REDEFINING THE HOMELESS EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN

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ABSTRACT
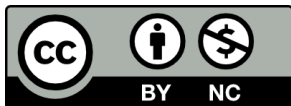
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As inequality increases throughout America, the most destitute individuals lack upward mobility while conditions continue to get worse for those in extreme poverty. The purpose of this study is to gain a firsthand understanding of the consequences of rising inequality in Michigan communities, with emphasis on college towns and deindustrialized cities. I produce grounded theory supporting the argument that the homeless experience is becoming increasingly diverse. Homeless individuals are those who have the fewest life chances and whose lifestyle, a navigation of circumstance, results in stasis. Social forces produce the conditions that homeless individuals cope with. Homeless individuals perform coping strategies in public, behavior that contributes to socially constructed identities. Because they are socially ostracized from the public, homeless people are perhaps one of the most stereotyped and stigmatized groups in America. When seen in public spaces, the "homeless" distinction evokes certain preconceived notions about financial standing, alternative options, and lifestyle choices. I analyze data from a three-year ethnography along with casual interviews, surveys, and visual ethnographic data to build a mixed methods approach exploring homeless phenomena. I suggest more qualitative research is necessary to study the social problem of homelessness in America.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a social problem that predates the American Revolution. Despite social and economic developments since that time, current responses to the problem are similar to solutions attempted hundreds of years ago. Colonial town leaders distinguished between impoverished residents and non-residents, creating a group of "transient poor" (Rossi, 1991:17). There have been subgroups of homeless individuals ever since.

Hoboes, also spelled "hobos," were the predominant post-bellum homeless characters until the Depression Era (Higbie, 2003). That identity morphed generally into the Skid Row wino from the 1930s until urban renewal in the 1960s (Peterson & Maxwell, 1958; Wallace, 1965, 1968; Wiseman, 1979). Although Bahr (1967) argued that Skid Row was disappearing nationally in major cities like Detroit, some media framed the situation differently. "Skid row didn't die. It just moved" when it was displaced from its Michigan Avenue location in Detroit in 1963 ("Detroit builds slum 'hotel,'" 1964:3). Homelessness changed dramatically in Michigan during the 1960s.

The "bums" who migrated to Detroit from Chicago a decade earlier were pushed out of the Motor City mile between Washington and Trumbull Avenues by gentrification in 1965, a collective urban renewal effort totaling $152,000,000 ("Chicago Skid Row crackdown causes exodus to Detroit," 1949; Mahan, 1965). Whether individuals moved to "slum hotels" or highway construction displaced neighborhoods, social forces changed the landscape of homelessness in Midwestern American urban centers like Detroit. Most of the major changes occurred during the 1960s. A second wave of urban renewal began in Detroit during the 1990s. The MGM Grand Casino opened in 1999 and the Detroit Tigers vacated the baseball stadium the same year. Skid Row in Detroit scattered even more.

The modern form of the social problem started as early as the 1870s (Kusmer, 2001; National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Prior to that, Civil War camps attracted vagrant "tramps" who assembled in "colonies" called "jungles." The jungles shared the same qualities of Civil War camps so the two groups naturally fit together and cohabitated. A three-year recession after the Civil War added to the newly emerging problem.

The term "tramp" was a label originally used in reference to the short excursions of soldiers before evolving into a label for the vagrants who were "bumming" around the integrated camps. The term "bummer" was used as a colloquial moniker during the Civil War. "Bummers" became synonymous with "vagrants" in an 1868 New York Times article ("The New York bummers: Their mode of life-favorite resorts-their tricks and wiles," 1868). Continuing into the 1870s, "bumming" encompassed the description of vagrants who slept outside as well as railroad strikers. "Bums" were more than just a collection of out-of-work vagrants.

During the Civil War, soldiers often foraged for food and slept outside, behavior considerably equivalent to bumming. After the war, some individuals continued this behavior without employment. Military enlistment formerly provided an environment where tent cities and scrounging for food were normal activities. Bumming was actually encouraged when rations ran out (Kusmer, 2001). After the Civil War, those same activities became criminal.

While the United States did not create the concept of vagrancy laws, the nation began to implement such laws toward the end of slavery to control recently freed slaves who had no claim to land. Nine states adopted vagrancy laws in 1865-1866 (Cohen, 1991). Homeless individuals stayed at local almshouses, designated homes of charity for the poor, to avoid vagrancy arrests and charges. The number of homeless doubled in just one year and almshouses failed to provide

enough shelter for those in need (Kusmer, 2001). The homeless began to use jails for temporary shelter. For example, in 1867 over 1,400 vagrants sought refuge in the Cleveland central police station.

The preceding short synopsis does not encompass all of the homeless during that period just prior to the turn of the 20th century. Homelessness is a social construct that changed throughout American history and "homeless" held different meanings at different times and places. During the Civil War, vagrants were rather normal but there were many other types of homeless individuals. After the war, being "without a home" evolved into a formalized status and the phenomenon of homelessness became a recognizable social problem.

The early American homeless identity lacks specificity. Certain descriptions of the problem focus on economic conditions, e.g. the rail-riding hobo studied by Anderson (1923). Hoboes congregated in cities with train stations and moderately available employment. Bum camps moved closer to the city when urban centers concentrated activity downtown.

Other descriptions of the problem frame individuals in the context of their environment, e.g. urban residents stuck in cities where conditions are detrimental. Skid Row inhabitants were, and continue to be, more stagnant than hoboes were. A stable Detroit economy surrounded the Skid Row drunk until urban renewal began in the 1960s, worsening the conditions for homeless continuously through the turn of the next century. The major difference between the Detroit homeless and homeless individuals in other Michigan cities began to take shape after urban renewal disrupted Skid Row fifty years ago. I argue that the current "urban renewal" in Detroit will exacerbate the homeless problem that exists today in the Motor City.

Studying homelessness is as relevant now as it ever was because homelessness is a growingly complex phenomenon. Associated Press journalist John Barbour (1987:B-8) eloquently wrote, "The old Skid Row drunk has blended into that other shadowy community, called vaguely the homeless, the displaced, the under-educated, the out-of-but-seeking work, and those people released from mental institutions but still somewhere on the other side of reality." Barbour, from the idyllic Michigan college town of Ann Arbor, recognized the changing landscape of homelessness and the distinct differences between the destitute urban homeless and those individuals who passed through his hometown. "A curious diaspora has come to pass," Barbour said. "The old Skid Row habitués, the drifters and winos have been scattered through the cities, and when the weather is offensive, plucked from the pavements and the alleys and put in shelters." Homeless identities were never homogeneous. Consider the differences between post-bellum Civil War veterans and freed slaves who both found refuge in abandoned war camps. The homeless experience is becoming increasingly diverse.

As homelessness changes in America, it is important to recognize homeless experiences vary especially since the federal government homogenizes the problem. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) counts the homeless and generates statistics based on 30 categories and 414 Continuums of Care (CoC). COCs are general regions that coordinate services for the homeless. HUD uses those counted numbers to create Annual Homeless Assessment Reports (AHAR) that influence annual budgetary appropriations. I argue that these reports fail to provide an accurate description of the homeless problem in America.

<u>Problem Statement</u>

Although the counted number of "homeless" individuals is decreasing in America, the number of individuals living in extreme poverty is rising. Experiences of extreme poverty,

including episodes of homelessness, are incredibly different by state and region but the government often addresses the problem as a monolithic issue. It is important to study the lives of those individuals who cope with the circumstances of being homeless because strategies and makeshift economies will subsist for those surviving at the margins. The problem of homelessness is exacerbated when legislators outlaw coping strategies of marginalized individuals, framing such behavior as deviant when it is a navigation of circumstances.

Homeless individuals in Michigan currently face statewide cuts in mental health services in addition to new local policies that criminalize panhandling, metal scrapping, and squatting. Governmental officials outlaw coping strategies and decrease public spending making the navigation of homelessness increasingly difficult for the individual.

<div align="center">Sensitizing Concepts</div>

Blumer (1954:7) distinguished between definitive and sensitizing concepts within social theory. Definitive concepts encompass "what is common to a class of objects" and contribute to a "clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks." The categorical government count and AHAR are examples of classifying the homeless. In contrast, sensitizing concepts provide a "general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances." Focus on culture, institutions, and social structure establishes general relevance for the sociological study of homelessness. I ask the following set of sensitizing questions to guide my research:

Q1: How do structural forces contribute to the variability of homeless experiences in Michigan?

Q2: What are some coping strategies that homeless individuals use to navigate extreme poverty?

Q3: How is the homeless identity socially constructed?

Sensitizing concepts do not necessarily contradict definitive attributes, classifications, or quantified analysis. "Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look" (Blumer, 1954:7). I aim to fill the gaps of statistically descriptive reports by adding new qualitatively rich empirical research.

Defining the Problem

In the United States, many people perceive homeless individuals to make up one of the lowest classes in society because the homeless have almost no capital. Most of a homeless individual's belongings fit into a few bags. Without a house, these individuals lack a major visual representation of status. They are missing a normal symbol of wealth. The American home generally contains a family unit and purchasing a house is a rite of passage for the newly married couple. To be without housing is equivalent to lacking numerous desirable qualities like social stability, independence, money, and upward mobility.

Throughout this manuscript, I define social stability as the general maintenance of an existing social arrangement. When an individual is socially stable, he is aware of the culture's set of social norms and able to adhere to the status quo. In the United States, it is normal to have a physical address indicating a steady place of residence. The homeless individual is usually transient and unable to maintain a stable living arrangement. He relies on social support to provide essential elements of the American lifestyle.

Independence is a social arrangement involving almost no reliance on a social system. Having social independence does not mean a complete disconnect between the citizen and the society. However, independence is any social arrangement not completely controlled by an

outside source. Individuals can experience independence and lack of independence simultaneously during a single phenomenon. For example, a typical American can go to the café and use the money in his pocket to purchase coffee but must pay taxes. That individual made an independent choice to buy coffee but governmental authority controlled a portion of his money. Independence is not finitely measured.

Money plays a key role in American independence because of the capitalist governmental and economic systems. Income is an indicator of success and contributes to the pursuit of the American Dream. Pursuit of that dream usually includes advancing to a higher social class. Assets and income contribute to greater social mobility in the United States.

Homelessness is a phenomenon that often compounds both the lack of residence and lack of employment, resulting in minimal assets or income. Relative deprivation analysis is essential in this instance because the value of money, similar to independence, is not absolute. Even though the concept of assigning a level to "poverty" appeared around 1904 at $460 annually, the poverty line continues to be arbitrary (Hunter, 1904; Patterson, 2009:7). Similarly, the "living wage" is an ambiguous concept. While the impact that money has on upward mobility and independence is relative, financial capital influences social outcomes in America.

<u>Terminology through Post-Bellum Transition</u>

Terminology used by and referring to the homeless changed dramatically over the past century, especially from the Civil War period through the Great Depression. There has never been a precise definition of homelessness; it has always been a social construct. Even though terms like "tramp," "bum," "vagrant," and "jungle" predate the Civil War, those terms became more prevalent in the literature after the war.

The "hobo" was a unit of analysis for Anderson (1923) when "hobo" was the primary term for a homeless man. Anderson talks of living in lumber camps and distinguishes between the Pacific coast and Great Lakes regions. The lumber industry flourished in Bay City and Saginaw, Michigan during the 1800s (Younkman, 2015). A violent labor strike in 1885 resulted in better conditions for tens of thousands of workers who flooded the area during the boom. The concentration of workers stimulated an economy in the region that supported and entertained many local residents. The waterfront strip, knows as "Hell's Half Mile," consisted of saloons and brothels. There were fights and prostitutes in the area. Before the current Bay City jail and courthouse stood at 2nd Street and Jefferson Street, the "Block of Blazes" brothel stood there in 1885. Paid organized laborers, not hoboes, frequented these places of debauchery.

A newly built railroad connected Bay City and Saginaw in 1867. Although the railroad initially brought new residents to the area, it provided an exit route for the logs and lumbermen. The lumber industry that brought wealth to Bay City primarily moved to Oregon, Washington, and California because of the longer warm season. As Anderson points out, working in the woods was not a seasonal job out west; the work remained throughout the year in warmer climates. Anderson mentions hoboes and "tramps" working in the lumberyards of Oregon. At that time, logging roads were "skid roads" (Oregon, 1917:118) because the logs "skidded" along the roads when hauled. "Skid Road" was the name used throughout Oregon in reference to the same type of settlement called "Hell's Half Mile" in Bay City. Allen (1995) provides more history on many of these terms. I convey a general overview here to offer context for the historical descriptions of homelessness in this manuscript.

Anderson (1923:150) also described the public response to seeing a homeless person during the early 1900s. The public ascribed an identity to hoboes and tramps, calling them

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"undesirables." That perception, Anderson argues, originates from a disheveled appearance. The "shabby" and "unkempt" appearance elicits perceptions of "beggars, vagrants, drunkards, and petty thieves." Although his work is full of terms about homelessness, I cannot find any instance of Anderson referring to "Skid Row." He describes the "Main Stem," terminology that is no longer commonly used. The "Main Stem" is simply what the hobo called "Main Street." Anderson defines "Hobohemia" as more than just the Main Stem; it included burlesque shows and a rail yard among other things. Hobohemia extended beyond a single strip of pavement. It is difficult to define conceptual settlements precisely so Anderson described Hobohemia by its street boundaries. Naming streets as boundaries is possible when describing similar settlements in Bay City during the 1800s, Oregon during the turn of the century, and Detroit throughout the 1900s. However, "Skid Row" is now a general term in reference to almost any urban area where extremely impoverished people live. Public citizens ascribe labels to identify poor individuals and ambiguously label the locations where homeless individuals congregate.

Hobohemia, the Main Stem, and Skid Row are places where "joints, dives, holes, (and) dumps" exist (Allen, 1995:146). Hobohemia was a culturally concentrated area with "cheap hotels, lodging houses, flops, eating joints, outfitting shops, employment agencies, missions, radical bookstores, welfare agencies, economic and political institutions" (Anderson, 1923:14). Anderson also described "jungles" that were places the hoboes congregated near rail yards. The terminology used to describe the homeless and their living spaces is almost endless.

I present a general summary of the terminology used to describe the homeless to provide context to the historical narrative in this manuscript. I define terms throughout this research but I emphasize here the enormous variability and expanse of terminology used during the last century. My focus is on the current homeless experience but I provide some background of the

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problem that includes archaic and esoteric vocabulary. One of my primary arguments is that homelessness is not precisely definable. There is a wide range of terms used to describe phenomena connected to extreme poverty. I argue that longstanding polysemy is detrimental to both the study of extreme poverty and those living in such conditions.

<div align="center">Difficulties of Assessing the Problem of Extreme Poverty</div>

Poverty and homelessness are prevalent themes in some of the most famous sociological works. DuBois (1899:269, 271) explained how marginalized individuals fall into circumstances that limit upward mobility. "When a group of persons have been for generations prohibited from self-support, and self-initiative in any line, there is bound to be a large number of them who, when thrown upon their own resources, will be found incapable of competing in the race of life." Even a motivated individual must navigate bureaucracies to get assistance. The troubles DuBois faced studying poverty in 1899 remain today. Then, it was "very difficult to get any definite idea of the extent of Negro poverty; there (was) a vast amount of alms giving in Philadelphia, but much of it (was) unsystematic and there (was) much duplication of work." Still, limited public records and roughly estimated figures make it hard to study the poor.

Figure 1. Total Number of Homeless People Counted in the United States (2007-2014)

(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014b)

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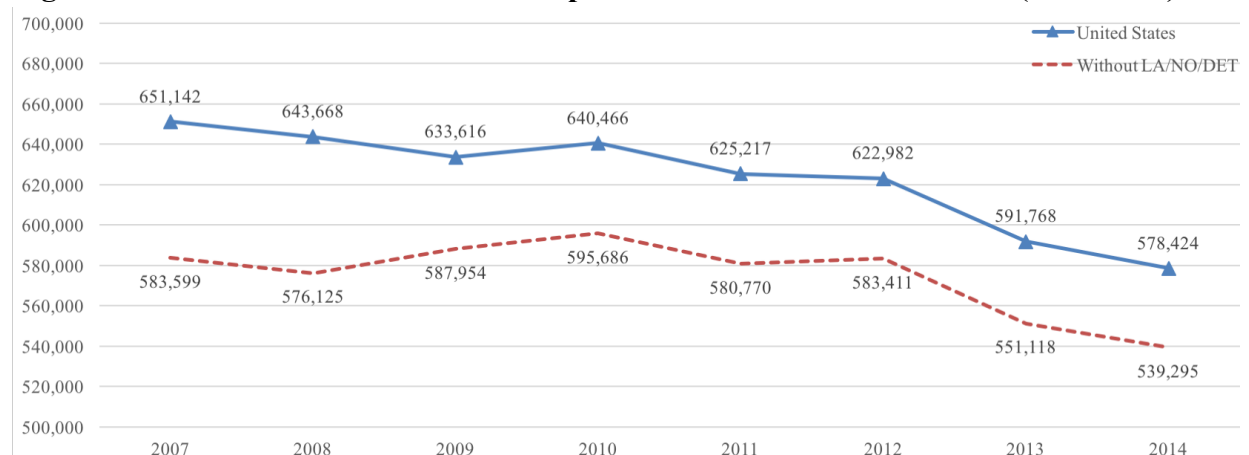
Quantifying homelessness remains difficult. HUD did not start counting homeless individuals until 1983. National data shows homelessness declining in 2009, a figure heavily influenced by large cities like Detroit who used flawed extrapolation techniques to estimate the homeless count (Cortes, 2011). With those cities omitted from the data, homelessness appeared to increase nationally between 2008 and 2009 (Figure 1). After standardizing the "Point in Time" count (PIT) methodology in 2010, homelessness has continued to decline. Currently, HUD estimates there are 578,424 homeless individuals on any given night.

The homeless count in Michigan has fluctuated since data became more accurate in 2010. The number of homeless individuals has increased in certain years, decreased in others, both including and excluding Detroit from the data (Figure 3). The most recent data shows that homelessness is on the rise in Michigan but declined slightly (n=34) in Detroit. While these numbers are still estimates, this data represents the best guess at the number of homeless individuals in Michigan on any given night during January of each year. It is important to note that the PIT count is drastically different from Homeless Management Information System data (HMIS). I explain those differences throughout this manuscript. The imprecision of the data also indicates that the homeless problem is difficult to study quantitatively.

Government agencies and other institutions usually address the problem of homelessness quantitatively. This is probably true for several reasons. First, there are currently about 578,424 homeless individuals living in the United States (2014) and it would be almost impossible to produce qualitative studies in one environment that would apply to another area of the nation. Even in Michigan, for example, Ann Arbor and Detroit are drastically different. Tasked with solving social problems at the national level, the federal government views the homeless en masse. Second, the government is in the business of appropriating tax dollars and must do so

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using quantitative metrics. It would not be prudent to distribute tax dollars based on needs presented exclusively in qualitative studies although a combination of research types might prove beneficial to agencies charged with solving the homeless problem. The purposes of qualitative and quantitative studies around homelessness are distinctly different. For example, the identities of homeless individuals are more aptly studied using qualitative data while quantitative figures show the rates of homelessness.

Rates of homelessness vary by geographic region. It is logical that homeless individuals, especially those unsheltered, will gravitate toward warmer climates. Anderson (1923) mentioned that seasonal migration was common as far back as when lumbermen, pursuing stable work in the warmer climates of the Pacific Northwest, would leave Michigan for the winter. When the homeless do migrate to colder climates, as they do in New York, the phenomenon is possibly attributable to social services, perceived upward mobility, and other available resources. However, migration patterns toward destinations other than Michigan are outside the scope of this study. The population of this study includes approximately 12,227 homeless individuals in the State of Michigan (2014). The percentage of homeless that make up the overall population in Michigan is small. About 0.12% of the citizens in Michigan are homeless. For comparison, 0.10% of Illinois and 0.11% of Ohio are homeless; Indiana has less homeless per capita (0.09%). Midwestern states have relatively low proportions of homeless.

Higher populated states like New York (0.39%) and California (0.36%) have substantially higher rates of homeless residents. Florida falls roughly in the middle with 0.24% homeless (United States Census Bureau, 2013b; U.S. Department of & Housing and Urban Development, 2013). However, these statistics vary greatly by the methodology used to count the homeless. The Campaign to End Homelessness (2015) claims there were 71,713 homeless in

Michigan ("HMIS" Statewide; Michigan) during 2011 but the PIT effort counted 13,185. The

Campaign to End Homelessness estimated 93,982 individuals were actually homeless in

Michigan during 2011 by using extrapolated data. That figure makes the percentage of homeless

in Michigan almost 1% of the entire population, rounded up (0.0095). Framing is starkly

variable when using either of these numbers; the latter supports the argument that, "One in a

hundred people in Michigan are homeless."

Figure 2. Estimates of Homeless People by State (2013 PIT count)
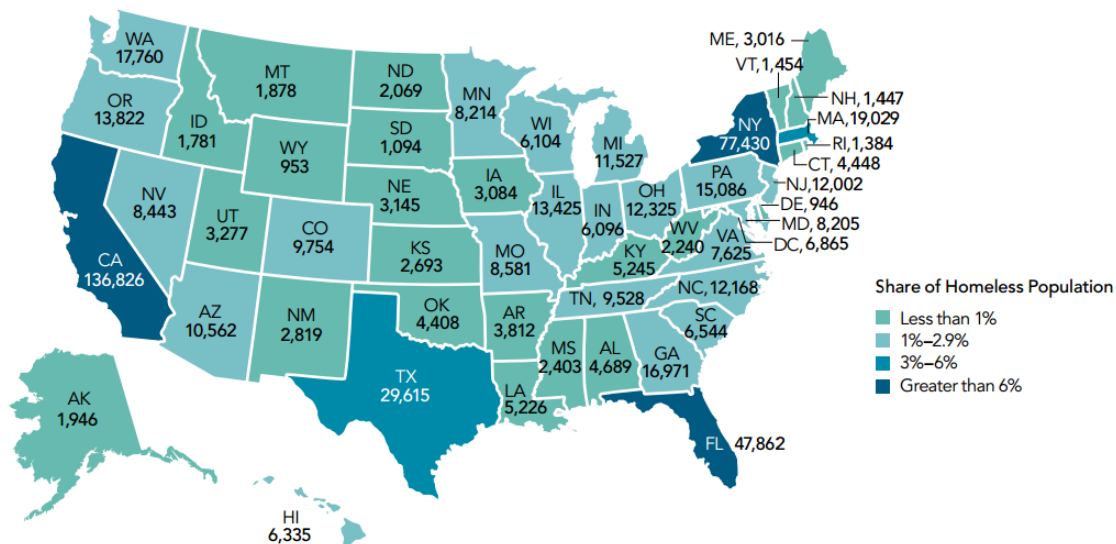
Regardless of the count methodology, it is quite clear that the homeless do not simply

migrate to warmer clients. The share of homeless population by state is a multifactorial

outcome. Certain conditions may be more appealing to the homeless: warmer climate, more

shelter available, greater support systems, fewer laws against begging and vagrancy, etc. Other

states might criminalize homelessness and provide fewer benefits. In this manuscript, I do not

compare national trends. I study Michigan homelessness and focus on conditions that vary

within the state like starkly different unemployment rates between cities. At the same time,

Michigan legislators continue to cut statewide funding that affects communities at the local level.

While the rates of homelessness by state are descriptive, those numbers do not convey any standalone trends. The homeless census is only a starting point. Surveying a variety of demographic characteristics may shed more light on who is migrating where. For example, if there is more opportunity for physical day labor in California, perhaps more homeless men move there to look for jobs. If there are hospitality (janitorial) or nanny jobs more prevalent in New York, then maybe the homeless population of females is higher in that state. Both of these examples assume that those individuals are interested in jobs. Census data is only as good as the variety of categories that are measured. Other methods, like interviews or ethnography, are useful to supplement quantitative data.

Figure 3. Total Number of Homeless People Counted in Michigan (2007-2014)
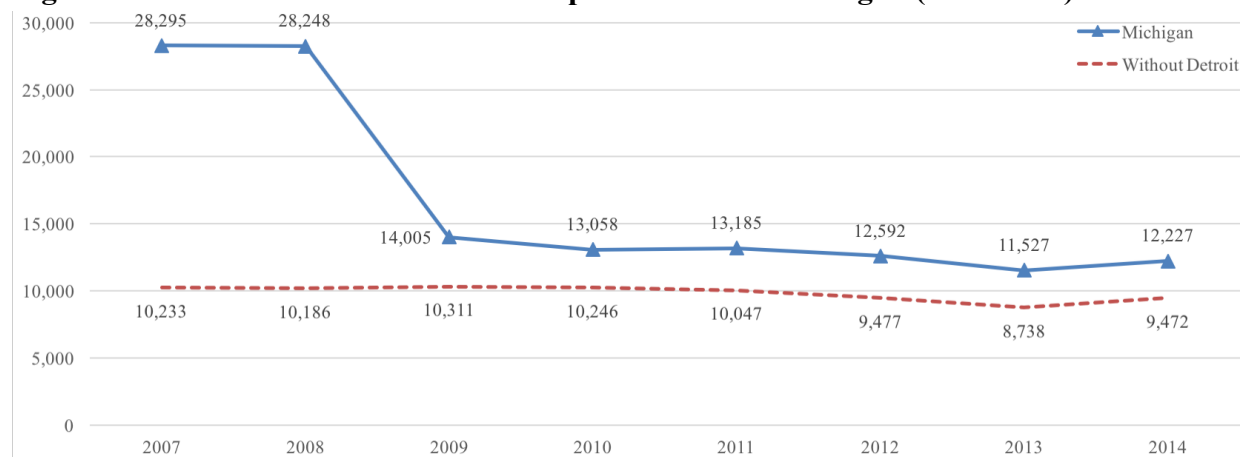
The homeless are not really a social class because general descriptors like "low income" do not adequately define the group. Each homeless individual has a distinctly different set of life chances and ability to find inner satisfaction, some of the shared interests that make up a class situation (Weber, 1922). The federal government assists the homeless through more than seven departments. I list federal funding by department in Table 1. Annual appropriations for homeless assistance programs in all departments is shaded in Table 1.

Table 1. Homeless Assistance Programs (Budget Authority in Millions of Dollars)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Department of Education						
Education for Homeless Children and Youth	$65	$65	$65	$62	$65	$65
Dept. of Ed. Total	$65	$65	$65	$62	$65	$65
Department of Health and Human Services						
Health Care for the Homeless	$171	$215	$232	$248	$308	$323
Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness	$65	$65	$65	$61	$65	$65
Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals	$43	$42	$42	$39	$41	$41
Services in Supportive Housing Grants	$32	$33	$33	$31	$33	$33
Runaway and Homeless Youth Act	$116	$115	$115	$108	$114	$116
DHHS Total	$427	$470	$487	$487	$561	$578
Department of Housing and Urban Development						
The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program						
The Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)	$1,865	$1,901	$1,901	$1,933	$2,105	$2,406
Emergency Food and Shelter Program	$200	$120	$120	$114	$120	$100
HUD Total	$2,065	$2,021	$2,021	$2,047	$2,225	$2,506
Department of Justice						
Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for the Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking Program	$18	$18	$25	$23	$25	$25
DOJ Total	$18	$18	$25	$23	$25	$25
Department of Labor						
Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program	$36	$36	$38	$36	$38	$38
Dept. of Labor Total	$36	$36	$38	$36	$38	$38
Department of Veterans Affairs						
Supportive Services for Veteran Families	$20	$61	$100	$300	$300	$500
Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program	$175	$172	$224	$235	$250	$253
The Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program	$119	$219	$201	$234	$219	$219
Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program	$83	$140	$135	$137	$137	$155
The Justice Outreach, Homelessness Prevention: Healthcare for Reentry Veterans (HCRV, prison outreach) and Veteran's Justice Outreach (VJO, law enforcement, jail and court outreach)	$6	$14	$22	$21	$34	$35
VA Total	$403	$606	$682	$927	$940	$1,162
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness						
	$3	$3	$3	$3	$4	$4
USICH Total	$3	$3	$3	$3	$4	$4
DEPARTMENT SUM TOTAL						
	$3,017	$3,219	$3,321	$3,585	$3,858	$4,378
BUDGET TOTAL	$3,792	$4,195	$4,412	$4,748	$5,081	$5,696

(United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2015)

Categorization is useful when appropriating federal funds to certain programs that combat specific issues. For example, if there was a spike in homeless veterans then the budget for the subsequent year might reflect the response to that specific problem by appropriating more money for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The federal government will spend over $5.6 billion this year (2015) on homeless assistance programs (Table 1). That amount of money reduced homelessness by 13,344 people last year (Figure 1) and does not include other general welfare programs like Medicaid. The federal government counts homeless individuals using a set of 30 categories (Table 2). Each cell in Table 2 is a counted category. The chronic categories, a current focus of reduction efforts, are shaded in Table 2.

Table 2. Categories of Homeless People (2014 PIT count)

Total (Counted)	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Individuals	Sheltered Individuals	Unsheltered Individuals
Individuals Chronic	Sheltered Individuals Chronic	Unsheltered Individuals Chronic
Families	Sheltered Families	Unsheltered Families
Families Chronic	Sheltered Families Chronic	Unsheltered Families Chronic
Unaccompanied Youth and Children	Sheltered Unaccompanied Youth and Children	Unsheltered Unaccompanied Youth and Children
Unaccompanied Children	Sheltered Unaccompanied Children	Unsheltered Unaccompanied Children
Unaccompanied Young Adults	Sheltered Unaccompanied Young Adults	Unsheltered Unaccompanied Young Adults
Chronic	Sheltered Chronic	Unsheltered Chronic
Veterans	Sheltered Veterans	Unsheltered Veterans

(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014b)

Chronic and acute homelessness are distinguishably separate categories. A chronically homeless individual is "an unaccompanied individual with a disability who has either been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years" (U.S. Department of & Housing and Urban Development, 2013:2). Acute homelessness is simply a period of homelessness lasting less than 1 year. Each is a separate and unique phenomenon.

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Eliminating "chronic" homelessness is a current point of emphasis in the United States. The federal government increased its ability to respond to the homeless problem through a collaborative "Open Doors" strategy launched in 2010. The program continues to emphasize interdepartmental collaboration and aim for lofty goals like ending chronic homelessness by 2015, an initial goal postponed until 2017 (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2013a). Chronic homelessness is decreasing nationally but statistics are sometimes misleading.

Unsheltered subcategories of chronically homeless individuals decreased by 6,557 but "Sheltered Chronic" subcategories continue to rise (Table 3). Shifting categorization is a reasonable explanation for that phenomenon. For example, a chronically homeless family that is housed results in a drop of "unsheltered" but an increase in the "sheltered" count. I argue that reclassification and shifting categories does little to solve the problem of homelessness.

Table 3. Subcategories of Chronically Homeless People, National (2014 PIT count)

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Sheltered Individuals Chronic	38,971	32,647	29,418	31,203
Unsheltered Individuals Chronic	64,944	64,014	57,037	53,088
Sheltered Families Chronic	7,198	6,913	8,150	9,362
Unsheltered Families Chronic	8,314	8,857	8,389	5,781
Totals	119,427	112,431	102,994	99,434

(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014b)

Although homelessness in Michigan is currently on the rise, although some counties have implemented successful strategies that target the chronic and veteran categories. For example, Washtenaw County has housed 116 veterans and 90 chronically homeless people since January 2015. Only 37 veterans and 31 chronically homeless people still need housing to get to the target of "zero" homelessness by 2016 (Housing Access for Washtenaw County, 2015). At that point, homelessness will be manageable and in a state of "functional zero" but not eliminated.

I must make an important point here about my research sample. I was not able to determine the precise chronic/acute status of my subjects. That was never my objective. Limitations such as not tracking subjects longitudinally prevented me from obtaining valid data on that categorical distinction. However, it surprises me that there are only 31 chronically homeless people in Ann Arbor. This implies one of the following must be true: (i) I talked to and observed every single one of them; (ii) Those I perceived to be chronically homeless were actually acutely homeless; or (iii) The number of 31 chronically homeless in Ann Arbor is simply inaccurate. This is why I emphasize the difference between "functional" and actual zero.

"Functional zero" is a somewhat controversial and misleading terminology. Achieving functional zero does not equate to resolving the problem. In their August 2015 report, Housing Access for Washtenaw County explains that "functional zero is reached when, at any point in time, the number of people (veterans or chronic) experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness will be no greater than the current monthly housing placement rate for that population (veterans or chronic)." This is clearly an effort to manage homelessness. "If one wants only to manage homelessness, e.g., provide information for an allocation of temporary emergency shelter resources, then it is of some interest to know the proportions of homeless people who are members of families, persons with mental disorders, and so on" (Blasi, 1990). Pursuing functional zero might be a step toward eliminating homelessness or it could just be an effort that perpetuates disadvantage and stratification.

Strategies to achieve functional zero are explicitly bureaucratic processes. Investing governmental funds and completing risk assessments, both actions occurring exclusively within institutional agencies, are major components of local and federal plans (Figures 4 and 5). In fact, the first step of one local plan is "coordinated entry" into the system. The ultimate goal is to

place the individual into a housing program through a process of transition. I challenge the

intended starting and ending points of this transitional paradigm. The process appears to be

somewhat of a transition from individual autonomy (e.g. sleeping rough) to institutional reliance

(e.g. housing vouchers). The government frames it as transitioning out of homelessness.

Figure 4. Strategy: Housing Access for Washtenaw County (2015)

http://www.housingaccess.net/zero2016.html
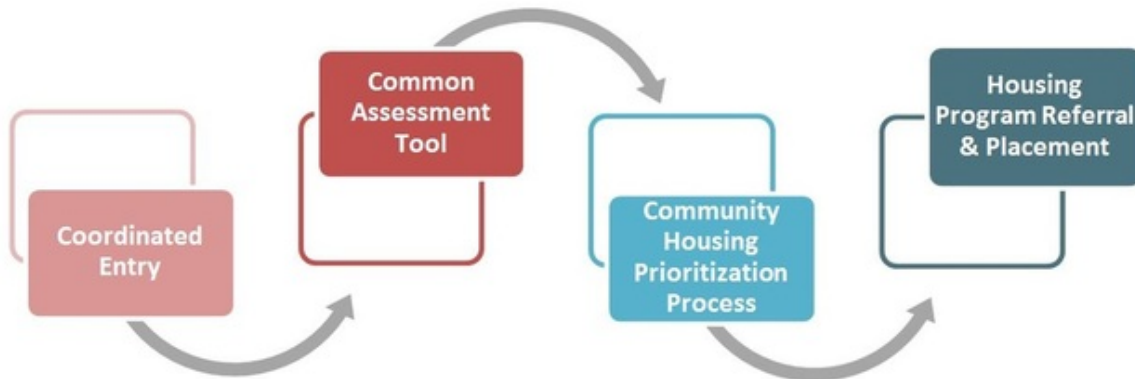
Figure 5. Strategy: United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (2013)
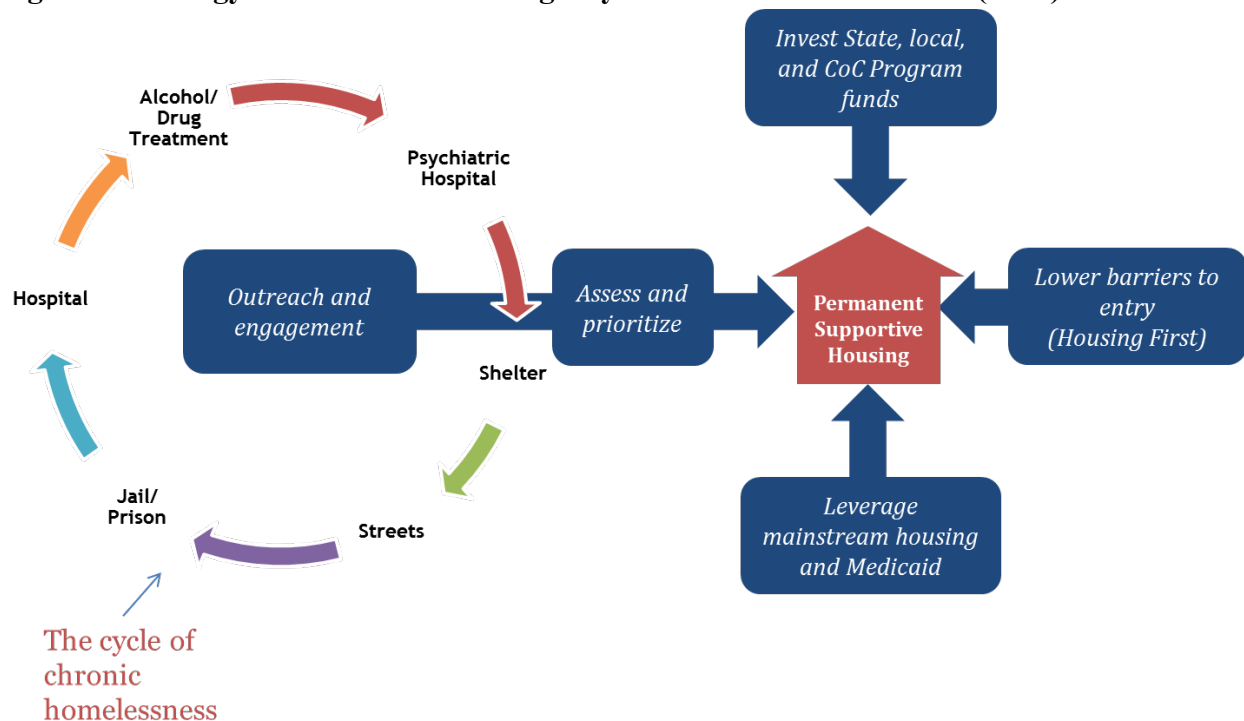
http://usich.gov/population/chronic
(United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2013a)

Transitioning out of homelessness does not necessarily correlate with upward mobility. The gaps between income strata in the United States have been growing steadily since the 1960s. Proportionally, the widest income gap is between the lowest fifth and second highest fifth of American families (Figure 6). Transitioning from extreme poverty to "regular" poverty does not substantially improve the life chances of these individuals. Categorizing marginalized groups does little, if anything, to address the root problem of extreme poverty conditions. These transitions are merely lateral reclassifications.

Figure 6. Income Percentage (%) "Raise" Needed to Move into Next Highest Income Tier
Families as of March of the following year. Income in current 2014 CPI-U-RS adjusted dollars. The U.S. Census (http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2014F.html) indicates there are 81,353,000 families in the country. One "fifth" of those is n=16,270,600. For clarity, a 120% "raise" means doubling household income plus 20%.

UPWARD MOBILITY (Opportunity): Income % Raise Necessary to Get to Next Higher Tier

$y = 0.0063x + 1.1423$
$R^2 = 0.72923$

$y = 0.0114x + 0.61$
$R^2 = 0.85344$

$y = 0.0042x + 0.4421$
$R^2 = 0.94178$

$y = 0.0043x + 0.3326$
$R^2 = 0.97106$

Looking ↑ from Lowest to 2nd •Looking ↑ from 2nd to 3rd ▲Looking ↑ from 3rd to 4th ✕Looking ↑ from 4th to Highest

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a)
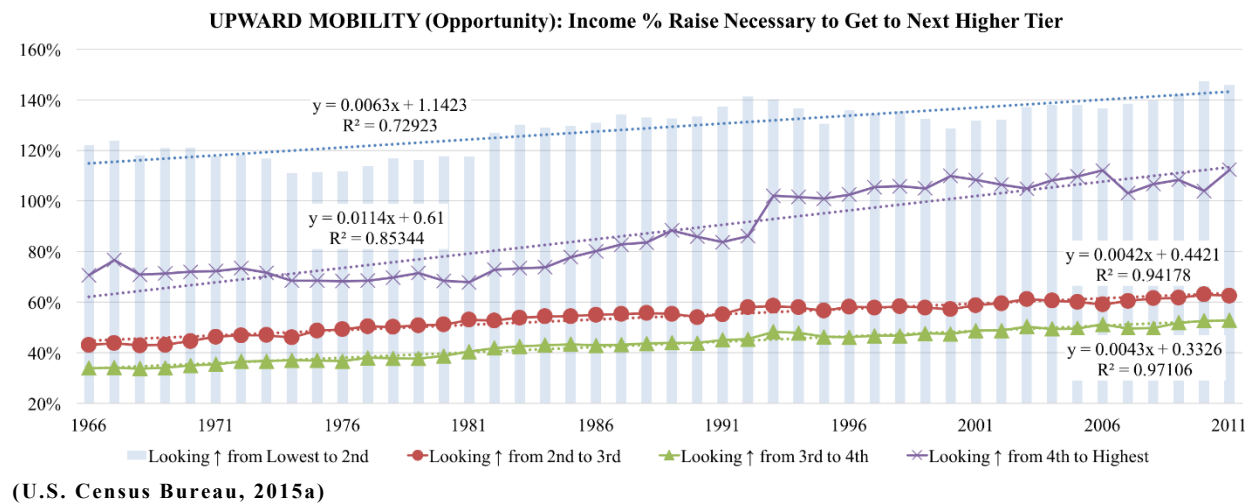
Recognizing lateral reclassification is important because it points to the lack of true upward mobility for a class of people restrained by economic forces. Marx (1906:693) explained that a "disposable industrial reserve army" forms as capital grows. The gross domestic product (GDP) has grown steadily in America since the Great Depression. While homelessness appears to be decreasing, the stratum of extremely poor people remains. If people actually were transitioning upward, then the proportion of extremely poor people would decline. However,

that has not occurred during the past 50 years. In fact, the number of individuals who make up the lowest class is growing even while GDP increases.

Figure 7. United States Gross Domestic Product (Billions of Dollars)

(US Department of Commerce, 2015a)
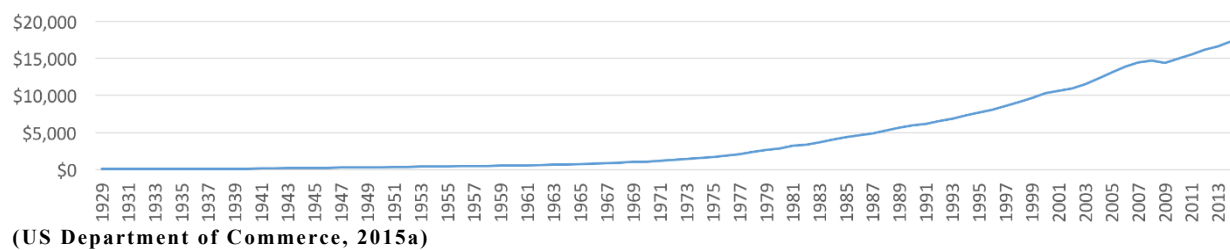
The percentage of people living below 50% of the poverty level has almost doubled in the past forty years even though homeless counts declined. During the same period, the percentage of poor people who worked decreased (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015b). The reserve labor army is growing. Income inequality is growing in the United States despite record GDP growth.

Figure 8. Percent of People below 50 Percent of Poverty Level (1975-2014)

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015b)
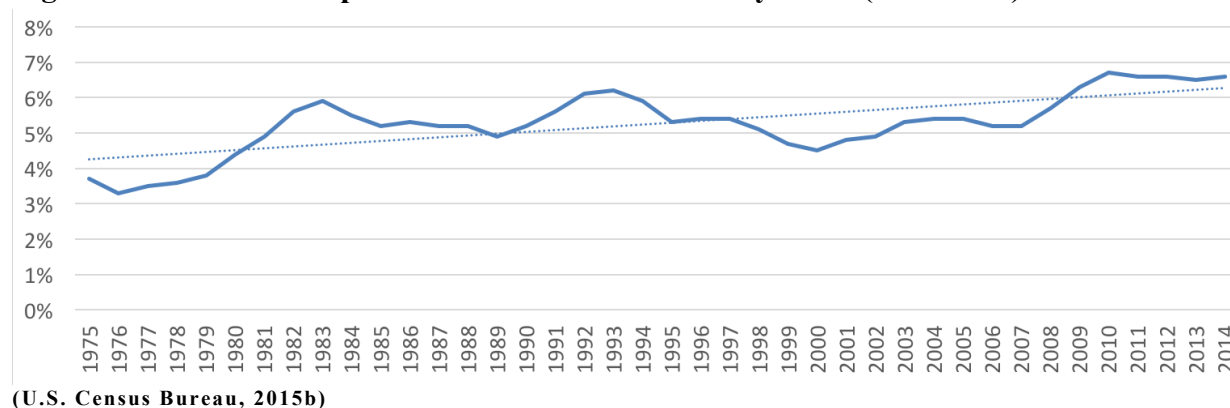
The idea of "functional zero" homelessness is similar to the concept of "full employment." Both mask the actual problem. Quite simply, if there are 500,000 homeless individuals but 500,000 housing units available to place them in, then a frame of success builds around messages that the country achieved "functional zero." Institutions frame unemployment rates in the same manner. As I write this manuscript, the American unemployment rate is 5.1%,

a figure conveyed as full employment by some media sources and the Federal Reserve (Hartman, 2015). Government and media frame this state of job market equilibrium as "a balance between employers looking for workers and workers looking for jobs." To support my argument that framing is similarly occurring within the plight to reduce homelessness, I replace some of the words in that statement to express that functional zero is "a balance between shelters looking for homeless and homeless looking for housing." When explained as such, functional zero is perhaps a laughable goal because it exists even while individuals live on the streets.

Herein lies another classification of homeless individuals: the soon-to-be-housed. Those individuals who participate in governmental transition programs are reducing or eliminating any autonomy they previously held. Those individuals are essentially soon-to-be-institutionalized, another form of outcast deviance. That label seems less appealing to the individual, yet the public supports that transition toward "institutionally reliant." This process does nothing to shed the "needy" label or deviant identity. The process simply reclassifies the individual into another category of "neediness" and deviance much like those who live in Section 8 or other public housing projects. Certain people ascribe deviance to the identities of impoverished individuals any time those individuals need, reject, accept, or receive assistance. When the individual is deviant through any choice, maintaining autonomy (by rejecting institutional support) is appealing.

Many ordinary people[1] view homeless individuals as deviant in American society because the homeless do not adhere to the status quo of having a home, job, and family. Yet, the perceptions held by domicile citizens do not always coincide with statistical data. For example, there are almost as many homeless people in families as there are homeless individuals (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014). Of the 610,042 homeless people measured on one night in 2013 using a point-in-time estimate, 222,197 were homeless people in families, which accounts for 36% of all homeless people and 50% of all people living in homeless shelters (U.S. Department of & Housing and Urban Development, 2013). This is to say that roughly half the people in homeless shelters are adhering to the family component of normal American life.

Still, the very small sub-population of homeless youth probably receives disproportionate charity from philanthropists. Some activists with great intentions believe that helping the small sub-population of homeless youth would eliminate homelessness altogether. "If every church, every synagogue, every temple would take one child, we would eradicate homelessness immediately," said a local pastor in Detroit (Hicks, 2014). I will not argue against his assertion in the research that follows. However, I will emphasize that the public perception of homelessness does not always coincide with quantitative data.

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[1] Throughout this study, I struggled to find a term for "non-homeless" and settled on words like "normal," "ordinary," and "common" to describe housed people. This is not to say that the homeless are abnormal. I just could not come up with a better term to use.

Figure 9. Estimates of Homeless Sub-Populations (2013)

PIT Count (2013)

Category	Value
Youth	46,924
Veterans	58,063
Chronic Persons in Families	16,539
Chronic Individuals	92,593
Family Households	70,960
People in Families	222,197
Individuals	387,845
Unsheltered	215,344
Sheltered	394,698
Overall	610,042
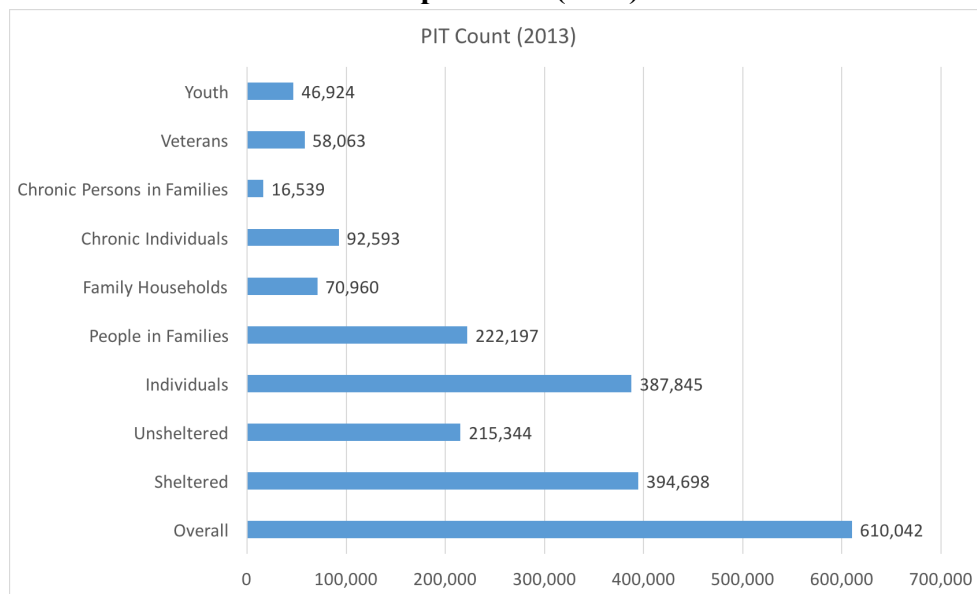
(National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014)

Another categorical label put on the homeless is the description of residence. Both acute and chronically homeless individuals stay in either the shelter or elsewhere. "Unsheltered" does not necessarily mean "in the street." However, the government does offer three examples of unsheltered space: under bridges, in cars, or in abandoned buildings (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). There is no mention of "couch surfing" or staying with friends anywhere in the report.

It would be very difficult to measure the number of individuals staying with friends on any given night and it would be even more challenging to categorize couch-surfers as homeless. The Department of Housing and Urban Development Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (2013) avoids that difficulty by excluding those types of individuals from its sample. The count occurs during mid-January, a cold month that requires many transient individuals in the northern United States to seek shelter.

While the extent of census data on the homeless is broad and includes many variables, the final two basic categories of homeless individuals are family status and military service history. I list the main categories used by governmental agencies in Table 2. Those categories listed essentially encompass the PIT count but I added definitions for clarity. I focus on sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals in this study due to convenience sampling. Although I toured a Christian mission for women and children, that population was too vulnerable for me to do embedded observation. In addition, armed individuals and closed-circuit cameras secured the building. I was clearly an outsider so I determined that rapport would be difficult to maintain. I did, however, observe and interview some women (no children) in the locations I conducted research.

It is important to note that the "Other" racial category is not commonly acceptable and does not adhere to the United States Census categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (United States Census Bureau, 2013a). I included the more basic category of "Other" for two reasons.

First, it comes from data presented in a recent report created by a task force involving members of academic, governmental, secular, and religious institutions (The Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness Task Force, 2005). Second, the categories represent my own experience as an embedded observer. I saw individuals who looked white, black, and other but I did not have a chance to ask every person what his or her race or ethnicity was. Since this study is based on visual observation, simpler categories are appropriate and there is precedence even found in quantitative studies like those cited.

Table 4. General Categorical Distinctions Used in Reporting the Homeless

AHAR Distinctions			
Chronic/Acute: Chronically Homeless Individual refers to an unaccompanied individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for either 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years.	**Sheltered/Unsheltered** Unsheltered Homeless People include people with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.	**Family/Single** People in Families are people who are homeless as part of households that have at least one adult and one child.	**Veterans and Non-Veterans**

Demographic Categories			
Age • Under 18 • 18–30 years • 31–60 years • Over 60 years	**Gender** • Male • Female	**Race** • White • Black • Other	**Education** • 8 years or less • Some high school • High School graduate including GED • Post high school

(The Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness Task Force, 2005; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013)

Inadequacy of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data is generally available to describe the problem of homelessness but it cannot exclusively explain causes of homelessness. For example, an individual might experience a health issue that causes him to lose his job. The stress at home from decreased wages could result in a separation from his wife. If she moves out, he is no longer in a two-income household. This example provides a combination of at least four explicit causes of homelessness: disability and/or mental illness, stress, unemployment, and family structure. While those reasons are measurable by survey, it is unlikely they tell the whole story. Narratives or informal interviews effectively obtain qualitative data to support or negate quantitative research.

Quantitative data, annually provided by HUD, is consistently vague and hard to interpret. For example, the figure of "610,042 homeless people measured on one night in 2013" appears in the 2013 AHAR but HUD provides another PIT count data source estimating 591,768 homeless the same year. The chart below comes directly from the 2013 AHAR (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). It is not edited whatsoever and appears exactly as it does in the report. Oddly, the numbers are significantly different from another figure I provide in this manuscript indicating 591,768 total homeless in 2013 and also provided by HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014b). The lower number (n=591,768) comes from what HUD calls "raw data sets" and the higher number (n=610,042) comes from PIT "estimates" in a report provided to congress.

I argue these estimates of raw data are an amalgamation of imprecision. First, the count itself is flawed. I will explain that in a later section based primarily on my embedded observation. Second, these are estimates based on flawed estimates. The further the numbers derivate from the actual count, the more likely the inaccuracy of the count. This is why the 2013 estimate varies from raw data by almost 20,000. In sum, the counts and estimates are rough guesses based on flawed counting methods. Such variability at the national level creates doubt regarding the accuracy of counts at the local level.

Figure 10. PIT Estimates of Homeless People by Sheltered Status (2007-2013)

(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013)
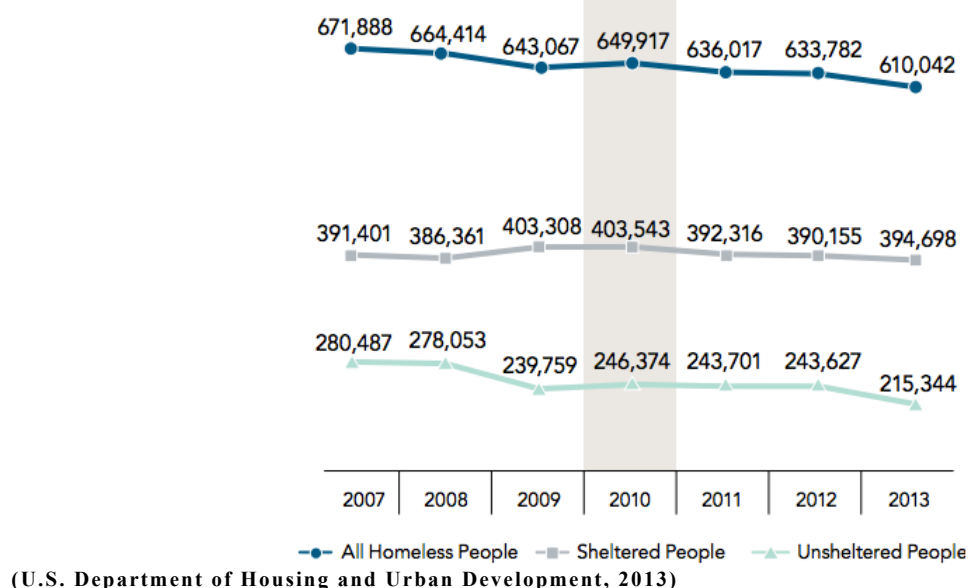
Regardless of how variable the national counts are, many charities and governmental

agencies assume the numbers provide the best representation of homelessness in America. I

discredit that and many erroneous public assumptions throughout this manuscript. The

quantitative data simply represents a best guess and rudimentary categorizations of homeless

individuals. The PIT count involves unpaid volunteers with limited training trekking through

snow in the subzero dark of night. Yet, Congress and the American public presumes these

estimates valid.

Another false association that some Americans make is that most, if not all, street people

are homeless. This is simply not true and I will discuss that perception further in the research

that follows. Ordinary people make other assumptions and harbor stereotypes about homeless

people. Stereotypes include associations between homelessness and drug use or other deviant

behaviors. Some people even doubt the credibility of those in need, assuming certain beggars

have high levels of sustainable income and may even own homes.

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Ambiguity of Homeless Identities

The stigma associated with homelessness extends beyond homeownership. Ordinary people might group beggars, hoboes, drunkards, bums, and transient "street people" into one conglomerate of deviants. The public might collective view the homeless as a social problem because of perceived criminal tendencies and inferiority. There is a perception that the homeless cause many social problems in the community (Snow & Anderson, 1987). Their deviance is visible in their disheveled appearance while the causes of their respective troubles are more complex and hidden.

Experiencing homelessness encompasses the phenomena itself and at least two identity types: ascribed and enacted. The individual is in a situation where shelter is not possessed. The "other" has ascribed a certain homeless identity to each homeless individual encountered. This ascribed identity is a burden the homeless man cannot readily escape. Situated between self and other is an enacted identity that is the physical embodiment representing who the homeless man is in relation to others (Parsell, 2011). Since there are two distinct identities, it is possible the identities could differ or intersect. Even when similarly presented, the distinct perceptions of homeless people by others and the self-concepts of homeless people are two separate identities.

One of the earliest American works to combine qualitative and quantitative analysis of early twentieth century poverty was that of Robert Hunter, a social worker who lived in the Chicago Hull-House (Hunter, 1904). The book was a self-proclaimed unscientific work that Hunter published to uncover the "conditions and the causes which bring such terribly serious misery and wretchedness into the world" (pg. 17). Hunter noted city districts where "town bums" hung out (pg. 106) and explained that the average American knows almost nothing about any social class other than his own.

Homelessness was a relatively new concept during Hunter's time as an author but he

managed to include data regarding the phenomenon. His categorizations are especially

noteworthy, more that the numbers presented. Hunter acknowledges that duplications in

counting severely invalidate the quantitative data. Current measures of the homeless population

rely on point-in-time estimates in an attempt to avoid duplication. HMIS also accounts for

duplication and its counting methodology is more thorough than the PIT count. The difference

between the 2011 HMIS count (n=71,713) and the PIT count (n=13,185) was drastic.

Hunter (1904) suggested that count numbers historically vary by institution, i.e. who is

counting. Turn-of-the-century counts began to encompass individuals assisted by both public

and private charities, adding more validity to the figures.

Table 5. State Board of Charities Count of Individuals Receiving Assistance (NYC, NY)

| Year | State Institutions | Hospitals | Dispensaries | Outdoor Relief | | Total |
				In Homes	*Homeless*	
1897	7,720	98,960	1,451,713	266,431	288,380	2,113,204
1898	8,272	106,835	1,052,177	364,814	368,101	1,900,199
1899	8,161	114,199	932,072	395,632	338,863	1,788,927

(Hunter, 1904)

It was, and still may be, appropriate to examine homeless numbers and poverty rates in

the same studies as hospital data because the homeless use hospitals for shelter. Hunter (1904)

adds two additional data points of emphasis: evictions and pauper burial rates. The point-in-time

measurements appear to be accurate for two reasons. First, communities organized into

Continuums of Care (CoCs) count the number of homeless individuals to submit reports for

federal grants. It would be in their best interest to count as many homeless individuals as

possible so that they receive maximum funding. Second, various counts combine into the

Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX) so that the final count consists of two combined data sets

(National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014). The counts are not flawless but they are the only measures counting unsheltered homeless individuals utilizing the most reliable methods currently available.

The public often denigrates homeless individuals even though many homeless have special needs like physical or mental disabilities. Historically conflating the homeless, criminal, and insane has only exacerbated that denigration. The United States government acknowledges that homeless people are the least able to help themselves and therefore require special assistance programs (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). This classification as being "needy" is divisive. Institutions like the U.S. government convey messages that the homeless rely on services exclusively provided by the institution, e.g. food stamps and other public welfare benefits. This establishes dependence on the institution and differentiates the "haves" from the "have-nots."

The daily experience of the homeless individual includes many interactions with the public in both rural and urban areas. The experience of being homeless differs based on many factors like family status, physical, and mental health. In many cases, homeless individuals experience life as a deviant other in need of social support.

Of the 610,042 homeless individuals living in the United States, about 11,527 individuals live in Michigan, which hosts the fourteenth highest population of homeless. However, Michigan has the fourth highest number of Continuums of Care (CoC). These local planning bodies coordinate the full range of homeless services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or even an entire state (U.S. Department of & Housing and Urban Development, 2013). Seven states and Washington D.C. have only one CoC. Michigan

has the 4th highest number of Continuums of Care in the nation, with the 5th most CoC per capita homeless. This means that Michigan has a proportionally high level of institutional support for the homeless.

Table 6. Total Number of Continuums of Care and Ratio of Homeless Per CoC by State

Total # of CoC	Ratio of Homeless per CoC
1. California (40)	1. Virginia (477)
2. New York (30)	2. New Hampshire (482)
3. Florida (28)	3. Maryland (513)
4. Michigan (21)	4. Kansas (539)
5. Illinois (20)	**5. Michigan (549)**

(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013)

More evidence of Michigan's institutional support for the homeless is shown through its incredibly high proportion of sheltered chronic homeless. Nationally, only about 34% of chronically homeless individuals live in shelters while over 60% of the chronic homeless in Michigan are sheltered. However, it is surprising that Michigan falls in the middle of the pack on that statistic.

There is a tremendous imbalance of institutional support by state. For example, California only shelters about 13% of its chronically homeless. There are twice as many unsheltered chronically homeless people living in Oregon as there are chronically homeless individuals living in Michigan. The comparison of Oregon to Michigan shows that the discrepancies extend beyond just the climate.

In sum, homelessness is a very complicated problem in America, studied in a variety of different ways. Institutional support differs greatly even between geographically similar states. When studying homelessness, it is important to maintain a focus on the aspects of the experience. Quantitative studies are useful for descriptive purposes. Qualitative studies can help

explain the intricacies of the homeless experience, therefore helping to reduce the ambiguity and conflation of homeless identities.

<div align="center">Progression of American Homeless Support Systems</div>

As the homeless problem began to take shape, institutional structures limited vagrants to two options for shelter: almshouses and jails. The almshouse option came in two main forms: governmental or charitable. The settlement house movement came to the United States from Britain, where it began in 1884 to combat poverty (Immigration to the US: Settlement house movement, 2014). The first American settlement house was the "Neighborhood Guild," opened in New York City in 1886. The Hull-House opened in Chicago in 1889 (Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, 2009). Much like the jails, settlement houses were not equipped to meet the needs of the increasing homeless population during this period.

Prior to the Civil War, and even before Michigan became a state in 1837, laws were passed to help the poor. Quigley (1997) provides a summary of laws enacted in Michigan and the surrounding states from 1790 to 1820. The following themes are present in the development of poor laws during this time: (i) the government did not provide public assistance (welfare) if the individual had family that could offer support and (ii) forced any person who was physically able to work. Any person who was unable to work would receive assistance in his or her own home, a private residence, or at a poorhouse.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Evolution of Midwestern Homelessness

At the beginning of the twentieth century, roughly 40% of the 10 million Americans in poverty sought public assistance. Sleeping in a jail was criminal and seeking charity was a frustrating, time-consuming, and stigmatized experience in certain areas (Patterson, 2009). Regardless of the stigma that was sometimes present, several support options existed and the public viewed denying such options as a voluntary act. Simply put, Eloise (Wayne County Hospital, Sanitarium, and Poor House) was available to "poor old guys" around Detroit. Taking a stagecoach to the facility was an option. Institutional forces, however, were not as voluntary.

