“THEY AREN’T HOMELESS THEY HAVE HOMES”:

UNPACKING INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING (IN)SECURITY EXPERIENCES IN HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR

By © Sarah-Mae Rahal

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ABSTRACT

Homelessness in northern Canada intersects with a multitude of issues. This includes but is not limited to: chronic northern housing need, social determinants of health, colonialism, intergenerational trauma, and socio-economic change. These issues are integral when examining how geographies of homelessness are produced, reproduced, and ultimately experienced in northern Canada. The issues of homelessness and housing insecurity reveal themselves to be even more complex and nuanced than their individual parts. Importantly, homelessness and housing insecurity in northern Canada are experienced disproportionately by Indigenous peoples. Given this important reality, settler-colonial histories and living legacies must be considered to fully understand the Indigenous homeless and/or housing insecure lived experiences. By using qualitative data and insights from semi-structured interviews with: frontline workers at an emergency shelter, transitional and housing programs, government staff working in social services, health, child welfare, law and corrections, policy makers who develop housing and homelessness policies and individuals with lived experience of homelessness, this research seeks to identify and explore the factors that have led to increased visible Indigenous homelessness in the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. Moreover, this case study contributes to our understanding of the broader experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity in northern Canada, as the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a key economic, administrative, service and transportation hub, and a significant place to the Labrador region which shares similar dynamics vis-à-vis housing and homelessness with other northern regional centres. The knowledge shared and discussed in this thesis demonstrates the significance of mobility and movement for people who are experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity in Labrador. Mobility and movement is a large theme is this research; it is the movement of people

between rural/remote communities across Labrador to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. This movement across Labrador is directly related to uneven development and inequities that exist in both the region and across northern Canada more broadly. Additionally, what critical gaps in both housing, supports, and services that exacerbate individuals' vulnerabilities when experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity in the community of Happy Valley- Goose Bay is examined. This thesis therefore lastly seeks to more fully describe the ways in which Indigenous homelessness is experienced in Happy Valley-Goose Bay by situating all these experiences within the context of settler-colonialism and the colonial continuities that continue to displace Indigenous peoples on their homelands. The experiences discussed in this thesis inform the reality of homelessness in the community, as well as the colonial systems and structures that led to a growing Indigenous homeless population in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The growing Indigenous homelessness population in Happy Valley-Goose Bay contributes to the massive overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in homeless populations across Canada, given the colonial context and the ongoing colonial project; these structure and systems have succeeded in their effort to disenfranchise and displace Indigenous people. I conclude this thesis by offering brief recommendations that point at better collaboration to address gaps, service, supports and housing gaps in the community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout this whole journey of moving to Newfoundland for my Masters, moving back to Ontario, conducting fieldwork, and writing, I have faced unimaginable challenges and circumstances that will live with me and inform far more destinations in my life. I want to acknowledge my own strength, resilience, and perseverance in passionately pursing this thesis through substantial hardships. Amid this thesis journey I found myself trapped in an abusive relationship. I share this because I want to be completely transparent and honest with my readers. During these times I found it impossible and overwhelming to do anything. However, in the midst of all that chaos, my research was my motivating force and kept me grounded and focused. I must give thanks to my supports in Newfoundland and Labrador, all who made me feel at home. I could not have done this without the unwavering support and care from my thesis supervisor, Dr. Julia Christensen. All my lifelong friends and colleagues in the Storytelling Lab special thanks to; Gilly, Miranda, Veronica, and (honorary member) Tash. I want to thank the whole Department of Geography for being a part of this process including Carissa and Charlie. I want to give thanks to my committee member, Dean Bavington, for being outstanding committee member and co-supervisor while juggling a very busy schedule.

The most unforgettable part of this journey was my fieldwork, getting to be in and be a part of the community of Happy Valley- Goose Bay. I must first thank my family in the community, Kelly, Blair and their precious boys, Carson, and Caiden. Thank you for letting me into your home and surrounding me with love, laughter, and lots of moose meat. My time spent in the community would not have been the same without community members embracing me and guiding me throughout my whole fieldwork journey. I would like to thank every research participant who provided me with knowledge that was far beyond what I expected. *Nakummek* to

support of Nunatsiavut and *Tshinashkumitin* to Innu Nation for welcoming me onto your homelands and allowing me to conduct my fieldwork; I have gained knowledge that will reside with me forever. I would like to give a special thanks to the Housing and Homelessness Coalition of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, for allowing me to be a part of your community and guiding me throughout my time in the community. To all the dedicated, strong, and hardworking people I met through this journey: Jessica Keating, Krystal Saunders, Meaghan Norris, Cole Kippenhuck, thank you for going above and beyond for me. Lastly, Jackie Compton-Hobbs, thank you for being my friend and showing me around The Big Land.

I want to thank my family. To my baby sister, thank you for always being there to listen, to make me laugh and for convincing me to come home when I was in a dark place. To my parents, thank you for always checking in, even when I didn't think I needed it. To my oldest sister, who inspires me, gives me strength, and blesses me with my favourite role on this earth so far, being an aunty. To my chosen family members Quinton, Rachael, Hannah, Kanda, and Bobbi, thank you for your continued support and love. Thank you all for welcoming me back home and being there when I needed it. To John, my partner who has shown me what a healthy and loving man and relationship looks like.

I want to dedicate these words, and all my time, labour and passion through this project to the kind people of the community that has such a tender place in my heart. While writing this thesis, the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has suffered great loss. A handful of people have passed in the community that were involved in street life and had experienced homelessness. This loss grounds the importance and significance of all the work and research being done around homelessness in the community. May those individuals that have passed rest in peace and power, may their experiences and stories not be silenced and ignored further.

I must acknowledge that this thesis journey has been a lot longer than anticipated. But, that is life, we as humans are constantly adapting, developing, and changing, and I have done a significant amount of growth on this thesis journey. On this journey there has been quite a significant number of obstacles and challenges to further delay the completion of this thesis. I could easily list some obstacles and challenges to place the blame on, like healing from a bad relationship, COVID-19, or taking on a full-time job, but all these experiences that I have lived and survived through have informed who and where I am today. I would like to reflect, as I have been a graduate student for nearly six years now, that I am proud of who and what I am after these six years. In June 2020, I began working full-time in the field of Indigenous service delivery. I began my professional career in Toronto, Ontario- the biggest city in Canada. As a front-line worker during the pandemic, I can see similarities in the experiences in Toronto to those in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. These similarities include dynamics of trauma, movement, challenges with housing, homelessness, and access to adequate supports and services. With the experience, knowledge, and perspectives I have now, I would like share that this writing is far more than a thesis or a requirement of a degree for me. Ending and reducing homelessness is what I dedicate each day of my life to-empowering, supporting and bettering lives, especially the lives that are often silenced, marginalized, missing, or murdered.

Lastly and most recently, I want to acknowledge and dedicate this whole journey, and this finished product that I am so proud of to my dearest friend Bianka, who has crossed over to the spirit world. Your voice, your kind spirit, your love and your loud laughter will always continue to inspire me and push me to be a better woman.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.0 First Words

The most intimate and impactful moment I had during this research journey was an experience in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HV-GB), Labrador. On one of my fieldwork trips in the community, I was driving around town with a research participant who was formerly a staff at the Labrador Friendship Centre involved in this project, and when we were passing by Husky Park, a public park in the community where people living precariously typically hang out, a few women called us over. As we drove over to meet these women, we grabbed some granola bars, water bottles and bug spray from the truck to give to them. One of the women we met was in tears with worry because she hadn't seen or heard from her daughter in 48 hours. As we drove around HV-GB looking for her daughter, I held the hand of the worried mother and comforted her. After we eventually found her daughter, I returned home to where I was staying while in town. This experience still sits heavy with me, and I think about this woman often because my time in the community showed me that this woman would often be dismissed due to her homelessness status, and racialized Innu identity. Stories that were repeatedly shared with me by research participants, underlined by media accounts, and reiterated in public discourse, demonstrated that this particular woman would rarely be seen for who she was – a mother, someone with a lot to live for, and someone with a lot to lose. This woman's experience is unfortunately not isolated to HV-GB and is in fact a common experience in Turtle Island (lands now commonly known as, and hereon referred to as, Canada), where many Indigenous

daughters, mothers, women, and girls don't come home, or even have a home to go to.[1] This interaction was significant to me because it brought home the very real consequences of homelessness and how they are intertwined with systemic gendered and racialized violence, and intergenerational trauma entrenched by ongoing colonial impacts. For some, the connection between violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-spirited people and housing insecurity may not be obvious. However, I reference the national Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) genocide in the introduction of my thesis to acknowledge the central role that housing insecurity plays in this ongoing crisis in Canada. *The Final Report* of the MMIWG mentioned the need for safe and affordable housing over 400 times (National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019). As there is no accurate number of how many Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirited people have been murdered or are missing, the source of this violence is directly linked to the on-going colonization of Indigenous bodies and lands (National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019). Thus, Indigenous women and girls face severe marginalization that creates vulnerabilities to violence including poverty, housing insecurity and barriers to education, training, and employment (National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019). It is critical for the researchers in this field, and the people sharing these lands together acknowledge this specific colonial impact to stop perpetuating and ignoring the ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls- particularly in the realm of homelessness and housing insecurity.

Regardless of gender though, housing insecurity and homelessness are realities for many Indigenous peoples in Canada, with Indigenous peoples being eight times more likely to

[1] Indigenous women represent 16% of all female murder victims, and 11% of missing women, despite Indigenous people comprising only 4.3% of Canada's population. Indigenous women and girls are therefore three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of violence (Assembly of First Nations, MMIWG End Violence, 2020)

becoming homelessness in urban geographies nationwide (Belanger, 2013). Thistle (2017) shows that Indigenous homelessness is an outcome of the historically constructed and ongoing settler colonial relations that have displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors, and stories. Displacement and dispossession have disempowered many Indigenous peoples in Canada, and Indigenous homelessness must therefore be situated within larger discussions of colonial legacies and settler colonialism across Indigenous peoples' traditional homelands. Furthermore, Indigenous homelessness is a phenomenon that is multi-scalar, and occurs both individually and collectively (Christensen, 2013). In other words, Indigenous homelessness is symptomatic of ongoing colonization which includes colonial systems, structures, and its policies; these colonial systems, structures and policies deepen individual housing need and create homelessness among Indigenous families, a phenomenon that is also experienced inter-generationally. To illustrate the growing phenomenon of homelessness in northern Canada, Christensen (2012) and Christensen et al. (2017) research and unpack homelessness factors across northern Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. Christensen et al. (2017) acknowledge that there is also consensus among advocacy groups, support groups, and territorial housing corporations that homelessness is on the rise. In addition to the rising homeless populations in the northern Canada, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in the number of northerners experiencing homelessness (Christensen, 2017). Homelessness data from Point in Time (PIT) counts done in northern Canada reveal an overrepresentation of Indigenous people. In 2021, Whitehorse conducted a PIT count and identified 151 homeless individuals, among whom 85% identified as Indigenous (Mills, 2021). Similarly, in 2021 Yellowknife conducted a PIT count and identified 321 homeless individuals, with 91.5% identifying as Indigenous (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Many residents in

northern Canada are Indigenous (86% of Nunavut residents identify as Indigenous; in The Northwest Territories, 51% of residents identify as Indigenous; and in Yukon, 23% of residents identify as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2016c), and the high rate of homelessness amongst Indigenous peoples in northern Canada is closely related to the (under)development and implementation of colonial social policies. In particular, the introduction of the welfare state that began to deliver social and health programs as well as provide housing are all programs that have been neglected in northern Canada since the establishment of these programs. In addition to accounting for the role that northern physical, economic, political, and social geographies play in northern housing insecurity, researchers must also attend to the specific ways in which colonial pasts and presents continue to produce housing insecurity in the lives of northern Indigenous peoples. Attending to the context-specific intersections between these geographies is central to understanding homelessness and housing insecurity in HV-GB, which has its own unique history with respect to the region of Labrador and settler-Indigenous relations.

The identified need of this research came from community members who wished to explore the intersecting discussions and narratives of colonial histories and site-specific impacts, and northern socio-political and physical geographies, given that homelessness in the community continued to become more visible and was (and continues to be) of considerable concern for both community members and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. In November 2022, CBC published a news article titled, "*Inside Happy Valley-Goose Bay's Struggle with a Growing Transient Population*", where they interviewed clients at the local shelter as well as community members who shared their fear of the growing transient (homeless) population in the community (Atter, 2022). At the end of the article, a community member shared that, "There has to be some other answers besides more RCMP" (Atter, 2022). For more clarity, the transient population is

perceived to be mobile as these individuals migrate across Labrador during the warmer months of the year (generally May until September), and in the colder months, most of this population go back to their home communities located on the coast or other remote and isolated regions of Labrador. This thesis seeks to share some answers and insights to the growing phenomenon of homelessness in HV-GB and provide a framework for understanding the complex nature of homelessness as an intersection with settler-colonialism, and the many dimensions that Indigenous homelessness is experienced.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

In this thesis I aim to examine the factors contributing to the growing visible Indigenous homelessness in HV-GB by focusing on rural-urban mobility and movement. Mobility and movement became central to this project in its early stages of discussion with the local community advisory board (CAB) also known as the HV-GB Housing and Homelessness Coalition, because every member of CAB are community members and work in the community. In addition to discussions with the HV-GB Housing and Homelessness Coalition, multiple news articles were published about the growing homelessness population in the community at the same time. Then, when I spoke with research participants and informally with community members, I quickly identified the need for this research to be focused on the dimensions and very different lived experiences of Indigenous homelessness, specifically on the movement and mobility factors influencing the transient population. This is in part due to the fact that the transient population in HV-GB has been racialized, problematized, and heavily scrutinized within the community. For example, a publication by an Atlantic news outlet, "*Happy Valley- Goose Bay removes park benches, but residents say lawlessness from transient population worse than ever*" shares that, "Happy Valley-Goose Bay is pulling the seats out from under drunk and disorderly transients, but

even Mayor George Andrews admits it's not much of a solution" (Jackson, 2023). The article continues to place blame on the "transients" committing frequent beak-ins, thefts, sexual assault and disrupting traffic and residents. After the article lists some of the alleged crimes happening, it states that, "Residents are reporting lawless behaviour by some of the 80 or more transients who come primarily from nearby Innu and Inuit communities" (Jackson, 2023). Many community members that I met on this journey and some research participants who are working professionals in the community alike expressed the similar stereotypical beliefs that are extremely active and embedded in the community; in other words, the transient population is dominantly characterized as an: Indigenous population, predominately Innu, who come from their reserves or the Labrador coast to drink, party in town, and sleep in the woods all summer (Research participant, 2019). At the onset of this research, my goal was to firstly use this project to make the perspectives of people working with the transient population, and who are working with the full spectrum of Indigenous individuals experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness in HV-GB more visible. Secondly, I wanted to amplify the voices and stories of those with direct lived experience of homelessness, and in so doing my intention is to counter the harmful and othering[2] discourse of transiency.

My overarching research aim from these two goals is to *develop, expose, and advance a fuller and more comprehensive account of Indigenous homelessness experiences in HV-GB*. This work contributes to the small sub-field of Indigenous homelessness research and addresses a critical gap in public understanding. Ultimately, I seek in this thesis writing to counter the harmful characterization of the transient (homeless) Indigenous population in an effort to bridge

[2] Edward Said's (1978) Orientalism is a foundational postcolonial theory which conveys the ways in which the West secured colonial power and dominance over the East through the process of 'otherization'. This hegemonic discourse casts the East as inferior, uncivilized, and submissive. Alison Mountz et al. (2009) in The Other, further describes 'othering' as the discrimination of people or a population that is different that the collective social norm, who are seen as different, deviant, or in need of being cultured by the group that is othering them.

scholarship, activism, and decolonization work in academia. From my overall research aim, I have three research objectives:

(I) First, examine the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors that drive rural-urban mobility, movement, and homelessness in HV-GB.

(II) Second, understand the factors contributing to homelessness in HV-GB by examining the key gaps in services, supports and housing that are identified by research participants.

(III) Third, unpack the conceptualization of transiency by engaging with concepts of identity, space and place within the larger discussion of northern experiences of homelessness and settler colonialism.

I answer objective 1 in Chapter Four, where I pay particular attention to the inequalities and unevenness of the region as they pertain to the experiences and motivating factors that led many Indigenous families and vulnerable people to a lifestyle of movement and mobility to access integral supports and services. I answer objective 2 in Chapter Five, where I explore critical gaps in essential services in HV-GB including: affordable housing shortage, lack of mental health funding, and restricted addiction services. In Chapter Six, I answer objective 3 by critiquing the harmful discourse of transiency that has served to 'Other' Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness and which reinforces a dominant narrative of "legitimate" or "deserving" need for housing in the community and thus by comparison, an "illegitimate" or "undeserving" need. By unpacking the histories of uneven rural-urban geographies in the context of colonialism, declining infrastructure and support services, and colonial and discourses of homelessness, the broader discussions of urban space, identity, and the racialization of housing insecurity and

homelessness become central to understanding the geographies of Indigenous homelessness in HV-GB.

1.2 Situating Myself

Housing insecurity and/or homelessness are not situations I have experienced in my life; I grew up in a small, upper-middle class, and predominately white-settler southern Ontario town. I am the third of four children in a blended family. I am an auntie, daughter, sister, partner, and a woman with mixed settler-Indigenous ancestry. My mother and my relations on my maternal side are Sephardic from Morocco, and my father and my relations on my paternal side are from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. My grandmother was Mi'kmaq from Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia); all my relations and my ancestors have guided me into a privileged life that I am utterly grateful for. My educational background and personal passions brought me on a journey that I did not even consider when I started university. In 2018, I was finishing my B.A. in Political Science at York University and my Aboriginal Politics professor, Dr. Gabrielle Slowey, suggested I apply for graduate school under the supervision of her friend and colleague- my current supervisor, Dr. Julia Christensen. Over the course of my time as a graduate student, I have been challenged in many ways, and have also gained a wealth of knowledge, especially around northern and Indigenous research. Lacombe (2016) leans on the work of Leanne Simpson, an Indigenous scholar who speaks to decolonization and the responsibilities of artists and scholars that have communities that they are a part of or who they are doing work with, to leave space for words from settler scholars, Indigenous scholars, and community members for the ultimate project of unsettling ways of colonization (Lacombe, 2016). These words have guided this journey as I set out on this research journey as an outsider with unique positionality- an Indigenous researcher set to do research with and about Indigenous peoples, but without

particular ties to the community of HV-GB. I wanted to not only research the experiences of housing insecurity and homelessness, but to fully understand dynamics in the community of HV-GB which can be difficult for an 'outsider' perspective. However, from the beginning of this project I was welcomed by the friendly people I met in the community, and I made it a priority to work collaboratively with the Indigenous Nations of Labrador and with the community of HV-GB.

1.3 Homelands

Labrador is often referred to by many Labradorians as, 'The Big Land', as the region is geographically large with its land mass boasting mountains, a rocky coastline, and many healthy water sources including rivers and lakes (**Figure 1**).

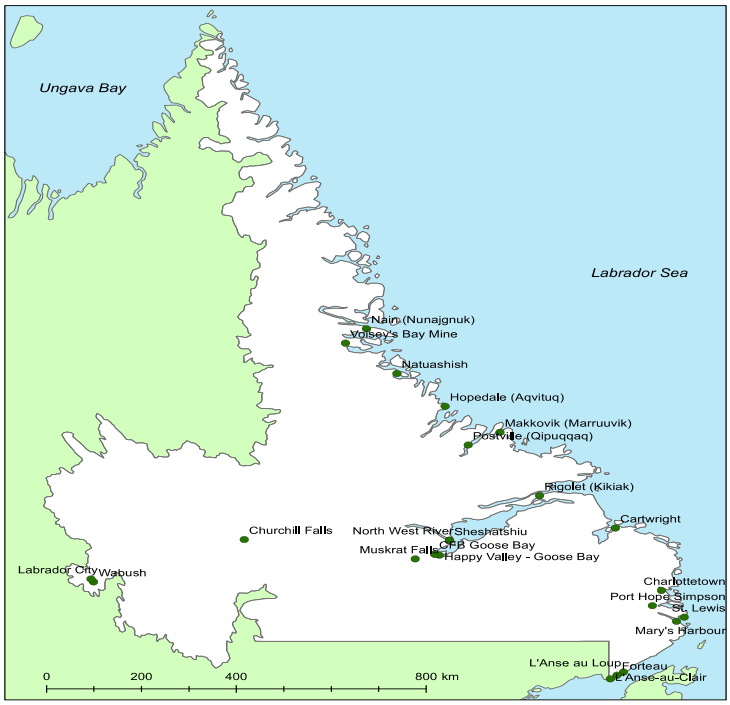

Figure 1 Community map of Labrador (Source: Johnathan Henry, MUN, 2019)

Labrador also comprises the homelands to three Indigenous Nations[3]: the Innu Nation (Nitassinan), the Nunatsiavut Inuit, and the NunatuKavut (Southern Labrador Inuit). The community of Happy Valley was built in 1941 and was originally distinct from Goose Bay which was strictly a Canadian military base. However, in 1973 the two communities were incorporated as the municipality of Happy Valley-Goose Bay (Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2020). This newly combined municipality of HV-GB is centrally located in Labrador and continues to be settled on the traditional territories of the Innu Nation and the NunatuKavut, after its joining incorporation (Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2020).

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[3] The term Indigenous is used here to represent First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples. There has been some controversy over the NunatuKavut in the past few years as some members of the group identify as Métis while others identify as Inuit. NunatuKavut is now an unrecognized Inuit territory and group of Inuit people.

Figure 2. Traditional territories map of the Indigenous Nations in Labrador (Jonathan Henry, MUN, 2019)

The community of HV-GB quickly became a place of great significance to the region by serving as a hub for: health, education, transportation, and services (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2023a). However, the lands upon which HV-GB was founded have been a significant place for the Indigenous Nations far before HV-GB was settled. The Innu Nation's traditional territories encompass a large portion of Labrador and eastern Quebec (**Figure 2**); their homelands are referred to as *Nitassinan* (Tipatshimuna, 2005). Innu Elder and Activist, Tshaukuesh Elizabeth Penashue's, 2019 translated diaries *Nitinikau Innusi: I Keep the Land Alive*, includes a map of significant places for the Innu Nation of Labrador (**Figure 3**). On this map Happy Valley-Goose Bay is observed as a significant place and route for the Innu Nation. In census data from 2021, the current population was 6,996 people with almost 56% of that population identifying as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2021). The community of HV-GB has the largest Indigenous population in the whole province of Newfoundland and Labrador (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2023).

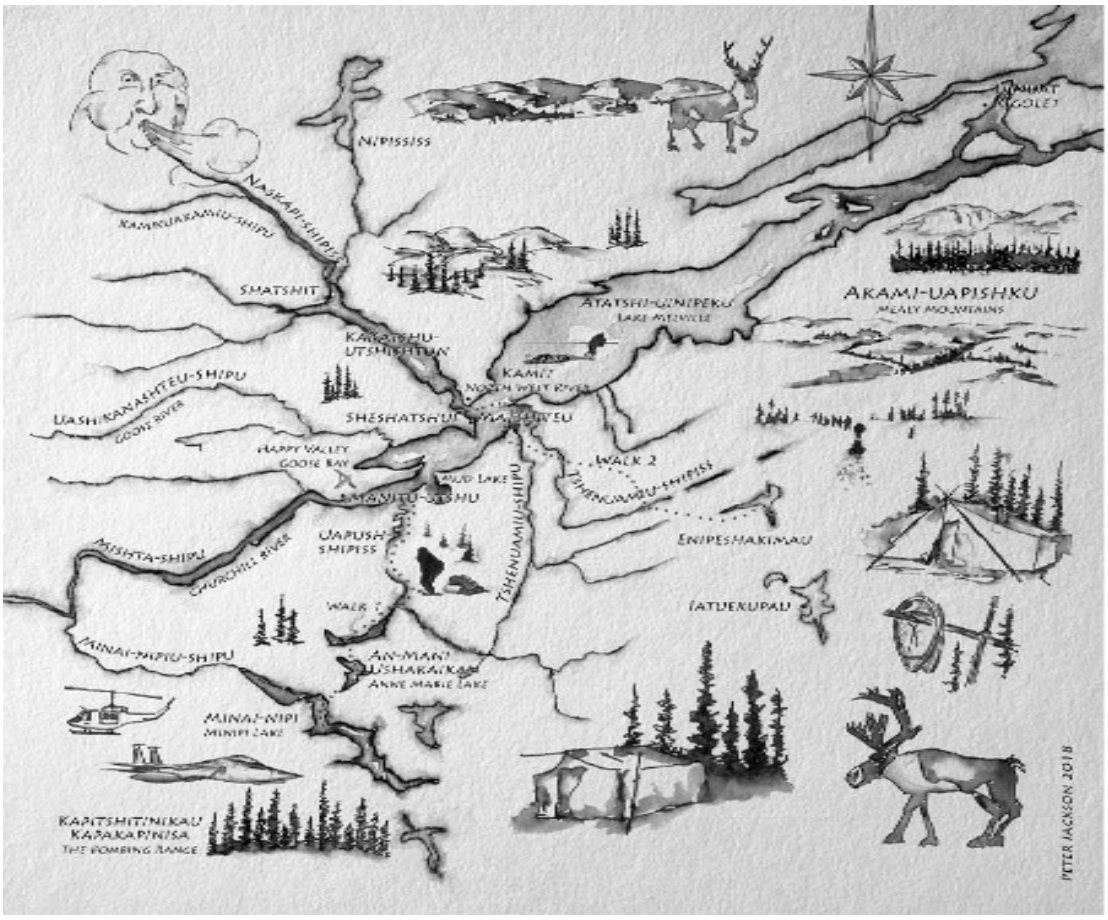


Figure 3. Traditional routes and travel of the Sheshatui Innu Nation (Tshaukuesh Elizabeth Penashue)

For NunatuKavut they claim that much of their traditional territories and travel routes intersect and overlap with both the Nunatsiavut and the Innu Nations (NunatuKavut, 2020). Though these Nations are distinct Indigenous peoples in Labrador, communities and individuals from the Innu Nation, the Nunatsiavut, and the NunatuKavut have collectively seen their homelands transformed into lands of settlement and development. The displacement of Indigenous Nations in Labrador from their traditional homelands have taken many forms. For example, the members of the Innu Nation have been forcibly relocated/ displaced far from their homelands to isolated northern unfamiliar lands, and there have been a series of natural resource

extraction projects constructed on the lands that have destroyed the lands and created intergenerational consequences to members of the Innu Nation (Stienstra, 2015; Council of Homeless Persons, 2009; Samson, 2018). Regardless of the form of displacement, Thistle (2017) shows that the impact of separating Indigenous peoples from their lands is produced by the state in the settler-colonial occupation of Canada. Further, Thistle (2017) deepens his analysis of Indigenous homelessness as being best understood as the outcome of ongoing settler colonization that has (and continues to) displace Indigenous people from their traditional ways, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories. In this thesis, I examine how the contemporary forms of displacement carry on from historical projects; for example, natural resource extraction was a tool of settler colonialism that continues to displace and dispossess Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands (Coulthard, 2014). Military occupation and use of Indigenous lands is also a common theme and displacement of Indigenous peoples for military use of land is also a part of Canadian history but especially here in Goose Bay. This will be further discussed throughout this paper with recounts from Innu Elder Elizabeth Penashue's book.

A recent example of contemporary displacement of Indigenous Nations surrounding the HV-GB community is the Muskrat Falls project. The Muskrat Falls project is a hydroelectric project that consists of a spillway, three dams, and a powerhouse owned and operated by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, previously owned by Nalcor Energy, in Muskrat Falls on the Lower Churchill Rivers about 30 kilometres west of HV-GB. Construction of Muskrat Falls began in 2013, and began generating power in 2020 (Nalcor Energy, 2020). As I will further discuss in this thesis, Muskrat Falls had severe implications on Indigenous Nations in Labrador, particularly for the Innu Nation, where the project resulted in land and water desecration including through flooding and methylmercury contamination (Crocker & Moore, 2021). The

desecration and destruction of the land undermines and puts the land-based histories vital to the Innu Nation at risk (Samson, 2018). The displacement of the Innu Nation is an ongoing history that started well before Muskrat Falls, however; starting in the 1950s the Canadian state attempted to sedentarize the nomadic and land-based Innu people (Samson, 2018). Today, the Innu Nation of Labrador are confined to two reserves in Labrador- Sheshatshiu and Natuashish (Samson, 2018). The displacement of Indigenous peoples from their traditional homelands to reserves, a process that spans back to as early as 1637, is a dynamic that Thistle (2017) describes as 'unsettling', particularly when grappling with the issue of Indigenous homelessness because it reveals the complexities that broader settler colonial legacies have on marginalization and inequity. Settler colonial legacies and other colonial concepts like welfare colonialism will therefore be discussed throughout this thesis. Paine (1977) conceptualized that the administration of the social welfare state was a tool for colonizing northern and Indigenous peoples through the production and reproduction of dependency. The reality for many Indigenous people living in Labrador and in the HV-GB region is thus imbued with the complex legacies and ongoing acts of displacement and generational loss. With this reality in mind, I draw inspiration from the scholarship of Thistle (2017), Christensen (2017), and Peters and Robillard (2009), to argue in this thesis *that homelessness and housing insecurity in HV-GB must be situated within the overall context of settler colonialism in order to understand the nuances of the lived experiences and factors that contribute to the increased visibility of Indigenous homelessness*.

1.4 Homelessness in HV-GB

Homelessness in HV-GB has been a growing concern in recent years. In a 2022 CBC article it shares that, "5 years ago the Labrador town's estimated homelessness population was 25 people. Today [2022] the mayor says it's 80" (Atter, 2022). Beyond not having accurate

homelessness data on HV-GB (e.g. PIT data or a public facing homelessness dashboard) many community reports, provincial statements, and news articles have expressed concern over the growing homelessness population in HV-GB. Based on my conversations in the community, it was explained to me that homelessness in the community has always existed. However, many of these community members also shared that in recent years there has been an increasing amount of homelessness that is much more visible and pervasive. The 2007 *Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Plan for Addressing Homelessness and Transitional Housing* report aimed to identify housing and homelessness issues facing people in the community. It shared that HV-GB is facing a rise in visible homelessness as the largest and most serviced urban hub in its surrounding region in Labrador (Lee et al., 2007). Sixteen years later, there are still the same housing stock and affordability issues cited in the report, and the visible homeless population continues to increase. To examine these housing issues, Jewczyk (2018) published a research project examining the housing environment in Central Labrador. The project shared data from research participants in HV-GB who discussed that everything had become more expensive over the previous five years, and that there had been a large increase in the number of "working poor" residents who relied heavily on community supports for everyday needs. Additionally, participants in Jewczyk's (2018) study shared that the community was in a housing shortage and that the cost of houses for sale and to rent had increased dramatically. In addition to the economic factors, there is a clear indication that the geographies of homelessness in HV-GB intersect with colonial pasts and presents as Indigenous peoples comprise 85-95% of the overall homeless population in the community (Schiff et al., 2016). Schiff et al. (2016) have previously done research exploring the key gaps in housing, housing programs, and homelessness supports in the community, however, since their research publication, the "transient population" has

become the centre of discussions surrounding homelessness, issues in the community, and research needs in the community. This project is therefore significant in its effort to contribute to exploring the gaps of knowledge around the lived experiences of the mobility and movement, and the complex ways in which Indigenous homelessness is framed in HV-GB. Furthermore, this project contributes to the sub-field of Indigenous homelessness literature, and the broader field of geographies of homelessness and housing insecurity (in Labrador).

