INTRODUCTION

Leadership, Learning, and *Equality of Quality of Life* in the Small City

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As soon as several of the inhabitants of the United States have conceived a sentiment or an idea that they want to produce in the world, they seek each other out; and when they have found each other, they unite. From then on, they are no longer isolated men [sic], but a power one sees from afar, whose actions serve as an example; a power that speaks, and to which one listens.

—Alexis de Tocqueville

The city is ultimately a shared project, like Aristotle's polis, a place where we can fashion a common good that we simply cannot build alone.

—Charles Montgomery

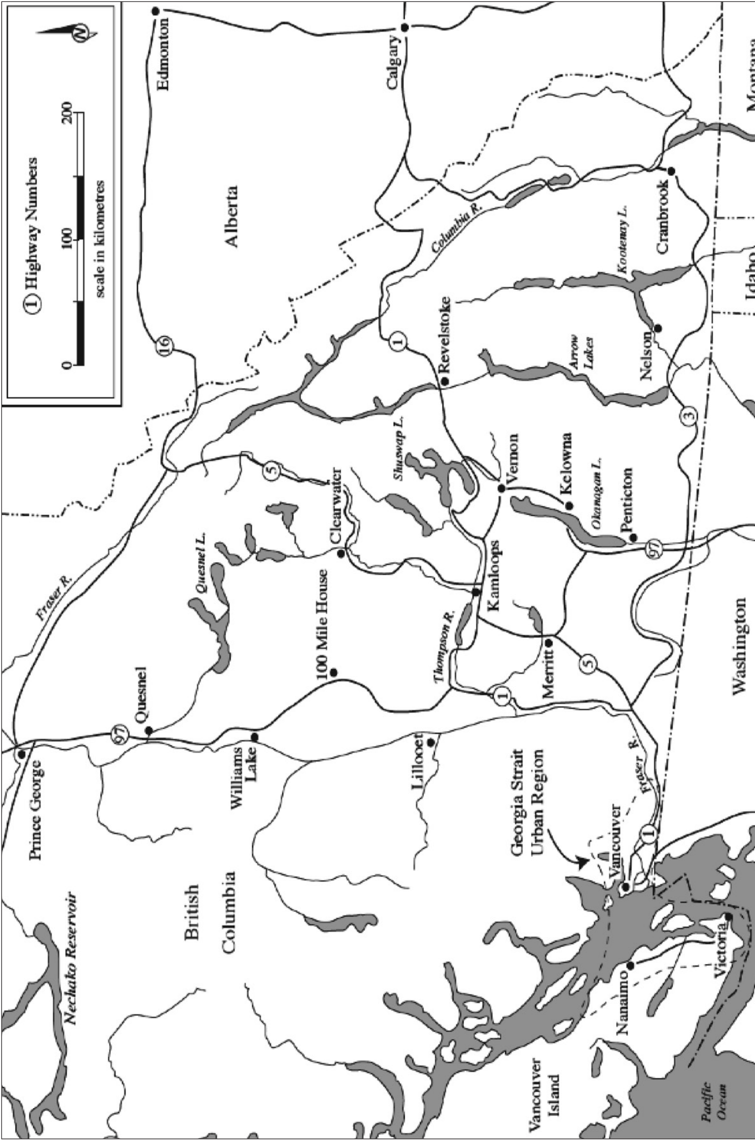

FIGURE 0.1. Southern British Columbia. From *The Small Cities Book: On the Cultural Future of Small Cities*, edited by W.F. Garrett-Petts (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2005). Courtesy of W.F. Garrett-Petts.

The insights from this collection reveal and challenge present understandings of *quality of life* in the small city, thus opening up new opportunities for local initiatives and research on "leadership and learning" at the local level, with the goal of maximizing joy, minimizing hardship, increasing empathy and cooperation, instituting fairness for all residents, and building lasting bonds between friends, families, and strangers. How the needs and aspirations of residents of the small city are addressed, who foments these changes, and what accounts for the success of certain initiatives over others is the focus of our collection.

As in all urban centres, there are in Kamloops the most visible forms of leadership and the less visible forms—all of which contribute to the diversity of urban life. The most visible forms of leadership are understood as being driven by the local "pro-growth coalition," a combination of developers, property owners, professionals, tradespeople, and businesses acting in concert with the local government to ensure the continuous expansion of the city. From this leadership we witness the appearance of housing developments, shopping districts, and various business and industrial ventures, enhanced and augmented by the range of services and amenities provided by the local government. With this dynamic emerges a particular *quality of life* (or *quality of place*)—generated by the need to perpetuate increases in the population by attracting investment and employment—as one important measure of municipal success. For the small city, as a more diverse urban setting, "growth imperatives" have been challenged and supported by broader notions of *quality of life* beyond employment and consumer needs—resulting in less visible forms of leadership and learning to address local needs and aspirations. These less visible forms of leadership reveal the intricate and diverse types of network collaborations that foster unique contributions to our *quality of life* in the small city—or what we identify as *equality of quality of life*—as a new perspective on *quality of life* issues.

The purpose of this collection is to expose how these leadership initiatives have and continue to fortify—often unknowingly—the *equality of quality of life* in one small city, Kamloops, British Columbia. With a population of 90,000, and as the largest urban centre within a regional district of some 132,000+, the City of Kamloops has an important profile as a small to mid-sized regional city offering a range of professional,

industrial, retail, government, and educational services not available in the smaller towns within a much larger catchment area. With this diversification in economic opportunities and employment, the City of Kamloops has engaged in new types of planning, moving beyond basic land-use planning to encompass social, cultural, recreational, and sustainability plans that express a more comprehensive and inclusive process than in the past (Kading and Walmsley 2014; Walmsley and Kading 2017). *Quality of life* has become a powerful idea in establishing collective goals for urban centres and assessing the effects of proposals or change in our communities, and as the Chief Administrative Officer of Kamloops has affirmed, "Collectively we are committed to a goal of building a beautiful city and a quality of life that is one of the best in Canada" (City of Kamloops 2017).