In 1901, Chicago jails housed 92,500 men overnight (Patterson, 2009). The number of shelter beds in that city could not meet the demand so police turned away men unless it was unbearably cold or after 10 o'clock at night. This reduced the number of men housed in Chicago jails to 16,800 the next year.

Industrialization brought low wage jobs to American cities that saw increased population when farming became an unreliable source of income for rural families. Industrial labor was also unreliable. Illness or termination from a city job would quickly cause a family to become impoverished. However, blue-collar work helped prevent generational poverty. Between 1880 and 1930, about 35% of blue-collar laborers' sons were middle class (Patterson, 2009). Whites held most of those blue-collar jobs, which contributed to greater disparities in the economic opportunities between races.

Segregated settling was another compounding factor of greater disparities during this period after the first Great Migration. In Chicago, for example, nearly half of the registered

black voters were born in East South Central states and an astounding 1/6 of the black electorate came from Mississippi alone (Gosnell, 1933). These individuals migrated to Chicago and did not settle in random places. They congregated near those whom they felt comfortable. In addition, there were social forces that influenced blacks where to live. Even though discriminatory housing practices were illegal in the 1930s, blacks were sometimes limited to certain housing choices. Gosnell suggests these multiple factors contributed to the formation of the Chicago "Black Belt" on the south side.

Early Homelessness in Michigan

When Michigan became part of the Northwest Territory in 1790, the legislation included a paragraph requiring each township to appoint an "Overseer of the Poor." Five years later, the law was expanded (Northwest Territory et al., 1925). Legislators amended the poor law of the Northwest Territory in 1799 to "farm out" the poor to the highest bidder (Quigley, 1997:9). In 1828, Wayne County was required to build a poor house called the "House of Reformation" (Cook, 1905:204). The original concept for the "House of Reformation" transformed into the area generally known in Detroit as "Eloise." This generic term refers to three main buildings constructed along Michigan Avenue in Detroit prior to the Civil War: Eloise Infirmary, Eloise Sanatorium, and Eloise Hospital (Keenan, 1913). The infirmary was the "Wayne County Poor House" voted on by the citizenry in 1832. For context, Michigan gained statehood in 1837.

The original Wayne County Poor House was located at Gratiot Avenue and Mt. Elliot Street on the east side of Detroit, which was Hamtramck Township at that time and 2 miles from the Detroit city limits. Two years later, it moved to what is now Westland (Ibbotson, 2002). Both locations were mostly demolished and currently have strip malls and fast food restaurants in their respective places. Most of the former sites of poor houses that I examined for this

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research are now locations of minimum wage employment or county complexes that consist of courthouses and jails.

When I began this research, one building still housed children and senior services but officials put that building on the market midway through my research. "The (single) building is virtually all that's left of a complex that once numbered 55 buildings and was known as Eloise." What began as a "poorhouse and farm" in 1839 grew to a sprawling campus of 76 buildings at its peak (Zaniewski, 2015). Wayne County is now selling it for $1.5 million. Regardless of it sitting in Wayne County, Eloise was only 30 miles away from Ann Arbor and therefore considered to be in the same general grouping as the Michigan State Hospital outside of Yspilanti (Durchslag, 1953). The Ypsilant/Saline location was one of many former asylums that became popular for thrill seekers and explorers. Officials demolished it a few years ago.

Figure 11. Ypsilanti Hospital (2006; Photo by Jeffrey R. Stroup)

(Tutschek, 2015)

It is not surprising that people thought the Ypsilanti State Hospital was haunted. The facility had numerous unusual events take place there. Over a quarter million dollars was appropriated to build the facility ("$271,500 is authorized for new Ypsi hospital," 1930). Conscientious objectors were placed on staff during World War II ("Approve use of objectors in State Hospital," 1943). After the war, a social psychologist trained at California Berkeley and teaching at Michigan State University conducted an unusual experiment where three mentally ill individuals who believed they were Jesus Christ sat in a room together (Rokeach, 1964). He conducted the study to examine personal identity. Several years later, the doctor who was the superintendent of the hospital during the Roceach study murdered his family and committed suicide ("3 found dead; Murder, suicide are expected," 1971). Around the same time, a former autoworker killed three coworkers and became a patient at Ypsi only to stab a fellow patient ("Ypsilanti patient stabbed," 1973). Then, more than a dozen patients escaped including at least one murderer (Lilly, 1974). These are more than just entertaining historical stories.

The dysfunction of the Ypsi hospital had policy ramifications. The hospital admitted a man after killing 25 people in one year (1974) and then released him because of an insanity plea. He promptly went and killed his wife in Ann Arbor. That event had an effect on the mental health code of Michigan, and legislation drafted in 1975 amended the original criminal procedure code of 1927 (The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1927; Turque, 1975). Several quotes from the 1960s through the 70s paint a picture of public perception around mental illness at that time.

In 1973, Dr. E. Gordon Yudaschkin, Michigan's "controversial and blunt speaking mental health director explained his goal "to reduce our facility population to the bare minimum" (Sandner, 1973). Regardless of depleting the facilities of patients, Dr. Yudaschkin did not "see any of the 23 facilities for the mentally ill or the mentally regarded going out of business." The

decade after he made that statement, about 16 state psychiatric hospitals remained. Then,

Republican Governor John Engler closed 12 of those by 2003 (Gerritt, 2012). Both of these

massive blows to mental health care came under Republican regimes. For context, William

Milliken was the Republican Governor of Michigan from 1969 until 1983 and was preceded by

Governor George Romney.

Table 7. Quotes about Mental Illness, Deinstitutionalization, and Laws (1960s-1970s)

(McDonald, 1965:19)	"One afternoon when I was visiting 'C' ward at Ypsilanti State Hospital, Benjamin L., 65, lonely and despondent, was found hanging from a stairway between the ward floors. He had tied a belt around his neck and hooked it to a wire screen… Ypsilanti averages four or five suicides or attempts each year."
(Mendler, 1973:11)	"Many mental illnesses are socially defined. That which frightens society is called madness." – Dr. Vernon Stehman, Ypsilanti State Hospital Superintendent
(Sandner, 1973)	"A revolution in how Michigan handles its mental health problems is quietly taking place but not without strong objections from a number of groups. Always in the past the state has dealt with its mental patients by sending them off to large state hospitals or sprawling homes for the mentally retarded. But now they're being brought back by the state to their home communities to live in small foster homes or in special small facilities." • 1960: 421 of the state's mentally retarded lived in private foster homes • 1973: 1,099 of the state's mentally retarded lived in private foster homes
(Gerstenberger, 1975:16)	"Under the law, patients may not be kept in institutions beyond the demonstrable need for care. We have no choice, even if we wanted to keep them in – which we don't." – Dr. Donald C. Smith, Acting Director, Michigan Department of Mental Health
	"The public at large tends to perceive assumptions of the worst possible consequences in any changes dealing with mental illness until proven otherwise." – Saul Cooper, director of the Community Mental Health Center.
(Dunn, 1975:19)	"The real issue is 'Should we be treating persons at an institution who are not treatable?'" – John Strotkamp, coordinator of court services at the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health Clinic
(Dunn, 1975:19)	The new code was "an attempt to bring the mental health statues out of the Dark Ages." – Saul Cooper, director of the Community Mental Health Center. "Given public attitude and concern and anxiety and because of rather disastrous incidents… We're going to have to have some kind of legislation to protect the public."
(Dunn, 1975:19)	"Under the proposed law, a person determined by a court to be 'guilty but not mentally ill' would receive whatever mental health treatment demanded by the affliction. If medical authorities determine that the person is not mentally ill, or if treatment succeeds and the person recovers, then the person would not go free. The convicted person would serve out his or her sentence under control of the state prison system."

During this period of numerous closures between the 1960s and the early 2000s, legislators and law enforcement held differing views on how to care for the mentally ill. "I voted against the closing of Lafayette Clinic in the city of Detroit, I voted against the closing of Clinton Valley here in Pontiac," Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said. "It wasn't going to make the issues go away: it was going to send it elsewhere and here's where it ended up" (Jones, Mullen, & Brewster, 2014). Unfortunately, the trend of jailing the mentally ill does not appear to end any time soon. Current Michigan Governor Rick Snyder recently appointed James Haveman to be the Director of Community Mental Health. Mr. Haveman held the same post under Governor Engler when the majority of psychiatric hospitals closed down.

Since the 1960s, Michigan has continued to withdraw support from the mentally ill. "The state and the federal government have pretty much walked away, in my opinion," said Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard. "Jails have become the dumping ground (for mentally ill people)" (Jones, Mullen, & Brewster, 2014). During my field observations, I spoke to at least one police officer who interacted and was familiar with many of the local "frequent fliers."

Figure 12. Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital (2008; Photo by Jonathon Gruenke)

Figure 13. Black Horse Tavern; Future Site of Eloise (1838)
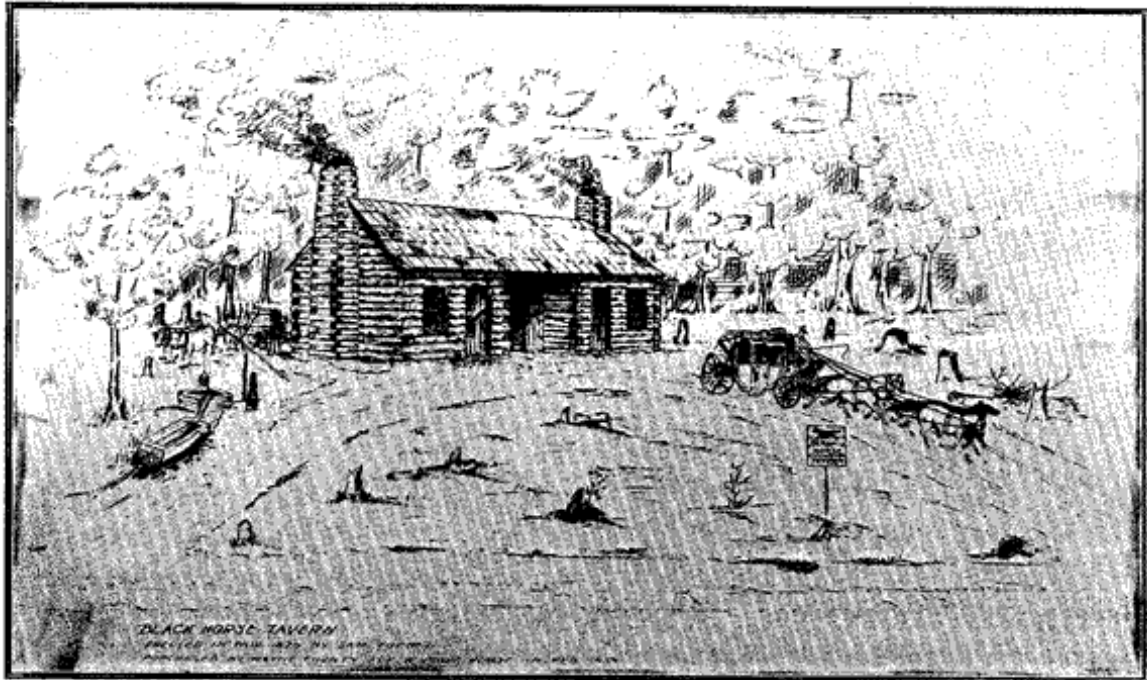
BLACK HORSE TAVERN
Purchased by Wayne County in 1838 for a Poor House.

(Tibbals & West, 2013)

Figure 14. Bunk Beds at Eloise (1931)

(Ibbotson, 2002)

Figure 15. Location of Eloise and Transportation Route from Detroit (1945)

TRANSPORTATION—The Hospital is sixteen miles west of downtown Detroit on Michigan Ave-
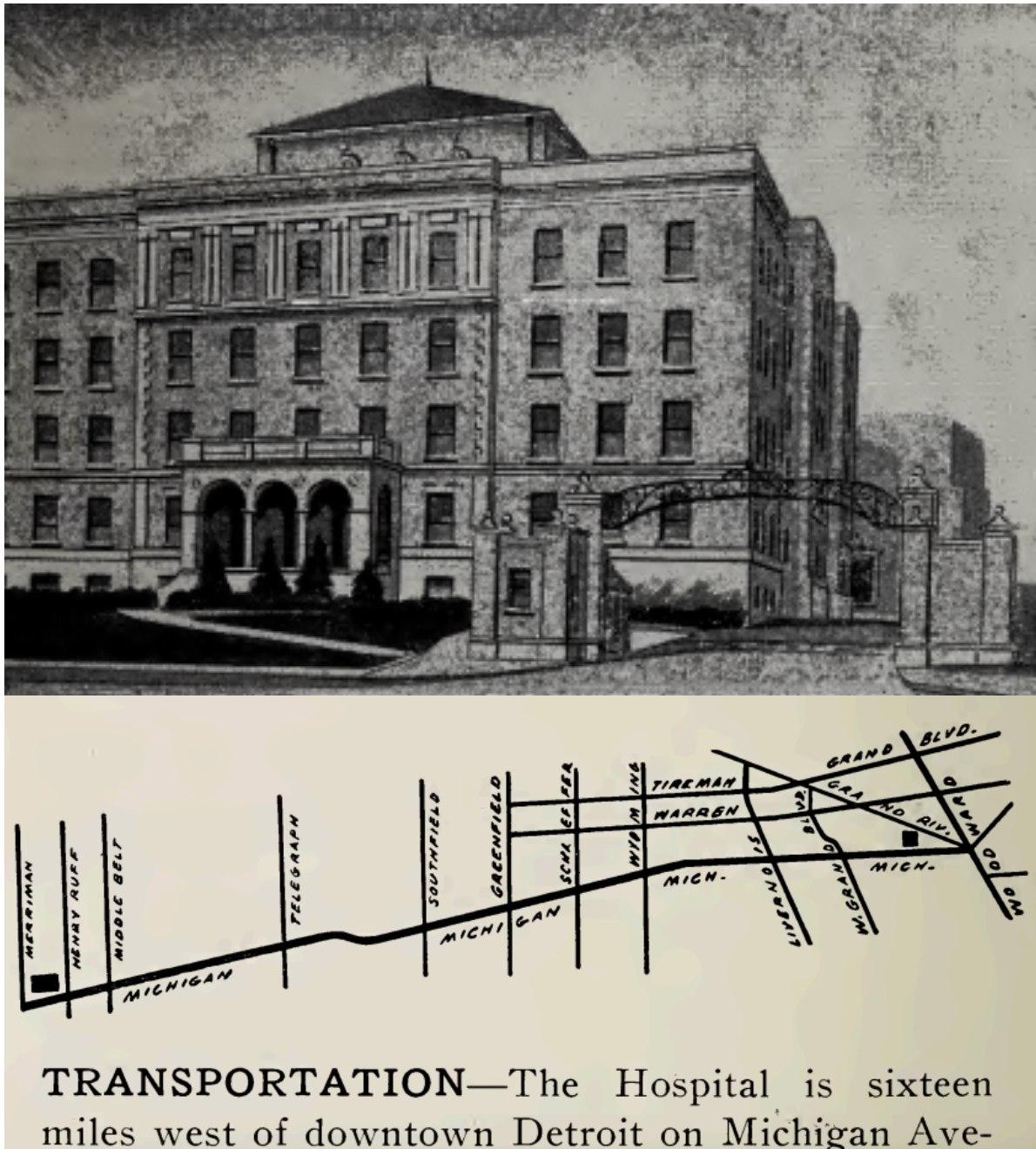
Eloise was 16 miles west of Detroit. Transportation was available to and from the Barlum Tower, now called the Cadillac Tower, in the heart of the city. Buses also went round trip to Ann Arbor and Eloise was on a route that connected with Chicago. Ironically, the route from Detroit to Eloise ran right along what would later become Skid Row on Michigan Ave.

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Figure 16. Eloise (2001)

(Zaniewski, 2015)

Eloise was a major location for the homeless and indigent around Detroit through the Great Depression era. Many locals called the men who stayed there "POGIES," which stood for "Poor Old Guys in Eloise" (Ibbotson, 2002:49). The census of the Eloise poor house would substantially rise in the winter cold months. At that time, there was less stigma around receiving public support in terms of both poverty and mental illness. "Mental illness is not a disgrace," explained one patient pamphlet from Eloise (pg. 39). Mail, money, gifts, visitors, and transportation were all components of life at Eloise. There was a working farm, some employment, and the campus operated like a small city.

During the mid-1900s, stigmatization of homelessness and social support was low in certain areas of Michigan. The POGIES, for example, lived with the sick and infirmed. They received care and the public generally recognized them as a class in need of supportive services.

In fact, their residence was an infirmary supported through taxes voted on by the citizenry. Social support for the homeless manifested in various ways prior to the Great Depression.

Ann Arbor, in Washtenaw County, had its own version of a county institution. The county infirmary, which supplanted the county "poor house" in its same location as a place for homeless refuge, closed in 1971 (Shackman, 2008; Washtenaw County (Mich.) Board of Supervisors, 1914). This is the critical point in time when the Ann Arbor homeless went from "infirmed" to "homeless." The Washtenaw County Poor House was a farm on the southeast side of the county from the 1830s until 1917 and then existed in the same spot as the Washtenaw County Infirmary until 1971. Coincidentally, the original location of the poor farm is now on the map as "County Farm Park" and managed by Washtenaw County. County Farm Park is about 3 miles from the current largest homeless shelter in the county, the Delonis Center. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners oversees the Delonis Center in Ann Arbor through a public-private partnership.

Figure 17. Washtenaw County Poor House, Insane Asylum, and Farm (1874)

RES. OF SHERMAN HINCKLEY.

WASHTENAW CO. POOR HOUSE & INSANE ASYLUM.
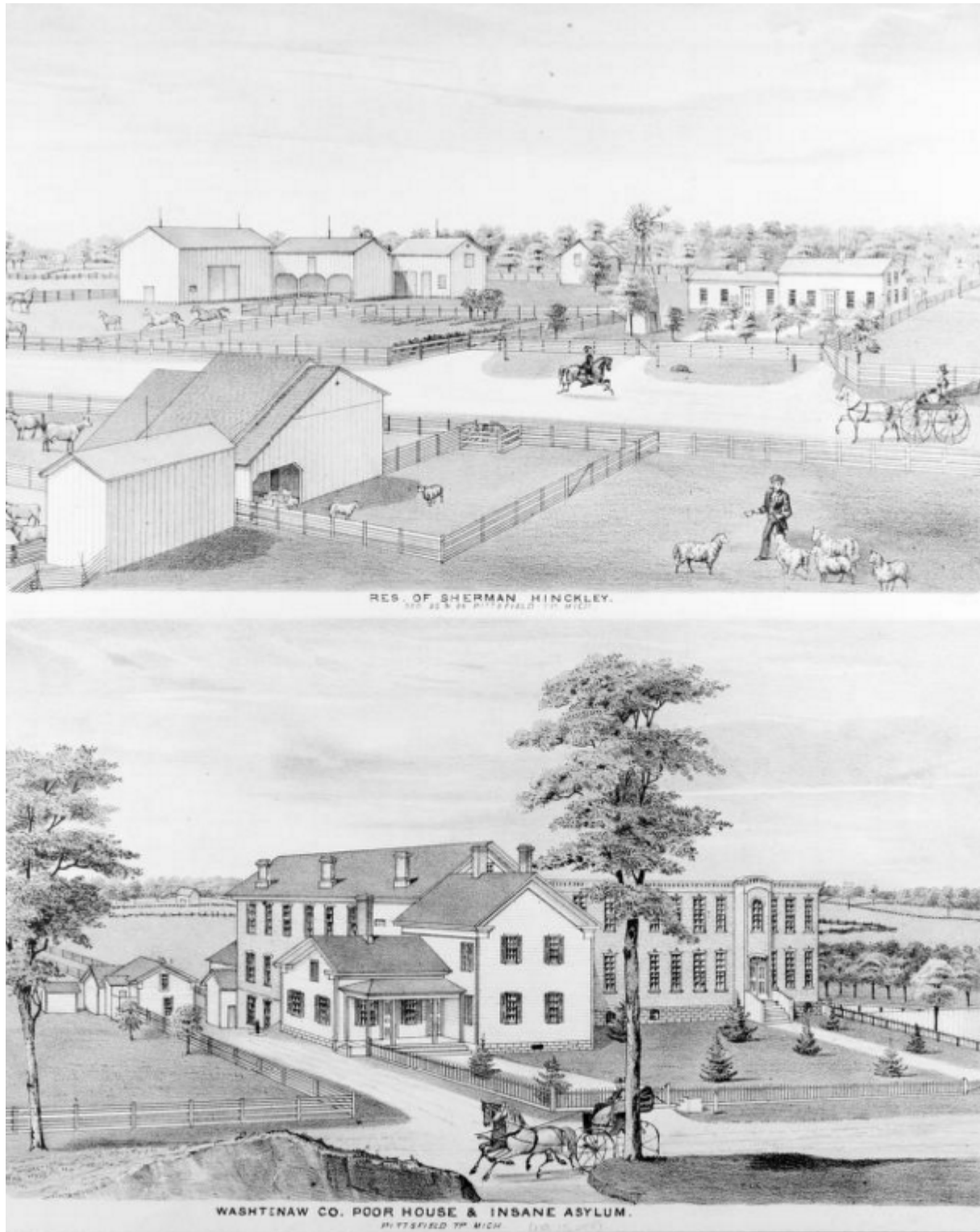
Characteristics of Modern Homeless Individuals in Detroit

Detroit segregated like Chicago did in the 1930s although similarities were not apparent until a decade later. Blacks primarily migrated to the "Black Bottom" and "Paradise Valley" neighborhoods on the lower east side of Detroit during and after World War II (Sugrue, 2014). Coincidentally, these neighborhoods sit directly between the original Wayne County Poor House and the most recent iterations of Detroit Skid Row. During the 1930s and 1940s, Sugrue estimates that almost a third of the black population of Detroit lived in these neighborhoods. Housing conditions in those neighborhoods were bad because some of the buildings were almost 70 years old by then. Low rent buildings concentrated poverty, especially blacks, in Detroit.

Despite the conditions, culture flourished in Detroit. Paradise Valley was known by some as the "Rat Belt" since the city received 206 reports of rat bites in 1951 (Sugrue, 2014:37). Detroit poet Robert Hayden (1977:436) was able convey the realities of the place where "Godfearing elders, even Godless grifters, tried to shelter us. Rats gnawing in their walls." Bluesman John Lee Hooker saw culture, singing about Hastings Street and one of the 13 new clubs that opened in Paradise Valley during the 1940s (Salvatore, 2007). Clarence LaVaughn Franklin, the father of soul singer Aretha, became pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church in 1946 and renovated a bowling alley at 4210 Hastings Street two years later (New Bethel Baptist Church, 2015). Paradise Valley was "one long stretch of black businesses, successful black businesses. All blacks supported the black businesses," said Erma Franklin, the sister of Aretha (Salvatore, 2007:110). However, Salvatore points out that everybody was gone from that area by 1955. The wealthier west Detroit black neighborhood, with Berry Gordy and Motown Records, flourished while the poorer east side suffered.

There was a clear divide in Detroit between the east and west neighborhoods. Gordy once said, "all the bad people lived" on the east side (Salvatore, 2007:110). His parents once owned a business in Paradise Valley but part of that identity stayed on Hastings Street when he moved to the wealthier Boston-Edison Neighborhood in 1967. Even the black neighborhoods of Detroit segregated between the "haves" and those who "have not."

Figure 18. Hastings Street District of Detroit (1930s)

(Reuther & Reuther, 1930s)

It is difficult to single out one fundamental cause of poverty in Detroit. Even among segregated black residents, there were some who lived in squalor among the Hoovervilles photographed by the Reuther brothers and the shanties of the Hastings Street District while others found success on the west side. Berry Gordy distributed "ghetto scholarships" in the 1960s and 1970s in an attempt to provide upward mobility to young black students in Detroit ("Sterling ball funds ghetto scholarships," 1971). However, I argue that the Reuther photographs

and discussions with Detroit hoboes shine more light on the realities of Detroit poverty during this time than the philanthropy of Berry Gordy (Lichtenstein, 1995). Reuther blamed the capitalists while Gordy partied with the west side bourgeoisie.

Figure 19. Berry Gordy Jr. House in Boston-Edison Neighborhood, Detroit (1967)

("Sterling ball funds ghetto scholarships," 1971)

Like Detroit, segregation did not inherently cause poverty in the Chicago Black Belt. The Chicago settlement of black individuals included professionals, lawyers, doctors, beggars, house cleaners, prostitutes, criminals, and police officers. Attainment levels varied and social capital was available in many forms. Regardless of apparent opportunity, the tie that bound this community was that its cohesion bound "by hostile acts of the white world" (Gosnell, 1933:335). In addition to capitalism, part of that white system was democracy.

Voting habits of black Chicagoans in the 1930s appear, on the surface, contradictory to their own self-interests. Blacks in Chicago predominantly voted for Republicans. While 8.7% of Chicago adults were black in 1930, nearly 17% of the Republican primary voters were black (Gosnell, 1933). This is not surprising because emancipation was still a recent memory and Abraham Lincoln was the country's first Republican president. Older blacks were still hesitant to associate with the Democratic Party. Younger blacks saw a new Republicanism that Gosnell suggests was keen on destroying southern representation in the north. The new Republicans

were building a "lily-white" organization. The changing landscape of American political parties provided a fertile environment for new policy, resulting in the National Housing Act of 1934 (which created the Federal Housing Administration) and the Housing Act of 1937 (also known as the Wagner-Steagall Act). Between emancipation in 1865 and the housing legislation of the late 1930s, there was a tremendous shift in policies affecting blacks and the respective intents of both national parties.

Table 8. Presidential Overview from Emancipation (1865) to Housing Reform (1930)

Republican (Lincoln)	Democrat (Johnson)	Republican (Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur)	Democrat (Cleveland)	Republican (Harrison)	Democrat (Cleveland)	Republican (McKinley, T. Roosevelt, Taft)	Democrat (Wilson)	Republican (Harding, Coolidge, Hoover)	MAJOR SHIFT IF AMERICAN PARTIES
Early 1860s	Late 1860s	1870s and Early 1880s	Late 1880s	Early 1890s	Late 1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	

(White House, 2014)

While this is not a study of politics, it is important to provide background on the general political environment during the period for historical purposes. A presidential overview shows the transition from emancipation to housing reform, changing policies related to the poor and blacks alike. A Republican in 1863 emancipated blacks (politically). Then came a Southern Democrat, Andrew Johnson. At this time, "Southern" representation generally meant support of the interests of whites through individual states' rights. However, the trend shifted toward policies that were more Republican until the 1880s due to a predominantly Republican Congress and subsequent Republican presidents, many of whom were northerners.

Democratic Party principles were still essentially capitalist and not congruent with the current perspective of the Party. For example, Grover Cleveland was against Chicago railroad

strikers and unions. President Cleveland also vetoed Civil War pension and disability pension

bills in opposition to Congressional action (White House, 2014). Following that generally pro-

commerce Democratic presidency, voters elected several "pro-people" Republican presidents.

Party stances began to change with Woodrow Wilson during the 1910s. Wilson was in office

when social policies passed limiting railroad workers to an eight-hour day. He also helped

establish a graduated income tax. Wilson was one of the final Democratic presidents who

prioritized individual states' rights.

Republican presidents of the 1920s generally benefitted from the boon after World War I.

However, the Great Depression of the 1930s quickly followed. During the 1930s, the

Democratic and Republican Parties seemed to flip their general agendas. In 1932, there were

about 13,000,000 unemployed Americans (White House, 2014). In response, a predominantly

Democratic Congress passed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932 which was the

first major federal involvement in housing during the 1900s (U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development, 2007). Democrats supported social welfare mostly through institutional

structures during this period.

The National Housing Act of 1934 established the Federal Housing Administration

(FHA) that still exists today. The main components of this legislation occur in two forms: loans

or mortgages for low-income families (i.e. Fannie Mae) and new public housing (i.e. the

"Projects"). The fairness of these two distinct structural functions is debatable. Supporters will

argue that the federal government prioritized social welfare during this time of great need.

Detractors argue that the legislation, specifically Wagner-Steagall in 1937, placed too much

control in the hands of local authorities (The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, 2014). As

Gosnell (1933) stated, segregated urban areas like the Chicago "Black Belt" developed out of combined social and political factors, many of which still exist.

Table 9. National Political Landscape and Legislative Occurrences (1930s-1968)

Decade	President	Senate Majority	House Majority	Major Occurrences
1930s	Democrat (F.D. Roosevelt)	*Republican (72nd)* Democrat (73rd) Democrat (74th) Democrat (75th) Democrat (76th)	Democrat (72nd) Democrat (73rd) Democrat (74th) Democrat (75th) Democrat (76th)	National Housing Act of 1934 Housing Act of 1937
1940s	Democrat (Truman)	Democrat (77th) 1941 Democrat (78th) 1943 Democrat (79th) 1945 *Republican (80th) 1947*		Housing Act of 1949
1950s	Republican (Eisenhower)	Democrat (91st) 1949 Democrat (92nd) 1951 *Republican (93rd) 1953* Democrat (94th) 1955 Democrat (95th) 1957 Democrat (96th) 1959		Housing Act of 1954 Federal Highway Act of 1956
1960s	Democrat (Kennedy and Johnson)	Democrat (97th) 1961 Democrat (97th) 1963 Democrat (98th) 1965 Democrat (99th) 1967 Democrat (100th) 1969		Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965 (Section 23) Housing Act of 1968 Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970
For context, Nixon and Moynihan succeeded the legislators on this table.				

(Friedman & Krier, 1968; The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, 2014; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2007)

As I continuously argue in this manuscript, there is no single cause of poverty or economic segregation. Thirty years of capitalist response to the Great Depression culminated in the 1960s urban renewal of Detroit. Neither political party was more at fault than the other. Hoovervilles were shantytowns that sprung up during and after the Great Depression due to extreme economic conditions. Congress responded by passing legislation intended to eliminate shantytowns by providing loans to house people. Those loans "systematically discriminated against poorer urban neighborhoods, particularly those with substantial minority populations" (Rusk, 1999:86). Redlining maps show discriminatory loan practices during the 1930s. Hoovervilles disappeared but stratification, economic segregation, and poverty remained.

Figure 20. Detroit Redlining Map (1939)
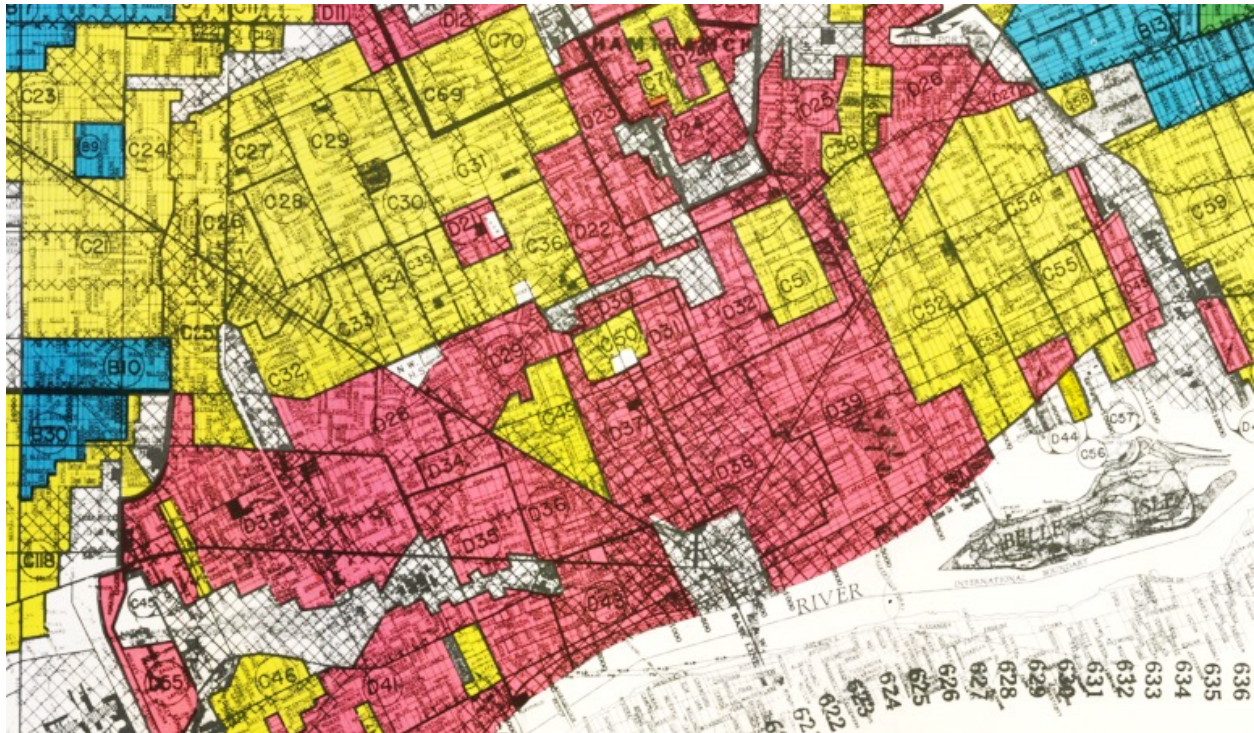
The red or darker shaded areas were marked "low grade" i.e. where loans should not be offered.
Areas marked "low grade" coincide with concentrations of blacks (black neighborhoods).
(Hill, 2014)

The National Housing Act of 1934 classified neighborhoods and was a financially based

piece of legislation. The FHA only insured mortgages in "racially homogeneous

neighborhoods," exacerbating the problem of segregation (Rusk, 1999:86). "Redlining" was a

common practice. The Housing Act of 1937 (Wagner-Steagall) placed political power in the

hands of local authorities and was operationally based. Housing "projects" are a result of this

legislation. The Chicago Housing Authority, founded in 1937, aims to "provide temporary

housing for people with incomes insufficient to obtain 'decent, safe and sanitary' dwellings in

the private market" (Chicago Housing Authority, 2014:177). The CHA built the housing

projects in Chicago. The main themes of the Housing Act of 1949 were low-rent public housing,

slum clearance, farm housing, and housing research (Committee on Banking and Currency,

1949; Truman, 1949). This series of legislative acts also produced the Brewster Projects in 1935

and the Frederick-Douglass Towers in Detroit during the 1950s. The Detroit neighborhoods of

Black Bottom and Brush Park were places that were financially struggling and full of minorities.

Prioritizing "housing first" was the approach taken by the legislature.

Figure 21. Slums, Industrial, and Low Cost Housing (Detroit, 1941)

Slums, Industrial Areas, Proposed Low Cost Housing, 1941

Industrial Areas
Slum Areas
Low Cost Housing Projects

Source: Detroit Housing Commission, *Annual Report 1941.*
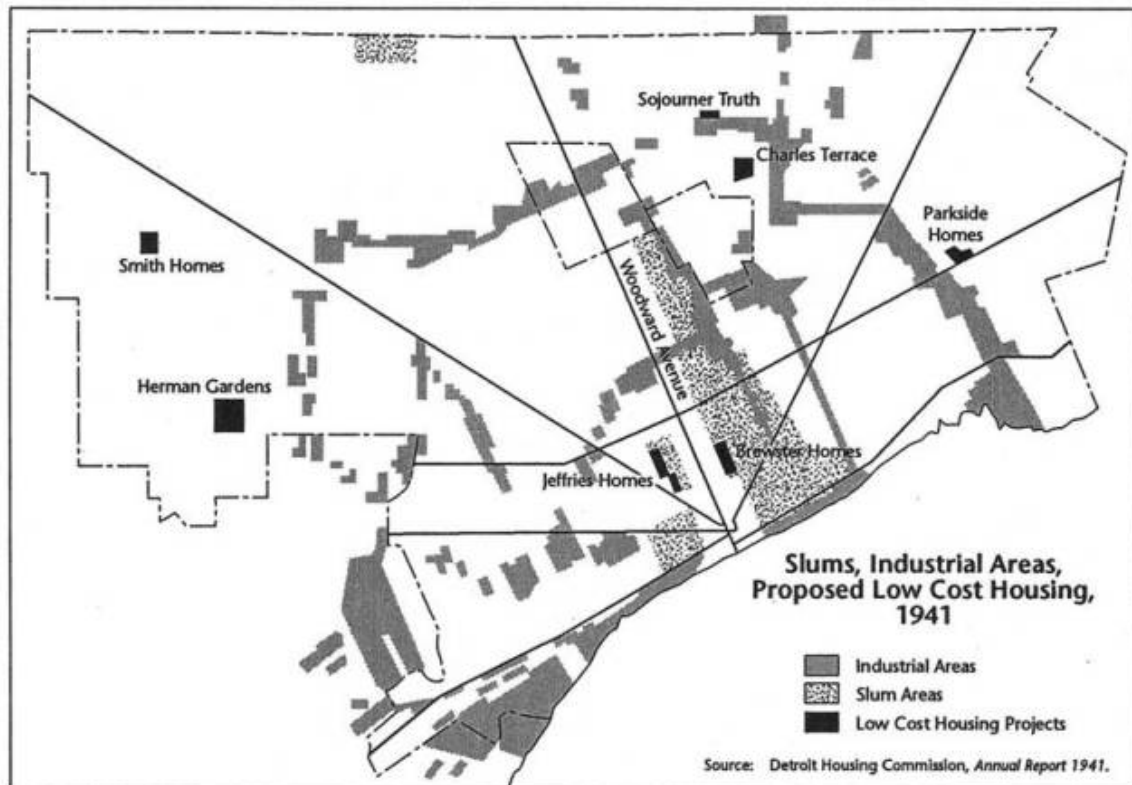
(Hill, 2015)

Truman used the term "housing" ten times during his 1949 presidential address. Housing

was a national priority. The legislation of the 1930s and 1940s would manifest in various ways,

appropriate to analyze now because those same systems still exist in 2015. The themes of that

legislation are still present in modern day "housing first" programs. I argue that "housing" does

little to solve the underlying capitalist problem of stratification and economic segregation.

Chicago continues to be a bastion of segregated concentrated poverty especially in the

form of its "projects." While the Black Belt on the south side was concentrated segregation, its

black residents were not necessarily all impoverished. The projects put blacks in highly segregated, highly impoverished environments. This is true of both the Chicago projects and the Brewster Projects of Detroit. The history provided here of Chicago from the Great Depression through the 1940s is relevant to this study of Michigan homelessness because of the substantive number of Chicago poor who migrated to Detroit in and around the 1950s. Each Midwestern city followed a different economic trajectory but their histories of homelessness intertwine.

The problems that began in the 1930s are much larger than any single neighborhood or housing project. The Detroit Housing Commission started in 1933 and is now "the largest owner of rental housing in the City of Detroit" (Detroit Housing Commission, 2015). The Chicago Housing Authority began 4 years later and by the 1950s "had become the largest landlord in Chicago with more than 40,000 units of housing" (Chicago Housing Authority, 2015). I argue throughout this manuscript that these bureaucracies are clearly in place to manage housing the poor but do nothing to eliminate the overall social problem.

The primary issue that began in the 1930s and continues to this day is lack of ownership, meaning the citizenry no longer controls their land or homesteads. "Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015). After congress established government owned rental housing, they sought to eliminate urban slums. President Truman said that explicitly in 1949. Then, the government built more public housing following the Housing Act of 1954. The Eisenhower legislation of the 1950s was slightly different because it privatized "urban renewal," establishing racially divisive partnerships between city planner and private developers. This process shifted all responsibility

for urban failure onto the local governmental institution because the cities gained full control of planning the urban landscape.

The outcome was bleak. Initially, no private developer would purchase the land in southeast Detroit because it was "too close to black neighborhoods to attract upper-income whites" (Babson, 1986:158). Urban renewal programs eventually bulldozed all of Black Bottom. Babson explains how "urban renewal, under (Mayor) Cobo, became little more than 'Negro removal.' Detroit's expanding black population had to double-up in the remaining slum areas or push into nearby neighborhoods." Urban renewal has long been associated with the displacement of blacks (Thomas, 2005). "Urban renewal" was synonymous with "Negro removal" (Pritchett, 2003:47).

At certain times, 97% of those displaced by urban renewal were black (Thomas, 2005). "Those concerned about 'blight,' which connoted economic deterioration, were often landowners and downtown business owners more worried about falling property values than about the fate of the poor" (Thomas, 2013:45, 48). Again, the essence of the problem is that the impoverished are powerless to their removal and displacement. Thomas continues, "Donald Monson, in one of the few Detroit planning documents of this era that mentions race, commented in 1947 that 'any practical program of rebuilding the deteriorated sections of Detroit is complicated by the fact that the bulk of the deteriorated area is east of Woodward Avenue and presently occupied largely by Negro families. However, the bulk of the public housing program must be for White occupancy even after due allowance is made to the fact that the Negro people are in greater need of housing.'" Mel Ravitz, a sociologist fresh out of the University of Michigan, said in 1955 that "many White families living now in neighborhoods that are beginning to be... occupied by Negroes will not invest any sizable sum of money in home improvement" (Thomas, 2013:96-

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97). City administrators and planners thought the best option would be to raze Black Bottom (Da Via, 2012). Decades of cultural and administrative subjugation of blacks in Detroit culminated in the 1967 Detroit riots.

The 1967 Detroit riots left about 5,000 people homeless. Most of those individuals were impoverished black Detroiters who stayed with relatives during the riots (Darden & Thomas, 2013; Gordon, 1971). After the riots, those people sought permanent housing in a burned out city. Black Bottom was gone. So was Paradise Valley. Corktown turned into a desolate wasteland now known colloquially as "Cobo Fields" or "Ragweed Acres" (Babson, 1986; Da Via, 2012). Decades of problems created a situation whereby the city was "creating refugees" through a process of "dislocation without relocation" (Henrickson, 1991:475). The riots were just one factor that contributed to the turmoil during the 1960s. Police brutality, often cited as the instigating cause of the 1967 riot, was another problem. Poor city planning also resulted in detrimental outcomes for impoverished blacks. In addition to all of those components, highways plowed through the city such as I-375 in 1964.

Construction of I-375 forced out many of those individuals whom the Detroit neighborhoods riots did not subsequently displace. Highway construction "really just ripped the guts out of that (Black Bottom) neighborhood," explains Sidney Barthwell Jr. whose father once owned a drugstore in Black Bottom. The highway "in essence, destroyed my father's business. Everybody had to move out. It was devastating, and it has never been the same again. Kind of like a black diaspora. We went all over, where we could get in" (Gallagher, 2013). When marginalized blacks did relocate, it was mostly to places of concentrated poverty.

Figure 22. Trumbull Households Displaced by Urban Renewal (Detroit, 1971)

MOVEMENTS OF A SAMPLE OF HOUSEHOLDS DISPLACED BY URBAN RENEWAL IN THE TRUMBULL COMMUNITY
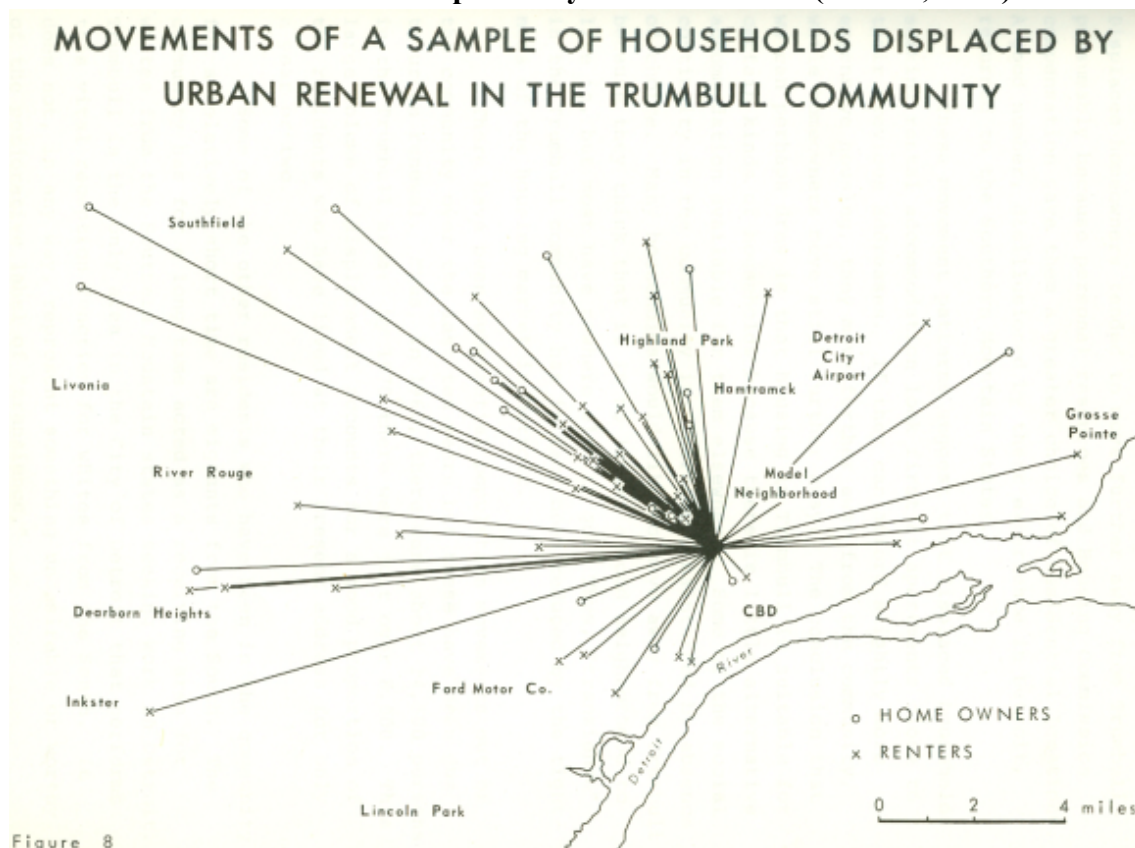
Figure 8

(Hill, 2014)

Concentrated poverty creates a disadvantaged social environment for poor minority families (Massey & Kanaiaupuni, 1993; Wilson, 2012). Therefore, systems that produce concentrated poverty perpetuate disadvantage. The federal government recognized this around 1990 and launched two new approaches to de-concentrate poverty: resident dispersal and place redevelopment (Chaskin, Joseph, Voelker, & Dworsky, 2012). Resident dispersal is a mechanism that physically moved impoverished households to more secure neighborhoods (less poverty, less crime, better schools, etc.). It was a way that families could "move to opportunity." However, resident dispersal often had unintended consequences. Briggs, Popkin, and Goering (2010:141) identified a "move-back" pattern where families would move back to an impoverished area, albeit not always their former neighborhood.

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Figure 23. Detroit Area Ethnic Groups (1971)

DETROIT AREA
ETHNIC GROUPS 1971

Shading indicates that ethnic group comprises 50% or more of population

LEGEND

Black	Polish & Hungarian	Maltese
Southern White	German	Greek
Black and Southern White	German & Italian	Middle Eastern
Polish	German & English	Belgian
Polish and Black	Italian	Mixed
Polish and German	Jewish	Other
Polish and Italian	Black & Jewish	Non-residential
Polish, Italian, and German	Mexican	— — Detroit City Boundary

One subject in that study explained that he wanted to move back to somewhere where he was "more comfortable." The resident dispersal program seems almost fundamentally flawed because it moves families from the in-group to the out-group, often amplified by both cultural and racial elements. When poverty intersects with race, as it clearly does in Chicago and Detroit,

a proverbial breeding ground for social problems flourishes in both affluent and impoverished communities.

Figure 24. Public Housing Population by Race/Ethnicity and Income (Chicago, 2014)
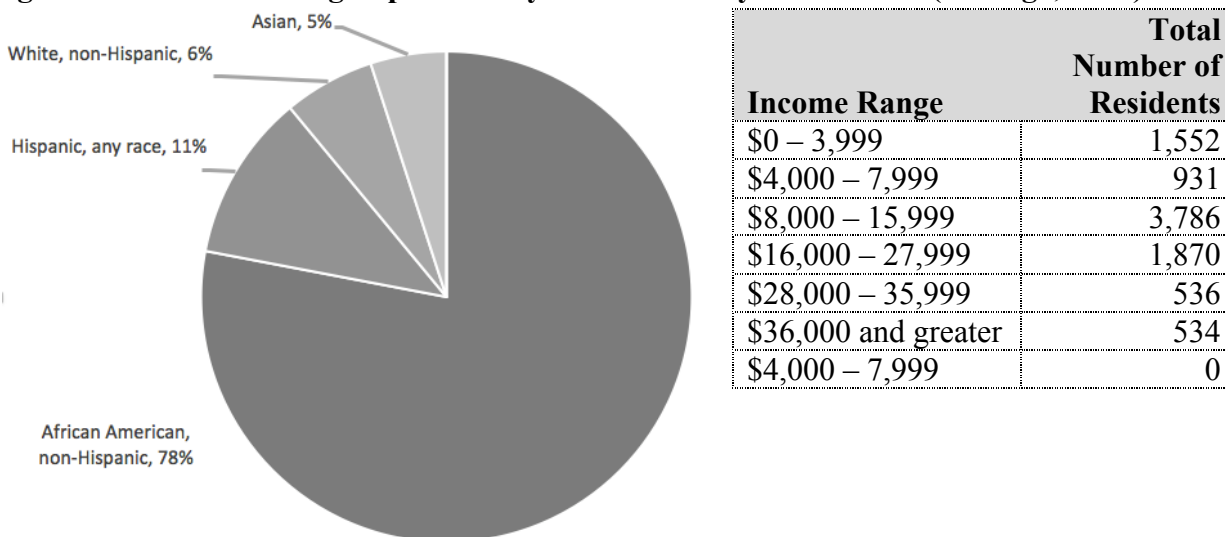
Income Range	Total Number of Residents
$0 – 3,999	1,552
$4,000 – 7,999	931
$8,000 – 15,999	3,786
$16,000 – 27,999	1,870
$28,000 – 35,999	536
$36,000 and greater	534
$4,000 – 7,999	0

(Chicago Housing Authority, 2014)

Detroit has been home to a wide swath of homeless individuals, somewhat similar to the description provided of Chicago earlier in this manuscript. Because of its sheer size, I am limited in describing its hobo and homeless dwellings. It is appropriate to convey characteristics of homeless individuals with similar experiences. Therefore, I focus my research on the services provided by the Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) formed in 1955. I examine the characteristics of homeless individuals who might fall under the service of the NSO rather than provide a comprehensive history of homelessness and the publicly housed in Detroit.

The NSO had sixteen staff members plus maintenance workers when it began in 1955. It turned over almost its entire staff during its first year. Eleven years later, the NSO had twenty-eight professional staff members, nine clerical staff members, and no maintenance staff. To bolster its staff in the late 1960s, the organization employed thirty-two local social work graduate

students and fourteen work-study undergraduate students (Bernard, Kurtagh, & Johnson, 1968).

The agency began collaborating with Detroit Police as soon as it opened. The NSO originally

formed when three settlement houses merged.

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen is an example of a religious mission driven food service

serving the poor in Detroit. The Capuchins are a religious community of friars inspired by St

Francis of Assisi. They began their Detroit ministry in 1883 and built a monastery on Mt. Elliott

street "purposely locating in a neighborhood where street people were known to congregate"

(Capuchin Soup Kitchen, 2015). The friars opened a soup kitchen in 1929. As of 2015, the soup

kitchen also operates "Earthworks" which is a program focused on improving food security, i.e.

safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable food. The soup kitchen also provides food, clothing,

household necessities, "psychological needs such as motivation, self-esteem, rehabilitation, and

meaningful relationships" (Capuchin Soup Kitchen, 2006). It still serves the poor in Detroit and

is located on Mt. Elliott Street.

Figure 25. Historic Photos of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen (Detroit)

(Capuchin Soup Kitchen, 2015)

Even though Detroit is such a large city, its social services for the poor are closely knit.

The Detroit Police continue to be involved in connecting vagrants with necessary services

through the Community and Police Advocacy (CAPPA) program (City of Detroit, 2014). The

first physical location for services listed on its website is the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. It also lists

the NSO Tumaini Center first on its list of ten homeless shelters.

The administration of these institutions also contains linkages. George P. Gaerig,

Operations Manager of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, sits on the board of the NSO (Michigan

Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO), 2015). Lewis Hickson, former Operations Manager

for the Tumaini Center, was the Executive Director of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen from 1973

until 1998 (Hickson, 2014, 2015). With various professional pipelines to gain employment at

these organizations, e.g. the forty-six college students contributing to the effort at NSO at any

point in time during the 1960s, it is easy to understand how there is administrative crossover

between agencies.

Figure 26. Neighborhood Services Department Food Line (1980s)

(Babson, 1986)

The declining automotive industry and other struggling manufacturers severely affected

Detroit from 1978 until 1981. This produced many out-of-work impoverished families and

individuals in the city. Again, because of its size and close ties to the auto industry, the

characteristics of the Detroit homeless individual were different from Lansing and Ann Arbor

during this period. From 1978 to 1981, forty-two automotive companies and services closed in

Wayne County (Babson, 1986). This brought a new type of individual to the food lines.

Figure 27. Detroit Street Beggar Comparison (1932 and 1982)

(Babson, 1986)

This "new" type of homeless individual in 1982 actually had many of the same

characteristics of the homeless individual in 1932. During both of these periods, many out-of-

work males sought assistance from food services and charities. "Four years ago (in 1978), we

fed less than 500 daily, mostly men in their fifties," (Capuchin Community Center) manager

Lewis Hickson reported in November 1982. "This last week, we have served on the average

2,000 people a day, men and women, most of them in their 30s" (Babson, 1986:215). The

difference in 1982 was that the men had families. Many of the hobos in the early 1900s where

transient vagrants who rode the rails from town to town looking for work. By the 1980s, men

were more likely to have settled in the city and formed families. Although that is a significant

difference, it is important to note that the out-of-work poor in the 1980s were physically capable

of working and were looking for work like many of the hobos earlier in the century.

The trouble of Detroit in the 1980s clearly shows two things: (i) the same issues evident

for decades were not yet fixed and (ii) the foundation of institutional support was built up until

the 1980s but not much was added then or after. The Capuchin Soup Kitchen opened its doors the same day the stock market crashed in 1929 (Babson, 1986). That was a response to a social problem. The Salvation Army joined the effort to feed and clothe the homeless. Focus HOPE started in 1968 as a civil rights organization. Day House, a Catholic Worker shelter, opened in 1976. Gleaners formed in 1977 to end hunger. Manna Meals also began in 1977 (Babson, 1986). Many of those organizations, together with long established church efforts, appear on the Detroit city CAPPA website. Yet, few new programs sprung up to help the homeless since the 1980s recession.

Intersection of Homelessness, Housing, and Race in America

When the current concept of homelessness emerged as an American social problem during the 1870s, only about 10% of the homeless population was black. Even until the 1960s, the typical homeless individual was a white male around 50 years old (Kusmer, 2001; National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). However, blacks have historically been associated with poverty and the stereotypes that come with poverty.

Shortly after the Civil War, a white public perceived blacks as possessing the same negative qualities as voluntary paupers. The privileged class predominantly saw poverty as voluntary. The working class viewed both paupers and blacks as lazy, apathetic, and childlike (Patterson, 2009). Conversely, settlement houses sought racial justice and lessened stereotypes. However, settlement houses indoctrinated residents with culture and education. They did not provide unbiased support and their approach to addressing poverty turned off many impoverished people, including blacks.

Housing everybody might be the pragmatic solution to the problem. In 1868, the

Republican Congressional Committee estimated post-bellum homestead laws would house

31,250,000 individuals, equivalent to the entire population of the country at that time. Those

laws provided for transient Civil War veterans and recently freed slaves especially.

Subsequently, the depleted Depression Era economy created general housing problems but

homestead laws remained through most of the twentieth century. The homeless were mostly

drifters until the Great Depression regardless of homestead laws that were in place until 1976.

Housing is certainly a primary aspect of the homeless experience measured discretely or

as phenomena that manifest in various ways for homeless individuals. In one regard, to be

"housed" means a person has shelter or a roof overhead that provides safety. Theoretically, a

society could eradicate homelessness if the society guaranteed a place for its citizens to sleep

safely indoors. For example, "public housing" is a benefit the government provides to

individuals in order for those persons to become "housed." Public housing can have a certain

stigma attached to it since those who use it are receiving government assistance. People often

perceive public housing residents as needy. Even though housed, their social experience can be

different from that of a homeowner. Therefore, I argue that housing is more than a discrete

variable.

Types of housing, the residents who live in various dwellings, and the communities that

surround settlements conceptually mesh throughout American history. During periods of

slavery, typical plantations included a master's house with separate overseer and slave quarters.

White overseers, who held a higher status, lived in more comfortable housing than black slaves

had access to (Otto & Burns III, 1983). In some instances, poor whites may have lived in

housing that was comparable to or in worse conditions than blacks but the whites always enjoyed

the privilege of freedom. The quality of the housing did not compare to the social benefits of being white and living free.

Segregated living was common on the plantation. After the end of slavery, segregation continued for reasons other than the function of the plantation. The settlement house movement emerged during the period right after the Civil War. Although the movement sought racial justice and lessened stereotypes, white Europeans managed the first settlement houses. These were more ethnocentric than culturally sympathetic. Some white settlement house leaders even held beliefs that blacks could make more progress "on their own" as a segregated group (Hounmenou, 2012; Lasch-Quinn, 1993). Structural and cultural forces played a role in racial segregation during the settlement house movement.

One reason for the limited expansion of the settlement house movement was a division between blacks and whites. Essentially, the mainstream settlement house movement failed to assist blacks, a historically oppressed group in America. Hounmenou (2012) suggests that blacks' oppositional consciousness was an important factor in the development of a separate black settlement house movement. I argue that segregated settlement houses provided a favorable environment for the less adulterated cultivation of black culture similar to larger areas like Paradise Valley in Detroit. In addition to the culture divisions, structural forces promoted segregated settlement houses. As the settlement houses increasingly segregated, expansion stopped. A second reason for the limited expansion of the settlement house movement was limited funding.

Funding was a mechanism to manage housing on a national scale throughout the 1900s. The U.S. Housing Act of 1937 brought affordable housing to low-income families as a response

to the Great Depression. The primary intention of the act was to create jobs and eliminate slums (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014a). However, many Americans viewed the public housing system unfavorably from its inception through the 1960s (Friedman & Krier, 1968). Section 23 of the Housing and Urban Development Act (HUD) of 1965 granted local housing authorities the power to offer suitable vacant living spaces to low-income tenants. Section 23 was a governmental move away from "housing projects" and incentivized scattered low-income housing paid using subsidies. It is important to note that different types of housing, like "the projects" or Section 23, will affect the individual in different ways.

The government often built public housing developments intentionally in disadvantaged neighborhoods until policies were implemented to stop such practices in the 1970s (Hirsch, 1983; Rohe & Freeman, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2010). Even after the 1970s, institutional mechanisms were in place to perpetuate inequality. Schwartz et al. (2010) found that New York City public housing children perform substantially worse on standardized math and reading tests. Further research is necessary to discover how different the outcomes are for homeless children who attend public schools. In Kalamazoo, for example, there are currently 1,586 homeless students (Monacelli, 2015). Research on students in poor housing situations has shown: (i) the experience of public housing itself could contribute to low test scores, i.e. living near and with low performers; (ii) individual and family characteristics; and (iii) students living in public housing attend worse schools. Schwartz et al. focused on the third hypothesis. I will examine the first. The experience of living in concentrated poverty, established by institutions built in disadvantaged areas, is likely to be a major contributing factor to the life outcomes of those individuals.

Housing, as a "have or have not" variable, is an essential component of the homeless experience. Public housing, i.e. the "next step up" from homelessness, is relevant to any substantive study on the extremely poor. The "next step up" is a component of upward mobility and motivation. A thorough scientific study should analyze "housing" as a status and privilege. The concept of housing is more complex than a standard definition of "shelter." There are qualities to housing that influence outcomes for the individuals who live in certain types of housing, neighborhoods, urban communities, or who sleep rough (e.g. in tent cities).

Characteristics of Modern Homeless Individuals in Ann Arbor

In 1964, Democratic President Lyndon Johnson delivered a speech on the campus of the University of Michigan and described the "Great Society" of America. He admitted, "There is not enough housing for our people" (Johnson, 1964). He encouraged onlookers to "join in the battle to give every citizen an escape from the crushing weight of poverty" and said Americans "have the power to shape the civilization that we want." It was a brief, invigorating speech. However, with limited words, President Johnson clearly acknowledged social forces as the undercurrent that shaped the nation. Poverty can crush a man. Americans may be at fault if "we" do not create a society that produces enough housing for "our" people. Individualism was absent from the speech. The presidential speech had a theme of helping those in need of assistance.

In 1971, Ann Arbor hosted the somewhat famous "John Sinclair Freedom Rally" in Crisler Arena. This was shortly after the police arrested Ann Arbor resident John Sinclair for possessing a small amount of marijuana. In popular culture, John Sinclair was a folk hero who sparked protest against unnecessarily restrictive governmental policies on drug possession. He and his Trans-Love commune moved to Ann Arbor from Detroit in early 1968, after the Detroit

Riots destroyed over 2,000 buildings near the areas of Plum Street and Wayne State University where the commune and its underground newspaper were located (Detroit Artists Workshop, 2015). Between the 1967 Detroit Riot and the 1971 Freedom Rally, there was a four-day riot in Ann Arbor incited by hippies probably affiliated with Sinclair. The "Battle of Ann Arbor" came one month after a similar riot in Berkeley, California (Glenn, 2009; "Police rout hippie-led mobs, arrest 21 in Ann Arbor riot," 1969; "Youths on coast and troops clash," 1969). The Ann Arbor rally was south of campus, more of a place where hippies congregated and not really where any homeless were. The Berkeley riot, coincidentally, was in People's Park where another protest came 22 years later to keep the park as-is (Mungan, 1991:B-4). The later protest was due, in part, because "People's Park has now become a… symbol for society's failure to provide for the homeless and helpless." Neither the 1960s rioters nor the 1971 activists specifically intended to combat homelessness, but I mention them here to provide context to the social environment of that time.

The Freedom Rally in Ann Arbor was symbolic of the conflict between the 1970s hippie movement and generally strict local police power. John Sinclair was one man in the small college town of Ann Arbor but the world became aware of the Freedom Rally when John Lennon and Yoko Ono came to support the rally. At this time, Ann Arbor was a microcosm of changing American ideals on both sides of the spectrum, from the conservative Republican in office (Richard Nixon) to the extreme activism of the White Panther Party and John Sinclair.

The White Panther commune lived on the southeast side of Ann Arbor in two houses, 1510 and 1520 Hill Street. At times, up to 28 people could sit at the dinner table and eat together. This created a need to manage large quantities of food and a formal cooperative effort emerged out of necessity. The food system, Ann Arbor People's Food-Coop, still exists to this

day (Sinclair, 2015). As communalism became a sustainable way of life, institutional support waned.