To summarize, in this introduction chapter I have introduced reoccurring topics that I will continue to discuss throughout this thesis. It is of utmost importance that my positionality in this work, and that your positionalities as readers, recognize the community of HV-GB not only as the subject of this research but as a significant social, political, cultural, economic, and historical meeting place situated on and within the traditional homelands of Indigenous Nations. Acknowledging the community of HV-GB as settled on Indigenous homelands allows us to unpack some of the complexities of Indigenous homelessness especially given that homelessness is increasing, and that it is predominately experienced by Indigenous peoples. I will discuss these complexities of homelessness in HV-GB and in the larger geography of northern Canada next in Chapter Two: Literature Review, by reviewing literature and scholarly work that explores homelessness and housing insecurity in HV-GB.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Over the past three decades, homelessness has emerged as a concern for many communities across northern Canada (Christensen et al., 2017; Christensen, 2013). In this chapter, I review the academic and grey literatures that examines homelessness and housing insecurity in northern Canada to situate homelessness and housing insecurity in a northern context. Diverse fields from physical and human geography, including biogeography, geographies of homelessness, Indigenous geographies, and uneven geographies are all discussed and are central to examining the dynamics of northern homelessness, as the experiences of housing insecurity and homelessness are necessarily framed by place (Turner & Schiff, 2014). 'Place' in Geography is more than a location and can be described in its simplest form as the inter-relationships among the physical environment, the built environment, and the people (Johnston, 1991). The literature I explore in this chapter reviews colonial history, policies, and geographies of unevenness that have shaped and re-formed place, home, and housing in Labrador. I draw secondly on literatures of settler colonialism theory to weave together housing and homelessness literature into the larger dialogue of colonization. Evident in these literatures and lived realities, however, is the long history of resilience, refusal, and the resurgence of Indigenous peoples. In this chapter, I also outline the landscape of housing and homelessness in Labrador and situate it within the dynamics of settler-colonialism, welfare colonialism, social welfare, and (under)development/ inequity.

2.1 Understanding Dynamics in Labrador

The Canadian North has a unique and diverse social, political, economic, and physical landscape (Christensen et al., 2017). The Canadian North is often conceptualized by the three northern territories above the 60th parallel: Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. However, varying definitions also include northern regions of seven provinces including Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Labrador (Natural Resources Canada, 2023). For clarity throughout this thesis, I will use the term 'northern Canada' which is encompassing the territories as well as northern regions of provinces, including Labrador. Northern Canada is characterized by a vast land area with small communities that are geographically remote from Canada's provincial capital cities and southern border cities, as well as from one another (Christensen et al., 2017). While northern Canada is geographically significant in terms of its landmass, it also encompasses diverse histories, peoples, ecosystems, cultures and contexts, and there are some distinct similarities that altogether frame a shared northern social landscape. Similar to many other Indigenous communities in Canada, there is an ongoing history and presence of colonization. This section reviews the Indian Act, the Residential School system, the administration of state- delivered programs, natural resource extraction and development, and the various layers of inequalities experienced in Labrador, as these colonial policies, structures and systems have and continue to reshape and unsettle Indigenous nations, communities, lands, and homes.

2.1.1 Contact in Labrador

The lands currently known as Labrador include the ancestral homelands of the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, the Innu of Nitassian, and the Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut (see **Figures 2 and 3**). Colonial contact, and natural resource extraction and development in Labrador began far

before the Confederation of Canada.

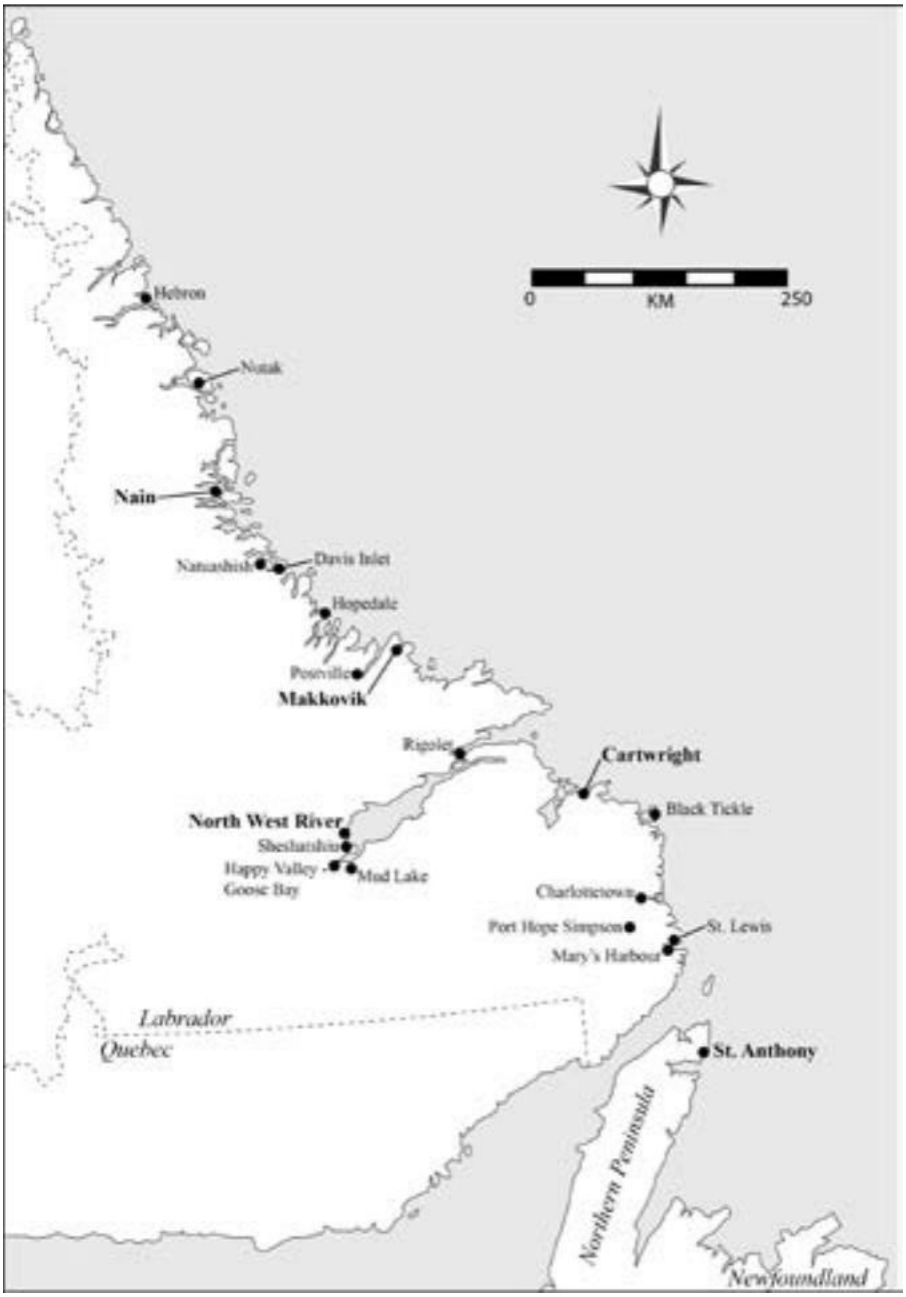


Figure 4. Moravian Stations and Other Communities in northern Labrador (source: Peter Ramsden)

In 1771, after the unsuccessful 1752 expedition by German Missionary Johann Ernhardt, Moravians arrived in Labrador, and were the first Europeans settlers from Germany, Denmark and England to settle and build Christian communities in Nain, Labrador- their first new Moravian mission station (Procter, 2020). The Moravians established trading posts and Protestant Mission Stations in Nain, Okak Hebron Zoar, Ramah Makovik, Killinek, and Hopedale (**Figure 4**). The Moravian goals according to a 1772 Moravian pamphlet was to, "Transform some aspects of Inuit life, to abandon some cultural practices, and to adopt new values", a goal they described as, "Trying to civilize and humanize [the Inuit] in some degree till they are Christian" (Procter, 2020, pp. 38). The Moravian mission's efforts in Labrador significantly transformed Inuit life, for example: Inuit people changed from performing their traditional roles to participating in the commercial cod and seal industries, Inuit cultural practices were banned (e.g. drumming, throat-singing, dancing), and there were changes to Inuit housing, clothing and diet (Procter, 2020). Moreover, the Moravian missionaries ran Protestant schools, which today is viewed as one of the most powerful social transformation tools for Labrador's Inuit population (Procter, 2020). In 1780, Moravians missionaries establish day schools in Nain, Okak, and in Hopedale. By 1783, these schools were spreading all across Labrador and the Moravians began to operate Moravian mission boarding schools, and while attendance was not compulsory at this time, attendance was made compulsory for children in the early 1940s (Procter, 2020). The Moravian mission founded multiple boarding schools that would eventually be taken over and operated by the International Grenfell Association in Makkovik and Nain. In central Labrador, contact began in the early 1800s, and in the 1830s the Hudson's Bay Trading Company (HBC) establish a trading post in North West River, cementing more settler presence in Labrador (Natcher et al., 2012; Procter, 2020). The Methodist Church then established a

mission at Lester's Point near Rigolet in 1883 and provided teachers who would travel across central Labrador to teach, where they had "outstripped everyone" and duplicated the boarding school model from the Moravians of central Labrador, which were viewed as "admirable" and a "truly rational solution" for 'civilizing' the Inuit population (Procter, 2020, p. 315).

The 1921 Children's Act (an Act for the Protection of Neglected Dependent and Delinquent Children) allowed Newfoundland magistrates to take children into custody as they felt necessary. This was used as leverage against parents to send and pay for their children's attendance at these boarding schools (Procter, 2020). More day and boarding schools began opening and in 1926, Yale School opened in North West River, which was a boarding school duplicated from other boarding schools (Procter, 2020). The 1921 Children's Act alongside mandatory school attendance legislation in 1942, forced Indigenous parents to send their children to these boarding schools. In 1949, when Newfoundland and Labrador confederated with Canada, it increased the contact between Indigenous peoples and European traders, and therefore also the exploitation of natural resources for economic pursuits. Confederation with Canada dramatically changed everyday life for people in Labrador (House, 1980). Newfoundland and Labrador was the last province in Canada to confederate (with Nunavut being the final joining territory in 1999), and it created an uncertainty among Indigenous nations, communities, and individuals of the province (Tanner, 1998). By becoming a Canadian province, Indigenous nationhood, sovereignty, and self-determination would be further undermined by settler-colonial provincial and federal governance structures, and the most harmful and violent legislation- the Indian Act. The Indian Act of 1876 was legislated just 9 years after Canada's confederation in 1867. The Indian Act controlled and governed almost all aspects of life for Indigenous peoples (Belanger, 2012). The goal of the Indian Act was to assimilate Indigenous peoples into Canadian

society through state-sanctioned policies that systemically and institutionally enacted violence upon Indigenous peoples, and it continues to perpetuate violence today (Coulthard, 2014). When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949, these harmful and violent colonial policies, systems and structures beyond schooling systems, unsettled and disrupted Indigenous nations and communities.

For the Innu of Labrador, they lived *nutshimit* (on the land) until the 1960s when Catholic priests and the new provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador forced Innu children to go to school (Procter, 2020). Catholic day schools were established in the place of Moravian schools in Sheshatshiu and Davis Inlet, and thus Innu families had to move into sedentary villages, some Innu children were moved away to schools in other regions of Labrador, and some children were sent to orphanages in St. John's (Procter, 2020). While Innu children did not attend boarding schools to the same degree as Inuit children in Labrador, these schools had a significant impact on families, former students, and generations thereafter (Procter, 2020). Generations of Inuit and Innu were forced to send their children to these Catholic day and boarding schools. Today, these schools are a recognized part of the residential school system; they were laden with physical, sexual, spiritual, and emotional abuse. Indigenous children across the nation were ripped away from their families and required to abandon their traditional languages, cultures, foods, and all their ways of being and knowing (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The history of boarding and day schools in Labrador left a legacy of intergenerational trauma for many Indigenous communities, families, and individuals in Labrador. Furthermore, Labrador was left out of the 2008 national apology for residential schools . However, in 2017 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sent a formal apology from the Canadian government for the abuses and atrocities that occurred at day schools and boarding

schools bringing survivors from the day schools and boarding school system into the circle of other Canadian residential school survivors (Procter, 2020).

I want to acknowledge that this thesis does not cover the entirety of the history and impacts of the residential school system in Canada. The history and legacies of the residential schools are slowly being uncovered, unhidden, and shared, and there is currently a lot of research being done to tell this dark history. I do, however, want to acknowledge a piece of that dark history and its legacies that carry on today in Labrador. Intergenerational trauma is discussed throughout this thesis in an effort to provide a fuller narrative of Indigenous homelessness in HV-GB, as Indigenous homelessness is inevitably linked to intergenerational trauma resulting from colonial practices of displacement and dispossession (Peters & Christensen, 2016). I discuss the residential school system like many other colonial tools as playing a key part in creating and sustaining Indigenous homelessness. In Labrador's case, colonization was facilitated under the guise of religious superiority and "education." In the next sub-section, I will discuss the federal and provincial incentives' relationship to a particular form of colonialism that has been pervasive in Labrador and all-encompassing in Indigenous peoples' lives.

2.1.2 Welfare Colonialism

Due to northern Canada's diversity, colonization was multi-faceted and fueled by competing incentives to expand 'Canadian presence in the North'. Two major incentives included: natural resource extraction operations, particularly with iron, nickel, uranium, and potential hydroelectric power; and military expansion (House, 1980; Abele, 1987; Christensen, 2016). Both militarization and natural resource extraction efforts worked in conjunction with social welfare administration to disrupt Indigenous peoples' relationships to the land as well as displace peoples from family and culture (Abele, 1987; Christensen, 2016).

Following WWII, the territorial north (Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) became an increasingly important place, as much of northern Canada was characterized as a 'resource hinterland', and natural resource extraction activities were scattered across northern Canada (Abele, 1987). Resource extraction in northern Canada has been shaped by its poor agriculture conditions, small population density, and relative isolation from southern Canadian cities (Keeling & Sandlos, 2012). The lands were therefore easily targeted for natural resource exploration, extraction, and industrial development particularly with mining valuable minerals and hydrocarbons found in the area (Keeling & Sandlos, 2012). However, the impact and risk on local populations, comprising mainly Indigenous people, were rarely considered in these economic ventures. Alongside increasing natural resource extraction and exploration, northern Canada was integral to militarized sovereignty claims (Christensen, 2017). The end of WWII therefore also began a vigorous new phase of economic development and settlement in northern Canada (Christensen, 2017). This rushed settlement of northern Canada was based on the fear of invasion around Canada's northern Pacific coast and northeastern borders (Abele, 2009). As a result, there were massive military developments, including the construction of military bases in Labrador, such as the one in Goose Bay (Abele, 2009). As Goose Bay was also established as a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military base (and still is today) the community had and continues to have a significant military presence (Penashue, 2019).

With increased development across various sectors in Labrador and the rest of northern Canada, colonization subsequently took the form of extending and administering the state-welfare system. The role of extending and administrating social welfare was conceptualized by Robert Paine as, "welfare colonialism" (Christensen, 2016). Paine (1977) wrote that, "To depict life in northern settlements today, one has to recognize that it is dominated by colonial

encounter…it is colonialism of a kind in which is increasingly prevalent, we call it welfare colonialism" (p. 6). Paine (1977) conceptualized that the administration of the social welfare state is a tool for colonizing northern and Indigenous peoples through the production and reproduction of dependency. We therefore see that on one hand, the ramping up of natural resource extraction and militarization translated into higher control of the land, and that on the other, the rolling out of state welfare translated into a secondary control of the people on the lands. With this working definition of welfare colonialism described, I will next provide a deeper review of historic and contemporary welfare colonialism impacts on Indigenous peoples in Labrador.

2.1.3 Welfare Colonialism in Labrador

The introduction of state welfare in Labrador began shortly after WWII and Labrador's confederation with Canada in 1949, at which point massive government-sponsored programs started being delivered in northern Canada, entrenching welfare colonialism and paternalism (Fox, 1979). The delivery of government-administered programs included the administration of social services (e.g. housing, healthcare, and employment and income supports), and the re-settlement of Indigenous peoples to allocated residential areas, which profoundly changed all Indigenous ways of life (Christensen & Andrew, 2016). Welfare colonialism is the term that best describes the uneven political and economic landscape for Indigenous people in northern Canada (Christensen & Andrews, 2016). Shewell (2004) expands on welfare colonialism and argues that the introduction of welfare was used to coerce assimilation by Indigenous people into the dominant Canadian socioeconomic order. Similarly, racism is inherent in the welfare state and takes an assimilationist form (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994). Dependency is also a fundamental part of welfare colonialism to maintain a system of imbalance that often disempowers Indigenous

peoples and communities from their own autonomy and self-determination. With dependency there thus came heightened vulnerability, which was instrumental in the remaking of Indigenous social relations and the discourse of the "dependent" Indigenous person (Alfred, 2009; Hall, 2020). Mohawk scholar Alfred (2009) expands theories around the entrenchment of Indigenous peoples' dependency on the state, showing that it creates more vulnerability as dependencies on the very people and institutions that have, "caused the near erasure of [their] existence and who have come to dominate [them]" (p. 42).

Indigenous and settler-state relations are dramatically transformed under welfare colonialism particularly in terms of economic dependency and the provision ofshelter and/or other basic needs (House, 1980; Tester & Kulchyski, 1994). Additionally, the provision of programs and services around the quality and availability of housing, employment, and social infrastructure by the government were extremely inadequate (Sider, 2004). The administration of social programs and housing in northern Canada had severe consequences for Indigenous northerners as the state-administered programs required resettlement, and therefore forcibly relocated communities to more central locations in the region (Sider, 2004). In addition to the high state of dependency that welfare colonialism created, the introduction of the welfare state had an unanticipated consequence that created an ongoing vicious cycle of government intrusion. These forms of government intrusion included very intimate and damaging acts, including forcibly resettling and relocating Indigenous people from their traditional territories (Fox, 1979). There were and continue to be substantial implications of welfare colonialism for Indigenous peoples through its creation of dependency on the state which ultimately undermines the political mobilization and autonomy of Indigenous peoples (Reinert, 2006).

In the 1950s and into the 1970s, the federal and provincial governments started to centralize the Innu and Inuit people of Labrador. The Inuit of Nutak and Hebron were forced out of their communities. The Inuit from the south were resettled in north-central Labrador (Sider, 2004). In the late 1960s, most of the Innu people were forced to live in permanent communities in Nutak and then forcibly re-settled with the promise of a better life on the island of Davis Inlet (Sider, 2014). This forced centralization and resettlement made it easier and cheaper for the governments to provide communities with the delivery of government-sponsored programs. Furthermore, there was added pressure for Indigenous people to become sedentary when education was made mandatory for children to receive. To access government-administered programs, communities had to abandon their traditional dispersed, migratory ways of life and settle into permanent housing and communities (House, 1980; Sider, 2014). The communities that were resettled relied primarily on land-based subsistence and livelihoods, and their homelands were closely related and connected to their culture, language, food, tradition, and epistemologies, which therefore profoundly changed all Indigenous ways of life (Christensen & Andrew, 2016). The implications of the welfare state thus resulted in an uneven assortment of programs exerting managerial power over Indigenous peoples and every aspect of their world (Natcher et al., 2012). The quality of life therefore did not improve for Indigenous peoples under the welfare state. The Inuit and the Innu of Labrador suffered from economic dependency in a system that removed their traditional values and maintained poverty through unequal power dynamics (Fox, 1979). The federal and provincial governments therefore failed to generate a dynamic within Labrador that allows for Indigenous success, and instead created dependency on an underdeveloped system (House, 1980; Alfed, 2009).

Forced resettlement and relocation, administration of government programs, and all mechanisms of the welfare state continue to shape the landscape of Labrador. Social welfare in northern Canada is a powerful tool for social, cultural, and economic change because its policies and programs effectively erodes the independence and self-determination of Indigenous peoples (Christensen, 2016). The administration of state-delivered programs created a high degree of vulnerability by trapping Indigenous peoples in a cycle of state dependency for inadequately delivered programs, while simultaneously displacing and dispossessing them from their traditional territories and their ways of knowing and being. However, the emergence of government-sponsored incorporation cannot be separated from its goal of economic exploitation of Indigenous land (Hall, 2020; House 1980). These dynamics contribute to the settler-colonial agenda to displace Indigenous peoples from their land for settler use. Throughout this thesis I discuss unevenness and the various ways in which unevenness is experienced. This section spoke of the unevenness of political power in the settler-colonial state of Canada: Indigenous nations were forced into a system of dependency on the Canadian state for the exploitation of Indigenous lands. In the next section, I discuss natural resource extraction and development in Labrador and its relationship to underdevelopment and economic unevenness in Labrador because the pursuit of natural resource extraction worked in tandem with the Canadian welfare state to disempower Indigenous peoples, their epistemologies, self-determination, and most importantly- remove them from their lands.

2.2 (Under)Development and Natural Resource Extraction

Following Newfoundland and Labrador's confederation with Canada, the pace of new natural resource extraction projects in the province accelerated. The economic transition towards natural resource extraction industries in Labrador was appropriated largely by the provincial

government of Newfoundland and Labrador and by private corporations (House, 1980). Recently, hydroelectric projects and mining activities have been the main forms of these natural resource extraction projects. These forms of development, which are scattered across northern Canada have caused substantial issues for Indigenous communities including transforming and alienating Indigenous peoples' relationships to their territories, the continual shrinkage of their territories and resources, and a threat to their culture given that their systems of values, knowledge, and practices are deeply interconnected with their lands (Scott, 2002). Moreover, similar to other natural resource extraction projects in Canada and beyond, critical development studies reveal the rather uneven landscape that the projects create despite claims of generating better quality of life (Scott, 2002). While uneven development is generally understood as an unevenly developed economy, unevenness can exist in various dimensions (Christophers, 2009). Some of these different dimensions of unevenness will be discussed through this thesis as Christensen (2012) argues that uneven development and fragmented social, institutional, and economic geographies result in a unique landscape of vulnerability to homelessness in northern Canada (see also Christensen et al., 2017). Uneven development is understood as inevitable and is structurally inscribed within the fabric of capitalist development (Harvey, 1982; Hudson, 2007). Additionally, the benefits and harms of the capitalist development are unevenly distributed, as the colonial governments further normalize colonial appropriation and control over Indigenous lands and structurally unequal socio-economic relations between settlers and Indigenous people (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2014).

Another term that describes the dynamics of unevenness and uneven development in Labrador is 'underdevelopment'. Underdevelopment in its simplest form is underdevelopment in regions where there is a 'core' who make up the elite 'metropolis' and there is an exploited

'peripheral' zone considered as 'satellites' that are in a state of dependency and under-development due to its service of the 'core' (Frank, 1966). This exploitative relationship of underdevelopment is the nature capitalism. While Frank (1966) applied this theory to the global economy and referred to this relationship of capitalism as state-by-state, in applying this theory to Indigenous geographies in Canada vs. non-Indigenous geographies of Canada, these dynamics are the same. Characteristics of underdevelopment include extreme poverty, disparity in the delivery of social services, lack of safe drinking water, poor infrastructure, and environmental insecurity. Considering all these factors, people living in the geographies of underdevelopment are subjected to a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, fragility and vulnerability (International Peace Institute, 2009). Underdevelopment is not a new experience in Labrador, however. Political economist, House (1980), examined the social, political, and economic conditions of Labrador post Newfoundland and Labrador confederating from 1971 until the 1980s and suggested that the social and economic improvement of coastal Labrador relied upon an explicit recognition of the region's long history of underdevelopment and exploitation (House, 1980).

Environmental degradation from commodity-oriented deforestation, damming, mining, etc., produce intersecting environmental hazards for which Indigenous people are put at risk. Anishinaabe scholar Deborah McGregor speaks about the cultural dominance of environmental degradation in settler-colonial societies and inequities in terms for how certain groups are impacted differently (McGregor, 2018). Moreover, until the late 1970s, national natural resource extraction and exploitation policies failed to acknowledge the effects of projects on Indigenous peoples who live and depend on the lands (Abele, 1987). Frances Abele (1987), a policy scholar, shared that increased northern natural resource extraction represents the extension of full-scale colonial administration unto Indigenous populations, and therefore a full administrative

apparatus was established in northern Canada. The governments and natural resource extraction companies thus encroached on traditional Indigenous territories to control the lands in northern Canada for economic exploitation. Natural resource extraction that occurs without the consent and consultation of Indigenous peoples on their lands is an extension of colonial practices, as natural resource extraction can physically and spiritually corrode lands while generating few resources, opportunities, or wealth for the local populations that live on the lands (Wallerstein, 1974; O'Brien, 1982; McCusker, 1991; Rodon, 2018). These uneven distributions of harms and benefits thus perpetuate the dependency on the welfare state and by extent, welfare colonialism.

I situate natural resource extraction within the legacies of colonialism, which perpetuates the underfunding of basic services, unilateral (or non-consultive) extractive decision-making over land, and limited opportunities for local residents. As a direct consequence of natural resource extraction projects, there is an increase in poverty and ultimately, vulnerability for already vulnerable and/or marginalized populations (Koutouki et al., 2018). Marginalized groups in northern Canada include people with disabilities, women, and Indigenous peoples- whom disproportionately experience the negative burdens of natural resource extraction projects whether it be from uneven benefits of employment, increase in family breakdown, or increase of domestic and gender-based violence (Koutouki et al., 2018). As noted earlier, the benefits of natural resource extraction projects are highly unevenly distributed despite these activities occurring on the traditional lands and territories of Indigenous peoples. For example, the Innu Nation were promised financial compensation and employment on the Muskrat Falls project, however, meaningful financial benefits have not been honored for the Innu Nation (Stoddart et al., 2022). In comparison, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro reported an $580 million profit in their 2022 fiscal year and boasted the success and full commissioning of the Muskrat Falls

Project (Whiffen, 2023). Just as natural resource extraction is the explicit control and dominance of the land situated in colonialism, the control and dominance of the people on the land is sustained through the administration of both natural resource extraction projects, and the local social services programs. These dynamics and administration reveal some of the complexities in settler-colonial governing structures, whereby it is common to have large economic capital generated in an area be controlled by a limited few (Koutouki et al., 2018). This is evident in Indigenous communities across Canada where Indigenous people experience poverty at a higher rate than non-Indigenous people in Canada; in Newfoundland and Labrador specifically, 14.3% of the population live in poverty compared to the national poverty rate of 7.4% across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2023). Poverty in Labrador is part of the larger discussion of socioeconomic inequities and unevenness experienced by Indigenous people in Labrador that I discuss in this thesis.

Natural resource extraction begat uneven development and inequality in Labrador; in examining northern Canada, Abele (1987) and Christensen (2016) argue that the very nature of these extractive industries fuels the concentration of wealth and resources in urban centres (particularly in southern Canadian cities), and the uneven development of peripheral areas. This is exemplified by the vast experience of poverty in Labrador (**Table 1**). Table 1 shows the economic inequality by sub-regions in Labrador.

Table 1: Economic inequality by subregion: Labrador, Canada, 2020. (Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Statics Agency)

Economic Inequality by Subregion: Labrador, Canada, 2020			
Local Area*	Personal Income Per Capita , $	Families, Below Low Income Threshold, %	Income Support Assistance, %
Labrador North	30,000	24.5%	10.1%
Labrador West	63,300	4.9%	2.2%

Goose Bay Area	43,500	10.8%	3.9%
Labrador East	37,000	8.8%	2.8%
Pinware River Area	42,100	7.1%	2.2%

Source: Income, Consumption and Leisure, Community Accounts, Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
*Local areas were formulated by Statistics Newfoundland Community Accounts
Areas include communities as followed:
Labrador North includes Nain, Natuashish, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik and Rigolet
Labrador West includes Churchill Falls, Wabush and Labrador City
Goose Bay Area includes Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Labrador East includes Cartwright, Mary's Harbour, St. Lewis, Port Hope Simpson
Pinware River Area includes Red Bay, L'Anse au Loup, Forteau, L'Anse au Clair

It is important to note the activities and demographics in these sub-regions. The regions that have the highest income (Labrador West and Goose Bay Area) also have the most natural resource extraction in Labrador. Labrador West is home to the two biggest hubs outside of HV-GB-Labrador City and Wabash. Labrador West hosts the province's largest private employer, Iron Ore Company of Canada (Rio Tinto, 2023), and mining projects are its largest economic contributor. However, according to Statistics Canada (2016c), only 9% of the sub-region's population identifies as Indigenous (Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022). In comparison, Goose Bay Area's activities include the province's source megaproject, Muskrat Falls. As another major hub in Labrador, Goose Bay Area's demographic differs from Labrador West, with 50% of the population identifying as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2016c). Predominantly in this area is Sheshatshui Innu First Nation and many Nunatsiavut beneficiaries also live in the Goose Bay area. The sub-regions: Pinware Region, Labrador East, and Labrador North have the lowest personal per capita incomes, and they have very little economic activities compared to Labrador West and Goose Bay Area. More importantly, these regions also have a significantly higher proportion of Indigenous-identifying peoples. These areas are home to the Nunatsiavut communities and the Natuashish Innu First Nation and NunatuKavut community members. It is clear in **Table 2** that there is a large income disparity in Labrador's sub-regions. The regions that have the lowest personal per capita

income also have higher proportions of Indigenous residents. To explore this further, in the next section, I will review different dimensions of unevenness and inequality in the region of Labrador.

2.2.1 Unevenness in Labrador

Unevenness is a lived reality across northern Canada as unequal power dynamics and paternalistic policies in the form of welfare colonialism continue to shape northern Canada politically, economically, socially and, indeed, spatially. As a result of these dynamics, underdevelopment is a general term to characterize the social structure of Labrador (Frank, 1966; House, 1980). To explore what unevenness lived experiences can look like in northern Canada, Christensen (2012) unpacks visible homelessness in Yellowknife and Inuvik, the two urban hubs in the Northwest Territories (NWT). She examines the rural-urban dynamics and uneven development that contributes to movement within the territory. Christensen (2012) suggests that uneven development is, "the unevenness of opportunity, access to employment, education, and training" (p. 430). Considering this, all these factors of unevenness lead to rural-urban movement in NWT (Christensen, 2012a). Similarly, Labrador shares the same unevenness.

While Labrador is a region of unevenness, it is important to highlight the efforts of the Indigenous communities exercising their right to self-determination. Self-determination is the ability and power to control decision-making over one's own community and lands (Coulthard, 2014). In the 1970s, new associations were forming, including the Naskapi-Monagnais Innu Association (now the Innu Nation of Labrador) and the Labrador Inuit Association (now the Nunatsiavut Government) (Samson, 2014). These Indigenous political associations' goal was to protect their interests, their land and their rights from outside forces (Innu Nation, 2022). These associations helped forge a new consciousness in Labrador- one that included the political organization of Indigenous nations in Labrador (House, 1980). In an effort to curb inequality in

terms of resource access, the Nunatsiavut Government (formerly, the Labrador Inuit Association [LIA]) finalized their land settlement agreement of Nunatsiavut in 2005 that reasserted their sovereignty and control over Inuit homelands and its people (Natcher et al., 2014). However, some significant challenges persist for the Nunatsiavut Government, as many Inuit communities throughout northern Labrador continue to suffer disproportionately from health issues and low socioeconomic status, an experience which is felt across northern Canada including with the Innu of Labrador (Dombrowski, 2016). In the 1970 Royal Commission Report, Labrador was boasted as, "One of the richest areas in Canada in terms of natural resources such as iron ore and hydroelectric power, but also one of the poorest in terms of another resource- adequate housing and related services for its people" (p. 46), which is consistent with the theme of unevenness as profits and benefits from major projects in the region are not being distributed evenly to local populations, which suggests that rural-urban mobility would likely be a factor in Labrador homelessness.

The paradox of rich natural resources compared to poor housing and essential services outlined in the 1970 Royal Commission Report of Labrador, illustrates the longstanding contributing factors to homelessness in the region. Nevertheless, these experiences are disproportionately represented by Indigenous people across northern Canada- with Labrador being no exception. In a later 1990 Commission Report of Labrador examining social services and housing, the report claims that, "Coastal communities act as a barometer of the economic and social health of Labrador" (Commission Report of Labrador, p. 17). Samson (2014) in turn argues that if coastal communities are deemed the 'barometer of Labrador', then it is worrisome that much of coastal Labrador, including HV-GB, have high poverty rates, as it suggests that those seeking more opportunity or services in urban hubs are coming from in-land and more

stratified circumstances. Despite the richness of resources in the region and massive revenue being accumulated from natural resource extraction projects scattered across Labrador, unevenness and inequality affects many residents in Labrador. Based on the historical development of Newfoundland and Labrador and delivery of services through the lens of welfare colonialism, I will discuss housing and homelessness as it pertains to northern Canada and in specific cases of Labrador in the next sections of this chapter.

