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Going Back: The Case for Remunicipalization

Analyzing the Ottawa Case to Understand Why Municipalities May Remunicipalize a Service
Instead of Choosing Another Private Contractor

Subject Key Words: Remunicipalization, solid waste collection, in-house

Geographical Key Words: Ottawa, Canada, The United States, Europe

MPA Research Report

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Executive Summary

With the wave of New Public Management, privatization of services in the public sector became a popular choice among government managers who believed this would improve the quality of services while also lowering costs. This turned out to not always be the case, and municipalities have slowly begun to turn towards the remunicipalization of services that were once contracted out. The purpose of this research paper is to take a Canadian case of remunicipalization and analyze what the primary reasons were for remunicipalization. The city of Ottawa served as the case example and the research paper identified that the City decided to remunicipalize a portion of residential solid waste collection services in 2011 because it could perform the service at a lower cost, improve the quality of service, and allow the municipality to have more control over the service. Ottawa possessed similarities and differences with global trends of remunicipalization, however, each case of remunicipalization will always be unique depending on its specific circumstances and should be studied on an individual level to understand how the decision was made. It is encouraged that more research be conducted on remunicipalization in order to shine more light on the benefits that it can offer municipalities.

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never forget the bond we have, and I wish nothing but the best for all of you. Crisis Corner for Life.

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Introduction

The adoption of private sector practices in the public sector was viewed as a groundbreaking phenomenon back in the 1980's and 1990's. This innovative transition of government practice was given a great deal of research and study to identify the benefits that privatization can provide in government. For decades, local governments in Canada and around the world have felt the pressure to contract out or privatize their services, which is a tenet of the neo-liberal program. However, the promised benefits of this practice are not always fulfilled and can leave local government managers frustrated. Research on the outcomes of privatization has demonstrated that contracting out services does not always result in cost savings or increased service quality. As a result, services that were once outsourced are finding their way back home through the recent trend of remunicipalization. Unfortunately, this trend has not gathered much attention from the academic world, especially in Canada. Research has been scarce on the issue, with only a handful of studies primarily in European countries and the United States. In contrast, much research exists on the decision to privatize. This raises the question of why is there so little research on remunicipalization? When private contractors cause problems for the municipality, oftentimes the municipality will seek a solution by finding a new contractor. But do municipal managers recognize the potential benefits of bringing a service back in-house? These benefits may include improved quality of service, lower costs, increased control over a service, etc.

One of the more prominent examples of remunicipalization is within municipal waste collection services; it is one of the most often analyzed sectors. Waste collection is an extremely important service that affects all citizens and some municipalities in Canada have realized that the best delivery of the service can be achieved from bringing it back in-house.

The objective of this research paper is to shed light on this trend of remunicipalization in Canada, which has been neglected by researchers, with a focus on waste collection. The question that needs to be answered is: what are the main reasons a municipality remunicipalizes solid waste collection services? A case study from Ottawa, Ontario will be analyzed in depth to understand the key factors and reasons for remunicipalizing waste collection. Additionally, this case will be compared to research available from Europe, the United States, and Canada to find any similarities and/or differences with other global trends.

Breaking Down Remunicipalization

Remunicipalization is not a common term in the local government setting. As stated, this is only a small, emerging trend, and the definition of this term has varied conceptually. Scholars have used different concepts to capture this development and define the term remunicipalization (Clifton, Warner, Gradus, and Gel, 2019). In Europe, privatization was understood as the selling of public assets to the private sector. Hence, working on the reversal of this process, scholars in Europe pointed to cases of the renationalization of assets, whereby previously privatized state-owned assets were brought back into public ownership (Clifton, Warner, Gradus, and Gel, 2019). The United States on the other hand viewed privatization as contracting out, so scholars studied cases where the municipality decided to reverse the decision to privatize and produce services in-house once more (Clifton, Warner, Gradus, and Gel, 2019). Upon review of some Canadian cases, the definition of remunicipalization is aligned more with how the United States has defined remunicipalization. Therefore, this paper will define remunicipalization as the act of a municipal body of government deciding to bring a contracted service back in-house for the municipality to operate either partially or fully.

Waste collection services in particular have been focused on since they are often one of the more popular services to be remunicipalized. Waste collection is the collection of solid waste from point of production to the point of treatment or disposal (Hoornewg and Bhada-Tata, 2012). Municipal waste can be collected in several ways, including house-to-house pick up, community bins pick up, curbside pickup, or self-delivered where generators deliver the waste directly to disposal sites. The level of service often varies by municipality and depends on local circumstances; small communities often provide drop off collection service while larger municipalities will offer curbside or similar pick up collection (Kelleher, Robins and Dixie, 2005). To finance this service, municipalities generally follow either of two practices: partial or full user fee system where citizens have to pay a fee for each bag after a certain limit, or property taxes pay for the service. As a result, part of the contracting out decision is based on how the garbage is collected. Types of contractors who bid on the contract will depend on the collection system. For example, if the contract involves having wheel carts that need power lifters on the side of the truck, this would make the cost of providing the service more expensive. The number of times collection is provided varies as well depending on the municipality's goals. Some municipalities specify 5-day collection while others may have a 9-day collection period in order to be environmentally sensitive; less pickups reduces carbon effect from trucks and makes people more conservative when disposing waste.

The Future is Public is an organization composed of union leaders, activists, researchers, and community groups that share ideas and proposals around building a pro-public movement in Canada. The organization has a database that has tracked (almost) every case of remunicipalization that has occurred throughout the world since 2005, with a majority of cases coming after 2010 (Future is Public, 2019). A vast majority of the cases belong to European

countries, especially Denmark, Norway, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain for remunicipalized waste collection services. In Canadian waste collection cases, there are 5 Canadian municipalities listed: City of Saint John (NB), Sherbrooke (QB), Conception Bay South (NFL), Port Moody (BC), and Paradise (NFL). (Future is Public, 2019). While there is very limited research done in Canada, one study examined the cases of Saint John, Sherbrooke, Conception Bay South, and Port Moody (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). Winnipeg has also announced a two-year pilot project that would bring some waste collection back in-house; however, this project has been delayed (Foxall, 2020).

The research on this trend is limited, and any research that has been done on Canadian municipalities has been brief. Therefore, analyzing Ottawa in depth can be an essential way of dissecting the specific reasons as to why the municipality brought waste collection back in-house. This will include identifying the particular actors or parties responsible for advocating the City to bring waste collection services in-house. Furthermore, the goal is to not only find the specific reasons for remunicipalizing but to also look at where these municipalities fit in the remunicipalization trend. As the literature review will show, there are trends of remunicipalization in Europe, the United States, and just recently, in Canada. By comparing the Ottawa case study to these global trends, any similarities and/or differences can be identified to see if the Ottawa case is aligned with a particular global trend, or if it encompasses multiple facets of these trends.

Literature Review

State of Literature

Remunicipalization is more common in Europe and the United States, and as a result, most of the literature is based on literature from the United States and Europe. Additionally, a significant

amount of literature is focused on multiple services being remunicipalized; however, solid waste collection and water distribution sectors are the most analyzed services (Demuth, Friederiszick, and Reinhold, 2018). Most research has followed the decisions to privatize a service in a local government, and relatively little attention has been given to the more recent trend of remunicipalization (Hefetz and Warner, 2007). This is extremely problematic given the evidence that more and more municipalities in the world are rethinking how they are providing public services. Finally, while more recent research has been done in Europe, most of the research from North America is becoming out of date. Therefore, this vacant area of recent research must be fulfilled to understand the current climate of remunicipalization within local government, especially in Canada.

Moving from Privatization to Remunicipalization

Since the 1980's, governments, consultants, and lobbyists have authored and sponsored dozens of reports promoting the idea of New Public Management and contracting out services (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). New Public Management encourages governments to be more efficient and responsive by transforming the public sector through the adaptation of private sector and market-based approaches towards service delivery (Hefetz and Warner, 2007). As experience with New Public Management grew, however, frustration began to emerge from local government managers (Hefetz and Warner, 2007). While proponents of privatization would argue it would typically offer a superior form of service delivery to urban governments, experience has raised concerns about the lack of cost savings. Faced with limited revenues and rising costs, local governments must decide which services to provide to their citizens, how these services will be delivered, and how they will be funded. Each country has different reasons and pressures facing them when deciding how to provide services.

