupants meet the criteria for homelessness outlined by United Nations stipulations that SRO occupants have insecure housing and experience unsafe and unsanitary conditions

where they reside (Gurstein & Small, 2005). These accounts are consistent with public demonstrations in downtown Vancouver and apparent discontent with this form of housing in general (Chan, 2014). Given the complexities of living in poor quality housing versus shelter living or with no fixed address, a dynamic definition of homelessness is warranted and will be described below in the Methods section as it pertains to exclusionary criteria used to collect the sample for this research.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

This literature review is organized based on several research areas that, while interdisciplinary, are all germane to the greater theme of this thesis about homeless mobility. An initial challenge is posed by the hundreds of competing definitions of what it means to be homeless vis-à-vis unstable or precarious housing, or marginal accommodations. The literature review then continues to a discussion of general homeless mobility research both within and outside of North America.<sup>1</sup> Research from varying countries was selected for inclusion in this review due to there being a finite amount of research exclusively in Canada, or even in the North American context. Research that distinguishes differences between countries with respect to homeless mobility, survival strategies or social control is also presented where appropriate. This section includes research on both migration, long-distance mobility or interurban or rural, as well as research on intra-urban mobility, daily mobility patterns and features of typical homeless travel. This is followed by an explanation of what homeless survival strategies are and how mobility is interconnected with these strategies. Lastly, as survival strategies comprise both legal and illegal activities, a final discussion will cover the topics of distance to crime as well as how mobility may influence the homeless as victims or offenders using two spatial frameworks posited by place-based criminology theories.

<sup>1</sup> Literature on homeless youth mobility falls outside of the boundaries of this thesis, which focuses on adult homeless mobility; though findings on youth mobility generally are: (1) youth who travel farther participate in more risky behaviors; and (2) travel is for similar reasons as adult mobility. See Hagan and McCarthy (1997) and Martino et al (2011) for more information.

## 2.1. Homeless Travel in the North American Context

Lee and Schreck (2005, p. 1075) assert “[I]nformation is unavailable on the specific kinds of settings in which the homeless spend their time” (see also Garland, Richards & Cooney, 2010; Wolch, 1991). Despite a wealth of research on various homeless-related topics such as victimization (Roy et al., 2014), homeless survival strategies (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001), homeless encampments (Chamard, 2010), and the homeless and crime (Fischer et al., 2008; Garland et al., 2010) there is little empirical research on how the homeless spend their time. This conclusion was similarly and recently reached by Kauppi, Pallard and Faries (2015a, p.68), who found gaps in research pertaining to intra-city homeless mobility, and migratory and transient homelessness. Research in this area is interdisciplinary, with mobility research on homeless persons including topics such as mental health issues, spatial clustering, crime and travel, and access to health services or shelters.

Two prevalent articles about homeless mobility in Vancouver both find that the homeless are largely concentrated in the Downtown East Side (DTES), and travel to the Downtown East Side area from other places (Somers et al., 2016a; Somers et al., 2016b). Somers et al. (2016a) analyzed the geographic distribution of persons with co-occurring disorders who benefited from homeless shelter payments, among other inclusion criteria, and found the rate of persons residing in the DTES with co-occurring disorders to be higher than any other local health area (LHA) in British Columbia. The second article determined that among a cohort of mentally ill homeless adults chronicled over a 10-year period, the per cent of persons who designated where they live increased from 17% to 52% in the DTES LHA. The percent of persons in LHAs around other parts of Vancouver remained relatively stable whereas LHAs outside of Vancouver dropped (Somers et al., 2016b). The authors conclude, after noting homeless residency during the 10-year period, that homeless persons are likely to travel to the DTES from around British Columbia if they are not already in Vancouver. However, these findings are hardly surprising as the DTES has been known for decades to have homelessness problems and to have a high proportion of persons with mental health and substance use disorders among those who utilize health services (Eby & Misura, 2006; Hagan & McCarthy, 1998). Additionally, homeless persons may travel to Vancouver knowing that

there are other homeless there, given that the homeless have been found to concentrate and seek other homeless persons as a social network (Iwata & Karato, 2011).

Insights regarding homeless migrants and transients has also come from research in other parts of Canada. Two studies, one occurring in Ontario and the other Saskatchewan, are particularly relevant. Kauppi, Pallard and Faries (2015b) summarize a multi-year research alliance, in which several articles are summarized, analyzing the characteristics of homeless migrants particularly around Sudbury, Ontario, a small urban center surrounded by rural communities. Notably, they find that from 2006-2007 migrants from outside of the city comprised 25% of homeless persons sampled. Among the migrants, women were underrepresented (30% compared to the local figure of 45%), compared to the non-migrants and indigenous people who were over-represented, 25% compared to local 7% (p. 16). Additionally, both mental and physical health problems were common among homeless migrants. Migrants also indicated travelling due to a dearth of sustainable employment at their previous location<sup>2</sup> (p. 16).

A second study by Peters and Robillard (2009) was the first study on homeless mobility with respect to Indigenous Canadians – whom they referred to as the “hidden homeless” – in Saskatchewan. The phrase “hidden homeless” has two competing definitions. First, in this study, it refers to persons who “couch surf” and, without a home to themselves, sleep precariously night to night with various friends, family and other persons with whom the homeless individual has social ties. The second definition for “hidden homeless” refers to street homeless who evade detection due to their resourcefulness and/or self-sufficiency. Peters and Robillard (2009) found that participants moved an average of four times in the previous 18 months and migration often rotated between a city and a reserve (p. 662). Migration away from a reserve was commonly due to one of four reasons: (1) family conflict; (2) searching for employment or education; (3) visiting with others; and (4) to enter a correctional or treatment center (pp. 662-663). Results of their study further revealed that most participants fell into two

<sup>2</sup> The search for employment opportunities was also found by Rahimian, Wolch and Koegel (1992) to be the main reason for migration; employment opportunities are also indicated to be motivators according to social workers in Vancouver homeless shelters in 2016 (Snowdon, 2016).

distinct mobility patterns. The first pattern involved multiple moves within the reserve and back and forth to the city, while the second was a more stable housing situation where participants had a main residence and traveled back and forth to relatives' homes for extended periods of time (pp. 666-667). Peters and Robillard (2009) do, however, stress that there were unique mobility patterns among many of their participants, affected by factors such as domestic abuse, depletion of social capital with their social ties, youth conflict with parents, and employment.

U.S. scholars have contributed to research on homeless mobility both within and between cities. Rollinson (1998) identified typical daily paths among 32 homeless persons in Missouri who regularly slept at one of two shelters. He found that many members of his study used public transportation as a means of passing time as well as for personal enjoyment. His participants traveled to fewer than five destinations daily, the primary ones being public locations used to loiter and pass time, places for food, and places to acquire monetary resources. One of the key findings was that, "[t]hese men made a daily migration to isolate themselves...in an attempt to cope with the threatening environment they had geographically withdrawn to the perceived safe confines of the 'nooks and crannies' that exist in the built environment" (Rollinson, 1998, p. 113). While the homeless as victims and offenders will be discussed at length below in a "Homelessness and Crime" section, this finding that the homeless travel to isolate themselves due to victimization is noteworthy as one hypothesis of homeless victimization posits that their extended exposure and proximity to other potential offenders increases their likelihood of being victimized (Lee & Schreck, 2005). The homeless coping strategy of dealing with victimization by migrating to perceived safe places in the built environment may then further contribute to their victimization if "safe places" are erroneously categorized by the persons seeking them, or if "safe places" are distant geographically from their starting location, thereby increasing length of exposure. One of the important contributions made by Rollinson (1998) with respect to homeless mobility is the identification of specific physical locations that the homeless may travel to. This is vital given the uncertainty about what the homeless do and where the homeless go during a day (Lee & Schreck, 2005). If homeless trip distance is calculated to a crime

for example, knowing likely points of origin is especially important given that homeless are not going to have stable housing accommodations.<sup>3</sup>

Several studies on homeless mobility focused on the homeless in and around Los Angeles, another large metropolitan area on the West Coast like Vancouver. One of the first such studies was by Rahimian et al. (1992), who found that homeless migrants to Los Angeles tended to be significantly younger (under 25 years old), white, unmarried males who constituted roughly 35% of the homeless population (pp. 1325-1326). The article however does not investigate the causes, or timeline, of homelessness among their sample; it is possible that migratory unmarried young males are the least likely to find employment among migrants and that the males were not homeless until having arrived in L.A. after failing to find suitable economic opportunities. A subsequent article by Wolch et al. (1993) addressed daily and periodic homeless mobility within the city instead of long-range migration. This study found that social networks and housing situation influenced voluntary mobility while involuntary mobility was commonly caused by police action, dependency on social services or business behavior towards the homeless (p. 165). These first two articles are notable for two reasons. The first is that they developed and further expanded on a model for homeless mobility that, while perhaps overly simplistic given what is now known, accounts for several restraints on mobility, social networks of homeless persons, as well as other potential factors influencing decision making for homeless to travel.

The second reason these studies are important is because they differentiate homeless persons by whether they are “daily movers,” that is, whether they travel outside of the downtown core or remain within the downtown throughout the day (Wolch, et al., 1993, pp. 165-166). This concept of daily movers is limited and is a questionable proxy measure for identifying the amount of movement a homeless individual exhibits, but it does open the door to examining characteristics of homeless mobility. Wolch et al. (1993) ultimately find four reasons for travel outside of the downtown area, which included: maintaining contact with family and friends, social services, finding work, and

<sup>3</sup> This point is discussed in more below along with the Distance to Crime literature.

“to escape a degrading milieu,” that is, to distance oneself from the negative environment experienced there (p. 167).

The last crucial article on homeless mobility around Los Angeles is from Jocoy and Del Casino Jr (2010), who found that homeless persons tended to have shorter trip distances within the city than those in urban households (three-mile trip compared to seven); make more trips per day (five versus four); have lower motor vehicle ownership (15% versus 92%); and relied more frequently on public transportation (31% versus 2%). Additionally, the researchers found no significant relationship between income and distance traveled (p. 1957), though the homeless had a greater number of restrictions on their mobility, a topic that will be discussed later in this thesis. In addition to being important for this research due to the article being uniquely specific about homeless mobility, this article and a longer report (Jocoy & Del Casino, Jr., 2012) were helpful insofar as they included the questionnaire administered to homeless research participants (pp. 50-92), that provided valuable insight into applicable questions to include in my own research (described below in the Methods section of this thesis).

Improving upon the work of the early research in Los Angeles, researchers in Alabama further explored differences between homeless “movers” and “stayers” using a different measure. Lindquist, Lagory and Ritchey (1999) differentiated movers in their homelessness study in Birmingham by whether a homeless person had resided in the city for the past five years. The authors found that of the 39% of their sample found to be movers, 50% were from within Alabama and the average mover had stayed in Birmingham for the past three years (p. 697). Movers and stayers were found to be distinct in several ways. Movers were more commonly white, had less happy childhoods, and perceived strength of social ties differently, additionally movers who had high incomes had stronger ties. Stayers meanwhile had stronger social ties if they were female (p. 700-701). Despite these differences, Lindquist, Lagory and Ritchey (1999) conclude in most respects movers and stayers are quite similar, and psychologically stayers did not benefit uniquely in terms of less depression or life stressors from remaining in their own communities compared to the migrants (p. 704).