But what is *quality of life*? Generally this is understood in terms of expanding a set of local amenities or services to enhance health and leisure opportunities (e.g., sports facilities, cultural and educational venues, parks, festivals, and bike paths) expressed through municipal community planning documents. *Quality of life*, in this regard, tends to be seen through the quite visible appearance of facilities and services to achieve this optimal state, or urban ambience, and may be used to promote the attractiveness of the urban centre in soliciting investment, tourism, and residential growth. This collection expands on the concept of *quality of life* to encompass *equality of quality of life*, a new perspective comprised of less recognized but critical components that ensure the health and vitality of urban life—particularly in the small city, where the structures and capacities of local government are more circumscribed than in large urban centres. The themes we will explore include engagement with urban social challenges, an aging population, sustainability, and local heritage. Leadership initiatives and local learning are much more pronounced in addressing these issues, generating certain services and conveniences, and fostering an improved urban experience for all residents. As academics with both a professional and a personal attachment to the local initiatives under review and discussion, we can further attest to the distinctive institutional role the *small university* in the small city can play in initiating, supporting, or promoting these *equality of quality of life* features. The strength and novelty of our collection, we feel, lies in the way we provide an overview of the multiple ways in which this community-university

engagement may occur, and the wide variety of outcomes and opportunities that may emerge from this collaborative context. The aim of this collection is to acknowledge and account for these dynamics—the active engagement between the university and the local community in the City of Kamloops—offering insights for other small to mid-sized cities and small universities where *equality of quality of life* issues have become more prominent.

Quality of Life Debates and Equality of Quality of Life

Important features of the *quality of life* debate have generally been framed around the contrasting views of two influential thinkers on community and urban life—Robert Putnam and his focus on the precarious state of social capital, and Richard Florida on the urban requirement to develop creative capital. Putnam is renowned for his research on and lament over the decline in "social capital," or "social networks and interactions that keep us connected with others," captured in his famous reference to *bowling alone* (Montgomery 2013, 53–54). For Putnam, social capital allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily, allows communities to "advance smoothly" due to trust, widens "our awareness of the many ways in which our fate is linked," and provides "conduits for the flow of helpful information that facilitates achieving our goals" (Putnam 2000, 288–89). Lives rich in social capital exhibit significant mental and physical benefits as well as better outcomes in child welfare and education, healthy and productive neighbourhoods, economic prosperity, health and happiness, and democratic citizenship and government performance. Putnam presents the evidence that social capital "makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy" (290). The decline in social capital, or "civic / community engagement," is attributed to the pressures of time and money, suburbanization (increased commuting and urban sprawl), the effects of electronic entertainment (privatizing leisure time), and, most significantly, generational change—"the slow, steady and ineluctable replacement of the long civic generation by their less involved children and grandchildren" (283). Putnam's remedies for this "civic malaise" and "breakdown in community" consist of general prescriptions,

calling on professionals and leaders in various fields to make the workplace substantially more family-friendly and community-congenial, create more integrated and pedestrian-friendly areas with public spaces, foster new forms of electronic entertainment and communication that reinforce community engagement, and introduce ways to ensure more participation in cultural activities, public life, and our communities. While Putnam does not make a specific appeal to a "university role" in addressing these trends, the strength of his work is in highlighting the academic research on the decline of community engagement and the negative effects on our quality of life.

The decline in social capital has been viewed by Richard Florida as less an issue of concern than as an opportunity for the revising of urban amenities to attract the new "creative class" of the 21st century (Florida 2002; Dubinsky 2006). The significance of Florida's research is to identify the successful urban centres in the United States that were well prepared for the emerging trends in the global economy in the face of rapidly declining prospects in the manufacturing and resource industries that had been bases of urban prosperity in the 20th century. For Florida, the cities that are gaining in prosperity and population are the ones attracting a new "creative class"—highly educated and innovative individuals who choose where they want to live based on the amenities and the unique atmosphere of a particular urban environment. *Quality of place* becomes critical, then, in order to establish an urban context that will attract this creative class and preserve the local growth and investment prospects in a global economy. Florida places a premium on higher education, and on the arts, culture, and diversity in generating "creative capital," with a university as a necessary component to "quality of place" in fostering a "creative community." Florida's sense of how the university contributes to this dynamic is through "technology, talent, and tolerance," in which collaborations between the discoveries of the hard sciences and the investment of private companies are the critical facet (Florida 2002, 291–93). Thus, not only is a particular urban context a necessary ingredient, but a particular type of university and university role is required within this urban context. From this it is not hard to imagine the advantages for larger urban centres with corporate and financial head offices and several large universities with established research programs in the sciences, technologies,

engineering, and medicine (STEM) in capturing this "creative capital." An added downside of Florida's prognosis is that not all urban centres (even those with a university or college) would be able to "retool" to benefit from these global trends:

> Florida considers many small communities to be "hopeless" cases. In particular, he suggests that small communities, especially those tainted with the residue of resource extraction or noxious industries, cannot go head-to-head in the global competition to attract postindustrial firms: they lack the diversity and cultural capital necessary to attract the creative class. (Nelson 2005, 92)

Thus, rather than offering a general prescription for reviving the fortunes of communities, Florida suggests there will be "winners" and "losers" in this competition for "creative capital"—with limited prospects for many smaller urban centres. Despite this prognosis, Florida does identify the critical role a university has, or may have, in contributing to or even shaping the prospects for a given community, even if the "small university" in a small city may be disadvantaged relative to larger urban centres.