Situational Factors

Some municipalities decide to keep services privatized while others decide to bring back services in-house: but why? Before diving into what the main reasons are for remunicipalization, there are certain situational factors that explain why a municipality may be more likely to remunicipalize a service than another.

The amount of competition present in a marketplace is an important factor in deciding whether a municipality will bring back services in-house. One would expect remunicipalization to happen in the case of insufficient competition at the moment of re-tendering a contract and when cost-efficient public alternatives are available (Demuth, Friederiszick, and Reinhold, 2018).

Competitive markets on the other hand make contracting more effective by providing governments with information about the trade-offs between price and quality across different vendors and by disciplining vendors for poor performance (Brown and Potoski, 2003). However, competitive markets are hard to maintain, and research indicates efforts to maintain such competition distract public managers from other tasks such as monitoring to ensure service quality (Warner, 2016). The market of solid waste collection tends to have more competition than other services and therefore privatization is more common; other services such as water distribution has high asset specificity and tends toward a natural monopoly (Bel, Fageda, and Warner, 2010).

Second, opposition from political bodies and organizations can play a role in remunicipalization. Politics is part of public management and good managers do not just make technical decisions; they also interact in the political process. Municipal bodies with left wing councils are more likely to push for remunicipalization than right wing councils (Gradus and Budding, 2018). However, there is inconclusive research on how much of a role this actually

plays; instead, research has indicated that political ideology may be context specific. A Dutch study found that ideology had a strong influence on the decision to remunicipalize while German research has indicated that political ideology was less relevant for the choice (Demuth, Friederiszick, and Reinhold, 2018). In the Dutch case, they found that the higher the proportion of left leaning councillors increased the likelihood that the municipality would reverse privatize a service; the Dutch use a proportional representation system where the divisions in an electorate are reflected proportionally in the elected body.

Local unions also are heavily involved in arguing for remunicipalization. Due to the threat privatization poses to their member's jobs and working conditions, municipal unions will often strongly oppose the privatization of public services. During the process of deciding who to award a contract to, unions develop strategies and policies to promote remunicipalization; this involves strategies for intervening in political processes before decisions are made (Hall, 2012). Strategies often include convincing public managers and council through qualitative and quantitative criteria that in-house service delivery is a superior alternative to privatization (Cyr-Racine and Jalette, 2007). Therefore, the degree to which municipal unions have an influence on the decision to remunicipalize depends on how well they can gather resources and formulate a strong argument to remunicipalize a service. For example, a Montreal study analyzed a case where a municipality had contracted out its snow removal services. The union spend a significant amount of time gathering information and elaborated a complete public-private cost figure for snow clearance (Cyr-Racine and Jalette, 2007). The union had formed an alliance with the joint subcontracting committee to make the case for remunicipalization and proved the service was costing the City double the price it would pay to have the service conducted in-house (Cyr-Racine and Jalette, 2007). Lots of pressure was put on the administration after this new data was

presented by the union, and the City ended up bringing the service back in-house. This case demonstrated that the ability to develop arguments, collect data, and form alliances can increase union pressure on the decision to remunicipalize.

Reasons to Remunicipalize

Aside from the situational factors that affect this decision, there are several main reasons why a municipality decides to bring a service back in-house.

Costs serve as one of the most important reasons that a municipality decides to remunicipalize. There is an assumption that privatization leads to cost savings for a municipality, however, it should be noted that research has indicated there is not a genuine empirical effect of cost savings resulting from private production (Bel, Fageda, and Warner, 2010). Transaction costs play a significant role in the level of costs a service produces. These costs include contract design, finding a qualified contractor, and monitoring the contractor (Warner, 2016). This theory explains that services that are more asset specific (requiring specific physical infrastructure or technical expertise) and are more difficult to manage are less likely to be contracted out (Warner and Hefetz, 2012). Primarily, transaction costs are of significance as they are responsible for the greater likelihood of savings for waste collection; waste collection has a moderate level of asset specificity and a low difficulty measuring outcomes and therefore transaction costs are expected to be lower than other services like water (Schoute, Budding, and Gradus, (2017). However, governments that contract more with for profit vendors will conduct more monitoring activities, thus raising costs. Monitoring is costly in terms of time and information; case studies in the United States indicate monitoring costs represent 20% of the total contract (Hefetz and Warner 2004). Government managers consider monitoring to be an important factor in their decision, and so those who highly invest in monitoring are more likely to bring services back in-house

since they are keeping a close eye on the outcomes of contracts. It should also be noted that governments with a low level of monitoring capacity appear to use remunicipalization as a substitute for monitoring (Hefetz and Warner, 2004). If the municipality has relatively low contract management capacity, it is often difficult to have sufficient resources to monitor contracts, especially complex ones; less than half of municipalities from a U.S survey indicated they actively monitored contracts (Hefetz and Warner, 2004). As a result, municipalities with low contract management capacity (often counties) had the highest rate of remunicipalization due to the limited government capacity to monitor contracts.

Deterioration in service quality is another strong reason why municipalities decide to bring services back in-house. As stated, private for-profit vendors are more likely to try to cut costs by lowering the quality of service they deliver. Monitoring costs rise as service quality decreases, as research indicates that disappointment with service quality and high monitoring were major reasons for remunicipalization (Ballard and Warner, 2000). Residents complain to the municipality if service quality decreases, which results in a significant amount of time and resources being wasted by city employees. Not only are city employees required to handle these complaints, but they then had to visit the site in question to check up on the contractor's work, contact the contractor to inform them of the problem, and finally revisit the site to ensure that the work had been re-done properly (Ballard and Warner, 2000). The level of complaints on service quality were much higher than when the municipality delivered the service and as a result, the service was brought back in-house. In the service area of waste collection, a recent German study found that safety indicators such as road-safe collection vehicle, positioning of the waste container after collection, and remaining contents in the waste container received the lowest percentage of fulfilment probability (Schulte, Gellenbeck, and Nelles, 2017). These can represent

key service quality indicators when municipalities are measuring service quality during a decision to potentially contract back in-house.

A third reason for remunicipalization comes from the recognition that the municipality must retain some level of public control. This may be why a municipality decides to bring services partially back in-house through a mixed public and private service delivery model in order to regain some control over the service delivery (Warner, 2016). Related to this, the principle agent problems can be a reason why a municipality wants to regain control. If there is goal incongruence between the contractor and the municipality, then the municipalities will often be more inclined to contract back in to gain control over the service to produce their desired goals (Hefetz and Warer, 2004). In some cases, either a growth in the size of the community or an amalgamation leading to the creation of a larger community allowed the municipality to have the capacity to take back control of a particular service (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). For example, the Township of Cumberland, Ontario announced plans for a sports complex, but did not have the management capacity to manage the facility so they contracted it out. Ten years later in 2001, the township was amalgamated with Ottawa, who then had the service brought back in-house because the township now had more resources and an increased capacity to manage the sports complex (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016).

Finally, tying in with service quality, public value plays a strong role in affecting a municipality's decision to remunicipalize. New public service literature in particular argues local government managers who use market approaches to deliver services must balance an even wider set of concerns, including accountability and public preference (Hefetz and Warner, 2004). The shift in local government practice towards remunicipalization is a rebalancing effort that reflects the emergence of the social choice position which values both markets and citizens

voice. The social choice approach argues local governments are to create a framework for a deliberative process where citizens develop the political capacity to engage their differences and identify solutions (Hefetz and Warner, 2007). U.S based studies from 1992-2002 show that the shift to bringing services back in-house was due to a shift in the managerial learning process in which there was a recognition to seek a balance of citizen voice with market management issues. (Hefetz and Warner, 2007). This increased recognition of the value that citizen voice plays in market management led to a higher rate of remunicipalization. For example, the study indicated many governments contracted out recreational services for efficiency gains, however, the citizen's concern over access and control fueled a large reverse contracting process (Hefetz and Warner, 2007).