## 2.2. Homeless Travel Outside of North America

The majority of popularly referenced research on homeless mobility outside of North America has been conducted in England.<sup>4</sup> Starting in 1991, Whynes analyzed travel distance and characteristics of homeless migrants entering shelters in Nottingham. Whynes (1991) concluded that roughly one-third of all persons seeking to use the homeless shelters came from persons whose last address was outside of the city; additionally, these homeless migrants were distinct from homeless locals. Migrants tended to be older than locals by an average of eight years (p. 114), one quarter of them spent the previous night sleeping at a family member or friend's home (indicative of having ties in the city prior to coming), and typically had different reasons for their shelter application. A history of housing instability or searching for work was the general reason for migrants whereas locals indicated depleting social capital with friends and family or losing their own housing (p. 117). Interestingly, the author found that local services may be better equipped for migrants than locals due to the city being less prepared to handle younger homeless persons. Quite differently, Wardhaugh (1996), indicates that homeless mobility within Manchester is spatially confined and influenced by a "homelessness circuit," an area of roughly 10 square blocks within which are day centres, youth centres, food and clothing charities, medical services, and other homeless service offices (p. 705). The shantytown within this area, "Cardboard City," along with all its tenants, experiences a continuous state of spatial displacement, moving around the circuit and Manchester's Chinatown.

Two articles on mobility in coastal England vary in their approach and findings. May (2003) found that nine persons, roughly a quarter of his sample, were migrants to the city who experienced long term homelessness, and while reasons to travel there differed, eight out of nine moved there after hearing about the city's reputation as a good place to be homeless (p. 36). Among those nine who traveled because the city was

<sup>4</sup> The mobility of Irish "travelers," and Roma, is outside of the scope of this study, despite some research on homeless mobility indicating blurred lines between distinctions of homelessness and being a traveler. For more information on this, see Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield (2003) and Helleiner (2000). Some homeless scholars use the word "traveler" to mean a homeless person who travels farther than persons with more fixed mobility, not in reference to travelers in the U.K. context (Martino et al., 2011).

reputably good, three traveled for better access to survival strategies, four traveled because they had heard of better access to homeless services (housing or otherwise), and the remaining two had only migrated once to the current city and “recently [came] to Brighton because of its reputation for cheap and easily available heroin” (May 2003, p. 38). Moreover, travel among those who were not long term homeless was limited, few persons traveled to multiple new cities after becoming homeless and the two most likely reasons for travel were either to look for a job or to seek room and board with friends or family (p. 39-40).

A second article, by Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield (2003) involved interviews with homelessness officers and agency representatives as well as homeless persons in rural coastal areas. They distinguished four kinds of migration patterns:

1. Out Migration: This category of migrants are homeless persons who lived in the rural area but migrated outside of the rural area into a city. There are three structural factors leading to this, a) lack of social housing for families, b) lack of affordable, private rental housing, and c) lack of emergency housing such as drop-in night shelters.
2. Within Migration: This group of homeless persons move from one locale in the rural area to another in the same rural area. This occurs due to reluctance to make the change from rural living to urban living and due to lack of transportation to get to an urban center. Migration from one rural area to another may also occur thanks to the prevalence of “couch surfing”, a practice more common in rural areas due to the lack of other forms of housing.
3. In Migration: Homeless in this category have moved from urban areas to rural areas. This is characterized by more privacy being afforded to those in rural areas despite less anonymity, less government restrictions, greater quality of life due to previous two reasons, perceived reduced temptation of drugs in rural area (though this was not the reality), and seasonal and “casual” employment opportunities in rural areas.
4. Through Migration: This final group of homeless are travelling from one location to another and pass through this rural area. The destination and point of origin can be rural or urban; alternatively, the homeless are travelling aimlessly but only remain in the rural area temporarily. This is salient during summer months especially among “new age travelers” (Helleiner, 2000), large variability of transience among homeless persons where some stay for days and other weeks before leaving, persons often without destinations, happens through forced migration by authorities (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003).

Two studies from Japan found that homeless mobility was most influenced by available employment, medical care and food (Suzuki, 2008), as well as social networks and parks with free water and toilets (Iwata & Karato, 2011). Suzuki (2008) additionally found that homeless persons living on the street were approximately between three and eight times more likely to relocate based on employment opportunities compared to homeless who sleep in tents, who were found to be more stable than those on the street without tents. For that study, employment opportunity locations were measured by “Public Job Agencies or Day Labor agencies” (p. 1024), and thus, homeless relocation likelihood is measured not by availability of money-making strategies, but by availability of more legitimate employment.

Altogether, this section finds that a minority of homeless persons from a study area will have been homeless and will have originated from another city (May, 2003; Whynes, 1991), and there are common themes among studies to account for why the homeless would migrate. Homeless mobility, according to these studies, occurred either because the homeless were searching for better job prospects and to be closer to day labor opportunities (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003; May, 2003; Suzuki, 2008; Whynes, 1991) or to be closer to homeless service providers (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield 2003; Wardhaugh, 1996). Additionally, the finding that mobility would be greatly influenced by social networks is common within homeless mobility research outside of North America and within North America (Iwata & Karuto, 2011; Mostowska, 2013; Peters & Robbilard, 2009; Wolch, Rahamian & Koegel, 1993). These studies demonstrate the importance of homeless mobility research including information on employment opportunities, places that provide homeless services, and social networks.

### **2.3. Factors Influencing Homeless Mobility**

The homeless, almost by definition, are forced into public spaces more frequently than domiciled persons. This influences homeless mobility in several ways, even without considering transportation disadvantage experienced by the poor (Hine & Mitchell, 2001). Homeless mobility is affected by urban planning (Braverman, 2010; Thaman, 2011), legislation (Doherty et al, 2002; May, 2003; Mitchel, 1995; 1997; Snow & Anderson, 1993), physiological factors such as physical disability, need of restrooms and

special services (Felson et al, 1996; Iwata & Karato, 2011; Rahimian, Wolch & Koegel, 1992), and by criminal justice response (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003; Wardhaugh, 1996). Persons living in SROs and shelters are also noted as sometimes having affected mobility as a direct result of their housing situation (Nair, 2016; Rankin, 2015; Rollinson, 1990)<sup>5</sup>. Regardless of these aforementioned factors, it appears most involve a central issue, i.e., the homeless do not have their own space to conduct daily activities. In the literature, this leads to the issue of “contested spaces.”

“[C]ontested spaces [are] an arena of struggle for social control – the authority to impose what is properly public – between, on one side, the private managers and, on the other, the public users” (Reyes, 2016, p. 201). This concept is that many different kinds of activities may occur in public places, some of which may create conflicts of use. For example, conflicts of use may occur when a public bathroom is used to wash one's face and clothing instead of strictly to use the toilet (Braverman, 2010) or persons sell drugs in a city park that then discourages lawful park use by other residents (Payne & Reinhard, 2016). Conflicts arise when one activity restricts the availability or inhibit access of activities that may occur there. When conflicts like this arise, urban planning and legislation is used to help regulate and control these places so as to impose “what is properly public” – a distinction made by policy makers and persons less negatively affected by the consequences of regulation in these spaces. This, in turn, means that everyday actions such as defecation, sleeping, changing clothing, storing one's belongings, etc. can become "criminal" when conducted in public places. Mitchel (1997) describes this flawed phenomenon.

[The] law, in all of its magisterial impartiality, understands that the rich have no more right to sleep under bridges than do the poor. Such irony can only be so easily ignored if we somehow also agree, in the “impartial” manner of the law, that the poor have no greater need to sleep under bridges — or to defecate in alleys, panhandle on streets, or sit for a length of time on park benches (p. 305).

<sup>5</sup> Authors found SRO occupancy to directly affect mobility in several ways. The most obvious mobility impediment being when SRO elevators were nonfunctioning, trapping disabled tenants in the buildings for days at a time.

This articulation of "properly public" behaviors creates a mechanism in which persons confined to public spaces, such as the homeless, are highly controlled because they offend public order by engaging in private behaviour in public spaces (Wardhaugh, 1996). Some scholars, in reference to what they perceive as absurd anti-homeless laws, refer to this as "spatial cleansing" (Amster, 2003). This takes the form of sidewalks becoming privatized (Amster, 2003; Kohn, 2004; Snow & Anderson, 1993), and law enforcement acting as government agents to force the homeless to move along (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003). Literature on strategies of homeless social control further demonstrates government intervention to relocate homeless persons, that self-evidently influences mobility.

Snow and Mulcahy (2001) discuss different types of space and strategies to regulate homeless movement. The authors identify three primary strategies: (1) containment; (2) displacement; and (3) exclusion (pp. 159-160). Containment involves keeping the homeless invisible, that is, not viewable by other citizens whom the homeless might bother. Containment is achieved primarily through three techniques: (a) greater surveillance of the homeless; (b) zero tolerance policing of homeless related ordinances; and (c) disruptive tactics such as "shutting down showers, eliminating portable toilets, padlocking dumpsters and garbage receptacles, boarding up vacant buildings and just plain harassing the homeless" (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001, p. 160). This has occurred in Abbotsford, as previously noted, when city agents covered homeless tents and belongings with chicken manure and pepper spray (CBC News, 2015).

Displacement includes activities such as removing or restricting places that the homeless would sleep, transporting homeless to other areas in the city, and zero-tolerance policing with respect to homeless attempting to make money illegally. An egregious example of homeless displacement occurred recently in Nevada where hundreds of mentally ill homeless medical patients were given one-way bus passes to California, where they knew no one, and were instructed to seek medical services there instead (Hubert & Reese, 2013). A similar, though small scale, example of this occurred in British Columbia as well when two homeless men from Saskatchewan were given one-way bus passes to B.C. instead of shelter accommodation where they were from (Laanela, 2016).

The last strategy the authors found was that of exclusion. Strategically, exclusion involves NIMBY policies (Dear, 1992) in which homeless services are located in particular areas to force movement to and within those areas or otherwise strategic attempts to exclude the homeless from parts of a city. Doherty et al (2002), while analyzing homeless exclusion in seven European countries, found similar methods to regulate the homeless, though their research focussed on organized tactics and strategies including border control and discipline, deterrence, and legislation (p. 293). Perhaps most worthy of mentioning is how basic some restrictions are to a homeless individual's mobility, such as the need to defecate.

The homeless mobility literature includes frequent reference to homeless persons needing to travel in order to find a bathroom to which they have access. The necessity and uncontrollable human requirement to defecate is an example of an everyday activity that becomes criminal in public places and, thus, a part of a uniquely homeless struggle. In addition to authorities eliminating access to portable toilets to force homeless movement (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001), lack of public bathrooms have plagued the homeless for decades in major metropolitan areas. For example, in the late 1980s four homeless persons in New York City filed a lawsuit against the city for the suffering and humiliation they experienced by being unable to find public bathrooms; personal accounts by those persons indicate the availability of restrooms was a significant problem to the point of requiring the homeless to plan their days around the availability of bathrooms (Legal Action Center for the Homeless, 1990). Years later, Kohn (2004) notes that New York City still has no public toilets; planners do not want public toilets as they would attract homeless persons (p. 144). To date, no research has been conducted pertaining to homeless persons in Vancouver and public restrooms, though there is a lack of public restrooms in the city (Robinson, 2016), and the automated public restrooms used in Vancouver have issues and may be prone to crime (CBS News, 2011; Chan, 2008; Frazier, 2011). This is a topic that needs to be investigated in Vancouver and warrants additional exploration in future research.

Some shelters have regulations dissuading migrant homeless persons, and elderly individuals living in SROs have been found to have restricted mobility. Research by May (2003) challenged the perception of the Brighton and Hove city council that

homeless persons were flocking to the city from elsewhere simply to make use of the city's services. The new ordinances ensured only prior residents of the city could be admitted and provided services. It is hypothesized to be the same reasoning used by many shelters in Moscow to deny admitting homeless who cannot demonstrate prior registration as city residents (Stephenson, 2006). Meanwhile, Rollinson (1990) determined that some poorly maintained and low quality SROs, restrict residents' mobility when, for example, elevators are frequently out of service that trap residents with disabilities from leaving. Broken elevators trapping residents in SROs is a common occurrence in several SROs in Vancouver as well (Nair, 2016; Rankin, 2015); some tenants have been trapped for days at a time, unable to leave to purchase food and receive services.

