# Organizing Against Poverty in Edmonton: A Case Study of EndPovertyEdmonton Movement Organization

by

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**Abstract**

This study examines the antipoverty efforts and social movement-building approach of EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE). In the context of poverty, social movement organizing refers to groups of actors working together as a collective and in a coordinated manner to change fundamental structures that reinforce poverty. While some research has examined poverty-related social movements, the focus has been in the global south as opposed to community-focused initiatives in Western developed countries. As a result, little is known about the processes and how community-focused social movements organize and contribute to the elimination of poverty in Western developed countries. Specifically, the objectives of the study were as follows: 1) to determine what accounted for the emergence of EPE with the aspiration to build a movement to end poverty in Edmonton; 2) to examine the core strategies of EPE to achieve the goal of ending poverty in Edmonton; and 3) to ascertain the socio-contextual factors that enable or constrain EPE in the process of organizing against poverty in Edmonton. Using a case study methodology, and generating data through one-on-one interviews and a document review, findings from the study offer insights into the dynamics, strategies, and contexts of antipoverty organizing of EPE. The findings indicate that EPE has embarked on a bold vision to build a movement to end poverty in Edmonton. This huge undertaking by EPE represents a novel approach aimed at eliminating poverty and it signals a focus to drive conscious collective change. As well, the study found that the development of EPE has influenced and renewed motivation for anti-poverty work and has resulted in important accomplishments that are likely to contribute to the elimination of poverty in Edmonton. However, despite EPE's accomplishments, the findings indicate that strategies that are critical for effective movement-building are largely missing. For example, I show how there is a disconnection, what I refer to as "the missing link" between the key aspirations that gave rise to

the movement organization and current EPE strategies. Furthermore, I detail the influences of socio-contextual factors (e.g., resources, political and policy factors) on the work of EPE, underscoring the socio-contextual factors that facilitate and constrain efforts to build a movement to end poverty in Edmonton. Finally, I discuss how the findings of this study provide practical implications for theory, research, and practice.

## Preface

This thesis is an original work by Razak Oduro. No part of this thesis has been previously published. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Organizing Against Poverty in Edmonton: A Case Study of EndPovertyEdmonton Movement.”, No. Pro00092645, September 9, 2019

## Dedication

*To my wife, Comfort Adwoa Animah Oduro, your support and sacrifices enabled me to attain this great height.*

*To my daughters, Oye and Aseda, you are my inspiration and testimony.*

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"*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God*" 2 Cor. 3:5. Thanks to the Almighty God for His abundance of grace which sustained me through the academic journey.

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## Table of Contents

## List of Tables

## List of Figures

# Chapter One

## Purpose of the Study and Background Information

***"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."***
**An African Proverb**

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes poverty as a persistent problem facing many parts of the world, including Western developed countries such as Canada (Battle, 2015; Notten & Laforest, 2016; Gazso & Waldron, 2009). In a report on poverty, income, and inequality by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada ranked near the bottom third of member countries (OECD, 2015), which suggests that 20 OECD countries have lower rates of poverty than Canada. Although Canada is widely known for its progressive social values that promote inclusion, social equality, and multiculturalism (Prabhakar, 2018; Raphael, 2011), the reality is that poverty is deeply entrenched in a number of its cities and localities (Mitchell et al., 2018). Furthermore, poverty in Canada has remained political, making it difficult to fully ascertain who is poor, determine the means for reducing the incidence of poverty, and respond to its effects (Duru, 2018; Langford, 2020; Raphael, 2011).

Addressing poverty in Canada is a complex task because many political, economic, social, and cultural factors contribute to the perpetuation of poverty (Butz & Roberts, 2012). This is further compounded by the fact that the power to address these factors is dispersed across various groups (e.g., non-profit organizations, governments, and Indigenous groups) and jurisdictions (e.g., federal, provincial, and municipal). In Canada and in many other countries, governments and not-for-profit organizations have engaged in poverty reduction and poverty amelioration efforts for several decades (Notten & Laforest, 2016). Despite these efforts, poverty continues to exist in various cities in Canada (Rich et al., 2011). In recent years, there has been increasing support for organizational actions to eliminate poverty in major cities in Canada (Cabaj, 2012). Organizational

action in the context of poverty broadly refers to groups of actors working as a collective with a shared vision of changing the status quo. The rise in organizational action to address poverty is due in part to four interrelated factors: (a) recognition that poverty in a land of plenty is unacceptable (Butz & Roberts, 2012); (b) recognition that poverty is a complex challenge requiring collective mobilization by a wide range of actors (Cabaj, 2012; Shantz, 2011); (c) recognition of a patchwork of government policies and uncoordinated activities of not-for-profits (Offer, 2010; Rose & Humble, 2014); and (d) recognition of societal power imbalances (Greene, 2005). Sensitivity to these factors by policy makers, academics, and advocates has led to a new generation of city-based organizations and community-focused anti-poverty initiatives across the country. These initiatives are characterized by a new language and approach (e.g., collaboration, coordination, collective action, social movement organizing, etc.), as well as a new sense of optimism that the persistent problem of poverty can be overcome (Butz & Roberts, 2012; Cabaj, 2012).

The African proverb at the beginning of this chapter nicely captures the ambition and approach of the new generation of organizational actors seeking to address poverty in Canada. The adage literally means that finding a way to change the difficult realities of life cannot be done alone but requires working collectively (Quotespedia, n.d.). The inherent assumption here is that working together can achieve effective and sustained change because strength and energy can be pulled from the collective. Conversely, when working alone, a person can go fast but will quickly grow weary and become worn out. In this context, addressing complex social problems such as poverty cannot be done by a single entity or organization. Instead, the task requires a collection of purposeful individuals and entities such as governments, not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous

groups, and community members who are willing to make a difference in the lives of people living in poverty (Shantz, 2011).

In Canada, there are emerging examples of cities that have embraced collective arrangements to address poverty. For instance, in Hamilton, a round table for poverty reduction has been created to mobilize civic leaders and community members to make the city the best place to raise a child free from poverty. The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction aims to tackle the underlying causes of poverty through action strategies that focus on systems and structures that keep people living in poverty (Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, 2015). Similarly, in Edmonton, an anti-poverty movement organization called EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE) has emerged with a bold and transformative vision to end poverty in Edmonton. The movement organization aims to employ collective action and community mobilization to address the root causes of poverty and change conversations about poverty, societal barriers, and power relations that influence people's lives (EPE, 2015). Though recent anti-poverty initiatives vary in terms of specific strategies, formation, and focus, the common thread among them is that they are shaped, to varying degrees, by their community focus (rather than being sector-led) and by the desire to employ collective approaches in their work. For instance, at the core of EPE's vision is the spirit of activism using a social movement approach to mobilize inclusive support to eliminate poverty in Edmonton (EPE, 2015).

Although some cities in Canada are embracing collective action and community mobilization, including social movement organizing, as an alternative transformative approach to ending poverty, little is known about the emergence and effectiveness of collective arrangements on the ground. This is consistent with observations in other Western developed countries as little information is provided in the literature about how social movement organizations contribute to

the elimination of poverty. In this study, I sought to examine the emergence, strategies, and context of recent organizational actions involving community-focused efforts and collective approaches to end poverty. Specifically, I examined the anti-poverty efforts and movement-building approach of EPE in Edmonton. In the section that follows, I introduce the research setting, which includes a detailed overview of the EPE movement organization. I then situate my research within the social movement literature as well as the contribution of this study to research knowledge. Finally, I briefly outline the organization of this dissertation.

**The Research Setting: Overview and Background of EndPovertyEdmonton**

EndPovertyEdmonton is a social movement organization aimed at "advancing a vision of shared prosperity for all, where every Edmontonian has an equal opportunity to live, work, participate and thrive" (EPE, n.d., para. 2). EPE has its roots in the earlier work of the Poverty Elimination Steering Committee established in 2013. The steering committee was a city council initiative created to lead the development of foundational work for poverty elimination in Edmonton. During the course of the committee's work, a new mayor, Don Iveson, was elected, and he indicated that strong political support would be given to poverty elimination in Edmonton (EPE, 2015). Subsequently, in his State of the City Address on March 5, 2014, Mayor Iveson proclaimed that, "I will elevate the profile of poverty elimination by bringing the weight of the mayor's office" (State of the City Address, 2014, p. 4). A week after the mayor's declaration, Edmonton City Council approved the creation of a Task Force to Eliminate Poverty; thus, the steering committee was elevated to a Task Force after the election of Mayor Don Iveson (EPE, 2015). The Task Force was co-chaired by Mayor Iveson and Bishop Jane Alexander (former bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton) and included 22 members from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and areas of expertise. The Task Force was responsible for identifying

collective and tangible actions to eliminate poverty in Edmonton (City of Edmonton, n.d.). Based on the work of the Task Force, Mayor Iveson in particular, recommended that "to be successful to end poverty, this has to be a movement. It's about building a truly inclusive city for all" (EPE, 2015, p. 3). Subsequently, with the support of the city council, the EPE movement organization was created and formally inaugurated in 2017 to engage and mobilize the hearts and minds of Edmontonians as a key part of the solution to end poverty in Edmonton (EPE, 2016a). For the most part, the previous anti-poverty efforts of the steering committee and the Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty formed the foundational work for the formation and development of EPE. The table below depicts the trajectory of events that led to the eventual formation of the EPE movement organization.

**Table 1.** *Trajectory of Events That Led to the Establishment of the EPE Movement Organization*

| | Trajectory of EndPovertyEdmonton Movement |
|---|---|
| 2013 | Poverty Elimination Steering Committee was established. |
| 2014–15 | Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty was established. |
| 2015 | EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy approved by City Council. |
| 2016 | EndPovertyEdmonton road map approved by City Council. |
| 2017 | EndPovertyEdmonton Movement Organization originated with a Secretariat to coordinate the road map actions. |

*Source*: (EPE, 2018)

Since its establishment in 2017, the EPE movement organization has become the critical link and catalyst through which poverty can be eliminated in Edmonton. In essence, EPE has become the vehicle to drive the bold vision of ending poverty. The key goals of EPE are to (a) convene, coordinate, and broker innovative partnerships; (b) change the conversation on poverty; (c) advocate for policy change; and (d) cultivate a community movement that builds the capacity of Edmontonians to act to end poverty (EPE, 2016). The underlying framework of EPE is a collective impact model, which involves bringing the whole community together to achieve a

shared vision (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Through this model, EPE seeks to build a significant number of community partnerships with organizations from the civil society sector (e.g., United Way Alberta Capital Region, Centre for Race and Culture, Edmonton Social Planning Council, etc.), not-for-profit social service organizations (e.g., iHuman, Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative, etc.), and persons with lived experience of poverty. Mayor Iveson's Task Force originally intended that these partners would work together to end poverty in a generation, with the ultimate aim of creating a city free from poverty where every child can thrive, and every person can share in the prosperity of the city in order to prevent transmission of poverty from one generation to another (EPE, 2018).

EPE defines poverty as the lack or denial of economic, social, and cultural resources that allow people to have a quality of life that sustains and facilitates full and meaningful participation in the community (EPE, 2015). In relation to this definition, the former Task Force developed a road map founded on 35 priority actions organized under six game changers: eliminate racism, establish livable income, affordable and quality childcare, affordable housing, accessible and affordable transit, and access to mental health services (EPE, 2015). A defining feature of EPE's vision is the belief that "We don't just want to help people manage or cope with poverty. We want to END POVERTY in one generation" (EPE, 2015, p. 8). Although EPE's vision is compelling, there are critical, unanswered questions about the structural and operational dynamics of the poverty-related movement organization, how it acts on the ground, and how participating actors/players assess how it is unfolding. As well, it is important to determine the socio-contextual factors that facilitate, or likely constrain, the task of ending poverty. This study provides answers to these questions.

**Situating the Research**

Historically, social movements have been one of the primary means of organizing for social change (Crutchfield, 2018; Shragge, 2012). Common characteristics of social movements include being shaped by change-oriented goals, having some degree of organization, and having some level of temporal continuity (Snow & Oliver, 1995). Typical examples of social movements include women's movements, students' movements, civil rights movements, anti-globalization movements, environmental movements, and 2SLGBTQ+ movements. For instance, amidst some shortcomings, women's movements have contributed to some positive outcomes in increasing women's participation in politics and the labor market (Horn, 2013). In addition, vigorous campaigns and sustained collective action by environmental movements have seen improvement in knowledge and awareness of persistent environmental problems, which has translated into environmental policies and practices that aim to tackle the devastation of the environment (Staggenborg, 2012). Furthermore, the recent Black Lives Matter protests and the emergence of the #MeToo movement have occupied the global space and gained attention, activating major policing and social reforms, especially in the United States (Buchanan et al., 2020; Hosterman et al., 2018). The Black Lives Matter protest movement, for instance, has been described as the largest social movement in history (Buchanan et al., 2020). The global scale of the Black Lives Matter protest movement shows that the social movement field continues to grow, and various kinds of movements continue to emerge to foster social change in many parts of the world.

Much of social movement research has focused on socio-political movements of resistance or movements rooted in political action, protests, and demonstrations, with little or no attention given to movement organizations that have emerged to address the issue of poverty (Bebbington, 2010; Christiansen, 2009). While some social movement research has focused on poverty, the

primary interest has been at the macro level in the global south (e.g., Mandela, 2005; Njoroge, 2009) as opposed to regional or community-focused initiatives in Western developed countries. As a result, little is known about how community-focused social movements organize and contribute to the elimination of poverty in Western developed countries (e.g., Palmer & Heroux, 2016). Given the importance of social movements in bringing about social change and the relative lack of research on poverty-related social movements, particularly in Western developed countries, this study sought to examine EPE through the lens of social movement organizing.

In the context of poverty elimination, the study was concerned with social movement organizations such as EPE that originate from an institution (i.e., the City of Edmonton). EPE takes a collaborative approach in their pursuit of social change (Armstrong & Bartley, 2007; Paradis, 2016) rather than a confrontational approach to collective action such as protests, riots, demonstrations, and marches (Palmer, 2016; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Tilly, 1998). This conceptualization shifts the focus away from the traditional social movement literature that tends to depict movements as groups that operate outside the sphere of the state, protesting the policies and actions of a democratic state (Kriesi, 2004). Traditional social movement scholars tend to consider protests, disruptive behaviors, and other kinds of "attention-getting" strategies as the primary means through which social movements emerge (Arthur, 2008; Piven & Cloward, 1977).

However, in Mary Katzenstein's study (1999) on movements that originate from institutions, such as the feminist movements within the Catholic Church and the United States Military, she argued that movement organizing does not only occur on the streets or through one-off "placard-bearing" activities. Katzenstein contended that a wider pool of actions and words could exert more influence than visible protest. For instance, the feminist movement within the Catholic Church employed discursive activism by pointing out the words of the gospel that provide

for the inclusion of women in all the Church ministries. Similarly, the feminist groups in the Military pressed for equity in pay, hiring, and promotion, and demanded a change in the system and culture of discrimination in the service. Katzenstein pointed out that through institutional approaches, feminist activists in the Military raised concerns about how women are denied training and advancement based on sex alone and not competence. The feminist activists argued that such practices of discrimination make the Military service out-of-touch with the rights of women to be treated with respect and to work in an environment where equal opportunity exists for Military service people. According to Katzenstein, these actions are not mere resistance to power; instead, they are proactive, assertive, and demand-making political activism that cannot be ignored in social movement studies. In this regard, Katzenstein argued that it is limiting to conceive social movements as only those outside the state and established institutions. Social movements that originate from institutions can have a greater understanding of the structural constraints and the changes that may be possible, and as such, they can effectively mount a challenge to influence reforms, policies, and decision-making (Katzenstein, 1999).

Generally, social movements within institutions focus on achieving a particular goal or set of goals (Arthur, 2008). Rojas (2007) refers to movement actors within institutions as "bureaucratic insiders" who are within institutions but can make changes to structures that advance a particular set of goals. For the most part, movements within institutions do not tend to employ disruptive strategies; instead, they focus on "silent" forms of resistance, such as creating spaces for change and learning and other kinds of discursive activism (Arthur, 2008; Katzenstein, 1999). However, the challenge for movements that develop within institutions is how they can overcome the risk of institutionalization or cooptation (Meyerson & Scully, 1999). According to Meyerson

and Scully, these movements tend to be coopted into the institutional culture, undermining their ability to challenge the status quo.

My study examined EPE as an example of social movements originating from an institution. I conceptualize EPE as a movement organization that takes a cooperative, community-based approach (instead of disruptive approaches) to social movement organizing to engage and mobilize a broad swath of the Edmonton population and community organizations in a collaborative way to achieve a shared vision. Accordingly, the underlying assumption of EPE is that poverty cannot be solved by a single organization but needs to involve all Edmontonians coming together to understand that addressing poverty is a collective responsibility (EPE, 2016a). Focusing on EPE as a social movement organization, a case study methodology was employed to examine the emergence, strategies, and context of anti-poverty organizing in Edmonton.

**Significance of the Study**

Only a few scholars in Canada (e.g., Green, 2005; Paradis, 2016; Shantz, 2011) have raised the issue of the importance of social movement activism for poverty elimination, arguing that social movements create spaces for making the issues of poverty more visible on the political agendas of governments. This study adds to this small body of scholarly literature by drawing attention to the dynamics and context of contemporary forms of organizing against poverty in Canada and in the global industrialized north. Accordingly, the study expands the base of research knowledge on the relevance and limitations of poverty-related movements in the broader context of political, economic, and social change.

Furthermore, the findings from the study point to critiques of the ongoing and evolving priorities and strategies of EPE. The study draws attention to the gaps and shortcomings of EPE's strategies and contributes to shaping the development of a relatively new movement organization

in Edmonton. As well, this study provides an external academic review of EPE to key actors and community knowledge users on the evolving operation, structural dynamics, and potential of a movement-building approach to end poverty. Moreover, the study provides empirical knowledge that can strengthen community of practice and public policy in Canada. Because this study is conducted at a time when various cities in Canada are developing new ways and strategies to address poverty (Cabaj, 2012; Notten & Laforest, 2016), the study offers empirical evidence that can be drawn on to shape and contribute to efforts to eliminate poverty across Canada. Specifically, the findings of the study can inform future analyses such as intercity and interprovincial comparisons or expositions about how a movement-building approach can be adopted to address poverty in Canada.

Additionally, social movement scholars have paid limited attention to movements that develop within institutions. As a result, there is relatively little research (Arthur, 2008; Binder, 2002; Katzenstein, 1999) on movements originating from institutions, particularly poverty-related movements within established institutions. The scholarship on movements, such as EPE, is crucially important in understanding how movements in institutions contribute to social change. This study, thus, adds to the small body of scholarly literature by drawing attention to the dynamics and processes in which movements within institutions organize themselves and contribute to social change.

Lastly, previous studies have largely focused on the emergence of social movements (Cress & Snow, 1996; Sen & Avci, 2016a) and have given little attention to challenges and socio-contextual factors influencing the activities of movement organizations. To a large extent, this study differs from previous studies because it examines the facilitating and constraining factors that have influenced the activities and operations of EPE. Although social movement scholars

acknowledge that the activities of social movements are shaped by conditions external to movements (Cress & Snow, 1996; Kriesi, 2004), relatively little headway has been made to empirically examine and identify contextual factors that influence movements that emerge on the basis of poverty. This study empirically demonstrates and provides a nuanced understanding of how contemporary movement organizations like EPE operate within or are influenced by the contexts in which they are embedded.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

The remainder of the dissertation is organized into eight chapters. Chapter Two explores theories and relevant literature on social movements, in particular, poverty-related movements in Western developed countries. Collective behavior, resource mobilization, and framing theories are explored and form the theoretical lenses that shape the study. Chapter Three discusses the research methodology and methods employed to conduct the study. The rationale and purpose for employing case study, the research design, the sampling techniques, the data generation methods, and the ethical considerations of the study are presented in this chapter. The study findings are organized in five chapters from Chapter Four to Chapter Eight. Specifically, Chapter Four discusses findings on the underlying conditions that influenced the emergence and formation of EPE. Chapter Five captures findings on the poverty elimination strategies of EPE and Chapter Six provides findings on the governance structure of EPE. Chapter Seven examines the extent to which EPE has been successful in making progress toward the achievement of the key aspirations that influenced its emergence. Chapter Eight presents findings on the socio-contextual factors that enable or constrain EPE's effort to build a movement to end poverty. In each of these chapters, the findings are situated and discussed in relation to relevant literature and theory. Lastly, Chapter

Nine concludes the dissertation. The implications of the findings for theory, future research, and practice are discussed in this chapter.

## Chapter Two

## Theoretical Perspectives and Literature Review

In this chapter, I review relevant bodies of conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature on social movements in general and social movements that organize around poverty and other overlapping social problems such as homelessness. Few social movements emerge on the basis of poverty, particularly in Western developed countries (Bebbington, 2010). Consequently, research on poverty has focused little attention on social movements, and social movement research has not documented much on poverty. The intersection of social movements and poverty provides an interesting opportunity to think about ways poverty can be eliminated. In conducting this review, I performed a comprehensive search using terms used by scholars writing on social movements and poverty. Some of these terms included "justice movements" (Clarke, 2021; Deveaux, 2018; Little, 2007), "poverty activism", "alliance movements" (Paradis, 2016; Rosalind & Ishbel, 2020), and "poverty coalitions" (Shantz, 2011; Dirks, 2015). To understand the social movement literature landscape on poverty, I included these terms in addition to search terms such as "anti-poverty movements", "social movements and poverty", "poverty and activism", "social change movements", and "poverty and grassroots activism". I conducted my search through relevant database search engines including Sociological Abstracts, SocINDEX, Proquest Dissertations and Theses, Web of Science, and Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection.

The literature search focused on social movements in Western developed countries with particular attention to poverty-related movements. Refining my key search terms, I generated approximately 79 results including 32 peer-reviewed articles, 10 dissertations, 13 books, and 24 book chapters. I also found four key reports from anti-poverty organizations in Canada such as Campaign 2000, Citizens for Public Justice, and Canada Without Poverty. In addition, when I

expanded the search to include terms such as “social justice movements” and “community action groups”, a plethora of papers were found, but they were largely focused on environmental movements, 2SLGBTQ+ movements, anti-globalization movements, and protest movements; however, I reviewed them to support general discussions on the emergence and strategies of social movements. I reviewed the literature thematically under the following key focus areas: (a) the dominant theories of social movements and (b) the intersection of social movements and poverty. Additionally, I examined how the social movements’ success and failure have been conceptualized and studied by movement scholars. The gaps and limitations in the literature are discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

## Theories of Social Movements

Major theoretical approaches have influenced the thinking of social movement scholars in Europe and North America. These approaches are critical perspectives that influence the writings of and methods of inquiry used by many scholars (Staggenborg, 2012). In this section, I discuss three dominant social movement theories and the basic assumptions of these theories: (a) collective behavior theory, (b) resource mobilization and political opportunities theory, and (c) framing theory. The review examines how these theories came to be and how they explain the emergence of social movements. For the most part, these theories explain social movements rooted in political action. In this regard, I examine the extent to which these theoretical approaches explain the success or failure of contemporary social movements, such as EndPovertyEdmonton, that organize around poverty.

### *Collective Behavior Theory*

During the study of social movements, collective behavior theory was the dominant theory that explained the formation of movements from the 1940s through to the 1960s (Crossley, 2002).

A few different perspectives—deprivation and grievance theory and structural-strain theory—are included in the category of collective behavior theory, which is often referred to as the classical model of social movements (Staggenborg, 2012). Key proponents of the theory include Chicago School scholars, such as Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, as well as other prominent sociological scholars such as Le Bon, Hubert Blumer, and Neil Smelser (Barkan, 2016; Crossley, 2002; Staggenborg, 2012). The collective behavior theoretical approach to social movement scholarship emerged during a period of rapid social transformation in the 1950s when a lack of improvement in the living conditions of people did not match expectations (Staggenborg, 2012). In his book, *Theory of Collective Behavior,* prominent scholar, Neil Smelser, offered influential explanations about social movements and other forms of collective behavior. Smelser (1963) noted that social movements and other collective behaviors occur if certain conditions are present including structural strain, a generalized belief that conditions are bad in society, precipitating factors such as dramatic events and a lack of social control. Smelser argued that social problems in society cause people to be angry and frustrated and without such structural strain, people would not have any reason to protest, and therefore, social movements would not arise.

Following from Smelser's (1963) explanation came the relative deprivation and grievance theory influenced by scholars such as Alexis de Tocqueville and James C. Davies (Barkan, 2016). According to proponents of the relative deprivation and grievance theory, social movements are born when certain people or groups in a society feel they are deprived of specific goods, services, or resources (Barkan, 2016; Sen & Avci, 2016). When a deprived group of people perceives that social conditions are improving, they become hopeful that their lives will get better; however, if these conditions stop improving, they become frustrated and apt to turn to protest, collective violence, and other social movement activity (Barkan, 2016). The basic proposition of this

theoretical approach is that feelings or perceptions of discontent and dissatisfaction generate shared grievances and such feelings become an important impetus for encouraging aggrieved persons to participate in a social movement (Staggenborg, 2012). This theoretical approach views participants' involvement in a social movement as a coping mechanism for being disgruntled members of the society (Kirmani et al., 2008). Thus, collective behavior theories portray movement emergence as a reflex response to grievances, deprivations, anomie, structural strains, or other such forms of hardship (Crossley, 2002).

In this regard, collective behavior theories highlight the emotional dimensions of social movements; however, critics have pointed out that these theories fail to explain why, in some cases, feelings of deprivation or discontent do not lead to the formation and emergence of social movements (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Sen & Avci, 2016). Although feelings of discontent may be an essential condition for social movements (and other collective behavior) to arise, discontent by itself does not guarantee that a social movement will begin and that only discontented people will take part in the movement once it has begun (Barkan, 2016).

In spite of the shortcomings of the collective behavior theories, they seem to offer a partial explanation as to why social movements occur. For instance, one can argue that the feminist movement in the 1960s came about because, prior to that time, society deprived women of rights and opportunities that were only accorded to men (Horn, 2013). Similarly, in the context of poverty, it can be argued that anti-poverty movements exist because certain groups of people feel deprived and discontented by their deprivation; however, the existence of grievances about poverty does not alone explain the occurrence of social movements. In varying degrees, bad situations exist at all times and in all societies and do not necessarily lead to movements (Kirmani, 2008). Although feelings of deprivation and discontent (or dissatisfaction) may seem to be plausible

factors for movement emergence, other scholars argue that collective behavior theory is limited because it does not account for the role of resources or political opportunities that encourage organizing and the formation of a strong backbone social movement organization to pursue and sustain collective action (Sen & Avci, 2016).

As a result of their shortcomings, collective behavior theories have declined in importance, and interpretations of major forms of collective action have changed from viewing social movements as spontaneous outbursts to viewing them as movement activities with concrete goals and clearly articulated values and interests (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Consequently, two major theories following collective behavior theoretical approaches subsequently emerged: (a) theories related to resource mobilization and political opportunities and (b) framing theory. These theories were developed in the 1970s in reaction to the continuous occurrence of movements in the United States and Europe after the prevailing theories failed to give comprehensive accounts of movement emergence (Kirmani et al., 2008).

***Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)***

As the name suggests, the basic premise of the resource mobilization theory is that the availability of resources, both tangible and intangible, is critical for the emergence and success or failure of social movements. The theory was developed in the 1970s, and it explains how social movement actors mobilize for collective action. RMT is currently the dominant theoretical perspective in social movement studies, especially among North American scholars. RMT can be divided into two strands. McCarthy and Zald (1977) and Edwards and McCarthy (2004) presented the first strand, which focuses on an entrepreneurial-organizational version of the theory. The second strand is related to the work of McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow (2001), which presents a political version of the theory called the political process theory. Although both strands of the

theory emphasize the importance of resources for collective mobilization, McAdam and colleagues extend the argument that for collective action to be successful, the political environment must be favorable and open to create change.

Resource mobilization and political process theorists argue that social movement activities are rational rather than irrational or emotional responses to unsatisfactory societal conditions such as inequality and deprivation. Hence, for social mobilization to be possible, people who are discontented must mobilize resources and direct them into effective collective action (Garcia & Parker, 2011). Resources include both tangible assets, such as funding, and intangible assets, such as the commitment of participants (Staggenborg, 2012). Basically, RMT explains how social movement success is shaped by the resources that are mobilized; however, Cress and Snow (1996) pointed out that not every available resource can translate into effective collective action and mobilization outcomes. Thus, access to the relevant type of resources is critical for determining the success of the social movement. Cress and Snow (1996) placed emphasis on the resource-type and the resource-use strategies used by social movements as important elements for effective mobilization to achieve movement goals.

### *Resource Types and Mobilization Outcomes.*

Under the resource mobilization theory, scholars have identified five main types of resources that influence the mobilization of social movement activities (Cress & Snow, 1996; Edwards & McCarthy, 2004): social-organizational resources, moral resources, material resources, cultural resources, and human resources.

**Social-Organizational Resources.** RMT posits that mobilization results in part from the availability of organizational resources. Social-organizational resources can be categorized as either internal or external to the social movement organization. Internal organizational resources

relate to the structure and form of the movement organization such as the formal and organizational vehicles through which resources are mobilized. Gamson (1990) suggested that organizations that are formalized are better able to connect with other organizations in building resources than those that are informal or unstructured, which can help sustain the movement over time. He argued that informal or unstructured organizations may be better suited for innovating tactics and considering one-off spontaneous actions in response to unfavorable conditions. Similarly, writing on environmental movements, Staggenborg (2012) noted that loosely structured movements, such as Earth First!, organized blockades to prevent logging and performed other acts of civil disobedience to protect the environment, but their actions were unsustainable, and they did not achieve their desired outcome. In contrast, formalized organizations, such as the Sierra Club, which lobbies governments, are able to mobilize funds and build co-operation with governments and other organizations to sustain their activities.

According to the RMT, external social-organizational resources include access to networks and the social connections necessary for social movement success (Snow & Cress, 1996). In particular, the social networks of social movement organizations are important to their influence and survival because movements grow within networks. Furthermore, the theory posits that external social-organizational resources increase information flow and improve solidarity, which enables social movements to make significant impacts. The basic assumption is that social movement organizations with narrower networks are less effective in sustaining mobilization since they do not have access to a wide range of information and other resources (Snow & Cress, 1996). In Robert Fisher's 2009 book about ACORN, a social movement that organizes for economic justice, he opined that the strong membership base and federated structure of ACORN accounts for its impact at the neighborhood, city, state, and federal levels. Fisher described ACORN as the

most significant movement organization with solid networks and grassroots support in the United States. ACORN has approximately 220,000 members organized in 850 neighborhoods across more than 100 American cities (Fisher, 2009). As a result of the formalized structure and the networks of ACORN, the organization can initiate campaigns in almost every sector of the economy including, affordable housing, neighborhood safety, voter registration, health care, and other social issues, to address the needs of the poor and their neighborhoods (Fisher, 2009).

**Material Resources.** As part of RMT, the category of material resources comprises financial and physical resources such as money, property, office space, equipment, and supplies (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004a). Proponents of RMT argue that social change is capital intensive. Every social movement organization, regardless of its size, has operational costs that necessitate monetary resources to pay the bills (Snow & Cress, 1996). For this reason, resource mobilization theorists assume that material resources are important for social mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) and that social movement leaders with a particular agenda build organizations when they see an opportunity for gaining the necessary material resources. The ability to generate material resources, especially financial resources, is a key determinant of whether or not mobilization succeeds (Cress & Snow, 1996).

Nonetheless, there is a lack of agreement among scholars about the implications of generating material resources through internal or external sources on the activities and success of social movement organizations. For instance, Arthur (2008) stressed that material resources can be mobilized internally among members of the movement or externally among potential organizations/donors to the movement; however, when material resources, such as monetary resources, are mobilized outside the social movement, the movement can be externally controlled, coopted, and movement leaders may face the problem of making decisions that are not appealing

to its donors. In contrast, Edwards and McCarthy (2004a) pointed out that not all material resources can be generated internally and that the ability of movement leaders to mobilize material resources externally can facilitate the success of the movement. It is important to note that these arguments made by Arthur (2008) and Edwards and McCarthy (2004a) are theoretical, and there is no empirical study that directly examines the influence of mobilizing material resources (internal or external) on the activities of social movement organizations.

**Human Resources.** As postulated by RMT, another important type of resource needed for social movement mobilization is human resources. This category includes tactical repertoires and the strategic know-how necessary for the attainment of movement goals (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004a). Additionally, it involves knowledge about building and maintaining the movement organization and how to accomplish specific tasks. Examples of human resources include labor, experience, skills, expertise, membership base, grassroots organizations and leaders who sacrifice their time and energy to the social movement organization (Crutchfield, 2018; Edwards & McCarthy, 2004a). The basic assumption is that a social movement's ability to recruit and mobilize people for action directly impacts the movement's ability to create change (Snow & Cress, 1996). For instance, Crutchfield (2018) points out that movement organizations are fueled by energy that materializes from the bottom-up. A movement's grassroots are its everyday people, the "rank and file," in contrast to the leaders or "elite" (Crutchfield, 2018 p.24). Accordingly, movement organizations ensure that they turn their approach to mobilizing or power upside-down. They make significant effort to invest resources (e.g., money, time, political clout etc.) into ensuring the grassroots not only survive but thrive, because they see the grassroots as the live wire of the movement. The author metaphorically refers to this approach to grassroots organizing as "turning grassroots gold" (Crutchfield, 2018 p.21), thus, movement organizations that flourish make sure

they possess a robust sustained movement of activists and local groups pushing the goals of the movement from the bottom-up. The single most important decision movement leaders have to make, according to Crutchfield (2018), is whether "to let their grassroots fade to brown or turn their grassroots gold" (p.22).

Crutchfield (2018) noted several movement organizations in the US that consistently focused on building a strong membership base at the grassroots to drive their causes to victory. Some of these organizations include the National Rifle Association (NRA), 2SLGBTQ+, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The author pointed out that MADD employed concrete grassroots activism to turn the tide of the movement organization. MADD as a movement organization was founded in 1980 by Candy Lightner. This was occasioned by the death of Lightner's child who was killed by an intoxicated driver. As a result of the devastating loss, Lightner and her friends began MADD to raise public awareness of the adverse consequences of impaired driving. Crutchfield (2018) reports that within a year from when the movement began, it gained an exponential grassroots support across many states in the US, primarily through establishing chapters in local communities. One influential strategy that contributed to rise of MADD, in the view of Crutchfield, was the loose governance structure of the organization. While MADD had a central office, semi-autonomous local leaders were free to appoint their own leaders, raise their own resources, and promote their own programs. The decentralized structure encouraged the "power of the organization vested outside of the headquarters and away from its founder…, MADD pushed power out to the chapters, which were free to act locally and advance the drunk driving cause in ways that worked in each community's unique political, legal, and social context" (Crutchfield, 2018 p.35). Crutchfield concluded that when grassroots members are properly organized and mobilized, "they make a whole movement greater than the sum of its

parts". Elsewhere, other authors (e.g., Fell & Voas, 2006; Loewit-Phillips & Goldbas, 2013) in their ethnographic research on MADD have reiterated the incredible impact of MADD in raising national consciousness regarding the consequences of impaired driving in the US. Loewit-Phillips and Goldbas (2013), for instance, indicated that through the grassroots efforts of MADD, the organization has led to the development of national, state, and local laws to curb the societal ravages caused by drunk driving.

