



Article

Lived Expertise in Homelessness Policy and Governance

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Abstract: Lived expertise (LE) is a valuable form of expertise that can lead to more effective policy-making. Existing research points to important mechanisms for where and how to include LE. It also offers lessons around the potential exclusionary effects such mechanisms may have. In this article, we bring the discussions together and ground them in the Canadian case of homelessness. Failures in Canadian homelessness governance and policy highlight the utility of LE where it has been included, but we also find that its prevalence is unknown. Recent mechanisms including LE are still limited and their influence is questioned. We insist that the inclusion of LE cannot be haphazard or merely a nod to its value. Rather, it requires careful and considerate inclusion that centers LE throughout the policy process, encourages its influence and innovation, and embeds mechanisms for its long-term involvement within governance structures.

Keywords: lived expertise; policymaking; homelessness

1. Introduction

Cities across Canada are facing increasing levels of housing unaffordability, encampments, and homelessness (Dahms and Ducharme 2023; Infrastructure Canada 2023; Pickereell 2023). Residents are forcibly evicted from dismantled tent cities and services are scrambling to meet the needs of growing populations experiencing homelessness (The Office of the Federal Housing Advocate 2023). The rise in homelessness points to several issues within the Canadian welfare state and the role of policy in perpetuating and maintaining inequality. It thus demands careful consideration of policy and governance failures, particularly the evidence used to support existing and innovative approaches to homelessness. This article adds to the discussion of policy and governance failures. It considers the role of lived expertise in homelessness policy and argues for its importance to effective policy and governance. And yet, we also argue that there is a need for *meaningful* inclusion of such expertise, rather than surface-level tokenistic gestures, and highlight the careful consideration needed when engaging with and including lived experience. It is important to note that the article presents lived expertise (hereafter LE) as a vital form of policy expertise. At times, LE is referenced as an object, but we cannot forget that it is tied to people with these experiences. As we argue for more engagement with LE, we do so through mechanisms that include people with LE within inclusive and meaningful practice and coproduction.

Recently, there has been an increase in mechanisms within Canada that include LE, although they are still spaces of contestation and limited inclusion and influence. To better understand where and how LE should be included in policy processes, we argue that there is a need to reframe our understanding of democracy and policymaking, as well as evidence and inclusion. Although there are ways in which individuals with LE have engaged to bring about change outside of existing policy processes, this article considers where and how individuals can and should be included in policymaking. We critically examine efforts to show that inclusion in existing processes has been limited, including instances where it is thought to be present. In doing so, we build from extensive work



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by other Canadian scholars, advocates, and individuals with LE that have advocated for recognition, inclusion, and leadership in policy development (see, for example, [Cataldo et al. 2021](#); [Levac et al. 2022](#); [Ilyniak 2022](#); [Nelson 2020](#)).

In this article, we set the research and literature on LE inclusion in the context of Canadian homelessness policy. We do so to illustrate the utility and the struggles associated with the inclusion of LE as policy-relevant expertise, as well as where and how it is currently utilized in the Canadian case. We begin by situating ourselves within this work before outlining the importance of LE and its relationship to policymaking. Using existing literature, we consider elements that foster *meaningful* inclusion of LE and where and how purported inclusionary spaces can serve to exclude, rendering populations like those experiencing homelessness “surplus”. We then outline the rise of evidence-based policymaking, presenting it as an opportunity to change perceptions around evidence and provide mechanisms for the inclusion of LE. We argue that LE is also crucial evidence and should be included throughout policy processes. The article then turns to homelessness and LE with examples of where and how research and policy has included people with lived experiences of homelessness, highlighting limitations and opportunities for improvement. Then, we introduce the Canadian case, outlining homelessness governance, as well as the history of advocacy and policy change. We end with a discussion of meaningful inclusion where we highlight recommendations and provide mechanisms for advancing meaningful engagement with LE in Canadian policymaking.

2. Author Positionality

Although we both have conducted research on homelessness in Canada—experiences that have encouraged us to write this article—neither of us have experiences of homelessness. As we outline throughout the paper, LE is absent or rarely included in various policy processes, including in research and advocacy that inform policy. This includes academia, something that should change. We write this article as two cisgender, heterosexual, settler women, one of whom is a woman of color, at different levels of professorship. Our personal and professional experiences—including in university settings but also with advocacy work and volunteering with service providers in East Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Guelph, and Edmonton—shape our positionality as well as our approaches to research.

We therefore write this article from our positions of privilege and engage critically with political science literature, in addition to other bodies of work, to argue for the importance of LE and to show where and how LE can and should be more meaningfully included in research and policy processes.

3. Lived Expertise and Meaningful Inclusion in Policymaking

LE has been discussed in multiple disciplines and bodies of research. At times, different terms are used—such as “Experts by Experience” (see [Lindström and Rantanen 2021](#))—or discussed more indirectly. It is a first-person perspective—a value-laden knowledge of reality that encompasses the “what it’s like” sense ([Casey 2023](#)). LE can be defined as a phenomenology that contrasts positivist assumptions and emphasizes *subjective* experiences to understand phenomena ([Mcintosh and Wright 2018](#)). In this way, various bodies of work from critical scholars, including feminist scholars, Indigenous scholars, critical race scholars, disability scholars, and others, emphasize the importance of the experiences of diverse groups ([Mcintosh and Wright 2018](#); [Schwandt and Burgon 2011](#)). It has long been recognized, then, that LE holds value for democracy, equity, and social justice. In relation to policy, LE improves outcomes for targets of policies and programs ([Lindström and Rantanen 2021](#)). Recently, the discussions around LE have grown, and its inclusion has been marked in mental health and other policy and service planning models (see, for example, [Nelson et al. 2016](#); [Speed and Reeves 2023](#)).

Democratic participation literature is particularly helpful in setting the context of engagement with LE within broader democratic values and systems. It also points to the limitations of existing processes. Such discussions are particularly prudent given the rise

of participatory mechanisms for citizen engagement within the neoliberal context. Such mechanisms of participation, ranging from surface-level participatory mechanisms to more collaboration and co-creation, require direct examination. As the literature has discussed, LE can be included in a variety of ways and at a variety of points in the policy cycle; not all of which are meaningfully observed to influence policy. Further, individuals with LE rarely lead policy processes or are identified as valuable partners in co-developing policy.