## **2.4. Homeless Survival Strategies**

In order to survive, a homeless person needs many of the same things as someone who is not homeless, but may have fewer opportunities. For example, most of us need financial resources for public transportation, food, shelter and clothing. Those who are unemployed due to living on the streets may employ other income gaining methods, known as survival strategies. These strategies shape and are shaped by spatial constraints imposed on the homeless (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001), where appropriateness of strategy is dependent on several individual and contextual factors varying from person to person. As one might expect, there are numerous strategies that the homeless employ, both legal and illegal. Illegal money-making strategies are typically referred to as "shadow work" or survival behaviors (Ferguson et al, 2011; Snow & Anderson, 1993).

Types of shadow work include the unlicensed selling of goods on the street, panhandling, prostitution, selling drugs, and stealing, among other activities (Ferguson et al, 2011; Lei, 2013). Some research finds that the longer one is homeless and lawful employment isn't obtained, the more likely it is for persons to turn to these illegal activities (Snow & Anderson, 1993). Additionally, cultural constraints alter the strategies used in different countries. In the United Kingdom, for example, more homeless persons panhandle and busk than in Japan, where panhandling is extremely rare, though more

homeless in Japan scavenged for goods (Okamoto, 2007, p. 532). This research also found that transient homeless are more likely to participate in shadow work, and those who do participate are more likely to rely on friends for help as well as to be addicted to drugs<sup>6</sup> (Ferguson et al, 2011). However, some scholars study homeless survival strategies, as sources of income, within a broader framework of skills and attributes necessary to survive and adapt to the conditions that homeless experience.

For example, Lee et al. (2011) used a measure of 13 survival skills that were used previously in the context of homeless youth and young adults for determining their ability to function away from home, though the homeless skills are apt to be applied to homeless adults more generally as well. The 13 survival skills identified include:

1. Avoiding hassles with the police
2. Avoiding fights
3. Knowing safe places
4. Finding a place to sleep
5. Finding places to keep out of bad weather
6. Getting around without money
7. Getting food without money
8. Getting things when needed
9. Getting money when needed
10. Dealing with agencies and services
11. Avoiding people who will rip you off
12. Identifying people who will look out for you
13. Identifying people that you can learn from and keeping in touch with people.

The authors used these survival skills in relation to the prevalence of HIV risk factors, such as unprotected sex and drug use, to help understand traits and behaviors of 'high-functioning' versus 'low-functioning' homeless. While this measure was used for HIV risk factors and administered to homeless youth, many of the skills are considered relevant to homeless adults for other reasons. For example, 'Ability to keep in touch with family and identifying persons that can be learned from' affects homeless geographic mobility as some homeless travel to where their family and friends are as previously noted via indications of the importance of social networks (Iwata & Karuto, 2011; Mostowska, 2013; Peters & Robillard, 2009; Wolch, Rahamian & Koegel, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> This is the finding in the literature on more transient homeless youth as well (Martino et al, 2011).

Bender et al (2007) assessed capacity for survival on the streets through focus groups in which they asked the homeless which traits they perceived to be most critical for their survival. Mobility was important; homeless who traveled for several years were viewed as using fewer services, were deferred to by other homeless as knowledgeable, and were respected for being self-sufficient (p. 31). Further, those who traveled were perceived to have accrued street smarts and capability – in this context it appears that travel is a survival strategy explicitly by building reputation and respect among peers, as well as implicitly in that it may increase ability to participate in various strategies inaccessible to those who remain fixed in place. Bender et al (2007) found that many of the other attributes and skills identified by the homeless as being crucial to survival were applicable to domiciled persons as well, such as coping, problem-solving and observational skills.

## **2.5. Homelessness and Crime**

The homeless are sometimes stigmatized as being especially criminal and dangerous, despite contradictory research, that homeless crime is largely due to a lack of food, shelter and alternative legal subsistence strategies (Gaetz, Grady & Buccieri, 2010; Garland et al, 2010; Snow, Baker & Anderson, 1989). Snow, Baker and Anderson (1989) found that the homeless not only were more likely to be arrested for nuisance offenses and crimes with no victim, but that the arrest rate for violent offenses was significantly lower for homeless persons than domiciled.<sup>7</sup> The authors concluded that the likelihood of violence against the general public by homeless persons is less likely than violence against the general public by domiciled persons (p. 538). Mitchel (1995; 1997) adds that much "criminality" arises from local government criminalizing behaviors homeless are forced to conduct in public because of the fact of their homelessness. For example, sleeping in a public park becomes the crime of trespass and begging becomes

<sup>7</sup> Snow, Baker and Anderson (1989) came to this conclusion after reviewing Austin Police Department records from 1983-1985. The authors found that their final sample of 767 homeless, among the pool of 13,881 who had one or more contacts with the Salvation Army during that period, commit proportionately and substantially fewer violent offenses than non-homeless adult males in Austin, Texas during those years. See Snow, Baker and Anderson (1989, pp. 533-536) for more details on the context and procedures for their study.

criminalized as unlawful solicitation. Similar to the homeless as criminals, the homeless as victims is an issue with several mediating factors.

The homeless are victimized at disproportionately high rates compared to the general public (Gaetz, 2004; Garland et al, 2010; Lee & Schreck, 2005). Some of the reasons for this are the prevalence of homeless persons having mental health and substance abuse issues (Garland et al, 2010), being marginalized spatially and moved to the least valued spaces in a city (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001) and due to social exclusion (Gaetz, 2004). Among the homeless, demographic characteristics do not seem to be as important compared to the general public, though Garland et al (2010) found that homeless are more likely to be victimized if they are turned away from a shelter or if they have committed a new crime since becoming homeless. While these are all factors potentially contributing to homeless victimization, an underlying theory commonly used to explain the homeless and crime is routine activity theory<sup>8</sup> (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Because the homeless need to sleep in shelters, on the streets or in temporary hotel accommodations, they are exposed to more persons than they would be if they had their own home. This may contribute to their victimization in several ways. For example, their personal belongings must be carried with them, which increases their items' visibility to others and, thus, increases the likelihood of being robbed. Visibility is one of the four features of desirability as defined by routine activities, the other three being access, inertia and value (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Possessions carried by the homeless are also ideal to be stolen given items' inertia and access; the items will be easy to carry and motivated offenders have access to them if victims carry items in plain view on the street. Assault and more violent offenses also are more likely against the homeless as their mobility intersects potential offenders more often given that the homeless are less secluded than they would be in private areas (Gaetz, 2004; Tyler et al, 2001). This is found to be especially true, not just of all homeless, but especially homeless who spend more nights outside (Garland et al, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Some scholars argue that lifestyle-exposure theory is a better fit to account for victimization than routine activity theory (Lee & Schreck, 2005). Such a discussion is outside of the scope of this thesis; routine activity theory was chosen on the basis of more support for the theory compared to lifestyle-exposure and due to routine activity theory's popularity in the criminological literature.

As stated above, Rollinson (1998) noted that the homeless travel in an attempt to isolate themselves in “the perceived safe confines of the ‘nooks and crannies’ that exist in the built environment,” though it is unknown what characterizes these perceived safe places. This has the capacity to increase rather than decrease victimization if the homeless have to travel further to get to these places or if the places are incorrectly perceived to be safe. This question of whether the homeless have universally perceived safe places is discussed further below, though it has been found that travel in and of itself in public spaces does not reduce victimization among the homeless (Gaetz, Grady & Buccieri, 2010). Broader than routine activity theory, the concept of environmental criminology can be applied with respect to the homeless and crime as homeless mobility will bring them to high crime areas as identified by environmental criminology.

Environmental criminology, the explanation of criminal acts due to or facilitated by the physical environment, is a set of theories such as the geometry of crime and crime pattern theory (Andresen, 2014). Fundamentally, this category of criminology posits that the physical environment impacts crime concentration in place and time, facilitating it where crime otherwise may not have been (Kinney et al., 2008). Committing an offense in some areas is easier than in others; the geometry of crime explains areas that are more crime prone for people willing to commit crime and explains that the ways individuals navigate their environment will impact their awareness to these high or low crime supportive places (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1981; 1995).

Every person has places where they spend most of their time and routes they use to get from one place to another. Examples of the places where individuals spend most of their time, sometimes referred to as activity spaces, may include their home, their workplace, a store they frequently shop at, and so forth. Individuals develop awareness spaces surrounding these areas and the routes, or pathways, which the individuals most frequently use to travel from one activity node to another. In addition to activity nodes, pathways and awareness spaces, subsequent work on the geometry of crime developed the idea of crime generators and crime attractors (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Crime generators and crime attractors are physical places that notably affect an individual’s ability to commit a crime or be victimized by a crime. Crime generators are places in which crime is generated due to the large number of people

who frequent that place; examples of crime generators include shopping malls, schools and other places in which large numbers of potential offenders may interact with potential victims. Crime attractors, on the other hand, are places in which offenders are aware of the known criminal opportunities there (Kinney et al., 2008). The two kinds of places are not mutually exclusive, and any given area may be one or both.

The homeless' likelihood of criminal offending and victimization has been shown in the literature to be affected by their immediate environment. Homeless shelters are often cited as an example of crime attractors (McCord et al, 2007) and street homeless have indicated their reluctance to use shelters due to their fear of theft and assault there (Gaetz, Grady & Buccieri, 2010; Hagan & McCarthy, 1998; Wasserman & Clair, 2009). Some research has found that homeless are reminded of temptations to use drugs when they stay in places in which they had previously used, despite having abstained for some time (Hodgetts et al, 2010). Due to homeless persons being in public spaces – which, by definition, have no private owners – the homeless would seemingly have to rely on the police or the general public (Felson, 1995) to enforce order, police being a sort of de facto capable guardian of public spaces, if indeed any capable guardians exist of public areas at all. However, homeless are found in the literature to distrust police as a consequence of being “moved along,” harassed or otherwise treated more poorly than other citizens (Snow & Anderson, 2001; Wasserman & Clair, 2009). The unfortunate consequence is that the most ideal persons to guard that environment are mistrusted to do so and have the potential to contribute to homeless concerns of abuse. The extent to which general responsibility of guardianship is provided in public spaces by strangers towards the homeless is currently unknown (Felson, 1995).

Lastly, some information on distance to crime literature is justified given the prevalence of substance abuse among the homeless (Eby & Misura, 2006) and the finding that some homeless travel for survival strategies that are illegal (Gaetz, Grady & Buccieri, 2010; Garland et al, 2010; Snow, Baker & Anderson, 1989). The distance to crime literature uses the well-supported theory that given multiple paths to accomplish the same goal, people will choose the path of least effort (Zipf, 1949). Consistent with the least effort principle, most research on distance to crime finds that offenders commit offenses short distances from their home location, typically within two miles, or 3.2km

(Ackerman & Rossmo, 2015; Andresen 2014; Andresen et al, 2014). If the homeless are found to be purchasing drugs to sustain an addiction, previous research has established that median distance traveled varies depending on drug type with 2.9km for heroin and 3.5km of travel for marijuana (Johnson, Taylor & Ratcliffe, 2013). Findings from a separate study on aggregated drug dealing found that men travel an average of 2.56 km while women travel only 1.67 km to sell drugs; women travelled shorter distances for all crime types than adult males with the exception of shoplifting (Levine & Lee, 2013). Levine & Lee (2013) note that while distances were farther for shoplifting – averages of 4.25 km and 3.51 km for females and males respectively. While there is limited research on distance to travel for panhandling or prostitution, there is some pertinent information on the topics.

Persons engaging in prostitution for example, select high traffic areas nearby their home location to minimize travel so as to maximize the number of clients they see, as well as remain within their regular awareness space (Williams, 2014). Traveling to panhandle is suspected to be similar to prostitution; that is, travelling short distances within known areas that have a lot of passersby. An issue with both of the aforementioned methods to make money is that persons conducting them need to be visible to clientele, but also may wish to be invisible to authorities or to others understanding their situation as homeless or desperate. The underlying phenomena are known as homeless invisibility strategies (Hodgetts et al, 2010; Kauppi et al, 2015b). There are reasons why the distance to crime literature excludes homeless persons, however.