**Cultural Resources.** In addition to human resources, RMT posits cultural resources are necessary for mobilization. RMT theorists identify cultural resources as the artifacts produced by social movements that are used to garner support for the movement. These artifacts include literature, music, and symbols generated during the social movement (Edwards & McCarthy 2004a). Recently, some movement scholars have included social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and other communication technologies through which movement artifacts are posted, to mobilize people for collective action. For example, in a study on the internet and social movements' repertoires of action, Laer and Aelst (2016) pointed out that the internet has given social movements new and improved opportunities to engage in social and political action. The internet provides opportunities for social movements to recruit members and generate support for action while also strengthening transnational ties.

**Moral Resources.** The last category of resources included in RMT is moral resources. This type of resource includes legitimacy of the movement and endorsements by key people and organizations that support the aims and actions of the movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Cress and Snow (1996) categorized the moral support that social movement organizations receive into sympathetic support and solidaristic support. Sympathetic support involves statements by external organizations that are supportive of the movement. Solidaristic support involves the

participation of external groups in the collective actions of the movement. In their study on homelessness social movement organizations in the United States, Cress and Snow (1996) found that legitimacy is important for collective action because a lack of recognition or support from key people and organizations weakens a movement's viability. During their study, they found that external endorsement by other organizations, celebrities, and influential authorities provided an important morale boost for homelessness social movements because of the sense that key people share concerns about homeless people. When organizations receive recognition such as media coverage, they gain legitimacy because their activities have been validated, which creates discourse about the organization's goals and attracts other people who may have been unfamiliar with the organization (Pilny et al., 2014).

RMT emphasizes the importance of resources for the success or failure of social movements; however, the theory's emphasis on the availability of resources has been critiqued as inadequate. McAdam et al. (2001) argued that although resources may be necessary for the emergence of movements, they are not sufficient for explaining the ways in which the political system influences social movements' activities. Instead, they propose a political process theory, which looks at the role of resources and highlights the importance of the political system and the larger social environment in the emergence, dynamics, and outcomes of social movements (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 1998). The political process theory emphasizes that in addition to organizational resource mobilization, external factors, such as how closed or open the political system is, affects a social movement's ability to act. Furthermore, consideration of external political factors is crucial for explaining when and how resource mobilization occurs. That is, according to the proponents of the political process theory, social movements are shaped by the wider set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the context in which they are embedded. In short, the political process

theory focuses on the interactions of social movement actors with the state and the role of political opportunities in the mobilization and outcome of social movements.

### *Framing Theory*

Another key social movement theory discussed by scholars is framing theory. This theory has developed over the years in Sociology and is influenced by the work of Erving Goffman (1974). Goffman (1974) referred to frames as "schemata of interpretation that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences with their life space and the world at large" (p. 21). Framing theory focuses on the way social movements make appeals to societal actors or present issues that resonate with those they seek to mobilize. This perspective emphasizes the role of movements in constructing cultural meanings, framing issues in a particular way to identify injustices, attribute blame, propose solutions, and motivate collective action (Staggenborg, 2012); therefore, successful frames contribute to the emergence of social movements.

Contemporary scholars who have advanced framing theory include Benford and Snow (2000) who developed the concept of collective action frames as a way of capturing the importance of meanings and ideas in stimulating social action. Action frames help movements negotiate and understand problematic conditions and build support to affect change. Collective action frames help social movements to interpret the "world out there" with the intention of mobilizing and garnering support and demobilizing antagonists (p. 614). In this regard, framing can be seen as a marketing task of social movements, packaging the issue and strategically linking ideas, beliefs, and values in a way that generates support (Ketelaars, 2016). Proponents of this theory assert that some frames may be more successful in building support than others, and it is the task of the social movement organization, especially leaders, to frame issues that resonate with their intended audience and constituents.

Benford and Snow (1988, 2000) have theorized three kinds of framing that influence social movements' activities: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing involves how social movements identify a social problem. They argue that the problem must be clearly defined and easily understood by potential constituents. Prognostic framing involves offering a solution to the problem and determining how it will be implemented. Motivational framing is how the frame will attract people to participate in the collective action. Benford and Snow (2000) emphasized that the extent to which framing is effective and resonates with potential constituents depends on frame consistency, empirical credibility, and the credibility of frame articulators.

The application of framing theory by some movement scholars has led to the identification of factors that hinder or facilitate effective collective action frames (Imig, 2006; Ketelaars, 2016; Redden, 2011). These factors include, but are not limited to, (a) prevailing economic and cultural norms, (b) political opportunity structure, and (c) audience and targets. I briefly review research findings about how these factors influence frames and discursive processes of social movements.

**Economic and Cultural Structures.** Frame theorists, such as Benford and Snow (2000), posit that for frames to succeed, they largely depend on the economic logic and dominant values and ideologies that prevail within a given polity. For instance, in countries like the United States and Canada, the dominant economic frame that influences economic and social policies is an individualized frame where poverty is framed as an individual problem and the responsibility to overcome poverty rests with the individual (Grasso & Giugni, 2016; Redden, 2011). This notion is influenced by a neo-liberal economic logic, which emphasizes freedom from government interventions and the importance of individual choice (Bryant, 2013). Esping-Anderson (1990) referred to this state of economic welfare as a liberal welfare regime, where welfare provision is

highly commodified with minimum levels of government support. For this reason, the economic landscape is influenced by welfare reforms, such as workfare (mostly used in the United States) and welfare-to-work (used in Canada), which encourage labor market participation in a manner that discourages welfare dependency (Brietkreuz & Williamson, 2012; Grasso & Giugni, 2016; Bryant, 2013).

Bryant (2013) pointed out that the emphasis on individual responsibility has created economic categorizations among those living in poverty as the deserving poor and undeserving poor. The deserving poor, such as seniors and people with disabilities, are those who experience hardship through no fault of their own, and therefore, deserve some kind of help. In contrast, the undeserving poor are those who are able to work but are not employed; thus, their personal decisions contribute to their poverty (Bryant, 2013). Given the dominance of an individualized frame in societies, such as the United States and Canada, social movement organizations challenge this frame and argue that the sufferings of people are beyond their personal choices or characteristics (Ketelaars, 2016).

**Political Opportunity Structure.** Research has shown that another factor that constrains or facilitates the success of framing is the political opportunity structure. This factor relates to the assumptions of the political process theory, which refer to the political and social conditions that raise or lower barriers to mobilization (Benford & Snow, 2000; McAdam et al., 2001). Along similar lines, Imig (2006) noted that if the political structure is sympathetic to the course of action taken by movements, they are more likely to succeed, and if the political structure is antagonistic, actions taken by movements may be resisted. Thus, the role of the political structure is critical to the dynamics and outcomes of social movements.

**Target Audience and Constituents.** Benford and Snow (2000) theorized that the target audience for mobilization can influence how issues are framed. In effect, before people join a movement, they must first understand the issue and be convinced that something can be done about it. Thus, Benford and Snow suggested that in framing, social movement activists and target audiences interact, hence, determining the extent to which their frames align with or are commensurable to the needs of potential constituents influences resonance. This theoretical assumption is consistent with a study conducted by Ketelaars (2016) that examined the effects of framing qualities on frame resonance among protest participants in three Western-European countries—Belgium, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Ketelaars (2016) analyzed a protest survey involving 5,000 participants in 29 street demonstrations between 2009 and 2012. The survey investigated various issues, such as austerity, discrimination, and the environment, to determine which frames were likely to resonate with protest participants. The author found that a daily-life frame, which is a frame that focuses on issues that relate to people's everyday experiences, such as how they meet their basic needs, resonates or fosters more alignment with people than abstract frames that do not reflect the needs of those targeted.

### *Summary of Theories on Social Movements*

Scholars have discussed three theories of social movements to explain how movements emerge and what actions they take to sustain their activities. The collective behavior theory explains the extent of grievances as a cause for social movement emergence, and the resource mobilization and political process theories stress the importance of resources as well as the favorable or unfavorable political environment for the emergence and success or failure of social movements. Framing theory concentrates on how societal issues are framed by movements to generate support for action. Significantly, each of these theories offers possible explanations about

some dimensions of social movements. Nonetheless, there is a lack of an integrated theoretical approach that broadly explains the actions of social movements in a comprehensive manner. For instance, if societal issues are well framed but there are insufficient resources (e.g., lack of funds or apathetic movement actors), social movement action would be unlikely to realize its desired outcomes. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive theory or a conceptual model that more fully explains the activities of social movements, particularly those that emerge on the basis of poverty. To begin to fill this need, I draw on the findings of this study and the basic assumptions of social movement theories to develop a model/analytical framework that contributes to or extends these theoretical formulations to different social contexts such as organizing against poverty.

**Intersection of Social Movements and Poverty**

In this section, I present an overview of the literature that examines poverty-related movements in Western developed countries. I conceive poverty-related movements as those that organize against poverty and other overlapping social problems such as homelessness. In respect to this, I discuss both empirical and theoretical literature on poverty-related movements. In general, I found that a small body of literature (comprising 14 empirical studies and 11 theoretical papers) has attended to social movements that organize on the basis of poverty. These studies primarily focus on why social movements matter in the context of poverty and the strategies employed by poverty-related movements to sustain collective action and mobilization against poverty. Additionally, as I indicated in the introduction of this chapter, other studies, and theoretical discussions on social movements in general were reviewed to support the literature on poverty-related movements.

Furthermore, I found that research on poverty-related movements largely employed case study methodology with the exception of one study (Katz, 2017) that employed ethnography. The

theories of social movements posit that a variety of factors and conditions influence the emergence and mobilization of movements. Hence, a methodology that casts attention on socio-contextual factors and is consistent with key assumptions and dimensions of social movement theories (e.g., RMT) would be a good fit. In this regard, I suggest that to enhance understanding of the work of poverty-related movements, case study is an appropriate methodology to connect poverty-related movements' activities to socio-contextual factors that shape social change in Western developed societies. In the section that follows, I discuss what is known in the literature on social movements and poverty. Later in this section, I present how social movements' success have been characterized and the gaps and limitations of the extant literature.

***Relevance of Social Movements to the Discourse of Poverty***

Through theoretical and empirical examinations, a number of scholars have examined the relevance of social movements to the discourse on poverty and the elimination or reduction of poverty (Butz & Roberts, 2012; Gentle, 2016; Little, 2007; Shantz, 2011). According to these authors, social movements do two things that are necessary in the fight against poverty. First, social movements encourage those living in poverty to participate in the social, economic, and political life of a society. Second, social movements make issues of poverty visible in the public sphere or energize political interest in poverty by challenging ideas and meanings surrounding poverty. In her work on the Just Society Movement (JSM), which took place from 1968–1971 in Toronto, Little (2007) found that the JSM encouraged people on welfare, especially mothers, to raise their voices against injustices that occurred with the implementation of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). In April 1965, Prime Minister Lester Pearson declared a "war on poverty" and introduced the CAP. The CAP provided guaranteed funding for provincial and municipal welfare programs. Little (2007) indicated that between 1965 and 1971, federal and provincial welfare state programs

expanded to improve the conditions of those on welfare; however, there was a widely held notion among decision-makers that "all Canadians were prospering" due to the post-war economic growth. This belief led welfare administrators to humiliate and scrutinize the poor, even while welfare programs were expanding their eligibility criteria (p. 180). In response, the JSM increased public awareness of the problem by revealing the inadequacies in welfare policies, attracting media attention, and mobilizing over 200 welfare recipients to protest and challenge exclusionary practices by welfare administrators. Little concluded that the JSM in Toronto was able to effectively empower many of the city's poorest citizens to claim what they were entitled to.

In a similar manner, Kruzynski and Shragge (1999), who wrote about anti-poverty movements that emerged among English-speaking Montrealers in the 1970s, noted that the movement, Greater Montreal Anti-Poverty Coordinating Committee (GMAPCC), created spaces for the poor to have a voice in shaping the modernization of Quebec society. Kruzynski and Shragge found that in the rapidly modernizing state of the 1970s, welfare recipients were perceived by the State as passive citizens who did not have agency to demand what they were entitled to. The GMAPCC made claims on the State by mobilizing those excluded from the wider political process through confrontational actions such as occupations and demonstrations at welfare offices. This propelled a new form of citizenship for poor people through demands for basic income entitlements for the poor and the right to speak for themselves and access services that benefited them. Kruzynski and Shragge concluded that the anti-poverty movement "brought citizenship to those on welfare in Quebec" (p. 329).

Furthermore, a number of studies have begun to examine how social movements challenge ideas surrounding poverty in Western developed societies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States (e.g., Bebbington, 2010; Bryant, 2013; Greene, 2005). In these societies,

individual factors, such as people's inability to adapt to the demands of the society or work hard enough to secure adequate income are predominantly characterized as the contributing factors of poverty (Bryant, 2013). Social movements arise to challenge the individualized notion of poverty and to argue that poverty is a product of prevailing relations of power and that movements emerge as part of or in response to power relations (Bebbington, 2010). Thus, social movements that organize around poverty reveal that the prevalence of poverty is an indication of the unequal or oppressive relationships that exist in a society—relationships of power, responsibility, and accountability (Kaldor et al., 2009). Accordingly, poverty-related social movements assert a social justice stance and an ethical set of human relationships by helping to counteract poverty as a shameful social relation and to challenge the power imbalance that shapes social relations (Lister, 2013).

***Strategies of Social Movements***

Another dimension of social movements and poverty that scholars have studied is the strategies employed by movements. In general, strategies of social movements have received a significant amount of attention from scholars since the 1960s. Maney et al. (2012) posited that the strategic decisions of social movements' leaders/actors are crucial to their success or failure. This is similar to the basic assumptions regarding human resources postulated by the RMT. These basic assumptions point out that the expertise and experiences of movement actors are important resources for social mobilization (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). As well, Morris (2000) suggested that social movements' strategies can be understood as "tactical breakthroughs", that is, tactics that outmaneuver the opposition and generate collective action (p. 8). In other words, social movements that are determined to have an impact develop strategies that move people or maximize resonance in order to fulfill the vision of the movement. Thus, scholars are concerned about

strategies because the strategies of social movements are both the compass and the map, and without a strategy, the dreams of social movements are unlikely to materialize (Maney et al., 2012).

In reviewing the literature on strategies, I found that theoretical discussions and empirical research have identified three main social movement strategies: (a) mobilizing frames and discursive strategies, (b) direct action or adversarial strategies, and (c) non-adversarial strategies. I review and discuss these strategies in relation to movements that emerge on the basis of poverty. In all, I found that social movement strategies are not mutually exclusive, and the choice of strategy depends on the context and goals of a particular social movement.

**Mobilizing Frames and Discursive Strategies**. In the context of poverty, scholars have found that the way poverty is framed determines the response from movement activists and public policy decision makers (Bryant, 2013; Paradis, 2016; Redden, 2011). Findings from these studies relate to the assumptions of the framing theory, positing that framing societal problems to appeal to people is an important indicator of how the movement will succeed and the policy responses designed to address the problem (Cress & Snow, 1996). Thus, discourses or frames on poverty shape public policy action towards the poor (Bryant, 2013). In this section, I review scholarly work on mobilizing frames used by poverty-related movements in developed countries like Canada and the United States. On the whole, frame strategies employed by movements in these societies include a social justice or rights-based frame, a systemic frame, and an economic case frame (Fraser, 1999; Imig, 2006; Redden, 2011; Paradis, 2016).

***Social Justice Frame.*** As part of a social justice frame, poverty is discussed in relation to quality of life and human rights (Fraser, 1999). The goal of a social justice frame is to induce changes in institutions that contribute to poverty and to favor a balance of power relationships in society (Bebbington, 2010). Social justice frames draw attention to the denial of fundamental

human rights and instead emphasize citizenship, participation, and equality. According to this frame, everyone should be treated fairly and equitably and should share in the benefits of society so people in disadvantaged situations can fully contribute to and participate in their societies. An example of a social justice frame is the work of the Right to Housing (R2H) Coalition in Ontario (Dirks, 2015). The Right to Housing Coalition is dedicated to advancing the right to housing and ending homelessness in Canada. Dirks (2015) indicated that in their attempt to mobilize citizens for action, the R2H Coalition framed the lack of access to housing as a natural disaster and homelessness and inadequate housing as violations of human rights. Dirks (2015) noted that the R2H Coalition came together because of a shared vision: "That we can and must end homelessness, and that everyone has a human right to a home that is adequate and affordable" (p. 138).

Based on the R2H master frame of social justice, in 2013, the coalition filed a complaint at the Supreme Court arguing that the governments of Canada and Ontario had an obligation to reduce and eventually eliminate homelessness. According to Dirks (2015), the court application included almost 10,000 pages of expert witness affidavits and exhibits to support the coalition's arguments, including government-supported research. The R2H Coalition sought a court order requiring the federal government to implement a national housing strategy. In response, the governments of Canada and Ontario filed a motion to strike the application for the court order. The court found that the application could not succeed and dismissed the application. Dirks (2015) found that the court ruling enabled the coalition to generate support from the wider public because access to housing is a major problem for people, especially for those living in poverty. Dirks concluded that the R2H Coalition became instrumental in the implementation of a housing strategy in Ontario. In short, a social justice frame emphasizes societal injustices and the need to address social problems as human rights issues.

***Systemic Frame.*** Another mobilizing frame employed by poverty-related movements is a systemic frame. A systemic frame emphasizes structural or systemic factors such as capitalism, colonization, power relations, racism, and sexism as key forces in (re)producing poverty (Katz, 2017; Paradis, 2016). In an ethnographic study of a welfare activist organization called LIFETIME (Low-Income Families' Empowerment Through Education), which organizes around the impact of welfare reform in San Francisco, Katz (2017) found that welfare activists framed the problems of welfare reforms as systemic. Katz noted that the welfare activists argued welfare reforms were shaped by economic and policy drivers of the State that limit the opportunities of persons on welfare to enhance their lives. In this regard, the activists operated through oppositional consciousness by helping their members—single parents—understand the implications of welfare reform. Through training and active engagement, the members were able to make connections between their problems with the welfare system and how the system is intentionally designed to demean those on welfare. Additionally, Katz found that LIFETIME members were able to link their private troubles with the broader structural factors that perpetuate inequalities in San Francisco. The findings by Katz support the framing theory's assumption that the more movement organizations frame issues that appeal to their members, the greater the likelihood that members become motivated to participate in collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Furthermore, in a review paper on how homelessness activists claim discursive spaces to pursue collective action in Canada, Paradis (2016) found that activists framed the main drivers of homelessness in Canada, including colonization, income insecurity, and state withdrawal from housing provision, as systemic and structural. Paradis indicated that based on the systemic frame as the cause of homelessness, activists' responses to homelessness have been radical and reactionary, rejecting institutional responses to homelessness such as welfare cuts, gentrification,

shelter closures, and displacement. Furthermore, Paradis concluded that activists' responses to homelessness not only directly claim home spaces for poor people, "They also propose a pre-figurative vision of an autonomous community outside colonial, capitalist, and institutional relations" (p. 100). In short, systemic frames draw attention to structural factors that perpetuate poverty in societies.

***Economic Case Frame.*** Few researchers have examined how an economic case frame strategy can be deployed to maximize support for the elimination of poverty in Canada (Benbow et al., 2016; Laurie, 2008). An economic case frame typically calls for investment in the lives of those living in poverty. Here, the economic cost of poverty is highlighted by movement activists to alert the State and the public to the burden of poverty on taxpayers. Given the capitalist nature of Western societies such as Canada, Benbow et al. (2013) theorized that making an economic case for poverty elimination would undoubtedly achieve support and mobilization. Although there are no empirical studies that have examined the association between the economic case frame and social mobilization against poverty, an economic-case-frame strategy is employed by anti-poverty organizations such as Vibrant Communities Canada and Canada Without Poverty. For instance, Vibrant Communities (2012) argued that poverty has a substantial economic cost and that "investing in poverty prevention is much less costly in the long-run than spending to alleviate poverty in perpetuity" (p. 2). Vibrant Communities Canada indicated that in 2011, poverty cost the federal government $19.9 billion in employment insurance and an additional $4 billion in transfers to low-income families. Thus, economic case frames reveal the economic cost of poverty, which calls for action by governments and anti-poverty activists.

**Direct-Action or Adversarial Strategies**. Another strategy employed by poverty-related movements is using direct-action or adversarial activities. Direct-action includes strategies such as

disruption, confrontations, street-based protests, protest camps, lockouts, demonstrations, marches, and encampments (Staggenborg, 2012). An example of a social movement that employs direct-action strategies is Ontario's Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). OCAP is one of the most well-known poverty-related social movement organizations in North America. In fact, almost all the literature on social movements and poverty in Canada refer to the operations of OCAP (Butz & Roberts, 2012; Green, 2005; Shantz, 2011). OCAP operates on "the principle that the only way poor people can have access to what they are entitled is through disruption" (Butz & Roberts, 2012, p.112). OCAP takes an anti-capitalist stance to poverty, and their actions involve the mobilization of impoverished people, homeless people, and workers to challenge broader political, economic, and social policies. Notwithstanding the difficulty of mobilizing poor people for collective action in capitalist societies such as Canada, Green (2005) reported that OCAP has succeeded in having a membership base of 200 to 300 people, and they are well known for standing against austerity programs.

In a qualitative study examining the operations of OCAP, Shantz (2011) investigated one of OCAP's actions and outcomes regarding the Special Diet Allowance that was cut by the Ontario government in 2008. Findings from Shantz's study indicate that after the introduction of a social assistance policy known as Ontario Works, many families receiving welfare had difficulty paying rent and were unable to feed their children. This led to a number of people relying on food banks and developing health problems. Since poverty is a social determinant of health, OCAP collaborated with health workers to demand the restoration of the allowance. Shantz reported that through protests and disruption of work at welfare offices, OCAP succeeded, and an allowance of $250 per family was released to those on welfare. The author emphasized that the success of the mobilization saw the Ontario government pay close to $6 million in the first year of organizing,

$200 million by 2008, and by 2011, the government had fully restored the Special Diet Allowance. Shantz concluded that grassroots movements, such as OCAP, can have positive implications for the health and standard of living of those living in poverty.

The period in which Shantz (2011) conducted the study was marked by an Ontario government that favored less economically conservative ideals than the government that cut the Special Diet Allowance, and it is important to note that the political system in Ontario has changed since then. Currently, the Progressive Conservative Party is in power. The CBC has reported that the government is working to reform social assistance in Ontario, which is raising fears among anti-poverty organizations given that welfare cuts are common under Conservative governments (CBC News, 2019). As noted by the political process theory, the political system is critical to the successful outcomes of social movements (McAdam et al., 2001); thus, the sustenance of a particular action or strategy of a social movement may achieve its intended outcome if the political system is favorable. Conversely, if the political structure is unfavorable, positive outcomes of social movement mobilization may be unlikely. Shantz's findings suggest it is imperative for researchers to examine the social and political contexts of social movements.

Additionally, social movement organizations in the United States, such as ACORN, employ direct action to pursue social change. ACORN mobilizes poor people in low-income neighborhoods in the US and connects their concerns to the economic structures and policies perpetuating poverty (Stern, 2003). Nonetheless, Atlas (2010) has described ACORN as one of the most controversial antipoverty organizations in the United States because of ACORN's role in state politics and voter registration. ACORN has a direct-action strategy, called Project Vote, that encourages low-income citizens to participate in the electoral process. Due to ACORN's direct involvement in electoral work, the organization has faced backlash, especially during the 2008

presidential election. The McCain-Palin campaign accused ACORN of perpetrating massive voter registration fraud and accused Obama of having long and deep ties with ACORN (Atlas, 2010). This notwithstanding, some authors (e.g., Delgado, 2009; Fisher, 2009) have noted that the strategies of ACORN (policy advocacy, disruptive tactics, and media framing) have demonstrated the organization's ability to achieve change in social policies of the state. For instance, in one of ACORN's squatting campaigns against the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), ACORN succeeded in mobilizing thousands of poor people and set up a tent city behind the White House (Delgado, 2009). The direct action by ACORN yielded federal reforms that led to the passage of the National Homestead Bill. The passage of the Bill changed HUD policies and procedures, and that facilitated low-income homesteading (Delgado, 2009). Delgado concluded that the ACORN campaign revamped homesteading programs which turned over vacant houses to low-income residents in Philadelphia, Detroit, Brooklyn, and Chicago.

Similarly, Chappell (2017) has noted that ACORN participated in a broad grassroots alliance, National People's Action, that helped push through the federal Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). The CRA required banks to invest in underserved communities, including mortgage funding. By 2008, the CRA had spurred more than a trillion dollars of bank lending to resource-starved families and communities (Chappell, 2017).

In short, direct-action strategies have been one of the visible strategies poverty-related movements utilize to pursue social change goals.

**Non-Adversarial Strategies.** In contrast to direct-action or adversarial strategies, non-adversarial strategies include collaboration, advocacy, service provision, lobbying, and negotiation (Staggenborg, 2012). The basic premise of this type of strategy is that social movements can partner with the State in delivering programs and policies and can work to address changes in

institutional relationships (Arthur, 2008; Paradis, 2016; Staggenborg, 2012). Paradis (2016) indicated that in the context of poverty elimination, poverty-related movements that employ non-adversarial strategies believe that poverty cannot be eliminated without State or institutional actors. Additionally, Paradis theorized that non-adversarial strategies are a type of "insider and outsider" approach to problem-solving during which as "insiders", movement actors participate in meetings with policymakers and as "outsiders" they provide relevant information that may assist in developing appropriate policies for tackling the problem. Through an "insider–outsider" strategy, movement actors engage in collaborative governance, which can bring about the desired change (Paradis, 2016, p.101). The ideas of Paradis are consistent with the external social-organizational resources necessary for social mobilization as postulated by the RMT, although the study did not discuss RMT as its theoretical framework.

Some scholars (e.g., Arthur, 2008; Plow, 2007) question the ability of non-adversarial strategies to provide the intended changes social movements desire. Plow (2007) pointed out that negotiating within the policy process is a form of co-optation to an agenda already set by the State; hence, social movements that employ non-adversarial strategies may only act to support the status quo (Plow, 2007). On the other hand, Arthur (2008) argued that movement actors that choose non-adversarial strategies have a greater understanding of structural constraints and can make changes that can be achieved because they become part of the decision-making process.

Arguments about whether adversarial strategies are more effective than non-adversarial strategies have remained theoretical and inconclusive. Maney and colleagues (2012) suggested that movement actors that are well-motivated to pursue a collective agenda may choose to combine strategies towards achieving the changes they desire. The authors stressed that social movements evolve, and strategies may change under certain conditions; hence, a fixation on a narrow range of

specific strategies may not lead to the intended outcome. Therefore, Maney et al. proposed that since strategies may change over time, a longitudinal study would be useful for capturing the dynamic interplay of strategies employed by movements.

In summary, the literature suggests that strategies of social movements are central to the organizing process of movements and that social movements vary in terms of the strategies they employ. For this reason, conclusions about the effectiveness of strategies require researchers to consider the scope of movements and the contexts in which they are embedded. In this study, which focuses on the EPE movement, I address these gaps by examining EPE strategies and the factors that shape the selection of specific strategies in relation to EPE's goals as well as the contexts in which they are embedded.

Finally, the foregoing review of the literature has discussed theories and strategies of social movements that relate to the outcomes, success, and failure of movements. However, to what extent have scholars critically examined the concept of success and failure or outlined the key characteristics of success in social movement research? The next section discusses how success and failure have been characterized by movement scholars.

**Characteristics and Dimensions of Social Movements' Success**

While social movements have been recognized in the literature as contributing to political, social, cultural, policy, and institutional change, few attempts have been made by scholars to characterize and outline key dimensions of "success" and "failure" (Gamson, 1975, 1990, 1998; Saeed, 2009; Haiven & Khasnabish, 2013). It is common for social movement scholars (e.g., Crutchfield, 2018; Grey, 2004; Polletta & Jasper, 2001) to discuss factors and conditions that contribute to success; however, these scholars do not explicitly define success or how success is measured. Instead, their ideas about what success is are often implied. For the most part,

determining social movements' success and failure is not clear-cut (Zelinska, 2021). As a result, theorizing about social movements' success remains underdeveloped (Kolb, 2007; Gamson, 1990). Furthermore, there is no established methodology to determine what constitutes success of social movements, making it difficult to explicitly understand important nuances of social movement outcomes (Zelinska, 2021). This section attempts to review efforts made by social movement scholars to outline key dimensions or characteristics of success.

In his seminal book, *The strategy of social protest*, William Gamson, offered an initial approach to characterizing social movements' success. Gamson (1990) noted that success can be conceived of as set of outcomes, recognizing that a given social movement organization (SMO) may score differently on equally valid outcomes. Gamson proposed two set of outcomes that can be used to assess the success of social movement organizations. These include (a) acceptance of a challenger group (i.e., the movement organization) by its antagonist or authorities and (b) gaining new advantages by the group during the challenge and its aftermath. According to Gamson, one way a movement organization can be said to have succeeded is that the movement is accepted and treated by its opponents as a valid entity or voice for a legitimate set of interests and the movement is able to gain new tangible advantages for their members during the active phase of the movement or its short-term aftermath. Gamson further indicated that movement organizations often have multiple goals, some short-term and others viewed as long-term with many steps along the way. In this regard, one dimension of success, in the view of Gamson is through the movement's achievement of their goals. Consistent with the Resource Mobilization Theory, the author emphasized that the likelihood of achieving a movement's goals is connected to various internal characteristics of the movement, including the strength of the movement organization, influence of actors, and the strategies employed by the movement organization.

Some social movements scholars (e.g., Benford & Snow, 2000; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Zelinska, 2021) also have explored success from a social constructionist approach. The social constructionist approach primarily looks at frames (Benford & Snow, 2000) and identities (Polletta & Jasper, 2001) as important dimensions of social movements' success. The underlying premise of this approach is that "constructionists move beyond structural determinism and recognize that meanings are socially constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed" (Zelinska, 2021 p.285). For this reason, the ability of movements to construct frames that connect with the realities of people to be part of a movement is conceived of as movements' success (Benford & Snow, 2000). Additionally, movements often aim to change the existing identities, both of the general public and those responsible for policymaking (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Zelinska, 2021). Social movements and their members construct social reality in a particular way and a change in identity leads to transforming cultural representations and social norms — how groups see themselves and are seen by others (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). From this perspective, the ability of movements to contribute to changes in collective/dominant identity is a key dimension of success. For example, Crutchfield (2018) in her study on movement organizations (such as Freedom to Marry and MassEquality Coalition) that organize around marriage equality in the US, pointed out that these movements have been successful because they developed frames that were able to alter people's attitudes and behaviors toward homosexuality. For decades, 2SLGBTQ+ rights were prohibited in several US states and advocates focused on using legal strategies to demand reforms and marriage equality. Crutchfield indicated that when Freedom to Marry movement leaders lost a landmark case in California in 2008, the movement changed their strategy to tap into emotions and reframing messages around social norms to connect with universal human values, such as love and commitment. The Freedom to Marry movement stopped talking so much about rights and legal

protection and began framing marriage as something people wanted to do because of a deep sense of love and commitment. The advocates used polling research to reframe the focus of the campaign's messaging from "rights" to "love" and "commitment" which in turn led to the diffusion of now-familiar slogans such as "Love is Love" and, eventually, a change in marriage laws. Even though Crutchfield did not explicitly define success, she suggested that success was people connecting with the frames that were constructed by the movements to bring about change (Crutchfield, 2018). In other words, the Freedom to Marry and MassEquality Coalition movement organizations, according to Crutchfield, can be deemed to be successful because they changed people's attitudes and social norms about 2SLGBTQ+.

It is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all model to understand the success and failure of social movement organizations. The success of a movement organization is determined by different sets of outcomes, and indeed, achieving social change happens not by chance. This makes classifying success and failure of movements a complicated venture. Haiven and Khasnabish (2013), in a theoretical review paper, argued that the binary of "success" and "failure" is not a useful dichotomy. The authors pointed out that the work of movements is never done and to think of success is to show practical and material victories of a movement based on the goals of the movement. However, movements build up a "culture": images, stories, practices, beliefs, relationships, ideas, and institutions that allow them to persist (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2013). In their view, movements live within an "ecology of persistence" that makes them thrive beyond their stated goals. In this regard, movements do not "succeed or fail, [they] exist in the interstice, in the hiatus…[they] are driven by common dreams of a world beyond the binary of success and failure…and [they] live in the everyday space of "not-success" and "not-failure" (Haiven and Khasnabish, 2013 p.489).

Together these theoretical discussions provide important insights into how success and failure have been characterized in the literature. These characteristics and dimensions of success provide a useful process to understand important nuances that shape social movement organizations in their effort to achieve social change.

**Research Gaps**

Social movement research is a growing field. Overall, the main foci of social movement research have been social-political movements of resistance or movements rooted in political action (e.g., anti-globalization movements, women's movements, and environmental movements), with less attention given to the intersection of social movements and poverty, especially in Canada. The intersection of social movements and poverty provides an interesting opportunity to think about ways poverty can be eliminated. Although movement scholars argue that poverty is a product of relations of power and that social movements contribute to changing power relations (Bebbington, 2010; Butz & Roberts, 2012), empirical studies that examine how social movement approaches can address poverty are limited. Additionally, existing studies on poverty-related movements (e.g., homelessness movements) often approach poverty from a narrow perspective such as difficulty in accessing housing. Although access to housing is an important basic need, it is insufficient to conceive that having access to housing services alone can lead to an end to poverty. For instance, if a person has access to shelter but is denied employment or discriminated against when searching for employment on the grounds of race, has access to shelter has addressed the problem of poverty? Devereaux (2018) noted that addressing the problem of poverty is complex and embedded within an interplay of multiple factors. The current research on poverty-related movements fails to account for how social movements address the multiple factors that underlie poverty.

This study addresses these gaps, and in particular, it examines the anti-poverty efforts and social movement-building approach of EPE to end poverty in Edmonton. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What accounted for the emergence of EPE and the goals that influence the formation of a movement organization to end poverty in Edmonton?
2. What are the core strategies of EPE to achieve the mission of ending poverty in Edmonton?
3. What are the socio-contextual factors that enable or constrain EPE in the process of ending poverty in Edmonton?