A significant contribution to this debate has been the work of Charles Montgomery, not just in bridging this debate on social versus creative capital but in redefining the meaning of *quality of life / quality of place* and deepening our understanding of the relationship between leadership, learning, and *quality of life* in the small city. Montgomery provides a rich account of local leadership initiatives and learning aimed at enhancing social interaction and community engagement through access to nature, greater choices in mobility, and redesigning urban spaces for conviviality, while simultaneously reducing the costs to residents and local governments, generating new economic and social opportunities and addressing concerns over urban sustainability. Most importantly, these initiatives extend beyond our largest urban centres as ideals for all urban centres irrespective of size. It is evident from Montgomery's examples that the "small university" can play a decisive leadership and creative role in forging *quality of life / quality of place* that generates a creative community while directly addressing declining "social capital" concerns in achieving the

goals of a “happy city.” Building on Putnam’s observations, Montgomery further expands on the negative effects of increased isolation and a solitary existence by increasing numbers of citizens:

> Social isolation just may be the greatest environmental hazard of city living—worse than noise, pollution, or even crowding. The more connected we are with family and community, the less likely we are to experience colds, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, and depression. Simple friendships with other people in one’s neighborhood are some of the best salves for stress during hard economic times. . . . Connected people sleep better at night. They are more able to tackle adversity. They live longer. They consistently report being happier. (Montgomery 2013, 54–55)

Backed by research from psychology, economics, philosophy, sociology, and urban planning studies, Montgomery argues that the design of our largest urban centres is making us sick—mentally, emotionally, and physically—while fostering isolation and mistrust and undermining family and community life. The prevailing model of urban design, which is built to accommodate automobiles rather than citizens, is increasingly expensive, inequitable, and unsustainable for both residents and local governments. The roots of this “broken social scene” lie in continuing urban sprawl, where longer commute times and the heavy reliance on automobiles to get to and from work and to access all services and amenities leads to less time for family, friends, and community engagement—the very ingredients of a happy and fulfilling life. Montgomery’s work highlights communities and individuals who have contested these negative trends. He quotes Enrique Peñalosa (a community leader and former mayor of Bogotá): “One of the requirements for happiness is equality . . . Maybe not equality of income but *equality of quality of life* and, more than that, an environment where people don’t feel inferior, where people don’t feel excluded” (235; emphasis added). With this ideal of happiness in mind, Montgomery makes an appeal for new ways of thinking, planning, and building—in essence, proposing a new creative project of reimagining both physical and social

spaces in our urban environment and transforming them through local leadership initiatives.

Montgomery's analysis offers a unique view on what comprises *quality of life / quality of place*, establishing the following principles for a *happy city* that will generate a more inclusive, affordable, diverse, and sustainable urban experience:

- The city should strive to maximize joy and minimize hardship
- It should lead us toward health rather than sickness
- It should offer us real freedom to live, move, and build our lives as we wish
- It should build resilience against economic or environmental shocks
- It should be fair in the way it apportions space, services, mobility, joys, hardships, and costs
- Most of all, it should enable us to build and strengthen the bonds between friends, families, and strangers that give life meaning, bonds that represent the city's greatest achievement and opportunity
- The city that acknowledges and celebrates our common fate, that opens doors to empathy and cooperation, will help us tackle the great challenges of this century. (43)

Montgomery offers a specific antidote to the decline in social capital highlighted by Robert Putnam while simultaneously highlighting the creative capital—the university research, academic studies, understanding of local challenges, and the leadership initiatives that are necessary to achieve these outcomes. It is from this framework that we may assess both the small city context against that of larger urban centres fraught with the challenges Montgomery identifies, and the extent to which leadership initiatives in the small city can reverse or prevent the negative trends evident

in these larger centres. Notable from these *happy city* principles, or goals, is the congruence with the raison d'être (or very purpose) of the contemporary university, highlighted in university mission statements and institutional plans: diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, addressing societal challenges, and engagement with new ideas and peoples.

However admirable this confluence of ideals, though, Montgomery highlights the varied power structures and forces that have shaped our largest urban centres and mitigate against change, noting their tendency to seem overwhelming. "It is easy to feel small in the face of the monumental power of the real estate industry, the tyranny of zoning codes, the inertia of bureaucracy, and the sheer durability of things that have been built" (295). Recognizing that we have made mistakes, Montgomery observes that "we let powerful people organize buildings, work, home, and transportation systems around too simplistic a view of geography and of life itself" and that it is "not too late to rebuild a balance of life in our neighbourhoods and cities and, in so doing, to build a more resilient future (316). While he identifies political figures, specific individuals, neighbourhoods and cities that have challenged the status quo, what is less apparent from Montgomery's account are the types of leadership initiatives that have, or may develop, the social-creative capital needed for equality of quality of life outcomes, particularly as we transpose these challenges and ideals onto a smaller urban setting. Whereas "bonding" social capital is highlighted as a virtue and a goal (connections between people who know each other quite well, e.g., family, friends, neighbours), "bridging" social capital (links to people outside one's own group) and "vertical" social capital (links to power and decision-making authority, such as government) have been recognized as critical to enabling overall social capital and establishing the bases of real community development, resilience, and adaptability that support sustainability (Dale and Newman 2010, 7–9; Emery and Flora 2006, 21). These forms of social capital are seen as necessary to move from the supportive "bonding" capital that may just allow a community to "get by" to forms of capital that support "getting ahead." Further, communities "are based on networks, both personal and professional, and the density and diversity of network formation vary tremendously within and between communities. As well, networks appear to be crucial in any one community's ability to access more diverse kinds of

capital, particularly social capital linking ties" (Dale and Newman 2010, 8). Thus, in assessing the capacity of a small city to build social-creative capital and adopt *equality of quality of life* standards, it is necessary to understand (1) the types of effective leadership critical to developing bridging and/or vertical capital, (2) where this city is situated within the broader range of urban settings, and (3) the city's particular resources and challenges in terms of achieving *equality of quality of life* outcomes.

