

Profiling Municipal Decision Agendas: A Pilot Study of Southern Ontario

by

Shanaya Kelsey Vanhooren

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Canadian local governments have been consistently described as having a relatively limited role in policymaking. It has been argued in the local government literature that municipalities abide by the mandate imposed by provincial statutes, which primarily includes policies related to property, such as zoning decisions, and services to property, such as fire protection and sewage collection. Other scholars have argued that the role of local governments is expanding. For example, some argue that globalization has increased the importance of local governments and, indeed, there is evidence that local governments are beginning to independently address global problems, such as climate change. Moreover, rising property taxes suggest that municipal governments have an expanding, more demanding policy agenda.

This thesis analyzes whether municipal governments are involved in areas of policymaking that are beyond their traditional mandate by conducting a content analysis of the municipal council meeting minutes of three Southern Ontario municipalities from 2015-2017 inclusive. The primary research question is to what extent are municipal councils in Southern Ontario considering policy decisions that are beyond their traditional mandate, as outlined in the local government literature? Municipalities vary greatly in size and previous research demonstrates that size has a significant influence on the scope and content of policymaking. Thus, this thesis also asks: does a municipality's size influence the scope and substance of policy issues under consideration by the municipal council?

The findings suggest that all municipalities, especially small and medium-sized municipalities, address policy areas that are beyond the traditional mandate described in the literature. In fact, over forty percent of all coded policy decisions pertained to issues that are not included in the literature's characterization of municipal responsibilities. Furthermore, large municipalities address a substantively more diverse set of policy issues than small and medium size municipalities. However, large municipalities are not the only local governments making policies in areas considered traditionally 'urban'. The findings also emphasize that further research is needed that investigates the function and prominence of constituent policy at the local level, as well as the explanations as to why these trends exist.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to analytical framework

It has been consistently argued in the local government literature that Canadian municipalities have a very limited role in policymaking. They have been characterized as “policymakers” who abide by the mandate imposed by the provincial governments (Sancton, 201, p. 251). Their traditional mandate revolves mainly around property, such as regulating land use and zoning decisions, and services to property, such as fire protection (Sancton, 2015; McAllister, 2004).

On the other hand, some scholars have asserted that local governments are becoming increasingly important in an era of neoliberalism and globalization (Andrew & Goldsmith, 1998; Boudreau, 2006; Kipfer & Keil, 2002; Tindal et al., 2016), as strong economic growth at the local level is vital with the decline of the economic power of states (Young & Leuprecht, 2006; Leo, 2006). Globalization has empowered local governments to address international issues, such as climate change (Smith, 1998). Furthermore, the consistent rise in property taxes noted in the news media and a demand from municipalities in the early 2000s for a “New Deal” with the provincial and federal governments suggest that municipalities are expanding their role as policymakers.

Finally, the intergovernmental relations literature has started to emphasize the importance of municipalities in the Canadian federation (see Young & Leuprecht, 2006). Some scholars have gone as far as to argue that cities need greater institutionalized autonomy (Courchene, 2005; Broadbent, 2008). Those who support the increased autonomy of municipal governments would likely argue that municipalities are already expanding their policy agendas beyond land use planning, services to property, localized issues and other traditional areas. More

research is needed to engage with this contradiction in the literature and determine whether municipalities are wading into new areas of policymaking.

Studying municipal government is complicated by their widely variable size. It is reasonable to believe that municipal size will impact the types of issues that dominate the municipal decision agenda. Larger municipalities have a greater policy capacity (Taylor, 2016) and a more heterogenous population, which is expected to result in a wider range of policy issues permeating the agenda (Trautman, 2016; Jibson, 2014). In order to accurately determine whether local governments are expanding their policy agendas, it is necessary to conduct research that takes size into consideration.

1.2 Introduction to research questions and methodology

From these assertions about the municipal mandate and municipal size, which are explained more thoroughly in the Analytical Framework (Chapter 2) two research questions were formulated. First, to what extent are municipal councils in Southern Ontario considering policy decisions that are beyond their traditional mandate, as outlined in the local government literature? Second, does a municipality's size influence the scope and substance of policy issues under consideration by the municipal council?

To understand the types of issues that municipal councils have been considering, this research project profiled the municipal decision agenda in three Ontario municipalities, as a pilot for a larger research project that would profile the agenda of municipalities across Canada. This was accomplished by conducting a qualitative content analysis of municipal council meeting minutes, with a focus on the decision agenda, from a small, medium and large municipality. The cases were systematically selected to ensure a roughly representative sample of municipalities of

varying size. The content analysis analyzed a sample of the council minutes of Lambton Shores, Woodstock and Hamilton from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2017.

The coding framework for the content analysis evolved from a list of the functions common to all Canadian local governments, as outlined in Sancton's (2015) most recent edition of *Canadian Local Government* (see pp. 22-23). "Sancton's (2015) list", as it will be referred to throughout this thesis, outlines the 'traditional mandate'. The coding framework grew to include inductive codes which reflected issues that did not fit functions included in Sancton's (2015) list. All of the policy 'functions' in the coding framework were classified as either 'core', meaning they were derived from Sancton's (2015) list, or 'non-core' meaning they were not included in the list and therefore reflected policy decisions that are beyond the traditional mandate. This distinction between 'core' and 'non-core' formed the basis for answering the first research question.

In order to answer the second research question—whether municipal size is influential—the data were compared across the cases. The 'functions' were also evaluated using a policy typology, in order to gain insight into the substance of issues that were addressed by municipal councils. A more thorough explanation of the content analysis and coding framework can be found in the Methodology (Chapter 3).

1.3 Significance of the research

As discussed throughout this chapter, there appears to be a contradiction in the literature about the role of local governments in policymaking. Scholars studying local government have long characterized municipalities as the tools for decentralized service delivery, particularly services to property and other localized matters. However, research that focuses on the impacts of globalization and neoliberalism, as well as studies on intergovernmental relations, suggest that

local governments are expanding their policy agendas. This thesis begins to address this contradiction by systematically analyzing the municipal agenda in order to determine what sorts of issues municipal councils are addressing.

This thesis also offers a number of insights to those studying and working in local government. First, it adds to a very small literature that examines small and medium-sized municipalities. Most research focuses on big cities, despite the fact that small and medium-sized municipalities comprise the majority of local governments in Canada (Tindal et al., 2016). If the findings demonstrate that size correlates with the types of issues that dominate the municipal agenda, it suggests that size should be treated as an independent variable in the study of municipal politics. Second, Sancton (2015) notes that “little serious research has taken place on Canadian municipal policy-making” (250). This project will offer insights into the municipal agenda, a key component in policy development, which will facilitate further research on municipal policymaking.

Chapter 2: Analytical Framework

2.1 Introduction

To effectively structure the analytical approach, a review of the relevant literature is in order. First, this review demonstrates that the responsibilities of Canadian municipalities is summarized comprehensively in a list presented by Sancton (2015).¹ This list helped form the basis for a content analysis, which is explained more thoroughly in the subsequent methodology chapter. Second, this review highlights a debate that has emerged in recent literature regarding the role of Canadian municipalities as policymakers. Research by local government scholars has proposed that local politics is traditionally about land use decisions, local economic development, and localized policies, such as those regulating noise and nuisance, or allocating resources to local parks and facilities. The municipal agenda, scholars argue, continues to be dominated by these traditional areas of responsibility (Sancton, 2015; Lightbody, 2006; Tindal et al., 2016).

Other local government scholars, however, suggest that cities are at the forefront of the economic stability of states (Young & Leuprecht, 2006; Leo, 2006), and that municipalities are addressing some of the most important global policy problems, such as climate change (Smith, 1998). Research has also expanded on the role that municipalities play in Canadian intergovernmental relations, likely as a response to this new ‘position’ of Canadian local governments in a globalized economy. Some scholars even suggest that municipalities deserve greater institutionalized autonomy and that the current position of municipal governments as “creatures of the province” is insufficient (Courchene, 2005; Broadbent, 2008). In sum, this literature, which suggests that local government is becoming increasingly important, indicates

¹ See **Table 1**.

that municipalities are becoming more ambitious policymakers that are moving beyond their “traditional” mandate.

Finally, this chapter outlines evidence that supports the hypothesis that municipal size affects the types of policy decisions that municipal councils are addressing. Research on local government tends to focus on large cities, yet many municipalities remain small and rural (Tindal et al., 2016). It is clear that there is space for research that closely examines the practice of local decision making to reveal the issues that appear before municipal councils; this will go some way to addressing the apparent contradiction in the literature. Furthermore, this thesis will contribute to a limited body of scholarship that analyzes small- and medium-sized municipalities, as opposed to large, urban metropolises. The expected findings for the content analysis are outlined at the end of this chapter.

2.2 The municipal mandate

Canadian municipal governments are seen as having a limited policymaking role, due to their subordinate position vis-à-vis provincial governments. The authority of municipalities is derived from provincial legislation, and their legal status and autonomy are not entrenched in Canada’s constitution (Siegel, 2009a, p.65). In the United States, state-level constitutions recognize local governments in some form or another. Furthermore, the doctrine of “home rule” grants larger municipalities protection from attempts by state government to significantly change their boundaries or authority without their consent (Sancton, 2012, p. 305). In contrast, the power of Canadian local governments can be legally disposed of on a whim by the provincial government (Siegel, 2009a). It is the provinces, by way of the constitution, that control the powers and resources allocated to their local governments (Andrew & Graham, 2014).

Canadian local governments, characterized as “beavers”, have been strongly contrasted with “cats”: those local governments that are organized under the system of home rule, including many large American cities, such as San Diego, California. The literature suggests that “cats” enjoy greater autonomy in policymaking, whereas beavers have a limited amount of powers that are outlined in a sort of “laundry list” (Smith & Stewart, 2006; Tindal et al., 2016). Taylor (2014) argues that these historical institutional differences impact how Canadian and American cities approach contemporary problems. Historically, Canadian local government powers have been restricted and “private and local initiative” has been favoured over government initiative, whereas in the American context, localism has led to “a political culture that values local self-determination, open government, partisan competition, and local policy innovation” (Taylor, 2014, p. 71). These differences, Taylor (2014) argues, better position American cities for a globalized, deregulated economy. In comparative context, therefore, the limited legal autonomy and subordinate hierarchical position of Canadian local governments make them less likely to pursue policy areas beyond their traditional mandate.

Canadian municipal governments have been traditionally seen as a mechanism for efficient provincial service delivery (Siegel, 2009a, p. 21; Tindal & Tindal, 1984, p. 186). This has created municipal governments that are typically hesitant to engage in autonomous policy development (Siegel, 2009a, p. 22). Sancton (2015) also argues that Canadian local governments are primarily “policytakers”, as opposed to policymakers, meaning they mainly abide by and implement policy mandates imposed by provincial governments (Sancton, 2015, p. 251). When Canadian local governments do make policy, it is usually a response to an “external pressure”, whether it is from higher levels of government or citizens (Ibid.). Although the *Municipal Act* (2003) increased the autonomy and capacity of local governments in Ontario, in practice,

municipalities continue to act as “creatures of the province with a relatively limited role in policy making” (Siegel, 2009a, p. 24).

Canadian local government scholars often argue that municipalities lack policy analytical capacity, relative to the provincial and federal governments, as another explanation as to why municipalities are not active policymakers. Governments that have a strong policy analytical capacity are able to engage meaningfully in policy development. This includes the “ability to acquire relevant knowledge through qualitative and quantitative research, generate and evaluate options in support of medium- and long-term plans, engage stakeholders and the public, and communicate recommendations to decision-makers” (Henstra, 2018, p. 129). Stewart and Smith (2007) argue that the absence of urban-specific knowledge brokers, such as academics, and a weak demand for sophisticated policy analysis from local decision makers, have resulted in poor local policy analytical capacity. Taylor (2016) also notes that “the relatively small size of local bureaucracies limits their capacity to engage in policy innovation” (16-17). Overall, these arguments suggest that research that examines the municipal agenda should find municipalities considering issues that are traditionally within their given mandate.

Sancton (2015) outlines the functions of all Canadian local governments, which is included in **Table 1** and is referred to as “Sancton’s (2015) list” or “the list” from here on. The list was used to form the basis of the coding framework, which coded municipal council meeting minutes. The coding framework is explained more thoroughly in the methodology chapter of this thesis. Many of the functions included in the list are discussed in the literature, with certain functions identified as more dominant than others. This literature is reviewed below. Aside from the list, there are other powers allocated to municipal governments by the provinces that are worth mentioning.

Table 1: Sancton’s (2015) list of functions of Canadian local governments

Airports (thought not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Public health
Animal control	Public libraries
Building regulations	Public transit
Cultural facilities	Recreation
Downtown revitalization	Regulation and/or provision of cemeteries
Economic development	Regulation of noise
Emergency planning and preparedness	Regulation of taxis
Fire protection	Roads
Income and employment assistance (<i>Ontario Works</i>) *∇	Rural fences and drainage
Land-ambulance services*	Sewage collection and treatment
Land-use planning and regulation	Solid waste collection and disposal
Licensing of businesses	Tourism promotion
Parks	Traffic control
Policing (in Ontario, rural municipalities cover full costs of policing, which is provided by RCMP or OPP)	Water purification and distribution
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income +	Weed control
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	

Note: This list comes directly from Sancton (2015), pp. 22- 23.

**Unique to Ontario*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government

∇ Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government

Grey rows constitute what Sancton (2015) identifies as functions that are unique to urban municipalities.

The first is “natural person powers” which allow municipalities to hire and dismiss staff, as well as purchase or dispose of property, real estate or other assets (Tindal et al., 2016, p. 145). Despite the phrase, natural person powers do not grant municipalities any more powers than those that are already assigned in governing provincial legislation, like the *Municipal Act* in Ontario (Tindal et al., 2016). Second, Ontario municipalities also enjoy several “spheres of jurisdiction”, defined as policy areas in which municipalities have “considerable authority to act” without consulting with other levels of government (Siegel, 2009a, p. 31). Sancton (2015) suggests that with the assignment of spheres of jurisdiction, “we can expect municipalities to test their jurisdictional limits” (31). However, Tindal et al. (2016) argue that, in practice, the spheres do not offer municipalities more discretion. This is because not all functions are assigned as “spheres of jurisdiction”, and those that are assigned are constrained by other legal requirements defined in the governing provincial legislation (146). Here the key point is that Sancton’s (2015) list is a comprehensive, yet parsimonious framework to define the boundaries of the traditional municipal mandate, which is crucial for undertaking a content analysis. Furthermore, previous research supports the decision to use Sancton’s (2015) list in a content analysis because it includes the traditionally most pressing policy areas for local governments in Canada.

It has been argued that land use decisions dominate the municipal policy agenda. Writing in 1983, Sancton argues that “municipal politics in Canada is about property” and suggested that most municipal politics focuses on debates about the development of property (296). This focus on property differentiates local politics from federal and provincial politics in Canada (Sancton, 1983). Lightbody (2006) asserts that over two-thirds of the municipal agenda focuses on land use planning and management (83). McAllister (2004) also notes that local governments are traditionally seen as responsible for “hard” services, especially land use planning (232).

Municipalities have been traditionally responsible for the local built environment and maintain jurisdiction over service to property, rather than “soft” services to people (Sancton, 2015).

According to the literature, in addition to land use planning, economic development also captures much of the attention of municipal councils. Municipalities face “huge pressures” to promote economic development and growth, which often involves land-related decisions, such as approving new subdivisions or industrial areas (Sancton, 2015, p. 254). The “land-owning and development industries” rely heavily on municipal councils to approve favourable land-use decisions (Sancton, 2015, p. 255).

Furthermore, Sancton (2015) argues that municipalities frequently chase “the next big thought or proposal that might give them the edge in the competition for economic growth” (257). Some examples of these fads include the promotion of industrial parks or clusters, such as the tech cluster in Waterloo (Sancton, 2015) or the spread of Richard Florida’s (2002) ideas about attracting the “creative class” to promote economic growth. More recent research from Goodman and Lucas (2016) report that the traditional area of “fiscal issues and economic development” is the most important policy priority for electoral candidates in the 2014 Ontario municipal elections (35). Surprised by these findings, which appear to confirm old trends in the literature on municipal policymaking, they state that “the ‘expanded urban policy agenda’ may not have captured the interest of electoral candidates in municipalities across Ontario” (Goodman & Lucas, 2016, p. 41). Aside from these “pressing” areas of traditional local policymaking, the mandate also includes areas of decentralized service delivery.

Finally, municipalities also have a keen interest in policy areas that are of localized interest. First, they are responsible for regulating local matters, which Siegel (2009a) describes as part of the “real stuff” of early municipal governments (31). This includes regulating things such

as land use within municipal borders, licensing of businesses, and passing by-laws that establish rules about local behaviour such as “noise, nuisance, and smoking” (Tindal et al., 2016, p. 348). Second, municipalities operate recreational and cultural facilities that are of “localized interest”, such as city parks, libraries, and small museums (Siegel, 1980, p. 296).