Figure 28. Washtenaw County Infirmary (ca. 1970)

Project Grow has operated as a non-profit on the grounds of the County Farm Park since 1972 (Project Grow Community Gardens, 2015; Washtenaw County, MI, 2015). A group incorporated The People's Food Co-op in 1971 (People's Food Co-op, 2015). In 1982, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in downtown Ann Arbor began serving a free hot meal to the homeless and working poor (Stanton, 2014). While these organizations do not have strict missions to serve the homeless, the chronology of community food organizations in Ann Arbor is relevant to the development of services to the homeless.

The Food Gatherers is an organization that formed in 1988 through a public-private partnership to serve the homeless (Food Gatherers, 2015). Its warehouse is located in the northernmost part of Ann Arbor. The organization currently provides food to the Delonis Homeless Shelter in downtown Ann Arbor.

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Food sources have been distant from homeless dwelling areas since the farm closed in 1917. While the infirmed lived at that location, hobos were located in the center of the city near the railways. Riverside Park was developed and named in 1907 and soon thereafter was a haven for homeless vagrants. Many referred to it colloquially as "Hobo Park" (Shackman, 2009) because of its close proximity to the rails where hobos would stop off.

Riverside Park was a popular place for hobos to congregate until the rail station turned into a restaurant in 1970. The new Amtrak station did not open until 1983 (Amtrak, 2014). The hobo era lasted in Ann Arbor from the closing of the poor farm in 1917 until the closing of the depot in 1969. The face of homelessness changed over the past several decades but the homeless found a new place in downtown Ann Arbor to congregate. Liberty Plaza is now widely known to be the place where the homeless currently hang out (Stanton, 2015a, 2015b). Ann Arbor residents are as dismissive of the Liberty Plaza homeless as they probably were of the bums that lived in Riverside Park.

Liberty Plaza is where the homeless currently dwell during warm days in Ann Arbor. This city park served as a place of homeless refuge during the 1980s and 1990s (Abresch, 1997; Lituchy, 1988). Liberty Plaza is so small that certain maps do not even make note of it. The plaza is downtown and conveniently efficient for panhandling. Riverside Park, on the other hand, is across the river and is not a viable place for street begging.

Liberty Plaza is also near the University of Michigan campus community and other resources or places of refuge. It is useful as such until policies make it less appealing. For example, the public library (perhaps unofficially) banned homeless in the 1980s (Pearlstein, 1984). The current librarian, whom I met during my research, would not let that happen today.

Figure 29. Two of the City's Homeless on a Liberty Street Park Bench (1988)

Gail and Jesse, two of the city's homeless, tell many stories from their Liberty Street park bench.

The public no longer refers to modern homeless individuals as "hoboes" or "infirmed" which was common during most of the 1900s. The general progression of terminology transitioned from the archaic "pauper" to a modern day "needy" person. The public continues to perform charitable acts for the needy, like a 1987 "Walkathon to help homeless" (Tutak, 1987). Ironically, the cycle has come full circle and homeless individuals share more characteristics with 1800s paupers than with 1950s hobos. The news stories cited here refer to "vagrants" as recently as the 1980s.

Figure 30. Two Boys at a Michigan Hobo Festival (2008)

Argus-Press Photos/Anthony Cepak

THOMAS GAFFNEY, 8, left, of Port Huron, and Hayden Settlemeyer, 10, of Owosso, smile as they power a hand-car down the tracks at the Steam Railroading Institute's Hobo Fest in Owosso Saturday afternoon. The hand-cars were originally used to move work crews up and down the tracks.

(Warren, 2008)

When the Washtenaw County Infirmary closed in 1971, homeless individuals received less care for physical and mental health needs. Housing changed from an "infirmary" to a "shelter." This implies that the primary need for the homeless individual is housing and not health services. The county poor farm turned into an area used by city dwellers to escape downtown and jog, picnic, or hike on nature trails (Krupa, 1977). Ironically, the news article mentioning the poor farm transformation to recreation area was next to a headline about the rising unemployment rate at that time. As one shift in perceived medical and housing needs was occurring, a secondary need for food became popular. Organizations that provide housing and food replaced hospital institutions.

Table 10. Change in Ann Arbor from Hobo to Homeless (1790-2002)

Overseers of the Poor established	Reformation House (Wayne Co.)	Washtenaw Co. Poor House (Farm)	Washtenaw Co. Infirmary	World War II Korean War	Michigan Central Station Closes	Rail Passenger Service Act	Washtenaw Co. Infirmary Closes	People's Food Co-op, St. Andrew's, Project Grow, and Food Gatherers	Huron Street, Ashley Street, and Felch Street Shelters Open	MAJOR SHIFT IN HOMELESSNESS
1790	1820s and 1830s	1917		1930s through 1950s	1969	1970	1971	1970s and 1980s	1984 through 2002	

The hobo also disappeared as railroad traffic declined. The wars of the early 1900s brought heavier loads to and from industrialized cities. The military rail traffic decreased. An Ann Arbor depot closure put an end to old style travel and new high speed Amtrak began with a new station in 1973. Hoboes preferred boxcar traffic over the new passenger cars.

Table 11. Ann Arbor Quick Facts about Homelessness (1980s)

1980s	• 2,807 homeless in Washtenaw County • 5 Shelters: Salvation Army (809 Henry Street), Shelter Association (420 W. Huron), S.O.S. Crisis Center (Ypsilanti), Ozone House (608 N. Main serves youth), and SAFE House (Pittsfield) • Man removed from University of Michigan library because officers "thought he was a street person" and told him he should "go hang out on the south corner of the Diag with all the street people and vagrants" (1983)	• $163/month income from "General Assistance" • $22/night rent at the Embassy Hotel • Ann Arbor public library considers banishing homeless people from the facility (1980)
1986-1987	• 3,028 homeless (estimated) in Ann Arbor • 27,000 "bed nights" dispensed in 1986	• 200 low-income, single room occupancy units demolished in 15 years

(Becker, 1983; "Help for homeless," 1987; Tutak, 1987)

The rail yard began to shrink and the city landscape changed. "Hobo" became an outdated term and an extinct identity, now only celebrated as a sort of mythological figure (Warren, 2008). During these festivals, the Steam Railroading Institute conveys hobo history.

The connection between the hobo and the rails is a part of American folklore, including the local history of Ann Arbor.

The modern Ann Arbor homeless scene began in the early 1970s. The downtown library doubled in size in 1974. St Andrew's Episcopal Church served its first free hot meal in 1982. The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County opened in 1983 with an average of 25 people per night sleeping on mats on the floor (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, 2011). Food Gatherers formed in 1988. The Delonis Center construction finished in 2003. These organizations combine to form the foundation of the current homeless experience in Ann Arbor.

Characteristics of Modern Homeless Individuals in Lansing

Lansing, Michigan saw a similar fate. Its Union Depot on Michigan Avenue, which sits a few hundred feet away from the site of the current Lansing City Rescue Mission, was converted into a restaurant in 1972 and replaced by Amtrak in 1975 (Clara's Lansing Station, 2015). The new Amtrak station moved several miles outside of downtown to East Lansing near the campus of Michigan State University. Prior to Amtrak, downtown Lansing served as a hub for rail traffic after the Civil War and into the automotive boom during the early half of the 1900s. This was a period when hobos could be seen on downtown Lansing city streets. While the characteristics of the early twentieth century hobo were similar in both Lansing and Ann Arbor, the care was slightly different.

The Lansing City Rescue Mission opened in 1911 and a soup line began shortly thereafter. A group of people incorporated this mission and opened a shelter at its current location in 1948. The overnight shelter services began in 1957 (City Rescue Mission of Lansing, 2015). Although the Mission provided services to the railway hobos that Ann Arbor did not, the

characteristics of hobos in both cities were relatively similar up until both depots closed around 1970. There is less information readily available about the history of the Lansing area hoboes since the local newspapers there are not freely available to search electronically.

Stories of Lansing Skid Row and the tramps and hoboes that lived around the area are sporadic. However, I am personally familiar with Lansing history since I was born and raised there. Skid Row was near the Capitol Building and the City Rescue Mission even when I was a young boy. The "shabby area of cheap rooming houses" described in 1949 was still relatively the same until developers built a minor league baseball stadium there in the mid-1990s. The police searched the four-block area downtown including "railroad sidings" for a murderer ("Lansing boy, 4, found slain on vacant lot," 1949). The police went all the way to Wisconsin to seize a mentally deficient man who admitting to killing the boy just to satisfy the detectives ("Expert is hired in slaying case," 1949). That innocent man was released when an unemployed auto factory worker confessed to the killing ("'Don't know why I did it;' Racine man cleared," 1949). Most stories involving Lansing Skid Row are tragedies.

Table 12. Brief History of Central Michigan Train Depots, Abridged (1900s)

1886	Michigan Central Railroad Depot	Washtenaw County 401 Depot St, Ann Arbor MI Now the Gandy Dancer Restaurant
1903	Durand Depot; Abandoned by Grand Trunk in 1974	Shiawassee County, Durand MI Now the State Railroad History Museum and Amtrak Station
1903	Lansing Union Depot	Ingham County Lansing MI now Clara's Restaurant
1903	Grand Trunk Western Rail Station	Ingham County 1203 S Washington Ave, Lansing MI Named "Eyesore of the week" in 2010
1903	Michigan Central Railroad Depot	200 Depot Dr, Dowagiac Now a train and bus depot
1920s	Michigan Central Railroad Depot; Passenger service until 1959	430 N Cochran, Charlotte MI Converted to a restaurant

(Kirby, 2010; Schneider, 2004)

Tramps in Lansing are certainly a current problem recognized by police, an argument supported later in this manuscript. They sought shelter in the jails over a century ago ("Tramp nuisance," 1906). At that time, "vagrants" received "bread and water" after arrests for drunk and disorderly conduct. Another man swindled two others at the Grand Trunk rail yard office out of their tobacco and lunches ("Ungrateful hobo punished," 1912). Finally, a cross-dressing hobo from Lansing was arrested after riding the rails to Wisconsin ("Girl hobo arrested while posing as a boy," 1915). These interesting times kept the "Vagrancy Board" busy. The "hobo investigators" appointed by Michigan Governor Warner included Walter S. Foster of Lansing, a prominent attorney whose local firm is well known in Lansing to this day ("Name vagrancy board," 1909). The early 1900s were a decade full of emerging vagrancy laws in Michigan.

Table 13. Michigan Vagrancy Laws (Early 1900s)

1907	City of Flint: "To restrain and punish drunkards, vagrants, street beggars, and other disorderly persons…" "To provide for the protection and care of paupers, and to prohibit and prevent all persons from bringing to said city from any other place any pauper or other person likely to become a charge upon said city…" "To provide for the burial of strangers and poor deceased persons"	(Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan Passed at the Regular Session, 1907)
1907	City of Hastings: "To apprehend and punish vagrants, truants, mendicants, street beggars, drunkards and persons found drunk in any of the public streets, or places in the city…"	
1907	City of Holland: "To apprehend and punish vagrants, truants, mendicants, street beggars, drunkards and persons found drunk in any of the streets, parks or public places in the city…"	
1907	City of Ionia: "To prohibit and regulate bathing in any public water… To restrain and punish drunkards, vagrants, mendicants, street beggars and persons soliciting alms"	
1907	City of Lansing: "To apprehend and punish vagrants, drunkards, disorderly persons and common prostitutes"	
1907	City of Marquette: "To restrain and punish drunkards, vagrants, street beggars, and all disorderly persons or keepers of gaming or disorderly houses in which drunkards or boisterous persons are allowed to congregate and disturb the peace…"	
1909	"The Governor is hereby directed to appoint a commission consisting of five citizens of the State of Michigan… (To) meet and proceed to investigate, in such manner as they may deem advisable, the subject of vagrancy, habitual drunkenness, offenses designated as disorderly conduct and similar offenses…"	(Michigan, 1909)

The vagrants who ran in and out of Lansing were a motley bunch. A car thief and a transient boxer, or "pugilist," were among those picked up by police in nearby cities ("Locals," 1932, "Vagrant admits car theft," 1966). However, there is no real indication that Lansing suffered from a major homeless epidemic during the 1900s. The economy was never substantially worse than the national situation. Automotive jobs were prevalent in Lansing for decades. During the 1900s, homelessness in Lansing was just as likely due to natural disaster as financial turmoil ("Many are homeless in Michigan floods," 1912). Like Flint, the city did not see its worse days until the factories began to leave around the turn of the 21st century. Neither Lansing nor Flint were primarily lumber towns so the rail-riding hobo travelled more north near Saginaw and Bay City. Furthermore, the establishment of rails did not take hoboes away from Lansing. If anything, rails brought more workers to the factories in Lansing and Flint where jobs were available for the majority of the 1900s. Conditions are not the same now. I describe the current Lansing homeless phenomena more thoroughly in a later section.

Locals know the area in Lansing near the Grand Trunk Western rail yards as "REO Town" because it once housed the factory that built Diamond REO Trucks. East-west rails ran directly through the campus and north-south rails that went right past the Lansing Union Depot were to the east. REO Town was a good area to hop trains going in any direction.

REO Town stopped producing trucks in 1975 and the area declined after that. The neighborhood did not develop as expected and nearby Baker Street became notorious for crime during the 1980s and 1990s.

Figure 31. Grand Trunk Western Rail Station Lansing Depot (1902 and 2010)

(Kirby, 2010; Schneider, 2004)

Figure 32. REO Town Factory with Rails

("REO Motor Works," 2006)

Figure 33. REO House Ad (1925)

A HOME OF YOUR OWN

After all is said and done, the happiest man is the fellow who has a home of his own.

These fine, modern homes, SOLD ONLY TO REO employes, at prices ranging from $5,000 to $5,500.00—

And All You Need to Pay Is
$300 (or more) down and
$40 (or more) per month.

Some of these REO houses have six rooms and bath, and some seven, with full basements.

Every REOITE Should AND CAN Own His Own Home.
Call at the Welfare Dept. for Information

REO HOME AD, MAY, 1925. The REO Motor Car Company promoted home ownership as a means of a stable workforce. South Lansing, in proximity of the REO factory, was known as "REO Town."

(MacLean & Whitford, 2003)

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There was a third depot in Lansing that warrants mention. The Lake Shore and Michigan

Southern Railroad depot stood in what is now "Old Town" Lansing. The tracks are no longer

functioning there but the crossing signs remain. The "L.S. and M.S." was mainly a route to

Chicago but did not connect with the more northern lumber routes through Saginaw or Bay City.

Figure 34. Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad (1907) and Connections Map (1900)
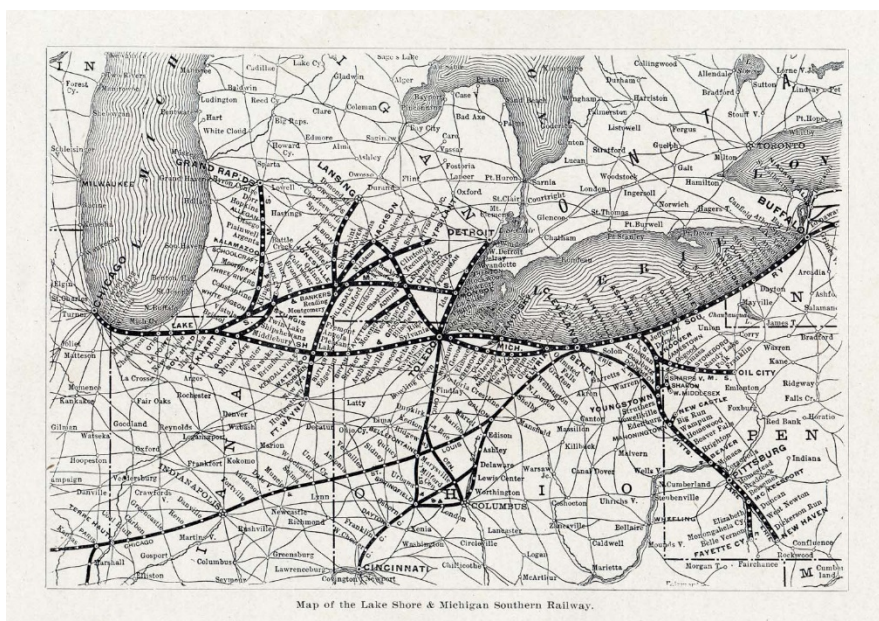
L. S. & M. S. R. R. Depot, Lansing, Mich.

(Alan Loftis Collection, 1907)

Map of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway.

(Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway System and Representative Employees, 1900)

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In sum, the railroads did not bring very many hobos to the Lansing area during the 1900s. This was possibly due to increased vagrancy and tramp laws instituted early in the century. Maybe hobos stayed in northern Michigan where there were lumber jobs. If they did come to Michigan, they received decent support.

One way to measure the homeless in these areas without evidence of hobos is to review census data. The data are useful in combination with knowledge of the depot construction in 1903 and vagrancy law emphasis in 1907, especially in Lansing and Flint. In 1904, there were n=61 and n=59 "paupers" in Flint and Lansing respectively. In 1910, there were n=67 and n=66 respectively. The number of paupers living in Flint/Lansing almshouses did not significantly increase when the railroads came to town nor did the poor count decrease when legislatures drafted more anti-vagrancy laws.

Table 14. Paupers in Michigan Almshouses (1904)

	Enumerated, 12/31/1903							Admitted during 1904							Discharged/ died, or transferred during 1904		Present 1/1/1905	
	White — Native							White — Native							White	Colored	White	Colored
	Native parent age	Foreign parent age	Mixed parent age	Parent age unknown	Foreign born	Nativity unknown	Colored	Native parent age	Foreign parent age	Mixed parent age	Parent age unknown	Foreign born	Nativity unknown	Colored				
Genesee	15	3	6	8	19	1	2	25	2	0	2	13	0	0	35	0	59	2
Ingham	24	3	3	5	11	0	3	7	1	0	7	7	2	1	14	1	56	3
Washtenaw	16	3	1	6	13	0	4	10	2	0	1	11	0	1	18	1	45	4
Wayne	74	90	21	4	298	0	20	139	202	47	6	427	0	47	777	46	531	21

(United States Census Bureau, Koren, & King, 1906)

Table 15. Paupers in Michigan Almshouses (1910)

	Enumerated on 1/1/1910			White				Admitted in 1910			White				Transfers to other almshouses		Other transfers and discharges	Deaths in 1910
	Total	Male	Female	Native	Foreign born	Nativity unknown	Colored	Total	Male	Female	Native	Foreign born	Nativity unknown	Colored	Present 1/1/1910	Admitted in 1910		
Genesee County Infirmary, Flint	67	42	25	47	17	0	3	95	65	30	78	9	4	4	0	2	78	16
Ingham County Poorhouse, Mason	66	43	23	50	16	0	0	26	19	7	24	2	0	0	0	0	23	8
Washtenaw County Poor Farm, Ann Arbor	52	37	15	32	19	0	1	27	21	6	16	8	2	1	0	0	13	8
Wayne County Poor House, Eloise	566	443	123	197	340	1	28	1,168	962	206	485	626	4	53	0	0	869	175

(United States Census Bureau, 1911)

Although these numbers appear to represent the conditions of poverty in Michigan during this time, I argue they do not. "The number of paupers reported is not a measure of the extent of poverty in a community. It depends on the adequacy of the supply of almshouses or the prevailing policy in regard to outdoor relief, on climate conditions, and on the existence or number of special institutions for children and for physical and mental defectives" (Michigan State Board of Health, 1915:51). As I explain throughout this manuscript, census data does not adequately represent the lives of extremely poor people. Many other environmental and circumstantial factors contribute to the homeless identity and experience.

The experience of extreme poverty extends beyond the life of the individuals and the scope of the community. "Unfortunately, we have many children who are without good homes and home surroundings. The beaten, starved and cowed child of the inebriate cannot have an

equal chance with those properly reared. Poverty handicaps underfed, under-clothed, and badly

housed children and their parents. Such children have not violated any social law nor committed

any sin. Their fault is farther back and antedates their birth" (Michigan State Board of Health,

1915:71). This point summarizes the purpose of this section of this manuscript. The social

forces of poverty extend far before the life of the individual. There are more homeless people

today than in 1904.

Table 16. Number of Homeless People Counted in Michigan; by Continuum of Care (2014)

COC	COC Name	Total
MI-501	Detroit CoC	2755
MI-500	Michigan Balance of State CoC	2253
MI-506	Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County CoC	793
MI-507	Portage/Kalamazoo City & County CoC	681
MI-505	*Flint/Genesee County CoC*	*635*
MI-516	Norton Shores/Muskegon City & County CoC	584
MI-509	Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County CoC	545
MI-504	*Pontiac/Royal Oak/Oakland County CoC*	*457*
MI-502	Dearborn/Dearborn Heights/Westland/Wayne County CoC	456
MI-508	Lansing/East Lansing/Ingham County CoC	429
MI-512	Grand Traverse, Antrim, Leelanau Counties CoC	396
MI-519	Holland/Ottawa County CoC	387
MI-503	St. Clair Shores/Warren/Macomb County CoC	343
MI-510	Saginaw City & County CoC	325
MI-514	Battle Creek/Calhoun County CoC	284
MI-517	Jackson City & County CoC	240
MI-515	Monroe City & County CoC	185
MI-511	Lenawee County CoC	138
MI-518	Livingston County CoC	135
MI-523	Eaton County CoC	126
MI-513	Marquette, Alger Counties CoC	80
	TOTAL IN MICHIGAN	**12227**

KEY
Dark Shade = Primary Focus of Dissertation
Light Shade; Italics = Secondary Focus of Dissertation

Summary of the Modern Homeless History in Three Michigan Communities

I present the general modern homeless histories of Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Lansing here to provide context to current lived experiences of homeless individuals in these communities. It is important to note that several tangential components of each community are relevant to the overall circumstances of the homeless at various times. The poor houses and vagrancy laws of the early 1900s are as relevant as the railroad depots built during those same years. Neither was the exclusive cause of any rise or decrease in homelessness at any point in time. All of those factors and many more blend together to form the conditions that lead to a segment of the population living in poverty.

Table 17. Paupers in Other Charitable Institutions, Michigan (1904)

	Number of institutions				Number of inmates			Annual subsidies from public funds, 1903	Income from pay inmates, 1903	Cost of maintenance, 1903	Number of inmates per 100,000 of population	
	Total	Public	Private	Ecclesiastical	On 1/1/1904	Admitted during 1904	On 12/31/1904				On 12/31/1904	Admitted during 1904
1904 Michigan	114	8	71	35	5,509	30,177	5,395	18,366	530,443	1,040,958	211.9	1,191.7

General summary of all benevolent institutions, public and private (exclusive of prisons, hospitals for insane, almshouses, schools for the feeble minded, and schools and homes for the deaf and blind)

(United States Immigration Commission, Dillingham, & Lloyd, 1911)

Charitable institutions and supportive programs remain present in Michigan. Churches, county poor farms, and public benefits are all types of support offered to the poor throughout the 20th century. Although poor houses have transformed into county homeless shelters, the function of serving the poor and mentally ill remains. Soup lines and soup kitchens still exists in these Michigan cities, many in the same locations as a century before. Police arrest modern day street people and put them in jail just as they rounded up bums, tramps, and vagrants long ago. The

rescue mission in Lansing, for example, still sits a few hundred yards away from the railyard depot built in 1903. The Ann Arbor homeless still beg and sleep on the same benches as was common decades earlier. Detroit has changed the most significantly during the last century among these three cities. The charity to poor people has severely declined in Detroit.

During my observations of these three cities, I experienced high levels of charitable support from institutions. I also recorded instances where charitable institutions were struggling for resources as much as the individuals they serve. The current homeless experience in Michigan is as variable as the preceding histories I describe.

The histories of Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Lansing vary quite dramatically but share some similarities. During the late 1800s, administrators considered residents to be "inmates" and often referred to the mentally ill as "idiotic." Conditions were dreadful. In one instance, a man was chained to a fence "like a bear… to degrade and brutalize" him. Despite the abundance of supportive institutions, the state poor houses varied in quality. They were mostly on sprawling campuses covering dozens of acres. However, the care was only as good as the individuals who provided it. The conditions became so awful that the Board of Corrections and Charities sought to shut down the whole system around 1920. Throughout their tenure, the Board repeatedly complained about county reports not submitted on time. Public Act 121 of 1885 established the Board to associate with county superintendents of the poor "for (the) purpose (of preparing) a uniform system of records and accounts for the use of superintendents, overseers, and directors of the poor, and keepers of the poor-houses" (Michigan, 1890:3091). The Secretary of State received regular reports from the Board. The People of the State of Michigan, via the legislature, enacted more laws for the poor that year. However, the Board recommended a new system. Their recommendation resulted in revised 1925 laws.

Public Act 146 of 1925 defined "poor" and "poor persons" as "those who have no property, exempt or otherwise, and who are unable, because of physical or mental disabilities, to earn a livelihood" (Michigan, 1925:1). The words "settlement" and "residence" remained vague. Much like the vagrancy laws of the early 1900s, these statues did little to eradicated poverty.

Table 18. Abridged Reports of the Michigan State Board of Corrections (1881-1904)

1881-06-24	The Board were forcibly impressed with the insufficient accommodation provided by Wayne county for its poor, and especially for its indigent insane, the buildings being over-crowded and very badly constructed for proper care of the insane, and dangerously insecure in case of fire.
1881 Flint	The poorhouse, about two and a half miles from Flint, is of brick, one and a half stories, about 16x120 feet, with stone basement. It is warmed by stoves and ventilated by windows… two bath tubs for men and two for women… An insane woman had, at a former visit, just escaped with her child, a bright boy, for fear he would be separated from her and sent to the State Public School. If she returns, as no doubt she will, it will be mistaken kindness if, to humor the whims of a crazy mother, this child is permitted to remain under poorhouse influences…
1881 Lansing	The poorhouse is about six miles east of Lansing in the town of Meridian. It is a two-story brick building with good basement, well constructed for use as a poorhouse. The rooms are of good size, warmed by furnaces and ventilated by flues. The sexes are kept entirely separate… There were 40 inmates when visited… Found a man of about 24, idiotic, said to be inclined to escape, and so tied, without shelter, to a fence near the house, where he had worn a path at the end of his rope, like a chained animal. The effect upon other inmates, of constant exhibition of a human being in this condition, chained like a bear to a fence, must be to degrade and brutalize.
1881 Saginaw	The poorhouse is about eight miles from Saginaw City… 34 inmates; 10 females, a few of whom were idiotic; 24 men, 1 idiotic and 2 insane…
1881 Ann Arbor	The poorhouse, about three miles from Ann Arbor, is a large two-story brick building with a frame part one and a half stories high, for the keeper… no insane are kept… two chapels, one for Protestants, one for Catholics… found 59 inmates, 17 women and 42 men…
1881 Wayne	When visited it was more than full… It appeared to be well kept, and as clean as could be expected from the character and condition of many of the inmates, victims of their own loathsome vices, brought to poverty and hopeless dependence by intemperance and profligacy… a class of inmates brought to their present deplorable condition by debauchery and vice… Physical restraint by means of fetters and chains had been in use…

(Michigan, 1881-1920)

One fundamental shift from this set of laws was the distinction between "indoor" and "outdoor" paupers (The Atlantic Monthly, 1881). The almshouse system and subsequent boon of charities from the 1880s through the Great Depression established a new class of "indoor" or housed poor people. The government took a similar approach in the 1930s and 1960s when

public housing and housing projects popped up in Detroit and other cities. The conceptual division perpetuates when distinctions separate "street people" from "shelter dwellers."

This is a distinction apparent throughout much of my embedded observation later in this manuscript. I argue that the real division between institutionalized and autonomous homeless began during this period between 1880 and the Great Depression. The hoboes were rather autonomous but the mentally ill "idiotic" men in Lansing were clearly insane. There was some crossover in the statutes, blending vagrant tramps with street beggars and mixing in drunkards alike. Lawmakers failed to recognize the real differences in homeless people early on during the establishment of the homeless support system.

Charities, to this day, provide some equation of food, shelter, and/or clothing to destitute individuals. Some homeless shelters emphasize mental health and other medical services. Other organizations combat addiction. Yet, these unfairly combined long ago. An individual with addiction has many different needs than an orphaned child. A criminal deviant, especially a sex offender, is distinct from an abused and battered woman who ends up homeless. Despite assumedly good intentions, the charities and county shelters built in the 1800s no longer serve the needs of the modern day homeless individual. The Board of Corrections and Charities never fully understood the life of the inmate. Charity volunteers always served a lower class but were rarely peers of those they served soup. The Overseers of the Poor, now shelter administrators, historically dealt with low funding. There is still a mysterious divide between those who have and have not. Each agency maintains a distinct "us and them" model, much of which came from laws drafted in proximity to the Civil War. Economies in these cities are different, no longer agrarian, and poor farms simply are not functionally appropriate. A new outlook on homelessness is long past due.

Table 19. List of Relevant Private Charities (1881-1904)

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">1881-1884 Private Charities</td>
<td>

Detroit
- Michigan State Retreat, Sisters of Charity; Michigan Ave; includes treatment for opium addiction; up to 100 patients paying $5/week; always 20 patients gratis
- St. Anthony's Male Orphan Asylum; Gratiot Rd in Hamtramck
- St. Mary's Hospital
- The Industrial School; corner of Washington and Grand River Ave; "The object of the (school) is to educate children who are too poor to be properly clad for the public schools"
- St. Luke's Hospital and Church Home and Orphanage
- Harper Hospital
- Michigan College of Medicine Hospital; Purpose of "no person requiring medical or surgical attention being refused admission, whether able to pay or not"
- House of Providence, Sisters of Charity
- Woman's Hospital and Foundling's Home; 13th Street
- St. Vincent Orphan Asylum; Sisters of Charity
- Protestant Orphan Asylum; Evangelical Churches
- U.S. Marine Hospital
- Home of the Friendless; Protestant; 22 Warren Avenue West; 80 homeless inmates
- Thompson Home for Old Ladies; Protestant
- Home of the Aged and Poor; Little Sisters of the Poor
- Women's Home; 78 Congress Street West

Lansing
- Lansing Industrial Aid Society; on a lot deeded by an aged colored man (probably James "Father" or "Uncle Jimmie" Little, the first black resident of Lansing)

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<tr>
<td>1904 Detroit</td>
<td>

- The Florence Crittenton Mission; 297 Brush Street; especially for homeless
- McGregor Mission; 233 Brush Street
- The Phyllis Wheatley Home; 176 Elizabeth Street East; for aged colored women
- Detroit City Union of the King's Daughters and Sons; 427 Woodward Ave
- The Ladies' Society of the Detroit Homeopathic College Free Dispensary; 185 Lafayette Ave
- United Jewish Charities; 239 High Street East
- Home for the Aged and Poor; 49 Scott Street; Little Sisters of the Poor
- Fairbanks Woman's Relief Corps; Grand River and Cass Avenues
- The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; 22 McGraw Building
- The Detroit Free Dispensary for Women and Children; 149 Forest Avenue East
- D'Arcambal Home of Industry Association; Biddle House; 236 Jefferson Ave; for discharged prisoners
- Woman's Hospital and Infant's Home; 149 Forest Avenue East
- The Protestant Orphan Asylum of Detroit; 988 Jefferson Ave
- The Ladies Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans
- The Detroit Deaconess Home; 53 Elizabeth Street West; Episcopal
- The Thompson Home for Old Ladies; 866 Cass Avenue; Protestant
- The House of Providence; 187 Elizabeth Street East
- The Visiting Nurse Association; 224 Clifford Street
- The Children's Free Hospital; 1038 Antoine Street
- The German Protestant Home for Orphans and Old People; 250 Harvey Avenue
- Christ Church House; 242 Woodbridge Street East
- St. Luke's Hospital, Church Home and Orphanage; Fort Street and McKinstry Avenue
- Franklin Street Settlement; 519 Franklin Street
- The Arnold Home for the Aged and Incurable; Baldwin Mansion; 110 Fort Street West
- St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum; 137 McDougall Avenue; Sisters of Charity; for homeless children
- The Detroit Branch of the Needle Work Guild of Americas; provided clothing
- The House of the Good Shepherd; Ward Mansion; 792 Fort Street West

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(Michigan, 1881-1920)

I argue that counting, categorizing, and grouping the poor and destitute does little to address the root problem of homelessness. Structures are in place that began over a century ago to separate the "paupers" from the privileged. Dozens and dozens of charities fail to provide the necessary support to meet the needs of the homeless in Detroit and Ann Arbor. Tent cities and vagrant modern day tramps still scavenge around Lansing. Police in all three cities make similar arrests to those individuals who sought refuge in county jails over one hundred years ago.

To be clear, there are distinct identities even among the homeless. The early terminology expresses that concept well. Hobo: "someone who travelled and worked." Tramp: "someone who travelled but did not work." Bum: someone who neither travelled nor worked (Fawcett & Rambeau, 1994:348). Perhaps living among the group and hearing their stories is necessary to understand these differences completely.

Figure 35. Tell Your Story (Hobo Symbol, 1918)
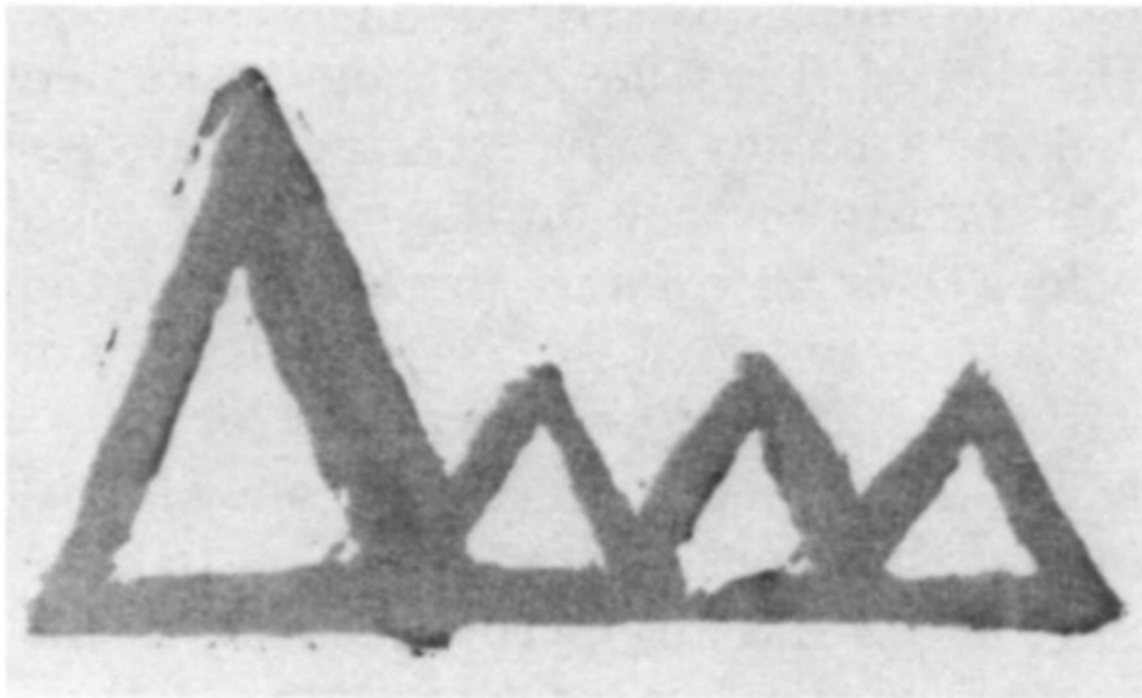
(Beard, 1918; Darnell, 1965; Fawcett & Rambeau, 1994)

CHAPTER 3: THEORY AND LITERATURE

Homelessness as a Social Phenomenon

Homelessness is a social phenomenon studied through any combination of fundamentally different lenses: quantitatively or qualitatively, macro or micro scale, historically or currently. I focus my analysis of homelessness using a qualitative micro-sociological lens but I do not negate any one of the alternative perspectives. I convey historical basis for my qualitative micro-sociological emphasis while incorporating certain alternative heuristics. There is no "single perfect" theory to apply to homelessness so I explain how a few relevant theories are appropriate to this study.

Homelessness can be an individualized experience that stems from structural, e.g. capitalist, social forces. When observing the behavior of a single individual, it is important to recognize his situation is not self-determined. Even a micro-sociologist must acknowledge the larger structural forces that influence the behaviors of the homeless man. "To deal with him even as an individual, society must deal also with the economic forces which have formed his behavior" (Anderson, 1923:121). Extreme poverty is the antecedent to the homeless experience and public housing is often the "next step" of upward mobility.

Daily routine is a viable unit of analysis to study social constraints. The homeless man can be constrained to an area in the city where food, shelter, and jobs are available. He lives among fellow impoverished individuals. Low cost and availability determine his meals and sleeping options. Of note, I only refer to the homeless "man" to compare with the individuals described by Anderson. My study includes both men and women. The hoboes described by Anderson have established routines constrained by limitations. I consider daily routine to encompass most of the homeless experience.

The sociology of the homeless man covers much more than just the biological man. He lives within a social system of economic, physical, environmental, and personal interactions. The homeless man interacts with many components of a social system each day. His actions are processes in the actor-situation system. "The situation is defined as consisting of objects of orientation, so that the orientation of a given actor is differentiated relative to the different objects and classes of them of which his situation is composed" (Parsons, 1951:2). He interacts with social, physical, and cultural objects. Like any man, his actions are not simply instinctual or natural biological responses. Parsons explained that man develops a system of expectations relative to his situation. The homeless man constructs a system of expectations from his experience of interacting with other individuals and institutions.

Situation and interactions socially construct the identity of the homeless man. The homeless man and ordinary man are both aware of certain situational limits like those that Anderson listed. "For instance, I know that I am poor and that, therefore, I cannot expect to live in a fashionable suburb…" I must live in the projects (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:56). However, structural forces that cause homelessness often go unrecognized. Anderson (1923:86) argues that the causes of homelessness are rooted in "the very core of American life, in (the) industrial system, in education, cultural and vocational, in family relations, in the problems of racial and immigrant adjustment, and in the opportunity offered or denied by society for the expression of the wishes of the person." It is hard to envision the macro-level structures that cause homelessness during social interaction.

When a normal person interacts or sees a man he perceives to be homeless, that ordinary person inserts assumptions about the homeless into the interaction. For example, an ordinary person may see a bum on the street and ascribe an element of laziness to him. Liebow (2003)

explains how this is especially flawed logic when perceiving the desire to work. Some of the men who hang out on street corners during the day actually do have jobs but simply work at night or do not like the awful conditions of their small apartment so they choose to socialize on the streets. This does not mean they are unemployed or homeless.

Harper (2006:126, 21) describes situations where a working tramp is better off lying about any job he has. "They go right to the food stamp people. 'Have you worked in the last three months?' 'Nooo, nooo.' They sign their name and it's notarized!" This strategy allows a working tramp to receive food stamp benefits. Successful strategies like that help maintain independence. "In the tramp world, how one gets by when you're down on your luck becomes your marker, even your label." The contrast is clear. The same act deemed prestigious by tramps is deviant in the eyes of everyday people.

Social identity is one of the main components of social interaction. Ordinary people and street people interact with distinct identities and social statuses. "Individuals with widely different social roles live in the same climate of dramaturgical experience" (Goffman, 1959:112). Symbols, like ragged clothes and no teeth, are visually apparent in many of the interactions between the homeless and housed people.

Approaches to studying the social problem of homelessness range from broad demographic analyses to idiosyncratic relationships between the homeless and the public. From the statistical tables of DuBois (1899) to Anderson and the ethnographic work of the Chicago School (1923), scholars have studied the lowest class of individuals through different lenses. I argue that too much emphasis on quantitative analyses overlooks the real life experiences of homeless people. Social measures such as census data and unemployment rates ignore the

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important day-to-day interactions between the homeless and institutional support. While macro-level descriptions of the homeless problem are important, I suggest additional micro-level ethnographic work will supplement those studies.

There are several reasons why the homeless are problematically considered "invisible" in America and the experience is somewhat hidden. Merton (1938:677) says those individuals not properly oriented to society become "fictional." Such marginalization is the result of intense social pressures. Goffman (1959) explains that deviants like mental patients and homeless individuals fail to become visible others until they are physically placed within the institution. Once institutionalized, the deviant must behave as expected, acting within the parameters of the ascribed identity he has become (Goffman, 1963). Numerical categorizations of homeless populations simply do not encapsulate this analysis of the homeless experience.

I propose a reflexive approach to understand the homeless experience better. I begin by examining the causes, consequences, and categories of homelessness. Then, I dissect and review the literature on homelessness focusing on the gaps that have resulted in perpetuating and exacerbating the problem. It is important to provide a fresh examination of homelessness because the current policies to reduce homelessness are ineffective.

Homelessness is an appropriate phenomenon to study sociologically because it involves structural forces, observable behavior, social expectations, and symbolic interaction. The individualized behavior of the homeless man results from macro institutional forces like industrialization and inequality. The homeless identity is not explicitly definable. Rather, the homeless identity is socially constructed. There are over 500,000 homeless individuals in the United States and at least 12,227 counted in Michigan during 2014 (Figures 1 and 2). Anderson

estimated the number of homeless men ranged from 30,000 to 75,000 in Chicago immediately

preceding the Great Depression. The current figure for Chicago is either 6,287 or 100,000

depending on who is counting (Reynolds & CBS News, 2014; U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development, 2014b). As Blasi (1990) said, knowing the numbers only helps manage

homelessness but does little to address the fundamental causes.

The sociology of the homeless man is as relevant today as it ever was. Structural forces

are still in place, causing 7% of Americans to live in extreme poverty and about 1% of

Americans live in public housing (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015).

Income inequality is rising even as GDP (gross domestic product) increases (Figures 6 and 7).

These collective issues are visible in the lives of homeless individuals.

Fifty years of growing inequality and diminished mobility for the lowest class are

structural forces that produced circumstances of extreme poverty for individuals experiencing

homelessness and those who are in public housing, one misstep from homelessness (Figure 6).

This structural functional lens comes from the work of Durkheim (1895:3), who said there are

"ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of

coercion… they control him." Behavior is an actor-situation process that exists within a physical

environment. Individuals relate to their situations (Parsons, 1951).   Most of my theoretical

arguments support social constructionism and symbolic interactionism but I assume a structural

functionalist point of view.

Homeless individuals live hand to mouth for survival, performing a series of "coping

strategies." Some coping strategies are deviant, normal, align or conflict with institutional

strategies. Generally, the circumstances of extreme poverty limit individuals from focusing on

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long term goals or increasing their life chances. I provide a summary of low-income housing in America to emphasize the unappealing "next step" of upward mobility for the homeless.

Coping strategies play out in public settings. The identity of the homeless individual is primary constructed from an audience that overlooks the structural forces causing and sustaining extreme poverty. Neither media framing nor public interaction adequately shows the constraining social forces behind extreme poverty. When the media portray caricatures and misrepresentations about homeless behavior, ascribed identities may lead to enacted identities. This may be the self-fulfilling prophecy Merton (1948:194) described; "Once they have assigned meaning to the situation, their consequent behavior and some of the consequences of that behavior are determined by the ascribed meaning." I focus mainly on how coping with circumstances leads to identity formation. Those identities then become the public understanding of homelessness.

The process of identity construction results in public misconception. There are innumerable types of experiences that occur each day for those in extreme poverty. Some of those experiences include behaviors like begging, sleeping rough, or looking disheveled. However, I expect to discover a wide range of situations and behaviors, some actions originating from a system of expectation and others through a responsive coping mechanism.

Acknowledging diverse experiences is essential to building a new understanding of homelessness. The sensitizing questions I pose and arguments I make stem from qualitative analysis of data. The theoretical framework of structural functionalism influences the arguments built mainly upon social constructionism and symbolic interactionism. This study is essentially phenomenological and directly applicable to the sociology of the homeless man.

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Constructing Perceptions of Homeless People

Public perceptions of homelessness develop through two primary mechanisms: personal experience and media framing. Everyday interaction with homeless individuals occurs on the street in certain cities and public places. Identities are ascribed or enacted and, sometimes, the former leads to the latter. That process supports an argument for Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948; Parsell, 2011; Shalin, 1986). The homeless individual begins to perform actions that are expected of him. I use Goffman's (1959) set of definitions in this study to help explain that process:

Table 20. Definitions of Interaction

TERM	DEFINITION
Interaction (face-to-face)	the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence
An Interaction (encounter)	all the interaction which occurs throughout any one occasion when a given set of individuals are in one another's continuous presence
Performance	all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants
Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute to other performances as the audience, observers, or co-participants.	

(Goffman, 1959)

I base a definition of framing from the work of Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993:117). "Events do not speak for themselves but must be woven into some larger story line or frame." While the purpose of my study is not to completely analyze media, I feel it is important to state that my definition of media framing includes more than the news media. Any event that is "mediated" and framed is not restricted to a succinct set of media. Framing includes certain phenomena encompassed by social media, news media, and similar forms of communication. To use the Gamson and Wolfsfeld phrase, framing means to "weave events into some larger story line." This is common in the news and social media.

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The following list of characteristics is not an analysis of news content. The purpose of conveying this set of characteristics is to form a baseline understanding of how the media frame homeless individuals and issues of homelessness in the public sphere (Habermas, Lennox, & Lennox, 1974). I use a convenience sample of local news stories from major media outlets during the time of my study. Convenience sampling is appropriate because I am not analyzing this data. I am presenting a general set of characteristics about current perceptions of homelessness.

Table 21. Characteristics of Homelessness Through Local Media

	Psychological	Legal	Employment	Housing	Health	Sociocultural	
NORMAL	dignified	need help	physical laborer	in shelter system	sober	library patrons	in a relationship
	survivors	victim (of unfair housing)	working	living out of car	sick (chronic health condition)	use technology	families and children
						pet owner	transgender
DEVIANT	getting assistance	informal labor	transient	mental illness			
	need help	criminals	jobless	living in tent city	substance abuse		
	humiliated	domestic violence		evicted	fire hazard-level hoarding		unkempt

(Allen, 2014; Freed, 2014a, 2014b; Ockerman, 2014; Roelofs, 2014; Shackman, 1996; Stanton, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2014e, 2014f, 2014g; Westveer, 2014)

This list of characteristics does not cover a definite spectrum. However, I portray a simplistic distinction between favorable and unfavorable characteristics (i.e. normal and deviant). Another way to read the distinction is compliant versus non-compliant as an American citizen. Some of the favorable labels adhere to governmental regulations, e.g. to obey laws.

American governmental institutions are major contributors to the perception of homeless individuals. First, the legislature enacts laws that criminalize the activities common to the homeless experience (Allison, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Prois, 2012; Schuster, 2013). Second, lawmakers use terminology in statutes. For example, "the county department shall represent the facility to the public as the county medical care facility and shall make reasonable and continuing effort to divorce the facility from an association in the public mind with the words 'poor house' or 'poor farm'" (Michigan Legislature, 1925, 1939). Finally, in addition to appropriations, lawmakers have the ability to "create a state interagency council on homelessness; and to provide for its powers and duties" (Cavanagh et al., 2014). Michigan House of Representatives legislators proposed such a bill, mostly legislators from the legislative districts of this study, but failed to pass it during the time of this study. The American government has the power to give or withhold services to the homeless.

Public Perceptions of Homeless Individuals

The process of eliminating homelessness begins with acknowledging the diverse perceptions that regular people have about homeless individuals. Such stereotypes and stigma could originate from racial bias. Blasi calls these "hierarchies of scorn" (pg. 216) and differentiates between the public care and concern for a child versus condescension toward an able-bodied unemployed man. Lee, Tyler, and Wright (2010) claim attitudes held by housed citizens about the homeless vary by race. It is important to acknowledge that the public perception of homeless people may be different from the reality of the homeless experience.

More research should focus on public perceptions of homeless individuals, especially perceptions held by legislators. An increased emphasis on ascribed and enacted identities would benefit the knowledge that influences policy decisions. It seems obvious that the homeless

problem does not completely stem from choices and pathways of the homeless individual. Social forces play a part in decreasing mobility and influencing social outcomes like homelessness. Public perception is a social force. Public opinion as a social force on racial minorities and lower classes was something the Chicago School analyzed closely (Bogardus, 1929). Public interaction with the homeless and homeless identity formation is present in the literature but further studies are necessary to fill in the gaps left by prior research.

Public interaction and identify formation can be analyzed through a variety of approaches. First, the contact hypothesis suggests that "contact between members of an in-group and an out-group is expected to improve the attitudes of the former toward the latter by replacing in-group ignorance with first-hand knowledge that disconfirms stereotypes" (Lee, Farrell, & Link, 2004:40). However, there is a difference between contact and exposure. When a person interacts with a beggar on the street, the phenomenon is a superficially shallow moment. The lack of depth during the interaction often produces a negative feeling in the passerby, ascribing a trait of nuisance to the beggar (Lee, Farrell, & Link, 2004; Snow & Anderson, 1993). Ironically, policies that criminalize panhandling may unintentionally reduce the stigma of nuisance as a part of the homeless identity by decreasing the public presence of that perceived nuisance. By this logic, less public interaction could result in fewer negative stereotypes.

Knecht and Martinez (2009) studied the contact hypothesis using surveys built around Project Homeless Connect (PHC), a program later revised and mimicked by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The researchers measured perceptions of ordinary volunteers before and after those individuals spent a day with homeless people. The authors acknowledged a glaring question of validity; subjects were predisposed to sympathy for the homeless, as they were specifically involved to help. The results of this study indicated

volunteers who assisted the homeless during the experience feared the homeless less after the event, supporting the contact hypothesis. However, there was no significant increase in the desire to see more governmental funding for preventative programs after the event. Although public feelings of safety around the homeless improved with more contact, negative impressions of ineffective policies remained stable.

<div style="text-align: center;">Public Perceptions of Governmental Policies to Reduce Homelessness</div>

Perceived ineffectiveness of governmental policies is a serious issue. Phelan et al. (1995) argues that education influences the formation of tolerant attitudes toward homeless people but education fails to elicit support for economic policies that aid the homeless. This argument supports the notion that culture preserves stratified hierarchies. The beliefs, norms, and values of the dominant group (housed people) justify the existing social order. This "fundamental attribution error" ignores the potential for structural forces to influence life chances and overemphasizes personal attributes as the necessary qualities for success (Phelan, Link, Moore, & Stueve, 1997:325). A prevailing individualistic point of view leads to diminished support for policies as solutions.

Homelessness is a social problem often quantified in annual reports from both governmental and independent agencies. The first sentence of the federal "Strategic action plan on homelessness" includes three statistical estimates (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). The first paragraph of the most reputable independent report proclaims a point-in-time count of around 578,424 Americans experiencing homelessness, a 2.3% decline from the prior year (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015). While these are important numbers to consider, this data fails to explain many aspects of the homeless problem.

<u>The Problem of Categorizing Homeless Individuals</u>

The first step to eliminating this social problem is to acknowledge there are several causes, categories, and pathways out of homelessness. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) use various categorical schemes ranging from general to specific. The most basic categories include unsheltered, families, chronically homeless, veterans, and at-risk individuals. The government counts each of these groups and measures trends. There is nothing inherently wrong about reporting numbers. I argue that the emphasis is too heavy on quantitative data used to explain the homeless experience.

Qualitative research is vital to the study of homelessness because it can link the real life experiences of homeless individuals with statistical data collected by the U.S. government and NGOs. The point-in-time counts indicate how many people are homeless in America. Researchers ought to use qualitative and quantitative analyses to describe causes and consequences of homelessness. Yet, an essential research question precedes those reports about the number of homeless people in America: Why do we want to know? Blasi (1990) argues that the categorical information is helpful to manage homelessness but such data fail to provide any route toward a solution.

Each stakeholder has a certain motivation for knowing how many Americans are homeless. The United States government considers cost savings when implementing policies to manage homelessness. Institutionalization is a far more expensive option than "freeing" the homeless with the independent financial support of welfare. Scull (1977) divides this choice of welfare support into two perspectives, to view welfare as either a social investment or a social expense. Incarceration is essentially a punishment for deviant individuals but the homeless are

not lawbreakers by default. Therefore, the federal government must handle the homeless deviant differently than a criminal.

One major difference between the roaming homeless and the criminally incarcerated is that the homeless population represents a reserve labor "army," a concept popularly affixed to Marx. This group of perceived potential (but currently unemployed) workers suppresses wages due to the surplus of available workers in the labor market. When there are more workers than jobs, the price of labor is lower just like prices drop when bread becomes too stale to sell as fresh. The United States federal government operates a capitalist economy and knowing the quantity of homeless individuals is synonymous with measuring the reserve labor surplus. This possible ulterior motive brings into question the objectivity of quantitative reporting of homeless populations.

A second general difference between someone on Skid Row versus Death Row is that the homeless individual, if able-bodied, are possible candidates for rehabilitation. Labelling the homeless as "drunk" is a common stereotypic identity that has roots in truth (Parsell, 2011). Anderson (1923:49) describes beggars who are "rum-dum" drunk and panhandle until they sober up. If alcoholism is his only malady, the homeless man might clean himself up. Although Snow et al. (1986:418) suggest deinstitutionalized individuals are "presumed too impaired to seek employment," Warner (1989) explains how rehabilitative programs return workers to a deflated labor market. Despite that unique potential for rehabilitation, the homeless often share a common quality with criminals: mental illness.

Estimates of mental illness range from 25% to 50% for the homeless and around 11% for inmates (Warner, 1989). When milder mental illnesses are included in those measures, the

numbers jump to an astounding 90% but closer analysis might support an argument that those rates are exaggerated (Snow, Baker, Anderson, & Martin, 1986). Regardless of the percentage of homeless who are mentally ill, there are two basic options for these individuals: institutionalization or deinstitutionalization. Criminal incarceration is outside the scope of this paper but research generally supports the notion that deinstitutionalizing the homeless is cost effective (Scull, 1977; Warner, 1989).

Of course, the mentally ill homeless population does not exist without cost. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI), Medicaid, and other welfare mechanisms are governmental programs that pay for care outside of the hospitals. There will always be a cost associated to managing the homeless. Policies tend to operate as Band-Aids placed over gaping social wounds, created through a process of legislative concessions. The government has consistently enacted new programs based on a cost savings approach to treating the mentally ill.

There are other financial incentives for different entities to serve a homeless population. For example, as Scull and any rational person argues, the agencies that serve the homeless only benefit from maintaining clientele. Governmental bureaucracies and NGOs alike devote resources to serving the homeless. As the homeless population declines, so do the numbers of agencies that accommodate them.

There is an undercurrent of racism maintaining a homeless population disproportionally represented by African-Americans. Blasi explicitly calls out the "obvious" role that racism plays in the homeless phenomenon (pg. 216), a statement supported by numeric data.

Table 22. Homeless Rates by Race (2010)

	United States	White	Black
National Census	308,745,538	223,553,265	42,020,743
Total Who Experienced Homelessness	1,593,150	662,750	589,465
Per 10,000	51.6	29.7	140.3

(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011)

Categorizing the homeless into subpopulations has not eliminated the social problem. This quantitative approach to describing the problem has only resulted in policies that shift appropriated funds from one group to another. Starting with policies like the Housing Act of 1937 (Wagner-Steagall) to SSDI in 1956 to Medicaid in 1965, the government has addressed the issue of homelessness as if there was a single answer to solving the problem: put money toward (or, oddly, remove it from programs) eliminating the root cause or consequence of homelessness.

Current popular categorizations align with current policies to address the homeless problem. Some of the goals of these policies are to return the individuals to permanent housing (e.g. Section 8). Other policies address the pathways to homelessness like mental illness (e.g. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) or seek to provide assistance for large subpopulations like veterans (e.g. Department of Veterans Affairs). Both the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) and HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants focus on children and homeless families. From a distance, it seems logical to categorize over a half million homeless individuals into groups and initiate programs to help pull those groups out of extreme poverty. Yet, the categorical approach has not yet eliminated the problem.

On the surface, subpopulations seem appropriately grouped (sheltered/rough, families, chronic, veterans, youth, mentally ill, etc.) but scholars agree that these groups are not clearly

definable (Snow, Baker, Anderson, & Martin, 1986; Warner, 1989). An alcoholic has a different

mental condition than a schizophrenic. Sexual assault and fetal alcohol syndrome could be

associated with family circumstances. The stigma of homelessness may have more of an impact

on youth than reduced access to public education. I make no claims about specific correlations

between certain phenomena listed above because there are very few studies on the intricacies of

the homeless experience. More research will help fill in the gaps left by large-scale grouping.

<p align="center">A Framework for New Research</p>

Deviance, including homelessness, is not reducible to a statistical definition of "anything

that varies too widely from the average" nor is deviance reducible to a manifestation of mental

illness (Becker, 1963). Categorizations have not benefitted the homeless at large. To fill the

gaps left by a historical emphasis on quantitative analysis, I propose a qualitative research model

that will address the causes and consequences of homelessness. This research is useful for

developing new legislative policy to address the social problem of homelessness.

In short, I explain how social forces and circumstances can affect the life chances of an

individual. Mental health is both a cause and component of homelessness for many individuals.

Similarly, employment (or lack thereof) is both a cause and component of homelessness. I pay

close attention to the work that homeless individuals perform while homeless. Work is a basic

example of an activity that can help someone escape homelessness. Focusing on strengths and

resilience, I examine what leads a person toward housing. Of course, identifying as "homeless"

plays a major part in the experience of being homeless so I review the literature and explore the

formation and maintenance of the homeless identity. This manuscript is comprehensive but can

be split into its respective sections when necessary, certain themes applicable to future studies.

<center>Reclassifying Homelessness</center>

The basic premise of this research is reclassifying the homeless as underserved, almost removing the stigma of failure completely. Focusing on subgroups is not a new idea (Breakey & Fischer, 1990). Even quantitative survey data has produced new categorization schemas (Grigsby, Baumann, Gregorich, & Roberts-Gray, 1990). For example, the homeless have been labeled as such: (i) recently dislocated; (ii) vulnerable; (iii) outsiders; and (iv) prolonged. Researchers and service agencies often group individuals using these categorical labels.

Even when grouping like this, based on certain characteristics, each individual has a unique experience that is different from all the rest in his category. This is a sound argument, that every individual has a history and distinct worldview socially constructed over his lifetime. Qualitative scholars show this variability of experience in many ways. When explaining "conditions of the group," Harper (2006:137) submits 13 photographs and 8 of those pictures portray a single man; the rest consist of only 2 or 3 in a group. He then dives right into the story of one man, Jesse, and his plight to find employment while sober from heroin. Qualitative research avoids generalizing the homeless experience into a discrete set of characteristics.

Table 23. Characteristics of Homeless Types

	Recently Dislocated	**Vulnerable**	**Outsiders**	**Prolonged**
Duration	Minimal	Moderate	Moderate	Severe
Social Networks	Small	Extremely Small	Large	Small
Mental Health and Dysfunction	Mild/Minimal	Severe	Mild/Minimal	Moderate

(Grigsby, Baumann, Gregorich, & Roberts-Gray, 1990)

A common public perception is that individuals choose to be homeless. Yet, even those individuals make intricate choices within their lives that are distinct from others in their predicament (Parsell & Parsell, 2012). These individuals in the "outsiders" category do not represent the entire "homeless" population. Yet, public perception is sometimes concentrated on

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that single quality – lack of housing. This perception may be accurate for the outsiders. Either these individuals choose to sleep rough or they made choices throughout their lives that produced the condition of homelessness. Again, this does not explain the entirety of the homeless experience and "choice" is probably not the predominant pathway to homelessness.

Public consensus can develop out of perception when interaction validates a perception even once. This is the case when the "outsiders" represent what it means to be "homeless." The social problem becomes "homelessness" and the solution is simply to "house" those people. Explained through Public Arenas Theory, legislators and commoners begin to exclude other social issues from public concern. Many social issues start to compete symbolically against other issues for resources (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988; Lee, Lewis, & Jones, 1992). Singling out a perceived social problem often fails to solve the collection of issues that truly exist. This is why I provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem, addressing multiple conditions of disadvantage. Social networks, mental health, low wages, and fewer opportunities to work are components of the homeless experience. Lack of affordable housing and crime also manifest within environments of extreme poverty. However, the "broken windows" theory is fundamentally flawed. It does not seek to prevent the real issues involved. For example, the Safer Cities Initiative in Los Angeles did not eliminate homelessness in Skid Row. A better solution to "reducing homeless-related crime" would be to reduce homelessness first. This logic applies to any of a variety of homeless conditions: homeless-related mental illness, homeless-related poverty, homeless-related stigmatization, homeless-related disadvantage, etc. Policies must address the antecedents, which is why I focus the analyses in this research on the underlying conditions of homelessness.

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Disadvantaged Families

A holistic approach to understanding homelessness involves examining the preconditions and pathways that lead to outcomes of disadvantage. Pathways research involves biographical narrative methods used to discover conditions that (i) cause an individual to leave housing and (ii) reduce thriving once the individual has become independent. A social constructionist approach is necessary to discover how the individual defined "self" during different periods throughout the life course (Clapham, 2003). This theoretical application should examine intentional actions that lead to unintended consequences.

An "at risk" family is not simply an impoverished group of biologically related individuals. Therefore, a social constructionist approach analyzes disadvantage more deeply than any study that reduces homelessness to a limited cause-and-effect pathway. I stress the importance of integrating analysis of disadvantaged families with the other components in this report, including but not limited to: mental illness, low wages, and stigmatization. A simple lack of material resources fails to explain why some poor people are not homeless and does not approach the pathway out of homeless, from extreme despair to moderate stability (Fertig & Reingold, 2008). This is why biographical narratives and other qualitative methods are necessary to include in a comprehensive study of homelessness.

Mental Health

I expect that independence is a primary motivator on the path toward homelessness. In other words, a desire to live independently can be detrimental to the individual. In the prior section on disadvantaged families, I suggest that leaving home is a conscious act of independence that may result in negative consequence for the individual. The same potential exists for avoidance of mental health care. Qualitative methods like interviews and biographical

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narratives help gather data on how the individual perceived mental health care throughout his life. Initially, I categorize potential responses into perceptions that define (i) mental health care as ineffective and (ii) receiving mental health care as a behavior that exhibits reliance, i.e. on the institution and/or others.

Rejecting mental health care certainly occurs, to some extent, due to the stigma of illness (Corrigan, 2004). Accepting mental health care may also diminish self-esteem (e.g. amplify feelings of neediness). The stigma around mental illness is not exclusive to the homeless and destitute. Protecting reputation, identity management, and hiding the illness are all coping mechanisms for individuals and families in general (Yarrow, Clausen, & Robbins, 1955). Mental illness is a social problem often hidden, on purpose, to "protect" the self-esteem of the individual and otherwise avoid the label of "abnormal."

There are two concepts, previously mentioned, that must be overcome in order to adequately address mental illness and its effects on the homeless condition. First, Public Arenas Theory suggests that legislators and the public are limited to solving a discrete set of social problems at one time. In other words, there are limited resources available to devote toward social issues. Mental illness is often hidden until the person acts out. Therefore, it is imperative that research on homelessness shows the effects of mental illness throughout the life courses of homeless and disadvantaged individuals quite clearly. Second, policies cannot follow a "broken windows" approach to addressing mental illness. Untreated mental illness may be a primary cause of homelessness. Therefore, policies that address the outcomes of mental illness (e.g. homelessness, crime, and general deviance) have no effect on the root problem.

