Multilevel Policy from the Municipal Perspective: A Pan-Canadian Survey

Jack Lucas and Alison Smith

February 11, 2019

Abstract

Building on in-depth case studies and extensive theory-building by Canadian multilevel governance scholars, this article identifies and describes multilevel policy involvement by federal, provincial, municipal, private, and NGO actors in three policy phases and eighteen policy domains that specifically involve local governments in Canada. Drawing from an original pan-Canadian survey of municipal mayors and councillors, we show that municipal politicians see multilevel policy involvement as remarkably prevalent across many policy domains. Using an original measure of multilevel policy involvement, we identify the policy domains in which policy involvement is most concentrated or fragmented and then describe the correlates of this measure. Multilevel policy involvement, we argue, is more clearly associated with policy phase and policy domain than with municipal population or region. We conclude with a discussion of implications for future research.

Public policy scholars with interests in the institutional dynamics of Canadian public policy have typically focused on the role of federal and provincial governments, and the relations between them, in the policy process (Bakvis and Skogstad 2012, Wallner 2014). In recent years, however, a combination of factors – relative quiet on the constitutional file, the heightened salience of "complex policy domains" in Canadian cities, new attention to Indigenous governance and reconciliation – has prompted a new interest in the role of other actors in the policy process, such as municipalities, private actors, Indigenous communities, and NGOs. While these actors are hardly new policy players in Canada, sustained academic attention to their role in public policy development and implementation has until recently been the preserve of a small number of pathbreaking scholars (Bradford 2002).

Nearly all of the work that has emerged from this new interest in the multilevel dynamics of Canadian policymaking has focused on case studies of policy domains in which multiple actors are clearly engaged in the policy process, such as immigrant settlement (Good 2009, R. M. Smith 2004, Tolley and Young 2011), emergency planning (Henstra 2013), or homelessness (Doberstein 2016, A. Smith 2016). What is less clear, at this point, is how these policy domains fit within the broader spectrum of activities in which non-constitutional actors such as municipalities are involved. Are these domains typical of other areas of policy? Is intensive involvement of multiple actors confined to a few high-profile domains, or is it distributed more evenly across a range of policy areas? Is it possible to describe multilevel policy involvement more systematically *across* policy domains?

Our goal in this article is to begin to address these questions. Drawing from a new survey of more than 1,000 mayors and councillors from municipalities across Canada, we provide a big-picture overview of multilevel policy involvement across eighteen policy domains that involve local governments to some extent.[1] We then distill our data into a novel measure of multilevel policy involvement, allowing for systematic comparison of multilevel policy dynamics across geography, phases of the policy process, and policy domains. These measures

1. The anonymized dataset and complete replication files are available at (link removed for review).

provide us with a valuable first look at multilevel policy involvement from the municipal point of view, and they point the way toward a large-scale comparative approach to multilevel governance in Canada.

1 Background

The study of institutions and public policy in Canada has traditionally focused on federal and provincial governments. Many of Canada's leading policy scholars have devoted themselves to the question of how policymaking works within federal and provincial governments, how the two levels of government interact, and how policy-making authority has been distributed between them. Well-established periodization schemes in the development of federal-provincial interaction and policy-making have given way to approaches that are more sensitive to the ways that federal-provincial interaction has evolved differently across policy domains. In most of this work, however – whether focused on identifying major "types" or "periods" of federalism at an aggregated level or on more disaggregated analysis of specific domains – federal and provincial governments loom large as the major institutional players in the analysis (Bakvis and Skogstad 2012, Schertzer 2015, Simeon 2002).

The tendency to focus on federal and provincial governments has in turn led scholars to examine policy areas that involve these governments, such as immigration, healthcare, and income security. When local actors such as municipalities and non-governmental organizations *are* mentioned in these studies of Canadian policy-making, if they are mentioned at all, they tend to enter the narrative as advocates or in the implementation phase. The constitutional position of Canadian municipalities as so-called "creatures of the provinces" plays a major role in these narratives; as Robert Young has written, local authorities are "a competence of the provincial governments...Provincial governments create them, regulate them, prescribe many of the policies they implement, and, not infrequently, eliminate them through amalgamation" (Young 2013: 1). This leads to a tendency to view municipalities, in

Martin Horak's words, as "policy takers, not policy makers, on the intergovernmental stage" (Horak and Young 2012: 350).

Yet, as both Horak and Young go on to argue, this constitutional picture is too simple to capture the realities of Canadian policymaking. Canadian municipalities are the sites of a vast array of complex policy files, some old and some new, which are characterized by input and involvement by actors outside the traditional federal-provincial nexus (Bradford 2005, H. Smith 2004). Of course, not all policy areas involve municipal governments (just as not all policy areas involve federal or provincial governments). But the lack of attention to the local perspective can lead to an incomplete picture of policy-making in Canada. Canadian municipal politicians have the capacity to leverage media profiles, electoral mandates, implementation responsibilities, and even infrastructure ownership (Sayers and Alcantara 2018) into a level of involvement in public policy issues that goes well beyond what one would expect from a "creature of the province." Within this context, the multilevel governance approach, which looks not just to formal jurisdiction but also to the complexities of actual policy involvement of state and non-state actors, is increasingly valuable for understanding public policy processes in Canada.

Multilevel governance research brings local and non-governmental actors directly into our understanding of Canadian policy-making. In policy areas where there is some degree of local involvement, Bradford explains the importance of the multilevel approach to policy and research. He writes, "in order to meet the policy challenges, new relations must be forged among the state, civil society, and the economy, and within the different branches and levels of government. These relations will be less hierarchical, more attuned to the needs and aspirations of diverse groups, and better able to use different forms of knowledge" (Bradford 2005: 12). Putting this perspective into a concise definition, Horak defines multilevel governance as, "a mode of policymaking that involves complex interactions among multiple levels of government and social forces" (Horak 2012: 339). Working from this definition, multilevel governance in this article refers not only to different levels of governments but

also to different sectors as well; these sectors, notably the private sector and the third sector, are generally conceived of as local (see Horak and Young 2012), but can also span scales or jurisdictions themselves.

Studies of multilevel governance have tended to focus on specific policy domains, such as climate change adaptation (Bauer and Steurer 2014) or emergency management (Henstra 2013). Outside Canada, a number of researchers have begun to develop measures of key features of multilevel governance, such as political authority, across countries and time. Led by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, these scholars have systematically tracked the evolving authority of substate governments in 42 countries over nearly 60 years. Their findings demonstrate careful attention to the details of each case while also identifying large-scale trends in the direction of increasing regional authority (Hooghe, Marks, and Schakel 2010). This attempt to systematically measure and compare core aspects of multilevel governance serves as a major source of inspiration for the approach that we develop here.

A second source of inspiration for our approach in this article is Martin Horak's framework for understanding multilevel governance in Canadian cities. In his informative and important concluding chapter to the 2012 edited volume *Sites of Governance,* Horak develops an exceptionally useful framework for understanding both the actors (federal, provincial, municipal, and "social forces") and the policy phases (policy advocacy, policy development, resource provision, and policy implementation) involved in multilevel governance processes. This framework enables a form of systematic mapping of multilevel governance that would previously have been lost amidst the complexity of multilevel governance. "One of the most striking aspects of multilevel governance in Canada's big cities," Horak concludes, "is the tremendous variety of forms it takes" (Horak and Young 2012: 341). In this article, we seek to build upon Horak's analysis to outline this variety of forms across an even larger array of policy domains and actors. We know that a number of actors are involved in policy areas such as climate change adaptation and immigrant settlement, but what about policy areas that are more traditionally considered local? Is the involvement of multiple actors only seen

in certain policy areas or in certain phases of the policy process?

To answer these questions, we adapt Horak's framework in this article in three main ways. First, we add one new actor to our survey (regional governments) and divide "social forces" into two new categories: private businesses and non-governmental organizations. This allows us to more precisely estimate the role of municipal governments (as distinguished from regional governments in some provinces) as well as the role of social forces in the policy process in Canadian municipalities. Second, we focus on just three of Horak's four phases of the policy process. We felt that our survey instrument and sampling frame (described below) would be better equipped to capture formal phases of the policy process (development, resource provision, and implementation), rather than the rather different aspects of policy agenda-setting and entrepreneurship associated with policy advocacy. Finally, to bring additional comparative data into Horak's analysis, we expand our focus beyond six important policy areas in Canada's big cities – the focus of the Horak analysis – to a larger list of eighteen policy domains and all Canadian municipalities above 5,000 population.

A final note on our framework and argument. Martin Horak has suggested that "academic definitions of multilevel governance often presuppose coordinated action. Yet the degree to which policy action is actually coordinated in multilevel governance varies widely" (2012: 339). While we agree with Horak, we do not address the extent to which actors at different levels and in different sectors are *coordinated* in their policy efforts in this article. Rather, we seek to explore, systematically and across an array of policy domains, the *involvement* of governmental and non-governmental actors in policy areas that involve local governments to some extent in the policy process.