Municipalities have been described as ‘policymakers’ and characterized as administrative arms for provincial governments. Despite a notional expansion of municipal powers, exemplified in the discussion of ‘spheres of jurisdiction’ and ‘natural person powers’, scholars have pointed out that municipal autonomy has not expanded in practice. Unlike more proactive and independent local governments in the United States, Canadian local governments are described as weak policymakers which lack analytical capacity. This characterization of local governments can, however, be contrasted to other research that shows that local governments are becoming increasingly important.

2.3 The increasing importance of municipal governments and municipal policy

There is a growing literature that suggests that the role of local governments is expanding as a result of the forces of globalization and neoliberalism (Andrew & Goldsmith, 1998; Boudreau, 2006; Kipfer & Keil, 2002; Tindal et al., 2016). The theory of “glocalization” demonstrates the increased importance that has been placed on municipal governments. It argues that strong economic growth at the local level is vital to the overall economic health of states with the decline of the traditional economic power of national governments, as a result of international treaties and globalization more generally (Young & Leuprecht, 2006, p. 10; Leo, 2006). Dunn (2006) argues that the federal government sees an increased need to engage in “flexible partnerships, including those with cities” (300). Literature supports this theory by noting that cities have become international players in a globalized economy (Andrew &

Goldsmith, 1998, p. 103; Kipfer & Keil, 2002, p. 230), especially as they are more involved and concerned with planned local economic development than ever before (Boudreau, 2006, p. 163; Andrew & Goldsmith, 1998, p. 103; Leo, 2006, p. 482-483).

It is also contended that the major restructuring of municipalities that took place in the 1990s was a response to globalization (Boudreau, 2006). Tindal et al. (2016) confirm that the purpose of amalgamations was to create local governments with stronger regional voices in a globalized economy (132). For example, Smith and Stewart (2006) argue that the autonomy of British Columbia's local governments has increased with the addition of natural person powers (p.256), a legislative change that was also made to Ontario municipalities in 2003. My research looks at the issues that dominate council meetings, in part to determine whether theories about the enhanced role of local governments in the face of globalization are observable in the contemporary policy discussions of municipal councils.

In addition to an enhanced role in economic development, it has been argued that globalization has created municipalities that are responding to an array of new policy areas. Smith (1998) contends that some local governments are tackling global issues independent from territorial or national governments; he calls these "globalist" cities. For example, he states that since the 1990s, cities have started to address areas such as "world peace and disarmament, international aid, and environmental-sustainability components" (p. 69). One example Smith offers is Vancouver's declaration as a "Nuclear Weapons Free Zone" (p. 70). Municipalities have also started to provide foreign-aid to war torn areas (Smith, 1998). Furthermore, local environmental groups are pushing municipalities to address climate issues, such as air quality (Smith, 1998).

Globally, there has been an increasing emphasis on making cities more sustainable, in an effort to tackle both environmental and social problems. The United Nations' (2017) eleventh sustainable development goal, for instance, is to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". In Canada, the 2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy notes that "clean, sustainable communities" are a long-term goal (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2016, p. 68). This research project sought to determine whether this language of "sustainability", also called "livability", materializes in municipal council discussions. Profiling council meeting minutes is a way to draw conclusions about whether the three cases resemble "globalist" cities, as Smith (1998) describes.

In the 2000s, Canadian municipalities began to call for more autonomy and resources to fulfill their mandates – the so-called municipal "New Deal" (Taylor & Eidelman, 2010, p. 968). There was a concern that Canadian cities were not well-positioned to fulfill their role as economic drivers in a globalized economy. There were several issues that municipalities argued were hindering their potential. These included (1) a large infrastructure deficit; (2) a Canadian tax system that favoured rural areas and did not offer enough resources to urban areas; (3) weak federal support for cities when compared to that received from national governments in other industrialized countries; and (4) a weak municipal capacity to raise adequate revenue to pay for increasingly expensive services, because of a reliance on property taxes and user fees (Sancton, 2012, p. 309). In 1993, under Jean Chrétien, the federal Liberal government responded to the first concern, promising in its election platform to spend \$6 billion over two years "to upgrade transportation and local services", by working with provinces and municipalities to distribute the funding (Sancton, 2012, p. 308).

More recently, the news media have noted a consistent rise in property taxes, which demonstrates local governments in Ontario are seeking more financial resources (Murray, 2016; “Ontario homeowners could see property taxes rise”, 2012; Hutchins, 2016). Property taxes are “the financial bedrock of Canadian municipalities” – the main source of funding for all municipalities (Sancton, 2015, 328). It is reasonable to hypothesize that this upward pressure on municipal property taxes is linked to their pursuit of a broader policy agenda. If an increase in property taxes is attributable to new policy initiatives, rather than solely the rising costs of traditional services, then this finding would further legitimize research that calls into question whether property taxes are providing the resources necessary for Canadian local governments.

In summary, the literature suggests that local governments are important economic drivers in a globalized world. It also suggests that municipalities have started to take action on global issues when the responses from higher levels of government are seen as inadequate. Furthermore, the municipal “New Deal” of the late 1990s and early 2000s saw Canadian municipalities, united under the Federation of Canadian Municipalities,² lobbying strongly for more resources from higher levels of government. More recently, the media have noted a consistent rise in property taxes, the financial base of municipal government. These developments suggest that more research is needed to understand if municipalities are beginning to move into new areas of policymaking that are beyond the traditional mandate. In a comprehensive review of the field, Taylor and Eidelman (2010) argue that “broader case comparisons, focused as much on small- and mid- size localities as Canada’s large metropolitan regions” is needed to strengthen the existing research that explores municipal restructuring and

² The Federation of Canadian Municipalities advocates on behalf of around 2,000-member municipalities. It has existed for over eighty years and seeks to influence various policies and programs enacted by the Canadian federal government (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2018).

particularly how it is linked to structural forces, like globalization (p. 968). Although this research does not look specifically at the impacts of municipal restructuring, it does investigate arguments about the increased role of municipalities in policymaking by profiling the municipal agenda. Furthermore, it also investigates how size affects the issues that dominate the municipal council agenda.

2.4 Municipal size: An important variable for local policy considerations

It is reasonable to expect that the size of a municipality has implications for the policy process. Some of these implications are related to the supply of policy capacity, which can be defined as challenges or opportunities that relate to the ability of the government agencies to undertake policy implementation (Rayner et al., 2013, p.67). First, larger municipalities have a more robust property tax base, and therefore have more resources available for policy development, improvement and expansion (Jibson, 2014). Second, though it is argued that all Canadian municipalities are lacking in analytical capacity, Taylor (2016) suggests that larger municipalities have a more developed local bureaucracy and greater access to policy expertise (16-17). Furthermore, larger municipalities also have more citizens with a wider range of views participating in the political process, whereas policymakers in small towns are subject to more narrow interests of a select number of politically active citizens (Trautman, 2016; Jibson, 2014).

Small, rural municipalities face unique policy decisions related to issues such as “protecting the quality of groundwater supplies”, “dealing with the influx of ‘factory farms’” (Tindal et al., 2016, p. 349) and attracting and sustaining the population, especially young people (Siegel, 2009b). Larger municipalities are involved in a wider range of policy areas, such as public transit and policing, independent of provincial police forces (as seen in the grey rows in **Table 1**; Goodman & Lucas, 2016, p. 41). Large cities also face unique challenges, such as high

levels of poverty, especially among minority populations, high levels of pollution and poor air quality, and high housing costs (Tindal et al., 2016). Each of these challenges is too complex to address independently in this literature review. However, they do point to new areas of policy that might be addressed by large municipalities. Overall, scholars have emphasized the importance of local contexts in shaping municipal policy outcomes (Cook & Ward, 2012; Breeman, Scholten & Timmermans, 2015). If the results of my research can demonstrate that size is correlated with differences in the scope and content of policymaking, then it might suggest that the provincial government should re-evaluate the “one-size-fits-all” approach of provincial statutes, like the *Municipal Act (2003)*.

2.5 Municipal policymaking and intergovernmental relations

This section argues that the intergovernmental relations literature helps us further understand municipal policy responsibilities and supports my hypothesis that municipal governments are moving beyond their traditional mandate into new areas of policymaking. First, I discuss how this literature reveals that it is difficult, but not impossible, to definitively divide policy responsibilities between individual levels of government. Second, there exists a debate about the role of municipalities in Canadian intergovernmental relations, which has traditionally included only the federal and provincial governments. This research, like research that argues for a renewed position for local governments in a globalized world, points to the increased importance of municipalities in intergovernmental relations. To begin, it is worth defining intergovernmental relations in contrast to multi-level governance as these two concepts are easily conflated.

In the Canadian context, intergovernmental relations typically refers to the structure and dynamics of the federal-provincial relationship, and particularly the constitutional division of

powers between these two levels of government (Young, 2006, 4). Alcantara et al. (2016) argue that intergovernmental relations involves government actors dominating positions of power and non-governmental actors playing only a consultative role, whereas multilevel governance involves non-governmental actors as “co-producers” of decisions and public goods (Alcantara et al., 2016, p. 43). Of particular interest for my research is intergovernmental relations and its implications for the municipal mandate and agenda. Canada can be generally described as “a highly decentralized federation with diverse regional interests” with increasingly complex intergovernmental relations whereby the provinces often seek to protect their constitutional autonomy (Henstra, 2017).

Certain policy areas are acted upon by all levels of government. This is especially true for housing (Goldberg & Mark, 1985; Carroll & Jones, 2000) and immigration (Tindal et al., 2016, p. 159). Young (2012) notes that city governments often work with or receive funding from the federal government in the following policy areas: “emergency planning, federal property, immigrant settlement, infrastructure and urban Aboriginal policy” (6). Furthermore, we know from Sancton (2015) that several municipal functions are heavily subsidized and/or monitored by the provincial governments including the provision of subsidized social housing for low income citizens, municipal seniors’ homes, income and employment assistance, public health services, and land-ambulance services (22-23). It is clear that some policy areas see action from all or more than one level of government.

Many policy areas are, by nature, intertwined with others. Tindal et al. (2016) provide an interesting example: “welfare and social housing are part of one policy. Housing density depends on transit or the automobile. The latter affects the environment and depends on energy policy” (p. 151). Moreover, the effects that federal and provincial policies have on municipalities and

their citizens are often “underestimated” (Bherer & Hamel, 2012, p. 104). In Canada, many areas of public policy receive attention from several or all levels of government, furthermore, the effects of these policies are often indivisible from other policies. This reality appears to pose a challenge for my research, which classifies policy as either inherently local (core) or inherently national in scope (non-core), according to the literature.

Despite the interconnected nature of policy, scholars commonly divvy up responsibilities to particular levels of government, usually by looking closely at the constitution and other relevant legislation, such as provincial statutes. As previously mentioned, Sancton (2015) defines local responsibilities of Canadian municipalities in a list. Furthermore, the general purpose of having multiple levels of government is to assign specific responsibilities to each level. There have been considerable attempts to disentangle responsibilities, mostly to ensure that governments are acting efficiently. For example, during the Common Sense Revolution led by the Mike Harris government in Ontario, the ‘Who Does What’ task force reviewed the responsibilities of municipal governments and the province in order to make recommendations about how to more ‘rationally’ assign responsibilities (Siegel, 2009a, p. 31). There have also been attempts to think more broadly about what level of government can best manage particular responsibilities or areas of policy.

Sancton (2012) has sought to theorize how we can generally understand a division of policy responsibilities between different levels of government. His theory is pragmatic, rather than normative. It focuses on what level of government can most effectively establish certain types of policies, rather than what level of government *ought* to be doing so (Sancton, 2012, p. 304). In other words, it appears that Sancton (2012) focuses on the essence of an issue as either micro-scale and driven by local context, or macro-scale and concerning the broader population,

regardless of where one lives. For example, he argues that income support and environmental policies ought to be established by the provincial or federal level of government. This ensures that particularly wealthy or unconcerned citizens or municipalities cannot simply opt out, deeming the policies ineffective (Sancton, 2012, p. 304). Municipalities could be involved with implementation or provision of these policies, however (Sancton, 2012, p. 304). Other functions, such as public parks, are inherently local (Sancton, 2012, p. 304). Nonetheless, higher levels of government might provide funding for parks if they see it as a way to improve the quality of life, for example (Sancton, 2012, p. 304). Although multiple levels of government might be involved in a particular area of policy, Sancton (2012) demonstrates that the government best suited to address particular issues can be located on a spectrum between inherently local and inherently national.³ This discussion of assigning policy responsibilities demonstrates that most of the responsibilities included in the list that was used for the content analysis are inherently local issues, despite federal or provincial involvement.

With the onset of the “New Deal” in the late 1990s and a flurry of research arguing municipalities are increasingly important in an era of globalization, several scholars have sought to insert cities and municipalities more permanently into the intergovernmental relations literature. The 2004 version of *Canada: The State of the Federation* contains an unconventional discussion of Canadian intergovernmental relations that focuses on the role of municipal government (Young & Leuprecht, 2006). Contributing authors explore themes such as federal-municipal relations, but also examine specific policy fields that span all three levels of government, such as housing. Overall, this literature further confirms the expanding role of

³ It should be noted that Sancton (2012) does not provide any explicit method for determining whether a ‘macro’ responsibility belongs to the federal government or the provincial government. Rather, his discussion focuses on whether a responsibility is suited to a municipal government or a higher level of government.

municipalities in a globalized economy. My research contributes to this literature by investigating whether municipalities have expanded their role as policymakers, with the onset of new debates about their increased importance and position in the Canadian federation.

A debate has also emerged about the role of cities and municipalities in the Canadian federation. Some scholars assert that cities need greater institutionalized autonomy—a broader sphere of free decision-making authority that would enable them to make more decisions without provincial consent. Broadbent (2008), for instance, argues that large cities such as Toronto and Montreal need autonomy equal to the provinces. Courchene (2005) argues that “we need to find ways – politically, institutionally, and perhaps eventually constitutionally” to support our “global city-regions” (31), a term that evokes Florida’s ideas about ‘urban regeneration’ and attracting the ‘creative class’ (Florida, 2002).

Others argue, however, that cities can work within the current constitutional arrangements to make the federal and provincial governments more responsive to urban issues. According to Bradford (2002), cities should be more involved with federal and provincial policymaking. This will ensure that the demands for cities to be economically competitive actors are met. Furthermore, higher levels of government should be concerned by exclusion of municipalities in national and provincial policymaking. Bradford (2002) argues that consulting with cities ensures national and provincial policies are more adaptive to local contexts, and thus more likely to be effective (vi). Leo (2006) makes a similar argument about the importance of local context. The traditional, hierarchical view of federalism is incompatible with the demand for economically resilient cities in a globalized world. However, the belief that we must choose between autonomous cities or more centralized decision making is incorrect. Intergovernmental

relations must involve greater collaboration in order to realize national policies that are effectively tailored to local or regional differences (Leo, 2006, p. 485-486).

Sancton (2012) strongly opposes the argument that cities should become self-governing, calling it “fruitless” and potentially “dangerous” for municipalities to take this position seriously (314). Municipalities cannot become self-governing because, unlike provinces or states, their boundaries are constantly evolving and contested (Sancton, 2008). Furthermore, if only the largest cities or city-regions became autonomous governments with status equal to the provinces, many Canadians who live in municipalities outside of these areas would be excluded from an important aspect of Canadian politics (Sancton, 2012, p. 316). For these reasons, it seems almost impossible that cities would be granted full institutionalized autonomy. Sancton (2012) suggests that “rather than wasting time worrying about the emergence of city-states, it is time to recognize that the provinces containing our largest city-regions have in fact become dependent on these urban centres” (p. 315). Similarly, Siegel and Tindal (2006) argue that in order for municipalities to take a more assertive role in Canadian politics, they must recognize “that their future depends more on their own actions than on some elusive constitutional breakthrough” (40).

For those who support increased autonomy for local governments (through institutionalization for example), we might expect that they would justify this position by arguing that municipalities are already expanding their policy agendas. On the other hand, those who dispute this position might argue that municipalities are and ought to be sticking to their traditional role. This debate concerning the autonomy of larger municipalities once again points to a need to look more closely at the municipal agenda and discern whether municipal policymaking has expanded beyond service delivery.

The intergovernmental relations literature highlights two key ideas that are central to my research. First, although policy is increasingly interconnected, Sancton (2015) and other literature still identifies areas of policy that are traditionally local. Second, scholars studying intergovernmental relations in Canada have started to discuss the role of municipal governments, likely as a response to the view that municipalities are increasingly important in an era of globalization. Some scholars believe that municipalities need a stronger institutionalized position in Canada, which also raises questions about whether municipalities are becoming more involved in areas of policymaking traditionally acted upon by the federal and provincial governments. Overall, the literature allows me to formulate some hypotheses about municipal policymaking in the three chosen cases from 2015-2017.