The distance to crime literature typically uses the offender or victim home location in relation to the crime, but this is clearly problematic for persons with no listed home location and likely why crime distance research excludes homeless persons (Ackerman & Rossmo, 2015).<sup>9</sup> The case of “Hotel 22” is illuminating with respect to methodological difficulties in research in this area. Hotel 22 is the name for a 24-hour

<sup>9</sup> Wiles and Costello (2000) used “where [offender] slept the night before the offense” as the start location, instead of necessarily a building address associated with victim or offender home residence. They found for burglary and “taking without owner’s consent” that average travel distance to offenses within the city were between 1.6 and 2.5 miles.

bus line that is used by homeless persons as a shelter in California (Lo, 2015). The bus travels from San Jose to Palo Alto, a distance of 27km each way, and during late evenings and at night the majority of bus patrons appear to be homeless persons sleeping. This situation of persons sleeping on a continuously moving vehicle creates problems with how environmental criminology or crime distance can be applied. Not only do homeless persons have unstable housing from one time to the next, but their housing may not be continuously fixed in space as well.

## **2.6. Aim of the Study**

Homelessness is increasing in Canada while available federal funding is decreasing (Gaetz, Gulliver & Richter, 2014). Street homelessness, for example, in Vancouver is at an 11-year high (Thompson, 2016) despite the city's vocal efforts to eliminate homelessness. Accordingly, further research is warranted.

This study addresses previous short-comings in the literature in a few ways. One of the substantive short-coming that this study addresses is the stark amount of research on homeless mobility in regard to typical haunts of the homeless. Where *do* the homeless travel regularly? Rollinson (1998) did this to an extent but it warrants further exploration; in his study, homeless shelter residents tended to travel to public parks, locations to buy alcohol, places of employment or areas to make money, and to soup kitchens where the homeless could obtain food (pp. 111-113). Further exploration however is warranted, particularly because the previous study was conducted in the United States where the homeless may not rely on the same types of survival strategies or travel to the same sorts of locations (Okamoto, 2007). One example of how the homeless in Vancouver are expected to have different survival strategies is that selling your blood plasma is not possible in Vancouver, unlike in parts of the United States (Rollinson, 1998; Wasserman & Clair, 2009). This study also seeks to expand on Rollinson's (1998) sampling limitations, given his sample was comprised only of homeless persons who slept in shelters.

Another area in need of development is the understanding of travel distance to, and motivations for, preferred survival strategies (Jocoy & Del Casino Jr, 2010).

Accordingly, my second research question is: how far do homeless travel for their survival strategies? I hope that answering this question will also uncover details about homeless persons' motivations for engaging certain strategies. Because past research finds homeless criminality to be largely in response to desperation and lack of available legal strategies (Gaetz, Grady & Buccieri, 2010; Garland et al, 2010; Snow, Baker & Anderson, 1989), it is worth exploring whether forced movement of the homeless by city officials, mobility constraints as a result of housing or other factors, influence the homeless' need to conduct illegal survival strategies.

## **Chapter 3. Methods**

### **3.1. Design and Data Collection**

Following the tradition indicated by Rollinson (1998) on participant-observation research and agreeing with the argument made by DeVerteuil et al (2009, p. 661) that “scholars need to engage more directly with the real authors of these homeless geographies: ...homeless people themselves,” this study sought to do that. My primary data source comprised 24 semi-structured face-to-face interviews I conducted with currently or recently homeless persons in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, an area notorious for being one of the most economically depressed urban neighborhoods in all of Canada, a distinction that has persisted for decades (Eby & Misura, 2006; Hagan & McCarthy, 1998). An advantage of face-to-face interviewing is that social cues can be recognized, both the independent cues of the participant and of the participant with the environment in which the interview takes place (Palys & Atchison, 2007). Additionally, it allows a researcher to interact with participants in their natural environment, avoiding the dangers of viewing participants’ world from behind a desk, removed from participants. Data collected from participants was then analyzed using ArcGIS to enable a more precise method of calculating distance between locations and observing spatial differences between participant mobility patterns.

This study intentionally uses a flexible definition of homelessness and had few exclusionary criteria. This sort of definition was used to allow for different types of homeless persons to be included in this research, as different forms of homelessness may affect homeless mobility differently (May, 2003; Rollinson, 1998). Homelessness for this study is defined as persons who currently sleep on the street, in unstable housing or in city-provided shelters. As previously discussed, SROs, shelters and some forms of government-assisted living are often classified within categories of unstable housing, in which occupants are in imminent threat of homelessness, due to occupants experiencing

harm and not having autonomy within their own accommodations (Gurstein & Small, 2005; Somers, Moniruzzaman & Rezansoff, 2016). All participants in the sample additionally had been living on the street or in an emergency shelter at some point in the past five years in Vancouver. Participants also had to be at least 18 years of age and have resided in Vancouver for at least the past three months; this number of months was established on the assumption that routine daily mobility would be unlikely if participants had spent less time than that in the city. Ethics approval was obtained from the Simon Fraser University Ethics Review Board in February 2016 and then again in October 2016<sup>10</sup>.

Snowball sampling was used to solicit the participants for the study; communication with participants commonly occurred around Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Markets (DTES Markets). The DTES Markets are a loosely regulated city solution to homeless peddlers selling second-hand products on sidewalks in the downtown core. Snowball sampling was chosen as it has previously been used with success to contact members of difficult-to-reach populations (Palys & Atchison, 2007). Additionally, my interest was in speaking with persons in different housing situations, instead of only persons at homeless shelters (May, 2003; Rollinson, 1998), as homeless housing situation has been found to affect mobility (Wolch, Rahimian & Koegel, 1993). The first three persons interviewed were involved in some capacity with the DTES Markets; referrals to later participants included persons not involved with the markets and later interviews occurred in other places in downtown Vancouver. Due to where participant referrals began, interviews mostly took place in and around the DTES Markets in Vancouver. The interview location was always left up to participants, but ultimately only four of the 24 interviews occurred greater than one block from the Markets. The four interviews that occurred greater than one block from the Markets occurred in a secluded part of a shopping mall, on an adjacent street and inside a participants government assisted living facility.<sup>11</sup> Interview participants were compensated 20 dollars per interview.

<sup>10</sup> Appears in Appendix A

<sup>11</sup> When interviews were conducted outside of the Markets and surrounding area, it was usually due to cold weather providing an incentive to seek shelter during the 90 minute interview.

Data collection occurred in two separate time periods, from February – March 2016 and from November 2016 to early January 2017. In total, approximately 110 hours were spent in the Downtown Eastside area during this time, excluding the 36 hours of interviewing with participants. Interviews lasted 75-90 minutes, though subsequent contact with participants was common after the interviews occurred. NVivo 10 was used to compile and analyze qualitative data. The interviews were aided using a physical map of downtown Vancouver that allowed the researcher to more easily discuss homeless mobility and locations in Vancouver with participants (Payne, 2016). With respect to interest in places commonly traveled to, the emphasis was on locations that participants would not necessarily travel to daily, but minimally a few times per week on what they considered to be a routine basis over the span of several months. Their account of this was recorded at one static time, during each participant's interview, in lieu of previous scholars use of "mobility diaries" (Jocoy & Del Casino, 2010; 2012). While semi-structured, each of the interviews included the following themes and were mindful of questionnaires used in previous studies (Jocoy & Del Caino Jr., 2012):

- Origin, upbringing and childhood difficulties
- Pre-homeless life and current contact with family and friends
- Daily mobility, restrictions on mobility, mobility to survival strategies
- Government contact, perceptions of law enforcement, Institutional supervision
- Substance abuse and disabilities
- Number of income sources, in some cases whether this changed while homeless versus once finding housing, survival behaviors

## **Chapter 4. Results**

### **4.1. Information about the Sample**

My interviewees ended up being a largely white, mixed-gender sample of individuals between 27 and 70 years in age. Table 1 below provides some basic descriptive information about participants including the mean age, ethnicity and gender, current housing type, drug use, childhood difficulties, institutional supervision and communication with family. As indicated above, the current housing type of participants varied despite all persons having recently been street homeless or in homeless shelters in Vancouver prior to their current housing situation. Examples of distinctions of past street homelessness to current non-street homelessness are presented later in this section. Drug use was reported by nearly all participants; only two individuals out of 24 did not report drinking alcohol to intoxication weekly or consuming other drugs on a weekly basis during the past 30 days. Many individuals participated in polydrug use, and consumed drugs daily. Childhood Difficulties in Table 1 is simplified to a nominal variable despite rich narratives depicting often abusive and traumatic childhoods, examples of which will be described below. The distinction for whether childhood difficulties were experienced was based from prior research on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); participants who had experienced any of the ACEs – such as physical, psychological or sexual abuse – were categorized as having childhood difficulties (Felitti et al, 1998). Institutional supervision, likewise, was something many of the participants have experienced at some point in their lives, whether it was adult incarceration or being held in juvenile detention centers, or both. Communication with Family is depicted as an ordinal variable to simplify the sometimes complex relationships that participants had with family. The “often” distinction being made for persons who attempt to contact family routinely every week whereas “occasionally” communicating with family indicates communication still occurs but less routinely and “not at all” signifies where participants indicated they no longer speak to family. Lastly on Table 1, a nominal indicator is shown

for whether participants had or discussed physical or mental disability. More than half of the 24 persons interviewed had disabilities, which often influenced mobility. Substance abuse and addiction is not included here as a disability. Among the 24 respondents, only one was a military veteran and he was male.

**Table 1. Sample Information (n=24)**

	Count (%)		Count (%)
Mean Age (median)	46.13 (47)	Childhood Difficulties	
Ethnicity		Yes	17 (70.8%)
Anglophone	18 (75%)	No	2 (8.3%)
First Nations	4 (16.7%)	Refuse to answer	5 (20.8%)
French Canadian	1 (4.2%)	Institutional Supervision	
Hispanic	1 (4.2%)	Prison / Jail	9 (37.5%)
Gender		Juvenile Det. Center	5 (20.8%)
Male	13 (54.2%)	Foster Care	3 (12.5%)
Female	10 (41.7%)	Other <sup>c</sup>	3 (12.5%)
Transgender	1 (4.2%)	Never held	5 (20.8%)
Current Housing Type		Refuse to answer	3 (12.5%)
Street Homeless	9 (37.5%)	Communication with Family	
Women's Housing	7 (29.2%)	Not at all	9 (37.5%)
Gov't Housing	5 (20.8%)	Occasionally	11 (45.8%)
S.R.O.	3 (12.5%)	Often	3 (12.5%)
Drug Use <sup>a</sup>		Refuse to answer	1 (4.1%)
Marijuana	10 (41.7%)	Disability	
Alcohol	8 (33.3%)	Yes	13 (54.2%)
Heroin / Opiates	7 (29.2%)	No	11 (45.8%)
Cocaine / Crack	6 (25%)		
Meth	3 (12.5%)		
Other <sup>b</sup>	2 (8.4%)		

<sup>a</sup> Drug use and Institutional Supervision counts exceed 24 and 21 respectively, due to polydrug use and participants having been supervised in multiple manners.

<sup>b</sup> Two reports of other drugs used include illegal prescription drug use and a loosely regulated herbal drug known as kratom.

<sup>c</sup> Other forms of institutional supervision included probation, mental health assessment center and "drunk tank."

Reports of childhood difficulties varied among participants but were nearly always present and in some cases had lasting implications for their mobility and survival strategies. Angela is a good, though tragic, example of this. When asked if she had a normal childhood, she replied: “What’s normal? I started work when I was 14 at McDonalds. I was in 87 [foster] homes and started using [drugs] when I was 11.... I started selling sex when I was young. I’m not saying when that all started.” Currently 34 years old, Angela continues to participate in prostitution after having recently lost her job as a house cleaner. Another participant, Paige<sup>12</sup>, reported similar difficulties growing up that led to her becoming a child prostitute in Vancouver:

My parents drank and my mom always looked the other way...My stepdad was abusive, physically and sexually. I once talked to my sister about what my dad had done, I could see it in her eyes, you can just tell with your sister, that he had done that to her too...the family friend brought me to Vancouver, they were a prostitute there. I started doing that too when I was 13 and never wanted to go back to my family in Alberta.