2 Data and Methods

As we have suggested above, our goal in this article is to begin to outline large-scale comparative patterns of multilevel policy involvement in policy areas that involve local actors,

from the perspective of Canadian municipal politicians. Our approach is simple: ask municipal councillors and mayors from across Canada about their perceptions of multilevel policy involvement and report what they tell us. In this section, we outline the details and motivation of this research design, including the survey frame, our measure of multilevel policy involvement, and the strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

2.1 Sampling Frame and Respondents

Our findings are drawn from a survey of Canadian mayors and councillors. In March and April of 2018, we distributed a survey invitation by email to a population of 4,578 municipal mayors and councillors from across Canada. To compile the invitation list, we collected the publicly available email addresses for all mayors and councillors in municipalities above 5,000 population, using census subdivisions in Statistics Canada's 2016 census tables to identify our list of municipalities.[2] When email addresses were unavailable, we requested them directly from city clerks. In a handful of municipalities, officials did not respond to our request or (very rarely) refused to provide email addresses. Overall, however, our population list includes nearly every current municipal politician (well over 95 percent of the total) in Canadian municipalities above 5,000 population. We collected data from municipalities in all provinces and territories; because of a very small number of responses from the North, however (just seven completed surveys), we exclude the Territories from our analysis in this paper.

We chose to survey elected municipal politicians rather than other local actors – such as senior municipal administrators – for three main reasons. The first is practicality: while collecting the emails of 4,578 involved considerable effort, most of the email addresses that we needed were publicly accessible, making it possible to compile our list of respondents without contacting hundreds of individual municipalities with email address requests. The

2. This population threshold is arbitrary, but it is regularly used in Canada to exclude very small, rural, and remote municipalities from analysis. More focused research on the multilevel policy challenges of very small municipalities in Canada would, however, be valuable. See appendix A for more detail on the census subdivision types that were included in the survey.

same would not be true for chief administrative officers or other senior administrators, whose contact information is often much harder to access. Second, we felt that a survey of elected politicians across Canada would allow for comparability; unlike senior administrators whose roles and job titles vary considerably across municipalities, mayors and councillors are elected in broadly similar ways to serve broadly similar policy-making functions across Canada. This allowed us to probe the association between, say, population size and multilevel policy involvement without needing to add controls for the job titles and roles of our respondents. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, municipal politicians are important players in Canadian multilevel governance; the informal, ad hoc, and non-institutionalized patterns of intergovernmental interaction that often characterize multilevel governance in Canada mean that local politicians' perceptions provide a vital perspective on who is involved in multilevel policy processes (Bramwell 2014; Miller and Smart 2012; Leo and August 2009). In addition to the politician survey, however, we also received responses from 208 senior administrators whose email addresses were readily available in British Columbia; we compare these responses to those of our main respondent pool (elected politicians) in section 3.2 below.

A total of 1,084 elected politicians consented to participate in the survey, for an overall completion rate of 24 percent. As in many opt-in full-population elite surveys, we cannot know how representative our respondents are of the population from which they are drawn. We can, however, check for obvious sources of concern by comparing our respondents to the population on observable characteristics such as gender, province, and municipal size. While we have no reason to expect that some of these factors, such as gender, are related to opinions on multilevel policy involvement, we can gain confidence about the representativeness of our sample on *unobservable* characteristics of our respondents by comparing our sample to the population on characteristics that we *are* able to observe. Table 1 provides an outline of these comparisons. Our respondents are very similar to the population from which they are drawn along most observable dimensions, including gender and municipal population. Quebec respondents are somewhat overrepresented in our data than in the population, and

Ontario politicians are slightly underrepresented; Online Appendix F thus reports regional breakdowns of our key results to confirm that the findings we report are not driven by the Quebec respondents.[3] While caution is always in order in non-random elite survey research, the distributions in table 1, combined with the neutral tone of the survey questions themselves, provides little reason to doubt that our results are broadly representative of the views of Canadian municipal politicians.

Table 1: **Comparison of Sampling Frame and Respondents**

	Sampling Frame	Respondents
Gender		
Men	67%	64%
Women	33%	36%
Province		
Alberta	14%	16%
British Columbia	11%	8%
Manitoba	4%	3%
New Brunswick	3%	2%
Newfoundland	2%	3%
Nova Scotia	5%	5%
Nunavut	0%	0%
Northwest Territories	0%	0%
Ontario	30%	26%
Prince Edward Island	1%	0%
Quebec	28%	35%
Saskatchewan	2%	2%
Yukon	0%	0%
Population		
1st Quartile	24%	26%
2nd Quartile	25%	25%
3rd Quartile	25%	25%
4th Quartile	26%	24%

2.2 Policy Issues

As noted above, our goal was to move beyond areas of urban policymaking in which multilevel governance is prominent – such as climate change policy or infrastructure – to outline broader patterns of policy involvement across a wider array of local policy tasks. To assemble our preliminary list, we collected all major reference texts and textbooks on Canadian

3. The appendix also notes a few policy domains in which multilevel policy involvement in Quebec appears somewhat distinctive relative to other regions in Canada.

municipal politics and policy, compiled a list of policy tasks in which Canadian local governments were described as being at least peripherally involved, and then refined the list to exclude education policy (in which school boards, rather than municipalities, are the most important local actor) and issues that we considered too vague to be interpreted consistently by respondents (such as "municipal development"). We then further refined the list by selecting at least one policy area from each broader policy domain (such as "policing" from the larger domain of "protective services"). This helped to narrow down the list of possibilities, but hard choices remained; we would have liked to include many other issues in the survey – fire protection, sewage collection and treatment, public libraries, airports, and many others – but had to balance comprehensiveness against the challenge of lengthening what was already a lengthy and demanding survey. Our approach was thus to ensure that at least one issue was included from each general *area* of municipal policy (excluding sewage collection but keeping solid waste and water supply; excluding fire protection but keeping policing; excluding public libraries but keeping culture and the arts) and that we covered as many broad areas as possible. While our resulting list is by no means fully comprehensive, it includes a wide range of policy issues, covers a mix of "bread and butter" municipal policy alongside more complex policy domains, and includes many of the policy issues that we believe are salient in local communities across Canada.[4]

Table 2: **Policy Issues Included in Survey**

Climate change policy	Land use planning and regulation
Culture and the arts	Parks and recreation
Economic development	Policing
Electricity and Natural Gas Supply	Poverty reduction
Emergency planning	Public health
Homelessness	Public transit
Housing	Roads, Bridges, and Highways
Immigrant settlement	Solid waste (collection and disposal)
Indigenous relations / indigenous affairs	Water supply

4. Because our own research has been focused primarily on large Canadian cities, we also interviewed a city councillor in a small Ontario municipality to ensure that our list was intuitive, reasonably comprehensive, and did not neglect issues that are particular to smaller places.

Even after this fairly stringent winnowing-down process, asking our respondents to provide detailed phase-by-phase, actor-by-actor, domain-by-domain detail on a list of eighteen policy issues would have made for a long and tedious survey and very low response and completion rates. We therefore asked each respondent about a random draw of half of the issues in the list. This approach reduced our total pool of respondents for each issue in the dataset, but it allowed us to gather data about a much larger overall list of policy issues. Given our interest in broad patterns of involvement across a large array of issues, we believe this tradeoff was well worth making.

2.3 Survey Structure and Questions

Following directly from Martin Horak's framework, our survey was divided into three major parts: policy development, resource provision, and policy implementation. In each part, we provided a very brief preface and a clear, short, and easily visible definition of the relevant policy phase.[5] We then asked respondents to identify, for each actor (municipal, regional, provincial, federal, private, NGO) and policy domain, how involved the actor was in that particular policy phase. Because the existence and structure of regional and county government structures vary widely across Canada, we allowed respondents to skip the regional question if it was inapplicable to their local circumstances.[6] We provide the full question texts in Appendix A.

In addition to each respondent's responses in the survey, we matched a number of contextual and demographic variables for each respondent, all of which were collected by the research team while compiling the initial email address lists. These include the respon-

5. For instance, the preface for policy development was: "Academic researchers often divide public policy responsibility in Canada into three phases: (1) Policy development, (2) Resource provision, (3) Policy implementation. Public policy development is defined as **the process of deciding on a course of action in a policy area.**" See appendix A for more detail on survey questions.

6. In a pan-Canadian survey, these institutional questions are bound to create some awkward cases, such as the case of regional governance along with borough-level administration in Montreal. While our data suggest that Montreal respondents were able to answer our questions despite the complexity of their regional institutions, we note this here as an acknowledgement that the municipal/regional distinction, while useful as broad pan-Canadian categories, are likely to obscure as much as they reveal in some specific instances in Canada.

dent's province and municipality, their position (mayor or councillor), their municipality's population (2016 census), and the respondent's gender.

2.4 Measuring Multilevel Policy Involvement

The basic raw data provided by our respondents is a series of 162 distinct judgments about the level of involvement of each actor in each phase of each of the nine policy domains to which they were randomly assigned. While these "raw" judgments are very valuable and informative on their own, we also want to use them to map overall levels of multilevel policy involvement within distinct domains and policy phases. To do so requires a measure that captures the extent to which multiple actors are perceived to be involved in a particular phase of the policy process. If respondents' involvement scores indicate that multiple actors are involved in a policy domain, this should produce a higher multilevel involvement score than if respondents indicate that just one actor is involved in a specific domain.

Intuitively, then, most multilevel governance scholars operate on the assumption that policy domains in which one actor is primarily or exclusively involved should receive a low score in a multilevel policy index, and domains in which several actors are equally involved should receive a high score in such an index. The first situation might be characterized as one in which policy involvement is "concentrated" in a single actor, while the second situation is one in which policy involvement is "fragmented" across several actors. We therefore use a well known measure of market concentration, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), to capture the concentration or fragmentation of actors' involvement in a particular policy domain. Since the HHI captures the *concentration* of a market, we take the complement of the HHI as our measure of multilevel policy involvement. A high score on our index, which we will call the "Multilevel Policy Involvement Index" (MPII), indicates a more fragmented involvement "market" in a policy domain, while a lower score indicates that involvement is more concentrated in a smaller number of actors. We describe the MPII in more detail, as well as the exact process by which we calculated it, in Appendix B.