In agreement and solidarity with advocates and lived experience networks (see, for example, [Cataldo et al. 2021](#); [CLELN 2024](#); [Nelson 2020](#); [Ilyniak 2022](#); [Malenfant and Smith 2021](#)), we contend that the targets of policies and those who are failed by policies hold a novel and vital form of expertise that should inform policies that follow. In fact, we argue that populations most affected by policies and targeted by them should be included in decision-making *because* of those experiences and because they are those most impacted by certain institutional actions ([Young 1990](#)). Examinations of the experiences of marginalized groups can influence our understanding of the welfare state (including gaps and inequities in social protection that might be unnoticed by scholars or practitioners), politics, and where policy change is needed ([Michener et al. 2020](#)). They can also affect existing theories of citizenship and democracy (see, for example, [MacIntyre et al. 2022](#)).

From voting to citizen deliberation, theories of democracy rely on the participation of the governed. Traditional theories of democracy define the participation of citizens as the ability to influence the major decisions that affect them (see, for example, [Verba 1967](#)). This participation leads to trust in government and influences the relationships between the state and its citizens, building accountability, legitimacy, and political stability ([Bennet and Resnick 1990](#); [Brennan and Lomasky 1993](#); [Verba et al. 1995](#)). And yet, we know that participation is fraught with inequalities, including with respect to *who* participates (see, for example, [Verba and Nie 1972](#); [Schlozman and Verba 1979](#); [Dalton 2017](#)), their *experiences* while participating (see [Arnstein 1969](#)), and the subsequent *influence* of their participation (see [Young 1990](#)). How participation is defined and the acts it encompasses can also vary, affecting the accessibility of some forms of participation as well as their subsequent influence. Some groups, for example, may participate outside of traditional forms of politics, with various forms of resistance (see [Scott 1985](#)), strategies and opportunities (see [Simone 2018](#)), and forms of participation (see [Levac and Weibe 2020](#)). Equality of participation is important in our examination and evaluation of the distribution of democracy and its accessibility to even the most vulnerable in society ([Swyngedouw 2018](#); [Davidson and Iveson 2015](#)). It also speaks to the voices represented—and those ignored—in the creation of policy.

The participatory democracy literature outlines the importance of engagement and the need to include indicators and structural change to achieve democratic goals ([Coppedge et al. 2011](#); [Pateman 2012](#)). It also points to the many possible forms of direct involvement and engagement in the policy process (see, for example, eds. [Cain et al. 2003](#); [Chambers 2003](#); [Fung 2006](#)). There is a need, therefore, to also consider the different forms of participation equally, particularly given the various forms in which some groups—and marginalized groups in particular—may or may not participate ([Schlozman et al. 1999](#)). The literature does, however, also clarify that even spaces of engagement can be spaces of exclusion.

In analyzing specific forms of participation, [Arnstein \(1969\)](#) offers vital considerations regarding what we deem to be participation and productive engagement. Arnstein's ladder typologizes citizen participation as manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. The ladder begins with the manipulation of rubberstamp advisory committees that are used as vehicles of public relations by elites, forms of group therapy that attempt to control actions, and informing, which includes elites that provide information but discourage engagement. Placation is the fourth rung of the ladder and is where some power exists with some citizens chosen to sit on public boards or committees, although they can still be outvoted. Partnership includes the redistribution of power with negotiation through joint boards and committees, often initiated by angry citizens that demand a share of power. Delegated power and citizenship

control are at the top of the ladder and occur when citizens have significant power to hold others accountable and are in complete control of policy and managerial aspects. As Arnstein exhibits through her ladder, there is a lack of examples of participation found at the top where citizens have control (Arnstein 1969).

Levac and Weibe (2020) argue that engagement can at times be used to advance a government's predetermined position and not allow citizens to influence the policy purpose or questions. Deliberation then, is the active involvement within institutional processes and more intentional exchanges of ideas that are founded on mutually agreed upon and accepted assumptions and reasons (Levac and Weibe 2020). The impacts of those included rely on the design of the participatory process and substantive inclusion, including the generation of alternatives, planning, and evaluation (Black and Gregersen 1997; Michels and De Graaf 2017). There is a need for processes of political engagement throughout the planning and policy process, with community values articulated and considered (Legacy et al. 2016). Involvement requires time to advance and create trusting relationships through intentionally anti-oppressive aims and intersectional praxis (Levac and Weibe 2020). Involvement can also include various activities and forms of participation. Phillips and Kuyini (2018) argue that, in reference to homelessness participation in service delivery, there is a need to extend Arnstein's ladder to consider more and other forms of participation, reasons for participation, and specific processes of participation. Importantly, for individuals experiencing homelessness, there is a need to move beyond consultations with limited impacts and feedback loops to more co-design and co-production of policy that provide more power and leadership to those participating (Cataldo et al. 2021). Such engagement with LE, however, needs to occur throughout policy processes.

There are, after all, many ways in which citizens may participate to influence policy throughout the policy cycle. Such spaces require critical attention. The policy process includes early stages of problem definition and agenda setting, where LE can be particularly helpful in articulating definitions and approaches to a policy problem and garnering attention to influence agenda setting. The problem definition phase, however, is dictated by the evidence included (or not) (Daviter 2019). The framing of a particular problem influences where on the agenda it lands and therefore the support it receives, as well as how policy solutions are designed (Hassel and Wegrich 2022). This stage of the policy process is particularly important, yet there is little evidence of LE co-creation or meaningful collaboration. To be clear, there is often "consultation" at this stage of policy (and also in research), but Paradis and Mosher (2012) have documented a frustration that this does not translate into policy action. Meaningful engagement with LE can influence the later stages of the design and implementation of policy and inspire policy innovation (Mcintosh and Wright 2018; Doyle et al. 2021; Miller et al. 2023).

In service delivery and policy implementation, LE is often included as peer work. Peer work is identified as beneficial to more service user responsiveness and rapport building (Ferguson et al. 2011). It has been discussed in the context of harm reduction and trauma-related services. Peer work has been found to enhance the advancement of programs and foster trust and communication, informing continuous improvement, advancing local adaptation, and promoting learning that helps navigate the challenges of complex interventions (Worton 2019). It increases engagement with program services, even over time, and increases trust through personal and peer experience (Deering et al. 2011; Macdonald and Howard 2020). Such programs can lead to more satisfaction and acceptance of a given intervention (Kahan et al. 2020). And yet, we know that there are limitations to the value given to peer workers, including the lack of trauma-informed training, compensation, and respect, as we discuss later.