The current popular approach to solving homelessness is Housing First, "an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need" (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2013). The logic of programs like Housing First is flawed. It is a noble concept to house the individuals first and then treat them for their mental illness. This assumes that (i) they agree or want to receive housing and (ii) the entire scope of causes on the pathway to homelessness will disappear and never come back. Agencies need to discover and address the root causes first. For example, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2015) offers resources that provide "Help for Veterans" and instruction around "Coping with Traumatic Events." It is no coincidence that veterans experience post-traumatic stress disorder at higher rates than the general population. PTSD, by its very name, is a disorder that occurs after traumatic stress. The stress of war, among other things, causes the disorder. Again, these programs are out of sequence. Finding and addressing the root causes of mental illness is a logical first step.

<u>Working Poor</u>

Unemployment rates ignore the homeless of society. As I previously argued, Public Arenas Theory suggests a lack of knowledge about the homeless experience can lead to a lack of concern within policy decisions because legislators deal with a variety of social problems and can only focus on a select few at a time. Unemployment rates tend to grab public attention because those statistics are easy to understand at a surface level. When the public and legislators are concerned with reducing joblessness, they overlook the underlying issues of disadvantage.

Casual observation produces skewed perceptions about the lives of destitute individuals. For example, the current poverty guideline in the United States for a single person is $11,770 in

annual income. Minimum wage in Michigan is $8.15 per hour. This means that an individual who works 27.8 hours per week at a minimum wage job is in poverty. It also means that an individual who works "full time" (30 hours per week) at minimum wage is not in poverty ($12,714 annual income). The statistical categories used in these examples include classifying individuals as "working" and in or out of "poverty." Therefore, a casual observer can read statistics regarding the unemployment and poverty rates and look no further. This casual observer is misinformed and has a skewed perception about poverty in America.

National statistics can also produce feelings of helplessness in individuals who understand that the structural problems are far too massive for any individual to solve, e.g. through interaction with a homeless person. Dromi (2012) interviewed individuals who interacted with homeless people and discovered that those ordinary people believed that the problems were not solvable through an exchange of street philanthropy. Passers-by perceived drug addiction and other "serious problems" to be insurmountable obstacles for the street people. Again, statistics do very little to move public perception toward a solution.

In sum, stereotypes and assumptions about homeless people stem from non-empirical assumptions (Shier, Jones, & Graham, 2010). The notion that homeless people are unemployed might stem from seeing street people begging for money. Perhaps those beggars are actually living in low-income housing while truly homeless individuals are selling newspapers on city street corners. Narratives are critical to a comprehensive analysis of the homeless experience. "The strengths and voices of the poor are important adjuncts to complement the mostly quantitative studies on poverty" (Okech, Howard, Mauldin, Mimura, & Kim, 2012:433). Empirical data supplement macro-level statistics, supporting or negating the assumptions that common people and legislators have about the working poor and homeless individuals.

Strengths and Resiliency of the Underserved

Simply put, the homeless have needs and the federal government has appropriated funds that support programs to serve those needs. However, the strengths of the individuals experiencing poverty need more emphasis. Programs should leverage the strengths of the individuals, not reduce those strengths. Getting to know shelter residents is one pragmatic method of discovering strengths and limitations of individual residents. "Shelter life is stressful, and shelter rules can become an added burden for the family. There is a need for shelter providers and other service providers to establish better relationships with homeless families so that they truly serve as helpers rather than contributors of increased stress" (Thrasher & Mowbray, 1995:100). While this recommendation applies to social workers who directly serve homeless people, researchers using qualitative methods should utilize the same approach. This is a reverse model of assistance. Ask the homeless what they need first. Then, provide that assistance.

Discovering the Homeless Identity

As I previously argued, a social constructionist approach is helpful to uncovering how the individual forms an identity throughout the life course (Clapham, 2003). Symbolic interactionism is applicable to the contact hypothesis, i.e. to discover the extent that contact between the homeless and housed people improves the attitudes of the housed people toward the homeless by replacing public ignorance with first-hand knowledge that disconfirms stereotypes (Lee, Farrell, & Link, 2004). However, increased contact between homeless individuals and others has not solved the homeless problem. For example, privileged middle-class passers-by do not lift every beggar out of poverty nor do those people take the time to understand the intricacies of the homeless experience completely during the brief interactions that occur on

street corners. The beggar, even if living in low-income housing, becomes "homeless" in the eyes of the ordinary people simply through a mechanism of ascribed identity formation.

There are still many gaps in the literature regarding homeless identity formation. These gaps connect to other themes discussed throughout this manuscript. For example, the notion put forward by Parsell (2011:447) that "physical presentation can be seen as both a representation and illustration of the identity people are trying to convey" falls flat when the individual is unable to purposefully present himself due to limited resources or mental illness. Performative Theory is limited to observing an identity through the physical enactment of the self. This assumes, to some extent, that homeless individuals purposely convey their physical presentation.

One of the major assumptions that I make in this study is that the publicly constructed perception of homelessness develops through two primary streams: (i) personal experience and (ii) media framing. By personal experience, I mean normal everyday interaction with homelessness no matter the frequency. This may take the form of passing a beggar on the street or driving by a shelter on the way to school. By media framing, I mean normal everyday consumption of media representations of homelessness. This may take the form of a newspaper or TV news story or it could mean watching a TV show drama or movie that depicts a homeless person. In other words, I suggest there are two main ways to perceive homelessness: directly and mediated.

Before I proceed to describe homeless characteristics as they appear through a mediated lens, it is important to explain the concepts of framing and mediated imagery. A cynic might argue that all media messaging originates from a single interest held by the media firm. For example, Herman & Chomsky (2002) argue that media is only created and sold to produce profit

for the media firms and advertising partners. Since those who have means mostly purchase papers and stories in bulk, there is no reason to divulge the true causes and circumstances of the homeless experience if profit is what matters.

The media firm might maintain other priorities in its own self-interest. A critical race theorist might argue that the media firm prioritizes its whiteness first and foremost, conveying stories and imagery that negate the black man's value to society. A feminist theorist would argue similarly that the media firms frame sexual assault victimhood to place blame on the woman. In either case, marginalized groups are often demonized (Armour, 1997). Demonizing the homeless can occur through framing by private media firms and public institutions as well.

The public, through lawmakers and ballot measures, criminalize homelessness. This manifests through protocol. Many shelters force residents to leave during the day to wander into urban areas where the following activities are criminal: loitering, drinking in public, begging, and sleeping in parks or on city benches (Foscarinis, 1996). I just offered three potential media interests that conflict with the general interests of homeless individuals: profit for the firm, promoting whiteness by denigrating blackness, and blaming women (and other marginalized groups or victims) as the cause of social ills. Through these and other lenses, I suggest that the American mass media generally holds different interests than the homeless population.

Media framing possibly exists within the homeless stories conveyed by newspapers and on TV shows. I am not arguing that the media collectively persuades the public to view homelessness as an epidemic, social problem, or undeserving poor. I simply offer it for consideration.

Pathways

The general progression of the Midwestern American homeless experience began with pauperism in the late 1700s, developed into hobo vagrancy during the 1800s, shifted from Civil War camps to railways leading into the 1900s, and included many out-of-work individuals resulting from both the Great Depression and 1980s recession. Poor farms, poor houses, settlement houses, and religious charities fed and housed the poor throughout the twentieth century. During times of extremely high joblessness, like 1983 and 2010, soup kitchens and charities saw an increase of out-of-work individuals and families.

However, at the time of this manuscript in 2015, the unemployment rate is low for several Michigan locations. The current unemployment rates in many Michigan metropolitan areas are at the lowest in almost ten years and on a constant decline (United States Department of Labor, 2015). Given this social fact, it is necessary to examine the public perceptions of homeless individuals in addition to statistics that offer a glimpse into pathways.

On the surface, it seems that fewer homeless individuals will be "jobless, looking for work." At the same time, there are less "infirmaries" to house the poor. It makes sense that more homeless individuals will be either mentally or physically ill, i.e. unable to work. The unemployment rates are falling faster than the shelter occupancy rates so there must be pathways to homelessness other than lack of jobs.

Figure 36. Detroit Metropolitan Unemployment Rate (1983 to 2013)
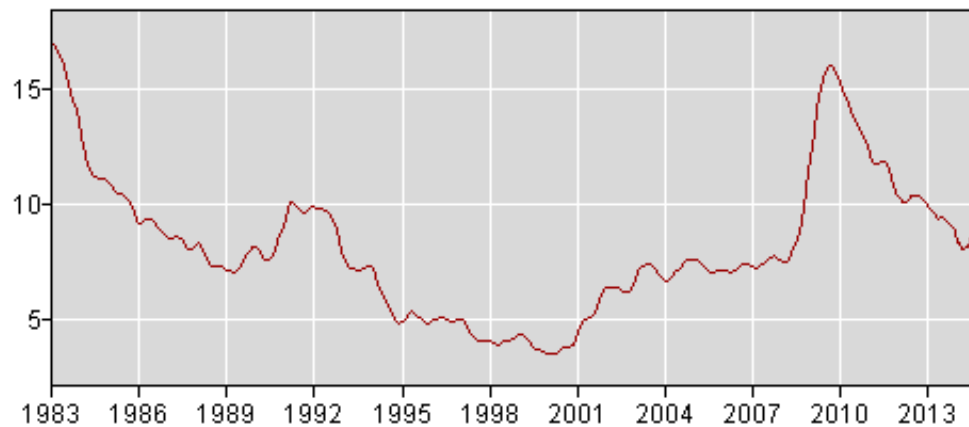
Figure 37. Lansing Metropolitan Unemployment Rate (1990 to 2014)
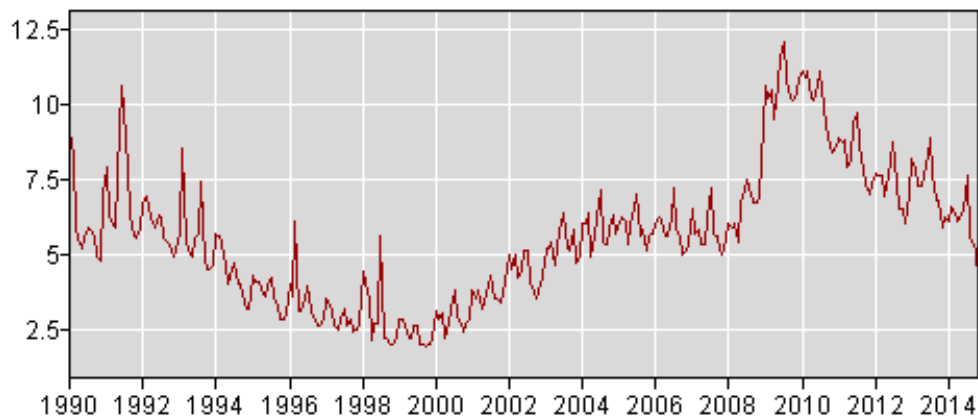
<div align="center">Upward Mobility</div>

An examination of upward mobility is extremely relevant to the study of homelessness because of the ways that certain statuses manifest during the homeless experience. First, one form of upward mobility in America is the ability to pursue and obtain a job. For some homeless individuals, this is unrealistic due to a mental or physical disability. On the other hand, the homeless might get jobs that provide very low income or chance for promotion. In that case, the individual has moved "up" to "employed" status but may not actually be any better off. Second, the individual might pursue housing outside of the shelter. The status of being "housed" is

somewhat vague in that an individual is "housed" in the shelter, in temporary housing, living with friends or family, etc. Therefore, the goals and aspirations of the homeless individuals range widely.

The "homeless" reference group is also vague. Individuals may be in and out of work or housing. Soup kitchens provide assistance to the homeless and working poor so there is frequent crossover of reference groups. During periods of national recession, middle-class Americans become jobless and eat at the same tables as several of these reference groups. For those reasons, it is difficult for a homeless individual to develop a precise reference group image.

The final intersection between social mobility and homelessness worth mentioning is the discrepancy between ceremonial and working aspects of social position. Family, social service workers, or peers may influence the reference group image that the homeless individual develops of "housed" people. This reference group image then determines how the homeless individual acts in certain situations. Turner (1964:361) explains how ceremonial aspects of social position are observable in formal situations. Working aspects, however, guide behavior that is typically unseen and not formal. Turner gives the example of an immigrant who formally learns English "without its idioms and the mores without their normal latitudes." A parallel example would be the homeless individual who learns how to sell newspapers on the street but fails to develop other goals and values that are typical to American upward mobility. While the homeless individual ceremonially "works" on the street, there are strong forces that may exclude him from the means of upward mobility.

Upward mobility is not reducible to a mechanism based on goals and means. The experience of the homeless individual is often oversimplified. For example, the homeless

individual may have goals congruent with the American Dream: food, work, and housing. He

may even receive those elements from certain social services: soup kitchen, selling newspapers,

and the shelter. However, possessing these "goals and means" clearly does not ensure that the

homeless individual is upwardly mobile.

Table 24. Causes of Poverty (1899)

By sickness and misfortune	40%
By lack of steady employment	30%
By laziness, improvidence and intemperate drink	20%
By crime	10%

(DuBois, 1899)

Pathways to homelessness and the upward mobility of the homeless individual intersect.

For example, an individual may lose a job because of an injury and then become homeless.

Since the means to a job disappeared, the goal to work might as well. This is only one of many

examples where pathways to homelessness and upward mobility intersect.

Table 25. Mental Health Statistics of the Poor (1891-1895)

THE INSANE				
	Whites		**Negroes**	
	Total Receptions	*Insane*	*Total Receptions*	*Insane*
1891	6,195	264	569	13
1892	5,694	450	537	45
1893	5,884	427	567	39
1894	5,339	441	569	38
1895	5,712	463	606	52

(DuBois, 1899) "Total Receptions" refers to those admitted to a particular almshouse.

DuBois (1899) documented these aspects of poverty over one hundred years ago in

Philadelphia. Work, drugs or alcohol use, and mental health are still relevant to the current

examination of homelessness. Although DuBois included extensive field notes regarding alcohol

consumption and "saloon" patronage, I exclude those figures from this section because it is not comparable to the information presented in the data I obtained.

As shown in these tables, many aspects of the homeless experience intersect. For example, DuBois combined laziness and drunkenness. Insanity was only a proportion of the sickness listed as a cause of poverty. It is common in American culture now to refer to alcoholism as an illness. While I do not perform statistical analysis to compare ratios of these figures to the present day, it is important to note that these are not new pathways to homelessness.

Theoretical Basis for Data and Analysis

Since my unit of analysis is the life of the homeless man, I acquire data that include phenomena of everyday life. "Everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world. As sociologists we take this reality as the object of our analyses" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:33). To obtain this data, I observe interactions and take field notes. I triangulate that data with casual interviews, surveys, and multifaceted ethnography. I include embedded observation (auto ethnography), researcher observation, and visual ethnography (photographs). Most of these methods occur simultaneously through a grounded theory approach.

The convenience sample includes homeless individuals (roughly n=100) and ordinary people (about n=100) in Michigan who primarily live in a college town or deindustrialized city during the time of the study. Again, I use grounded theory so that "the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process – they are interrelated and go on simultaneously" (Creswell, 2007:150). I position a phenomenological lens

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to describe "what" participants experience and "how" they experienced it; the structure (environment) provides context. I conduct ethnography to develop a structured story of the participant experience.

I use coding to develop themes, e.g. "coping strategies." I expect to discover preexisting themes as well as new emergent themes that I did not expect, e.g. "first available" decision-making. The codes represent my expectations, surprising information, and themes that are conceptually interesting (Creswell, 2007). I do not quantify much of anything, as sometimes occurs in ethnography, because I am not categorizing individuals (e.g. not by race, gender, etc.). When appropriate, I quantify some themes using the Dedoose qualitative research tool. I rely heavily on visual data (photographs). There is some "photo elicitation" in my survey but mostly I use photos to express my themes.

<u>Contribution of the Research</u>

I produce new information regarding the sociology of the homeless man. I use grounded theory to discover "what caused this phenomenon to occur (and) what strategies or actions actors employed in response to it" (Creswell, 2007:237). The phenomena in this study are the circumstances of extreme poverty. I explain responsive actions and a system of expectations, both components of a strategy to cope with circumstances. I expect many of the coping strategies will exacerbate the preexisting diminished life chances and lack of upward mobility.

The structural force of extreme poverty causes behaviors that add to already increasing inequality. Homelessness is a social problem closely tied to extreme poverty and lack of upward mobility. The federal government spends billions of dollars each year in an effort to reduce the number of people counted as homeless. This collective national effort manifests as the "Opening

Doors" strategic plan to "prevent and end" homelessness. Local efforts include "homeless taxes" passed in county elections to fund transitional housing programs (Monacelli, 2015). I argue the problem will not vanish simply by targeting a reduction of PIT count numbers. The problem of homelessness is much more complicated.

As inequality increases, the most destitute individuals continue to lack upward mobility. The homeless have almost zero capital, status, property, or life chances. The homeless lifestyle, a navigation of circumstances, is a result of experiencing the lowest class situation and having the lowest social status. Because they are socially ostracized from the public, homeless people are perhaps one of the most stereotyped and stigmatized groups in America.

When ragged individuals perform certain behaviors in public spaces, their distinction as homeless evokes certain preconceived notions about their (i) financial standing; (ii) alternative options; and (iii) lifestyle choices. Orinary people who live in different circumstances socially construct homeless identities. I examine identity construction empirically. Identity is a conceptual bridge between individual and society (Snow & Anderson, 1987). Behaviors like begging, sleeping rough and collecting cans for deposit do not contribute to positive social status.

Snow and Anderson (1987) suggest that functions of the homeless are not the type that build personal significance or self-worth in the individual. I argue such functions do not come through autonomous choice. The norms, beliefs, and values of homeless culture are a result of circumstances, not vice versa. The federal government currently lists alcohol, drug use, incarceration, and psychiatric hospitalization as components of the "cycle of chronic homelessness." Yet, these elements are present in some of the wealthiest privileged lifestyles.

Social forces are much stronger than individual motivation. Because of their circumstances, homeless individuals manifest resiliency in different ways than normal people.

I provide an alternative perspective than the federal government conveys in its plan to end homelessness. Current policies focus too much on individual behaviors and categorize individuals to support claims that certain behaviors cause homelessness. To be blunt, this is the same message conveyed by Moynihan fifty years ago. Sociologists generally reacted to the Moynihan Report (1965) by discrediting its claim that "the black family is drastically different from the white family in the way it treats its children and in the results it produces" (Berger & Simon, 1974:160). In fact, researchers argued, "there are forces operating in the society which produce the high rates of illegitimacy, unemployment, and other antisocial factors which Moynihan reported, but these are not solely family factors." I argue similarly for those experiencing homelessness. Homeless individuals are not drastically different from others in the way they generally cope with circumstances. The homeless are not distinctly different from those in public housing or living at 50% of poverty. I contribute new research to poverty and inequality studies, supporting the argument that social forces constrain the homeless.

Michigan is an ideal location to study homelessness. Throughout my study, I collect information during dramatically different seasons and record how the weather affects the day-to-day lives of homeless individuals. I expect extreme conditions to force the homeless to seek refuge in shelters, ridding them of some personal autonomy. I expect the cost of living in certain areas results in variability of the homeless experience. For example, the low cost of living in Detroit allows severely impoverished individuals to live in close proximity, housed in squalor and comingling with the homeless on Skid Row. The high cost of living in Ann Arbor and

suburban Oakland County forces individuals to the shelter or to sleeping in cars, as no affordable housing is available in those areas. The difference between Detroit and other areas is vast.

I provide a fresh look at homelessness and offer a new definition of the phenomenon. While the government focuses its effort on welfare benefits, public housing, and mental health services, it overlooks those actions the homeless perform in response to their circumstances. Drug use and avoiding the shelter or public housing by socializing at Skid Row or in tent cities are examples of these coping mechanisms the government primarily addresses by criminalizing the acts. Services are clearly inadequate as homeless continue to die at shelters in Ann Arbor and Detroit (Counts, 2015; Kiertzner, 2015). A local analysis of the homeless experience is critical now. The problem needs an alternative focus in order for long time issues to be resolved.

Much of the information regarding homelessness involves broad demographic statistical analyses. The data are valid, but present a narrow and limited understanding of the homeless experience. Unemployment and poverty rates portray the homeless as a single group, a sort of monolithic existence. However, there is more to homelessness than is expressed by the quantitative reports used to influence legislation addressing this epidemic. While 578,424 individuals experience homelessness on any given night in America, each individual experience is different. I conduct research that involves linking the real life experiences of homeless individuals with government data collection and the legislative decision making processes.

The homeless experience involves three main characteristics: identity, social forces, and navigating. These are not distinct elements, which is why I conduct research that encompasses the homeless individual and the surrounding environment. This is a new approach to research that used to lump the homeless into a single group or limited set of categories. My research

focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and derives themes from the set of those individual experiences.

This research is generally beneficial because it contributes to a better understanding of how to address individual needs more efficiently. Presently, the public generally perceives the "homeless" as a deviant group requiring numerous costly social support programs. I suggest there are subcategories of homeless individuals. When the government meets the specific needs of these individual, it avoids unnecessarily expensive support. For example, it is possible that mental illness leads to homelessness, addiction, and joblessness. The responsive treatment of these outcomes could shift toward prevention that is more economical. However, the current tendency to treat the "homeless" unnecessarily clusters these conditions together.

The first step to eliminating this social problem is to acknowledge there are several causes, categories, and pathways out of homelessness. The second step toward eliminating homelessness begins with acknowledging the diverse perceptions that housed people have about homeless individuals. I base my research questions on this dichotomous framework: (i) How do individuals experiencing homelessness identify themselves and the support they receive? (ii) How does the public attempt to understand and meet the needs of destitute individuals?

To answer these research questions, I conducted an ethnography of the homeless experience. I interviewed the working poor, lived in the shelter system for several weeks, and conducted informal discussions with administrators at various centers and missions. I presented and continue to present my research at various national conferences.

The next phase of my research will examine other specific needs of destitute individuals. My initial research left gaps because I began by grouping the homeless into a single category. I

learned that there are many subpopulations of homeless individuals with distinctly different needs. My ongoing research will fill specific gaps left by my prior research and that of other scholars.

Qualitative methods expose the real life health care needs and services that exist within the homeless community. Future research should focus on two initial types of health care needs: mental health and dental care. Mental health is not in plain sight. This is important to the study of homelessness because of the unseen disadvantage that mental illness presents when untreated. The public should not ascribe the identity of "lazy bum who is unwilling to work" to certain homeless individuals with mental illness. Dental care is a key component of overall health often underemphasized. Proper dental hygiene and care prevents tooth loss and oral pain. Both mental health and dental care are essential needs of homeless people. The homeless would benefit from increased mental health and dental care.

In what follows, I conduct qualitative methods to gain new insight about the perceptions that ordinary people and professionals have of homeless individuals. This is important because public perceptions influence legislation and determine support for services. Citizens have the power to vote for legislators and the legislators hold the pens to write policies. Therefore, the perceptions of homelessness are critical to addressing the issue. This examination will focus on two key components: the working poor and the strengths of homeless individuals. As stated above, some perceive the homeless as unwilling to work. In fact, some homeless individuals do work and others are not able due to physical or mental disabilities (i.e. they are willing but unable to work). The work lives of homeless individuals vary dramatically, ranging from illegally illicit prostitution and drug sales to generally acceptable day labor.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Studying Extreme Poverty

Statistics do not fully describe conditions of extreme poverty and its derivatives because most of the primary variables measured are not absolute. Even when measuring poverty levels based on hard line numbers like assets and income, statisticians compare those figures to national averages or some other index. Longitudinal measures of poverty are also relative because those models compare one year of poverty (i.e. current state) with preceding and future years. Financial capital is dynamic and virtually impossible to measure without some relation to another metric.

Scholars measure poverty both economically and socially. While these are not the only paradigms, they are common in the literature. Williamson and Hyer (1975) reviewed sixteen measures of poverty developed in a panel study at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center. They divided those measures into three main categories: relative, absolute, and longitudinal poverty. The researchers focus on economic indicators, acknowledging both objective relative deprivation (actual income relative to poverty line) and subjective relative deprivation (subjects' feelings of inadequacy about their relatively low income). The researchers also cite measures other than wealth, including "gifts of food from relatives" (pg. 654). Yet, Williamson and Hyer avoid including such measures because "to operationalize such measures would unquestionably prove most difficult." The researchers emphasize economic measures of poverty (over social measures) out of convenience.

Williamson and Hyer (1975) make a very weak argument to exclude qualitative social factors in poverty studies. In addition to claiming it "difficult" to measure poverty qualitatively, the researchers cite Banfield (1970) as one of the few researchers who attempted to

operationalize poverty in terms of lower-class norms, values, and behavior patterns. With this reference, Williamson and Hyer cite research that others deemed racist (Lockard, 1971). Perhaps Williamson and Hyer simply fell victim to the trend in 1970s academia to "blame the victim" (Small, Harding, & Lamont, 2010:13). After that period, scholars began to study the intersection of culture and poverty structurally. Researchers who studied poverty using a structural framework examined a wide spectrum of economic and social measures. In fact, macro and microstructures can intersect in a variety of ways. Many structural functionalists would agree that social structures are a complex system involving economic, social, behavioral, and other factors.

In the early 21st century, cultural sociologists began analyzing how structural forces influenced behavior and outcomes. Lareau (2003) examined the differences in raising children, arguing that life course outcomes varied between poor and middle-class families due to cultural practices and norms. Several scholars documented the effects culture had on romantic relationships in impoverished communities (Edin & Kefalas, 2011; Harding, 2007). Wilson (1996, 2010, and 2012) covers the impacts of structural forces including work, public policy, and deindustrialization. In general, contemporary sociological thought has shifted away from the "victim blaming" themes of the 1970s.

I argue that "victim blaming" was, in part, the result of measuring poverty using strictly quantitative models. Numbers are somewhat easier to put in a frame of objectivity, while much of the qualitative field work done by ethnographers holds a certain subjective flavor. However, this is only the nonprofessional's view of qualitative research. A truly embedded observer can acquire data that adds a great amount of value to the study of poverty. Qualitative research provides data about participants that numbers simply cannot capture.

Statistical analysis has done little, if anything, to help solve the American homeless problem. Hunter (1904:12) wrote more than a century ago "the United States spends more money than any other nation in the world (on) statistical investigations, and yet we know less about the poverty of the people than almost any other great nation of the Western world." For purposes of this study, I use the point-in-time estimate of 610,042 homeless people on any given night in America (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014). While Hunter acknowledges homeless measures ranging between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 he argues that those are not precise numbers due to unaccounted duplications. In other words, agencies were not performing point-in-time estimates during the time that Hunter wrote in 1904 so past and current figures cannot be compared. However, Hunter professed the relative nature of poverty and explained how poverty is a construct of being underfed, poorly clothed, and poorly housed. Those elements of poverty and homelessness are still prevalent in America.

In what follows, I present a point-in-time snapshot on the streets of a midsized city in Michigan to show the potential of three discussion areas about pathways to homelessness: (i) willingness to work; (ii) alcohol and drug use; and (iii) optimism. While the photographs are visual ethnographic data, I will not analyze the data in this section. This chapter outlines some issues for further discussion and analysis in later sections. I convey my observations here but do not argue in support of any claims made about the data in this section. For example, a person selling newspapers stands alone as a single piece of data as does a smile on the face of someone photographed. I analyze the photographs later. These photos exhibit some of the characterizations of homeless individuals that I described in the previous section, including street work identities constructed through social interactions with passersby on public street corners.

This sample meets three criteria outlined in the literature for ensuring validity of photographic data. First, the sample of behavior observed and recorded accurately reflects how people ordinarily act and is not largely a response to the observer's presence and activities (Becker, 1974). I took field notes and was aware of times that subjects knew of my presence, which may have affected the photograph. In each case, I explain that in the description of the photograph if it occurred. Second, I repeat the event enough times so that the single event can stand for a regularly repeating class of events (Harper, 2005). I performed an embedded ethnography for several weeks that lasted longer than one year on the same streets with some of the same subjects. I became aware of what was repeated behavior after a substantial amount of time. Finally, since photographs include visibly recognizable individuals, I have taken adequate measures to ensure sensitivity (Gold, 1989). I know more information about some of the subjects in these pictures than I will convey in the descriptions. I only present the following photographs as pictures taken on one day.

Figure 38. Playing Guitar on the Streets for Money

(Girdwood, 2015)

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Figure 39. Selling Newspapers on the Streets for Money

(Girdwood, 2015)

I photographed all interactions in wide-open public spaces on the streets of a city. I wore my camera hanging from my chest and it was clear that I was taking pictures on the streets for several hours. A few individuals came to ask me about my actions. Some would smile for the camera and I would return a smile and say, "Actually, I'm not photographing you. I'm taking a picture of what is behind you!" One man even gave me tips on how to get a better angle for a shot. We talked briefly and I told him who I was and what I was doing. Other individuals were

also taking pictures on the streets this day so I fit in to the activities that were happening in the city.

These images present aspects of the willingness to work. One beggar's sign conveyed the loss of work. Many individuals were on the streets selling newspapers. Two men were playing guitar for money. Selling newspapers and playing guitar are forms of labor so these individuals were engaged in actual work. Joblessness may be a pathway as well as jobs that do not provide enough money to purchase shelter (e.g. informal labor).

As previously stated, I make no assumptions about the accuracy of the claims presented on the signs of individuals begging on the streets. I do not even assume any individuals are homeless. When I analyze the data, I look for themes and additional data that may support the claims made on these signs. However, in this section, I only show the signs at face value. One sign, like many others I encountered, said "I DON'T DRINK OR DO DRUGS!!!" Alcoholism and other drug use may be a pathway to homelessness. It may be a contributing factor to the duration of the homeless experience. On the other hand, I might discover that it has little to do with the homeless experience. In any case, that sign contradicted a common assumption that homeless individuals are drunkards and addicts.

Although I am not making an argument in this chapter about the attitudes and beliefs of homeless individuals, I present certain images showing individuals who were smiling when photographed. As previously stated, I did not stage these photographs nor did I select them for what they show. Many of the individuals photographed were smiling.

During my ethnographic work, I pay close attention to the characteristics present here in this section, especially: (i) willingness to work; (ii) alcohol or drug addiction; and (iii) optimism.

I will also closely examine the parallels of these characteristics, including but not limited to: (i) physical or mental disabilities making it impossible to work; (ii) similarities and differences among those who live in the shelter system, beg on the streets, and experience homelessness in different ways; and (iii) pessimism with a specific emphasis on mental health issues like depression. Although I will not be gathering data on any of the actual health histories of these individuals, I expect to overhear some mention of any number of physical and mental ailments that may connect to an inability to work or maintain an optimistic worldview.

<u>Rationale for a Qualitative Study</u>

I focus on these three elements to argue for the appropriateness of a qualitative study about the experience of being homeless: food, clothing, and shelter. These are not the only aspects of the study but they provide a basis for explaining the relevance of ethnography as applied to the homeless experience. While I appreciate the statistics, transparency, and benefits that many non-profit services provide to the homeless community, I argue that numbers do not tell the entire story especially in terms of food, clothing, and shelter.

A prominent non-profit serves food to roughly 5,100 people each week in one Michigan community, recently eclipsing 1,000,000 served (Food Gatherers, 2014). This is a commendable achievement that the agency and volunteers should be proud of. However, I heard a homeless man say once during a meal, "Fuck welfare. Pets eat better than this." Again, my point is not to discredit the value of the food service. I only argue that observation is an important and relevant method for studying the homeless experience in addition to quantitative data. My field notes about the quality of food from the perspective of the homeless are an important complement to the figures provided regarding the quantity of individuals served.

This is an opportune time for me to discuss bias in the study, which I will discuss several times throughout this manuscript. I participated in an ethnography during which I was a participant myself. I ate the same meal as the man who complained about the food. I did not find the food to be all that bad and at one point wrote, "The meal was good." I wrote more details about the food on occasion, like "the pasta was hard, undercooked. I ate half the plate." At many times, my own preferences for food would influence how I experienced the meal. I have never been on welfare. The man who detested the food indicated he was. There are many instances where I am certain that bias contributed to my impression of the experience of being homeless, as both a participant and observer.

Clothing is another important element observed qualitatively or quantitatively. One national non-profit reports that it gave over 220,000 winter coats to children during the current year (Operation Warm, 2014). This noble cause provides only new coats to children with benefits that include "feelings of pride, excitement and joy, and help to raise the self-esteem of children struggling in poverty." Again, I have no intention to discredit the good work this charity is doing. I only argue that observation is a necessary complement to quantitative data.

Observation is not the endpoint for qualitative analysis. I compile the data and look for themes. It is important to find replications of behaviors, values, and norms that come to the surface objectively. It is also necessary to compare the participant group (homeless individuals) with a different group (i.e. common people). Observation alone does not provide sufficient substance to develop scientific theory.

Researchers can use visual ethnography to show how a social experience evolves through time and can present several perspectives on a single subject (Harper, 2005). In terms of

clothing, there may be stark differences between the smiling faces on the non-profit promotional material and the observations of real life. Although Harper discredits the "realist tale" form of visual anthropology, he acknowledges that visual ethnography is a method used by sociologists to visualize field notes and fieldwork. Harper explains that sociologists often hold a deep involvement with their subjects, an "insider's knowledge" (pg. 28) that can help expose further details of the social phenomenon under study. In this manuscript, I perform embedded ethnography with emphasis on the experience of the homeless individual. I present the experience of a set of individuals by analyzing written, oral, and visual field notes that recorded the perspectives of subjects over time.

I use visual ethnography as a method in this research. To ensure validity of my data and method, I focus on questions asked in the literature. (1) "Does the sample of behavior observed and recorded accurately reflect how people ordinarily act or is it largely a response to the observer's presence and activities (Becker, 1974:18)?" (2) "Is the event reported on repeated enough times so that the single event can be understood to stand for a regularly repeating class of events (Harper, 2005:29)?" (3) Since photographs include visibly recognizable individuals, have I taken adequate measures to ensure sensitivity (Gold, 1989)? Answering these questions clearly and forthright helps ensure the validity of the data used in this manuscript as well as proper ethics for research involving visual ethnography.

I present a set of photographs in this section to help explain my reasons for using visual ethnography as a method. I present more photographs in the other sections of this manuscript but the picture below is useful for answering the methodological questions in this section. First, this is an accurate reflection of ordinary behavior uninfluenced by my presence as a researcher. During most of my study, including all the times I was taking pictures, I blended in as a regular

person and did not stand out. On the day I took this photograph, I was dressed much like the

tailgaters in the picture. In fact, I attended every football game during the season as a football

fan. Many football fans take pictures so my behavior was completely normal.

Figure 40. Collecting Cans on Campus for Money, Two Young White Female Onlookers

(Girdwood, 2013)

Second, this event repeated for several weeks. I took 442 pictures during two weeks of

recorded visual data retrieval. I obtained other photographs from various sources that do not

identify individuals. I have experienced football game events for over twenty years as a fan so I

am familiar with the activities that occur on those days. I argue that I have met Harper's

standard "that the single event can be understood to stand for a regularly repeating class of

events" (pg. 29) based on my experience, my training, the quantity of pictures, and the duration

of the research.

Finally, I argue that I have met Gold's standard of sensitivity in visual ethnography. Gold's standard revolves around the researcher having an in-depth understanding of his subjects. This understanding helps ensure appropriate use of photography in the research. According to Gold, sensitivity stems from understanding the values, beliefs, and relationships of the subjects. Throughout my entire study, I found that homeless individuals do not differ from others who desire dignity and respect. Therefore, I did not take exploitative pictures. I did not take pictures of illegal activities. I did not take pictures of private activities. Most of the photographs that I took show individuals working "on the job" in public. The preceding argument is for a surface level understanding of the individuals' values that contribute to an overall sensitivity.

Figure 41. Collecting Cans on Campus for Money, Smiling Disabled Interracial Couple

(Girdwood, 2013)

I employed a compound set of interactions and relationships to help build greater understanding of the participants' values. For example, only one person directly declined an interview and another passively declined, both in a public place but outside auditory range of others in the area. I did not take pictures of those individuals. When I asked certain individuals to take their portrait, they were always enthusiastic and never declined. Therefore, my photographs that were explicitly not "action shots" all involved implied consent. I concluded that their verbal agreement and smiling faces indicated they were not upset that I was taking their picture. I explained my research objectives to them clearly and candidly. There was never any trickery or manipulation. Since I talked with many of these individuals and interacted with them in various ways for several weeks, I argue that I have a sufficient understanding of their values in relation to the pictures that I use in this research.

The points of emphasis conveyed by Becker (1974) and Harper (2005) encompass validity of the research while Gold's standard of sensitivity (1989) provides a framework for explaining the appropriateness and safety of the method. I will argue the merits of validity later in this manuscript. Therefore, I will expound here upon the ethical obligations of qualitative methods including visual sociology, ethnography, and qualitative research in general. Gold lists a set of criteria for measuring the sensitivity of a research project.

I do not simply rely upon my institution's review board (IRB) approval to ensure this study is ethical. As Gold eludes to, IRB originated from a medical model, which means the process is more applicable to medical studies as opposed to social scientific research, especially qualitative ethnographic studies like this.

First, I built rapport with many of the participants in this study to avoid any coercion. One subject asked if I would put the video on the internet. We talked about my research and my plans to use the video. "Is that what you plan on doin' with it?" he asked. "I was going to but if you don't want me to, I won't." "Uh, do what you do. Just, uh, all right… c'mon." At all times, I offered alternative options to decline any participation whatsoever or to conduct my research in the way that the participant chose (e.g. turn off the recording device). If the participant hesitated, I did not push. This particular subject gave thought to his participation and then concluded with "alright, come on" which was an indication that I was welcome and had gained rapport. "You just want to see how this stuff works, right?" he asked. This informed me that he was aware of the intention of my research to study the system and social phenomenon that was taking place. He was right; I just want to see how this stuff works.

Second, I gained consent from the "gatekeepers" but did not stop there. The rapport and understanding that I gained from the subjects buttressed the consent provided (and required) from the gatekeepers. This resulted in a combinatory approval of IRB, the gatekeepers, and the subjects themselves.

Third, I provide explanation of all visual data presented in this research. In this section, I provided one photo of an event to explain how I fit into the scenery in order to portray an accurate reflection of ordinary behavior uninfluenced by my presence as a researcher. I offered another photo as evidence that I gathered additional visual data that was candid and, especially in those instances, participation was willing and perhaps enjoyed. The enjoyment of participation was an unexpected reciprocal benefit for certain subjects. I explained that I was a researcher while doing fieldwork and I continue to provide explanations to all photos used here in this manuscript.

Finally, I describe the experience as accurately and thoroughly as possible. While I do not have any photographs of the food that I ate during my ethnography, I present visual data in this section of both the clothing (preceding) and the housing (following) that I recorded during this study. Food, clothing, and shelter are three elements of the homeless experience measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. I suggest visual presentations of the types of clothes and shelter (as data) will strengthen the arguments put forth in this study. Furthermore, I argue that including qualitative data conveys a more accurate portrayal of the homeless experience than quantitative data alone. For this reason, I argue that the qualitative data analysis in this study adds new value to the research on homelessness that will benefit those participants in this study.

I make every attempt for this research to benefit the subjects as much as possible. As a general explanation, I am integrating photographs in this research of instances that represent the experience of being homeless in the public realm. This includes pictures taken in a public space and pictures taken in a private space during a public event or later posted to the public domain.

While the photographs are intended to represent the experience of being homeless, not necessarily all individuals portrayed in the pictures are homeless. However, those pictures are indicative of the homeless experience because the same activities are performed (e.g. collecting cans and begging) in the same public space by both homeless and domicile individuals. Therefore, it is less important that the individual in the photograph is "homeless" per se (without permanent residence) and it is more important that the individual is symbolic and emblematic of the homeless experience. There is substantial gray area and uncertainty involved in defining what it means to be a "homeless" person.

Figure 42. Inside the Skid Row Shelter (YouTube Screenshot)

(Neighborhood Service Organization's Tumaini Center, 2011)

I include field notes about the shelter provided to homeless individuals in Michigan. The qualitative data will assist in describing the experience in ways that statistics cannot. For example, one urban center (pictured) assisted over 1,200 individuals in the year of this study and helped 228 people transition to housing (Neighborhood Service Organization, 2013). Statistically, that means 972 people remain housed at the shelter. A screenshot from an internet video shows the interior of the center. However, the explanation is as important as the photograph itself.

This photograph of an urban homeless center is a prime example of the need to provide explanations to support visual data. First, the image does not show how dark the interior really is. There are no windows in the center. The light in the picture is from the flash of the camera. The fluorescent lights provide very little illumination in that room. Second, the picture alone does not tell the story that those individuals sleep in those same chairs, remaining upright throughout the night. It omits the "standing room only" area in the back for overflow when no

chairs remain. It does not show "handicap row" in the front of the room, which is an area of territory reserved for amputees and paraplegic individuals. These are examples of the need for explanations of each photograph presented in this study.

The research contained in this manuscript furthers the study of the homeless experience and homeless identities by filling gaps left by prior research. There are many, many sociological theories historically applied to the social problem of homelessness throughout the past decade. I discuss those theories throughout this manuscript. In this chapter, I argue for the inclusion of grounded theory in research about homelessness. Grounded theory is actually a method that involves constructing theory out of the data that is gathered throughout the study.

Qualitative data is useful for testing established theories or it can contribute to the formation of new, grounded theory. I previously argued that researchers tend to study homelessness through a quantitative lens. I do not argue against the validity of that prior research. It is helpful to the overall description of the homeless experience. However, prior research has left gaps for new, embedded ethnography research to fill. I argue that the experiences I had as a homeless person during this research, in addition to the individuals that I observed, are new data useful to supporting established theories, negating established theories, or forming new, grounded theory. I suggest that each of those approaches are equally important. Due to my personal preference to be progressive and creative, I chose to pursue grounded theory using qualitative data.

Grounded Theory

Bias is an element of research that is occasionally overlooked and likely inherent to all scientific research. One of my primary research objectives is to minimize bias as much as

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possible. I argue that the logic of grounded theory coincides with that research goal. While bias is certain, it seems that "letting the data form the theory" is more objective than seeking out data to substantiate or discredit an existing theory.

I am aware that my gravitation toward grounded theory aligns with my own personal interests and professional history. Grounded theory was born from a qualitative study on the social experience of the human dying process (Glaser & Strauss, 1964, 1967). My personal experiences with death and dying, both personally and professionally, have shaped my worldview. Although I did not consciously come to prefer grounded theory because of its origins, it is no coincidence that my scientific approach to study social problems is similar to Glaser and Strauss. It is important that I consider the validity and applicability of other social theories to the issue of homelessness. I compare and contrast theories in another chapter of this manuscript.

Grounded theory is a methodology that shares similarities with other social theories commonly found in qualitative studies. Symbolic interactionism and labelling theory help scholars analyze the relationships between individuals and society. Symbolic interactionism is useful to support the argument that theory emerges from the research process (Huber, 1973). Grounded theory is essentially pragmatic because it is, by definition, rooted in the practice of sociology rather than theory.

Pragmatic social research shows researcher bias more than any other approach. This is important because it is unlikely that a researcher could ever conduct a study with absolute objectivity. Some even criticized Blumer (1969) for failing to explain how an empirical researcher can enter a study with a blank mind (Huber, 1973). Now, I find no evidence that a

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completely objective study is possible. Therefore, a study becomes increasingly more valid when it includes sufficient mention of potential bias.

I argue scholars should study observable phenomena empirically as opposed to analytically. By that, I mean it is important to identify social mechanisms that are observable rather than seek to discover replicable mechanisms. "A social mechanism is a more or less general sequence or set of social events or processes analyzed at a lower order of complexity or aggregation by which - in certain circumstances - some cause X tends to bring about some effect Y in the realm of human social relations. This sequence or set may or may not be analytically reducible to the actions of individuals who enact it, may underwrite formal or substantive causal processes, and may be observed, unobserved, or in principle unobservable" (Gross, 2009:364). There is so much ambiguity in definition of social mechanism that any reduction of complexity would seem irrational. In my view, choosing to test one of a finite set of existing theories is reductionist. For that reason, I argue researchers should observe social phenomena first and then conduct analysis.

Grounded theory is a true alternative to positivism. Most formal theory is reductionist and does not encompass all aspects of social action (Becker & McCall, 2009). Grounded theory allows explanation to develop from the experiences of the researcher and so it fits well with ethnographic methods. Grounded theory is not, by itself, a qualitative method. Grounded theory is an approach that requires the researcher to develop a clear personal position prior to the study in order to clarify hidden bias. A grounded theorist acknowledges the potential for an alternative to universal norms. Grounded theory is quite pragmatic and very different from positivism.

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In addition to supporting grounded theory as an approach to the study of homelessness, I acknowledge the ambiguity of its definition. Birks and Mills (2011) describe a set of criteria that a grounded theorist must strive to fulfill: (1) initial coding and categorization of data; (2) concurrent data generation or collection and analysis; (3) writing memos; (4) theoretical sampling; (5) constant comparative analysis using inductive and abductive logic; (6) theoretical sensitivity; (7) intermediate coding; (8) selecting a core category; (9) theoretical saturation; and (10) theoretical integration. In what follows, I provide an explanation of how I will accomplish each of these requirements.

Coding and categorizing data is a very basic activity performed by almost all qualitative researchers. I will transcribe my written and audio field notes into text. Then, I will use Dedoose software as a tool to find themes within the textual data. I code these words, phrases, and themes in order to group them later in the analysis.

Concurrent data collection strengthens the ethnography by generating an accumulative theory as opposed to a reductionist approach. As I have previously stated, this is not a sequential approach to research. Grounded theory is holistic in that it involves as much data as can be retrieved within the parameters of the timeframe and study. Data and theoretical formation builds as the study progresses. Therefore, I will collect data and code it first. Then, I will continue to record more data and field notes for later analysis.

Memos are another valuable component of grounded theory research, especially in conveying potential bias. I will record observations as field notes but I will also write memos about my own understanding of the events as they occur. This means the theory builds continuously throughout the study as opposed to a finite snap shot analysis that is prominent

within quantitative research. Qualitative ethnography and grounded theory, on the other hand, adds value by seeking to interpret social events in real time. These real time memos may theoretically support or conflict with the overall conclusions presented in this study. However, they are a vital component of developing a grounded theory.

Theoretical sampling is a way to adjust the study as it happens. In a typical study, this might appear to be a form of manipulating the results. However, grounded theory starts with few theoretical targets, i.e. does not seek to prove hypotheses. Fluidity of study is a beneficial component of grounded theory research. I seek to analyze certain larger social mechanisms, like employment choices of the very poor, but I begin the study with full awareness that my first venue may lack substantive data. In addition, I might discover a very prevalent theme during my first few experiences that could warrant new methodological derivatives. Theoretical sampling and constant comparative analysis are both forms of abductive reasoning (Birks & Mills, 2011). Analysis occurs at various stages throughout the duration of the research and theoretical sampling allows for a more adaptive and fluid approach to scientific study.

Theoretical sensitivity encompasses the awareness of the researcher for potential bias. Because the researcher conducts the study having had some life experiences, the research cannot be void of those experiences. The researcher is aware of potential bias from the outset, during, and at the conclusion of the study. This is why repeated (initial and intermediate) coding is beneficial to the study. At different times, I will code and interpret the data. This avoids a static relationship with the data. My analysis will occur after I have experienced a different set of activities. I can compare and contrast the analyses.

Selecting a core category is the payoff of grounded theory research. Unlike typical methods, this comes during or at the end of the study. The core category is a prominent theme throughout the data and only presents after substantial observation has occurred. To strengthen the core category, I will use multiple methods to collect data (interview, focus group, and observation). Multiple methods provide different data streams. If a core category rises to the surface through all three methods, it is an even more important theme to analyze in the study.

Corbin and Strauss (2014) offer certain criteria for choosing a core category: (1) it must be abstract and overarching; (2) it appears frequently in the data; (3) it is logical and consistent; (4) it applies to different phenomenon; and (5) it relates to the other concepts and categories.

Theoretical saturation and integration is a difficult component of grounded theory because it is truly comprehensive. Corbin and Strauss (2014) convey a story line approach to research. By telling a thematic story, the core concepts should run throughout the research. The story line approach adds theme to narrative. Done properly, the story line includes theory in all stages of analysis and integrates theory throughout the study.

The theme of this section is that grounded theory provides a practical comprehensive framework to conduct a study on the experience of being homeless. Grounded theory encourages objectivity, thorough theoretical development, and relevant applicability to phenomena (as opposed to the universal principles of positivism). For these reasons, I base this study on grounded theory as a principle method of this mixed methods study. I take a story line approach in subsequent chapters while emphasizing the core category of this research: Homelessness is a general concept that encompasses many types of experiences, almost all of which involve severely impoverished individuals who cope with undesirable circumstances.

CHAPTER 5: CAN DOGGIN' & SLEEPING ROUGH IN A HETEROGENEOUS CITY

<u>Starting a Grounded Theory Study</u>

I argue throughout this manuscript that scholars must conduct more qualitative research in order to explain the variability of homeless experiences in America because the current categories do not adequately represent the phenomenon. The federal government groups a half million people together into a single "homeless" statistic presented to the public and Congress; the latter uses that quantitative data to make policy decisions. I argue the social problem of homelessness is much more complicated than that.

In this section, I provide qualitative research to fill the gaps of those quantitative studies. I focus on three main sensitizing questions:

Q1: How do structural forces contribute to the variability of homeless experiences in Michigan?

Q2: What are some coping strategies that homeless individuals use to navigate extreme poverty?

Q3: How is the homeless identity socially constructed?

The first question will manifest at the micro level, mostly through the interactions of homeless people and institutions. Shelters, missions, soup kitchens, and other social support agencies provide services for the homeless that those individuals either accept or refuse. Sometimes, the bureaucracy of the institution influences the choice of refusal. When individuals live in extreme poverty, they navigate through support systems and often experience tough conditions. For example, an individual might need $20 to pay for a room but the individual does not have a job. Therefore, the individual must figure out a way to come up with the money in a short period. I study that strategic decision and others like it in this section.

The homeless identity is socially constructed in various ways. Often, people ascribe the "homeless" label to individuals who are not even homeless. It is important to study this process of identity construction because it relates to the formation of knowledge. False assumptions contradict reality. The marginalized people in this study have little, if any, power to reverse negative stereotypes about their respective identities. If the homeless individual is mentally ill, he has almost no way to show another person how that mental illness affects his ability to find work. Since the ordinary man has never slept for weeks in a homeless shelter, he has no idea how that experience produces limited outcomes. In short, many common people do not understand the social forces that constrain the homeless man.

The homeless identity should essentially be that of a constrained individual. Any homeless success story conveyed by the media is an exception to this rule. The burdens on the poor are extreme and prevent upward mobility even to the "next step" of "regular" poverty. There is almost no source of motivation for the homeless. Scholars need to conduct more research showing the social forces that strip away autonomy from marginalized individuals. There are many myths about the homeless identity that scholars should debunk. Not all beggars are homeless. Homelessness in Lansing is different from homelessness in Detroit. The list goes on.

It is important to note that I wrote the introduction to this section after extensive fieldwork. These are not hypotheses or misinformed assumptions about the situations that homeless people face. I bluntly express the realities of homelessness here. I admit the assumptions I make about the public, that common people do not fully understand the homeless experience and that Congress does not see the conditions of those 578,242 homeless individuals adequately described in any report. Even in Michigan, legislators probably do not know the

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quantitative extent of the problem when they read one report stating there are 12,227 homeless individuals and 93,982 in another report (The Campaign to End Homelessness, 2015; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014b). Homelessness is not a quantifiable problem.

<u>Learning about the Can Man</u>

I fundamentally argue throughout this manuscript that it is not accurate to label an individual "homeless." That stance developed during my grounded theory study of poor people. I never sought out to study homelessness. I designed my original study to examine the micro economy of the individuals who collect cans at college football tailgates. I wanted to discover the effects of this perpetually hegemonic system on the lower class can collectors and the higher-class tailgaters. Everybody seemed to be enjoying the relationship that involved one privileged group of football fans and one marginalized low (informal) wage group of can collectors. At the beginning of my study, I did not refer to my subjects as "homeless."

For those not familiar with the annual tradition of football tailgating in Michigan, I will explain the phenomenon briefly here. Michigan has a 10-cent bottle deposit on carbonated beverages like Coca-Cola (pop) and beer. Consumers who buy the drinks pay the 10-cent deposit on purchase and then can redeem the empty bottles later at the same store where they bought it. This is a process meant to encourage recycling and prevent littering. Michigan has several public universities, some very large with student populations over 50,000 and football stadiums holding between 70,000 and 105,000 football fans. The university teams play football games at these stadiums on autumn weekends. During those events, many football fans arrive hours before the game to eat, drink, and socialize. Fans bring massive quantities of drinks to those "tailgate" picnics, resulting in large numbers of empty bottles after use. Fans drink a lot of

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beer and go into the stadium. The cans are a nominal expense to a football fan who spends $75 or more on a ticket. Returning a few bucks worth of empty bottles is inconvenient and not the priority of the day for the football fan. Therefore, it is normal for the football fan to leave the empty bottles on the ground for a "can man" to collect and return to the store for compensation.

The micro system appears to benefit everybody involved. One can man told me football fans are "pretty cool" about offering up their empty bottles. "If it's there on the ground, you're welcome to it. You know, they've got their little tents and stuff set up. I don't invade their privacy too deep. I don't want to just go walking over to their thing and just pick cans off the tables, you know, you have to be a little bit respectful. And, they look at it as cleanup for a campus. But, the students, yeah, they're usually pretty good. Sometimes they'll even give you money. I don't go at it that deep. They'll offer you something to eat or something to drink, which I don't drink. I'm not a drinker, but if they do offer you something to eat, yeah I'll take a hotdog or a hamburger or something like that." This comment shows that the interaction involves more than cans. Food, money, and respect are all elements of the typical transaction.

The can men know where to go for "good money." There are certain areas where they collect cans, routes they travel, and many of the tailgaters are in the same place every week. The process of can collecting and the interactions become routine.

Structural and other forces break routines. I heard that can men are polite in fear of being "shut down" by authorities if they cause a ruckus. Another can man told me that his workdays were shortened due to criminal behavior from others during the events. He said police instituted a curfew "because of the rapes that happen out here. I guess people have been breaking into the cars, like when they put their liquor in the cars and lock them up; people have been going into

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the vehicles. So, last week I had my cans by a tree there and I come back, I asked this guy to stand here and wait for me, because I have to park my car way outside of campus to walk, walk over there and come back to my car, right? So, I got back and there was a police car sitting right by the tree and he says, what are you doing? And I said, well those are my cans right there. He says, oh okay. So, I got them. He says, well I did tell your two buddies that they had a choice, either they can go to jail or they can leave the premises. He says we've got a curfew out." This comment also expresses two major structural components of the system.

First, the effort to collect cans is more difficult than I first imagined. The can collectors have intricate systems in place to maximize profits. Parking on campus is about $15 and up per car. Paying that would severely decrease profits for the can man. Therefore, it is common for them to park far away, which adds a lot of time and effort to the workload. Second, the can men have to deal with police regularly during the day. The police have to deal with theft and rape on campus. This creates a tumultuous relationship between the can men and the police due to the secondary effects of policies.

Police may implement a curfew intended to prevent rapes on campus. Those rapes probably involved students or tailgaters in general. The rapes probably did not involve can men. During the time of my study, I never heard of a can man being accused of rape on campus. Nonetheless, police established curfews to prevent rapes and those curfews tangentially decreased the amount of time a can man could work on campus to make money during the day. This is one of many examples where structural forces, responsive mechanisms to help privileged people, negatively affect the day-to-day lives or poor people.

Police are aware of the can collectors and I never heard substantively negative comments from either party about the relationship. In fact, a police officer was one of the first individuals who directed me toward studying the homeless as a subpopulation of can collectors. "A lot of the guys that come here, they're the people that, same people you see in the city on the weekdays and they'll be at like the… like around the missions or the VOAs or just sleeping in the parks and they have the same little set-ups where they… they all have some sort of cart that they bring… they'll steal them from (the nearby grocery store) and I don't know how they get 'em out here but they've got, definitely got a system where they bring more people with them. They got, some people have like their kids. I don't know what they do with them afterwards, but you'll see that they start going through. They just walk up to everybody's tailgates and they'll start going through their trash or like these people here will just throw their cans towards the curb knowing that they'll just walk up to the curb and do a drive by and pick it all up but then, uh, they also they'll get a little friendly after the games when these people are gone and start really picking through the stuff seeing if they can find any empties or anything else laying around." This police officer was at the same post for three full football seasons during this study. He was very knowledgeable about the micro system of can collectors and their activities outside of the weekend. I was intrigued that he mentioned the shelters and missions but I did not immediately start to research that group (homeless) without supporting data.

Earlier in my study, a tailgating fan elaborated on the mutually beneficial micro system. When I asked what he did with his cans, he said, "Give them to the man that comes around collecting them. I don't know if he's homeless, I'm not going to judge him. But I give them to the people that are collecting them." That individual was in a group of others who thought the can collectors were "all very nice" people conducting the function of "keeping this place

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cleaner" and were "very friendly" people who "never ask for money." They appreciated the function of the can collectors and even mentioned one by name.

The man continued to elaborate on his perceptions of can collectors, their function, and the police. He told me that he lived in Chicago and his property owner recently sent out a memo to tenants stating that the police informed the property owner that the can collectors have criminal records, which he thought, was "ridiculous." In fact, he wished that Chicago had a bottle deposit so that can men could perform the same function in that city. "I live by Wrigley Field; it's called Wrigleyville… destroyed by fucking beer and whatever, beer cans and everything, right. I would appreciate if we had can people in Chicago because they'd clean up the neighborhood." This group, especially this individual, held the can men in favor. Earlier in the conversation, he juxtaposed "can man" with "homeless." Even though he said he would not "judge" the can man and label the can man "homeless," this respondent brought "homeless" into the conversation. It is quite possible that this man and this group appreciate the function that homeless people provide by cleaning up empty cans and litter from neighborhoods and parks. In fact, one individual in the group said, "They're saviors of the neighborhood."

Again, a common theme during my interviews was that the can collectors provide a service to the community. "Drink your beer, throw it on the ground and it gets taken care of. It's cleaned up. When the game's over… the cans are gone." However, the characteristics of the can man were important to tailgaters. "If you are 40 years old and you've made bad decisions… that is one thing… (but) I feel bad for the kids; you know… 9:30 a.m. this morning there's a 10-year-old kid walking around collecting cans."

There were two distinct types of youth collecting cans: impoverished and those raising funds for charity. I have one set of photographs of a young boy working in concert with an older woman but I omit those pictures from this research to protect the identity of the young boy. Like the tailgater, I sympathize with the young boy but only because he is impoverished. The fact that he is learning a good work ethic is exclusive from my feelings of sympathy. I mention this because the tailgater has a hidden mental conflict. On one hand, most tailgaters believe that the can collectors provide a service and the micro system maintains functional equilibrium. The system provides opportunity for those who "made bad decisions" at some point in their lives to contribute to society. On the other hand, the tailgater does not believe children have such a duty.

Figure 43. Fundraising Youth (2013)

While I did not see many kids collecting cans, that tailgater was not the only respondent who talked about youth. One can man said "They've got this thing serious and they've got kids out here and I don't think they belong out here because they are raising hell but…" and, when I asked him how many kids were collecting cans, he said "Tons, stick around awhile. They've got 3 to 4 families of parents anywhere from 8 years old to 12 years old." When I spoke to the can collectors who involved children, one respondent explained his rationale. "Yeah, to me I would want them (kids) out here picking up cans and learning the value of work rather than being out there on the streets selling drugs pulling people you know what I am saying that they don't have no morals, no elders to lead them. I have my sons out here all the time. This is my way of teaching them the value of a dollar and if you want it bad enough you have to work for it." Again, this is the dilemma of the can man in society. Certain people sometimes consider a laudable act, like teaching work ethic to a child, to be deviant because of the context of the act.

The other conundrum is the ascription of failure to the identity of the can man, the idea that the can man "made bad decisions" during his lifetime that results in the situation he now faces. Yet, the can man is working by collecting cans. This clearly exhibits some type of work ethic. Therefore, his prior missteps were probably not due to laziness. "If I could work, I'd be working," one can man told me.

Since there is some structural force preventing this individual from working, probably either a lack of jobs or his own disability, he copes with his circumstance by collecting cans for money. The tailgater is a necessary component of the system. "I am helping these people out," one tailgater told me. "I just throw it here on the ground… somebody is literally getting paid to pick the thing up. If you look around, there is dozens of people at any given time with trash

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bags." During my study of the can collectors and tailgaters, I found many of the tailgaters viewed themselves as philanthropists. They perceived their role to be that of almsgiver.

One manifestation of this charitable perception is apparent through interactions with the local celebrity can man, "Willie the Can Man." I mention him by name because I do not include him within my respondent data. He is not one of my subjects. Respondents mentioned Willie several times during my conversations on campus. He is internationally known (at least, on the internet). He even sells t-shirts that refer to him as the "Pride of East Lansing, doin' that can thing" (Bouffard, 2007; Lima, 2007). The news articles also mention he is homeless.

A "documentary" online also describes him as homeless. A local bar manager said "If we were to let him back in here, it's kind of opening up a window… for the other people… you know, the other homeless people around town" (MSU TISM, 2008). "He's just a local celebrity, really, is all I know about him." As a celebrity, Willie comes to define the identity of many of the local can collectors.

The most famous can collector in the town is homeless. When asked what one tailgater does with his cans, he said, "We try to pawn them off on the bums." A fellow can man said that Willie was "kind of crazy." The fifth respondent to mention Willie said, "Willy, that's my boy. I've known him for 20 something years, so, everything's all good. We all stick together." This response matched others who described teamwork as an effective approach to maximizing profit.

Figure 44. Teamwork to Maximize Profit (2013)

In sum, most of the tailgaters believe the micro system of can exchange is beneficial to everyone and that the tailgaters are a form of charity to the "homeless bums" who collect cans. The can collectors work hard and strategize to maximize profits. While this encompasses most can collectors, I emphasize the variability between types.

The police office respondent summed up this variability. "I think you definitely have the two different kinds. You get the guys that are just as quick as can be, come in and get it, and walking away and then some of the people that, uh, aren't so serious. They don't… they don't have the carts; they don't have… they'll just have a bag or something like that…" Although this police officer understands this distinction, many of the tailgaters base their knowledge of the can collectors on a single identity: Willie the Can Man.

Figure 45. Cart Full of Cans (2013)

This was the essential realization that prompted me to consider the variability of the homeless identity. After interviewing dozens of can collectors, I began to distinguish between the drunks, those raising funds for charity, those with low paying jobs or fixed incomes who needed some extra cash, individuals, teams, and many other types. Even though there are many different types of individuals collecting cans, the public generally perceives a single identity – the homeless bum.

Furthermore, there were distinctly different types of homeless people. When the police officer respondent initially said they were "around the missions or the VOAs or just sleeping in the parks," I did not really know the difference at that point in my study. At one point, a can collector said that there were seven others "from (his) group" and that he lived "by (the) hospital" and took the bus to get to the campus. I cannot confirm where he lived or who his

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group was but the hospital is only a few hundred feet from the city rescue mission. I started to recognize a certain type of respondent – the truly homeless.