2.6 Hypotheses derived from the literature

Based on this review of the local government and intergovernmental relations literatures, several hypotheses emerged for my content analysis of municipal council meeting minutes in Hamilton, Woodstock and Lambton Shores. First, it was expected that policy development in all of the cases would primarily consider issues related to land use planning and development, which the literature suggests is the main preoccupation of local policy (Sancton, 1983; Lightbody, 2006; McAllister 2004). Second, in addition to land use planning and development issues, economic development more generally was expected to consume much of the time and attention of local governments. The importance of economic development in municipal politics is highlighted both by local government scholars (Sancton, 2015; Goodman & Lucas, 2016), as well as scholars considering the effects of globalization on local politics (Boudreau, 2006; Andrew & Goldsmith, 1998; Leo, 2006). Third, it was expected that municipal size would correlate with different types of issues on the municipal policy agenda. Specifically, it was

hypothesized that Hamilton (the largest municipality) would address responsibilities specific to urban municipalities, which are outlined by Sancton (2015) (as seen in the grey rows in **Table 1**), but also include other issues outlined in the literature, to a greater extent than in the smaller communities of Woodstock and Lambton Shores. Some of the ‘urban’ issues outlined in the literature do not fit into the traditional mandate, for example, poverty reduction and air quality improvement policies (Tindal et al., 2016; Smith, 1998). Therefore, it was anticipated that Hamilton City Council would be most likely to demonstrate “mandate creep”, by addressing these ‘new’ urban issues. By contrast, the municipal council of Lambton Shores was expected to address more traditional municipal issues and some uniquely rural issues, such as matters related to farming or Sancton’s (2015) function “rural fences and drainage” (p. 23). The content analysis addressed these hypotheses by providing data about the types of issues considered by the three case communities, as well as how the types of issues being considered varied by municipal size. Overall, these hypotheses are supported by the literature review conducted in this chapter.

2.7 Conclusion

In sum, there is reason to believe that municipalities in Ontario have an expanded policy agenda. Beginning in the 1990s, scholars have argued that cities are at the forefront of the stable, economic growth of states in a globalized economy (Young & Leuprecht, 2006; Leo, 2006). It has also been argued that local governments are more ambitious policymakers than ever before, tackling such global issues as climate change and world peace (Smith, 1998). Scholars studying intergovernmental relations have sought to insert municipalities into a discussion that traditionally focused on the relationship between the federal and provincial governments (Young & Leuprecht, 2006). Some scholars have gone as far as to suggest that municipalities need a more autonomous, institutionalized role in the Canadian federation (Courchene, 2005;

Broadbent, 2008). These arguments suggest that municipalities are likely wading into policy areas that are beyond their “traditional” mandate.

This description of the expanded role of local governments appears contradictory to a literature that argues that local politics continues to be focused on decisions concerning land use planning and regulation and local growth. Rather than focusing on global issues, this literature suggests that local governments remain concerned with localized matters, such as regulating nuisance and maintaining local parks and recreational and cultural facilities. Overall, this debate about the policymaking role of municipal governments requires further investigation.

Furthermore, Sancton (2015) argues that “little serious research has taken place on Canadian municipal policy-making” (250). Specifically, more research is needed to understand whether and how municipal policymaking has progressed beyond the traditional role of provincial service delivery. Likewise, we can expect that the type of policies under active consideration by municipal councils will vary according to size, as larger municipalities have greater policy capacity (Taylor, 2016) and a more heterogeneous population (Trautman, 2016; Jibson, 2014). If municipal size indeed proves to correlate with the types of issues under consideration by council, it would highlight the importance of a provincial legal and regulatory framework that is flexible and considerate of place-based policy needs.

If municipalities are considering issues that are beyond their mandate, it might suggest that local governments have a claim to more financial resources or, as Bradford (2002) suggests, at least to a stronger role working with the federal and provincial governments on policy problems that affect municipalities. Finally, profiling the municipal agenda opens the door to further research about particular policy problems faced by city councils. The next chapter

outlines the methodology used to investigate whether municipal governments are currently addressing issues that are beyond the typical characterization of municipal responsibilities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

I conducted a qualitative content analysis of municipal council meeting minutes from Lambton Shores, Woodstock and Hamilton, covering the years 2015-2017. Qualitative content analysis is a systematic method for analyzing qualitative material using a coding framework (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). This chapter outlines the coding framework, case selection, and challenges associated with coding. To reiterate, my two research questions are as follows: first, to what extent are municipal councils in Southern Ontario considering policy decisions that are beyond their mandate from the province? Second, does a municipality's size influence the scope and substance of policy issues under consideration by the municipal council?

3.2 Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) can take several forms, but it can generally be defined as a systematic but flexible way to review data. Kaefer et al. (2015) note that it is systematic in that it allows the researcher to organize and consider all data, but within a framework that has clear steps and emphasizes checking the coding for reliability. It is nonetheless flexible as it allows the context and research question to dictate the coding framework that is established (Kaefer et al., 2015). Coding is the process of assigning relevant parts of the data to nodes, which can be defined as “storage containers” that hold references to relevant aspects of the data (Kaefer et al., 2015; Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 75). QCA is an adaptable method that moves beyond exploratory research and allows data to be reviewed methodically.

My research used Nvivo, a computer software that supports qualitative data analysis, to conduct the QCA. It helps the researcher with multiple tasks associated with content analysis including organizing data and any records associated with the data; keeping “memos” or research

notes throughout the process; uncovering relationships in the data using nodes that are generated by the researcher; identifying themes in the data using queries; and finally, creating models to display relationships (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 23). Nvivo does not, however, analyze data independently. Rather, it is a tool that allows researchers to analyze larger datasets more efficiently than through manual analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011, p. 71). Using Nvivo to conduct QCA allows the researcher to also “focus on quantitative aspects of the data that [are] most relevant to the research question”, such as counting (Kaefer et al., 2015, p. 7).

3.3 Data: Municipal council meeting minutes

To begin, it is necessary to justify the selection of council meeting minutes as the data under scrutiny. Councils have three main roles: (1) to “represent” and make decisions for the citizens of the community, (2) to take a “policy-making role” in determining services, budgets and generally shaping the quality of life in a community and (3) to take action as managers of the municipal corporation, which delivers services and is made up of several departments (Tindal et al., 2017, p. 226). In order to serve their function as policymakers and managers, councils vote on recommendations from committees or advance their own policies, with the help of municipal staff, including forward-thinking plans and strategies (Henstra, 2018, p. 3). This is why Sancton (2015) describes the council as the “formal decision-making mechanism for municipalities” (162). All decisions must be voted on by council before they become binding; therefore, all “policy” decisions come through council. As a result, municipal council meeting minutes, specifically the “decision agenda” meeting minutes, make up the data of this thesis.

Since this research sought to analyze the role that council plays in making and managing policy, coding focused on items within the minutes that can be defined as decisions being made about policy that required council’s support (or disapproval). This research was particularly

interested in the government's choice to act or not to act to address a problem (Howlett, 2009, p. 5). This definition of policy, although both broad and parsimonious, points to how the municipal agenda is permeated by all sorts of "policy" decisions. Furthermore, it highlights that the municipal council acts on behalf of the government when deciding how to approach an issue that has made it onto the agenda. At the local level, policy decisions typically concern services and their delivery, as well as land use planning (Tindal et al., 2017; Lightbody, 2006).

However, this definition of policy excludes from the coding process several other elements found in council minutes. For example, routine, administrative actions that do not represent a response to a problem, such as approving previous council minutes or approving additions to the agenda, were not coded. Furthermore, items that were withdrawn from the agenda or tabled to a future meeting were not coded. Finally, issues that arose more than once in a single meeting were coded only once – the annotations tool in Nvivo helped avoid duplications.

Other parts of the minutes were not coded, even though they could be considered within the scope of the coding frame. For instance, council committees sometimes make recommendations that are then endorsed by the council, and these could then be considered "policy". To illustrate this point, Hamilton's city council is required to decide whether or not to adopt the recommendations that are presented on behalf of standing committees, as well as to "receive" the remainder of standing committee meeting minutes as information. This raises the question as to whether the recommendations of standing committees should be coded, since they are in some cases proposing policy and they always require council's approval. Ultimately, given the relatively limited role of committees in policymaking, the recommendations of standing committees were not coded.

Tindal et al. (2016) notes that committees are created by council, with the exception of a select number of executive committees, such as that seen in the City of Toronto, or committees of adjustment, which exercise some planning responsibilities laid out by the province. Standing committees, which describe the structure of most of the committees in the three selected cases, are composed of councillors, as well as some citizens. Standing committees specialize in particular issues or department operations (Tindal et al., 2016, p. 247). They help “speed up” council’s work by reducing the workload of councillors, allowing them to specialize in certain areas. The discussion of the minute details of an issue take place in committee meetings, rather than in council meetings. Tindal et al. (2016) note that committee discussions are sometimes duplicated in council meetings, or council will refer an issue back to committee before making a final decision (247). This duplication or delay usually takes place when an issue is contentious or of high significance. Therefore, it is evident that most important policy decisions are discussed or voted on separately in council meetings.

Furthermore, it would have been unduly cumbersome to code the individual items contained in committee minute recommendations. Although Hamilton included committee minutes as appendices in council minutes, Lambton Shores and Woodstock did not. As a result, it would have required additional data gathering and sorting that, due to time constraints, would not have been feasible for this project. Nonetheless, any substantial recommendations (those that would signal a significant change in policy) would be discussed and voted on by council.

The decision was also made not to code closed session items. This is simply because not enough information was available to assign each item to the appropriate node, even though some closed session decisions could be considered policy decisions. This decision helped ensure the coding process was reliable.

Finally, information that is brought forward to council, but does not require council to allocate resources or take a particular position, was coded to the inductive node ‘information for council’. Examples of references included in this node are delegation presentations, correspondence or reports from internal departments or committees, and correspondence and reports from external associations, groups, or persons. It should be emphasized that all of these examples *must* be noted as to “be received” or “received as information” in order to be coded to ‘information for council’. If, for example, a presentation is “received and endorsed”, it would be referred to a different node, as this represents a policy decision. The purpose of this node, which is the only node that does not reference “policy”-related decisions, is to enable conclusions to be drawn about the amount of information council receives, in relation to the amount of policy decisions that are made.

3.4 Case selection

The cases were purposively selected to ensure a roughly representative sample of municipalities of varying size. Using Statistics Canada census data from 2016, municipalities in Ontario were classified as large, medium and small based on the percentile distribution of population, as seen in **Table 2**. ‘Indian Reserves’, as denoted by Statistics Canada, and municipalities with a population of less than 10,000 were purposefully excluded from these calculations. Although local governments with a population of less than 10,000 make up over half of all local governments in Ontario, these extremely small governments and all ‘Indian Reserves’ govern only about nine percent of the Ontario population.⁴ Furthermore, most of these small entities are located in Northern Ontario. Therefore, an over-representation of these

⁴ As a result, Table 2, “Percentage of Ontario Population” column does not add up to 100%, as it is missing municipalities with a population of less than 10,000 and all ‘Indian Reserves’.

extremely small municipalities would present a biased picture of municipal policymaking in larger municipalities, which affects most Canadians.

Table 2: Case Selection

Size	Percentile	Population	Frequency (out of 147 local governments in Ontario*)	Percentage of local governments in Ontario*	Percentage of Ontario population
Large	>75 th	>64,045	35	23.81	68.65
Medium	25 th -75 th	13,191-64,044	75	51.02	18.81
Small	<25 th	10,000-13,190	36	24.49	3.9

**The population of local governments in Ontario excludes “Indian Reserves”, “Indian Settlements”, “Unorganized” territories and local governments with a population <10,000*

One case was selected from each size category: small, medium and large. Aside from the size requirement, the cases were also limited to Southern Ontario to control for potentially significant variation in policy topics due to geography. Siegel (2009) notes that municipalities in Northern Ontario, despite some similarities to small towns and rural areas of the rest of Ontario, face unique challenges inflicted by geography and climate (23). For example, Northern Ontario communities face high rates of outmigration of resource industries, such as mining (Wilson, n.d.). Northern Ontario also has a higher concentration of Indigenous peoples.

In order to account for institutional differences, only single tier municipalities were considered. This allows for the municipal council to be considered the primary institution that makes policy, as opposed to a regional government where the policymaking role is split between the regional and lower-tier municipalities (Sancton, 2015). In the case of a lower-tier municipality, for example, the meeting minutes of both the upper and lower tier municipal councils would need to be reviewed. Finally, accessible municipal council meeting minutes from

2015 to 2017 were required for each case. Only municipalities with council meeting minutes available online in PDF format were considered.

Hamilton was selected to represent the large municipalities. With a population of 536,917, it is the fourth largest municipality in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2016). Furthermore, it shows several ‘urban’ characteristics that one would expect from a ‘large’ municipality. For example, the city, which was originally known as a “steel-town” for its heavy involvement in steel production, has a diverse economy. It has seen an expansion into other sectors, such as education and science, and continued strength in manufacturing (Peesker, 2013, February 14). It also has a diverse population. It has a sizeable immigrant population at just over 130,000 comprising about 73% of the total population. Hamilton is comparable to other municipalities its size. London, the fifth largest municipality in Ontario has almost 95,000 immigrants and Brampton, the third largest municipality in Ontario and that is known for its large immigrant population, has 308,000 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Woodstock was selected as the medium-sized case, and it has a population of 40,902 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Aside from population size, it is a suitable medium size case because it has an economy that is less diversified than Hamilton, but more complex than Lambton Shores. Agriculture and real estate are two dominant industries in Woodstock, based on the high number of registered agricultural businesses, however, the labour force is mostly employed in the manufacturing sector (Woodstock Economic Development, 2017). The city has a smaller immigrant population at 4,400 in 2016 comprising about 11% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Finally, Lambton Shores, with a population of 10,631, was selected as the small case (Statistics Canada, 2016). Only about 9% of Lambton Shores population is of immigrant origins

(Statistics Canada, 2016). Lambton Shores has a very high number of businesses involved in agriculture, particularly Soybean production (Mellor Murray Consulting, 2017, August 28).

Lambton Shores is a suitable ‘small’ case because it has both a generally homogenous population and it is evidently rural. One of the unique characteristics of this case is its proximity to Lake Huron, which has spurred tourism to Grand Bend Beach. Overall, these three cases covered a range of community sizes, allowing me to answer my second research question, and they were deemed suitable for a content analysis of their council meeting minutes using Nvivo.

3.5 Coding framework

My project blended inductive and deductive coding in a framework that captured three nested levels of analysis, which is outlined in **Table 3**. Deductive coding “works with prior formulated aspects of analysis, bringing them in connection with the text” (Mayring, 2000, para. 12). The deductive nodes were derived directly from Sancton’s (2015) list. These comprise Level 1 ‘core’, which involved coding council issues according to the specific responsibilities assigned to all Canadian municipalities. Throughout the content analysis, inductive nodes were added to Level 1 that were not included in Sancton’s list. Inductive coding uses the research questions and theory to produce tentative nodes. These nodes are refined as the project advances (Mayring, 2000, para. 11). The inductive nodes created a coding framework that fit with the overall purpose of the project: to uncover policy issues on the council agenda that are beyond the traditional municipal mandate. The inductive coding is explained further later in this chapter.

Table 3: Coding Framework – Deductive Nodes

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fire protection	Allocative	Core
Animal control	Regulatory	Core
Roads	Allocative	Core
Traffic control	Allocative	Core
Solid waste collection and disposal	Allocative	Core
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core
Building regulations	Regulatory	Core
Economic development	Developmental	Core
Tourism promotion	Developmental	Core
Public libraries	Allocative	Core
Parks	Developmental	Core
Recreation	Allocative	Core
Cultural facilities	Developmental	Core
Licensing of businesses	Regulatory	Core
Emergency planning and preparedness	Allocative	Core
Rural fences and drainage	Allocative	Core
Regulation and/or provision of cemeteries	Allocative	Core
Airports (though not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Developmental	Core
Weed control	Allocative	Core
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income (heavily subsidized by provincial government) +	Redistributive	Core
Operation of municipal seniors' residences*	Redistributive	Core
Income and employment assistance (<i>Ontario Works</i>) *∇	Redistributive	Core
Public health*	Allocative	Core
Land-ambulance services*	Allocative	Core
Public transit	Developmental	Core
Regulation of taxis	Regulatory	Core
Water purification and distribution	Allocative	Core
Sewage collection and treatment	Allocative	Core
Downtown revitalization	Developmental	Core
Regulation of noise	Regulatory	Core
Policing (in Ontario, rural municipalities cover full costs of policing, provided by RCMP or OPP, since 1998)	Allocative	Core

Note: Level 1 comes directly from Sancton (2015), pp. 22- 23.

**Unique to Ontario*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government

∇ Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government

Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.

By nesting the coding into levels, all Level 1 nodes could be arranged under parent nodes that reflected Levels 2 and 3 in Nvivo. Level 2 coded for the *type* of policy issue—allocative, constituent, developmental, redistributive, regulatory and symbolic – to better understand the proportion of council attention that is devoted to each issue type. The nodes of Level 1 were aligned with Level 2 through a review of the most pertinent policy types at the local level, as explained below. Level 3 of the coding framework labeled council issues as “core”— meaning they are the mandated policy areas for municipalities in Ontario, according to Sancton (2015)— or “non-core”, meaning they extend beyond the scope of what has been noted in the literature as the traditional municipal mandate. This taxonomical approach is also further explained below.