2.2.2 Chronic Housing Need in Northern Canada

Northern Canada's transformation to permanent settlements and state welfare-provided housing has from its beginning been characterized by a myriad of problems, from inconsistent tenure models (Tester, 2012) to short supply (Tester, 2012; House, 1980), which altogether drives chronic housing need. For decades, northern Canadian communities faced significant housing issues like inaccessibility, inadequacy, and unaffordability which have collectively been identified as a national crisis (Tester, 2012). This national crisis is characterized by a significant core housing need which is, "A standard measure of housing insecurity in Canada, including affordability, adequacy, and suitability of both private market and public housing stock" (Christensen et al., 2017, p. 354). As introduced in Chapter 1, in September 2018 the Community Advisory Board (CAB), Housing and Homelessness Coalition of HV-GB hosted a *Let's Talk Housing Forum*, a conference with diverse participants representing different sectors and fields to discuss housing challenges as they exist in HV-GB and Labrador more broadly. During the forum, the need for more safe and affordable housing was the central topic of discussion. Participants at the forum discussed the lack of affordable housing options due to natural resource extraction industries driving up rental prices (as the demand for housing grew much quicker than the availability of new housing stock). Many participants in this forum also shared that the

private housing market is inaccessible for many people in the community and that there is a severe lack of subsidized housing in the region. On the town of HV-GB's website they include a comparison of rental costs pre- Muskrat Falls, which they identified as their "normalized rates", and post-Muskrat Falls "Muskrat Falls rates", and acknowledge the impact that the project had on the affordability of housing in the community (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Pre- and post-Muskrat Falls rental costs in HV-GB (Retrieved from: https://happyvalley-goosebay.com/visitors/living-here/housing-costs/)

Rental Unit	Normalized Rate	Muskrat Falls Rate
One Bedroom	$750 – $800/month	$800 – $950/month
Two Bedroom	$1,000 – $1,100/month	$1,200 – $1,400/month
Three Bedroom	$1,200 – $1,500/month	$1,500 – $1,800/month
Full House	$1,800 – $2,000/month	$2,000 – $2,500/month

The Muskrat Falls project also created a need for fully furnished house rentals, and these rentals go for upwards of $3,500/month (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2023b). In a 2022 CBC article, the mayor of HV-GB shared that the homeless population was approximately 80 people but that 5 years ago, the homeless population was an estimated 25 people (Atter, 2022). Considering all the factors contributing to homelessness, and the dimensions that homelessness can be experienced, these issues were discussed at length at the *Let's Talk Housing Forum*.

These meetings, recent articles, and findings reiterate the 2007 *Community Plan for Addressing Homelessness and Transitional Housing* which shared that much of the homelessness

in the community was hidden and called for an increase in accessible housing for people with disabilities, second stage housing for women and children escaping violence, affordable housing for single people, tenancy support and assisting tenant with developing basic life skills to maintain housing (Lee et al., 2007). These calls were reiterated in a more recent 2018 report, *Housing Demand and Supply in Central Labrador: Housing in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Cluster,* where housing providers and service providers supporting many vulnerable individuals and families around HV-GB expressed their struggles to deliver their services, and the lack of resources to strategically plan for housing demands (Jewczyk, 2018). The housing challenges in HV-GB are exemplary of the overall housing need in northern Canada, where housing need, chronic housing shortage, and homelessness converge as an underexplored- and to many, socially misunderstood- lived reality for many northerners.

Despite the housing conditions in northern Canada being deemed a national crisis, little has been done to effectively address the issues. The Government of Canada introduced its National Housing Strategy (NHS) in 2017, which was the largest and most ambitious federal housing program in Canadian history. The Government of Canada in the NHS (2017) stated that over the next decade (2017-2027), it will invest $82+ billion to build stronger communities and help Canadians across the country access safe and affordable homes. The NHS has key housing priorities in the territorial North (i.e. Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon) to address the northern housing crisis and promised $300 million over the ten years, in additional federal funding, to address these housing needs. The NHS also acknowledged a history of poor planning, understanding, and declining federal funding to support housing which has contributed to the housing issues (NHS, 2017). The strategy also identified key priority areas including additional funding, as scarce emergency shelters serve as permanent housing for women often because

there is a lack of transitional/second stage housing, as well as additional funding to offset higher costs for building, operating, and maintain housing projects (NHS, 2017). The Government of Canada under the NHS also began Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy (RH), a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. This program has funding priorities for urban, Indigenous, and rural and remote communities to help these groups/communities address their local homelessness needs.

Under these two federal funding programs, Labrador has only received one investment: the Nunatsiavut Government was given $5,933,639 to convert buildings into residential units to create 20 new units in Hopedale, Nunatsiavut (NHS, 2023). The town of HV-GB has been requesting federal funding since the implementation of the NHS and RH; for years prior to the implementation of the NHS, the Housing and Homelessness Coalition of HV-GB, local organizations, community members, and local MPPs advocated for funding to address the increased homelessness population and lack of housing the region as the provincial government continues to underfund the community (Housing and Homelessness Coalition of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2018; Various Research Participants, 2018). However, local efforts to address homelessness have been made in the community. In 2016, the emergency shelter, The Housing Hub, opened with the management and operations of the Nunatsiavut Government and has maintained its funding since opening from various funders including Newfoundland and Labrador Housing (NL Housing) and Indigenous-specific funding (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022). The Housing Hub holds only 12 beds for the entire region. In 2018, Jackie Compton-Hobbs, a member of the HV-GB's Housing and Homelessness Coalition shared that while progress has been made, it is still not enough (Hodder, 2018). While there have been other community-based initiatives started in the community in recent years to try

to address homelessness including the formation of an Acute Response Team and additional municipal enforcement officers in 2022, Michelle Kinney, the deputy minister in the Nunatsiavut Government and operator of the Housing Hub shared in a 2022 CBC article that homelessness and the transiently homelessness crisis is complex, involving issues of child welfare, justice, women's issues, mental health and health issues, and it is in large part a lack of resources and resource integration in the community. A resident of the community interviewed in the same article shared that core housing issues were not resolved (Jugol & Kelland, 2022). In addition, in a 2023 CBC article featuring a local resident who was experiencing homelessness and staying at the shelter, they shared, "That there needs to be more supports for people who are struggling in the community" (Atter, 2023). Funding at the provincial and federal levels have thus been inadequate as homelessness and housing needs in the community and region of Labrador continues to increase.

Since HV-GB does not fall within the federal definition of 'the (territorial) North', the community is left out of NHS priorities for northern housing and RH funding. The community therefore has had to rely on provincial funding and other funders to respond to the well documented growing homelessness population and growing housing issues in the HV-GB and the region of Labrador. I will discuss at length the available services and supports relating to hosing and homelessness in region highlighting gaps from research participants and people with lived experience in Chapters 4 and 5. Northern Canada, while being promised additional funding from the federal government, remains largely neglected in the delivery of housing programs and policy/funding promises, and the situation in HV-GB is no exception. Parallel to the housing affordability, adequacy, and homelessness lived realities in northern Canada, the failure to deliver on improved housing by federal programs is equally an ongoing lived reality. As housing

is a key social determinant of health, it is inherently related to mental health, physical health, domestic violence, and social strain (Christensen, 2017). Chronic housing need in northern Canada has ultimately cascaded into challenges that condition homelessness in Labrador. In the next section I will review literatures on the intersection northern geographies with homelessness and its experiences.

2.3 Geographies of Northern Homelessness

There is a promising and growing body of literature on homelessness in northern regions and locales within Canada. Until quite recently, homelessness was conceptualized as primarily an urban phenomenon, and one limited to urban areas in southern Canada (Patrick, 2014; Christen, 2017). In comparison, there is little acknowledgement of homelessness in northern and remote places, and the discourse that does exists tends to neglect the unique northern physical geographic and cultural contexts, as well as the experiences of intergenerational effects of colonialism, government paternalism, socio-cultural change, and the economic transition of northern Canada (Christensen, 2017).

In exploring the geographies of northern homelessness, the concept of 'place' becomes central to the discussion of both the contributing factors to homelessness as well as the actual lived experiences of homelessness in northern regions. A place-based understanding of the geographies of northern homelessness contextualizes the ways in which northern homelessness is produced and reproduced and is equally important in identifying solutions towards alleviating chronic housing insecurity. By providing a more robust understanding of northern homelessness, a series of integral and intersecting facets of northern housing insecurity are revealed. For example, the significance of movement and mobility, the unique experiences of Indigenous homelessness, and the gendered dimensions of homelessness experienced by women in northern

geographies. These discussions are significant because they re-conceptualize the ways in which homelessness can be understood in northern Canada, reframing the phenomenon not simply as an urban experience, but as one with significant rural and remote dimensions as well (Peters & Robillard, 2009).

2.3.1 Place, Homelessness, and Movement & Mobility

There is a growing body of literature that explores the connections between the significance of movement and mobility, and people experiencing homelessness (Peters & Robillard, 2009). In this body of literature, place, a significant geographical concept that understands the term as more than a location, space, or location; place can be better understood as the inter-relationships among the physical environment, the built environment, and the people, and is therefore imbued with emotion, memory, attachment, and experience (Johnston, 1991; Ujang & Zakariya, 2015). Place as a concept is central to this discussion and to the geographies of northern homelessness as it permits the examination of the situated and place-dependent nature of homelessness experiences in northern Canada, which are ultimately rooted in social and infrastructural inequality (Christensen, 2017).

According to the literature, the geographies of northern homelessness are characterized by many moving parts (see Schiff & Waegemakers, 2015; Christensen, 2017), but central to shaping its experience is colonialization, which has created a northern landscape of unevenness (Christensen, 2017). From this unevenness in northern Canada, a distinguished and integral aspect of the geography of northern homelessness is movement and mobility- particularly for Indigenous people. As settlement history in northern Canada has shaped uneven economic, social and infrastructural dynamics, there is an uneven spatial distribution of resources, opportunities, and infrastructure in northern Canada resulting in movement in and between regional hubs and

centres in northern Canada (Christensen, 2017). For this reason, rural-urban movement and migration is often from relatively isolated and rural communities to urban centres or hubs. Rural-urban movement is characterized by the movement between rural settlements to urban centres or hubs and is an accepted norm of northern Canada given the need to access employment, education, medical services, justice systems, and health and social support services (Christensen, 2013; Turner & Schiff, 2014). However, movement is even more essential for individuals experiencing homelessness (Christensen, 2013; Turner & Schiff, 2014). Often, movement is necessary to access supports and services that are lacking in rural communities or that do not exist with reasons ranging from limited economic opportunities, poor housing conditions, changing family relationships, to institutionalization (Anderson & Collins, 2014). Peters and Robillard's (2009) make a distinct connection between movement and mobility to the reserve system, a system created under colonialism that has long been places of poverty, isolation, and poor housing resulting in continuous and inevitable reasons for migration (Peters & Robillard, 2009). Considering this, individuals experiencing homelessness often rely on services and opportunities that are located in urban centres such as: more housing opportunity (public and private stock), emergency shelters, transitional/ second stage housing, drop-in centres, Friendship Centres, and wide range of other supports (Peters & Robillard, 2009; Christensen, 2013; Schiff & Turner, 2014). The nature of these services, opportunities and supports are essential for a person experiencing homelessness's well-being, survival and livelihood, and the need to access these services results in a deep dependence on rural-urban movement (Peters & Robillard, 2009; Christensen, 2013; Schiff & Turner, 2014). However, Indigenous people leaving rural geographies for more urban centres or hubs are not always met with opportunity and access to services and supports. Rather, they are often met with difficulties in accessing these supports and

services, or safe and affordable housing in these geographies (Peters & Robillard, 2009, Anderson & Collins, 2014). This is evident as rural-urban movement has, and continues to increase over the years, and urban regional hubs now host a larger visible homeless population than before (Christensen, 2013, 2017; Christensen et at., 2016). These regional hubs in northern Canada include Inuvik and Yellowknife, largely researched by Dr. Julia Christensen, and HV-GB has been largely researched by Dr. Rebecca Schiff (see Christensen, 2012a; Schiff, 2014). Further analysis, experiences, and encounters of lived experiences of rural-urban movement to the urban centre of HV-GB will be discussed in Chapter 5. While significant research is being done on housing insecurity and homelessness in northern Canada, there are still gaps in the literature addressing the role that hidden homelessness in northern rural settlements has in (re)producing visible homelessness in these northern regional centres (Christensen, 2012a). I will therefore discuss hidden homelessness in the next section, a phenomenon that remains at large in northern Canada.

2.3.2 Hidden Homelessness

Hidden homelessness includes those living in any of the following conditions: overcrowded, unstable housing, inadequate housing, couch surfing, or are at risk of becoming homeless (Christensen, 2016). Many northern coastal and remote communities have a severe lack of housing availability (Turner & Schiff, 2014). Individuals experiencing hidden homelessness in small communities often rely on social networks such as friends and family for housing and support (Turner & Schiff, 2014; Waegemakers-Schiff et al., 2015; Jewczyk, 2018). Due to the cold and harsh climate of northern communities, there is a high reliance on couch surfing by individuals who do not have their own housing (Christensen, 2012a; Turner & Schiff, 2014; Christensen, 2016). Moreover, there are very few shelters currently in operation outside of major

regional centres in northern Canada, and many emergency housing shelters and programs in northern Canada are being used for permanent housing (Bopp, 2007; Peters & Christensen, 2016). The concentration of shelters in urban centres, and the lack of housing availability results in both facilities overcrowding, and household overcrowding. Overcrowding is a common experience in northern Indigenous geographies, and it results in a series of other issues such as social strain, poor mental health, domestic violence, and more incidences of acute respiratory diseases (Clark et al., 2002; Tester, 2006, 2009; Kovesi et al., 2007; Orr, 2007; Christensen, 2016). As hidden homelessness is shaped by structural elements like housing, high rates of core housing need, and poverty, Indigenous communities are disproportionately represented by 1 in 6 Indigenous people in Canada, and 17.1% live in overcrowded housing, which is double the percent of non-Indigenous people living in crowded housing (Statistics Canada, 2022). Stats related to overcrowding are significantly higher for Inuit people living in *Inuit Nunangat* (Inuit homelands). In Inuvialuit region, 31% of Inuit live in overcrowded housing, in Nunavut 60% of Inuit live in overcrowded housing, in Nunavik 47% of Inuit live in overcrowded housing, and in Nunatsiavut 18% of Inuit live in overcrowded housing (Statistics Canada, 2022). In addition to the high percentages and rates of overcrowded housing in Indigenous communities, there is also a disproportionate percent of housing that is in need of major repairs (Statistics Canda, 2022). In a 2023 report called published by the Canadian Human Rights Commission titled Federal Housing Advocates Observational Report: Inuit Housing, the report reviews housing in Nunatsiavut and Nunavut. The report shares that housing that does exist was not built for the climatic circumstances of northern Canada, housing has been disintegrating around Inuit in Nunatsiavut and Nunavut for generations. In addition, housing has been overcrowded, neither healthy or adequate for generations (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2023). Considering

these factors and statistics, many experiences of homelessness in northern Canada are hidden, and it is important that these experiences are acknowledged.

The geographies of northern homelessness are complex and unique, and it is critical that the experiences of hidden homelessness in northern Canada are not detached from geographies of socio-spatial dynamics of disparity and movement between and within northern communities (Christensen, 2017). Rural-urban movement is a key feature of the geographies of northern homelessness, and it is closely related to hidden homelessness (Christensen, 2017). In other words, movement to an urban centre or hub is often the only option for individuals experiencing homelessness in smaller northern communities to have the opportunity to access support, services and shelter, which creates a push and an increase in people experiencing homelessness in urban centres and hubs, especially for Indigenous people in northern Canada who are already overrepresented in homelessness population across Canada and in rural and urban geographies (Christensen & Peters, 2016). With movement of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness and/or housing precarity towards urban centres and hubs in mind, in the next section I will review the literature examining Indigenous homelessness as it intersects with colonial history and contemporary forms of displacement and dispossession.

2.3.3 Indigenous Homelessness and its Colonial Intersects

In discussing Indigenous homelessness, the concept of home must be unpacked. Indigenous homelessness has largely been conceptualized and informed by colonial, Euro-centric, white conceptualizations of home. Dominant discourses have framed homelessness to be understood as living without a structure of habitation or being 'roofless', which places and emphasis on 'home' as a physical structure (Berman et al., 2009; Christensen, 2013; Mallet, 2004; Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Somerville, 1992). Sommerville (1992) and Christensen (2013) oppose this dominant

discourse and suggest that homelessness is better conceptualized as 'rootlessness', which implies the absence of a sense of place, or a sense of home. Existing research expands on the conceptualization of 'home' and suggest that 'home' is contextually constructed within cultural, social, and individual values (Christensen, 2013; Veness, 1993). Indigenous scholar, Jesse Thistle (2018), applies an Indigenous lens to homelessness and frames homelessness as a breakdown of relationships with oneself, family, community, land, water, place, animals, culture, and language. Therefore, the idea of home in a decolonized and Indigenous epistemology implies an emotional, spiritual, and psychological attachment to a place that takes many facets and forms (Christensen, 2013). Home in an Indigenous conceptualization thus takes on even more forms. Indigenous conceptualizations of home also include the concept of 'homeland', which is rooted in the same relations of belonging and identity (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Berger, 2005; Christensen, 2013). The land aspect of homeland is significant to Indigenous people as the land acts as the interface of culture, knowledge, teachings, language, kinship, and ways of being and thinking (Christensen, 2013; Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007; Thornton, 2008). With the Indigenous conceptualizations of home and homelands, the experiences of homelessness for Indigenous peoples are tied to colonialism, sociocultural change, intergenerational trauma, and is experienced differently across place (Christensen, 2013; Thistle, 2017). As it stands, however, Indigenous homelessness discourses and literature perpetuates colonial narratives of homelessness. In other words, the dominant view of Indigenous homelessness in public narratives and academic literature is one that focuses largely on narratives of poverty, addiction, and poor mental health amongst Indigenous peoples (Thistle, 2017). Racism and discrimination towards Indigenous peoples is entrenched in Canadian society particularly in the characterization of Indigenous homelessness (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). Thistle and Smylie (2020) reveal that

systematic literature reviews of factors that lead to homelessness have been subject to publication bias which marginalizes Indigenous voices, experiences, and perspectives. In these reviews, visible manifestations of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous peoples including addiction and poverty are incorrectly assumed to be the factors leading to homelessness (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). The common narrative of Indigenous homelessness thus engages with victim blaming otherwise known as 'gaslighting', which casts the Indigenous person as flawed and blames them for their own homelessness (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). The literature produced following this narrative places great emphasises on the shortcomings of the individual for their homelessness and fails to discuss the broader systems that uphold homelessness, and the individual experiences behind this system failure (Christensen & Peters, 2016). Moreover, that subset of literature obscures the historical legacy and impacts of colonization (Anderson & Collins, 2014; Christensen, 2013; Thistle, 2017; Thistle & Smylie, 2020).

More recently, there is a growing body of literature that has emerged to examine the lived experiences of Indigenous homelessness. Central to this literature is the understanding that Indigenous experiences of homelessness must be situated within an overall context of colonialism (Peters & Robillard, 2009). Colonialism has had the ongoing effect of traumatizing generations of Indigenous peoples by disrupting traditional systems of governance and destroying social systems, cultures, and worldviews (Thistle, 2017). Colonialism has resulted in the deep cultural destabilization that has been produced and reproduced on an individual and community level. As a project, it has also been responsible for the disproportionate rates of mental, cognitive, behavioural, social, and physical challenges faced by Indigenous individuals, families, communities, and Nations (Christensen, 2013; Thistle, 2017). The effects of trauma and the role of intergenerational trauma are intimately related to Indigenous experiences of

homelessness (Menzies, 2007; Belanger, 2013; Christensen, 2013; Thistle, 2017). While trauma is attributed to the centuries of colonial violence in the form of policies and practices on Indigenous peoples, trauma stemming from the residential school system has been characterized as an act of genocide (Menzies, 2007; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015; Coulthard, 2014). Anderson and Collins (2014) investigate the prevalence and causes of homelessness among Indigenous people in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In their review, they recount the dehumanizing effects that colonial policies and practices continue to have on Indigenous people. The foremost example in Canada is the residential school system which Leach (2010) characterizes as one the most disempowering acts of colonization. Increasingly, studies are being done across Canada, acknowledging the link between individual, familial, and communal trauma from the residential school system to experiences of homelessness (Sider, 2005; Menzies, 2007; Belanger, 2013; Christensen, 2017; Thistle, 2017). Schmidt et al.' (2015) work examines more specifically Indigenous homelessness for women across Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut through the experiences of research participants who have a family history of residential school attendance, and the authors identify residential school attendance, and the trauma impacts of displacement, modernization and colonization as a major contributing factor to their cause for contemporary homelessness. Similarly, in Anderson and Collin's (2014) and Sider's (2005) studies examining homelessness in northern Ontario, they draw the conclusion that residential school attendance was a contributing factor to homelessness, even when it only directly affected prior generations. Outcomes from residential school attendance and intergenerational trauma that relate to homelessness include disempowerment, cultural erosion, social deprivation, loss of social and psychological well-being, diminished political power, and diminished collective rights (Anderson & Collins, 2014).

Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness are increasingly having the opportunity to contribute to the larger discussion of situating their lived experience in the context of colonialism, and its legacies and continuities (Peters & Robillard, 2009). Beyond intergenerational trauma, this includes the systems of oppression and forms of social exclusion, such as racism, discrimination, classism, and negative stereotyping (Berman et al., 2009; Anderson & Collins, 2014). Thistle (2017) also makes the integral link to placing Indigenous experiences of homelessness in the context of colonialism. He suggests that Indigenous homelessness is:

> Best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories. (Thistle, 2017, p. 6)

Thistle (2017) uses Indigenous worldviews to describe Indigenous homelessness as being experienced on a spectrum of dimensions where individuals, families, and/ or communities are isolated from their relationships to land, kin, culture, language, and identity, thereby expanding the understanding, scale, and scope of experiences of homelessness for Indigenous peoples compared to western conceptualizations of homelessness. In Thistle's (2017) work to define the dimensions of Indigenous homelessness, he notes that there are 12 ways in which Indigenous people across Canada articulate Indigenous experiences of homelessness. Some of those dimensions include historical displacement homelessness, overcrowded homelessness, escaping or evading harm homelessness, and relocation and mobility homelessness. In particular, displacement is discussed in 2023 report assessing housing in Nunatsiavut, it states that the housing conditions that the Inuit inhabit are a direct result of colonialism and failure of federal and provincial policy. Further the report makes the link to lack of secure housing and resulting

displacement echoes the trauma of forced relocation many Labrador Inuit experienced in the 1950's (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2023). As the provincial government forced Inuit in northern Labrador to abandon their communities, it thrusted many families into cycles of dislocation, dispossession and forced Inuit to rely on a severe lack of secure and safe housing, these impacts are still experienced today (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2023). Further relating to Labrador, I would like to draw attention to the definition of another dimension of Indigenous homelessness, escaping or evading harm homelessness as:

> Indigenous persons fleeing, leaving, or vacating unstable, unsafe, unhealthy or overcrowded households or homes to obtain a measure of safety or to survive. Young people, women, and LGBTQ2S people are particularly vulnerable (Thistle, 2017, p. 12).

Secondly, I highlight the definition for relocation and mobility homelessness:

> Mobile Indigenous homeless people travelling over geographic distances between urban and rural spaces for access to work, health, education, recreation, legal and childcare services, to attend spiritual events and ceremonies, have access to affordable housing, and to see family, friends and community members (Thistle, 2017, p. 13)

These particular dimensions of which Indigenous homelessness can be experienced have been contextualized within the dynamics that I reviewed in this chapter. I outlined the disproportionate rates of overcrowding, unsafe, unaffordable, and inadequate housing, and rural-urban movement both in northern Canada and in Labrador for access to opportunity or for essential services and supports including housing and emergency housing/ shelter programs. I will revisit the concepts and definitions of the dimensions of Indigenous homelessness and ground them within the lived experiences of the research participants in HV-GB. In addition to considering the multi-faceted ways in which Indigenous homelessness is experienced according to Thistle (2017), I will next

review the literatures that examine the experiences of gendered homelessness with a particular focus on women and Indigenous women in northern Canada.

2.3.4 Women's Homelessness

There is a growing body of literature examining women's experiences of homelessness in northern Canada. According to the National Anti-Poverty Association (NAPO), women are among the fastest growing groups in the homeless and at-risk of homelessness populations (Bopp, 2007). A study by Women's Homelessness North of 60 found that *all* women in northern Canada are at risk of homelessness, because even a small change in their circumstances can jeopardize the fragile structure of their lives that allows them to meet basic needs such as housing. Gendered differences in the experiences of northern Indigenous homelessness are therefore significant. Though housing insecurity and a lack of affordable and/or available housing impact all northern peoples, the impacts trickle down disproportionately to women and children (Bopp, 2007). In other words, northern women are subjected to both the structural elements that condition homelessness in the north (i.e., inadequate, and poor housing conditions), and are also victims of addiction, domestic violence, and intergenerational dependency on income support (Bopp, 2007). While social issues in northern communities are inherently linked to colonial trauma and living legacies, trauma in this context is translated disproportionately onto women (Poole & Bopp, 2015).

The intersection of homelessness and women exemplifies the vulnerability and insecurity in northern geographies. However, to bolster the understanding of homelessness and gender, the fact that 90% of homeless women in northern Canada are of Indigenous ancestry reveals that there is a larger context and factors at play that must be considered (Schmidt et al., 2015). Some factors include that Indigenous women are more likely to be single parent families that

experience core housing need, and Indigenous women experience violence, poverty, and poor housing at a rate much higher than non-Indigenous women (Christensen, 2016). As I discussed hidden homelessness previously in this chapter, there must be particular attention paid to the unique experiences of hidden homelessness through the lens of women in northern geographies. Women in northern geographies experiencing homelessness is less visible than other homelessness populations, as less women in these geographies do not live on the streets where their circumstances are visible, and it often takes shape in hidden forms (Schmidt et al., 2015). The research done in *A Study of Women's Homelessness North of 60* expands the definition of hidden homelessness to: "include women who are temporarily staying with friends, families or staying with a man only in order to obtain shelter, and those living in the household where they are subject to family conflict or violence" (Kappel Ramji Consulting Group, 2002; Bopp, 2007, p. 2)Hidden homelessness for women is also more precarious as they are more at risk for physical, emotional, and psychological harm (YWCA, 2012). The risk of violence is also significantly higher for Indigenous women as Indigenous women and girls in Canada are also three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of violence (Assembly of First Nations, MMIWG End Violence, 2020). These factors heighten the vulnerabilities that often leads to women's living situations that are considered to be hidden homelessness.

Domestic violence is another prevalent social issue that I discuss as it is a reoccurring theme in the data collection phases of this research. Domestic violence has a direct role in creating a myriad in forms of homelessness for women in northern Canada (Christensen, 2013; Poole & Bopp, 2015, Christensen, 2017). While police-reported domestic and family violence has been on the rise for the past five years in Canada, domestic violence rates are disproportionately high in northern Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021). In 2018, HV-GB had the

6th highest rate of violence against women (Smellie, 2018).[4] While housing and lack of housing is a foundation of many struggles, women who are fleeing violence are deeply impacted by the critical lack of shortage of housing options in Nunatsiavut (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2023). In Christensen's (2017) research in NWT shares that in combination with core housing need, the desire to escape violence is often motivating factor for a woman leaving her community. This particular form of migration creates many challenges like separating children from their mothers, and once people leave it is often hard to return due to low housing stock and nowhere to go apart from emergency shelters. In many instances this pattern is seen as directional from rural to urban centres (Christensen, 2017).

Integral to the experience of homelessness for women in northern Canada is therefore movement and mobility. The factors that lead to rural-urban movement is highly gendered as Indigenous women rely on urban hubs for not only the opportunities sought, but also to leave difficult or violent family relationships (Christensen, 2013; Christensen, 2017; Schmidt et al., 2015). Therefore, this movement must not go unexamined as it speaks to the larger discussion of uneven and inequitable experiences in northern and Indigenous geographies and especially for women. This next section of this chapter will review concepts of race and space, literature that examine settler-colonial constructs of different places and how Indigenous people experience these different conceptualizations. This section will other set the stage to fully understand this how Indigenous homelessness is understood in different spaces.

2.4 Race and Space and the Urban

[4] It is important to note that there are limits to this data, as the majority of domestic violence does not get reported to either the police or authorities (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Here, I review the literature that examines the intersections and nuances between race, urban space, and settler-colonial concepts and constructs that further frame the ways in which Indigeneity and Indigenous people experience these spaces. In this section I continue to focus on the experiences of Indigenous homelessness, and by reviewing literature on race and space I can better advance an understanding of how settler-colonial racism shapes it.

While urban centres are often characterized and defined by big cities and large populations, in northern Canda urban centres do not share those same characteristics. However, they remain significant for the surrounding communities. Urban centres in northern Canada are growing in importance by serving as a hub for shopping, employment, education, health and medical services, justice systems, social support services, and governmental administration (Christensen, 2013; Christensen, 2017). Therefore, movement between rural settlements and urban centres is an accepted norm of many people living in northern Canada (Christensen, 2013; Christensen, 2017; Turner & Schiff, 2014). Urban centres are also increasingly important to people experiencing homelessness as they migrate to these hubs for not only the facilities, but also for increased access to varied housing options and an escape from domestic violence (Anderson & Collins, 2014; Turner & Schiff, 2014; Christensen 2017).

The relationship between Indigenous peoples and cities has historically been a relationship characterized by tension (Coulthard, 2014). In order to fully understand this relationship and how it has manifested across Canada in many forms of racism, I first lay out a working definition of racism. At its simplest, racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one ‘race’ over all others, and therefore an inherent right to dominate ‘others’ (Lorde, 1980). To build on this working definition, racism has been defined as the beliefs, attitudes, arrangements, and acts held by or perpetuated by members of a race who believe that they possess specific

characteristics or abilities that distinguish them as superior to another 'race(s)' (Clark, et al., 1999; Hoyt, 2012; Paradies, et al., 2008; Benoit et al., 2019). Racism as a concept in Canada is more complex when factoring in settler-colonialism, and the colonization of the lands upon which Canada has been settled. Namely, Canada is built on stolen lands from Indigenous people, and colonialism as a project ongoingly works to displace, dispossess, and disempower Indigenous people (Coulthard, 2014; Benoit et al., 2019; Simpson & Hugill, 2022). Palmater (2016) argues that racism against Indigenous people has been deeply normalized and that both society and all levels of government cannot deny that Canada has a serious problem with the many forms of racism.

Considering these ideologies, racism and settler-colonialism is spatialized in Canada. Canada's colonial practices spatially contained Indigenous people through the creation of the reservation system (Razack, 2000; Coulthard, 2014). In tandem with the creation of a physical reservation system, there was a social construction of the 'authentic' Indigenous identity in the settler-colonial mindset. This socially constructed identity is one that is tied to places that are located on reservations, are rural, and are underdeveloped (Wilson & Peters, 2005). Indigenous people were systemically and institutionally confined to reservations, and all other spaces were allocated to settlers to make use of in the pursuit of colonizing the country (Razack, 2000). Cities under this ideology belong to settlers, whereas reservations are reserved for Indigenous people (Razack, 2000). Coulthard (2014) expands on this concept by arguing that Canadian cities were conceived in the colonial imagination as non-Indigenous, 'civilized' spaces. His explanation of how city spaces were discursively re-created as *urbs nullius*—the idea that the urban is absent of Indigenous sovereignty and presence, demonstrates the 'othering' and casting of Indigenous people as unbelonging in the city (Coulthard, 2014). To add, contemporary urban geographers

draw on Coulthard's (2014) urbs nullius term, and there is now a growing body of literature on settler-colonial urbanism, which draws linkages between settler-colonialism and the on-going condition of city-making and the creation of contemporary urban spaces (Dorries et al., 2019; Simpson & Hugill, 2022). In settler-colonialism urbanism conceptualizations, the city and urbs nullius discursive thought is so pervasive that it constructs and re-constructs the urban as a place where Indigenous peoples are perceived to non-existent or 'out of place'. This narrative is bolstered by the ongoing casting of rural places as distinctly Indigenous, a legacy of the reservation system relocating efforts (Razack, 2000; Klodawsky & Blomley, 2009; Coulthard, 2009). Settler-colonial perspectives and practices have thus confined Indigenous identities within the physical boundaries outside of the city.

Settler-colonial conceptualization and creation of urban centres is bolstered by structural racism, so that the invisibility of positive representations and perceptions of Indigenous people, culture and knowledge systems leaves only the visibility of negative stereotypes promoted through mainstream society and in spatialized spaces where Indigenous people are perceived to be present. The lack of visibility, representation, and knowledge of Indigenous people further fuels racism in Canada (Goodman et al., 2017; Benoit et al., 2019). Racism has detrimental impacts to individuals and societies particularly with regards to social mobility and acceptance, which can affect opportunities for self-determination, socioeconomic stability, social determinants of health and wellness, and freedom in cultural expression (Benoit et al., 2019). Racism is often encountered by Indigenous people in city and urban centres, which is particularly troublesome considering that many Indigenous people (and women more than men) in northern Canada often have to migrate to urban centres. This migrating population must endure and attempt to overcome racism when trying to secure affordable housing and

employment, or when moving through public spaces like shopping malls, parks, and schools (Peters & Anderson, 2013). Unjustly, the uneven institutional development of northern Canada has forced Indigenous people from rural-uneven geographies into urban spaces that are usually hostile towards Indigenous people (Wilson & Peters, 2005; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1993). I will demonstrate an example of the paradoxes of settler-colonialism in Chapter 6.