In relation to program evaluation, there is a need to go beyond stakeholder analysis to center LE within the evaluation itself, throughout the process (Schwandt and Burgon 2011). It is not, therefore, the surface-level discussion of where and how citizens and vulnerable groups *can* participate to influence policy, but rather centering *if* those opportunities are in fact influencing policy, the extent to which such spaces are equitable, and their

presence throughout the policy cycle. LE then becomes not only a perspective utilized in policymaking but central to our understanding of policy, from early processes and defining their goals to implementation and evaluation.

The variation in actors involved in policymaking, furthermore, creates numerous spaces where LE can be included. The role of nonprofit organizations, for example, in service delivery and advocacy creates spaces of engagement with LE. Nonprofit advocacy is influenced by organizational size, board support, knowledge about legislation and policy, funding, donations, collaboration, and the neoliberal environment (Guo and Saxton 2010; Lu 2018; Malenfant et al. 2019). These factors may hinder or encourage the inclusion of LE (see Pue and Kopec 2023). A recent survey conducted by the Charity Insights Canada Project, including over 500 respondents from registered charities, found that LE is often included at the organization level (CICP-PCPOB 2023). As the respondents included those working with organizations, little is known about LE from those with LE, and this may include service providers and advocates speaking on behalf of those with LE. How LE is included, furthermore, is varied. The respondents outlined inclusion at the board level, in advisory committees, and in staff evaluations. When asked why organizations engage with their target populations in numerous ways, many participants cited the importance of including target populations for their success and to ensure they are meeting the needs of those accessing services (CICP-PCPOB 2023).

In thinking through participation, and particularly the participation of a marginalized population, it is important to consider questions of power and equality. There is a need to ensure that those most affected are included and that there is not only participatory inclusion but also procedural equality and access to information, as well as shared interests and opportunities for the exposure to alternative perspectives (Levac and Weibe 2020). Intersectionality is also vital, given the heterogeneity of experiences and subpopulations among marginalized groups, including differences in age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, etc. The heterogeneity of experiences may at times feel like a limitation or barrier to including LE in policymaking. Mcintosh and Wright (2018, p. 459) acknowledge this limitation. And yet, they argue that there are “clusters of commonality and shared intersubjective experiences”. Societal changes and advances have centered around communities communicating and developing their shared lived experiences (Casey 2023). In homelessness policy, heterogeneity is particularly prudent. Existing approaches, even those with inclusionary intent, often apply a one-size-fits-all approach that ignores the heterogeneity of experiences and leaves some social identities stigmatized and excluded (Brais and Maurer 2022; Nelson et al. 2023). There are ways to include heterogeneity meaningfully and consider its utility whilst also deriving commonalities that can benefit policy and political action.

To better understand the utility of LE, there is a need to interrogate where and how to include LE whilst also avoiding spaces of tokenism, surface-level inclusion, and ineffectiveness. As we create spaces for the inclusion of LE, they must be critically evaluated. Doing such work well requires constant reflection and spaces adaptable to the everyday struggles of democratic participatory mechanisms. It also requires the consideration of what forms of evidence and therefore experiences are deemed relevant to policymaking.

4. Evidence-Based Policymaking and Changing Perceptions

The rise of evidence-based policymaking provides an opportunity to consider the representation of voices in relation to the evidence gathered and analyzed for policy. It allows us to consider the inclusion of LE throughout the policy cycle, particularly in earlier parts of the policy process. As we frame LE as evidence, we need to be cognizant that this evidence comes from people. There is therefore the need to ensure such knowledge is not divorced from those who hold it and that they are included throughout policy processes, as we highlighted above.

The framing of LE as evidence requires an interrogation of not only what is defined as expertise and evidence but also the societal perceptions and understandings that influence

such conceptions. Evidence-informed policy relies on research as sources of evidence, to facilitate policymaking, and to increase the capacity for implementation (Bowen and Zwi 2005). In many ways, then, evidence-based policymaking itself can improve various policy processes, and if there are broader understandings of what constitutes evidence, this can create opportunities for more engagement with lived experiences.

Discussions around evidence-based policymaking often center around the analytical capacities of governments. Governments require the capacity to analyze and collect the necessary evidence. And yet, studies have found that even when governments have access to various forms of evidence and resources, they do not always use them systematically due to the lack of capacity regarding engagement with diverse evidence (Newman et al. 2017). This often refers to technical capacities, connecting evidence-based policymaking with analytical resources (Howlett 2009). Policy analytical capacity, then, includes the capability to collect appropriate data and utilize it effectively. It is a predictor of successful applications of evidence-based policymaking but requires a highly trained public service (Howlett 2009). Although discussions of evidence-based policy and capacity outline technical skills and data analysis, they can, and, we argue, should, consider the inclusion of LE and the capacities of governments to engage with LE and incorporate it into policy. In fact, the evidence-based frame may provide the necessary impetus to increase the involvement of those with LE throughout the policy cycle. It may also increase the value placed on those with LE as knowledge holders and their inclusion as leaders with such knowledge.

Some definitions of evidence-based policy include experiential knowledge, although such knowledge is often seen as more tacit (see Smith-Merry 2020). The rise of evidence-based policymaking favors more structured evidence, putting into question where and how LE can be included. The reliance on rigor, validity, and reproducibility questions the expertise of LE. And yet, as Smith-Merry (2020) argues, such measures need to be contextualized when including different forms of knowledge. There are benefits to diversifying methods of data collection and the analysis of evidence to decouple definitions of rigor and validity from a strict understanding of methods and better contextualized knowledge (Smith-Merry 2020). There is a need to include the variety of experiences that can serve as evidence. In fact, such inclusion can point to the limitations of measures and lead to better outcomes (see, for example, Meltzer et al. 2021).

The same can be said of where LE is not included; the absence of LE in policymaking and eventual policy can speak to broader societal perceptions and values regarding some forms of evidence and expertise. As Speed and Reeves (2023) argue in their consideration of the lack of LE in social security policymaking in the UK, the inclusion of LE is more common in some policy areas, such as health policy. They argue that the lack of formal and institutionalized imperatives to involve those with LE of social security benefits in policy development is due to the different fields of power in social policy. In fact, there are different social imaginaries between patients and out-of-work beneficiaries. These differences lead to a lack of solidarity and collective action, with conceptions of actors that limit holding the government to account (Speed and Reeves 2023). The perceptions and equivalence between groups and thus their targets and influence are related to broader conceptions and systems. Capitalist notions and values of social welfare influence how some groups are viewed (Speed and Reeves 2023). It also determines those marginalized, and therefore rendered surplus, by capitalist investment and accumulation. The conceptualization of welfare dependency influences policy design and self-perception. It can also be utilized to disempower some groups to maintain the status quo, avoiding changes to eligibility criteria and the provision of services (Wright 2016). Such conceptions fail to include lived experiences that would point to systemic issues (Wright 2016). These conceptions are related to liberal paradigms of governance and values that often place responsibility on the individual (Wright 2016).