Level 2 of the coding framework classified issues using the policy typology literature (see **Table 3**). There are six types of policy that are relevant at the local level (Henstra, 2018, pp. 124-125). The policy typology literature began with Lowi’s (1972) classification of policy into distributive, regulatory and redistributive policy with the underlying assumption that ‘policy determines politics’. Since then, it has been expanded by other scholars to include new categories and characterize power relations determined by these categories (Peterson, 1981, p. 275). Classifying policies using Lowi’s (1972) method is generally criticized for excluding other spheres of policy, such as social regulatory policy (Sharp, 1997). Lowi’s categories (1972) are also criticized as too subjective and not mutually exclusive (Smith, 2002, p. 381). Nonetheless, numerous scholars studying local, regional and central governments continue to adopt the categories, despite their methodological issues (Hayes, 2007; Tolbert, 2002). A review of the literature helped define the most pertinent typologies for local-level issues.

Allocative policies at the local level are concerned with service delivery to citizens (Henstra, 2018, 124; Sharp, 1997, 276). This category is also known as “distributive policy” and

adheres to the same definition noted above (Tolbert, 2002; Lowi, 1972). Allocative policies can sometimes be seen to overlap with redistributive policies, as some of the services provided under allocative policies are seen to benefit the poor more than the rich (as is the case for public health services). Nonetheless, these services are available to all, rather than targeted towards lower income groups, and are funded primarily from the municipal budget (Henstra, 2018, p. 124). Table 1 shows that local governments are responsible for many functions that are considered allocative policy. This is unsurprising, based on the literature which describes Canadian municipalities as primarily service providers (Siegel, 2009; Tindal et al., 2017).

Constituent policy, which was one of Lowi's (1972) original policy types, can be defined as policy that changes the structure of the political process, usually through political institutions (Tolbert, 2002, p. 78). It is one of the most distinct policy types, as it refers specifically to changes to the political process. Lowi (1972) applied it to congressional agencies, for example, discussing the creation of a new agency (Tolbert, 2002, p. 78). Constituent policy is an interesting category because it affects politicians more than citizens, as it often involves altering institutional arrangements. Based on Sancton's (2015) classification of the municipal policy arena, constituent policy is not an essential part of the traditional the municipal mandate in Ontario.

Developmental policies are those concerned primarily with promoting economic growth and improvement at the local level (Henstra, 2018, p. 124; Sharpe, 1997, p. 276). Like allocative decisions, they too dominate the agenda at the local level. However, developmental decisions are less routine and attract more attention than allocative policy decisions (Henstra, 2018, p. 124). Developmental policies seek to make a municipality more attractive to both residents and

business (Henstra, 2018, p. 124). As a result, a wide array of issues, from land use planning to tourism promotion, fall into this category.

Redistributive policies use public resources to provide services specifically for low income citizens (Henstra, 2018, pp. 124-125). The tailoring of services or policies to low income citizens differentiates these policies from allocative policies. Ontario is the only province in Canada in which municipalities have a mandate to implement redistributive policies, such as social housing for low income earners and operation of seniors' residences (Sancton, 2015, p. 22). These policies garner more attention from the public as they are seen to take from the politically attentive and influential working class to give to the less attentive and powerless poor (Henstra, 2018, p. 124).

Fifth, "regulatory policies control or prohibit behaviours that pose potential risks to public health and safety" (Henstra, 2018, p. 125). Municipal governments in Ontario maintain jurisdiction over some important regulations, such as the licensing of businesses and building regulations, but also regulate issues seen as traditional public nuisances noise and animals, for example. Like constituent policy, regulatory policies are generally distinct and easy to identify. Finally, symbolic policies, like constituent policies, are easy to identify. They require little resources or efforts and are used to honour or recognize a "group, event or cause" (Henstra, 2018, p. 124).

Overall, the policy typology literature helps signal what types of policies are expected to dominate the municipal decision agenda, however, further research is needed to verify how much attention each type is receiving. There are five types of policy that are most relevant at the local level: allocative, constituent, developmental, redistributive, regulatory and symbolic policy. The policy types are meant to be mutually exclusive categories. Although there were additions and

some rearrangement of Level 1 nodes, the typology proved exhaustive throughout the research process.

To complement the assignment of municipal issues into somewhat subjective categories, a taxonomical approach was also adopted, which is reflected in Level 3 of the coding framework. Smith (2002) argues that having two policy categories allows for the classification of policies to be more empirical and objective than the typology approach (391). My framework adopts the taxonomical approach by generating the “core” and “non-core” categories. As noted earlier, the core includes the policy areas that are within the municipal mandate, as identified by Sancton (2015), seen in Level 1 in **Table 3**. The “non-core” nodes, which were all generated inductively during the coding process, includes issues under consideration by the municipal council that are not a part of Sancton’s (2015) characterization of the traditional mandate.⁵ The taxonomical approach made it easier to draw conclusions about whether the municipal agenda in Hamilton, Woodstock and Lambton Shores are dominated by issues that are defined as the traditional mandate of Canadian municipalities, according to the literature.

3.6 The practice of coding

In order to understand the coding framework, this section explains the process of assigning codes. Items that did not fit into a Level 1 core node were added to an existing inductive node, a new node was created, or assigned to a temporary “unknown” node, which was later revisited in consultation with my supervisors. The “unknown” node provided an opportunity to discuss uncertainties that arose in the coding process, as well as to review interesting findings. Reviewing coding with other researchers is essential to ensuring the validity of the codes, meaning their usefulness in answering the research question (Bazeley & Jackson,

⁵ The inductive coding process is described further in the following paragraph.

2013, p. 93). In this case, validity meant ensuring the nodes, especially the inductive nodes, accurately described the new items that arose.

Inductive nodes were an essential part of the project, as they were meant to reflect issues that were beyond the traditional mandate, and thus helped answer the first research question. As discussed in the analytical framework chapter, Canadian intergovernmental relations is becoming increasingly complex, meaning that many policy areas receive attention from more than one level of government. This makes it difficult to clearly state which policy areas are uniquely local. However, the traditional responsibilities of Canadian municipalities are outlined by Sancton (2015). This means that all inductively generated nodes were considered beyond the traditional mandate; they were therefore labeled as ‘non-core’.

It is evident that some of the inductive nodes reflect municipal responsibilities. For example, parking is a ‘sphere of jurisdiction’ in Ontario municipalities, and is therefore part of the municipal mandate. However, the purpose of excluding these sorts of functions from the list of ‘core’ nodes is to draw conclusions about the literature’s characterization of the municipal mandate. This approach allowed me to conduct a feasible analysis of the municipal mandate in three cases. Because it uses a list of municipal responsibilities created by an expert in the field, and aligns these functions with the policy typology literature, it allows me to draw conclusions about both the types of issues that dominate the agenda and those that are excluded from the literature and deserve more attention.

Inductive nodes were sometimes difficult to name at the outset of the project; however, they were solidified as new codes were added. This can be seen in **Appendix A**, which demonstrates how the nodes changed as the project progressed. Stage 2 illustrates the expansion of the framework to a point that became difficult to manage. Bazeley & Jackson (2013) describe

this as “viral coding” – the expansion of the coding framework to the point that it is unmanageably large as a result of redundant child nodes (p. 104). For example, the node ‘Appointments’ under the ‘Non-core’, ‘Constituent’ section in Stage 2 demonstrates this problem. The ‘Appointments’ node became expanded to include several child-nodes that later proved uninteresting and unnecessary for the project, and as a result, were amalgamated under ‘Appointments’. Nonetheless, the expansion of the coding framework to this point help ensure that the framework was comprehensive. The amalgamation of redundant child nodes after coding was complete simplified the framework. It also helped ensure that the framework would be useful for future research. The finalized coding framework is displayed in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Finalized Coding Framework						
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Roads	Allocative	Core		Budget and financial planning	Allocative	Non-core
Fire protection	Allocative	Core		Grants and contributions	Allocative	Non-core
Rural fences and drainage	Allocative	Core		Environmental stewardship	Allocative	Non-core
Water purification and distribution	Allocative	Core		Taxation	Allocative	Non-core
Sewage collection and treatment	Allocative	Core		Municipal facilities and equipment	Allocative	Non-core
Policing	Allocative	Core		Accessibility	Allocative	Non-core
Public health*	Allocative	Core		Strategic planning	Allocative	Non-core
Emergency planning and preparedness	Allocative	Core		Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government	Constituent	Non-core
Solid waste collection and disposal	Allocative	Core		Boards, committees, sub-committees and panels	Constituent	Non-core
Cemeteries (regulation and/or provision)	Allocative	Core		Council	Constituent	Non-core
Land-ambulance services*	Allocative	Core		Accountability and transparency	Constituent	Non-core
Weed control	Allocative	Core		Internal policies	Constituent	Non-core
Recreation	Allocative	Core		Salary, wages and remuneration	Constituent	Non-core
Public libraries	Allocative	Core		Department-specific policies and hiring	Constituent	Non-core
Economic development	Developmental	Core		Municipal elections	Constituent	Non-core
Public transit	Developmental	Core		Appointments	Constituent	Non-core
Parks	Developmental	Core		Workplace review	Constituent	Non-core
Cultural facilities	Developmental	Core		By-law enforcement	Constituent	Non-core
Tourism promotion	Developmental	Core		Integrity commissioner	Constituent	Non-core
Airports (though not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Developmental	Core		Mayor	Constituent	Non-core
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core		Public participation or citizen engagement	Constituent	Non-core
Downtown revitalization	Developmental	Core		Clerk	Constituent	Non-core
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core		Marinas and Beaches	Developmental	Non-core
Income and employment assistance (Ontario Works) *Ñ	Redistributive	Core		Culture promotion	Developmental	Non-core
Operation of municipal seniors' residences*	Redistributive	Core		Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction	Redistributive	Non-core
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income (heavily subsidized by provincial government) +	Redistributive	Core		Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens	Redistributive	Non-core
Traffic control	Regulatory	Core		Refugee resettlement	Redistributive	Non-core
Licensing of businesses	Regulatory	Core		Parking	Regulatory	Non-core
Building regulations	Regulatory	Core		Support for licence applications to AGCO	Regulatory	Non-core
Noise regulation	Regulatory	Core		Use of public space	Regulatory	Non-core
Animal control	Regulatory	Core		Sign regulation	Regulatory	Non-core
Taxi regulation	Regulatory	Core		Property maintenance	Regulatory	Non-core
				Inclusivity	Regulatory	Non-core
				Objection to liquor licence application	Regulatory	Non-core
				Objection to communication tower	Regulatory	Non-core
				Illegal dumping	Regulatory	Non-core
				Awards or recognition	Symbolic	Non-core
<i>All functions noted as 'core' are directly from Sancton, The grey rows constitute what Sancton (2015) identifies</i>				Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<i>*Municipal function that is unique to Ontario municipalities</i>				Information for council	N/A	N/A
<i>+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government</i>						
<i>∇ Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government</i>						
<i>~ Excludes 'information for council' references</i>						

There is a level of subjectivity involved with coding. To be as objective as possible, coding focused on the essence of each issue. Put differently, where there was ambiguity as to where the items should best be coded, I considered both the substance of the issue and its material impact in the community (including its impact on municipal resources and whose interests would be affected). For example, in May 2015, Hamilton city council passed a motion to establish a Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee (Hamilton City Council, 2015, May 27). Although this decision is related to public transit (which is an allocative node) the decision itself altered the political process by creating a new sub-committee. The decision changes the political process, which subsequently affects public transit in Hamilton. Therefore, it was coded to 'Boards, Committees and Sub-Committees' under 'Constituent Policy'. By considering both the substance of the issue and its impact on municipal resources and interests, coding sought to be as objective as possible.

Since there was only one coder, inter-coder reliability was a lesser concern than for projects involving multiple coders. Reliability refers to whether an instrument consistently produces the same measure (Bernard, 2000, 27). Bazeley & Jackson (2013) argue that coding is more likely to become unreliable when there is more than one coder involved in the research; coding becomes susceptible to variation based on differing values and beliefs of the coders (93). In addition, keeping detailed notes about the rationale behind assigned codes minimized inconsistencies that might otherwise have arisen because the coding took place across multiple sessions. For example, by noting that the disposition or sale of public land was coded to economic development, it ensured that future instances of this issue were not mistakenly coded as land use planning and regulation.

Equally important to ensuring items are coded to the proper node is ensuring that enough information is coded. As Bazeley & Jackson (2013) suggest, coding must take place in a way that will facilitate analysis (89). References that do not communicate the full meaning of the code without re-opening the original document make analysis cumbersome. Selecting text in Adobe PDF format is more difficult than MS Word documents, due to spacing and line restrictions, which makes coding especially tedious at times. This problem, which arises specifically in Nvivo, is recognized in the literature (see Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 90).

3.7 Conclusion

I undertook a qualitative content analysis in order to explore two research questions. First, to what extent are municipal councils in Southern Ontario considering policy decisions that are beyond their traditional mandate from the province? Second, does a municipality's size influence the scope and substance of policy issues under consideration by the municipal council? The data of the content analysis consisted of municipal council meeting minutes from a small, medium and large municipality, which were systematically selected. The three cases are Lambton Shores, Woodstock and Hamilton. This chapter outlines the coding framework by thoroughly discussing the policy typology and taxonomy literatures. It also discusses the challenges associated coding, such as generating inductive nodes, viral coding and subjectivity. The findings that were generated from the content analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Content Analysis Results: A Discussion of the Issues that Dominate the Municipal Decision Agenda

4.1 Introduction to the Results

This section presents the data gathered from a qualitative content analysis of municipal council minutes in three Ontario municipalities, Hamilton, Woodstock and Lambton Shores. The content analysis was devised to respond to two main research questions. First, to what extent are municipal councils in Southern Ontario considering policy decisions that are beyond the traditional mandate as discussed in local government literature? Second, does a municipality's size influence the scope and substance of policy issues under consideration by the municipal council? The coding results for each case are summarized in the following appendices: Lambton Shores is summarized in **Appendix B**; Woodstock is summarized in **Appendix C**; and Hamilton is summarized in **Appendix D**. This chapter will review the results for each case and discuss the three most referenced 'policy' nodes⁶, findings related to size, as well as any anecdotal, significant findings. The chapter will conclude by interpreting the coding results for all of the cases, which are summarized in **Appendix E**. First, however, it is necessary to provide an overview of the findings.

Overall, the content analysis confirmed the argument in the literature that municipal policymaking is concerned with property decisions, as 'land use planning and regulation' was the most referenced node in all of the cases. It also suggests that allocative and developmental decisions policy decisions occupy over 60% of the decision agenda, which is an expected finding based on the high number of 'core' functions that are allocative or developmental.

⁶ 'Policy' nodes are the nodes that include references to decisions on the agenda that are considered 'policy'. The methodology chapter of this thesis notes it is concerned with 'policy decisions'. All of the nodes in the coding framework are considered 'policy' nodes, with the exception of the 'information for council' node. For further explanation of the 'information for council' node, see the Methodology Chapter, section 3.3.

This chapter also argues that all municipalities, regardless of size, consider issues that are not included in the traditional mandate. In fact, small and medium municipalities are more likely to consider decisions that are ‘non-core’ than large municipalities, however large municipalities consider a more diverse set of both ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ policy issues. It was expected that the large municipality would have substantially more references⁷ to the ‘urban’ policy functions identified by Sancton (2015), however, this was not the case. Instead, it appears that there are certain policy functions that might be considered primarily functions of ‘small’ municipalities and that Sancton’s (2015) list of ‘urban’ policy functions should be revisited.

Furthermore, this research also found that over 12% of policy decisions concern constituent policies. The third most referenced node was ‘collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government’. This is significant because the local government literature excludes any serious discussion of constituent policy. The municipal agenda is also permeated by delegation presentations, committee reports and other ‘information’ that is to be received by council. Further research might uncover how local policymaking is influenced by the information presented to municipal councils. The findings presented below are intended to act as a starting point for a larger project that would conduct a similar analysis using more cases.

4.2 Lambton Shores: Results and Discussion

4.2.1 Top three policy nodes

Lambton Shores was selected to represent the small municipality in Southern Ontario. It is an appropriate case because it has a population of 10, 631 (Statistics Canada, 2016), which is below the 25th percentile of the distribution. In Lambton Shores, the municipal council mostly considers land use planning and regulation decisions. There were 192 references, meaning that

⁷ ‘References’ refer to the number of codes in a node. In other words, each ‘reference’ represents a policy decision, which has been coded to the appropriate node.

22% of all ‘policy’ decisions considered by council were related to land use planning and/or regulation. This finding is unsurprising, as Sancton (1983; 2015) argues that property-related decisions dominate municipal politics. The second most referenced policy node was an inductive node, budget and financial planning, which had 88 references, and included about 10% of all policy decisions in Lambton Shores. Some examples of budget and financial planning references include special council meetings to review and approve line-by-line annual budgets for various departments, committees and organizations for the upcoming fiscal year (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2015, January 10; Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2015, November 24); approving banking agreements (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2015, May 5) and approving year-to-date financial statements (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2015, June 16). The third most referenced policy node was roads, which contained 5.7% of all references. This is one of the mandated functions of municipal governments, which requires distributing resources to maintain local roads.