By exploring these questions, this research contributes to the small body of literature on poverty-related movements and how contemporary forms of organizing against poverty have the potential to influence social and community change in Canada.

# Chapter Three

## Methodology and Methods

For this study, I employed a case study methodology to explore the work of the End Poverty Edmonton movement organization. Case study methodology provides a framework to holistically examine how EPE operates and the contexts (social, political, demographic, and economic) in which the activities of EPE are embedded. I show that case study methodology is beneficial for understanding the work of the EPE movement organization. To understand case study, I examine its origins and definitions and identify its ontology, epistemology, and methodology. This chapter is outlined as follows. First, I discuss how case study is conceptualized, this methodology's key components, and the rationale for choosing this approach to study EPE. In subsequent sections, I discuss the sampling and recruitment process, data generation and analysis strategies, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations for this study.

### Case Study Methodology

Case study is a research methodology that helps explore a phenomenon within some particular context through triangulation of multiple data sources. It undertakes the exploration through various data sources to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon (Rashid et al., 2019). It is crucial to define what constitutes a case in case study research. A case can be a single community, region, or country; a single family; an organization; an individual; or an event or incident (Stake, 1995; Zainal, 2007; Yin, 2014). Case studies can be single or multiple in scope and are bound by geography, time, place, and activity; or by definition and context (Vries, 2020). Generally, the fundamental purpose of a case study is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. A well-constructed case study is holistic and context-sensitive (Patton, 2002).

Historically, case study research as a strategy for methodological exploration has been used across many academic disciplines, including anthropology, history, psychology, education, business, law, and health (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Stewart (2014) noted that historical examples of case studies date back to the early nineteenth century with the biography of Charles Darwin. Additionally, several scholars attribute modern-day case study research to the work of the Chicago School of Sociology. At the Chicago School, anthropologists conducted case studies involving field-based observations of groups to understand their social and cultural lives (Johansson, 2003; Vries, 2020). According to Harrison et al. (2017), case study methodology evolved over time, and in the 1970s, a second generation of case study researchers emerged, including Robert Stake (1995, 2006), Robert Yin (1984, 2014), and Sharan Merriam (1998, 2009). Robert Yin presented a structured process for undertaking case study research where formal propositions or theories guide the research process. As well, Robert Stake and Sharan Merriam advanced the use of case study methodology in educational research as a way to evaluate curriculum design and innovation.

Many methodologies are aligned with a specific philosophical orientation that guides the research process (Harrison et al., 2017). Case study, however, has practical flexibility in its approach whereby "it is not assigned to a fixed ontological, epistemological or methodological position" (Rosenberg & Yates, 2007). Luck et al. (2006) has described case study research as "a bridge across paradigms" (p.103). As a result, some case study methodologies are quantitatively or qualitatively orientated. However, since the fundamental goal of case study methodology is to conduct an in-depth analysis of an issue within its context, Harrison et al. (2017) stated that it adopts a relativist ontology and a subjective epistemology, with the belief that meanings are constructed socially and experientially. Accordingly, in a case study, particularly one that is grounded in a qualitative approach, an interaction between participants and the researcher is

required to generate data. In this regard, the researcher is connected to and immersed in the field, and as a result, a subjective and interpretive orientation flows throughout the inquiry (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2014).

In the context of social movement studies, Snow and Trom (2002) noted that because movement scholars derive their data from research on a particular movement organization or a period of time in a movement's existence, there is a close connection between case study methodology and the study of social movement organizations. Case study, thus, is one of the most frequently employed research strategies for examining social movement organizations and movement-related processes. Essentially, the case is the movement as a whole, and the objective is to situate it in time and place, in history, and in its operations. Case study research in social movement studies involves a holistic analysis of systems of actions by generating a richly detailed, thick, and in-depth understanding of movements' activities within the context in which they are embedded.

Guided by the principles of case study in social movement research, I examined the work of the EPE movement organization. I sought to explore and understand the factors accounting for its emergence, its strategies and the socio-contextual factors that facilitate or constrain how the work of EPE is leading to change for those living in poverty in Edmonton. A number of qualitative research methodologies arguably could be used to study social movements that organize based on poverty; however, a case study offers the opportunity to describe, explore, critique, and reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon. A case study enables the examination of a phenomenon in its broader context (Yin, 2014). For this reason, case study methodology was used to explore and understand the work of EPE and key players of the movement organization.

Moreover, using case study methodology for this study generated detailed understanding and knowledge that can be valuable to EPE and can inform policies and practices relevant to eliminating poverty in Edmonton. As noted by Vries (2020), using case study for social movement studies, the researcher conducts a comprehensive analysis of the movement that allows for the development of contextual understanding of the phenomenon of interest. The researcher raises questions about specific actions of the movement and generates in-depth analysis, which can produce relevant knowledge for the movement. For instance, Stewart (2014) noted that applying case study methodology to study social movements reveals greater detail about the movement and helps movement players to recognize the everyday lived experiences of their work, gain insight into how they are producing knowledge, and understand the effect of their knowledge in bringing about change. Following the insights from Vries (2020) and Stewart (2014), my study engenders knowledge that has the potential to advance the work of EPE.

## Methods

In this section, I discuss the methods employed in this study. First, I present a detailed account of the sampling, sample description, and the recruitment strategies employed in selecting and identifying participants. Second, I discuss the main data generation methods: one-on-one interviews and document review. Next, I describe how the data were handled and analyzed, as well as the reflexivity and ethical considerations for the study.

### *Sampling and Sample Description*

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for this study. Essentially, purposeful sampling is used to select participants or other data sources that provide the best or helpful information about the topic and answers to the research questions (Mayan, 2009). In this regard, key EPE players who could provide rich information related to the purpose of this study were selected. In all, four groups of participants were selected for the interviews: (a) members of the

EPE Task Force, (b) members of EPE Stewardship Round Table (SRT), (c) staff of the EPE Secretariat, and (d) key City of Edmonton staff that have supported the development and implementation of EPE. Across the four groups, participants had a range of professional and personal experiences that motivated them to engage in anti-poverty work. Their formal roles included working for the City of Edmonton, not-for-profits, and funders. While holding positions "within systems," most participants would primarily be considered on the fringes of their organizations due to the poverty focus of their work. Many are known across the city to be credible and respected advocates of anti-poverty work and disruptors both within and outside of their systems. Although all participants undoubtedly wanted to see EPE succeed, and perhaps because of this desire, they openly and freely offered their critique of EPE and noted where they believed things must change if EPE is to succeed.

The first category of participants were members of the Mayor's Task Force for Poverty Elimination. As discussed in Chapter One, EPE had its beginnings in the work of the Task Force to Eliminate Poverty in Edmonton in 2014. To a large extent, members of the Task Force were the early players or key drivers of poverty elimination. The 22 members of the Task Force came from academia, not-for-profit agencies, voluntary organizations, city council, and the City of Edmonton. I purposely selected key participants from this category, including early-on members who continue to be involved in the work of EPE and those who are not currently involved. The purpose of including members of the Task Force was to explore the key factors that accounted for the emergence of EPE, the conversations about building a movement as an approach to propel change, and the challenges and prospects of a movement-building approach to poverty elimination in Edmonton.

Second, I recruited participants from the EPE Stewardship Round Table. The SRT "oversees the creation of conditions to support the community's efforts to end poverty" (EPE, 2015, p. 11). The SRT is also responsible for monitoring outcomes of poverty elimination efforts in Edmonton. Selecting members from the SRT was appropriate because they offered insight into the poverty elimination efforts of EPE, how the movement organization is unfolding, the potential impact of EPE strategies, and the socio-contextual factors influencing the work of EPE. It should be noted that some of the original Task Force members rolled their commitment into serving on the SRT.

The third group of participants I recruited was the staff of the EPE Secretariat. The Secretariat provides "coordination, administrative support, and communication" to EPE (EPE, 2015, p. 11). Its roles include managing and coordinating EPE road map actions; collecting data; evaluating and reporting EPE progress; and facilitating and engaging in community dialogue and inputting it into the operations of EPE (EPE, 2015). The EPE Secretariat comprises the paid staff of EPE who talked about the ongoing work of EPE, what they are focusing on, what they are attentive to, and the challenges associated with building a movement towards poverty elimination.

Finally, I recruited key City of Edmonton staff who have supported the development and implementation of EPE road map actions. I recruited individuals who were assigned to support the initial Task Force, the SRT, and other ad hoc committees that provided research and information to the Task Force. This category of participants provided in-depth knowledge about the emergence, strategies, and contexts of EPE operations as well as information about how the initiative of a movement-building approach to poverty elimination fits into city-wide initiatives and priorities related to poverty elimination.

### *Strategies for Recruitment and Gaining Access*

The strategy for recruiting participants and gaining access to the field in this study largely involved two stages: the initial planning of the study before the ethics approval and the actual recruitment/identification of prospective participants. I describe the two stages below.

Stage I: This stage involved the initial phase of the planning process before I obtained ethics approval. During this stage, I wrote to the EPE Secretariat (in particular, the research and evaluation specialist) to approach people for possible participation in the study. I met the specialist in person to discuss the purpose of my study and the strategy for recruitment. As part of the discussion, we agreed that an information letter (Appendix A) and consent form (Appendix B) would be made available to the research and evaluation specialist for electronic distribution to prospective participants. The information letter described the purpose and importance of the study and the benefits of participating. Additionally, it provided my contact information along with an invitation for prospective participants to contact me to arrange an interview. I chose this approach because the research and evaluation specialist had access to the contact details of EPE members and could easily distribute my research to the wider group. Also, since EPE involves a relatively small number of people, the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (REB) raised concerns in my ethics application about how the contact details of EPE members would be retained without identifying the participants. In this regard, the REB approved the approach of having EPE's research and evaluation specialist distribute my information letter to recruit prospective participants (see Appendix C for initial ethics approval).

As well, by attending EPE public events, community workshops, and symposiums I was able to connect with a few people involved in EPE. As a result, I had high hopes that by using the office of the research and evaluation specialist, I could easily recruit prospective participants for

my study. It is important to note that the recruitment strategy was not intended to be completed by using pre-existing relationships with prospective participants. I was only hoping that initial contact and personal communication with some members at EPE's public events would stimulate an interest in my study; however, four weeks after the specialist sent out information about my research, only one prospective participant had contacted me and expressed interest in the study. Since I was not having much success with this initial approach, and due to time constraints, I went back to the REB with an ethics amendment that would (a) give me the chance to directly contact potential participants, (b) utilize a snowball sampling technique to recruit participants, and (c) provide the chance to do a follow-up on prospective participants to reduce the operational burden on the research and evaluation specialist at EPE's Secretariat. In the amendment, I established clear methods of de-identifying research participants and outlined the process of retaining participants' information for future contact purposes. The amendment was approved by the REB, resulting in Stage II of the recruitment process (see Appendix D ethics amendment notice of approval).

Stage II: After the amendment was approved, I asked the research and evaluation specialist to give me the contact details of the current members of EPE, former Task Force members, and/or other people who had previously been involved in the work of EPE. I received a contact list made up of 24 members grouped according to the four categories of my sample description. I sent out direct invitations to all 24 members on the contact list. Using this approach, seven prospective participants replied and expressed interest in participating in the study.

During the interviews, I employed a snowball sampling technique. This means that an initial number of participants were asked for the names of others, who were subsequently approached (Boeije, 2010). In utilizing this technique, after each interview, I asked participants to

identify a colleague who met the inclusion criteria and would likely participate in the study. Some participants referred me to other members they had worked with in teams during pre-EPE organizing. The success of this technique was contingent on the information and referrals provided by the participants, and by using the snowball technique, I was able to recruit seven more participants for the study.

Furthermore, during the recruitment process, a participant invited me to attend an upcoming SRT meeting as an observer. Although I did not indicate that participant observation was going to be one of the methods of generating data, I considered attending the SRT meeting because I felt that attending the meeting was a way to broaden research support for the study and connect with the wider membership of EPE. I attended a meeting of the SRT in November 2019. At the meeting, I was given the opportunity to introduce myself to the SRT members. During that brief opportunity, I talked about myself and the reason I was invited to the meeting. After the meeting, two SRT members approached me and indicated their interest in participating in the study. Later, they emailed me with possible dates for conducting the interviews. In the end, I had more success directly contacting prospective participants and employing a snowball technique, and I completed a total of 17 interviews.

***Sample Size***

For this study, I recruited 17 participants. Table 2 gives a detailed breakdown of the number of participants recruited in each category of participants purposively selected for the study.

At the proposal phase, my plan was to recruit 15−20 participants until data saturation was reached (i.e., when no new themes or issues came up during the data generation phase of the research) (Thomas, 1993). Despite the initial recruitment challenges, I was able to recruit 85% of my targeted sample from the diverse categories of participants. Mayan (2009) pointed out that

decisions about data saturation may seem artificial as new and unique information may continuously enter the research; however, there comes a time when doing another interview or analyzing another document may not be helpful. Mayan's insight provided guidance to my study. For instance, after my 17th interview, I did not receive additional contact from interested participants, but the amount of information generated from the 17 interviews was comprehensive and useful enough for me to determine that data saturation had been reached. Importantly, the number of participants recruited for my study is consistent with the literature on sample size in case study.

**Table 2.** *Number of Participants Recruited in Each of the Sample Categories*

| Sample Category | Number of Participants Interviewed | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Former members of the Mayor's Task Force | 2 | The participants were directors of community organizations related to anti-poverty work in Edmonton. They did not roll over their commitment to EPE due to their respective employment duties. |
| Members of EPE Stewardship Round Table | 7 | Background characteristics of participants included co-chairs, city councilors, branch managers, and executive directors of social research and social service organizations. Some of these participants were also members of the Mayor's Task Force. |
| Staff of the EPE Secretariat | 6 | A majority of staff members at the Secretariat participated in the study. |
| Key City of Edmonton staff | 2 | These participants were part of the early stages the Mayor's Task Force and they continued to support the work of EPE. |
| **Total** | **17** | |

*Source*: Field work, 2019–20

### *Data Generation Methods*

I employed a document review and one-on-one interviews as my main data generation methods. Choosing two data sources is consistent with critical ethnographic studies and helps researchers to generate substantive data from different perspectives and corroborate or counter information to reduce the risk of bias (Oladele et al., 2012). Thus, multiple data sources serve as a means of triangulation. By triangulating data, the study produced "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (Creswell, 2009, p. 28). In Table 3, I present a matrix showing relations among the research questions, the data generated, data sources, and data generation methods. The data generation methods are described in detail afterwards.

**Table 3.** *Research Matrix Showing Relations Between Research Questions and Data Generation Methods*

| Research Questions | Data Generation Methods | Data Sources | Data Generated |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. What accounted for the emergence of EPE and the goals that influence the formation of a movement to end poverty in Edmonton? | Document review<br><br>One-on-one interviews | EPE public documents<br><br>Mayor's Task Force and SRT<br><br>Key City of Edmonton staff | Information on how the idea of movement-building came about.<br>Information on the importance of a poverty-related movement in Edmonton.<br>Underlying conditions that accounted for movement emergence.<br>Underlying goals that shape EPE's organization and dynamics.<br>Prospects and challenges of anti-poverty organizing. |
| 2. What are the core strategies EPE uses to achieve the mission of ending poverty in Edmonton? | Document review<br><br>One-on-one interviews | Mayor's Task Force and SRT<br><br>EPE internal and public documents<br><br>EPE Secretariat<br><br>Key City of Edmonton Staff | Information on core strategies of EPE.<br>Information on EPE's organizational strategy and governance structure.<br>Inherent gaps and shortcomings of the core strategies of EPE. |
| 3. What are the socio-contextual factors that | One-on-one interviews | Mayor's Task Force and SRT<br><br>Public documents | Information on what EPE is attentive to in building a movement.<br>Information on the influence of political factors (e.g., layers of relationships with |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| enable or constrain EPE in the process of ending poverty in Edmonton? | Document review | EPE Secretariat<br><br>Key City of Edmonton Staff | the municipal, provincial, and federal governments).<br>Socio-demographic influences on mobilization.<br>Challenges of movement-building for poverty elimination. |

**One-on-One Interviews**. I conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with the participants to gain detailed information and perspectives about EPE's efforts to eliminate poverty in Edmonton. Semi-structured interviews are designed to obtain relevant information about a particular subject in more detail than unstructured interviews. As Dunn (2005) pointed out, a semi-structured interview format is quite flexible and gives the researcher the opportunity to probe further to gain responses that answer the research questions. Unlike unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews encourage more focused responses while maintaining flexibility (Dunn, 2005). Prior to the beginning of the interviews, an interview guide is designed to shape the interviews and ensure relevant areas of interest are covered (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Accordingly, the interview guides for this study (Appendices E & F) were designed with open-ended questions to allow participants to express themselves freely. The interviews emphasized eliciting in-depth, focused, descriptive accounts about EPE's efforts to build a movement to end poverty, the shortcomings and the challenges confronting such efforts in Edmonton, and the contextual factors influencing the work of EPE. Furthermore, using semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe or follow-up on participants' responses.

Interviews began in October 2019 and were completed in February 2020. The interviews averaged approximately one hour in length, although they varied from forty minutes to an hour and a half. Overall, 15 interviews were conducted face-to-face and two interviews were conducted via telephone. All the interviews were audio recorded. Twelve of the in-person interviews were conducted at the respective offices of the participants. Three interviews were conducted at coffee

shops around downtown Edmonton. There were advantages and disadvantages to using different locations for the interviews. For instance, doing the interviews in the participants' offices was beneficial in many ways. First, the participants were welcoming in their office settings and felt comfortable responding to the questions without the possibility of interference or being overheard by other people. Second, power differentials between the participants and me seemed somewhat reduced—the participants appeared "empowered" and "less pressured" (Oltmann, 2016, p.10); they responded to my set of questions with ease, and they focused on the conversation. Third, conducting the interviews in the participants' offices allowed me to record the interviews without interruptions and background noise.

On the other hand, the interviews conducted at coffee shops were a bit challenging because there were interruptions such as the talking and chatting of onlookers and customers in the shop. Additionally, there was not much space to place my recorder and interview documents, including the information letter, consent form, and interview guide on the coffee table, especially after the participant ordered coffee and snacks. In these situations, while the participant signed the consent form, I reorganized myself a couple of times to avoid spillage. For example, I noted the following in my field notes after one challenging interview at a coffee shop:

> The interview was conducted at Starbucks Coffee Shop. Since it was a public place there was background noise and customers at the shop kept moving behind the participant. The participant had to move/tilt the chair to make way for other customers to pass. At some point, I had to organize myself in such a way that the participant's coffee on the table did not spill on the consent form and recorder...I was also under the impression that since it was a public place the participant may not be fully open on some of the questions that were asked. However, the participant was forthcoming with the responses. The participant spoke extensively on all the major questions asked except that some sections of the interviews were interrupted with background noise. (Fieldwork, 2020)

As occurs during many case studies, I wrote field notes immediately after each interview. Mayan (2009) pointed out that field notes are used to describe the researcher's reflections, feelings,

ideas, hunches, and interpretations about what is observed. In this regard, my field notes captured a summary of each interview, spontaneous ideas, personal impressions, initial insights from the interviews, and the locations and settings of the interviews. Also, if some participants frequently used phrases or placed emphasis on certain events, I noted these in the fieldnotes.

**Document Review.** In qualitative research, a document review is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating relevant documents of organizations, agencies, or institutions in order to gain information and insight to answer a research question (Bretschneider et al., 2017). A document review is a good source of background information on organizations and can be used to generate empirical knowledge, gain understanding, and elicit relevant data for research (Bowen, 2009). Many forms of documents such as newsletters, reports, memos, minutes, and website publications can be analyzed in qualitative research (Bretschneider et al., 2017). Prior to conducting interviews, I analyzed a variety of documents including a selection of both public and internal documents from EPE and other entities such as the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Social Planning Council, and the Government of Alberta (Appendix G). The documents from EPE covered the organization's background and orientation; its strategies and road map actions; its progress reports, newsletters, internal memos; and its online information from the EPE website.

Other documents referred to by participants or that were related to discussion points during interviews were also purposively selected for further analysis. For instance, when a participant alluded to a policy document, I reviewed that document to determine whether or not there was a connection between the statement in the document and the participant's narrative. Examples of these types of documents include evaluation reports, fiscal plans, strategic plans, and policy briefs. I also reviewed State of the City addresses, election campaign platform messages, budget documents, and fiscal plans of the provincial and federal governments. Additionally, I

included relevant documents related to poverty profiles in Edmonton, anti-poverty organizing in Alberta, and economic and demographic changes from key agencies such as the Edmonton Social Planning Council and Statistics Canada in the document review. In short, the documents provided a broad range of data about the operations of EPE, the structural dynamics of how EPE is unfolding as a movement, and the socio-contextual factors influencing or likely to influence the work of EPE.

### *Data Handling and Analysis – Approach and Method*

The purpose of data analysis in case study research is to understand and explain themes elicited from participants and other data sources (Bengtsson, 2015; Stake, 1995). In this study, the data analysis was done inductively, along with data generation. Before explaining the steps involved in my data analysis, I first describe how I managed and handled the interview data.

**Data Handling and Management**. Ethical principles in research require that data be handled in such a manner that only designated individuals have access to them. When research data are properly handled, the anonymity of participants and the confidentiality of their information are guaranteed (Tri-Council, 2018). Also, proper management of the data contributes to transparency and facilitates the possibility of others knowing what transpired during data generation and analysis (Boeije, 2010). In this study, the aspects of data handling and management practices before and during data analysis included the organization, storage, and transcription of the data. As noted by Boeije (2010), properly organizing different data files, and having a neat archive helps the researcher to easily retrieve information and prevent hours of searching for "that one note or that particular quote or interview" (p.72). As I discussed earlier, the interviews for this study were audio recorded, and digital copies of the interview recordings were kept on a secure, password-protected site in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. In addition, electronic data were encrypted as per the University of Alberta's encryption policy

(University of Alberta Research Ethics Office, n.d.). To prevent any loss of information due to technological failures, I stored hard copies of the data, including field notes, consent forms, interview guides, and transcripts, in a secured cabinet in the Department of Human Ecology.

Another aspect of data management was the transcription of the audio-recorded interviews. I personally transcribed verbatim all audio-recorded interviews. This process was time-consuming; however, as noted by Patton (2002), doing all or some of your own interview transcriptions instead of having them done by a transcriber provides an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights. My experience personally transcribing the interviews supports the writings of Patton—by transcribing all the interviews myself, I was fully engaged and engrossed in the data, which helped me develop early impressions about the data. I was also able to gain insights, make notes, and highlight phrases and relevant aspects from the transcripts, which helped me form initial themes and sub-themes. I became connected to each of the interviews, and I was able to easily pull a transcript to look for relevant phrases used by a particular participant. This process helped me during brainstorming, allowing me to form initial ideas and think about themes that emerged from the data.

Following the transcription of interviews, I checked all transcripts for accuracy and completeness. I read through each of the transcripts, and in areas where I had difficulty, I went back to the original interview audios to clarify and correct errors in the transcripts. This process was done consistently and continuously throughout the writing of this dissertation. After the transcription was complete, I inputted all of the transcripts as document files and organized them in the Nvivo 12 database, a qualitative data analysis software program that helped me during the subsequent coding and analysis of the data.

**Description of Data Analysis Process**. The process of analyzing qualitative data is described in the literature as a laborious task and one of the most enduring features in the research process (Boeije, 2010). There are varied approaches to analyzing qualitative data—there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The common focus in qualitative data analysis is using rigorous and trustworthy strategies that help to manage, organize, and find meaning in the data (Boeije, 2010). In this study, I employed a qualitative content analysis when analyzing both the interview data and the documents. Qualitative content analysis is the "process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data" (Mayan, 2009, p. 94). The advantage of qualitative content analysis is it helps gather direct information from study participants without imposing predetermined categories, which allows coding of participants' intent within context. Bengtsson (2015) indicated that there are four main stages to doing rigorous qualitative content analysis: decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation. Decontextualization involves the researcher familiarizing themself with the data as they go through the transcribed data to focus on detailed data. Recontextualization is achieved by checking whether all aspects of the content in the transcripts have been covered in relation to the aim of the research. Categorization is the stage where the researcher begins to create categories, condense large chunks of information to ensure no content is lost, and divide the data into sub-themes or sub-categories. The final stage is the compilation, during which the actual analysis, fine-tuning, and write-up process begins (Bengtsson, 2015).

To begin the process of data analysis for my study, I followed the four stages proposed by Bengtsson (2015) and proceeded as follows. The first step — decontextualization — was the transcription of the interviews, and I began analyzing the data inductively. To effectively analyze the data, I read and re-read each of the interview transcripts. For each of the interviews, I compiled

all the field notes in relation to the transcripts and began the preliminary coding. This process is recognized as an "open coding process" in the literature. Open coding allows the researcher to identify and derive possible themes at the beginning of the data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Oladele et al., 2012). I did an initial open coding and made notes on the margins of each of the interview transcripts about interesting points and some possible themes and initial categories, a process similar to what Bengtsson refers to as recontextualization. The open coded transcripts were shared with my supervisor so she could examine whether the open codes made sense and were relevant to the purpose of my study. By examining the codes and talking through the initial process with my supervisor, the categories were revised and modified, a process similar to what Bengtsson refer to as categorization. The initial categories formed a "coding list"—a template that served as a guide for analyzing other transcripts (Bengtsson, 2015, p. 12). The coding list contained a summary of key points and the preliminary themes and categories that explained a particular code. For instance, an initial code like "emergence" explained how EPE got started and the intentions behind its goals.

After completing the initial open coding, I inputted the coded transcripts into Nvivo 12 for additional coding, analysis, and data organization. An electronic file that assembled all the data for a particular code from all the interviews was created in Nvivo. For example, I compiled all the data coded "core strategies" into one file. Next, I generated a codebook (Appendix I) that contained all the codes and categories and a comprehensive description of the codes. After coding and organizing in Nvivo, I reviewed the codes again by comparing them to the original transcripts in order to "stay true" to the original data (Bengtsson, 2015, p. 14). As I reviewed the data again, I began analyzing it by systematically identifying patterns and commonalities across the data—a process known as axial coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). During this process, I discovered

overlaps between some of the codes, and I combined them to create an overarching theme. For example, I merged codes such as “collaboration” and “partnerships” into “relationship building”.

Furthermore, I used a similar process for analyzing documents as part of the document review as I did with the interview data, although part of this process commenced prior to the interviews. O’Leary (2014) suggested that one of the ways researchers can analyze documents is using an interview technique, where each document is treated like a “participant or informant” that provides the researcher with useful information. Following insights from O’Leary, I considered each of my documents to be a “purposeful participant” that gave me additional information to help seek convergence or contradiction with my interview data. As well, when a participant spoke about a specific document or their comments needed further corroboration/confirmation, I proceeded to review the related document to ensure credibility, reduce potential bias of the data, and learn more about the issues the participant raised.

During my first and second readings of each of the documents, I identified and highlighted meaningful and relevant excerpts that responded to the research questions. This approach was similar to the open coding process I employed when analyzing the interview data. During the initial open coding, I derived emerging themes and categories from the documents. For instance, documents that provided contextual information about the emergence of EPE were broken into smaller chunks such as the main factors that gave rise to EPE, the key players/partners involved in the early stages of EPE, the incentives behind the vision of movement-building, the provision of resources, and the anticipated outcomes of using a movement-building approach to end poverty. These smaller chunks of information helped me derive preliminary categories from the documents for further analysis.

After the initial open coding, I started analyzing the emerging categories in a critical and systematic manner, identifying patterns within the documents, and analyzing the categories in connection with the interviews. In case studies involving multiple data sources, there is no quick fix for analyzing the data. Critical reflection and analysis of the data sources allow for the identification of implicit and explicit connections between the data from one source and the data from another (Juris & Khasnabish, 2015). I categorized codes that shared similarities, grouped them into themes that fit together, and conducted an in-depth analysis to make explicit connections between participants' accounts and documents. I also categorized codes that were contradictory or inconsistent with the interview data. This process helped me to integrate the data in such a way that a meaningful, deeper, and more comprehensive understanding of the data was developed. For instance, some of EPE's documents were explicit about the approach of engaging in advocacy and systems change; however, in the interviews, participants revealed that the advocacy strategy of EPE had yet to be developed, which had undermined EPE's goal to change the conversation about poverty. Juxtaposing the interview data with the documents, I characterized this theme as "the missing link" to examine the extent to which EPE has been successful in meeting the aspirations that influenced its emergence and formation.

Similarly, guided by the principles of case study, I conducted an additional analysis to examine the data from the interviews and documents within broader socio-contextual factors and taken-for-granted assumptions that influence the work of EPE. Thus, the analytic strategy of this study was sensitive to "systems of actions" (Snow & Trom, 2002) engaged in by EPE to create change. These included the elements of equity, inclusion, active voice of marginalized groups, power, and how EPE is attentive to these factors in the process of ending poverty in Edmonton. In the light of these, I further examined how the ongoing activities/organizing processes of EPE either

empower or disempower people with lived experiences of poverty. For example, the governance structure of EPE, as described in EPE's documents, showed that people with lived experiences of poverty are key stakeholders in the task to end poverty in Edmonton. Nevertheless, the interview data revealed that people with lived experiences of poverty have yet to be actively involved in the work of EPE. In analyzing this finding, I showed how the exclusion of people with lived experiences casts doubt about EPE's aspiration to build a collective voice and provide inclusive support for the task of ending poverty in Edmonton. Overall, the data analysis was an iterative process and involved the arduous task of reading, re-reading, and critically reflecting upon the various aspects of the data in order to understand their meaning systematically and comprehensively.

## Qualitative Research and Trustworthiness of Research Findings

Maintaining the trustworthiness of qualitative research ensures rigor and demonstrates how and why findings from a particular inquiry are worth paying attention to (Mayan, 2009). In this study, I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for maintaining trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### *Credibility*

This criterion assesses whether the findings make sense and present a true picture or accurate representation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, strategies that were used to ensure credibility included participant checks, methodological and data triangulation, and peer review (Mayan, 2009). Participant checks are the process of obtaining feedback from participants. I performed my participant checks by utilizing probes during the interviews to assess my understanding of the participants' responses and to verify certain passages in their accounts. As well, when closing the interviews, I asked participants about their impressions of the interviews,

and if there was anything we didn't talk about, they were given the opportunity to say so. I also checked with one participant via telephone for further clarification on a particular response. This was a participant I interviewed at a coffee shop and a response to a question was not clear in the audio recording due to background noise. By employing participant checks, accurate and credible accounts were ensured in the study.

Additionally, since the study employed two sources of data, I had the advantage of corroborating participants' interviews with document analyses. This process produced credible data that came about, in part, by methodological and data triangulation. Methodological triangulation is the use of at least two methods to study a phenomenon in a single study (Denzin, 2012). Using methodological triangulation is important because different methods reveal different aspects of reality; therefore, multiple methods help the researcher generate or capture a more detailed picture of the situation being investigated than if only one method is used (Denzin, 2012). In this study, interviews and the document review ensured methodological triangulation. Data triangulation involves obtaining information from multiple data sources by generating data from varied research participants (Denzin, 2012). In this study, the four categories of participants within EPE, along with an array of documents, provided an opportunity for data triangulation which is consistent with the guiding principles of case study (Stake, 1995). The information provided by one source and/or method was considered in relation to information from other sources and/or methods.

Additionally, I utilized a peer review strategy during which my supervisor reviewed the interview transcripts and used the substantial amount of data to examine the findings for credibility. This process helped me develop ideas and challenged my assumptions in writing and presenting the data. Combining these strategies ensured the credibility of the study.

***Transferability***

This criterion assesses the applicability of the findings to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure this criterion, this study provides a detailed account and offers extensive information about anti-poverty organizing strategies and challenges in Edmonton. This will enable others who read the findings to make an informed decision about its transferability to other contexts or how it can be appropriated to other cities in Canada. Concerted efforts to reduce poverty are being made by various groups in Canadian cities like Hamilton, Saint Johns, and Calgary (e.g., Beveridge, 2016; Cabaj, 2012). For this reason, findings from this study can be applied to or could inform a social movement approach to poverty in these and other cities in Canada.

***Dependability***

The criterion of dependability was demonstrated by reporting the processes used within the study and the decisions made throughout the study. During the study process, I kept a personal research journal in the form of a field notebook. The journal contained documentation of everything that happened in the field including the scheduling and rescheduling of interviews and the operational aspects of data generation such as the challenges encountered in the recruitment and the data analysis processes. Transferability and dependability are closely linked; thus, ensuring transferability was a step toward ensuring dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

***Confirmability***

This criterion is concerned with ensuring that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This was achieved by documenting detailed methodological descriptions in my research journal and outlining the step-by-step procedures. In relation to

ensuring confirmability, I demonstrated reflexivity when I reflected on my assumptions and values as they shaped the research process in this study. I discuss the issue of reflexivity next.

**Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is the process whereby researchers become self-aware of their assumptions, values, and actions and how they shape the research process (Mills et al., 2012). In case study, as in broader qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument through which data are generated and analyzed (Mayan, 2009). In this regard, the researcher's role, positionality, assumptions, and values, as well as how the research participants' views are represented, are crucial in the research process (Mayan, 2009; Palaganas et al, 2017). As Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted, in qualitative research, the researcher is not neutral, distant, or emotionally uninvolved. Through the process of reflexivity, researchers acknowledge their assumptions and the possibilities of reporting biased or unbiased accounts of research findings. Reflexivity, then, is an ongoing process and a critical reflection of the researcher's role, biases, and assumptions and how these influences all stages of the research process (Palaganas et al., 2017).

The researcher's role, that is, their insider (the emic) or outsider (the etic) role status has been widely discussed in qualitative research. For instance, Creswell (2009) pointed out that in qualitative research, the interpretations of participant observations and interactions are shaped by the researcher's cultural values and norms and their social locations. In this study, it was important for me to be aware of my background, assumptions, values, interests, and experiences and how they influenced or enabled my interaction with, and analysis of, the views of my research participants and documents.

### *Personal Background*

As the primary researcher of this study, reflecting on my personal background is important because my experiences and social locations determine my perceptions and interpretations of the data. I am an international student from Ghana examining anti-poverty organizing in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. I come from a background where poverty is a daily experience for a significant number of people in my rural community. According to a UNICEF report on poverty and inequality in Ghana, one in four people live in extreme poverty in rural Ghana (UNICEF, 2016). Coming from such a background, over the past years, my research interests, intentionally or unintentionally, have been influenced by the exigencies of poverty in Ghana. For example, I have studied the influences of poverty on children and the health and social outcomes of families living in poverty. Additionally, I have studied how social protection programs strengthen notions of citizenship in rural communities (Oduro, 2012; Oduro & Dako-Gyeke, 2013; Oduro, 2015). These research experiences contributed to my interest in the work of EPE.