Leadership and Learning under the New Governance Model

At an international level, new forms of local or "place-based" leadership have increasingly been recognized as an important factor (or "missing link") in accounting for regional growth, economic and social performance, achieving environmental sustainability, the development and well-being of particular places, or the success of certain local cultural industries (Beer 2014; Sotarauta, Beer, and Gibney 2017; Sotarauta and Beer 2017; Bentley, Pugalis, and Shutt 2017; Wellbrock et al. 2013; Dubinsky 2006; Emery and Flora 2006). A shared quality of this leadership is the move from traditional hierarchical relationships of leadership to collaborative relationships between institutional sectors (public, private, and community sectors)—based on mutual trust and cooperation—and having "a distinctive long-term time horizon" (Beer 2014, 255). Pivotal contributors to local leadership are that "it should involve the sharing of power; it should be flexible and it should be rooted in entrepreneurialism" (255). Studies of leadership have also contrasted *transactional leadership* (a "top-down" process targeted to the realization of a limited number of specific objectives) with *transformational leadership* that emphasizes "processes that transcend organizational, environmental, and human limitations in order to guide a process of change" and is "broad ranging and strategic" (255). Australian research on rural communities identified effective local leadership in building community resilience and helping to secure an economic future for a region or community, and having a "pivotal role in providing ideas and a vision for the future, and thus provided a focus around which community identity and belonging could be fostered" (255). Four key qualities of effective rural leadership were found to be "the

formulation of a realistic vision of the community's economic and social development; the achievement of a high level of community approval of, if not active commitment to, that vision; motivating key persons and groups to achieve the vision; and leading by example" (255). In a study of six rural European development initiatives,

> visionary leaders made the difference. They enjoyed considerable trust and generated inspiring, bounding ideas. They were also capable of bridging diverging interests and transcending (at least temporarily) actual conflicts, and could access additional resources by means of their wider networks. . . . These visionary leaders did not operate alone; in fact they enacted collaborative leadership. They initiated and enabled the participation of residents in low threshold meetings, networks, collaborative (private-public) partnerships and wider collaboration in employing development activities (Wellbrock et al. 2013, 427)

The authors note the ability of these leaders to "adopt" and "mediate" the "complex interplay of power, resources and people," and observe that "collaborative leadership thus provides an incentive for joint reflexivity, building collective agency and institutional reform" (427). An important caveat to this new focus on leadership is that "discussions of local leadership inevitably raise questions of power and the ability to influence either others within a community or government processes. This means that the leadership of places cannot be examined in isolation; any thorough account also needs to consider the relationship between local leaders and governmental or other power" (Beer 2014, 256). Thus, the success of collaborative leadership initiatives is contingent on a range of local and non-local factors, and an understanding of the conditions that have fostered or prompted the move to more collaborative leadership in more areas.

Dubinsky (2006), in examining the success of cultural initiatives in Kamloops, BC, identified five kinds of collaborations in the "new organizational paradigm" that had become the rule in achieving goals,[1] thus providing a rough framework as to the motivations for establishing new collaborative networks:

- *Organic collaboration*—arising from evolving or emergent conditions or opportunities (often serendipitous) in which organizations recognize that there are ways to "work together more effectively to accomplish goals than going it alone"
- *Self-interested collaboration*—may have emergent or serendipitous qualities "but one or more parties will be specifically self-interested from the outset—on the lookout, as it were, for possible partnerships and alliances" (100)
- *Mimetic collaboration*—"based on emulation, whereby an organization thinks collaboration is a good idea or is needed . . . with the expectation that the collaboration will be fruitful and satisfy what has been missing, since others have benefited from it"
- *Normative collaboration*—"happens as a result of, or in response to, standards or conventions in a given field or sector that require or recommend cooperation of some sort. . . . [and] may be the basis for emergent collaboration or more formalized alliances and partnerships."
- *Coercive collaboration*—"forced cooperation, whether an organization coerces another to collaborate or whether an organization feels compelled to collaborate. . . . Coerced organizations occasionally turn out to be the most cooperative" (101).[2]

What Dubinsky was capturing in this discourse of collaboration has become understood generally as a larger and highly uneven process of moving from *government* to *governance* taking place across Western nations. Seen as rooted in the adoption of neoliberal ideals of "smaller government," and the disruptive and unequal effects of technological changes and globalization, *governance* refers to a range of governing styles which "imply a shift from state sponsorship of economic and social programmes

and projects . . . towards the delivery of these through partnerships involving both governmental and non-governmental organizations and perhaps other actors" (Shucksmith 2010, 3). Shucksmith states

> Features of this style include a new role for the state as co-ordinator, manager or enabler rather than as provider and director; the formation of tangled hierarchies, flexible alliances and networks through which to govern (often to the confusion of most citizens); the inclusion of new partners, notably from the private and voluntary sectors; and indeed 'governing through community' or 'government at a distance' (4).

Assessments of the local effects and results of this shift to "governance" have generated highly contradictory positions. Some researchers see this as an abdication of state roles and responsibilities, leading to increased competition between places, resulting in new forms of inequalities and exclusions in society and an increased burden on those who participate, within a context of a more "confused set of accountabilities"—rather than fostering a general revival or local resilience (Beer 2014, 256). In addition, in this discourse of decentralization, increased local self-government, and "local empowerment," serious questions remain about the extent to which there has been a meaningful devolution of power and resources. Other researchers have seen within this process the opportunity for participation and real empowerment, "leading to capacity building" and the ability to challenge, resist, negotiate, or mediate the relationship of "the local" with the central government / state authorities to acquire resources or affect policy changes to the benefit of the community or region (Beer 2014, 256; Shucksmith 2010, 4–5). Success in capacity building has also resulted in a stronger sense of community, identity, and local purpose.

Research outcomes by nation-locality have been mixed, but have generally affirmed that leadership *and learning* within this collaborative network approach to addressing local challenges have been critical to achieving some measure of success within these new state-endorsed governance arrangements, and have involved the ability of particular figures or local organizations to facilitate both bridging and vertical forms of social capital