The United States

In the United States, contracting out is a long-standing practice; in fact, many urban services (especially social services) began in the private sector and shifted to public provision during the 20th century (Warner and Hefetz, 2012). The United States can gather data on the status of municipal services through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) survey, which occurs every 5 years and differentiates stable public delivery and continued contracting from experimentation with new outsourcing and new insourcing (Warner and Hefetz, 2012). The United States is the only country with this longitudinal data that permit analysis of contracting dynamics overtime. Data indicated that in the 1990's insourcing was primarily a substitute for monitoring, as few governments monitored their contracts. The peak of privatization among U.S local governments was in 1997. However, a study from 1997-2002 found that reverse privatization had risen 18% among local government services and exceeded

the rate of new contracting out (Warner and Hefetz, 2012). As of 2012, the level of reverse contracting (insourcing) now equals the level of new contracting out in the United States.

In the United States, local governments are free to experiment without state directives to privatize, as has occurred in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and now the EU (Warner, 2016). This is the main reason why research has identified lower rates of privatization and higher rates of remunicipalization among local governments in the U.S compared to Europe (Warner, 2016). In the United States, mixed market delivery is more common and enables ongoing public presence in a particular service. For example, a city may be divided into districts with some served by private contractors and others served by the public. This enables a benchmarking process of costs across the public and private partners that stimulates innovation and retains avenues for citizen engagement (Warner, 2016). The process with the private sector promotes bureaucratic competition in-house by benchmarking costs and quality with in-house operations, thus putting pressure on private contractors to keep up quality and reduce costs (Warner and Hefetz, 2008). From 2007-2012, ICMA data identified that contracts to for-profit partners are 60% more likely to be reversed than contracts to other governments (Warner, 2016). Based on this same survey, mixed contracts are more three times more likely to be with for-profit partners than with other municipalities (Warner, 2016). City managers recognize that if they want to contract with for-profit partners, then they can enhance their ability to manage by retaining a mixed market position. However, governments were more likely to have contracts with other municipalities if they were contracting out complete contracts. This is because when services are fully contracted out, municipalities are less likely to reverse privatize; contracting with other municipalities is preferred to contracting out with private partners (Warner, 2016).

Public managers in the United States place a great deal of emphasis to remunicipalize services based on concerns over contract monitoring, service quality, and costs (Hebdon and Jalette, 2008). Costs and efficiency play an extremely important role in trying to decide how to conduct a public service in the United States; 83% of government managers between 1992 and 1997 reported attempts to decrease costs. Service quality also served as the single biggest reason in 2002-2007 where 61% of municipalities brought services back in-house due to concerns over service quality (CCPA, 2015). Additionally, politics also plays a more prominent role in the U.S for deciding whether to privatize or reverse privatize public services. Politicians might choose to provide services in-house to gain political benefits such as support from local unions, opportunities to purchase supplies from local allies, and the ability to use government employees on political projects (Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, and Vishny, 1997). To decrease the amount of political influence on the decision to contract or not, states can have state clean government laws which enforce a merit-based hiring system, standards requiring counties to use competitive bidding on all purchases, and forbid political activity by government employees. A U.S based study concluded that states who enforced these clean state laws have an increased level of privatization due to the hindering of political motives (Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, and Vishny, 1997). While it is not proved that states that do not possess or have weak state clean government laws are more likely to remunicipalize services, it can be assumed that politics will play a heavier role in the decision and can serve as a motive.

Europe

Public services have a strong history of being provided by local government in Europe. Dating back to 19th century Europe, the provision of public utilities in its initial basic form was deemed mainly a responsibility of the local authorities (Wollmann, 2014). With the expansion of the

national welfare state which unfolded in the early 20th century and climaxed during the 1960's and 1970's, the provision of public services was engraved into being a key responsibility of local municipalities (Wollmann, 2014). This development was rooted in the belief that the conduct of public services in the best interest of the citizens was ensured by having them done by the public sector; for example, France nationalized the energy sector after World War II.

However, the public sector-centered form of public service provision came under attack by the advocates of neo-liberal beliefs and New Public Management who claimed the current structure was inefficient. A sense of criticism was perpetuated that the public sector operated under a sense of political rationality that gave a priority to social and ecological goals and neglected economic rationality (Wollmann, 2014). This neo-liberal shift received its initial powerful thrust in the United Kingdom after Margaret Thatcher's conservative regime was elected in 1979 and the neo-liberal ideology quickly spread to other European countries. For example, the Netherlands switched their provision of garbage collection from the late 1990's towards the mid 2000's, with two-thirds of the switches being towards outside production (Schoute, Budding, and Gradus, 2017). While this sparked more privatization of public services at the municipal level, it eventually became evident in the 1990's that these neo-liberal promises that privatization would usher in better quality of services at lower prices did not materialize (Wollmann, 2014). Instead, providers had often made use of the next possible opportunity to raise prices while at the same time deteriorating the working conditions of their employees. This would tie in with the corresponding shift in the national and international discourse in which, in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the relationship between the state and the private sector had been critically scrutinized and the crucial role of the state in redressing private sector and market failures was rediscovered.

This distrust in the private sector following the 2008 crisis had a stronger impact on European countries who used to heavily value the presence of government services and lost confidence in the performance of the marketplace and corporations. For example, 60% of local authorities indicated they have begun or were preparing to take previously outsourced services back in-house (Wollmann, 2014). The Association for Public Service in the UK found that 67% of 140 municipalities surveyed had either brought a service back in-house or were considering doing so (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). Germany has begun to bring back their energy sector due to the growing support from the German public which is very critical of energy privatization from increased concerns over environmental issues; they have also brought waste collection and water back in-house (Hall, 2012). France's Inspection generale des Finances even condemned the use of public private partnerships back in 2014 to spark an anti PPP movement (Clifton, Warner, Gradus, and Gel, 2019). This overall reassessment of the merits of public-sector based service provision is also reflected in a growing popular perception which tends to value public sector service provision higher than the private sector one. This trend is evidenced by a growing number of local referendums in which the privatization of public services and facilities is rejected or their remunicipalization is demanded (Wollmann, 2014).

In relation to waste collection, research on several European countries such as the UK, Germany, and France have indicated the main reason for remunicipalization was costs, control, and contract expiry (Hall, 2012). A recent survey of German municipalities also indicated that remunicipalization was an opportunity to regain political control over the quality and price-setting of service provision (Wollmann, 2014). Additionally, while in the U.S political influence can play a contributing role in the decision to bring a service back in-house or not based on state clean government laws, more general findings in European literature has found there does not

seem to be an effect from political ideology to remunicipalize services. Instead, the decision of a European municipality is more pragmatic than ideological; the exception is in the Netherlands where ideology played a significant role in choices in service delivery (Gradus and Budding, 2018). In this case, left leaning municipal councils were more likely to reverse privatize services than right leaning councils.

Canada

While research on remunicipalization is generally limited, the literature pertaining to this decision in Canadian research is scarcer than in Europe or the United States. The remunicipalization movement in Canada is still relatively small, geographically scattered, and is conceptually varied. The vast majority of privatization in Canada has taken the form of public private partnerships, which leads to a false conception of a country with deep-seated commitments to equitable public service delivery when, in reality, there has been a drastic erosion of this model and a growing preference for private sector actors and market-orientated operating services (McDonald, 2018). Unions have strongly campaigned against privatization, but these concerns have not been as influential. There is not a lot of media coverage on this trend and in practice, there is no distinctly pro-public movement in Canada. The main issue is it has been often challenging to find common ground on what constitutes a “good” public service, with different organizations having diverse ideological orientations and sectoral interests. Any collective demands to return to “public” control of essential services must acknowledge, engage with, and encourage differences of opinion on what to reclaim and what to reject, instead of assuming the status quo (McDonald, 2018). An offensive and defensive strategy would need to be developed to not only argue why privatization is bad, but why bringing back public services in-house is good. Unfortunately, there are no dedicated journals on the topic, and while panels

and papers about the problems of privatization exist, pro-public debates rarely feature as standalone themes in academic publications or conferences.