Prior to coming to the University of Alberta, I did not have knowledge of any anti-poverty organizations in Edmonton, including EPE. When I arrived in Edmonton in September 2015 to begin my doctoral program, my former research coordinator talked to me about EPE as a new poverty movement in Edmonton. I was struck by the name 'EndPovertyEdmonton', and unconsciously, it began to sink deeply into me, urging me to get to know more about how the vision/mission of ending poverty could be realized. Perhaps this interest was instigated by a question I have internalized over the course of my research: How can poverty be eliminated completely among humanity? Given my research experiences and my daily encounters with people living in poverty in my home country, the work of EPE intrigued me. Though my interest was not to compare poverty in Ghana to poverty in Edmonton, I was fascinated by what this whole

enterprise of ending poverty was going to be like. In hindsight, I realize I was attracted to EPE and felt it could be interesting to learn from EPE's efforts to end poverty in Edmonton.

***Reality Checks***

Fusch et al. (2018) theorized that "the better a researcher is able to recognize his/her personal view of the world and to discern the presence of personal lenses, the better one is able to hear and interpret the behavior and reflections of others" (p. 21). Given my interest in poverty-related research, it is important for me to acknowledge that I have an attraction to or "bias" for poverty reduction initiatives across the world. Because I was aware of this potential bias and because I was an outsider to EPE, I did not overrepresent the accounts of my participants to convey a story that would attract the attention of the wider public, City authorities, or potential knowledge users of my research to issues of poverty in Edmonton. I ensured the quotes used to buttress points/arguments in this study were true representations of the participants' narratives without amplification. Additionally, throughout the interviews, I probed and asked questions, which made participants pause to reflect before answering. For instance, a participant I had met at an EPE public event, and with whom I had already established a rapport, was surprised about the nature of the interview and the line of questions. The participant remarked at the end of the interview that "You covered it all, oh my God. Really very detailed, thoughtful questions. This got me thinking and thinking about what we are doing with EPE" (Fieldnote, 2020). Finally, the use of methodological triangulation in this study helped me to mitigate bias. Generating data from multiple sources (i.e., documents and interviews) helped me corroborate the study findings and captured balanced perspectives in the study without the influence of personal bias.

## Ethical Considerations

I sought and was granted ethical approval before recruiting participants. Creswell (2009) pointed out that addressing ethical issues in research is important in order to protect participants, circumvent misconduct, and uphold the integrity of the study and the researcher. Relevant ethical considerations for this study are discussed below.

### *Autonomy and Informed Consent*

In qualitative research, and as in other research approaches, the topic of autonomy and consent have been widely discussed. Given the importance of autonomy and consent, the Tri-Council (2018) emphasized that one of the ways scholars can show "Respect for Persons" in research is to ensure those who participate in their research are able to do so of their own volition. Accordingly, this may only be done after they fully understand the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, along with any other concerns. Only when participants are fully informed about the study and consent to participate of their own accord will they be considered to have expressed their autonomy.

Following this principle, I designed an information sheet and consent form (see Appendices A & B, respectively) to obtain written consent from the participants. These documents were electronically distributed to the participants for their perusal prior to the interviews. The information sheet outlined the purpose of the study, identified the researcher, and described the research process—what participation entailed, topics to be discussed during the interviews, and the right to withdraw from the study. It also explained how confidentiality would be maintained and how the participants' privacy would be protected. When I met with each participant, I went through each point of the consent form, highlighting confidentiality and how the findings would be used. I also provided the participants with an opportunity to ask questions prior to signing the consent

form. Finally, copies of the information sheet and consent form were provided to the participants for their reference and records.

***Confidentiality and Anonymity***

Confidentiality implies that participants' personal information entrusted to the researcher is safeguarded (Tri-Council, 2018). For this reason, the Tri-Council (2018) stated that the easiest way for a researcher to achieve their confidentiality obligation is to collect and use data anonymously. I de-identified all information given by the participants by assigning codes to each participant and their data. Participant codes were prefixed with FT (for former Task Force participants), SRT (for Stewardship Round Table participants), SEC (for Secretariat participants), and CTY (for participants from the City of Edmonton). I eventually replaced these codes with pseudonyms in this report. As well, due to the relatively small number of people involved in EPE, during the presentation of research findings, I ensured that participants' comments were not easily traceable or associated with them. Furthermore, I carefully considered which contextual information (e.g., the sample category of the participants) could be kept and what needed to be left out to protect anonymity. Additionally, all electronic documents (code number list of participants) and data (digital recordings, transcripts) are kept on a secure, password-protected University of Alberta network site in the Department of Human Ecology. Finally, if information or findings from this study are presented or published in the future, information that may identify participants will not be included. All other materials will be destroyed five years after the completion of this study.

***Beneficence and Non-Maleficence***

The potential benefits and risks of participation in this study were minimal and the benefits outweighed the risks. First, the study provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the efforts, successes, and challenges of addressing poverty in Edmonton. For example, some

participants reflected that the interview encouraged them to think about what EPE can do to sustain the conversation about building a movement to end poverty. Second, by sharing experiences and reflecting on a movement-building approach to poverty, it is hoped that findings from this study will potentially inform future research and anti-poverty work in Edmonton and Canada as a whole. In this regard, and for the intended purposes of this study, there were no direct benefits to participants, which I made clear to participants as part of the consent process.

## Chapter Four

## "Together We're Stronger": The Emergence of EndPovertyEdmonton and the Intention of Movement-Building to End Poverty

*"Edmonton wins when everyone shares in its prosperity."*
*(EndPovertyEdmonton document, 2016a)*

This chapter focuses on the underlying conditions that played a role in the emergence and formation of EPE movement organization. Generally, social movements emerge based on unresolved social problems within society (Bebbington, 2010). They involve purposeful individuals and organizations desiring to bring about change by asserting new values for the public to consider and changing unacceptable forms of life (Shragge, 2012). The prevailing conditions under which movements emerge to bring about change are important to the success or failure of the movement itself. This section of the study sought to examine the underlying conditions that contributed to the emergence of EPE and the intention of movement-building to end poverty in Edmonton.

Participants were specifically asked about the conditions that gave rise to the EPE movement organization. This question brought to light the key players that were involved, the conversations that were happening as EPE was being developed, and the conversations that were happening at the time about building a movement to eliminate poverty in Edmonton. In addition, I reviewed relevant EPE documents on the early beginnings of EPE and previous works on poverty in Edmonton, including the work of the Poverty Elimination Steering Committee, which was initiated in 2013. The findings from both the interviews and documents revealed four underlying conditions that influenced the emergence and formation of EPE: (a) dissatisfaction about previous anti-poverty strategies, (b) the need to improve coordination and holistically address poverty, (c) the need to change the conversation about poverty, and (d) the role of the mayor and the

institutional opportunity for organizing on the basis of poverty in Edmonton. The findings are discussed under these four themes.

**Dissatisfaction about Previous Anti-Poverty Strategies**

Data from EPE documents and participant interviews show that one of the main conditions that gave rise to the emergence of the EPE movement organization was dissatisfaction among early EPE players about previous anti-poverty strategies in Edmonton. The early players were members from diverse professional backgrounds, such as academia, business, not-for-profit organizations, municipal governments, and poverty-related programs, with different experiences and areas of expertise (EPE, 2015). The key concerns described by participants were that while there had been several efforts to address poverty in the past, these efforts had not been effective in eliminating poverty because they had focused on dealing with the negative consequences of poverty largely through social service and charitable programs. As such, there was a need for an alternative upstream approach that addressed the root causes of poverty by making changes to the policies and structures that play a fundamental role in the ongoing persistence of poverty:

> …there needed to be collective action, deliberate collective action, and creation of a movement to address poverty, as opposed to just like welfare sector policies, inequality policies, settlement sector policies, which is how they have been dealt with it in the past…So, the work of ending poverty is not just focused on programs and services but really looking at policies and systems change. (Debby)

> …starting a movement was seen as important because I think for many years many organizations and social service sectors or people in the academic field, you know, even the municipality, people have worked from a social service perspective, and what I think EPE's aspiration is to say that ending poverty is not going to be solved by the social service sector alone; however to generate collective strategies that has something to do with advancing policies and a movement that will be a catalyst for the public, actually becoming advocate for changes in governments and other organizations to actually address root causes of poverty… (Dora)

Participants' narratives on the ineffectiveness of previous poverty-related initiatives are consistent with EPE documents that describe the early beginnings of EPE (e.g., EPE, 2015; EPE, 2016a). For instance, EPE's 2016 document indicated that the persistence of poverty in Edmonton (one of the most prosperous cities in Canada at the time) was unacceptable and must not be allowed to continue. An excerpt from the document reads as follows:

> Poverty exists in the midst of our prosperity…if poverty is something we built, we can choose to tear it down…for decades very well-intentioned governments, organizations and individuals have spent billions of dollars trying to manage the impact of poverty through food banks, shelters and other programs aimed at easing the burden of those in poverty, without a meaningful and sustainable impact…the EPE movement will harness our community's energy in order to demand social change. (p.41)

The recognition among early players that previous initiatives had not been effective in significantly reducing poverty pointed to the need for an entirely different approach from those used in the past—an approach that focused on the elimination of the main structures and drivers of poverty. The feeling of dissatisfaction among early players is consistent with the theoretical literature on social movement emergence. For instance, collective behavior theories postulate that when movements emerge, people feel discontented or displeased about existing conditions, which instigates their efforts to mobilize to bring about change (Barkan, 2016; Smelser, 1963). Similarly, Christiansen (2009) opined that the first step of the life cycle of a social movement is its emergence. At this stage, there is a dissatisfaction about existing social conditions and movement players may conceive the idea and intention to address the existing conditions. These theoretical assumptions about how and why movements emerge connect with the findings from my study. Participants revealed that dissatisfaction about previous anti-poverty strategies motivated the need to leverage a movement-building approach to possibly redirect, reinvigorate, and/or redefine anti-poverty work in Edmonton.

Additionally, the findings showed that previous approaches to poverty were focused on programs and services, charity, and downstream approaches that addressed the negative consequences of poverty, thereby maintaining the status quo. Thus, previous strategies centered on treating or managing the symptoms of poverty, ignoring root causes of poverty, and failing to deliver the far-reaching changes required to eliminate poverty. The participants indicated that managing poverty implied an acceptance of allowing poverty to continue. Accordingly, the aspiration of EPE is to shift the conversation away from poverty reduction to poverty elimination. This accounted for the upstream, movement-building, and prevention focus approach to change and achieve better outcomes.

> There was the need to move away from this idea that [poverty can be addressed through charity], that in fact, it is about prevention. This is about investment. This is about policy and systems change. This is about saying, okay, if you can come in early and really change the condition, that there will be huge benefits for the city in the long run, that it's an investment in people… (Jonny)

> …it was decided fairly early on that it had to be elimination and not reduction, that reduction accepted that some poverty was acceptable, and that was not a premise to start with. But it had to start with the premise that whether it is possible to get there and that the objective had to be elimination… (Chizo)

While much remains unknown, a growing body of knowledge is accumulating about the strength of movement approaches relative to downstream approaches. For instance, Bibby et al. (2009) explored how a social movement approach contributes to healthcare improvement and equity within the English National Health Service (NHS) in the UK. They found that when a movement approach is integrated into healthcare management, it is more likely to expose structural and fundamental issues in health inequities and disparities than programmatic approaches that focus on a narrower range of services. For the most part, my study found that dissatisfaction about approaching poverty from a programmatic perspective influenced the emergence of the EPE

movement organization to shift from working within a charity model to focusing on building a movement to address poverty.

It is important to note that any approach taken to address an existing social condition may depend on how the condition is conceptualized (Bebbington, 2010). EPE conceptualizes poverty as "the lack, or denial of economic, social and cultural resources that allow people to have a quality of life that sustains and facilitates full and meaningful participation in the community" (EPE, 2015, p. 7). This conceptualization acknowledges multidimensional and systemic barriers that create or perpetuate poverty in Edmonton. When social movements recognize these barriers, they may seek to address the main drivers of poverty rather than the symptoms (Bebbington, 2010). In this regard, EPE's conception of poverty may have contributed to the vision of using a movement-building approach to advance policy and systems change for large-scale improvement efforts to end poverty in Edmonton.

**The Need to Improve Coordination and Holistically Address Poverty**

Related to participants' dissatisfaction with previous anti-poverty initiatives, another underlying condition that influenced the emergence of the EPE movement organization was the need to improve coordination and holistically address poverty. The data drawn from the interviews and the relevant sections of EPE documents showed that previous approaches and processes were fragmented and uncoordinated. Poverty-serving organizations in Edmonton were working in isolation from each other and lacked a coherent response to poverty; thus, the dissatisfaction with what was perceived to be an uncoordinated approach contributed to the emphasis that EPE should use a more holistic, coordinated approach than those used previously.

The participants' desire for coordination was reinforced by the need to build a movement that mobilized all Edmontonians to be part of the solution to end poverty. In this regard, the work

of ending poverty was not going to be accomplished by a single entity but needed to involve many agencies and service providers in Edmonton joining together as a collective to determine how a coordinated approach could have a greater impact on poverty (EPE, 2015). The inherent assumption that motivated this notion was that "If all Edmontonians work together, Edmonton will move from a charity model to one of investment, resilience and capacity building" (EPE, 2015, p. 42). Accordingly, the underlying goal that influenced the emergence of the EPE movement organization was bringing together poverty-serving organizations, community agencies, and the business community to purposively coordinate and holistically tackle the root causes of poverty:

> …when it comes to ending poverty, there are many complexities, it cannot be the work of a single organization… It's not just government. It's not just enough for not-for-profit, but it's everyone from government, the business sector, the not-for-profit service sector, and, you know, all Edmontonians that poverty is everyone's responsibility. So, it will need governments, it needs citizens, it need business. In fact, it will need everybody to see that this is something that we can only solve by working together…the idea that together we are stronger. (Dora)

Furthermore, some of the participants noted that a focus on coordination would enable EPE to maintain long-term efforts and momentum on the complex issue of poverty. A participant who had been involved in anti-poverty work in Edmonton for several years offered this explanation:

> The early members of the task force recognized that there was a lot of work around housing, a lot of work about neighborhood renewal, and a lot of work about crime prevention…there was no proper coordination. All of it came back, that poverty was the core...basically it was kind of putting band aids on things without actually dealing with the real question of poverty, and as poverty was at the root of all of that, it was necessary to look holistically at poverty and it address upfront to try as well to actually create a long-term change. (Tobin)

According to other participants, proper coordination and holistically addressing poverty can reduce unnecessary duplication and fragmentation of efforts, making poverty elimination efforts in Edmonton more efficient and effective. Thus, to generate the needed change, anti-

poverty initiatives and activities needed to be formalized and structured in terms of existing organizations being able to collectively work together to bring about change:

> So, where this whole thing started was a group of five or seven of [poverty-serving organizations]…saying there has to be a better way of being able to coordinate all of the work that's going on within Edmonton because there's so many organizations that are doing such work…but it was never anything sort of formalized or structured in terms of being able to work together…so what these organizations started to do was to form group, and that led to a steering committee on poverty elimination…then the task force and now EndPovertyEdmonton doing the work of convening and coordinating the work on poverty in Edmonton so, it has been a kind of a journey. (Mandy)

> [The Mayor's Task Force] started originally in 2014 and was really sort of driven by the mayor and accomplishing city goals, and in it being a response to rising poverty in the community, and the fact that there was some form of a bust cycle. So, needing to address that from a more coordinated thoughtful approach to prevent many other people from falling into poverty… (Tammy)

The above quotes provide insights into the idea that not one single entity can do the work of ending poverty because poverty is complex and systemic. From the perspective of the participants, coordination would be the catalyst for change and would create an enduring solution that addresses the elimination of poverty. In this regard, a key impetus that influenced the emergence of the EPE movement organization was the desire to mobilize, coordinate, and harmonize work on poverty in Edmonton in a holistic manner. The findings of this study align with earlier observations indicating that coordination enables organizations and stakeholders to develop a joint understanding of and coherent response to complex problems where the power of action is diffused among many agencies (Bunger, 2010; Notten & Laforest, 2016). Similarly, in a theoretical review paper on the importance of policy coordination, Peters (2018) pointed out that proper coordination eliminates gaps in policy coverage, produces synergy, and effectively delivers policy to address a specific problem. Consistent with Peters' findings, my study participants believed that coordination would address problems with fragmentation in relation to poverty-related work in Edmonton. In essence, the findings suggest that coordinating anti-poverty activities

and initiatives holistically has the potential to maintain long-term efforts and retain the focus on addressing the root causes of poverty in an effective and efficient manner.

**The Need to Change the Conversation About Poverty**

Another condition that influenced the emergence of the EPE movement organization was to maximize opportunities to reframe the poverty dialogue and to change people's attitudes about poverty in Edmonton. The findings from participants' narratives and documents indicated that to make a major stride in the fight against poverty in Edmonton, there would need to be a transformation in public conversations about poverty and a shift in attitudes in order to achieve large-scale community change. Participants revealed that a key aspiration of EPE is to reorient attitudes about poverty by shifting the conversation on poverty away from victim blaming. They emphasized that societal perceptions of the causes of poverty have often been attributed to individual responsibility and personal failings. Participants talked about a need to shift public beliefs about poverty to an understanding that poverty is a result of systemic and structural factors beyond the responsibility of the individual.

> …the idea is to have some kind of a poverty movement to get the public to have this sort of dialogue in the public [public awareness and support], a discourse about poverty not being an acceptable by-product of the society that we live in and that it's not a reflection of people's personal choices, that it's not a sort of personal moral failing, it is something that could happen to all of us. (Mandy)

> I think the drive behind was needing to change the conversation about poverty, you know, not having it sort of just this taken for granted by-product of capitalism gone wrong or that it is an acceptable part of the kind of economic and social system, and that the need to change discourse around it to make it like the fact that it just shouldn't happen, it should be that we do have the resources in this community to make that [poverty] not be a thing anymore and then to sort of get people talking about it. (Tammy)

The narratives of the participants revealed their beliefs about the importance of getting the public to understand the systemic nature of poverty rather than just focusing on people's

personal failings. Besides the findings from the participant interviews, the aspirations expressed in some of EPE's documents indicated that a community-led movement would mobilize the public to shift their inaccurate beliefs and attitudes about poverty and that "clear thinking based on accurate information, and attitudes of openness and willingness to change will open up opportunities for new solutions and innovations to emerge" (EPE, 2015, p.17). Thus, the aspiration of EPE is to connect to the hearts and minds of Edmontonians and encourage them to be part of the solution to change the discourses about poverty.

This finding is consistent with the arguments of some social policy scholars (e.g., Bryant, 2013; Lister, 2004; Redden, 2011) that Western societies, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, have done relatively less to address the root causes of poverty because the issue is not understood as a structural and systemic problem. Instead, the dominant discourse that influences economic and social policies in these countries is an individualized frame where poverty is often understood as an individual problem and the responsibility to overcome poverty rests with the individual (Bryant, 2013; Grasso & Giugni, 2016; Redden, 2011). These scholars argue that people living in poverty are often stereotypically portrayed and blamed for their poverty. This notion is highly influenced by a neo-liberal economic logic that emphasizes freedom from government interventions and the importance of individual choice (Bryant, 2013). How poverty is perceived and understood is important because these factors influence the extent to which social action is taken (Imig, 2006); thus, common understandings of poverty influence the extent to which poverty is perceived as an important issue and what can and should be done to address it (Kaldor et al., 2009). The participants in my study explicitly expressed that if the attitudes and perceptions of poverty in Edmonton are not changed, it will be challenging to eliminate poverty. Hence, the emergence of EPE was influenced by the desire to

enable effective participation of the wider public and the "understanding that there needs to be a change in attitudes in order to change systems, and that to change attitudes and public perception about the causes of poverty, was really part of starting a movement to bring about change…" (Dora).

**The Role of the Mayor and Institutional Opportunity for Organizing**

Another underlying condition that influenced the emergence and formation of EPE was the role played by the mayor with the support of other political champions at Edmonton's City Council who encouraged anti-poverty organizing. This theme surfaced both from the participant interviews and documents. The interview findings revealed that the formation of EPE was possible because it had strong support from elected political leaders at the City of Edmonton. As well, in the State of the City address on March 5, 2014, the mayor stated, "I will elevate the profile of poverty elimination by bringing the weight of the mayor's office" (State of the City Address, 2014, p. 4). A week after the mayor's declaration, Edmonton City Council approved the creation of the Task Force to Eliminate Poverty. As I explained in Chapter One, the work of the Task Force eventually led to the formation of EPE. Additionally, in the interviews, participants used metaphors such as the "mayor's personal crusade" (Tara), the "mayor's baby" (Dora), and the "mayor's vision" (Jonny) to refer to EPE, indicating the extent to which they believed the leadership role of the mayor was instrumental in EPE's emergence. According to participants, the general acceptance and support of elected political leaders at the level of the municipal government offered an institutional opportunity for organizing a city-wide effort to influence the work of eliminating poverty in Edmonton. Two participants, Jonny and Jim, had this to say:

> I think it really stemmed from a vision that the mayor had about ending poverty in our city within a generation. You know, so that the children of today when they have kids, their kids won't have to live in any sort of state of poverty. And that's how it began. And it's not like

> we didn't have services out there that were dealing with people in poverty, but this was more the intention behind it… (Jonny)

> It's certainly been strongly supported by the mayor and city council. Compared to previous initiatives EndPovertyEdmonton has received the strongest support certainly in the last two decades at the municipal level, at both the political leadership as well as the administrative leadership, and indeed the mayor's office itself… (Jim)

Furthermore, findings from interviews and EPE documents indicate that support from the City of Edmonton and other partners, such as the United Way, in the form of resources, including funding and administrative assistance (e.g., office space, support staff), were critical in the early stages of EPE. The participants indicated that the City of Edmonton provided operational funding to support the implementation of EPE priority areas for the first five years from 2017–2021. Emphasizing the importance of financial resources, Dora stated, "EndPovertyEdmonton is lucky to have a five-year funding commitment from the City, the United Way, and the Edmonton Community Foundation and that gave EndPovertyEdmonton the chance to really get things started and have a good foundation to enable change." Similarly, my review of EPE documents confirmed that the City of Edmonton played a key role in providing financial investment and administrative support to the work of EPE (EPE, 2016). Furthermore, the funding package received full endorsement from the Edmonton City Council.

In social movement organizing, scholars have theorized that the provision of resources contributes to the emergence and success or failure of social movements. For instance, proponents of the resource mobilization theory (e.g., Cress & Snow, 1996; Edwards & McCarthy, 2004a) have stressed that material resources such as financial and physical resources (e.g., office space, supplies, staff support) are important for the successful commencement of social movements. Furthermore, they argue that social change is capital intensive, and therefore, the provision of material resources to support the operational cost of a movement is crucial for its emergence and

overall success. Overall, findings from my interviews and document review show that the level of financial commitment from the City of Edmonton and community partners, such as the United Way and the Edmonton Community Foundation, enabled the formation of EPE. This finding is consistent with the extant literature and provides further support for the assertions of the resource mobilization theory that resources are critical to the emergence of social movements.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter presented findings on the underlying conditions that contributed to the emergence and formation of the EPE movement to end poverty. The accounts of participants and a review of some EPE documents on pre-EPE realities showed that dissatisfaction about previous anti-poverty strategies proposed by elected political leaders (among others), the lack of coordination of poverty-related activities, the importance of changing the conversation about poverty, and the influential role of the mayor and the Edmonton City Council provided the opportunity to organize and form the EPE movement. For the most part, this chapter has provided a foundational basis to examine how the aspirations to form the EPE movement were grounded in action. The next chapter presents findings about the poverty elimination strategies of EPE.

## Chapter Five

## From Aspiration to Action: Poverty Elimination Strategies of EndPovertyEdmonton

This chapter presents findings on the poverty elimination strategies of EPE. As discussed in Chapter One, the Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty produced a strategic road map to guide the journey to poverty elimination in Edmonton. The road map comprises 35 priority actions that are anchored in six interrelated strategies described as game changers: 1) eliminate racism, 2) livable incomes, 3) affordable housing, 4) accessible and affordable transit, 5) affordable and quality childcare, and 6) access to mental health services and addiction support (EPE, 2018). The 35 actions under each of the game changers are presented in Appendix H. Essentially, the game changers are strategies intended to address particular problems that contribute to/cause poverty. They are rooted in a set of assumptions presented by the Task Force. The first assumption is that the game changer strategies are the starting point to initiate a collective community effort to fulfil the vision of ending poverty in a generation (EPE, 2016b). The second assumption is that the outcomes of the six game changers will result in an essential and radical change for those experiencing poverty (EPE, 2018); thus, the efforts to achieve the game changers would produce outcomes that contribute to poverty elimination. Third, the Task Force assumed that the implementation of the game changers would best be led by partner community organizations and agencies with EPE acting as the coordinating body to steward the journey towards poverty elimination (EPE, 2015). Examples of partners include the City of Edmonton (COE), United Way Alberta Capital Region, Edmonton Community Foundation, and Edmonton Community Development Corporation.

Within this context, I sought to understand the extent to which the game changers are being implemented and the outcomes (if any) that are emerging from their implementation. Specifically,

in the interviews, participants were asked which game changers are working and which are not working. Participants were also asked about the ongoing challenges and shortcomings associated with the implementation of the game changers. Additionally, I reviewed relevant EPE documents (EPE, 2016; EPE, 2018; EPE, 2019) and available evaluation reports (e.g., City of Edmonton, 2019) on any of the game changers to learn about progress that has been made thus far. Overall, the findings from the interviews showed that, at least to some degree, EPE has made progress on three game changers: eliminate racism, livable incomes, and accessible and affordable transit. With regards to the other three game changers — affordable housing, affordable and quality childcare, and access to mental health services and addiction support — interview participants expressed concerns and frustrations about the lack of progress made on these game changers. The findings are discussed under each of the game changers. Following this discussion, I examine the findings about the shortcomings of and concerns about the game changers. It is important to note that the intention of this chapter is not to evaluate whether EPE has failed or succeeded to achieve significant outcomes in relation to these game changers. As noted by Gamson (1990) movement organizations often have multiple goals, some short-term and others viewed as long-term with many steps along the way. This makes it difficult to measure the success or failure of movement organizations. Accordingly, this chapter discusses participants narratives about the actions EPE is undertaking to meet the aspirations of these game changers and how best progress can be made to optimize the goal of ending poverty.

**Eliminate Racism**

Consistent with the literature demonstrating the intersection of poverty and racism in many Western developed countries such as Canada (e.g., Gazso & Waldron, 2009; May, 2017), relevant sections of EPE's documents (e.g., EPE, 2016a; EPE, 2018) indicate there is an overrepresentation

of people of visible minorities, especially those of Indigenous background, experiencing poverty in Edmonton and that this needs to change. Accordingly, EPE lists 12 action items in its road map under the eliminate racism game changer in an effort to foster true reconciliation and build strong and respectful relationships with Indigenous communities (EPE, 2016a). Some of the actions that are part of this game changer include (a) design and build a new Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre; (b) create spaces, events, and opportunities to show and grow the talents of Indigenous Edmontonians; (c) review programs and services that reflect the needs, interests, and culture of Indigenous peoples; (d) support and promote training opportunities to build understanding and end discrimination and stigmatization among vulnerable people; and (e) expand initiatives on intercultural competency, anti-racism, and trauma-informed training and make them mandatory for City staff (EPE, 2016a).

With regards to the game changer to eliminate racism, participants in my study believed that eliminating racism is central to ending poverty in Edmonton and that EPE has taken concrete steps in pursuit of this goal that could contribute to the elimination of racism. Approximately one-third of the participants responding to the question on the core strategies of EPE indicated that an important first step towards the elimination of poverty in Edmonton is to eliminate racism. The participants emphasized that there is a link between poverty and race and that poverty cannot be eliminated without addressing racism and its negative impacts. In addition, the participants indicated that Indigenous people and ethnic minority groups face limited opportunities and experience difficulties in relation to discrimination, employment, isolation, and many other stressors that negatively affect their ability to live a dignified life.

> Some of our most vulnerable citizens and people at risk of poverty are Indigenous people and minority groups who face many difficulties…that's the reality, which is quite unfortunate. And one of the key actions was that EndPovertyEdmonton will help in

> shaping that focus to ensure something is done to eliminate racism…so that our brothers and sisters can live in dignity. (Gloria)

Furthermore, the participants mentioned some of the specific actions that have been taken relating to the eliminate racism game changer. First, they pointed out the design efforts that are underway to move forward with the plan to build an Indigenous Cultural and Wellness Centre (ICWC). The ICWC is "focused on including Indigenous people in all aspects of the planning and development of the project to ensure it provides an Indigenous gathering place that is welcoming to Edmonton's diverse Indigenous population" (EPE, 2018, p.14). The participants indicated that the effort to build the ICWC is an important step towards advancing meaningful reconciliation in Edmonton. The ICWC project is being led by the EPE's Indigenous Circle in collaboration with the City of Edmonton to ensure that Indigenous worldviews are built into all aspects of the ICWC. According to the participants, the collaborative goal of initiating the ICWC project is to build relationships of trust and restore traditional values as an essential part of the efforts to advance meaningful reconciliation, community participation, and inclusion of Indigenous peoples.

> …so, the very first action is to build and design an Indigenous Cultural Wellness Centre. The Indigenous Circle works closely with the City of Edmonton on this project…City of Edmonton is the lead on that action and the Indigenous Circle works very closely in an equitable partnership with the City. So, I think that's going really well, and Indigenous worldview is embedded in all aspects of design, like from the get-go Indigenous worldview has been integral to getting that project off the ground. This is a way to improve relationships of trust in the city. (Zita)

> I think the efforts to build the Culture and Wellness Centre is the City's commitment to work better with Indigenous peoples, most of our vulnerable citizens are Indigenous peoples. EndPovertyEdmonton helps sharpening that focus and also to help recognize the importance of meaningful reconciliation as it's called and that has really been elevated through the work of EndPovertyEdmonton to ensure the inclusion and participation of Indigenous peoples in the work of ending poverty. (Jonny)

Another action that participants mentioned as contributing to the implementation of the eliminate racism game changer was intercultural training and workshops organized for City of Edmonton employees. These workshops are part of the efforts to change colonial practices that serve as barriers to employment and opportunities for Indigenous peoples and visible minority groups. A few of the participants further explained that the purpose of the intercultural training is to equip employees, expand their knowledge and understanding of issues related to racism, and help them "understand culture, things like unconscious bias in order to improve respectful workplaces" (Dora). Additionally, another participant stressed the importance of changing colonial practices that hinder opportunities for growth among people living in poverty. The participant explained that "the City is doing a lot in terms of changing its own practices to minimize or try to get rid of racism or colonial practices that are preventing some citizens from participating either in employment or in benefits" (Simbo). Overall, the interview findings showed that EPE and the study participants believe that a lack of awareness of and sensitivity to racism and its impacts on poverty are some of the underlying factors that contribute to poverty.

A comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirmed that poverty in Canada is noticeably higher among families that are Indigenous, ethnic, and racialized (Campaign, 2000; Evans, 2009; May, 2017). May (2017) emphasized that any anti-poverty initiative that does not place visible minority groups and Indigenous peoples at the center of its efforts is inadequate because such populations face disproportionate levels of poverty. For example, in Alberta, the 2016 Census showed that 17% of visible minority populations live in poverty compared to only 11% of non-visible minority populations (Statistics Canada, 2018b). Systemic racism and social exclusion impact the life chances of many Indigenous families in Canada (Campaign, 2000). The

actions of EPE within the eliminate racism game changer aim to tackle poverty by addressing racism and injustice to eliminate the overrepresentation of specific groups in poverty.

**Livable Incomes**

Livable income is another game changer strategy that is part of the road map framework outlined by EPE. EPE (2015) describes a livable income as the "amount of income or a living wage an individual or family needs to meet basic needs, maintain a safe, decent standard of living in their communities and save for future needs and goals" (p. 32). Furthermore, EPE believes that "if all Edmontonians had the opportunity for a livable income, much of the poverty in the city could disappear" (EPE, 2018, p. 16). For the most part, the policy objective of the livable income game changer relates to the campaign goals of evolving living wage movements in cities such as Vancouver (Ivanova & Saugstad, 2019; Jayatunge, 2014). These goals involve achieving better economic standards for low-wage workers. Along this line, EPE identified nine action items that inform the operationalization of this game changer. These items include (a) develop a living wage policy for all City of Edmonton staff and contracted services to be approved by City Council, (b) actively encourage local employers in all sectors to learn about and implement living wage policies, (c) expand the spectrum of financial empowerment initiatives, and (d) initiate a community dialogue to remove systemic barriers to employment opportunities.

Essentially, this game changer seeks to address the inadequacy of wages (EPE, 2015). Regarding the importance of establishing livable incomes in order to eliminate poverty, during the interviews, the majority of the study participants indicated that if livable income policies were adopted by employers and businesses, it would substantially change the lives of families struggling in poverty.

> Livable incomes take into account the cost of living in Edmonton and the basic needs of families…this is so important because many families are working two or three jobs before they can have a decent income to take care of their families, that's a worry to families and that has to change…EndPovertyEdmonton is working to change this and have all employers adopt a living wage policy. (Sam)

> The aim of EndPovertyEdmonton is to have a living wage policy throughout employment practices in Edmonton and that would significantly change the way things are done…not only to make people live comfortably but so they can be lifted out of poverty. (Jacob)

Participants stated that EPE has made some progress on the livable income game changer. For instance, they indicated that the City of Edmonton has adopted and is implementing a living wage policy. With the inception of this policy, City employees, in particular, employees of contracted services, will be paid a living wage. The participants attributed the successful implementation of a living wage to the work of EPE because prior to EPE, a living wage policy did not exist. They indicated that the formation of EPE brought a specific focus and attention to poverty, which subsequently contributed to the roll out of the living wage policy. The following quotes illustrate some of the main points raised by the participants:

> …some of the ones that progress can be seen is the one on livable income or livable wage… EndPovertyEdmonton played a role in that and the City did this past two years, pass a policy of paying living wage to all of its full-time staff…so, I think this was very important for the families so that was progress. (Dora)

> The City now has a policy on living wage. This is really big and important in this city to have a living wage policy which did not exist before EndPovertyEdmonton was in place right…the presence of EndPovertyEdmonton really contributed that because EndPovertyEdmonton kept persisting that something has to be done about livable income. (Simbo)

To confirm the participants' narratives on the living wage policy, I reviewed documents from the City of Edmonton to find out if there were records indicating the City has taken the step to pay its contracted staff a living wage. I found a policy brief statement published by the City of

Edmonton in November 2019 indicating that the City of Edmonton had adopted *Policy C612A: Living wage for City of Edmonton employees and employees of contracted services*. The policy brief was developed by the Finance and Corporate Services division of the City and stated that the City, as a key partner to EPE's action on livable incomes, would be implementing a living wage policy for its employees and the employees of contracted services. An excerpt from the briefing notes read as follows:

> The City of Edmonton plays a critical leadership role in the End Poverty Strategy…it identifies the establishment of an internal City of Edmonton policy to adopt a living wage for all City employees and the employees of contracted services as a way for the City to demonstrate leadership. As a progressive employer, the City of Edmonton recognizes that paying a living wage constitutes a critical investment in an employee's overall effectiveness and well-being (City of Edmonton, 2019).