3 Findings

We begin with the "leaders table." Table 3 displays the actor or actors with the highest mean involvement score for each policy domain and phase. In cases in which one actor was clearly predominant in the involvement scores, we have included just one actor; in all other cases we have included the two most prominent actors.[7] A few features of the data are immediately apparent in the table. First, local elected officials appear to see considerably more variation across *domains* than across policy *phases*: in all but two cases, the most important actor in a policy domain is consistent across all three phases. Whether this pattern reflects our respondents' lack of familiarity with the distinction among the three phases, a genuine pattern of consistent policy involvement across phases, or – as we suspect – some combination of the two, the variation across policy domains is clearly more obvious in the table than is variation across policy phases.

A second notable pattern in the table is the dominance of municipal government: municipalities are seen as the most important actor in more than half of the cells in the table. Given that our policy domains were deliberately selected from among those in which local governments are often involved, and given that our respondents are elected municipal officials, this municipal dominance is hardly surprising. More interesting, perhaps, are the instances in the table in which the municipality does *not* dominate. In electricity and natural gas supply, housing, public health, and poverty reduction, it is the province that is seen as most important, reflecting the particular importance of Canadian provinces in areas of social, health, and energy policy. In three domains, local officials see the federal government as most important: climate change policy, immigrant settlement policy, and Indigenous relations / Indigenous affairs. Given considerable recent interest in tri-level and federal-municipal interaction in Canadian multilevel governance (Young 2006), these domains figure very prominently in recent Canadian research on multilevel governance and Canadian urban policy. We must remember, however that it is the *distinctiveness* of these domains rela-

7. See online Appendix D for complete results by phase and policy domain.

Table 3: **Most Important Actors, By Domain and Phase**

	Development	Resource Provision	Implementatio
Climate Change Policy	Federal	Federal	Federal
	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Culture and Arts	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	NGO	NGO	Provincial
Economic Development	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Regional	Regional	Regional
Electricity and Gas	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Emergency Planning	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Regional	Regional	Regional
Homelessness	Provincial	NGO	Provincial
	NGO	Provincial	NGO
Housing	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
	Regional	Municipal	Municipal
Immigrant Settlement	Federal	Federal	Federal
	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Indigenous Relations	Federal	Federal	Federal
	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Parks and Recreation	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
Public Health	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Planning	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Regional	Regional	Regional
Police	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Poverty Reduction	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
	NGO	NGO	NGO
Public Transit	Provincial	Municipal	Municipal
	Municipal	Provincial	Provincial
Roads, Bridges, Highways	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Provincial	Provincial	Provincial
Solid Waste	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Regional	Regional	Regional
Water Supply	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal

tive to the others, rather than their representativeness of urban multilevel governance more generally, that makes them interesting for multilevel governance scholars.

This leaves just one domain - homelessness - in which the most important actor is not a government but instead the non-governmental sector (community associations, charities, and religious organizations). Together with arts and culture and poverty reduction, local elected officials see NGOs as playing an important role in the homelessness sector, including in resource provision. These results reflect the distinctive role of non-governmental actors in social policy and cultural domains in Canadian municipalities (A. Smith 2018). While federal and provincial governments are clearly involved in homelessness policy in a number of very important ways, such as funding the construction of affordable housing, providing income supports, and administering mental health policy, these interventions may be seen as indirect by local politicians. Indeed, from the municipal perspective, they may not be "seen" by politicians at all; many local councillors and mayors may not be fully aware of the many *indirect* ways federal and provincial actors are involved in homelessness policy. In this sense, this finding is noteworthy; even local politicians may be unaware of the complexities of who is doing what in some of the most multilevel policy files, such as homelessness. On the other hand, NGOs may also be perceived to be playing a more *direct* role in homelessness policy in terms of meeting the immediate needs of the homeless through service provision, fundraisers and advocacy.[8]

Given the consistency of the "winners" across phases in table 3, it is informative to collapse the three phases into a single measure to understand each actor's most important policy roles as perceived by local officials. Table 4 provides a list of the top five policy domains for each actor, along with the average level of involvement for those domains. Overall, municipal officials perceive governments – whether, municipal, regional, provincial, or federal – as the key players in nearly all of the policy domains in the survey. For private actors and NGOs, even the most high-involvement policy areas only rise to the average level

8. Note that overall involvement scores in homelessness were low. Our respondents marked NGOs as most involved in homelessness, but even so, NGOs were only considered somewhat involved.

Table 4: **Top Five Policy Domains By Actor**

1. Municipal Gov.	**Involvement**	**4. Federal Gov.**	**Involvement**
Planning	Very	Indigenous Relations	Very
Parks and Recreation	Very	Climate Change	Very
Water Supply	Very	Immigrant Settlement	Somewhat
Roads, Bridges, Highways	Very	Economic Development	Somewhat
Solid Waste	Very	Roads, Bridges, Highways	Somewhat
2. Regional / County Gov.	**Involvement**	**5. Private Businesses**	**Involvement**
Planning	Very	Economic Development	Somewhat
Solid Waste	Very	Arts and Culture	Somewhat
Emergency Planning	Very	Electricity and Gas Supply	Somewhat
Economic Development	Very	Housing	Somewhat
Roads, Bridges, Highways	Very	Solid Waste	Somewhat
3. Provincial Gov.	**Involvement**	**6. NGOs**	**Involvement**
Public Health	Very	Arts and Culture	Somewhat
Roads, Bridges, Highways	Very	Poverty Reduction	Somewhat
Climate Change	Very	Homelessness	Somewhat
Electricity and Natural Gas	Very	Housing	Somewhat
Economic Development	Very	Immigrant Settlement	Somewhat

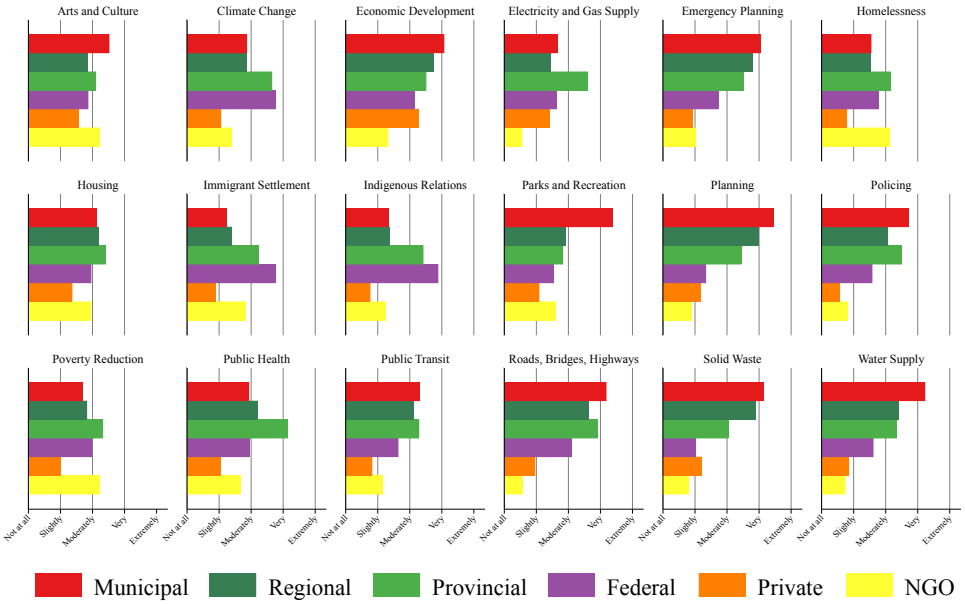
of "somewhat" involved in our responses. By comparing across the six lists, we also get a first glimpse of the multilevel picture: planning, for instance, is on both the municipal and regional lists; economic development appears in the regional, federal, and private lists; and roads appears on the lists of all four government actors. These initial patterns highlight the domain-specific character of multilevel involvement – that is, the changing shape of multilevel policy involvement *across* policy domains – a feature to which we will return in our analysis below.

3.1 Multilevel Policy Involvement: A Descriptive Summary

Figure 1 allows us to dig deeper into the data, surveying the average level of perceived involvement for each actor across each of the eighteen policy domains in the dataset. As in table 4 above, we have collapsed the three phases into a single measure in this figure.

Figure 1 contains a wealth of domain-level detail about multilevel policy involvement in Canada. We will restrict ourselves here to a few notable patterns. The first pattern to notice in figure 1 is the simple *presence* of multilevel governance across all of the policy domains

Figure 1: **Policy Involvement Scores by Domain and Actor**



in the dataset. In fully one third of our policy domains, respondents rank all six actors as at least "slightly" involved, and in all but three domains, five or more actors are at least "slightly" involved. This consistent multilevel policy involvement is even clearer when we restrict our attention to the four government actors, the top four bars in each of the graphs: every level of government is perceived to be at least slightly involved in *all* of the policy domains in our dataset. From the perspective of municipal politicians, at least, multilevel involvement in public policy issues is not a rare bird, appearing only in the context of high-profile and complex policy problems. It is also readily apparent to municipal politicians in bread and butter policy domains like parks and recreation, economic development, and public transit.