Paige indicated that Child Protective Services became involved when she was growing up, before she left for Vancouver, but she was returned to her family and the problems continued until she left for good. While the previous examples were both of female participants, Chris provides a different perspective. Chris’ childhood was characterized by frequent travel dependent on which prison his mother’s partner was moved to. Chris also experienced the foster care system and began selling drugs at the age of 12 because “selling is the best way to make money I know. It’s awesome money and I didn’t have a lot. I moved around everywhere with mom, always to whatever city my current dad was in prison at.” While Chris was the single individual in this sample who identified as transgender with the intention of becoming female, he indicated that every male influence in his life was in prison; this, coupled with the exposure from a young age to selling drugs likely contributes to why Chris continues to sell drugs now in his 30s.

<sup>12</sup>All quotes used for this research were provided by persons who gave informed verbal consent to participate in this research. Additionally, all of the names in this research are pseudonyms.

## 4.2. Frequently Traveled Areas and Survival Strategies

While all participants routinely traveled to several locations each week, there were uniform destinations identified by those interviewed. For example, regardless of current housing type, respondents preferred traveling to locations capable of providing multiple services such as United Gospel Mission (UGM) and Pigeon Park. I suspect UGM was a common destination because UGM provides meals, substance abuse help and emergency shelter while, because it is on Hastings street, also implicitly provides access to arterial roads that ease mobility into and out of the area. Jack seemed to favor UGM, stating,

There are a few places I go for food, – the Evelyne Saller Centre and No Frills sometimes – when I have money. I go to UGM most days, it's between [the DTES Market] and where I unload trucks.

Snow also had slept at UGM, explaining,

When I came to downtown Vancouver from Surrey I slept at UGM for two weeks. Still better than sleeping outside but I got kicked out after a while. You need to check in every night at 9pm, you aren't ever guaranteed a bed, sleep next to people you don't trust. I go there for food still sometimes, but I stay in a SRO near Chinatown now.

Pigeon Park is also on Hastings and a popular destination because it is a well-known black market where drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and stolen goods can be purchased inexpensively. Pigeon Park then was used to purchase and sell stolen goods, cigarettes or alcohol, and to find other people; the presence of a public bathroom at the park further encouraged travel there. However, not all multipurpose destinations were equally sought after by participants; Carnegie Community Center is one such example. The community center provides the same services as UGM but the underground bathrooms directly outside the center have a reputation for drug activity and are viewed as a crime prone place to be avoided. As participant Snow remarked, "You never use the washrooms, like at Carnegie, there's too much drug trafficking there. There's

lookouts at the top and after you go down there every stall is busted up and has tweakers everywhere.”<sup>13</sup>

Research participants each had their own leisure activities that normally required travel such as seeing artwork, or traveling to well-known places in downtown Vancouver; however, central to many participants’ mobility was travelling to where they could see the water. Participants would travel to Crab Park at Portside to walk their dog, to drink alcohol or to sleep in a cluster of trees. Steve was one such participant. As he explained, “There are a couple places I may go to sleep, but I like Crab Park because of the open water. It’s also out of the way.” Kenny reflected on how he enjoyed parks before and after getting a car:

Stanley Park is a good place for me, its got a lot more privacy and I can just camp out instead of worryin’ about people comin’ up on me...with my car I like the parks because it’s less likely to get broken into when its not on the street. Parks are just quieter and more peaceful than being [in the middle of the city].

Similar to Crab Park, Stanley Park and Creekside Park also were sought routinely as places that provided comfort, a view of the water and escape from where they would be moved along, stigmatized by others or harassed by citizens. Katie is an example of a participant who enjoyed going to Stanley Park. She stated, “Have you ever seen fireworks along Stanley Park? I used to drink at the park with my ex [husband], and we would shoot off fireworks or just lay along the water. It was a lot of fun.” Additionally, the presence of water on a side of a park provides additional privacy compared to more urban parks surrounded by multistory structures.

A park more centrally located in downtown that is avoided by several participants was Oppenheimer Park. Oppenheimer is a mostly open-designed park the size of a square block and was avoided due to vicious assaults at night being known to occur there. Troy described an assault there:

Stay away from Oppenheimer at night, especially in the summer. It’s bad because of all the drinking and stuff late at night. I’ve seen 20 people gang up on

<sup>13</sup> “Tweaker” is a slang term that refers to a methamphetamine user.

just one guy before in that park. It ain't right but it happens. Some people have been victims so long they become aggressors to change it.

While there were common locations for participants that transcended participant housing, survival strategies sometimes were segregated by housing type. An implication of this is participants' mobility to strategies was altered greatly when housing changed. Vanessa, one of the homeless who transitioned from living in a shelter to living on the street, voiced concerns about opportunities wasted by having to check-in to emergency shelters:

It just becomes a full-time job, you can't go too far away or else you won't be able to check-in to the shelter every four or six hours. Add that to the time you wait in line to receive food, another hour or two, and your whole day is just spent waiting. You can't do anything else besides that.

While living on the street Vanessa is able to scavenge for clothing from outside distant thrift stores and find more products to vend at the DTES Markets. Maude's story was similar to Vanessa's. Maude was a woman who went from sleeping on the street to living in a shelter, which meant she was no longer able to sell marijuana at her previously favoured places.

I used to sell along Robson [street] by the library, but my current place is close to Main [street]. I'd have to walk 20 blocks to sell in the same place and I just can't do that any more [due to my age].

While the previous two women's change in housing type altered strategies, Angela moved from one SRO to another outside of the Downtown Eastside and this affected her primary survival strategy.

I'm happier living at Granville and Richards than I ever was at Hastings and Main; lower class [sex] workers are normally around Hastings and Main and the people who look for sex here expect to pay more money for the same services, [so] I make more [money] here doing the same thing.

Overall, the persons who traveled farthest for survival strategies were five street homeless persons all of whom had lived on the street between 12 and 36 months. These five included three men and a heterosexual married couple. They had multiple strategies they relied on, some legal and some not, such as binning, scavenging, selling cigarettes, heroin or alcohol, odd jobs for businesses and selling goods wherever they were able.

They all expressed an interest in acquiring good housing, hated shelters, had some form of disability and used drugs daily to cope with their physical pain. General sentiments among the five were that public washrooms were not only infrequently, but poorly, kept and sometimes dangerous with used needles. They all had resentment toward police and expressed indignation at being treated like second class citizens by medical personnel, store owners and university students. Their long range strategies – Troy's, for example, of travelling 13.7km to sell alcohol on a popular beach – were motivated by recognizing opportunities and being unconstrained spatially so as to be able to pursue them.

During the summer I'll sell alcohol at Wreck Beach to UBC students. It's good money an' you can recycle cans there, too. There's a bus that goes all the way to UBC, you go from Main to there. It's simple.

Among the five, Marvel provides a good illustration of their ingenuity, adaptation and diversity of strategies.

Marvel had been homeless for the past two years and was currently sleeping in underbrush next to the University of British Columbia. He scavenges goods discarded by university students before travelling to binning locations, particularly around embassies and more affluent neighborhoods in Vancouver's West Side. Sensing my lack of understanding about scavenging in Vancouver, Marvel clarified for me:

We live in such a disposable society. People are always wasting and getting rid of things that are in good condition; I'm always out on moving days [near the end of each month] looking for stuff. You know I once found 100 bucks in a birthday card that was thrown out with a bag of beer cans? I thought it was planted. I was all looking around to see if someone was going to jump out at me when they saw the money.

After searching those neighborhoods he takes a bus to another set of neighborhoods by the Cambie Bridge, all the while travelling to a bottle depot to cash in the bottles he had found on the way. In the neighborhoods he may have to rebuke challenges and threats from other bidders who claim an area as their territory. After the bottle depot he either goes to the methadone clinic, smokes heroin or smokes meth. After that he goes to two warehouses to see if the owners have any maintenance jobs for him; if they do not he proceeds to the DTES Markets. While the markets are 12.3km

one way from his sleeping location, he travels closer to 15 after the hours of searching for goods. Fortunately, bus drivers often let him ride for free though Marvel has received tickets before for riding without paying. He sells goods along the way, on the bus or sidewalk, wherever someone becomes interested in something in one of the numerous garbage bags or boxes he carries with him.

Because he often finds more things to sell than he can carry he began keeping stashes in different parts of the city. Marvel highlighted approximate places on the map of each stash during the interview while informing me that:

I have five or six stashes total. Each bag is in a different place along the way to Main from UBC; total there is enough there to fill the bed of a pickup truck. Sometimes stashes go missing, someone finds it or thinks its garbage and throws it out. I keep some of them in trees; they're black bags and nobody looks up into a tree looking for something like that. The bags just wait there until I have enough room to bring them to the recycling depot or market.

According to Hillary, "You can tell when someone messes up or rips someone off [in the Downtown Eastside] because they'll disappear for a while, away from their regular spots." This appeared to be the case with Russel. Russel's account of his life was punctuated with him "nodding off," a side effect of the heroin he smoked half way through the interview. While he usually could be found around the DTES Markets or Pigeon Park, he had been gone for the week prior to the interview, and during the interview indicated he owed someone money. This confirmed Hillary's insight and suspicions about why people were asking around for him. Russel had been homeless for two and a half years, currently sleeping 3.3km from the DTES Markets outside of the Downtown Eastside. His sleeping locations weren't as stable as Marvel's, with Russel sleeping along Broadway street in a myriad of different alleys and building entryways during inclement weather. His strategies involve selling heroin, boosting<sup>14</sup> and selling goods at the markets. In Russel's case, he would travel two kilometers to a Safeway and steal products before traveling another three kilometers to get to the Downtown Eastside where he would coordinate with a supplier and get the drugs to later sell or use. With drugs and stolen product, he spends the rest of his day around the market or Pigeon

<sup>14</sup> "Boosting" is slang for stealing products that are then resold for money on the street.

Park. Russel struggles to get around, also in contrast to Marvel, due to Russel frequently encountering problems with bus drivers who belittle and threaten him. Indignant about the treatment by bus drivers, Russel said that,

Bus drivers are all assholes, they just don't get it. They don't sympathize with me and get how I'm supposed to get all my stuff around. It ain't a bus driver's job to tell someone, 'no, you can't ride', it's their job to get people from one place to another. Bus drivers have put their hands on me, threatened me, just to get me off a bus. Homeless are just second-rate citizens.

### **4.3. Survival Strategies and Mobility**

Homeless survival strategies, operationalized as active means of acquiring income, were very diverse. It is useful to conceptualize these strategies as proactive due to 22 of 24 research participants receiving some form of government financial aid, whether that is via pension, disability, welfare, housing or transportation vouchers, and so on. Only one man and one woman did not receive such aid and in the table below – Chris – the one individual who identified as transgender, is counted as female as her ultimate goal is to be identified as such. Below in Table 2 are the 23 different survival strategies encountered, grouped into similar categories. All strategies are mutually exclusive; for example, an individual “selling heroin outside of the market” was not counted also as “selling goods not at market” unless that same individual additionally sold goods besides heroin outside of the market. Additionally, in the table there are parentheses distinguishing how many persons were male or female for each strategy. One individual drew comics and another was First Nations and sold wood carvings he made; those two persons account for the instances of “selling self-produced goods.” Additional information on Table 2 is warranted before proceeding to additional results.