The truly homeless can collector is not distinct from the domicile can collector. There are no visible characteristics indicating a can collector is homeless. Of the dozens of respondents interviewed, no can collector ever mentioned "homelessness" until one respondent with an unusually optimistic attitude.

Interviewer: And, how late you gonna stay?

Respondent: Oh, I'm gonna… when I get four bags that are full, I take 'em down to (the local grocery store). Then I'll come back.

I: Uh, why do you end on four bags? There a limit or something like that?

R: No, just heavy to carry.

I: How come you don't grab a cart at (the store) and wheel it down here?

R: Eh, I don't wanna… That's kinda stealing.

I: Uh…

R: And, I don't steal.

I: Okay, um, and how much uh, money overall do you think you're gonna make today?

R: Oh, probably about fifteen bucks, so…

I: Fifteen overall?

R: I hear a lot of people bragging about making a hundred or so, you know.

I: Okay, uh, where did you like hear… you say that you hear people bragging. Where do you… do you see them around here? Do you know them from before? Or…

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R: Oh… I'm staying at the City Rescue Mission and a lot of the guys there come out here on a game day and they'll, tonight, they'll be bragging about how much they made.

This respondent mentioned a group, he lives by the hospital, and he said he takes the bus.

He stood out as a respondent because he continued to express his optimistic attitude. "I love this campus and, when I'm out here doing this, I pick up trash and put it in the trash can because it's such a beautiful campus." His motto was "It's better to scrounge a dime than do a crime."

He told me a very, very long story about his personal history:

R: Well, let me phrase this correctly. My ex-wife, we divorced about three years ago. Never cheated on her. Never. But, um, she… we were living in (another Midwestern state) at the time. I was branch manager of… of, um… (a local soft drink bottler). Branch Manager is top dog over the whole warehouse. Anyway, um, she came up to me in 2001 and said, my mom and dad are getting so… She was from Michigan. My mom and dad are getting so old. I'm afraid they're going to die out in Michigan and I'm going to be in (another state) can you ask for a job transfer? So, I went to my boss, told him the story and he got me a transfer to Lansing as Cold Drink Manager. Cold Drink Manager, you handle all the vending and the hospitals, schools, and rest areas. We didn't have any rest areas. Rest areas are, the machines there are filled by the Commission for the Blind and I knew, I knew a lot of the management at the Commission for the Blind building in Lansing. One day, I was driving around in my company car and I got a call from the, uh, secretary of the Commission for the Blind. She said, you know… Coke and Pepsi's contracts are coming up for renewal. Do you want to submit a proposal? Well, yes. Thank you very much. I put the proposal together, got it approved by the Vice President… Regional Vice President of (the bottling company). Then, went before the, uh, Commission for the Blind's meeting at a hotel here in Lansing. Read the proposal. Passed out copies to all the, uh, rest area operators. Within two weeks, we had thirty rest areas.

I: That was around here, right?

R: Yeah, uh well, in the State of Michigan. And, I… I would give each one of them that went with us, I would give them my, uh, business card with my cell phone number and I told them - If you have a problem, take it through the right channel, you know, if, if a machine broke… breaks down, call the service department. If you're not getting the proper product, call the warehouse. But, if you're not getting taken care of, call me. I get a call about once every two weeks. And, I would jump into it and do the best I could to fix it. For example, one call I

got was from an operator. He had three rest areas at the top of the lower
peninsula. He said, I'm not getting any cola. I haven't gotten it for a few weeks.
It's one of my best sellers. Can you help me? And, I said, hold on, I'll call you
right back. So, I called the warehouse. Well, we're not getting as much (cola) as
we're ordering and he's not a high priority account (laughter). So, I called him
back and I said, I'll tell you what, I'll load some cases in my car, my company
car, and I'll drive them up to ya. How many you want? Twenty. And, those were
bottles, you know. So I, uh, I loaded twenty cases. Went up there, and, he gave me
a check and I gave him an invoice and… he never called me back. And, that's
just an example of, you know, my promise to take care of ya.

I: When was that? About what year?

R: Oh, boy… about 2003. Yeah… I'm… I'm still good friends with the, uh, a lot
of the rest area operators. They were good people.

I: All right. Well, hey, it was nice talking with you…

R: God bless ya.

Although not exclusive to the homeless, this amount of storytelling shows the readiness

of the respondent to share his life history. I found this common behavior among the homeless,

usually taking place within our first conversation. This man also said, "God bless" which,

although not exclusive to the homeless, coincided with him staying at a Christian residence. He

mentioned he used to work and was currently looking for work, two qualities more in line with

hoboes than with bums. Since "hobo" is archaic terminology, tailgaters used "bum" more often

to describe the can collectors.

When I asked a tailgater why he bought beer cans instead of bottles, he replied:

R: Cause the bums will break the bottles.

I: Okay, all right. They break them? Like, in the street? Is it a nuisance, or…?

R: No, they… I just want to make it easy for them so when they throw it in their
basket it don't break. (Note: A can collector confirmed this to be true later.)

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I: So, you made a conscious decision that it is easier for the bums to get the cans?

R: Well, I'm sorry, not bums. The homeless.

I: Okay. So, um…

Background: Not even sure that they're homeless. I don't know.

I: So, you, can you, so you said that you're not sure that they're homeless. How many do you think, like what proportion?

R: I'd say it's fifty fifty. Really, I mean, it's just a random guess that they're homeless.

It sounded like he thought he was doing the homeless a favor by buying unbreakable cans and calling them "homeless" instead of "bums." However, both terms are derogatory and used somewhat synonymously. Said one can collector, "I think they (tailgaters) just don't like people (who collect cans) because they think we're bums… Alcoholics… we're doing it for a drink or we're doing it for drugs. I'm not doing it for any of that. I'm just doing it for extra change like we said… A little pocket money." I can confirm this is a valid statement because I triangulated the data in two ways.

First, I followed a can collector (with permission) all the way to the store after the game. He was sober as a nun. He had two "helpers" who came with him who were clearly drunk and he admitted they were. He told me how they just wanted to tag along and only made about $5 that day for liquor. There was a very clear distinction between those collecting cans for drugs or booze versus those seeking to maximize profits and stay sober. Some individuals blended those two actions a little bit. I spoke to one man in 2015 who admitted he liked to drink a little beer while collecting cans but he did not get blackout drunk. He also told me to come visit him in the nearby woods where he slept rough in a tent.

<u>Sleeping Rough</u>

The can man who first mentioned the "city mission" prompted me to delve into studying homelessness, the living conditions for many can collectors, but my study also includes those who "sleep rough" especially outdoors in tents. I elaborate on the shelter options and Skid Row later but it is appropriate to discuss sleeping rough now because it relates directly to the can collectors.

It is no secret that there are homeless individuals living in tents less than 1 mile away from the campus. One news article even gives specific directions to the homes of "can-doggers" (Balaskovitz, 2010). In fact, one of the photos in that news article looks similar to my picture of an elaborately constructed shelter.

It surprised me how open the man was who told me his location and urged me to come visit. That can man, whom I will not assign a pseudonym because our interaction was limited, invited me to his tent home for further conversation but he was not there when I stopped by. He instructed me to yell "incoming" as I approached so that I would not frighten anybody in the camp. I took pictures of his camp.

There was not much in the camp. It certainly had some of the common attributes of homeless encampments: clothesline to dry clothes strung up between trees, bedding/padding, heaps of scattered garbage, tools, and storage bins. I compare these photos with pictures I took 8 months earlier and 73 miles away at another camp.

Figure 46. Elaborately Constructed Shelter with Fastener Detail (2015)

Figure 47. Camp "Incoming" (2015)

Figure 48. Southeastern Michigan Homeless Camp in Winter (2015)

The can man camp also had a sign that said "WHY LIE??? I NEED A BEER!!!" This aligned with his attitude during our conversation on campus. He was drinking a beer at the time. He told me he was not an alcoholic and did not drink liquor, only beer. The campsite seemed to confirm that; there was an empty case of Keystone Light in the camp near a dirty woven rug.

However, there was also an empty liquor bottle nearby. I assume that was from a friend. The campsite also consisted of a patio chair and some luggage. It appeared to be somewhat abandoned but I could not really tell if he planned to come back. The blankets hanging out to dry might have indicated he would return at some point. Another nearby camp had a "fresher" look.

Figure 49. Active Camp Near Can Man (2015)

I could tell this camp was in use because the tarps did not have dirt on top of them; they were recently set up. The milk crate had tools and an empty beer can on it. Again, there was no dirt or dust on these items. Someone recently used them.

This camp had a hammer, shears, a can of food, and a religious note all in close proximity to the living quarters. Clothes were hanging to dry. The secondary tarp covers storage of belongings.

Figure 50. Camp Tools and Religious Note (2015)

Figure 51. Path to Can Man Camp (2015)

These camps are not difficult to find if purposely sought out. I include a photo of one of

the pathways leading away from a public river walk toward a camp in the woods. These

conspicuous paths coupled with the explicit directions in the news article make the locations

somewhat public knowledge. However, I lived in this city for 18 years prior to my study without

any knowledge of these camps. I even played baseball on a field where a homeless tent literally

rests up against the right field fence now where I stood a decade ago. I acquired my new

knowledge through my study, knowledge constructed through interactions with my sample.

Figure 52. Hole in Outfield Fence Leading to Can Man Camp (2015)

As I made my trek through this area, two men walked nearby. I alerted them to my

presence and approached them to talk about my study. They said they were not homeless but

knew of the individuals who lived around in the camps. They fished at the same spot for years.

They left their cans for a certain homeless man and felt charitable doing so.

Figure 53. Tent Camp Visible from Main Road and College Campus (2015)

One of the camps I saw consisted of three tents that were moderately visible from campus and a nearby main road. The photograph shows how the tall grass slightly hides the tents. Most of the tent camps in this area were deep in the woods but these three were out in the middle of a grassy field. Perhaps these individuals moved away from the nearby river in fear of flooding.

At least two of the camps I photographed were flooded out. One camp even had a sign that said "LOST EVERYTHING. RIVER FLOODED. TENT 2 FEET UNDER WATER. GOD BLESS U." Although many people assume that some beggars are lying or fabricating stories on their signs, I present data here to contradict those assumptions. This tent was flooded and it appeared that weather ruined all the belongings of this person. Silt covered the inside of the tent, still standing a few feet from the river. I saw at least two camps that were flooded out like this. One individual simply left everything and moved along.

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Figure 54. Lost Everything, River Flooded (2015)

My visit to the "can man camp" area was enlightening for several reasons. I learned that the campers spread out. No two camps, except for the cluster of three tents, was in close proximity of another camp. However, one camper I talked to mentioned other camps. Though spread apart, the camps had many similar characteristics (e.g. tools, storage, bedding, clotheslines) even shared by another camp in a different county. The force of weather was apparent. Previously, I understood that cold weather could cause a person to move but I never considered the flooding risk. Seeing two signs in the camps, I confirmed that some of these individuals were also street beggars. This lined up with other field notes that I explain later. The city mission residents collect cans and tent dwellers beg.

My final conversation with a homeless person occurred during my visit to the "can man camps." I followed a pathway deep into the woods and saw some campfire smoke. The individual, a young black man, wore a bright collegiate t-shirt. I was surprised that he did not attempt to be more inconspicuous. I waved and asked him, from about 30 feet away, if I could approach his camp. He said I could. We talked for about a half hour after I identified myself and told him the purpose of my interview. He was very skeptical the entire time. At first, he asked, "What makes you think I'm homeless?" Since I study social construction of identities, obviously I did not want to label him homeless so I told him that another can man directed me to look around these woods and that the can man described himself as homeless. I put the question back to the man and asked him if he considered himself homeless. For a while during our conversation, he dodged the identity. However, he eventually said, "Okay, yes, I am homeless."

We talked about his life history, where he was from, and he explained that rap music helped him stay positively motivated. He and his girlfriend were trying to gain housing with their young child. He confirmed that his girlfriend had some type of government assistance. At

one point, he asked me why I was not scared doing what I do. He specifically referred to the

potential of somebody robbing and murdering me. I responded it was just as likely for

somebody to kill me in my own home. I am not scared of homeless people as a group. I

explained how schizophrenia is somewhat scary to me, if untreated, but there are schizophrenics

out in public so there is no reason to be more or less scared when studying the homeless.

Honesty helps me gain rapport with respondents. For example, I asked the can man who directed

me to these woods "Why would you tell me where you live? Why trust me?" He replied,

"Because you haven't done anything to break my trust." Some of the tent campers are skeptical

first and others are trusting until forsaken.

As I talked with this man, he took sips from a bottle of cheap pink wine. He never

offered me any although I would have refused because of IRB rules. He smoked a cigarette.

What I will always remember about this man is how closely he resembled a picture I found when

researching the history of homelessness. The old photo is called "Man in hobo jungle killing

turtle" from 1939. The similarities to my modern day interaction with my subject are striking.

The hobo sits with almost the exact same posture as my subject who sat on a cinder block. The

hobo looks at the meal he is about to prepare on an open campfire or burn barrel of some sort.

Next to the modern day homeless man, smoldering ashes of a campfire glowed orange and

emitted a faint waft of smoke. The hobo smokes a tobacco pipe while he prepares his meal. The

modern day homeless man smoked a cigarette he pulled from tucked behind his ear. The hobo

consumes a meal that is unsanitary and not desired by ordinary people. The modern day

homeless man sat while a turkey leg warmed on top of an ashy broken cinder block next to

where he sat, sipping a bottle of cheap wine. The similarities struck me.

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Figure 55. Man in Hobo Jungle Killing Turtle (1939)

CHAPTER 6: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DETROIT SKID ROW AND THE SUBURBS

Finding People Who Sleep Rough through the Homeless Count

Throughout this manuscript, I criticize the reliance on homeless counts used to determine policies designed to eliminate the social problem of homelessness. This is not empty criticism. It stems from two fundamental arguments I make: (i) Numbers do not fully represent the complexity of the homeless experience and (ii) Counts vary so dramatically between agencies with historic extrapolation flaws that the numbers are not valid. I wanted to see the flawed counting methodology firsthand so I participated in the count.

I reached out to two primary contacts regarding my participation. I obtained both contacts through an internet search, resulting in news media postings or recruitment fliers. It was not difficult to connect with those whom I recruited. However, I was not able to connect with other counties at all (e.g. Genesee, Ingham, Eaton, etc.). I am still not sure how those counties assemble enough volunteers to count although I assume they manage the same volunteers each year who come to the effort through agency word-of-mouth recruitment. Regardless, I found my two counties and pursued involvement.

I participated in the Wayne County point-in-time count and one other suburban county. It is appropriate for me to name Wayne County because the area is so large that my involvement becomes ambiguous. I do not mention the names of individuals. It would take a great deal of deduction, insider knowledge, and guessing to identify anybody or any location in the data conveyed herein.

Wayne County offered a volunteer training session. I do not recall if it was a requirement to participate but I believe it was required of team leaders. My participation was voluntary (as a

researcher). I did not go "under cover" or hide my identity. At the training in Wayne County, there was one instructor and seven attendees. Some of the attendees were from HUD; at least one other was a housing director of some sort. The other "counters" were from local agencies. Many, if not all, in the group seemed to recognize each other.

The instructor told us we were "going out on night count" and the group was pleased. "Interviewers" (those doing the count) would use the same familiar count forms. All locations would be serving a meal during our effort and would be aware of the count, i.e. our presence and occupation. Some of the counters in the groups had experience. "My first year, I got 10 done. Learned not to talk too much. I enjoyed it," said one counter. "The staff are friendly. The men are flirty," said another. Earlier in the day, the instructor conducted a training webinar and many of the in-person meeting attendees participated in the webinar, like me. The instructor stressed that this count was only to find unsheltered individuals.

The instructor told us it is common for the homeless to be suspicious. "They didn't want to give last names (last year)." "We ask for duplication purposes," the instructor explained. That was good to hear. I know that the government tries to avoid duplicate counting of individuals. The instructor emphasized that. "Transgender" is a new HUD category this year (2015). The instructor said that < 1% have disclosed transgender. She must have been referring to HMIS data. "Race and ethnicity" are new questions this year. Somebody asked if it was permissible to guess on these socio-demographic characteristics. We were told no, do not guess race and do not guess gender. Only ask the question. The instructor allowed us to guess age range. We could remind the homeless that they do not have to answer questions, especially disability questions. Disability questions help determine if they have been chronically homeless.

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Of note, the affirmative statements in this paragraph are the information conveyed by the instructor, i.e. not declarations from me.

In addition to the disability questions related to chronic categorization, the question "how many times have you had a homeless episode, 1 night = 1 time" the instructor told us "gets to the definition of chronic homelessness." Again, I was happy to hear the instructor knew the categories well and was conveying the categorical definitions adequately. There was one major count limitation that coincided with a limitation of my study: "The hardest part is all the vacant homes. We can't send our volunteers into vacant homes."

This is a glaring flaw in the count methodology, especially in Detroit. Squatting is an epidemic in Detroit. The media presents squatters as either a benefit or detriment to the communities they reside in. Controversial "newswoman" Ronnie Dahl "reported" on squatters who were "terrorizing" communities and getting a "free ride" in Detroit (Dahl, 2015a, 2015b). On the other hand, media also recently framed Detroit squatters as victims of over-aggressive policing (Wimbley, 2015) and desirable neighbors (Kurth, 2015). So called "abandonminiums" are being razed in Detroit to make way for urban renewal reminiscent of the 1960s ("Squatters complicate Detroit's plan to bulldoze vacant homes," 2015). If there are any squatters left after the media hubbub and bulldozing, Public Act 224 of 2014 might scare them out:

> *"Sec. 553. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), an individual who occupies a building that is a single-family dwelling or 1 or both units in a building that is a 2-family dwelling and has not, at any time during that period of occupancy, occupied the property with the owner's consent for an agreed-upon consideration is guilty of a crime as follows:*
>
> *(a) For a first offense, a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than $5,000.00 per dwelling unit occupied or imprisonment for not more than 180 days, or both.*

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(b) For a second or subsequent offense, a felony punishable by a fine of not more than $10,000.00 per dwelling unit occupied or imprisonment for not more than 2 years, or both" (House Bill No. 5070, 2014).

Regardless of their intent, white conservative Republicans continue to create and sponsor laws like Public Act 224 that affect urban, black areas. This particular bill passed the Senate with six dissenting votes. Three of those nay votes came from Senators of Districts 1, 2, and 3 representing the heart of Detroit. Suburban and rural lawmakers, with majority power, passed legislation directly affecting Detroit. Both sets of legislators represented their constituents. However, the Republican majority implemented laws that harmed constituents of another district. These are the conditions faced by thousands of disenfranchised homeless people.

In the suburban county, I went right to the count and did not undergo training. There were 32 teams with 5 individuals per team. The group leader conveyed the same basic instructions as were given in Wayne County. She assured us that she alerted the police in advance. We should take no longer than 4 hours to complete our effort. Some groups expected to return in 1 hour. The instructor told us to use the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI SPDAT). It is a very long, thorough 6-page form.

The assistant coordinator was the head coordinator the past two years. Her best experience going out was with a "peer" and she said there are 3 or 4 here tonight. They "really know where to find people." Volunteers repeatedly said they knew where the "hot spots" were. Seasoned volunteers explained that those who were "going to (a wealthy rural suburb) probably won't find anybody." It is this coordinator's first year running the count. I spoke to her aunt. She seemed slightly nervous but did not seem to tie that nervousness too much to violence or danger when I asked. The event hosts provided Dunkin Donuts and coffee. Wayne County had

no refreshments and that coordinator apologized. There were about 39 people at this event. In Wayne, there were about eight. They do a count the following day, too.

The effort was exciting but our group failed to locate any homeless individuals. We were not looking in one of the "hot spots" and we had little information to go off. As we drove around, the group kept looking to me asking, "Where should we look?" They knew I was a researcher but I told them I did not want to skew the data so I left the discovery up to them. One of the older white male volunteers was very ambitious. He told the driver to stop at a fire station. It was dark and the station was not open but we could see some men inside. The volunteer approached the building, knocked on windows, and some fire fighters came out to talk to him. They knew right where "tent city" and rough sleeper camps were. They directed us to a long, vacant service drive. The snow was deep but our SUV handled sufficiently.

We got out and started walking down some railroad tracks in the bitter cold. After about 100 yards, we found a camp. There was a "Beware of the Dog" sign and we paused because the instructor told us not to barge in on anyone. After some hesitation, we called out. There was no movement and no dog. The snow was very deep and it prevented us from getting too close. After a few minutes, we decided there was nobody home. I went back a few days later to check.

Figure 56. Suburban Tent Camp in Winter, Entry (2015)

Figure 57. Suburban Tent Camp in Winter, Detail (2015)

There are several similarities between this and the can man camps. Tools are strewn throughout both camps, as are cheap plastic patio chairs. Shopping carts were at each location. This camp had a few sharp daggers stabbed into a tree where a clock hung. Although there were no fresh footprints, I saw some food that looked relatively fresh. Rubber bike tubes and various bicycle and lawn mower parts were scattered around the camp. Whoever lived there was not around.

A few days earlier, I visited another location that our volunteer group found during the count. The fire fighters also recommended this location. When I approached the small "camp" in daylight, I was surprised at what it was. It did not appear to be any type of home camp. It looked more like a temporary summer overnight resting spot. However, somebody intricately built this camp and the effort to construct it was apparent. A fire pit was nearby but unused. There was no food, storage, or other things commonly found at camps. I figured someone would rejuvenate this camp during warmer months. Another interesting aspect of this camp is its placement in close proximity to a busy road and strip mall. The photos portray it as in the wilderness. It is not. It sits about 50 yards from a bank on one side and a busy intersection to the other side. Trees and brush protect it from view.

Figure 58. Suburban Tent Camp in Winter, Uninhabited (2015)

I never encountered a single homeless person during my count efforts in the suburban area. I met a few homeless individuals tangentially in Detroit through the count but I discuss those interactions in another section. I was able to meet a homeless individual in this same suburban area through my personal connections.

Suburban Homelessness

I do not intend this section to represent suburban homelessness in its entirety. However, the data help form themes of suburban homelessness as distinct from urban Detroit experiences that I discuss in another section. In the preceding section, I described how motivated suburbanites trekked through snowy fields only to conclude the effort without counting a single homeless person. It is possible that many of the homeless in that area were sleeping in cars due to the cold weather.

I met "Ben" (pseudonym) at a local chain restaurant and offered to buy him lunch. He was ready and willing to talk. We began with a conversation about Detroit Skid Row.

> *"Because, you know there was another lady writing a dissertation in that area that was at Wayne State because several of her professors have lost jobs over the years… have been unable to even find work at all, period, and become homeless. Yeah, so it's become… it's not a… I think it is not something that you can point a finger at and say 'well, this person is homeless because he or she did not try to obtain anything in life.' I've met some people out here in this area who are like me who live in their car… several as a matter of fact. You always… here at the corner of (Main Road) and (Main Road) there are several of us that sleep there in our vehicles you know and we try to make it very very very discreet but the point is the (Suburban) Police send out their officer by to make sure we're OK and it's not a situation where we make ourselves useless in this situation at all. We don't. We just… we do not conjugate there at all. We actually would go to (lists fast food restaurants) and have a cup of coffee but we do not get out of our cars and conjugate in that area at all."*

> *All your belongings, are they in your car?*

> *"Yes, and I have to be very careful unfortunately. The few of us that are over there all have trucks so we are able to hide as good as possible by pulling the back so the trucks and… So, it makes it a little easier for us as far as being able to drive our vehicles around. Part of the problem is driving along and getting your vehicle broken into. That's a huge problem because in this area drugs… is… equally as rampant as as equally as rampant as they are in Detroit. I think it is a… it's an issue with a lot of suburban nights because this function is… Detroit is the mecca for drugs. Detroit is the distribution for drugs but there is... certain areas such as (suburb) they get meth. They're huge in meth so that concerns us*

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from a standpoint of security and that's one of the reasons that the police officers often times stop by and you know check to see if we're OK."

I ask him why he does not seek out a religious or county shelter. He says they are dangerous. I ask him what the greatest danger is.

"You have some of society's most hardened criminals in shelters. You can try to go to sleep and then it becomes almost an impossible thing to do (subject then orders food, an entre. server recommends a salad. subject orders fish and chips saying about the salad 'that's too healthy' and the server asks if subject wants tabasco sauce, which he does). It's amazing what are done in shelters. Any belongings you have will disappear. Your life is literally teetering on the brink because you see violence in there that are uncalled for. People are just bullies. They are. You're talking about individuals that have spent 20 or 25 years in maximum security prisons and they're not… I tell you one time I rode the bus one morning. I was… one evening actually. I went down to Detroit for a job interview so I parked my car at (Main Road) and Woodward and rode down. Now, these guys conjugate over… around… create this… they congregate over at the main bus terminal downtown and I got back there and I got back to that bus around 5:15-5:30. So, I got there and I'm… when I got out of the bus, the back of the bus was filled with these individuals. The language… and, actually spoke about the things that some of them have done. No, there's no way that any person would feel safe in a… in a homeless shelter. It's not a good environment."

His description of the stark differences between Detroit and the suburbs were striking.

This man would be counted and categorized just like the other half million homeless individuals

currently living in America. Some may think he is a lot like the other older black men who sit in

the Detroit shelter or are on Skid Row. Yet, this man is scared to death of the "hardened

criminals" and "drug mecca" of Detroit.

"This is in Detroit… in Pontiac… Pontiac and Detroit are tough. Most people do not understand that… that is that… that is the case. Most people assume that it's all the same because shelters. Here's an overriding factor with that… that's why most people do not understand the fact that they are shelters and why they are in shelters… the violence that goes on in shelters… are basically even though they are recorded and reported… are not reported to most of the media. And, one of the reasons for that is to keep the people off the streets at night… to get people, especially during the winter time. Tent City down in Detroit was actually formed because some people had some really bad experiences in the shelters. I don't think Tent City was formed just because… they felt safer and they felt much better in that environment than they would have just going off into them shelters."

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I interview some of the shelter residents later in this study and most of their comments support his argument. I asked him why he does not panhandle. He speaks negatively of the phonies but also includes an element of fear in his response. He tells me some passersby just randomly beat on beggars. He told me "the life of the homeless is a heightened awareness." He told me many drug addicts are thieves and his laptop was stolen right out of is car (home). He distinguished himself between the thieves, addicts, beggars, and other homeless. He told me the clerks at one fast food resident know him but "don't know of (his) situation." Sometimes, he said, a person can walk into the fast food restaurant and that "there are some people… you can walk in there… you can tell… you can tell that they are homeless." I asked him how they are different from him and how can a regular person know who is and who is not homeless.

> *"You can tell by their physical aura. You can tell they have their bags. A gentleman that one of the guys that I sit down there with, his name is (redacted). I'm sorry, one of the guys I know at (fast food restaurant), he has a (pickup truck). Very highly educated man… nobody could tell… nobody knows. We would go in and have a cup of coffee… talk… but, one of the things that… it's almost like an unwritten code. The more you hold on to certain information, the safer it is. (His buddy) was walking the street one night for exercise and he got jumped because some guys recognize him as the guy that sits in the pickup and so a lot of stuff is shrouded in secrecy or because you can go into the library the Public Library… I think everybody says 'Detroit' and they make the statement… the references to the City of Detroit… but, what they do not understand is that homelessness is just as rampant on a per capita basis as it is in the City of Detroit. It is a large… young and old. Here's all the three of us that parks our vehicle up over here… the three of us and we… I think between the three… you probably have about 8 or 10 degrees, so it's not a situation where people are just in that capacity because they do not try…"*

Although he did not answer my question directly, I came to understand what he meant by "aura" later on. He did not possess that aura. I cannot really describe an "aura" in this scientific paper but I can explain it as an amalgamation of extreme scruffiness, bad teeth, cognitive deficiency due to drug use or mental disability, dressed in layers, and carrying excess baggage

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(i.e. a lot of belongings in tow). This suburban homeless man was much different from that description. His comments and "aura" support my argument of the extreme differences between types of homeless experiences and individual identities.

<div align="center">Discovering Detroit Homelessness through the Homeless Count</div>

I was somewhat lucky to receive an assignment through the Detroit homeless count that would substantively benefit my study. The suburban assignment added data but we did not locate any homeless individuals so I was only able to take photos of empty camps. While that was important, it failed to provide an empirical outlook of homelessness in Detroit and its surrounding counties. I was pleased that my second assignment in Detroit provided more substantive data.

My suburban effort was at night but my Detroit assignment was early morning. I arrived at about 7am to a church that provides meals to the homeless. This is a church mentioned in my earlier description of the history of Detroit. It was a brick church and it was difficult to see where the parking lot was in the dark. After I pulled in, a young black male approached me and asked me if I had any handbills to pass out. Handbills are small brochures used to advertise local businesses. It was the first time anybody in my study mentioned "handbills" to me directly.

Just prior to my 7am duties, there were about about 7 individuals hanging around the church. A Cadillac sat in the parking lot. An older white male came up to tell me that the soup kitchen breakfast church closed this day due to an illness. He wore a volunteer shirt.

A van pulled in and on its side, a banner read "Hooked on alcohol? Do you need help?" or something like that. This particular van looked different from the van/SUV full of girls that pulled in. I approached the girls' van, told them that I was from the homeless count, and asked

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them if they were from the count. They were not. The girls looked to be about 20 years old and they told me that they were volunteers.

Several individuals (about 4) got into the van with the writing on it. Another old Buick pulled up. The individuals that got into the van appeared to be the same individuals that asked if I had handbills to pass out. The van sat idling off to the side of the parking lot.

Another white unmarked van pulled into the parking lot. I quickly realized this is where individuals are coming to look for work. One of the aforementioned white vans pulled out with approximately 4 individuals in it after a period of about 5 minutes. That left about two individuals standing in the parking lot. Again, the soup kitchen closed for the day so something else was occurring with these white vans. One of the remaining men began talking to someone in the unmarked white van.

Another black man walked up to the church door with a backpack on. Several of the individuals who hung around wore backpacks and approached the church walking, all on foot. It looked like somebody told this man that the soup kitchen was closed today and he walked away leaving. He was talking on a cell phone, probably trying to make a decision of what to do. Another man pulled up to me in a late model red car and sat about six feet away from me in his car talking on his cell phone.

I asked the man in the late model car if he was with the count and he said he was. He told me that the two cars to his right were also with the count, which constituted all three individuals that I was supposed to meet (two men and one woman). I mentioned their first names and the man in the car called the other man "Mr." which was different from how I was saying it. I told him that the church closed and he seemed surprised. I explained whom I was, a

graduate student, and I was here to observe. He seemed very excited that the church closed. He

hurriedly got out of his car to tell the other two counters. He said something like "We can leave

now" and all three immediately left. I got the impression that they were returning to work or

clocking in or out for this activity, i.e. being paid. The man seemed happy that he did not have to

count homeless people, an assumption supported by how quickly they all left.

After about 15 minutes, I determined that I would not obtain interview or observation

data unless I approached the men standing at the church door. To the benefit of my study, one

man there began to talk quite a bit after I identified myself as a graduate student doing research

on homelessness. He talked for about a minute, non-stop, and mentioned that he wanted to do

what I was doing and "make a documentary." I was excited to hear that because I would like to

make a documentary and I did not even mention my film making history to this man. It was just

a coincidence that he mentioned wanting to make a documentary. This helped me build

immediate rapport with the subject. As I realized that I should document what he said, I asked

him if I could record the conversation and he readily accepted.

> *Investigator: There was about 12 of you here. Where did they go and how come*
> *you didn't go with them?*
>
> *Subject 1: Well, I'm trying to go to work, for one, get on a hand billing truck. But,*
> *most of them go to another church that's open up there on Jefferson… that way*
> *you can get a meal and everything like that.*
>
> *Investigator: So, they come here first?*
>
> *Subject 1: Yeah, usually (this church) opens every day except Thursday and*
> *Sunday and they open about 730. They'll start feeding people and stuff and you*
> *can get warm and you know, pretty much get a free meal and stuff, stay warm 'till*
> *about 11… 12… I think they kick you out.*
>
> *Investigator: Do they come here first for the work or for the meal?*

Subject 1: For the meal. Nobody comes here for work (inaudible) handful of people that want to come here for work.

Investigator: Where are the better places to go to work?

Subject 1: I have no clue (laughs).

Investigator: You wish you knew, right?

Subject 1: Yep (laughs). I wish, I wish I did know.

At this point, I was speaking with three white males. They were all different and I talked with the most lucid of the three. They all sought work, particularly $5/hour day labor passing out handbills for "slave drivers" because "what can you do… because you need the money." They told me where they stayed (at a church) and the differences between the white vans (some were full of "dope heads"). Then, two of the less lucid individuals started babbling nonsense so my main subject asked to walk so that we could continue our conversation in private.

Subject 1: Most of them, like… you want to walk or whatever? Most of, like, I mean… it's, eh… I don't know man, like if I had a check, I wouldn't be here for one. Most of these guys… like the Hotel Yorba… it's up here… First of the month, like right now, there's a couple guys they're probably all dressed up, in like, in their 3-piece suit and then 2 days later they're broke. And, it's like, they get a check from the government man and they pay their rent for the month and then they're broke. Because they spend it all on drugs and everything like that and it's just like fuck. Why can't I get a check? You know, and I got a disability, too, I broke my back in 2009. And, I got knee problems, back problems, all sorts of crap. I can't get a check. Keep fighting because it's like I end up, I end up not having a place to stay where I can get mail.

The man reiterated some common reasons to avoid the welfare office: bureaucracy, stigma about "pity," and the less-than-promising success rate of actually receiving benefits even when entitled to them. He continued to gripe about the poor conditions of Detroit so I asked him why he chose to live here instead of the (potentially) beautiful and accommodating suburbs.

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Subject 1: Because there's nothing out there. Nothing out there at all; there's no shelters... the only other, there's a rotating shelter, um, in Taylor. But, they're pretty much full. Everything else is the only, anything, is Detroit. There's nothing in the suburbs whatsoever for I mean pretty much anything to even help you. You know, you go to DHS and that's a run around and stuff you know uh last time I applied for a Bridge Card, I got it for a month and then they cut me off. Then, the lady wouldn't answer the phone for like 10 days. (My benefits were cut off because) she (said) I made uh $37 and I need to report it in 2013 but I didn't make any money in 2013 it was 2011 when I had that I worked at a car wash. She said I needed to uh to show up with it. And prove it and I'm like prove what? That I made $37 one day? And, like, it's just... you know, it's just ridiculous...

I later confirmed that there was a "rotating shelter" in the suburbs and it was usually completely full. His comment shows the compounding problems that marginalized people face. He looked for shelter and benefits but they turned him away. He tried to get a job but that only prevented him from receiving more benefits. This creates a situation whereby individuals must navigate these systems with strategies.

He told me of other types of work (passing out phone books) and locations where the homeless live (specific abandoned buildings). I told him about my time on Skid Row Detroit and he responded, "all the drug dealers… all they do is prey on those people." This is a comment supported by my interview with another individual on Skid Row. Despite what the media portray, many Skid Row residents are nothing but prey for drug dealers.

I directed some of my questions to elicit certain themes of my research: knowledge obtained through social networks, decision-making, and choice to locate. He summed up those concepts by stating, "You know, it's like, I knew that was the only place I knew where I could make cash and so I walked all the way and it took me three and a half hours to walk down here. I stayed in an abandoned building the one night then somebody showed me the little shelter church over there um I went there then the next day I got on a hand billing truck. And I been

doing that since." This quick progression from place-entry to sustained routine showed up in some of my interviews conducted elsewhere. Many homeless individuals expressed very simply that they arrived to a city, found the first place of refuge through their closest peer network, and continue to perform those survival tactics through the current day.

The man told me about some housing options like a $70/week hotel or a park where homeless individuals sleep outdoors during the summer. While these are real "options," each comes with its own set of problems. During my interviews on Skid Row, I asked some individuals why they chose to sleep in the Skid Row shelter instead of in a wide open field on a bed of soft grass (at the shelter, they must sleep upright in chairs). They told me that sleeping in the park was dangerous, especially for women. This subject told me the cheap hotel "is a shit hole, too. Like, I was staying (at a cheap hotel) last year. And, they had bed bugs and I left. I was like fuck this man. As soon as I found them I was like I'm out. You know I couldn't deal with it. But, you know I mean it's like what do you do." This was another common theme expressed in several of my interviews with other homeless individuals. The homeless know of, or legitimately have, very few options. The conditions of those limited options are terrible. Privileged classes are able to move around to other safe environments when conditions become unpleasant. Nevertheless, the homeless have few other options… "What do you do?"

> Like I uh right now I sleep on the floor. I sleep in a pew. (inaudible) So, I don't even sleep in a bed. But, you know, uh I can go to a shelter over there by (Skid Row) but man there's fucking drunks and drug addicts and problems and all that and I don't want to deal with that shit.

His choice, like that of many other homeless individuals, is between sleeping on a floor/pew or congregating with drug dealers. The homeless deviants (drunks, addicts, etc.) spread out and their prime locations vary by city. For example, some of the can men told me that

many of the shelter residents in Lansing are drunks. However, a news story indicates that the

tent dwellers are alcoholics (Balaskovitz, 2010). One respondent told me most of the drunks

sleep rough, even in rail yards, or by the VOA. Another respondent told me the panhandlers are

most likely addicted to heroin. Residents of Skid Row told me that parks were dangerous. Yet,

this respondent suggests that Skid Row is the most dangerous place. I know of at least two

incidents of shanking at the Skid Row shelter and one respondent mentioned a stabbing.

> *Subject 2: That one guy (there was no real prompt to this statement other than the preceding discussion of Skid Row, "drug addicts," "problems," and "that shit")*

> *Subject 1: Yeah, that one guy got stabbed (laughs)*

> *Subject 2: I know that guy*

> *Subject 1: The first night I'm there a guy got stabbed for uh lighting up a cigarette*

> *Investigator: So it was just uh sort of like a conflict and aggression or was it…*

> *Subject 1: The guy one guy lit up his cigarette and the other guy uh "Don't light that fucking cigarette I'll blah blah blah blah blah" and fucking they got into a fist fight and then uh he went in the bathroom and they you know broke up and stuff and then guy came in there and stabbed him in the back of the leg. Supposedly, that guy's uh he's wanted for uh violation of parole plus now he stabbed somebody so it's like fuck man. I just try to stay out you know like I don't… I really don't even have any friends man… talk people I'll… people I'll talk to but I don't try to associate with most of these people because they're fucked up, you know, I'm not trying to stay down I'm trying to get up. I mean there's guys that stay at that shelter I'm at right now for two years like what the fuck man how can you, you know I mean yeah I don't make much money but I'm trying to save up every little bit I can so I can get a (inaudible) I don't want to live at a shelter my whole life…*

> *Investigator: So, what do you think keeps them there?*

> *Subject 1: Keeps them there, they know every night they got a warm place to (inaudible) rest at. That's it, that's all, you know what I'm saying. They go out, they make their beer alcohol money and then you know that's it… And then, do*

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you know like, a lot of these guys, you know like some of them you know all they do is they just scrap. They'll go into buildings break into these you know abandoned buildings and take you know copper wire whatever they can they can scrap out of and shit you know and that's you know what are they gonna do when all that's gone…

Again, the man explains the terrible conditions and suggests that there is no "light at the end of the tunnel," to use hyperbole. Once a certain survival technique is extinguished (like scrapping), the individual finds the next best option from a set of options that is limited to begin with. Survival strategies disappear in two ways: materialistically and structurally. Sometimes the material to survive dissipates, be it copper or food or housing. Structural forces also reduce survival options.

Subject 1: Now, well now they passed that new law that if you get copper anything copper you have to wait three days for a check to come to your you know they congress passed the new law and stuff so you have to wait three days for a check and you gotta have valid ID

Investigator: Makes it harder

Subject 1: Yeah, they're they're they're you're not going in there getting all that money right away and stuff like that so they can trace loose trace stuff um but uh you know I mean how you gonna trace wire (laughs)

Subject 2: You gotta wait three days get paid for copper now?

Subject 1: Yeah

Subject 2: That's all over?

Subject 1: Everywhere yep. Yep, the state, the state passed a new law

Subject 2: Why'd they do that?

Subject 1: Because they

Subject 2: Why

Subject 1: Because everybody was stealing copper, copper pipes

Subject 2: Why, are they trying to trace to see if it's stolen?

Subject 1: Yep, because there is so many places that (inaudible) keep getting broken into… buildings broken into… and, all the (inaudible) copper stolen… I ain't into that. I'd rather work hard. Then, you know, get my money, but… except working for 5 bucks an hour ain't really shit.

When a survival strategy disappears the next option is rarely employment. Detroit is an extremely depressed area. Detroit has a low (8.4% lower than Michigan) rate of citizens in the labor force. Of those individuals in the labor force, 28.5% are unemployed in Detroit (compared to 12.7% in Michigan). There are 208,390 individuals employed in Detroit and, of those, 29% work service jobs compared to 19% in Michigan (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). In Detroit, there are: (i) fewer individuals able to work; (ii) fewer individuals employed; and (iii) jobs pay less.

Investigator: So, another part of my study is I think there is a misperception about the guys who are panhandling and stuff downtown especially during the sports games and stuff. You haven't mentioned that at all, is it something you…

Subject 1: I don't do it. I mean, yeah I'll ask for a quarter if I need it or something like that but I don't sit there and panhandle all day, I just…

Subject 2: I do. I panhandled last night.

Subject 1: Did you. Did it work?

Survival strategies come from several factors but primarily stem from pragmatism. This homeless individual assesses the potential profitability of panhandling by asking, "Did it work?" He receives an answer from his close-ties peer network and gathers more information to consider the pros and cons of such work.

Subject 2: Yeah, man, real good.

Subject 1: Yeah, I mean you see them always on the edge of the edge of Detroit on the freeway and you know coming off the freeways and stuff like that and you know of them I hear make good money, 50… a hundred bucks a day, it's like wow.

Subject 2: They want to fight over a spot like that

Subject 1: Oh, yeah.

Subject 2: Kill a motherfucker

Subject 1: I bet, you know but it to me it's like you know I'm not going to… I mean I'm not gonna ask for handouts because I'd rather just go out there and get what I can for myself you know I mean I'm not gonna lay down and (inaudible) if I'm gonna get something I'm gonna have to go get it myself. You know, but if a lot of these people had that same mentality there'd probably be pretty nice shelters and pretty nice places to go but you know that it's not like that, you know people use (or: abuse) it

Subject 2: Fuck, shit, I did it but I seen everybody else doing it I said fuck it. Got me a sign. Said "Homeless Please Help" (inaudible) it up, it works.

Subject 1: Never done it. But, you know I've still. When I've needed a few bucks or a smoke…

During the conversation, I could tell this man was considering the option of panhandling in the future and weighed the costs and benefits of street begging. He began the conversation by antagonizing the idea and argued that it was not real work because it was a "handout." Yet, his friend explained it as a way to get money for smokes. That friend continued to explain how to perform the action most efficiently.

Subject 2: You gotta… you gotta… You've gotta step… You've got to step down to the level of (inaudible)

Subject 1: Yeah, and I don't look like a scum bag (laughs) I gotta let my beard grow out and obviously you know

Subject 2: Look at me I'm… this coat helps a little; yeah, the homeless coat

Subject 1: I've got one of those. I just don't, I don't… don't carry it. It's too heavy.

Subject 2: Shit, this motherfucker's warm.

Subject 1: Yeah, it is. That's a sleeping bag jacket. There's a back on the… bottom drops down and you can put your feet in and it velcros all the way around and you can… it's a sleeping bag

Again, the conversation included information transmission about how to survive. The "homeless coat" was a way to stay warm. Looking "like a scum bag" was a way to get more money panhandling. So much of the interaction involved accumulation of new knowledge through a close-ties peer network. When developing a coping strategy to survive, homeless individuals process the most readily available information first. It was so cold and the homeless are so broke, the first option appeared the best way to survive. There was no time or place to sit down and consider any long-term plan. The goal was simply to live and get money right now.

These are common goals for many Detroiters, homeless or not. I argue that the majority of Detroit residents live in situations where they cannot afford to meet even the most basic human needs. Over 74% of Detroit households make less income than the average annual expenditures for the area (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). Almost half of those, over 80,000 households, earn less money than the average annual housing expense in the area. An astounding 54,445 households in Detroit earn less than $10,000 per year. For context, there were 2,755 individuals considered homeless last year.

Table 26. Detroit and Michigan, Household Income and Benefits
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars (2009-2013)

Total households	Michigan		Detroit	
	3,823,280		256,599	
Less than $10,000	312,673	8.2%	54,445	21.2%
$10,000 to $14,999	215,695	5.6%	26,359	10.3%
$15,000 to $24,999	452,251	11.8%	42,441	16.5%
$25,000 to $34,999	426,840	11.2%	32,543	12.7%
$35,000 to $49,999	557,516	14.6%	35,227	13.7%
$50,000 to $74,999	704,343	18.4%	33,272	13.0%
$75,000 to $99,999	455,719	11.9%	15,845	6.2%
$100,000 to $149,999	436,587	11.4%	11,706	4.6%
$150,000 to $199,999	143,832	3.8%	2,915	1.1%
$200,000 or more	117,824	3.1%	1,846	0.7%
Median household income (dollars)	**$48,411**		**$26,325**	
Mean household income (dollars)	**$64,753**		**$37,887**	

Figure 59. Detroit Area Annual Expenditures; Average $57,514 Total (2013-14)
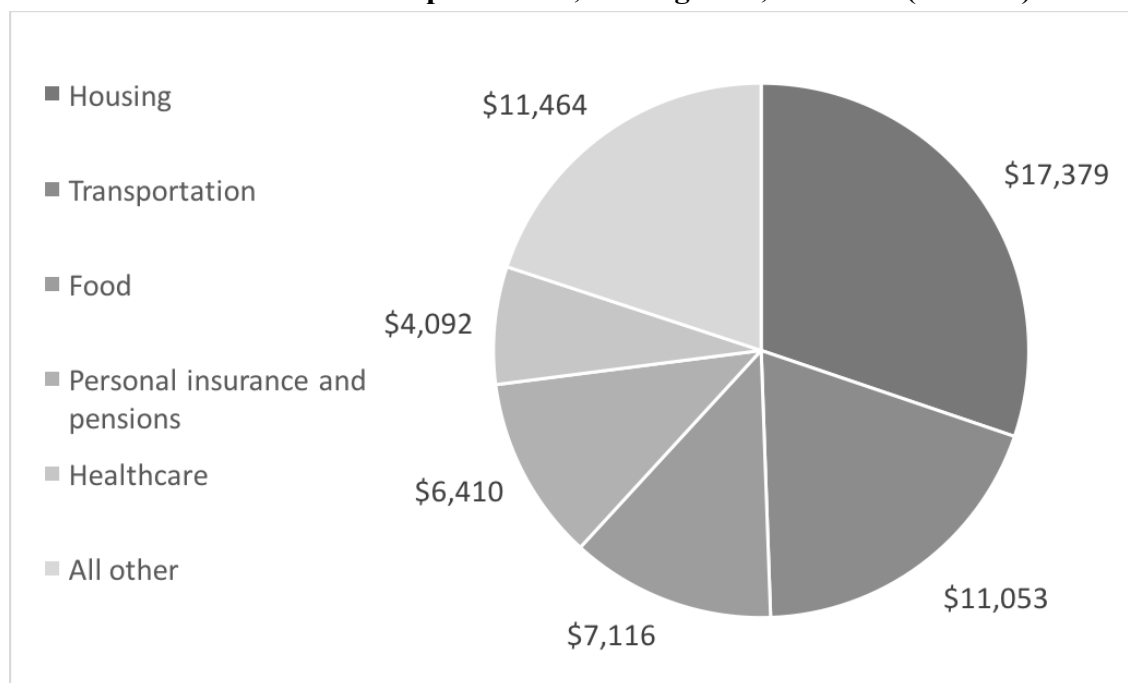
(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015)

I continue to argue that the homeless count does little, if anything, to help address the overall problem of extreme poverty in Detroit and other concentrated areas in Michigan. The male respondents in this section describe strategies to cope with the conditions of extreme poverty. Panhandling for "a hundred bucks a day" is not deviant… "it's like wow" to these individuals who face daily challenges to their survival. The 2,755 homeless individuals see the other 80,804 households earning less than $14,999 per year, some of whom work fast food or retails jobs, and it is difficult to envision any better life. They see their neighbors, an astounding 67% of Detroiters, "either under the poverty line or what (the United Way) identifies as 'ALICE' -- asset-limited, income-constrained, employed" (Abbey-Lambertz, 2014). When life chances diminish to this level, upward mobility is non-existent. The only remaining strategy is survival.

Table 27. Structural Forces on the Detroit Homeless Experience
Many structural forces affect the Detroit homeless experience. I provide a very short summary here before transitioning into the next section.

Scrapping in Michigan (Oosting, 2014)	New law "caps direct cash transactions for metal at $25 and requires scrap yards to mail payments to an address provided by the seller of commonly stolen items: catalytic converters, air conditioners and copper wiring."
Panhandling in Flint (Keller, 2015)	"An ordinance that bans panhandling and soliciting on the sides of streets. Those people found begging can be issued a ticket."
Squatting in Michigan (Hajal, 2014)	"The state laws (that) went into effect (in September 2014) made squatting a crime punishable by up to 180 days behind bars and a $5,000 fine for the first offense, while making the second offense a felony punishable by 2 years in prison and a $10,000 fine. The legislation also made it easier for property owners to have squatters who forced their way into a property arrested, and to legally remove their property and change locks."
ALICE Poverty in Michigan (Abbey-Lambertz, 2014)	"1.5 million Michigan families can't afford to meet their basic needs"

Figure 60. Men Waiting for Work at a Soup Kitchen in Detroit (2015)

Figure 61. First of the Month Unemployment Line in Detroit (2015)

Over 60 individuals wait in line outside the unemployment office in Detroit on the first of the month. I took the two photographs on this page on the same day to show the options of seeking informal day labor or public assistance during the cold winter months in Detroit where 80,804 households earn less than $14,999 per year.

Observing the Detroit Soup Kitchen

The day after I went to Detroit to participate in the homeless count, I went back as a participant observer. I pulled in to the church parking lot about 710a (Saturday) which was slightly later than the previous day (Friday). The day prior, the instructor told me to arrive at 7a for the homeless count but today it was more appropriate to arrive later when breakfast started. My subject from yesterday said to come about 730a. When I arrived, there were about 8-10 cars in the parking lot and 2 vans. One van was beige and the other was white. The beige van was not there the day before. It pulled out rather quickly. I did not ever see a box truck this day like the day before but I did see the van with writing on its side pull in a bit later in the morning. One of the cars had a "coexist" bumper sticker so I figured that was a college student or progressive community do-gooder volunteer. At some point, I saw one late model car pull in (never saw any cars leave) and that vehicle had two older white males that got out and went inside.

When I first arrived, I could tell that this would be a great morning to observe the breakfast meal. There were some individuals around the red (main back) door and the cars tipped me off. I parked and proceeded to check out the facility. The difficulty for me walking in was that there are no windows. Much like my trips to Skid Row, I just had to ambitiously open a door and walk in without knowing anything about what I was walking into. This is why I walk in with such confidence, as if I know what I am doing. That behavior helps me fit in.

When I opened the door, I could see it was a stairwell. However, I could not see if it was better to go left or down to the right. Perhaps there were more individuals downstairs so I chose to go down. I walked past about six or seven older black males with my head down. I got the feeling they were looking at me a little funny but not too much. I never know if I really stand out in these environments. I realized later they were probably wondering what I was doing. I

learned very soon that I was breaking the rules and breakfast had not yet started. They were still in the stairwell waiting.

As I reached the bottom of the stairs, there was a closed door. Since men were sitting in the stairwell, I did not want to cut in line but they were not moving. I was unsure what the situation was, i.e. if they were hanging out or waiting in line. One or two guys sat on the floor with their heads bowed down. As I pondered my next move for about 2 seconds, I saw a bathroom to my left. The door was wide open and I saw a stand-up stall (and one sit-down stall and a sink). I proceeded to the bathroom for two reasons; I had to use it and it would help give me a reason to be doing what I was doing. After using the bathroom, I walked straight through the basement door.

When I entered the room, I could tell the meal would be there; it had the standard look of a cafeteria. There was a food counter and about 20 tables with an equal number of men scattered across the room, sitting. Nobody was at the food counter. All the workers or volunteers were white. In an instant I could not figure out how to eat or what the procedure was so I spotted a coffee maker (I thought) and made a beeline toward it to get coffee. I grabbed a Styrofoam cup and filled it up… with water. At least it was cold. As I turned around, a white male said, "You either gotta work or get out (or, maybe he said 'leave')." This informed me that I needed to leave immediately. I slowly realized that maybe the meal had not yet started.

I confidently walked up the stairs and threw my foam cup in the large garbage can that was nestled in the middle of all the six or seven black males waiting in the stairwell. The big plastic can with a large black plastic trash bag seemed to be resting where the stairs made a turn. It was a dark and dingy stairwell.

I pushed the big, heavy red door open and some early morning sun light shined in my eyes. A beige van pulled out right in front of me. There was only one black male outside. The same black male was the first to approach my car the previous morning and ask if I had any work for him passing out handbills. Later, he again approached me and asked me if I was there waiting for work to pass out handbills. I said no, but asked him "Is that what you are here waiting for?" He said, yes. He spoke somewhat slowly, softly, and somewhat politely. He walked with a slow pace. He looked to be wearing a "homeless coat" like I saw the day before. He had a canvas bag hanging from around his neck and draped over his back. It was slightly creepy because it could easily strangle him if he was not careful. He approached the van or vans as he had the day before. However, I never saw this young man ever get in a van.

I waited for a while. I saw about five or six black males approach and enter the red door. From where I stood, I could see in one window down into the basement cafeteria. All the rest of the windows were either boarded or cloudy. Nevertheless, I kept looking down in to the basement to check. I saw a line form. Nobody was looking up at me. Nobody was outside either so I waited for the line to get shorter until there was maybe one person waiting and five people at the counter. Then, I went back in.

I looked around to see what the procedure was. I grabbed a tray and looked forward. The first window was bean soup and possibly a cheesy macaroni. It came in medium sized Styrofoam bowls, a size in between a cup and bowl. It looked gross which is saying a lot because I will eat just about anything. I think I was especially repulsed because it was not breakfast food. Perhaps if this were lunch and I were hungry, I might try it. Everybody else seemed to be getting some. I thought that maybe this was because these men had been up all

night awake. In other words, maybe this was not their breakfast. Maybe it was their dinner at 730a.

The next window was peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on white bread on a tray with about fifty sandwiches on it. The jelly leaked through in about one spot per sandwich. I would have taken one if hungry but I just was not hungry. The next window had an assortment of donuts (not donut rolls) and muffins or other pastries. None of it looked the least bit appetizing. I took a donut. Since I did not really want one, I just pointed and said, "One of those." The man replied "Plain one?" and I nodded. I left the food line with one plain donut and a napkin.

Racially, it appeared 100% of the volunteers or workers were white. Some black men helped but I got the impression they were patrons simply contributing to the meal, perhaps in return for extra food. There was a white woman working the front desk, which I originally thought was check-in but later realized it was simply a tray return area. A heavy black man, maybe 50 years old, sat next to her about 90% of the time. I figured he was not a volunteer. I thought he was homeless and just dressed sharply but some of his comments made it seem like he was a worker/volunteer although he did not really do much work. The white woman seemed to know about a dozen or so patrons and mentioned them by name although I did not hear any mention her name. They might have and I missed it. The white woman's job was to sit there and collect dirty trays. To her right was a trashcan for plates and cups and napkins. Sitting on her little table was a big bucket. I knew right away that the bucket was for liquid waste. While that is not knowledge exclusively tied to the shelter system or soup kitchens, I saw it at three other locations (shelter, soup kitchen, breakfast church). It is somewhat gross. One thing she used that I did not see at other locations was a tub of soapy water. When patrons left, they handed her their tray and she rinsed it right there and set it back out. That was also kind of gross

and it informed me why my tray was wet to begin with. At one point, the woman and I made eye contact and she smiled at me. She was there when I first walked in and there when I left.

Immediately after the food windows was a coffee station with two large metal urns. A 20-something year old thin brunette woman was working that station. I asked for coffee and she replied, "Black or with creamer?" I told her I would take it black. She filled up a large cup, the same size that was used for the beans (I heard one of the volunteers actually refer to the bean soup as just "beans"). She had regular sized cups and I wondered why she did not give me a regular sized cup.

I took my coffee and donut tray over to the main entrance where the white woman sat. I sat as close to her as I could. I wanted to hear her and the patrons. I did not want to seem out of place just sitting in the middle of a table full of regular patrons, i.e. intruding. The spot at a table next to the white woman faced the wall. I figured I could just sit there discretely and observe.

To my left were some magazines and possibly some bread loaf plastic bags. There was also some hand sanitizer or single serve lotion bottles and some travel sized toothpaste and toothbrushes. In addition, there were maybe three magazines. One was TIME magazine.

Early on, I heard the woman referring to patrons by name. She asked one, "If they had showers here… would you take a shower here?" She told the patron they were thinking about installing showers and asked for his feedback. I thought this was a little strange because I did not see how any showers could go anywhere in this basement. Perhaps she was talking about upstairs somewhere.

She also asked the man, "They are thinking about doing laundry here and if they had laundry here, would you wash your own clothes or would you be okay with turning in your clothes to be washed and taking a new set of clothes?" I thought that was an odd but relatively normal question. I did not hear his answer or I simply do not remember it.

While the soup kitchen notes do not appear to contain anything out of the ordinary, this narrative supports a few of my arguments throughout this research. First, I was hesitant to enter the soup kitchen but I received food and warmth once inside. There were "regulars" and volunteers who knew some of them. If I wanted to join this community, I could. If I were a desperate homeless man, I could seek out daily food and warmth at this place. It would make sense to visit this location regularly to meet my immediate needs. However, this environment provided me and its other patrons almost no long-term assistance. The only "long term" effects of this place would be (i) situating it into a stagnant routine and (ii) adding fellow impoverished individuals into a social network. The same is true for the box trucks outside offering low-wage informal day labor.

Second, it was a depressing environment. There were clearly "haves" and those who "have not." The volunteers were friendly but I assume some conflict builds between them and the homeless individuals who frequent the place because the volunteers are limited to offering beans and toothpaste. I saw this type of conflict build at another location and probably did not see it manifest here in Detroit because I only visited once.

The themes emerging from my Detroit fieldwork were absolute destitution, extreme limitations on income earning, unhelpful social networks, criminalization of activities, and virtually no mechanism to escape extreme poverty. In certain sections of this manuscript, I argue

that the closure of mental health facilities had negative effects on the overall homeless population in Michigan. However, Detroit is a much different case. These are not exclusively disabled individuals. They might be. However, the best description of Detroit is a disabled city. The city is unable to provide the majority of its residents with any hope or upward mobility.

Figure 62. Homelessness on Church Steps in Detroit (2015)

Detroit Skid Row

I never knew this area as "Skid Row" until a hospital van dumped a homeless man at my research site and left him to die. The media referred to the area as "Skid Row" (Kiertzner, 2015). Explained earlier in this manuscript, Skid Row was a strip along Michigan Avenue (Barbour, 1987; Lindberg, 1951). Many of the Skid Row inhabitants during the 1950s migrated from Chicago then urban renewal displaced those Michigan Avenue residents during the 1960s.

Now, the media consider Skid Row to be "3rd Street and Martin Luther King, across the street from the NSO homeless shelter" (Kiertzner, 2015). This label is a social construction based on prevalent homelessness, felons, drug traffic, mental illness, and despair. A man recently stabbed two Detroit emergency medical technicians at the site ("Suspect charged in stabbing of Detroit EMS workers," 2015). Officials charged that same man with first-degree murder in a 2006 cold case. In a different incident, a homeless man was left for dead outside the shelter ("Man's body found outside Detroit homeless shelter," 2015). Both of these incidents occurred after I took field notes but in close proximity to my research site.

It is a rough area and almost indescribable. Although I never visited Skid Row in Los Angeles, I assume Skid Row in Detroit is a smaller but similar community. I went to the location several times over three years and talked to many individuals, both inside and outside of the shelter. I went at various times throughout the year, during the bitter cold winter and in the beautiful weather of summertime. I grew fond of the individuals who spoke with me. However, those individuals were lucid and somewhat handpicked by the staff of the facility. My convenience sampling limited access to only those individuals the gatekeepers referred to me. I did not push to go outside these boundaries because I do not find much value in speaking to the

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mentally ill or liars. My sample adequately met my objective to gather substantive data on the

daily lives of individuals on Skid Row Detroit.

The first time I went to the site, I was nervous. There were about a dozen people near the

Skid Row shelter, on the sidewalks, and in the middle of the road. At first, I thought the

individuals were in the middle of the road because they were talking with some construction

workers blocking the street. On second thought, I realized the individuals were just walking in

the middle of the road by choice and they just hollered at the construction workers as a

byproduct of their proximity. I was surprised to see so many people outside because the wind

chill this day was about -10 degrees Fahrenheit. The building looked like it had a warehouse in

the front and I assumed the shelter was in the back. I found out later that this entire building was

just one warehouse type building. It was not a typical community center. The structure itself

could have been an old bus garage.

Staff[2] told me about several plans to move the location. The first plan was to move to an

abandoned Detroit Police precinct. Staff explained that the precinct served as a fuel station so

there were gas tanks buried underground that would have to come out in addition to an asbestos

hazard stemming from separate shotgun and pistol shooting ranges. It caused me to believe that

the abandoned precinct would fit the model of this existing location, which appeared to be a

converted garage.

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[2] I refer to my conversations with "staff" in general. This avoids identifying any of the staff
members I spoke to over the course of several years.

During my first visit to Skid Row, I arrived at 1250p. Staff told me on the phone I could "pull right in and park" so I confidently entered a fenced area that looked like a tow yard. There were only two rows of parking spots turned into three rows. One row was blocked. I thought this must be normal and would not have hesitated to block in another car. However, I found a sport right by the door. Later, when I came out of the building, I saw what looked like vomit right beside the front passenger side of my car. I could not tell how fresh it was but my guess was it happened during the 2 hours I was in the building. I was thankful none was actually on my car.

It was difficult to see where the actual entrance for the center was. There were no clear markings of "entrance" and the only sign that I saw indicated something to the effect that this place was open "24/7." Since I was a few minutes early for my first meeting, I used the time to pretend to check email on my cell phone while I scouted out what the regular entrance was. It appeared that people commonly used one unmarked door on the side of the building. Without hesitation, I walked right to it and entered as if I knew what I was doing. Whatever I do at these shelters, I do confidently as if I belong there and I think this builds my perceived reputation by the regulars.

By this time in my study, I held a new understanding of the looks I get from homeless people. I have not yet ever felt someone looked at me with resentment. Since I now know of the high rate of mental illness among the homeless, I assume many of these individuals lack the mental capacity to form real resentment for me. If they were completely cognizant, I would expect resentment for the main reason that I stand out as white and dressed decently. The only other feeling I ever perceived was ambivalence or perhaps "This is a new social worker or

doctor." I have not yet felt unwanted or unfit to be at a shelter. If anything, I have some underlying white privilege.