The LE of groups is therefore particularly important to challenging dominant discourses that structure and influence policymaking. The inclusion of LE often reflects existing neoliberal and capitalist power relationships and the hierarchy of social organi-

zation. Where LE is included, it is often surface-level inclusion that ignores the value of LE, and where it is not, it further supports power relationships that keep those with LE from holding positions of power. In fact, policies on homelessness in Canada have failed to address the evidence and LE that require structural changes to truly influence homelessness (Nichols et al. 2024).

5. LE and Homelessness

Populations are rendered “surplus” through policy design and governance decisions. Dependent or deviant populations—or populations like those experiencing homelessness straddling the line between both—are rarely represented in policy (Schneider and Ingram 1997). LE is often included in existing processes as an afterthought or included merely as a tokenistic box-checking gesture. Undeserving social constructions are often accompanied by deceptive policies, exclusionary rules, and strict eligibility requirements. Perceptions and stigmas, including neoliberal conceptions that individualize poverty, influence policy and governance decisions and relate to discussions of deservingness (Clarke et al. 2020; Kopec 2022). The conceptualization of homelessness is contested between governments, sectors, groups with lived experience, etc., with competing perspectives ranging in terms of views around individual and state responsibility for developing solutions (Kyle 2005; Smith 2022) and oscillating between deservingness and cultural constructions (Feldman 2004). Neoliberal philosophies deepen the marginalization of those experiencing homelessness in Canada and erode the potential for policies that ensure universal basic economic security and a robust welfare state (Donnan 2014). These policies, in turn, influence experiences of social exclusion, including the isolation from various political, social, economic, and cultural systems and marginalization from public spaces (Gaetz 2004; Rokach 2004; Peressini 2007; Taylor 2013). They also perpetuate neoliberal discourses that individualize homelessness and ignore systemic and structural elements in favor of existing practices (Ilyniak 2022; MacDonald and Cote 2022).

The oscillation of deservingness, therefore, influences policy, determining burdens of proof, accessibility, and implementation. It can also influence the mobilization for or against policies of those experiencing homelessness and the broader public. Lateral stigmas and the limited access to resources and networks influence group cohesion and consciousness (Cress and Snow 2000; Williams 2005). NIMBYism¹, furthermore, is fueled by misperceptions around homelessness, leading to opposition to services in specific communities and neighborhoods (Adams et al. 2023). It can also influence the value placed on LE due to stereotypes and stigmas that may influence public support for homelessness policy and the inclusion of LE.²

Research has pointed to the mismatch between LE and existing policy, highlighting why failures persist in homelessness policy responses and underscoring the need to view LE as evidence for policymaking. For example, studies have considered the (mis)alignment between existing approaches and lived experiences of homelessness. This has included the considerations of narratives and self-perceptions that question liberal individualized practices and advocate for more focus on structural constraints and systemic factors (Toolis and Hammack 2015; Stonehouse et al. 2022). Research has shown the importance of governance in homelessness policy, pointing to the need for collaborative structures across levels of government, policy actors, and areas (see, for example, Doberstein 2016; Hafer 2018; Smith 2022). The benefits of LE in homelessness service delivery have also been recognized due to the variation in the meanings associated with the objectives of programs and the need for more user-centered administration and service delivery (Fenley 2020). Smith et al. (2021) examine the differences between the State of Utah Strategic Plan on Homelessness and the needs expressed by people experiencing homelessness. They find the Plan ignores the quality of housing and mechanisms and fails to recognize barriers to access, certain groups, and the importance of informal social supports. In fact, LE pointed to the gaps in existing approaches and pointed to where and how responses can be improved (Smith et al. 2021).

In Finland—the case most often hailed a success due to its decreasing levels of chronic homelessness (see [Turunen and Granfelt 2023](#))—the inclusion of LE is evident in approaches to homelessness. LE is mentioned in plans and included in the direct provision of services through peer work, collaboration in planning and development (including through grass-roots organizations), and collaborative networks through employment and voluntary consultations and evaluations ([Hansen 2018](#); [Pleace 2017](#); [Turunen and Granfelt 2023](#); [Meriluoto 2018](#)). Researchers have also identified the benefits of participation in policy processes for individuals experiencing homelessness, noting the effects on self-esteem and empowerment ([Phillips and Kuyini 2018](#); [Tanekenov et al. 2018](#)). Decentralizing governance can create user-informed and sustainable policy, as well as lead to informed indicators of success ([McIntyre-Mills 2009](#)).

Some research on homelessness and policymaking, therefore, points to the importance of LE. And yet, much of the work on LE advocacy, leadership, and inclusion is not present in the academic literature. Many advisory and community tables exist in Canada that include and advocate for LE in policy, such as the Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network (CLELN). The efforts of such organizations, networks, and coalitions rarely appear in academic research and literature, showing barriers to access in higher education and research and policy spaces, though this is changing ([Malenfant and Smith 2021](#)).

Research that has called on the inclusion of LE, although limited, has considered its importance to policy and the associated barriers. Whilst arguing against the de-coupling of validity and rigor in relation to the methods and knowledge that qualify as evidence in policymaking, [Smith-Merry \(2020\)](#), for example, argues for the employment of individuals with LE in policy. Earlier in the policy process, involvement in data gathering and problem definition is key to policy effectiveness. [Norman et al. \(2015\)](#) examine meaningful participation and point to the feelings of dismissal that need to be combatted through more inclusionary forces that address unequal power relations and value LE. Other strategies include using tools to create scientific evidence and include LE throughout the process to allow for the cocreation of knowledge and findings and narrative approaches to influencing policy ([Smith-Merry 2020](#)). For peer work, there is a need to ensure support is provided to peer workers, with adequate training and education ([Kahan et al. 2020](#)). There are challenges associated with the respect, value, and compensation of peer involvement that require clear implementation guidelines ([Ilyniak 2022](#); [Miller et al. 2023](#); [Kopec 2022](#)).