The relative absence of private businesses and corporations from figure 1 – that is, the relatively small size of the orange bar in most of the subgraphs – is also notable. Private businesses and corporations rise to the level of "moderate" involvement in just one instance, economic development, and are considered to be at least "slightly" involved in fewer than half of our policy domains. While there may be an important distinction to make between

the involvement of private business leaders or local elites and actual private businesses and corporations – our survey asked about the latter, not the former – the common argument that local and urban policy making is dominated by private businesses and property developers is not a view that is widely shared by elected municipal politicians in Canada. Indeed, in two thirds of the policy domains in our dataset, our respondents believe nongovernmental organizations, such as charities and nonprofits, to be more involved than private businesses, and in all but one domain (economic development), each of the four levels of government are seen as more involved than private businesses.[9]

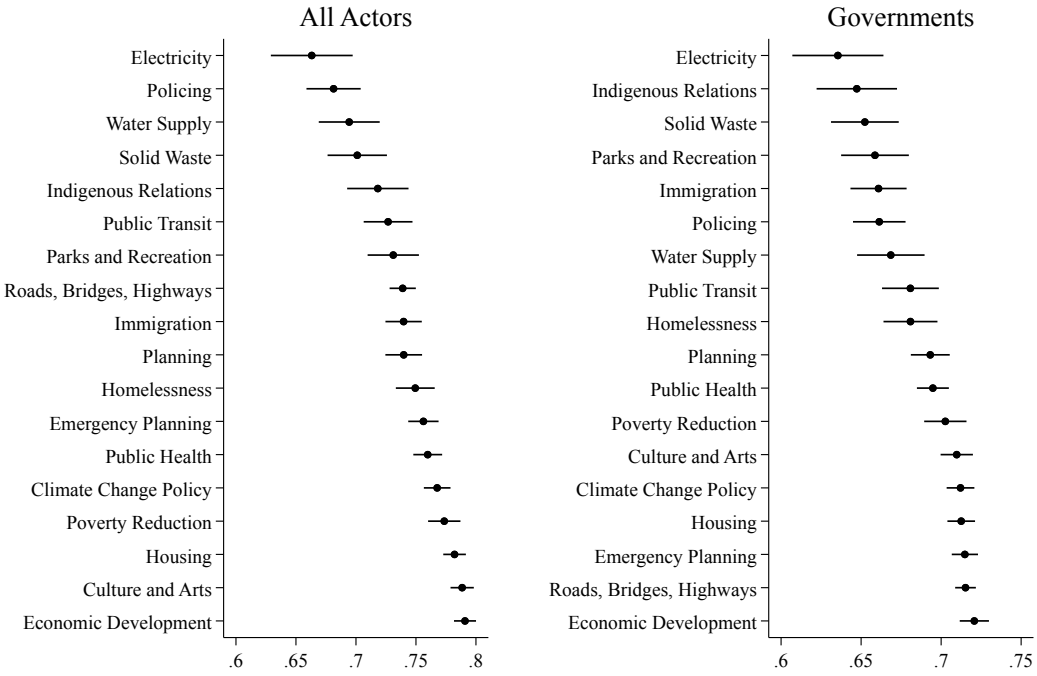
3.2 Multilevel Policy Involvement Index Scores

While figure 1 provides a useful overview of perceived involvement by policy domain, it does not lend itself to ready overall comparison of multilevel governance across the eighteen domains. We therefore turn now to the multilevel policy involvement index (MPII) described above – our measure of multilevel policy involvement for each of the eighteen domains. Figure 2 provides an overview of the MPII scores for each policy domain. The plot on the left-hand side of the figure provides an overview of MPII scores for each policy domain when all six actors, including private businesses and NGOs, are included in the calculation; the plot on the right-hand side of the figure provides MPII scores when only governments (municipal, regional, provincial, federal) are included in the analysis. We have included the "only governments" plot alongside the "all actors" plot for two reasons: to illustrate, by way of comparison with the "all actors" plot, the domains in which involvement by non-governmental actors tends to produce higher MPII scores, and also to identify policy domains which may not involve substantial non-governmental involvement but which nevertheless involve high amounts of *intergovernmental* policy involvement. Recall that the MPII score reflects the extent to which a single actor dominates the involvement scores in a particular

9. Our analysis suggests that local politicians are also more uncertain about the role of private businesses in local policymaking than any of the other actors. For more detail, see our analysis of "Don't Know" responses in Appendix E.

policy domain; higher scores reflect more fragmented involvement across actors and thus a higher amount of multilevel policy involvement in the domain. Each circle in the figure is a point estimate of the MPII score for the domain; the black lines are 95 percent confidence intervals.[10]

Figure 2: **MPII Scores: All Actors and Only Governments**



Perhaps the most important observation to draw from figure 2, in keeping with the discussion above, is the simple *presence* of multilevel policy involvement across all of the domains in our analysis. In the figure on the left, the index ranges from a theoretical low of zero (in which one actor receives all of the involvement points and every other actor is seen as "not at all involved") to a high of 0.83 (a case in which each of the six actors receives precisely

10. Some readers may notice that standard errors are larger for some issues than others; the issues with the largest standard errors are electricity, waste, water, and Indigenous relations. In each case, this is caused by a very small number of respondents who identify just one actor as involved in the policy domain, producing an MPII score of zero. In three domains, these responses appear to be plausible, if perhaps extreme: only provincial governments in electricity (two respondents, one from Quebec and one from Nova Scotia); only municipal governments in waste and water supply (one in waste, from Ontario; two in water supply, also from Ontario). In only one case – one respondent from Alberta who indicated that municipal governments are the only actor involved in Indigenous relations – do these responses appear to have originated in error or misunderstanding on the part of the respondent.

the same amount of involvement points); in the figure on the right, the index ranges from zero to 0.75.[11] Given these ranges, what is clear in both figures is that multilevel governance scores are universally high; even the lowest scores on both figures, for electricity and natural gas supply, are far closer to the top end of the theoretical range than the bottom. As we have observed above, our respondents see all actors as being at least somewhat involved in nearly all of the policy domains in the dataset.

Within the general context of high overall multilevel policy involvement scores, however, figure 2 also reveals some interesting variation. Policy domains in which one actor is perceived as dominant, such as electricity and natural gas (provincial government) or water supply (municipal government), receive significantly lower multilevel scores when compared to areas in which involvement is more evenly distributed across actors, such as housing and economic development. Most of the policy domains with high overall MPII scores will come as little surprise to Canadian multilevel governance scholars: domains such as climate change, poverty reduction, economic development, and housing have long been viewed as key cases in the study of multilevel governance. However, the figure also reveals other domains, such as arts and culture policy, in which high involvement by multiple actors suggests the potential, at least, for multilevel policy challenges that have thus far gone largely unnoticed by multilevel governance scholars.

Since our general approach to multilevel policy involvement includes both governments *and* non-governmental sectors, comparing the "All Actors" plot to the "Governments" plot in figure 2 provides an additional useful perspective on the MPII scores. In some cases, such as electricity (at the bottom end) and economic development (at the top), a policy domain's position in the overall ranking is relatively unchanged, indicating that these domains are more or less "multilevel" regardless of whether we focus on governments alone or on governments as well as private actors and nongovernmental organizations. In several other cases, however, we see distinct movement up or down the overall order. In the cases of immigration and parks

11. The range of the Herfindahl-Hirschman index is from 1/N to 1; the MPII index is the complement of this score.

and recreation, the policy domain becomes much *less* multilevel when we exclude businesses and NGOs from consideration and focus on governments alone. For these domains, overall MPII scores are driven by high levels of involvement from the NGO sector but a single government (municipal for parks and recreation, federal for immigration) is perceived to be dominant within the governmental portion of the involvement scores. In other cases, the opposite is true: excluding businesses and NGOs from the calculation makes water supply somewhat more multilevel and roads, bridges, and highways much more multilevel: so much so, in fact, that it appears at the very top of the governments plot. While businesses and NGOs are seen as relatively unimportant in this domain, infrastructure spending by Canadian governments at all levels, combined with more quotidian arrangements relating to municipal, regional, and provincial road and highway systems across Canada, make this policy domain distinctly multilevel in character when our focus is on patterns of involvement among Canadian governments.

As we have noted above, these results reflect *perceptions* about policy involvement on the part of 1,084 municipal elected officials across Canada. But how distinctive are these perceptions? Since municipal politicians may have less expertise and experience compared to other local actors, such as senior municipal administrators, do their perceptions reliably capture a "municipal" perspective on multilevel policy involvement? Additional research is necessary to fully answer this question, but a preliminary answer is available to us based on survey responses from 208 senior administrators in the Province of British Columbia who also completed our survey.[12] Comparing MPII scores for these senior administrators against those of elected officials in municipalities of similar size suggests that municipal politicians generally do *not* differ in systematic ways from their non-elected municipal counterparts. In a few instances – such as economic development and public transit – elected officials tend to see particular actors as more involved in the policy process than do senior administrators, but these differences are more the exception than the rule. These findings, which we discuss

12. Unlike in most other provinces, where contact information for senior administrators is very difficult to compile, email addresses for these officials were available on the CivicInfoBC website.

in more detail in appendix G, give us additional reason to believe that our results reflect a broader municipal perspective on multilevel policy involvement in Canada.