Canada's political landscape has fewer political parties than many countries where such pro-public debates are flourishing; countries such as France, Spain, and Bolivia, with strong socialist, anarchist, and other radical traditions due to lots of proportional based electoral systems. Additionally, the international pro-public experience shows the importance of citizen engagement (as opposed to governments or unions driving change); this can be demonstrated from German citizens voicing their concerns with the privatized energy sector (McDonald, 2018). While a top-down movement can be effective, bottom-up mobilizations have been a critical part of building and sustaining many pro-public movements in Europe. For example, Spanish elections of left-leaning governments in 2015 to 2016 led to a rapid change in public awareness and attitudes towards remunicipalization (McDonald, 2018). Some countries have used referendums to raise public awareness and create a pro-public movement. This can be demonstrated in the 2004 national referendum in Uruguay which introduced an amendment to its Constitution outlawing water privatization (McDonald, 2018).

This does not mean that Canada has not participated in this movement, but rather this trend has not exactly taken off in Canada fully. Canada's Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research produced a report in 1997 that showed 40% of municipal services were being brought back in-house (McDonald, 2018). In the Canadian context for remunicipalization, several reasons for deciding to bring back services in-house include cost savings, better quality control, flexibility over a service, efficiency in operations, problems with contractors, increased staff capacity, and more support from citizens. Additionally, local governments in different provinces varied significantly in both their own source of revenues and in funding by higher

levels of government. It should be noted that because of the devolution of services by Canadian provinces to the cities without the necessary funding, it is conceivable that managers may be under more pressure to restructure than their American counterparts (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016).

Since there is no survey system like ICMA, various case studies have been done on Canadian cities who have remunicipalized services. The city of Hamilton remunicipalized their water service after a campaign of local civil society groups and a handful of local politicians pointed at the previous contract's flaws and the operational failures of the private operators. No company was interested in taking on the full liabilities associated with the contract, so the city had no choice but to bring back the service in-house (Martin, 2012). Other cities such as Sherbrooke, Saint John, Port Moody, and Conception Bay South have been studied as cases for partially or fully bringing waste collection services back in-house. The main reasons for switching back in these cases was due to a decrease in quality of services and high costs; Saint John indicated they saved \$700,000 in the first year of remunicipalization (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). In the same Canadian study, 12/15 municipalities indicated that cost savings was the main reason for bringing services back in-house (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). However, despite these cases, Canada still has more privatization than the United States. This is surprising considering studies have shown that Canadians are more likely than Americans to have positive attitudes towards government and a greater public sector union density (Hebdon and Jalette, 2008). It's clear that Canada still lags behind the rest of the world, so in order to possibly generate a pro-public movement in Canada, more research and literature must be presented on the issue in order to bring it to light.

Methodology

This paper's primary aim is to look at a specific case study and provide an in-depth analysis of the entire process surrounding the decision to bring solid waste collection services back in-house. Using a case study research design, the goal will not be to operationalize specific concepts and variables but instead will focus on studying naturally occurring events within a case and identifying the primary reasons for remunicipalization. The city of Ottawa is an example of the remunicipalization of waste collection services and will serve as the single unit within the case study analysis; this case has not been found in academic literature or been logged by The Future is Public. In 1998, Ottawa contracted out solid waste collection in three zones, and retained in-house collection in a fourth zone. However, in 2011, the City renewed the first in-house contract, and voted to bring a second zone back in-house. While online news outlets briefly covered this issue, there has been no real in-depth academic research on the reasons that affected the decision to remunicipalize.

Not only is Ottawa an example of remunicipalization of waste collection services, but it is also a unique case. With a population of over 990,000 people, Ottawa is the largest municipality in Canada that has remunicipalized waste collection services. A majority of the other cases identified range from smaller to mid-size municipalities with a population between 20,000 and 170,000. Additionally, the administrative size of the municipality makes it an appealing unit for this research paper because it gives access to a large database of available information from committees, city staff, and council. It should be noted that the original intent of this paper was to analyze Ottawa and Paradise, Newfoundland using a multiple case studies research design. Both cases would be analyzed and then compared with each other and the larger global trends. However, Paradise does not have any online records relating to the decision to bring waste

collection services back-in-house in 2011. COVID-19 has hindered the ability of staff from Paradise from obtaining records related to this decision, and therefore, the municipality was removed from the research paper. Based upon a news article produced by *CBC News*, the main reason for remunicipalizing waste collection services was because a staff report indicated that an in-house team could perform the services at a lower cost (CBC, 2011).

Due to COVID-19 prohibiting the possibility of conducting interviews, the method for collecting information will be through document analysis. The primary method of data collection was the use of a wide variety of sources including council meeting minutes, committee reports, staff reports, financial statements, union reports, and media articles. These sources help answer the research question by covering a wide range of potentially different areas that can have an influence on the decision; this includes municipal staff who operate the day-to-day tasks and have an understanding of the costs and challenges associated with the service, councillors who can bring up external factors that have an effect on the decision, the union's perspective and influence on the decision, and the media who can bring to light any public concerns or values related to the decision. Information was recorded between 2002 and 2012; however, the information related to the actual decision made in 2011 comes from information gathered between 2010 and 2011. To narrow down the area of research, this paper only studied decisions related to waste collection services; this includes the collection and disposing services of garbage, recycling, organics, and household hazardous waste. Additionally, the information was gathered only from municipal staff and council members who have control or interest in the delivery of waste collection services.

The research findings are presented in a chronological timeline starting with the context of the municipality at the beginning of the previous contract with a private entity and ending with the

final decision to bring waste collection services back in-house. With the intent to grasp a complete understanding of what happened in this particular case, several elements are analyzed throughout the entire decision-making process. The first step involves explaining the context of each municipality and why the municipality started considering bringing waste collection services back in-house. This is followed by identifying the actors within the decision-making process who contributed to the idea of bringing waste collection services back in-house. Throughout the process, evidence presented by municipal staff or other political actors is studied to see how they tried bringing back waste collection services; this relates to data metrics used for measuring how in-house waste collection would provide greater benefits to the municipality than if a private contractor was selected. Finally, the paper will then look at why the final decision was made and analyze the particular aspects of this decision, such as what resources were needed to carry out the service, which particular area the service will be carried out in, etc.

After the entire policy process has been analyzed, the factors will be listed and ranked from most important to least important reason for bringing in waste collection services back in-house. There will also be an analysis of the strategy used by actors to bring waste collection services back in-house. Upon completion of the analysis of the case, the paper will try to compare Ottawa with the existing global trends of remunicipalization. Based on the literature review, Europe, the United States, and Canada all demonstrated their most common factors for remunicipalization. In the United States, the primary reasons to reverse privatize were to promote competition through a mixed market model, lower costs, improve service quality, and political influence. In Europe, the main reasons were costs and efficiency, control, and public opinion. Finally, the limited Canadian examples demonstrated that the main reasons for remunicipalization were costs and efficiency, flexibility, problems with the contractor, and support from citizens. The data and

information from Ottawa will be studied to see what similarities and/or differences there are with each category.

Ottawa: A Case of Remunicipalization

In 1995, the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) assumed responsibility for the collection of solid waste from Ottawa and 10 surrounding municipalities. At the time, the level of services provided to residents was standardized with respect to garbage, recyclables, and leaf and yard waste (Region of Ottawa-Carleton, 2000). In the fall of 1998, the Regional Council began to consider altering the levels of service for solid waste delivery. They concluded that this new contract should be designed to reflect an increased devotion to waste diversion, customer convenience, and fiscal responsibility. When the contracts were awarded that year, they were designed to encourage the development of a competitive marketplace in the RMCO for waste management services. As a result, the Regional Council approved the retention of collection for Zone C4 (out of 4 total zones) as part of the awarding of the residential waste collection contracts (Region of Ottawa-Carleton, 2000). In order to track the progress of the in-house waste collection group, the Regional Council also approved the requirement of an annual financial audit and annual information report (Region of Ottawa-Carleton, 2000).