The policy brief did not state the amount the City considers to be a living wage or the number of employees to benefit from the policy; however, on the City of Edmonton's website, it shows that the living wage for the City is calculated annually by the Edmonton Social Planning Council (City of Edmonton website, n.d.). In a recent update on Edmonton's living wage, the Edmonton Social Planning Council (2019) reported $16.51 as a living wage for the City of Edmonton.

Additionally, in the interviews, some participants noted that the City of Edmonton has taken initiative in the area of procurement practices to help operationalize the implementation of the living wage policy. The participants mentioned that a social procurement policy ensures that contracting services will entail establishing community benefit agreements that will pay living wages to employees regardless of their work status. Social procurement involves leveraging a social value from existing procurement to increase community benefit (EPE website, n.d.). According to the participants, the community benefit agreement is one way to fulfill the living wage policy:

> Some of the most significant things that EndPovertyEdmonton is doing are around social procurement. I think having that stated within the City is helping drive policy and like a focused direction. I think that's really key, going forward contracting services has to build in a social procurements component to whatever contracting they do in the City. Is there going to be a community benefit agreement coming out of it? Are the people that they hire, do they pay a living wage? You know what communities are being supported through this contract right that need more support? So, that's a big deal, so there's some good things I think that EndPovertyEdmonton being around is helping to drive that, that's a very strong lens at the City. (Tammy)

> …about the social procurement and the fact that the custodians, those people who look after city buildings that do cleaning and custodial work, that major contract is now coming under a livable, livable wage, sort of lens as well…You would never have heard the City before this, like five years ago talking about business for good, talking about giving back and not just looking for the best, most efficient and cost savings was very important. But now to be talking about, we want to contribute to the well-being of our community. And we're going to have a matrix when we choose people to hire and consultants…that isn't something that the City was doing or even contemplating until the past few years of the work of EndPovertyEdmonton. (Dora)

The quotes above indicate participants are hopeful that if the City of Edmonton continues with the social procurement policy, the livable income game changer will contribute to EPE's efforts to eliminate poverty in Edmonton. This finding is consistent with the theoretical assumptions that underlie the policy objective that a living wage improves economic outcomes for low-wage workers (Linneker & Wills, 2016). Generally, a livable income differs from a minimum wage. Minimum wage is the legal minimum the government requires employers to pay whereas a living income reflects what earners in a family need to bring home based on the actual costs of living in a specific community (Ivanova & Saugstad, 2019). Families who work for low wages often face challenges such as meeting the basic necessities of life and adequately supporting the healthy development of their children (Ivanova & Saugstad, 2019). In this regard, adopting a living wage policy may achieve the goal of lessening the scale and impact of the working poor, reducing

reliance on social support programs, and improving overall dignity and quality of life (Linneker & Wills, 2016).

However, although EPE has successfully collaborated with the City of Edmonton to adopt a living wage policy, the participants revealed that EPE has not been successful in having all employers in the business community in Edmonton voluntarily or willingly adopt a living wage policy. Thus, it appears the progress of this game changer is currently limited to the City of Edmonton's commitment to implement a living wage policy for their employees and the employees of contracted services. Prior studies on living wage movements in other jurisdictions, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, show that expansive coverage and effectively mobilizing many employers to adopt a living wage is crucial to the success of living wage campaigns (Evans & Fanelli, 2016; Linneker & Wills, 2016; Neumark, 2002). For instance, Evans and Fanelli (2016) found that living wage movements have been largely successful in the United States due to many employers committing to living wage ordinances. Furthermore, the overview by Evans and Fanelli of living wage campaigns in Baltimore, Los Angeles, San Jose, Chicago, Boston, and Detroit showed the grassroots mobilization of low-wage workers, the urban and racialized working classes, and a dense network of community organizations has been the common determinative factor in the success of living wage movements in the United States. Similarly, Stephanie Luce (2009), in her review of the role of ACORN in the success of living wage movements, noted that a strong grassroots campaign helped ACORN influence living wage ordinances and policies in the United States. Luce found that ACORN recruited and organized labor unions, religious groups, and other community groups. As well, ACORN set up a resource centre that offered training, research, organizing techniques, and tools to diverse grassroots groups to engage policy makers and influential leaders in many States. In 2002, for example, ACORN

mounted a successful grassroots campaign in New Orleans that caused an increase in wages a dollar above the federal wage level. Luce (2009) concluded that one of the reasons for ACORN's success in the living wage movement is that the movement organization has been a grassroots effort.

In Canada, Jayatunge (2014) reported that in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC) a broad coalition of grassroots community groups, organized unions, faith-based organizations, and public policy think tanks have successfully mobilized over 50 employers to adopt living wage policies. Conversely, the findings of my study show that EPE's strategy tends to focus on policy advances that target or collaborate with the City of Edmonton rather than a broad-based mobilization of the business community or grassroots organizations. Though it may be too early to come to any conclusions on the livable income game changer, the experiences of other jurisdictions suggest that the effective participation of grassroots organizations and the local business community, along with the mobilization of low-waged workers, is critical to the success of achieving the large-scale adoption and implementation of the living wage policy.

**Accessible and Affordable Transit**

EPE identified accessible and affordable transit as one of the six game changers for poverty elimination (EPE, 2015). Additionally, the organization identified four action items associated with the game changer that serve as starting points for progress. The actions of this game changer are to (a) implement a subsidized transit pass (60% discount) for eligible low-income transit customers, (b) provide free passes to social service agencies to distribute to vulnerable youth and adults in Edmonton, (c) conduct a feasibility study about the costs and opportunities of free transportation for children under 12 years of age, and (d) evaluate Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) Late Night Owl Service and improve the service as appropriate for shift workers (EPE, 2016b).

This game changer underscores EPE's belief that affordable transit is key to reducing the burden of people living in poverty and that by increasing access to transit, Edmontonians with low income will have greater access to education, employment, and recreational opportunities (EPE, 2016b).

Recognizing the importance of affordable and accessible transit, through its key partner, the City of Edmonton, EPE initiated a pilot Ride Transit Program in September 2017. The Ride Transit Program is designed to increase access to the Edmonton Transit Service for Edmontonians with low income by reducing the cost of a monthly transit pass. Essentially, the program provides a subsidized transit pass to beneficiaries at the rate of $35/month. The regular transit rate is $97/month (City of Edmonton, 2018). Funding for the program involves a cost-sharing arrangement between the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton. Presently, individuals and families who can access the program include those below the low-income cut-off, recipients of the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), income support recipients, newcomers, and youth in government care (City of Edmonton, 2018). EPE's 2018 progress report indicated that about 11,000 subsidized transit passes were sold every month through the Ride Transit Program and 600 free transit passes were provided every month to vulnerable youth (EPE document, 2018).

During the interviews, participants shared their perspectives on the accessible and affordable transit game changer. They indicated that the transit program is making a significant difference in the lives of people living in poverty. Although some participants acknowledged that EPE is in its early years, they mentioned that the progress on the affordable and accessible transit is an inspiring step that needs to be sustained. The participants emphasized that the roll out of the Ride Transit Program has removed or reduced the financial cost of taking public transportation to

work or to search for employment opportunities. As well, beneficiaries' access to recreational centres has also been enhanced.

> It's hard to say, right? I mean, this is only the third year of implementing the road map actions. I mean, you could look at some results that are inspiring. So, for example, the high uptake of the low-income transit, in their initial evaluation, people have said that the low-income ride transit helped them, you know, helped them access employment opportunities, going to services without thinking of the financial cost to it… (Tara)

> So, there have been some positive outcomes, I mean, that of the low-income transit fees specifically. I think it has already made a huge difference for a lot of people, you know, that we had heard the transportation and the cost of transportation was a great impediment to people being able to work being able to you know, have any kind of life enjoyment or any of those kinds of things. So, I think having that in place I think it's been a hugely successful program that's already seeing benefits. (Tobin)

The narratives of the participants were similar to the findings in an evaluation report by AndersonDraper Consulting Inc. (2018), which I included as part of my document review. In my review, I found that this is the only game changer that has been subjected to a formal evaluation. In 2018, AndersonDraper Consulting Inc., an independent company, was contracted by the City of Edmonton to conduct an evaluation of the Ride Transit Program. The purpose of the evaluation was to understand the impacts and barriers of the Ride Transit Program. The approach to the evaluation included interviews with the program users and stakeholders such as the Edmonton Public Library and the City of Edmonton Recreational Facilities (City of Edmonton, 2018). The results from the evaluation showed that beneficiaries of the transit pass were able to attend events or get-togethers without any hindrance. Furthermore, the majority of the program users felt it was easier to get to appointments and that they were better able to access work opportunities and necessary services because much of the cost of transportation was covered by the Ride Transit Program. These results reflect those by Beveridge (2016) who also found that in Canadian cities, such as Hamilton, Calgary, and Winnipeg, affordable transit programs have been successful at

reducing the cost of transportation, resulting in additional funds for people in poverty to access basic needs and improve their ability to get to work, apply for jobs, and more consistently access the services they need. Affordable transit also offers opportunities for those living in poverty to build quality-of-life assets such as feelings of independence, connections to family and friends, and a greater sense of contribution to community (Beveridge, 2016).

Additionally, in my interviews, participants indicated that the accessible and affordable transit game changer has removed impediments to community participation, allowing beneficiaries to access recreational resources such as public libraries. Allen and Farber (2019) noted that the inability to travel to daily activities and participate in community recreation can result in "transport poverty". Transport poverty is the risk of accessibility deprivation in the domain of public transit and the inability of those living in poverty to travel to important destinations in their communities (Allen Farber, 2019, p. 214).

Given the importance of accessible and affordable transit, participants indicated that EPE must make an effort to sustain the Ride Transit Program. In contrast to transit programs in cities like Hamilton, where the affordable transit pass is a permanent feature in their anti-poverty program (Beveridge, 2016), the Ride Transit Program is only a pilot program in Edmonton. Beveridge (2016) reported that successful strategies employed in Hamilton that have ensured the sustainability of the transit program include community advocacy strategies and the involvement of community-based poverty groups in creating awareness about the importance of a low-income transit pass and the negative impacts a lack of accessible transportation can have on those living in poverty. This suggests that integrating similar strategies into EPE's work could reinforce and complement efforts that would advance a sustained transit policy program in Edmonton.

**Affordable Housing**

The affordable housing game changer strategy is concerned with the need for and the right to affordable housing in Edmonton (EPE, 2018). To operationalize this game changer, EPE has proposed four action items: (a) increase supports to the community bridge initiative to prevent evictions; (b) revisit and renew affordable housing agreements with other orders of government, implement a housing awareness campaign and initiate a centre of excellence for social housing; (c) establish a community development corporation (CDC) to invest in affordable housing and community economic development; and (d) research leading practices on housing design and innovation (EPE, 2016). A key belief articulated by EPE (2015) is that access to affordable housing is critical to the work of eliminating poverty because it enhances the self-esteem and dignity of those living in poverty. Despite this organizational belief, during the interviews, when I asked participants about what EPE was doing to eliminate poverty, only a few participants raised initiatives related to affordable housing. The narratives from the participants who talked about affordable housing indicated a lack of progress on this game changer strategy. Although the participants acknowledged the need for affordable housing as a poverty elimination strategy, they were concerned about the lack of progress on tangible actions related to affordable housing.

> I'm not sure that EndPovertyEdmonton is making the progress on housing like the way it was envisioned. It is another really big piece of the puzzle, but determination to succeed on this game changer hasn't waned on that you know…I think that there is the need to keep on pushing with that until something meaningful happens. (Tobin)

> So [affordable housing] overall, I would say has had little impact so far…some attention is being given to housing and EndPovertyEdmonton has helped in bringing the focus of the City to that to develop priorities in this area. It's been a couple of years though…I think EndPovertyEdmonton need not to freak out about that only have to keeping working on that… (Tammy)

There was a general belief among the participants that affordable housing can connect individuals and families with the facilities and services they need to build meaningful and dignified lives for themselves. Although the intent behind EPE's affordable housing game changer is to achieve better housing outcomes in terms of decent, safe, and secure housing in Edmonton for people living in poverty (EPE, 2018), how EPE will move the affordable housing game changer forward was less clear in the interview findings and the document review. In Canada, social movements organizing around housing have adopted varied strategies ranging from those that are more adversarial, such as grassroots direct-action strategies (e.g., rent strikes, protests, civil disobedience, squatting, etc.), to those that are non-adversarial, such as legal and right-based strategies; social housing campaigns; and lobbying and persuasive strategies, to achieve their goals (Dirks, 2015; DeFillipis, 2012; Falvo, 2017; Paradis, 2016). These strategies often target provincial and federal governments to pressure them to either provide or ensure provision of affordable and adequate housing. Accordingly, the ability of EPE to develop similar strategies could potentially move the affordable housing game changer forward.

**Affordable and Quality Child Care**

The fifth game changer strategy is affordable and quality child care. This game changer focuses on ensuring that affordable care and early learning opportunities are available for families (EPE, 2018), and it is premised on the belief that when children grow up in families with limited resources for meeting basic family needs, it has negative consequences on their development. Thus, EPE points out that making a concerted effort to ensure the availability of affordable and quality early childhood education is one way to mitigate the harmful effects that poverty has on children's development (EPE, 2019). EPE has identified three action items to operationalize the objectives of this game changer. These action items include (a) implementing the Communities

United Initiative in five Edmonton communities, (b) establishing a new early learning and care steering committee to guide the implementation of an integrated system and strategy for early learning and care in Edmonton, and (c) establishing and growing the All in for Youth wraparound initiative at five school sites.

When I asked participants about EPE's core strategies, similar to the response I received about the affordable housing game changer, only two participants raised initiatives related to affordable child care. Although the participants acknowledged the importance of providing affordable child care as a way to support families living in poverty, they expressed concern about the lack of progress made by EPE on this game changer. For example, one participant mentioned that what has been done about affordable and quality child care is the establishment of the "Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care to explore and consider actions/strategies for fulfilling the aims of the game changer" (Debby). This participant stressed that the efforts by the council have yet to produce the childcare outcomes required to meet the objective of the game changer: ensuring every child has equal access to early learning and care.

Another participant talked about the uncoordinated activities of childcare providers in Edmonton and the inertia and general lack of understanding exhibited by private childcare providers and some members of government around issues relating to early learning and care, making it difficult for families to obtain access to care. Additionally, the participant stressed that the childcare system is too complex to change and that more effort and leadership is required by EPE to undertake such a complex task.

> If you take an area like early learning and care, we have not got a system of early learning and care, the way early learning and care is handled in Edmonton there's a lot of inertia to it. It's hard to change the system … it's very complex… So, we have a lot of private childcare providers in Edmonton that are not connected. We have a lot of people in government who think it's somebody else's role to take a leadership on something like this. It's just getting the consensus and enthusiasm to move forward takes time. So,

> EndPovertyEdmonton is working around that and coming up with the Early Learning and Care Council, so that people and institutions can understand and see the value of options that needs to be done. (Simbo)

Following up on participants' comments, I reviewed documents on the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care to find out its mandate and the reasons why the Council was established. In EPE's 2019 document, it indicates that the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care is a new council that was established in March 2019 with the purpose "to provide leadership and integrate a system on early learning and care" (EPE, 2019, p.1). An excerpt from EPE's documents reads as follows:

> The ECELC is an organization composed of institutional and community partners tasked with improving early learning and care in the city, with a focus on vulnerable populations. It was established in response to EndPovertyEdmonton's action on affordable and quality child care… (EPE, 2019, p.1)

The Council's scope of work includes conducting research and analyses of community needs for early learning and care and implementing strategies to build the capacity of community-based service providers in order to promote culturally responsive early learning and care (EPE website, n.d.). Furthermore, I found that the Council took its first steps in November 2019 by creating a profile of child care in Edmonton. The profile outlines the current state of licensed, full-day, unparented childcare programs for children who have not yet entered kindergarten in the City of Edmonton (EPE, 2019). With regards to affordability and accessibility, the profile reported that in 2019, there were just under three spaces for every 10 children (0–4 years of age) in Edmonton, and the childcare cost for families in poverty to access early learning and care was expensive (EPE, 2019, p. 1). For instance, the report indicated that the median monthly daycare fee for infants in 2018 was $975 and that Edmonton families with young children could spend as much as, or more, than their monthly rent for child care (EPE document, 2019). For the most part, the Council was

established to move the affordable and quality childcare game changer forward and to clarify the complexity around early learning and care. The initial steps of the Council indicate that plans in relation to this game changer are underway; however, concrete actions indicating that EPE has made progress enabling families to have affordable child care have yet to materialize, perhaps underscoring the reasons why most participants did not talk about this game changer during the interviews.

**Access to Mental Health Services and Addiction Supports**

The sixth and final game changer included in the road map framework is access to mental health services and addiction supports. The aim of this game changer is to ensure there is "equal access to mental health and addiction supports and care, in order to help eliminate poverty" (EPE, 2018, p. 32). To actualize the objectives of this game changer, three action items are outlined in EPE's road map: (a) resource the Edmonton Mental Health Steering Committee to implement the coordinated community mental health action plan, (b) advance partnerships to support the implementation of the Edmonton Suicide Prevention Strategy and Managed Alcohol Program, and (c) advocate to increase funding and access to mental health services and education including the expansion of full-service hours for multidisciplinary mental health services. Research on access to mental health services in Canada shows that the cost of mental health services is high and there are inequities in service utilization, particularly among people living in poverty (Bartram, 2019; Raphael, 2011). The high cost of mental health services has negative implications for families struggling to access them. To a large extent, EPE seeks to address the gap and inequity in access to mental health services by ensuring these services are affordable for people living in poverty (EPE, 2018); however, although EPE's intentions regarding mental health services and addiction supports are clearly demonstrated in the documents, efforts to address this game changer were less

clear in the interview findings. Surprisingly, none of the study participants made mention of this game changer during the interviews. Given that participants did not talk about this game changer, a plausible explanation could be that not much progress have been made on the access to mental health and addiction supports game changer.

**Shortcomings and Concerns About the Game Changer Strategies**

When talking about the game changers, participants also spoke about the shortcomings and challenges associated with implementing these strategies. A common concern among the participants was that the game changers are too broad, requiring several priorities and actions to make progress on them. Participants indicated that the broad nature of the game changers limit the effectiveness of EPE's work in the sense that the scope of each game changer covers vast issues, which suggests a general lack of focus:

> So, sometimes what we find with the game changers there's so many different topics. Even if you go in the community there's nobody may be looking at it… I think we would like to align so we have people working in all these areas. When things come up, we're always reacting, looking for ways to have understanding on that topic… it's such a vast topic…so that's a shortcoming. (Joy)

> I think each game changer individually is still a large portion of work. So, I think what we need to see is a bit of a splintering effect in a way for people to take up the work and align themselves to what's happening. (Zoe)

The participants emphasized that because the game changers involve several broad areas of focus, there is too much for EPE to attend to properly, and that makes it difficult to work in a concerted way to achieve the desired results. Other participants suggested that while EPE has a long-term goal to end poverty, it needs to focus on and prioritize important strategies that can be achieved and sustained.

> How does EPE effectively work across so many different areas? I think EndPovertyEdmonton needs to intentionally structure itself to look in-depth about some

> areas that maximize the greater impact and others that don't…EndPovertyEdmonton has not fully done that. (Tammy)
>
> …if EndPovertyEdmonton wants to be seen as an organization that actually impacts poverty, it needs to consider more on four or five indicators of progress that they want to own and then focus on developing a plan to address them or in partnership with others. By so doing, the work of EndPovertyEdmonton will be much simpler and sustainable in many ways. (Jacob)

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter presented findings on the poverty elimination strategies of EPE. Specifically, the chapter focused on EPE's game changers identified as priority actions to contribute to the task of eliminating poverty in Edmonton. The game changers are categorized into six priority areas: eliminate racism, livable incomes, affordable housing, accessible and affordable transit, affordable and quality child care, and access to mental health services and addiction support. As explained, these game changers are rooted in an anti-poverty objective to lift families out of poverty and create an environment where every Edmontonian can thrive (EPE, 2015). As indicated by participants and relevant excerpts from EPE documents, the inherent assumption underlying the EPE game changers is that when the six game changers are adequately addressed, they will produce outcomes that have a multiplying effect on poverty elimination (EPE, 2018). For example, the effective implementation or broad adoption of a livable income would have a positive influence on affordable housing and would improve health and well-being. In essence, there is a cross-multiplying effect of one game changer on the other, and when acted on together, they can lead to essential change for those experiencing poverty (EPE, 2018). Although these assumptions may be true, the study found that a lack of equal attention and drive as well as the broad nature of the game changers have hindered substantive progress on all six, and in particular, affordable housing, affordable and quality child care and access to mental health services and addiction supports.

# Chapter Six

## "A Big Rock to Move": The Governance Structure of EndPovertyEdmonton

This chapter presents findings on the governance structure of EPE. The proponents of the resource mobilization theory have noted that social-organizational resources, such as the structure of a movement, are key factors that influence the capacity of a movement to advance its efforts and achieve its goals (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004a; Staggenborg, 2012). In this study, I examined the governance structure of EPE during its efforts to build a movement to end poverty. Specifically, in the interviews, participants were asked about EPE's governance structure and how it supports or contributes to EPE achieving its mission and aspirations. As well, I reviewed EPE documents to analyze sections on the governance structure and how it aims to bring people together to build a community-wide movement to end poverty in Edmonton.

### Governance Structure

This section discusses the governance structure of EPE. EPE designed a governance structure to oversee the implementation of the road map actions and build a community movement to end poverty in Edmonton (EPE, 2016b). In light of this, EPE's governance structure consists of five community tables (EPE, 2016b): the Stewardship Round Table (SRT), an Investment Collective, a Stakeholder Forum, an Indigenous Circle, and a Count Me In Network. The community tables are supported with a secretariat to provide coordination, administration, and communications (EPE, 2016b). It is noteworthy to state here that the relationships among the community tables, including the flow of communication, are not clearly demonstrated in EPE documents. The table below describes the key role, composition, and remuneration of the five community tables and the Secretariat.

**Table 4.** *Roles and Functions of EPE's Governance Structure*

| Community Table | Key Role | Decision-Making | Composition /Membership | Remuneration /Compensation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stewardship Round Table (SRT) | Steward and oversee the road map, vision, and secretariat. Responsible for monitoring outcomes of poverty elimination efforts in Edmonton and reporting back to funders and the community. | Strategic, employment and hiring of staff, fiduciary. | Leadership representation from each of the other EPE tables. Also, representation from all orders of government as ex-officio members. | Volunteers, non-paid staff. |
| Investment Collective | Guide funding commitments, reporting accountability, and encouraging new partnerships. | Coordination of social investment opportunities within EPE; financial sustainability and growth; financial reporting of progress; seed and leverage partner investment. | Funding agencies, corporate partners and government sponsors. | Volunteers, non-paid staff. |
| Stakeholder Forum | Bring the voice of Edmontonians with diverse lived experiences of poverty. Embodies the principles of equity and inclusion. | Test ideas, shape strategy, bring an equity lens to EPE's work; help capture qualitative and compelling stories from those with lived experience; and assist in assessing impact of EPE's work. | Representation from various groups including Indigenous Edmontonians, newcomers (immigrants and refugees), low-income workers, at-risk youth, vulnerable women, homeless individuals, isolated seniors, low-income persons with disabilities, and frontline community workers. | Not activated yet or operating, |
| Indigenous Circle | Ground the work in Indigenous knowledge. Bring in the spirit and wisdom of Indigenous peoples to help steward the EPE vision. | Ensure connection with EPE activities in the most culturally appropriate way for Indigenous peoples. | Membership is determined by the Indigenous Circle in consultation with Indigenous communities and community partners. | Offered honorarium when meetings are organized. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Count Me In Network | Mobilize Edmontonians and build their capacity for collective action. | Enhance the reach of EPE and help assess impact and the changing attitudes about poverty central to the goal of ending poverty. | Diverse cohort of stakeholders such as local businesses, youth, faith communities, community leagues, local media, and individually committed Edmontonians. | Volunteers, non-paid staff. Not yet activated or operating. |
| Secretariat | Coordinate, communicate and support the work of the SRT. | Management and coordination of the action items of the game changers; diverse communication using social and traditional media; data collection, evaluation, coordination, and reporting; facilitation and engagement of community dialogue and input. | Currently five staff personnel in administrative portfolios: Communication, research and evaluation, strategic initiatives, and Indigenous engagement with an executive director. | Paid staff. |

*Source*: Author's construct based on EPE's 2016 document (pp. 11–12) and field data.

Essentially, the idea behind the governance structure is "to bring people together, guide collective decision making and seed the conditions for a community movement to end poverty" (EPE, 2016b, p. 5). For the most part, study participants discussed the governance structure throughout the interviews in relation to questions not specifically focusing on the governance structure. As depicted in the above table, there is a well-established structure describing the role of each community table; however, in the interviews, participants talked about the challenges and gaps associated with the governance structure, especially the relationship between the Secretariat and the Stewardship Round Table and the non-activation of the Stakeholder Forum and the Count Me In Network. Some of the participants also emphasized that the operationalization of the governance structure poses a challenge to the day-to-day activities of EPE. The findings revealed three main challenges and gaps: (1) tensions between the Stewardship Round Table and the Secretariat and lack of role clarity, (2) leadership and organizational struggles of EPE, and (3) non-

activation of two key community tables, the Stakeholder Forum, which is intended to include representation of people with lived experience of poverty, and the Count Me In Network Table, which is intended to form the community membership base of EPE. A few of the participants talked about the strengths of the organizational structure, such as the considerable power that some members of the Stewardship Round Table have in the community; however, it was difficult to establish how the strengths identified by participants have translated into or enhanced concrete actions of EPE. The following section discusses the findings about the three main challenges and gaps that emerged from the data. Later, I present the perspectives of some of the participants who talked about the strength of the existing governance strategy.

***Lack of Role Clarity***

About one-third of the participants indicated there is lack of clarity about roles among the governing tables especially between the Stewardship Round Table and the Secretariat. They indicated that due to the lack of role clarity, decision making is challenging and there are times that both the Stewardship Round Table and the Secretariat are not sure about their authority and what to do to move forward. The thoughts of some of the participants are demonstrated in the following quotes:

> I think the Stewardship Round Table group is not sure what its role is, what is the authority and mandate that it has. Like is it making decisions for the executive director of the Secretariat for them to implement things. What is it working on… are they supposed to be like financial oversight, but there's no strategic plan in place for them to guide their work…so, there's a whole lot of confusion. (Debby)

> What does the [Secretariat] do when they see things that are just like why are the [Secretariat] doing this, you know, who do [Secretariat] take it to? Does [Secretariat] take it to the Stewardship Round Table, who makes that decision? And what does the [Secretariat] do with that decision?... having a lack of clarity in terms of responsibilities, roles, and responsibilities at each of the tables is like not helped us at all. (Tammy)

> …I'm not going to sit here and say it's all been working perfectly up until this point, okay. And I think there's a whole bunch of reasons for that, and partly that it's a very different kind of way of understanding governance…the Stewardship Round Table seems not to have found its feet and that frustrates the work of the Secretariat because you do not know where to take things and get things done on time, which is gradually slowing the movement…that's unfortunate though. (Tobin)

Other participants, Zita in particular, alluded to the notion that there is an absence of communication and cross-EPE conversations among the governing tables, particularly between the Secretariat and the Stewardship Round Table, about where to advance a particular action when it is required. Zita reiterated that the lack of role clarity has weakened the forward momentum of the movement because there is a lack of interaction even though "the governing circles were supposed to work together, everyone seems to be sorting their stuff out…things are not clear, how can things move forward, the structure lacks clarity and that's a cause to worry…" (Zita). Sharing similar concerns and explaining why the governing structure lacks clarity, another participant, Simbo, indicated that when EPE was initiated there was no "operating manual" that served as a guide or provided clear terms of reference and that EPE was novel and "nobody knew how to set up this thing…in fact it looked very experimental at the beginning." Overall, the interview findings revealed that the lack of clarity creates tension between the Stewardship Round Table and the Secretariat, which undermines operational efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the findings suggest that until proper roles are assigned and boundaries around decision making are created, progress and the way forward for EPE will be stalled.

### *Leadership Struggles of EPE*

Another shortcoming of EPE's governance structure that participants spoke about was leadership. The participants noted that EPE has experienced a general lack of leadership, especially in the Secretariat, and they attributed the problem to leadership transitions. For instance, at the

time of the interviews, the Secretariat had an interim executive director, and the Stewardship Round Table was in the process of recruiting a new executive director. Participants believed that these leadership transitions negatively effected direction and focus, causing the Secretariat to suffer because it lacked the leadership required to ensure the stability and progress of EPE.

> The Secretariat has had a lot of transitions, there's been a lot of, you know, transitioning from one leadership to the next and that has really stalled the progress and now [the Secretariat] is about to have another executive director in place and I would say that things might change but it will take time for EPE to find its feet… (Tammy)

> EPE has had or experienced some organizational issues with their leadership that had caused some delays in organizing this critical part of the structure and I guess like most organizations who are a certain extent starting from scratch, it does take a while and particularly for such a complex work as ending poverty…I think that there are some birth pains that most organizations go through. (Tara)

Furthermore, some of the participants stressed that the biggest factor that will indicate EPE is making progress is how leadership challenges are addressed. In particular, Mandy indicated that leadership is crucial for EPE in its first five years because it is imperative for EPE to make its mark and "truly demonstrate that they are true leaders in the community that advances and moves forward the issues of people living in poverty." Additionally, when commenting on the importance of EPE leadership, Debby indicated that EPE needs leaders who are "desiring for change" and are eager to build a movement that "empowers" people living in poverty rather than a leadership structure that transitions from one person to another without focus and clarity. Generally, the interview findings revealed that participants believe that resolving the issue of leadership within EPE is a crucial part of its quest to build a movement to end poverty. Concerns about the struggle for effective leadership and about how EPE will make significant progress were expressed by most of the participants. In these conversations, the participants worried that if something is not done to improve the leadership and coordination of EPE, the call for change that EPE is aiming to achieve

may be difficult. The participants' concerns align with the work of other studies on leadership in social movements (e.g., Dirks, 2015; Ganz, 2010; Morris, 2000), which has stressed that leadership is key to achieving movement goals and that leadership challenges constrain the ability to mobilize people to be part of a movement. Thus, to facilitate effective movement-building, there needs to be strong leadership to create an enduring structure that sustains collective action (Morris, 2000). Similar to findings in the literature about the integral role of leadership in social movements, I found that EPE's struggles with leadership undermine its ability to make progress or build a movement that meets the goals of EPE. However, it is important to note that since the completion of my interviews, a new Executive Director (ED) was hired. The findings from my study suggest that it will be important for the new ED to work with the Stewardship Roundtable and others to clarify leadership and governance structure.

### *Non-Activation of Key Community Tables*

Additionally, one of the most pressing issues about EPE's governance structure that almost all the participants talked about was the non-activation of the key community tables, the Stakeholder Forum and the Count Me In Network. The participants talked about the struggle to get these tables operational, including the lack of funding available to recruit a coordinator to spearhead their activation. These tables are supposed to involve the mobilization of people with lived experience of poverty and the larger Edmonton community in the process of building a community movement. The views of the participants are presented under the following sub-themes: (a) lack of representation of people with lived experiences and (b) lack of grassroots participation and community ownership.

**Lack of Representation of People With Lived Experiences.** Participants spoke about the lack of representation and inclusion of people with lived experiences of poverty in the current

operations of EPE's governance structure. As noted in Table 4, the Stakeholder Forum was intended to mobilize and involve people living in poverty; however, the study participants indicated that the Stakeholder Forum has not yet been established, which makes it difficult for EPE to organize itself as a community movement because the voices of people with lived experiences of poverty are missing. In the interviews, when I asked about why the Stakeholder Forum had yet to be activated, some participants mentioned the lack of funding and dedicated staff required to coordinate the forum as the main problems hindering its activation. The majority of the participants were of the opinion that people living in poverty are most affected by poverty and their constant involvement in the governance structure of EPE would help achieve the mission of EPE. Some of these narratives are offered below:

> I think the first order of the day for EPE is to truly organize itself as a community entity, that is, actually being shaped and guided by the people who are closest to the problem… the question is, where are the voices of the people with lived experience? So, at this point, EPE is still missing a most essential part of what it is... I think that if you don't have the voices of people with lived experience helping to shape and influence the decisions that you make, I think you lose the power of meaningfulness and thoughtfulness in the way that you do your work… (Tara)

> The lived experience perspective is to help set priority areas, provide feedback on solutions proposed, and provide EndPovertyEdmonton with the ability to tell what poverty actually looks like and if that is missing that's a worry. (Cindy)

Similarly, some participants stressed that the lack of representation of people with lived experiences of poverty casts a negative light on a movement organizing for change towards an equitable and inclusive society in Edmonton. The participants alluded to the notion that because there is a lack of involvement of people living in poverty, EPE is not fully functional as a movement. Additionally, they indicated that truly grounding the task of movement-building in the experiences of people living in poverty is fundamental and crucial.