Just as there is racism experienced in urban centres by Indigenous people, Indigenous people who are experiencing homelessness are doubly marginalized. A well-documented narrative often encountered in HV-GB for Indigenous peoples is one of transiency. However, this narrative fails to recognize the rationale of movement and mobility in Indigenous peoples' lives, the complex network of relationships that exist between a reserve and the city, or the relationships between small northern settlements in northern Canada. These experiences will be discussed throughout Chapters 4-6 of this thesis as they pertain to the discussions of transiency which is used to displace Indigenous peoples within the settler colonial city.

2.5 Conclusion

While visible homelessness in northern Canada is on the rise and is a relatively new phenomenon (see Christensen, 2012a), the roots of contemporary northern housing insecurity are not (Christensen, 2017). Colonial continuities vis-à-vis chronic housing need, intergenerational trauma, and the social determinants of Indigenous health frame a distinct geography of homelessness in the northern Canada. Moreover, the processes of settlement and natural resource extraction in northern regions have resulted in a geography of uneven development and displacement that continues to disrupt the social fabric of northern Canada. They underline the kind of disparities and inequities that exist in not only housing, but also in access to

opportunities, resources, and social and health supports. Furthermore, such rural-urban unevenness tends to disadvantage Indigenous peoples who comprise the dominant populations in rural northern communities. Despite the fact that northern communities and cities also have significant Indigenous populations and are situated on Indigenous homelands, settler-colonialism perpetuates racialized, transient, and/or ‘out-of-place' stereotypes of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness. These narratives and impacts are seen most predominantly affecting Indigenous women but create an overall landscape of exclusion which shapes how homelessness is experienced in northern Canadian contexts, such as HV-GB.

In the next chapter, I outline my research methodology which was informed by Indigenous research methods and frameworks. I introduce the specific methods I employed and share the community-based components of this thesis research, which have informed the majority of my findings.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODS

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I both share my research methods and tell the full story of how this project came about in HV-GB, Labrador. When meeting with my supervisor, Dr. Christensen, for the first time in the late summer of 2018, she shared with me some possible locations and research topics that I could pursue. Dr. Christensen mentioned HV-GB and her recent discussions with the Housing and Homelessness Coalition, where several initial research needs had been identified, and I was immediately interested in exploring a possible project in the community. A few weeks later in September 2018, Dr. Christensen and I were invited to the *Let's Talk Housing Forum*, a conference hosted in the HV-GB community with key stakeholders, service providers, government workers, and policy makers to discuss housing gaps and issues in the community. It was from this conference and further conversations with community members that a research project began to take shape.

3.1 Consent and Permission

With a topic as intimate and personal as Indigenous homelessness in a small community[5] and given the geography and location of HV-GB, I had to receive consent from both the Innu Nation and the NunatuKavut, as HV-GB exists on the traditional territories and homelands of these nations. HV-GB is not situated within Nunatsiavut, the ancestral homelands and modern land claim of the Labradormiut (Labrador Inuit), so I did not *require* consent and permission

[5] Memorial University on Research Impacting Indigenous Groups requires engagement with applicable Indigenous groups. From the beginning of this project, I prioritized getting consent from the Innu Nation, the NunatuKavut and the Nunatsiavut as Happy Valley-Goose Bay resides on Indigenous homelands and my research was about Indigenous peoples.

from the Nunatsiavut Government. However, seeking consent and input from the Nunatsiavut Government was nevertheless important, not only to maintain respectful relationships in the pursuit of decolonization, but also because the Nunatsiavut Government is a pillar in the community through their provision and delivery of services and programs for Nunatsiavut beneficiaries as well as for all people experiencing homelessness in HV-GB. Additionally, I approached the Community Advisory Board (CAB) on Housing and Homelessness of HV-GB for research consent. During this period, there were simultaneous happening between the Indigenous governments, provincial government, housing providers and service/ support providers to develop a project that was going to respond to diverse community research needs. By the end of these consultations, I drafted a research proposal that each government and organization had an opportunity to provide feedback and comments on. In that research proposal, I also met Indigenous governments' research applications and protocols. Once I received consent and research approval from the three Indigenous governments and the CAB, I applied for ethics approval at Memorial University.

3.1.1 Ethics

The Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) at Memorial University requires an ethics review for any research involving human participants conducted by faculty, students, and staff (Memorial University, 2020) (see **appendix C**). Due to my project taking place on Indigenous homelands and seeking research participants who interacted with people experiencing homelessness and/or precarious housing situations, vulnerability and confidentiality were important factors I had to consider. Throughout my project, I maintained a high level of confidentiality to protect the identity and safety of my research participants. All these factors were considered in the methodological approach and research methods used to answer the

objectives of my project (**Table 3.1**). Once I received ICEHR's ethics approval, I prepared for the first stage of fieldwork.

Table 3: Research Method Alignment

Research Objective	Research Method:
(1) To examine the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors that drive rural-urban mobility, movement, and homelessness in HV-GB.	Archival and (grey) literature review, Semi-structured interviews, Storytelling techniques
(2) To understand the factors contributing to homelessness in HV-GB by examining the key gaps in services, supports and housing that are identified by research participants.	Archival and (grey) literature review, Participant observation, Semi-structured interviews, Story-telling techniques, Feedback workshops
(3) To unpack the conceptualization of transiency by engaging with concepts of identity, space and place within the larger discussion of northern experiences of homelessness and settler colonialism	Archival and (grey) literature review, Participant observation, Media-discourse analysis, Semi-structured interviews, Feedback workshops

3.1.2 Literature/Archival Review

In preparation for my first phase of fieldwork in HV-GB, I conducted an extensive literature review on academic and grey literature including policy reports, community plans from Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial government, and reports from Indigenous governments in Labrador and the municipality of HV-GB. While living in HV-GB, I did archival research at the Labrador Institute; I reviewed newspapers, local publications and Labrador's commission reports. These archives, articles, and reports were instrumental to analyzing the discursive landscape in Labrador as archives provide the opportunity for dialogue between the current

generations and the voices of the past (Hay, 2016). The role of grey literature has become increasingly important for research confronting social and public policy as it is a key part of the evidence produced from, and used to, inform public policy and how it plays out in practice (Lawrence et al., 2014). Schiff and Turner (2014) focus on homelessness and housing insecurity and shared that in scarce Canadian-based peer-reviewed articles in the field, grey literature has provided valuable information to their research (Schiff & Turner, 2014). In reviewing the grey literature, I was able to have a fuller understanding of homelessness and housing insecurity in HV-GB before my fieldwork took place. Moreover, I wanted to get a grasp on the public discourse formed on homelessness and housing insecurity, as they had been identified as issues in the community for years. Broadly speaking, in early communications with governments, local organizations/ agencies, and the CAB on Housing and Homelessness of HV-GB, the growing "transient" population was amongst the biggest concern for research needs expressed. Considering this, my research leading up to my fieldwork (both my grey literature review and archival research) was to contribute to my research's aim to understand Indigenous homelessness in northern Canada, with a focus on understanding the factors contributing to rural-urban mobility and homelessness in the community. Also, to explore and unpack transiency through the lens of Indigenous homelessness as it confronts settler-colonialism.

3.2 Community-Based Research Approach

My work has been guided by a community-based research (CBR) approach. CBR is an approach that aims to avoid research that merely advances an understanding but goes beyond to ensure that that the knowledge produced from a research project will contribute to making a concrete and constructive difference in the world (Flicker et al., 2008). CBR therefore is an approach to resist the role that research has historically and contemporarily played in privileging

certain communities or knowledges over others (Flicker et al., 2008). Often privileged are Anglo-Saxon, Western worldviews or perspectives, and the assumptions made in that research; research that is widely deemed unethical and extractive especially with regards to research on/ with Indigenous people (Hayward et al., 2021). Research on or with Indigenous people has a long and complicated history littered with atrocities. Western research has historically regarded Indigenous people as "subjects" causing harm in many ways including: perpetuating colonialism, neglecting local needs and benefits, power imbalance, stigmatization and disregarding for Indigenous culture, and understanding and research approaches (Mair, 2011; Hayward et al., 2021). Further in this chapter, I review the importance of Indigenous methods and the decolonizing research methods that I used throughout this thesis. This thesis is grounded in CBR to challenge traditional research methods which produce only certain bodies of knowledge and cause harm (Flicker et al., 2008; Hayward et al., 2021). CBR centres the community in research and places a deep importance on community collaboration, participation, and social justice agendas (Flicker et al., 2008). Since the 1980s, there was a feminist turn in geography that recognized the dynamics of power and positionality in the production of academic knowledge and research (de Leeuw et al., 2012). CBR approaches are particularly significant for research concerning Indigenous individuals, families, and communities, who have historically been engaged by researchers as "subjects" whom research is done 'on', rather than as partners or collaborators (de Leeuw et al., 2012; Hayward et al., 2021). CBR instead provides a framework for building meaningful, long-term commitments with Indigenous communities rooted in collaborative and relational knowledge production (de Leeuw et al., 2012; Kindonet et al., 2009). From the beginning of this project, my responsibility as a researcher and the aims of CBR aligned: I wanted to disengage and resist colonial, exploitative dimensions of research on

Indigenous peoples, and instead produce a piece of work that would be productive for community groups accomplishing the same thing (de Leeuw et al., 2012).

With my research need established by the community of HV-GB, community members, Indigenous governments, and community stakeholders were central to the framing and design of this project. As such, I worked closely with local stake and rightsholders including the CAB, the NunatuKavut, the Nunatsiavut and the Innu Nation to identify key participants within their governments and organizations. Through these relationships I conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with community members. These community members worked in various fields that intersected with homelessness. Their expertise varied and included: government (provincial, municipal, and Indigenous), front-line staff from homelessness-serving organizations, child welfare, public health policy, housing policy, housing providers, emergency housing providers, politics, law enforcement, Indigenous service providers, and correctional services. I used a multi-method approach, using CBR as a guiding framework, and bringing several qualitative research methods together to address the complexity of homelessness and housing insecurity experiences in HV-GB. Qualitative research in human geography seeks to analyze social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental structures; human geographers explore the fine line between these structures, individuals, and their experiences (Hay, 2016). Therefore, the methodology of my project adopted a combination of qualitative research methods including a literature and archival review, participant observation, media-discourse analysis, semi-structured interviews, storytelling techniques, and feedback workshops (see **Table 3**).

My methodology aimed to emphasize space for the personal narratives and experiences of HV-GB community members who were experiencing homelessness- community members who had been marginalized, excluded, and ultimately silenced. Qualitative research is often

pluralistic; in other words, it seeks to emphasize multiple meanings and interpretations rather than seeking to impose a dominant or "correct" interpretation (Hay, 2016). Plurality of understandings is significant to decolonizing research as it provides space for Indigenous peoples, communities, and narratives, which have been largely marginalized in settler-colonial society and in the historically colonized research space to exercise their inherent right to self-determination, and to share their own histories, realities, and cultures without the continued harms and legacies from inequitable, extractive, and unethical research practices (Smith, 1999; Hayward et al., 2012).

Another lesson that I learned on this journey was related to the importance of reflexivity. Reflexivity for me was adjusting my research methods. Before my fieldwork when I was conducting my (grey) literature review and media-discourse analysis, I thought I had a clear understanding of HV-GB and its dynamics surrounding homelessness and housing insecurity. However, during my fieldwork in the community speaking with community members and research participants, observing, walking around, being in public spaces and being physically present, my gained experience and knowledge reshaped the questions I asked and the people I spoke with. Baxter and Eyles (1997) state that, "Researchers are encouraged to allow the research situation to guide research procedures in order that they may gain access to human experiences" (p. 506). There is a great need for qualitative research to be reflective as knowledge is produced and reproduced through social relations (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). There were a few times after an interview or an interaction when I changed my fieldwork plans. Reflexivity allowed me to remain open, open to learning, open to sharing, and to really be present in the community. In the following subsection, I detail how my methodology also engaged with

Indigenous methodologies and decolonizing methods that resist research and narratives that have largely marginalized Indigenous peoples, voices, experiences, and stories.

3.3 Decolonizing Research

Research has been and continues to be a tool of colonization (Datta, 2018). When considering the history and continuities of colonization in Canada, the role of academic research was not often at the forefront of this discussion. To add complexity to the history of academia as a colonial tool, and to ultimately highlight the importance of decolonizing research in my field is that geography has historically been dominated by Anglo-Saxon, Western worldviews, perspectives, and assumptions in the name of colonization (Hayward et al., 2012; Radcliffe, 2022). Moreover, the role of geography historically was at the forefront of colonization and has deep colonial roots, for example its early work in mapping the lands and resources that colonial powers could take over. In that light, Alfred and Corntassel (2005) write that, "It is important to identify all of the old and new faces of colonialism that continue to distort and dehumanize Indigenous peoples" (p. 176). Research is an integral part of sustaining colonization and perpetuating the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, communities, and knowledge (Sinclair, 2004). For example, Indigenous scholars Louis (2007) and Sinclair (2004) claim that Western research methods have pathologized, problematized, objectified, and dismembered Indigenous communities. Colonialism has disrupted the intergenerational transmission of Indigenous knowledge by imposing Western forms of knowledge transmission and education (Greenwood & Lindsay, 2019; Rowe et al., 2019). Research plays a major role in the production of knowledge as universities have long claimed roles in defining and validating colonial knowledge systems, which further marginalizes Indigenous knowledge (Smith, 1999; Kovach et al., 2005). Colonialism isn't the only story in Indigenous experiences, perspectives, or histories however,

and therefore there is danger in permitting colonial productions of knowledge to be the only narrative of Indigenous peoples (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Therefore, while there is a need to pay attention to the role that colonial forms and processes have in shaping Indigenous experiences, we must look to Indigenous strengths, resistance, resilience, and resurgence for accurate representations of self-created narrative truths.

In Radcliffe's (2022) book, she shares and agrees to the argument that geographers of colour have been making for decades, which is that geography has an urgent task of decolonizing, but that this task must not rest solely on the backs of racialized people but on all of us to take responsibility and play a role in overturning racialized exclusions and assumptions (Radcliffe, 2022). The field of geography has been changing and there is a growing body of literature and geographers who are acknowledging, making spaces, and collaborating to produce literature that challenges racial exclusions and assumptions by sharing different worldviews, perspectives and cultures (Radcliffe, 2022). Recently in academia, geographers have been increasingly interested in engaging and working towards decolonizing methodologies (de Leeuw et al., 2012). Indigenous communities may have been marginalized in significant and important ways, but they are also places of resistance (Smith, 1999).

While research serves as a tool of colonization, research can also be a tool of decolonization. In Datta's (2018) research article, she argues that decolonizing work in research is an on-going process of 'becoming'- by unlearning colonial ways of knowing and researching and relearning. Unlearning and relearning gives space to Indigenous researchers, individuals, communities, and participants to share their own story, and have these stories matter as individual lived experiences rather than aggregate data. This type of research contributes to Indigenous resurgence (Sium & Ritskes, 2013; Mussi, 2021). In decolonizing research

methodology work, there has been a great effort to move away from acquisitive, invasive, and power-laden research relationships with Indigenous peoples (de Leeuw et al., 2012). CBR has thus become an increasingly common research methodology in human geography to support justice, political engagement, and respecting non-hierarchical relations; CBR principles support decolonization work in academia (de Leeuw et al., 2012). Pursuing CBR ultimately went together with my decolonizing approach, as it was important to me as a researcher and my community partners to resist the research and relationships that have perpetuated the colonization and exploitation of Indigenous peoples.

3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted my fieldwork in June and July 2019, when I spent six weeks in the HV-GB community. The timing of this trip was planned according to input from multiple community members and members of the CAB, all of whom suggested that the warmer summer season in HV-GB brings heightened movement into town and an increase in visible homelessness. The main goal of this fieldwork phase was to conduct semi-structured interviews with frontline staff at: homelessness-serving organizations, housing providers, emergency housing providers, government staff working in social services, health, child welfare, law and corrections, and policy makers who develop housing and homelessness policies. I organized questions according to key research themes, with an interview guide that included open-ended questions and the flexibility to ask follow up questions when prompted and where appropriate (Dunn, 2010; Hay, 2016) (**appendices A & B**). The key research themes I identified were based on early stages of grey/ literature review while reviewing previous research done in HV-GB, northern research on housing insecurity, and homelessness in local media (news articles, community reports, community releases of information). Additionally, as local community partners/ organizations

identified a research need, I grouped research themes around topics that could begin to unpack their need. Based on the nature of semi-structure interviews, interviews were guided differently based on the participants' experiences, positions, and organizations (Dunn, 2010; Hay, 2016).

I understood before doing semi-structured interviews that research participants would have different knowledges and perspectives based on their occupation. I would therefore ask more about certain themes than others to guide conversations. For example, my interview approach was different between a RCMP constable and an employee at the Housing Hub, when I would rely much heavier on the 'housing' and 'social supports' theme for an employee at the Housing Hub compared to the RCMP constable. Interviews were audio recorded with a handheld portable voice recorder where consent was given, which ensured accuracy and allowed me to be fully engaged and present. All research participants who participated in semi-structured interviews consented to being recorded, except one participant who wanted to respond in written form to the interview guide. After interviews were transcribed, research participants had the opportunity to review and confirm their individual transcriptions.

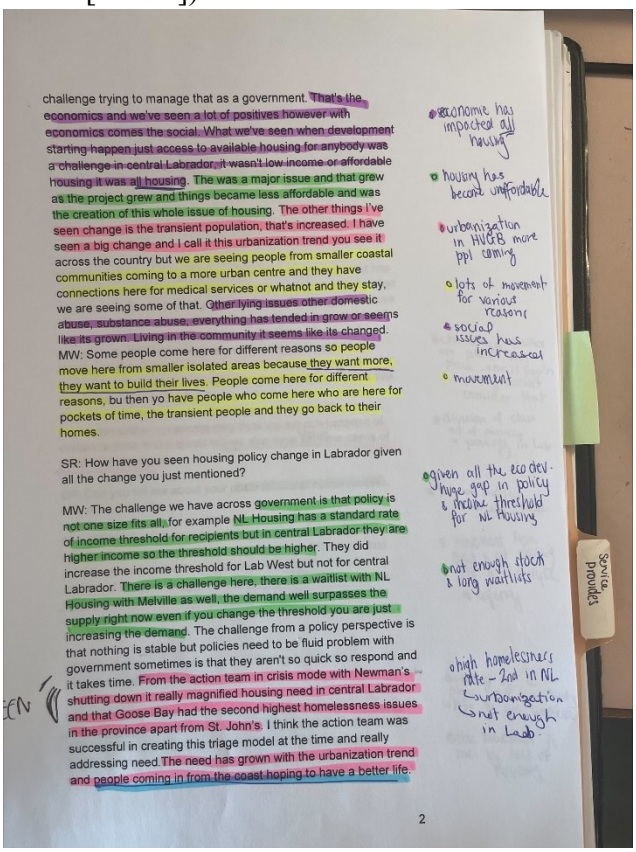
Over the course of that first six-week research visit, I interviewed 21 participants who were working in frontline and non-frontline positions from: department manager, team lead, program manager, constable, housing liaison worker, housing workers executive directors, social workers, cultural liaison, shelter coordinator, policy analyst, and politicians. Research participants were from many organizations in HV-GB and the surrounding area including the: Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, RCMP, Mokami Status of Women, Labrador Affairs, Labrador-Grenfell Health, Labrador Corrections Centre, Apenam's House (adult residential treatment centre), Melville Native Housing, CSSD, and the Labrador Friendship Centre.

In the semi-structured interviews, I sought to broaden participant diversity in terms of age, gender, and professions, but their professional experience and knowledges were limited by understanding homelessness and its intersects with mental health and addictions challenges in a particular way. Lack of lived experience with homelessness by the interviewees, despite working closely with the issue, limited the capacity to fully understand and discuss certain topics and questions I posed (Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network, 2023; National Right to Housing Network, 2023). I therefore needed to conduct interviews with people who had had or had lived experience of homelessness. Moreover, it was mentioned to me by a few participants that I should interview people who had lived experience of homelessness, which reinforced a larger empathetic understanding that people who do not have lived experience limits the ability to fully capture the diverse narratives of homelessness. Following the summer of my June and July 2019 fieldwork, I planned for a second trip in the fall of 2019, with the focus on hearing from those with lived homelessness experience. I discuss my methods in section 3.6.

Based on the interviews, there were strong, reoccurring themes. After I transcribed my interviews, I returned to each interview to review and draw out similar themes. Analysis of qualitative data is often challenging and frustrating as findings and results do not emerge from your transcripts easily (Skjott-Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Coding and data analysis thus requires you to be deliberate, to work and identify the most important elements and then write them into a convincing story that answers research questions and provides insights that are consistent with your data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The six analytical themes I identified from grey/ literature review and eventual data from field work trips were: the significance of place; movement & mobility; housing & social supports; gaps in housing & social supports; socio-economic change; and, (un)belonging in the city. As I worked my way through analyzing the

interviews, I highlighted each theme that emerged in my participants' discussion in a different colour (**Figure 5**). The coding process and ultimately the analysis of the qualitative interview data was a long iterative process to ensure I applied the themes throughout my interviews, and to make myself familiar with the data for its analysis against the literature.

Figure 5. A Sample of Qualitative Interview Data being coded and analysed (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahel [author])



3.5 Participant Observation

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I conducted extensive participant observation work during two of my fieldwork trips in HV-GB, first from June to July 2019 and then again in October 2019. Participant observation is a research method where the researcher immerses

themselves in a particular social setting, observing behaviours and interactions. This method is valuable as it seeks to understand the experiences of individuals in a social context and day-to-day (George, 2023). In the time I spent in the community I also attended community celebrations and gathering such as Canada Day, Pride Week, National Indigenous Day, a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) vigil, sports games, weekly craft markets, and community fundraisers. I did not have an established office space, so I often worked at Tim Hortons on their free Wi-Fi; the coffee shop a very busy meeting place in HV-GB. Tim Hortons was a significant place where I conducted my participant observation because of its geography located in the middle of HV-GB surrounded by the hospital, courthouses, parks and the organizations that provide housing and support services in the community. It is also important to note that Tim Hortons was one of the only public places in the community that did not restrict their washrooms to the larger public. I will elaborate on the restriction of public spaces in HV-GB in Chapter 6. However, wherever I was, I observed and listened carefully and made fieldnotes in my journal of my findings.

Another big aspect that grounded my participant observation was that I often walked everywhere in town. As there is no form of public transit or car sharing, by walking throughout the community I was able to experience firsthand the layout and the long commutes and distances between organizations, agencies, and locations in town. Thanks to friends and family in the community, I also had the privilege to go out on the land by ATV and boat, which allowed me to explore the local landscape. On an ATV trip through some of the backwoods trails of the community, I was able to see first-hand some of the homeless encampments and hangout spots in the area. This trip led me the physical location where the identified research need was rooted. This experience was a deep privilege, first in that I had social networks with community

members who ATVs and who could/ were willing to show me these locations. Second, as a researcher who wants to fully understand, examine, and analyze, seeing the homeless encampment first-hand contextualized for me the urgency and significance of this research for the community.

During my time in the community, I wanted to build rapport with community members and research participants. Participant observation was a useful method in this research because it helped me to develop a highly contextual understanding of the situation, allowing multiple viewpoints to be heard and acknowledged (Hay, 2016). While most observations and interactions with the community took place in locations that were informal and not limited to offices or cubicles, it allowed me to get involved in the community in relatively unstructured environments (Hay, 2016). These unstructured environments were fundamental to bolstering this research because limiting research to semi-structured interviews often removes researchers from the flows of everyday life, whereas participation observation allowed me to observe and take part in everyday life, and the interactions that came with it (Hay, 2016). This allowed me to have unique insight into the ways in which homelessness in conceptualized, perceived, and misunderstood in the HV-GB. It also revealed the dynamics of how Indigeneity is viewed, perceived, and experienced in settler-colonial spaces.

3.6 Storytelling and Lived Experience: Lessons Learned

3.6.1 Sampling

Following the guidance and desire of community members to expand the understanding of lived experiences of homeless individuals in HV-GB, I shaped my methodology to ethically include these participants' vital perspectives and stories. To best represent and gather these perspectives

and stories, I turned to sharing circles as a research method (see **appendix D** for Sharing Circle Guiding Questions) (Nabigon et al., 1999). I then aimed to spend two weeks in October 2019 conducting sharing circles with potential participants who had or continue to have experience with homelessness and housing insecurity. To recruit these participants, I had created flyers (see **appendix E)** and posted them all over HV-GB on public bulletin boards. I also dropped copies off at the Labrador Friendship Centre, Housing Hub, and the Mokami Status of Women thrift store and program space. I then posted them in public parks on telephone poles, the administration, the Nunatsiavut Government offices, and the hospital. Additionally, I posted the flyer on a local HV-GB Facebook group which was then shared by other members of that Facebook group to their personal pages. My recruitment process differed from semi-structured interviews where I already had contact and previous relationships with the CAB on Housing and Homelessness in HV-GB. For the semi-structured interviews, I started by interviewing members of the CAB, and through those interviews I was recommended to connect to other potential participants. I would connect to these participants by email, phone, or going to their office to see if they were interested and then schedule an interview.

During the 5 days when the sharing circle was scheduled to take place, I provided coffee, tea, and pastries from Tim Hortons each day. Providing food was not only to nourish and fuel participants' bodies and minds but it acted as a form of community and trust building (Levkoe et al., 2019; Robin et al., 2012). In many cultures, particularly in Indigenous cultures, food is attached to identity, culture, and connects people to the natural world (Levkoe et al., 2019; Robin et al., 2012). In addition to providing food, participants were to be given a $25 gift card to either Tim Hortons or North Mart (the grocery store in HV-GB). This was to provide a token of appreciation, and to show that I value and honour their time, their expertise, and stories. In the

next section, I outline my efforts, failures, and lessons learned in planning to conduct these sharing circles.

3.6.2 Storytelling and Sharing Circles

Why I had decided to conduct sharing circles was because it is a method that allows for the sharing and gathering of stories. Christensen's (2012) reflection on her research and methods in the NWT shared that she gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for what research means from an Indigenous perspective, and came to realize the significance of the creative knowledge production and sharing process through storytelling. Moreover, storytelling is a more culturally appropriate approach to conducting research in collaboration with Indigenous people (Lawrence et al., 2006). In its simplest form, storytelling involves people sharing their own experiences and it is recognized for its ability to foster human connection as it is a way for people from different worldviews to related to each other (Zhang, 2021). Sharing circles are subset of storytelling and are grounded on the basis that *every* storyteller is equal in information, spirituality, and emotion shared (Lavallée, 2009). Storytelling is also a decolonial and an Indigenous research method, being that it is a part of traditional community learning practices (Lavallée, 2009). For that reason, storytelling practice can be familiar and comforting to many Indigenous peoples, particularly in the context of research given that storytelling offers an opportunity to find power in their voice and reclaim their narrative (Lavallée, 2009; Zhang, 2021). Thus, the aim of sharing circles in this project was to explore the lived experiences of homelessness through group storytelling.

There are similarities between focus groups and sharing circles, with both methods centered around sharing knowledge (Hunt & Young, 2021). However, a fundamental difference between the two is that sharing circles are acts of sharing *all* aspects of the individual—heart,

mind, body, and spirit (Nabigon et al., 1999). Sharing circles are part of a larger body of storytelling research methods, and human geographers, social scientists, and medical and health professionals are increasingly taking up this research method as the public becomes increasingly cognizant of alternative ways of knowing, knowledge translation, and understand that Indigenous storytelling can more effectively incorporate Indigenous culture and perspectives (Charon, 2001; Cameron, 2012; Christensen, 2012b; de Leeuw et al., 2017; Hunt & Young, 2021). Christensen (2017) in her research in the NWT incorporates storytelling methods throughout her book as she shares the personal narratives of her research participants' homelessness experiences to illustrate the many ways in which homelessness occurs and provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of northern homelessness (Christensen, 2017). Similarly, in this thesis I aim to contribute to the growing body of literature of geographies of northern homelessness using similar methods.

Western norms and worldviews have influenced historic and contemporary research methodologies, with devastating effects on the wellbeing of Indigenous people, families, and communities (de Leeuw et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important for researchers to engage in decolonial and Indigenous research methods, such as storytelling methods, as it has opened new creative spaces for those who are often furthest removed from research (de Leeuw et al., 2017). Making space is integral to decolonizing research methodologies and frameworks because it involves rethinking and rewriting the Indigenous position in history and society through incorporating Indigenous knowledges and narratives on their terms (Lavallée, 2009). With storytelling research methods' intent to promote meaningful and reciprocal opportunities, I decided that sharing circles were the best method for my project (Walsh et al., 2010). However, I became extremely discouraged after not a single participant showed up to my first scheduled

sharing circle. I had naively thought that by simply creating space it would be enough for Indigenous people with lived experiences of homelessness to come share their stories and experiences. After the third scheduled session of no one showing up, I realized that failure in research can be a finding in itself, and although researchers rarely disclose the mistakes or failures in research, it nevertheless can lead to invaluable findings and experiences (Gregory, 2019). This failure provided me a lesson on patience and humility, and it offered me an opportunity to pivot and change my methods.

The lesson I learned from my failed attempt at planning sharing circles in HV-GB was that, "In order to critically and productively understand, and possibly transform, research relationships, researchers need to establish relationships outside the expected, pushing the boundaries of what is already imagined or defined" (de Leeuw et al., 2017, p. 158). It was not enough for me just to create space and facilitate these sharing circles. Sharing circles are based on relationships, trust, and safe spaces (Latimer et al., 2018). For the participants I attempted to recruit, I was just another researcher from the South. After two weeks of failed attempts at organizing sharing circles and lessons learned, I decided that my best bet was to rethink my methods. While I still thought creating space for people with lived experience to share their *own* stories in their own words was important and significant to telling a more complete narrative of homelessness experiences in HV-GB, I needed to rethink the approach. I therefore extended my fieldwork time and decided to stay longer in HV-GB to facilitate this change of course.

It was clear in my participant observation work that I had to become a familiar face in the community, and so I spent more time in the shelter and the Labrador Friendship Centre. I introduced myself to new people and talked to the community members present in those spaces. Once I had shown up consistently to the Housing Hub and the Friendship Centre for a few weeks

in a row, I felt that I was more familiar, and I decided to host a community breakfast (**Figure 6**). With the help of a few other staff and community members part of the CAB, I organized a community breakfast at the shelter and cooked hash browns, eggs, bacon, and sausages— foods not typically offered for breakfast at the shelter. I cooked, served and shared a meal with the staff and clients at the shelter to help build rapport, trust, and community through food (Levkoe et al., 2019; Robin et al., 2012). The community breakfast was a hit, and 23 people attended. It was during breakfast that I let people know I would be available throughout that morning to listen and meet individuals with lived experience. That morning, 11 individuals shared their stories with me indivudally.

Figure 6. Breakfast at the Housing Hub (the local shelter) for research participants with lived experience (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahal)

3.7 Feedback Workshops and Deliverables

In March 2020, I returned to HV-GB with plans to host a series of feedback workshops with interview participants. The purpose of these workshops was to gather input and feedback on preliminary research themes and to build a data analysis plan that ensured research findings were

representative of the lived realities in the community, and approved by community members (Heller, 2011). During the feedback workshops, I would have discussed and presented policy recommendations with the purpose of informing a policy report to present to governments (including Indigenous governments), policymakers, and community stakeholders. However, my trip to HV-GB in March was unexpectedly cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was in the community for three days, during which time I was able to present my research results to the Housing and Homelessness Coalition of HV-GB and had been actively planning my workshops when the Labrador Institute proactively called off all research activities. I returned home to Ontario, and in lieu of conducting my feedback workshops in person I circulated my preliminary findings to participants by email. Throughout this project I wanted to ensure that respectful and reciprocal relationships with community stakeholders were maintained. I attended CAB meetings before my fieldwork and a few months afterwards. Until the COVID-19 pandemic halted in-person meetings and research in the spring of 2020, I was participating in the CAB activities including attending meetings, presenting at meetings, providing research findings, and drafting a Reaching Home Application for the community to access funding to address homelessness. I wanted to share this project with the community, and so I also compiled a summary of my research findings into a report that has been distributed to key stakeholders and players in the community, where they could provide their feedback and input (**appendix F**). This summary report will be made available online in addition to paper copies that will be distributed to the organizations that were involved in this research.