In 2001, all the municipalities of the RMCO amalgamated into the city of Ottawa and were now governed by the city of Ottawa council. In the same year, the City launched an organic waste diversion pilot program with the goal of increasing waste diversion and saving landfill space; this program only operated in 9 neighbourhoods and was collected weekly (City of Ottawa, 2002). During the contract period of 1999 to 2006, Zone C4 had managed to save the municipality \$1,474,641; total savings are a combination of savings as a result of the City's bid price compared to the next closest bid and savings as a result of actual costs of the operation

compared to the City's bid price allocation (City of Ottawa, 2007). In 2005 when it came to discuss the details of the new contract, the focus was not on whether the municipality should continue to collect a portion of waste in-house, but rather on how to improve waste diversion within the municipality. The Director of Public Works and Services and the Deputy City Manager had prepared a report to The Planning and Environment Committee, the Corporate Service and Economic Development Committee, and City Council advocating that the new collection contract include the current level of services until the implementation of a city-wide weekly organics curbside collection with a move to bi-weekly garbage collection in 2008 (City of Ottawa, 2005). Additionally, city staff recommended alternating weekly recycling collection for the duration of the next contract term to achieve maximum diversion. The reasoning for implementing a weekly organics program and move to bi-weekly garbage collection was to reach the 60% waste diversion rate guideline that was approved by the province while also minimizing the financial impact of waste collection services; the current waste diversion rate of the City was only 31% (City of Ottawa, 2005).

Based on staff calculations, the decision for implementing bi-weekly garbage collection would save the municipality \$7,570,000 over the 6-year contract as a result of switching from weekly collection (City of Ottawa, 2005). Additionally, by increasing the participation rate of residents diverting and sorting waste, the City can extend the municipal Trail Road landfill site by five years; a goal Council was trying to accomplish. However, other councillors on the Planning and Environment Committee decried the absence of public consultation and the fact that the plan was too rushed; other municipalities with bi-weekly pick-up had implemented the program incrementally (City of Ottawa, 2005). Instead, some councillors wanted weekly garbage collection to continue after 2008 and organics pick up to continue until the end of the contract in

2012 and then switch to bi-weekly collection. In 2005 when the contracts were awarded, Council had approved the more expensive option with the current service level for the first two years of the 6-year contract and then implementing the organics curbside collection with weekly curbside garbage collection; organics would be collected weekly from April to November and bi-weekly from December to March. Furthermore, Council had decided to award the in-house collection group Zone C3 instead of Zone C4 (which was now contracted to a private contractor); this new contract would last from 2006 until 2012 (City of Ottawa, 2005).

The new program added several costs to the City, particularly involving the purchase and distribution of organics bins as well as start-up costs of the Zone C3 in-house collection group, such as organics collection vehicles and facility upgrades (City of Ottawa, 2008). Monitoring costs were also added from solid waste inspectors who were providing education on the new program as part of regular by-law enforcement procedures and measuring customer satisfaction through set out studies (City of Ottawa, 2008). The new costs of this program to waste collection services got municipal staff to recommend that Council switch to bi-weekly garbage collection to save money to help pay for the organics program, educate consumers of the benefits of the program, and report on the progress of the program (City of Ottawa, 2009). The organics program was finally implemented in January of 2010 and named “the Green Bin Program”. With the upcoming contract expiring in the next year, it was becoming clear the City was looking for ways to save costs in waste collection.

In early 2011, members of the Environmental Advisory Committee were recognizing that costs were becoming a problem, as the local media had been writing stories on the cost increases; the costs of waste services included not only pick-up but also sorting and storing (City of Ottawa, 2011). Additionally, the public was concerned that the upcoming changes to waste collection

would result in less service for tax dollars. However, a member of Council re-assured that they want to pass the savings down to the taxpayer (Chianello, 2011). A few days later at the Environment Committee meeting, city staff produced the annual audit report for 2010 to show the progress of the in-house collection group. When the new contract was awarded to Zone C3 in 2005, the City renewed the requirement for an annual audit report of expenditures and an annual information report (City of Ottawa, 2011). Table 1 presents the financial performance of the in-house collection group since the first year of the contract.

Table 1

	Current Contract	Current Contract	Current Contract	Current Contract	Total Savings
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	
Savings from City Bid	\$1,101,647	\$ 977,689	\$731,338	\$781,024	\$3,591,699
Additional Savings from In-house Collection Operations	\$ 254,367	\$ 498,847	\$243,282	\$213,996	\$1,210,492
Total Savings	\$1,356,014	\$ 1,476,536	\$974,620	\$995,020	\$4,802,190

As previously mentioned, the total savings are a combination of savings as a result of the City's bid price compared to the next closest bid and savings as a result of actual costs of the operation compared to the City's bid price allocation.

By the end of the 4th year of the contract, the in-house collection group had resulted in a cumulative operating surplus of \$1,210,492 and \$4,802,190 in total savings; if the savings from the last contract are added, then the in-house group saved a total of \$6,276,831 (City of Ottawa, 2011). In all the annual audits produced since the beginning of the contract in 2006, the explanation for the savings was consistent and involved staff reporting that operating savings resulted from efficient route optimization, managed labour costs, and the productivity of dedicated and experienced staff.

The audit was also required to provide the Statement of Operations for the in-house collection group each year. Table 2 demonstrates a summary of all the Statement of Operations produced from 2006 until 2010; the fiscal year of operations is from June 1 until May 31 of the next year.

Table 2

Year	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Revenue	\$3,995,011	\$3,536,617	\$3,588,516	\$3,650,083	\$4,084,684
Labour Costs	\$1,903,000	\$1,637,450	\$1,610,268	\$1,715,504	\$1,744,341
Vehicle Costs	\$2,206,975	\$1,437,010	\$1,379,65	\$1,588,860	\$2,002,390
Materials and Supplies	\$84,304	\$75,795	\$55,578	\$76,085	\$99,303
Total Expenditures	\$4,412,501	\$3,282,252	\$3,089,669	\$3,406,802	\$3,870,688
Surplus from In-house Collection Operations	\$417,490	\$254,365	\$498,847	\$243,281	\$213,996
Actual Tonnage	54,974 (4 zones)	40,750	39,672	38,812	37,485
Cost per Tonne	\$80.27	\$80.55	\$77.88	\$87.78	\$103.00

Revenue is calculated on an accrual basis based on tonnage collected at rates proposed and accepted in the bid process

The table shows that since the new contract was awarded, the in-house group had produced a steady increase in revenue; revenue is calculated on an accrual basis based on tonnage collected at rates proposed and accepted in the bid process. It should be noted that the only reason there was a rising average cost per tonne was because the City was collecting less garbage each year, which was most likely the result of increased waste diversion methods. However, the 2005-2006 year and the 2008-2009-year audits indicated that the in-house collection group average cost per tonne was lower than the average cost per tonne for the other four collection zones (City of Ottawa 2007 and 2010). Unfortunately, city staff only made this comparison in the 2005-2006

and 2008-2009 annual audit report and there was no other financial reporting on the other collection zones.

Finally, the annual audits included the performance results of the in-house collection group based on customer service requests. Table 3 represents a summary of the customer service requests to the City across all the collection zones since the new contract in 2006.

Table 3

Year	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Total City Calls	18,036	12, 320	9, 557	9, 938
Total Calls C3	4,413	3, 736	2, 389	1, 875
% of C3 Calls	26%	30.3%	25%	18.9%
Avg Call/1000 C3	97.53	82.56	52	52
Avg Call/1000 Other Zones	64.96	41.65	33.8	33.8

Out of the 260,000 households, Zone C3 was always responsible for an average of 45,000 households. There was a high increase in customer calls in the first year of the contract for all collection zones due to the new routes, new collection schedules, and new contractors (City of Ottawa, 2008). During the rest of the contract up until 2009, all the collection zones had resulted in a decreased number of calls; this was due to residents becoming familiar with year-to-year service level changes (City of Ottawa, 2009). However, the annual audit report for 2010 explained that Zone C3 and C2 reported significant call reductions while Zone C1, C4, and C5 reported a significant increase in the number of calls. Each audit clarified some misleading information when looking at average calls per 1000 homes. The reason why Zone C3 has a much higher average is because the in-house collection group provides service in the urban core where

calls are related to property standards and waste issues are historically higher than in suburban and rural areas. The second reason is many homeowners in the other zones call the contractor providing service directly rather than calling the City, and thus fewer calls about private contractors are reported (City of Ottawa, 2011).