4.2.2 Implications of size and other significant findings

The coding results for Lambton Shores provide some evidence to suggest that certain municipal policy functions vary according to municipal size. According to Sancton (2015) there are several municipal responsibilities that are “generally carried out by *urban* municipalities” (p. 23). These include “public transit; regulation of taxis; water purification and distribution; sewage collection and treatment; downtown revitalization; and regulation of noise” (Sancton, 2015, p. 23). Policing is also an urban responsibility, which involves either establishing a city or regional police force or contracting the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). In Ontario, rural governments cover the full costs of policing that is provided by the RCMP or OPP (Sancton, 2015, p. 23).

Because Sancton (2015) suggests that this subset of issues is usually addressed by urban municipalities, I expected that there would be few references to these functions in Lambton Shores' council minutes. From 2015-2017, Lambton Shores' council never made a policy decision related to public transit or taxi regulation and only made two decisions related to downtown revitalization. It did, however, have a substantial number of policy discussions on several issues that are considered "urban" responsibilities. There were 18 'water purification and distribution' references; 13 'sewage collection and treatment' references and 12 'noise regulation' references. These findings demonstrate that, at least in the case of the Lambton Shores, rural municipalities are active in policy areas that are traditionally viewed as belonging to urban municipalities. However, more research is needed to determine whether urban policy areas are discussed in other rural municipalities, as well whether the nature of the policy discussions differ between urban and rural municipalities.

The coding results also suggest that rural municipalities are more likely to address particular policy functions. Rural fences and drainage was referenced 34 times in Lambton Shores council minutes and this function was not referenced in Woodstock or Hamilton council minutes. It was also the fifth most dominant function in Lambton Shores; it occupied almost 4% of the coded agenda. Similarly, although 'weed control' was referenced twice in Lambton Shores council minutes, it was never referenced in Woodstock or Hamilton minutes. It is also interesting that Lambton Shores was the only case to have substantive discussions about 'cemeteries'. An expansion of this project both to include more cases and more council meeting minutes could provide further insight as to whether this finding is significant. More research is needed to determine whether small municipalities are the only municipalities addressing these policy areas.

Along with findings related to size, there are a significant amount of references to other nodes in the coding results for Lambton Shores.

The node ‘information for council’ includes references to aspects of council minutes that are not “policy” decisions. It is interesting to note that the node comprises 17% of all references in Lambton Shores council minutes, meaning that the council agenda is permeated by items that are brought to the attention of council, but are not meant to be acted on. This includes delegation presentations; department reports; external association or government reports; invitations or other correspondence extended to council. For example, in July 2017, Steven Del Duca, the Ontario Minister of Transportation presented council with information regarding Ontario off-road vehicle use (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2017, July 14). On November 24, 2015, the Municipality of South Huron presented a notice to Lambton Shores regarding the start of their municipal Water and Wastewater Master Plan (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2015, November 24). Committee and board minutes are also received as information. For example, the minutes of the June 16th, 2016 Bluewater Recycling Association Board of Directors Meeting were received by council June 28th, 2016 (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2016, June 28). These reference samples highlight that this node does not include “policy” actions, as defined in the methodology chapter. Nonetheless, the high number of references suggest that the Lambton Shores council spent a significant amount of time accepting information from various actors.

The majority of the references to the inductively generated node “ports and beaches” were from Lambton Shores’ meeting minutes. These results were anticipated because Lambton Shores has two large, popular beaches: Grand Bend Beach and Ipperwash Beach. On its website, the municipality boasts that Grand Bend Beach hosts “thousands of visitors each year” (The Municipality of Lambton Shores, 2018a) and “Ipperwash Beach is one of the longest freshwater

beaches in Ontario” (The Municipality of Lambton Shores, 2018b). One substantive policy discussion that took place was the development of the Grand Bend Beach Rotary Community Stage, which was built in celebration of Canada’s 150th birthday and to bring live music to the beach (The Municipality of Lambton Shores, 2018c). This example highlights the importance of local contexts in shaping policy priorities, which has also been emphasized by previous research (Cook & Ward, 2012; Breeman, Scholten & Timmermans, 2015).

4.2.3 Summary of the results and discussion

In summary, the three most referenced policy nodes in Lambton Shores’ council minutes are ‘land use planning and regulation’; ‘budget and financial planning’ and ‘roads’. The ‘information for council’ node was almost equally as saturated as the ‘land use planning and regulation’ node. Finally, contrary to expectations, Lambton Shores council discussed policies that are “generally” considered urban responsibilities, according to Sancton (2015). Further research could help determine whether ‘water purification and distribution’, ‘sewage collection and treatment’ and ‘noise regulation’ ought to be considered urban policy areas or whether they are areas that all municipalities address, regardless of size. The findings also suggest that only small municipalities deal with certain issues, most notably ‘rural fences and drainage’ and ‘weed control’. A greater discussion of the implication of this thesis’ findings for “urban” policy functions is included in the discussion of the results for Hamilton in section 4.4.2. The high number of references to the inductively generated node ‘ports and beaches’ was unsurprising, given the municipality borders Lake Huron.

4.3 Woodstock: Results and Discussion

4.3.1 Top three policy nodes

The council minutes of Woodstock, a medium-sized municipality, were also examined using qualitative content analysis. It has a population of 40,902 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Like Lambton Shores, policy decisions in Woodstock focused mostly on ‘land use planning and regulation’ and ‘budget and financial planning’. ‘Land use planning and regulation’ had 143 references, comprising 18% of all references to policy nodes in Woodstock minutes, whereas ‘budget and financial planning’ had 106 references, comprising 13% of all references. As previously discussed, ‘budget and financial planning’ is an inductively generated node created to reflect the high number of decisions related to allocating financial resources to various municipal departments, as well as routine financial decisions.

Woodstock city council’s third most referenced node was ‘economic development’, as opposed to the high frequency of ‘roads’ references in Lambton Shores. The literature suggests that economic development, like land use planning and development, captures much of the attention of municipal councils, and therefore it is unsurprising that this node has a relatively high number of references (61 references). This node mostly references decisions to sell surplus municipal land (for an example of this sort of decision, see Woodstock City Council, 2017, April 20) or to lease municipal land, usually to utility companies (for an example of this sort of decision, see Woodstock City Council, 2016, April 21). It is interesting to note that Woodstock had the highest proportion of ‘economic development’ references at 7.8%, in contrast to Lambton Shores and Hamilton, which had significantly lower percentages of about 2%. This was unanticipated because the literature suggests that economic development is the second most

dominant policy function for all local governments, regardless of size (Sancton, 2015; Goodman & Lucas, 2016).

4.3.2 Implications of size and other significant findings

One of the most striking aspects of the data is the significantly fewer references to the ‘information for council’ node in the Woodstock council minutes (38 references), in contrast to Lambton Shores (151 references) and Hamilton council minutes (496 references). It was determined that this resulted from the procedures chosen by council, rather than any significant difference in the number of delegation presentations or informational reports coming before Woodstock’s council. More specifically, it falsely appears that there is “less” information for council than the other cases because delegations and reports that are relevant to another item on the agenda would be referred to that item, rather than “received as information”. When item X is “referred” to item Z, the coding procedure involved annotating (rather than coding) that “item X is coded at item Z” and coding item Z. This was done in order to avoid duplicate coding of multiple items in a single meeting. Subsequently, item Z was usually a “policy” decision on a particular issue – item X was the corresponding presentation or report considered during the decision. However, the result was some differences in the coding of ‘information for council’ since the Woodstock City Council was more likely to “refer” information items, and Hamilton and Lambton Shores were more likely to “receive” information items. This slight inconsistency highlights some of the difficulties that arose in the coding process. It is nonetheless insignificant because the main focus of this thesis is profiling the types of *policy* decisions that permeate municipal council meetings.

The only other node that varied considerably in Woodstock meeting minutes than the other cases was ‘public libraries’. However, there were few references to this node from all cases

(9). This finding appears to be insignificant and the literature does not suggest that it would be related to size.

4.3.3 Summary of the results and discussion

In sum, Woodstock, like Lambton Shores, focused mostly on ‘land use planning and regulation’ and ‘budget and financial planning’ policy decisions. There were also a significant number of references to the ‘economic development’ node. It is interesting to note that ‘budget and financial planning’ was an inductively generated node, meaning it was not included in Sancton’s (2015) list.

4.4 Hamilton: Results and Discussion

4.4.1 Top three policy nodes

The coding of Hamilton council minutes, a large city in Southern Ontario with a population of over 500,000 (Statistics Canada, 2016), generated some unexpected results. The three most referenced policy nodes were as follows: ‘land use planning and regulation’ (645 references or 36.5% of all policy references in Hamilton minutes), ‘traffic control’ (107 references or 5.9%) and ‘boards, committees, sub-committees and panels’ (88 references or 4.9%). Each of these nodes are discussed below. Aside from the most dominant policy nodes, the ‘information for council’ node had a substantial number of references (496, comprising 21.9% of all references), similar to Lambton Shores.

It is unsurprising that land use planning and regulation dominates the policy discussion in Hamilton, like it did in Woodstock and Lambton Shores, as the literature identified this aspect of local policy. Traffic control, the second most referenced node, concerns decisions that help regulate traffic, such as by-laws regarding speed limits or new stop sign installations. For a large city like Hamilton, it also concerns more complex decisions such as installing transit-only lanes

(Hamilton City Council, 2015, January 21) or traffic calming measures (Hamilton City Council, 2015, June 10).

Hamilton had a significant amount of references to decisions about the structure and function of boards, committees, sub-committees and panels. These results demonstrate that a sizeable amount of city council policy decisions concern constituent policy – altering or arranging the structures and procedures of municipal government. References in the ‘boards, committees, sub-committees and panels’ node generally pertain to the appointment or resignation of individuals from these organizations. Tindal et al. (2016) note that these organizations assist council by creating forums for the discussion of issues specific to different departments, and ultimately play a role in policy formulation. The seemingly routine task of establishing and maintaining these bodies proves to occupy a significant amount of the decision agenda. This is contradictory to literature that describes the municipal policy agenda, as it rarely discusses the role of municipal councils in establishing constituent policies.

4.4.2 Implications of size and other significant findings

Although Hamilton is the largest, most urbanized municipality included in this study, it rarely had significantly more references to the nodes that represent ‘urban’ responsibilities, according to Sancton (2015). In particular, the only ‘urban’ node that was referenced much more often in Hamilton council minutes was public transit (48 references, out of a total of 58 references to this node across all cases). Contrary to expectations, Woodstock’s minutes contained far more references to ‘downtown revitalization’ (19 references, out of a total of 26 references) and Lambton Shores’ minutes contained the most references to ‘noise regulation’ (12 references, out of a total of 28 references from all cases) and ‘water purification and distribution’

(18 references, out of a total of 30 references from all cases). These findings suggest that further research might demonstrate that Sancton's (2015) list of 'urban' functions requires revision.

Nonetheless, the coding results for Hamilton suggest that larger municipalities are dealing with a more diverse set of policy issues. For example, Hamilton had significantly more references to the following nodes (in contrast to the other cases): 'parking', 'emergency planning and preparedness', 'animal control', 'provide subsidize social housing for low income', and 'culture promotion'. Hamilton minutes contained 60% or more of the total references to these nodes. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that urban municipalities are more likely to discuss these issues, as opposed small or medium-sized municipalities. For instance, more policies to regulate animals, especially pets, seems logically associated with denser communities because there would likely be more complaints about pets by neighbours, for example, as well as more interaction among pets and people in the community.

It also appears likely that there would be a greater demand in cities for council to support various cultural events and organizations – represented by the node 'culture promotion'. This was an inductively generated node that grew out of 'cultural facilities'. It refers to policies that seek to promote cultural events, activities and organizations, whereas 'cultural facilities' refers to policies that directly impact municipally owned facilities, such as museums. There were 17 references to 'culture promotion' in Hamilton council minutes, as opposed to 6 in Woodstock and 4 in Lambton Shores. For example, in May 2015, Hamilton city council voted to supplement the costs of transportation for attendees to the Canadian Aviation Historical Society National Convention and Annual General Meeting (Hamilton City Council, 2015, May 27). In June 2016, council requested staff to report on the feasibility of live streaming The Tragically Hip's final show in Gage Park in order to give the public the opportunity to see the show at minimal cost

(Hamilton City Council, 2016, June 22). Since larger municipalities have more politically active citizens with varying interests (Trautman, 2016), it seems reasonable to expect that councils in large cities, as opposed to small municipalities, would be more likely to support various cultural activities and organizations.

Furthermore, the results note that Hamilton makes policy that addresses poverty and seeks to help low-income residents. Woodstock and Lambton Shores are not addressing these types of issues. This is evident in the references to the nodes ‘affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens’ and ‘affordable housing and/or poverty reduction’. Both of these nodes are inductively generated and considered ‘non-core’ or beyond the traditional mandate. As discussed in the analytical framework, Tindal et al. (2016) suggest that poverty is one of the unique challenges that is faced by cities. Although the data from the content analysis do not seem to confirm Sancton’s (2015) discussion of ‘urban’ functions, the analysis does suggest that cities are addressing substantively more issues, some of which have been noted by other scholars as urban problems.

4.4.3 Summary of the results and discussion

Overall, the three most referenced policy nodes in Hamilton council minutes were ‘land use planning and regulation’, ‘traffic control’ and ‘boards, committees, sub-committees and panels’. The findings suggest that larger municipalities deal with a wider range and substantively more policy areas than small and medium municipalities. Interestingly, the results do not confirm that large municipalities are substantively more likely to deal with the ‘urban’ policy areas identified by Sancton (2015), with the exception of public transit. However, Hamilton made decisions on policies related to poverty, which was identified in other literature as an ‘urban’ policy problem.

4.5 All Cases: Results and Discussion

4.5.1 Top three policy nodes

Appendix E outlines the coding results for all cases. The most referenced policy function was ‘land use planning and regulation’, which had 980 references or 28.71% of all policy references. It was expected that land use planning and regulation would dominate the decision agenda, as the literature suggests this to be the case (Lightbody, 2006; McAllister 2004). Sancton (1983) even argued plainly that “municipal politics in Canada is about property” (296).

The second most referenced node, ‘budget and financial planning’, had 275 references and occupied 8.06% of all policy decisions. This is an inductively generated node that can be classified as allocative policy because it includes decisions to allot resources to specific departments, committees and other branches of the local government, as well as other routine financial operations. Although this node is not included in Sancton’s list (2015) and is therefore labeled as non-core or beyond the traditional mandate, it is clear that municipalities are responsible for collecting revenue and distributing it among departments. Nonetheless, it highlights that the literature typically does not discuss this area of ‘policymaking’, despite its obvious importance. The high number of references to ‘budget and financial planning’ makes sense, given the increased importance municipalities have placed on municipal finances in recent years. The analytical framework chapter noted that there has been a consistent rise in property taxes in recent years, which is the main source of municipal revenue, and beginning in the early 2000s, municipalities were calling for new revenue sources (Sancton, 2012). This finding is also surprising because local government scholars argue that economic development is the second most important policy function of municipal governments (Sancton, 2015; Goodman & Lucas,

2016). However, it occupied a subordinate position with only 122 references or 3.57% of coded policy decisions.

‘Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government’ was referenced 140 times, meaning 4.1% of all policy decisions were coded to this node. This was a non-core node that includes decisions to work with, support and/or call on government actors (including conservation authorities and school boards) in their pursuit of different initiatives or policies; these can be more broadly described as lobbying efforts. For example, in January 2017, Lambton Shores municipal council called directly on the federal government to make infrastructure funding more compatible with municipal asset management plans (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2017, January 17). In February 2015, Hamilton city council requested that the mayor lobby the federal government in opposition to the cancellation of home mail delivery by Canada Post and request that it consult directly with the city before moving forward with this change (Hamilton City Council, 2015, February 11). In Woodstock, after the death of a 15-year-old boy while playing soccer, the city council resolved to request that the Ontario government develop a policy to have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) installed in all schools across the province (Woodstock City Council, 2017, March 23). This is only a small collection of examples included in this node, which had 140 references.

The dominance of this node is interesting for two reasons. First, this finding appears to fall in line with the intergovernmental relations literature, which has only recently started to discuss the importance of municipal governments in the Canadian federation. The high number of references to this node suggests that municipal governments are looking to assert a role in the discussion of policy issues that affect several municipalities, as well as provincial and national policy issues. Bradford (2002) argues that “given the increasingly important role of cities in

shaping the country's economic, social and environmental well-being, expanded municipal participation in federal and provincial policy making is appropriate in many fields" (p. vi).

Although a more qualitative analysis of this node would allow for more robust conclusions about the significance of this node, the data and this preliminary analysis of the references suggest that municipal governments use lobbying efforts to assert a role in policymaking that extends beyond their locale.