(Wellbrock et al. 2013; Clark, Southern, and Beer, 2007; Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004; Emery and Flora 2006). For instance, in Northern Ireland, a European Commission program to promote local development resulted in enhanced local networks and horizontal links between public, private, and community sectors "with the involvement of statutory and key local agencies" (Scott 2004, 56). Most evident was that "a significant degree of mutual learning had developed between the stakeholders in the development process," leading to "new ways of working," "changing styles of discussion" and through "communication and interaction, increasingly a shared understanding of the local area" (56–57). Partnership capacity was enhanced, as "there appeared to be an increasing level of rural development know-how" such that autonomous strategizing replaced a reliance on outside consultants, indicating "increased confidence and leadership of the groups, in addition to the development of strategic planning skills," an outcome contingent on "the ambit of the individuals involved" (57).[3] And although there may be a natural tendency to assume that "bottom-up / grassroots" (or *organic*) collaborations have greater prospects for success than "top-down—government-directed" (or *normative/coercive*) collaborations, research suggests that leadership has been the key quality for determining the success or failure in either type of collaboration (Clark, Southern, and Beer 2007, 263 and 265). In a study of a rural economic development strategy in Nebraska, an initial emphasis on "leadership development," with a focus on local youth, and the effort to "increase skills, create awareness of leadership opportunities, and expand their understanding of the County," was "still identified" two years into the project as "the most critical element for success" (Emery and Flora 2006, 24). "Working to increase the number of people committed to building a new future for Valley County, as well as their skills to do so effectively, was the cornerstone upon which other strategies depended" (24). Evaluations of government "leadership development programs" in Australia have added important insights, suggesting that the transactional leadership skills imparted to participants through these programs "limited themselves to a process-driven role, tended to have one-off success, but lacked longevity as a leader. By contrast, those who stepped beyond the bounds of their training and engaged with their broader community were more likely to emerge as transformational leaders, build social networks, and contribute

to socio-economic aspirations" (Beer 2014, 257). Also evident was that "context is fundamental to leadership and effective leadership needs to be generated internally, rather than imposed via an externally-funded program. Critically, leadership needs to be given the opportunity to be practiced, which in turn implies some form of mobilization or exercise of power" (257). Thus, the potential for effective and successful local leadership collaborations is about both local and vertical learning, in which "bottom-up versus top-down" or "grassroots versus government-led" may be categories of limited value for understanding the potential for local capacity building and developing social-creative capital. Rather, there is a complex interplay of accumulating local and vertical knowledge to support the development of bridging and vertical social capital to foment creative activities, solutions, and outcomes to economic, social, and sustainability challenges (Beer 2014, 260).

Although we can identify particular qualities and features of effective leadership, and highlight the importance of particular leadership styles within collaborative networks, far more complex processes and variables need to be considered in order to fully understand the context in which these may be effective. While holding out the hope that from within these new forms of governance "the state exercises generative power to stimulate action, innovation, struggle and resistance, to release potentialities, to generate new struggles and to transform governance itself," Shucksmith (2010, 12) cautions that

> while this should be founded upon deliberative processes and collective action, the mobilization of actors (especially the least powerful) to develop strategic agendas in such a context of diffused power where nobody is in charge will be a crucial challenge. And strategies, once agreed, will encounter the unexpected: for innovation to be successful, it is likely to be multiple, non-linear, complex and continually emergent rather than conforming to a rigid development plan. This will present a huge challenge of cultural change to actors in rural development, and its realisation will depend partly on the institutional capacity of these actors in

> terms of knowledge resources, relational resources and mobilising capabilities (12).

This insight is shared by Montgomery (2013) with regard to large urban centres, observing that

> the struggle for the happy city is going to be long and difficult. The broken city lives in the rituals and practices of planners, engineers, and developers. It lives in law and code, and in concrete and asphalt. It lives in our own habits, too. Those of us who care about the living city are going to have to fight for it in the streets, in the halls of government, in the legal and social codes that guide us, and in the ways we move and live and think. . . . There have been victories in thousands of neighbourhoods where people have challenged the written and unwritten rules of how we move, live and share space. . . . Victory is not guaranteed, not in every fight, but every time one of us stands up to dispersal, we chip away at its power and get a chance to find new life within ourselves (317).

These insights reinforce the recognition that the power of local / place-based leadership and collaborative efforts are practised within particular and quite varied contexts with regard to the sets and types of resources available to affect change. Bryant and Marois (2010) have constructed a conceptual frame-work—"the dynamic of localities"—to capture the complex environment affecting developmental outcomes, beginning with the actors (local and non-local) with different interests and objectives, capacities, resources, and degrees of power and influence. Actors utilize and construct networks to help mobilize support, resources, and information for their actions, and these networks represent the formal and informal organization of the particular place under study (338):

> The dynamic of community change is linked to the nature of the power and social (or informal) relationships in a community and how they are articulated through the

> networks both internal and external to the community. In short, communities can be characterized by different community cultures with respect to the management of change and the recognition and inclusion of the legitimate interests and segments present in the community in the management of change. Inevitably, this leads to the hypothesis that as a result of these differences, different local communities will experience different trajectories in the transformation of their space (Bryant 1995, 261).

The resulting *profile* of a place leads to each place or locality having different orientations: *observed orientations* that "reflect the cumulative effects of all these actions, including any public planning and management effects" (often expressed through public documents and plans), and *latent orientations* that "have not yet been recognized or acted upon by the actors in place" (Bryant and Marois 2010, 339). A combination of these orientations "can be identified and acted upon by the community and local players. They then become central to the management and planning of development in the community or territory; as such, they become strategic orientations which in turn become the framework within which actions are pursued to achieve the community's objectives" (339). Nevertheless, "the actors function in context, which can be defined at different scales that include economic, legal, administrative, cultural and political dimensions" (339), which serves to highlight how these new forms of *governance*, such as governing "through community" or governing "at a distance," may take markedly different forms depending on the country. It has been observed that "leadership at the regional or local scale is a more challenging proposition in highly centralized systems of government when compared with nations—such as the United States—where powers are devolved" (Beer 2014, 260; and see also Sotarauta and Beer 2017, 213 and 221).[4] For instance, with the more centralized system in Australia, and in a top-down effort to advance a particular "entrepreneurial" model of governance, communities and regions deemed "healthy" (receptive to government efforts) enjoyed more support and resources than those deemed "unhealthy" (confrontational), introducing new inequalities and greater "risk of exclusion from decision making, and potential for the imposition