At the same Environment Committee meeting when the annual audit was presented and recommended for Council to receive, the Committee received a response from the City Treasurer after a city councillor on the Committee had made an inquiry about costs of the garbage, blue, black, and green bin (organics) program and the Household Hazardous Waste Programs. Specifically, the Committee wanted to know what the average Ottawa household was paying through their property taxes for these programs. The Treasurer responded saying based off a home with an assessed value of \$295,000, 3.47% of the tax bill, or \$131.65, was allocated to the cost of garbage collection and recycling programs; \$89 was for garbage collection and \$42.65 was for all other solid waste program costs (City of Ottawa, 2011).

Two months later at another Environment Committee meeting, a Service Level Review report was presented by city staff (City of Ottawa, 2011). The report echoed previous staff reports recommending changing curbside collection service levels for the upcoming 6-year contract in order to increase waste diversion and to lower costs; the main recommendation was for weekly organics program and move to a bi-weekly garbage collection schedule. The change in service would increase the city waste diversion rate by 9%, for a total between 48% and 53%. Staff recommended that the change in service delivery would save the City around \$9,000,000 per year and \$54,000,000 over the six-year life span (City of Ottawa, 2011). This change in service would also save taxpayers \$13 on their tax bill. Council then decided to implement the new Solid Waste Service Levels for uniform curb side collection across the city, bi-weekly collection of

residential garbage, weekly green bin collection, and bi-weekly collection program for diapers and incontinence products, alternating with the residual waste collection (City of Ottawa, 2011). As a result, they also decided to extend the current waste collection contract by 5 months so the new collection contracts and solid waste service levels would be effective in November 2012 when the new contracts and service levels started (City of Ottawa, 2011).

Since the contract would be expiring next fall, the Environment Committee made a recommendation to Council in May of 2011 to establish an in-house team and submit a city bid for curb side residential waste collection services. To ensure that there would be no bias during the bidding process, Council had previously adopted a competition protocol in 1998 to provide both accountability and transparency that could allow for the preparation and submission of an in-house bid (City of Ottawa, 2011). A staff report indicated two main reasons why the City should once again bid for residential waste collection services. First, staff re-emphasized the cost savings that the in-house collection group had accomplished since they were awarded a zone in 1998. Second, the involvement in waste collection services had provided city staff with a more complete understanding of waste collection challenges and the ability to pilot various alternative service delivery options with maximum flexibility and minimal financial penalty; an example of this is the organics pilot program (City of Ottawa, 2011).

The in-house group had provided valuable feedback on collection costs, vehicle trails, and organics container suitability from the operator's point of view. The staff believed that this experience had assisted the City to make practical advancements in recycling and organics trials. As a result, Council approved the creation of an in-house team and ensured that a Fairness Commissioner from an independent consulting company would ensure the City's bid process was consistent with the competition protocol (City of Ottawa, 2011). Council decided to defer

this agenda item for one month to allow the continuation of the dialogue city staff was having with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 503 over discussions of the bid (City of Ottawa, 2011). Discussions with CUPE 503 must have been significant because Council had deferred this agenda item once again until August to allow the continuation of dialogue between the City and CUPE 503 (City of Ottawa, 2011).

CUPE 503 produced a preliminary report on solid waste to win back waste collection services for the in-house group. The union highlighted how the mayor had commemorated and valued the success that the in-house collection group had provided; the focus was on the cost savings that in-house group achieved. A large portion of the report focused on debunking the false claim that contracted services are superior to in-house services. Even though there was still a belief that contracted services were the better service alternative, the union provided evidence through several case examples of how municipalities had achieved financial savings and improved service quality from switching back in-house. The report also echoed arguments that were found in the literature review, particularly around the fact that studies on waste collection have found no evidence that private production reduces costs and that cost savings from private contractors eroded over time (CUPE 503, 2011). The latter section of the report also demonstrated that the in-house collection group is actually at a disadvantage when bidding on contracts. Estimated costs of in-house tenders appear artificially higher due to the need to include a wide range of “ghost costs”; head office expenses allocated to the bid. However, private sector bidders are spared of these additional costs and obtain an advantage during the bidding process. The union analyzed that the impact of these ghost charges overstates the cost of an in-house bid by 8%, which can put the in-house group at a disadvantage (CUPE 503, 2011). Nonetheless, the report

let the numbers speak for themselves and provided the evidence on how much the in-house group had saved the City.

The final portion of the union report highlighted the importance of flexibility, and how this factor is never entered in calculations. The union reminded how Ottawa was able to launch the pilot organic program because it had the flexibility to do it with its in-house crew. As the City looks towards increasing waste diversion and potentially moving towards zero generation of garbage, having in-house collection crews will be invaluable. They can also provide the City with direct and detailed information on the characteristics and challenges of waste collection essential for developing policy, as well as the potential to implement more efficient collection methods on an on-going basis.

Several months later in August, the Deputy City Manager and Department of Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability submitted a report for the Environmental Services Department to establish an in-house team bid; this report was produced with consideration from CUPE 503 (City of Ottawa, 2011). Staff argued that the City has already had experience in Zone C3 in the downtown core, which is a high-profile zone that encompasses the downtown business core and tourist area. Additionally, it is the most difficult zone in the city to collect waste because of a higher housing density, back alley collection, high pedestrian traffic, parked vehicles, etc. Nonetheless, City workers have been very successful in providing a high level of service despite these challenges (City of Ottawa, 2011). Combined with the financial saving and operational benefits that were presented in the report back in May, staff recommended that Council award Zone C3 to the in-house collection group and the other four zones be tendered. There was an emphasis to keep a minimum of one zone to be collected in-house to ensure the managed competition process continued (City of Ottawa, 2011). This new report was presented

to Council and the recommendations made were approved, thus awarding Zone C3 to the in-house collection group and establishing an in-house waste collection bid team (City of Ottawa, 2011).

In November of 2011, city staff produced a report to the Environment Committee which set out recommendations for who should be awarded a contract in each collection zone. The Fairness Commissioner also provided a report certifying that the tendering process was done in a fair and transparent manner. Table 4 demonstrates all the bids made for each collection zones from the 7 bidders.

Table 4

Bidders and Location	Price Schedule Zone C1	Price Schedule Zone C2	Price Schedule Zone C4	Price Schedule Zone C5
GFL Environment East Corp. Pickering, ON	\$8,275,353.25	\$7,278,353.25	\$6,750,353.25	\$7,568,353.25
Malex Gatineau, QC	No Bid	No Bid	\$16,653,582	\$16,607,542
Waste Management Waterloo, ON	\$6,158,562	\$6,658,285	\$6,595,731	\$6,895,664
City of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON	\$6,757,197.30	\$6,105,570.12	\$5,445,795.58	\$5,807,713.76
Tomlinson Environmental Services Ltd. Ottawa, ON	\$7,274,559.41	\$7,036,459.53	\$7,487,117.52	\$8,020,613.86
BFI Canada Ottawa, ON	\$7,591,219	\$8,258,323	\$7,814,366	\$8,459,799
Mill Waste Systems Inc. Markham, ON	\$6,728,504	\$5,998,030	\$5,548,628	\$6,258,262

Staff recommended that the lowest bidder for Zone C1, C2 and C5 be awarded a contract; the City was the lowest bidder for Zone C5. Due to residential growth in the current curbside zones, some boundary changes were required to balance the zone sizes and to take into account natural geographic barriers (City of Ottawa, 2011). As a result, the staff recommended that Zone C5

establish 39 positions and delegate authority to the Manager of Public Works for the Fleet requirements for Zone C5 (City of Ottawa, 2011). Furthermore, the changes to the boundary of Zone C3 increased the number of households from 45,000 to 55,000 and thus required 7 additional workers. Despite the praise of the in-house collection group, staff recommended Zone C4 be awarded to the second lowest bidder submitted by Miller Waste Systems Inc instead of awarding it to the City (City of Ottawa, 2011). The first reason was because it would be very difficult for the City to get vehicles and fully trained staff in time to start the collection of Zone C3 and two additional zones by next November. At the same time, the new service levels would be implemented, and an extra zone would require an increased monitoring capacity. Miller Waste Systems Inc had proven experience and demonstrated it has the capacity to deliver the service requirements; they are currently under contract with other municipalities with the similar size zones (City of Ottawa, 2011). In the end, the benefits of awarding Zone C4 to Miller Waste Systems Inc outweigh the added cost of awarding the second lowest bidder.