Second, Sancton's (2015) list does not include any constituent policies as 'core' functions. The literature as a whole scarcely acknowledges constituent policy in local policymaking. The content analysis demonstrates that municipal councils also considered other constituent policy decisions, such as establishing and upholding boards, committees, sub-committees and panels; discussing the role and function of the municipal council; implementing accountability and transparency policies, among others. It appears that municipal governments are taking an active role in altering political arrangements and institutions, even if many of the references are to routine, unexciting decisions. Nonetheless, the traditional literature often describes municipal governments as "creatures" whose functions and powers are controlled by provincial governments (Siegel, 2009a; Sancton, 2015). This description of municipal government understates its power to establish and alter local government institutions. A future research project could look more closely at the substance and implementation of constituent policies at the local level, as constituent policy decisions occupied a total of 12.42% of the coded agenda.

4.5.2 'Non-core' nodes: discussion

The coding results suggest that municipalities are addressing policy areas that are not included in the literature's characterization of the 'traditional' mandate, as described in the

literature. In total, there was 1,452 references to inductive nodes, or nodes that are not included in Sancton's (2015) list. In fact, the inductive coding process required adding 37 new nodes in order to accommodate for policy decisions that did not fit into one of Sancton's (2015) 32 policy functions. **Table 5** outlines the top three nodes for each policy type. This table further demonstrates that many of the most referenced nodes are not included in Sancton's (2015) list, meaning that Ontario municipalities are having substantial policy discussions about issues that are not traditionally defined as the 'most pressing' policy areas in the literature. For example, the highest referenced allocative node is a 'non-core' policy function: 'budget and financial planning'. Furthermore, the literature excludes any serious discussion of constituent policy. However, the results suggest that constituent policies are incredibly salient. **Table 6** shows that constituent policies accounted for more than 12% of all policy decisions. In the small and medium cases, constituent policies were the third most referenced policy type. It is possible that these functions are often excluded from the literature because they are generally unexciting, mundane decisions. Nonetheless, the high number of references to these nodes suggest they occupy a large part of the decision agenda, and likely consume a substantial amount of time and resources.

Table 5: Top nodes by policy typology

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Budget and financial planning	Allocative	Non-core	275	8.06	6.71
Roads	Allocative	Core	122	3.57	2.98
Recreation	Allocative	Core	78	2.29	1.90
Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government	Constituent	Non-core	140	4.10	3.42
Boards, committees, sub-committees and panels	Constituent	Non-core	123	3.60	3.00
Council	Constituent	Non-core	30	0.88	0.73
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core	980	28.71	23.91
Economic development	Developmental	Core	122	3.57	2.98
Public transit	Developmental	Core	58	1.70	1.42
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core	10	0.29	0.24
Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction	Redistributive	Non-core	8	0.23	0.20
Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens	Redistributive	Non-core	2	0.06	0.05
Traffic control	Regulatory	Core	119	3.49	2.90
Parking	Regulatory	Non-core	88	2.58	2.15
Support for licence applications to AGCO	Regulatory	Non-core	85	2.49	2.07

Table 6: Policy typology results

All Cases: Policy typology results

Level 2	References	Percentage of Policy Node References~
Developmental	1341	39.29
Allocative	1029	30.15
Regulatory	516	15.12
Constituent	424	12.42
Symbolic	80	2.34
Redistributive	23	0.67

3413

LAMBTON SHORES: Policy Typology Results

Level 2	References	Percentage of Policy Node References~
Allocative	379	43.66
Developmental	280	32.26
Constituent	123	14.17
Regulatory	80	9.22
Symbolic	4	0.46
Redistributive	2	0.23

868

WOODSTOCK: Policy Typology Results

Level 2	References	Percentage of Policy Node References~
Allocative	356	45.52
Developmental	274	35.04
Constituent	74	9.46
Regulatory	65	8.31
Symbolic	13	1.66
Redistributive	0	0.00

782

HAMILTON: Policy Typology Results

Level 2	References	Percentage of Policy Node References~
Developmental	787	44.64
Regulatory	371	21.04
Allocative	294	16.68
Constituent	227	12.88
Symbolic	63	3.57
Redistributive	21	1.19

1763

4.5.3 Implications of size

The Analytical Framework Chapter noted that this research expected to find that municipal size affects the policy issues that dominate the council decision agenda. It was expected that Hamilton would have the most references to the core ‘urban’ functions that Sancton (2015) identifies (see **Table 4**, grey rows), followed by Woodstock and then Lambton Shores. It was found, however, that this hypothesis only held up for the ‘public transit’ and ‘policing’ nodes. Although Hamilton had the most references to the node ‘sewage collection and treatment’ (14 references), Lambton Shores had 13 references to this node and Woodstock only had 2. Furthermore, Woodstock, the medium size municipality, had significantly more references to ‘downtown revitalization’ (19 references) than Hamilton (5 references). Contrary to my hypothesis, Lambton Shores, the smallest municipality, had the most references to ‘water purification and distribution’ and ‘noise regulation’, two “generally” urban municipal responsibilities (Sancton, 2015, p. 23).

Other literature suggests that there are policy issues that cities are addressing that are not noted as ‘urban’ functions in Sancton’s (2015) list. For example, Tindal et al. (2016) states that cities must tackle growing amounts of poverty, especially among minority populations. The coding results demonstrate that Hamilton, significantly more so than the other cases, discussed policies that seek to reduce poverty or address the affordability of housing, as well as the affordability of municipal services. Furthermore, two nodes stand out as possibly “rural” issues. ‘Rural fences and drainage’ and ‘weed control’, two core functions, were only referenced in Lambton Shores council minutes. It is logical to assume that these responsibilities mostly concern small, rural municipalities.

More generally, the coding results suggest that large municipalities are addressing substantively more and a wider array of policy areas than small and medium-size municipalities. As stated in the discussion of the findings for Hamilton, several policy functions had substantially more references in Hamilton's minutes than the other cases, such as 'parking', 'culture promotion', 'public health', 'animal control', 'emergency planning and preparedness', and the previously mentioned 'affordable housing and/or poverty reduction' and 'affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens'. For all of these nodes, 60% or more of the total references were from Hamilton meeting minutes. These findings related to size suggest that Sancton's (2015) list of 'urban' functions should be revisited. Future research might expand and refine his list to include other policy areas.

When comparing the sum of the non-core nodes across the tables, it is evident that Hamilton addressed a wider range of '*non-core*' policy areas than Woodstock and Lambton Shores. Past literature suggests that this is because large municipalities face a wider array of problems and demands (Tindal et al., 2016; Goodman & Lucas, 2016). However, a larger percentage of references in Woodstock and Lambton Shores related to 'non-core' nodes than in Hamilton. This finding in particular is interesting, as it contradicts the literature, which implies that large municipalities would be more likely to address non-traditional policy areas because of a greater policy capacity as well as a more heterogeneous population with varying views. Overall, large municipalities address a more substantial amount of policy areas, however, small and medium municipalities are more likely to address policy issues that are not described as part of the traditional mandate in the literature.

Table 6 further demonstrates that size impacts the scope and substance of policy issues considered by municipal councils. Developmental and regulatory policy decisions were the two

most dominant types of decisions Hamilton’s council addressed. Lambton Shores and Woodstock, on the other hand, mostly addressed allocative and developmental decisions. The data suggests that small and medium municipalities are more similar than large municipalities, which address different types of policy issues.

4.5.4 Analyzing two significant ‘non-core’ nodes

There are several inductive nodes that had a substantial number of references. Although it was not possible to examine all of these nodes, this section will briefly discuss the ‘grants and contributions’ and ‘environmental stewardship’ nodes. The purpose of discussing these nodes is to highlight the varying types of items that municipal councils are addressing that are not considered a part of the traditional mandate in the local government literature.

‘Grants and contributions’, which had 134 references, is an inductively generated node that captures the multitude of requests from municipal councils for monetary or in-kind support for community organizations and events. It also includes awards that are offered by the municipality that have a monetary value (whereas those without a monetary value were coded to the ‘awards or recognition’ node – a form of symbolic policy). Although little is written about this function, it appears to be a typical power exercised by municipal governments in Canada. The types of events or organizations that are supported by councils vary considerably. For example, some are as simple as waiving the fees for Easter egg hunts (Hamilton City Council, 2015, February 25) or providing municipal buses for a community Christmas “tour of the lights” event (Woodstock City Council, 2017, November 2). Others require more resources, such as Hamilton providing multiple grants around \$1,000 in December 2017 (Hamilton City Council, 2017, December 8). Future research could look more closely at the types of funding that is being

offered, what groups or organizations are receive the most funding, and how this varies across cases.

The ‘environmental stewardship’ node, which was generated inductively during the coding process, had a significant number of references from all cases. Each case had at least 24 references to ‘environmental stewardship’. This node can be broadly defined as municipal efforts, through policies, initiatives, resolutions (which signal support), or funding to mitigate climate change and/or protect the natural environment. It was determined that this function is not a ‘core’ or mandated responsibility of Canadian municipal governments. Local government scholars emphasize that although Canadian local governments are not given expressed authority to mitigate climate change and/or protect the environment, they are well positioned to integrate climate change mitigation and sustainability measures into mandated policy areas such as land use planning, building regulation and waste management (Hughes, 2017; Pasquini & Shearing, 2014). Furthermore, Smith (1998) demonstrates that Vancouver is addressing global issues, including environmental sustainability. International bodies and national governments also have various policies to promote local climate action, such as “sustainable” and “livable” cities (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2016; United Nations, 2017).

A closer at the ‘environmental stewardship’ references reveals that all three municipalities, to varying degrees, participated in the Ontario government’s Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) program. The general goal of the program is to advance the development of renewable energy sources, such as wind, biogas, and solar, by “homeowners, communities, business owners and private developers” (Ministry of Energy, 2015, August 26). The program guarantees that the Ontario government will purchase the energy that is produced at a fixed rate for a fixed period of time (Ministry of Energy, 2015, August 26). Although this is a provincial program, it requires

municipalities to approve of the projects being pursued in their communities. The municipality can also receive funding to develop renewable energy sources for publicly owned buildings. In order to understand the level of involvement in the program, closer analysis of the cases is required. Nonetheless, the references to the policy discussions of the FIT program in each municipality provide a starting point for further research.

The references also revealed that the municipal councils in Lambton Shores, Woodstock and Hamilton took more independent policy actions to promote sustainability and environmental protection, as well as to mitigate climate change. For example, Hamilton discussed the implementation of a local improvement charge loan program, known as the Hamilton H.E.R.O (Home Energy Retrofit Opportunity) program, to provide funding for citizens to improve the efficiency of their homes in order to meet the city's Community Climate Change Action Plan goals (Hamilton City Council, 2016, September 28). In Woodstock, a Community Energy Plan (CEP) was adopted in July 2016 (Woodstock City Council, 2016, July 14). The executive summary notes that adopting a CEP is a "natural extension" for cities that are active in "energy conservation, sustainability planning and progressive environmental and economic development" (City of Woodstock, 2016, July 4). Finally, Lambton Shores participated in the Communities in Bloom national competition in 2016 (Lambton Shores Municipal Council, 2015, September 22). Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization that works to beautify and promote "environmental responsibility" through community involvement and a national event that focuses on enhancing community green space (Communities in Bloom Canada, 2018). The national competition is held annually and evaluates cities based on tidiness, environmental action, forestry and landscape (Ibid.). Overall, these findings suggest that municipalities,

regardless of size, have policies to protect that work to environment, promote sustainability and/or mitigate climate change.

4.6 Conclusion

In response to the first research question, this chapter argues that all municipal councils in Southern Ontario are making policy decisions in areas that are not included in the local government literature's description of the traditional mandate. The three most referenced 'non-core' nodes were 'budget and financial planning', 'collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government' and 'boards, committees, sub-committees and panels'. Size did not influence the number of references to non-core nodes as expected, as Woodstock and Lambton Shores had a greater percentage of total references to 'non-core' nodes than Hamilton. Therefore, small and medium municipalities are just as likely, if not more likely, to be making policy decisions that do not reflect the traditional policy functions of local governments. This finding requires further research to address why this may be the case, as the literature does not help explain this anomaly.

However, size does influence the breadth of policy decisions under consideration by municipal councils. Hamilton, the largest municipality, considered a wider set of both 'core' and 'non-core' policy functions than Woodstock or Lambton Shores. In other words, Hamilton had substantively more references to a greater number of individual nodes than the other cases. Although this research only looked at three cases, it suggests that large municipalities consider a wider range of policy functions.

It was hypothesized that Hamilton would be more likely to consider 'urban' responsibilities (see **Table 4**, grey rows) than Woodstock or Lambton Shores. However, several 'urban' functions were referenced more often in Lambton Shores or Woodstock minutes than

Hamilton minutes. Despite a lack of literature that discusses uniquely ‘rural’ or ‘small’ municipal functions, the results suggest that there are functions that are only acted upon by small municipalities, such as ‘rural fences and drainage’ and ‘weed control’. Nonetheless, Hamilton was more likely than the other cases to consider other ‘urban’ issues identified in the literature, such as poverty reduction. **Table 6** also demonstrates that large municipalities are dealing with different types of policies than small and medium municipalities.

One of the most significant findings is the high number of references to constituent policy functions. The literature omits any serious discussion of constituent policy at the local level. For example, Sancton’s (2015) list, which ostensibly outlines the functions of all Canadian local governments, does not include any constituent policy responsibilities. However, the results suggest that constituent policy occupies over 12% of the coded agenda (see **Table 5**). Although these types of policy decisions are arguably mundane and uninteresting, this research finds they occupy a significant amount of the decision agenda.

In summary, all municipalities appear to be making decisions on policy issues/areas that are not included in the description of the traditional mandate. Size also affects the breadth of issues that are considered by municipal councils – large municipalities are involved in a substantially wider range of policy issues. Small municipalities, however, consistently discuss particular functions that are not discussed by medium or large municipalities.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Review of the analytical framework and research questions

This thesis began by suggesting that there is a significant contradiction in the literature about municipal governments' role as policymakers. On the one hand, many scholars studying Canadian local government argue that municipalities are “policymakers” that mainly deliver services as mandated by the provinces (Sancton, 2015, p. 251). These services relate chiefly to property and the local built environment, such as zoning designations, fire protection or sewage collection (Sancton, 2015; McAllister, 2015; Lightbody 2006). Municipal governments also engage in local economic development (Sancton, 2015; Goodman & Lucas, 2016) and create policy to address local problems, such as licensing of local businesses and regulating local behaviour (Tindal et al., 2016; Siegel, 2009a). Overall, Siegel (2009a) describes municipal governments as “creatures of the province with a relatively limited role in policy making” (p. 24).

Conversely, local governments have also been described as active policymakers that are addressing global problems, such as climate change (Smith, 1998; Pasquini & Shearing, 2014). This is evident in national and international policies that discuss the role of cities and communities in ensuring ‘sustainability’. Several scholars have argued that municipal governments are increasingly important with the onset of modern globalization and neoliberalism. Strong local economic development is essential to the health of states with the decline of the traditional economic power of federal governments (Young & Leuprecht, 2006; Leo, 2006). Globalization has also empowered city governments to act more independently in the international arena (Andrew & Goldsmith, 1998; Kipfer & Keil, 2002). In Canada, demands for a municipal “New Deal” in the early 2000s, which saw municipalities calling for more

resources and federal support, demonstrates concern over the ability of local governments to fulfill their role as economic drivers (Sancton, 2012). Furthermore, the debate in the intergovernmental relations literature about whether municipal governments should be granted increased, institutionalized autonomy, rather than continue to be at the whim of provincial governments, raises further questions about whether municipalities, in practice, are making policy in areas that are not a part of their traditional mandate. As a result of this debate concerning the policymaking role of municipal governments, the following research question was asked: to what extent are municipal councils in Southern Ontario considering policy decisions that are beyond their traditional mandate, as outlined in the local government literature?

One of the challenges associated with researching local governments in Canada is that they vary significantly in size. However, this also presented an opportunity for the development a secondary research question: does a municipality's size influence the scope and substance of policy issues under consideration by the municipal council? It is reasonable to expect that size will affect policymaking in local government because it dictates conditions such as policy analytical capacity, resources, and citizen views (Taylor, 2016; Trautman, 2016; Jibson, 2014).

5.2 Review of the methodology

This research project addressed the debate about the role of municipal governments in policymaking by conducting a qualitative content analysis of municipal council meeting minutes from a representative small, medium and large municipality in Southern Ontario. The three cases selected were Lambton Shores, Woodstock and Hamilton. These cases are both quantitatively representative, in that they fall into the appropriate population size, and qualitatively representative, as they hold characteristics similar to other 'small' 'medium' and 'large'

municipalities, as described in the literature. By only selecting cases in Southern Ontario, it was possible to control for variation in provincial statute and variations in policy issues that would be dictated by extreme variations in geography. Furthermore, this project acted as a pilot for a larger project that would include more cases from across Canada.