> I think there are still some gaps in terms of some of the other pieces EndPovertyEdmonton wanted to put together…one of them was the kind of lived experience of the Stakeholder Table, that one hasn't happened yet. This does not put EndPovertyEdmonton in a positive light because EndPovertyEdmonton represents them…and I'm impatient to see that [Stakeholder Forum] actually go ahead…I am not prepared to give up on that piece, of this kind of EndPovertyEdmonton vision. (Tobin)

> The next focus is that EndPovertyEdmonton is going to put a lot of weight on the experiences of people that are living in poverty and to bring a more equitable lens on it because they are the people most affected by poverty. To say that this can't just be the people that have the most money that are in the room. This has to be people that have experience in those areas that we have identified as the root causes that we know that discrimination plays a huge part of that…all these groups that we need to make sure have an equal voice at the table. (Cindy)

The above quotes provide insight into what participants consider a key element of a movement that organizes because of poverty: participation of people with lived experience. Further highlighting the importance of this key element, Jonny compared EPE to a vehicle without all its running wheels and stressed that when a vehicle does not have all the necessary components, it is difficult for that vehicle to move in its intended direction or even move at all. This finding corroborates the ideas of Ganz (2010) who suggested that movements are built by the people whose cause is being undertaken and the purpose of movement actors is to determine what it will take for the "powerless" people to create the power they need to solve their problem. For the most part, movements are about the "powerless" organizing and those in positions of power working with the "powerless" to effectively organize them and help them believe that change is possible (Ganz, 2010). Additionally, Crutchfield (2018) have noted that what sets apart successful movements from the rest is that their movements are "leaderfull" (p.145). A "leaderfull" movement is filled with people who have a "lived experience" of the problem — the individuals most directly affected by the cause — and are empowered to speak and act on behalf of the organization (Crutchfield, 2018 p.145). In essence, movement leaders recognize that, to succeed, they need everyone around

them, especially people affected by the problem, to succeed as well. In this regard, the lack of voice, representation, and participation of people with lived experiences of poverty places a damper on the EPE movement organization and the potential for EPE to advance itself as a movement that organizes on the basis of poverty. Furthermore, one of EPE's aspirations is to bring an equitable lens to poverty by promoting inclusion, equity, and participation (EPE, 2015). Even though EPE has been successful with Indigenous inclusion through the activation of the Indigenous Circle Table, it struggles to ensure the active participation and engagement of people with lived experiences of poverty despite recognizing the importance of doing so. Significantly, the involvement and voices of persons with lived experiences will enhance the work of EPE in building a movement for community change.

**Lack of Grassroots Participation and Community Ownership.** Another concern raised by some of the participants was the non-activation of the Count Me In Network. As I indicated in Table 4 the Count Me In Network is supposed to be the governance table that will mobilize Edmontonians and encourage participation of diverse groups, such as local businesses, faith-based groups, and the wider public, to build their capacity for collective action. However, in my interviews, participants indicated that the current structure of EPE is functioning without strong grassroots community participation. Furthermore, they emphasized that without the involvement of many Edmontonians, it will be difficult for EPE to build an effective movement organization and get the broader community to engage and drive the change needed.

> When I think about what it is, you know, it's not enough people yet, the business community is missing, one of the big sectors, so that's huge loss…It needs to get much larger in order to be effective. The scale of what EPE is trying to do is going to require many, many hands—that phrase, many hands make light work—poverty is a big rock to move and the number of hands required for it is obscene… (Cindy)

> Count Me In Network, which is supposed to be that movement piece of Edmontonians that's not quite activated just yet…there's still confusion as to what it could mean or what that network could lead to, there is a lack of understanding around how that structure should look like I think…in my opinion, the Count Me In Network and the Stakeholder Forum are the two pieces that make EPE a movement. (Zita)

Along similar lines, other participants alluded to the notion that the activation of the Count Me In Network would "generate public support and excitement about EPE" (Tara) and that would give some form of "credence and acceptability to the work of EPE as an organization that advances the work of ending poverty in Edmonton" (Jacob). In essence, most of the participants stressed that the ability of EPE to connect with the broader community would be a measure of success because the community would better understand EPE and contribute to making EPE an effective movement organization. Similar to current research on social movements, which has shown that mobilization and a community-wide effort are critical for effective collective action (e.g., Cetin, 2015; Deveaux, 2018; Ganz, 2010), study participants indicated that EPE's ability to end poverty could be enhanced if there was some grassroots participation from the broader community. Social movement scholars, such as Ganz (2010), theorize that the power of social movements is their ability to turn broad community membership into the organizational capacity to push the goal of the movement forward. That is, for social movements to succeed, they largely depend on their ability to maximize grassroots mobilization. A movement's grassroots are its everyday people, the "rank and file," in contrast to the leaders or "elite", and movement organizations that flourish make sure they possess a robust sustained movement of grassroots activists and local groups pushing the goals of the movement from the bottom-up (Crutchfield, 2018). Similarly, Bate et. al, (2009) noted that movements need to be outward-looking and inclusive— movements that become exclusive and inward-looking become "sects" and "elites". The absence of grassroots participation and

community ownership pose a serious challenge to EPE in the quest to eliminate poverty through the lens of social movement organizing.

The challenge for EPE to generate grassroots support may be attributed to the fact the organization did not emerge from the grassroots. As explained in Chapter One, EPE originated from people in positions of power and representatives from dominant groups and institutions. In this regard, the elite origins of EPE, to a large extent, serve as a barrier to actualize the goal of building grassroots support for the movement. One of the issues that emerges from this finding is that the building of the EPE movement organization has been left in the hands of professionalized actors or elites who are trying to organize and build a community movement with a "top-down" approach. This finding is not encouraging, and it runs contrary to the conceptual premise in the literature that a grassroots mobilization strategy is necessary and important to social movement organizing (Cetin, 2015). As the study demonstrates, EPE presently possesses a weak grassroots participatory orientation and depicts more of an "elite group" that limits opportunities for community mobilization and action. These findings, together with previous literature, suggest that the ability of EPE to secure wider and deeper participation of Edmontonians, particularly those people with lived experiences of poverty, will increase the likelihood of a community movement to bring about change.

***Current Strengths of the Governance Structure***

As participants talked about the limitations and shortcomings of the governance structure, I asked about the strengths of the structure. Participants' opinions revealed that the presence of the Indigenous Circle is one of EPE's greatest strengths. Even though some of the participants were generally concerned about the shortcomings of EPE's leadership, they were of the opinion that the presence of the Indigenous Circle provides input and integrates Indigenous knowledge and ways

of doing into the work of EPE. The Indigenous Circle is connected to EPE but can also act independently, reviewing and submitting proposals that advance Indigenous culture and perspectives on wellness towards poverty elimination (EPE document, 2018). In the interviews, one participant mentioned that the Indigenous Circle reviewed the road map actions, offered recommendations, and provided an Indigenous lens into how Indigenous-specific poverty can be addressed.

> So, I guess one thing that I'll talk about is the Indigenous Circle road map review questions and recommendations. So, the Indigenous Circle combed through all of the road map actions. And then they provided an Indigenous lens to all of the actions. And that speaks to ending poverty from an Indigenous perspective because Indigenous poverty is unique. It is, it's very different than let's say for example, the poverty that Indigenous people experience is different than newcomer's poverty experienced you know what I mean. So, with that the Circle did a review, total review to ensure that all these actions are, I guess, working towards ending Indigenous-specific poverty. Yeah, so to ensure that Indigenous voices are involved here or like whatever those recommendations will be so that's one strategy I think it is unique to EndPovertyEdmonton. (Zita)

In addition, some participants noted that the Indigenous Circle has been vibrant in the work of EPE, although they did not provide direct examples. Furthermore, they indicated that the Indigenous Circle has been a strong part of EPE and stressed that EPE's inclusion of Indigenous Edmontonians is an important part of the governance structure because aspects of EPE's work is focused on reconciliation. Indigenous engagement and inclusion at the time of the study was described as one of the tables that "seems to be firing on the most cylinders" (Tobin). According to the study participants, engagement and working together with Indigenous leaders has facilitated the ongoing work on the Indigenous Cultural and Wellness Centre.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter examined the governance structure of EPE. It revealed the five community tables that form the governance structure and highlighted the shortcomings associated with the

current structure including the lack of role clarity, the problem with leadership, and the non-activation of two key community tables that will help advance the task of building a movement to end poverty in Edmonton. The chapter concluded with a discussion about the Indigenous Circle as a key strength of the governance structure and how it can be leveraged to strengthen EPE's effort to build a movement.

## Chapter Seven

## A Social Movement Lens for Exploring Change: Is There a Missing Link Between EPE Aspirations and Strategies?

In this chapter, I examine the extent of EPE's success in attempting to meet the aspirations that prompted its formation. Given EPE's aspirations and efforts to employ a social movement approach to bring about change, participants were specifically asked about the strategies used by EPE to mobilize support from diverse groups and organizations in Edmonton toward ending poverty. Although I reviewed EPE documents to find out if there were any indications of strategies that contributed to the task of movement building, the findings in this chapter mainly surfaced from the interviews. Willems and Jegers (2012) pointed out that in social movement organizing, the aspirations and strategies of a movement mutually influence each other in a dynamic, ongoing process to ensure the desired outcomes of the movement are accomplished. Thus, successfully organizing and acting for change largely depends on the strategies employed to meet the aspirations of the movement. In this study, the participants' descriptions revealed a disconnection between EPE's aspirations and the strategies it employs to meet the intentions of building a movement to end poverty in Edmonton. Three main themes emerged from the findings, indicating an explicit lack of strategy in three areas: (a) relationship building, (b) mobilizing frame, and (c) advocacy.

### Relationship Building

According to participants, an effective way for EPE to make progress as a movement organization would be to build relationships, especially relationships with existing community organizations and poverty-serving agencies. Given that EPE is a convening entity grounded in the spirit of collective responsibility (EPE, 2016a; EPE, 2018), participants mentioned that regular

engagement, collaboration, and check-ins with existing organizations would be an important factor in the success of EPE. According to participants, relationship building would enable EPE to gather ideas in a concerted way that would inform the effort to build a movement to end poverty.

> It is all relationship, relationship, relationship, because we're not talking about a group whose job it is to interface with people living in poverty. It's a relationship builder. So, it all comes down to relationships. [Edmonton] is a pretty small town. Everybody knows everybody else who works in this space. So, building those relationships, and hoping that the people who run those organizations will be able to connect in ways that shape the movement. (Mandy)

> I think building relationships, being that mechanism of convening people and listening, and certainly bringing forward their voice or empowering them to bring forth their own voice…those relationships should be like continuous engagement that gives EndPovertyEdmonton perspectives, views, and directions…trying to build a movement ties with the importance of constantly refreshing those relationships in order to move this movement farther. (Jonny)

Even though some of the participants acknowledged the importance of building collaborations and relationships, they also talked about the challenges and tensions that arise from such relationships. They pointed out that the formation of EPE has created tensions between it and other poverty-related organizations. For instance, some of the participants mentioned that through the City, the Province provides Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) grants to community agencies, and presently, organizations funded through this grant are supposed to align some their priorities to those of EPE. The participants noted that these organizations feel EPE is taking over or getting involved with their responsibilities. They stressed that for EPE to effectively build relationships with the agencies, they first must address tensions related to funding and mend those relationships in order to have enough buy-in from these organizations. The participants' narratives are captured in the following quotes:

> …any organization who's funded by FCSS, the Family and Community Social Services Unit, any organization or group when they report their activities, they'll have to align it

> with EndPovetyEdmonton, they have to show how that has contributed to reducing or eliminating poverty…so they then refer to EPE in their conversations, in their documents, maybe in the activities they do. I have actually sat in conversations where community partners have said they feel EndPovertyEdmonton is stepping on their toes… (Debby)

> The Province gives the City I think it's something like $20 million dollars each year through what's called FCSS (Family and Community Support Services) and that money the City then gives out to organizations who are doing social services to prevent problems. It's called preventive social services. And in this past two or three years, FCSS funding has adopted a focus on ending poverty as well. And so, when they decide to give money to an organization, they have certain criteria and they say organizations should work and see their work is aligning with EndPovertyEdmonton and the vision of ending poverty. Some organizations feel they do not have the space of their own. (Dora)

Following up on participants' comments about FCSS, I reviewed what the program is about and noted whether there was any indication that organizations who receive funding need to align with EPE's priorities. Generally, the FCSS is an 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta, participating municipalities, and Metis settlements, and it is used to (a) support individuals, families, and communities through preventative social programs and services and (b) provide FCSS grants to community agencies to deliver preventative programs and services (Government of Alberta, n.d.). The funding program is intended to have a preventative focus, which means programs delivered by community agencies that receive a grant should aim at addressing social needs and developing responses that help families strengthen their family life and function more effectively in their own environment. After reviewing documents and the information available on FCSS, I did not specifically find that the eligibility for FCSS funding requires agencies to align their priorities to EPE. However, participants' narratives indicated that since FCSS is focused on preventative social services, the City of Edmonton is ensuring that community agencies receiving funding tailor their programs to the aspirations of EPE in order to contribute to the achievement of the goal to end poverty. Although participants indicated that the expectation of alignment may ensure coordination and prevent program duplication, community

agencies feel they do not have their "space" to operate, which is creating tensions between them and EPE. This finding is another example of EPE taking a top-down approach, especially with the City of Edmonton redirecting agencies to focus on poverty elimination. Even though the directive of the City of Edmonton may have been created with the best intentions, it does not foster the community-driven approach that EPE aspires to (EPE, 2018). The narratives of the participants suggest that EPE should collaborate with community agencies to develop priorities and actions so that community agencies are able to make meaningful contributions.

Likewise, other participants commenting on the apparent turf war between EPE and the existing community organizations indicated that organizations fear EPE may claim their successes and that competition for success undermines effective relationship building. The participants stressed that EPE cannot claim the successes of existing organizations because their role does not involve delivering services and programs. The narratives of the participants further demonstrate that EPE is not working as a partner with the community agencies:

> … [Community Agency 1] are part of the EndPovertyEdmonton as a movement so to speak or [Community Agency 3] but EPE can report on that which is good to share with the community, but it has no way of claiming that it has anything to do with that success of these organizations. (Chizo)

> So, there's [Community Agency 2], the [Community Agency 3], the [Community Agency 1], they're very accepting with EPE, because they see poverty at the root of all the challenges they view with clients at the front line, right. These organizations were initially regular at EndPovertyEdmonton meetings but not so much now…I think they feel EndPovertyEdmonton may claim their successes. But I want to say that it wouldn't be fair for EndPovertyEdmonton to take ownership of their successes, because I don't think EndPovertyEdmonton being there or not makes a difference. (Gloria)

These findings were quite surprising because, as previously indicated, one of the conditions that influenced the emergence of EPE was the desire to improve the coordination of anti-poverty initiatives in Edmonton. Additionally, given that existing agencies are apprehensive about EPE, there appears to be a disconnect between EPE's aspiration to build a movement and what is

happening on the ground in terms of coordination and relationship building. The apparent interorganizational tensions, described by participants as resulting from a lack of partnership, collaboration, and relationship building on the part of EPE, have hindered effective coordination. Literature on social movements indicates that movement building is about relationship building and the purposeful formation of relationships on which social networks can be built, and that the success of these actions is essential to the success of social movements (Fine & Jacobs, 2014; Snow & Cress, 2000). Likewise, proponents of the resource mobilization theory opine that coordination and organizational resources such as networks and relationships enhance the ability of social movements to achieve their goals (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004a). Essentially, relationship building is the mechanism through which social movements seek to organize; relationships are the collective building blocks of social movements (Bate et al., 2009). Crutchfield (2018) in her study on social movement organizations in the US points out that even though internal conflicts and tensions may be inevitable in movements, the ability of movements to manage tensions, resolve disputes over end-goals, and power struggles, and their willingness to work with adversarial allies to chart a common agenda is likely to impact the success of movement organizations.

In contrast to the assumptions and research findings in existing literature, my study findings show that interorganizational tension undermines relationship building and effective coordination. My findings concur with those produced by Gordon (1984) during his study on religious movements in the United States. In his analysis, Gordon (1984) pointed out that social movement organizations (SMOs) seeking to address a localized problem intersect and interact with existing organizations that may have a similar vision for addressing the problem. Accordingly, the process of interaction can have a significant effect on the success or failure of the movement organization

as well as on the internal characteristics of the movement such as expanding the membership base. To resolve the problem of interorganizational competition, Gordon (1984) suggested that movement organizations should understand the local social environment and seek to build cohesion rather than confrontation during the process of change. In this regard, the findings of my study suggest that EPE needs to build trust among existing organizations to maximize the benefits of coordination and relationship building in the effort to organize a movement.

**Mobilizing Frame (Or Lack Thereof)**

Another strategy that participants talked about was the lack of frames or key messages that connect with the broad community of Edmontonians and encourage them to be part of the movement, and importantly promote different ways for people to understand poverty. Participants emphasized the importance of framing and stated that they felt EPE has not done a lot of work on framing strategies or fully developing frames that enable effective communication and mobilization which would build resonance among the wider public. A few of the participants mentioned that EPE attempted to use a political campaign strategy but failed in the process of doing so. EPE attempted to use political advocacy messaging to make poverty an election issue in the 2019 provincial election. The theme for the EPE campaign was "Let's Do This" (EPE, 2019). According to participants, this mobilizing frame was a strategy to introduce the discourse on poverty into the public domain with the intention of energizing the public to ask candidates about their position on poverty and what their political party intends to do about ending poverty. Regrettably, according to the participants, the initiative failed to achieve its intended purpose prior to the implementation of the campaign because as an organization funded by not-for-profits, EPE had no jurisdictional authority to conduct a political campaign.

> The campaign bombed…the campaign was supposed to basically energize people to go onto the website to send an automatic letter to their campaign candidates for their constituency, to speak on poverty—what are their positions on poverty and what would they do and all of that…I think it wasn't planned well and also the Secretariat found out that as being part of United Way it didn't have the status it needed to be able to go out and do a campaign…like making poverty as an election issue, but it didn't work out because of a whole lot of legal issues around who can or cannot do advocacy with operational and logistics issue around if a group whose [funder] is the United Way. (Debby)

> EndPovertyEdmonton tried to do this campaign during the last provincial election. And the focus was on testing some messaging like in a traditional communications way. And so that was kind of interesting and that helped us develop some of that messaging around poverty. But EndPovertyEdmonton didn't get to the heart of what it really intended to do because it was later found out that EndPovertyEdmonton didn't have the legal status to be able to do that kind of campaigning...EndPovertyEdmonton couldn't do any paid advertising because of the rules and regulations around that… (Tammy)

Although EPE attempted to employ political advocacy framing in the past, my interview findings revealed that the explicit lack of a mobilizing frame raised questions about EPE's intentions to change the conversation about poverty. As explained in Chapter Four, one of the conditions that influenced the emergence of EPE was the identification by community-based professionals, municipal policy decision makers, and those involved with poverty-related programming that there was a need to change the conversation about poverty. Social movement scholars intimate that the ability of movements to change dominant discourses and frame problematic conditions, such as poverty, in ways that appeal to the public is crucial for their success (Benford & Snow, 2000). Through framing, movements make connections, communicate effectively, and mobilize people behind their goal; thus, framing shapes wider public thinking and discourse and has significant consequences for social movement outcomes.

During their research on movement building as an approach to healthcare improvement, Bate et al. (2004) identified a three-stage iterative process for building an effective movement for

change: (1) framing, (2) mobilizing, and (3) sustaining and mainstreaming. In this interrelationship model, the authors suggest that the first step in building a movement involves the way movement players make appeals or present issues that resonate with those they seek to mobilize. The core issue is the movement's ability to rally, appeal, and propel sections of a population to realize common change goals. During this process, the more one's values, meanings, identity, and personal biography align with the goals of the movement, the more likely that person will be to invest their energy (Bate et al., 2004). Alignment is very much a matter of how the cause is framed to mobilize and capture people's attention. Effective mobilization can lead to the sustainability of the movement. After people have bought into the goal of the movement, the movement becomes part of their lives, and subsequently, it can be mainstreamed into the society. In such cases, the movement is recognized, and people are convinced that the movement exists to advance a cause in which they are interested (Bate et al., 2004).

The three-stage model proposed by Bate et al. (2004) indicates that EPE has not done some key things they need to do to achieve their aspirations. The findings from my study show that EPE's lack of a mobilizing frame has limited its ability to mobilize enough Edmontonians to support its goal of building a movement. Thus, the challenge for EPE is how to develop some mobilizing frames to draw in a large swath of the people. In the context of poverty-related movements, the Right to Housing (R2H) Coalition in Ontario developed a mobilizing frame to attract a significant number of people to the part of the movement aimed at addressing housing problems in Ontario (Dirks, 2015). R2H framed the lack of access to housing as a 'natural disaster'. Dirks (2015) noted that by using this frame, the R2H Coalition was able to generate support from the wider public and make their demands known to the Ontario government in order to shape the discursive space around housing and homelessness in Ontario. Dirks (2015) stressed that the

mobilizing frame was in consonance with people's everyday life experiences; thus, they voluntarily joined the movement. The findings from my study in combination with previous literature about mobilizing frames has important implications for EPE. In particular, it will be important for EPE to develop mobilizing frames that encourage and inspire Edmontonians to join the movement organization.

**Advocacy Strategy (Or Lack Thereof)**

The final strategy participants talked about was the importance of an advocacy strategy in shaping the movement organization. Participants' narratives suggested that EPE lacked an advocacy strategy necessary to influence policy and systems change. The participants mentioned that without a clear strategy, EPE will not reach a wider audience and effectively advocate the intentions behind building a movement to end poverty. Echoing the importance of a solid advocacy strategy for achieving policy and systems change, one of the participants raised the rhetorical question, "How can EPE target changes that need to be made within the system not sort of a haphazard way without an advocacy plan? How is EPE going to bring people on board if there is no plan?" (Tammy). Tammy further stressed that "EPE is sort of like engaging in a firefighting approach, rather [than] EPE see[ing] themselves as like park rangers ready to steward this movement, not always in a sort of emergency response way, but in a way that is effective with clear direction and a plan to get everybody together…".

Furthermore, other participants commenting on the importance of advocacy in movement building indicated that a strong advocacy plan is needed to influence policies that make positive impacts in the lives of people living in poverty. The sentiment of one of the participants is illustrated in the following quote:

> EndPovertyEdmonton needs strong public policy, like there are policies that the city and the province and the federal government will enact, and some will help people who live in poverty and some will harm people and push them into poverty or make them poor. So strong advocacy messaging is important. Right now, EndPovertyEdmonton doesn't seem super strong about advocating, no big social movement has not been first and foremost an advocacy strategy I think, the biggest influence of EndPovertyEdmonton would be through advocacy to some degree… (Gloria)

Overall, the narratives of the participants were quite surprising, especially given that one of the underlying conditions that gave rise to EPE was the intention to promote systems change (as explained in Chapter Four). Previous research has established that advocacy strategies are essential components of a social movement's efforts to achieve the equity, inclusion, and meaningful participation of disadvantaged groups in the community life of a society (Antrobus, 2004). Indeed, advocacy helps bring together people impacted by a problematic condition, raise their knowledge about the condition, and secure support for collective action (Kapilashrami et al., 2015). For instance, in a study on the affordable transit pass in Hamilton, Beveridge (2016) reported that community advocacy strategies and the involvement of community-based poverty groups enabled the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction to ensure the city's piloted affordable transit pass became a sustainable and permanent program in Hamilton. The advocacy associated with the pass centered on creating awareness about its importance and the negative impacts that the lack of accessible transportation can have on those living in poverty. Beveridge (2016) posited that the advocacy appealed to members of the community—particularly those who struggle to purchase daily transit passes due to low-income—to join the campaign for change.

Other studies (e.g., Antrobus, 2004; Maney et al., 2012) have also shown that movements that engage in advocacy build support, public recognition, and traction at the community level, which strengthens the capacity of the movement to facilitate change. Interestingly, the findings from my study were not encouraging, as participants indicated that EPE has yet to develop a clear

advocacy plan for connecting with Edmontonians and influencing policies that would have positive impacts on people living in poverty. The absence of clear advocacy strategy and lack of a mobilizing frame is perhaps one of the reasons EPE has not been able to activate the Count Me In Network and the Stakeholder Forum governance tables, as discussed in Chapter Six. The integration of advocacy strategies into the work of EPE could significantly reinforce and complement the efforts of EPE to achieve its goal of movement building.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter examined the extent to which EPE has been successful in meeting some of the aspirations that instigated its emergence. The chapter highlighted the missing link between EPE aspirations and strategies in the effort to build a movement toward poverty elimination. Specifically, interview findings pointed to the challenges that EPE is facing in building relationships that would enable effective collaboration and coordination of anti-poverty initiatives in Edmonton. Additionally, the findings revealed that EPE lacks the mobilizing frame necessary to connect to the wider Edmonton community and mobilize a broad swath of the population to be part of the movement to end poverty. Lastly, I found that the lack of a clear advocacy strategy undermines EPE's effort to promote systems and policy change and, more importantly, mobilize a community-wide effort towards social change. Overall, the findings discussed in this chapter reveal the inadequacies in EPE's strategies and aspirations to build a movement, change the conversation about poverty, and reorient attitudes about poverty to engender effective and holistic approaches that would alter the status quo.

# Chapter Eight

## The Realities of Organizing: Socio-Contextual Factors Influencing the Work of EndPovertyEdmonton

In this chapter, I present findings on the socio-contextual factors influencing the work of EPE. The findings in this chapter are mostly drawn from participant interviews. The EPE documents did not reveal much about socio-contextual factors; however, where necessary, I present excerpts from relevant documents, such as provincial budgets, election campaign documents, and other policy-related documents, which shed light on possible influential factors. Specifically, I asked participants about the factors that have influenced or are likely to influence EPE's efforts to build a movement to eliminate poverty. Additionally, participants were asked about how the work of EPE fit into the broader scheme of the municipal, provincial, and federal government initiatives related to poverty elimination. In all, two main factors emerged from the findings, and they include political and policy factors as well as adequacy of resources to sustain collective action.

### Political and Policy Factors

The first socio-contextual factor that emerged from the data centered on the alignment or fit of EPE's work within the political and policy environment in which it is embedded. EPE is situated within a web of three interrelated political contexts—the municipal (i.e., the City of Edmonton), provincial, and federal governments—that shape its efforts to build a movement organization to eliminate poverty. The findings indicate that EPE's alignment and political relationship with these orders of government have been mixed. First, participants did not reveal any major concerns regarding EPE's relationship with the municipal government. As explained in Chapter Four, this is because key representatives from the municipal government, especially

elected political leaders like the mayor, influenced the formation and development of EPE. These leaders were early actors who played an essential role in the beginnings of EPE, and the participants indicated that EPE fit into the broader scheme of the plans of the municipal government regarding poverty elimination in Edmonton. The comments of the participants regarding EPE's strategic alignment with the municipal government was not surprising given that EPE was borne out of the municipal governance structure. Overall, the study found that the municipal government continues to contribute to or support initiatives that are related to EPE's aspiration to build a movement to end poverty in Edmonton.

Obtaining political support and buy-in at the provincial level has always been and remains a challenge. The participants indicated that EPE is experiencing difficulties in building bonds of solidarity and cooperation with the provincial government. In fact, one of the major issues that most of the participants talked about was the change in government at the time of my study. My first two interviews were conducted immediately after the Alberta provincial election in 2019. The election led to a change of government from Alberta's New Democratic Party (NDP) to the United Conservative Party (UCP). Moreover, I conducted about 15 subsequent interviews after the UCP government tabled the 2019-20 provincial budget in October 2019. At the time, most of the study participants were uncertain and concerned about how the change in government would influence anti-poverty organizing.

The anxieties of the participants could be attributed to the differences in the political philosophies and policy priorities of the two political parties, especially on the 2019 election campaign platform. The NDP is a social-democratic party whose political philosophy favors government planning and public ownership, and where necessary, an increase in public spending to provide jobs and services (Alberta NDP, n.d.). In relation to the political ideology of the NDP,

particularly during their 2019 election platform, the NDP promised to increase spending in key areas such as health, seniors and long-term care, and education, and to create an economy that would benefit everyone, regardless of status (Alberta NDP, n.d.). The NDP also promised to cap child care fees at $25 per day, and this promise had been piloted in almost 100 early childhood and care centres in Alberta (Alberta NDP, n.d.). Additionally, in their 2019 election platform the NDP revealed plans to extend the coverage of the child care program. For the most part, the NDP assured voters that their policies and programs would "put jobs and families first" and that "no family will be left behind" (Alberta NDP, n.d., para 2).

Conversely, the political ideology of the UCP tends to favor a neo-liberal approach to governance (United Conservatives, n.d.). A neo-liberal ideology leans towards a free market economy, limited government, privatization, fiscal responsibility, and where necessary a decrease in public spending (Peterson, 2020). These ideological principles are premised on the beliefs that fiscal responsibility through balanced budgets and a free-market economy will "encourage the creation of wealth through free enterprise, and protection of the right to own, enjoy and exchange property" (United Conservatives, n.d., p. 7). The political ideology of the UCP connects with the promises from their 2019 election campaign platform, which brought them into government. For instance, in their 2019 election platform, the UCP characterized Alberta's economic difficulties as a "spending problem" and argued that Alberta is in for "a series of fiscal belt-tightening measures" (United Conservatives, n.d., p. 100).

Based on the political ideological differences of the NDP and UCP, and following a change in government with the election of the UCP, the majority of my study participants expressed concern about the priorities of the UCP government regarding social issues such as poverty, as well as concerns about the future of EPE and its relationship with the provincial government. For

instance, the participants mentioned that EPE had a working relationship with the NDP when it was in power and that there was a government representative on EPE's Stewardship Round Table even though the provincial government did not provide tangible support such as funding. For the most part, the sentiments and anxieties expressed by the participants indicated that because the provincial government has jurisdictional responsibility for many of the policies relating to people's economic well-being and the elimination of poverty, progress on eliminating poverty would be slowed or halted if the UCP government imposed cuts on agencies that provide services and supports to people living in poverty.

> …there was great alignment with the previous provincial government. Now, EndPovertyEdmonton is kind of sort of in limbo. So, it really depends a lot in some senses on the tide, the political tide where is it taking EndPovertyEdmonton, and how can EndPovertyEdmonton harness that tide…when EndPovertyEdmonton is in motion with the tide, then the ship will sail smoothly; however, when EndPovertyEdmonton is disconnected as what it is experiencing now, then it is going to be difficult...right now, the political tide, as far as the province it is just not in the favor of EndPovertyEdmonton, there are budget cuts and many more programs are going to be cut. (Jonny)

> …provincially, I don't think EndPovertyEdmonton feature in terms of being recognized by the new provincial government. Previously, EndPovertyEdmonton had representation from the provincial government, they were participating in meetings but due to the change of government, they are not here any longer… (Debby)

> The provincial landscape is very different from the time that EndPovertyEdmonton was created…there is a provincial government who may not necessarily be sympathetic to social issues such as poverty, they [provincial government] hold the purse and the government has a different set of priorities, budget cuts, spending on social programs is going to be decreased so that's a big external factor… (Tara)

In relation to participants' narratives on budget cuts and the political tide, I reviewed the 2019–20 provincial budget that was tabled in October 2019 and the 2020–21 provincial budget that was tabled in February 2020 to find out how the financial components of the budget statement related to the anxieties expressed by the participants. For the most part, the provincial government

fiscal plan for 2020–21 showed a 2.5% reduction in spending over the next three years, or $1.3 billion less spending than in 2018–19 (Government of Alberta, 2020). Of particular interest, I compared the 2020–21 budget document with the 2019–20 and 2018–19 budget estimates on social services ministries and programs. The relevant ministries included Children's Services; Community and Social Services; and Family, Social Supports and Housing (Appendix J). I found that the budget outlined a 11% reduction in Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth, a 7% reduction in Child Care Subsidy, and a 3.2% reduction in employment and income support. As well, there was a 3.4% reduction in community supports and family safety. Overall, compared to the 2018–19 and 2019–20 budgets, the budget estimates for 2020–21 showed a general reduction in spending on key social services (Government of Alberta, 2020). The findings from the budgets confirm the political philosophy and ideological dispositions of the UCP in terms of decreased spending and program cuts (United Conservatives, n.d.).

Participants' concerns about the potentially negative influences of the UCP governments' policies and priorities (e.g., budget cuts) also align with the political process theory. The political process theory postulates that the ebb and flow of social movements is influenced by the prevailing political context (Kriesi, 2004; McAdam & Tarrow, 2018; McAdam et al., 2001). Proponents of the political process theory opine that in an unfavorable political context, opposition to the political structure may pose a threat to the existence of the movement (McAdam & Tarrow, 2018). Nevertheless, the ability to develop strategies that challenge policy directions and deepen a social movement's presence within opposing political structures is its principal indicator of success (Kriesi, 2004).

Interestingly, with the exception of a few participants who indicated there is a need for EPE to communicate and develop new relationships in order to build political buy-in from the

provincial government, when I asked participants how EPE plans to navigate the political challenges it is encountering, most participants were unclear on the explicit strategies EPE intends to adopt. For the most part, the participants' narratives revealed frustrations, worries, and suppositions about the provincial government. Perhaps EPE's explicit lack of plans could be attributed to the timing of my interviews, which was less than a year after the UCP was elected. Be that as it may, in 1995, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) faced similar political challenges with the Ontario Conservative government (Shantz, 2011), which can be compared to the findings of my study. However, the OCAP was able to navigate its challenges by engaging in direct action strategies such as public mobilization and protest. Shantz (2011) reported that in 1995, the Conservative government reduced social assistance in Ontario by 21.5% and this ushered in a Social Assistance Reform Act. The Act resulted in substantial changes to welfare provision and even after a change in government in 2003, the newly elected Liberal government only reduced the dramatic funding cuts by 3% (Shantz, 2011). This left many people living in poverty to face unhealthy living choices and a reliance on underserviced food banks, making it difficult to feed their children. Shantz (2011) reported that amid these cuts OCAP mobilized healthcare workers and about 200 people living in poverty to demand a Special Diet Allowance and a change in social assistance rates. The author indicated that the success of the mobilization saw the Ontario government pay several million dollars and fully restore the Special Diet Allowance. OCAP's direct action strategy and its ability to mobilize a significant number of people around cuts to social provisions are compelling examples of using collective action to promote health, social well-being, and using social movements to effect social and policy changes, especially in an unsupportive political context (Shantz, 2011).

Additionally, Nathanson (1999) noted that movement success involves "ideologically persuasive constructions" and grassroots mobilization to gain "public acceptance" and "political connection". In essence, social movements confront entrenched political opposition and challenge political practices that create injustices. In relation to the social movement literature, my study findings suggest that EPE has not done enough to purposively develop explicit strategies to navigate the political challenges posed by the provincial government. Such strategies are needed to build momentum for effective mobilization to demand policy change (e.g., reverse social service cuts) and seek justice for those living in poverty in Edmonton. In short, the findings show that EPE's lack of explicit strategies to confront challenges in the political context in which it is embedded runs contrary to its goal of building a movement to bring about change.

Finally, regarding EPE's relationship with the federal government, a few of the participants mentioned that there is an ongoing relationship in terms of federal government representatives participating in the activities of EPE. For instance, one of the participants stated that "EndPovertyEdmonton is working in concert with the federal government, they participate in meetings and their presence gives some recognition to EndPovertyEdmonton" (Joy). The participants did not mention whether EPE has received financial support or any specific assistance from the federal government toward EPE's poverty elimination efforts. As well, the documents did not reveal evidence of financial support from the federal government. Participants' responses suggested that the support from the federal government cannot be compared to that of the municipal government in terms of both financial and in-kind support. Unlike the tangible support provided by the municipal government, the type of support provided by the federal government could be described as moral support. According to proponents of the resource mobilization theory (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; Pilny et al., 2014), moral support gives legitimacy and credibility to

the work of social movements and the absence of moral support weakens a movement's viability. Furthermore, theorists of the RMT opine that when a social movement receives moral support and gains legitimacy, it creates discourse about the goals of the movement and is likely to attract other people that may have been unfamiliar with the movement (Pilny et al., 2014). Based on the assumptions of the RMT, moral support from the federal government has the potential to increase the viability and recognition of EPE.