3.8 Limitations

I want to acknowledge that there are some limitations of this research specifically in relation to homelessness research. Lancione (2016) in her article challenging European literature

and research on homelessness shares that, “Only in being open about the limits of what is done and in being honest about the entrenchment of disciplinary knowledge, can renewed, impact-orientated and theoretically relevant research approaches be brought to the fore” (pp. 163-164). In this chapter I described my research methods including data collection and data analysis; I want to acknowledge that the pervasive forms of hidden homelessness were not fully captured during data collection and were out of the scope of this research. Christensen (2016) further acknowledges that, “Visible realities of homelessness in northern urban centres cannot be detached from the often hidden forms of homelessness existing in many northern rural settlements” (p. 206). The data I collected during fieldwork was qualitative and non-representative in nature, and the results should therefore be interpreted accordingly. Moreover, I collected data during the warmer months of the year (June-October), when there is a general increase in visible homelessness in the community. There is likely a larger narrative to explore in the colder months in HV-GB vis-a-vis homelessness experiences. However, it unlikely that there will ever be precise numbers of hidden homelessness (Wooley, 2016). Nevertheless, this research captures a rich narrative of the variety in which Indigenous homelessness is experienced in HV-GB which builds on an otherwise narrow discourse of Indigenous homelessness and transiency (see Christensen, 2012a; Lancione, 2016).

3.9 Conclusion

Throughout this project, my methodology took different forms and paths than originally intended. However, with a reflexive approach, I was able to build good relationships with community stakeholders and community members, and maintained a respectful, responsible, and reciprocal dialogue. It was my firsthand experiences with frontline workers and people with lived experiences that provided a deeper understanding of homelessness and all its other intersecting

discussions in this research. Conversations across my research methods informed the factors that are outlined in this research, and that provide a more accurate and full narrative of homelessness in the community. It was these experiences that really shaped the knowledge I sought to share in this thesis. Community-based, qualitative research involves all partners and, "Begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change" (Lavallée, 2009, p. 24). It is through my methodology and writing that I hope my research will inform change to ensure that *all* community members are housed, healthy, and thriving.

CHAPTER FOUR:

SITUATING HOMELESSNESS IN HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY

"We are a hub. We are the only community in Labrador that is connected by air, road, and sea--we are the only community that you can get to by those three means. Geographically and physically, we are the center so it's why people come to Happy Valley-Goose Bay."

-Coordinator of Supportive Living at the Housing Hub

4.0 Introduction

To understand homelessness and housing insecurity in HV-GB, it is crucial to situate the community within the broader regional and provincial context. The community of HV-GB is a significant place in the geographical context of Labrador as it is a place of northern isolation and social layers. In this chapter, I examine the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors contributing to rural-urban mobility, movement, and homelessness in the community. Additionally, I explore the ways in which the dimensions of homelessness and housing insecurity in the community intersect with and expand our understanding of the dynamics of northern urbanization, socio-economic unevenness between rural and urban geographies of infrastructure, supports and services, and migration and mobility. I aim in this chapter to provide a robust understanding of the significance of HV-GB not only as an urban centre but also as a hub for many communities and individuals in Labrador. I also examine the urbanization of northern Canada in this chapter, as urban centers in northern Canada are becoming increasingly important to northerners. I pay specific attention to the role that military and natural resource extraction projects have in Labrador, and their contributions to unevenness. This chapter is where I elaborate on the socio-economic unevenness and inequality that is experienced by Indigenous peoples and communities in Labrador. Lastly, I present rural-urban movement and the significance of migration and mobility to HV-GB, keeping in mind the

contextual landscape of the region. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 are dedicated to reviewing key literature that sets the thematic foundation and concepts to support section 4.3 of this chapter, which is where I draw out the themes of analysis made evident in my HV-GB fieldwork.

4.1 Movement, Mobility, and Urbanization in northern Canada

Movement and mobility are common occurrences and patterns in northern Canada (Christensen, 2017). Movement of individuals and families between more rural communities to urban places is a pattern that was shared both amongst the majority of research participants in this study, and in the literature discussing urbanization and homelessness in northern Canada (see Christensen, 2013; 2017). Given this, movement and mobility is a frequent dynamic in Labrador, as many northern geographies are institutionally uneven. This uneven access and infrastructure of supports and services in rural geographies forced many individuals, families, and specific populations to migrate in and out of HV-GB, the hub of the region (Christensen, 2013; 2017; Schiff & Brunger, 2015). As reviewed in Chapter 2, the uneven spatial distribution of resources, opportunities, and infrastructure in northern Canada resulted in significant movement in and between regional hubs and centers in northern Canada (Christensen, 2017). Following this dynamic in other northern Canadian regions, HV-GB too as the hub for essential services in the region including medical, judicial, education, employment, governmental services, experiences movement in and between its borders.

Urbanization is often an overlooked concept in northern Canada (Carson et al., 2022). However, scholars like Dybbroe et al. (2010) suggest that urbanization is an increasingly central feature in the Arctic, as regions across northern Canada are intensively urbanizing. While Dybrroe et al. (2012) discusses the Arctic (which geographically is outside of HV-GB's

location), their work is still relevant to situating the landscape of HV-GB in terms of understanding the processes of urbanization, modernity, and globalization in vast geographical regions with small populations. I engage urbanization as a lens to illuminate the unique urban dynamics that exist in urban centres in northern Canada as there are key interconnections between urbanization and homelessness in northern geographies (Christensen et al., 2017). HV-GB shares similar dynamics to other urbanizing centres in northern regions as a key gathering place for people from other rural or remote communities in Labrador.

In my literature review and during my fieldwork collecting data, research participants frequently referred to HV-GB as the hub for the majority of Labrador. There was also a considerable amount of movement into the community from the other provinces, territories and countries (Dybrroe et al., 2010). This historical movement was related to: (1) state welfare provision services, military expansion and, (2) the emerging economic opportunities surrounding natural resource extraction in northern Canada. Natural resource extraction was a relatively new phenomenon in Labrador until the province of Newfoundland and Labrador confederated in 1971 (House, 1980). However, regardless of the comparative infancy of natural resource extraction in the region, Labrador is host to massive projects including a nickel mine in Voisey's Bay, the hydroelectric dam in Churchill Falls, and the Muskrat Falls dam megaproject. These projects all contributed to the urbanization and movement of people to HV-GB over the last 50 years.

4.1.1 Military and Natural Resource Extraction

Military and natural resource extraction in Labrador have been key factors in the urbanization and movement of people and resources into the region. However, they have also played a significant role in sustaining and maintain unevenness (Christensen, 2013; 2017). Unevenness is

a theme throughout this paper, and unevenness is conceptualized in this work in its social, ecological, and political forms of stratification (see Christensen, 2013; 2017). Unevenness as a concept helps to build a more complex understanding of Indigenous homelessness in HV-GB by providing the facets through which Innu individuals in HV-GB have become disproportionately affected by homelessness.

First and foremost, the Innu Nation has faced significant and devastating impacts because of natural resource extraction and military activities (Penashue, 2019). The impacts of natural resource extraction and military development on the Innu communities were overwhelmingly demonstrated in the archived accounts/diary of Tshaukuesh (Elizabeth) Penashue. Tshaukuesh is an Innu Elder and activist from the Innu Nation. In 2019, her diary was translated and published into a book which provided an excellent overview of Innu history during the decades of development and change.[2] Low- level flying was one of the extremely invasive impacts to the Innu Nation, Tshaukuesh recalls that, "Pilots flew so low at times they almost skimmed the treetops. The sonic created by the low-level flying was extremely stressful for the people and animals living there" (Penashue, 2019, p. xix). Low-level flying had detrimental impacts on the local caribou population which had further impacts on the Innu Nation as caribou was, and is, central to Innu culture and survival (Sider, 2014; Penashue, 2019). Penashue (2019) wrote, "Low level flying, and military training were threats to the [Innu] right to live peacefully on their own

4 In 1976, the Innu people of Labrador organized under the name, Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association (NMIA), now known as the Innu Nation, to better protect their rights, lands, and ways of life against the increasing military presence and natural resource extraction in Goose Bay. Organization in the 70s was integral when the military base began low-level flying over Innu lands (Penashue, 2019)

lands" (p. 4). Military activity thus had adverse effects on the Innu Nation including harmful impacts to their well-being, livelihoods, culture, and lands.

Natural resource extraction also had adverse effects on the Innu Nation. One of these projects was the 1974 Churchill Falls hydroelectric plant and dam, where no consultation with the Innu Nation occurred (Samson, 2003). Penashue (2019) shares that, "[Innu] lost so many things that happened because of Churchill Falls" (p. 173), which included hunting grounds and sacred burial grounds that were used and taken care of for generations. Recently with the Muskrat Falls project, there was also no preliminary undertaking of consultation or engagement with the Innu Nation before the megaproject's construction (Samson, 2018). This project, authorized by the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador flooded 65,000 square miles of the Michikamau region, an area that was used for hunting and fishing- activities which sustained the Innu diet and life (Samson, 2018). The construction of the Muskrat Falls dam, and its subsequent flooding over the landscape completely altered the entire local ecology and even reversed the flow of some rivers (Samson, 2018). Innu hunting families recalled wildlife drowning, the loss of caribou calving grounds, decreased waterfowl populations, and methylmercury poisoning into local vegetation and animal populations (Samson, 2018). Natural resource extraction projects in Labrador have taken a form that is harmful not only to the Innu Nation's livelihoods and sustenance, but also that have serious impacts on the ecological integrity of Labrador. While the impacts of military and natural resource extraction projects are examples of political, social, and ecological unevenness experienced in Labrador specifically by Indigenous peoples, all of these activities relate directly to the displacement of the Innu Nation (Koutouki et al., 2018; Sider, 2014; Samson; 2018). These activities are major factors in the ways in which Indigenous conceptualizations of home are being colonized and reshaped.

4.2 Inequality in Indigenous Communities

As introduced above, unevenness is a common experience in northern Canada, and takes many forms such as socio-economic, developmental, and institutional. In this section I examine the inequality experienced by Indigenous peoples in the region due to these different forms of unevenness. I situate discussions of inequalities and experienced unevenness by Indigenous people in Labrador within the larger context of racialization and racism in Canada, and which have disproportionately come to affect Indigenous people (Anderson & Collins, 2014; Thistle, 2018; Thistle & Smylie, 2020). To capture the whole narrative of factors influencing rural-urban movement and the significance of HV-GB, it is central to understand the intersectional inequalities faced by Indigenous people and communities in Labrador.

Today, many inequalities experienced by Labrador's Indigenous communities are exacerbated by ineffective, inappropriate, or under-funded programs or services for Indigenous peoples in Canada (Sider, 2014). However, inequality must be understood much deeper than the failure of colonial government policies. Inequality faced by Indigenous people must be contextualized within the historical legacies and continuities of settler-colonialism in Canada. Inequality in Indigenous communities is due to direct and indirect present-day consequences of settler-colonialism resulted in long-term loss of land and autonomy through political, cultural, economic, and social disenfranchisement (Adelson, 2005; Sider, 2014). Acknowledging history is inherently important as these implications are today's living legacies. Both the Innu and Inuit communities have endured a history of intimate and deep violence given that the roots and basis of northern settlement and development in Labrador included the relocation, resettlement, and residential school attendance requirement of Innu and Inuit peoples (Procter, 2020; Samson, 2014). Those forced acts all worked to systemically enact violence on Indigenous individuals and

communities in Labrador (Procter, 2020; Samson, 2014; Sider, 2018). The results from these colonial systems and institutional tools created living legacies in the form of trauma and intergenerational trauma (Christensen, 2017; Procter, 2020; Thistle, 2018). Intergenerational trauma affects generations beyond the individuals who experienced the firsthand forms of trauma, and individuals, families, and communities will then typically be characterized as also living with patterns of social marginality and isolation (Dombrowski, 2016). Contextualizing the effects of historical and ongoing settler-colonialism provides a fuller narrative of inequality in the Innu and Inuit communities of Labrador.

4.2.1 Housing Need in Indigenous Communities of Labrador

Whereas in Chapter 2 I provided a review of the literature and data exemplifying the disproportionately high rates of overcrowded, inadequate, and unsafe housing in Indigenous communities- particularly in Indigenous communities in northern Canada, in this section I provide a focus on housing need and the current state of housing in Indigenous communities in Labrador. By examining housing as a socio-economic determinant of health in communities, the inequality that exists in Labrador is further demonstrated. Housing correlates with health and wellness indicators/ statuses, and the housing inequality experienced by Indigenous households and communities can help to explain the colonial-constructed failure of access and delivery of essential services and supports for Indigenous peoples in Labrador. The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national representational organization that seeks to protect and advance the rights and wellbeing of the Inuit people in Canada, released a report in 2014 regarding social determinants of health in Inuit Nunangat (Nunavut, Inuvialuit, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut). In this report, ITK (2014) reported that there were significant health gaps in Inuit Nunangat as a direct consequence of poor socio-economic conditions including high poverty rates, low educational attainment,

limited employment opportunities, and inadequate housing conditions. These communities faced higher rates of chronic illnesses and infectious diseases, and the health problems were linked to crowded and poor-quality housing, unemployment, marginal access to health services, and food insecurity (ITK, 2014; Lauster & Tester, 2010). Housing therefore played a key determinant of health and well-being in these communities, but in many of these communities overcrowding, and the availability of adequate and safe housing was also a key concern (ITK, 2014).

Though housing need is a significant concern for many Indigenous communities in Canada, Inuit households experience the highest levels of overcrowding in Canada at 53% (ITK, 2014). In Nunatsiavut, a 2014 *Housing Needs Assessment* found that that 15% of households in Nain and 14% in Hopedale were overcrowded (ITK, 2014). This was roughly five times higher than the national average (ITK, 2014). Moreover, nearly 3:4 homes, which translated to 74% were in need of major or minor repairs (Minich et al., 2011; ITK, 2014). Most recently, in a 2023 report Johannes Lampes the President of Nunatsiavut stated that Nunatsiavut communities have been suffering everyday and have for generations due to their housing situation. This has amounted into a human rights crisis (Canadian Human Rights Commission, pg 3, 2023). While Nunatsiavut is outside of HV-GB, HV-GB is a major hub for Inuit communities in Nunatsiavut and even run significant programs, supports and services for their benefits and non-beneficiaries in HV-GB. Innu communities/ reserves in Labrador, Sheshatshiu, and Natuashish also face similar issues as both communities are experiencing a housing crisis (Breen, 2016). These communities have also been experiencing a significant population growth. Sheshatshiu (an Innu reserve 40 kms from HV-GB) in particular has seen birth rates increase by 36% between 2012-15 (Health Canda, 2018). This population growth over the last few years has resulted in a massive increase in the demand for housing. The current housing supply in the area does not

meet community demands however, and overcrowding is a common result, creating major health and wellbeing issues (Jewcyz, 2017; Lee at al., 2007; Waegemakers & Schiff, 2015).

4.2.2 Economic Inequality in Indigenous Communities in Labrador

As I explored in the Chapter Two, social determinants of health and wellbeing are relational and reach further than what is traditionally conceptualized as a health determinant (Bopp, 2007; Christensen, 2017). Though housing is a social determinant of health and is a lens I explored throughout this thesis, it is also significant to examine other inequalities that impact Indigenous communities in Labrador. While Indigenous communities in Labrador face severe inequality with regards to housing and health, economic inequality also has major outcomes that impact an individual's life far beyond the financial realm (Samson, 2014). Poverty is prominent amongst Labrador's Indigenous communities (Dombrowski et al., 2016; House, 1980; Samson, 2014). The poverty rate in Nunatsiavut is 24.7%, which is 4-5 times the national poverty rate (Duhaime & Édouard, 2015). High poverty rates translate into significantly different social outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Dombrowski et al. (2016) looked at the relationship of movement patterns and inequalities in Inuit communities in Labrador and Nunatsiavut. From their research, they concluded that Inuit people living in HV-GB showed different social outcomes based on the length of time they have lived in the urban center (Dombrowski et al., 2016). For example, Inuit people who were born in HV-GB displayed a higher average income, better employment statuses, and more access to tools needed for subsistence food gathering compared to those who were born in Nunatsiavut (Dombrowski et al., 2016). Since poverty results in poorer outcomes and poverty rates are disproportionately higher in Indigenous communities, it results in a necessary pattern of moving out of these rural- Indigenous communities and reserves and into urban locations (Robillard & Peters, 2009).

The common geographical trends and patterns of uneven development have disproportionately disadvantaged Indigenous communities along the lines of rural-urban disparities, inadequate housing, economic opportunities, and institutional services that have spatialized northern settlements (Christensen, 2017). These uneven and inequitable dynamics arebetter understood within the context of colonization and the colonial legacy that created reserves as places of extreme poverty and isolation. For Indigenous communities across the country, reserves are colonial creations where there is little opportunity for employment, education, or services (Peters & Robillard, 2014). Though Inuit communities do not have reserve systems in northern Canada, Inuit communities share similar histories and outcomes as the First Nation reserve systems (Richmond & Ross, 2008). In both cases, community conditions are characterized by low levels of economic development and high levels of poverty (Peters & Robillard, 2014). For northern rural geographies in particular, the majority of communities are comprised of Indigenous peoples and further become a landscape of economic disparity between rural communities and urban centers, ultimately creating concentrated poverty in the rural regions (Christensen, 2017). In HV-Gb, these same patterns of unevenness experienced historically and contemporarily in Indigenous communities across health, social, and economic lines were key motives for rural-urban movement.

4.3 What We Heard: Rural-Urban Movement in Labrador

In this section, I use data from various research participants. This includes participants who live in the community, work in the community, as well as community members with lived experience of homelessness. I demonstrate in this section the constant movement between rural-urban communities in Labrador, as well as the importance of this mobility for certain individuals and populations. I examine the common themes that emerged during the semi-structured

interviews, centering around the factors that make HV-GB a hub. Moreover, I explicitly examine why HV-GB is a significant place for many individuals in Labrador and pay particular attention to those who experienced housing insecurity and/or homelessness.

According to my research participants, mobility and movement from rural Indigenous communities to urban centers is motivated by several factors including: poor housing on-/off-reserve, access (or lack thereof) to key medical, employment, educational, justice, and mental health and addiction services. During my interviews with research participants, 17 (out of 23) participants identified HV-GB as the hub or centre of Labrador. One research participant who works at the emergency shelter in HV-GB shared that, “We are a hub. We are the only community in Labrador that is connected by air, road, and sea- we are the only community that you can get to by those three means. Geographically and physically, we are the center so it's why people come to Happy Valley-Goose Bay” (Coordinator of Supportive Living, Housing Hub, 2019). Another research participants shared that, “HV-GB is the centre, it’s the place to go, HV-GB has family, hospital, it’s where you can go for any of your appointments” (Research Participant, Community Service Worker, Labrador Friendship Centre, 2019). Similarly, another participant shared that, “People come here hoping for something better and different" (Research Participant, Director, Labrador Affairs, 2019). Urban centers especially in northern Canada remain magnets for individuals who lack access to these services in their communities (Christensen, 2017). There are various factors that provoke “pushing” from rural settlements and “pulling” towards urban centres (Lee, 1966; Christensen, 2012a).

The unevenness and inequality of access to institutions, services and supports in Indigenous communities often came up as a prominent theme and factor that shaped mobility patterns as urban centres pull the most vulnerable individuals from rural geographies towards

these otherwise inaccessible services (Christensen, 2012a; Christensen, 2017; Waegemakers et al., 2014). A participant shared that, “People from coastal [Inuit] communities come to HV-GB because it’s a hub, it's the hub of Labrador the medical centre, a transportation hub, government, you can access more things [in HV-GB] that other communities don't have and as a result of that there is a need for better living circumstances here (Research Participant, Program Manager, Nunatsiavut Government, 2019). Similarly, the Manager of Apenam’s House, a residential treatment program in Sheshatshui shared that, “[Innu] come down [to HV-GB] because services are here, we know this is a hub, they are going to make their way to the center, there is more opportunity [in HV-GB] than Sheshatshui” (Research Participant , Manager, Apenam’s House, 2019). A former staff of the Labrador Friendship Centre also shared that, “People have been travelling here for decades. People coming here from the coast to get away from violent homes and not go back, people dealing with abuse, and residential school experiences and so many different things, and needing to get away- Goose Bay is that hub” (Research Participant, former SHIELD worker, Labrador Friendship Center, 2019). Movement and migration to northern urban centres by individuals who are housing insecure or experiencing homelessness is therefore significantly important for these individuals (Christensen, 2017; Waegemakers et al., 2014).

While I overall aim in this chapter to situate HV-GB within the broader regional and provincial context of historic and contemporary uneven geographies, I focus the remaining sections of this chapter on situating rural-urban movement and mobility within discussions of inequality and unevenness in rural-urban geographies, ultimately framing the factors that contribute to rural-urban mobility, movement, and homelessness in the community. I rely heavily on data and knowledge from my semi-structured interviews with community members, professionals in the community, and participants who have lived experienced with homelessness,

all of whom contributed a deep understanding and knowledge about these discussions. I further provide the demographic information of the research participants in this thesis who have lived experience as it contributes to this discussion (see **Table 4**). Of the 8 research participants with lived experienced of homelessness who were not from HV-GB, everyone had a reason for migrating to HV-GB. Some reasons included that they were kicked out of their home community, there was a family breakdown, they were blamed for something they did not do, they came to connect with family, or they came to access medical services and to access the emergency shelter (Research Participants with lived experience of homelessness, 2019). While research participants without lived experience and those who participated in semi-structured interviews provided important findings and data, it is through the findings and data from research participants with lived experience of homelessness that a unique and intimate insight and valuable perspective was built. Data from both groups of research participants will be discussed further in this chapter, as rural-urban movement adds layers of complexity to northern homelessness including the pathways to homelessness and the rise of visible homelessness in northern Canadian urban centers (Christensen, 2017).

Table 4: Demographic Information about Research Participants with Lived Experience of Homelessness

Age	20 – 30 years	8
	31+ years	3
Gender	Men	7
	Women	4
Home community	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	3
	Coastal Labrador (Natuashish, communities in Nunatsiavut)	8
Identified as Indigenous	Yes	11
	No	0
Total research participants		11

4.3.1 Better Living Circumstances: Movement for Medical Treatment

Access to medical/ health services and supports was a major motivating factor for individuals migrating to HV-GB. In Labrador, HV-GB is the medical hub of the region, as coastal Labrador health services are limited to nurses and telehealth services that work with Labrador-Grenfell Health, the hospital and health center in HV-GB (Various Research Participants, 2019). Any medical treatments such as dialysis, or medical procedures such as X-rays must be done in HV-GB. Additionally, HV-GB is often the stop-over location for people from the coast to access medical services in St. John's. People often stay in HV-GB for a few days before flying out to St. John's which is the largest medical hub in the province. For these reasons alone, there is a lot of necessary movement between rural-coastal Labrador and HV-GB. During my interviews, two participants who were a couple revealed that they had originally left their home communities on the coast for medical appointments. This was quite common, and many individuals from nearby Innu communities and coastal Inuit communities seeking medical or other services often remained for various reasons (Peters & Christensen, 2016; Schiff et al., 2012; Schiff & Brunger, 2015). This was the case for a particular couple that shared that, "It's easier here, it's bigger and cheaper" (Research Participants, a couple with Lived Experience #1, 2019).

Access to medical services and supports as a key migration factor was also discussed quite frequently by frontline workers, service/support providers, and policymakers. An employee who worked for an organization delivering critical health and social services within the community (who chose not be identified) shared that, "Migration from coastal communities to HV-GB is because it's a hub, it's the hub of Labrador[…] the medical center, a transportation hub, government, you can access more things that other communities don't and as a result of that there is a need for better living circumstances" (Research Participant , Program Manager,

Nunatsiavut Government, 2019). The Manager of Mental Health Addictions at Labrador-Grenfell Health shared that most clinics in coastal Labrador have mental health workers, but that Labrador-Grenfell Health (the hospital in HV-GB) sees the majority of the people coming in from the coast to access mental health and addiction services. The Deputy Minister, and the Director of Health and Social Development for Nunatsiavut also expressed the significance of HV-GB as the medical hub and said that, "Individuals with multiple and complex needs are not returning to their home communities as much they want to, they can't as supportive housing and health supports are here [*in HV-GB*]"(Research Participant, Deputy Minister and Director of Health and Social Development, 2019). When asked if these individuals with multiple and complex needs can be served in their home communities, the Deputy Minister expressed that they could, however the proper infrastructure and wrap-up services/supports are limited on the coast compared to HV-GB (Research Participant, Deputy Minister and Director of Health and Social Development, 2019). With the current medical services structure in Labrador, rural-urban movement is conditioned and motivated by uneven dynamics of access to medical services, supports and infrastructure, resulting in significant movement between rural-coastal communities and HV-GB- the medical hub.

4.3.2 Opportunity

Opportunity was the second theme that came up quite frequently in interviews. Opportunity as a theme comprised of a variety of experiences for individuals. Two men who had lived experience of homelessness remained quite candid during their interviews and expressed the hardships they had faced living on the coast. Both men migrated to HV-GB in search for a better life. One of the men expressed that he came to HV-GB looking for a job because his home community did not have many options for him. The other man shared that he had come to HV-GB because he was

having trouble at home and needed somewhere else to live. Both men had stayed in the former boarding house in HV-GB, Newman's Boarding House, which shut down after 30 years of providing shelter to people most in need (Montague, 2017). Newman's Boarding House shut down due to lack of funding and allegations by former residents about the poor living conditions (Montague, 2017). While Newman's House was called a boarding house in the community, but in an interview with the owner of the house he said, "For years it's been a homelessness shelter"; prior, he claimed that, "The provincial government and others in HV-GB have not done enough to help keep the boarding house functional (Montague, 2017). After the boarding house shut down the emergency shelter opened, and both men were staying at the emergency shelter. The Director of Labrador Affairs claimed that, "People come here for different reasons, some people move here from smaller isolated areas because they want more, they want to build their lives" (Research Participant, Director of Labrador Affairs, 2019). Pathways to homelessness are complex, however rural-urban movement adds layers of complexity given that the promise of opportunity and a better life in HV-GB is a significant motivating factor for people migrating from the coast or rural locations.

4.3.3 Needing to Get Away: Hub for Escape

Escape was the third motivating factor that had significant importance and influence on the myriad of rural-urban movement rationales in Labrador. During interviews with frontline workers and support and service providers, 'escape' was revisited quite frequently when discussing migration in HV-GB. 'Escape' is a term used most frequently when discussing family and/or domestic violence. In Canada, Indigenous women are more likely to experience spousal violence, with the rate of spousal assault against Indigenous women in Canada three times higher than against non-Indigenous women (Boyce, 2016; Christensen, 2017; NWAC, 2008). Stress and

breakdowns of social relationships including family or spousal relationships are inextricably linked to uneven geographies of social and economic opportunity, institutional flows, and core housing need (Christensen, 2012a). Indigenous women and children in northern Canada experience distressingly high rates of family violence, which has been linked to core housing needs and to intergenerational trauma from residential schools and the ongoing effects of colonialism (Christensen, 2017). A program coordinator at the Labrador Friendship Centre shared that, "People have been travelling here for decades, people coming here from the coast to get away from violent homes and not go back, people dealing with abuse and residential school experiences, and so many different things and needing to get away. Happy Valley-Goose Bay is that hub" (Research Participant, program coordinator, 2019). With core housing need a reality across northern Canada, when women flee domestic violence, they often have no other option but to access shelter outside of their communities (Christensen, 2017). As the lack of housing remains a significant problem throughout Indigenous and rural Labrador, women fleeing violence are often escaping to HV-GB.

Interviewees particularly from the Mokami Status of Women Council, an organization that provides supportive living units for women who have fled from domestic violence, and from Libra House, an emergency shelter for women who are experiencing violence or who are at-risk of violence, claim that housing was a major discussion point for clients seeking outs these organizations. An executive at an organization for women in the community (who chose not to be identified) expressed that:

> The challenge of housing directly impacts our clients. Limited housing stock is a barrier to women seeking independence from supportive living, overcrowding, and bad housing conditions. These conditions add family stress which often leads to violence and then women come here seeking a safe place to stay. Many women before coming to [here] were in housing insecure situations where they were couch-surfing, having survival sex

> for a roof over their head, a lot of these women are coming from the northern Canadian coast. (Research Participant, executive at a women's organization in Labrador, 2019)

The Executive Director of the Libra House shared similar discussions of housing and the link to domestic violence saying,

> Overcrowding is a common experience on the coast, overcrowding causes a lot of strains. We have had some women come here because of family violence, a lot of discomfort, a lot of alcoholism within the homes. Due to the housing crisis, we also see a lot of clients couch surfing, it's really common here, at least half of the women that come to Libra House have exhausted all other options. Women come to Goose Bay because it's the hub, we have more support, services, and the shelter. (Research Participant, Executive Director at Libra House, 2019)

Rural-urban movement is central to the experiences of women and other individuals in coastal and rural Labrador seeking safety and escaping violence. Similarly, this dynamic exists in other contexts across the northern Canada (Christensen, 2017). As rural-urban movement is central to escape for women fleeing domestic violence, it is also crucial to recognize the role domestic abuse has in creating homelessness for women. The harsh reality of the high rates of domestic violence creates further vulnerabilities for women in northern Canada. Domestic violence is therefore a significant contributor to homelessness for women (Bopp & Poole, 2007; Christensen, 2017; Peters & Robillard, 2009, Schiff & Turner, 2015). Considering the high rates of domestic violence in northern Canada, there is a great significance of HV-GB existing as a place to escape from domestic violence.

4.3.4 Geographies of Substance Use & Addictions

Based on interviews I conducted with frontline workers, support/service providers, and policy makers, addictions and substance use were another major factor that contributed to reasons for movement to HV-GB. The Supportive Living Coordinator at the Housing Hub, the emergency shelter in HV-GB, shared that:

> "A lot of people coming from the coast for whatever reason, whether it for medical or to visit family and they get here thinking that Happy Valley-Goose Bay is the answer to their problems back home move in with a family member or friend that doesn't work out and then next thing you know that's the people we see walking around the streets all day long. Often people are fleeing from family violence or family break up, assault, abuse, or their own demons. When people get here, they think things will be much better, sometimes it gets worse because the drugs and alcohol we have here are stronger and more available." (Research Participant, Supportive Living Coordinator, Housing Hub, 2019)

Substance use complicates migration for individuals migrating from rural-coastal Labrador to the urban hub of HV-GB. A health and social program delivery worker in the community (who chose not to be identified) further discussed the complexities attached to migration and addiction. She claimed that:

> "People who migrate to HV-GB are under the impression that they are gonna get better housing, life is going to get better in Goose Bay. Life isn't better in Goose Bay, you have as many or just as many challenges and you can't escape the lived experience of trauma and addiction, it goes with you. People trying to run away and escape their problems; running away doesn't solve anything." (Research Participant, health and social program worker, 2019)

Upon arrival in HV-GB, substance use can significantly complicate an individual's circumstances. As HV-GB is the largest community in Labrador, it offers greater access to drugs and alcohol compared to the coast (Schiff et al., 2015). Natuashish, a Mushuau Innu First Nation reserve on the coast of Labrador between Nain and Hopedale, adopted a bylaw in 2008 making it a dry community, banning the sale and possession of alcohol in the community (Lafille, 2010). An RCMP constable at the Goose Bay attachment shared that:

> "A lot of people who are not from HV-GB are predominantly from coastal communities, they come here for whatever reason and those reasons are varied. They just stay and live this transient lifestyle. Alcohol is a big factor and easier to come by here than in a dry community. There are also now people panhandling for change and obviously panhandling where the possibility of your outcome is probably more successful, so we are getting more [homeless people] than we ever did. So that could be a reason, the availability of [alcohol and drug] resources. (Research Participant, RCMP constable, 2019)

The Director of Labrador Affairs also pointed to the role of alcohol as a major factor for migration into the community:

> "The other factor [to movement] is if their community is dry or not, if there's alcohol bans in their communities they come here where there's access to alcohol. In addition, there's a homeless shelter… they go there to get cleaned up, get some food, that's fine but knowing that support is there and still able to do what they want to do, it's an attraction. (Research Participant, Director of Labrador Affairs, 2019)

While drugs and alcohol are speculated to be motivating factors for people coming to HV-GB, previous research done by Christensen (2012; 2017) in the northern-urban hub of Yellowknife shared that while her study indicates that majority of research participants reported substance use, only a minority had moved to the city to access drugs and alcohol. This section therefore explores the role of addictions and how drugs and alcohol add layers of complexity to homelessness in the community. During semi-structured interviews with support/service providers, frontline workers, and policy makers, access to drugs and alcohol, and the complexities of addiction, were frequently discussed in relation to movement from rural and remote communities in Labrador into HV-GB. However, it was clearer that there was a strong public discourse centered around addiction and movement when examining social media and news outlets in the community. These popular media platforms marked a stark assumption and distinction between the types of population migrating to HV-GB. For example, in a CBC article from June 14th, 2019, titled, "*Public Drug Use, Drunkenness, Lewd Acts Prompt Call for Emergency Meeting"*, Mayor of HV-GB, Wally Anderson and town Councillor and Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Coalition, Jackie Compton-Hobbs, discussed the community safety issues stemming from the 'transient population' including public drug and alcohol use (Barker, 2019). In a CBC article published a few weeks prior, Compton-Hobbs discussed the growing presence of the 'transient population' in the community, a population that was characterized as,

“People with complex needs, people struggling with addictions, mental health and family issues.” Compton-Hobbs further explained that, “The transient population comes to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for medical appointments, ends up staying until the fall arrives, and aren't homeless per se, as some do have homes in their communities” (Gaudi, 2019). Concerns around the 'transient population’ have been a community issue for years according to the local CAB and previous research done in the community (Various research participants, 2019). To try to deal with the transient population, the town of HV-GB created a Transient & Homelessness Working Group in 2017 (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2018). The Transient & Homelessness Working Group as of 2021 is part of HV-GB’s Action Team whose mission is to support individuals experiencing homelessness using a coordinated approach with community-led response with representation from Nunatsiavut Government, Innu Nation, Innu Round Table Secretariat, Nunatukavut Community Council, the Labrador Friendship Centre, the Salvation Army, the Provincial Health Authority, the RCMP, the Housing and Homelessness Coalition, Libra House, and the Provincial and Federal Governments (Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, 2024).