Within research and policy, individuals with LE need to be included as leaders and collaborators, rather than research subjects or objects ([Cataldo et al. 2021](#); [Nelson et al. 2023](#)). Inclusion therefore requires the reduction in barriers to participation, collaboration throughout processes, transparency, and relationships that challenge existing systems of oppression ([Nelson 2020](#)). The inclusion of LE in homelessness policy and governance therefore requires further investigation to better understand where and how it is included, as well as its influence on policymaking and within the various stages of the policy cycle.

6. Homelessness in Canada

As we document in this section, the response to homelessness in Canada has become more systematic over the last five years, after many years of ad hoc and emergency-level responses. This history reveals both how LE is seen as more important and valuable by policymakers but also how many challenges remain regarding the real inclusion and influence of LE in policy. In other words, although some mechanisms for LE inclusion have grown, the enduring failures in approaches to homelessness show the limitations of this inclusion.

The housing crisis in Canada has deepened in recent years, to the point where it has become a main priority of political parties at all levels of government. In this latest stage of the housing crisis, homeownership is increasingly out of reach for younger generations, and increases in rent are putting more and more households in core housing need. There has, however, been a nearly constant crisis of affordable housing for people with low incomes in Canada for well over 100 years ([Rose 1980](#)). The most extreme manifestation of this housing

crisis is homelessness. As the housing crisis has deepened, so too has the homelessness crisis, with communities of all sizes across Canada reporting startling increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness, and unsheltered homelessness in particular, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (ESDC 2019; Infrastructure Canada 2022). Indeed, scholars and activists such as Ricardo Tranjan (2023) question whether this can even be called a “crisis”, considering its never-ending reality.

To be sure, there has long been a population of people living in Canada who have needed emergency shelters; Quebec’s largest homeless shelter, the Old Brewery Mission, first opened its doors to unhoused people in 1889. And yet, scholars, advocates, and service providers are clear that there has been a rise in the number of people who experience homelessness in Canada, as well as an ever-diversifying mix of people who experience homelessness since the 1990s (Gaetz 2010; Layton 2008; ESDC 2019). Whereas in the past, it was primarily men who were unable to work who experienced homelessness (RAPSIM 2012), today, children, single parents, youth, Indigenous peoples, and seniors all experience homelessness at alarming and unprecedented rates (ESDC 2019). This has not always been the case in Canada and arises from a complex series of policy decisions and indecisions made at all three levels of government.

Though Canada’s housing system has always been heavily marketized and geared towards homeownership (Bacher 1993), an important turning point in the affordability of housing came in the 1990s when most senior governments abruptly stopped funding the development of new non-market housing. In the 1960s and 1970s, referred to as the “heyday” of social housing development in Canada (Suttor 2016), federal and provincial governments, in collaboration with non-profit and co-op housing providers, built nearly 25,000 non-market housing units per year. Though this was not enough to meet the housing needs of all low-income households, Suttor (2016) reports that the non-market housing system was able to meet 50% of the housing needs of low-income renters during the 1970s. Beginning in the 1980s, the non-market housing system came under attack by the federal government, who viewed it as expensive and insufficiently targeted at the neediest households. The co-op housing program was the first to be cut by the federal Progressive Conservative government; a few years later, the federal government would withdraw fully from investing in non-market housing, this time under a federal Liberal government. In addition to halting its investments in non-market housing, the federal government passed the responsibility for managing the social housing system to the provinces (Suttor 2016).

Beyond divesting from social housing, the federal government also restructured how the welfare state itself is funded and governed. Provincial governments have significant responsibilities over social policies but do not have enough revenue to fully fund them. Provinces depend on a series of transfers from the federal government to develop social policies, a challenge of fiscal federalism and governance that has its origins in the Constitutional division of powers (Béland et al. 2017). Prior to the 1990s, the federal government let provinces determine their social needs and funded 50 per cent of social policy expenditures through the Canada Assistance Plan (Rice and Prince 2013). In the mid-1990s, without consulting the provinces, the federal government changed its system of social policy funding transfers to the provinces, moving to a block grant transfer. This did, in some ways, respond to provincial concerns with the previous transfer, which imposed federal requirements on provincial decision-making. Those requirements were mostly removed (except in the area of healthcare), but substantially less money was transferred to the provinces. Faced with less money to spend on social policies, eight out of ten provinces also cut their own investments in non-market housing development, and they all either immediately or eventually enacted deep cuts to social assistance incomes as well (Béland and Daigneault 2015). These decisions, made by senior officials in the federal and provincial governments, directly contributed to more people living in housing insecurity and homelessness in the 1990s (Gaetz 2010).

There were other contributors to the rise in the number of people experiencing housing insecurity, including the deinstitutionalization of people with mental illnesses; this process

was designed to enable people with mental illnesses to live in communities (instead of in rigid and violating institutions), but social and health supports never followed them into communities (Ranasinghe 2017). David Hulchanski, however, notes that the “arrow flows both ways”, stressing that the experience of homelessness or housing insecurity often causes a deterioration in mental health as well, and notes that not all people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity report a mental illness (Hulchanski 2009). Municipalities made land-use planning and zoning decisions in a way that prioritized either single-family homes or large condominium developments, with little in between (Bozиковic et al. 2019). Further, policymakers at all levels of government, but the federal and provincial levels especially, failed to respond to the changing realities in the Canadian population, including population growth, a rise in the amount of the “working poor”, increases in single-parent households, and an aging population (Banting and Myles 2013). The increase in the number of people living in housing insecurity in Canada, therefore, is found in several decisions and indecisions. This reinforces the fact that the causes of homelessness are multiple and complex, and the fact that the governance of homelessness, along with the responsibility for developing solutions to it, is divided among several levels of government and sectors of society.

Advocates working in emergency shelters and with other unhoused populations noted a dramatic increase in the number of people experiencing housing insecurity in the 1990s and early 2000s. They worked closely with allies, including in city councils, to pressure the federal government to respond to the growing needs of people experiencing homelessness. A particularly influential group of activists was based in Toronto (the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee or TDRC), though they collaborated with community groups across the country, including groups in Quebec like the FRAPRU; they were also engaged directly with people experiencing homelessness, who were included in their advocacy efforts (Crowe 2019). The TDRC insisted that homelessness had reached a crisis point in big cities across Canada, especially Toronto (Layton 2008). Following intense advocacy, the federal government appointed a minister responsible for homelessness, Claudette Bradshaw. Minister Bradshaw toured the country to learn about the evolving and increasing crisis of homelessness, meeting primarily with service providers, people with lived experience, and others on the front lines. Following these meetings, the federal government announced the National Homelessness Initiative, a short-term, emergency-level program intended to respond to the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness (Layton 2008).