At this point, I saw about 20 people and they were all black but it did not register to me that they were all black because of the small sample size. I know Detroit to be predominantly black so it was not surprising that everybody around was black.

I walked in the door and to my left was a 3' x 10' Plexiglas window. There were about 5 or 6 black individuals in the hallway and maybe two individuals behind the glass. I recall they were all male except maybe one female behind the glass. As the door shut behind me, there was some commotion and hollering. One male appeared to be a leader or a staff member. I just kept walking forward through the men down the 15' hallway. I think I nodded and raised my hand in a wave at a person in authority. There was some validation that I was okay even though staff chastised some of the other men at the time. As soon as I reached the end of the hallway where a staff member was operating the door, I said, "I'm here to see (staff)" received a nod of confirmation and entered the hall. As I looked up, I felt my first shock as to where I was. This was the shelter main room.

In front of me were about 150 black men sitting in chairs facing forward. It was not silent. I did not interrupt anything and it was not as if a record needle screeched when I walked in. I felt very comfortable. I felt no strange resentful stares. I looked to my left and there was some type of check-in table with maybe two staff members, although it was very difficult to distinguish staff from residents at first. Later, I would look for blue shirts that I think indicate staff.

As I focused forward, I saw a metal detector. This is when I went into another mode of confidence and looked for staff to nod to and heard one staff say to another "He's here for (staff)." I nodded again. Someone must have motioned me forward. I walked through the metal detector, it beeped, and I knew I had metal keys in my pockets. My other experience with metal detectors was very recent, at courthouses, and I even took my chap stick out of my pockets previously because I am extremely frightened of authority and cops. Here, I felt confident as if I was the authority. I also strongly believe there was a strong presence of white privilege here. I did not look like a resident so staff treated me differently. I do not look like a cop so I did not turn anybody off. When the metal detector buzzed, nobody did anything. I kept walking and staff instructed me to move toward a door that I would later discover was the entryway to the (staff) office.

Someone opened an office door and there were two or three black men in the room besides staff. They quickly gathered their things to end whatever meeting or discussion was happening. Again, it was as if I was something special here yet nobody said my name or position. I politely waited for the men to leave, which took about twenty seconds, and then I entered the small office with no windows.

The walls were white and so was the drop ceiling. The vent on the ceiling was dusty but not stained with cigarette tar. One wall was cinder blocks and I imagine my car was directly outside where I was sitting. Staff sat at a nice fake cherry wood L-shaped desk with barely enough space to the left to get around. There was a round table and a bookshelf. Staff had a laser printer and an old Windows computer. There were many loose papers on both the desk and the round table.

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I noticed a "Michiganian of the Year" award from the Detroit News 1982. To its left, a plaque commemorating the founding of COTS (Coalition on Temporary Shelter), another homeless shelter in Detroit. There was a coat rack with a beige tweed ¾-length coat with a scarf draped over it. Staff wore a suede dark brown sport coat, a yellow sweater, and a light blue-collared dress shirt. Staff had a matching dark brown suede derby hat on at all times. The stylish dress was impressive.

I asked staff about the efficacy of the metal detectors. He told me they were a sufficient deterrent. I followed-up with a question about what the metal detectors deterred. Staff replied, "You know what…" and got out of a chair to search for something behind a filing cabinet near the desk. Staff pulled out the most frightening sword dagger I have ever seen. It had two curves in it and was about two feet long. It was probably made of steel and had a handle. There was a sharp point for stabbing, a sharp blade for cutting, and serrated edges for carnage. It was extremely scary. I could envision what using that weapon would do to human flesh. It seemed to me like that weapon could take out all 150 individuals at the center unless someone had a gun. I wondered whether staff had a concealed weapon but did not ask. Nobody appeared to be wearing a bulletproof vest.

I asked staff about other staff members' risk of harm. A woman murdered a staff member about eight years ago when the woman thought a male staff member was her ex-husband. Something triggered her posttraumatic stress disorder. Staff said that PTSD was prevalent. It made me perceive the interactions between staff and residents as somewhat surreal in that both individuals are not cognizant. There was no intent in that killing. What happens is not necessarily rational behavior.

Staff expressed frustration that mental illness is not viewed the same as physical illness, e.g. by the American medical system or the government (my examples). I was not sure if the origin of this discontent was financial, i.e. because funding was equivalent. Alternatively, the perception stemmed from an egalitarian moral system of equality. I asked staff how the individual was subdued or if the weapon was confiscated. He said staff caught it at entry. Staff indicated there was no struggle. I said, "Oh, so the staff found it at entry and confiscated it with no struggle? It was willingly handed over?" Staff informed me that is what happened.

Staff talked about the decision process of the deviant. The person was coming in from the cold and needed shelter. Entry required disposing the weapon. There was a rational choice made by the resident: weapon or shelter. Staff implied that individuals choose shelter even though they are deviant on the surface. They conform to have their needs met.

I told staff the main purpose of my research was to learn about income sources and trajectory influences. I explained the origin of my "Can Man" study. Staff began to describe "carts with bags of cans draped off them. The individuals return them but stores max out at $25 per visit and some stores do not take all the bottle (types) back." I told staff I was familiar with the process and asked staff to confirm if there were can men here at this shelter. Staff confirmed that there were. I conveyed the spectrum of formal, informal, licit, and illicit work and told staff that I was examining all work done by residents and trying to learn more about the motivation for work. Staff understood my line of questions clearly and responded.

There is some legal work done by the residents. In the summers, "you'll see vans with no windows and no seats pull up at 6 in the morning to grab some people to pass out handbills. The work is legal but they pay them in either cash under the table or crack. So, the work is very legal

but the method of payment isn't really." I was confused at first. At that point, I did not know what handbills were but I nodded as if I did. Because of the context of the discussion and emphasis on the legality of the practice, it took me about two minutes to figure out this meant small advertisement fliers. Still, I was a bit confused since Detroit does not have as many businesses to advertise like New York would. Once or twice, staff mentioned the term "abondominium" which meant a vacant building inhabited by homeless people.

Staff told me a story about a homeless man who he just saw that day at McDonald's holding up a sign asking for money. The man's head slumped down and the two did not make eye contact. I told staff about the difference in panhandling versus can dogging; the latter is much more physical labor and functional to society. Staff did not display an overly agreeable facial expression. There was no smiling or nodding. Maybe I confused him with my academic jargon use of "legitimate" which maybe sounded like "respectable." I tried to overcome the perceived confusion by emphasizing the "functionality" of can dogging as a means to clean up refuse from the environment in the community. Then, staff nodded slightly.

Table 28. Types of Labor Performed by Homeless Individuals

Labor	Formality	Licit/Illicit	Legality	Payment/Drug
Handbills	Informal	Licit	Legal	Cash or Crack
Can Dogging	Informal	Licit	Legal	Cash / Crack / Alcohol
Panhandling	Informal	Licit	Legal	Cash / Heroin
Scrapping	Formal	Licit	Both	Cash / Crack
Prostitution	Informal	Illicit	Illegal	Cash or Crack

I pressed staff on the "distinction" between the can men and the panhandlers. To clarify what I was looking for, I posed a question about the fruits of labor. Staff previously mentioned the handbill circuit paid in crack cocaine. In response, I delivered a question to the effect of "What drugs are they on or what do they spend their money on?" Without hesitating, staff

replied "heroin" about the panhandlers. "And, what about the can doggers?" "Alcohol and crack. The scrappers are crack and the prostitutes are crack." Staff made it clear that crooks paid both prostitutes and hand-billers in cash or in crack. The crack game (drug dealing) frustrated him because the dealers prey on the residents. Staff referred to the markup on drugs. If a resident buys crack on street credit, a $10 bag could end up costing the person $50. The dealers also come on the first of the month and, although I already knew why, staff said it was because the residents get their government checks on that day. Staff said, "The dealers come to get their money and if they (residents) don't have it, maybe they'll mark it up… or… they'll kill 'em." I do not remember exactly how staff framed the frequency, but said murders happen around the center all the time. The dealers even plant point men inside the shelter, not to sell drugs, but to find people who owe money to the dealers.

During the discussion about drugs, staff noted, "an alcoholic is always an alcoholic" and that "most of" the heroin users have HIV/AIDS and the staff knows it. These very direct statements exhibited some acceptance of the situation. Staff also talked about how outpatient drug rehab does not work. It is a simple way for individuals to get a bed. This shelter has chairs and residents sleep upright in chairs. There are no beds. If a person wants to sleep laying down in a bed, they have to go to rehab. Staff said, "If you really want to get rehabbed, you need to go inpatient (and prove it to me)."

Staff told me about the struggle and delays to getting public benefits. However, when an individual eventually does get benefits, the government pays retroactively. Staff described one woman whose benefits finally came through and she "got paid just enough money to kill her." At first, I did not understand the reference but I still giggled and smiled to pretend as if I knew exactly what that meant. Then, the story.

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A woman received between $5,000 and $10,000 for retroactive benefits. She bought 30 days of lodging in a motel about two blocks from the center. Her ankles were the "size of my thighs." The first night in the motel, she laid down… I thought the next words would be "and died" but the story took another direction. She could not sleep. The second night she laid down… and, could not sleep. She was so used to sleeping in a chair that is what she had to do. Therefore, she came back here to the shelter. A few weeks later, she died. When they have money, they cannot help but spend it on fulfilling drug addictions. It is their habit, what they perceive normal. They do not fiend for the drugs. They simply go back to doing what they are used to doing and they go back to the familiar places. She just could not sleep in a bed.

Staff proceeded to tell me a couple other stories about two former star athletes who now reside at the center. One was a former middleweight boxing champion. The other was a former Harlem Globetrotter. Staff gave me a "Homeless Fact Sheet" that listed the following, unedited:

- Detroit has between 19,000 - 20,000 homeless people.
- There are only 7,300 shelter beds in Detroit
- 65% of the shelter bed are occupied by children under the age of 17
- Of those who are in shelters 5,705 are male
- 1,515 are female
- In most fiscal years NSO Tumaini serves 1,200 people
- The ratio of men to women is approximately 2 to 1
- Our maximum capacity is 150 after which people are turned away.
- 50% self report some form of mental illness the number is closer to 80% in reality
- The primary cause of homelessness is family breakup.
- The secondary cause is a lack of affordable housing.
- The average age of those who frequent Tumaini is 48.
- 28% of those who are Tumaini consumers have been homeless 2yrs or more.
- 15 % have been homeless 1 year or more.
- 9% have experienced homelessness 4 times or more over a 3 year period.
- 52% of those we see are chronically homeless.
- Only 17% are first time homeless.

Staff informed me that the counting mechanism is flawed or inaccurate because the reports go to the authorities by month and officials compile statistics. This refers to Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX) or the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) not the Point-In-Time (PIT) annual count. The same individuals are at the shelter each month and counts duplicate. For example, if the same 100 individuals were at the shelter in January, February, March… etc., then the numbers report out as {100, 100, 100…} for n=1,200 annually when actually there are only n=100 distinct individuals served.

I spoke to several staff members and residents at the shelter on Skid Row over the course of three years. Some of my subjects were off the street, individuals who generally congregated outside the shelter. My sample consisted of people affiliated directly and indirectly with the shelter. None of these individuals are identifiable and I use pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Homeless for me, I've been here, this is my third month… I came here on a domestic violence. Um, I've been homeless once before but it wasn't this severe homelessness… Um, but this time I really got my feet in here. This is my third month, like I said. I don't like it. And, I want… here I want to get what they offering me… help me find a home. But, they so slow in doing things that I'm getting impatient. I'm sitting up in these chairs. My legs are swelling up. I'm diabetic. And, yesterday I went to the doctor and they told me that my heart is beating faster to compensate for the water that I'm retaining or something and they want me to see a specialist. And, that's got me worried… about your heart. That's a serious thing. And, I just… At first, I was depressed. I went to a psychiatrist and got some medication to help me sleep and depressed but I never had to sleep up in a chair and get sick over it, you know, laying in these chairs trying to get comfortable… and, then they want you to get out and do some footwork… which, I did mine but everyday I'm getting sicker and sicker and sorer and sorer and it's just not, it's just not right for people to live this way. I have an income but I can't afford to just go out and get a place right away. And, things are so slow and I hate it.

Clearly, this supports my argument that the homeless experience is so terrible it causes medical problems including mental health issues like depression. This respondent has an income and is at a place of refuge yet still has no upward mobility. I asked the subject why not travel to a nicer place nearby like to a shelter in Ann Arbor. I wanted to know what kept the subject in this dreadful place and situation. Other subjects report not knowing of other options.

> *Okay, I head about Ann Arbor. I have a grandson that goes to Eastern and he on campus and they have shelters up there he was telling me… but, this is where I'm at because of my daughter… I can go… she can come see me and I see her… I don't know no place else… and, I don't know the number to the Ann Arbor facility or else I would go. They don't volunteer that information when you call.*

The subject knows of another nicer option through family. However, the individual is stuck to Detroit because of family. I observed this paradox elsewhere. One of my Ann Arbor subjects absolutely hated Detroit but migrated up from a nice home in Florida to live at the homeless shelter in Ann Arbor just to be near her daughter (who was recently shot and having strokes) and care for her granddaughter. A structural mechanism, lacking information about other shelters, buttresses the cultural forces. While there are coordinated efforts within each Michigan region, the counties almost never work in concert to help the homeless. There are many reasons for that structure, two being the "don't dump them here" mentality of local residents and "we only pay for ours" funding restrictions. These structural forces result in a surplus of Detroit homeless, i.e. too high demand and not enough shelters to meet the need.

> *When you call the shelter hotline, there's no vacancies anywhere that has a bed… so, you get stuck here.*

Richard Florida (2011) writes on the "Stuck Class" that is prevalent in Michigan. Throughout the country, fewer than 6 in 10 Americans live in the state they were born. In

Michigan, that rate is 76.6%, which is similar to other states in the "Stuck Belt" Midwestern

region. While his research does not focus on the extremely poor or homeless, the concept is

applicable to these individuals on Detroit Skid Row. Structural forces trap them.

> *I've been here three or four months. I've been homeless longer than (the other subject). And, I really don't want to talk about how long it's been but it's been too long. My homelessness, it comes from my illness. (inaudible) Diabetic, I couldn't get my medicine, had to go through a lot of different (inaudible) to get the right kind of insurance to supply the medicine because I'm on insulin. (Pantomimes) That's $300. I have two different kinds of medicine… I would work and every time I worked I would get sick on the job… fall out… have to leave… so, mines come from not having any money, my homelessness.*

This subject was reticent about the homeless experience at the beginning of the interview

but became more comfortable during the opening statement, explaining the troubles that come

from being sick and poor. The high cost of medicine was not the only issue. The illness made

this individual unable to work. For those people who are at the very bottom tier of income, one

sick day (or, even several due to illness) can result in termination.

> *In between homelessness times, I would stay with friends and family… this amount of days… that amount of days… around the city.*

This, of course, is another piece of evidence to invalidate the national homeless counts.

This subject was in and out of homelessness, couch surfing, and not counted as "homeless"

during periods when the subject was clearly homeless.

> *When I saw my feet swelling in here, I didn't know they didn't have carts or beds or mats. And, when I found out I had to sleep in a chair, I thought it was okay until I saw how my feet and legs were swelling… my heart was racing but the nurse here gave me the medication… sitting in these chairs with your feet swelling, legs swelling like that… causes other problems in your body. You know, tiredness, you can't be tired because you gotta get up and get out. 5 o'clock in the morning we wake up… So, we get up and we clean… which is okay because*

you have to clean… by the time we get through cleaning it's time to go out looking for places to stay, looking for jobs, looking for bus tickets, things like that, yeah, sometimes we look for places for food.

The comment supports two of the primary arguments in this study. First, the experience of homelessness and extreme poverty exacerbates existing or new problems. This is not surprising but I observed new phenomena here at this shelter. There are no bunks. Residents do not lay down, ever. There are only chairs so legs swell up and harden, becoming more and more painful. This subject entered the shelter sick and her health did not improve. The health condition of this subject and many others worsens.

Second, the day-to-day experience consists of meeting immediate needs like food, warmth, and transportation. There is no long term planning. There are no pathways out. Residents wake up every morning and perform the same routine that will keep them in place.

You stay here… you know, some people get their income here; you know, this is really their home. But, I don't want it to be my home. This will drive me crazy if I have to live here like this everyday. And, sometimes you feel worthless, you feel childish the way you're talked to sometimes… the residents, you get in arguments, you get in fights, you know, because they don't have any stress classes. They need some stress release for these people.

Many "pragmatic" solutions to eliminating homelessness include giving people shelter, money, clothes, food, or other materials. This place on Skid Row offers food and shelter but that does not encompass all the needs of these individuals. They are just like privileged middle class individuals who face stressful situations (some might argue these extremely poor people have more stress). However, there are no mechanisms in place to relieve stress. When stress builds, conflict ensues.

It's just a place that nobody should be in… there's a real way out of here but it takes so long. Just like the program they put me in, a permanent supportive housing, that's where somebody, they help me get a place; somebody visits me once a month. They see if I'm taking care of my business, do I need to go here, do I need to got there… but, it seems like it's so far off, the concept that they have. And, it takes so long. (voice volume raised here) They don't move fast enough. And, I know that paperwork and bureaucracy takes a while. The process takes a while. But, while I'm in the process, you know I'm getting sick, I'm swelling up…

There is a real internal mental conflict this subject has. This individual goes out every day and survives, meeting urgent needs immediately. There is no bureaucracy within these actions: scrounging food, begging for change, snagging a bus ticket. Yet, the shelter system cannot meet the individual's needs immediately. Bureaucracy delays the process.

I think (the problem is) the government. I think (the staff) is trying their best but it don't seem like the process should be 6, 7 months to do what they gotta do for you. It seems like… I mean, there's so many shelters around… you getting sick, and they know you getting sick, they could make a space somewhere else where you could halfway recuperate. And, I put that on the government because it must not be coming down to where as they can do something like that. Government is the money! I'm blaming it on the government.

Although there was some clarity in these statements, I must say that the subject searched a little for someone or something to blame. The subject primarily stated the system is broken and people need help. The "government" was just an easy target to blame. While government might be truly at fault in this scenario, the individual did not form a clear explanation as to why the government is at fault (other than "Government is the money!"). The subject directed less concern toward who is at fault and directed more concern toward "I am in need; please help me."

During the interview, the subject described "black" and swollen legs then told me to feel the leg. It was very dense, very hard, and whatever was inside pressed so tightly on the skin that it felt like the skin was about to burst open. It was, as the subject described, "Like leather." The

physical condition of these subjects, inside or out, was not good. There were visible maladies

like sores and swollen legs. In addition, the subjects informed me of heart conditions and

depression. The subjects received pills from a doctor on site but remained stuck in chairs with

no way to stretch, maintain activity, or relieve stress.

> *I, uh, just came here because I took a Greyhound bus from where I was*
> *originally… I had a cell phone at the time so I was able to look at some places…*
> *was trying to get into rehab and I looked up a couple places and I couldn't find*
> *them so I called the mission and asked them where they were located and to stay*
> *there and he told me where they were and I found directions from the people*
> *downtown and I walked here… Yeah, I think I was turned away from the (other)*
> *places… No one called me back even once I got in here…*
>
> *I think it gets harder each day to enjoy yourself inside of this building here*
> *because the staff is always changing… I think a lot of people come here and take*
> *a lot out of here, that are resourceful to other people…*

This subject talked to me about how a person ends up at this particular shelter.

Essentially, it is the only shelter available to many people. That theme was apparent in almost

all of my conversations with people at this shelter. One woman was a victim of domestic

violence and her partner threatened murder in the middle of the night. This shelter was the only

place that would take her in. Another man called other shelters but no other place would call

him back so he came to this shelter and stayed ever since. It is simultaneously an open and

closed door. It is open for entrants but the door figuratively closes, with structural and cultural

processes in place that prevent individuals from leaving even though they desire to get out.

> *I think if some people didn't use this as their last exit, and it gets rough, it's more*
> *of a challenge for them… It's what type of person you are, if you like a challenge*
> *or you don't like a challenge… Considering that this was my last exit and I really*
> *can't get away from here… I couldn't because there's no where else to go…*

This subject stays outside mostly and only comes inside to use the bathroom. The subject used to come in and watch TV but became increasingly angry because of the conditions indoors. The subject eats lunch at the shelter at noon and then lays in a field for a few hours or sits on the curb until 3p. Then, the subject eats dinner across the street at 430p. It takes about 3 or 4 weeks to get a bed over across the street. Residents also sleep in chairs across the street. There "is more freedom" at the shelter on Skid Row. "The air is nicer," and "they care more about the people that stay here" on Skid Row. There are more services on Skid Row. This subject stayed at that other worse shelter because there was air conditioning and, eventually, a bed. This subject said that other residents "are stuck in this place." I asked him about work.

> *The whole can thing… I think that's more… I consider that to be a religious type thing because the people that are doing it are really crazy. You want to do it yourself but you're not allowed because so many people are doing it… You could take a bag of cans to the store, the liquor store, if you have 10 cans it's a dollar… 10 cans, 10 bottles is two dollars… I think God puts a lot of people in those paths to prevent people, but also to turn you on to, you know, keeping this place clean. It keeps people in act and in order.*

> *You can do fraud a lot… open up bank accounts, get debit cards, people pay you for your debit cards, you know…*

> *I used to gamble…*

> *I worked for this guy... cleaning out homes… this guy comes here every Monday and picks you up and you can haul, you clean out homes, restoration, like just clean the houses out that people died or they're foreclosed…*

> *Work comes up a lot… at first, I think… it's not appealing… but, there are things that will turn you on to it like women or drugs you know… you can make money doing that, it's nothing, you can sell cigarettes here… a lot of people have food stamps… I don't think they would even try to work... yeah, they would sell their food stamps…*

> *I'm older and I know a lot about myself so I can work 10 hours and only get paid $40 and still be able to survive mentally…*

As the subject listed options, I noted that none of the options were long term or contributed to upward mobility. Some were obviously illegal and could result in arrest or imprisonment. Other options pay so little that there is no way to maintain savings. Bank fraud, of course, prevents individuals from putting any sort of savings into an account. All of these components of the homeless experience combine and amplify other detrimental components.

> *It was… let me put it to you like this… I started with a drug problem… my past history, my family had drugs… one of my brothers died from liquor, another one died from a massive heart attack from drugs… and, the last one got shot, almost cut in half, and dumped his body in the alley… I was young when I pictured it and seen it… when I went to the morgue and actually seen him… he was like cut in half all the way back to his spine… and, I had never seen nothing like this before in my life… and, I guess it affected me so bad…*

So many of the individuals on Skid Row are victims of trauma due to the environment in Detroit. When they get to the shelter, they are already suffering from PTSD (probably undiagnosed) or other mental disabilities. When one subject said can men are "really crazy" and religious, it might be because of some post-traumatic stress due to experiences with drugs. Many of the women are victims of domestic violence or extreme sexual assault like violent rape. The intersection of sexual trauma with rampant prostitution is outside the scope of this study but warrants mention here. It might be similar to the drug trade trauma this subject experienced, who now has to live in and around drug deals every day.

> *Some people have a chip on their shoulder…*

> *Some people are down here just for drugs…*

> *Some people are actually down here because they're scared, they don't know where to go or what to do…*

> *Ever since Engler closed all those mental hospitals… the majority of people in here have mental stability problems… I say out of a hundred at least 35 to 40% of them… and, they actually will not tell you they have a problem… but, you can see*

it the way that they actually focus on things and think of things and they will go completely to another problem, another situation… and, then you will ask them that same problem again and they will say, 'Why did you ask me that?' That's when you know, and you can see, that they need help.

I see it so much… brutality and robbing… everything down here because, other people feed on the homeless. They take whatever they see the homeless get. Everybody don't want to help the homeless.

These comments clearly show how the homeless are victims of macro and micro structural forces. As mentioned earlier in this manuscript, Governor Engler closed many psychiatric hospitals a little over a decade ago. Thousands of mentally disabled people are now in homeless shelters. When there, "dope dealers and pill doctors" prey upon them.

The conditions on Detroit Skid Row are unlike any other town or city in this study. The location of Skid Row is far away from downtown, distinguishing it from Ann Arbor and Lansing. Soliciting alms from businesspersons or in shopping districts is tougher for the Detroit homeless because of the way the city is structured. Skid Row used to be near the Plum Street hippie commune and Tiger Stadium. There were other types of people and communities surrounding the 1950s Skid Row wino. Now, Skid Row harbors the mentally ill and people who prey on them. Many of these individuals are unable to support themselves due to mental illness or physical disabilities. Many have compounding needs but the "solution" to their problems is an emergency shelter with no beds, leaving them to sleep upright in chairs comingling with others who are "crazy" or equally destitute. Their physical and mental conditions worsen. Subjects described both hardened legs and building stress and anger due to these conditions. Even those with "a chip on their shoulder" are not motivated to leave.

This shelter and Detroit Skid Row have existed for decades. Highways, urban renewal, and bulldozing have displaced Detroit residents or hospitals abandoned them when government officials closed those facilities. They move to the nearest open shelter or stay with family during periods when the shelter is unavailable. My time observing Detroit Skid Row was very bleak and it appears this environment will continue to exist. I see no policies coming from the governor or legislature that will reverse the process. Installing an M-1 rail is equivalent to the highway installations of the 1950s and 60s. The "New Center" area is building up in the same way "urban renewal" was supposed to revitalize Detroit in the 1960s. Detroit Skid Row will continue to exist for many more years. In fact, things seem to be getting worse in Detroit.

CHAPTER 7: EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN A COLLEGE TOWN

<u>Gaining Entry to the College Town Homeless System</u>

This section includes a robust auto-ethnography of the homeless experience in a college town. I met with a shelter administrator prior to this research and that individual encouraged me to conduct ethnographic research at this site. The administrator said that, in order to get valid data, I needed to "eat with them, shower with them, and sleep with them" at the facility. This perspective aligned with my research purposes, to gather empirical data about the homeless experience in Michigan. I can use this data to triangulate some of the other methods in preceding sections. Although I was not truly homeless, I had a warm condominium in Flint to go home to, I became as embedded as possible and did not take any shortcuts. I tried my best to experience a microscopic example of the day-to-day life of the homeless individual. The following is mostly a narrative of that experience with some themes emphasized when appropriate. I recorded very thorough hand-written field notes during the experience in a spiral notebook. This narrative comes from those field notes and begins when I entered the shelter.

I arrived to the shelter at 10a. The front desk receptionist, whose name I overheard, told me I could get a bed for one month. In my prior talks with the gatekeeper administrator, he told me not to take a bed; it would take one away from a real homeless person. I would only participate in a way that did not take up a bed.

The shelter calls a one-month bed an "emergency." It takes six weeks for placement into a permanent bed and that creates a two-week gap where I would be without any bed from about April 6 to April 20 (Easter Sunday). That would be the least amount of time that I would be without a bed if I put my name on the list immediately. From this introduction to the shelter, it felt as if I was being "screwed" for lack of a better term. Immediately, the receptionist told me

the shelter did not have enough beds. However, this would be the only time I did not feel as though I received sympathy. Perhaps the receptionist was frustrated about a two-week gap that she could not help me. She could do nothing about it. Her directness, although it sounded curt, was the truth.

The receptionist shifted away from delivering pessimistic news toward a more helpful set of instructions for me to get assistance on this night. I was to call a coordinated access phone number and ask to get on the list. Then, I needed to return at 11a for a pre-screen. I already knew much of this process after speaking with the gatekeeper administrator during my previous tour so it aligned well with what I was expecting. I did not understand why I had to call an outside agency and I did not really know at that time what "coordinated access" meant. It might be an umbrella agency for all the shelters. They establish a unified roll of individuals who need assistance. The area code was local. Looking back, I guess it was the number to the Continuum of Care hub but at that time I was a "homeless person," I did not have any clue. It was just another government number to me.

The receptionist told me that somebody would ask me to return Monday or Tuesday for "intake" to get on the permanent bed list. These would be my prescreen instructions this same day. However, I knew already that I would not be going through that process because I was not going to take up a bed. My objective was simply to receive the emergency shelter.

I think I really looked like a resident because the receptionist asked me if I had a phone. In other words, she did not assume by my looks that I had a cell phone. I said I had a phone. She sent me into the cafeteria to make a private phone call. There was nobody in the cafeteria

because there was no emergency warming; the temperature that day was above 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

When I called the number she gave me, it was an automated answering machine with options for domestic violence, veterans, and youth. I was none of those so I just waited to speak with an operator. I participated in a short intake screening and she told me it was for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The operator, a young woman, asked for my permission to enter data into that system. Then, she asked for my date of birth, name, and last four digits of my social security number. I willingly gave all this information to her.

While on the phone and during my wait in the lobby, I saw two men in the hallway. One asked if he could smoke on the balcony. The receptionist told some other women to go elsewhere, out of the lobby, to have their conversation be private.

I gave the woman on the phone my phone number and email address but not my physical address at this point. The woman on the phone asked me many questions. I said I had no income (my only real outright lie). My story was slightly hard to stick to but most of my answers were true, e.g. about my location and "living on my friend's couch." At some point, she mentioned an ID and social security card. I think this was in reference to the permanent bed or other services I might be offered. The woman on the phone was giving me a tremendous amount of information very quickly and I could neither write it down nor remember it at this pace. She said I could apply for a housing choice voucher and I would need a social security card for that. A housing choice voucher is similar to Section 8 housing and based on income. She informed me that I should establish a mailing address or PO Box at the center. This lined up with something a Detroit Skid Row resident told me. The "no address" dilemma of homelessness is

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more of a media creation. I could get a mailing address immediately. Again, this was a quick and rapid whirlwind of information. Even looking back through my notes, I know there are many services mentioned that I still have no idea how to obtain.

She ended the phone call with "hang in there, John." She sounded very sympathetic and concerned about my personal wellbeing. It was a unique moment in the phone call where she shifted from a somewhat autonomous script reader to a concerned individual.

After I left the shelter, I knew I had about an hour to kill before my 11a admission or intake or whatever it was. Okay, it was my "prescreen." I thought I would walk around the city, the main street. Anderson called it the "Main Stem." I was familiar with this area. Within one block of the shelter, an Asian couple stopped me to ask directions. They did not seem scared of me even though I looked rugged. I felt my look was somewhere between broke college student and homeless young person. Next, a black man asked me for a cigarette light at a bus stop. In both cases, I felt bad that I was not able to provide. About 100 yards away from the shelter, I saw what I thought might possibly be part of a broken crack pipe. It could have been my imagination, so I took a picture to try to confirm later on.

Figure 63. Possible Drug Pipe Piece by Shelter (2014)

At 11a, I arrived for prescreen and waited in a chair in the lobby for about 45 minutes. I was the last one screened, I think, of several. At 1145a, I underwent a one-on-one interview in the interview room with a female staff member. She took my picture on a camera that put my face in a computer system. I conveyed my story of going couch to couch. I displayed no interest in a long-term bed or services. She instructed me to return at 830p to get in line for a bed.

At noon, I entered the cafeteria again, this time for lunch. There were about 15 tables and 8 people at each table (approximately n=120). Some specific groups knew each other and the majority of those individuals arrived on the same bus together. There was even at least one request heard to save a seat. While I was waiting, several staff members took shifts at the front desk. There was a young Asian male volunteer. He was a senior at the local university studying economics. A resident asked him for hand warmers and he found some. I thought the resident might have taken advantage of him. The preface was, "You're a volunteer, right?" There was a man in a scooter with a "Scooter Store" label on it. I heard his name but I will just call him

"Scoot" in this narrative. He seemed to be popular but not necessarily respected. He had a gallon of private label brand drinking water and a local grocery store pastry bag with a donut in it.

I was in the waiting room (lobby) with Scoot (a black male), a white older male, two black females (one young, one old), and two other black males. There was a skinny old Asian male standing silent in the corner for an hour. He was probably mentally ill. I have never seen anyone stand silent for an hour without moving like that. He was not really looking around. He had a blank stare. Later, a resident would refer to him as "Mr. Miyagi."

A black male went to smoke a cigarette on the balcony. As he talked on his cell phone loudly, others started to take notice. There had been a white middle-aged couple hugging on the balcony earlier (one man, one woman) and the man came in with a quip, "The whole inside of the building doesn't need to hear your conversation."

The black man on the phone was angry and stormed in loudly after the receptionist told him to calm down and be quieter because she could not hear the person on the phone (client) she was talking to. An argument ensued and the receptionist asked the man to leave. He angrily agreed (did not detest) but cursed as he left. Even though he was leaving and halfway through the door, the receptionist told him that cursing was unacceptable. "Fuck this shelter," he said as he left.

For some time, I heard faint crying (female) from the stairwell. Whoever it was, it would have to be a permanent resident because temporary folks like me cannot go up the stairs. There is an alarm and a lock on the door. This knowledge would inform me later as to the details of a death at the shelter in 2015. In that case, a man came into the shelter and only used the first floor

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bathroom. That indicated he was not a long-term resident. Those residents stay away from the temporary "emergency" shelter seekers like the man who died in the bathroom. Nobody physically locked the stairwell. The "lock" just allows entry without tripping the alarm. I know the alarm works because, the next day, a woman asked for us in the lobby to open the door for her. I would not open it so another black man pushed it open a little and the alarm sounded. He said something afterward like, "See!?!"

I walked into the cafeteria and noticed some individuals were already eating. It was 1215p and other individuals were in line for food. The bathroom door (men) was right by the end of the line. I figured I would use the bathroom first then get in line after but I could not physically get to the bathroom without walking all the way around to the other side and circle back because the tables were so close together. There was no clear path. I decided to grab a food tray (empty) and proceed. I was about seven people back in line from the window.

When I got near to see the process, I saw those in front of me had tickets (to eat). I immediately turned to the woman behind me and asked, "Where do you get the tickets? I'm new." She looked annoyed with a scrunched brow and told me the staff member gives them out. I walked with my tray to the staff member she pointed to. The man said that staff handed out tickets then staff called tables based on the number (at the table). Something in my mind clicked from earlier. I had seen a woman put clear plastic cups (marked) on the tables before lunch. They were upside down. My initial thought was they were marked with residents' names for either medications or drinks (maybe sugar free for diabetics or other special dietary needs). It turns out, the cups were numbered and this is how staff called tables to eat.

I sat at the table in the front left corner where only one young black male was sitting. I thought I would either (a) get one-on-one conversation with the man or (b) sit silently and observe. By the end of lunch, I never spoke a word to him. He rapped most of the time. I recall lines of "She in the club with no panties on," and the first thing he rapped was "like a fed I can spot, look to the head with a red dot" or something along those lines. There was also a song derivation of Notorious B.I.G. and two complaints about gross food. I would later search for the songs and determined that the "club with no panties on" song must be "Paranoid" by Ty Dolla $ign.

My table was called quickly, "together as a part of table 3" by a white male staff. The staff must have thought it more efficient to combine just us two. I took my tray and ticket, a yellow laminated paper square, to the line. There were about four workers from the local volunteer food group serving in two windows. There was a third window I originally thought may be for drinks but really was for dirty dishes. There was a condiment table in front.

The first female worker asked me if I wanted a salad. "We have croutons and dried fruit." I said yes, which implied "yes" to all of it. She said, "I hope you like salad because that's a lot of salad," when she finished assembling a plate. "They will help you with the rest," she said as she nodded to the women at her right in the next window.

There was a sign saying, "Don't put your ticket in the bucket until the worker asks you for it." I obeyed. I also knew that Friday was leftovers day because I heard somebody say that and there was a white dry erase board sign that confirmed the information between the first and second windows.

At the second window, there was mashed potatoes (looked good, not just from a white flake mix), fried chicken, quinoa, and baked beans in trays. I should mention there were pineapple slices wrapped individually in wax paper at the first window. I declined the mashed potatoes due to limited plate and stomach space. She asked me if I wanted, "Chicken or quinoa?" and I replied "In the back," which meant I wanted quinoa. After a slight delay to comprehend, she served me. I also accepted bread and butter and took a tray of baked beans. I proceeded to my seat where I purposefully left my backpack. It looked like the normal thing to do.

The food was good. The beans were hot. The quinoa was cold. I was surprised they had quinoa and wondered if any resident really knew what it was. I ate every bean and almost cleaned my entire plate. It was probably near 1,200 calories or more. That was my only food so far today. Previously, I had two cups of coffee from home. I was urinating frequently so I did not consume any fluids with lunch in order to decrease my need to use the restroom.

Later in the day, I used restrooms in a public building and library where I also wrote my field notes. I did not want to buy anything from a coffee shop to blow my cover just out of a need to use the bathroom. Although I felt that way initially, I learned later that buying coffee was not abnormal. I could have bought coffee and used the bathroom at the coffee shop, two practices very common for the local homeless. This information did not come to me until later.

When I finished eating, I sat and observed for about 5-10 minutes. The other man at my table left immediately after he finished eating what little he consumed. Another woman with a walker was now sitting at the far end of our table. She was older and black. When individuals arrive late, i.e. after staff calls all the tables, people refer to them as "stragglers." I heard a man

ask if there were seconds on food. I was not hungry enough for seconds but I wished I had grabbed a generously portioned bag of David brand trail mix. There was no dessert other than that. I still had my tray and dirty dishes. I moved to the other side of the table (facing the room, not the wall) to observe, be more discrete, and take notes. I wrote about three lines of notes before the male staff (ticket man) said, "There is no weather amnesty today. So, when you're done eating, please promptly pack up your stuff." This put an end to my note taking. One minute prior, I thought I should use one section of my notebook for writing poems or rap lyrics. This way, if a resident ever asked me to show what I was doing, I would show the lyrics and not stick out like a creep. At one point, toward the end of lunch, I saw my venue contact (the administrator). He did not see me. I packed up my stuff and headed out after bussing my table.

Prior to lunch, Scoot and another white man had used the phrase "brother from another mother." A younger white male asked an older white male, "Where have I seen you before?" The older man joked, "Not prison," but the younger male did not laugh probably because he was focusing on where he had seen the man. Later, the young man said "(street name)" and they agreed that was a long time ago. That street has several social services located on it.

Before lunch, a woman came to the outside front door on a scooter. I would later see her elsewhere during my study. The men behind me told me to "Push that button" to open the door because I was standing next to the handicap auto-door opener button. I pushed it immediately. The doors opened. She did not come in because she was smoking a cigarette. "Oh, I thought she was coming in," said a man behind me. Later, I would press the button again and this time she entered. She was maybe 300 pounds or heavier. Some of the Skid Row subjects I talked with said that weight gain was a common symptom of diabetes. When she was in the lunchroom outside earshot, the men joked about her weight. "Did you see (southern university)?" one man

asked another. She was wearing a (southern university) leather jacket. "That (she) was 'University' State… the whole state!"

When I left, I did not know what to do. It would be six hours before I could return for dinner. Luckily, it was not too cold. It was about 30 degrees Fahrenheit and sunny. I was dressed appropriately with a hooded sweatshirt, hooded jacket, winter gloves, and a winter hat.

Looking back, I should have brought spare change to ride the bus and follow some of the individuals to see where they went between meals. I only had a $20 bill in my pocket in case of an emergency. While most everyone got on the bus, I started walking toward downtown.

By 4p, I had walked 7.62 miles. I had a pedometer on my wrist that was a Christmas gift from my girlfriend. Being homeless is more activity than going to the gym.

I found the "Breakfast" Church where I would be eating breakfast. It was by chance that I found it. I did not want to use my cell phone map because that would sort of be cheating and I had six hours to kill anyway. Nevertheless, I found it in less than an hour. Then, I passed by a local bakery and deli. I remember having graduate school class in there and now I could not go in because it is expensive and that might blow my cover. I really wanted to find a library to rest.

Figure 64. My Initial Look as a Homeless Person (2014)

    I walked all over the local university campus to gain knowledge of where my opportunities to rest were. Classroom doors lock at this college, which is unlike many other colleges and universities that I have been to. Perhaps that is due to the high quantity of homeless individuals in such close proximity.

    Downtown was an absolute hotbed of illicit begging, illegal drug trade, and other illicit informal work and loitering. I was simply trying to loiter and observe. First, I said "How you doin'?" to a beggar to indicate I was not someone to ask for money. I saw a black male. He got

aggressive as a beggar, often cornering people as they walked by. He waved to two Asians through a glass window as they ate frozen yogurt. They laughed. He was working with an older black man in partnership. I saw one panhandler give another money out of his cup. An older man in a red flannel coat was more passive and sat behind an overturned cardboard box. He had a clear plastic cup on top for donations. One man was walking up and down the street begging. An hour later, a man would approach me. I said, "I'm new" and explained I was staying at the shelter. This changed everything. The conversation took a turn. "What do you need?" "I'm all right." "I've got numbers." I stood idle as the man dug through his pocket. I saw lint and one loose bill (money). A small blue cigarette lighter fell from his pocket. I did not budge. Usually, I would bend over to help pick it up. He kept saying he had "numbers." After ninety seconds, he pulled out a tattered and worn piece of paper that was so worn it looked like toilet paper thin. I read "(the local area code) …" and knew it was a local phone number. "Nah, I'm good" and looked away. "He can get you what you need." I turned to look him in the face to say no thanks and politely leave. His pupils were huge and iris so thin. The iris was blue green teal. I thought that maybe the eye color was relative to some type of Caribbean/Haitian ethnicity. I checked later on to discover it seems like the norm is quite the opposite. Blacks usually have dark brown eyes. The pupil size was almost certainly due to drug use. I heard throughout my study that beggars primarily use heroin. When I searched later, it appears that heroin does not cause pupils to dilate. Use causes pupils to constrict but withdrawal causes pupils to dilate. Cocaine, however, does appear to dilate pupils. The man said, "He can get you cocaine," using very clear syllables. I replied just as clearly. "Nah man, I'm good." I walked away. He did not seem discouraged. In fact, he was pleasant and non-threatening.

I saw a white male who looked like a 40-year-old hippie. He was sitting crossed leg style and wearing some type of wire and (maybe) hemp or string necklaces. He was making necklaces, too, and probably selling them although he did not ask people to buy them that I saw. He did not stay long. He was not aggressive. I did not see him get any money. Later, I read a local news story about him.

I saw a black man and black woman roughly 50 years old. They appeared rather aggressive with their begging, approaching individuals as they passed by. They had at least one sign although I did not stop to read it.

At this point, I did not recognize any of the individuals as somebody who had been at the shelter today. I was surprised.

I saw an older white woman who was someone I had seen at the shelter. She was probably new, like me. I noticed her early in the morning because she had luggage on wheels and did not appear to be in too bad of shape. I passed her several times on the street, made eye contact, and said "Hello." I was hoping to talk to her at dinner.

I saw another older white male wearing black jeans and white tennis shoes, carrying a backpack with the local college insignia. I discreetly followed him because he looked homeless. His clothes were dirty and worn. His hair was very, very greasy and messy. His action probably confirmed my suspicions. He was pulling paper fliers out of his backpack and attaching them with masking tape to telephone poles. I saw him put up two or three. He was doing a good job. The fliers were spaced out and at eye level. The fliers were for a French language tutor. There was an email address and a local phone number. It said the tutor even graduated from a French high school! Although I have seen many disheveled professor types in my day, this man

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appeared more likely homeless than fluent in French. My guess was somebody paid him to hang the fliers, similar to the "entrepreneurs" who solicit Detroit homeless to distribute handbills in the city.

I drew a map in my field notes and documented who and where each of these individuals were. However, I exclude the map from this manuscript to protect the identities of each individual. I will include a photo I took of a street performer.

Figure 65. Street Performer Sign (2014)

I took a picture of the sign and wanted to take a picture of him but he stopped mid-song and went across the street in a hurry. The last people I met were 30-year-old black males. They were begging aggressively, similar to some other individuals also mentioned in this manuscript. I approached one of them from the south. From twenty feet, I nodded. I had been standing for about two minutes in the same place. My intent was to gain a familiar face to meet with back at the shelter. I coolly pulled my right hand from my pocket and flashed two fingers together at stomach level. "Let me holla at you," he yelled. I approached thinking that meant we chat. "What you out here doin'?" "I'm new." "I got you. We can do this. Not even a handshake. Don' gotta be stickin' out like a handshake, man. You got the look like you know what you doin'." "Yeah, I'll be here on weekends." "So, we can do this." I meant I would be staying at the shelter (which I said to try to gain rapport). Perhaps he thought I meant I would be on the street needing drugs on weekends.

He kept repeating some word that began with a "C" and meant "inconspicuously." I was confused because I heard "not even a handshake" and I questioned to myself within a matter of seconds: "Does this mean he is offended that I did not shake his hand? He did not offer. Wait, if I reach my hand out he might try to exchange drugs." His constant chatter confused me. "Nah, I'm good," I said and slowly walked away. He yelled back. I turned and nodded. "You good?" he yelled. "Yeah," and I walked half a block, said "Hello" with a nod to a woman, paused for a minute, then kept walking. My plan was to find a place to rest and take notes. My first stop had no place to take notes so I walked out after using the bathroom. I used the bathroom whenever I could, not knowing when my next opportunity would be. The exact same process happened at my second on-campus stop. I started writing notes not certain what building I was in.

I was frightened after the second potential drug offering. Although he never explicitly

offered nor used any drug terms, I was worried he would mark me as a "questionable" figure. I

am somewhat recognizable. My red hat is easy to see. I hoped he did not think I was a cop. I

am a student (literally) and so I have come to invalidate my fears by knowing that I looked like

nothing more than a real-life nervous college student.

I guessed that I would not see any of the dealers at the shelter. It is a friendly place. The

shelter gives Breathalyzer tests to residents and requires drug testing (I think) for long-term

residents. However, I must admit, the interaction on the street that first day frightened me a

little. I questioned my overall safety and thought about going home. I needed to embed myself

more and build rapport. I waited another 80 minutes until dinner. I walked around and headed

back to the shelter.

Experiencing Homelessness: First Night

Before I left my notes to walk, I thought it would be a good idea to check my information

sheet from the shelter to ensure I had my times correct. I was not planning to read my info sheet,

but when I put my notebook into my backpack, there it was. Since I had 80 minutes until dinner

(I thought), it was more than enough time for reading.

The sheet said dinner started at 530p. It was 520p when I read that. I hurriedly walked to

the shelter and entered the cafeteria right on time. Time was hard to track at first. I would learn

later the precise locations of clock towers, church bells, clocks on bank buildings, and other ways

to keep track of time.

I sat down kitty corner to a woman I saw earlier on the "Main Stem," in between an

elderly frail black lady who probably weighed less than 100 pounds and a black man who did not

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speak the entire time except to reply with his name when asked by the woman across the table from me. That woman was there with a 20 to 30-year-old white male. The woman appeared to be Native American.

I knew right away that this would be an enjoyable social meal because the couple (white male and Native American woman) would not stop chatting. First, one woman told another that she liked her sweater. "Are those diamonds?" she asked. "They're sparkles," the woman replied, "of some kind." "That's a beautiful design. What…" "It's a snowflake… like we need any more of that!" For context, this was during the worst winter in Michigan within my lifetime.

"I like your dress, too, and your black top is pretty," said the woman. "I like your purse, very colorful." "It goes with everything," said the woman.

The elderly black woman entered the line too early, grabbed a tray with chocolate covered pretzels and a pouch of salad dressing, and staff told her to go sit back down and wait her turn. I was actually trying to determine order at this time. Everybody at the table had drinks and cups and there was a little mess (no trays) so I wondered if I missed dinner. I waited patiently.

When I saw others receiving tickets and staff scolding the woman, I thought order was underway. We received our pink/orange laminated square "tickets" from a female staff member and entered the queue. The gender of staff and color of paper ticket were different for dinner than lunch. The kitchen staff were different, too. There were two teenage boys (no teenage girl) and the rest were middle-aged white women.

The white male at my table was in front of me. He called back for his female partner to come to where he was. She did and thanked us both for holding her spot. She may have been using the bathroom.

I was not hungry when I entered the windows and a little nauseous. I would try to eat light. I got the same salad, only this time the dressing was in single serve packs. I received an orange (which was still in my backpack as I wrote field notes later that night) and chocolate covered pretzels, the only two items I really wanted. Prior to that, somebody gave me an option of orange drink ("punch") or milk. Some individuals were even getting ice in their milk. I chose orange drink because I thought it might settle my stomach. I also received a raisin bread slice and a butter pack. This was sufficient and I told the staff that "was enough, no more" but she handed the plate to the next window and said, "They'll take care of you."

At the window, the food looked better than I had seen on plates. People had been getting mounds of beef chunks (stew) and I was not interested in that. However, they had steamed vegetables and some pasta (warm) with no sauce. I think it was rotini. I asked for a little of each. I declined the meat. When I turned down the beef, the teenage boy asked if I wanted a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Had I better prepared for the question, I would have accepted. However, I already had plenty of food on my plate so I declined the sandwich. I think they offer peanut butter as a protein especially when eaters decline meat. The meal was good. The elderly black woman made a comment that "A dog would like this… instead of throwing in the garbage." The pasta was hard, undercooked. I ate half the plate. My intention was to save the pretzels and orange for later.

Prior to our meal, the young woman at our table pulled out the trail mix she got from lunch because she was hungry and could not wait to eat. However, I ate the pretzels as a negotiation tactic to stay at the shelter longer. After dinner, I would have two hours to burn until 830p check in.

The young woman mentioned that there had been a minor food fight the night before. "He said something to her then she flipped the tray." "Oh, that's when trays started flipping." "I couldn't see well because the (beam) was in the way" (indicating they had been sitting in the same place the night before). All night, the young man talked slow and his hands trembled, perhaps from a closed head injury.

The young man stated he was originally from suburban Detroit. The young woman pressed him on it, "(Suburb) or (Suburb) Hills? There's two." He told stories (vaguely) about a cop seeing a concealed weapon on him. The young man at dinner told a story about "getting profiled" and his former friend telling a cop to "read his profile" (i.e. criminal record) which was "several pages long." Inevitably, this young man claimed he spent two years on probation to avoid 50 years in prison.

He told another vague story about his mom calling the cops on him and she "did something petty." The young woman asked him who his mom was. After a long pause, he replied, "It doesn't matter at this point." The conversation was strange and hardly coherent. Yet, the couple complained when staff sanctioned two men for shadowboxing. "I'd say at least half the people in here are drunk or on drugs. Half the people in here are on drugs!" "You can't be drunk in here. They should be kicked out." They were not.

I saw a black man from the street earlier. I recognized his hat with a green pot leaf on it. I saw (southern university) State on the street after dinner. She was six feet from the street performer on the same corner. Twice, homeless individuals asked me for change on the street whom I had seen at the shelter. One man I recognized from the shelter was passing out fliers (probably for payment). The stickers on his pull cart had sarcastic jokes on them.

As I wrote field notes my first night, a drunk 20 or 30-year-old white male (pseudonym: "Camo") was walking around harassing people. Although he did not talk to me, I could not help but stop writing due to distraction. I heard him say something to some college kids about "the girl who paid for her tuition by prostitution." At the time, I did not know that the story of Belle Knox had just come out that weekend. I learned about Belle Knox, the Duke student who came out as a sex worker, roughly two weeks later. The man was talking about real current events I had not heard yet. He said he was looking for his backpack. I really hoped he did not come toward me and try to claim mine. I was worried. I would see this man later during my study.

I returned to the shelter at 830p as instructed to wait in line to get a bed. I knew my bed was simply a mat on the floor. I expected to be in the hallway on a hard tile floor with a number. I saw the setup during my tour with the gatekeeper administrator. I expected the mats to be like yoga mats, thin but better than nothing.

There were about 10-12 people at the shelter when I arrived. It was dark. Ms. Moody (pseudonym) was first in line near the glass front door. I learned her name from some interactions she had with staff while I was sitting in the front lobby. At first, they called her "Ms. Moody" but then later I heard staff call her "Moody" so I think her first name was Moody and they were just calling her "Ms. Moody."

Not surprisingly, Camo showed up. This same man was just causing problems on the

university campus. I could not tell if he was drunk or possibly on crack. Using prior knowledge,

I know that his belligerent behavior was not due to marijuana use as that mellows a person out. I

was also quite certain the behavior was not from heroin just because I think heroin is more

euphoric. He was not euphoric. He was belligerent. On the other hand, maybe he was mentally

ill. The best way to describe the behavior was "drunk-ish." I heard him listening to Eminem

loudly on earbuds. I heard another white male 20 or 30-years-old also listening to Eminem.

Later, when I was in the lobby waiting to check in, I saw Ms. Moody with car keys for a

late model car (a new key fob, unscratched). She went to her car, parked nearby in the adjacent

parking lot, to pick up some of her belongings out of the trunk. Her items were in a clear plastic

trash bag.

Several cars pulled up during my wait to enter the building. A pizza delivery driver, a

yellow cab with several residents, a white car, and various staff members came and went. Later,

when I was in the lobby waiting to check in, a police car would park in the same spot as the

white car.

It was clear who the cliques and individual "lone wolves" were. One clique consisted of

a white male, white female, and possibly one or two other individuals. They were young and I

wondered if they were freshly out of high school. Another young black girl hung around them.

She looked to be about 16 years old and she was relatively cute. She looked like someone who

could be a student at the local college. She was also somewhat clean and had decent clothes on.

She wore colorful tights and a bright green vest. It was not dress clothes, but the clothes were

clean and that made her stand out to me. Her hair was styled which was different from most of

the white women I saw who just had their hair brushed straight and pulled back tightly into a ponytail. At one point, a young man approached her and he had a 2-liter of pop in his hand. "That's my favorite kind of pop!" she exclaimed. "Want a drink?" he asked. "No," and I think she made a comment about eliminating sweets from her diet. The pop was private label brand cola. I was surprised that this would be her favorite brand of pop. Maybe she was just patronizing him or making small talk. Two-liter bottles were common overnight. Twenty ounce Faygo was common during meals. The homeless seemed to have a sense of size based on need and planning for time. I saw very few Coke or Pepsi brand products. Mostly, the pop was off brand although I saw some 1-liter Mt Dew and Diet Mt Dew bottles on occasion. I thought maybe those were on sale or purchased because of the size. Personally, I used to buy 1-liter Diet Mt Dew so I could relate with that size and brand purchase.

While that clique of young people seemed to be a tight knit group, there was another group of 50-year-old white males. The latter group appeared to be a collection of similar SES individuals with no real tight knit ties. They talked about cars and factory work. I heard a black man talking about a manual transmission truck the next day. Automotive discussions involved the function and mechanical nature of the cars rather than the value of the car, e.g., "I have a really sweet ride."

There was another overweight black woman on the left of the glass doors. Ms. Moody and the other older black woman flanked the front doors and were obviously first and second in the line by placement. The younger clique stood to the left. The older white males were on the sidewalk in the middle of everything. There were two or three young black males off in the shadows to the right. I was in the middle and right in front of me was Ducky (pseudonym), approximately 30-40 years old, maybe Mexican or Hawaiian. I could not tell what his precise

ethnicity was and discovering his name did not help either (it was generically European). I heard his name called because he and I were the only individuals who needed to complete additional paperwork this night on admittance because it was our first night at the shelter.

Ducky was nice and recognized me on the street the next morning. He acknowledged me as we passed each other. He was with another man who was old and used a cane. I wished that I had accepted his clear acknowledgement of me that indicated he would welcome me as a third in their newly formed clique. However, I had too much data in my head and did not want to forget any details of my 24-hour experience by adding another specific occurrence to my data set. Even though it was his first night, I also hoped that he would be there next week and we could connect then. He was obviously willing to talk and engage. He looked sober. I could not tell what his reason for stay was. He had on very clean clothes and a name brand winter coat. His backpack probably cost about $100. He looked somewhat out of place but that led me to believe he was suffering from mental illness. Most of the cleaner young men were likely mentally ill with the dirty young men most likely heroin users.

There is a distinct behavior difference between these individuals. The mentally ill have a drug-dulled paranoia. I would see instances of very small trepidation quelled by meds (my perception, although I had little data to substantiate the medication). At one point, a man openly discussed his medications to address vertigo. He first called them "anti-verts" and told the listener "that means anti-vertigo." His doctor changed his meds around because, as he said, most anti-verts are steroids. Somehow, the steroids were a bad thing. Of course, I based a lot of my perception from the discussions I had on Detroit Skid Row where one subject told me about 40% of the homeless are mentally ill.

Camo was just as annoying as ever but he did not seem to have any apparent enemies. Most individuals welcomed him to the area. There were no eye rolls.

Had I known the doors did not open until 9p (really, 915p), then I would have arrived later than 830p. As 9p drew near, the group concentrated on the sidewalk in a loosely formed line. Some people jostled for position but it was not blatant because collective knowledge was not to worry. There would be enough beds. I am quite certain this shelter had hosted more people than this and my assumption was confirmed when I asked a staff woman later "How many of these (intakes) do you do per night?" She laughed and said the highest admit level was about seven when the cold season first began. On this night, there would be two intakes, Ducky and me. Although, the staff member said, "Now, I'll get about 4 per night." She overestimated the real number of two.

The clear glass windows and activities inside made me grin during this 45-minute wait. There were 4 individuals inside the cafeteria moving tables to the hallway, mopping the floor, and placing mats after the floor dried. It did not seem like the activity should take this long. The windows served as a barrier between the "show" and those in waiting. It reminded me of a fudge or candy shop that makes sweet treats in the front window for anxious children onlookers to ogle. We were anxiously awaiting our warmth.

During the wait, some aggressive black males pushed their way through the line and into the building. I do not know what their main objective was. We would all get beds. There was no real benefit to early entry. It was not that cold outside. It was maybe 25 degrees Fahrenheit. My two undershirts, hoodie, and fall jacket kept me warm enough. Maybe they were just

showing their masculinity and authority. If so, they were just doing it for themselves. Nobody else seemed to care.

At 915p, we all entered civilly into the building and toward the cafeteria door. There are two glass doors, but we all went toward one. In the cafeteria, there was a folding table or two to the right of the room with papers on it. There were two bins, one had blankets and one had mats but the bin with mats was not necessary because mats covered the floor already. There was not any room for another mat. Each mat was about an inch from the mat beside it. Right away, I knew I would be sleeping close to another man or maybe I would get lucky and there would be an empty mat beside me due to the low number of temporary residents tonight. It looked that way, as if I would have an open mat next to me.

I was about halfway from the front and back of the line. Maybe I was closer to the back, but the middle is where I felt. The first mats claimed were against the walls and in the corners. That made sense. The sleeper would have nobody to his head or right and could lean his pillow on the wall. After those, a few individuals filled spots next to the pillars. Again, the men would lay their pillows against the pillars as props.

Staff said more than once that the back two or three rows were women; a couple rows were for couples, and two or three for men. The approximate number of mats was 7x10, n=70. The heads and feet would be on north and south poles. It was not totally a grid. To maximize space, the row nearest the food windows was perpendicular with two rows totaling roughly 5 mats. In the morning, I heard staff tell an individual or two "You can't sleep there next time. The back two rows are for women." There was no argument. I heard a man say he arrived at 4a

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so I am sure that late arrivals were less precise knowing what row was what. The lights were off at 4a.

The first paper on the table was for shower sign up. I was ready to "shower with them" at the recommendation of the gatekeeper administrator who gave me my tour. This would help me build rapport and embed myself. However, I did not sign up for a few reasons. First, only about 10 individuals signed up for a shower and about 40 individuals chose not to shower. Not showering was the norm and I wanted to be perceived as normal as possible. Second, showers would occur in 30-minute increments. Doing the math quickly, I recognized there were about four shower stalls available. It went like this: 930p for men (two slots) and 930p for women (two slots), 10p for men (two slots), 10p for women (two slots), and so on. Third, I did not have any shower accessories. Fourth, I did not need a shower. I only participated as an observer for 24 hours and took showers before and after the time. I proceeded through the line.

There were two staff members helping the line flow at an even pace. The female staff at the end of the table would ask a person's name, check it off, and then the second female staff would throw the person a blanket. Ducky was two or three people in front of me. When he came to the checklist, the woman asked him if he had stayed at the shelter the night prior. He had not. Staff told him to wait in the lobby to fill out paperwork. I thought my name would be on the list since I went through prescreen and called prior to that. I knew my name was already "in the system" and I even had my picture taken! However, staff told me the same thing as they told Ducky. I headed toward the lobby to wait.

It was a long time before staff called either of us. Ducky was first. I waited about 30 minutes for his session to end. During my wait, I witnessed a handful of incidents.

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Staff denied Camo entry at the front desk. "You're not on the list." "Come on, yes I am. I should be on the list." "No, you're not." "But, I talked to…" "Your name is not on the list and you weren't in the stack of papers that I was given." The last comments made me believe the female staff knew who he was. He was probably on some list. He had probably been there before. However, she was probably using a bureaucratic way to mitigate this conflict. Homeless individuals seem to understand bureaucracy quite well and they know that if they do not adhere to the rules, staff will ask them to leave.

Another older white male came in with a bag. His hair was white and gray, but whiter. It was greasy and not well kept. He had a hat and glasses. He had diminished cognition. He spoke slowly. I assumed the best at first, thinking he was mentally ill and they would admit him. However, I was wrong. He was drunk. The staff looked unfavorably at this fact. "You're too drunk to stay here." "No, I'm not." "You need to go to the hospital." "But, I'm fine. I'm not drunk." "Really, then blow and prove it." He was not anxious to prove it. He continued with much explanation including "I only had a pint all day." Even in my own drinking heyday, I knew that a pint would give me a decent buzz. Coincidentally, that was how much I drank when I was homeless a decade earlier. It helped me fall asleep then. Knowing what I know now about the shelter rules regarding alcohol, I would not drink a drop. I prefer a warm bed to the warm body that comes with booze.

At some point, he understood his only option was to "prove it" and he accepted the opportunity to take a Breathalyzer test. Perhaps he thought he would get lucky and pass the test. He did not. He blew a .280 or .208 but I think it was the former. This level BAC (blood alcohol content) confirmed to the staff member that he was over the limit and would not be staying at the shelter tonight. I thought there was zero tolerance to gain admittance. He seemed dejected and

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did not leave without voicing his frustration. These were just empty words. All parties involved knew the inevitable outcome. He left.

Before my lobby wait, staff excused a man from the line in the cafeteria. "You're a trespass." Staff uses the term "trespass" for individuals who have done something to get themselves kicked off the rolls. He adamantly claimed he was not a trespass. His defense was that there was some mistake. Staff escorted him (loudly) to the front desk, without physical confrontation, and I did not see him again. I recognized him, black male about 50 years old, from meals.

Another black male, in his 50s, was in the lobby during my wait. I am not exactly sure what happened to him. I think his name was T-Bone (pseudonym). The staff knew him well and they seemed depressed or frustrated by his condition. I think he was drunk and the staff had sympathy for him. I think the staff let him stay as long as possible before giving him a Breathalyzer and kicking him out. I did not clearly see the outcome.

During my wait in the lobby, two police officers entered the building. They looked like kids, maybe in their 20s, one black and one white male. I glanced at their name badges and guns to verify they were real police and not just security guards. They were here for something different.