## Resources

Another socio-contextual factor that emerged from the data was the need for adequate resources. I asked participants about the resources (or lack thereof) that (1) EPE is applying to implement strategies to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty and (2) are needed to build and support the movement to end poverty. In addition, I reviewed EPE documents to determine if there were any indications of how EPE was going to be resourced. Most of the study participants mentioned the importance of resourcing and a sustained investment in EPE as being a key factor in mobilizing a generational effort to address poverty in Edmonton. Overall, the findings from the participant interviews largely pointed to a lack of resources, especially regarding the financial and human resources necessary for mobilizing and building an effective movement for change.

### *Financial Resources*

EPE's 2016 document indicates that the City of Edmonton and two leading community partners, the United Way Alberta Capital Region and Edmonton Community Foundation, are to provide operational funding and investment for EPE for its first five years from 2017 to 2021. The proposed annual operating budget and investments for EPE are estimated at about $1 million (EPE, 2016b). These funds will be used to support the activities of EPE specifically in relation to the

implementation of the game changers as specified in the road map (EPE, 2016b). The table below provides a detailed breakdown of the proposed funding estimates and how they will be used.

**Table 5.** *EPE's Estimated Annual Operating Budget*

| Operational Item | Expense Budget | Notes on the Purpose of the Fund |
|---|---|---|
| Human Resources ─ Secretariat | $450K | To fund the staff of EPE's Secretariat, reallocated or seconded staff from partners, and interns to supplement the core staff. |
| Administrative and Contract Expenses | $150K | To support administrative costs and contracted work of EPE in relation to implementation of the road map. |
| Communications Hub and Learning Investment | $100K | To support the establishment of communication, dialogue, and engagement and the development of print and digital tools and platforms. To support creation of EPE as a go-to hub and model for poverty elimination and learning. |
| Collaborative Funds to Seed Innovation | $100K | To support or seed pilot initiatives and innovation of poverty actions. |
| Evaluation, Data, and Reporting | $100K | To monitor and report on progress. |
| Office Space (provided in kind from partners) | $100K | Initial dedicated office space and supports to house the EPE Secretariat. |
| **Estimated Annual Budget** | **$1 Million** | |

*Source*: EPE, 2016 p. 18

In the interviews, participants indicated that the funding provided is not adequate. For instance, they indicated that EPE is lacking adequate funding to develop and undertake activities, such as research, advocacy, and antipoverty framing which would enable EPE to build an effective movement. About one-third of the participants mentioned that beyond funding for implementing the game changers, adequate financial resources in the critical areas of research and advocacy in movement building have not been available. For the most part, the participants were concerned

that the current funding gaps in these relevant areas will make it difficult for EPE to undertake activities that are imperative to strengthening its capacity.

> …if you want to create a movement, you need resources and primarily financial resources to do a whole bunch of work…it is not just about programs and activities that the community partners are implementing. EndPovertyEdmonton needs resources, like one of the strategic goals is changing the conversation which requires doing framing research to be able to figure out how to frame anti-poverty conversations, or like pro-poverty intervention conversations in Edmonton…but there's no funding for like that overarching building and initiatives, advocacy efforts, policy efforts, systems mapping efforts like that all that requires capacity. So, how is EndPovertyEdmonton going to move forward if it doesn't have money to do these things? (Debby)

> There's still a big funding gap in what EndPovertyEdmonton intends to do…there are challenges of funding in other areas that are important to building the movement piece and not so much for the game changers but for some of the other things that need to happen like bringing in representation of different groups. (Jim)

Additionally, the participants linked the failure to launch the Stakeholder Forum and the Count Me In Network to the lack of financial resources. As explained in Chapter Six, the Stakeholder Forum and the Count Me In Network involve the mobilization of the larger Edmonton community and people with lived experience of poverty in the process of building a community movement. The participants stressed that adequate funding is a big factor in movement building because it involves "mobilizing a significant number of cultural groups like newcomers' group, multicultural groups that EndPovertyEdmonton can reach out to learn and relearn about their living situation and get them involved in building the movement" (Jonny). Participants' narratives indicated that EPE is constrained by inadequate funding to maximize its ability to advance the task of movement building.

Furthermore, some of the participants were uncertain about how financial resources would be mobilized after the City of Edmonton and partner funding ends in 2021. My review of various EPE documents did not reveal funding arrangements or potential sources of funding for EPE post-

2021. In the interviews, participants expressed concern about EPE's funding arrangements beyond 2021 and the sustainable investments needed for the activities of EPE. Since the work of EPE is a "generational vision", participants were concerned about the sustainability of funding for and long-term investment in EPE. Some of the participants' anxieties are articulated in the following interview excerpts:

> …EndPovertyEdmonton needs a sustained investment to have successes that will help Edmontonians see that EndPovertyEdmonton has started to make a difference in the lives of people, but I'm not sure where that is going to come from and without long-term financial commitment the effort may go nowhere… (Dora)

> …I think the concern is where the resources for the next subsequent years will be coming from because this is a generational vision. It's a movement for 30 years, so if there are no funding commitments in the long term, the 30-year vision cannot be achieved… (Tara)

In accordance with participants' concerns about a lack of sustained funding, social movement scholars that champion the resource mobilization theory (RMT) (e.g., Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; Edwards et al., 2018) have pointed out that when resources are not commensurable to the priorities of social movement organizations, they are less likely to have an impact. According to the RMT, the importance of financial or monetary resources cannot be underestimated because no matter how many resources a movement mobilizes, it will engage in extra activities that are necessary for the viability of the movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004) and will incur costs that will need to be offset by a commensurable monetary resource (Edwards et al., 2018). In this regard, the success of a movement, in part, is contingent on the availability of financial resources.

This notwithstanding, other scholars, such as Arthur (2008), have been critical of the tendency of social movements to postpone achieving their goals when faced with financial resource challenges. Although Arthur (2008) acknowledged the importance of funding in social

movement organizing, he asked "Will movements cease to move when there is no funding?" Arthur argued that social movements are not stagnant and that they are dynamic in organizing and may seek resources from external or diverse sources to alter the status quo and create a lasting change. Interestingly, when I asked about what EPE is doing to navigate the challenges that come with funding gaps, only one participant talked about the ongoing collaborative effort between EPE and the Community-University Partnership (CUP) involving grant proposal writing to support funding for research and advocacy. The narratives of other participants pointed to reliance on the City of Edmonton for extended funding commitments after the first five foundational years of EPE. For instance, one participant stated, "The City funds like 80% of EndPovertyEdmonton's operating budget. I think definitely the City will support this, having committed funding after 2021 is very important because if EndPovertyEdmoton continues to do their work it would be helpful for the City" (Chizo).

***Human Resources***

Another key finding relating to resources is EPE's deficiency in human resource capacity, especially the staff capacity of the EPE Secretariat. About two-thirds of the participants mentioned that the small number of paid staff at the Secretariat is hampering the progress of EPE. They indicated that the workload and task of building a movement is overwhelming for the small Secretariat team. For the most part, the participants were concerned that although EPE intends to build a movement to end poverty, these intentions are being undermined by the lack of human resource capacity available to propel the ideals of the movement forward.

> The Secretariat even needs a way to distribute the workload across the people that are working with us [potential community agencies] and that would be an effective method of distributing the workload. EndPovertyEdmonton is a lot of moving parts and the small staff sometimes get overstretched with the workload. There needs to be a dramatic increase in the staff capacity of the backbone organization [the Secretariat]. Unless this is done not much progress can be made… (Debby)

> EndPovertyEdmonton is a small team of staff, and it is arm's length from the City…the small team of staff cannot do everything; it is a lot of work to build a movement…ending poverty is a complex task. So, having more staff members to help is essential because sometimes it can be tough because there's a lot of things that need to be done beforehand. (Gloria)

Along similar lines, other participants pointed out that members of the Stewardship Round Table are volunteers and not dedicated paid staff of EPE. According to these participants, without dedicated staff, there are limits to what members of the Round Table can do because they cannot fully function in their capacity as volunteers. Importantly, the participants underscored the fact that the volunteers have other duties in their respective organizations or workplaces. Overall, the interview findings revealed that EPE's small number of staff often experience heavy loads of responsibilities, which limit their ability to initiate activities that progress the efforts of building a movement. These findings corroborate the resource mobilization theory literature on the importance of human resources. Resource mobilization theorists hypothesize that human resources account, in large part, for the sustenance of social movement activities (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). This is because movement actors give their time and energy to promote or strengthen activities of the movement. For this reason, if actors are overburdened, limited activities can be initiated and organized effectively. Similarly, Oliver (1993) noted that the task of mobilizing for collective action is labor intensive and involves building dynamic relationships, searching for new opportunities, and building capacity; hence, a lack of adequate personnel can constrain the strategic actions of social movements. Participants' narratives indicated that the task of building a movement is overwhelming and that EPE involves "lots of moving parts", which supports evidence from previous studies.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter presented the study findings on the socio-contextual factors that have influenced or are currently influencing the work of EPE. Two dominant factors, political and policy factors and resources influence the work of EPE. Regarding political and policy factors, the chapter highlighted the influences that lack of political buy-in and strategic alignment with some orders of government (the provincial government in particular) had on EPE's efforts to collectively build an effective movement. Furthermore, the findings revealed anxiety and supposition among the study participants regarding the challenges associated with obtaining political buy-in. The chapter also discussed how resources, such as financial resources and human resource capacity, impact the work of EPE in building a movement for change and how this is likely to influence the work of ending poverty in Edmonton.

# Chapter Nine: Conclusions

## "Collective Input, Collective Impact": Making a Difference through Social Movement Organizing against Poverty

In this concluding chapter I review the findings and highlight the theoretical and academic contributions of the study to social movement literature, in particular, literature regarding poverty-related movement organizations. As well, I discuss the implications of the study for practice and include specific recommendations for EPE to consider in the process of building a movement for change. Furthermore, I discuss the implications of the study for future research on contemporary movement organizations that emerge based on poverty. I conclude the chapter with a discussion about the challenges and limitations of the study and a personal reflection on the potential of using a social movement approach to make a difference in ending poverty in Edmonton.

### Review of Findings

This study set out to examine the anti-poverty efforts and social movement-building approach of EndPovertyEdmonton to end poverty in Edmonton. Specifically, the objectives of the study were as follows: a) to determine what accounted for the emergence of the EndPovertyEdmonton movement organization with the aspiration to end poverty in Edmonton; b) to examine the core strategies of the EPE movement organization to achieve the goal of ending poverty in Edmonton, and; c) to ascertain the socio-contextual factors that enable or constrain the EPE movement organization in the process of organizing against poverty in Edmonton. Relative to these research objectives, a case study methodology was employed to examine the emergence, strategies, and context of anti-poverty organizing in Edmonton. The findings indicate that EPE has embarked on a bold vision to build a movement to end poverty in Edmonton. This huge undertaking represents a novel approach to eliminating poverty and signals a focus on driving

conscious collective change through social movement organizing in Edmonton. The study revealed that contrary to previous anti-poverty initiatives focusing on downstream efforts, EPE aims to implement upstream efforts by leveraging a social movement approach to policy and systems change, mobilizing inclusive support, and building a voice that ending poverty in Edmonton is a collective responsibility (EPE, 2016a).

Additionally, the study found that the development of EPE has influenced and renewed motivation for anti-poverty work, especially among elected political leaders at the municipal government, and has resulted in important accomplishments that are likely to contribute to the elimination of poverty in Edmonton. For instance, EPE's six game changers (i.e., eliminate racism, livable incomes, affordable housing, accessible and affordable transit, affordable and quality childcare, and access to mental health services and addictions support) are action items aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty. Although I found that progress had not been made on all six game changers, it was remarkable to note from the narratives of the participants that the progress made on three game changers—eliminate racism, livable incomes, and accessible and affordable transit—is gradually making a difference in the lives of people living in poverty. For example, participants' narratives revealed that EPE's effort to address the problem of low wages through the livable income game changer is an important step forward to ensure families have the financial means to achieve economic security and adequately support the healthy development of their children. Although participants believed that a livable income makes a positive difference, there has not been any empirical research specific to EPE that has examined whether this is the case. This notwithstanding, the work of EPE to promote better living standards so families can live a dignified life is inspiring and laudable.

Another significant accomplishment of EPE, which came to light in my study, is the establishment of the Indigenous Circle as part of the governance structure of EPE. The participants indicated that the Indigenous Circle is a unique feature of EPE and one of its greatest strengths. The Indigenous Circle provides an Indigenous lens through which Indigenous-specific concerns about poverty are examined. As well, given that one of the aspirations of EPE is to advance true reconciliation, the establishment and inclusion of the Indigenous Circle as part of the movement-building process are significant and integral to the work of poverty elimination. The Indigenous Circle ensures that the work of EPE embodies Indigenous ways of knowing and provides for the inclusion and recognition of Indigenous peoples and communities (EPE, 2018). For this reason, the involvement of Indigenous leadership and voices is noteworthy and a step in the right direction of promoting reconciliation and ending poverty in Edmonton.

In general, the study found that EPE was formed to do things differently, and doing things differently is an impressive task, especially since the accomplishments of EPE may have historical and contemporary significance in terms of anti-poverty organizing in Edmonton and Canada as a whole. However, despite EPE's accomplishments, the study found shortcomings/gaps in EPE's work that need to be addressed for further progress to be made. If these shortcomings are not addressed, they are likely to undermine the fundamental aspirations that influenced EPE formation. The first shortcoming, the failure to activate the two key community governance tables—the Count Me In Network and the Stakeholder Forum—aimed at mobilizing support and grassroots participation of community members and people with lived experiences of poverty, calls into question EPE's commitment to building a movement. The neglect of the voices of people living in poverty and the lack of involvement of a broad swath of the Edmonton population in EPE evokes the notion that the movement is in the hands of professionalized actors/elites. Accordingly, EPE

is being organized without active grassroots participation and the voices of people with lived experiences of poverty. This implies that EPE has not made progress on one of the key objectives that count as the success of a social movement organization, that is, to generate public support and followers (Crutchfield, 2018), especially with the active participation of people with lived experience of poverty.

Literature on social movements, in particular, literature on collective behavior theory (Barkan, 2016; Smelser, 1963; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Grasso & Giugni, 2016), has shown that for the most part, social movements develop from the needs of people directly affected by a problematic condition who feel that something must be done to change that condition. Conversely, in the case of EPE, the organization did not emerge due to people living in poverty or community members feeling disgruntled by their deprivation and wishing to change their situation. Instead, EPE emerged because elected political leaders, including the Mayor's Task Force and some leaders and representatives from dominant groups and not-for-profit organizations, felt dissatisfied and discontented about an existing condition (i.e., persistent poverty) and the strategies that had been used to address it. In this way, EPE was established by a group of elites rather than people living in poverty, and this group of elites is attempting to build a movement instead of supporting a movement that developed organically out of the people. In this regard, the study found that EPE's governance structure and much of the foundation that has been put in place shows an institutional way of working that is contrary to how movements usually evolve (Grasso & Giugni, 2016).

Thus, the findings of my study suggest that EPE represents a top-down initiative and the lack of participation and voices of people living in poverty in EPE's organizing process runs counter to the whole intention of building a movement. Ganz (2010) theorized that social movements are successful in organizing if they attract the leadership and participation of the people

whose cause is being undertaken. Ganz further noted that when social movements are inclusive and open to diverse viewpoints, they are more effective because there is buy-in and commitment from the people whose cause is being undertaken. Similarly, Crutchfield (2018) pointed out that what sets apart successful movements from the rest is that their movements are "leaderfull". A "leaderfull" movement successfully harness the energy of many, rather than a few, and channels that energy into a common cause. "Leaderfull" movements share three fundamental traits: (a) they empower local grassroots leaders to step forward; (b) they are built around coalitions of like-minded allies and "unusual suspects"; and (c) they are filled with people who have a "lived experience" of the problem — the individuals most directly affected by the cause — and are empowered to speak and act on behalf of the organization (Crutchfield, 2018). In essence, movement leaders recognize that to succeed, they need everyone around them, especially people affected by the problem, to succeed as well. In this regard, for EPE to survive, they must create an enduring structure that is inclusive, reaches out to people living in poverty, and actively involves them in the process, because without such a structure, the initial aspirations and visions that influenced EPE's formation will be difficult to achieve, and the organization runs the risk of fizzling out.

In considering the extent to which EPE can make progress in building a movement to end poverty, the study also found a disconnect between EPE's aspirations and its core strategies. For instance, one of the key aspirations of EPE was to coordinate, collaborate, and change attitudes about poverty; however, EPE is missing clear strategies for building the relationships and networks necessary for effective organizing as well as the mobilizing frames required for promoting different understandings of poverty and attracting people to the movement. Some scholars (e.g., Bate et. al., 2009; Edwards et. al., 2018; Fine & Jacobs, 2014) have noted that the processes of

forming relationships, building networks, and developing mobilizing frames lie at the heart of social movement organizing because they enable movements to create opportunities for participation. Relationships and networks facilitate exchange and negotiate agreements and public trust, which attracts broader public support for achieving the goals of a movement. Regrettably, my study found that EPE has not done a lot in building effective relationships and mobilizing frames, factors that are integral to the success of a movement (Bate et. al., 2009; Crutchfield, 2018).

Fundamentally, the study revealed some gaps in EPE's strategies and its ability to fulfil the aspirations of building a movement to end poverty in Edmonton. Additionally, the study found that EPE lacked a clear advocacy strategy, which creates questions about how EPE can effectively exchange information, gain input from the wider Edmonton public, and achieve the goal of building a community-led movement for change. Given that EPE aims to achieve systemic and structural changes, the absence of an advocacy strategy to promote and influence policies undermines the extent to which EPE can build a movement and achieve the aspirations that influenced its emergence. EPE needs considerable efforts to prioritize and integrate explicit strategies such as advocacy and relationship-building, which are crucial for building a movement for large-scale community change.

Finally, the study revealed the socio-contextual factors influencing the efforts of EPE to build an effective movement to end poverty. The study findings brought to light the realities of organizing against poverty within the context of mobilizing for adequate resources to sustain collective action and dealing with the political and policy factors that shape EPE's organizing processes. For instance, I found that EPE is intertwined within a complex web of three interrelated political contexts: the municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Although EPE has received

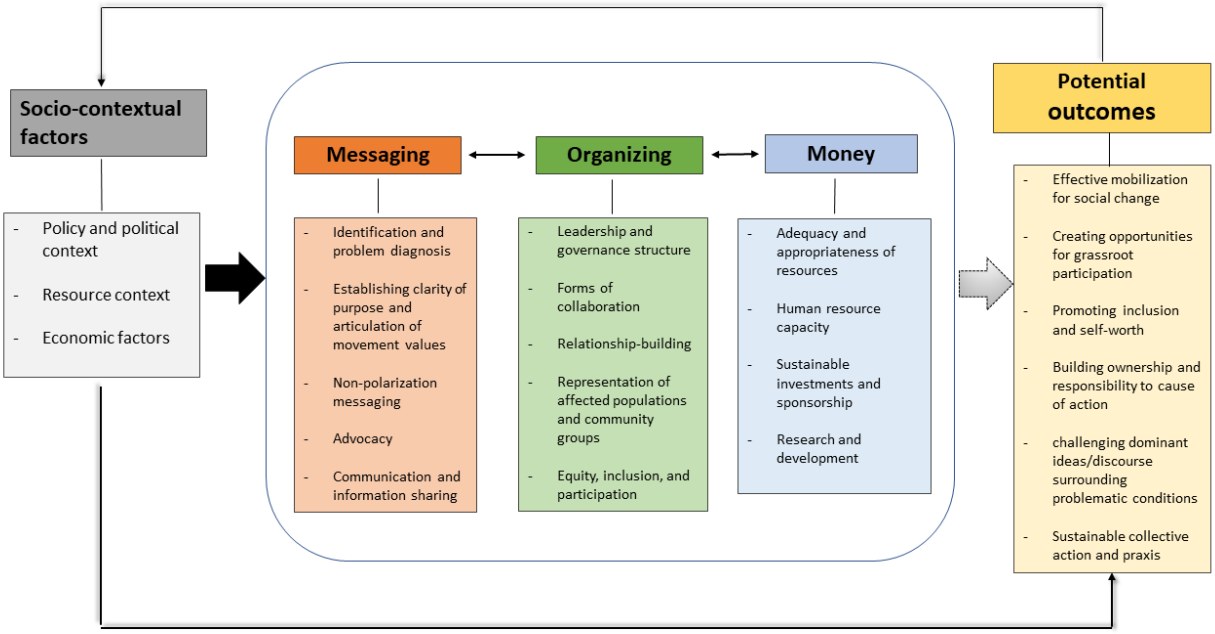
tangible support from the municipal government, obtaining political support and buy-in at the provincial level remains challenging. The participants in the study perceived the provincial government as a hindrance to building consensus and collaborative relationships on poverty elimination. Because the provincial government has control over many policies relating to people's economic well-being and the elimination of poverty, the absence of political buy-in and strategic alignment with the provincial government poses a serious challenge to building a movement to end poverty. Unfortunately, at the time of the study, I found that EPE had no explicit strategies to navigate the prevailing political challenges. The literature on social movements (e.g., Kriesi, 2004; Nathanson, 1999; Shantz, 2011) has shown that a movement's ability to challenge policy directions within opposing political structures is a principal determinant of its success. In this regard, EPE's lack of clear strategies to navigate political challenges will make it challenging to achieve the goal of building a movement in an ever-changing political environment.

**Implications for Theory and Practice**

As explained in Chapter Two, social movement theories have evolved over time. For the most part, each of the theories explains part of the social movement initiation and establishment and that there isn't a holistic theoretical perspective. In this study, I focused on drawing insights from three different movement theories — collective behaviour theory, resource mobilization theory, and framing theory. While the existing social movement theories offer important insights for explaining movement occurrences over the years, an obvious lacuna in the literature is the lack of a holistic theoretical perspective to explain the nuances and dynamics of movement organizing. In addressing this gap, this study takes a step toward synthesizing existing theories of social movements (Cetin, 2015), especially movements that organize based on poverty. Instead of treating movement theories as distinct from one another, this study has shown that insights from

the three theories can facilitate an explanation and guide the initiation and development of movement organizations such as EPE. By drawing on the findings of this study and insights from the different social movement theories, I propose an integrated conceptual framework (see Figure 1) to explain and enhance knowledge/understanding of poverty-related movements and the extent to which they can impact poverty. In addition, I discuss the potential implications of the conceptual framework for practice and how the framework could guide the formation and development of poverty-related movement organizations such as EPE. I hope that the implications may encourage EPE to increase its impact, sustain its efforts to eliminate poverty in Edmonton, and build on its strengths and successes.

Figure 1. *Proposed MOM Conceptual Framework for Understanding Poverty-Related Movements*




The above framework is called the MOM conceptual framework and involves three critical dimensions—messaging, organizing, and money (Figure 1)—that shape movements' occurrences and dynamics. Drawing on my findings and the literature, the potential outcomes of movements

are premised on the belief that the context in which a movement is embedded (i.e., solid arrow pointing to the three dimensions) has a significant influence on the extent to which the movement achieves its goals. Also, a key supposition of the framework is that the potential outcomes are influenced by the way in which contextual factors influence or enable an interplay of the dimensions (i.e., dashed arrow pointing to potential outcomes). Ultimately, context plays a role at all stages of a movement. In the following section, I discuss the three dimensions of the framework in more detail and its relevance for practice.

### *Messaging*

The first dimension of the framework is messaging. To explain this dimension, I draw on insights from the framing theory (Bate et. al., 2004; Benford & Snow, 2000; Redden, 2011) and the findings of my study that revealed the shortcomings of EPE (e.g., the absence of a mobilizing frame). Messaging involves the process by which the goals and values of a movement are identified, broadly diffused, and embraced by the wider public (Bate et. al., 2004). Developing key messages is critical because it is paramount to stimulating energy and mobilizing "movement constituents" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 613). As well, messaging assists movements in effectively communicating and sharing information with the broader public, hoping that the messages can maximize public resonance and "hook people in" to be part of the movement (Bate et al., 2004, p.67). The underlying assumption is that effective messages that attract people to the movement are achieved when there is proper identification and diagnosis of the problematic condition and clarity about the movement's purpose, values, and goals. These values need to be communicated in a non-polarizing manner and must appeal to the everyday realities of the population to attract people from diverse social and political backgrounds to the movement (Redden, 2011).

The fact that EPE has not yet been able to mobilize a broad swath of Edmontonians suggests that it needs to create a mobilizing frame or develop messages that would help mobilize Edmontonians and advance the development of an anti-poverty movement organization. Given that EPE aims to connect to the hearts and minds of Edmontonians (EPE, 2015), the organization's lack of messaging and mobilizing frames can have significant consequences for current and long term outcomes because EPE has yet to attract a significant number of people to their vision. Successful movements use a range of strategies to develop mobilizing frames/messages to connect with and attract sympathizers, critics, and opponents of the movement (Bate et al., 2009; Zakiya, 2018) as well as those who are ambivalent. The strategies include the use of facts and statistics, stories, images, and catchphrases that appeal to the people's realities, intrinsic motivations, and values (Zakiya, 2018). Essentially, messaging is one of the essential activities for a successful social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000). Accordingly, this study and the proposed conceptual framework suggest that EPE prioritizes developing effective messages that attract and connect with people who may or may not be sympathizers to ending poverty in Edmonton.

Finally, another aspect of messaging is elevating public advocacy to influence policy and systems change. Social movements operate in societies characterized by power imbalances, inequities, and poverty, and these factors are inextricably linked to systems and structures that create injustice (Kapilashrami et al., 2015). The advocacy efforts of movements influence policymaking and help oppose and transform systemic structures that reinforce power imbalances. Advocacy is an integral part of achieving social change (Kapilashrami et al., 2015). In essence, when social movements create change, much of the work occurs through advocacy and activism. Surprisingly, at the time of the study, I found EPE lacked an explicit advocacy strategy. EPE's goal is to influence policy, address systemic change, and initiate upstream changes to improve the

lives of people living in poverty (EPE, 2018). Nevertheless, EPE has not done a lot in terms of developing an advocacy strategy. There is, thus, a definite need for EPE to tackle the gap in advocacy to ensure it can advance clear and appropriately targeted policy proposals to influence policymaking now and over the long term. A reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be to make visible the realities of living in poverty and reveal the factors that create poverty. For instance, Antrobus (2004) has noted that one of the reasons the women's movement gained global recognition was the ability of the movement players to elevate advocacy by making women's realities visible while also revealing the links between the social relations of gender and the political, economic, social, and cultural structures that marginalize and oppress women. EPE can consider similar efforts to present an advocacy strategy that captures the perspective of people living in poverty, raises awareness, and shows the underlying factors that reinforce or reproduce poverty in Edmonton.

### *Organizing*

The second dimension of the framework is what I refer to as organizing. To explain this dimension, I draw on the findings of my study and insights from the resource mobilization theory (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). This dimension involves using the organizational capacity of the movement to build inclusive leadership and establish a governance structure that supports the ongoing priorities of the movement. Ganz (2010) noted that effective movement organizing mainly depends on the leadership and governance structure of the movement; the viability of a movement and its ability to make a sustained impact hinges on diverse, equitable, and inclusive leadership. Ganz further stressed that social movements that are inclusive and open could sustain collective action because the people whose causes are being undertaken commit to the goals of the movement. An implication of this is that EPE needs to activate the two community tables:

Stakeholder Forum and the Count Me In Network, which is meant to include people with lived experiences of poverty and community members. This aspect of EPE's governance structure cannot be overemphasized because it has the potential to promote equity, participation, and inclusion.

Additionally, EPE must gather, learn about, and synthesize the perspectives of people with lived experiences of poverty (Devereux, 2018; Paradis, 2016). These actions are necessary because they can inform EPE about potential priorities and actions and encourage the organization to be open to feedback from the public. One possible way EPE can make progress on the Stakeholder Forum and the Count Me In Network is to strengthen its relationship with poverty-serving community organizations. Because movement-building involves relationship building and forms of collaboration (Edwards et al., 2018), movement actors/players must pay particular attention to inter-organizational dynamics to maximize solidarity and support from existing community organizations (Crutchfield, 2018; Gordon, 1984). For the most part, the existing poverty-serving organizations work directly with people living in poverty, which will allow EPE to create strong relationship ties with people living in poverty. Involving people with lived experiences of poverty as co-actors, producers, and partners of change can lead to inclusive engagement (Peters, 2018) and the successful mobilization of a number of people in poverty to be part of the movement to end poverty. In this regard, EPE should take reasonable steps to build consensus with existing organizations and to deepen its connection, relationship, and presence at the community and grassroots levels. As the findings of this study have shown, the lack of community membership and grassroots engagement in EPE activities weakens the participatory nature of the movement. As well, Bate et al. (2009) noted that movements need to be outward-looking and inclusive and that movements that become exclusive and inward-looking become "sects" and "elites". Thus,

there is an urgent need for EPE to activate the two community tables and possibly expand the scope of their network to link up with similar collective initiatives in Alberta such as Vibrant Communities Calgary and other provinces in Canada such as the Hamilton Round Table for Poverty Reduction to become a viable movement.

In short, the findings and the framework suggest that if EPE put inclusive structures in place, it would potentially help the movement gain public traction and sustain collective action. For this reason, providing representation in the movement's governance structure for community groups or populations affected by the problematic condition is highly imperative to the movement-building process. The inclusion of the powerful voices of those affected by poverty would likely help shape the movement's organizing process.

***Money***

The final dimension of the framework is money. To explain this dimension, I draw on the findings of my study and the resource mobilization theory (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). The findings of my study revealed that the initiation of EPE was made possible by a significant injection of resources; however, participants indicated that they were not adequate, and they expressed concerns about the sustainability of EPE without ongoing resources. Consistent with resource mobilization theory, the MOM framework suggests that appropriate resources and investment are essential for effective movement organizing. Appropriate resources can also help movements engage in research, attract a critical mass of people to the movement, and potentially sustain collective action (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). I found that lack of resources was one of the key reasons that participants offered for the inability of EPE to activate the Count Me In Network.

Furthermore, building the human resource capacity of movements requires adequate resources to strengthen staff and personnel in the movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). The study findings revealed that the small number of staff at the Secretariat often experience a heavy load of responsibilities. Building an effective movement for change is labour-intensive and demands time, passion, and energy (Devereux, 2018). This is consistent with the resource mobilization theory (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). For this reason, the findings of my study and the framework suggest that unless EPE's human resource capacity issue is given serious attention, it is likely the organization may lose its opportunity to become an effective movement in Edmonton. As noted earlier, EPE could increase its human resource capacity by improving its relationships and partnerships with community-based agencies. These relationships encourage agencies to work together more collaboratively and efficiently, sharing the workload with robust coordinating mechanisms within EPE.

In summary, the underlying belief of the MOM framework is that the interplay of the three dimensions—messaging, organizing, and money, can lead to substantial outcomes for movements and, in particular, poverty-related movements. When movements develop messages that resonate with people, establish inclusive governance structures, and gain access to the necessary monetary resources, it is possible to produce results that have an enduring impact.

**Academic contributions of the study**

In the previous section, I discussed the theoretical contribution of the study and its implications for practice. In this section, I further discuss the empirical contribution of the study to the academic literature on social movements. Generally, empirical research on movements within institutions has remained limited and largely under-researched (Katzenstein, 1999; Rojas, 2007). This study examined EPE as a social movement organization that originated from an

institution. The scholarship on movements within institutions (such as governments, health, or religious institutions) is of increasing importance in understanding social change. This is because it is within such institutions that resources are distributed, systems are stratified, and policies influence the quality of life of people (Arthur, 2008; Kaldor et al., 2009). As well, the source of the economic difficulties and challenges that confront people have their roots in institutional policies and priorities outside the boundaries of their local communities (Fisher, 2009). In this regard, it is essential to understand how movements within institutions organize themselves and contribute to social change. My study has elaborately captured and revealed the complexity and unique emergence of EPE, how EPE is unfolding, its shortcomings, and what EPE can do better. The study has empirically shown the progress made by EPE and the renewed interest to drive conscious collective change in Edmonton. The findings of this study, thus, contribute to the limited body of knowledge on movements in institutions and, more specifically, movement organizations that emerge based on poverty.

Additionally, the study presents comprehensive research on EPE and provides community knowledge users and other service professionals helpful information about employing a social movement approach to issues of poverty. Crucially, this is an excellent time for a study to focus on contemporary movement organizations such as EPE because of (a) the complexity around its formation and development and (b) the increasing community-based poverty elimination initiatives emerging in several Canadian cities such as Winnipeg, Hamilton, Calgary, and St. Johns. Inaugurated in 2017, EPE has become a catalyst or movement vehicle to eliminate poverty in Edmonton. However, academic or empirical research on EPE has been rare or nonexistent until this study. This study identifies some gaps and shortcomings of ongoing priorities of EPE and suggests other strategies EPE can undertake to chart the path toward ending poverty. In this regard,

my study advances understanding of the potential and limits of poverty-related social movement organizing in Edmonton. Consequently, this study generates empirical knowledge and opens the academic window for further research into the struggle of EPE to achieve social, cultural, political, and economic opportunities for people living in poverty in Edmonton. Furthermore, my study highlights the "value" of social movements that originate from institutions to end poverty and serve as an example for the various poverty elimination initiatives across the cities in Canada.

**Implications for Future Research**

My study began to address the gaps identified in the social movement literature, especially the literature related to movements that organize based on poverty. These gaps included (a) the relative lack of research on poverty-related movements in Western developed countries; (b) the relative lack of attention given to the strategies related to and the influences of socio-contextual factors on contemporary anti-poverty movements; and (c) the absence of an integrated conceptual framework that explains how movements organize on the basis of poverty. To address these gaps, I proposed a conceptual framework and discussed the implications of socio-contextual factors on movement organizing and the shortcomings of contemporary movements such as EPE. Additionally, I revealed some inadequacies in EPE's efforts to build a movement. These inadequacies require further theoretical and empirical examination, which may inform future studies on contemporary social movements. Given that the field of social movement research continues to grow and diverse forms of movements frequently emerge, it will be important for future research to examine the following findings from my study.

First, the study's findings showed that existing anti-poverty community organizations were apprehensive that the EPE movement would take their "space" or compete on their "turf." During my review of the literature, I only found one study (Gordon, 1984) that examined the influence of

local social context and inter-organizational dynamics on social movements. Gordon's work was conducted over three decades ago, and it focused on religious social movements. Using insights from my study and expanding on the work of Gordon, future scholars might explore the perspectives of anti-poverty, community-based organizations on the emergence of movement organizations that share similar goals and ambitions; thus, future research could investigate how inter-organizational dynamics influence social movement organizing against poverty.