3.3 Correlates of MPII Scores

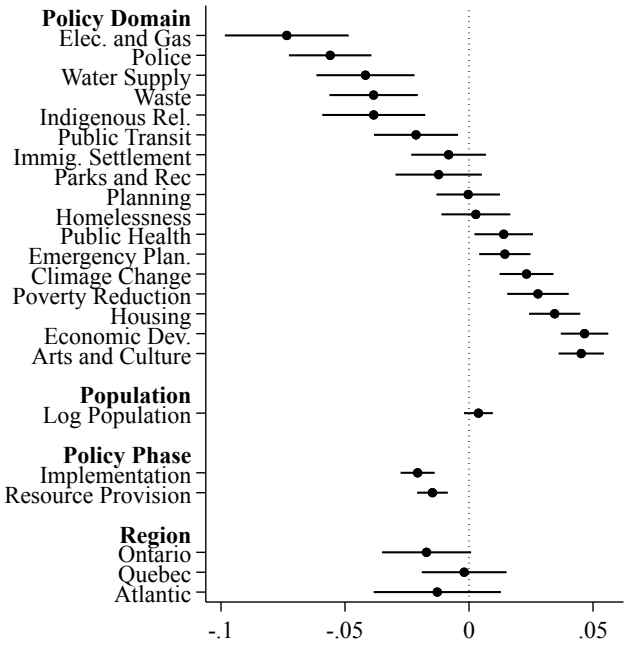
Thus far, we have described key actors and roles for each of the policy domains in the dataset and surveyed overall patterns of multilevel governance across domains. But none of the tables or figures above have incorporated the full range of variation in MPII scores within our data: variation across policy domains, phases of the policy process, regions, and municipal populations. We therefore conclude with a brief analysis of the correlates of MPII scores in our dataset.

Our dependent variable in the analysis that follows is the MPII score, calculated respondent-by-respondent for every domain-actor-phase combination in the survey. These scores are distributed across the full theoretical range of the index, from zero (in which a respondent identified just one actor as involved in a domain) to 0.83 (cases in which a respondent gave each actor exactly the same involvement score). Most scores, however, are concentrated between 0.7 and 0.8.[13] Our independent variables are four basic contextual factors that are potentially related to multilevel policy involvement: the policy domain, the policy phase, the population of the respondent's municipality (logged), and the respondent's region (West, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic). Because we draw multiple judgments from each respondent, we report standard errors clustered by respondent. For additional detail on the analysis, along with alternative specifications and robustness tests, please see Appendix C.

Figure 3 provides a summary of the results of the regression analysis. While the population coefficient is positive, it is not statistically significant at conventional levels and its substantive size is small. The same is true of the regional coefficients; while perceived multilevel involvement is lower in Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada when compared to Western Canada, the base category, these coefficients are substantively small and not

13. MPII scores are thus strongly left skewed. We discuss this in more detail and provide further analysis in appendix C below.

Figure 3: **Correlates of MPII Scores**



(OLS, standard errors clustered by respondent)

statistically significant.

Both policy domain and policy phase, on the other hand, are clearly patterned and statistically significant. Policy implementation and resource provision are associated with lower MPII scores than policy development, the base category. These differences are subtle – a shift of a little more than one fifth of one standard deviation in MPII score – but very stable across alternative specifications. Much the same is true of policy phase variables; relative to the base category with average overall MPII scores (roads, bridges, and highways), some domains, such as economic development, are consistently higher, while others, such as electricity and natural gas, are consistently lower. These differences are both statistically and substantively significant: the difference between the estimates for electricity and economic development is a full standard deviation in MPII score.

What these findings mean, practically speaking, is that policy-related variables appear to be much more useful for predicting MPII scores than region or population variables. While perceptions of multilevel policy involvement may vary somewhat across municipalities and

regions, the variation is much more pronounced across policy phases and especially policy domains. Variation in multilevel policy involvement appears to be primarily a domain-by-domain story.

4 Discussion

According to our respondents, multilevel policy involvement is surprisingly pervasive: on average, nearly every actor is seen to be at least minimally involved in every policy domain in our dataset. Even in the case of policy areas that we tend to see as exclusively local, such as parks and recreation or solid waste, every actor is seen to have a small but significant role in public policymaking. These findings suggest that there is room for comparative research by multilevel governance scholars on a much wider range of public policy domains than we tend to assume, ranging from well-established "complex" policy files, such as housing or climate change, through to more "bread and butter" policy domains like policing or water supply.

Still, our MPII scores do vary: there are higher levels of multilevel policy involvement in some policy areas than others. Unsurprisingly, bread and butter local issues *do* receive consistently lower MPII scores than their more complex cousins, such as poverty reduction, housing, and climate change policy. These findings serve to bolster the face validity of the index itself, while also serving to validate the work of Canadian multilevel governance scholars who have focused on these policy domains as areas of substantial and pervasive multilevel policy action.

These findings might be interpreted in several ways. On one hand, local political actors may be encouraged by these results, which appear to demonstrate that, for municipal elected officials at least, municipal governments are involved in a wide range of policy activities in their local communities. With municipalities identified as most involved in ten of eighteen policy domains, including emergency planning, culture and arts, and public transit, munic-

ipalities are clearly major players in vital areas of public policymaking in Canada. Anyone who ignores municipalities, one might argue, is missing a good bit of the action in major areas of Canadian public policy.

Another interpretation of these findings, however, is that Canadian local governments are in fact merely one weak voice in the chorus, even in areas of public policy that are traditionally understood to be central to municipal policymaking in Canada. If municipal actors perceive other public and private actors as "somewhat" or even "very" involved in their core areas of public policy, this may point to a sense that nothing is really "owned" by municipal elected officials alone. While this finding may not be bad news for multilevel governance scholars, it may be interpreted negatively by municipal politicians looking to carve out some scope for meaningful policymaking in their communities.

If our findings suggest that Canadian multilevel governance scholars might usefully expand the list of policy domains they study, we have also discovered that the list of municipalities in which multilevel policy involvement occurs is also longer than we might have expected. Elected officials in municipalities big and small tended to see multilevel policy involvement very similarly: as we have noted above, the difference in MPII scores across municipal populations is both substantively small and, in most specifications, statistically indistinguishable from zero. In contrast to "first-generation" research on Canadian multilevel governance (Bradford and Bramwell 2014, Horak and Young 2012), which tended to assume that multilevel governance is a distinctively big city phenomenon, our pan-Canadian survey demonstrates that, at the very least, local elected officials perceive multiple actors as *involved* in the public policy process across municipalities of all sizes.

Much the same is true of Canadian regions. Despite regional differences in political culture, provincial and municipal policy capacity, and provincial-municipal relations, responses were barely distinguishable from one region to another. Not only does this serve to illustrate that multilevel policy involvement is the norm, rather than the exception, across Canada, it also points to the need for increased research that adopts a domain-oriented rather than

region-oriented view of public policy processes (Lucas 2017, Wallner 2014). To understand how multilevel policy processes work in Canada, and how they vary, our findings suggest that we would do well to focus first on *policy domains* rather than municipal population size or regional variation.

5 Conclusion

Our work in this article stands on the shoulders of Canadian multilevel governance scholars, such as Neil Bradford and Martin Horak, who established the concepts and frameworks with which to begin to systematically examine the seemingly impenetrable complexity of multilevel policy processes. Our analysis contributes to this research by expanding the analysis beyond a small group of policy domains and cities; using a survey of more than 1,000 elected officials from municipalities across Canada, we have identified patterns of multilevel policy involvement across three policy phases and eighteen policy domains involving local government and measured those patterns using a new index of multilevel policy involvement. We have discovered that multilevel policy involvement is more pervasive than expected, and that this multilevel policy involvement varies much more distinctly by domain and policy phase than by municipal size and region.

These findings represent the beginning, not the end, of a more wide-ranging analysis of Canadian multilevel governance. Above all, we need to extend the analysis to actual multilevel *interaction*, rather than mere perceptions of policy involvement. Why does multilevel policy involvement produce shared governance arrangements and intergovernmental interaction in some domains but not in others? Are patterns of intergovernmental interaction more regionally distinct than patterns of raw involvement? These are important questions, and the patterns that we have identified will help to identify appropriate cases with which to answer them.

We also need to know more about perceptions of multilevel involvement and interaction

among other actors in the multilevel system. Surveys of elected and appointed officials at the provincial and federal levels, along with surveys of Canadian NGOs and businesses, would usefully supplement the responses from local elected officials that we have supplied here. Identifying the relevant population among these other actors is somewhat more difficult than in the case of municipal elected officials, but we believe that the patterns we have identified here, in combination with more qualitative research on multilevel interaction, may help to clarify who should be surveyed at other levels of government and in the private and not for profit sectors.

Canadian multilevel policymaking takes a variety of forms, some of them surprising. Our goal in this article has been to identify patterns within this variety. We hope that these findings will enable future work on multilevel policy involvement from other non-municipal perspectives, as well as more focused research on intergovernmental interaction, multilevel institutions and venues, and the responsiveness and effectiveness of Canadian multilevel policymaking.

References

Bakvis, Herman, and Grace Skogstad, eds. 2012. *Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy.* 3rd Editio. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Bauer, Anja, and Reinhard Steurer. 2014. "Multi-level governance of climate change adaptation through regional partnerships in Canada and England." *Geoforum* 51:121–129.

Bradford, Neil. 2002. *Why Cities Matter:Policy Research Perspectives for Canada.* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

———. 2005. *Place-based public policy: towards a new urban and community agenda for Canada.* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Bradford, Neil, and Allison Bramwell. 2014. *Governing Urban Economies: Innovation and Inclusion in Canadian City Regions.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bramwell, Allison. 2014. "The Politics of Coalition Building in a Deindustrializing City: Linkages, Leadership, and Agendas in Hamilton." In *Governing Urban Economies: Innovation and Inclusion in Canadian City Regions,* 110–135. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Doberstein, Carey. 2016. *Building a Collaborative Advantage: Network Governance and Homelessness Policy-Making in Canada.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Good, Kristin. 2009. *Municipalities and Multiculturalism: The Politics of Immigration in Toronto and Vancouver.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Henstra, Daniel, ed. 2013. *Multilevel Governance and Emergency Management in Canadian Municipalities.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks, and Arjan H Schakel. 2010. *The Rise of Regional Authority: A Comparative Study of 42 Democracies.* London: Routledge.