**Table 2. Survival Strategies**

Strategy	Count (M/F)	Strategy	Count (M/F)
<b>General Strategies</b>		<b>Shadow Work</b>	
Volunteer at Market(s)	10 (8/2)	Side job as maintenance	1 (1/0)
Vending at Markets	7 (5/2)	Unloading trucks for a company	1 (1/0)
Volunteering at Shelters / Services	8 (3/5)	Carpentry under the table	1 (1/0)
Selling Goods not at Market	4 (1/3)	Manual Labor	1 (1/0)
Temp Agencies / Temporary Jobs	2 (0/2)	Odd jobs, roofing	1 (1/0)
Selling Cigarettes	2 (2/0)		
Supported by Partner / Friends	2 (0/2)	<b>Foraging</b>	
		Binning	4 (3/1)
		Scavenging	3 (2/1)
<b>Drug and Alcohol Related</b>		Boosting	1 (1/0)
Selling Heroin / Cocaine	2 (2/0)		
Drug Carrier / Storage / Lookout	2 (1/1)	<b>Independent Employment</b>	
Selling Alcohol	1 (1/0)	Selling self-produced goods	2 (2/0)
Selling Drug Paraphernalia	1 (1/0)	Panhandling	2 (2/0)
Selling Marijuana	1 (0/1)	Prostitution	1 (0/1)

There were noticeable discrepancies between genders with respect to the quantity of strategies used. The only two strategies with more than two persons where females outnumber males are in volunteering at shelters or homeless services and selling goods at locations other than the DTES Markets. Males in the sample pursued a greater variety of strategies to gain income than females. The range of strategies for

women was 1-3 with a mean of 1.81 strategies. Among males, the range was 2-4 with a mean of 3.07 strategies. There were no males with only one strategy; there were three males with two strategies, six males with three strategies and four males with four strategies. While this will be discussed later, despite all participants having been street homeless or living in homeless shelters recently or currently, during the interviews eight of the nine people who said they were currently street homeless were males. Only five of the thirteen males were not street homeless during data collection. This may have influenced why males were more likely to engage in more income gaining strategies. Table 2 also does not indicate the successfulness of each strategy in securing money. For example, Angela, who used prostitution, indicated: "middle class women, like me, charge 80-100 dollars for an hour but it depends what kind of service they want. Like if they want a Half and Half it'll cost more than just vaginal."<sup>15</sup> However binning may garner much less. Reflecting on his income, Marvel noted that, "[I] may walk around looking for things to recycle for six or seven hours but only get 30...35 bucks tops at the [recycling] depot."

The category of *Shadow Work* in Table 2 is in reference to work that is "under the table," i.e., untaxed work with no documentation such as paystubs and so forth. The "side job as maintenance" for example occurs when warehouse employees contact Marvel, who could occasionally help them by doing repairs inexpensively.

I know a guy who works down there [at the warehouses] and he knows I need some money and use to be a contractor so when they have stuff that needs done and isn't too hard, he phones me and pays a bit of cash.

The homeless individual who unloads trucks, Jack, explained his situation:

I've been helping unload trucks for a soybean company for over a year now. It's only once a week but it helps. I find a few able-bodied guys, normally I look for good guys who can use a few bucks, and they help me unload the trucks up by the port.

<sup>15</sup> "Half and Half" is reference to a sexual encounter with a prostitute that involves half of the encounter being fellatio and half of the encounter being vaginal intercourse.

While binning refers to foraging for recyclables such as cans to turn in for money, scavenging refers to foraging for other sorts of goods to sell such as clothing or appliances. Two of the three people who participated in scavenging made a temporary deal with a thrift store, Troy and Vanessa revealed that:

The Salvation Army we go to is always getting donations after it's closed and after we asked they said we could just take anything left by the front doors. We clean it up and try to sell it at the markets. When we sell it it's cheaper than if the Salvation Army does.

This symbiotic relationship provides the homeless with merchandise to sell on the sidewalk or in the DTES Markets and it aids the thrift store by keeping the premises uncluttered. Though rare among the participants, this sort of relationship also was found to have occurred in some cases outside of survival strategies, such as when a business owner thanked a homeless individual for sleeping at night in front of the establishment's doorway. This happened to Alison, the French-Canadian participant, who recalled that, "He used to like when I slept in the doorway of his shop because it meant, he thought, his shop wouldn't have a burglary happen there."

Homeless participants in this study relied primarily on walking and many experienced unconventional restrictions to their mobility. While 13 persons normally walked everywhere, five most commonly took the bus and four rode bicycles. Unsurprisingly, persons who traveled further tended to use the bus. Only one person indicated they enjoyed using the SkyTrain. Only one individual owned a car when the interviews were conducted, though two others indicated having owned vehicles during periods of street homelessness in the previous three years. The individual who owned a car also indicated walking most places. There were a few alternative transportation methods due to irregular mobility concerns. Paige is a middle-aged woman who has to rely on disability vans and cabs to travel everywhere. She explained,

I had open-heart surgery four months ago, seriously. I can't take buses anymore, I tried and just get so sick, it's the worst...I don't use a bike or walk because I was once hit by a hit-and-run driver. It was before I became homeless but it broke my spine, bleeding on the side of my brain. When I was hit I flew 20 feet on the sidewalk, spent weeks in the hospital. I'm scared of it happening again.

Meanwhile, Jack, a SRO occupant in his 50s, enjoyed bicycling most places but struggled to find areas to secure his bicycle because the Balmoral where he stayed did not allow tenants to bring bicycles into the building. “I’m pretty sure it’s not legal what they do there – not just the no bike policy but also charging tenants money to bring guests there. It’s not right,” Jack indicated.

In two separate occurrences interviewees had attempted to use automated public bathrooms downtown and became trapped inside them for over an hour, a phenomenon that has previously been documented in Vancouver (CBC News, 2011). Participants subsequently traveled to avoid having to use the public bathrooms. Several persons experienced general difficulties traveling due to physical disability. Brad was in his 50s with prostate problems, and shared that, “Bathrooms are one of the rarest things in this city,” often having to consider where he went to have access to one. Kenny, meanwhile, could not walk very far without being in pain after having been stabbed twice in his spine, once with a knife and once with a screwdriver. Kenny’s pain was a daily consideration; he indicated as much when he said,

If I have to travel more than about 10 blocks I just can’t [do it]. I have to try and get a cab or if I have gas-money I’ll drive. Everyday walking sucks when your back aches, it affects my legs sometimes and I lose feeling.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the participants also indicated being told to move along by law enforcement or being harassed by bus drivers though no one’s mobility was as affected as Dennis. Dennis was a man who moved to Vancouver from Ontario, was in his 30s and was currently street homeless. Unlike most of the other participants whose mobility was constrained by social stigma of being homeless or from physical disability, Dennis is suspected of having mental health issues and this affected his mobility in numerous ways. For example, he required buildings where he purchased food to have

wood flooring. It symbolizes that the owner supports local business and recognizes the importance of flooring in helping keep food fresh. Otherwise the [store’s] produce is picked by Mexicans and underpaid people from fields somewhere else.

<sup>16</sup> Kenny is the individual who owned a car during interviews; despite saying that he would use multiple methods to get somewhere, he indicated his primary method was walking.

There also were parts of the city Dennis avoided entirely due to his belief that there were many extraterrestrial aliens present in Vancouver. Some aliens were indicated to be “protecting the hormones that prevent [humans] from getting sick”, though it still deterred him from going to eastern parts of Vancouver. The Renfrew area is one such example, because “everyone, except for maybe two people, in Renfrew is an alien.” It was unclear under which circumstances Dennis had been arrested in the city, though by his account his two arrests and brief incarceration were the result of finding a knife planted by the government in a city park; the knife, he said, was clearly planted by the government due to it being the only tool capable of repairing tank treads for a United States tank exclusively used in Africa.

The participants had varied backgrounds and many were migrants from outside of Vancouver. Table 3 provides information on where participants originated, the gender of participants by origin and reasons migrants gave for why they came to Vancouver. The majority of participants – 19 of 23 – came from elsewhere, with the most common motivation finding employment. Among the 19 who did not originate from Vancouver, most participants came to the city with available resources and job prospects and only later became homeless from losing their job, their medical condition, injury, or victimization. With respect to the concern of violent or otherwise already homeless coming to Vancouver and contributing to problems, this was very uncommon. There were only three participants with violent adult criminal records who were also from outside of Vancouver; two of those persons were currently in an SRO or assisted government housing while the third was currently street homeless. Troy, the street homeless individual from out of town with a violent criminal background, was also the only military veteran in the sample.

Troy came to Vancouver for employment that later became unavailable after sustaining a grievous injury, and he eventually found his way to the DTES with his wife Vanessa. The violent charges that had incarcerated Troy for 27 months of a four-year prison term in Ontario were brought about by his employment at the time as a “money and unpaid debt collector” for the Hell’s Angels. Troy’s current involvement with organized crime is unknown but unlikely and along with the other two foreigners with violent pasts, had not been incarcerated since arrival in Vancouver years prior to these

interviews. The other two criminal migrants were a man previously convicted of assault from Ontario and a woman who had participated in two bank robberies in Calgary, Alberta. Among participants from Vancouver with a criminal past, such as Marvel, participants were typically incarcerated for property crimes that were committed to get money for their substance abuse. In Marvel’s case,

I’ve been to prison a few times, the longest time for 18 months. It was always petty crimes, stealing peoples’ stuff to get money for drugs. A girlfriend I had at the time was a prostitute, I didn’t like her doing that, but she said she did it so that I didn’t have to steal and go to jail anymore.

**Table 3. Migration**

<b>Participant Origin</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Reason to Migrate</b>	<b>Count</b>
Ontario	7	Outside of B.C.		Employment	8
British Columbia	5	Male	7	Medical Reasons	3
Vancouver	5	Female	7	For partner / family	3
Alberta	3	From B.C.		For Artwork / Culture	2
Yukon	1	Male	2	Fleeing abuse	2
Manitoba	1	Female	3	Change of scenery	1
Quebec	1	From Vancouver			
United States	1	Male	4		
		Female	1		

Results on distance to survival strategies are presented below in Table 4. For survival strategies with more than two instances a median is provided in addition to the mean distance. To compute distances I used their sleeping location. In cases where they indicated multiple sleeping locations, I asked them to identify the location where they slept most frequently. Results for distance to strategies are difficult to easily quantify and present. The decision was made to classify “supported by partner / friends” as an active

strategy because this strategy is only available to individuals who cultivated relationships in such a manner to benefit financially from them; this was not the case for most interview participants as indicated by the low number of instances of that strategy. However, mobility isn't applicable in the same sense to this strategy as others and thus is excluded from Table 4. Distance for "drug carrier / [drug] storage / [drug] lookout" is similarly inappropriate given the lack of consistency for travel distance. The carpentry strategy varied so much so that a set distance was not established. Moreover, "boosting" involves multiple strategies. It requires the individual to travel somewhere to steal something and then to travel somewhere else to sell it. So the distance for that strategy is 2.7km to the theft location and then subsequent 2.6km to where the participant indicated preferring to sell. However, the final destination is only 3.3km from the individuals starting home location, not the 5.3km to the theft area then to the sell area. More important than difficulties in expressing total distances to strategies, however, is that all persons traveled distances less than four kilometers except for the five experienced street homeless previously mentioned who favoured several long range strategies.