Another area of research that requires exploration is the future political relationships between EPE and the municipal and provincial levels of government. Social movement scholars (e.g., Tilly, 1998; McAdam et al., 2018) have long been interested in political contexts' influence on movements' success or failure. I explored insights from these scholars when examining the political influences that have shaped EPE (discussed in Chapter Eight); however, further research is needed to determine the future of EPE in the context of a changing political landscape. For example, the current mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson, who supported the formation of EPE, is not seeking re-election in October 2021 (Ramsay, 2020). Further studies are needed to examine the political relationship between EPE and the municipal government and determine whether poverty elimination will be on the agenda at the Edmonton City Council when Mayor Iveson is no longer at the helm. Furthermore, due to the frosty relationship between EPE and the current Alberta UCP government, future research is required to establish how political factors will influence the sustainability of EPE and how EPE may organize, navigate, and respond to the provincial government to gain political buy-in.

Finally, the economic conditions that existed when EPE was initiated have changed significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the reduction in oil prices on a global scale, and the volatility of the energy and gas markets (Cho, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2020). Furthermore, the

current economic outlook in Alberta and the uncertainty around economic policy responses are likely to (a) cast attention away from poverty as a key priority; (b) contribute to/create conditions of poverty; and (c) potentially impact mobilization and motivation for collective action (French et al., 2020). These are important issues for future research. Undeniably, one of the most significant challenges to the recovery of the Alberta economy is the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The province is struggling to overcome the pandemic's economic effects, and the path to economic recovery remains uncertain (Government of Alberta, 2021). Economic indicators from Statistics Canada show that Alberta's economy has been the hardest hit of all the Canadian provinces due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Statistics Canada, 2020). For example, according to Statistics Canada, Alberta's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrank by 8.2% in 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020). Moreover, while the province struggles to manage the pandemic, the problem is further compounded by a collapse in world oil prices (Vernon, 2021). The double burden of dealing with the pandemic and low oil prices has been a major setback to the Alberta economy, and a plan for recovery from such an economic downturn has yet to be determined (Government of Alberta, 2021).

Additionally, the economic outlook has influenced the province's budget allocation and commitments to municipalities and local governments. For instance, in the recent Government of Alberta Budget (2021), the government reduced its funding to municipalities for local infrastructure projects (i.e., Municipal Sustainability Initiative) by about 25% over the next three years as a measure to balance spending and reduce budget deficits (Government of Alberta, 2021). In a response to the budget cuts, the mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson, indicated that the cuts could sideline planned projects and stated that "Edmonton projects are now at risk as a result of these deep cuts, though it's already clear…that this cut further injures the City of Edmonton's jobs and

fiscal situation…and further impacts Edmonton's momentum, which will slow Edmonton and Alberta's economic recovery" (Edmonton Journal, 2021, para. 9). Budget cuts in an uncertain economic environment are likely to influence the key priorities of the City of Edmonton, including the City's financial commitments to EPE. In essence, EPE currently exists in an unpredictable economic environment. Research indicates that in periods of slow economic growth, people's economic circumstances change, creating opportunities for sustained collective action (Barkan, 2016; Grasso & Giugni, 2016). For instance, following the 2008 economic crisis in Europe, Grasso and Giugni (2016) found that a greater number of people participated in social movement activities such as protests due to the high unemployment rate. Grasso and Giugni indicated that in a context of economic decline and deprivation, individuals are more likely to understand their relative deprivation, which provides a fertile ground for them to become involved in a social movement; thus, people affected by deteriorating economic circumstances are more likely to participate in social movements. Given these points, future research should determine how poverty-related movement organizations such as EPE can organize and respond to the prevailing economic challenges. This would be a fruitful area of research on anti-poverty organizing and collective action in addressing the needs of people living in poverty.

**Challenges and Limitations of the Study**

Like all research projects, this study was not without challenges and limitations. The first challenge was the difficulty in setting boundaries around the study due to the evolving nature of EPE. In reality, social movement organizations are not static—they evolve, revise, and adapt as they unfold or forge ahead (Cetin, 2015). Within the evolving nature of movements, this study encountered challenges that make the generalisability of some of the findings subject to certain limitations.

The first challenge is that many of my study participants revealed that EPE was experiencing leadership and organizational struggles that were hampering progress at the time of the study. Participants attributed this to the transitioning of leadership, especially at the Secretariat. This connects with some of my experiences in undertaking this study. During the proposal phase of my study, the EPE Secretariat had an Executive Director (ED) whom I had met with to discuss the purpose of my research. When I was ready to undertake the study, there had been a change in the ED, and an interim ED was in place. By the time I had completed my interviews and was in the process of analyzing the data, a new ED was recruited to lead and direct the affairs at the EPE Secretariat. The change in leadership raises the possibility that the findings of the leadership struggles of EPE need to be interpreted with caution and must be explained within the context of the period in which this study was conducted because, with a new ED, the concerns raised by the study participants may no longer be relevant. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study revealed participants' beliefs about the importance of leadership in social movement organizing and the extent to which leadership transitions within movements can alter the progress of a movement.

Furthermore, one of my findings showed that there is an explicit lack of advocacy strategies. In a recent EPE presentation (EPE, 2021a), representatives of EPE indicated that they had undertaken advocacy work, especially around the livable income game changer. Also, EPE's 2020 annual report, which was released in June 2021, indicated that one of its priorities is advocacy to influence policy change. This recent information suggests that plans are underway to develop advocacy strategies and drive policy change (EPE, 2021b). There is a strong possibility that efforts on advocacy work will improve in the long term. In this regard, my findings about the lack of advocacy strategy need to be interpreted within the period my study was conducted. Despite this

limitation, the current study certainly adds to the understanding and importance of advocacy in the process of social change (Kapilashrami et al., 2015).

**A Final Reflection**

*"Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of fundamental human rights, the right to dignity and a decent life."* **Nelson Mandela**.

I have long been interested in poverty elimination initiatives, and it was personally gratifying to note that a social movement organization was committed to ending poverty in Edmonton. Although my experience undertaking this study has been exciting, it remains one of the most challenging and enduring encounters of my academic journey. Before this study, I had little knowledge about social movements and how they interact on the ground to bring about change. The initial stage of conceptualizing the study was a difficult task. I read almost all the material I found on social movements and determined how it was relevant to poverty elimination. At some point, I lost focus on what to include and exclude from the study. Though I was skeptical at the initial stages of the research, embarking on this research journey has been an excellent experience for me. More importantly, I have learned about the good intentions behind EPE's vision of ending poverty, the commitment and motivation of my participants to end poverty, and the ultimate goal of making a difference by leveraging a social movement approach to poverty. However, many challenges abound, and if not addressed, they have the potential to erase the noble intentions of EPE. I am completing this study hoping that the efforts underway to end poverty will not wither and that EPE will put more tremendous efforts to address emerging challenges and gaps in their work. As a result of my experience in this research, my interest in poverty elimination initiatives has been emboldened, and I remain committed to undertaking real-life research to bring about positive change in the lives of people living in poverty.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A

## Information Sheet

**Study Title:**

Organizing against poverty in Edmonton: A case study of EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE) Movement Organization

### Why is this study being done?

To learn about the antipoverty efforts of EPE to eliminate poverty in Edmonton. I will be collecting this information to complete my PhD dissertation at the University of Alberta.


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### How is this study going to be done?

To learn about EPE, I will gather information from interviews with individuals who are familiar with EPE and I will review relevant EPE documents and other public documents that inform or influence the work of EPE. I will conduct interviews with people who have been involved in the work of EPE. These will include members of EPE Task Force, members of EPE Stewardship Roundtable, staff at the EPE secretariat, and staff at the City of Edmonton. The interviews will be audio-recorded and will last approximately one hour.

### Participation

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Even if you agree to be in this study, you can change your mind and stop taking part. You do not have to give me any reasons for not participating. Just tell me that you want to stop the interview. If you decide after the interview that you do not want me to use your information, you have up to January 31, 2020 to withdraw from the study. After this date, it is possible that a preliminary data analysis might have occurred, and it will not be possible for you to withdraw your information from the study.

**What are the benefits of being part in this study?**

I want to learn about EPE's efforts to eliminate poverty. What you tell me will help me understand the work of EPE and the challenges of eliminating poverty in Edmonton. By sharing your experiences and perspectives about EPE's approach to eliminate poverty, the findings of this study will help EPE reflect on its work and help policymakers understand what works well and not so well in the efforts to eliminate poverty. Furthermore, the study may benefit people living in poverty by suggesting ways to improve poverty-related policy-making processes and outcomes. The study may also inform other organizations in various cities in Canada working to address issues of poverty. There may be no direct benefits to participants.

To thank you for your time you will receive a $15 gift-card for your participation in the study.

**What are the risks of taking part in this study?**

I do not think that there may be any psychological, emotional, social or cultural risks for being part of this study. But there is a chance that you may feel some discomfort and stress about some of the topics we discuss. If you feel uncomfortable or emotional during the interview, I will suggest places to ask for help. If you are not comfortable answering a question, you may choose not to answer it. Or you can ask for the recorder to be turned off. Also, the information you provide will be analyzed together with other information that I will obtain from the interviews. Given the relatively small number of people involved with EPE, there is a small possibility that other participants may speculate the identity of a specific comment. However, I will make an effort in writing and presenting my analysis and findings in a manner that will limit the likelihood of your comments being traced back to you or other participants and people familiar with EPE speculating your identity.

**How will privacy be ensured?**

The information that you give me in this study will be kept private. I will keep your name and what you say private. Only my supervisors and I will have access to the information you give me. You will not be named in any reports or talks about this study. All the information you give me will be kept in a locked cabinet and on a secure computer.

The interviews will be audio-recorded. I will type out the interviews. I will not share information that you give me. As EPE involves group of people working together and may know each other, I will use a code number instead of your name on study materials. The code numbers will be destroyed once the dissertation has been approved. In reports or talks about the study, I may use your actual words, but I will not use your name or other details. This will make it difficult for other participants or people familiar with EPE to speculate on identity and or trace comments back to you.

I will keep all information private except when professional codes of ethics or the law requires reporting. If that occurs, I will let know you.

I would also like your consent to contact you in the future. This will help me if there is a need to follow-up with you or clarify your answers. As well, I will provide you with study updates and final results.

**How will the information from the study be used?**

I will keep the information from the study for at least five years once the study has been finished. After this time, all transcripts and consent forms will be destroyed beyond recovery. I will use the information from this study to write my PhD dissertation. I may also present the findings in publications and at conferences and meetings. Additionally, the results of this study will be shared with EPE to help EPE reflect on its work and understand the evolving operational and structural dynamics and impacts of a movement-building approach to end poverty.

**Questions or concerns about this study?**

A research ethics committee at the University of Alberta has approved the plan for this study. If you have questions about the study, you can phone Razak Oduro at 587-501-0454 or his supervisor, Dr. Deanna Williamson at 780-492-5770.

If you have concerns about the study, please call the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615.

## Appendix B
## Consent Form

**Title of study:** Organizing against poverty in Edmonton: A case study of EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE) Movement Organization

**Part I**

a) **Researcher:** Razak Oduro, Graduate Student, Department of Human Ecology (587-501-0454)
b) **Supervisor:** Dr. Deanna Williamson, Associate Professor, Department of Human Ecology (780-492-5770)

### Part II: Consent

| **Please answer the following questions by checking "yes" or "no"** | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have you read and received a copy of the Information Sheet? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do you understand the benefits and risks of taking part in this research study? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have you had a chance to ask questions and discuss this study? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without any penalty? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do you understand what the researchers will do to ensure privacy of the information you give? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do you understand who will have access to the information you give? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do you agree to be contacted in the future regarding this study? | ☐ | ☐ |

This study was explained to me by _____

I agree to take part in this study: YES ☐ NO ☐

Signature of Research Participant _____

(Printed Name) _____

Date _____

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

**The Information Sheet must be attached to this Consent Form and a copy given to the research participants**

**Appendix C**
**Ethics Approval I**

## Notification of Approval

| | |
|---|---|
| Date: | September 9, 2019 |
| Study ID: | Pro00092645 |
| Principal Investigator: | Razak Oduro |
| Study Supervisor: | Deanna Williamson |
| Study Title: | Organizing against poverty in Edmonton: A critical ethnographic study of EndPovertyEdmonton movement. |
| Approval Expiry Date: | Tuesday, September 8, 2020 |

| Approved Consent Form: | Approval Date | Approved Document |
|---|---|---|
| | 9/9/2019 | Information sheet |
| | 9/9/2019 | consent form |

Thank you for submitting the above study to the Research Ethics Board 1. Your application has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the committee.

Any proposed changes to the study must be submitted to the REB for approval prior to implementation. A renewal report must be submitted next year prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.

Approval by the Research Ethics Board does not encompass authorization to access the staff, students, facilities or resources of local institutions for the purposes of the research.

Sincerely,

Anne Malena, PhD
Chair, Research Ethics Board 1

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).*

**Appendix D**
**Ethics Approval II**

## Notification of Approval - Amendment

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Date: | October 17, 2019 | |
| Principal Investigator: | Razak Oduro | |
| Study ID: | Pro00092645 | |
| Study Title: | Organizing against poverty in Edmonton: A critical ethnographic study of EndPovertyEdmonton movement. | |
| Supervisor: | Deanna Williamson | |
| Approved Consent Form: | Approval Date<br>9/9/2019<br>10/17/2019<br>9/9/2019 | Approved Document<br>consent form<br>Information Letter<br>Information sheet |
| Approval Expiry Date: | Tuesday, September 8, 2020 | |

Thank you for submitting an amendment request to the Research Ethics Board 1. This amendment has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the committee. The following has been approved: changes to recruitment and withdrawal; addition of revised letter of invitation and information letter

Sincerely,

Anne Walley
REB Specialist, Research Ethics Board 1

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).*

## Appendix E

### Interview Guide for the Task Force, Stewardship Roundtable, and City of Edmonton Staff

Participant code number: _____ Date: _____

Start time: _____ Time Ended: _____

**Preamble**

Before we begin, I want to assure you that what you tell me during this interview will be kept confidential and will not be shared in any way with other participants in this study. Whatever you tell me will be used for academic and research purposes. Also, by sharing your experiences and perspectives with me about EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE), the study will help researchers and policymakers understand what works well and not so well in the efforts to eliminate poverty.

We will start the interview with a general question about your work with EPE. We will talk more about specific aspects of poverty and what led to the development of EPE. Then, we will talk about EPE strategies to achieve the task of ending poverty in Edmonton. Finally, we will end with some questions about factors that influence the work of EPE in Edmonton.

1. **Introduction**

Please tell me about yourself and your work with EPE? ***Probes***:

- What were you doing before your involvement with EPE?
- How long have you been involved with EPE? Can you tell me about your role?
- When you think about EPE, what comes to mind?

2. **Emergence of EPE and a movement-building approach to eliminate poverty**
    a. What were some of the underlying conditions that contributed to or played a role in the emergence of EPE? ***Probes***:
        i. Where did the idea of building a movement to eliminate poverty come from?
        ii. What were the conversations about?
        iii. What does a movement-building approach to poverty elimination mean to you? What does a movement-building approach look like?
        iv. How well do you think the EPE movement is unfolding? What is working and what is lacking in the work of EPE?
    b. What does success in building a movement to eliminate poverty look like for EPE? How do you measure success? What are indicators of success?

3. **Core strategies of EPE to achieve the mission of ending poverty**

    a. Can you tell me about EPE strategies that are being used to eliminate poverty in Edmonton? ***Probes***:
        i. Who and or what do the strategies target? Which of the strategies are working and which are lacking?

ii. What are some changes that the strategies have contributed to? Can you share with me some of the outcomes and consequences of the strategies?
iii. Can you share with me how the strategies of EPE have changed the priorities of the City or provincial government toward poverty elimination?

b. Questions about resource mobilization strategies of EPE:
   i. When EPE talks about ending poverty, what resources do you think are needed or EPE is concerned about in mobilizing people to end poverty in Edmonton? ***Probes:*** (financial, leadership, or cultural resources)
   ii. What strategies is EPE using to mobilize groups that they are concerned about? ***Probes*****:** (Newcomers and low-income groups). What about strategies of mobilizing people who can contribute to ending poverty? What types of communication and engagement strategies are being used?
   iii. What is the governance structure of EPE that supports the implementation of the strategies? ***Probes:*** (participants perspectives on the strengths, limitations, and challenges of the structure)
   iv. Does EPE work in collaboration or in partnership with other organizations or initiatives? If so, in what way? How do these collaborations contribute to EPE achieving its mission and goal?

c. Questions about framing strategies of EPE:
   i. What is the local perception about poverty in Edmonton and what is EPE doing to change or shift the conversations about poverty?
   ii. How have the issues of poverty been framed by EPE? What are the reasons for this frame?
   iii. What types of messages about poverty and poverty elimination seem to resonate with EPE's target group and stakeholders?

**4. Socio-contextual factors influencing EPE.**

a. How does the work of EPE fit into the broader scheme of City, Provincial, or Federal initiatives toward poverty elimination?
b. What are some of the factors (political, economic, cultural or otherwise) that have had an effect on EPE's effort to eliminate poverty?
c. What are some of the existing provincial policies and programs that influence (facilitate/support or work against) the work of EPE?
d. Based on your experience with EPE, what are the prospects and challenges of eliminating poverty in Edmonton? How do you think the challenges can be addressed?

**5. Closing the interview**

Is there anything about the work of EPE we have not talked about – and that you would like to tell me before we finish this interview?

Affirming consent: Now that you know what you have talked with me about, are you willing to have the interview be used for the study?

**Appendix F**
**Interview Guide for staff at EPE Secretariat**

Participant code number: _____ Date: _____

Start time: _____ Time Ended: _____

**Preamble**
Before we begin, I want to assure you that what you tell me during this interview will be kept confidential and will not be shared in any way with other participants in this study. Whatever you tell me will be used for academic and research purposes. Also, by sharing your experiences and perspectives with me about EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE), the study will help researchers and policymakers understand what works well and not so well in the efforts to eliminate poverty.

We will start the interview with a general question about your work with EPE. We will talk more about specific aspects of poverty and what led to the development of EPE. Then, we will talk about EPE strategies to achieve the task of ending poverty in Edmonton. Finally, we will end with some questions about factors that influence the work of EPE in Edmonton.

1. **Introduction**

Please, tell me about yourself and your work with EPE? ***Probes***:

- What were you doing before your involvement with EPE?
- How long have you been involved with EPE? Can you tell me about your role?
- When you think about EPE, what comes to mind?

2. **Emergence of EPE and a movement-building approach to eliminate poverty**
    a. What were some of the underlying conditions that contributed to or played a role in the emergence of EPE? ***Probes***:
        i. Where did the idea of building a movement to eliminate poverty come from?
        ii. What were the conversations about?
        iii. What does movement-building approach to poverty elimination mean to you?

    b. What is the secretariat doing as a unit to build the EPE movement toward eliminating poverty? ***Probes:***
        i. How well do you think the EPE movement is unfolding? What is working and what is lacking in the work of EPE?
        ii. What do you do to be attentive to your efforts toward eliminating poverty? What are some of the best practices of EPE?

iii. What are you focusing on and what are you not focusing on in building the movement toward poverty elimination?

c. What does success in building a movement to eliminate poverty look like for EPE? How do you measure success? What are indicators of success?

**3. Core strategies of EPE in achieve the mission of ending poverty**

a. Can you tell me about EPE strategies that are being used to eliminate poverty in Edmonton? ***Probes***:
   i. Who and/or what do the strategies target? Which of the strategies are working and which are lacking?
   ii. What are some changes that the strategies have contributed to? Can you share with me some of the outcomes and consequences of the strategies?
   iii. Can you share with me how the strategies of EPE have changed the priorities of the City or provincial government toward poverty elimination?

b. Questions about resource mobilization strategies of EPE:
   i. When EPE talks about ending poverty, what resources do you think are needed or EPE is concerned about in mobilizing people to end poverty in Edmonton? ***Probes:*** (financial, leadership, or cultural resources)
   ii. What strategies is EPE using to mobilize groups that they are concerned about? ***Probes:*** (Newcomers and low-income groups) What about strategies of mobilizing people who can contribute to ending poverty? What types of communication and engagement strategies are being used?
   iii. What is the governance structure of EPE that supports the implementation of the strategies? ***Probes:*** (participants perspectives about the strengths, limitations, and challenges of the structure)
   iv. Does EPE work in collaboration or in partnership with other organizations or initiatives? If so, in what way? How do these collaborations contribute to EPE achieving its mission and goal?

c. Questions about framing strategies of EPE:
   iv. What is the local perception about poverty in Edmonton and what is EPE doing to change or shift the conversations about poverty?
   v. How have the issues of poverty been framed by EPE? What are the reasons for this frame?
   vi. What types of messages about poverty and poverty elimination seem to resonate with EPE's target group and stakeholders?

4. **Socio-contextual factors influencing EPE**
    a. How does the work of EPE fit into the broader scheme of City, Provincial, or Federal initiatives toward poverty elimination?
    b. What are some of the factors (political, economic, cultural or otherwise) that have had an effect on EPE's effort to eliminate poverty?
    c. What are some of the existing provincial policies and programs that influence (facilitate/support or work against) the work of EPE?
    d. Based on your experience with EPE, what are the prospects and challenges of eliminating poverty in Edmonton? How do you think the challenges can be addressed?

5. **Closing the interview**

Is there anything about the work of EPE we have not talked about – and that you would like to tell me before we finish this interview?

Affirming consent: Now that you know what you have talked with me about, are you willing to have the interview be used for the study?

## Appendix G
## Types of documents reviewed

### EPE Documents

- End Poverty Edmonton (2018). *Year one: Progress report 2017-18*. Retrieved from https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/resources/

- End Poverty Edmonton (2017). *Taking action on game changers to end poverty*. Retrieved from https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/resources/
- End Poverty Edmonton (2016). *Ending poverty in Edmonton: A stewardship model for community change* (CR_3628 Attachment 2). Retrived from https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/resources/
- End Poverty Edmonton (2016*). End poverty in a generation: A road map to guide our journey*. Retrieved from https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/resources/
- End Poverty Edmonton (2015). *End poverty in a generation: A strategy*. Retrieved from https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/resources/
- End Poverty Edmonton (2014). *Changing the conversation about poverty in Edmonton.* Edmonton's poverty elimination steering committee summary report.
- End Poverty Edmonton (2021a). *EndPovertyEdmonton-Community University Partnership Poverty Research Program*. Edmonton: Alberta, Canada
- End Poverty Edmonton (2021b). *2020 Annual Report, The Pivot Edition: Tackling Poverty in a Pandemic*. Edmonton: Alberta, Canada
- Horne, T. (2019). *Evaluation of baseline collective impact conditions within EndPovertyEdmonton*. Edmonton: WellQuest Consulting Ltd.

### Relevant External Documents Reviewed

- City of Edmonton (2019). *Connected Edmonton: Edmonton's strategic plan 2019 – 2028*. Edmonton: City of Edmonton
- City of Edmonton (2020). State of the city address from 2014 – 2019. Retrieved from https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/Mayor_Don_Iveson_State_of_City_Address
- City of Edmonton (2018). *Ride transit pilot program evaluation 2018*. Edmonton: Anderson Draper Consulting Inc.
- City of Edmonton (2019). Living wage for city of Edmonton employees and employees of contract services. *Policy Brief C612A*. Edmonton: City of Edmonton
- City of Edmonton (2019). *Edmontonians' awareness and attitudes on poverty follow-up surv*ey. Edmonton: Leger Consulting Firm
- Cho, C. H., & Kurpierz, J. (2020). Strengthening the public purse: Budgetary responses to COVID-19 in Canada. *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management, 32*(5), 771-783.

- Government of Alberta (2020). *Fiscal plan: Budget 2020 A plan for jobs and the economy*. Edmonton: Alberta Treasury Board and Finance.
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- Government of Alberta (2021). *Fiscal Plan: Budget 2021 Protecting lives and livelihood 2021-24*. Edmonton: Alberta Treasury Board and Finance
- Government of Canada (2016). *A backgrounder on poverty in Canada*. Retrieved from canada.ca/publicentre-esdc
- Government of Canada (2018). *Canadian poverty reduction strategy: What we heard about poverty so far*. Retrieved from canada.ca/publicentre-esdc
- Hudson, C. A. (2014*). Poverty costs 2.5: Investing in Albertans*. Calgary: Vibrant Communities Calgary and Action to End Poverty in Alberta.
- House of Commons Canada (2017). *Breaking the cycle: A study on poverty reduction*. A report by the standing committee on human resources, skills and social development and the status of persons with disabilities. Retrieved from http://www.parl.gc.ca
- Ngo, S., & Kolkman, J. (2019). *A profile of poverty in Edmonton: A report to inform the work to end poverty in a generation*. Edmonton - Alberta: Edmonton Social Planning Council
- Statistics Canada (2020). Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, provinces and territories, percentage share. Statistics Canada Catalogue. Retrieved from https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid53610040001&pickMembers%5B0%5D51.9

## Appendix H
## EPE Road Map Actions

**Eliminate Racism**

- Design and plan a new Indigenous culture and wellness centre
- Create spaces, events and opportunities to show and grow the talents of Indigenous Edmontonians
- City of Edmonton to complete a review of programs and services to better reflect the needs of Indigenous peoples and champion the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
- Launch a Community Witness Program
- 
- Host an annual Day of Dignity to recognize and honour human rights and dignity for all
- Provide opportunities and supports to vulnerable populations to participate in all City committees
- Support and promote training opportunities to build understanding and end stigmatization between vulnerable people and law enforcement personnel
- Develop policies and amend bylaws to provide law enforcement with structured flexibility when issuing minor infractions
- Implement a social lab project to generate ideas and test prototypes to end racism
- Work with local Indigenous and refugee youth on an anti-racism public awareness and action campaign
- Expand initiatives on intercultural competency, anti-racism and trauma-informed training as mandatory for City staff
- Incentivize business, educational institutions and not-for-profit employers to implement intercultural competency and anti-racism education in their institutions

**Livable Incomes**

- Create spaces, events and opportunities to show and grow the talents of Indigenous Edmontonians
- Implement the Communities United initiative in five Edmonton communities
- Draft a living wage policy for all City of Edmonton staff and contracted services to be approved by City Council
- Actively encourage local employers in all sectors to learn about and implement living wage policies
- Expand the spectrum of financial empowerment initiatives
- Initiate a community dialogue to remove systemic barriers and improve coordination of training and employment opportunities
- Establish a Community Development Corporation to invest in affordable housing and community economic development
- Advance the development and stability of local food system providers through access to appropriate business skill training, mentoring, and capital sources (both for start-up and to scale)
- Support ongoing work and facilitate discussion amongst Edmonton's and Alberta's financial systems players, business support agencies and postsecondary institutions to

collectively address barriers faced by low-income Edmontonians when starting or growing their own businesses

**Affordable Housing**

- Increase supports to the Community Bridge initiative to prevent evictions
- Revisit and renew affordable housing agreements with other orders of government, implement a housing awareness campaign, and initiate a Centre of Excellence for social housing
- Research leading practices on housing design and innovation and raise awareness of the need for and right to affordable housing
- Establish a Community Development Corporation to invest in affordable housing and community economic development

**Accessible and Affordable Transit**

- Implement a low-income transit pass at 60% discount for eligible low-income transit customers
- Provide free passes for agencies to distribute to vulnerable youth and adults
- Conduct a feasibility study of the costs and opportunities of free public transportation for children under 12 years
- Evaluate Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) Late Night Owl Service and expand/improve service as appropriate for shift workers

**Affordable and Quality Child Care**

- Implement the Communities United initiative in five Edmonton communities
- Resource a new Early Learning and Care Steering Committee to guide the implementation of an integrated system and strategy for early learning and care in Edmonton
- Resource and grow the All in for Youth wrap-around initiative in five school sites

**Access to Mental Health & Addictions Services and Support**

- Resource the Edmonton Mental Health Steering Committee to implement the coordinated community mental health action plan
- Advance partnerships to support the implementation of the Edmonton Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Managed Alcohol Program
- Advocate to increase funding and access to mental health services and education including the expansion of full-service hours for multi-disciplinary mental health services
- Resource and grow the All In for Youth wrap-around initiative in five school sites

# Appendix I

## Nvivo Code Book

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Background of participants** | What participants were involved in before coming to EPE | 15 | 20 |
| **Core strategies of EPE** | The plan of action developed or being developed by EPE to achieve the vision and goal of ending poverty. | 1 | 2 |
| Building relationships (EPE collaboration with other organizations) | The organizations that EPE collaborate or partner with in working to end poverty in Edmonton. | 13 | 36 |
| Difficulties or challenges of collaboration and partnerships | The challenges of collaboration and issues emerging out such relationships. | 3 | 3 |
| **Framing strategies** | The mobilizing strategies or frames of EPE that help in building public resonance and connecting to the wider public. | 1 | 1 |
| How issues of poverty are framed | | 5 | 7 |
| local perception of poverty | Narratives about poverty in Edmonton | 5 | 7 |
| type of messages | Framing messages to connect to the heart and minds | 8 | 11 |
| **Governance structure** | The structure in place that guides or govern the work and operations of EPE. How that structure helps/supports the implementation of EPE vision. | 6 | 9 |
| Challenges/constraints | Perspectives about con | 8 | 11 |
| Lines of accountability | How is EPE accountable to people with lived experiences of poverty and the Edmontonian community in general. | 2 | 2 |
| Roles and responsibilities (Decision-making) | Clarity around roles and responsibilities | 4 | 11 |
| Strength of the structure | Regardless of the challenges, what is the strength of the governance structure | 3 | 3 |
| **Organizational strategies** | What EPE does as an organization in mobilizing resources/diverse groups to advance the work of ending poverty. | 1 | 1 |
| Advocacy | | 3 | 3 |
| Communication and engagement strategy | | 5 | 6 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial (funding) | | 8 | 9 |
| Leadership | | 8 | 18 |
| Representation of people with lived experiences | | 13 | 30 |
| Staffing (Institutional capacity) | | 8 | 16 |
| strategies for mobilizing | | 5 | 5 |
| **Roadmap strategies** | | 3 | 5 |
| Game changer strategies | Set of action priorities and game changers outlined by EPE to create the pathway of ending poverty. | 8 | 10 |
| outcomes and consequences of game changer strategies | Specific and plausible emerging outcomes of the game changers | 15 | 30 |
| What is lacking in the roadmap (limitations) | Shortcomings associated with the game changers | 8 | 17 |
| What roadmap strategies are working | | 2 | 2 |
| **Emergence and movement-building of EPE** | The process of coming into being of EPE and the intention to build a movement to end poverty. Participants description of underlying conditions, conversations, ideas etc. that contributed to the development of EPE. | 1 | 1 |
| How EPE movement is unfolding | Description of where EPE movement is now and where it is going. | 13 | 28 |
| what is lacking (limitations) | | 5 | 8 |
| what is working | | 1 | 1 |
| The idea of building a movement | Where the idea of building came from and the conversations around it. | 11 | 16 |
| Underlying conditions | The underlying conditions/factors that accounted for EPE emergence. | 10 | 14 |
| Underlying framework | | 2 | 2 |
| What does success in building a movement look like | How participants describe what EPE need or to be attentive to in building a movement. | 10 | 13 |
| what movement-building mean to participants | | 1 | 1 |
| **Factors or conditions that influence EPE** | The factors that influence or constrain the work of EPE and the actions or | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| | choices available to EPE to address the realities it is facing. | | |
| Demographic factors | | 4 | 6 |
| EPE and City municipal government relationship | | 14 | 20 |
| EPE identity, community support, and mobilizing | | 5 | 12 |
| Factors or conditions that constrain or impede | | 15 | 34 |
| Factors or conditions that facilitate | | 7 | 10 |
| How EPE fit into City, Provincial, Federal initiatives on poverty | | 7 | 13 |
| Interview experiences | How participants felt about the interview and/or shared 'extra' knowledge (perspective) about the work of EPE at the close of the interview | 2 | 2 |
| Motivation and incentives | What keeps or drives participants for doing the work they are doing | 8 | 11 |
| Prospects and challenges | What participants make of when they think about the task of ending poverty in Edmonton | 14 | 16 |

## Appendix J
## Government of Alberta Budget Estimates 2018 – 2021

| Comparison of 2018-21 Government of Alberta Budgets for Selected Programs | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **(thousands of dollars)** | | | | | |
| | 2018-19 Budget | 2019-20 Budget | 2020-21 Budget | Percentage Change of Budget 2019-20 from Budget 2018-19 | Percentage Change of Budget 2020-21 from Budget 2019-20 |
| **Expense by Function** | | | | | |
| **Social Services** | 5,922,000 | 6,304,000 | 6,211,000 | 6.5% | -1.5% |
| | | | | | |
| **Children's Services** | | | | | |
| **Child Intervention** | 826,184 | 871,376 | 867,069 | 5.5% | -0.5% |
| **Child Care** | 392,749 | 423,794 | 393,986 | 7.9% | -7.0% |
| **Early Intervention Services for Children and Youth** | 107,682 | 108,413 | 95,780 | 0.7% | -11.7% |
| **Alberta Child and Family Benefit**[1] | 175,000 | 179,000 | 275,500 | 2.3% | 53.9% |
| | 1,501,615 | 1,582,583 | 1,632,335 | 5.4% | 3.1% |
| **Community and Social Services** | | | | | |
| **Employment and Income Support** | 939,354 | 985,665 | 953,834 | 4.9% | -3.2% |
| **Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped** | 1,132,886 | 1,285,029 | 1,269,565 | 13.4% | -1.2% |
| **Disability Services** | 1,257,286 | 1,325,355 | 1,379,424 | 5.4% | 4.1% |
| **Homeless and Outreach Support Services** | 196,637 | 197,100 | 195,851 | 0.2% | -0.6% |

[1] The program was initially Alberta Child Benefit and Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit but got change as announced in Budget 2019 to Alberta Child and Family Benefit as a combined program

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community Supports and Family Safety** | 122,748 | 124,765 | 120,487 | 1.6% | -3.4% |
| | 3,648,911 | 3,917,914 | 3,919,161 | 7.4% | 0.0% |
| | | | | | |
| **Family, Social Supports and Housing** | | | | | |
| **Children's Services** | 1,529,440 | 1,598,176 | 1,648,136 | 4.5% | 3.1% |
| **Community and Social Services** | 3,723,574 | 3,948,026 | 3,948,452 | 6.0% | 0.0% |
| **Senior and Housing** | 690,196 | 708,705 | 727,971 | 2.7% | 2.7% |
| **Ministries Total Expenses** | 5,943,210 | 6,254,907 | 6,324,559 | 5.2% | 1.1% |