of solutions by external agencies" (Beer 2014, 260; and see also Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004). Such examples attest to the need for both local leaders (formal and informal) and researchers to be cognizant of the "orientations" of higher levels of government if they are to effectively negotiate and mediate on behalf of the community. This is most evident within federal systems (as in Canada), where "governance is marked by both horizontal connections but also hierarchical, competitive and co-operative modes of interaction . . . with both positive and negative outcomes" (Beer 2014, 256). In examining communities in Canada through the lens of these new forms of governance, it has been observed that "it is important to understand how the different contexts, especially at the provincial level, affect local and regional decision-making processes of local actors (public, private and community or associative actors)" (Bryant and Marois 2010, 339). Given the devolution of powers and responsibilities from the federal to provincial levels throughout the 1990s, the unequal capacities and resources among the provinces, and the often conflictual, changing, and unclear role of the federal government vis-à-vis the provinces (resulting in a "confused set of accountabilities"), developing vertical social capital can be difficult, with each province offering a different set of challenges and opportunities. Despite what may be many constraints "from above," the importance of local leaders has been affirmed "even under circumstances where they appear to have little influence. This often unseen power of leaders and communities should make us reconsider how rural communities can shape their future, even in environments where their formal powers appear muted" (Beer 2014, 260). This is a particularly apt insight for situating and assessing communities and community dynamics in Canada, where the centralized forms of power practised at the federal and provincial levels have often left local governments and community groups feeling frustrated, rather than empowered, over the downloading of responsibilities to the local level without the necessary or commensurate financial resources to address various challenges (Duffy, Royer, and Beresford 2014; Federation of Canadian Municipalities 2014).

From this overview it is evident that the specific qualities for effective "leadership"—that may generate social-creative capital under the new forms of governance in achieving *equality of quality of life* outcomes—are difficult to affirm. At one level we do know that these collaborations need

to be about sharing power, being flexible, and developing trust and cooperation in establishing strong linkages and bonds. However, the ability to learn and accumulate knowledge at the local level is a critical component of this process, and one from which flow the skills to create realistic initiatives, goals, and plans; to foster awareness of local and non-local resources and their potential; and to develop the local capacity to recognize and act on "serendipitous" opportunities as they emerge locally or externally (Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004, 290). The capacity of "key figures" within organizations (as public, private, or community-based entities) to learn and continually acquire knowledge of the local and the non-local underlies the ability to discuss and "work in new ways" with other partners; to increase local levels of confidence in taking actions, challenging conventions and established forms of thinking and power; and to progress from transactional forms of leadership to transformational leadership and outcomes. As recognized, this process of developing local / place-based leadership is highly contextual, and requires an understanding of the local resources and dynamics in determining the potential opportunities and trajectories in advancing *equality of quality of life*.

Situating "Kamloops" as a Small City—Challenges and Opportunities for Leadership and Learning

In emphasizing that neither central governments nor the research community across Canada have effectively or systematically addressed the challenges of small towns and rural communities, Bryant (2009) observes that "the challenges range from rapid population growth in the context of our major urban and metropolitan regions to continued decline or stagnation in resource peripheries because of changes to their economic bases. Even within these two broad regional types, there is considerable heterogeneity of circumstances—demographic growth versus stagnation, economic revival versus economic collapse, conflict versus harmonious transformation" (142). Within these extremes, small to mid-sized regional cities (and Kamloops in particular) demonstrate a combination of urban strengths and rural vulnerabilities under the new forms of governance that may be contrasted against our large metropolitan areas and rural small towns in exploring the bases for effective leadership initiatives. We have utilized the

term *small city* in recognition of the different views as to what constitutes a small city versus a mid-sized or medium-sized city, while drawing on literature from both perspectives. Small to mid-sized cities have become subject to increased examination as growth in local population, public and private services, residential accommodations, and occupational diversity has generated urban centres that are no longer "towns" but are clearly not "big cities" in terms of size, resources, and complexity (Bell and Jayne 2006; Garrett-Petts 2005; Brennan, Hackler, and Hoene 2005; Garrett-Petts, Hoffman, and Ratsoy 2014; Walmsley and Kading. 2018b). In this nebulous context, where there is little consensus on the parameters—population or otherwise—in defining a small to mid-sized city,[5] these urban centres have acquired a heightened level of sophistication that is often expressed in the emergence of municipal plans addressing a broad range of issues—culture, social, environment and sustainability, heritage, downtown revitalization, and economic development—that match practices in our largest urban centres. However, depending on provincial support and local financial conditions, the capacity to implement the laudable goals enshrined in these plans may be quite circumscribed in comparison to large cities (Cleave, Arku, and Chatwin 2017, 4). Recognized in Canada for the valuable role they "play as regional hubs and economic engines in their respective regions," economically, mid-sized cities have had quite varied and unpredictable growth experiences. In a study of 31 mid-sized cities across Canada, between 2005 and 2015 only 12 posted levels of economic growth stronger than the national average of 1.8% a year (Conference Board of Canada 2016). With the collapse of commodity prices in late 2014 reducing national economic growth levels to 1.2%, only 10 mid-sized cities were able to "match or beat the Canadian benchmark" in 2015. Such data continues to affirm an earlier observation that "depending on the historical evolution, location and asset base of the community, mid-sized cities can face significant economic development challenges presented by global, national or regional economic change—whether structural and/or cyclical in nature" (Seasons 2003, 67), and demonstrates the continued and significant effects of rural resource and agricultural industries on the economic health of many mid-sized cities. Unlike small towns, small city "social issues often parallel those of large metropolitan centres" (67), which is evident in

the high numbers of visible and hidden homeless (Kading 2012; Walmsley and Kading, 2018b). Small and mid-sized cities markedly lack the advantages that the large metropolitan centres have in maintaining the benefits of continued population growth from immigration. The vast majority of new immigrants remain attracted to Canada's largest metropolitan areas due to the presence of friends, family, and established immigrant groups in these centres, with only a small fraction moving to small and mid-sized regional hubs outside of the largest metropolitan areas (Hyndman, Schuurman, and Fiedler 2006). Even within the category of mid-sized cities, those with the largest population benefit disproportionately from immigration compared to small or small mid-sized cities. Given this combination of factors affecting the local prospects for economic and population growth, local municipal efforts in revitalization, redevelopment, and building resilience are often constrained by the lack of "fiscal resources to intervene to guide the future of their core areas" (Seasons 2003, 69). For small to mid-sized cities, comprised of a complex mix of urban and rural qualities, there is considerable variation in local resources that affect their respective capacities, trajectories, and orientations. While they do not face the stagnancy or decline that confronts many small towns and rural areas, there are still significant limits in their capacity to respond to a variety of urban challenges under the new forms of governance, all of which are evident in the City of Kamloops.