Interestingly, while similarities between the transient and homeless populations were acknowledged, in my interviews, policy makers, frontline workers, and support/services workers made distinctions between the two. Deputy Minister and Director of Health and Social Development for Nunatsiavut claims that there are,

> Two populations, there is a population that is homeless, they are maybe from HV-GB or maybe from the coast and here for a reason and they are truly homeless. Then we have a transient population that comes during the warmer months primarily from Natuashish because it's a dry community and they come here so they can drink, they aren't truly homeless and most of them have homes.(Research Participant, Deputy Minister and Director of Health and Social Development, 2019)

The Director of Labrador Affairs following this same narrative stated that:

> If someone is coming down and their home is in one community and they are coming down temporarily they are fluid, they are moving back and forth and it's by choice. I don't consider them homeless, it's not forced homeless, yes, they are probably homeless to a certain extent when they are in this community, but they chose to come here versus going back to their original home that they have a home. The difference is choice. I see a major distinction between the two, now some of them have similar issues whether that be substance use or mental health and addictions probably, but you can't force people to get help so there's some of the same challenges, but they have homes, that's the difference. (Research Participant, Director of Labrador Affairs, 2019)

In my interviews, almost every participant made the distinction between the local homeless population and the transient population, detaching the transient experience from homelessness. A further analysis of deattaching transience from homelessness will be discussed in chapter five and six. However, it is important to note that the transient population are identified as people who migrate from the coast to HV-GB to camp out in public and are in HV-GB to access alcohol and other substances. During an interview with the Housing Hub Coordinator/ Housing Liaison I asked what drove the transient population to HV-GB, and the participant shared that the reason was, "100 % addictions, some of them are coming from dry communities and they might not even be completely dry but it's hard sometimes to get, there might be a shortage of alcohol and drugs" (Research Participant, Coordinator/ Housing Liaison, 2019). While access to alcohol and substances are a motivating factor for movement and centering HV-GB as a hub, is it crucial to contextualize addiction and substance use within the larger context of colonialism (de Leeuw & Greenwood, 2010; Smylie, 2009)

4.4 Contextualizing Substance Use and Addictions

In order to fully understand the motivating factors leading to rural-urban movement in Labrador, particularly the role that substance use and addictions play in the lives of individuals who struggle with substance use and addictions, many other factors and discussions must be

considered. Of note, the relationship between addiction and substance use are undoubtedly attached to the history and legacies of colonialism (de Leeuw & Greenwood, 2010; Smylie, 2009). Here, I situate substance use and addiction within discussions of this complex relationship. In almost all my interviews with frontline workers, service providers, policy makers, and community workers, access to alcohol was mentioned as a motivating factor for movement from rural-coastal Labrador to HV-GB. Christensen (2017) shared similar experiences in Inuvik and Yellowknife, NWT, where many service providers shared that access to alcohol was a key motivating factor to migration to urban centers. However, "Regardless of the particular role substance abuse and addictions may play to rural-urban movement, it must be situated within the overall context of colonially induced collective trauma" (Christensen, 2017, p.145).

Substance use and addictions are indicators of intergenerational trauma, which is the trauma experienced by generations of Indigenous peoples (Menzies, 2009). Intergenerational trauma may be experienced by an individual, family, community, or nation. As Menzies (2009) argues, these experiences with substance use and addiction cannot be extracted from the broader historical and contemporary processes of colonization. To contextualize this within the geography of Labrador, Indigenous communities in Labrador continue to experience challenges with high addiction rates because of intergenerational trauma (Pollock et al., 2016). The high rate of alcohol use in Inuit communities is also representative of the deeper social and economic inequality, as well as the legacy of colonialism (Nelson, 2012). This is similar in Innu communities where the harmful effects of sedentarization have been accompanied by an increase in heavy drinking, suicide, solvent use, and sexual abuse (Samson, 2003; 2018). The living legacies discussed in Chapter Two cannot be ignored when examining the topic of substance use

and addictions. It is also important to acknowledge that this thesis engages with literature and research that is strengths-based. In other words, not placing blame on the failure of an individual but rather the failure of the larger systems and structures that an individual is a part of. This is contrary to the dominant discursive practices that portray Indigenous people who are experiencing homelessness as deviant or deficient (Christensen, 2017). Considering this, in an CBC article from 2022 titled, *As Reports of Drinking Hand Sanitizer Grow, so do Fears of Homeless People in Labrador*', a staff at Housing Hub shared that the severity of addiction in the community is, "Indictive of a larger problem, a lot of our clientele here suffer from trauma-induced problems, and their only way to combat that is through either alcohol or drugs" (Kelland, 2022). Therefore, with addictions running deep in Indigenous communities because of colonization, it further adds to the complexity of rural-urban movement and homelessness in Labrador.

As I exemplified in this chapter, HV-GB is an urban centre/hub with various pull factors leading to rural-urban movement and alcohol and substance use is only one of the contributing factors. HV-GB is unique in this dynamic in that the community has linked the particular movement motivated by substance use and addictions to the experience of transiency in the community. Popular public discourses regarding homelessness and transiency in the community have honed in on substance use and addiction while simultaneously failing to contextualize the individual experiences within the larger historical and ongoing legacies of colonization and rural-urban movement. Further, substance use and addictions related to what is perceived as transiency is extracted from multi-dimensional and multi-faceted ways in which homelessness is experienced for Indigenous peoples. In Chapters Five and Six, I will discuss transiency in more detail to draw out the complexities in what HV-GB has identified as a major issue.

4.5 Conclusion

As I discussed in this chapter, HV-GB is the urban center and hub in Labrador and is situated within an uneven landscape. Many Indigenous communities face a spectrum of inequalities, and rural-urban movement is an outcome for individuals in these communities. Movement is motivated by access to medical services, opportunities, escape from violence, and/or addiction, and these factors are central to individuals migrating. However, mobility and movement of some of the most vulnerable people, the transient population, has been problematized, and their experiences have been extracted from homelessness in the community and separated from the larger context of colonization and the experiences of Indigenous homelessness. I discuss transiency and Indigenous homelessness further in Chapter Six. In conclusion, there are layers of complexity to movement and migration in Labrador motivated by inequality and unevenness, but it is often the most vulnerable people migrating to HV-GB. I examined the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors that drive rural-urban mobility, movement, and homelessness in HV-GB, as well as draw out the factors contributing to homelessness in HV-GB. I next examine the services, supports, and gaps that exist in HV-GB for people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

CHAPTER FIVE:

COMMUNITY IN CRISIS: GAPS IN HOUSING, SUPPORTS, AND SERVICES

"Housing is just so expensive; you are always two cheques away from being homeless."

- Manager of Melville Native Housing Association

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I share the major gaps in housing, services, and supports in HV-GB that were identified by research participants, secondary research done in the community, and the literature that pertains to Labrador's northern geography. I review the transformation of HV-GB's housing market due to Muskrat Falls, the limited housing stock, housing gaps, and services and supports in the community. In Chapter Two, I reviewed geographies of northern homelessness literature in HV-GB. It is important to contextualize that the reality of the housing crisis is being experienced in much of the northern Canada. As this thesis largely focuses on HV-GB and in the region of Labrador, the housing crisis in northern Canada is characterized by significant core housing need which is a standard measure of housing insecurity in Canada, and includes affordability, adequacy, and suitability of both private market and public housing stock (Christensen et al., 2017; Lauster & Tester, 2014). Housing need in Labrador is a deep concern, and in Jewczyk's (2018) report examining housing demand and supply in central Labrador, housing/service providers shared that they are struggling with the provision of housing and supports to many families and vulnerable individuals and families that collect in HV-GB. There

are major factors that contribute to the myriad of challenges and transformation of HV-GB's housing market; the community is rapidly urbanizing and serves as a hub in the region for various and diverse services for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of Labrador, especially those who are housing insecure or homeless. While I have focused most of this thesis on the significance of HV-GB in the region of Labrador, in this chapter I examine the local gaps in housing, supports, and services that are available in HV-GB. In this section, I rely heavily on the data collected from research participants who have lived experience, who work as key stakeholders, and who work within organizations and agencies that play a vital role in housing, homelessness and program delivery in the community.

5.1 Happy Valley-Goose Bay in Transition

As discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, natural resource extraction, particularly the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam project was integral to the overall landscape of uneven development that shaped the community of HV-GB. The construction of (formerly) Nalcor Energy - now Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam, 30 kilometres west of HV-GB, began in 2013 (Nalcor Energy, 2020). Before the construction of the project, however, it was met with great resistance locally and nation-wide. In 2011, the Mokami Status of Women Council (MSWC) and researchers with FemNorthNet, a national research network wrote the *Out of the Rhetoric and into the Reality of Local Women's Lives* report to address the potential issues and concerns of local women regarding the Muskrat Falls (Hallet et al., 2011). In this report, five key priority areas were identified as socio-economic impacts from the project including: violence against women; poverty; childcare; housing; and mental health and substance use/abuse and addictions. These priority areas were expected to increase since natural resource extraction is associated with an influx of money, transient male workers, and

industrialization without an increased investment in social infrastructure which the local communities rely on (Hallet et al., 2011; Newhook et al., 2011). These issues would create significant concerns and challenges for women in the community. Affordability of housing was also a significant barrier in the community prior to the Muskrat Falls project. A highlighted concern from this report was that the Muskrat Falls project would amplify the local housing crisis given that transient workers from the region with higher incomes would drive up the price of housing and rental accommodations, resulting in housing to be unaffordable for many locals (Hallet et al., 2011). In addition to worsening the housing crisis in HV-GB, the report pointed to the potential rise in addiction and substance use/abuse that would create harmful impacts on individuals and the community's wellbeing (Hallet et al., 2011).

The MSWC and FemNorthNet were not the only community organizations concerned about the potential consequences of the Muskrat Falls project. For years leading up to, during construction, and in the project's operation, Indigenous Nations especially the Nunatsiavut and the Innu Nation were very vocal in expressing their opposition of the project, and the dire need for better engagement and consultation. The Nunatsiavut Government published multiple statements with the support of the NunatuKavut Community Council, and the Innu Nation also expresses public opposition to the Muskrat Falls project (Nunatsiavut, 2020). In research submitted by the Nunatsiavut Government for the Joint Review Panel (a panel established by Canada's Minister of the Environment, Minister of Environment and Conservation for Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs for Newfoundland and Labrador), they informed the ministerial government of the potential negative effects that the project would have on the Inuit living in the Upper Lake Melville region including: increased alcohol substance use, mental health and suicide risk, and other socio-environmental concerns

such as impacts on child development (Nunatsiavut Government, 2011). The Nunatsiavut Government also acknowledged the stress that the Muskrat Falls project would put on social service agencies in the region that were already overburdened (Nunatsiavut Government, 2011; Hallet et al., 2011). Though significant concerns were expressed by the Nunatsiavut Government with regards to the socio-economic change from the Muskrat Falls project before it commenced, they were overlooked (Samson, 2018). In the Joint Review Panel Report (2011), Chapter 9 of the 389-page report addressed the effects of the project from the submissions by the Labrador Innu, Labrador Inuit (Nunatsiavut), Inuit-Metis (now recognized as NunatuKavut), and Quebec Indigenous groups (Innu of Pakua Shipu, Unamen Shipu, Nutashkuan, Ekuanitshit, Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam and Matimekush–Lac John, and the Naskapis of Kawawachikamach). All submissions shared deep concerns for the many negative effects the project would have on the land, water, and ultimately on Indigenous peoples and their future generations. During an interview with a frontline worker for an organization that provided health and social services to the community (who chose not to be identified), they shared their observation of the impact that natural resources extraction has had in the community:

> Whatever major development is going on, it impacts the community socially, culturally, and economically. I say culturally because there is a great impact culturally too. Right now, Muskrat Falls is playing havoc in accessing resources, services, food, and housing in the community. (Research Participant, health and social program worker, 2019)

While the Muskrat Falls project has provided some benefits like employment, the risks, harms, and implications of the project have outweighed the benefits of the megaproject. For the Innu Nation, the influx of income from employment, "Is unlikely to address the endemic socio-health problems in Innu communities including suicide rates that are 10 times higher than Canadian levels, and poor community infrastructures including a periodic lack of potable water" (Samson, 2018: p. 116). In a news article from March 2023, former Innu Nation Grand Chief

Etienne Rich shared that, “The lack of consultation with Indigenous leaders over the Churchill Falls project and the Muskrat Fall rate mitigation agreement has him concerned that the voice of his people is not being heard by the provincial and federal governments” (Jugol, 2023). The Innu Nation has been extremely vocal in protesting and sharing the myriad of issues from Muskrat Falls and has gone as far as suing the federal and provincial governments for lack of consent, engagement, and consultation of activities relating to Muskrat Falls on their traditional territory (Jugol, 2023). In a 2017 news article, the Innu Nation shared their frustration with the proposed benefits for the Muskrat Falls project not being upheld. Though the promise of employment from the mega project is protected by a hiring protocol that states that the Innu are supposed to be given preference when jobs become available, former Chief Anastasia Qupee of Sheshatshiu shared that, “As far as the overall numbers go, it’s quite disappointing” (Montague, 2017). Furthermore, Steinstra (2015) discussed the potential impacts Muskrat Falls would have in the community especially for women, and the author claimed that, “The development will provide benefits to some but will increase and intensify exclusion” (p. 640). The apparent benefits from the Muskrat Falls project were unclear and uneven for many residents in Labrador. In a 2023 podcast called Mi’kmaq Matter with guest Peter Penashue, the chief negotiator of the Innu Nation, he shared that Nunatsiavut and Innu Nation have left the province’s Indigenous roundtable. Further, “the Innu Nation has been cut out of a billion-dollar agreement for the next decades to come” (Wheeler & Penashue, 2023) . Peter Penashue explains that said structured agreement leaves little revenue from Muskrat Falls to the Innu Nation (Wheeler & Penashue, 2023).

Muskrat Falls is the most recent mega-project, however, the project built onto the foundation of harmful interactions and use of the lands, such as the military low-level flying

practice; the megaproject thus serves to perpetuate structural inequalities and negatively impact many people, including the women and girls of the region (Stienstra, 2015). Women in the region have played an integral role in resisting colonial-driven economic and military development, as women are disproportionately impacted by the negative outcomes that natural resource extraction creates in communities (Stienstra, 2015). These negative outcomes have included the increase in housing prices, limited housing availability, an increase in violence against women, and an increase in substance use among workers and local community members. These outcomes have also negatively impacted local health, social and housing support systems in the region (Stienstra, 2015). While the negative outcomes of the Muskrat Falls project have disproportionately affected women, it is important to note that the megaproject has also exacerbated local gaps in housing, mental health and addictions services (Hallet et al., 2011; Schiff & Brunger, 2015; Waegemakers & Schiff, 2015). In the next sections of this chapter, I discuss these existing gaps in HV-GB.

5.2 Housing Gaps in HV-GB

Housing gaps in HV-GB existed far earlier than the Muskrat Falls project, yet it was the megaproject that forced a change in Labrador, with the Upper Lake Melville region incurring some of the most changes and challenges. In all 23 semi-structured interviews and 11 lived experience interviews I conducted, participants pointed out significant gaps in housing, services, and supports in HV-GB. While most participants talked about gaps that are becoming much more visible and wider over recent years, a few participants did discuss that these gaps had existed in HV-GB for decades. As Labrador's hub, housing and service gaps in HV-GB are significant because individuals migrate to the area to access housing and services. The social and economic geography of Labrador created a dynamic where rural-urban movement and migration

is necessary to access essential services. Given this, housing gaps in HV-GB contribute to the role that unevenness in rural-urban geographies play in HV-GB visible homelessness. The housing gaps that I discuss in this section include: limited housing stock, lack of transitional housing, lack of affordable housing, and uneven impacts of housing gaps in HV-GB.

5.2.1 Limited Housing Stock

As discussed in Chapter Two, northern Canadian communities face significant housing challenges including high core housing need (Christensen, 2016; Christensen et al., 2017; Lauster & Tester, 2014). HV-GB shares a high core housing need challenge as well, and the lack of housing consistently fails to meet the market demand for housing in Labrador (Jewcyzk, 2018). For Indigenous communities in Labrador, housing issues are felt disproportionately, where the demand for appropriate, affordable housing exceeds supply, and housing quality is inadequate and often in need of major repairs (Jewczyk, 2018). For example, Sheshatshiu, an Innu community and reserve just a few kilometers away from HV-GB, faces serious housing challenges within the community, and community members are doubly impacted as there is limited housing on reserve and limited housing options due to several gaps in HV-GB. This double gap was a dynamic described by a few research participants. The housing market gap in HV-GB forces community members from Sheshatshiu to rely solely on housing stock on-reserve provided by their band (**Figure 7**). In an interview with the Special Liaison to Chief Eugene Hart, housing gaps on and off-reserve were discussed in detail. Limited housing stock is the most significant housing gap that the community of 2,000 people faced. They shared that,

> We have 140 families, and that number continues to grow. We need more housing, we don't have the money, we would have to take money away from other essential services in order to actually provide and build houses. We have only received one house from INAC (Indigenous Northern Affairs Canada) in the past

> 20 years and with CMHC funding there are some limitations of what we can do. (Research Participant, Special Liaison to Chief Eugene Hart, 2019)

Figure 7. Photo of Sheshatshiu's housing waitlist binder. (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahal [author])

As discussed previously, Sheshatshui has a high birth rate, and the lack of housing on-reserve means that many Sheshatshiu community members are forced to live in overcrowded houses on-reserve because many community members cannot leave their community to access other housing markets, where they too are extremely limited and unaffordable. The Manager of Apenam's House elaborates that housing in the community does not meet the needs of the community,

> There is a significant housing shortage. The population in Sheshatshiu is growing so quickly because of our high birth rates. We can't keep up with the young families, we have a population that is 60% under 18, so all those people are starting to get older and needing places to stay of their own. We have a lot of families living in houses with generations of families because they can't afford other housing options off-reserve." (Research Participant, Manager of Apenam's House, 2019)

The housing challenges faced in Sheshatshui are not limited to this small community. In fact, the shortage and poor quality of on-reserve housing for First Nations in Canada has reached crisis

proportions (Durbin, 2009; Peters & Robillard, 2009). In other words, Sheshatshui is only one of many reserves across the country that face massive challenges rooted in housing shortage.

While Sheshatshui struggles with their own housing challenges, HV-GB struggles with similar issues. HV-GB has a very limited housing stock, which poses challenges for a community that is widely seen as the 'housing hub' of the region. In many interviews, the need for more housing options, especially smaller housing options (i.e. 1–3-bedroom apartments) was identified as a gap in HV-GB. The lack of housing stock and diversity of housing options in HV-GB created many barriers for community members. In an interview with the Deputy Health Minister and Director of Health and Social Development for Nunatsiavut Government, she shared that:

> [HV-GB] needs more housing options, we need more single unit apartments, there's a number of individuals that could live alone with drop-in supports if there were apartments available. There's very little housing stock in Goose Bay and public housing stock that isn't meeting the housing need. So, the actual physical structures aren't there for individuals here. (Research Participant, Deputy Health Minister/Director of Health and Social Development, 2019)

The Nunatsiavut Government at the time of this data collection in 2019-2020 rolled out a supportive living program in HV-GB for Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, which delivered housing and supports to individuals who required support day-to-day. There were only eight supportive living units in HV-GB that are exclusively for Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, which many frontline workers, supports/service and housing providers applauded as a huge success in the community (Various Research Participants, 2019). In an interview with the Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC), I asked how has housing policy and public housing provision changed over the decade. The Regional Director shared that the supportive living program was established and that the responsibility for Emergency Housing

and Transition Housing had been transferred to the NLHC. The NLHC also worked on an Eviction Prevention framework to better assist tenants and sustain their housing, rents 78 social housing units and provides funding through rent supplements (Research Participant, Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, 2019). However, in the interviews, participants also mentioned the need for more supportive living units, beyond what is available, as the waitlists to access these integral housing options were long. In July 2023, HV-GB announced that the town received funding from the provincial and federal government to build up to 16 affordable housing units (Russell & Dooley, 2023). In a 2023 CBC article, Labrador MP Yvonne Jones shared that, "There's been a tremendous waitlist for housing in the community, and especially for people with disabilities and so on" (Russell & Dooley, 2023). While four additional affordable units have been built due to increased funding, it was not identified whether these units would be for supportive living, despite all research participants sharing that there is a need for more affordable and supportive housing options in the community.

Supportive living is limited in HV-GB, and community members are often forced to access emergency shelters and temporary housing options. While these housing options are designed for short-term stays, they have nevertheless become permanent housing for many members in the community. An employee at a local women's organization shared that:

> There is no maximum time where women stay, there is a client who has been in our housing for 5 years. Housing directly impacts our clients, limited housing stock is a barrier to women seeking independence from supportive living, overcrowding and housing conditions add family stress which often leads to violence and then women come here seeking a safe place to stay. (Research Participant, employee at a local women's organization, 2019)

Beyond community members who have complex needs in the community, the overall lack of housing stock is a critical factor in the incidence of homelessness in northern Canada (Schmidt et al., 2015; Christensen et al., 2017). Since on-reserve housing is limited, when Indigenous families are given preference for receiving housing there are often almost no single housing accommodations (Peters & Robillard, 2009). Peters and Robillard (2009) also explained that when relationships break up or family breakdown occurs, children are more likely to stay with their mothers, and in cases where these families were in possession of housing, the break-up often results in homelessness for the father/ male partner. While this dynamic is not limited to men because women also experience housing loss and homelessness in these instances, this is an occurrence that often happens to men in HV-GB. Based on my interviews in the context of these existing dynamics, there is a strong need for housing suitable for single adults in HV-GB. However, HV-GB has a significant housing gap for single adult men in the community (Various Research Participants, 2019).

5.2.2 Lack of Transitional Housing for Men

HV-GB is home to the only correctional facility in Labrador, the Labrador Correctional Centre (LCC), and the only municipal and provincial courts in Labrador. For this reason, HV-GB is the judicial hub of Labrador. With Labrador's judicial facilities located in HV-GB, an additional housing and support gaps in supporting individuals who are released and discharged from public institutions (Jewczyk, 2018; Lee at al., 2007). As it exists, there are no transitional housing options for men exiting corrections in HV-GB. The overall objective of transitional housing is to provide people with the structure and support they need to address critical issues necessary to maintain permanent housing and maximize self-sufficiency (Desai, 2012; Novac et al., 2004). Men who are released from the LCC are left alone to face the challenge of securing housing with

an additional setback of holding a criminal record (Various Research Participants, 2019). This challenge was a major theme that arose from my interviews with people who have lived experience of homelessness. Three men with lived experience of homelessness shared that they became homeless upon discharge from the LCC. Some men shared that they committed crimes in their home communities and were subsequently banned from returning home. The men who were banned served their time and upon being released, were discharged to the HV-GB local shelter. For other individuals I interviewed with lived experience and sentences served, after being released from LCC they felt like their best option for a healthy and safe transition back into the community was to stay in HV-GB where there was more opportunity and access to supports for them (Research Participants with lived experience of homelessness, 2019).

An integral support that would benefit this population is transitional housing or supportive housing, which is a housing unit combined with case management and supportive programming. However, supportive housing as it exists in HV-GB does not meet the demands of the community. Further, these individuals become homeless while they search for housing accommodations or wait for a supportive unit to become available (Jewczyk, 2018). In many interviews, the lack of housing for men, especially men exiting the correction centre was discussed. During an interview with a Town Councillor who was also a correctional officer in the community, she identified men's transitional housing as a massive housing gap in the region:

> The gap for males in Goose Bay who get released from incarceration is huge. A lot of the time we see males being released from prison with no address, they become part of a cycle, they come out, they got nowhere to stay so they are committing a crime because they don't have a roof over your head and they are back in jail. It's not a very secure and stable life.(Research Participant, Town Councillor, 2019)

The gap of transitional/ supportive programming and housing options for single men in the community leads to cyclical homelessness. As the Town Councillor explained, the dynamic that

she witnessed as a former Corrections Officers at LCC is that men are often being discharged into a community that lacks safe or adequate housing and supports for them, and in turn, they often end up back in jail or custody for committing crimes to sustain themselves because they ended up homeless post-discharge.

To expand on the cyclical nature of homelessness and incarceration, during an interview with the Offender Services Coordinator at the LCC, she explained that her role was largely centered around case management while people are incarcerated, and she managed a small caseload of a population that has both behavioural issues and special needs. She explained that 'release planning' is a big portion of her role, but she is often met with great challenges in releasing some individuals. For example, she shared that, "People burn bridges, they can't go home to their home communities, so they are coming to Goose Bay and have no other options but the shelter" (Research Participant, Offender Services Coordinator, LCC, 2019). Housing in the community had critical housing and support gaps including the lack of transitional housing and lack of affordable housing, making the transition for men exiting corrections back into the community very difficult. In many cases, men exiting the LCC often ended up at the shelter, "The shelter has been huge for us, especially when we have no other option at least we know they have somewhere warm to go at night" (Research Participant, Offender Services Coordinator, 2019). With the lack of transitional housing for men in HV-GB, men exiting corrections face significant barriers accessing housing and reintegration into the community. The role of transitional housing is crucial in providing a safe and supportive environment, where residents can overcome issues that may have contributed to their homelessness or criminal behavior in the first place (Desai, 2012).

The lack of transitional housing for men in HV-GB is a gap that affects not only the men in need of this housing option, but women in the community as well (Schwan et al., 2020). For example, when men exiting correctional facilities do not have access the proper supports and services for a healthy transition back into the community, there is an increased risk for women in the community to become victimized or re-victimized by these men (Desai, 2012; Schwan et al., 2020). The Executive Director of the Libra House said, "There needs to be housing and therapy for men. If you help some of the men in this situation, then they are going to stop victimizing women" (Research Participant, Executive Director, Libra House, 2019). With no transitional or supportive housing options available for men in HV-GB, the Housing Hub functions as a shelter for men transitioning back into the community, highlighting the significant gaps in housing and supports for men.

5.2.3 Lack of Affordable Housing

Lack of affordable housing is a gap that was discussed not only in the interviews with frontline workers, policy makers, and service/support providers but also in the interviews with participants who have lived experience with homelessness. In these interviews, the Muskrat Falls project was identified as a major driver of change that strained existing housing availability, resulting in heighted housing gaps in the community. The rise in demand for housing from the Muskrat Falls project resulted in a housing shortage, and the cost for housing or units for sale or rent have increased dramatically (Butters et al., 2019). During interviews with community members and professionals in the community, 11 of 23 semi-structured interview research participants pointed to the construction of the Muskrat Falls project as the inciting incident for subsequent housing demand that spiked local rents and housing prices. As a result, HV-GB became a difficult place to live as the lack of available and affordable housing failed to meet the needs of the community

(Jewczyk, 2018). During an interview with the Housing Manager of Melville Native Housing (a non-profit Indigenous housing provider in HV-GB), she expressed that lack of affordable housing was a serious problem in HV-GB:

> Housing is just so expensive; you are always two cheques away from being homeless. The influx from the project is good for jobs but for a small community that doesn't have the infrastructure to support it, Muskrat Falls has negatively impacted our town.(Research Participant, Housing Manager, Melville Native Housing Association, 2019)

While Muskrat Falls has come with some perks for people employed by the project, housing has become a massive obstacle in the community. In an interview with the Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation the Regional Director, they shared housing challenges in the community due to Muskrat Falls:

> There has been a decrease in the availability of rental units with private landlords and an increase in the rental amounts being charged by the private market. These trends are in part due to economic growth related to local resource development and the Muskrat Falls project.(Research Participant, Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, 2019)

Housing thus became out of reach for many community members. The Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation explained the impact of this dynamic:

> The increases in the number of renters in the community and a general increase in salaries and employment in the region causes an increase in demand for rental accommodations. All of this affects rental prices and creates a cycle that makes finding affordable housing even more difficult for people who are low-income.(Research Participant, Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, 2019)

The increases in rent and value of housing in HV-GB made a massive impact in the community. Just as affordable housing plays a crucial role in alleviating homelessness, unaffordable housing is a significant pathway in forming homelessness. Jewczyk (2018) explained that the lack of affordable housing is a major issue in HV-GB and has resulted in overcrowded living conditions,

couch surfing and homelessness. The Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation makes a similar link by stating that, “Affordable housing can make the difference between safe, stable housing, and homelessness. This can be especially true when it comes to affordable rental housing as this is the most viable option for those with low incomes” (Research Participant, Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, 2019). In Christensen et al.’s (2017) literature review examining homelessness across Alaska, northern Canada, and Greenland, advocacy groups were found across northern Canada to have repeatedly emphasized the lack of adequate and affordable housing across northern communities. The lack of unaffordable housing is closely related to the increasing amount of homelessness in the northern Canada (Christensen et al., 2017; Stienstra, 2015). The lack of affordable housing is therefore a contributing factor to homelessness in HV-GB and a significant gap of service provision in the community of HV-GB.

5.2.4 Uneven Impacts of Unaffordable Housing

While housing gaps in HV-GB were critical, these gaps are not a lived reality for all members in the community. It is important to examine who was impacted by the gaps of housing in HV-GB. In many interviews I conducted, inequality was a recurring theme, whether it was experienced economically, socially, or politically. In an interview with two employees at a local women’s organization, both women described how the current housing situation in the community continued to impact their female clients. Both employees mentioned the cost of housing as a barrier to many clients as, “There is no middle class here, there is a lot of privilege in buying homes” (Research Participants, employees at a local women’s organization, 2019). This inequality in access to home ownership, and class division in HV-GB was a common reality discussed especially given all the change in the community caused by the Muskrat Falls project.

The Housing Coordinator at the Housing Hub shared his observation of economic inequality in HV-GB:

> The gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' has become wider and wider. The economy here is becoming further out of reach for the folks that are in the 'have not' category. There is a fine balance of the economy growing and flourishing but it's not reachable by everybody, not just the folks that are less fortunate or vulnerable. (Research Participant, Housing Coordinator, Housing Hub, 2019)

While all economic inequality cannot be entirely attributed to the mega-project, the transformation since the project began created a huge strain on the already existing housing market shortage. The rise in economic inequality was mostly experienced by certain marginalized populations in the region. In an interview with the Manager of Apenam's House (an adult residential treatment program) who was also a resident of Sheshatshui, she shared her experience growing up and working in Sheshatshiu, saying, "Poverty is common here [Sheshatsiu] and it's a cycle, that when you're in it you can't get out" (Research Participant, Manager, Apenam's House, 2019). The Muskrat Falls project exacerbated existing inequalities in the region, perpetuating cycles of poverty in Indigenous communities in Labrador. McKay and McRae (2021) state that, "Persistent federal underfunding has led to wide gaps in access to basic services and quality of life in the Innu communities" (p. 44). Chronic underfunding in the Innu Nation forced the nation to enter an Impact Benefit Agreement with the Muskrat Falls project operators despite their oppositions to the project, in an attempt to help offset some of these funding gaps and improve the quality of services available in their communities (McKay Consulting Inc. & McRae, 2021). However, this agreement has created a deep uncertainty within the Innu Nation, and further deprived the Innu communities of an opportunity to develop and grow on its own terms (McKay Consulting Inc & McRae, 2021).