The codebook began by using Sancton's (2015) list and then expanded to include inductive nodes in order to generate a comprehensive codebook that includes all possible policy decisions that might be considered by municipal councils. Furthermore, all inductive nodes were considered 'non-core', as they did not fit Sancton's (2015) list and therefore reflected issues that were beyond the traditional mandate. All nodes were assigned to a policy typology as well, in order to enable conclusions about the types of issues that dominate the municipal agendas in each case.

5.3 Review of the findings

In response to the first research question, it is evident that municipalities are making policy decisions that do not reflect the traditional mandate. This appears to be the case regardless of size. There was a total of 37 inductively generated 'non-core' nodes which spanned all of the five typologies. Furthermore, these nodes accounted for almost 43% of all coded policy decisions. In other words, close to half of the decisions that municipal councils are addressing are not discussed as part of the 'traditional mandate' in the local government literature. Rather, they are issues such as 'environmental stewardship' and 'budget and financial planning'. Even more interesting, however, is that the small and medium cases were more likely to address 'non-core' policy issues than the large case. Further research is needed to sufficiently explain why this is the case.

In response to the second research question, it was found that large municipalities, like Hamilton, are addressing a wider range of both ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ nodes, meaning they address a substantively more diverse set of policy issues. Furthermore, **Table 6** demonstrates that Hamilton is unique in the types of issues that dominate the decision agenda. It addressed mostly developmental and regulatory issues, whereas both Lambton Shores and Woodstock addressed allocative and developmental issues. Hamilton also had significantly more references to the following nodes: ‘parking’, ‘emergency planning and preparedness’, ‘animal control’, ‘provide subsidize social housing for low income’ and ‘culture promotion’. It is interesting to note that these nodes were not characterized by Sancton (2015) as uniquely ‘urban’ functions. Further research could test whether these are truly ‘urban’ functions.

Contrary to expectations, Hamilton did not have significantly more references to the ‘urban’ functions identified in Sancton’s (2015) list (see **Table 4**, grey rows), with the exception of ‘public transit’ and ‘policing’. This suggests that his list of urban functions requires revision, as the small and medium cases addressed many of these functions. Two functions in Sancton’s (2015) list (‘weed control’ and ‘rural fences and drainage’) were only referenced in Lambton Shores meeting minutes, suggesting that these are functions unique to small municipalities. As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, there is relatively little research that analyzes small municipalities, however, this research suggests that small municipalities address a unique set of issues.

Finally, Sancton’s (2015) list excludes any constituent policy functions. The inductive coding processed revealed that many decisions made by municipal councils are forms of constituent policy. These decisions involve altering or arranging the structures and procedures of municipal government. For example, the nodes ‘collaboration/consultation with and support for

other levels of government’ and ‘boards, committees, sub-committees and panels’ received a substantial amount of references. The high number of references to the first node, which basically consists of municipal lobbying efforts, is consistent with the intergovernmental relations literature, which suggests local governments should be more involved with federal and provincial policymaking. The high number of references to ‘boards, committees, sub-committees and panels’ points to the high number of decisions that council makes in order maintain and alter the government structure. The policy literature, however, rarely discusses the importance of this policymaking responsibility for local governments. These findings suggest that more research is needed that discusses the importance of constituent policy in local policymaking.

The high number of references to ‘land use planning and regulation’ was an expected finding, given its dominance in the literature as well. It was the most referenced node in all three cases and received a total of 980 references. These results demonstrate that the findings from the content analysis fall in line with the most important characterization of local policymaking, which helps further legitimize the unexpected findings.

5.4 Further research

The findings point to the need for further research that examines the ‘non-core’ nodes individually. A qualitative approach to further research, which looks closer at the ‘non-core’ nodes could determine whether they are natural extensions of the municipal mandate or more profound and unusual areas of policy that municipalities are addressing. It could also address the question of how these issues rise on the agenda. Of particular interest would be the nodes that are rarely discussed in the literature, such as ‘grants and contributions’. A quantitative approach might involve expanding the number of cases to generate more reliable data about the number of references to particular policy areas or issues. This would allow for more definitive statements

about the impacts of size on policy decisions. Nonetheless, this thesis involved creating a comprehensive codebook that is both parsimonious and replicable, which could be used to examine a larger set of cases. It has also generated a framework for selecting cases that are representative of small, medium and large municipalities in Ontario. In sum, the findings of this thesis suggest that there is room for more research that examines local policymaking in Canada.

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Appendix A: Evolution of the Coding Framework

Stage 1: Proposed Coding Framework

CORE

Allocative

- Fire protection
- Policing
- Roads
- Traffic control
- Solid waste collection and disposal
- Water purification and distribution
- Sewage collection and treatment
- Public libraries
- Recreation
- Emergency planning and preparedness
- Rural fences and drainage
- Regulation and/or provision of cemeteries
- Weed control
- Public health*
- Land-ambulance services*

Developmental

- Land-use planning and regulation
- Economic development
- Tourism promotion
- Parks
- Cultural facilities
- Airports
- Public transit
- Downtown revitalization

Redistributive

- Provide subsidized social housing for low-income*
- Provide subsidized childcare for low-income*+
- Operation of municipal seniors' residences*
- Income and employment assistance (*Ontario Works*)*#

Regulatory

- Animal control
- Building regulations
- Licensing of businesses
- Taxi regulation
- Noise regulation

**Unique to Ontario.*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government.

Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government.

Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.

Core nodes are derived directly from Sancton (2015) pp. 22-23.

Stage 2: Working Coding Framework

CORE

Allocative

- Fire protection
- Policing
- Roads
- Traffic control
- Solid waste collection and disposal
- Water purification and distribution
- Sewage collection and treatment
- Public libraries
- Recreation
- Emergency planning and preparedness
- Rural fences and drainage
- Regulation and/or provision of cemeteries
- Weed control
- Public health*
- Land-ambulance services*

Developmental

- Land-use planning and regulation
- Economic development
- Tourism promotion
- Parks
 - Ports and Beaches
- Cultural facilities
 - Culture Promotion
- Airports
- Public transit
- Downtown revitalization

Redistributive

- Provide subsidized social housing for low-income*
- Provide subsidized childcare for low-income*+
- Operation of municipal seniors' residences*
- Income and employment assistance (*Ontario Works*)*#

Regulatory

- Animal control
- Building regulations
- Licensing of businesses
- Taxi regulation
- Noise regulation

**Unique to Ontario*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government

Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government

Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.

Yellow rows are inductively generated nodes (all 'non-core' nodes are inductively generated, however).

NON-CORE

Allocative

- Budget and financial planning
 - Taxation
- Strategic Planning
- Municipal Equipment and Facilities
- Accessibility
- Environmental stewardship
- Grants and contributions
 - Awards
 - Events
 - Humanitarian donations
 - Waiving of fees

Constituent

- Accountability and Transparency
- Collaboration/consultation with and support of other levels of government
 - AEDs in schools
 - Litigation
- Municipal Elections
- Public Participation or Citizen Engagement
 - Public conduct at council meetings
- Workplace review
- Appointments
 - Appointment of Appeal and Complaints Representative
 - Appointment of Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer
 - Appointment of Drainage Superintendent
 - Appointment of Municipal Auditor
 - Appointment to Court of Revision
- Boards, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels
- By-law enforcement
- CAO
- Clerk
- Council
- Departments
- Integrity Commissioner
- Internal Policies
- Mayor
- Salary, wages, remuneration
- Website

Developmental

Redistributive

- Affordable housing initiatives
- Affordable transit for low-income users
- Refugee resettlement

Regulatory

- Parking
- Illegal dumping
- Objection to communication tower
- Objection to liquor licence application
- Property maintenance
- Sign regulation
 - Prohibit graphic imagery in public space
- Use of public space
 - Gender washroom usage
 - Liquor sales on city property
 - Smoking
- Symbolic
 - Awards
 - Information for council
- Unknown

Stage 3: Edits to Working Framework

CORE

Allocative

- Fire protection
- Policing
- Roads
- Solid waste collection and disposal
- Water purification and distribution
- Sewage collection and treatment
- Public libraries
- Recreation
- Emergency planning and preparedness
- Rural fences and drainage
- Regulation and/or provision of cemeteries
- Weed control
- Public health*
- Land-ambulance services*

Developmental

- Land-use planning and regulation
- Economic development
- Tourism promotion
- Parks
 - Ports and Beaches
- Cultural facilities
 - Culture Promotion
- Airports
- Public transit
- Downtown revitalization

Redistributive

- Provide subsidized social housing for low-income*
- Provide subsidized childcare for low-income**
- Operation of municipal seniors' residences*
- Income and employment assistance (*Ontario Works*)*#

Regulatory

- Animal control
- Building regulations
- Licensing of businesses
- Taxi regulation
- Noise regulation
- Traffic control *largely regulatory versus allocative*

NON-CORE

Allocative

- Budget and financial planning
 - Taxation
- Strategic Planning
- Municipal Equipment and Facilities
- Accessibility
- Environmental stewardship
- Grants and contributions
 - Awards *to be amalgamated into parent node*
 - Events *to be amalgamated into parent node*
 - Humanitarian donations *to be amalgamated into parent node*
 - Waiving of fees *to be amalgamated into parent node*

Constituent

- Accountability and Transparency
- Collaboration/consultation with and support of other levels of government
 - AEDs in schools *to be amalgamated into parent node to make framework more parsimonious*
 - Litigation
- Municipal Elections
- Public Participation or Citizen Engagement
 - Public conduct at council meetings *to be amalgamated into parent node to make framework more parsimonious*
- Workplace review
- Appointments
 - Appointment of Appeal and Complaints Representative
 - Appointment of Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer
 - Appointment of Drainage Superintendent
 - Appointment of Municipal Auditor
 - Appointment to Court of Revision
- Boards, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels
- By-law enforcement
- CAO *no references*
- Clerk
- Council
- Departments
- Integrity Commissioner
- Internal Policies
- Mayor
- Salary, wages, remuneration
- Website *-amalgamated to internal policies*

Developmental

Redistributive

- Affordable housing *and/or poverty reduction*
- Affordable transit for low-income users
- Refugee resettlement

Regulatory

- Parking
- Illegal dumping
- Objection to communication tower
- Objection to liquor licence application
- Property maintenance
- Sign regulation
 - Prohibit graphic imagery in public space *to be amalgamated into parent node*
- Use of public space
 - Sign regulation.
 - Gender washroom usage *either to be amalgamated into 'use of public space' or moved to a new node: 'human rights'?*
 - Liquor sales on city property *to be amalgamated to parent node to make framework more parsimonious*
 - Smoking *to be amalgamated to parent node to make framework more parsimonious*
- Symbolic – *as it stands, 'symbolic' acts as a node, rather than solely a typology. The added/alterd child nodes (below) will eliminate this inconsistency by moving all codes under 'symbolic' to an appropriate child node.*
 - Support for licence applications to AGCO
 - Awards or recognition – *including naming of sites, buildings etc. after someone*
 - Information for council
- Integrity, inclusivity and human rights - *After assessing the references in this node, it lacks a "human rights" or "integrity" aspect. References under this node highlight municipal efforts to be inclusive. 'Gender washroom usage' was added to this node.*
- Information for council – *This node does not represent 'policy' decisions; therefore, it does not belong under the parent node 'Symbolic'.*
- Unknown

**Unique to Ontario*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government

Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government

Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.

Yellow rows are inductively generated nodes (all 'non-core' nodes are inductively generated, however).

Core nodes are derived directly from Sancton (2015) pp. 22-23.

Stage 4: Finalized Coding Framework

CORE

Allocative

- Fire protection
- Policing
- Roads
- Solid waste collection and disposal
- Water purification and distribution
- Sewage collection and treatment
- Public libraries
- Recreation
- Emergency planning and preparedness
- Rural fences and drainage
- Regulation and/or provision of cemeteries
- Weed control
- Public health*
- Land-ambulance services*

Developmental

- Land-use planning and regulation
- Economic development
- Tourism promotion
- Parks
- Cultural facilities
- Airports
- Public transit
- Downtown revitalization

Redistributive

- Provide subsidized social housing for low-income*
- Provide subsidized childcare for low-income*+
- Operation of municipal seniors' residences*
- Income and employment assistance (*Ontario Works*)*#

Regulatory

- Animal control
- Building regulations
- Licensing of businesses
- Taxi regulation
- Noise regulation
- Traffic control

**Unique to Ontario.*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government.

Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government.

Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.

Core nodes are derived directly from Sancton (2015) pp. 22-23.

NON-CORE

Allocative

- Budget and financial planning
 - Taxation
- Strategic Planning
- Municipal Equipment and Facilities
- Accessibility
- Environmental stewardship
- Grants and contributions
- Culture promotion

Constituent

- Accountability and Transparency
- Collaboration/consultation with and/or support for other governments
- Municipal Elections
- Public Participation and/or Citizen Engagement
- Workplace review
- Appointments
- Boards, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels
- By-law enforcement
- Clerk
- Council
- Department-specific policies and hiring
- Integrity Commissioner
- Internal Policies
- Mayor
- Salary, wages, remuneration

Developmental

- Ports and beaches

Redistributive

- Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction
- Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens
- Refugee resettlement

Regulatory

- Parking
- Illegal dumping
- Objection to communication tower
- Objection to liquor licence application
- Property maintenance
- Use of public space
 - Sign regulation

Symbolic

- Support for licence applications to Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO)
- Awards or recognition
- Inclusivity

- Information for council

Appendix B: Lambton Shores Coding Results

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References	Percentage of Total References
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core	192	41.11	22.12	18.84
Roads	Allocative	Core	50	10.71	5.76	4.91
Recreation	Allocative	Core	34	7.28	3.92	3.34
Rural fences and drainage	Allocative	Core	34	7.28	3.92	3.34
Fire protection	Allocative	Core	20	4.28	2.30	1.96
Economic development	Developmental	Core	18	3.85	2.07	1.77
Water purification and distribution	Allocative	Core	18	3.85	2.07	1.77
Parks	Developmental	Core	14	3.00	1.61	1.37
Sewage collection and treatment	Allocative	Core	13	2.78	1.50	1.28
Noise regulation	Regulatory	Core	12	2.57	1.38	1.18
Building regulations	Regulatory	Core	11	2.36	1.27	1.08
Cemeteries (regulation and/or provision)	Allocative	Core	7	1.50	0.81	0.69
Cultural facilities	Developmental	Core	7	1.50	0.81	0.69
Policing	Allocative	Core	7	1.50	0.81	0.69
Tourism promotion	Developmental	Core	6	1.28	0.69	0.59
Emergency planning and preparedness	Allocative	Core	5	1.07	0.58	0.49
Traffic control	Regulatory	Core	5	1.07	0.58	0.49
Licensing of businesses	Regulatory	Core	4	0.86	0.46	0.39
Public health*	Allocative	Core	3	0.64	0.35	0.29
Solid waste collection and disposal	Allocative	Core	3	0.64	0.35	0.29
Downtown revitalization	Developmental	Core	2	0.43	0.23	0.20
Weed control	Allocative	Core	2	0.43	0.23	0.20

Airports (though not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Developmental	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Animal control	Regulatory	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Income and employment assistance (<i>Ontario Works</i>) *∇	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Land-ambulance services*	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operation of municipal seniors' residences*	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income (heavily subsidized by provincial government) +	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public libraries	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public transit	Developmental	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxi regulation	Regulatory	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
467					53.80	45.83

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Non-Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Budget and financial planning	Allocative	Non-core	88	21.95	10.14	8.64
Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government	Constituent	Non-core	44	10.97	5.07	4.32
Ports and Beaches	Developmental	Non-core	37	9.23	4.26	3.63
Grants and contributions	Allocative	Non-core	34	8.48	3.92	3.34
Environmental stewardship	Allocative	Non-core	26	6.48	3.00	2.55
Use of public space	Regulatory	Non-core	21	5.24	2.42	2.06

Boards, committees, sub-committees and panels	Constituent	Non-core	18	4.49	2.07	1.77
Municipal facilities and equipment	Allocative	Non-core	15	3.74	1.73	1.47
Parking	Regulatory	Non-core	14	3.49	1.61	1.37
Council	Constituent	Non-core	13	3.24	1.50	1.28
Taxation	Allocative	Non-core	11	2.74	1.27	1.08
Accountability and transparency	Constituent	Non-core	10	2.49	1.15	0.98
Sign regulation	Regulatory	Non-core	10	2.49	1.15	0.98
Internal policies	Constituent	Non-core	7	1.75	0.81	0.69
Salary, wages and remuneration	Constituent	Non-core	7	1.75	0.81	0.69
Strategic planning	Allocative	Non-core	5	1.25	0.58	0.49
Municipal elections	Constituent	Non-core	5	1.25	0.58	0.49
Workplace review	Constituent	Non-core	5	1.25	0.58	0.49
Culture promotion	Developmental	Non-core	4	1.00	0.46	0.39
Department-specific policies and hiring	Constituent	Non-core	4	1.00	0.46	0.39
Awards or recognition	Symbolic	Non-core	4	1.00	0.46	0.39
Accessibility	Allocative	Non-core	4	1.00	0.46	0.39
By-law enforcement	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.75	0.35	0.29
Integrity commissioner	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.75	0.35	0.29
Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction	Redistributive	Non-core	2	0.50	0.23	0.20
Public participation or citizen engagement	Constituent	Non-core	2	0.50	0.23	0.20
Mayor	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.25	0.12	0.10
Clerk	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.25	0.12	0.10
Support for licence applications to AGCO	Regulatory	Non-core	1	0.25	0.12	0.10
Inclusivity	Regulatory	Non-core	1	0.25	0.12	0.10
Objection to communication tower	Regulatory	Non-core	1	0.25	0.12	0.10
Appointments	Constituent	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00

Property maintenance	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Objection to liquor licence application	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens	Redistributive	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Illegal dumping	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Refugee resettlement	Redistributive	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
			401		46.20	39.35

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References			Percentage of Total References
Information for council	N/A	N/A	151	N/A	N/A	14.82

**Total Policy Node
References~: 868
Total References: 1019**

**Municipal function that is unique to Ontario municipalities.*
+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government
∇ Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government
Core nodes are derived directly from Sancton (2015) pp. 22-23.
Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.
~ Excludes 'Information for council' references.