Horak, Martin. 2012. "Multilevel Governance in Toronto: Success and Failure in Canada's Largest City." In *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities,* 228–262. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Horak, Martin, and Robert Young, eds. 2012. *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Leo, Christopher, and Martine August. 2009. "The Multilevel Governance of Immigration and Settlement: Making Deep Federalism Work." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42 (2): 491–510.

Lucas, Jack. 2017. "Patterns of urban governance: A sequence analysis of long-term institutional change in six canadian cities." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 39 (1): 68–90.

Miller, Byron, and Alan Smart. 2012. "Calgary in the Multilevel Governance Drama." In *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities,* 26–52. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Sayers, Anthony, and Christopher Alcantara. 2018. "Repowering the State: Linking Physical Assets to State Power." Unpublished manuscript.

Schertzer, Robert. 2015. "Intergovernmental Relations in Canada's Immigration System: From Bilateralism towards Multilateral Collaboration." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 48 (2): 383–412. ISSN: 17449324.

Simeon, Richard. 2002. *Political Science and Federalism: Seven Decades of Scholarly Engagement.* Kingston: Queen's University Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.

Smith, Alison. 2016. "Filling the Gap: Cities and the Fight Against Homelessness in Canada." PhD Diss., Université de Montreal.

———. 2018. "Mirror Image: The Fight Against Homelessness in Calgary and Montreal." In *Accountability and Responsiveness at the Municipal Level: Views from Canada.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Smith, Heather. 2004. *The Evolving Relationship between Immigrant Settlement and Neighbourhood Disadvantage in Canadian Cities, 1991-2001.* Vancouver: Vancouver Centre of Excellence.

Smith, Rogers M. 2004. "Identities, Interests, and the Future of Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (02). ISSN: 1537-5927.

Tolley, Erin, and Robert Young, eds. 2011. *Immigrant Settlement Policy in Canadian Municipalities.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Wallner, Jennifer. 2014. *Learning to School: Federalism and Public Schooling in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Young, Robert. 2006. "Open Federalism and Canadian Municipalities." In *Open Federalism: Interpretations, Significance,* 7–24. Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.

———. 2013. "Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities: Reflections on Research Results." In *The Politics of Multilevel Governance: Canadian Political Science Association.* Victoria.

Appendix A Survey Questions and Sampling Frame

Following directly from Martin Horak's framework, our survey was divided into three major parts: policy development, resource provision, and policy implementation. In each part, we provided a very brief preface and a clear and easily visible definition of the relevant policy phase. These three prefaces were as follows:

- Part One: Public Policy Development. Academic researchers often divide public policy responsibility in Canada into three phases: (1) Policy development, (2) Resource provision, (3) Policy implementation. Public policy development is defined as **the process of deciding on a course of action in a policy area**.
- Part Two: Resource Provision. Academic researchers often divide public policy responsibility in Canada into three phases: (1) Policy development, (2) Resource provision, (3) Policy implementation. Resource provision is defined as **providing resources for a particular policy area, such as funding, land and other assets, and policy expertise**.
- Part Three: Policy implementation. Academic researchers often divide public policy responsibility in Canada into three phases: (1) Policy development, (2) Resource provision, (3) Policy implementation. Policy implementation is defined as **responsibility for actual execution or implementation in a public policy area**.

For each part, we then asked a series of questions by actor for each of the nine randomly assigned domains, as follows:

- How involved is your MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT in (policy phase) in each of these policy areas? ((1) Not involved at all (2) Slightly involved (3) Moderately involved (4) Very involved (5) Extremely involved (9) Don't know)
- How involved is your REGIONAL/COUNTY GOVERNMENT in (policy phase) in each of these policy areas? ((1) Not involved at all (2) Slightly involved (3) Moderately involved (4) Very involved (5) Extremely involved (9) Don't know) (Please skip if inapplicable)
- How involved is your PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT in (policy phase) in each of these policy areas? ((1) Not involved at all (2) Slightly involved (3) Moderately involved (4) Very involved (5) Extremely involved (9) Don't know)
- How involved is the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT in (policy phase) in each of these policy areas? ((1) Not involved at all (2) Slightly involved (3) Moderately involved (4) Very involved (5) Extremely involved (9) Don't know)
- How involved are PRIVATE BUSINESSES AND CORPORATIONS in (policy phase) in each of these policy areas? ((1) Not involved at all (2) Slightly involved (3) Moderately involved (4) Very involved (5) Extremely involved (9) Don't know)

- How involved are NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS (e.g. community associations, charities, religious organizations) in (policy phase) in each of these policy areas? ((1) Not involved at all (2) Slightly involved (3) Moderately involved (4) Very involved (5) Extremely involved (9) Don't know)

Please see online replication materials (link removed for review) for a complete codebook as well as full replication data.

A.1 Census Subdivisions and Sampling Frame

To develop our list of eligible municipalities for the survey, we began by downloading a full list of Canadian census subdivisions by 2016 population from Statistics Canada (Table T301EN).[14] 713 census subdivisions in this table are listed as having a population above 5,000. We initially excluded three census subdivision types from our email collection process due to the absence of elected municipal officials in those types: Indian Reserves (1 in dataset), New Brunswick Parishes (5 in dataset), and Unorganized areas (3 in dataset). Unfortunately, we discovered after the data collection process was complete that we had also excluded electoral areas in British Columbia from data collection; these emails were not available on the BC municipal directory and we only later discovered that they were available on the websites of the relevant regional districts.

Table 5: **Census Subdivision Types and Emails Collected**

	Total	Collected	Percentage
Canton / Canton Unis	2	2	100.0%
City / Ville	297	257	86.5%
District Municipality	24	23	95.8%
Indian Reserve		N/A	
Municipal District	43	43	100.0%
Municipality	76	56	73.7%
Parish		N/A	
Regional District Electoral Area	20	0	0.0%
Regional Municipality	4	3	75.0%
Rural Community	1	1	100.0%
Specialized Municipality	4	4	100.0%
Subdivision of County Municipality	4	4	100.0%
Town	137	117	85.4%
Township	69	44	63.8%
Unorganized		N/A	
Total Overall	681	554	81.4%
Total Excluding Electoral Areas	661	554	83.8%

Statistics Canada's Census Subdivisions table contains more than 5,000 distinct CSDs; after eliminating the three CSD types listed above from the table, nearly 4,000 CSDs remain. Thus our sampling frame captures only a small proportion (about 16 percent) of all census subdivisions in Canada. From a population perspective, however, our sampling frame includes 31,059,089 individuals, more than 88 percent of Canada's total 2016 population (35,151,728). While we acknowledge that the 5,000 population threshold is arbitrary,

14. This table is available here: `https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/comprehensive.cfm`.

we felt that it struck a good balance between capturing a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural municipalities across Canada while also avoiding the immense practical challenges involved in collecting email addresses for very small municipalities.

Table 5 provides an overview of the total number of census subdivision types in our database, and the number of municipalities in each type for which we were able to successfully locate email contact information, either from online sources or from city clerk requests. Given that the missing municipalities are overwhelmingly very small rural councils, we estimate that we collected email addresses for more than 95 percent of the local elected councillors and mayors in Canadian municipalities above 5,000 population.

Appendix B MPII Calculation

This appendix explains the "Multilevel Policy Involvement Index" (MPII) used in the main text of the paper.

We begin by describing the overall logic of the MPII. As we discuss in the main text, we envision a measure of multilevel policy involvement as an attempt to capture the extent to which multiple players are involved in a particular phase of the policy process and/or the involvement of multiple players across all phases of the process within a particular domain. If respondents indicate that many actors are involved in a policy domain, this should produce a higher MPII score than if respondents indicate that only one actor is involved.

Intuitively, then, low MPII domains involve a "concentration" of involvement in one actor while high MPII domains involve a "fragmentation" of authority in multiple actors. We therefore use a widely adopted measure of market concentration, the Herfindahl-Hirschman index (HHI), to capture the concentration or fragmentation of a particular policy area. Since the HHI captures the *concentration* of a market, we take the complement of the HHI as our measure of multilevel policy involvement.

The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index is calculated as:

$$HHI = \sum_{i=1}^{N} s_i^2$$

where s_i is typically the market share of a firm and N is the number of firms. In our case, s_i represents the share of "involvement points" belonging to a particular actor in a particular policy domain (such as municipal government in the area of culture and the arts) and N represents the sum of the squared shares of all five actors in that policy area for each phase (such as municipal, regional, provincial, federal, private, and NGO actors in the policy development phase of culture and the arts). For each policy area and phase, we then calculate the Multilevel Policy Involvement Index as the complement of the *HHI*:

$$MPII = 1 - HHI$$

The range of the *HHI* is from 1/N to one; in our case, the range is from 0.167 to 1. The range of the MLG index is therefore from zero to 0.83.