The police officers asked the receptionist to go to a quiet place. Since the waiting room office was being used by (female staff) to check Ducky in, the three went into the small breezeway between both sets of glass front doors. Their conversation lasted about 3 minutes and was very straightforward. If I tried harder to listen, I probably could have heard every word. I was closest to the area, sitting in a chair. I did not have to listen, though. They came back into

the lobby and, I think, confirmed their presence with a female staff member. Staff called upstairs and the cops headed up using the elevator. I wanted to yell a loud joke to the receptionist, "Hey, you didn't make them take a Breathalyzer!" but refrained. I was still trying to lay low and not stick out.

The police returned to the first floor with a man in handcuffs. Perhaps due to his size, and he was not that large - maybe 250 pounds, his hands were cuffed using a chain between cuffs for more space to move around. They took him out to their police car. They had some type of warrant for his arrest. I took from the staff reactions that they had some sympathy for him. However, they did not seem to have sympathy for the crime. It made me think he might have assaulted a woman or something. On the other hand, maybe the cops arrested him for drug use. It was sort of a head shaker "Oh, well. That's the breaks," reaction by staff.

Ducky was finally done and a female staffer called me in. She asked me to sign several consent forms to indicate I was divulging information that would go into the HMIS database (Homeless Management Information System). She said that other agencies would have access to this information about me but only if I went to use their services. I hesitated but signed. There was another form giving healthcare workers access to my records. I hesitated but signed this, too. I figured if they ever get health information on me, that it would help if I had a seizure or something. However, I do not expect anybody ever to use this health information. In fact, they do not have my prior health records. This just helps if I had to use the second floor clinic at the shelter.

The female staffer asked me about 50 questions and I answered honestly. I told her I was in the area for school (that was one of the choices on the drop down list). I told her I had a

master's degree. The only lie that I told was about my income. I said I worked 10 hours per week (that was equivalent to my current professorship in-class lecture time). I did not include my fellowship. I told her I made "$400 per month." To determine what I should tell her, I took a long pause. She seemed frustrated. I tried to explain the pause was due to me "doing the math." It was. I wanted to give a reasonable wage and monthly income for admittance. In addition, I wanted a story that I could stick to.

When she asked if I had any further questions, I asked, "How many times do you do this per night?" and she smiled. This seemed to build my rapport with her.

I went back into the cafeteria and had a choice between roughly 25 open mats. I chose a mat that had spaces to the left and right. It would not be a cramped night. I had plenty of space to sleep on my 3'x6' mat. Every mat was green. I put my yellow backpack at my head so I could use it for a pillow. It would have been a better pillow if I took the crackers out of the top pouch. It was a tough decision. I did not want to smash the crackers in case I wanted to eat them later. However, I could not put them anywhere. I had a single backpack. I had no storage.

I took off my black winter gloves, brown boots, and red winter hat. Those four items (hat, gloves, boots, backpack) were my sole belongings and they all sat at my head, taking up about 2 square feet of space. Earlier in the night, as I walked through town, some college-aged male rolled down his car window and sarcastically yelled "Nice backpack!" It gave me a very strange feeling. I took offense and I was sad. I had taken on the persona of a homeless person and felt what a homeless person might feel mixed with my non-homeless sympathies for the homeless struggle. In a staged reality, this young man had just made fun of a homeless person.

The lights went out around 10p. There was a lot of chatter although I could not make

sense of any of it. I could not collect any data about the topics of conversation because it was

tough to hear what they said. However, the chatter made it somewhat difficult to fall asleep even

though I was tired from the day of walking over 10 miles. I tried to listen, but could not hear. I

did not put on my music and earbuds for two reasons. First, I wanted to hear some chatter.

Second, I wanted to save my cell phone (doubling as a music player) battery. My cell phone

jabbed into my side when I would turn over. I kept it in my jacket pocket. I did not want it

stolen and I preferred to have easy access to it. I fell asleep around 11p.

Ethnography: First Morning

I woke up two or three times during the night. I awoke in little increments between one

and fifteen minutes. Once, I could not figure out the origin of a loud whirring noise. I would

later determine it to be the hot air hand drier. The bathroom was close to the mats on the floor,

the bathroom door was thin, and the drier was loud. The second time I woke up, I must have

heard the snoring near my head. When I laid down to sleep at 11p, there was nobody by my

head, feet, or to either side of me. When I woke up, individuals occupied three of the four

points. There was a man snoring less than a foot from my head. Overall, there were about eight

snorers in the room. It was bearable, so I fell back to sleep.

There were a few reasons that I could not determine the time. First, I wear heavy

prescription glasses and do not sleep in them. I would have had to dig into my bag (serving as

my pillow) to get my glasses. I was worried about the zipper making noise since it was inches

from a sleeping man's face. I did not think to pull out my cell phone. I hoped that it was close

enough to 7a so I could just await the wakeup call. I had no such luck. I waited about 15

minutes and decided it might as well be 2a for all I know. I fell back to sleep.

Wake up came earlier than expected! I knew we were to be "kicked out" at 7a but I thought that meant a wake up closer to 7a than 6a when staff prompted us all to rise and shine. I was in for another surprise when I realized we got breakfast. Within moments after staff called wake up, I rubbed my eyes and put my glasses on. I then put my boots on and gathered my bag, hat, and gloves. I was ready to go within minutes.

I grabbed my mat to carry to a bin. I did not know if this was required or courtesy. Everybody cleared the mats from the floor in about 10 minutes and we all gathered in the hall front lobby, again looking like children through a candy shop window toward the cafeteria. The staff, along with some resident helpers, put the tables back up in the cafeteria within 15 minutes. Staff placed a table or two up front and a bucket of peaches was the first food item I noticed. We all entered the cafeteria, not in line or order, and sat at tables. This was a more disorganized gathering than other meals. A female staffer scolded a resident for brushing his teeth near the food. "Brush your teeth in the bathroom, please. There is food here." A few minutes earlier, I saw his friend pull a tube of toothpaste from a backpack next to where I was sitting in the back of the cafeteria. The tube was leaking and I was concerned that some would drip on me. I did not say anything. The friend, a black man, was again looking for his "white earbuds." He was looking for them last night and asking around if anybody had seen them. I was thankful my earbuds were black, even though I never used them, because I did not want him to confront or question me. I shook my head, "Nope," when asked if I had seen them. These two 20 to 30-year-old black males were the ones who cut in line and entered the shelter early the night before.

I saw another man using a dental floss stick in the corner of the cafeteria. Many individuals were prepared to conduct hygiene activities in the morning. I was not. However, I would be going home soon so I did not mind going 24 hours without hygiene.

More food came out. I saw bowls. Cottage cheese and peaches were the items that would go in the bowls. There was yogurt. The coffee was excellent. The temperature and quality of the coffee surprised me. I habitually drink $5 cups of coffee in my daily life. To get this great coffee really made me happy.

There was another gross moment when the woman across from me dropped quite a glop of yogurt from her spoon to her shirt when she missed her mouth. She did not notice and I did not want to point it out. Then, the woman to my right (both were black females roughly 50 to 60 years old) spilled her drink. It was brown, maybe chocolate milk. Luckily, it was a well-contained mess and both women went to retrieve napkins and rags immediately. There was no worry or embarrassment and the women handled it swiftly.

I ate an apple turnover. Other than its incredible stickiness, it was wonderful. The pastry and coffee were a pleasant surprise. All of the pastries were clearly marked for discount at the local grocery story because of expiration dates. I am very familiar with the yellow and orange tags because I am an aficionado of nearly expired goods. Some might say I am a cheapskate. I knew the exact store this food came from by the stickers.

Scoot had pastries from a local grocer the day before. Since he was in a motorized scooter, his only transit option would be bus or maybe car or cab. It would not be out of the question to take a 27-minute bus trip to the local grocer for pastries. I heard some individuals talking about the bus prior to 9a. "If it was after 9 right now I'd be on that bus."

Aside from apple turnovers, there were glazed donuts, small muffins, and paczki. It was the weekend after Ash Wednesday and Fat Tuesday. Although the donuts and paczki looked very appetizing, I saw nobody eating them and I chose not to. It was too many calories for my

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diet. Cottage cheese is my favorite at home but I was skeptical of it at the shelter. When expired

food is distributed, I stay away from milk products. I do not have a sense of smell so I worry

sometimes that I could drink an entire glass of spoiled milk without knowing it.

When I finished eating, I sat there silently. This had become a habit formed very early in

my experience. I had no rush to go anywhere. I was killing most of my time by walking. I did

not really have a decent place to sit. Even though it was warm enough to sit outside on park

benches, snow hid all the benches. The stoops and stairways were salty and cold.

Figure 66. Snowy Benches in Liberty Plaza (2014)

I heard someone ask another resident "Are you going to the breakfast church?" My ears

perked up. The breakfast at the shelter had me confused. Originally, I thought I would be

getting breakfast at a nearby church that I had scouted out the day before. However, when the

shelter provided breakfast, I thought perhaps my understanding of the procedure was flawed.

Now, I had new information that there would be a second breakfast! I was thrilled about the

opportunity to kill more time in a warm spot, sitting down; the food was much further down on

my priority list.

The mention of the "breakfast church" also excited me as an opportunity to gather more

data and observe another activity. It was not long before I heard staff holler "There is no

weather amnesty today" which indicated we had better gather our belongings and prepare to

leave. There was never any real disgruntlement about leaving, just a few groans. Nobody clung to the warmth of the room. I figured that was because it was not too cold outside. Twenty degrees Fahrenheit is a fair cutoff point for weather amnesty, in my opinion and experience.

I had to be careful how I observed the walk to the breakfast church. I had made no real friends and cliques were forming. I did not want to say, in a goofy way, "Hey, can I walk with you?" That would have just seemed out of place. It was much more normal and acceptable for me to portray myself as a new recluse. I left the shelter after about precisely half of the others had left.

At 7a, I looked to see where people were going. I expected to see some take the bus. I learned that the bus did not start to run until 9a. It was currently 7a. I saw one man walking toward the breakfast church. I tailed him at a safe distance, maybe 100 yards. This was not a great situation for gathering data. Very soon, though, I would encounter a group of four individuals from the shelter. There was one white female, about 30 years old. The other three were white males. I tailed them at between 50-100 yards. I did not want to follow them directly just in case they were not going to the breakfast church. I took a few different turns than they did. My path to the breakfast church was still direct, as was theirs, but it gave the appearance I was taking my own route. It would not be abnormal to turn left instead of proceeding straight if, for example, the "Don't walk" sign held me up or if the sidewalk was icier one way. I do not think they noticed or cared one bit about me even if I had been conspicuously following them. I came to that conclusion because when I walked closer to them, when we were near to the breakfast church, they talked loudly about guns, drugs, police, and jail time. "He had dope on him," one of them said during a narrative about experiences. I did not listen closely. This story reminded me of the white couple at lunch the day before. For some reason, these individuals

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regularly tell stories about crime, escaping police, sanctions, and deviant behavior. I could not

tell if it was bragging or just talking about regular life as I might recall a night out drinking with

my friends as we walked to breakfast.

With the breakfast church in my line of sight, I carefully watched the entrance doorway.

This was an important aspect of my embeddedness. I always determine what normal behavior is

and act as if I know what I am doing. If I do not know what is normal, I avoid the behavior. For

example, when I was on the college campus and I did not know if the door to a building was

unlocked, I did not go near and try to open the door. I just walked by. I only acted with

confidence and certainty, much of which I accumulated by knowing what to expect through

observation.

I went into the breakfast church entrance. It was a lower level entrance with steps down.

There were individuals smoking on the stoop. There were some other individuals hanging out in

the lobby. Since it was daylight, none of this seemed seedy or out of place. As I mentioned

previously, these individuals had a decent level of hygiene and mutual respect. I got the sense

that if they were to eat at the breakfast church they knew how to behave. I also thought that they

probably upped their respect level due to the volunteerism and religious aspects of the church. It

is an historic building full of symbols. It is not a governmental bureaucracy like the shelter. The

church does not owe the homeless. This is a charity. I saw absolutely no conflict during my

time at the breakfast church.

In fact, Camo showed up and residents were being amicable with him. There were some

handshakes and hugs. He was still as belligerent as ever. While I was eating, he came to my

table (thankfully, did not look at me) and loudly asked, "Psychological warfare, is it not?" "I

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have no idea what you mean nor do I care in the slightest." The man to my right was about 25-years-old and white. So was the man to my left. Camo walked away. "There is no lower level of mental deficiency…" said the man to my right. "Just go through life until the end where we all fall into a meat grinder…" said the man to my left in an apparent reference to Pink Floyd's "Brick in a Wall" movie.

The man to my right appeared to be on drugs. I thought probably heroin although perhaps he was on hallucinogens. His behavior and interaction with another man supported my guess of heroin. He would lift his clear glass mug full of coffee and just stare into it. We all had mugs of coffee. I heard that heroin users crave sweet things. He packed away a brownie in his backpack to save for later. His coffee could have been a vessel for sugar as well. In fact, maybe he was using Cheerios as a vessel for sugar, too. Although, the most support came when a third tall skinny 20 to 30-year-old white male stopped by to chat. "You okay?" "I don't feel good." "Well, help is on the way. At least we know that." I think I also heard reference to "getting a bump soon." Maybe I just imagined the "bump" to confirm my suspicions. I really do not think the third man was talking about Pepto-Bismol or Tylenol.

After I finished my Cheerios, I grabbed a mug of coffee and sat down. The coffee at the shelter was better but this was also good coffee. I really enjoyed the quality of coffee I was getting. However, it reminded me that my delight could be relative. I recall a time that I fasted for a few days at a Woodstock music festival in 1999 and then I guzzled a bottle of apple juice. Previously, I did not like apple juice but that was the best juice I had ever had and now I like apple juice. Maybe this was just regular coffee that I thought was good. I craved it so much.

I heard a man behind me say, "Excuse me" and I pulled my chair closer to let him through. "No," he said, "I'm already past you. You don't have to move. I just bumped you. You didn't feel that?" "Nah." "You look like you were zoning out. Tired?" "Yeah." He was very nice and a big black 20 to 30-year-old man, heavyweight, maybe 300 lbs.

Ducky was at breakfast. Many of the shelter residents were there. The two men at my table had not been at the shelter nor had the black man that bumped me to my recollection. Some black women were there that I recognized from the shelter. The man that slept in the cot next to mine was there. I think that is whom Ducky befriended. The tough looking 20 to 30-year-old white male who listened to Eminem was there and shook Camo's hand. There were probably about 100 people eating breakfast. There were two black men sitting in a pew to my left. One kept talking and talking. The other looked like he was trying to ignore him and did not respond or talk much. The black man referred to his truck and kept saying, "My sheet says, 'four until'" which meant his papers said he could drive after work and his papers said he worked "four until…" without an indicated end time. It was if the man was trying to convince the public that he was not breaking the law. However, we were not cops. We did not care. He also said that he had escaped a DUI (driving under the influence) because he was in the passenger seat. It was a boring story. Nobody cared. He kept talking.

"Seconds on canned goods are now available. Seconds on canned goods." This was a white male, around 50-years-old, hollering from a table in the corner with his hands cupped as a makeshift bullhorn. When I originally entered the eating space, which looked to double as a gym or auditorium with a stage, I noticed that we could all get a plastic shopping bag and fill it with goods. I was not hungry and did not need goods for the day (I planned to leave town soon to return home) so I did not proceed through that line. I saw canned goods, Ramen noodles, and

boxes of items like Pop Tarts. Realistically, a person could grab a week's worth of food from this table. Moreover, they apparently offered this amount of food every day.

This made me realize that food was not in short supply for the homeless. This was a fact confirmed by the gatekeeper administrator at the mission in Lansing. He told me, "You can get a warm meal at least 8 places around town." It is important to note that I did not study the nutritional value of the food. Nonetheless, if you are begging out of "hunger" or your sign says you are hungry, you are probably lying. The heroin addicts tend to use these signs to obtain quick cash for a quick fix. I confirmed this in Detroit, too. One of my subjects told me about the "Soup Kitchen Shuffle" and invited me to come join him on a Thursday morning to see how many options there were for food in the city.

I wondered why the street performer's sign said he was hungry. He did not look like a heroin addict. He was not thin nor was he tweaking. He seemed relatively level and stable. I looked back at the picture I had taken of his sign. He did not claim to be hungry. He did say he was "trying to get a warm place to sleep" which was sort of a lie. He had a warm place to sleep at the shelter. He must have meant he was saving money for a $20 hotel room or apartment. I observed him for several months during this study.

The crowd at the breakfast church began to dissolve. I looked around and realized this would be my final interaction with the homeless during this weekend. I would come to find out that was a false assumption. During the 5+ miles I walked after breakfast, I saw a few more faces that were familiar. As I left, I saw the man who offered me cocaine the day before. I did not look him in the eyes because I did not recall at that moment if he was the one who scared me. Thinking back, he was not. I could have made eye contact with him. He was on the stoop,

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though. I did not see him eating breakfast nor was he ever at the shelter (that I saw). This makes me believe that he just came to the breakfast church to sell drugs to regular buyers. I was saddened. This activity (if true) is similar to that occurring in Detroit. The homeless are not drug kingpins or even sellers, generally. They are the prey, the customers.

I walked into the daylight and headed toward town. Later, I would pass Ducky who acknowledged me as being recognizable. I returned the acknowledgement and recognition but did not stop or turn around. I also saw the man with sarcastic stickers on his basket. He was perched on the same street corner that he was the night previously. Traffic was almost nil at this point in the morning but it looked like he was preparing for a day's work. I learned that his basket and shirt said "Underground News" and "$1 donation." This was a revenue stream for him. He passed out "news" and asked for $1 per pamphlet. This is a vocation somewhere on the spectrum of illicit/licit and illegal/legal. At the time, I did not know what this newspaper was. I later learned it is a legitimate job and news source. There are many homeless street papers across the country. I became a regular customer of the "Groundcover News" in Ann Arbor when I worked for the University of Michigan (where I currently work). I picked up a copy of a street paper in Chicago and asked my college friend if he knew of that paper. He said he is a regular customer.

I walked and I walked. My plan was to use the bathroom in the Student Union at the local college. I was walking about 100 feet behind a black woman who was not anybody I recognized. She kept looking back at me. I kept walking. Coincidentally, she entered the Student Union. It appeared as if she stopped to glance back again at me through the glass windows in the large doors. Maybe I was hallucinating. Nevertheless, I felt like I was under suspicion by this point. I still had to use the restroom and I was not doing anything illegal so I

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went into the Student Union. The black woman was at the Information Desk (everything else closed because it was Saturday morning). I thought I heard her say "following me" although, again, maybe I was hearing things. I went to the bathroom. When I came out, the woman was in the middle of the hallway with three other people, at least two of them were men. Each time I would pass the woman inside the Union, everyone would stop talking. As I passed her, I looked up and smiled politely. I walked out. It all felt very strange. Perhaps I was assuming the role of a real homeless person, who may experience some paranoia when using facilities that are not "mine." Had I been dressed as a student or professor, and I have taken classes and taught at this college before, then I would never question my place or behavior. This was different.

My final objective was to exit the city without anybody noticing me. I heard a homeless man mention that he stayed in the parking structure. "It's hard (the pavement, when sleeping), but it is warm." I did not want to encounter him or anybody else in the parking structure. I had parked on the upper level. My fee was to be roughly $28 for the overnight stay. I wanted to get out discretely. I knew of a side door to the stairway in the parking structure. As I approached it, I looked around to be sure nobody was within my sight. I did not want to "blow my cover."

I now know that many homeless individuals have cars. It is not abnormal to have a car and be homeless. In fact, it is somewhat normal for a homeless person to have a car in this particular college town. Many of the subjects I talked to later told me about their cars.

My shoulders were aching from the night on the hard floor. Later in the day, my legs would throb from all that walking. I returned home to a warm house and my friendly miniature dachshund. I took a very long, hot shower. Before that, I stripped naked in my attached garage

and began to launder all my clothes. This was the procedure recommended by the gatekeeper administrator to prevent any potential of carrying bedbugs.

I filled a mug of coffee and generic Bailey's Irish Cream. I watched Saturday Night Live on DVR (recorded TV). I ate some soup with crackers. Then, I grabbed my laptop and began to transcribe field notes. It was strange to transition between two distinctly different identities. I felt some guilt about my privilege. My brief homeless experience was tough. However, I had a comfortable warm soft bed to come home to.

Ethnography: Week Two, Second Night

I came to town during Saturday afternoon about 3p. Dinner was the only meal offered today. It was a combination of lunch and dinner. Before I got to the shelter, I walked around the city for about thirty minutes. I saw black males "Red Hat" and "Floppy Hat" (pseudonyms). I think I saw Scoot but I would not see him at dinner nor did I see him since. I recognized a man wearing a snowflake hat from the breakfast church. He was sitting on a street corner begging for money. I have never seen him at the shelter before. I saw a scruffy, dirty, possibly homeless man come off the bus near the shelter at 250p but he headed away from the shelter and toward the Main Stem. I was surprised he passed up a free meal for what was likely just an hour more of sunlight for begging. I saw several individuals near the Main Stem bus hub. There was another long-trip bus station near the shelter; it is now gone. I figured the city hub is a logical terminal for many homeless to congregate. One man was speaking with a police officer. Ten feet away, there was an unmarked police vehicle. The man was not in handcuffs at the time but it did not look good for him. The police officer had a smirk on his face.

When I approached the shelter, there were only one or two men outside. I thought there would be many more smoking in the sunny warm weather. It was about 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Maybe there were more smokers on the smoking porch. I did not check. On this day, the snow had melted and the alleyway was now wet, muddy sod. There were no bags of luggage in the alley like last week. Luggage bags filled the alley the weekend before, a temporary storage place for those seeking refuge in the shelter. Long-term residents kept their belongings in a locked storage room that I saw during my tour with the gatekeeper administrator.

Inside, the cafeteria was full. At first, I did not think there were any open seats. After a second look, there were probably about 120 individuals in the cafeteria and about 20 open seats. I sat next to a white woman. There were also two black women, roughly 40-years-old, and a third black woman would join us. Across the table from me were the hugging white couple. She kept leaving to use the bathroom. Her boyfriend, who had a sort of grown out Mohawk hairstyle, said she had indigestion. It did not make the mealtime any more appetizing when he said "The beef is no good" and something about the poor quality of food that "street people" get. There are many times when residents said or did something to make the meal less appetizing. He also said he was allergic to chicken. That allergy surprised the final person at our table.

It was the woman, 30-years-old and either Mexican or Native American, whom I sat with before. She did not seem to recognize me. She was wearing a pink hat with rhinestones in a star pattern. It looked new, clean, and sort of resembled the rhinestone sparkling sweatshirt she commented on worn by another woman (who would later be identified by me as a woman from the Main Stem) the week before. I did not see the shaky hand man and there was no mention of him today.

The pink hat woman (whom I started referring to in my field notes as "Native American woman") mentioned that she had "fetal alcohol" (syndrome) that caused her to be taken advantage of easily. She said she loved her caseworker who she had just finished meeting with on the second floor. She said her caseworker was "sort of retired" and a "psychologist." Maybe she said the caseworker was a psychiatrist. This initiated a conversation at the table about the difference between psychology and psychiatry. "Psychiatry is for mental health. I have a psychiatrist. They give medication for mental health," said the woman to my immediate right. The man confirmed her claims by reading something from his smartphone that sounded like Wikipedia.

The pink hat Native American woman once lived in another Midwestern state. "(That city) is the only place I know where the south side is better than the north side," said the man, "but, that's not saying much. The entire place is a ghetto." The woman told a story that her parents had taken her child from her. The man claimed his uncle was an attorney. He also said his half-brother knew Geoffrey Feiger due to working across the street from him. (According to Google Maps, there is a Pancake House across the street from Feiger's office.) The man referred to Feiger's representation of Jack Kevorkian. "Oh, he's good," said the Native American woman in the pink hat. "No, he lost," said the man. The man claimed that Feiger also represented two of the Columbine shooting victims. (Note: This appears to be true; Feiger represented the families of Isaiah Shoels and Mark Taylor.) The man said those two victims had Michigan connections. The man said if his "uncle were still practicing" he would connect his uncle with the pink hat woman. According to the man, since the pink hat woman's children "were taken across state lines" that is "a felony" and "there are no statute of limitations on that."

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"It's a felony kidnapping," said the man. The woman seemed surprised almost as if she were now considering pursuing a case against her parents even though it "was many years ago, maybe 8 or 9 years ago." The woman said her mother was a megalomaniac English professor at the nearby college. The woman to my right asked what a megalomaniac was. "Egotistical" said the man as he repeated several synonyms of that word. "You mean, if she killed somebody she wouldn't think there was nothing wrong with that?" "Not that really," stated the man.

During dinner, the man and pink hat woman were talking about something that I thought was a reference to drugs. "It came up from below" said pink hat pointing to her groin area, "but I had a blockage so it stopped." "Blockage" was an unusual word that sounded almost like she was describing constipation. It seemed like they were talking about yoga and some sort of energy transfer. Staff called our table number. We were just about the second-to-last table called. The conversation about energy and aura continued in the meal line.

The meal line was long, maybe 20 people long. As I stated previously, we had a packed house for dinner tonight. There was coffee. They offered Starbucks creamer tonight. I wanted some but did not get any. They had Styrofoam cups and plastic mugs. I would have taken a mug because that is something somebody familiar with the shelter would do. I saw one man put about an eight-second pour of sugar in his coffee. I envisioned half a Styrofoam cup of sugar granules topped with a splash of coffee.

Before dinner, we were required to be quiet for one minute. Later, I would come to know it as "a moment of silence." Staff served dinner ten minutes early at 250p. Staff asked for three helpers who would clean up. It took a while, maybe a couple minutes, but she got three to volunteer. Staff allowed them to eat first. A female staff was asking a man sleeping on chairs

"Are you okay? Are you okay?" He was laying down across the tops of chairs and non-responsive. "You can't sleep here." A week later, I saw a female staff asking a man if he was okay and if he needed to go to the hospital. The staff seems constantly aware of who might not be okay and asks regularly to check when necessary.

The drinks tonight were 2% milk and lemon punch. There were signs on each dispenser saying "only one cup per person." At another meal, I would see a "two cups per person" sign. Drinking water was available in seemingly limitless quantity.

The black women at my table seemed to be lucid. At least one woman referred to having a job. Another was clean and dressed well in a white coat. The three were probably permanent (upstairs) residents. I heard them talking about how one of them was being placed in housing. It was a positive and optimistic conversation.

One of the black women kept talking about how good the food was. "What is it they put in that brown rice?" she asked. Then, she took a bite and I could see she held it in her mouth to savor and check the taste. "That's parmesan cheese in that spinach."

I got the pre-dressed salad (Caesar, I think, although I do not really have a sense of taste) with croutons. I got brown rice with black olives in it and spinach (which was slightly watery). I turned down green beans and chicken but staff did not offer me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I turned down fruit salad - sliced strawberries and pineapple. I took a chocolate cupcake. I saw a man with chocolate milk but I could not find any. I could never figure out where they got the chocolate milk. Maybe it was a mix of milk and coffee.

The man said that he "felt 9-11 four days before it happened." The pink hat woman said she saw major visions in her room during the same time. The man said Michael Jackson had a song "Blood on the Dancefloor" that predicted 9-11. Jackson "put his hands at 9 and 11" in a picture. In a video for "They don't really care about us," Jackson placed illuminati symbols like open eyes and incomplete pyramids so that viewers would understand and recognize the references. "With all the impersonators out there, how hard would it be to get a Michael Jackson look alike to dangle a baby over a balcony for a picture? Not hard."

The man claimed somebody murdered Michael Jackson because he spoke against the illuminati. The child molestation was all a frame. "I didn't think he'd do that," said pink hat. "What about McCauley Caulkin?" "What? They were friends," replied the man. The woman to my right just dyed her hair the color red. The man said he once dyed his hair black but that it turned the color red after it grew out.

They offered us seconds on food but not on chicken because there were not enough seconds on chicken for everyone. I entered the bathroom after dinner. One man was in the stall. Another man came in and asked him for a "square." I then saw that man reach his hand under the stall right next to me. It was strange for him to be that close to me. I might have even sprayed him with some of my urine. He took the cigarette and a second later, the supplier let out a loud bowel sound. He draped his clothes over the stall - red and white. (Draped clothing over stalls would later become a known symbol by which I could recognize the homeless in public, e.g. in public bathrooms.) I went to wash my hands. About six other men entered. The staff must have said it was time to leave. I dried my hands with the air drier. There were never any paper towels in the shelter bathroom.

I wrote my field notes in the college student union. There are many more students in here on this night, about 100. Last week, it was empty. It must have been spring break last week. I remember how frightened I was when Camo came through. Tonight, he would not fit in. The other people I saw at dinner earlier included these pseudonyms: Red Hat (young black male), his young black male friend Floppy Hat, the Preacher (large white male with rosary), Ducky, the blind man with a TV show hat, and the black male with a Farmer's Market shirt. On the street today, I saw: "Blue" with female partner (who turned out to be his wife) and a man selling $1 News.

Ethnography: Week Two, Second Morning

The breakfast church ends at 830a. I was prolonging my stay as long as possible with a second cup of coffee but I heard an individual (non-staff) tell another individual "You got five more minutes" at 825a. Ten minutes earlier, I saw the top of a city bus. From last week's experience, I thought the busses did not start to run until 9a but I just saw another one in the street on my walk here (to the student union, to write field notes) about 850a.

Individuals at breakfast church today included these recognizable pseudonyms: The Mailman, Eminem (headphones, tough looking young white male with shaved head), the Preacher, Red Hat (black male; although, I didn't see his friend Floppy Hat today), Green Hat (black male; beggar, but only takes meals and doesn't sleep at shelter). A skinny woman, who does not stay at the shelter, walked to breakfast church in front of me. She wore the same cloth dress and beanie hat as last week. Camo showed up late (815a), talked to Eminem, was wearing a leather jacket (not camo), but still had the camo backpack.

A skinny white blonde tattooed woman, whom I recognized from before, came to breakfast church. She was new to the shelter. She asked about the order of meals and meal tickets yesterday. She had a Starbucks cup yesterday and mentioned being at Starbucks. The cup had tea bags in it and was double-cupped. She referred to the suburbs of Detroit. She said she had tattoos and I saw them on her left lower back when she was sitting. I also saw part of her butt crack. I do not think she wore underwear. I mention it because it was noticeable and frequent, like a plumber. She also mentioned "stretch marks" that I never saw. That comment did not really make sense to me. As I review these field notes, it is funny to me that I wrote down such things but these are what I saw and heard. I did not select my field notes. I recorded as much as I could. At the shelter during breakfast, she kept going in and out of the bathroom with a coffee cup. At dinner yesterday, she said she could not have chocolate due to doctors' orders.

The Mailman (a pseudonym for one of the homeless shelter residents) seems to hang around an older man. Maybe they are both veterans. I heard them talking about the shelter. Maybe they are bunkmates. The Mailman is a very nice, polite and optimistic young person.

Prior to leaving for the breakfast church, I sat in the corner near Ducky (who did not go to breakfast church today). There was a black man sitting next to me. Another black man approached him. They began to talk. The sitting man was telling the standing man about the negative aspects of shelter life. "You just another nigger" (to them) he said. They (shelter staff) want residents to follow their system. "But, you got another thing to fall back on." There was some antagonism toward "they want you to work" but "you ain't gotta work like they want you to." In my best judgment, the man may have been referring to selling drugs although he did not come right out and say it nor did he use terms like "hustle." He was very vague. Maybe he was

talking about a government check. The standing man agreed. "But, you got something to fall

back on" the sitter kept repeating. "They just want you to say 'yessah' 'no-sah' (yessir, no sir)

but you ain't got to do that 'cause you got something to fall back on. Mostly, they want you to

become institutionalized." During certain points in my ethnography, I felt like the research

wrote itself or that my subjects were all sociologists. I write that in jest, but hearing mention of

institutionalization aligned with my research almost perfectly.

The sitter said "institutionalized" more than once. Whatever "something to fall back on"

meant, it was anti-establishment. I wrote down a few side notes: (1) Yesterday, I saw a man

digging through trashcans outside the union. He was older and either Mexican or Native

American. I did not see him ever again, before or after that. (2) This morning on my walk to the

breakfast church, I saw a man sleeping in an alley. After breakfast church, I walked past and it

appeared to me there was clothing and blankets there but no sleeping man. It was very cold in

the morning. The shelter offered weather amnesty.

This was the first time during my research that I randomly saw somebody sleeping rough

outside. Chronologically, it was early in the study. I was surprised that an individual would

sleep outside even though there was warm shelter available. Perhaps the man was a trespass or

not allowed in the shelter. As I learned from many other individuals I talked to later on, some

prefer to sleep rough. This lines up with the anti-establishment comments.

Some homeless individuals would rather sleep in the icy cold than deal with the

institution. They maintain some sense of autonomy, some personal control, if they sleep rough.

Tent dwellers do not have to blow into a Breathalyzer test every night. I understand that desire

to drink. There were many times during the boredom of the day that I wanted a drink terribly. I

only maintained sobriety to gain access to the shelter and fulfill my obligation to IRB. The

pressure of several institutions was constantly on my mind.

Figure 67. Main Stem Tent Dwellers (2015)

This morning, I saw graffiti on the Main Stem that said "Slim." Last night, Cub

(pseudonym, black male) asked me if I was Slim. I told Cub my name was John and I work

Monday through Friday in Flint. This seemed to interest him.

The shelter offered breakfast this morning at the shelter. I had two small turnover pastries and coffee. I declined a fruit cup, cottage cheese, and a juice box. "Who wants a dinner roll for breakfast?" I heard one woman ask sarcastically. There were about four dinner rolls available. I might start to develop a habit of picking up more "take home" items than I need at meals. I began to determine that this could be a way to gain some rapport. Typically, residents want more than one e.g. juice box. They are limited to one. I could get one, even though I do not want it, and give it away later. I wonder if this is why other residents blatantly offer their food to others during lunch, to gain friends. Last night, there was discussion regarding how bad the coffee at the shelter was. Someone referred to the coffee creamer as "sand." At breakfast church, the toaster did not work and a male diner voiced his displeasure loudly. I do not think he was trying to be a jerk. I think he did not understand his excessive voice volume. Staff was very apologetic. Apparently, every wall electrical outlet was blown (fuse) today. There were also problems with the coffee. My first cup had significant grounds in it. The machine was not working right. The following week, everything was right. At breakfast, I sat at a table with two older Asian males whom I had not seen before.

I wrote these notes at the student union. While there, I recognized at least one black male from the shelter. Two others, maybe more (up to 6 or 7 individuals), appear to be homeless. Their wheeled luggage and age (older than students) makes it obvious. Yesterday, I heard a young white male about 16-years-old say the staff caught him sleeping at the library and kicked him out "for loitering."

<center>Ethnography: Week Three, Third Night</center>

I entered town in the afternoon. I took a long walk after the 3p dinner meal and then I sat at a picnic table outside a city park to write field notes. The park is near a nice neighborhood

and a senior center. The temperature outdoors is tolerable, maybe 25 degrees Fahrenheit, but the wind is picking up and it is starting to get colder quickly. I have my gloves off to write but this location will probably serve as a brief stop. Walking keeps me warm.

This afternoon, dinner consisted of ground beef (like a Sloppy Joe or taco but with no bun or shell), cornbread (stale but warm), the same salad as always (only this time the croutons were cut up stale bread), a pineapple slice (with the core still in and some of the outside skin left on), and white potato salad. The woman at my table said the last potato salad got her sick. "I like potato salad but not old potato salad." I was hoping to get a piece of chocolate cake like some others had for dessert but it was all gone when staff called my table. I chose fruit with my other fruit options being cantaloupe or a bowl of sliced strawberries.

The white woman at my table had a slice of cantaloupe with the rind. She was cutting at it with a butter knife. The black woman made a Sloppy Joe out of the buns that came with the turkey sandwiches. The white female staff asked her about the ground beef, "What is that? Is it Sloppy Joe?" Both female residents agreed it was fresh. "You can tell they made that up today." At first, I thought she was talking about her white cake with whipped cream frosting.

The black man who was sitting to my right put some food in his backpack. "Do you want some cornbread to put in there?" offered the woman at my table. Earlier, a white woman at the table next to us offered up her cornbread to anybody that wanted it. I was surprised. The cornbread was the highlight of dinner for me.

The white woman at the table next to us got into some sort of minor altercation with another person in the lunchroom. I did not look because I did not want to be a voyeur. My persona is to stay out of others' business and keep to myself. A black man originally went up to

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her and said something. The woman was upset at another female in the lunchroom. I saw two conflicts in the lunchroom today.

While in line, a young Asian male walked up to get silverware. "Don't bump into me like that!" the black woman behind me hollered. It was the same woman from my table. "Don't say 'it doesn't matter.'" "He's sorry," said a black teen girl in front of me. "He's with us," she explained. "Don't apologize for him. He needs to be respectful." "He's sorry." "He needs to respect a woman." "I got that. Woman to woman, you know." "Yeah." Later, I saw the same young black girl outside possibly conducting a drug exchange with an older black man. I did not see her before or after that meal. The Asian male caused conflict last week with staff in the morning. He was not waking up fast enough. He complained loudly about it. This weekend, I heard him in the hall say the same phrase that he had said to the black woman in line. I do not remember exactly what it was but I recognized that it was the same phrase. It may have been, "Don't worry about it." That is probably it. He must have a mental cognition issue where he repeats the same thing over and is not completely aware of his impact on his surroundings. When I heard him say, "Don't worry about it," he had not bumped into anybody or anything. He just mumbled it to himself for no reason.

In line, a black man said to the young black girls, "Look at you, bite sized" (or, it could have been "fun sized"). They were very small, maybe 4-foot-tall and 70 pounds. They must have been only about 13 or 14 years old.

Here are some of the others I saw at dinner: the Preacher, "Beyonce" (a young black girl who kept a sharp appearance), Eminem, Red Hat (who would help clean up so he got to go first in line), Mr. Miyagi, Blind Man, a woman from the street, and the Native American woman.

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After I left dinner, I walked through the Main Stem. I saw three street newspaper sellers. At the first station, it was the regular man with his pull cart. However, this time he had a partner. It was the skinny blonde tattooed woman from last week. When I saw her in line later that night, she came right up walking to the front of the line. She is very aggressive which is probably how she found work so quickly.

Figure 68. Street Newspaper Sellers (2014)

I also saw two black males begging near a local coffee shop, the hemp wire necklace guy, the black guy wearing a mink coat and playing guitar (might have forgot to mention him before but I saw him on previous occasions; he is not bad at guitar), and several other unfamiliar beggars. I saw one man with a black eye who said, "God bless" to me as I walked by a fancy wine restaurant. I would see him the next day at the breakfast church but I did not see him or any of these unfamiliar beggars at the shelter. When people do not eat at 3p and it is decent weather outside, I assume they are maximizing prime begging hours.

Figure 69. Begging Tools (2014)

Side note: At breakfast church, I discovered that the church only gives bags of canned goods and other take-home food on Saturdays.

When I used the bathroom at dinner I bumped into a young white male with a winter hat who may have been a heroin user whom I previously saw at the breakfast church. He was waiting for the stall. I needed the urinal so I cut in front of him while he was waiting. As I relieved myself, I heard one man say to another, "You sleeping outside?" After a long pause, "What does it matter now?" It is getting colder now and the notes are not flowing freely from my memory as I write in the park so I am going to pack up and walk toward the student union.

Figure 70. Street Beggar in the Main Stem (2014)

By 6p, I was tired of walking. Walking kept me warm but made me tired. "How's it going man?" asked a grizzled man with a cane, limp, and carrying two plastic re-purposed shopping bags (probably homeless). "All right." "Red Wings. Go Red Wings!" He acknowledged my red winter hat. At dinner, I saw a trash bag full of empty cans and plastic bottles. He might have been collecting cans albeit very few.

Near the shelter I saw two empty juice boxes. I am beginning to recognize the symbols of shelter life. Those were the brand from the shelter. It is interesting to know now what litter comes from the shelter.   I saw quite a few empty plastic liquor bottles strewn around the grounds near the shelter. I was not able to determine why those are there since I never saw any residents drinking and we all have to take a Breathalyzer test to gain admittance. However, I know now that some drink first thing in the morning and the buzz wears off by 9p.

Right now, I am sitting on a park bench on a city street corner. I am secluded away from foot traffic and it is a good place to take notes. I remember how terrible the turkey loaf was from dinner tonight. I did not take any. I thought it was ironic that none of the homeless women at my table would eat any of it. My stepmother served the same thing at our family Thanksgiving last year. We complained under our breaths at the time but now I know our dislike was legitimate. Turkey loaf is just plain gross although I did see some individuals eating it and putting condiments on their sandwiches.

As I was getting ready to start walking into the city, a woman passed me with a pull cart. I did not recognize her. She had a cup from a fast food restaurant. Maybe I would see her later in the shelter. I looked in that fast food restaurant several hours after that and saw a black woman who matched her description and was working the counter but I cannot confirm it was or was not the same person. A pull cart does not always indicate that the person is homeless.

An hour later, I was in the student union writing these notes. On my way here, I walked by a church. It reminded me of the beggars and street newspaper sellers I saw outside the same Catholic Church last week on Sunday morning. That was a strategic location and a good time to beg. I say, "Beg" because some of the sellers blend the two activities even though they are not

supposed to. I check to see if they were there the next (Sunday) morning. There was one woman there selling the street newspaper.

I did not see any residents in the union that I recognized. The union is packed. A popular tournament basketball game is on TV right now and most students are watching. The more students, the less residents come here to hang out. I am not sure if that is a direct correlation or just a coincidence. I saw the same black female janitor here today that I saw last week. I remember her because I worry that she will kick me out if she realizes I am not a student. I saw homeless on the computers in here before but not today. Specifically, I saw Camo on the computers once. There are five computers in here and they all are off. On second glance, a girl just sat down and turned one on.

At dinner, the two women at my table were reading paperback novels. The following day, at breakfast, a different woman had a city library book in hardcover. At night, a man had a Quran. Books are very common among the homeless. I keep two books in my backpack just to fit in although I have not taken them out to read yet because I have been too busy observing, taking notes, and walking the Main Stem in my free time. I am sure the women are long-term residents. I believe I saw them take the elevator up after dinner.

While we were in line for dinner, a white girl in her 20s came out with a cart of trays. It looked like room service. There were full names of residents on masking tape marking the hot meals. The trays of food were for residents who lived upstairs. The women in line directed the volunteer to try to take the cart around the room instead of trying to squeeze through the line. It was a very practical suggestion. "Why didn't I think of that?" The volunteer acknowledged it was a good idea.

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I have not seen Ducky yet today. Last week, I think maybe I only saw him at bedtime.

Tonight, I have plans to go purchase a 20-ounce bottle of Faygo. That seems to be the norm.

Later, I would see an orange 20-ounce and a liter of cola at breakfast. I have seen many of them

and heard mention of flavors. Today, I saw a black male with peach. I have heard candy apple

mentioned. It is a very sweet and inexpensive pop. When I looked in a convenience store and a

gas station last week, neither had Faygo. It upset me and I left empty handed.

I went and bought an Arizona Arnold Palmer Lite (half lemonade, half tea). It was the

second week in a row that I bought one of those. This week, I got it at a convenience store. Last

week, I bought it at the gas station. I cannot find Faygo anywhere. The Arizona drink is only 99

cents so I will not stick out for having purchased a $4 drink, as I tend to do in my everyday life.

I was going to go to the liquor store near the shelter but I stopped short because I was afraid they

would have a $5 minimum on debit card purchases. I did not have any cash on me tonight.

During the later months, I learned about many other liquor stores. One subject told me about

juice hugs, a brand name for 50 cent sugary water juice drinks. We talked then about how bad

those are for young people and their teeth. Nevertheless, poor people buy them because they are

so inexpensive and children like the taste. This is another one of those compounding problems

of poverty.

Ethnography: Week Three, Third Morning

The last thing I did this morning was walk by the Catholic Church to see if the street

newspaper sellers/beggars were there. One was. Church mass was just starting and the beggar

does not have to be very aggressive to get parishioners to notice her. She wears a highlighter

yellow t-shirt over whatever coat she is wearing. Today, it was several very thick layers. I write

"sellers/beggars" here because this was my perception of these individuals at the time. After I

spoke with many of the street newspaper sellers later on, I changed my perception. I now know them as legitimate employees doing legitimate work.

It is cold. It is at least below 20 degrees Fahrenheit because there was weather amnesty today. I knew this would be the case because I checked the weather before I left for the weekend. Surprisingly, it was not bitter cold. I think the humidity and less wind reduces the frigidness. Another reason the street newspaper seller does not have to try hard is that nobody else is out on the street during this time and day other than her and the parishioners. There are occasional runners but not nearby the parish. The newsperson stands about fifteen feet from the parish entrance so the parishioners have to walk right by her. She did not look at me this morning, thankfully. I have become increasingly annoyed when beggars ask me for money. After all, I am homeless, too!

Prior to my time embedded in the homeless community, I had a negative perception of street newspaper sellers. I thought it was kind of a swindle and a rag of a newspaper but I did not take the time to learn what it really was. Apparently, it is a very legitimate source of income for the homeless and a structured formal job. Prior to visiting the website for this specific newspaper, I thought this was a racket they ran. In my prior view, it was one misstep away from drug dealing. I thought it was an annoying way to gain just a little credibility. However, now I know that it is completely legitimate. This was one of my biggest perception changes. It is sort of a formal form of nuisance. It is a legal way to beg, from the public's point of view. It is completely legitimate from the homeless perspective.

Before I walked by the Catholic Church, I tried to gain access to the student union to write some field notes. Somebody locked the side door. I looked at the schedule of open

business hours and noticed the earliest business to open was Subway at 9a. In my estimation, it was about 8a. I thought that maybe the union itself would be open so I tried the front doors but somebody locked those, too. This meant my free warm place options were limited. Yes, there was weather amnesty today at the shelter. I could have stayed a little longer at the breakfast church. That was it. I heard somebody say something about the busses running. I forgot to pay attention to see if this was accurate, that they ran prior to 9a. When the person mentioned the busses were running, it was in connection to the weather. I could not tell if that was a reference to the low temperature but it seemed that way. The bus would be a third option.

I saw the following familiar faces at the breakfast church today: Eminem, Ms. Moody, the Preacher, Cornel West (a black male who looked like the activist), the Mailman and his friend (who is a veteran with a pull cart), two black men who hung around Ms. Moody (one older man was new in a suit but the other man also wore a tie, the same church clothes he had on the week prior), the Red Hat, two white women (one called "Red" by others because of her red hair), and a few other random individuals. The skinny white woman who came from elsewhere and wore the same dress and beanie hat weekly was not there. There was a table, at least two Asians sat at it, and I recognized them from the breakfast church but not from the shelter.

The man who sat at my table was silent and did not say a single word the entire time. He looked about 40-years-old, white, and had a long goatee. He had some muscles so I am guessing he worked doing physical labor.

Here are some familiar faces I saw at the shelter overnight: Beyonce and a friend her age and race, Blue the street performer and his wife (whom he said has a bulging disc and she walks with a cane), Cub (who said hello to me in line waiting to get in at night), the woman from the

street, and Ducky. There is a man I recognize now who sleeps in the corner near Ducky and carries a Quran. That black man also wears a Muslim prayer hat ("Taqiyah").

Ducky said that he got in late about 1a to the shelter. He indicated that he was working until then. The woman from the street said "Good for you. I was thinking about you." Ducky thanked her. At the breakfast church, the Mailman was telling others about another shelter in the city. He gave very explicit instructions on how to get there. "Take the 5 bus… it takes you down on (main street), past (other street), then it turns and goes under (the highway), turns again and goes down that dirt road…" His directions were surprisingly detailed and accurate.

Figure 71. Kind Lady Lives Here Hobo Sign

Kind lady lives here

(National Security Agency, n.d.)

He referred to it as "a great place that helps the homeless." He talked about it with some who did not know of it (women) and one who did (man). He told everybody that the meal was at 6p and the meeting at 630p. One woman confirmed that it was a great meal and the cook was wonderful. The man mentioned something about the meetings and the Mailman said that the old speaker was gone. Apparently, he was doing something like "making a pitch" and "it was all

fluff" so he was removed. I wonder what his message was. Many in the area know of the dinner and meeting and there are several news stories about this organization. The Mailman never mentioned that. This tent city emphasizes sobriety but I do not think it is religious necessarily. The camp holds onto some components of the hobo lifestyle. They display a hobo sign that "A kind lady lives here" on their website.

I heard the Mailman mention his wife for the first time this morning. He also said he had a car. I think other residents may try to take advantage of his car for rides and the money he gets from his job. He is very nice and wants to help which makes him vulnerable. His friend was asking him to help get a package. His friend said that maybe he could have the package sent to the Mailman, as if this would eliminate the need for postage (i.e. interdepartmental mail). However, the Mailman said that it would still require postage. His friend also indicated that he was from a Flint suburb or used to live in that area and had some "papers to sign" in a Detroit suburb.

While I was sitting at the table, the man next to me ("Roc," bald black male pseudonym) and two white women were talking about getting a place to live. "When you leave here (meaning the shelter), they give you $250 at the (local charity)." I knew what this meant coincidentally because I had passed the charity for the first time on my walk the night before. I saw all the rummage and second hand thrift through some windows. "I want my apartment furnished," said Roc, "because I ain't messing around with none of that." "But, you don't know how many people have sat on that furniture." "I wash the carpets. That's where the allergy stuff comes from, the carpet. When I get a place, I buy one of those washers twice. I wash it real good once then I get it again in a couple weeks and do it again." "I'm looking at a place," said the woman, "that's $450 for the efficiency and $500 for the apartment. There's traffic through

there. The man has his mama upstairs and goes up there to get high. I don't do that. I got the door a couple times but the traffic ain't from me and I told him that. Trying to be looking at me like I don't have the money. I get checks every month! Utilities are included so I can pay that and my phone and still have money left over." "I like mine furnished," the man said repeatedly.

Before this conversation began between Roc and the white woman, he was complaining about her while she was in line. "Saying I'm gay. She can talk. Been with who knows how many and trying to call me gay." It did not make much sense what he was saying. It may have been some type of mental illness episode. He later said, about the men upstairs where he lived in the shelter, "All them zombies up there… gotta get away from them zombies. Walk down the hall and see them playing with they self. I don't need to see that." Women told me about females who masturbate at a different shelter, too. When individuals live in a condensed space, they have to deal with seeing these types of behaviors from their neighbors. The woman talked about her dislike for the shelter and its staff. "I filed complaints. Don't get at me or I'll file a complaint. I filed one against (gatekeeper administrator) and he's the one who takes the complaints. A minute later, (the director) was talking to me. She (not the director, someone else) ain't live here. This ain't her home. This is my home. So, don't try and be acting like this is her home." The woman was clearly upset with how staff was treating her but I do not think they were being mean. The staff just has a firm way of keeping order. I think the woman prefers autonomy and self-direction and gets upset whenever somebody tries to tell her what to do.

<u>Ethnography: Week Four, Fourth Night</u>

On my way into town today, I passed several street newspaper sellers. One man walked by me in long flowing blue garments. He had his face covered and almost looked like a ninja. He had a street paper news sign stuck to his belly. Those are always neon highlighter color.

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This one was yellow green. Soon after he passed me, I heard a passerby say "Rocking the Snuggie on backwards." This was probably in reference to the man.

I think the person was actually the man I now referred to in my notes as Eminem. Less than 20 feet later, walking in the same direction as Eminem, was the trembling hand man. He was walking and talking with a black man who did not look familiar.

I saw two beggars with cardboard signs. They looked familiar as beggars but I never saw them at the shelter. They were in their normal spot downtown near the theaters.

Figure 72. Street Beggar Sitting on a Bucket (2014)

It is probably a good day for begging. It is Saturday. The weather is not bad (overcast and about 40 degrees Fahrenheit). There is a city film festival today or perhaps the entire weekend. I have come to know where the clocks are in the city. One is outside on the facade of a bank and the other is inside a convenience store. I can see that one through the glass from outside. In fact, I saw it from across the street today on my walk here. It said 2:10 p.m.

Figure 73. Street Newspaper Seller on the Main Stem (2014)

I am now at the student union. There are not very many students here, less than last week, maybe 20 total. A black woman is sitting four tables from me. She was here when I walked in 10 minutes ago. I recognize her from the shelter. She is reading a novel. I thought that maybe she did that to fit in here as I do with my behavior (writing). However, it is unlikely

she can possibly fit in here at all. She is old, maybe 50 to 60-years-old. I fit in better because I am younger. I was even asked to show ID last night when purchasing alcohol (back at home in a restaurant; outside the scope of the study). There is a different new housekeeper today but she is the same age, about 40-years-old, and race (black) as the housekeeper that is usually here. A black man asked me to purchase a street newspaper today (who had a working partner) in the theater district. I politely declined.

I am going to use the restroom now in the student union then head to the shelter for lunch. The black woman is still here reading her novel (after I returned from the restroom). I am leaving.

At 4p, I found a nice bench outside a student building on campus to write field notes. It is near the student union in case I get too cold or have to use the bathroom. There are some loud, annoying kids (n=10) walking around yelling. Aside from the breeze, it is not too cold outside. The kids (about 14-years-old) spun a piece of street art so it made a loud whirring noise. "I think it needs some WD-40!" one yelled.

On my walk to this bench, I followed four individuals from the shelter. The Asian Boy went to the Public Library with three other friends. A skinny white woman also went to the library. I followed her. She had two bags. I am not positive she was homeless but I think she was. Very far from the library, I thought, "If she goes to the library then she is probably homeless." They went to the public library. This confirms a statement I heard from residents earlier in the week. The public library serves as a refuge. I should go in some time to observe their activities. However, I probably will not today.

Figure 74. Library Rock Sitting Post (2014)

Dinner was baked beans and franks, 7-grain bread with single serve butter, pea pods, and cherry drink. I declined "turkey" (salad?), cucumber "salad," strawberries, and baked fish. For dessert, I had an oatmeal raisin cookie.

"Fuck welfare. Pets eat better than this," complained a man ("Leather," white male pseudonym) who continued to be a nuisance throughout dinner. He later spoke with the blonde female 40-year old-white staff member with soft features. "It's what they get donated," she explained. She talked to him in a soothing "calm down" manner.

Leather continued, "File a grievance and they'll look to kick you out. They remember who files a grievance." Earlier, the same white 25 to 30-year-old man said, "I've seen better shelters than this. This shelter ain't nothing." A white 50 to 60-year-old woman at my table had enough. "Excuse me," she said and turned around toward Leather. I did not hear exactly what she said but it was something like "Don't be so negative. Some of us aren't so pissed off." "Oh,

just wait," he replied, "Just wait and you'll have a bad day. Just like this. Just wait. You'll have

a bad day." He repeated himself. "I just ate an ounce of food!" he exclaimed in protest.

Granted, this was probably the worst meal I received to date. I did not eat the franks, just the

beans.

Another white 30-year-old male at the table next to mine kept mumbling, "Father, Father,

father… father… father, father father…" and "Thou shalt not kill" (which rather scared me).

The woman at my table pointed out "He keeps quoting the bible then cursing!" and was aware of

the irony. "Ugh, the mentally ill…" she tapered off.

The other woman at my table was heavy, black, had on a hair net and a mouth shield like

a nurse. Cornell West (pseudonym) came up to her, "How you doing?" He asked about her

health. "You doin' alright now? I heard you was in the hospital for a bit." She indicated she

was feeling better.

"Help me! Open this!" demanded the mentally ill mumbling man. I saw him last week.

He said "God Bless" to me on the street. He had a black eye and a wrist splint that hindered him

from opening strawberries. "Thank you sister," he said when a woman came to his aid.

Others I saw at dinner included: Blind Man, Shaky Hand and his new black male partner,

Cub, Skinny Blond, Crazy Guy, Young Asian, Track Teen (skinny white male who wore a track

and field shirt from a local high school), Mr. Miyagi, and another quiet man who I recognized.

Those missing were Red Hat, the Preacher, Mailman, Ducky, Beyonce, Native American

woman, Ms. Moody, Blue the street performer (although somebody found a guitar string at

dinner), and the Mini-Teens (a group of very small teens whom a resident once called "Bite

Size"). As I wrote these notes outside, I became very cold so I decided to start walking around for once. I stopped at the student union to warm up, use the restroom, and write a few more notes.

Leather was, I think, the same man who was at the breakfast church when Camo came up and said, "Psychological warfare, is it not?" At the time, I figured Leather was a heroin addict. He might be, but I also heard someone around talking (joking) about crack. Leather also said he was a "raging alcoholic" and "needs a drink." In addition to his likely mental illness, he probably has many addictions. He talked about his large duffel bag and "going back to camp." I was intrigued as to where "camp" is. The man said, "This University is the biggest collection of yuppies in America. If you're a yuppie and can't get into Yale or Harvard, you come here." He also noted about the volunteers serving food, "Most of them are on probation. That's why they have to volunteer." As far as I know, he is wrong. The food charity is a volunteer-based charity. However, I heard another man say he volunteered in that kitchen before to fill a punitive requirement.

My table was the last one called. "That's bull shit," said the black woman at my table. "I seen her pull one out (ticket with table number) and put it back in. That's bull shit." She thought the shelter staff woman was pulling the table number out of the jar, looking at it, and putting it back in the jar (corruption). "I'm always the last table to be called." Both women at my table were residents (long term) and read paperback books. The black woman wore a bathrobe. "I smell mayonnaise," she said, "Something has mayonnaise in it." The white woman pulled an orange fruit out of her bag and started eating it. She could not wait for dinner to eat.

As I cleaned off my tray, a man came from the dinner window with a plate full of beef stroganoff (that looked good). "If they run out, they give you this," he said pleased. Earlier, he came in and I told him I was the very last person in line. "Right on time," he said. He preferred to be the first "straggler" in line.

The black woman at my table seemed to be in a very bad mood. There were four open seats at our table but when a woman came to ask if the seats were available, they told her somebody already took the seats. The white female staff said, "You'll just have to wait."

I confirmed Eminem (pseudonym) was the blue ninja from earlier. We were walking out at the same time. "See ya later Captain America," said a clean white female resident. "It's Captain Snuggie!" he corrected her.

I tried to follow him but could not keep up. The dinner was jam packed, waiting room only. I arrived right at 3 p.m. I took one of the only remaining open seats. As I wrote these notes, there were about 40 individuals in the student union. I did not see any homeless. I decided to go walk around and look for a Faygo.

At 7p, back in the student union, I knew what time it was because I heard the church bells ring. I have an iced tea and popcorn that cost about $2.25. It should last me an hour or so. I will have to watch the time closely to make sure I get back to the shelter on time at 8:30 p.m. I just walked for a long time. My legs are tired. I see a homeless man here in the student union. He has on a camper or hikers pack. It is a blue backpack. He left.

I see the same black woman in here from before but she is sitting at a different table, reading. She was not in here earlier and her new table spot indicates she has not been here consecutively. However, I did not see her at dinner.

There is no film festival in the city today that I see. I thought it was this weekend. Maybe it is, and I am just not seeing it. I think it was earlier in the week. However, I saw there would be a marathon in the city tomorrow, which is Sunday morning.

There are about 20 students in the student union. I saw Captain Snuggie's spot. He is outside the pharmacy in the theater district. He was talking to another man about gym workouts.

Blue, the street performer, and his wife were in the same spot in the theater district. She sits quietly on the sidewalk with a cardboard sign. He is mobile, walking around, but no guitar today that I saw. She must sit because of her bulging disc. The black woman here in the student union also has a cane.

An older white male has been in the student union all day. He changed the channel on the TV earlier off the basketball game to some movie about elves, which prompted me to leave my table. He is still here. He keeps a beverage cup out and a newspaper. I think I saw him before but did not write about him until now since I noticed his extremely long presence.

I discovered that the church bell tower that chimes the hour also has a clock on it. The long-term man is now walking around looking for an electrical outlet to charge his phone. He has been tapping his phone all day.

"We're all going to the same place," said an older black man (Green Vest) carrying a Wendy's fast food bag. "If you want me to buy you something, I'll buy you something." I was

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not sure if he was homeless, but he might be. He is. He was talking to the older black woman with a cane who has been here all day. I am leaving the student union now but I am certain I will see them both at the shelter very soon. There is another white male with a mullet at the student union. He might be homeless. I will remember what he looks like in case I see him again.

Earlier in the day on my incredibly long walk, I passed the shelter on foot around 6p. All the inside lights were off. There were about six or seven people in the bus stop enclosure hut including the skinny blonde-haired woman and the Crazy Guy. They were talking but got quiet when I walked by. It is about 8:25p right now and I am leaving the union. This will be my latest arrival at the shelter to date.

"This is bullshit," said an older white man wearing camouflage and carrying a large duffel bag. "If I didn't do my job, I'd be fired," he continued to complain about the poor effort of the staff members as they laid out mats. They were not ready to open the doors right at 9p and this upset the man.

"Let her to the front," a lady asked the group waiting outside to let a disabled woman with a walker to the front of the line, "or, you'll get trampled in the bull rush." "Yeah, the bull rush."

I did not see Beyonce this week. Cub was not in line to wait for the warming center. The Teen Track Star now helps staff pass out blankets. There was a new young white man in a white hat who I saw right before 9p with a girl on a bus stop bench. He may have been dealing drugs discretely to the residents. I heard one brief conversation he had with another resident. "Softball… what team?" "No, South Pole." It did not make any sense. I assumed it might be

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drug lingo. I saw a dirty hippie man leaving the shelter line around 9p. Unless he was there to talk to his friends, there is probably no other reason to hang out than sell drugs.

<u>Ethnography: Week Four, Fourth Morning</u>

Last night at the shelter, the older black man in the green vest (from the union) was there. Staff kicked him out for blowing "positive" into the Breathalyzer. He actually made his way to the corner of the room but the younger black man who was giving the Breathalyzer tests saw him and yelled, "Hey, you, you were positive." "No, I wasn't. I was cleared at the front desk." There seemed to be some confusion and after a period, the man stayed. I was not certain if staff allowed him to stay or if he simply fell through the cracks.

I discovered if an individual just stays quiet and does not create a ruckus, that person could generally fly under the radar. The young black man was having trouble with the Breathalyzer so perhaps the reading was inaccurate or he was just not aware of the upper limits allowed. I believe it is not a "zero tolerance" policy. The week before, a nice woman resident (who I did not see this week) asked the others in line, "Do cigarettes make that thing test positive?" It was an honest question and those around her answered her respectfully, "No, just alcohol." "Oh, because I smoke a lot of cigarettes right before coming in here and I just wondered."

Tonight, the young black man had trouble with the machine when I came to him in line. A young white female staff member was also giving Breathalyzer tests. Usually, two people rotate through the line to keep a good pace. The female staffer was on the phone with what seemed to be a boyfriend or son or other relative. She was handling a problem that drew her away from administering Breathalyzer tests.

The other young red haired female staffer was checking off names on the list. My name is never on there because individuals must need to stay consecutive nights. "Name? Were you here last night?" "No, last week." "Okay, can you spell the name?" There is never any trouble. As I mentioned earlier, if I just act affirmatively and quietly things run smooth. "Is it 'Geer' wood? How do you spell that again?" she asked. She is cute.