As a small regional centre in British Columbia, Kamloops is a city partially defined by its resource-based past, but striving to establish a new urban identity based on *quality of life* features. Long affected by the vagaries of the agriculture, forestry, and mining industries, which remain important generators of local investment and employment, the city has maintained a persistent strength from its status as a regional centre since the late 1970s. This has ensured the placement and expansion of a range of provincial and federal government offices and services, with the ongoing government investment contributing to the growth in retail, commercial, transportation, education, health, and tourism-related services. Since the late 1990s there has been a steady increase in population (of about 1% a year) and a notable diversification in forms of employment, suggesting a move toward a "post-industrial" economy comprised of professional and service sector careers (MacKinnon and Nelson, 2005).

This has generated a strong emphasis by the local government on advertising emergent strengths in high-tech, green energy, manufacturing, retail, and healthcare industries (Venture Kamloops 2017). And while the city had long experienced notoriously high rates of unemployment from the 1980s into the 21st century, even with the global economic crisis of 2008 and the falling commodity prices of 2014, Kamloops has retained an unemployment rate at or below the national average (Kading and Bass 2014; Venture Kamloops 2017). What has been less recognized in this recent phase of local economic and employment stability is the significant change in the employment profile of the city, with Interior Health, School District 73, and Thompson Rivers University (TRU) becoming by far the dominant employers in the city—the combined employment rising from 3,732 employees in 2000 to 6,865 in 2017, with a notable doubling of TRU and Interior Health employees (Kading and Bass, 2014; Venture Kamloops 2017; TRU 2017). Increased provincial and federal spending on high-paying professional jobs, with related spinoffs from capital expenditures and consumption, has been evident in the expansion of facilities, home building, the increase in big-box and local retailers, and the measured revival of the downtown core. Prospects for growth in all three of these major employers appear strong, with a recognized local shortage of doctors and other healthcare professionals, an aging population, and commitments by the provincial government to capital spending and program expansion at TRU and the hiring of more teachers in the school district to reduce class sizes. Thus, the overall context suggests both a gradual strengthening of important conditions for developing bridging and vertical forms of social capital—not inhibited by a shrinking economy and out-migration that would "weaken social relations and vitality by creating 'voids' and posing severe obstacles for initiating a collaborative spirit and uptake of joint development activities" (Wellbrock et al. 2013, 427)—and the continual expansion of knowledge-support structures that may act as "facilitating agents and agencies" (422) such as the City of Kamloops, School District 73, Interior Health, and TRU. The other less recognized but critical feature is the presence of both well-established and emerging community organizations that have sought to address a range of local challenges. Involving individuals from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, increasing collaborations among these organizations have generated numerous services,

conveniences, and opportunities that may serve to alter and redefine the small city urban landscape. It is the identification of these entities, their relationship to the various knowledge-support structures, and their ability to forge transformational leadership collaborations, that is the central focus of our collection.

Our collection seeks to situate and understand leadership, local learning, and the role of the university in the small city against the challenges and the goals outlined by Montgomery and his contribution to understanding *equality of quality of life*. Having a much smaller population has not exempted small cities from having to confront the same challenges in homelessness, addictions, poverty, isolation, discrimination, and exclusion for numerous residents that afflict large urban centres. In other words, a smaller community does not guarantee the high levels of community engagement or a "natural solidarity" that will ensure *equality of quality of life* as per Montgomery's principles (as is evident in several of our chapters). It is because of this insight that we have placed an emphasis on "leadership"—as recognized as a critical ingredient for success in other initiatives and locales—and on revealing both the origins of various local initiatives and the type of leadership required to be effective in this particular urban environment. Our focus on "learning" is to demonstrate how this critical quality of effective leadership is created and utilized to develop community awareness, increase skills and confidence, and recognize constraints, challenges, and opportunities. Thus, our effort is not only to bring attention to how these specific leadership initiatives have contributed to the local *equality of quality of life*. It is also to convey to a wider audience the collective understanding or experiences that have developed within the community and the university from these initiatives, and the lessons they hold for undertaking or evaluating similar initiatives in other urban centres. The collection comprises research themes as varied as adult learning, community gardens, heritage preservation, and the marginalized in Kamloops (from disciplines as varied as English, Anthropology, Sociology, History, Tourism, and Political Science), and seeks to reveal leadership initiatives and local collaborations that play an important role in forging the present *equality of quality of life* in the City of Kamloops. The collection reveals the quite unlikely alliances that have emerged, generating unique forms of bridging social-creative capital to address

particular needs or generate new opportunities for residents. As university researchers, each with quite varied connections to these leadership initiatives, we highlight the social and creative capital that has surfaced as small groups envision particular goals or outcomes with respect to local social issues, sustainability, heritage, or education. These creative acts, though, are not without challenges and constraints, which further shed light on the unique qualities, both positive and negative, of leadership initiatives within a small city setting.

This collection of original research on *leadership* and *learning* in the small city serves a variety of purposes. First, the collection draws attention to existing and emerging community initiatives under the new forms of governance, identifies formal and informal network linkages, and other forms of local support, that have been forged through leadership, and expands our understanding of how these collaborations/partnerships play a critical role in improving *equality of quality of life* for the community. This diversifies and enriches our understanding of what *quality of life* is comprised of within the small city. Second, these articles highlight the "collective understanding / local knowledge" outcomes that have emerged from these initiatives—exposing the particular political, social, or resource challenges that have accompanied and perhaps altered, limited, or redirected these initiatives. Third, as community-engaged research outcomes, these articles are intended to help in understanding the knowledge-support and leadership capacities of the small university in fostering initiatives here in Kamloops, with potential appeal for other urban centres in enhancing *equality of quality of life* in small to mid-sized cities.