The current state of the community has been built on inequality- including income inequality- as individuals who were employed by the Muskrat Falls project saw higher local wages but only a widening of the class division in the region. Considering the economic inequality in HV-GB, many community members in HV-GB relied on subsidized and public housing. Due to the local housing crisis and high demand for affordable housing, there were several social housing organizations established in HV-GB to assist with increasing affordable housing opportunities (Jewcyzk, 2018). However, the supply of affordable housing in HV-GB falls extremely short of the demands of the community. In interviews with housing providers that focus on subsidized and public housing, long waitlists were a big issue for each housing provider. Housing providers also had the added challenge of responding to the local housing needs as well as the housing needs of those migrating from the coast. In my interview with the Housing Manager of Melville Native Housing, a housing provider funded by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation managing 75 units in HV-GB, they shared that, "95% of the time [they] are at full capacity. In the past few years [they] have seen a rise in applicants and at any given time we have 30-40 applicants in the drawer waiting for housing" (Research Participant, Housing Manager of Melville Native Housing, 2019). The Regional Director for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation also shared similar challenges, "In recent years the rental market has changed. There is an increase in number of renters in the community and a general increase in salaries and employment in the region, causing an increase in demand for rental accommodations […] making finding affordable housing even more difficult for people with low incomes" (Research Participant, Regional Director, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, 2019).

In my interviews with participants who had lived experience with homelessness, they shared their experiences with the lack of subsidized and public housing. In one interview, an Inuk man in his late 20s, *Kyle**, Kyle shared his housing experiences in HV-GB. Kyle rented an apartment where he was evicted shortly after. After his eviction he found it extremely hard to find other accommodations in town because many landlords would not consider him as a potential tenant. Kyle shared that he felt landlords in HV-GB were discriminatory and racist towards him for being Inuk from the coast. He shared that once, "There was an eviction on my record and it was really hard to get apartments after that" (Research Participant, Kyle*, Inuk man with lived homelessness experience, 2019). Additionally, Kyle had very limited options for affordable housing since he was considered low-income. As a result, Kyle couch surfed, stayed in cars for years, stayed at Newman's House until it closed, and then he stayed at the Housing Hub when it opened in 2016. For years he waited on public housing lists and was on waitlists at two providers. Kyle shared that, "If there's no housing, there's no stability, you end up here [in jail]" (Kyle*, Inuk man with lived homelessness experience, 2019). *Tyler** shared a similar experience with lack of housing and resulting in institutionalization. Tyler, an Inuk man in his 20s from Nain, had a mother who was also waiting for public housing in Nain for over 20 years. Tyler shared that he had been kicked out of his community, so he came to HV-GB to start over. He stayed at the Housing Hub and on waiting lists for public housing for years. He eventually ended up in jail. Kyle and Tyler's housing journeys are just two of the narratives that represented the significant housing challenges and dimensions of homelessness in HV-GB.

In response to the lack of affordable housing options in the community, short-term housing providers and emergency shelters attempted to meet the needs and demands. The Housing Coordinator/ Housing Liaison at the Housing Hub shared that, "From April 1, 2019, to

March 31, 2020, we had 94 different clients sleep at the shelter. Of those 94, many of those clients were with us for multiple days, weeks, and months in some cases, and we are always at 100% occupancy" (Research Participants, Housing Coordinator/Liaison, Housing Hub, 2019). The Housing Hub, an emergency shelter with only eight beds (during emergencies they try to provide more shelter beds, and capacity has been increased to 12 if needed), has therefore become a housing band-aid solution for many community members in HV-GB. This is a similar dynamic for women in HV-GB, where the lack of affordable and available housing has created significant barriers and challenges for women locally. The lack of affordable housing has often resulted in women staying in emergency shelters and housing as permanent homes (Bopp, 2007). This was a common experience that supports and housing providers from women in HV-GB at the Mokami Status of Women Council and the Libra House shared. Precarious housing experiences for many women in HV-GB is a common experience in northern Canada, however, this dynamic has a particularly devastating impact on women with children (Bopp, 2007).

5.2.5 Housing as a Barrier to Child Custody

The relationship between housing, children, and families is central to discussions of homelessness in northern communities. In a report released in 2016 by Raising the Roof, an organization dedicated to ending homelessness in Canada, they pointed to low income and the lack of affordable housing as key causes of homelessness. Moreover, women are subjected to additional challenges such as intimate partner violence and discrimination in the housing and job markets, which creates stress that has lasting effects on their sense of belonging in society, well-being, family relationships, and their children (Paradis et al., 2008; Gulliver-Garcia, 2016).

It was only during interviews with research participants who work in the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation where accounts of children being apprehended was mentioned while speaking about housing challenges on-reserve and in region. Special Liaison to Chief Eugene Hart of the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation shared that housing is a massive issue in the community and that,

> It's a giant cycle, it's a constant cycle of CSSD [Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development] saying [a community member] can't have [their] children back unless [they] get housing, [they] have a roof over [their] head but CSSD requires them to have their own house, they keep going in this never ending cycle that even if they got their house they would be other issues, once [they're] in the system [they] are stuck in the system. (Research Participant, Special Liaison to Chief Eugene Hart, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, 2019)

The apprehension and institutionalization of Indigenous children is far from a new phenomenon in Indigenous communities. The removal of Indigenous children is a longstanding colonial violence entrenched in Canada (de Leeuw, 2016). The residential school system and the Sixties Scoop were state sanctioned systems to apprehend and assimilate Indigenous children into Western and colonial society (de Leeuw, 2016). These systems not only displaced Indigenous children from their homes, families, and communities, and subjected thousands of children to the deprivation of their family, traditions, culture, but also subjected them to various forms of abuse (McKenzie et al., 2016). Today, child welfare policies have the same disruptive patterns that are perpetrated on Indigenous children (Blackstock, 2008; McKenzie et al., 2016). As the Canadian child welfare system exists now, more Indigenous children are in the child welfare system than children who attended residential schools (National Collaborating Centre of Aboriginal Health, 2009). Statistically, Indigenous children are overwhelmingly overrepresented in the child welfare system. While Indigenous children only make up about 7% the population of children, Indigenous children make up nearly half of the child welfare system (Statistics Canada, 2016b).

The apprehension of Indigenous children into the child welfare system is often a result of structural factors that are beyond parental control, such as poverty, substance abuse, and poor housing (Blackstock, 2010). The Manager of Apenam's House explained that housing is a huge barrier for parents accessing their children, as well as the wellbeing of clients in the treatment program. She shared that a young woman in the last program had her children taken away and put into the care of CSSD. One of the stipulations CSSD put on her was that she could not be living with family and needed to have her own place to stay. She was a single mother without a job and could not secure a place to live for her children to be return to her. The Manager of Apenam's House shared during this interview that this story is a common experience, and highlighted the impact that housing gaps have on parents, women, children, and families, "This cycle is traumatizing mothers and [their] children based on no fault of their own. There is nowhere to rent that's affordable, it's a real insecurity here" (Research Participant, Manager of the Apenam's House, 2019). This cycle of trauma is a lived reality for many Indigenous families and communities, and colonial interventions that do not address structural violence undermine Indigenous people in the most intimate form- by severing families (McKenzie et al., 2016). Housing and the lack of affordable housing plays a role in destabilizing Indigenous family structures, and this was exemplified in various interviews where housing was a causal factor that separated Indigenous parents and women from their children.

5.3 Gaps in Services and Supports

While significant housing gaps were identified in HV-GB, it is just as pressing to discuss support and service gaps in the community. Similar to the way housing was affected in HV-GB due to the Muskrat Falls project, services and supports were also severely impacted (Hallet et al., 2011; Jewczyk, 2018; Schiff, 2014). The biggest services and supports sectors that were

impacted were mental health and addictions services. HV-GB is the hub for medical services in the region of Labrador, and the Muskrat Falls project added challenges to service and support systems in the community. During the construction of the Muskrat Falls project, local service/support providers and local community members were concerned about the impact that the project would have on the community (Hallet et al., 2011). Of the five key priority areas identified as socio-economic impacts from the potential project, mental health, and substance use and addictions were top priorities (Hallet et al., 2011). As predicted, the Muskrat Falls project increased demands on the already-strained health and social support systems (Jewczyk, 2018; Schiff, 2014). HV-GB's physical and social infrastructures were not prepared to accommodate the increased number of people and demands (Stienstra, 2015).

In 10 out of 23 semi-structured interviews, the lack of mental health and addictions supports were identified as the biggest service/support gap in the community. The Deputy Health Minister and Director of Health and Social Development for the Nunatsiavut Government shared that, "Muskrat Falls has created a larger marginalized population, a lot of people coming and going, a lot more access to heavy drugs, a lot of sexual exploitation, and a lot of mental health issues" (Research Participant, Deputy Health Minister and Director of Health and Social Development, Nunatsiavut Government, 2019). To address the increased need for mental health and addictions services, Labrador-Grenfell Health changed their service delivery model in 2019 from appointment-based to walk-in based. The Manager of Mental Health and Addictions shared that:

> The reason why we are currently operating on walk-ins is because we were at a point where we had such a huge waitlist, people were waiting a year or more for services. We had a waitlist of over 300 people just for HV-GB. It was a big problem in all of the region but here in HV-GB we had the biggest waitlist, and that's just not okay. (Research Participant, Manager of Mental Health and Addictions, Labrador-Grenfell Health, 2019)

While Labrador-Grenfell Health adapted to the increased need for services and supports in mental health and addictions, they still faced significant challenges related to housing. During an interview with the Manager of Mental Health and Addictions at Labrador-Grenfell Health, she commented on the relationship of housing to support and services:

> I am finding that it is really hard to work on addictions issues or mental health if they [the patients] don't have a roof over their head because when someone comes in without a roof over their head that becomes the primary concern. I find that here in Goose Bay we spend time with clients trying to get them connected to housing, but the issue is that there is no housing, so it's a huge challenge. Yes, people who are homeless still access our services, but it makes it so difficult when you don't have that support of having a place to stay. (Research Participant, Manager of Mental Health and Addictions, Labrador-Grenfell Health, 2019)

Current housing gaps thus creates challenges in the effectiveness and success of services and supports.

Furthermore, there is a lack of treatment services for addictions. In HV-GB, there are no detox or treatment centers, and when paired with inadequate mental health services and supports in the region, substance use and addition issues go untreated (Hallet et al., 2011). Apenam's House exists as the only adult residential treatment program in Labrador, but the funding structure only allows members of the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation to attend (Research Participant, Manger, Apenam's House, 2019). The Manager of Apenam's House shared that, "Apenam's House does not have enough beds and resources for the demand of their community (Sheshatshiu), waitlists are long for our treatment center and other treatment centers in Atlantic Canada" (Research Participant, Manager, Apenam's House, 2019). While addictions treatment, and services and supports demand have increased, the resources remain limited and strained (Various Research Participants, 2019). This dynamic has ultimately created challenges and barriers for many people within Labrador trying to lift themselves out of a cycle of poverty.

In 2022, the town of HV-GB released project plans for 'The Health, Housing and Supportive Services Hub', a $32,000,000 model of care rooted in harm-reduction/trauma-informed supports and housing for vulnerable people in the community all under one roof (Happy Valley-Goose Bay Hub, 2023). The Hub will include a continuum of housing including low barrier shelter, transitional housing, and supportive living. While the website shares that the project will be done in 18-24 months, it also shared that, "NL Housing will work closely with all partners in the coming months to secure and finalize estimates and funding contributions to support the new facility" (Happy Valley-Goose Bay Hub, 2023). The town of HV-GB on July 11, 2023, announced that they received $5,000,000 of funding from the federal government as part of the Rapid Housing Initiative (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2023). With this funding, the town of HV-GB approved the construction of 15 new affordable units in July 2023, and will both prioritize the waitlist and have rent geared-to-income (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2023). As this chapter highlighted the severe gaps that exist in housing, services, and supports, I include this new initiative which occurred outside of my data collection and research period as I want to highlight the ongoing advocacy and hard work of people in HV-GB who are not only aware of the existing gaps, but also actively working to fill them.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the existing gaps in HV-GB set against a background of socio-economic change that has deeply impacted housing, services, and support providers. HV-GB is situated within a broader northern Canadian Indigenous geography and faces significant challenges including the harmful effects of housing gaps in the community, limited housing stock, lack of transitional housing, and lack of affordable housing. Housing, services, and support providers in the community are cognisant of these gaps, and in all interviews with

employees from these services they shared that organizations are strained, and resources overstretched. However, housing, services, and support providers have adapted and continue to serve the rising needs and demands by community members in HV-GB and the region of Labrador. Their work is especially relevant with visible homelessness continuing to increase in HV-GB, and local housing providers, services, and support providers in the community are having to fill gaps in institutional and state funding. As Labrador remains an uneven and inequitable geography for (and between) many Indigenous individuals and communities, the gaps that exist in HV-GB condition the growing population of visible homelessness. The pathway to homelessness that was the most obvious was housing. I discussed housing gaps in this chapter as the lack of affordable housing, lack of housing stock, lack of subsidizing housing, low-income levels, and the lack of support services as main factors that drove people into homelessness (see Schiff, 2014; Peters & Christensen, 2016). Next in Chapter Six, I will examine the needs and dynamics of the 'transient population' in HV-GB, a homeless population that is also increasing in the community. Additionally, to conclude my thesis, I condense my major findings into policy recommendations to be presented to my community partners and in turn, the local government in HV-GB.

CHAPTER SIX:

(UN)BELONGING IN THE CITY: INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS AND THE PRODUCTION OF TRANSIENCY

"A whole population is being labelled as transient. The town is taking an approach that they must be dealt with and removed. These are people on their traditional lands and places. We do a land acknowledgment and then tell them to go home, there is a lot of hypocrisy in colonialism."

-Service Provider in HV-GB, 2019

6.0 Introduction

When I was initially invited into HV-GB, it was to do some research on the dynamics of homelessness in town, with an emphasis on the issue of transiency. The Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Coalition described it to me as there was a, "growing transient population in the community" (Chair of Housing and Homelessness Coalition, 2019). Transiency had been identified as a significant problem in the community by concerned residents, community members, and professionals who were business owners and/or whose work in the community sought solutions to address this issue. This was not an issue of lack of coverage; most people I encountered in the community knew about the transient population. Media coverage and public narratives had played an integral role in problematizing and constructing the narratives of individuals who are a part of the transient population. For example, in July 2019, during my first fieldwork trip, I was interviewed by the Telegram (a local paper in Labrador) within the first few days of me being on the ground. One of the first questions I was asked was about the role that drugs and alcohol play in the transient population's presence in the community (Montague, 2019). The majority of the coverage thus reinforced a discourse of addiction and substance use within the transient population, framing questions about the problem as individualistic faults, rather than as a symptom of a systemic problem in society. As I was invited in the community to

research the transient population in HV-GB, I did not want to further contribute to the harmful public narrative supported by many news articles that problematized this population. While the interviewer wanted to discuss addiction and substance use as the central concern around the transient population, I re-directed the conversation around legacies of intergenerational trauma and continuities of colonialization (Montague, 2019). Further, I discussed the severe lack of housing stock and supports that is largely acknowledged in literature, previous research and shared during my interviews with research participants.

Based on the knowledge and experiences I gained while living in the community, conducting interviews, and engaging with participant observation, I learned that "transiency" is not a single-caused status one comes to be; rather, it is an experience that is incredibly complex and multi-faceted. Thistle (2017) also describes the experiences observed in HV-GB as mobility homelessness, in which homeless people migrate between urban and rural spaces for access to work, health, education, recreation, etc. Thistle (2017) also shared that individuals who face these challenges are often faced with an impenetrable wall of racism and general lack of knowledge from the surrounding community. In Chapters Four and Five, I traced the significance of HV-GB as a significant location in the contemporary understanding of HV-GB, and the community's role it plays as a social, medical, housing, justice, economic, administrative, and transportation hub within the community. As the largest and most serviced town in Labrador, movement in and out of the community is inherent and inevitable as people travel to access health and social services, employment and educational opportunities, shop for supplies, and more. However, specific groups making this movement —namely, the people who are marked as Indigenous and without employment or housing—are characterized as out of place in the community. These characterizations are foundational in, and are hinged upon settler-

colonialism, and therefore settler-colonialism is instrumental in understanding the discourse of transiency in the community. In this chapter, I situate discussions of transiency, and the ways in which transiency is used to differentiate between "involuntary" and "voluntary" homelessness, within the dimensions and experiences of Indigenous homelessness and settler-colonialism in HV-GB. The dominant narrative of "transiency" is quite palpable in HV-GB and is rooted in other discursive practices of race and space. I provide in this chapter the findings and an analysis of the ways in which race is spatialized in HV-GB, and the ways in which Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness are held to extreme measures of scrutiny, criminalization, policing, and surveillance.

6.1 Space, Race & Settler-Colonialism

To ground this discussion, I want to share an experience I had in the community a few days into my first fieldwork trip. The experience revealed to me the two parallel realities that exist in HV-GB. In Chapter One, I situated myself in this research and described myself as a woman who is white-passing. In HV-GB, my whiteness afforded me a particular form of privileged access to research participants that intersected with providing as a sense of comfort for community members, working professionals in HV-GB, and many other people who would be openly racist and/or prejudiced towards Indigenous people in the community.

A few days after I first arrived to begin my fieldwork in July 2019, a few research participants offered to take me out on their ATVs to visit the trails in the back end of town where we would see the camps and spots where the so-called "transient population" typically hangout. I was surprised, because up to this point I had heard a great deal about the transient population, but I had yet to see it. After we passed through the trails to see the camps from a distance, we decided to stop in the Tim Hortons parking lot to discuss what we had seen. During our

conversation, the individuals I was with repeatedly expressed that the camps, the people in them, and the kinds of behavior associated with them did not have a place in the community. One of my research participants' partners shared that, "If they don't like it here in this 'white' town and how it's ran, they can go back their reserve." This was a turning point for me in this research, when I realized that the notion of 'transiency' and the way in which it was being used by research participants and others in the community served to produce and reproduce a harmful socio-spatial borderline between those who 'belonged' and those who 'do not belong' in the town. Moreover, as my research progressed, I began to see that transiency was also used to differentiate between those who were perceived to be "involuntarily" homeless and those were perceived to have made a choice to live in the camps. As I explore in this chapter, space, race, and settler-colonialism come together in particular ways in which a transiency discourse is produced and reproduced in HV-GB and is ultimately used as a way to present the town as a space of un-belonging for Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness.

In Chapter Three, I explored the literatures on the social and spatial dynamics between cities/urban spaces and Indigenous peoples. This dynamic is rooted in *urbs nullius*, the idea that urban spaces are void of Indigenous sovereignty and presence (Coulthard, 2014). Following *urbs nullius* discourse, Weinberger (2009) discusses the exclusion of Indigenous peoples in urban spaces with former Chief of the Mississauga's of the New Credit, Carolyn King. King argues that Indigenous people and their rights remain invisible from urban policy, planning, and the land (Weinberger, 2009). Weinberger (2009) refers to the absence of Indigeneity in the urban as a "racially constructed structural silence" (p. 185). The presumed absence of Indigenous peoples in the urban are premised on the colonial worldview that does not see an authenticity and

legitimacy for Indigenous peoples (Peters, 2002; Weinberger, 2009). Through settler-building and claiming of cities, spaces where authentic Indigeneity was seen not to exist were created in conjunction. The construction of the city has therefore entirely expunged Indigenous peoples from urban spaces (Weinberger, 2009). The construction of cities also occurred under settler colonialism, where the creation and continued existence settler-colonial societies is premised on the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous societies and peoples (Wolfe, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Hixon, 2013; Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). As the city exists, it remains a complex space for Indigenous peoples. Just as settler-colonialism serves to displace and dispossess Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories by containment on reserves, urban centers use discursive and material practices of containment, exclusion, and removal to displace Indigenous peoples *within* urban spaces (Coulthard, 2014). Today, more Indigenous peoples live in urban centers than reserves (Coulthard, 2014; Razack, 2000; 2002). Therefore, it is crucial to examine Indigenous peoples' experiences in urban spaces to understand how these spaces are racialized, and how races are spatialized. In this next section I share some of the experiences that Indigenous peoples have had in the city, including individuals who are experiencing homelessness, using the lens of transiency in HV-GB.

6.1.1 Colonial Creation of the City

HV-GB has one of the highest Indigenous populations in Newfoundland and Labrador, with 45.2% of the HV-GB identifying as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2016a). While some Indigenous peoples in the community were born and raised in HV-GB, many Indigenous peoples in the community have come from other parts of Labrador. As I discussed throughout this thesis, movement to urban spaces for Indigenous peoples occurs for many reasons. In the case of Labrador, most of the region is unevenly developed, and HV-GB serves as the service hub,

making movement to the town often essential to access services and opportunities within the region. The migration of Indigenous peoples to cities like HV-GB upsets colonial geographies that otherwise seeks to isolate and bound Indigenous geographies separate from Canadian urban centres (Peters, 2002). The construction of cities was built on settler-colonialism which enabled residents of that city to define who did or did not belong. The racialized structure of municipal citizenship sought to segregate, contain, and limit the access, rights, and opportunities of Indigenous peoples within cities (Razack, 2002). Canadian cities through colonial settlement history and contemporary social policy are constructed as places in which Indigenous peoples are excluded or imagined as "out of place" (i.e. do not belong) (Razack, 2000; 2002).

Cities are built on Indigenous territories and homelands, and these urban spaces are becoming significant spaces and meetings places for Indigenous people (Christensen, 2017). Movement and mobility are a common experience in northern Canada and Indigenous people are increasingly migrating and moving to urban spaces. In Kurtz's (2006) article discussing race within rural and urban Alaska, he described the division of two binary spaces—the rural and the urban and its formalized language of race within these two spaces. Kurtz (2006) argues that the urban-rural divide is overall problematic as it is integral to the very structure of ongoing settler-colonialism colonial ways of thinking and being (Kurtz, 2006). In creating a binary and divisions between rural-urban spaces, it further marginalizes and separates the people that are in these geographies (Kurtz, 2006).

6.2 Transiency Constructed by the Community

In its simplest definition, transiency is defined as, "the state or fact lasting for only a short time; transitory nature" (Oxford Dictionary, 2020). The Housing Coordinator and Housing Liaison at the Housing Hub shared in an interview that the word 'transient' is a word, and that it

is becoming a derogatory term in the community (Research Participant, Housing Coordinator and Housing Liaison, Housing Hub, 2019). In my observations in the community, transient was a word used quite frequently, not just by professionals in the community but by most community members as well. In the ways I heard the word being used in the community, transiency was used in a negative way. The discourse attached to 'transient' was harmful and in fact, derogatory. Transiency as it was understood in the context of HV-GB was centered around public drunkenness, substance use, loitering, perception of crime, and ultimately the idea that (in HV-GB at least) being without housing and/or living in the bush was a choice for those individuals. For the individuals that were identified as transient in the community, much of the community did not recognize the population as homeless. Additionally, public discourse through news articles, public discussions (on social media and in conversations with community members) and in interviews with research participants attached great agency and choice to transiency, seemingly to be a 'lifestyle'. In many interviews with professionals in the community, once I brought up the transient population as a topic of discussion, many participants shared that transiency in the community was a choice, and that the individuals living in the woods for the summer chose that lifestyle. The transient population characterized by the HV-GB community were typically Indigenous peoples from coastal communities and reserves, that typically spent the warmer 'summer' months in HV-GB. This population also typically slept in the woods and in camps (see **Figures 8** & **9**). The transient population typically collected in the community when weather was permitting to stay outside, which in Labrador is roughly May through to early September. In my interviews with research participants who frequented these camps, some participants shared that there were various reasons for why they come to HV-GB, but all 11 participants shared the importance of being in HV-GB whether it was to see old friends and

family, or for an opportunity that they do not have in their home community (Various Research Participants with Lived Experience, 2019)

Figure 8. Transient Camps (I) in HV-GB (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahal [author])

Figure 9. Transient Camps (II) in HV-GB (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahal [author])

There was a very strong public discourse reinforced by many news articles, public statements from governments, community social media discussions/ posts and interviews with research participants in HV-GB that differentiated the transient experiences from homelessness. Many participants I interviewed, and much of the public discourse had a stereotypical, one-size definition of homelessness. For example, in 11 semi-structured interviews conducted with frontline workers, housing/support providers, and government workers, they made a distinction between the transient population and the homeless population in HV-GB. The Director of Labrador Affairs shared that she, "Doesn't consider them homeless, it's not forced homelessness. Yes, they are probably homeless to a certain extent when they are in this community, but they chose to come here versus going back to their original home that they have a home- the difference is choice" (Research Participant, Director of Labrador Affairs, 2019). The Deputy

Minister and Director of Health and Social Development for Nunatsiavut also shared that the transient population, “Have families, houses that they could go back to, it’s more a choice of lifestyle than truly being homeless” (Research Participant, Deputy Minister and Director of Health and Social Development 2019). In 7 semi-structured interviews and discussions I had with professionals in the community and in everyday informal conversations I had with community members, substance use was commonly believed to be the main reason for the “transient population” to move to HV-GB. Most discussions of the transient population in the community were racist and reinforced a negative stereotype of Indigenous peoples, while simultaneously failing to acknowledge the larger narrative of trauma connected to addiction within the population. Furthermore, there was a strong desire in the community to criminalize and police the transient population; there had been public outcry from concerned community members, professionals, and politicians to address the ‘transient problem’. This outcry and community solidarity on the issue had been relayed in news articles, on community Facebook groups, and had been brought to the attention of provincial Ministers.

6.2.1 Policing and Managing Indigenous Homelessness

During one of my first weekends in the community, I went to get a drink at Tipsy’s (a local bar), and when I sat down, some people in the bar who were visibly Innu, greeted me and asked me what I was doing in Labrador. I was excited to talk about what I was doing in the community and because I love talking with strangers, I began talking with some of them. As we began talking, the bartender warned this group that they, “Know the rules, no bugging people, don’t ask her for anything.” Not being bothered myself, I thought, “Wasn’t it a normal thing to make conversation at a bar?”. That same week though, I was working from the local Tim Hortons, which was always packed with people, and I was sitting next to a table with an older man. Someone in the

restaurant laughed really loud, and the older man beside me looked at me and said, “Those Innu are so loud, they don’t know how to act.” These experiences reveal the racism that exists in HV-GB, one where there are social conditions, rules, and criticisms made about Indigenous peoples, particularly the local Innu people.

Indigenous peoples in urban spaces are scrutinized in their every practices through power dynamics that are sustained and created by existing institutions, policies, and community members. Moreover, Indigenous peoples in urban spaces are over-policed and incarcerated at an alarmingly high rate (Razack, 2000; Razack 2002). Settlers feel secure and entitled to cities through the process of settler-colonialism spatializing race in the city, and settler-claimed spaces in turn gives rise to carefully managed and policed boundaries within these urban spaces (Razack, 2002). Policing and management are interwoven in the discourses and construction of the city (Razack, 2000; 2002; Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). City-making processes, and the reproduction of urban spaces particularly in settler-colonial contexts, depends on the practices that reproduce, maintain, and reinforce settler colonial space (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). In Christensen’s (2017) study of Indigenous homelessness in Yellowknife, she explains that the ways in which homelessness is commonly understood fails to fully capture the complexity of its factors and pathways that led to homelessness. As a result, an individual’s homelessness becomes the defining feature of their identity; homelessness is all encompassing term that overshadows all other forms of that individual’s identity. She further explains that, “Indigenous people living homeless experience a doubling of these effects, produced by the discursive practices of colonialism that marginalize, racialize, and ‘other’ Indigenous people” (Christesen, 2017, p. 26). Christensen (2017) goes on to share that Indigenous people experiencing homelessness are portrayed as deviant and deficient, a discursive framework that frames

homelessness as a failure and personal choice within the larger racial discourses of Indigenous disbelonging (Christensen, 2017). These dynamics are at play in HV-GB as Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness from outside of the urban space are deemed to be 'out of place' and to 'not belong' in the city. Management of cities therefore works by defining who belongs and who does not belong to the city, and it is policed and reproduced through spatial practices which become embodied by the members of that space (Razack 2002; Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). Thus, to uphold and legitimate spatial divisions, settler colonial power must be maintained and routinely enforced by institutions and the residents of that space (Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). Settler-colonial power therefore depends on a spatial arrangement that determines how and by whom urban space is to be inhabited (Blomley, 2004; Simpson & Bagelman, 2018). Through observation in the community, HV-GB had committed to heavily policing, monitoring and surveilling public areas. For example, in **Figure 10** it is clear that there are no public washrooms, and there are signs on almost every building stating that washrooms are only for paying customers only- a social response and act that excludes certain individuals (i.e. those without financial capital) from accessing public infrastructure and certain spaces.

Figure 10. Locked Public Bathrooms in HV-GB (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahal [author])

In addition to individual practices of exclusion, there is a municipal community patrol officer whose job it is to patrol public spaces. This officer's role is to stop and ticket any community members who are loitering or gathering in public areas (see **Figure 11**). To add to the unwelcoming public practices in the community, there are no public benches or picnic areas. HV-GB thus manages and polices public areas to make them inaccessible, inhospitable, and/or unwelcoming for individuals that might depend on public spaces or resources- like the transient population. In another example, just prior to my arrival in June 2019, the town removed an entire wooded section of the community, an area known to be frequented by the transient population . The decision to remove the woods in the community that the transient population would frequent speaks to the ways in which settler-colonial cities shape and contribute to framing certain populations out of place and not welcomed in HV-GB. To add, the ways in which settler-colonial cities frame who is out of place and does not belong can vary in many ways, as it is discussed throughout this chapter from locked bathrooms to as extreme as actually changing the landscape of the HV-GB to expose and exclude the transient population.

Figure 11. Signs Discouraging People to Remain on or Use Premise(s) (Source: Sarah-Mae Rahal [author])

The Manager of Apenam's House, an Innu woman, shared her perspective on the public discourse on the transient population:

> There's a lot of stereotypes and racism here in the community. I don't think [the transient population] are necessarily welcomed in Goose Bay. [Community members] overlook [the transient population], [they treat them differently, there's not even a public bathroom left in town, [transient individuals] can't even use the bathroom here. (Research Participant, Manager of Apenam's House, 2019)

Policing and policies that restrict the rights of people without shelter discursively criminalizes and problematizes the homeless. The activities of people experiencing homelessness are constructed as criminal, as is their very presence in public and semi-public spaces (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2020). During my interviews with professionals in the community I asked, "What's the solution to serve this population? "In 7 interviews, participants believed in some way of criminalizing these individuals, and so solutions were centered around police or jail. However, during my interview with an RCMP Constable in the community, he expressed great frustration with this assumed solution suggested for/by the community. This contradiction shows that community members have added immense pressure to the RCMP to do more about the transient population in town. However, in my interview with this RCMP Constable, he shared that, "You can't mandate someone to get help. My basic point is that the root problem of the population is not based in criminality" (Research Participant, RCMP Constable, 2019). The criminalization and constant policing of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness reinforces the idea that Indigenous peoples, especially those who are experiencing homelessness, do not belong and are not welcomed in urban spaces. This in turn is reinforced by the response from many community members living, residing, and working in HV-GB.

6.3 Understanding Transiency within Indigenous Homelessness

In contrast to the public discourse of transiency in HV-GB, the purpose of this section is to situate the experience of transiency in HV-GB within the broader discourse of homelessness and the dimensions of Indigenous homelessness. Throughout these chapters and major themes of this thesis are movement, migration, and mobility. As outlined in Chapter Three, and in my presented findings, Indigenous peoples often migrate to urban hubs and centres seeking opportunities that do not exist in their own communities (Peters & Robillard, 2009). Further in a

paper tracing movement, dynamic circulations and mobilities of Indigenous people in urban cities Simpson and Hugill (2022) they draw on the work of Simpson (2017) who shows that Indigenous people have always moved throughout territories, when Indigenous people navigate these spaces, it can be understood as agency and self-determination (pg. 197). Simpson and Hugill (2022) further this argument by stating that Indigenous worlds have longstanding mobilities which defy settler-colonial constructions imposed by spatial formations like reserves. In my interviews with people with lived experience of homelessness, many participants living homeless shared that they came to HV-GB seeking various new paths in life whether it be escape from violence or seeking employment. Overall, HV-GB represented a hub with many more opportunities for people leaving rural communities. However, transition into the urban hubs and centres were not always seamless. Belanger et al. (2013) discusses how some individuals who migrate to the city in search of opportunity, improved education, health care, or other services become stranded or homeless in those cities due to lack of income or the lack of affordable or available housing. Many people who do migrate deal with the dynamics of discourses rooted in colonialism and racism. These discourses result in severe barriers to the opportunities that originally led an individual to migrate, such as finding a job or an apartment.