When Council approved the new service levels back in April, the estimated savings were \$9,000,000. However, additional savings of \$1,400,000 beyond what was identified at that Council meeting were recognized as a result of the tendering process for an overall annual savings of \$10,400,000 (City of Ottawa, 2011). Staff stated that the 2012 operating budget would have to be realigned to reflect a decrease in contracted services and an increase to compensation costs and fleet costs being related to if Zone C5 was awarded to the City in-house collection group (City of Ottawa, 2011). The report recommended that the capital budget would be increased by \$3,500,000 for a total authority of \$3,750,000 for the acquisition of 13 new collection vehicles to be funded from the Solid Waste Capital Reserve Fund to be repaid by the Fleet Replacement Reserve fund, causing no tax pressure in 2012 (City of Ottawa, 2011). The

Committee approved these recommendations and would recommend them to Council. At the following council meeting, all the recommendations made by the Committee for the residential waste collection contracts were approved, thus officially awarding Zone C5 to the City-in-house collection team (City of Ottawa, 2011). The previous contractor for Zone C5 was Waste Management, who could not compete with the City as their bid was over \$1,000,000 more.

At the same meeting, the Committee also introduced the Phase 1 of Ottawa's 30-year waste plan. Within the next 30 years, the population of the City is expected to grow by 300,000 people and generate an extra 100,000 tonnes of waste per year. There was a growing fear that the two main landfills could be filled up in 15 years, and so the City needed to act to increase waste diversion (CBC News, 2011). The mission statement for this plan was to state that by 2042, Ottawa would have room in its municipal landfill because of the improved rates of reducing, reusing, and recycling (City of Ottawa, 2011). The City of Ottawa's dedication to improve waste diversion through new strategies and programs through a 30-year plan reflects how significant the decision was to bring back an extra collection zone back in-house. One of the benefits of having an in-house collection team was the operational benefits of direct participation in service delivery. The past experience that had demonstrated that the in-house group has the capability to pilot different programs could have given city staff confidence that it would be a good time to embark on a more ambitious waste plan.

Phase 1 of the plan established the plan's vision, guiding principles, goals, and objectives. The key issues that were addressed in the plan included waste minimization and diversion, asset and financial management, and management of social and environmental impacts (City of Ottawa, 2011). Several months later, Phase 2 of the plan was introduced to state how the City would achieve these objectives. There were ten points listed in the possible ways to achieve these

objectives, and three methods were related to waste collection. One method was to manage assets wisely by enhancing asset management and efficiency in the collection system. This included studying different approaches to collect bulky items and allow for a self-supporting dedicated service (City of Ottawa, 2012). The second point was to manage waste locally, which involved exploring opportunities for more cost-efficient hauling and processing of recyclables and organics. The third method was to optimize waste diversion by re-evaluating current collection systems. In low density communities, the City would monitor the performance of recycling programs in other municipal jurisdictions to determine if moving to a single stream recycling program for low density communities who receive curb-side collection would have a positive impact on participation and material capture rates (City of Ottawa, 2012). In high density communities, the City would assess the viability of piloting a vacuum waste collection system during a major high-density redevelopment to determine impact on waste diversion.

Unfortunately, the plans for the Phase 3 were delayed and the plan came to a dead stop. The City had just begun to restart the planning phases of a new 30-year Waste Plan in 2019 (City of Ottawa, 2019). However, the decision to bring back a second zone in-house gives them greater flexibility for trying out new programs that may be involved in this plan.

Discussion and Analysis

After reviewing the entire policy process, it becomes clear that the main reason Ottawa decided to bring a collection zone back in-house was because of costs. Annual audits were produced to track how the in-house collection group provided savings to the City based on the City's bid price compared to the next closest bid and savings as a result of actual costs of the operation compared to the City's bid price allocation. Since the beginning of the new contract in 2006-2007, the in-house group had saved almost \$5,000,000 because of efficient route optimization,

managing labour costs, and having a productive and dedicated staff. Other reports produced by staff besides the audits had also repeatedly stated how the in-house team had saved the City money. When the decision was made to officially award the contracts, Council had decided to offer the contract to the tender with the lowest bid, thus signifying that cost was the most important factor in the decision-making process.

But it was not the only reason for bringing back waste collection services. The second most important reason was to regain public control. Throughout the entire policy process, the mission of increasing waste diversion was heavily emphasized by staff and councillors. This led to the introduction of a new organics program and the change in service levels to increase organic collection to a weekly schedule and reduce garbage collection to a bi-weekly schedule. At the same time the contracts were being reawarded, the City was also drafting a 30-year waste plan to increase waste diversion. The City staff had already demonstrated that they had ability to pilot new programs such as the organics program with maximum flexibility and minimum fiscal penalty. As a result, bringing back waste collection services was also the recognition that the in-house team could help pilot future projects that could be created in the 30-year waste plan.

The third highest reason for bringing back in waste collection services was to improve the quality of service. The argument that the in-house team had produced a high level of service was often cited by City staff and the Environmental Committee. For example, when the annual audit was presented in 2011 for the 2009-2010-year, Zone C3 had reported a reduction in calls while three contracted zones had a significant increase in calls. Zone C3 was cited as the hardest zone to collect because it was located in the downtown core, yet the in-house team still managed to reduce the number of calls and deliver a quality service. Additionally, the in-house team offered

important feedback for the entire waste collection process that could allow the City to continuously improve their service delivery.

The major actors involved in getting the City to bring back an extra waste collection zone in-house were city staff, the Environmental Committee, and CUPE 503. The overall strategy used by these actors was to highlight the positive things that the in-house zone had achieved, rather than of focusing on any problems from the private contractors. The primary staff members involved were the Deputy City Manager, the Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability Department, and the Environmental Services Department. Their main strategy was to use the data from the annual audits to highlight the financial and performance success that Zone C3 had since 2006. Additionally, when advocating to establish an in-house bid team, city staff showcased how the experience of the in-house collection team had provided valuable information to improve service delivery. The Environmental Committee had full support of the decision to bring back a waste collection zone and did not pose any barriers for staff to get these recommendations to Council. The Environmental Committee had approved all the recommendations to Council made by staff, including having Council receive the annual audits, approve the service level changes, approve the establishment of an in-house bid team, and approving staff recommendations on who should be awarded the contracts for each zone.

The support and effort from CUPE 503 to get a waste collection zone in-house signified how strong a union presence there is in Ottawa. Before contract talks even began, the union was already helping City staff prepare the annual audit that would be reported in 2011. Then the decision for creating a bid team was delayed by several months because the City was still communicating with CUPE 503. It was clear that the union had a working relationship with City staff, but the fascinating aspect of this policy decision was how a trade union was able to help

argue against 6 other private companies for why conducting waste collection services in-house was the right choice.

Back when the City was debating over the upcoming contracts in 2005, the City agreed to establish guidelines for the in-house bid process (City of Ottawa, 2005). In these guidelines, the role of the union was to help develop an in-house strategy and gain the support and interest of employees in the bid preparation process. But in this case study, it was apparent that the union also sought to gain the support and interest of the City to bring back in waste collection services. The union report began by debunking biased facts about privatization from the C.D Howe Institute and the Toronto Board of Trade. One important finding from the union report was how ghost charges are applied to in-house teams which puts them at a disadvantage. Finally, their strategy involved illustrating how the decision to have waste collection services had a greater long term impact than if the decision was to stay privatized; this was in reference to how transaction costs are rarely calculated in the contract and can increase costs in a short period of time from the agreement of the contract.