**Table 4. Distance Traveled to Strategies**

Strategy (Count)	Mean in km (Median)	Strategy	Mean in km (Median)
<b>General Strategies</b>		<b>Shadow Work</b>	
Volunteer at Market (10)	1.38 (0.8)	Side job maintenance (1)	11.2
Vending at Markets (7)	3.21 (1.2)	Unloading trucks (1)	1.4
Volunteer at Services (8)	0.85 (0.45)	Carpentry under table (1)	-----
Selling Goods not at Market (4)	4.1 (2.05)	Manual Labor (1)	3.0
Temp Agencies / Temp Jobs (2)	0.45	Odd jobs, roofing (1)	1.5
Selling Cigarettes (2)	2.9		
Supported by Partner/Friends (2)	-----	<b>Foraging</b>	
		Binning (4)	3.9 (2.25)
<b>Drug and Alcohol Related</b>		Scavenging (3)	6.46 (5.9)
Selling Heroin / Cocaine (2)	2.05	Boosting (1)	5.3
Drug Carrier/Storage/Lookout (2)	-----		
Selling Alcohol (1)	13.7	<b>Independent Employment</b>	
Selling Drug Paraphernalia (1)	0.6	Self-produced goods (2)	0.9
Selling Marijuana (1)	1.4	Panhandling (2)	2.95
		Prostitution (1)	0.2

Finally, opinions of law enforcement and its role in restricting mobility were ambivalent overall, with some participants expressing great appreciation for the police and others calling them a waste of time; police were always a polarizing discussion topic. It deserves noting that participation in crime did not necessarily influence whether police were viewed negatively. According to Brad, “cops have a tough job. It ain’t easy

putting yourself out there, dealing with junkies. Cops basically run this city and I have all the respect in the world for them.” Marvel meanwhile thought that,

Cops are a lot better now than they used to be. Twenty years ago they were more mean but now they’re more like social workers than enforcers. They are good for people who are homeless like me; they’re patient with [drug] users. Are [cops current behaviors] good for society? I don’t know about that...”

Among persons who viewed law enforcement favourably there was a consensus that things had improved compared to how they were in Vancouver many years ago, though 2010 appeared to be a bad year for nearly all participants.<sup>17</sup> During the 2010 Winter Olympic Games participants indicated being fined and highly controlled, given one-way bus passes, picked up and dropped off outside of town and forced into temporary shelters with inadequate accommodations. It was during that time that one of Kenny’s friends was fined 3,000 dollars for selling cigarettes in Pigeon Park. Having had his possessions confiscated to displace Kenny off of the sidewalk, he remarked that “we already don’t got shit, then the cops come in and take what little you do have...it’s just not the right thing to do.” Kenny’s opinion of law enforcement mirrored Troy’s, i.e., that “there is a two tier system for how laws are applied and people are treated.”

<sup>17</sup> See Hyslop (2010) for more information on this phenomenon in Vancouver.

## Chapter 5. Discussion

This study's results were consistent with much prior research. Motivations to travel were found to be similar to domiciled citizens and related to work, medical or services, eating and social activities (May, 2003; Wolch et al, 1993). Travel for some was influenced by respondents' social networks (Iwata & Karato, 2011), though only three persons' mobility was influenced by family. While individuals traveled to an average of seven places per day, persons in my sample typically moved only 11 kilometers per day<sup>18</sup> compared to prior research finding an average of 22.5 (Jocoy & Del Casino Jr, 2010). The five participants with the unusually long trip distances in this study, however, such as Marvel, Troy or Russel, journeyed up to 35 kilometers per day. Additionally, participants in this study most commonly traveled to public places like parks or libraries for leisure and for social services (Jocoy & Del Casino Jr, 2010, p. 1955). While this sample's mobility was concentrated in the Downtown Eastside as anticipated (Somers et al., 2016a), there was a clear dispersion when the sample was separated between street homeless and everyone else. This was the case due to street homeless persons seizing opportunities farther away than their more spatially stable peers. The only survival strategies that have average travel distance greater than 3.2km, the travel distance that crime distance research finds most crime occurs within (Ackerman & Rossmo, 2015; Andresen et al., 2014), are strategies used by the five street homeless travellers; travelling distances of 3.2km moves participants well outside of the Downtown Eastside. The out of town migrants in this sample have many of the same attributes as previous studies have found.

More persons in this sample were from out of town than most previous studies in this area. Most research finds 25% - 39% of samples of homeless are out of town

<sup>18</sup> This distance was measured using mostly Manhattan distances. While some of the participants indicated using alleys or walking through parks to reach destinations, the majority indicated using roadways (such as in a bus or when bicycling) and sidewalks.

migrants (Kauippi et al, 2015; Lindquist, Lagory & Ritchey, 1999; May, 2003; Rahimian, Wolch & Koegel, 1992); research in the United States found that 50% of homeless participants were from outside of the state (Lindquist, Lagory & Ritchey, 1999). In this sample 19 of 24 persons (79%) were not from Vancouver originally, though this may be due to sampling differences. Previous studies spoke to shelter applicants while this study's catchment area focused around homeless and disadvantaged street markets. The participants in this study, like Marvel, who said that "this is the place to be homeless, there are a lot of services and the weather is nice year 'round," were born in Vancouver and did not migrate here. Given that participants in this study associated shelter use with contracting giardia<sup>19</sup> and having their shoes stolen, it is unlikely most would willingly apply for shelter admission – though some did indicate brief stays in emergency shelters or currently remain in women's shelters or resource centers. While the homeless in this sample did not uniformly suggest they came to Vancouver for well-known homeless services (May, 2003), Vancouver is home to North America's only supervised drug injection facilities (Jozaghi & Andresen, 2013) and many in the sample were intravenous drug users. Previous studies finding that the majority of migrants are white (Lindquist, Lagory & Ritchey, 1999) or white unmarried males (Rahimian, Wolch & Koegel, 1992) seem relevant for this study as most persons were white, regardless of whether they were from Vancouver or elsewhere, and gender was close to evenly distributed among persons from British Columbia versus outside.

Using the terminology of Wolch, Rahimian and Koegel (1993), movers in this study, the five street homeless who traveled much farther than others and outside of the downtown area, were characteristically distinct from the non-movers. The five were different in terms of all being street homeless and having been street homeless for over a consecutive year, however they did not receive housing and food from family or friends as an explanation for why they traveled the way they did, unlike what would be expected given previous research (Wolch, Rahimian & Koegel, 1993). For those five there was a relationship between travel distance and income, which is dissimilar to previous findings (Jocoy & Del Casino Jr, 2010, p. 1957) as their farthest distances were opportunistic and

<sup>19</sup> Giardia is a water borne parasite that inhabits poorly sanitized water and causes intestinal infection when consumed.

more lucrative than many of the shorter distanced survival strategies others used. One explanation of this is that in the study by Jocoy & Del Casino Jr. (2010) there was many homeless persons traveling to search for jobs, this was not the in case for the 24 participants interviewed for this research. The income of respondents for this study is also dramatically different than for the study by Jocoy and Del Casino Jr. (2010); their study had four respondents, of 124 total, who received 1,666 to 3,000 dollars monthly (p. 1952), and had a total median income of \$396 dollars monthly (p. 1956). In this study, all participants received between \$650 and \$1400 dollars monthly. Reasons for this may be a greater access to financial gov't assistance in Vancouver Canada compared to California in the United States, or more profitable strategies. For example, persons recycling in Vancouver may gain more income than those in California. As previously noted in this thesis, location can play a large role in availability and cultural acceptance of some strategies (Okamoto, 2009) and this too may be why there is this discrepancy in income.

While not travelling as far, both persons who panhandled had to travel, as did bidders, due to a territory associated with those strategies. Brad cringed while revealing that "trying to collect money in someone else's turf'll get you hurt. I've seen a knife pulled on another person over nothing. Over three dollars." While five of the 10 women in this study had engaged in prostitution at some point in their lives, only Angela had recently done so in Vancouver. Her comment regarding prostitution territory was that, "territory is hard to figure out, you just know it when you see it. [Prostitutes] dressed differently or someone being out of place." Despite this, Angela attracted most of her clientele within a block of her residence, lacking concerns of anonymity in her activities and remaining a non-mover. In addition to survival strategies, many of the participants demonstrated the importance of survival skills.

While participants placed varying degrees of importance on different skills, it was clear that these skills were not all intuitive or easy to master. Marvel's decision to live next to the University of British Columbia (UBC), for example, was done to allow him to benefit from the "culture of waste" he observed among affluent and foreign university students. Living there also meant he could travel through wealthy West Side neighborhoods before coming to downtown. Further, residing next to the relative

isolation of UBC in the woods allowed him to avoid hassles with police, find places to sleep, identify safe places and avoid fights with others, all survival skills identified by Lee (2011). Another participant, Cindy, took pride in her ability to “make one hell of a cardboard condo” and indicated the value she placed on the skill of being resourceful to make shelter. Brad, however, indicated that the most important thing about being homeless downtown was being able to identify who would try to take advantage of you, saying that “everyone who doesn’t know how it works [in the Downtown Eastside] gets taken – ripped off. If anyone down here says ‘trust me,’ start running.”

Participants who engaged in illegal activities tended to be the ones who were homeless longer and/or unable to find lawful employment that compared financially (Garland et al, 2010; Snow & Anderson, 1993). Angela engaged in prostitution because she was terminated from her job, Russel boosted out of desperation to sustain his drug habit while attempting to pay off those to whom he owed money, and Troy sold alcohol on the beach because of how lucrative it was and because it maximized the benefit of traveling to the beach to engage in binning, a legal survival strategy. Brad, who sold crack pipes, grappled existentially against his situation as someone who believed he was born to work a legitimate job but was unable to due to his extensive physical disabilities. The persons who sold goods outside of the market – an activity that has increasingly become criminalized (Kane, 2015) – mostly did so out of opportunistic convenience. For example, a participant taking a bus from one location to another and selling something to a stranger who became interested in what the participant was transporting.

The homeless involved in this study recognized the significance of certain places encouraging or discouraging crime. Accounts of bathrooms outside of the Carnegie Community Center were comparable to those discussed by Felson et al (1996); an area that should be avoided due to it being high in crime where large groups of persons actively engage in the sale and use of drugs. Shelters were identified universally as crime generators (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995) where the risk of victimization via theft or assault was a constant concern because of the concentration of strangers, often with mental illness or substance abuse issues. Rollinson (1998) noted homeless travel at times to isolate themselves from their threatening environment, and this study found that

as well. Specifically, this study found that many of the street homeless would opt to sleep in distant parks where they were less likely to be robbed due to those areas being outside of others' awareness spaces. Concerns of length of exposure to others precipitating victimization was often mitigated via taking public transit to these isolated places. Vancouver itself and some of its amenities were perceived by several participants as affecting the likelihood of committing drug offenses compared to other cities. Chris revealed that his 13-year sobriety ended after coming to Vancouver due to the accessibility of drugs in the city; he also considered automated bathrooms as an ideal place to smoke meth due to the privacy afforded by their single service design (Hodgetts et al, 2010). Vancouver, as possibly promoting drug use, was also found to be the case by Steve who confessed,

[I]n Ontario, let's say you only smoke weed, if the cops find out, you get called a criminal. You get a label on you that hurts when you try to get a job or housing. Here in Vancouver it's not like that, drugs like heroin are more in your face. You see dealers and users more easily.

For some of the participants then, it appears possible that they found Vancouver's acceptance of drug use as appealing and an incentive to travel here.

## **5.1. Strengths and Limitations**

This study experiences all of its own strengths and limitations, and ultimately, I believe improves upon previous homeless mobility research. In agreeing with previous researchers about the value of participant observation, fieldwork and engaging with the homeless themselves, this study used a nonprobability data collection technique. Specifically, while snowball sampling is commonly used to reach difficult-to-contact groups such as the homeless (Hagan & McCarthy, 1998; Wasserman & Clair, 2009), a limitation is the possibility of collecting a homogenous sample in which a diversity of responses is not obtained as may be the case if a probability sampling technique was used. This study has a sample size of 24 participants, though this is not uncommon in homelessness research (May, 2003; Rollinson, 1998). The sample includes a diversity of responses, and sampling was terminated when I started to find diminishing returns from participant interviews, reaching a saturation point for this snowball sample. A strength of

this study is having snowball sampled starting from an area, the DTES Markets, and not from a homeless shelter. Several previous studies (May, 2003; Rollinson, 1998; Somers et al., 2016a; Whynes, 1991) start at a shelter as sheltered homeless are a more captive population than the street homeless are; given the general distrust of shelters among this sample, it is unlikely they would have been included in studies that started from there.