The design of this program reveals important assumptions and beliefs regarding homelessness at the time. It also reveals the consequences of not fully including local and lived experience in the crucial early stages of policy development. The program was originally intended for 3 years—it has been renewed non-stop since its origin in 1999, but only ever for short periods of time until the introduction of the National Housing Strategy in 2019 (1–3 years at a time until 2014). In Quebec, the provincial government insisted on co-governing the federal funding, but in other provinces, federal funding went directly to either municipalities (mostly in Ontario) or service providers, who were tasked with allocating the funding throughout their community to programs that would meet and alleviate the immediate needs of the unhoused population (see Smith 2022 for more details on program governance). The program therefore mostly bypassed the provinces, leaving their important social policy powers and significant resource partnership on the sidelines. Finally, the NHI was not a housing-based program; program funding, timelines, and guidelines precluded the development of long-term housing-based solutions. Indeed, Minister Bradshaw herself stated repeatedly that she is the Minister of Homelessness, not the Minister of Housing (Bradshaw 2000, 2001, 2002); while she accepted criticisms, including from political rivals from both sides of the political aisle and local services implementing the NHI, pointing out that housing was an essential part of the solution (Davies 2000; Goldring 2002), Bradshaw’s hands were likely tied by her very narrow mandate to address homelessness through any means that did not involve investing in affordable or non-market housing (HRSDC 2008, 2009).

Rather, the NHI was designed to be about the alleviation of emergency needs (HRDC 2001). The assumption in this design was that various systems (housing, child welfare, health, income security) were working fine and did not require reform or restructuring; rather, homelessness was a temporary and emergency departure from the norm of adequate housing being acquired mostly through the private housing market. It targeted emergency, individual-level solutions, not the systemic, structural, and housing-based ones demanded by advocates, including advocates with lived experience of homelessness. This reflects broader thinking during this time by other influential advocacy groups, including the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. They have since insisted on the importance of housing policy and various other system reforms, but in the early and mid-2000s, the idea was that everything a person needed to exit homelessness already existed; they just needed help putting it all together (CAEH 2012). The insights and experiences of advocates and people with LE themselves were readily available to powerful groups and policymakers at the time but were left out of the development of solutions (Jarrett 2016). Rather, solutions were seemingly designed to address the symptoms of homelessness, as opposed to its root causes.

In 2014, the federal government tinkered with the structure of the program (renamed the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, or HPS, in 2008). Following a 5-year study of the effectiveness of Housing First as an intervention to end homelessness, the federal government required that 65% of HPS funding in big cities be spent on Housing First programs. Importantly, the study, entitled *At Home/Chez Soi*, prioritized both the rights of individuals experiencing homelessness to safe, permanent, and supportive housing immediately and also the cost-benefit analysis of this type of intervention (compared with other approaches that required individuals to be “housing ready” before accessing permanent housing) (Goering et al. 2014).

In referencing the strategies used with different stakeholders during the development and implementation of the *At Home/Chez Soi* project in Canada, Nelson et al. (2016) outline the strategies of inclusion that worked and some challenges. They argue that their multiple strategies of including people with LE were important and influenced the common visions and purposes around Housing First. Collaborative local community processes were found to benefit the initiative across sites. And yet, they also argue that the limited experience working with and including people with LE led to some challenges. Struggles included different understandings of roles and key concepts. Many of these barriers were attributed to the lack of community infrastructure regarding including and drawing in those with lived experiences. They therefore argue for the need to have clear communication and the need to include what they deem expert-driven and participatory practices. They conclude with important lessons learned: having a clear purpose, being more attentive to issues of power and social justice, and creating structures and processes that are inclusive of LE with clear expectations and leadership (Nelson et al. 2016). These challenges speak to the previous lack of engagement with LE and the need to build mechanisms and structures to support its long-term inclusion.

Reviews of the NHI/HPS, which involved interviews with locally based service providers, consistently identified areas for improving the effectiveness of the program, including a consistent emphasis on the need for housing-based interventions, as well as a longer timeline and more funding (HRSDC 2008; ESDC 2014). This valuable feedback had limited impact, again considering that homelessness was defined as not related to problems in the housing system but rather an emergency and short-term situation.

Within the past ten years, there have been more efforts to include the voices of people with LE in policymaking discussions and processes, though they have often been at the demand of people with LE and have often been limited to tokenistic and limited interventions as opposed to roles of co-creation or leadership. The Canadian Lived Experience and Leadership Network—previously the Lived Experience Advisory Council—came from significant advocacy at the second annual Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in Vancouver in 2014. Lived experts and allies, some of whom had been invited

to attend the conference on scholarship, protested the conference's lack of inclusion of LE (Paradis 2016). Though the protest itself was peaceful, a particularly stark moment came when police officers prevented protesters, including those with LE, from entering the homelessness conference venue. Protesters leveraged the moment to secure a meeting with senior leadership at the CAEH. They argued for a more central voice in conference proceedings, demanding "nothing about us, without us" (Paradis 2016). Those involved in the protest spoke to the creation of mechanisms that include LE, although they argued more was needed (Kopec 2022). The annual conference, an important venue for policy-makers and agenda-setting in homelessness, has become more inclusive over time. The conference remains prohibitively expensive, however, even for service providers, making it inaccessible to many.

More recent housing and homelessness policies and strategies, including parts of the National Housing Strategy (NHS), call for the greater involvement of LE in the policymaking process, but the implementation and effectiveness of these calls remain to be seen. Policies often cite the need for more expertise, including LE, but rarely include clear engagement strategies or mechanisms (Kopec et al. 2023). Lived experts have called for their inclusion in early engagement processes to ensure that their experiences are included in policies on homelessness and housing (see LEAC 2016; Jarrett 2016). In 2017, the Liberal government announced that they would respond to longstanding demands from community leaders and lived experts and introduce a 10-year housing plan. It came with an initial budget of CAD 40 billion over 10 years but has since increased to CAD 72 billion. For the first time, the federal government's homelessness response is related to housing, including federal involvement in the development of new non-market and supportive housing.