Three of the contributions address social challenges and the needs of the marginalized in the small city. Terry Kading examines and assesses the local response to homelessness in the City of Kamloops, focusing on the context (local and federal) that gave rise to this leadership initiative, the achievements to date, and the multiple challenges that have arisen as a result of increased knowledge about local homelessness. Drawing on government documents, local plans, press reports, interview materials, and active observation, the chapter assesses the accomplishments in improving *equality of quality of life* to date, highlights what has been learned about the local homelessness situation, and details the challenges in the effort "to end homelessness" in Kamloops. Lisa Cooke tells the story of

a shower, the people who built it, and those who now use it, providing a compelling example of a community-based initiative that has not only changed the ecosystem of street-involved life in Kamloops by providing a much-needed service but has also shifted the ecology of giving and community compassion in Kamloops. Tracking the politics and poetics of the giving of this gift—a shower facility—shows how a group of individuals came together to address a gap in services, what obstacles they encountered along the way, and how this act of community leadership has affected not just the lives of those who now use the shower but the very terrain upon which such acts can occur. Dawn Farough focuses on the nature of and possibilities for collaboration between academics (representing the disciplines of theatre, literature, and sociology), community workers, and artist/activists as they work with a group of homeless and marginally housed individuals who will create and then perform a play about their lives and their experiences of homelessness. Interviews with members highlight the diverse views of group members regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of their project as they design a very ambitious and somewhat unconventional method of tackling homelessness in the small city. Farough also draws upon existing literature in theatrical studies and the social sciences in order to ask what this group can learn from previous theatrical projects involving marginalized community members. Combined, these articles reveal the depth, variation, and novelty in the local response and the university role with respect to social challenges in the small city.

Significantly broadening and enhancing our understanding of creative collaborations are critical assessments covering themes of local sustainability, adult education, and heritage preservation in the small city. Robin Reid and Kendra Besanger examine how a grassroots community group in Kamloops bridged partnerships across the community to create the city's first fully accessible, free public produce garden (the Kamloops Public Produce Project). In addition to successfully transforming a dead space in the downtown core into a vibrant, arable, and entirely public space, the project successfully raised awareness of food security issues at both the community and municipal government levels and provided a platform for social and political discourse surrounding the role of edible landscaping and the potential for community-driven food security

initiatives to transform the urban landscape. Ginny Ratsoy focuses on how local seniors, out of a need for affordable and flexible education, established the Kamloops Adult Learners Society, a non-profit, independent organization dedicated to improving the community's *quality of life* by furthering the education of the growing demographic of citizens in their retirement years. The article examines the motivation behind the creation of this resource for lifelong learning, situates it among programs for seniors in other locations in Canada, explores the distinct challenges and successes of the group, and concludes with the role of the Kamloops Adult Learners Society in knowledge dissemination and community outreach in the small city. Tina Block reflects on the development of a public history project—the Tranquille Oral History Project (TOHP)—which involves representatives from private industry, academia, and the non-profit sector. Despite varied backgrounds, participants in the project share a mutual interest in Tranquille, a site of historic significance located west of Kamloops, and Block reveals how this oral history project offers a lens on the challenges common to collaborative research, particularly multiple stakeholders with varied motivations and expectations.

The final article in our collection is, in the spirit of the themes under discussion—and perhaps not surprisingly—a collaboration by all the contributors entitled "Leadership Initiatives and Community-Engaged Research—Explorations and Critical Insights on "Leadership and Learning" in the Small City of Kamloops." We offer an assessment on the varied initiatives and how they have contributed to *equality of quality of life* in the small city, as well as reflections and insights on the practice of community-engaged research. Drawing on researcher experiences, and their various forms of engagement with these local initiatives, this chapter first evaluates small city specificity—notably the issues of urban size, resources and capacities, orientations and trajectory, identity, and other small city features that may limit or expand opportunities for initiatives and the development and sustaining of collaborative networks—reviewing these leadership initiatives in meeting Montgomery's goals for urban happiness. A second set of evaluations focuses on the outcomes and challenges for leadership and learning from the various formal and informal network linkages identified in each chapter, in determining the bridging and vertical social capital in place, the qualities and features necessary for

success, and the small city context in supporting these transformational ends. A final set of evaluations situates and exposes the significance of Thompson Rivers University as both a knowledge-support structure and a transactional/transformational leader in achieving *equality of quality of life* outcomes in a small city, and as an emergent and integral feature of local learning and creativity at the local level. This includes reflections from contributors on the practice and challenges of research, writing, and interrogating local leadership, offering insights on community-engaged research—a flexible and emergent research model based on our understanding of the local limitations in resources and capacities confronted by existing and potential community partners in this small city.

Notes

1 "One can hear the language of collaboration in the corridors of governments—and this includes granting agencies and programs—and one can also hear it in the corporate sector, in universities, in the cultural sector, and in other non-profit areas. Strategic alliances, shared resources, co-productions, co-sponsorships, and cross-sectoral partnerships are some of the key concepts and arrangements that govern, if not determine, the organization of many activities" (Dubinsky 2006, 99).

2 "The initial two categories are derived from the author's work in 'The Cultural Future of Small Cities' project. The third, fourth, and fifth are inspired by the work of Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell on the increasing sameness of organizational forms. See in particular DiMaggio and Powell, 1991. Extensive discussions with Catherine Cole, heritage consultant, Edmonton; Wendy Newman, director of ArtStarts in Schools, Vancouver, BC, and Linda Schohet, Director of the Centre for Literacy, Montréal, also contributed to the formation of the framework as a result of our work on collaborative models and community facilitation for linking literacy and the arts." (Dubinsky 2006, 104).

3 Scott (2004) highlights the challenge of "institutionalizing" this dynamic within successful leadership initiatives for long-term impact—an issue we return to in the Conclusion in understanding how the university may support this process of institutionalization.

4 Sotarauta and Beer (2017) identify the United States and Germany as "highly favourable to the emergence of local leaders, while centralized systems of government, such as Australia or the UK, generate adverse conditions for local leaders" (213).

5 Our classification of Kamloops as a "small city" comes from Ofori-Amoah (2007), who defines a small city as a population of 100,000 or less (3). In contrast, see Cleave, Arku, and Chatwin (2017): large cities—population greater than 350,000; mid-sized cities—population between 75,000 and 350,000; small cities—population less than 75,000 (4).

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