A unique problem pertinent to this study with respect to limitations of homeless research is the concerns of “hidden homeless” (Kauppi et al, 2015a) and lack of population parameters among the homeless (Snow, Baker & Anderson, 1989). While Kauppi et al (2015a) refer to the hidden homeless in the context of “northern, rural and remote” homeless persons, the concept arguably can be applied to urban settings and persons who become skilled at using invisibility strategies and self-sufficiency to remain undetected and “successful” or “high-functioning” as street homeless (Bender et al, 2007; Lee et al, 2011). An initial concern about this study is being unable to reach these persons who may have the most complex survival strategies and skills at living undetected in inclement weather for prolonged periods of time (Anderson, 2013). Fortunately, this study found individuals who could be described as successful street homeless; these persons remained street homeless for longer than one year and they had diverse strategies that caused them to travel much farther than the rest of the sample. These successful homeless took pride in their ability to construct their own shelters, like Cindy, and had survival strategies that varied based on season, like Troy who sold beer at the beach during the summer but sold more goods at the market during the winter. The ingenuity and resourcefulness demonstrated by persons in this sample are comparable to similar reports of successful homeless elsewhere (Kelly, 2017).

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. General Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**

The homeless in Vancouver, as understood by this research, are middle aged men and women with tragic backgrounds and multifaceted lives. Most of the homeless had disabilities, a varied perspective on law enforcement and multiple strategies for gaining money, some strategies legal and others not. Learning how long individuals are homeless, how much they rely on their social network, and where they receive services all appear important for understanding this group of people. However, support was not found for the notion that homelessness in Vancouver is due to homeless travelling to the city from all over Canada. Though participants did come from other provinces or other cities in British Columbia, the majority were not homeless when they arrived in Vancouver. These persons subsequently experienced homelessness after medical complications or job loss and many struggle in their housing situation even when not street homeless, constantly on the precipice of financial ruin. This study's findings are consistent with May (2003) finding that once persons became homeless, they moved to fewer additional cities. Homeless mobility within the city is largely concentrated in the Downtown Eastside for many reasons: homeless services locations, being forced out of other parts of the city by law enforcement, and accessibility of survival strategies they used such as selling goods at the market or volunteering at the market for a modest stipend of three to five dollars per hour. While there were a variety of survival strategies used by persons in this research, men and women both struggled with many hardships. Most of the men in the sample had employment backgrounds in various trades that they were no longer able to practice due to physical disabilities and drug addiction; the women meanwhile were often victims of physical or sexual abuse at very young ages. This study found that irrespective of housing situation, these persons took comfort in urban greenspace and parks, particularly when the parks are adjacent to bodies of water and did not have large numbers of occupants as the homeless were often persecuted by

pedestrians and others (Okamoto, 2007). These parks were often the most private places that the homeless had and like domiciled citizens, the homeless enjoy privacy at times, despite being denied the luxury of having their own truly private space.

In other research (Garland et al, 2010; Snow & Anderson, 1989) the homeless are characterized as being often falsely portrayed as especially criminal, dangerous and as a group of people who need to be highly regulated and contained to certain parts of a city; the homeless in this sample were similarly misunderstood and many were in pain as a result. Some of the homeless were convicted criminals, though to objectively pass judgement on them as morally abhorrent (Mitchell, 1995; 1997) isn't recommended either given the level of desperation that some of them experience. Of the 23 different active strategies this study identified, only seven of them were criminal beyond city ordinance violation and few people commit those seven. Despite the stigma and perceptions of being homeless, there were some progressive situations, and this study proposes three recommendations to reduce street homelessness.

This research recommends and challenges business owners and city organizations, especially in the Downtown Eastside and other financially depressed areas, to attempt to work with the disadvantaged when possible. Agreements were observed within this study and have the potential to provide homeless with legal survival strategies while simultaneously benefiting the parent business or organization. Such agreements also have the possibility of increasing collective efficacy in neighborhoods, increasing informal social control and increasing how much people care about an area (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). The homeless in this study who participated in shadow work enjoyed such agreements, despite the illegitimacy of only being paid in cash; it gave them a sense of purpose while not requiring a daily commitment that the homeless may be unable to guarantee given the instability in their lives. The type of agreement between a business and homeless would have to vary depending on many factors. In previous research, homeless have provided after-hours guardianship of premises in exchange for the business owner running electricity out to a homeless camp (Wasserman & Clair, 2009) and in this study some of the participants' unloaded trucks and performed simple building maintenance. Due to the dangers of the homeless being manipulated or otherwise injured and liability concerns being raised, this

recommendation really falls on individual businesses and may be imprudent to widely implement without city oversight.

A second recommendation aimed at reducing street homelessness and better guaranteeing the safety of the impoverished is to increase regulation of SROs and shelters downtown. While every person in this study had negative things to say about homeless shelters, SROs were not viewed as a better solution either. The homeless generally indicated that housing was easy to find, but that good housing was impossible for them. Sleeping in a city park, to them, was a safer solution that was less likely to get them sick, get them robbed or become contaminated with anything. My opinion, supported by other scholars and health organizations (Gurstein & Small, 2005; Shannon et al, 2006), is that in many cases the homeless who think sleeping in a park is better than an SRO, are correct. As already indicated in this thesis, SROs in Vancouver are not only bad, but dangerous to live in. Accounts of physically disabled persons being trapped on the 7th floor of a building with a constantly broken elevator corroborate this perspective (Nair, 2016; Rankin, 2015). Comically, the day that Jack was interviewed, on November 2nd, 2016, one of the questions during the interview was an inquiry about his current housing situation. As Jack was answering, he paused to direct attention instead to the newspaper that depicted the SRO he lives in, the Balmoral. His SRO was on the front page with a caption reading, "A City's Shame: The sad, sorry state of Vancouver's single-occupancy-room hotels" (Kieltyka, 2016). Bridging this gap between living on the street and living in their own housing requires reinforcing the safety and incentive to live in low-income or transitional housing.

A third recommendation is to hold focus groups with the homeless, service agency employees and relevant stakeholders to develop long term plans to incrementally reduce the number of homeless persons, and the length of time one remains homeless in the city. Including the homeless in developing strategies to help them become domiciled is beneficial to gain their perspective and to avoid a situation like in 2010 during the Olympic Games. In 2010 the homeless population was effectively alienated by city employees and law enforcement who forced them out of the city or into inhumane accommodations to project the perception of downtown Vancouver as some place that didn't have the kinds of problems other cities do (Hyslop, 2010). The

consequence is that many homeless individuals still distrust the city and hate law enforcement, now seven years later. Training for law enforcement and the implementation of units that specifically respond to homeless camps, persons or activities should also be considered, though it is unknown to what extent mishandled law enforcement interaction is the result of individual police encounters or police policy in general regarding homelessness. Possible long term solutions could involve a housing first model and the expansion of employment agencies to help connect prospective workers with employers; this possible long-term solution would be endorsed by the persons spoken with for this research and the idea is supported in academic literature (Tsemberis, Gulcur, Nakae, 2004).

## **6.2. Directions for Future Research**

There are a few areas that future research can improve on concerning homeless mobility and activity patterns. One direction for research is to specifically explore territoriality of homeless strategies as territory is a factor influencing mobility and results in sometimes violent confrontation according to participants in this study. Whether homeless territory can be shared, how it is identified, what the spatial and temporal boundaries are in reference to individual strategies, these are all topics that there is very finite and scattered research on. In Vancouver there has long been an understanding of where street prostitution strolls (Hagan & McCarthy, 1998) are, an example of territoriality, with different kinds of prostitutes in different parts of the city. Angela, the one individual in this study that participated in prostitution, had difficulty expressing what the boundaries were and what factors influenced them. There is also room for more precision in recording homeless mobility patterns.

Technological advances have surpassed researchers' ability to implement said advances with respect to homelessness in this area. Phithakkitnukoon et al (2010), for example, use cell phone data to analyze use of time in relation to space and determine what individuals' activity spaces are. Similar to the aforementioned researchers, Ryder et al (2009) indicate the applications of using phones to collect location and mobility information for the purposes of monitoring mobility affecting chronic diseases. The application to homeless mobility research is obvious and would allow for a more

accurate understanding of daily, or longer, mobility of homeless participants. It would be an improvement on research like the current study or similar (May, 2003; Rollinson, 1998) that relied on personal accounts of mobility that may be prone to participant memory loss. Some scholars employed mobility diaries that were distributed to the homeless (Jocoy & Del Casino, 2010), though diaries could similarly be less accurate due to diary writers using unreliable heuristics to estimate amount of time spent in locations or distances from one place to another. Lastly, another direction for research is in youth and adolescent homeless mobility.

While speaking to the issue of youth homeless mobility was outside of the scope of this thesis, there are reasons youth homeless research could benefit from more research in this area. There is already a considerable amount of research on youth homelessness that indirectly addresses mobility; Hagan and McCarthy (1998) did this while they compared youth homelessness in Vancouver versus Toronto. Research has also been done specifically addressing youth migrants (Martino et al, 2011), though that research too isn't without limitation. One of the reasons additional homeless youth mobility research is warranted, revealed during this study, was the frequency of participants discussing their youth truancy. Several of the females in this study fled their homes at a young age and never returned. Recording the kinds of places youth homeless may flee could be illuminating for structuring protective services there.

Despite the aforementioned ways that this research and others may be improved, this study still contributes to the literature and provides insight into the lives of the homeless in Vancouver. One way it does this is by accidentally interviewing and then by describing the life of Marvel, a man unique among street homeless as an individual most would describe as being in the category of "hidden homeless" or successful street homeless as discussed in the limitations section of this paper (Kauppi et al, 2015a; Anderson, 2013). By all accounts, he had complex survival strategies that compelled him to travel dozens of kilometers each day; he described how he hid his belongings in trees, an adaptation to his belongings being stolen, and he exhibited a degree of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness that was not anticipated to be found when this study began. More generally, this study contributes to homeless mobility research by discussing distances traveled to survival strategies and providing some insight into

motivations to travel for strategies. This study additionally followed previous scholars' recommendations to engage with and speak to the creators of homeless geographies, the homeless themselves. From the homeless themselves Brad would tell you that, "what you need to do is just sit back, watch and listen. See how [the homeless] operate, you'll learn more doing that than by talking to them."

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# Appendix A.

## Ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Ethics Research

	OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS dore@sfu.ca http://www.sfu.ca/ore	Director 778.782.6593 Associate Director 778.782.9631 Manager 778.782.3447
<b>Minimal Risk Approval – Delegated</b>		
<b>Study Number:</b> 2016s0531		
<b>Study Title:</b> Homeless Journeys: Understanding the Mobility of Homeless with Respect to Survival Strategies		
<b>Approval Date:</b> 2016 October 24	<b>Expiry Date:</b> 2017 October 24	
<b>Principal Investigator:</b> Reinhard, Daniel	<b>Supervisor:</b> Palya, Ted	
<b>SFU Position:</b> Graduate Student	<b>Faculty/Department:</b> Criminology	
<b>SFU Collaborator:</b> n/a		
<b>External Collaborator:</b> n/a		
<b>Research Personnel:</b> n/a		
<b>Project Leader:</b> n/a		
<b>Funding Source:</b> none		
<b>Funding Title:</b> n/a		
<b>Document(s) Approved in this Letter:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study Details, dated 2016 October 19</li><li>• Participant Information Sheet, dated 2016 October 19</li></ul>		
The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human participants.		
The approval for this Study expires on the Expiry Date. An annual renewal form must be completed every year prior to the Expiry Date. Failure to submit an annual renewal form will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated. The Board reviews and may amend decisions or subsequent amendments made independently by the authorized delegated reviewer at its regular monthly meeting.		
This letter is your official ethics approval documentation for this project. Please keep this document for reference purposes.		
<u><b>This study has been approved by an authorized delegated reviewer.</b></u>		
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