With the adoption of the National Housing Act in 2019, which formally enables the implementation of the NHS, came the creation of the National Housing Council (NHC), Federal Housing Advocate (FHA), and Review Panels. The Act states that in appointing members to the NHC, the Minister should consider members of vulnerable groups, those with an LE of a housing need and homelessness, the reflection of diversity, and people with experience in human rights. The purpose of the NHC is to offer advice to the Minister responsible for housing (currently, as of 2023, the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities) and "promote participation and inclusion in the development of housing policy by engaging with communities" (National Housing Council). Importantly, this mechanism would allow, in theory, for the inclusion of LE earlier in the policy process. Incredibly, when the members of the first National Housing Council were announced, there was not a single person with LE included. This prompted a strong reaction from lived experience networks and their allies. The National Right to Housing Network, for example, issued a statement: "the National Housing Strategy Act explicitly requires that members to the Council include persons with human rights expertise as well as LE of housing need and homelessness, yet these requirements are not fulfilling in the list presented by the government yesterday" (NRHN 2020). They call this "an enormous gap" and insisted on the importance of remedying the gaps in representation. The government responded that it would appoint more members with LE; the current membership of the NHC includes a diversity of people from various backgrounds but does not include a member who openly identifies as having LE with either homelessness or a housing need.

One of the roles of the NHC is to commission research. One of the first reports commissioned by the NHC was the literature review conducted by Levac et al. (2022) on the inclusion of lived experience. The literature review analyzes documents on LE of a housing need and contends with the importance of LE as knowledge and the need to prioritize it as such. It also argues that there are existing recommendations from people with LE, and the National Housing Strategy must be held to account in realizing them (Levac et al. 2022). It remains to be seen if these recommendations have been incorporated into recent activities.

Another important component of the NHS was the Right to Housing, which was passed in federal legislation in 2021. In part to oversee the implementation of the right to

housing, the NHS called for the appointment of a Federal Housing Advocate; this position was finally filled in 2022. In this capacity, Marie-Josée Houle has the mandate to monitor and evaluate implementation and progress, offer advice, initiate and analyze studies, receive submissions, and consult with vulnerable groups—including those with lived experience—as well as participate in the work of the NHC. The FHA calls on those with lived experience to make submissions, though her office is clear that they are unable to respond to individual housing needs but are rather searching for systemic and structural issues in the housing system. Both mechanisms are recent, created in 2020 and 2022, respectively, with their impact and influence on policy yet to be seen (though the renewed federal involvement in housing policy is also, admittedly, recent as well). Their position following an election and change in government is also unknown, with the need for long-term inclusion and the political commitment to adapt and remain flexible to ensure inclusion continues.

In speaking with individuals involved in various venues and processes, such as consultations with governments in Canada, Kopec (2022) found that tokenism and inequalities of participation influence experiences associated with such spaces. Participants pointed to the language used in some consultations that led to their exclusion, tokenism through similar individuals being asked to participate in campaigns and consultations without adequate compensation, and others having to make space for themselves to be heard (Kopec 2022, 2024). At times, those that participate can feel as if their participation has no effect, with a lack of follow-up after their participation (Kopec 2022, 2024; Ilyniak 2022). Such attempts can recreate individualist approaches to homelessness that ignore structural issues and include a significant amount of work for individuals with LE that is rarely compensated or later included in policy (Ilyniak 2022). Even with attempts to move from crisis responses to prevention, government responses have failed to adopt the structural changes needed to bring about change. Instead, even prevention efforts can legitimize dominant rationalities and include neoliberal capitalist assumptions that do not change or meet the intent of prevention-focused policies (Nichols et al. 2024).

The federal government's response to homelessness has therefore evolved recently with the introduction of the National Housing Strategy in 2019, which directly links housing and homelessness, partners more intentionally with the provinces, and includes venues for the participation of people with LE in the policy process (though they are limited, as we note below). Over the past twenty years, however, the responses to homelessness in Canada create what Dej (2020) refers to as a "homelessness industrial complex" that individualizes the causes and experiences of homelessness and perpetuates social exclusion. An important criticism of this system is that the responses are not addressing the causes of homelessness but are rather responding merely to symptoms. The inclusion of LE in the development of policy responses, including in the important early stages of problem definition and agenda setting, is essential to equitable, sustainable, and effective solutions that address the root causes. Perhaps most importantly, this exclusion allowed the delinking of housing and homelessness to go unchallenged and unresolved. The holders of this expertise, people who are or have been unhoused, have historically been so stigmatized that they have been excluded from the policy process (Gale 2015). This has started to change, but there is still room for improvement in the development of meaningful opportunities for inclusion.

7. Discussion: LE in Canadian Homelessness Policy

In the Canadian case, while senior government officials have been powerful in developing policy responses to homelessness, lived experts have had a much more limited role. Early responses to homelessness did not address what advocates and lived experts identified as the root causes of homelessness. Indeed, the importance of including LE in policy has been documented by researchers in Canada, who have identified the importance of LE in developing better strategies for ending homelessness (Ahajumobi and Anderson 2020). This has led to clear recommendations for policy and service delivery, such as personalized case management, shelter improvements, and anti-oppressive practices (see, for example, Walsh et al. 2016). The inclusion of direct experiences has been found to not only

enhance the provision of services but also influence new innovative policies and practices (see [Ramsay et al. 2019](#)). And yet, there has been a lack of large-scale government changes. Even where there have been changes, like the creation of the NHS, the mechanisms lack meaningful LE inclusion. Perceptions around homelessness are still oscillating in terms of deservingness, and there is a lack of long-term and preventative policy. There is a need to go beyond encouraging LE to embed it within policymaking processes and acknowledge its value as policy relevant expertise. This includes ensuring individuals with LE are in leadership positions and are involved in the cocreation of policy rather than the current practice of including them at minimal points in the policy process.

Current mechanisms of LE inclusion in Canadian homelessness governance require more clarity and further research to better understand their influence and the experiences associated with them. Canadian homelessness governance is complex, and its history is fraught with devolution, cuts to funding, and advocacy from various actors. The growing homelessness and housing crisis in Canada is highlighting existing failures and the need for more LE inclusion throughout the policy process. Although some mechanisms have been created (such as the NHC and the FHA), they rarely include the necessary clarity or reporting to consider their influence or transparency and accountability regarding their goals. We also know that such mechanisms and structures can allow for the inclusion of LE, and yet they can also be spaces of tokenism, inequity, and exclusion, with future research needed to consider these spaces more directly, including the experiences of those participating as well as the influence of such spaces on subsequent policy. Ensuring the inclusion of people with LE is required to ensure the historic exclusion of LE is not continuously perpetuated. Only when individuals with LE are included and hold positions of power can such spaces be considered as meaningfully including LE in policymaking.