To calculate the MPII requires four steps. First, we calculated the sum of "involvement

scores" by survey respondent for each policy domain in each phase. In parks and recreation, for instance, we calculated the sum of involvement scores of each actor in policy development, resource provision, and policy implementation. Second, we calculated the *proportion* of the summed involvement scores for each actor, domain, and phase. Third, we squared these scores and summed them, to generate a Herfindahl-Hirschman Index score for each policy area in each phase. Fourth, we took the complement of the HHI scores to generate the MPII score.

Appendix C Regression Details

In this appendix we provide the full regression table for the analysis in the main text above, along with two alternative specifications. These three models are visualized in figure 4 below, and then summarized in table 6. Model B is the analysis reported in the main text. This model is OLS with standard errors clustered by respondent.

Model A reports a basic OLS regression with ordinary standard errors. As is visible in the figure, the signs and sizes of the coefficients are very similar to those in Model B. The additional precision provided by the non-clustered standard errors makes the population and some of the region variables statistically significant. We believe that clustered standard errors are a more conservative approach in this case, but we do note in the main text above that the statistical significance of the population and region findings does depend on this decision.

Model C takes a different approach to the challenge of having multiple judgments from each respondent, reporting an OLS regression with respondent fixed effects. Due to perfect collinearity issues, this approach prevents us from including population and region in the analysis (preliminary tests indicated that a random effects model would be inappropriate here), but the the domain coefficients as well as the policy phase coefficients are similar in size and overall pattern. This third analysis, which effectively captures average "within-respondent" variation, gives us additional confidence in the findings reported in the main text above.

Figure 4: **Regression Analysis: Three Approaches**

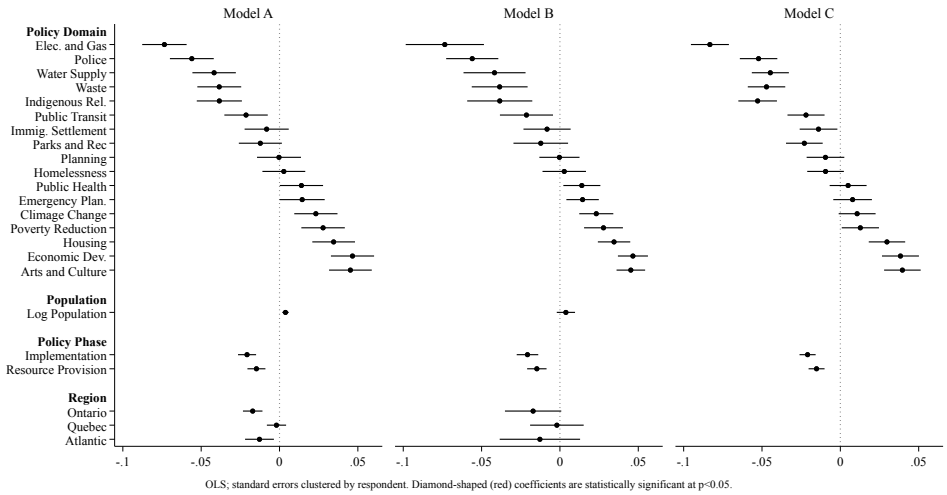


Table 6: Detailed Regression Results

	(1) Model A		(2) Model B		(3) Model C	
Domain						
Elec. and Gas	-0.0735***	(-10.17)	-0.0735***	(-5.78)	-0.0832***	(-13.47)
Police	-0.0560***	(-7.84)	-0.0560***	(-6.61)	-0.0522***	(-8.56)
Water Supply	-0.0417***	(-5.91)	-0.0417***	(-4.15)	-0.0447***	(-7.41)
Waste	-0.0385***	(-5.38)	-0.0385***	(-4.24)	-0.0471***	(-7.74)
Indigenous Rel.	-0.0384***	(-5.23)	-0.0384***	(-3.63)	-0.0528***	(-8.40)
Public Transit	-0.0214**	(-3.02)	-0.0214*	(-2.48)	-0.0219***	(-3.63)
Immig. Settlement	-0.00821	(-1.14)	-0.00821	(-1.07)	-0.0139*	(-2.27)
Parks and Rec	-0.0122	(-1.75)	-0.0122	(-1.38)	-0.0230***	(-3.85)
Planning	-0.000330	(-0.05)	-0.000330	(-0.05)	-0.00950	(-1.55)
Homelessness	0.00276	(0.40)	0.00276	(0.39)	-0.00944	(-1.58)
Public Health	0.0140*	(1.99)	0.0140*	(2.33)	0.00496	(0.83)
Emergency Plan.	0.0145*	(1.97)	0.0145**	(2.75)	0.00783	(1.24)
Climage Change	0.0232***	(3.30)	0.0232***	(4.20)	0.0107	(1.78)
Poverty Reduction	0.0278***	(3.93)	0.0278***	(4.40)	0.0128*	(2.11)
Housing	0.0345***	(4.97)	0.0345***	(6.57)	0.0298***	(5.02)
Economic Dev.	0.0466***	(6.63)	0.0466***	(9.56)	0.0384***	(6.38)
Arts and Culture	0.0453***	(6.51)	0.0453***	(9.76)	0.0396***	(6.65)
Phase						
Implementation	-0.0207***	(-7.04)	-0.0207***	(-5.92)	-0.0209***	(-7.98)
Resource Provision	-0.0147***	(-5.03)	-0.0147***	(-4.67)	-0.0152***	(-5.84)
Population						
Log Population	0.00381***	(3.59)	0.00381	(1.28)		
Region						
Ontario	-0.0171***	(-5.39)	-0.0171	(-1.87)		
Quebec	-0.00194	(-0.62)	-0.00194	(-0.22)		
Atlantic	-0.0128**	(-2.72)	-0.0128	(-0.98)		
Constant	0.724***	(62.49)	0.724***	(24.20)	0.763***	(174.75)
Clustered SEs	No		Yes		No	
Respondent FEs	No		No		Yes	
Observations	9478		9478		9478	
Adjusted R^2	0.082		0.082		0.373	

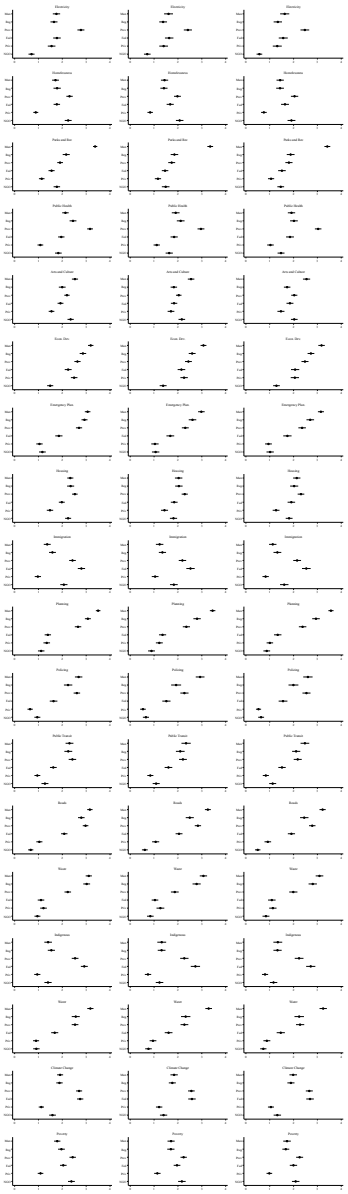
t statistics in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix D Overall Breakdown

Figure 5 below provides detailed mean estimates for every actor, policy domain, and phase in our dataset. For additional details and data, see the online replication files and dataset, available at (LINK REMOVED FOR REVIEW). Note that the detail in each image will be visible by zooming in on the page in your PDF viewing software.

Figure 5: **Mean Involvement Scores by Phase, Domain, and Actor**



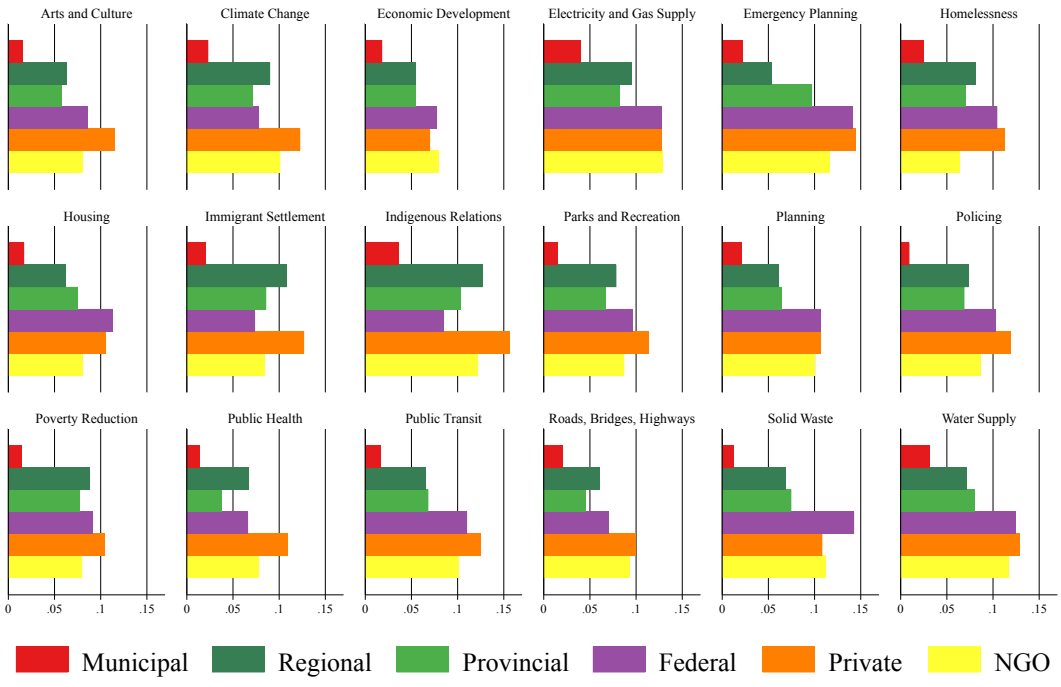
Appendix E Patterns of Uncertainty

Our analysis in the main text excludes "don't know" responses. But these responses may actually be informative: if patterns of "don't know" responses are distributed non-randomly, we may be able to use this information to better understand how local actors perceive policy involvement. Put another way, if more respondents indicate that they do not know if an actor is involved in a particular policy domain, we have good reason to believe that those actors are in fact actually less likely to be involved in that domain.