The ability of CUPE 503 to gather resources to create a detailed and factual report is one of the key elements that make the union's role so key in this policy decision. As stated in the literature review, the likelihood of a union to have an influence on the decision to remunicipalize increases based on how well they can gather resources and formulate a strong argument for remunicipalization. But this is not just any ordinary local union. CUPE 503 is part of Canada's largest union, which includes over 700,000 members, has 70 offices located throughout Canada, and an abundant amount of resources for conducting various types of union work; this ranges from issuing annual reports outlining the union's work in their areas of responsibility, leading campaigns, facilitating education, and conducting research in over a dozen employment fields

(CUPE, 2020). One of the major Canadian research projects from the literature review on remunicipalization was funded by CUPE (Reynolds, Royer, and Beresford, 2016). The CUPE website has posted several research articles on the topic of remunicipalization that highlight the benefits of remunicipalization and what kind of strategy works; this also includes posting articles highlighting the success of municipalities who have decided to bring a service back in-house

The working relationship between the union and City staff was strong, but a key aspect of this policy process was the recognition that the mayor was happy that work was being done in-house. The union report began with recognition from the mayor who values the great working relationship the City has with the union, and that there is a bright future ahead with in-house solid waste collection group. This comes from a mayor who has always valued the work of unions; in 2000, he contributed his entire municipal severance payment to Ottawa's Union Mission for Men (National Arts Centre, 2020). In early 2012, the City also reached an agreement with OC Transpo's bargaining unit the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 279, which marked the first time in 23 years that the City and the union have come to a collective agreement before the expiry of the existing contract (Baker, 2012). Therefore, the overall strength of the union had an impact on the City's ability to argue for remunicipalizing a waste collection zone, but the surrounding positive union atmosphere in the City certainly could have made it easier for the City to reach a deal with the in-house bidding team.

It is now time to compare the Ottawa case with the larger global trends of remunicipalization and see what similarities and/or differences can be made. To begin, it is clear that the structure of how waste is collected in Ottawa resembles the mixed market service delivery model that is common in the United States. When Ottawa was first amalgamated, they decided to ensure that at least one zone was kept in-house while the other zones would be put up for tender at the end of

each contract. As the Ottawa case study demonstrated, having this mixed market model is an effective way of benchmarking costs and quality with in-house operations. The City kept track of the financial and service level performance of the in-house zone and concluded that this zone was saving money while having a high level of service quality. Thus, when the opportunity arose for the new contract, the City decided to bring in another zone in-house; this now puts pressure on private contractors to ensure they keep costs low and service level high or else they could be the next contractor who may lose out on a deal by the end of the next contract.

The main reason Ottawa decided to remunicipalize another waste collection zone was because of cost; however, this was one of the main reasons for remunicipalization in the United States, Europe, and Canada as well. Therefore, there is nothing unique about the Ottawa case in this sense. As mentioned already, the City recognized that the in-house unit was collecting waste collection at a high level of service; they were operating in the hardest zone to collect while being one of two zones who reported significant call reductions in the previous year. According to information gathered in the literature review, Ottawa's reasoning here was similar to the United States and Canada, where concerns over the level of service quality was more prevalent than in Europe. Around 60% of local government managers in the United States cited the reason for change was because of a decrease in service quality while all of the Canadian cases surrounding remunicipalization of waste collection services cited service quality as an issue.

On the other hand, Ottawa was more similar to trends in the Canada and Europe that indicated gaining more control over a service was an important reason for remunicipalizing a service. The City had future ambitions towards improving waste diversion rates, and one of the strong elements of having the in-house collection group was their ability to successfully test out a pilot project (organics collection) without any difficulty or additional costs. Having an extra zone

allowed the City to regain more control over this service and gave them more flexibility with how they want operations to be conducted. While this is similar to European examples, it did differ from the kind of control that German municipalities sought; these municipalities were seeking political control. But this reason also followed suit with the trend at home, where a number of Canadian examples cited that they remunicipalized either because they gained the capacity to take control of a service or because they were disappointed with the private contractor and wanted to have more control over how the service was managed.

Finally, the strong union influence on the Ottawa decision resembles the strong union environment that is found in Canada and Europe. According to data obtained from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the top 5 countries with the highest trade union density (total amount of union workers divided by total number of workers) are European (OECD, 2017). The trade union density of those countries ranges from 49% to 90%; however, the population of these countries are near the smallest of the group. Within the data set, Canada had a trade union density of 33%, which sat in the upper-middle tier of the countries (OECD, 2017). Canada's favourable labour relation laws and large public sector are the two main reason why the country has a high unionization rate. For example, requiring secret ballot votes in unions reduces unionization success rates and certification attempts; however, five provinces allow unions to be certified automatically without secret ballot voting (Clemens, Veldhuis, and Karabegovic, 2005). Additionally, all Canadian jurisdictions permit mandatory dues payment as a condition of employment. This assures unions secure resources with which they can undertake advocacy, expansion, and development activities. The public sector in Canada represents 18% of the workforce, and of that workforce, 75% of workers are unionized (Clemens, Veldhuis, and Karabegovic, 2005). The United States on the other hand has a much

weaker union presence; the U.S only had a trade union density of 10% (McCarthy, 2017). A majority of states allow only partial mandatory dues clauses, which means that workers may only pay for representation-related union activities. Furthermore, the U.S public sector represents 14% of its workforce, however, only 40% of these workers are unionized (Clemens, Veldhuis, and Karabegovic, 2005).

While Ottawa possesses similarities with other global trends of remunicipalization, it still has some differences. First, there was no evidence that the decision was made to improve public value or that the public had voiced their support for remunicipalization. Media outlets from *The Ottawa Citizen*, and *CBC News* showed the public was mainly concerned about the service level changes that were being made. The City held public consultations to hear the public's opinion since the City was divided in half on this issue. The service level change was the only decision that was heavily covered in the media. Aside from that, there was no reporting from the media or the City that the public wanted to have waste collection services back in-house. This is much different from the global trends, especially in Europe which showed a long history of citizens believing services should be conducted by the public sector.

Second, there was no political influence on the decision to bring waste collection services back in-house. This was only prominent in the United States where some states had weak government laws that did not hinder political activity from influencing the decision-making process. The City of Ottawa had a Fairness Commissioner from PPI Consulting that provided independent oversight throughout the procurement process to select suppliers for residential waste collection services (City of Ottawa, 2011). PPI produced a report on a summary of the selection process, and certified that the principles of openness, fairness, consistency and transparency was established and maintained throughout all the stages of the selection process.

Conclusion

Ever since the rise of New Public Management, public servants have insisted that adapting private practices in government will improve service delivery and reduce costs. This led to the outsourcing of public services in favour of private contractors who would provide these promised benefits. However, the world has started to recognize that these benefits are not always delivered, and that in some cases it would be best to bring a service back in-house. The City of Ottawa is a perfect example of a municipality who decided the right decision was to remunicipalize one of its waste collection zones back in-house in order to lower costs, improve service delivery, and regain more control over the service. City staff, councillors, and the union formulated a strategy that involved highlighting the financial and service level accomplishments that the City's in-house team had accomplished, rather than trying to only point out the flaws of the private contractors. And to this day, Ottawa has retained these two collections in-house. It should also be noted there have been recent contract problems with private partners (Whan, 2019). If Ottawa ever increases their capability to operate waste collection services, then these private contractors could soon be on their way out the door.

When comparing the case of Ottawa to the larger global trends of remunicipalization, some similarities were identified as well as some differences. But the key take away from the comparison should be that no one case will ever be the same as another. Researchers can try to gain a larger understanding of remunicipalization from surveys of a large sample size, but a case study analysis appears to be more beneficial because it generates the details that are needed to understand the full story of the decision. A large city like Winnipeg who is testing out a pilot project before potentially remunicipalizing waste collection services should look at a case example such as Ottawa who may resemble some similar circumstances, resources, problems,

etc. It is also recommended more research be done within Canada on cases of remunicipalization in order to potentially identify any unique reasons for remunicipalization that may have not yet been identified.

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