The inclusion of LE requires flexible structures and processes to maintain that inclusion and associated commitments. Conceptions of democracy, inclusion, and evidence need to change. The growing focus on governments' analytical capacity and evidence-based policymaking must include lived experiences, which may include mixed methodologies and data analysis that centers LE at earlier stages of the policy process in addition to those that come later. LE itself needs to be added as a form of evidence, not to necessarily limit other forms of evidence but rather to supplement them and add necessary perspectives. It can even inform how we collect evidence and subsequent methods used. To do this, however, the value of LE needs to be embedded within the mechanisms created. Support for those with LE is necessary, including not only emotional support and trauma-informed practices but also instrumental support by way of flexible financial compensation and educational support through training, capacity, and skill development ([Ibáñez-Carrasco et al. 2019](#); [Miller et al. 2023](#)). They also must occur throughout the policy cycle for LE to be embedded within processes and inform policy from its formulation to its implementation and evaluation. Collaboration is required; LE needs to be included under the auspices of enhancing diversity, respect, equality, and equity. This requires going beyond verbal acknowledgement to inclusion through engagement and collaborative models that include remuneration ([Sartor 2023](#)). Including LE also requires adequate financing, partnerships with various organizations, and better communication ([Tempfer and Nowak 2011](#)). It also requires full transparency of processes and expected changes, meaningful co-production through leadership, and flexibility that reduces barriers to participation ([Cataldo et al. 2021](#); [Nelson 2020](#)).

Given the relationship between research and policy, mechanisms of inclusion should be found within policymaking processes *and* research practices. Research often exploits LE for academic outputs and places less value on LE ([Malenfant and Smith 2021](#)). Both spaces—research and policy—require similar approaches for meaningful inclusion that value LE as evidence and involve individuals experiencing homelessness as collaborators and co-creators from the start (see, for example, [Salazar et al. 2021](#)). In fact, policy, advocacy, and research on homelessness can learn from one another and their inclusion (or not) of LE ([Kopec et al. 2023](#)). They do, however, require a focus on structural factors that allows for

the inclusion of LE for social change, rather than exploitation that further tokenizes LE and perpetuates dominant discourse (Ilyniak 2022). To fight against inauthenticity and tokenism, sustained engagement, humility, a willingness to listen, and a better understanding of the conflicting voices and roles of LE, as well as the development capacity and skills, are required. The inclusion of LE also needs to confront the demands and struggles of people with LE. Even in cases where LE has been included, there is a need for more equality and mutual respect, the more careful incorporation of LE, and increasing openness beyond pre-existing and defined goals. Including LE, then, goes beyond inclusion following the development of goals and legislation, but includes consultation and incorporation throughout, which may, in fact, also lead to new and innovative approaches, if governments are open.

Valuing LE needs to be accompanied by political commitment and will. Truly valuing LE requires mechanisms that ensure compensation and security for lived experts, allow for collaboration that can foster changes in perceptions around homelessness and LE, prevent those with LE from experiencing retraumatization, ensure a diversity of voices beyond just those most amenable to political values or norms, allow for the transparency of all forms of evidence in order to understand the gaps within existing forms of knowledge, and allow for adequate communication between all actors and stakeholders before, during, and after engagement.

Efforts for the inclusion of LE are therefore important in and of themselves for the continued inclusion of LE. Governments, advocacy groups, researchers, and service providers need to ensure inclusion is not tokenistic by thinking beyond the individuals that may present well or those they have established relationships with to include various perspectives and ensure that processes of community engagement and participation are growing and expanding. It is also imperative for the governments and actors involved in such spaces to share experiences—good and bad—to further the discussion around LE and where and how it can be better included. Learning from others will provide opportunities for collaboration and meaningful inclusion across sectors, policy areas, jurisdictions, and states.

8. Conclusions

There is an immense benefit in better understanding LE and its presence in policymaking and considering best practices. To alter our conceptions of evidence, its sources, and how it is presented, there is a need to identify LE as a form of expertise and consider where and how it can be included in policymaking. This requires the meaningful inclusion of individuals with this expertise throughout the policy process as leaders and cocreators of policy. Understanding LE can inspire innovation as well as collaboration, with different policy areas and contexts learning from one another. Where some processes may include LE, its influence on policymaking and the associated mechanisms can add to our understanding. Involving target populations within policymaking is an opportunity for more effective policy at various points of the policy process.

Policymakers often cite wanting to include LE, and various bodies of literature consider where and how to include LE alongside its many benefits. Bringing existing research together provides an important theoretical and empirical intervention of LE and its inclusion in policy processes. As Canada begins to include LE in policymaking, through admittedly limited mechanisms like the NHC and the FHA, there are principal considerations related to *meaningful* inclusion to ensure such processes do not serve to further exclude populations rendered surplus. Future research on LE should include analyses of such mechanisms and, importantly, the experiences of those included and the subsequent influence they may have on policy processes.

Where LE is included, there is a need to consider its role and influence to ensure spaces of inclusion are meaningful and do not perpetuate or maintain existing power relations. Mechanisms that transfer power to individuals with LE are crucial and can lead to the policy changes necessary. In the Canadian context, this should include not only consultations with

LE but also implementing the experiences sought and the expertise gathered (see [Paradis and Mosher 2012](#)). In earlier stages of the policy process, cocreation and collaboration are needed. Others have considered the over-consultation of and ignorance of the lived experiences of homelessness (see [Nelson et al. 2023](#); [Paradis and Mosher 2012](#)) and exhibit the need for more meaningful inclusion earlier in and throughout the policy process. This goes beyond consultation that may serve to exclude through tokenization, limited consultation processes with no follow-up, and the ignorance of LE altogether ([Ilyniak 2022](#)). We realize that much of this requires structural change and will take time, as well as trial and error. And yet, there is a need to continue these conversations across disciplines, policy areas, governments, and actors to consider how individuals can be included and where and how policy can be continuously improved.

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Notes

- ¹ An acronym for "Not In My Backyard", capturing acts and perceptions regarding poverty and sentiments regarding where services and affordable housing should (and should not) be located.
- ² Exciting work is underway in this space, particularly on NIMBYism and homelessness, which engages multiple actors (see Eri Dej's work at the Center for Research on Security Practices).

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