Figure 6 provides a breakdown of the proportion of don't know responses for each domain and actor. The overall average is just under ten percent. However, as the figure shows, this average varies in quite systematic ways across the data. In nearly every policy domain, for instance, local politicians are most unsure about the involvement of private businesses in the policy process. This lends additional support to our contention in the main text that private businesses and corporations are not seen to be deeply involved in most of the policy domains in our dataset.

The figure also illustrates the need for additional research in which we survey other actors and levels of government. Don't know responses are noticeably uncommon for the municipal level of government – which is entirely unsurprising, given that this is the level of government which our respondents know best. Thus as we note in the paper, adding responses from other actors (provincial, federal, private, ngo) would be a valuable next step for these data.

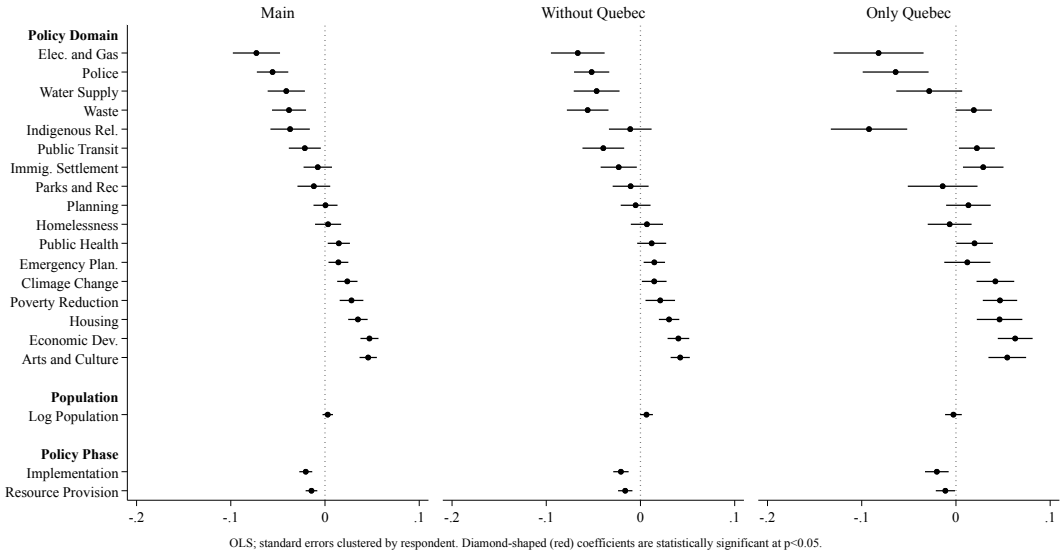
Figure 6: **Proportion of Don't Know Responses**



Appendix F Regional Robustness

In the main text, we note that our response rate is somewhat unbalanced by region: Quebec respondents represented a higher proportion of our pool of respondents than they represent as a proportion of the total municipal population in Canada. In the figure below, we run the same regression as in the main text (OLS, clustered SEs) with and without the Quebec respondents.

Figure 7: **Regression Analysis: Regional Robustness**



The results in the figure above do not affect any of the major findings or claims in the main text; excluding Quebec from the analysis produces results that are nearly identical to those in the overall analysis. Nevertheless, the figure does reveal some interesting features of the Quebec responses. Compared to local politicians in other regions, Quebec's municipal politicians see Indigenous relations as distinctly *lacking* multilevel policy involvement, largely because the federal government is seen to be much more prominent in this area. Similarly, multilevel policy involvement is seen to be higher in waste, public transit, and immigrant settlement in Quebec (relative to roads and bridges, the base category) than we find in other regions, presumably because of the increased role of the provincial government in these areas in the Quebec context.

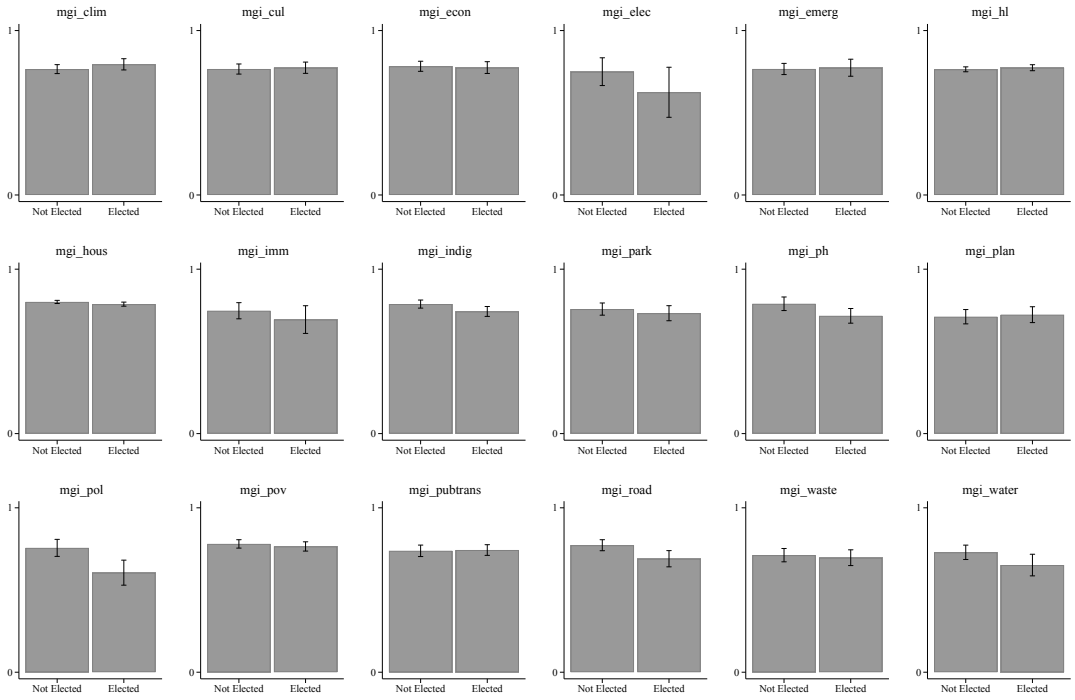
Appendix G Comparing Politicians to Staff in B.C.

Throughout the main text above, we have emphasized that our data reflect *perceptions* of multilevel policy involvement from the perspective of local elected politicians. One concern with this approach is that these perceptions may be idiosyncratic; while the findings may be useful as a presentation of the way local politicians tend to think about multilevel policy issues, they may be much less useful as a reflection of the way other local actors might think about the same issues.

One way to investigate this possibility is to compare the perceptions of local elected politicians with those of senior municipal staff. While we were not able to build lists of municipal staff across Canada, we *did* distribute our survey to senior municipal officials in the Province of British Columbia, where a single reliable directory of municipal officials is available for all municipalities in the province (this information is available through CivicInfoBC). We distributed the survey to any municipal officials with the name "manager" or "director" or "chief" in their job title, along with all City Clerks, Deputy City Clerks, City Managers, and Deputy City Managers. We received 208 complete responses from senior municipal officials in British Columbia.

Figure 8 provides a summary of a regression analysis in which we compute multilevel policy involvement scores for each BC respondent in our dataset (208 non-elected officials and 83 elected officials) and then regress these scores on our population variable and elected / non-elected status. The figure then reports predicted MPII scores for each policy domain for non-elected and elected officials. As is clear in the figure, MPII scores are very similar across the two respondent types: the differences between the two types are not statistically significant in 15 of the 18 policy areas in the dataset. Only in three areas – economic development, emergency planning, and public transit – are MPII scores of non-elected and elected respondents significantly different from one another. In general, these findings suggest that MPII scores are generally *not* distinctive to elected politicians, and are broadly shared by senior municipal staff.

Figure 8: **MPII Comparison of BC Elected and Non-Elected Respondents**



What accounts for the differences in MPII scores in the three cases in which the differences *are* statistically significant? In the case of economic development, the difference

originates in a tendency among elected officials to consider private actors more involved in economic development than do their non-elected counterparts. In the case of public transit, the difference originates in a tendency among elected officials to consider the federal government more involved in public transit than do their non-elected counterparts. In the case of emergency planning, the difference between elected and non-elected officials is more subtle, and no single actor stands out as the main driver of the difference; a slight tendency to consider regional and federal governments more involved than do non-elected officials appears to be the main source of the difference.

In general, then, we do see some differences between elected and non-elected responses in multilevel policy involvement scores. These differences are generally small and occur only in a minority of policy issues. While these findings apply only to the Province of British Columbia, they do give us some additional confidence that our results reflect the views of Canadian municipal actors on multilevel policy involvement beyond the elected respondents who comprise the bulk of our survey and the source of the findings reported in the main paper.