As transiency and the transient population was identified as a research need in the community of HV-GB, it is central to situate experiences of transiency within the many dimensions and forms that Indigenous homelessness exists in. To add to its complexity, Indigenous people might grapple with the trade-off between living in a permanent shelter or remaining close to their social circle and community members once migrating to urban centres (Peters & Robillard, 2009). Additionally, some Indigenous peoples who migrate to urban centres often choose to live without a formal home or permanent shelter to remain close to their social

circle and to remain in an urban place with more opportunities than their home community (Peters & Robillard, 2009). This was another complexity identified by people with lived homelessness experience- that they valued their social networks and being with their family and friends. While this is an important theme to contribute towards understanding the lived experience of Indigenous homelessness, it is beyond the scope of my research. Overall, however, the experiences described to me challenged the dominant characterizations and discourses of the transient population and Indigenous homelessness in HV-GB. These experiences revealed a web of an intimate and interconnected community of individuals who have the right to migrate to HV-GB to access better opportunities, resources, and (the possibility of) a better life. If we take a take a breath, ground ourselves, and work to (re)humanize individuals living homeless, we would realize that if the roles were reversed, we would probably want that same thing.

6.4 Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations I make in this section are brief, as policy solutions should be generated at the local, grassroots-level- from the HV-GB community itself. I make these recommendations based on my experience as a researcher, a temporary community member in HV-GB, and as a professional working in the field of homelessness.

1. The last community plan for addressing homelessness was in 2007, and HV-GB has since undergone significant changes with respect to housing and social support services. My first recommendation is that HV-GB conducts and creates an updated community plan to address homelessness, with attention to the socio-economic changes that the community and region have faced over the past decade.

2. Second, when conducting and creating this updated community plan to address homelessness in HV-GB, the process needs to be collaborative. Key rightsholders including representatives from (1) the Innu Nation, (2) the Nunatsiavut, and (3) the NunatuKavut, must be included. Policy solutions created without Indigenous consultation and collaboration will only reinforce settler-colonial norms and policies. There must also be collaboration with (4) individuals and families who have lived homelessness experience, as these experiences can provide a wealth of knowledge that will inform tangible and practical policy changes.
3. My third recommendation is to strengthen departmental and agencies' partnerships both within province and across the municipality of HV-GB. Stronger relationships need to be built between:
    a. Children, Seniors, and Social Development;
    b. Justice and Public Safety;
    c. Health and Community Services;
    d. The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation;
    e. The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Newfoundland and Labrador;
    f. the Executive Councils of:
        i. Labrador Affairs Secretariat,
        ii. Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, and
        iii. Office of Women and Gender Equality.

As I show in this thesis, homelessness is a layered issue, not one simply tied to housing. The solutions to address homelessness will therefore involve partnership and intersectional work.

4. As there was a prominent and harmful community discourse in the community about homelessness, I recommend bi-annual community sessions facilitated by the local CAB, and the Housing and Homelessness Coalition to educate, debunk misinformation, build relationships, and facilitate conversations with community members and local stakeholders/rightsholders about the larger systemic issues that create homelessness. These sessions could review key literature about homelessness as it relates to the community. I would recommend reviewing Jesse Thistle's (2018) "Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada".

6.5 Conclusion and Final Words

In this thesis I unpacked the experiences and narratives of Indigenous homelessness in HV-GB. Homelessness has been an issue in the community far before this research or my time spent in the community. In Chapter One, I situated myself, as well as HV-GB as a significant place for many individuals, families, and communities in Labrador. To expand the understanding of the community's significance, I included sections on the importance of recognizing Labrador as the ongoing homelands and traditional territories of the Innu Nation, the Nunatsiavut and the NunatuKavut. HV-GB has a historical and contemporary significance as a meeting place, and the increasing visible homeless population is situated within this history and practices. In Chapter Two, I reviewed literature that grounded and begins to unpack discussions of homelessness in northern Canada. I reviewed literature that examines northern settlement, housing, and policy in conjunction with the themes of unevenness and inequality. Considering these factors, I reviewed the geographies of northern Indigenous homelessness as it is centered around Indigenous homelessness. I paid attention to pulling out the literature that draws together Indigenous

homelessness experience with settler-colonialism. In Chapter Three, I provided the methodology that I engaged with for this research and defended how my research methods facilitated responsible and reciprocal research. My methodology was centered on Indigenous research methods and community-based practice, and this project and my writing served a research need identified by community partners in HV-GB. Then, in Chapter Four, I situated the significance of HV-GB as a hub within the region of Labrador. Through these discussions I examined the roles that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies played in framing the factors that contribute to rural-urban mobility, movement, and homelessness in the community. The findings and literature provided an understanding of the experienced inequality by Indigenous communities in the regions, which ultimately resulted in rural-urban movement and migration to HV-GB. Given the movement, mobility, and migration that occurs, in Chapter Five I discussed the gaps in housing, services, and supports. I identified crucial gaps in the community including: limited housing stock, lack of transitional housing for men exiting the correctional centre, lack of affordable housing, and lack of addiction and mental health services. Furthermore, I addressed the role that natural resource extraction had on straining services and supports in the community. I also highlighted the uneven impact that the gaps in services and supports had on Indigenous peoples, as well as on women and children. Lastly, in Chapter Six I situated transiency within the larger discussion and experiences of Indigenous homelessness. Transiency was identified as the research need that initially led to this research, and Chapter Six is where I discuss the ways in which cities and settler-spaces are constructed to problematize and exclude certain populations. In doing so, I build upon the limited knowledge about how Indigenous people including those experiencing homelessness encounter these spaces.

The objectives of this project were to:

1. understand the factors that contributed to rural-urban mobility and homelessness in the HV-GB, and how these factors were understood locally as a form of transiency;
2. to examine the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors contributing to rural-urban mobility and homelessness in HV-GB;
3. and to conceptualize the meaning and significance of mobility by situating the identification of this social phenomenon within the larger discussion of northern homelessness, northern urbanization and rural-urban mobility and migration.

A fundamental part of the journey to produce this work was to share a fuller narrative of homelessness. As I demonstrated in this thesis, I worked to build a bridge between northern development and settlement creating experiences in HV-GB, and how homelessness is experienced by Indigenous people. I did so by pulling together the themes that were identified by the community: housing, natural resource extraction, mental health, addictions, child welfare, and justice. Future research could continue to focus on HV-GB as the community receives its additional funding for housing and supports in the community. It is integral to research and monitor the outcomes of this funding's impact through program evaluations to better understand migration and mobility in Indigenous cultures and particularly vis-à-vis the transient population. More broadly, the literatures of transiency, mobility, and movement in Indigenous cultures could be expanded on as a body of knowledge because although this research begins to contribute to its growth, there are many facets left underexplored.

In unpacking homelessness, there is a wide range of relationships that intersect with other significant discussions. Throughout this journey, I learned and continue to learn about their

complexities, which is only made more complex when examining Indigenous homelessness. However, as I argued in this work, it is central to situate Indigenous experiences of homelessness within the living legacies and continuities of colonization. As we continue to live on this land together, and as we start to reconcile and build stronger relationships, we must listen, recognize, and acknowledge our histories and how they impact us not only today but for seven generations after as well.

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APPENDIX

A) Interview Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

	Title:	Northern Unevenness: Homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay
	Researcher(s):	Sarah-Mae Rahal, department of geography and Memorial University of Newfoundland, ssrahal@mun.ca
	Supervisor(s):	Julia Christensen, department of geography Memorial University of Newfoundland, jchristensen@mun.ca

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Northern Unevenness: Homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay"

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Sarah-Mae Rahal, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:
I am Sarah-Mae Rahal a Master's graduate student in the department of geography at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As part of my Masters, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Julia Christensen.

Purpose of Study:

The overall study aims to examine the factors contributing to homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay through a particular focus on rural-urban mobility and transiency. Compromised within this aim are the three main research objectives: 1) to understand the factors contributing to rural-urban mobility and homelessness in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and how these factors are understood locally as a form of transiency; 2) to examine the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors contributing to

rural-urban mobility and homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay; and, 3) to conceptualize the meaning and significance of "transiency" by situating the identification of this social phenomenon within the larger discussion of northern homelessness, northern urbanization and rural-urban mobility and migration. The significance of the study is that the community advisory board on homelessness and housing, understanding transiency, the ways in which it frames homelessness experiences, and the factors contributing to this mobility has been as identified as key research need in the community

What You Will Do in this Study:
I will be interviewing research participants in semi-guided interviews as well as focus groups to share their professional experience and knowledge around issues of homelessness and housing insecurity in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Length of Time:
Individual interviews that are one-on-one will be three one-hour sessions. The focus groups will be conducted twice, each focus group being three-hour sessions.

Withdrawal from the Study:
This section must address:

- If a participant chose to stop/end their participation participant must communicate verbally as well as in written documentation. Data collected up to that point will be removed from the study.
- **If data is requested to be removed** from the study after participation has ended data will be destroyed immediately

Possible Benefits:
Potential benefits from the study include informing potential policy recommendations in the community based on life experiences as community members, stakeholders and community workers. This study will also contribute to the larger academic community examining topics that exist in northern Canadian geographies

Possible Risks:
This study does include some risk, as my project is centred around a mobile homelessness population the group is inherently vulnerable and marginalised in the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. However, my research participants are not individuals in this population but my research participants are support providers, policymakers and government workers. The study could have the potential for emotional/psychological risk at my research is centred around colonial legacies and continuities that might induce some potential trauma, however the methods I will employee such as semi-structured allow participants to navigate around intimate topics that they are comfortable with. The study does not involve deception nor participants acting against their wishes. In addition are free resources for participants to access.

Newfoundland and Labrador Mental Health Crisis Line, 24 hour Toll-Free -- 1-888-737-4668
First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness 24/7 Help Line-- 1-855-242-3310
Canadian Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line -- 1-866-925-4419

Confidentiality:
The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.

Although the data from this research project will be published and presented, the data will be reported in aggregate form, so that it will not be possible to identify individuals. Moreover, the consent forms will be stored separately from the materials used, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses.

Though the researcher will safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion to the best of his/her ability, the nature of focus groups prevents the researcher from guaranteeing that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not repeating what is said in the focus group to others and be aware that other members of the group may not respect your confidentiality.

Anonymity:
Anonymity refers to protecting participants' identifying characteristics, such as the name or description of physical appearance. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in publications without your explicit permission.

Recording of Data:
All data collected by participants in interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:
Describe:

- All data will be electronically stored, this data is password-protected and stored on password-protected and/or encrypted devices. Consent forms will be stored separately from the data in a locked filing cabinet.
- Only the sole researcher, Sarah-Mae Rahal and researcher's supervisor, Julia Christensen will have access to data
- In addition, an audio presentation deliverable will be created from data collected. However accessible to the public. Consent must be obtained with a yes/no checkbox at the end of this form to give consent to collecting data for audio presentation. Participants should be informed that any archived data will be anonymized.
- "Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research."

Reporting of Results:

- **The data will be used for a deliverable to the community with reporting results and recommendations**

o In follow-up workshops, results and research deliverable including an audio presentation and executive summary/policy recommendations will be provided. In addition, these deliverables can be accessed on the project website.

o Upon completion, my thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library and can be accessed online at http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

In follow-up workshops, results and research deliverable including an audio presentation and executive summary/policy recommendations will be provided.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact Sarah-Mae Rahal email; ssrahal@mun.ca. Supervisor: Dr Julia Christensen email; jchristensen@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that **point will be destroyed**.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to September 1st, 2019

I agree to be audio-recorded	☐	Yes
	☐	No
I agree to the use of direct quotations	☐	Yes
	☐	No
I allow my name to be identified in any publications resulting from this study	☐	Yes
	☐	No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

B) Sample Interview Guide

Introduction

1. What is your position and duties within your organization?
2. What is the role of your organization in the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay?
3.

Theme - Socioeconomic Change

1. What are some changes you have seen working and living in the community in recent years?
2. What do you think are the drivers of this change?
3. Have these changes impacted HV-GB in a (positive/negative) manner?
4. How has housing been impacted by changes in the community?

Theme - Housing

1. How has housing been impacted by changes in the community?
2. How do you think housing is related to homelessness?
3. How has housing policy and public housing provision changed over the past decade What are some of the major challenges in the provision of public housing?
4. What do you know about various government policies that have been implemented to address the issue of housing in HV-GB?
5. How do these policies work in practice? Are they effective, do they fall short?
6. In your opinion, are there any gaps in the current policy that should be addressed?
7. If you could implement any policy related to housing, what is a priority area and what would the policy be?

Theme - Homelessness

1. Can you tell me about your observations of homelessness in HV-GB? What does it look like here in HV-GB?
2. What do you think is the contributing factor to homelessness in town?
3. What responses are being taken to address homelessness in the community?
4. Who are creating these responses to homelessness? Are these responses working?
5. What is a critical concern of parties involved responding to homelessness?

6. Who are the homeless? Are they different groups?
7. Are there groups not being served in the community?
8. Who are these groups? Are there different groups?

Theme - Mobility

1. What role and significance does HV-GB have to the greater region of Labrador?
2. In northern communities researchers and communities talk about rural-urban mobility, people migrating from rural spaces to urban spaces to access opportunities that don't exist in these rural communities, it this something you are seeing here in HV-GB?
3. Transiency is a term I'm seeing a lot, is this a term but describes what is happening here in HV-GB?
4. What does transiency look in the community?
5. How long has this population been in the community for? Have you observed any differences in this population in recent years?
6. How do you conceptualize transiency in relation to homelessness? What are some similarities and differences?
7. What do you believe are the factors contributing to rural-urban migration in HVG-GB?
8. What are community concerns surrounding rural-urban mobility in HV-GB?
9. How have community actors taken action to address transiency?
10. Are there existing gaps in current initiatives to address the transiency in HV-GB?
11. Are they any barriers/limits that impact community initiatives and actors addressing transiency?
12. Is there anything I missed or anything else you would like to share?

C) ICEHR Approval

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL
Canada A1C
5S7 Tel: 709
864-2561
icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	**20200129-AR**
Approval Period:	May 30, 2019 – May 31, 2020
Funding Source:	CRC (RGCS: 20171107; PI: Christensen)
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Julia Christensen Department of Geography
Title of Project:	*Northern Unevenness: Homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador*

May 30, 2019

Ms. Sarah-Mae Rahal
Department of Geography
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Ms. Rahal:

Thank you for your correspondence of May 15 and 30, 2019 addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project. ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to May 31, 2020. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project.

The *TCPS2* **requires** that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before May 31, 2020. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. If you need to make changes during the project which may raise ethical concerns, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes for the Committee's consideration prior to implementation. If funding is obtained subsequent to approval, you

must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR before this clearance can be linked to your award.

All post-approval event forms noted above can be submitted from your Researcher Portal account by clicking the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Portal homepage. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

for Kelly Blidook, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research

KB/lw

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Julia Christensen, Department of Geography Director, Research Grant and Contract Services

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL
Canada A1C
5S7 Tel: 709
864-2561
icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	**20200129-AR**
Approval Period:	May 30, 2019 – May 31, 2020
Funding Agency:	CRC (RGCS: 20171107; PI: Christensen)
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Julia Christensen Department of Geography
Title of Project:	*Northern Unevenness: Homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador*
Amendment #:	***01***

September 11, 2019

Ms. Sarah-Mae Rahal
Department of Geography
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Ms. Rahal:

The Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) has reviewed the proposed revisions for the above referenced project, as outlined in your amendment request dated September 10, 2019, and is pleased to give approval to the revised participant recruitment, consent form, and recruitment script, as described in your request, provided all other previously approved protocols are followed.

If you need to make any other changes during the conduct of the research that may affect ethical relations with human participants, please submit an amendment request, with a description of these changes, via your Researcher Portal account for the Committee's consideration.

Your ethics clearance for this project expires May 31, 2020, before which time you must submit an annual update to ICEHR. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance, and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer requires contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you need to provide an annual update with a brief final summary, and your file will be closed.

Annual updates and amendment requests can be submitted from your Researcher Portal account by clicking the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Portal homepage.

The Committee would like to thank you for the update on your proposal and we wish you well with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Blidook, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research

KB/bc

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Julia Christensen, Department of Geography

D) Sharing Circle Guiding Questions

The purpose of the sharing circles is to provide space for people with lived experience to share their stories and narratives. Through the sharing circles I hope to explore the topic of home and homelessness while navigating in your world

Where are you from?

How did you end up in HVGB and how long have you been here?

HOME

Where is your home?

What makes it home?

When do you feel most at home?...is there a connection with land

Activity: draw what home looks like, draw everything that makes home

HOMELESSNESS

Can you tell us about where you have lived in the past?

What do you think homelessness is?

Have you ever felt like you don't have a home? Can you explain that experience?

What does homelessness look like in HVGB?

What does living in the woods mean?

How does homelessness look where you are from?

Activity: draw what homelessness looks like

Why do you think there is homelessness in Labrador ?

Do you like being here in HVGB?

What are some changes that you want to see in HVGB?

What is working in HVGB?

E) Sharing Circle Flyer

F) Feedback Report developed for Key Partners and Community Members

(attached below)

“They Aren’t Homeless They Have Homes”: Unpacking Homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador

RESEARCH REPORT

Sarah-Mae Rahal
MA. Candidate
Department of Geography
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Supervised by: Dr. Julia Christensen
Email: ssrahal@mun.ca

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Acknowledgments

Before beginning this report would like to respectfully recognize and acknowledge that this research has taken place in Labrador on the ancestral homelands of the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, the Innu of Nitassian and the Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut. Furthermore, this research is part of a Master of Arts program in the department of Geography at Memorial University of Newfoundland, which is on the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq.
This report has been a collaborative project with many partners, organizations, agencies and community members that added their invaluable knowledge. Thank you for welcoming me into your community and showing me the heart of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Introduction

The goal of this research report is to share aspects of my MA in a format that is useful for all partners, organizations and agencies involved. Moreover, I aim to discuss homelessness and housing insecurity in the community in a way that is accessible and inclusive.

This report will provide a background on homelessness as it has been situated Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Location and place are critical to any discussion of homelessness and housing insecurity in Happy Valley-Goose Bay as it is often referred to as the hub of Labrador. This report will thus engage with concepts of mobility, movement, and transiency as key dimensions of homelessness in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

To better illustrate the scope and significance of this project, the sections that follow will outline the research questions and methods, as well as key research findings and recommendations.

Background

Situating Happy Valley- Goose Bay

Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) is located in central Labrador in the Upper Lake Melville Region. The lands known as Labrador are the ancestral homelands of the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, the Innu of Nitassian and the Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut. HVGB exists on the ancestral and traditional lands of Innu Nation and NunatuKavut. HVGB is the only community linked by air, sea, and road, and is often referred to as a 'hub'. HVGB is an administrative and economic hub in Labrador. For these reasons, HVGB is a significant place for supports and services, resources, and opportunities for not only the community but many rural, coastal, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous communities in Labrador. HVGB is also the administrative hub for the three Indigenous Nations in Labrador: the Nunatsiavut, the NunatuKavut, and the Innu Nation.

Housing, Mobility and Movement

'Unevenness' is a term that was repeated time and again throughout this project. Unevenness is a common experience in northern Canada, as settlement history in northern Canada shaped an uneven spatial distribution of resources, opportunities, and infrastructure (Christensen, 2017). Unevenness becomes clear when examining the lived experiences in Inuit and Innu communities throughout coastal and northern Labrador. Indigenous communities in these regions have very limited opportunities compared to HVGB, which is the hub of essential services in Labrador. Indigenous communities in Labrador continue to suffer disproportionately from health issues and high levels of socioeconomic vulnerability (Dombrowski, 2016). Closely related, core housing need is significant issue intrinsically linked to inequality. Housing is a social determinant of health and studies repeatedly link housing needs to: mental, physical, and spiritual health; violence; and individual, family, and community wellbeing (Christensen, 2017). Moreover, housing issues are inter-related with many other social issues that exist in Labrador.

The challenges in HVGB are exemplary of the overall housing need for in northern Canada; in other words, housing need and chronic housing shortage is a lived reality for many northerners. The housing conditions faced in northern Canada is a national disgrace that has been identified as a national crisis by housing scholars (Tester, 2012). This national crisis is characterized by significant core housing need, which is "a standard measure of housing insecurity in Canada, which includes affordability, adequacy, and suitability of both the private market and public housing stock" (Christensen et al., 2017; Lauster & Tester, 2014). As many northern coastal and remote communities lack affordable, accessible, and adequate housing, regional centers become important sites of housing diversity and opportunity. This dynamic is even more perilous when the housing options in regional centers are strained to meet the demands of their own community (Turner & Schiff, 2014). The lack of housing and supports for many families and vulnerable individuals and families in Labrador has led to the housing situation in HVGB not being prepared to meet current housing demands (Jewczyk, 2018). The unevenness of housing across Labrador often leads to movement from rural communities towards HVGB for access to housing, opportunities, and resources that do not exist in those smaller communities. Almost always, this movement is integral for individuals experiencing homelessness

(Turner & Schiff, 2014). Given that individuals experiencing homelessness often rely on emergency shelters, community hubs, and various community supports, HVGB currently has a growing visible homeless population because many of these supports do not exist in smaller, coastal, or remote communities.

Homelessness

In recent years, regional centers and hubs have become increasingly important places for northern communities. Alongside increasing urbanization in regional centers, there has also been an increase of visible homeless populations (Christensen, 2012). A similar dynamic is observed in HVGB, where anecdotal evidence suggests homelessness has been on the rise over the last couple of decades. Homelessness, however, is experienced on a spectrum and can take many forms. In northern Canada, hidden homelessness is the most prevalent form of housing insecurity and includes those living in overcrowded, unstable or inadequate housing, couch surfing, or who are at risk of becoming homeless (Christensen, 2016). Due to the cold and harsh climate of northern communities and close familial and community dynamics, there is a high degree of couch surfing (Christensen, 2012; Christensen, 2016; Turner & Schiff, 2014). Based on interviews with support providers, policy makers, frontline workers, and people with lived experience, hidden homelessness is reported as a common experience shared in HVGB.

While there are other visible forms of homelessness in HVGB, it is significant to note that experiences of homelessness often disproportionately impact certain populations. First and foremost, although homelessness and housing insecurity impacts all northern peoples, it disproportionately impacts women and children (Bopp, 2007). Additionally, homelessness disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples nationwide (Gaetz, 2013; Thistle, 2018).

Indigenous Homelessness

Indigenous peoples are disproportionately overrepresented in experiences of homelessness nationwide. It is critical to understand Indigenous homelessness within the larger context of colonialism. Métis-Cree scholar, Jesse Thistle also makes this integral link, stating that Indigenous homelessness is:

“best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and dispossessed Indigenous peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors, and stories” (Thistle, 2017).

The dominant discourse of Indigenous homelessness has largely focused on narratives of poverty, addiction, and poor mental health among Indigenous people. This view has neglected to discuss the entirety of these narratives and experiences (Christensen & Peters, 2016). Dominant discourse fails to acknowledge and critique the full context and factors that create Indigenous homelessness. As homelessness takes many forms, Indigenous homelessness is experienced in many dimensions, which are integral to challenging dominant discourses of Indigenous homelessness.

"Indigenous homelessness is not defined by lacking structure but is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include individuals, families, and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, cultures, languages, and identities"
(Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

Thistle (2017) expands on these Indigenous homelessness experiences, and shares that they can be experienced from: historical displacement, spiritual disconnection, cultural disintegration, overcrowding, and relocation and mobility. This elaborated narrative challenges the belief that homelessness is simply living without shelter; it recognizes Indigenous homelessness as experiences that are lived physically, spiritually, emotionally, and culturally.

Contextualizing Transiency

"They aren't homeless, they have homes"
(unidentified research participants, 2019).

HVGB has been experiencing a rising degree of visible homelessness that has been characterized as "transient homelessness" (Compton-Hobbs, pers. Comm). Transient homelessness is best understood as rural-urban mobility. In July 2017, the Town of HVGB established a Transient and Homeless Working Group with the purpose to discuss and collaborate with local stakeholders on solutions related specifically to transiency in the community (Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2018). Furthermore, at the September 2018 Let's Talk Housing Forum in HVGB, transiency was repeatedly discussed as a pressing community priority. In follow-up conversations with the Housing and Homelessness Coalition of HVGB (the community advisory board [CAB] on homelessness and housing in the community), understanding mobility, the ways in which mobility frames experiences of homelessness, and the factors contributing to this phenomenon were identified as key research needs in the community.

Public opinion, media, and research findings in this project have conveyed a strong opinion on transiency- one that detaches transiency from homelessness. However, Jesse Thistle provides a dimension of Indigenous homelessness from the lens of relocation and mobility, which he describes experienced as:

"Mobile Indigenous homeless people are travelling over geographic distances between urban and rural spaces for access to work, health, education, recreation, legal and childcare services, or to attend spiritual events and ceremonies, have access to affordable housing, and to see family, friends, and community members" (Thistle, 2017).

To understanding the issue of transience, it is central to understand the ways Indigenous homelessness takes form. Contextualizing Indigenous homelessness within colonization is paramount, as social issues in northern communities are inherently linked to colonial trauma and its living legacies (Poole & Bopp, 2015). Transiency must also be contextualized within the dimensions of Indigenous homelessness, as rural-urban movement plays a vital role in experiences of homelessness and

insecurity for marginalized residents where key health and social services, as well as emergency shelter options are concentrated in regional centres (Christensen, 2017; Christensen et al., 2017). Being that HVGB is the hub of Labrador, movement and mobility into the community is an increasing norm particularly for people experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness, and who need additional supports and services.

Research Objectives and Methods

Research Objectives

This research project aimed to examine the factors contributing to homelessness in HVGB with a particular focus on rural-urban mobility. Within this overarching research aim, there were three main research objectives:

1) To understand the factors contributing to rural-urban mobility and homelessness in the HVGB, and how these factors are understood locally as a form of transiency.

2) To examine the role that a variety of historical and contemporary uneven rural-urban geographies play in framing the factors that contribute to rural-urban mobility and homelessness in HVGB.

3) To conceptualize the meaning and significance of mobility by situating the identification of this social phenomenon within the larger discussion of northern homelessness, northern urbanization, and rural-urban mobility and migration.

Through these discussions, the uneven and inequitable experiences within northern and Indigenous geographies is illustrated.

Research Methods

This project was guided by a mixed-methods approach rooted in community-based research (CBR) to examine the experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity in HVGB. CBR emphasizes the importance of collaboration, participation, and social justice agendas; community involvement is therefore central to this research approach (Flicker et al., 2008). The combined methods of this project drew from qualitative research, including: a literature review, participant observation, media analysis, feedback workshops, and semi-structured interviews. In total, 33 interviews were conducted with a wide scope of support providers, frontline workers, housing providers, policymakers, government workers, and people with lived experience of homelessness.

This project also engaged with Indigenous and decolonizing research methods including sharing circles and storytelling techniques. Using Indigenous and decolonizing research methods is significant as, “it is important to identify all of the old and new faces of colonialism that continue to distort and dehumanize Indigenous peoples” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Research is a part of upholding colonization and perpetuates harm and the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, communities, and

knowledge. Indigenous scholars Renee Louis and Raven Sinclair claim that Western research methods have pathologized, problematized, objectified, and dismembered Indigenous communities (Sinclair, 2004; Louis 2007). In comparison, Indigenous and decolonizing methods disengage and resist colonial, exploitative dimensions of research on Indigenous peoples (de Leeuw et al., 2012). Moreover, it provides space for marginalized and systemically silenced voices to be heard and valued.

Moving Forward as a Community

Research Findings and Recommendations

1a) Finding: Leadership and Collaboration

There are undoubtedly a lot of agencies, organizations, and players involved in solving the issue of homelessness. From interviewing frontline workers and governments, it was expressed that there is a lack of collaboration between all players in town. There was a deflection of responsibility due to conflicting or overlapping jurisdictions. As a result, the burden of addressing homelessness and housing insecurity is shared unevenly across governments and NGOs, which places an unsustainable amount of responsibility on certain organizations in the community.

1b) Moving Forward: Collaborative Governance

There are important implications for organizations serving homeless individuals to collaborate, especially in northern communities (Schiff & Brunger, 2015). All players involved in this discussion are facing similar challenges based on broader challenges resulting from place or lack of funding. A collaborative space where everyone is at the table and every partner is respected and valued must be created. Collaboration is based on trust, understanding and respect, which is ultimately rooted in bettering the community- a goal that these organizations and stakeholders are working towards.

2a) Finding: Community Understanding

There is a strong public view of Indigenous homelessness in the community. This is especially prevalent on social media and media reports. These views are based on misinformation and a lack of communication with key knowledge holders.

2b) Moving Forward: Education Session

The Housing and Homelessness Coalition should take lead in hosting community engagement sessions rooted in education. These session's goals need to focus on sharing knowledge about different forms of homelessness and be rooted in Indigenous experiences of colonization. Indigenous peoples nationwide and especially in Labrador have, and continue to deal with, the trauma and living legacies of colonization. The education session would seek to bridge the gap of knowledge about homelessness within the community to better understand the complexity of homelessness in HVGB.

In Yellowknife, NWT (another northern community facing similar issues as HVGB), the community engaged in a project involving photovoice. Photovoice is an empowering methodology that allows individuals to reflect upon their strengths and main concerns for their community, and ultimately has worked to motivate municipal change. Photovoice can also

provide vital and accurate information from marginalized groups (Moses, 2015). A project like this should be explored in HVGB to include all voices in the community and expand community understanding.

3a) Finding: Fragmented Supports & Services

As it exists, there is a range of gaps in services and supports in HVGB that are detrimental to housing recovery. In HVGB, there is also a lack of many services and supports that are otherwise only available outside of the community, often in bigger urban centres located in Newfoundland, such as St. John's or Corner Brook. This dynamic has serious implications in fragmenting the continuum of care involved in Housing First. Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing, and then providing additional supports and services as needed (Gaetz et al., 2013).

3b) Moving Forward: Community-Centred Solutions

Supports and services need to be community centred. Supports and services should be community-based and informed by local knowledge.

4a) Finding: Housing Shortage

Housing need is a great concern in HVGB. As core housing need is related to social stresses, it factors significantly into pathways of homelessness in northern Canada (Christensen, 2017). The need for safe and affordable housing that fits complex and diverse needs is instrumental in creating a healthy community. In the current housing landscape, public housing supply in HVGB is not meeting the demands of the community, and there is a significant need for more public housing units- especially single units. Supportive housing, which has been found to be a great success in the community, also has a higher demand than available supply. Additionally, there is a desperate need for transitional housing in HVGB. Despite HVGB serving as the judicial hub in Labrador, there is no existing housing for men transitioning from corrections back into the community. This issue was identified as a significant problem in the community.

4b) Moving Forward: Housing to Fit Diverse Needs

Throughout this project many individuals, community members, working professionals, and people with lived homelessness experiences identified the need more diverse housing stock. As housing currently exists in HVGB, there is limited single housing units. Therefore, more housing to accommodate single people is required. This issue is heightened by the fact that there lacks transitional housing in the community, and there are very limited supportive housing options. Diverse housing stock must be built to meet the needs and supports of all community members.

5a) Finding: Addictions & Treatment

There is a lack of mental health and addictions treatment programs in Labrador. Without a long-term residential treatment facility and addictions services in the community, Labrador will continue to create and sustain a high population of individuals with severe cases of addictions or mental health problems.

5b) Moving Forward: Trauma-Centred Programming

To overcome social issues in Labrador, more addictions and mental health services must be made available and/or funded. Addictions and mental health issues are often the cause of many issues in the community, especially with regards to housing insecurity and homelessness. Programs addressing addictions and mental health must also be trauma-informed. HVGB, and Labrador more broadly has a high Indigenous population. Programming must therefore be aimed at addressing trauma as addictions is often the result of unresolved trauma.

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