Appendix C: Woodstock Coding Results

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core	143	33.57	18.29	17.44
Economic development	Developmental	Core	61	14.32	7.80	7.44
Roads	Allocative	Core	38	8.92	4.86	4.63
Recreation	Allocative	Core	36	8.45	4.60	4.39
Parks	Developmental	Core	23	5.40	2.94	2.80
Downtown revitalization	Developmental	Core	19	4.46	2.43	2.32
Fire protection	Allocative	Core	16	3.76	2.05	1.95
Cultural facilities	Developmental	Core	11	2.58	1.41	1.34
Licensing of businesses	Regulatory	Core	10	2.35	1.28	1.22
Public transit	Developmental	Core	10	2.35	1.28	1.22
Solid waste collection and disposal	Allocative	Core	10	2.35	1.28	1.22
Policing	Allocative	Core	9	2.11	1.15	1.10
Public libraries	Allocative	Core	8	1.88	1.02	0.98
Traffic control	Regulatory	Core	7	1.64	0.90	0.85
Building regulations	Regulatory	Core	6	1.41	0.77	0.73
Noise regulation	Regulatory	Core	6	1.41	0.77	0.73
Emergency planning and preparedness	Allocative	Core	3	0.70	0.38	0.37
Animal control	Regulatory	Core	2	0.47	0.26	0.24
Public health*	Allocative	Core	2	0.47	0.26	0.24
Sewage collection and treatment	Allocative	Core	2	0.47	0.26	0.24
Water purification and distribution	Allocative	Core	2	0.47	0.26	0.24
Taxi regulation	Regulatory	Core	1	0.23	0.13	0.12
Tourism promotion	Developmental	Core	1	0.23	0.13	0.12

Airports (though not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Developmental	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cemeteries (regulation and/or provision)	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Income and employment assistance (<i>Ontario Works</i>) * ∇	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Land-ambulance services*	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operation of municipal seniors' residences*	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income (heavily subsidized by provincial government) +	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rural fences and drainage	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Weed control	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
			426		54.48	51.95

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Non-core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Budget and financial planning	Allocative	Non-core	106	29.78	13.55	12.93
Grants and contributions	Allocative	Non-core	52	14.61	6.65	6.34
Environmental stewardship	Allocative	Non-core	35	9.83	4.48	4.27
Taxation	Allocative	Non-core	19	5.34	2.43	2.32
Boards, committees, sub-committees and panels	Constituent	Non-core	17	4.78	2.17	2.07
Awards or recognition	Symbolic	Non-core	13	3.65	1.66	1.59
Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government	Constituent	Non-core	12	3.37	1.53	1.46
Accessibility	Allocative	Non-core	12	3.37	1.53	1.46
Use of public space	Regulatory	Non-core	11	3.09	1.41	1.34

Sign regulation	Regulatory	Non-core	10	2.81	1.28	1.22
Council	Constituent	Non-core	9	2.53	1.15	1.10
Internal policies	Constituent	Non-core	7	1.97	0.90	0.85
Culture promotion	Developmental	Non-core	6	1.69	0.77	0.73
Department-specific policies and hiring	Constituent	Non-core	6	1.69	0.77	0.73
Salary, wages and remuneration	Constituent	Non-core	6	1.69	0.77	0.73
Municipal elections	Constituent	Non-core	6	1.69	0.77	0.73
Municipal facilities and equipment	Allocative	Non-core	5	1.40	0.64	0.61
Property maintenance	Regulatory	Non-core	5	1.40	0.64	0.61
Parking	Regulatory	Non-core	4	1.12	0.51	0.49
Appointments	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.84	0.38	0.37
Mayor	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.84	0.38	0.37
Accountability and transparency	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.84	0.38	0.37
Objection to communication tower	Regulatory	Non-core	2	0.56	0.26	0.24
Strategic planning	Allocative	Non-core	1	0.28	0.13	0.12
By-law enforcement	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.28	0.13	0.12
Clerk	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.28	0.13	0.12
Illegal dumping	Regulatory	Non-core	1	0.28	0.13	0.12
Ports and Beaches	Developmental	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Integrity commissioner	Constituent	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Support for licence applications to AGCO	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Inclusivity	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction	Redistributive	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Objection to liquor licence application	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Workplace review	Constituent	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public participation or citizen engagement	Constituent	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens	Redistributive	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00

Refugee resettlement	Redistributive	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
			356		45.52	43.41
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References			Percentage of Total References
Information for council	N/A	N/A	38	N/A	N/A	4.63

Total Policy Node References~: 782

Total References: 820

**Municipal function that is unique to Ontario municipalities.*

+ Heavily subsidized by the Ontario government

∇ Heavily subsidized and monitored by the Ontario government

Core nodes are derived directly from Sancton (2015) pp. 22-23.

Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.

~ Excludes 'Information for council' references.

Appendix D: Hamilton Coding Results

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core	645	60.39	36.59	28.55
Traffic control	Regulatory	Core	107	10.02	6.07	4.74
Public transit	Developmental	Core	48	4.49	2.72	2.12
Economic development	Developmental	Core	43	4.03	2.44	1.90
Roads	Allocative	Core	34	3.18	1.93	1.51
Licensing of businesses	Regulatory	Core	30	2.81	1.70	1.33
Building regulations	Regulatory	Core	17	1.59	0.96	0.75
Public health*	Allocative	Core	17	1.59	0.96	0.75
Sewage collection and treatment	Allocative	Core	14	1.31	0.79	0.62
Animal control	Regulatory	Core	13	1.22	0.74	0.58
Emergency planning and preparedness	Allocative	Core	12	1.12	0.68	0.53
Parks	Developmental	Core	12	1.12	0.68	0.53
Policing	Allocative	Core	11	1.03	0.62	0.49
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core	10	0.94	0.57	0.44
Water purification and distribution	Allocative	Core	10	0.94	0.57	0.44
Cultural facilities	Developmental	Core	9	0.84	0.51	0.40
Noise regulation	Regulatory	Core	9	0.84	0.51	0.40
Recreation	Allocative	Core	8	0.75	0.45	0.35
Downtown revitalization	Developmental	Core	5	0.47	0.28	0.22
Tourism promotion	Developmental	Core	5	0.47	0.28	0.22
Solid waste collection and disposal	Allocative	Core	3	0.28	0.17	0.13
Land-ambulance services*	Allocative	Core	2	0.19	0.11	0.09

Airports (though not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Developmental	Core	1	0.09	0.06	0.04
Income and employment assistance (<i>Ontario Works</i>) *∇	Redistributive	Core	1	0.09	0.06	0.04
Operation of municipal seniors' residences*	Redistributive	Core	1	0.09	0.06	0.04
Public libraries	Allocative	Core	1	0.09	0.06	0.04
Cemeteries (regulation and/or provision)	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fire protection	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income (heavily subsidized by provincial government) ∇	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rural fences and drainage	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxi regulation	Regulatory	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Weed control	Allocative	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
			1068		60.58	47.28

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Non-Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Boards, committees, sub-committees and panels	Constituent	Non-core	88	12.66	4.99	3.90
Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government	Constituent	Non-core	84	12.09	4.76	3.72
Support for licence applications to AGCO	Regulatory	Non-core	84	12.09	4.76	3.72
Budget and financial planning	Allocative	Non-core	81	11.65	4.59	3.59
Parking	Regulatory	Non-core	70	10.07	3.97	3.10
Awards or recognition	Symbolic	Non-core	63	9.06	3.57	2.79
Grants and contributions	Allocative	Non-core	48	6.91	2.72	2.12
Environmental stewardship	Allocative	Non-core	24	3.45	1.36	1.06

Taxation	Allocative	Non-core	21	3.02	1.19	0.93
Culture promotion	Developmental	Non-core	17	2.45	0.96	0.75
Use of public space	Regulatory	Non-core	14	2.01	0.79	0.62
Accountability and transparency	Constituent	Non-core	12	1.73	0.68	0.53
Internal policies	Constituent	Non-core	10	1.44	0.57	0.44
Council	Constituent	Non-core	8	1.15	0.45	0.35
Inclusivity	Regulatory	Non-core	8	1.15	0.45	0.35
Department-specific policies and hiring	Constituent	Non-core	7	1.01	0.40	0.31
Property maintenance	Regulatory	Non-core	7	1.01	0.40	0.31
Objection to liquor licence application	Regulatory	Non-core	7	1.01	0.40	0.31
Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction	Redistributive	Non-core	6	0.86	0.34	0.27
Salary, wages and remuneration	Constituent	Non-core	5	0.72	0.28	0.22
Sign regulation	Regulatory	Non-core	4	0.58	0.23	0.18
Accesibility	Allocative	Non-core	4	0.58	0.23	0.18
Municipal elections	Constituent	Non-core	4	0.58	0.23	0.18
Appointments	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.43	0.17	0.13
Ports and Beaches	Developmental	Non-core	2	0.29	0.11	0.09
Municipal facilities and equipment	Allocative	Non-core	2	0.29	0.11	0.09
Strategic planning	Allocative	Non-core	2	0.29	0.11	0.09
Public participation or citizen engagement	Constituent	Non-core	2	0.29	0.11	0.09
Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens	Redistributive	Non-core	2	0.29	0.11	0.09
By-law enforcement	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.14	0.06	0.04
Integrity commissioner	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.14	0.06	0.04
Clerk	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.14	0.06	0.04
Workplace review	Constituent	Non-core	1	0.14	0.06	0.04
Illegal dumping	Regulatory	Non-core	1	0.14	0.06	0.04
Refugee resettlement	Redistributive	Non-core	1	0.14	0.06	0.04

Mayor	Constituent	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Objection to communication tower	Regulatory	Non-core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
			695		39.42	30.77

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References			Percentage of Total References
Information for council	N/A	N/A	496	N/A	N/A	21.96

Total Policy Node References~: 1763

Total References: 2259

**Municipal function that is unique to Ontario municipalities.*
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Core nodes are derived directly from Sancton (2015) pp. 22-23.
Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.
~ Excludes 'Information for council' references.

Appendix E: Coding Results for All Cases

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Land-use planning and regulation	Developmental	Core	980	49.97	28.71	23.91
Roads	Allocative	Core	122	6.22	3.57	2.98
Economic development	Developmental	Core	122	6.22	3.57	2.98
Traffic control	Regulatory	Core	119	6.07	3.49	2.90
Recreation	Allocative	Core	78	3.98	2.29	1.90
Public transit	Developmental	Core	58	2.96	1.70	1.42
Parks	Developmental	Core	49	2.50	1.44	1.20
Licensing of businesses	Regulatory	Core	44	2.24	1.29	1.07
Fire protection	Allocative	Core	36	1.84	1.05	0.88
Building regulations	Regulatory	Core	34	1.73	1.00	0.83
Rural fences and drainage	Allocative	Core	34	1.73	1.00	0.83
Water purification and distribution	Allocative	Core	30	1.53	0.88	0.73
Sewage collection and treatment	Allocative	Core	29	1.48	0.85	0.71
Noise regulation	Regulatory	Core	27	1.38	0.79	0.66
Policing	Allocative	Core	27	1.38	0.79	0.66
Cultural facilities	Developmental	Core	27	1.38	0.79	0.66
Public health*	Allocative	Core	22	1.12	0.64	0.54
Downtown revitalization	Developmental	Core	26	1.33	0.76	0.63
Emergency planning and preparedness	Allocative	Core	20	1.02	0.59	0.49
Solid waste collection and disposal	Allocative	Core	16	0.82	0.47	0.39
Animal control	Regulatory	Core	15	0.76	0.44	0.37
Tourism promotion	Developmental	Core	12	0.61	0.35	0.29
Provide subsidized social housing for low income*	Redistributive	Core	10	0.51	0.29	0.24

Public libraries	Allocative	Core	9	0.46	0.26	0.22
Cemeteries (regulation and/or provision)	Allocative	Core	7	0.36	0.21	0.17
Land-ambulance services*	Allocative	Core	2	0.10	0.06	0.05
Taxi regulation	Regulatory	Core	1	0.05	0.03	0.02
Weed control	Allocative	Core	2	0.10	0.06	0.05
Airports (though not major airports formerly operated directly by the federal government)	Developmental	Core	1	0.05	0.03	0.02
Income and employment assistance (<i>Ontario Works</i>) * ∇	Redistributive	Core	1	0.05	0.03	0.02
Operation of municipal seniors' residences*	Redistributive	Core	1	0.05	0.03	0.02
Provide subsidized childcare for low-income (heavily subsidized by provincial government) +	Redistributive	Core	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
			1961		57.46	47.85

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References	Percentage of Non-Core References	Percentage of Policy Node References~	Percentage of Total References
Budget and financial planning	Allocative	Non-core	275	18.94	8.06	6.71
Collaboration/consultation with and support for other levels of government	Constituent	Non-core	140	9.64	4.10	3.42
Grants and contributions	Allocative	Non-core	134	9.23	3.93	3.27
Boards, committees, sub-committees and panels	Constituent	Non-core	123	8.47	3.60	3.00
Parking	Regulatory	Non-core	88	6.06	2.58	2.15
Environmental stewardship	Allocative	Non-core	85	5.85	2.49	2.07
Support for licence applications to AGCO	Regulatory	Non-core	85	5.85	2.49	2.07
Awards or recognition	Symbolic	Non-core	80	5.51	2.34	1.95

Taxation	Allocative	Non-core	51	3.51	1.49	1.24
Use of public space	Regulatory	Non-core	46	3.17	1.35	1.12
Ports and Beaches	Developmental	Non-core	39	2.69	1.14	0.95
Council	Constituent	Non-core	30	2.07	0.88	0.73
Culture promotion	Developmental	Non-core	27	1.86	0.79	0.66
Accountability and transparency	Constituent	Non-core	25	1.72	0.73	0.61
Internal policies	Constituent	Non-core	24	1.65	0.70	0.59
Sign regulation	Regulatory	Non-core	24	1.65	0.70	0.59
Municipal facilities and equipment	Allocative	Non-core	22	1.52	0.64	0.54
Accessibility	Allocative	Non-core	20	1.38	0.59	0.49
Salary, wages and remuneration	Constituent	Non-core	18	1.24	0.53	0.44
Department-specific policies and hiring	Constituent	Non-core	17	1.17	0.50	0.41
Municipal elections	Constituent	Non-core	15	1.03	0.44	0.37
Property maintenance	Regulatory	Non-core	12	0.83	0.35	0.29
Inclusivity	Regulatory	Non-core	9	0.62	0.26	0.22
Strategic planning	Allocative	Non-core	8	0.55	0.23	0.20
Affordable housing and/or poverty reduction	Redistributive	Non-core	8	0.55	0.23	0.20
Objection to liquor licence application	Regulatory	Non-core	7	0.48	0.21	0.17
Appointments	Constituent	Non-core	6	0.41	0.18	0.15
Workplace review	Constituent	Non-core	6	0.41	0.18	0.15
By-law enforcement	Constituent	Non-core	5	0.34	0.15	0.12
Integrity commissioner	Constituent	Non-core	4	0.28	0.12	0.10
Mayor	Constituent	Non-core	4	0.28	0.12	0.10
Public participation or citizen engagement	Constituent	Non-core	4	0.28	0.12	0.10
Clerk	Constituent	Non-core	3	0.21	0.09	0.07
Objection to communication tower	Regulatory	Non-core	3	0.21	0.09	0.07
Affordability of municipal services for low-income citizens	Redistributive	Non-core	2	0.14	0.06	0.05

Illegal dumping	Regulatory	Non-core	2	0.14	0.06	0.05
Refugee resettlement	Redistributive	Non-core	1	0.07	0.03	0.02
			1452		42.54	35.43

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	References			Percentage of Total References
Information for council	N/A	N/A	685	N/A	N/A	16.72

Total Policy Node References~: 3413
Total References: 4098

**Municipal function that is unique to Ontario municipalities.*
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Shaded rows constitute functions that Sancton (2015) identifies as unique to urban municipalities.
~ Excludes 'Information for council' references.