While I was waiting in line, two of the young white males were talking (respectfully) about how cute she is. "She has the same skin and hair color as my girlfriend I had for seven years," said one. "My ex-girlfriend had those kind of hips that could have a baby. You know what I'm saying?" "Do you have a kid? I have a kid. And, I'll take a lie detector on that." One of the men looked to be rather new and the other man was the Crazy Guy (now, I know his name). That may have been the first mention of children I heard yet. Although, I heard some discussion about children in the morning.

"They'll let you if both your names are on the birth certificate," said a woman, "Both your names have to be on the legal birth certificate." I think she was informing another woman what it takes to have a child stay in the shelter. My college students (I currently teach college) ask me if I ever see any kids but I have not. I assume that kids and women go to another shelter in the area as several counties have. This shelter caters more toward men in general. I can back up that claim with evidence that there were 40 men in line at breakfast church today and only 2 women. The male rows are much more occupied than the female rows of mats at the shelter. In fact, the Skinny Blond claimed two mats last night. She wiped them both down with a sanitary wipe and put her Starbucks paper bag on one of them. She pushed them together so they touched.

On the other hand, the men are much more rugged. I specifically chose a mat in my normal spot that was between two dirty mats. I figured this would assure nobody sleeps on either side of me or at least reduces the chance. However, the dirt did not dissuade two rugged old white males who both coughed loudly during the night.

If I were to guess, I would say they were veterans. There is no guarantee they are, but there is a clear distinction between the young men, the addicts, the old veterans, the mentally ill, those upstairs, and a few other categories of homeless. I slept near the Crazy Guy and, when I woke up, I was six inches away from Blue the street performer's head (and his wife). The middle rows are co-ed.

Blue the street performer and his wife have many belongings they usually pack into milk crates stacked on wheels. I heard some conversation between Crazy Guy and Blue's wife. "I heard him playing and singing today. He's good." said Crazy Guy. "Thanks," said the wife, "He's been doing it for thirteen years now." "Oh, what does he play?" "Mostly Pearl Jam… He has a set list." "Does he play that song… How's it go… Alone… Restless…" "Yeah, that's 'Daughter.' Pearl Jam. He plays that." "Oh, he's good. I was sitting there listening today over by…" "Thanks." In the morning, I walked by the wife's spot and her milk crate stool was still there. She must leave it out. Carrying it would be unnecessary cargo.

Figure 75. Homeless Man Storing Belongings in an Open Air "Public Locker" (2014)

While I waited in line, I saw the Mailman. He asked me how I was doing. He is very

upfront and jolly. He talks a lot. Without saying why, he started walking west down the

sidewalk. I watched him and he went about 200 yards then turned north. He came back ten

minutes later with his mailbag (previously, I saw him store canned vegetables in that mailbag), a

black trash bag, and luggage on wheels. I heard the Mailman say before that he had a car so I

guess he went to retrieve his belonging from his car.

In line, the Mailman brought up a rally that was taking place today (Sunday) at 1p on the

third floor of the library. "So, if you want to help the homeless…" he said, "Come to the

library." These homeless activists held the rally to discuss keeping the shelter open past the

April 6 deadline for the warming center. I stay at the warming center. That is the cafeteria

turned sleeping quarters. About fifty of us sleep on mats there. The upper three floors are shelter that is more permanent although there are some mats up there. On April 6, the warming center is closed and the shelter will force people like me to sleep in the streets or city parks. My first thought is that there is no physical detriment to sleeping in the streets because it is warm enough. However, the social support (including Breathalyzer tests) provided by the warming center is immeasurable. It is really a shame that the warming center will close. The shelter will leave these fifty or so potential addicts to their own devices and I do not expect that to be a very good summer for them.

Lenny (pseudonym), an older small white male, talked about addiction at breakfast in the shelter. "I was probably drunk," he said while telling a story about writing his name in the snow. "Little Lenny," said the young white female staff, "the best memory I have of the shelter is when you wrote your name in the snow." "They kicked me out," he told another resident, "and, if I died in the cold that night, I wanted them to know the name of the man they kicked out." "How'd you do it? Do you pee it in?" "No, my body. I did the L then the E and then the N… N… Y." Less than a minute later, the conversation shifted to his drinking. He said he does not drink that much anymore and I think he provided a number of days sober. "It's the context," said a black man near him, "the people you surround yourself with. You need to surround yourself with good people and that's hard to do out there." "I know," said Lenny, "it's a bad influence."

I cannot recall the exact words of the conversation but the black man was speaking sociologically about the entire situation so much that I wanted to ask him if he took any sociology classes. He professed a complete "the environment made me do it" argument for the man based on an influential social surrounding of addicted street people. Lenny agreed. It was an eye opening discussion to overhear. These men knew the forces that were causing some of

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their negative behavior but they were almost powerless to those forces. Mental illness is similar. Most of the mentally ill know of their condition. "I'm physically and mentally disabled," the Attorney (pseudonym) said outside in line. The "Attorney" is what I began to call the pony-tailed large young man with whom I previously ate a meal. His female partner appears to live upstairs. He is the one who talked about Geoffrey Feiger. I heard him say, "That's a felony" today regarding institutions who cast out homeless people.

The black man "sociologist" is also the same man behind the organized meeting today (Sunday) at 1p on the third floor of the library. He is definitely socially conscious. He spoke at a different time about drugs, saying, "That's what they do now. The drugs make you feel good in this bad situation we are in. Back in the day, they'd revolt, start a protest. Now, they just take drugs to make them feel better in the situation they're in." I wished I had a recorder going while he talked. He sounded so much like some John Sinclair interviews I know of.

Drug use came to the forefront at night. While I was dozing off, I heard "Call 911. Call 911. Call 911." Immediately, I turned over and got out my eyeglasses so I could see what was happening. The lights were still on. "What's going on?" asked the old white dirty male sleeping next to me. "I don't know," I replied. I watched. There was a dyed-red hair girl sitting up. A female staffer rushed to her side. "Move the mats. Move the mats." Somebody folded two rows of female-section mats to create a walkway. "Oh, no. Why'd she do that to herself?" There were two white females. Their beds leaned up against the front glass windows. They were just a few feet away from the troubled girl who had her back to me. My first thought was that she had just killed herself judging by the "Oh, no. Why'd she do that to herself?" comment. However, there was no obvious blood. The staff had rubber gloves on but those gloves are what they wear anyway when handling the mats at night. The black male staff (Breathalyzer man) went over to

the troubled girl. The red haired staffer (pseudonym: Ginger) did not seem to be worried. I looked at her and she was not even watching what was happening. It must not have been too serious, I thought.

Flashing red lights appeared in what seemed like two minutes. I was surprised how quickly the ambulance came. It parked directly in front of the shelter. A minute later, a second vehicle would park in the parking lot. I think that was probably an emergency car but not an ambulance or police car. I saw no police. The emergency personnel had on "Fire Department" blue t-shirts. A female staffer may have been holding the girl's wrist checking for a pulse. The emergency personnel would take her blood pressure right away and put her on a stretcher to take her to the hospital.

The troubled girl walked out. Somebody said, "She can't walk." A female staffer affirmatively said "One foot after the other," and the girl walked out with the assistance of three staff members. She walked as if she had cerebral palsy. Since she had not apparently slit her wrists as I first thought, my second thought was she had a seizure and "did this to herself" simply meant she did not eat enough or take her medications. I still do not know what happened to her. "Why'd she do that?" said one of the white women near her, "Young people today… They just don't know how much their parents love them." The other white woman who was there sat silent. I would ask that silent woman the next morning, "What happened to that girl last night?" "For medical issues, I'm not sure…" I could tell right away that the woman did not want to tell me. Later, I thought how interesting it was that the woman was playing the role of a staff member. Residents can talk all we want about other residents' issues. The shelter did not hold us to any confidentiality policies (that I know of). Yet, the woman was behaving like a staff member and not ready to disclose any information. I respected that and did not want to offend

her so I quickly softened the direction of the conversation. "I just hope she is okay." "Yeah."

"It was right when I was going to sleep. That was scary. I hope she is okay." "Have a nice

day," she said as I walked out of the shelter. I saw her thirty minutes later at breakfast church. I

am sure the girl overdosed on drugs. However, that theory is confusing since heroin would seem

to be the most likely OD drug and it would be very difficult to do heroin inside the shelter.

Maybe she was able to shoot up in the bathroom. Several months removed from this experience,

I thought about how much easier drug use would be than I originally considered. A man died in

the bathrooms during my study. It would be relatively easy to sneak drugs in or heavily use

drugs a few minutes prior to entry, mellowing the harsh realities of shelter life once inside.

I saw no evidence of needles in the bathroom. The bathroom is actually very simple.

There was not even any toilet paper in there today. "No toilet paper," said an older white

resident as I entered. I looked and he was right. I felt bad for whoever was in there before me

because feces were stuck to the side of the toilet bowl. That would have been an unfortunate

time to have a bowel movement. I rarely washed my hands while homeless. It seems that most

homeless do not wash their hands. There is never any paper towel and the hand drier is noisy. I

doubt there is soap half the time.

Figure 76. Men Congregate All Day in the Park (2015)

The woman said something like, "I thought she had been drinking," to me during our short awkward conversation. That might have been a covering blanket statement for inebriation that was inevitably a drug overdose. Although I am not an addict, I do not understand the need to do drugs (to overdose levels) inside the shelter at night. It is a warm, friendly place to sleep for up to eight hours. The people are nice, friendly, and willing to either talk or leave you in peace. The daytime is extremely boring and depressing so I can understand the need to do drugs then. The night at the shelter is not bad. I purposefully make myself tired by walking as much as possible so I sleep well. That may be why certain people have trouble at night. If they sleep during the day, they would not be tired at night. Whatever happened to that girl, I feel bad for her. I am not sure if overdosing results in a "trespass" for next time. I did not hear the word

"trespass" at all this week. Maybe staff is lightening up since there is only one week left of the warming center.

The Attorney (pseudonym) talked to the blond older white woman staff at the front desk about shelters. "I been at COTS. That place is terrible." "Don't they have bugs?" "I don't know but it is bad." He talked about a "boarding house in Inkster" and, true to form, turned that story into some discussion about the legality of the man who ran it not being the owner. (Note: At first, I wrote "halfway house" but then corrected it to "boarding house." He definitely said "boarding house" and I recall that clearly because I was not sure what he meant by that.)

Ginger came to the desk and entered the conversation. "Did you hear what they're doing in Ohio? Federal money, $3.9 million to build a shelter. State of the art." "Why don't they just put that money into housing? Well, I guess with the mentally ill you have two different ways to go about it." The discussion included ideas to better use the money as well as emphasis that it was federal money. The Attorney reminded us that the shelter we were at was not that bad. "Forty single units…" staff went on about how nice the new Ohio shelter was going to be. "If I were homeless, all things considered, I'd want to be homeless in Florida." The staff inserted "all things considered" to clarify that she could not know what it was like to be homeless. "I know, right? Sleep on the sandy beach without getting arrested." "If you are homeless in Florida and you aren't in (forget) county then you are not there by choice." The Attorney knew about some county in Florida that is very friendly to the homeless and stated that all the homeless go there. If a homeless person did not go there, it was "by choice," meaning by an ignorant choice.

I did not see Cub in the warming shelter but he was at breakfast church and possibly at the shelter during breakfast. He might now have a bed upstairs. I never saw Ducky this entire weekend.

Breakfast at the shelter was the normal pastry choices although there seemed to be fewer choices today. I did not even get in line. "What do you want (forget name)?" There is a physically and mentally handicapped individual who the staff and residents like to ensure is doing okay. He may have cerebral palsy or just be unable to walk due to brain trauma. I wish I could remember his name right now. Most people at the shelter seem to know his name. "Everything! He wants everything!" somebody yelled. "Do you have bran muffins?" asked the skinny blonde lady. "Yeah." "Do they have sugar on them?" "One does and one doesn't."

In the hallway at a different point in time, the same handicapped man kept repeating "Not okay. Not okay. Not okay." (Or, "Not good" or "It's bad" or "Hospital bad") A female staffer asked him to come into her office to talk. I am uncertain of the resolution. She was concerned for his wellbeing. "Do you need to go to the hospital?" That is when I think that maybe he changed his repetition from "Not okay" to "Hospital bad." Regardless of what the phrase was exactly, I knew he did not want to go to the hospital.

There was a man sleeping in the hallway as we waited for breakfast at the shelter. "Get up. Get up." A resident was acting like a staff member, trying to help, and telling him to stop sleeping in the hallway. "Let staff do that next time," said the front desk blond woman, "I could see him breathing. That's their job." The man obeyed the receptionist's request but the staff woman was upset that the resident did not let the staff handle it. "You can't stand there." The

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staff woman was also upset that the resident was standing too close to the front desk. The staff member emphasized boundaries.

"Can I have a tampon?" The blond woman loudly requested a tampon from the front desk. "Can I have a couple?" "We are only supposed to give you one at a time." "Okay, if I come back later, can I have a couple more?" "Just one when you ask." "Okay." I was surprised the blond woman was so loud about this aspect of feminine hygiene. At other times, the blond skinny woman was sterilizing her sleeping mat, combing her hair, and grooming. Apparently, she did not think asking for tampons was unladylike.

At breakfast, the black male resident organizer (the "sociologist") loudly told the group about the 1p meeting at the third floor of the library. Another resident mentioned to him that it was a concerted effort by that black man and a woman. The other resident clearly did not like the woman. "I'm going to be candid. I don't know why you partner with her." "Honestly, it's because…" the man tailed off. I think he either said or implied that the woman had some social capital that he could not pass up. Perhaps she was even the original organizer. On the other hand, maybe she was a long term resident. Whatever it was, the black male organizer could not seem to shake her as a partner even if he agreed that she was not his favorite person in the world.

There was a comment made about the length of time that residents can stay. "Mr. Miyagi has been here like five years," said the Attorney. He said "Mr. Miyagi" so I began to use that as a pseudonym in my field notes.

As I think back, maybe that dirty hippie gave drugs to the girl who possibly overdosed. The dirty hippie walked east. I saw him earlier in the Main Stem, probably begging. It is an eerie feeling to think back about the events that transpired this weekend.

There were probably no street newspaper sellers near the Catholic Mass this morning (Sunday) because there is a marathon going through the city. This reduced automotive traffic significantly. On the street Saturday evening, there were two black men asking for donations and selling little American flag charms or other pendants. I saw this behavior before at a college football game tailgate but not yet on the streets of this city during my study. I politely refused when offered.

Ethnography: Week Five

It is Saturday morning. I recorded my field notes while sitting in my car. I used voice to text technology. This seems like a convenient and efficient way for me to transcribe notes when I can do it this way. This morning, the man who was organizing the extension of the warming center told everyone at breakfast that there would be another meeting on Sunday at 3 p.m. on the second floor of the library. Because of my schedule, I believe that I can make that meeting. I would like to see how they get stuff done. I was very impressed that they were able to organize enough people and provide sufficient information to the administration that their group accomplished the outcome of keeping the warming center open 24 extra days until April 30. Their new plans are to try to keep the warming center open year round. At breakfast, I had a cup of coffee and that was it. When I was in line, a female staff member asked me what I wanted by name. She knew that my name was John. That was the first time somebody besides Cub called me by name. She asked me if I wanted fruit cocktail, yogurt, or cottage cheese but I declined. I used the excuse that those things were too healthy.

At the shelter breakfast, I picked up a small paper from a little box by the condiments, close to the food windows. It describes where to get additional food. The box was marked something like "Here are other places to get food." The paper does not appear to have many

places listed specifically to "get food" but these places seem to be warming centers. I wonder if the shelter offers this list during winter only or throughout the year.

I tried to tell small jokes now and then. Last night, when staff asked me for my name I said that my name was Barack Obama. The staff member said that, yes, she heard he was in town. Then she asked me for my name and she seemed to recognize me saying that she has seen me before. I believe that I am starting to fit in much better. While I was in line at night, a new young man came up to the building. He asked me if the shelter was full. I said no. He said that he was new to town. I explained that the shelter was not full except for the 3 upper floors. I told him about the process of check in. I told him that staff would have him fill out paperwork and give him a Breathalyzer test. He said that would be no problem since he had not been drinking today. Then he paused, and said that he had "herb" (marijuana) on him. He asked me if they check your stuff. I said no. Then, I repeated no they did not. I told him that the shelter was nice. Finally, I explained the sleeping arrangements with men in one section and women in another. At that point, he seemed disinterested in having further conversation. I told him that the center opens at 9 p.m. but usually they are a little late, about 5 minutes late. Staff lets us in about 5 minutes late.

There were many familiar faces. I did not see Cub. I did not see Ducky. I did not see the Muslim man. However, I saw Blue the street performer and his wife. I saw the Crazy Guy who sings to himself. I was surprised that the red haired girl who went to the hospital last week was back at the shelter today. She was welcomed with hugs from staff and residents. They talked to her about how good she looked. She was hanging with another young man with glasses who I recognized. She also seems to hang out with quite a few people. Perhaps the druggies know her.

I had a hard time sleeping. I mistakenly chose probably the smallest mat in the entire

cafeteria. I learned my lesson that location was not the only factor to consider. Next time, I will

make sure that I get a big mat. I slept between two black men. They slept both in the opposite

direction. However, since my mat was so small they kept bumping into me all night. It was not

the first time that somebody bumped into me at night. It woke me up. There was a lot of

snoring, too, that woke me up.

I was awake from about 2a until 3a. I think the Coke that I drank before going to bed

probably kept me up. I was not very fatigued from walking because I did not walk much the

night before. I can understand now why people have trouble sleeping at night. While I was in

line, I heard two residents talking negatively about the shelter administration. Specifically, they

felt that the gatekeeper administrator made too much money. They also talked about the

director. A female resident said she had never heard of or seen the director. The "Attorney"

(pseudonym) explained that the director was always on the fourth floor. The female resident said

that is probably why she had never seen the director.

I did not see the Mailman at night in line but I did see the Mailman at breakfast. In line at

night, I saw the older black woman with the red dress and red hat who I see quite frequently in

the student union. However, I did not see her in the student union that night. I saw the man who

walked with a limp as if he has cerebral palsy. Staff really likes him. They always ask him what

he wants for breakfast so that they can bring it to him first. I saw Track Teen. He helps set up

the mats just like the black man with the Red Hat. The man with the Red Hat had his floppy hat

friend with him today. I had not seen the floppy hat friend in about a month. There was a new

man who was mentally disabled. He talked a lot and wore very clunky boots and sweatpants.

He was skinny. He wore glasses. At breakfast, the red haired staff girl called him Sheldon in

reference to a sitcom on TV with a nerd in it. Several people left. I do not think the man understood the reference. Breakfast included the regular assortment of pastries, fruit, cottage cheese, yogurt, juice boxes, cookies, and coffee. I had my eye on a cookie but it just did not work out for me today. I only got coffee. I sat next to a man who had mail that he was reading. The papers he read described veterans and mental health services. His mail pieces had two different addresses on them, one in town and the other near Flint, Michigan. I almost asked him about his connections to Flint. However, I did not want to intrude and make it look like I was snooping on him.

In the morning, I saw an Asian boy who was friends with the red haired girl who went to the hospital. He was drawing pencil sketches. A black man was talking to him about his drawings. The Asian boy said that he was tired of working for "the people" and wanted to join a company instead. He said it was a six-figure company. I did not see the skinny blonde street newswoman at all today.

In the morning, I saw Cub and the Preacher at the breakfast church. Camo also came up to talk to me. He mentioned something about how "you cannot trust anyone with your food." He was referring to his food tray that was sitting next to me unattended for several minutes. He said that anyone in the cafeteria could sprinkle anything in your food. He said they were all mental cases, himself included. He proceeded to ask me for $5 and told me about a specific prescription that he could fill and sell or give to me. I told him I was not interested. At another point in the conversation, he told me that he was incredibly high. He said it was "purple nurple." Again, I told him I was not interested. He told me to watch his backpack while he went to get food. I did, and when he came back, I left. He gave me a salutation goodbye. For breakfast, I had grits and coffee.

I saw a table full of Asians. I saw the black man who wears a nice sweater from the shelter but I thought that he was staff. He might be a resident on the upper floors. He was sitting by Cornel West. Perhaps those men live together on the upper floors, which is why I never see them in the warming center. When I saw Cub, he asked me how I was doing and how the shelter was treating me. I told him it was great and that the shelter extended the warming center until April 30. He said, "that's what's poppin."

Breakfast was rather uneventful except for my conversations with Cub and Camo. I saw the red haired girl who went to the hospital and her group of friends. Breakfast was very full of people and there were no extra seats available so I sat on the stage in the cafeteria. I arrived late today at about a quarter after 8 a.m. This is 45 minutes or more after I usually arrive. I usually arrive right when it opens at 7:30 a.m. However, today I was making field notes in my car in the parking ramp between 7:30 a.m. and the breakfast church.

I am about to leave the parking ramp (and, stop recording field notes) but I am slightly frustrated because the gates went down right around 7 a.m. This is right when I got to the ramp. As it turns out, had I got to the ramp 10 minutes earlier I would have got free parking. Now they will charge me for a full day since it is after 7 a.m. I told Camo that I had no cash on me. That was true, but it is a weird feeling to be able to pay so much money for parking when these individuals have so little money. However, I am surprised how many of them smoke cigarettes that are usually $7 per pack. Most of them roll their own cigarettes.

Right when I was going to sleep, there was a conversation near me where one man was telling another man about the tent city that I watched on a video on the internet. The man essentially described the entire video that I watched. He talked about its location. He talked

about how the government shut it down. He mentioned the wood stove, the main tent that stayed

very warm, and he even describe the temperature precisely. The man said he built the steps to

the camp. I was surprised about how detailed his description of the camp was. He seems to be

brooding about the camp shutting down because it really was a nice place for people to go in the

summer.

<p align="center">Ethnography: Week Six</p>

It has been nine or ten days since I was last in the city as a homeless individual. On that

Sunday, there was a festival in the street and so the Main Stem closed down. There were

hundreds, if not thousands, of children and clowns. I do not know what the festival was all about

but it was warm. I went to the store and got an ice cream cone that cost over $6. Perhaps I knew

subconsciously that it was my last day conducting the embedded ethnography. I would not have

purchased an ice cream cone as a homeless individual.

Earlier in the day, I behaved like a homeless person and purchased a Faygo pop (black

cherry flavor) and some Altoids. Near the gas station, I recognized a homeless woman sleeping

on a park bench in the proximity of the farmer's market. My objective on that Sunday was to

attend the 3p meeting on the second floor of the public library.

In the city, I saw Blue the street performer. Near Starbucks, I saw Leather. As I

approached the library, I saw Sheldon but he was never inside the library. On the other side of

the library, I saw a homeless man either napping or begging. It was somebody I recognized as

homeless but not from the shelter. The other person I saw on my walk from the gas station to the

library was a single street news seller. He had a good pitch, "Get your morning news with your

morning coffee," he hollered right next to Starbucks. At the time, I thought that was a great

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strategy to be by Starbucks (a place frequented by people with disposable income) and a fantastic catchy sales pitch line.

Figure 77. Street Paper Seller (2014)

In the library, I was dumbstruck by how many homeless people were in there. It was my first time at the library. I saw an elderly black woman (homeless) at a computer station. There were about a dozen computers in a row, 6 facing 6 in two rows. They were all full when I entered. When one opened, I casually walked by as if I knew what I was doing but did not sit down. The screen said, "Use your library card or talk to an attendant" but I was not interested in doing either of those things. I saw the Lawyer (pseudonym: "Attorney") and his female companion.

I grabbed "Not about Madonna," a book about Madonna (the singer) and her roommate living in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Michigan. I knew the book would have some local

history in it, which is why I picked it up. Additionally, I grabbed the biography of the band Wilco. I wanted some cover to avoid interaction with other homeless individuals and the staff.

There were four or five homeless individuals, including Red Hat Man, sitting on some couches in a reading area. I heard the Red Hat Man say he was in prison from 2007 until 2012. He was very open about it and was not bragging or embellishing. I mean, he was not telling stories, just facts. The purpose of his conversation was to tell his companions how difficult it is to get back into public life after being in prison for 5 years. I was surprised he could be that old. He only looks about 24 years old so the infraction must have occurred in his teens. He follows the rules of the shelter very well and helps the staff. I wonder if he picked up those habits of regimen in prison.

As I walked around the library, from the third to first floor and back again, I estimated about 25 of the 50 people in the reading sections (and computers) were homeless. I was astonished. I thought to myself about times I was in public places like this and saw dirty people but never realized the ratio of almost 1:1 homeless!

I waited until about 3:20p and began to walk out because I did not see the group organizer. I was frustrated but still patient. Right as I walked out of the library, the organizer (black bald man) walked in.

I walked around inconspicuously. After 5 minutes, I walked back in. The black bald man met up with the elderly black woman and the "English Major" (pseudonym) black man. The "English Major" black man looks about 30 years old and he looks like a friend of mine, (and many others who could be) an English major in graduate school. I recognized all of them from the shelter.

I followed them at about 20 feet. When they sat down, so did I at a table nearby. I began to read and listen although I could not hear any decipherable words. After about 5 minutes, I looked up quickly from my book. They were not there. I got up, walked around, and did not see where they went. Unfortunately, this observation day would not prove to be substantive.

On the first floor, there was some type of costume party at the library. It probably coincided with the street fair. There were no homeless people around the children. The library was very segregated and it was clear (to me) who was homeless and where their territory of comfort was.

Figure 78. Difference Between My Homeless Look and Professional Appearance

Today, I decided that my embedded ethnography was most likely finished. At my paid job, my co-worker approached me laughing. "John," she said, "you look like a homeless man!" Later, we would tell that story to our boss who said, "Right, you are known around the office as dressing very dapper… dapper… and, this is much different." At that point, I felt like I did a

good job of looking the part and accomplished what I needed to. I took some pictures to show the difference between my homeless look versus my standard professional dress.

Interactions with the Homeless in a College Town

A few months after my embedded ethnography as a homeless individual, I started interacting with the homeless in a local college town where I worked. I recorded several more months of field notes to triangulate some of the data I recorded as a homeless person.

College Town: April

On a warm spring day, I walked around town and looked out for homeless individuals. I stopped at a street corner and interacted with a black female, roughly 50-years-old, who was selling the street newspaper. First, she asked me to buy and I said no. Then, she questioned whether I even knew what the street newspaper was and I said that I did. I said that I stayed at a shelter once and I was performing research on homelessness. "Oh, you're the one I need to talk to then!" she exclaimed and I replied that I needed to talk to her, too.

She started by telling me that she had a big idea for tiny houses to house the homeless. I thought that was a great idea but I began to assume that the woman did not understand what "dissertation research" really consisted of. She may have thought I was a grant funder or something to that effect.

Then, I asked her about where she came from and why she was here in this location. She provided a very vague description of being from down south... and, then Detroit. She was not lying, in my opinion, but her stories ran together and it was difficult to determine what place she was actually from or where she felt was her true home. Eventually, I decided from her stories that she was really "from" Detroit.

She said her daughter and grandbaby were in Detroit. I asked her why she did not go stay in Detroit to be closer to them. She said that one of her daughters had been shot (and, I believe killed) in Detroit so she was now very scared of the city. She said, "Every time I see someone in that neighborhood, I think it is the one that shot my daughter." Later, I learned that her daughter was still alive even after somebody shot her.

Figure 79. Beggar by Coffee Shop (2014)

This woman stayed at the shelter and sold the street news but claimed she only makes between $6 and $30 per day. I later learned that she slept rough in subsequent months. She really wanted a "card" and said that everything would be better once she got a card. "Do you know what I mean by that?" she asked. I replied thinking she meant a welfare card or food stamps. She laughed. She meant a marijuana card! She proceeded to tell me about how that would make her feel physically better. I believed her. She did not seem to be much of a crack

addict or pill user. Instead, she just appeared to want the calming effects of marijuana use and made certain references and statements to that effect. Unprompted, she gave me her phone number and told me it would be turned on in a couple days.

Figure 80. Coffee Shop Gear Pile (2014)

I walked around town and saw two men sitting on the ground holding cardboard signs. One said, "Begging sucks. Compassion doesn't." This man was someone new to me. Another man was kitty corner to a coffee shop and I have seen him regularly in that spot.

When I walked into a local coffee shop about a week prior, I saw some homeless gear near the door. When I entered today, there were four young men standing near the front door and I recognized one from the shelter last year. These men looked to range between 14 and 20 and they were all white. At least one (that I recognized) had a backpack and I seem to recall several of them wore t-shirts. Their t-shirts threw me off because it is cold today and I expect the homeless to dress in layers for warmth. I heard one boy ask for a condom and the individual I recognized said he did not have any. One of them said, "I don't have a partner right now." The conversation was strange. I tried to walk through their little group and they did not move. They were obviously in the way between the door and the counter but they did not move. My best assumption is that they simply did not have any awareness that they were an impediment.

Near the Main Stem, the regular black man was selling the street news. I declined his offer but the man next to him asked me if I remembered him. Perhaps this is a way to snag a passerby or maybe it was just his inebriated conversation starter. He was under the influence. He told me his name and said I should Google him. I found a video about him online. I asked if he would be around all summer and he said, "Are you kidding?" I told him I was a researcher doing a dissertation on homelessness. I never saw him again all summer.

Figure 81. Street Beggar (2014)

Figure 82. Street Beggar with Street Performer in Background (2014)

I have seen street performers several times on the same corner. One individual often leaves his sign and bucket out overnight, empty. He also leaves his sign and bucket in plain sight during the day on the street corner. His most recent sign said:

"TRYING TO MAKE $$ TO MAKE A RECORD ON TOP Of EVERY ThiNg ElsE I HAVE TO PAY FOR DONATIONS Of $20- GET A SPECIAL COPY THANK YOU + GOD BlESS LifE IS ShoRt & PAIN IS LONG GOD GIVES US LifE SO WE CAN HELP EACH OThER ThROUgh THE PAIN MY WifE Left ME FOR SOMEONE I ThoughT WAS MY FRIEND. MY HEART IS BROKEN. IF ThERE IS ANY WAY I CAN HelP YOU Let ME KNOW. I NEED HelP SO I NEED TO HelP OthERS ThANK YOU GOD BlESS"

I noticed that, when I enter one local coffee shop from the southeast door, there is a table sort of dominated by homeless individuals. This morning around 9a, there were two homeless individuals at the table. One had a travel mug. Previously, I saw (homeless) individuals sitting there with convenience store hotdog containers.

Today, at one table, there was a homeless woman with a cardboard sign sitting across from a woman who was reading the newspaper. The homeless woman with the sign had written the sign in the store. She borrowed markers from the staff and returned three markers to the counter when I was getting my coffee.

I have taken several pictures of the public behaviors of homeless people that I otherwise was unaware of prior to this study. Obviously, the individuals must write their signs somewhere. I have come to realize that this activity happens more openly in pubic than I was previously aware. Individuals write signs in the street or in the coffee shop. They borrow markers from coffee shop staff members. So much of their lives occur in public, the sign writing is no different.

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Figure 83. Writing a Sign in the Street (2015)

When I stayed at the shelter, I never recall seeing a person write a sign or carry a sign into the shelter. This aligns with what the shelter workers told me – the majority of beggars are not institutionalized homeless people.

Figure 84. Begging with Belongings Nearby (2014)

I have come to refer to the outside storage spaces used by the homeless as "public lockers" because they have to keep their stuff in open sight much of the time. Bags in the coffee shop corners, bikes with black trash bags full of sundries, backpacks on the tops of electrical boxes along the sidewalk, and crates and signs tucked neatly into corner alleyway crevasses are some of the many creative ways I have seen the homeless establish "public lockers" to store their items. It is generally easy to tell who is and is not homeless by the amount of excess baggage or layered clothing they have. Rolled sleeping bags are an obvious indicator.

College Town: May

On my walk for the morning coffee (845a), my coworker and I passed by a man selling the street newspaper in front of a fast casual restaurant on a busy street corner. He asked if I would like to buy a paper and I said I would today after I got my coffee, on my return back to the

office. He did not seem to pursue the conversation and somewhat dismissed me. Perhaps he gets that often with no follow through.

Figure 85. Walking Bike with Belongings; Talking to Friend (2014)

On my return back from getting coffee, the man was making one transactional sale about 20 feet before I reached him. Then, he asked me if I wanted to buy a paper and I held out a dollar and said yes, that I had my change from getting coffee and was ready to buy. He replied, "Oh, I would have sold you one for 20 cents." I asked him if this was his regular spot and he said yes, but we also talked about how he varies up his location from there, by a convenience store nearby, and down by the theater district. I asked if there was any rhyme or reason to the location and he did not have an in-depth rationale, just that he went where there was more foot traffic. I pushed, "Because this is in front of (the restaurant)?" "No, just there's a lot of foot traffic." My coworker said there probably was a lot of foot traffic because of the nearby parking

structure and it was a pathway to workplaces (this was right before 9a). His name was Billy the Kid (pseudonym). I asked him. Then, he repeated, "My name is (Billy the Kid) and this paper is to support the homeless."

I asked him how much money he made per day then I rephrased it to ask how many he sold in a regular day and he said about $10 or $15. This is surprisingly low but lines up with what another subject said a few weeks back. I hope that I will interact with him later in the summer (I would but only in passing). He was a black man, maybe in his 30s, with a tattoo on the right side of his neck.

Figure 86. Holiday Street Begging (2014)

College Town: June

Today is Thursday. I spoke to one of my subjects yesterday for the first time in about a month. She was outside the coffee shop and selling papers. She had a baby in a stroller with

her. I did not realize it was she at first because that was not her normal location (I was heading to her normal location). Also, a white male approximately 30-years-old asked me if I wanted to buy a paper. "It's a donation for her and the baby," he said pointing to the strolling and the woman next to it. "I know what it's for," was my casual reply but then I looked at who "she" was and it was my subject so I greeted her and we talked a little bit.

She told me that her daughter "stroked out" from being shot. I was somewhat surprised to hear that because I thought somebody murdered her daughter. However, she explained that her daughter was in Detroit and this was her grandchild in the stroller. The white male was never identified as the father or having any other type of relationship. He wore a badge to sell papers. The baby was roughly 1-year-old and ate some type of chips or cheese (orange) crackers with crumbs covering the front of him. I assumed it was a "him" (male) because of the cornrows in the hair. The baby was black but possibly mixed race.

My subject told me that she would return the next day (Thursday) and I told her I would look for her. She mentioned that she would be at her normal spot but for a male news seller that infringed on her territory. She was very upset about this infringement. She said, "I don't get down like that" and other negative phrases about the situation. I bought a $1 paper from the white male and told them all I planned to meet up the next day.

Figure 87. Street Beggar on Bench (2014)

Today (Thursday), it was nice to see my subject at her regular corner. She was sitting down, somewhat halfway laying down, on the steps of her regular spot. She was selling papers. I approached her holding out my paper from yesterday that I purchased - this is my new trick to avoid constant pestering to buy papers. She asked, "Where'd you get that? From me yesterday?" and I confirmed, yes. "That's nice to see the support and get the advertisement from you young people; that helps." We talked a little bit about how the public needs to know that this is no fraud. Before my study, (I told her this) I thought the paper sales were a fraud and many people I have talked to believe the same. "It's not a scam," she said emphatically. "Yeah, I know. But, many people probably don't know..." Our conversation tailed off into other subjects while my

subject continued to holler at passersby to buy papers. Nobody bought a paper while I was at the corner for roughly 15 minutes.

After a few minutes, her white male friend arrived on the corner with the baby in the stroller. He had a full pizza and I came to realize it was from the nearby convenience store because of the logo on the box. He offered me a piece and called me "sir." At various times, when the male was and was not in close proximity, my subject told me details about how she hated Detroit and the person who shot her daughter.

I told my subject that I was reading a book about these same things. I told her it was the book "On the Run" by Alice Goffman. My subject asked me if it was like what I was doing and I said, yes, it was a research paper. She looked confused and I do not think she completely understands what I mean when I say I am "doing research." This stems from our initial conversation. When I said "dissertation" it seemed like she thought I meant "business plan" or something. Anyway, I asked if she read and she said that she was currently reading "Tent City" but did not know whom the author was. A quick search shows that there is a book "Tent City Urbanism" by an author who spent time at a tent city in Michigan. I assume she meant that book.

She told me that she had been staying in a tent for over a month and had moved at least five times. "In a month?" Yes. I asked if she was constantly worried about displacement but she did not reply. I asked where her tent was and she cut me off, saying "I can't tell you." I responded, "Yeah, but the general area?" Again, cutting me off with "I can't tell you." It was a very curt, quick response. This rather set me back and I began to feel like this individual was not as comfortable with me as she once was. I believe, based on the stories of her daughter that she

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is beginning to feel stressed out and worry more about the future of her and her daughter for a variety of reasons including separation.

Elsewhere in the city, I saw a white male news seller by the other coffee shop. He is a popular and friendly well-known news seller. I saw a black male with a guitar case by the post office. I have a photo of this man playing his guitar in the winter while wearing a long brown fur coat. I wanted to ask him if he makes more money selling the paper or playing guitar. This is something I also want to ask Blue (although he does not sell papers). Blue was again sitting outside the drug store reading a magazine style newspaper and drinking a two liter of Faygo cola. I saw a man who frequents the nearby coffee shop sitting on a bench and realized that I have a photo of him from the winter, too. His sign is the same and refers to "compassion" and "homeless." The same limping crippled man approached me with "Excuse me sir, can you... (inaudible)… dollar (or eighty cents)." He walks the same path every time.

There was a concert in the park and I saw what I believed to be about a dozen homeless individuals congregating in clustered groups of about 3 to 6. One of my subjects said the concert did not increase nor decrease her sales although she did not seem very interested in many of my questions like that. There were some men playing chess in the park and I thought I might talk to them in the future.

What I noticed today is the repetition of behavior in many people - on the same benches, in the same locations, talking with the same social networks nearby. Differences in daily routines seem to be minimal. Many of the homeless individuals that I saw were either smoking idly by themselves or talking in small groups.

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The next week at 1030a, my coworker and I made our regular walk to the coffee shop. We would see one subject smoking on the corner, on his cell phone in the coffee shop, and drinking a coffee shop water with potentially a second coffee drink that might have been his on the table next to his spot. We saw Blue's station of crate and plastic jug but no Blue. The unique field note follows.

At the corner of the drug store where Blue plays, there are about 3 cast iron patio table sets where Blue sometimes sits reading and drinking Faygo cola. He was not there today but about 3 other black males were and they have been there before. Today, there was a new white male, maybe 30 years old, wearing ratty blue jeans. He aggressively talked to the person walking in front of us and I assumed he was soliciting. He was.

I purposely made eye contact with the man. He may not have approached us; I think that was because he was walking away toward the tables after having solicited the previous pedestrian, perhaps taking a moment to pause and rest. When I made eye contact, he approached us quickly. "Excuse me; I need $11 to get a prescription. Can you give me $11 to get my prescription? I'll go right inside with you (points to the drug store)." He was extremely aggressive. "I'm sorry, no," I replied and he pursued once more with an "Are you sure?" or something. The encounter upset me a little because of the potential for him lying and giving other "real" beggars a bad name/reputation. These were the conversation points that my coworker and I had during our coffee walk. Toward the end of our (coworker and my) conversation, I rationalized that there are plenty of other ways to get $11 even if completely destitute (e.g. buy some food with Bridge Card, sell it). As we walked back toward our office, the same man emerged from the convenience store carrying two drinks (looked like iced tea) and approximately 3 donuts. He clearly had overcome his extreme need for $11. This upset me. I

did not see this man again all summer. There are some temporary beggars in the city who offset the regular homeless beggars. These temporary beggars contribute to the perceived nuisance.

I talked to one of my subjects on the street. She told me that the local shelter kicked her out (where I did my fieldwork) after having only spent a single night there in the upstairs part. Now, she sleeps in her car and couch surfs. She is working to get more services for the homeless based on 3 S's: shower, storage, and sleep. These are the three aspects of housing that she believes the homeless need.

I questioned her on the last part. I pointed out, to my coworker, that the subject did not include food as one of those necessities. I asked the subject if this was accurate, that the homeless are well fed. The subject disagreed. I explained some options: Sunday breakfast church including a carry home bag, pizza in the park, and shelter meals. I purposely did not mention Bridge Card. The subject reminded me that she was kicked out of the shelter and that emphasized her point. If someone cannot attend the shelter meals, that is a significant reduction in services received. She also pointed out that the breakfast church and pizza were only occasional meals, not every day. Those are nice, she said, but it is not sustainable for a person to rely on those services.

We talked for a while, maybe five minutes, and I told the subject that I would email her. I hope we reconnect soon. I told her that I knew two other street paper sellers. The subject said that one of them, the female, was getting housing soon. This made me happy.

We met a new female subject today on our walk to and from getting coffee ("we" includes my coworker and me; my coworker joins me on my walks through the Main Stem). The new subject was selling papers outside the local coffee shop. My coworker had seen her

before and thought she had a learning disability but it is more likely it was a language barrier. Before I start with my notes on the new subject, I will point out that I saw a few males carrying large camping gear bags (dirty) on the walk. One walked with another man and they appeared to be Hispanic, perhaps migrant workers. The other was a single white male.

This new subject explained that she was from a northwest coastal state and one semester short of graduating with a college degree. My coworker asked her many questions. The subject's sister is a dentist out of state. Her brother works "a few blocks away" from the coffee shop in an office. She said that she stayed on a nearby main street. There are many services for the homeless on that street and it is likely that she stays at the Salvation Army. She said that she was in this city to "save money" by selling papers. I asked her why she chose selling papers over anything else for work and she replied "It was the first thing" presented to her.

The subject asked what we did and we said we worked for the dental school. I previously told her I was doing research. She was quick to point out that research on homelessness and dental do not mix. She was perceptive! I explained that I was working on a study about smiles and had emailed the newspaper publisher in hopes to use photographs. The subject smiled a lot. She was very bubbly and friendly. I hope to meet with her again and talk more about her experiences.

After I mentioned that there was also a street paper in Seattle, she acknowledged that the national street paper conference was coming up. She expressed disappointment that she would not be able to go to "see friends" there on the west coast.

My coworker and I walked to the coffee shop on another day and I saw two old gray haired men sitting on the bench outside the drug store. They might have been reading books,

phones, or something. They sat at opposite ends of the bench, i.e. they were not talking to each other. Blue was not out this morning. We proceeded to the coffee shop where we saw two of the homeless men who were there 9 out of 10 times, usually in the same spots.

Before entering the coffees shop, we spoke to a familiar subject on the corner who was selling papers. She tried to sell us a paper and I said, "Hey, I sent you an email," to jog her memory. She would later explain that she has a bad memory and is bad with names. She also called herself the "Mother Hen" for many in the town. Perhaps she encounters too many people to remember them individually. She recommended I watch the movie "Stone Pillow" with Lucille Ball from 1985. Looking at the movie, I was surprised that she believed it was still an accurate portrayal of the homeless experience. I would have assumed it was caricaturized. She pulled out her cell phone, which must include a data plan, and ensured that I was in her contacts. I sent her a test email and it went through. She encouraged me to read her blog. She has a robust web presence.

We talked sporadically about her experiences. She is frustrated at the lack of support offered to homeless people. Her frustration takes two forms: the shelter and the church. I asked her if she thought the shelter was low on cash, resulting in fewer services, or if she thought the individuals who ran the shelter were at fault. She was clear that she felt the administrators were at fault. She mentioned, "They treat it like a 9 to 5 job" and touched on other components of bureaucracy. Her complaints of the church were similar. She said that the church "runs like a business" now and has gotten away from their true mission to serve the poor. "You call the church, it's 'press one for pastor, press 2 to tithe,' it's a business now."

She described a historical decline in local services for the homeless. She referenced the YMCA. She said that the YMCA once had about 100 beds to house "transitional" individuals. She admitted that some amount of those beds transferred to the shelter where I did my fieldwork. I did some research on the YMCA stories she told and she was correct. I do not include those histories here in order to generalize the location. She and I continued our small talk and we saw another news seller approach. This was the sweet, smiling news seller. I greeted her by name and she remembered my name and said it aloud. She spoke to the other seller about something

The subject with a web presence posted to her blog about the legislature's new law to penalize truants and their families by holding back welfare benefits. She said that she needed to go to the library (now opened; had been closed for a while due to construction) to "take care of some business" (she meant blogging). She mentioned that she probably did not see my initial emails because of a high quantity of spam that she filters. She said that she tries to "meet quota" daily selling papers. She walked away and I proceeded to get coffee from the cafe.

Last week, I did my normal walk but saw very few (if any) recognizable homeless individuals on my route so I thought something was awry. I did see a few (maybe three) grey haired men on the bench outside the drug store. I walked all the way to the shelter to see if maybe it was lunchtime or something. There were about two grey haired men on the smoking porch at the shelter. There were no bags on the grassy side alley. Nothing was particularly happening at the time so I walked toward the Main Stem where I had seen a news seller. I introduced myself as a researcher. The man, he said his name, did not speak much. I knew he was cognizant because I told him I already bought a paper this month and asked when the next paper came out. He quickly said "The first of the month." That was pretty much the extent of our conversation and I told him we might see each other later. He had teeth missing.

I met another news seller by the farmers' market. At first, I explained to her that I was a researcher and she wanted none of me. "I don't do that," she explained. "If you want their stories, then read them in the paper," she continued, referring to the latest edition of the street paper that is full of short bios. I told her that was a common misperception, that many people thought I was interested in background stories, but that I was truly only interested in actual day-to-day experiences. After initially telling me she did not want to talk, she proceeded to talk for about thirty minutes or more.

We talked about many things but several stuck out. She is not pleased with the shelter. She has a physical handicap preventing her from moving her arm (although she showed me that she could move it). She has been selling papers for 4 years. She is displeased with sales during the Art Fair and so she resorts to panhandling during that time if it means an increase in income. She has talked to Blue and "his wife or girlfriend; I guess he calls her his wife;" She said that the wife "makes more money than he does" begging versus playing guitar. She thinks that many homeless individuals fake mental illness to get a check.

I walked back to work, passing the federal building where I encountered another seller, whose bio is in the paper. We had a great talk. I also told her that I was more interested in the day-to-day than her bio. She told me about compounding troubles she had ranging from a flat tire (she has/had a minivan) to some legal troubles. I empathized and replied that I understand how the homeless cannot even drink in their "homes" because that is drunk driving. She told me she was driving "that man, right there" (pointed to passerby black male) around and he caused her to get into some legal trouble. He had shoplifted from a nearby convenience store. When police pulled her over, she had an outstanding warrant (from something I recall was relatively

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frivolous). Then, she was in jail for a bit. When she got out, her minivan had a flat tire and/or somebody towed it. All of these things compounded into an unfortunate situation for her.

I turned around and started walking back toward the park. One of my female subjects saw me and stopped to talk. She was pushing the baby in the stroller. We had a lengthy conversation, maybe 5 to 10 minutes, and these were some of the highlights: She just got 7 teeth pulled; She was going to be featured in an upcoming newspaper; She mentioned concern for her daughter.

I told her that I worked for the dental school and she spouted off some opinions on pediatric dentistry. "Do you know what hugs are?" she asked. I did not. I thought that maybe she was referring to diapers. "Go down to any liquor store and look for hugs." It struck me that she was talking about very inexpensive sugary drinks; I knew of them but did not know the name. "They are fifty cents. Take one to work with you. Give everybody a teaspoon of it. They will all get sick." She was adamant that "Hugs" were full of acid.

She proceeded to tell me of her stomach maladies and various ways that acid negatively affects her health. She listed many foods including fruit. The acidity of fruit is a turn off for her and may prevent her from pursuing a good healthy diet. She said that the acids are bad for her sickle cell. This was the first time she mentioned sickle cell.

I asked her why she thought children do not get pediatric dental treatment. She said that parents would not take them "until they get a full grill." She referred to her grandbaby and said that he only had minimal teeth and that many parents wait until the children have 32 teeth, a "full grill." She also told me that she is looking forward to getting dentures and that I have nice teeth.

<u>College Town: July</u>

It crossed my mind to search the public criminal offender registries for homeless individuals. It would be appropriate not to single them out as criminals but I thought it was relevant to understanding the life histories of the circumstances many faced, i.e. after release.   I searched the general corrections site for a few names – it requires a search by name – but did not find any results.

However, I searched within ½ mile of the homeless shelter for sex offenders and there were 11 of them. Nine listed the address of the shelter and two listed an address nearby. I searched for that address and discovered it was transitional subsidized rental housing.

I did not completely recognize any of the sex offenders except one. There is a possibility that I may have seen two of the other white males on the street but I am not sure. I was sad to see that but I read the infraction and it mentioned, "Victim was intoxicated" which could mean that this was a domestic situation. I expanded the search and came up with some other addresses that also combined the sex offenders with homelessness, i.e. they lived in transitional housing.

This information was initially surprising but it aligns with some of the data that I have collected in the past. Homeless individuals fall into a variety of categories but these are continually present: veterans, formerly incarcerated, former wards of state hospitals (i.e. mental institutions), mentally ill (which may encompass either or both of the previous). In prior discussions with one subject (news seller), it is possible that some of the homeless fake mental illness to get a check.

I passed a subject on the street and she asked me about my project, specifically to recall what the words were that my adviser used. I told her "the homeless experience is my thing and

'coping with the circumstances of being homeless' is my adviser's phrase." She likes his phrase quite a bit. She complained that local media do not cover homeless issues. I argued that they, in fact, have many articles on homelessness. She countered that journalists only cover one side, that of the institution. I referred to an article from a year ago regarding the closure of the emergency shelter. I mentioned how the article featured her. She said that the media generally stop short of the full story and do not follow-up as they should. "(The shelter) kicked me out on a cold winter night," she told us.

She said that she was instrumental in getting breakfast served at the shelter. I told her that I remember breakfast clearly and that it was an important part of our collective day to be able to sit and have coffee with each other and talk. "Otherwise, they just kick you out in the cold," she said. She talked about raising money to fund the breakfast which surprised me because it was always expired pastries that I assumed were donated.

Figure 88. Several Early Morning Homeless Symbols (2015)

As we passed the park, my coworker said she smelled a very strong odor of Marijuana. I

noticed one black male sweeping the sidewalk who looked like a city worker. I was somewhat

surprised that he would be working in the middle of the smoke but the homeless (and many

around the Main Stem) seem somewhat liberated when it comes to Marijuana. This might have

roots in John Sinclair and/or the local liberal approach to the issue.

Figure 89. Early Morning Homelessness; Bench (2015)
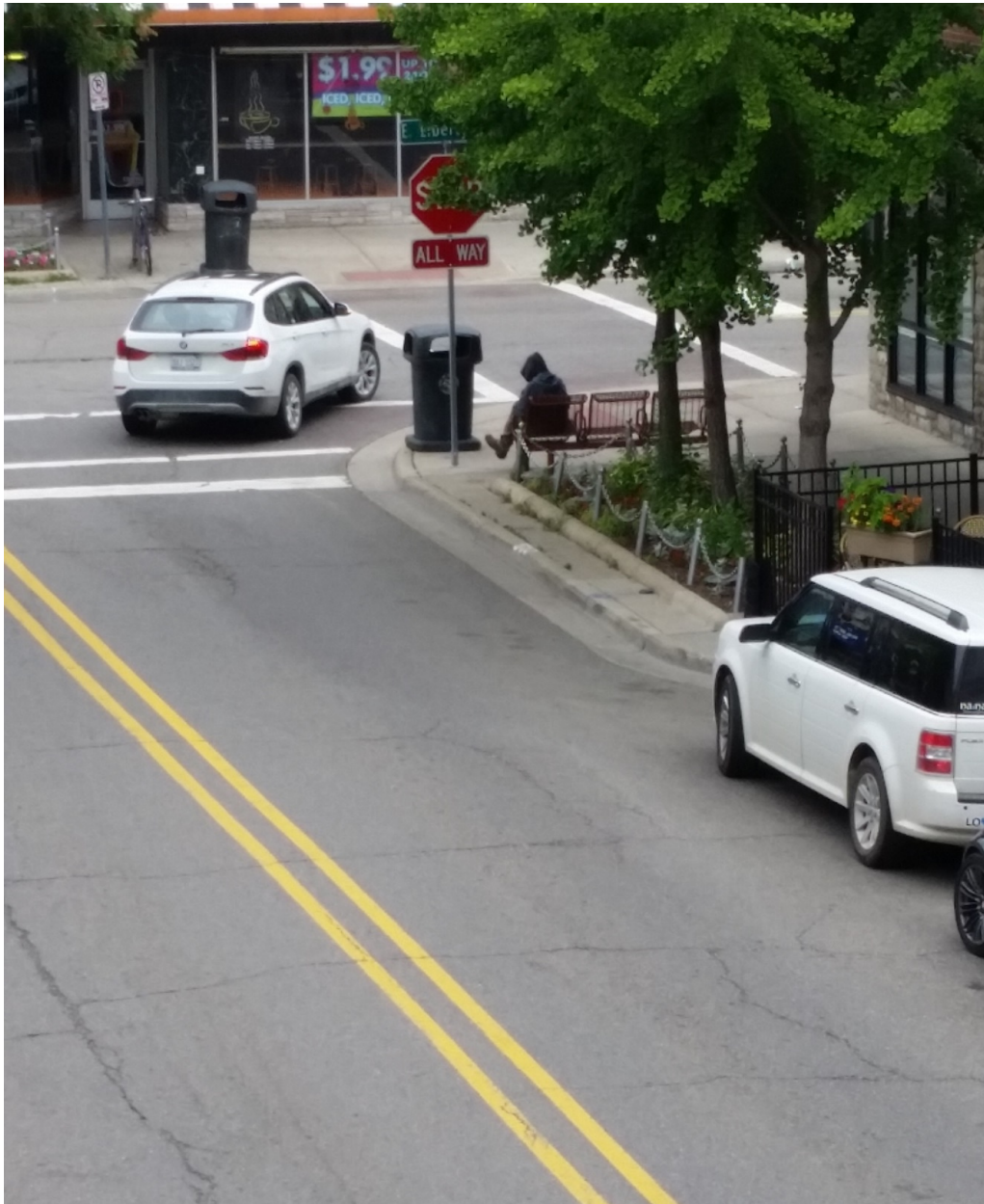
Figure 90. Early Morning Homelessness; Signs Mark Job Site (2015)

In NEED Of A FEW ANGELS. Just FouND OuT MY MOTHER IS VERY Sick. NEED to RAISE $ TO PLEASE HELP visit HER. NOT A JOKE I WOULD NEVER LIE ABOUT THIS

OFFERING MY MUSIC FOR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY

ANYTHING HELPS

I estimate that about 9 out of 10 walks into work in the morning result in some type of data collection on the homeless experience in this college town. Field notes range from seeing the bench sitter to coffee shop patrons to refuse in the street near the drug store benches. These are my most common interactions with the homeless and their possessions during my walk toward my office at about 7a. There are almost zero pedestrians during this time. I have not been able to distinguish between days of the week but Mondays seem to stick out as days when there are many belongings still in the streets. I thought that maybe it was because the weekends

are generally better for beggars since shopping increases. This is just a guess that I have not confirmed by talking with any of them. My assumption stems from the simple presence of items in the streets on Mondays. It also appears that more people beg closer to the end of the month after their welfare checks are spent. Individuals I spoke with confirmed this. Some individuals claim that welfare checks are gone within the first week of the month.

On a Monday, I walked into work at my usual 730a time. There was no bench sitter and I did not see anybody outside of the coffee shop but I did pass something unusual outside of the drug store. It was a cardboard box labeled "Free" with items inside.

Figure 91. Box of Free Items (2015)

The box contained: three pairs of old, dirty shoes; two empty beer bottles; one empty whiskey half-pint; hats and gloves; paper or tissue; and empty fruit punch bottle with straw. It was directly near a park bench and across from the drug store. Nobody was near the box except for a man in his running car who was probably waiting for a coffee shop order.

As I viewed the items, I was quite certain they belonged to a homeless person. Old and dirty shoes are very distinguishing for a homeless person. Half pints of whiskey are also distinct in size and cost (cheap). In the summer, homeless people are typically the only individuals who carry hats and gloves for the frequent cold nights. The beer stood out as perhaps not belonging to a homeless person because it is somewhat expensive craft beer.

Figure 92. Homeless Belongings Strewn in the Street; Detail (2015)

I walked a little further, about 100 feet, and came across a pile of some belongings that I believe was clearly from a homeless person. Again, nobody was in the vicinity so I took some pictures. The first thing that stuck out was the combination of the backpack, cigarettes, and reading materials. Reading material is common for many homeless people because it helps pass the long, long hours when there is nothing else to do. Cigarettes are also common, probably another way to kill time. The reading material probably belonged to a homeless person because it included books from the local library. As I have mentioned in prior field notes, the library is a

place of refuge for many homeless, especially in the winter. As I got closer, there was one

glaring piece of evidence.

Figure 93. Homeless Belongings Strewn in the Street (2015)

A paper said "Housing" at the top – the same piece of paper I got at the local shelter. In addition, there was an atlas (maps) and some opened envelopes that appeared to be bills or official correspondence (e.g. welfare) of some sort. The books were Death in Venice and Other Stories by Thomas Mann; Big Sur by Jack Kerouac; and Next Door Lived a Girl by Stefan Kiesbye. There was also nail clippers, a nail file, roll-your-own cigarette papers, an "Up Close" magazine, a bottle of perfume, a plastic bag with socks, a can of Edge shaving gel, and an empty plastic bottle of Diet Coke. My initial assessment is that somebody had a psychotic breakdown or alcohol induced breakdown and the police picked him up.

I went back out for coffee at about 10a and passed by the "Free" box and the pile of belongings again. The belongings were untouched. A homeless individual, the "Knit Cap" man, pilfered the "Free" box. I took a picture of Knit Cap going through the items. He did not take anything. The other man in that picture is likely homeless. He is big and very dirty. His eyes peer into nothingness, a very empty gaze. He did a "lean bob" back and forth on the bench while smoking a cigarette.

I took a picture of another man nearby with a backpack and a bag of clear plastic. He pushed the bag of clear plastic into the backpack. It was difficult to understand what he might be doing with all of that. I took another picture on a Monday where many beggars sit and so I was quite certain the cardboard was a sign. It was. I believe it said something like "Hard Times." My coworker reported to me that the box of "Free" stuff and the pile of a homeless individual's clothes were both still on the street on Wednesday, over 48 hours since we first saw them at 7a on Monday morning. The "Free" box was gone on Thursday. This picture shows all that was left of the strewn pile of homeless belongings.

Figure 94. Cardboard Sign Upside Down (2015)

Figure 95. Homeless Belongings Gone from Street (2015)

On my drive in this morning, I saw "The Captain" (pseudonym given a homeless veteran in a wheelchair) outside of the downtown coffee shop on the Main Stem. I would talk to him and develop a friendship later in my study.

Figure 96. Padlocked Electrical Outlet (2015)

This is a photo of the electrical socket outside the drug store. They recently (within the past week or so) put in a new locked outlet. Some homeless individuals regularly used this outlet for a radio. One day, one of their radios (not the one I saw) was smashed in this location. A week later, the outlet had a lock on it.

<div align="center">College Town: August</div>

Today is Wednesday and I met 3 new subjects on the street this morning. First, I spoke to Captain. I walked from my downtown parking spot past the coffee shop at 7a and it was very calm. There was not very much foot traffic but I saw a man whom I regularly see in a

wheelchair by the coffee shop. It was an opportune time to get a one-on-one introductory

meeting with him so I rerouted my walk and went toward him.

Captain had a plastic cup sitting on the sidewalk with a dollar bill and some coins in it.

He had a sleeping bag and a backpack in his area. He sat in a wheelchair and there were two

books laying on the sidewalk near him. At least one of them was an Asimov book that he said he

got for a dollar at the used bookstore about 100 yards away. He smoked a brown paper cigarette

(or joint) and plugged his nose to hold in the smoke at one point. We talked for about 45

minutes and I recorded 26 minutes of the discussion. Noisy trash and delivery trucks interrupted

the other time.

The first thing Captain talked with me about was his place to sleep. He explained that

one of the churches was better to sleep at because it had an overhang that was protective of the

rain. The churches are "welcoming" to the homeless. I thought that meant the churches allowed

the homeless inside to sleep but his mentioning the "overhang" informed me that he probably

slept outside.

His explanation of daily activities was very basic. He wakes up and heads toward the

coffee shop to use the bathroom first thing in the morning. He explained that the coffee shop is a

very popular place in the morning for the homeless because the bathroom is accommodating.

"When you gotta go, you gotta go," he said, which is why he sits no more than 50 feet from the

bathroom.

As we talked, he peered at several individuals and mentioned whether or not they were

homeless. I counted about 6-10 individuals during this time. One rode by on a bike. Many

homeless are around there in the morning, more than I originally thought and this became evident the longer I stayed around talking to Captain.

I asked him why the coffee shop employees were accommodating to the homeless using the bathroom. "I'm a paying customer," he responded. He had a coffee shop labeled paper cup near him full to the brim with coffee. After he told me he drank a lot, I wondered if there was vodka in the coffee mixed but that assumption went away when he pulled out a fifth and just chugged from the bottle twice. "Are there any cops nearby?" he asked. I did not answer because I was preparing to tell him not to do anything illegal while I was there (simply to adhere to IRB requirements). He reached into his bag, pulled out a plastic fifth of cheap vodka, and swigged twice. He asked me if I drank or smoked and I told him truthfully that I drank a lot but did not smoke anymore because my girlfriend cleaned me up.

A black girl who I would later meet, Sissy (pseudonym), gave the vodka to him. Captain asked her directly if he had to pay her back for the gift and she said he did not. Captain told me this was his routine. Wake up at the church, roll over to the liquor store to buy vodka, and sit in front of the coffee shop. He does this just about every day. He might go south in October for the winter "because I have money to" but he has been around this town for 3 years.

He is from the rougher suburbs of Detroit. His introduction to homelessness occurred sometime down south during what sounded like a bender culminating in him waking up from a stupor in a shelter. He did that on more than one occasion, probably in this town as well, and once heard a woman call out "Who here is a veteran?" at a shelter. This directed him to the Veterans Affairs. He showed me two cards from the VA. I asked if they helped and he said all three of them (one had a handwritten name and number on the back) were all "cool." They were

"cool" because they are helpful and get him stuff. He would be getting a new hearing aid soon. It was not clear if he would get that directly through the VA or not.

His main source of income is "a check." He claims to give away a lot of money, sort of on the street. I asked him about why he slept where he did, why he was in this town, and why he did not stay at the shelter. He stayed away from the "institution" and seemed upset about the "bureaucracy" at the shelter and that they "make you blow." These are the three most common reasons that I hear from homeless individuals who avoid the shelter system.

I asked him, if that was the case, why he chooses to live in this town as opposed to Detroit, which I admitted "is a different world." I asked because the Detroit center is less bureaucratic and allows residents to be drunk. Captain was clear in stating this college town is much safer. "You won't get stuck in an alley and (jumped/robbed/shot) rolled up on by a crack head." I acknowledged that was probably true and followed up by asking why anybody would choose to live in Detroit at all.

"That's their home." His general explanation was that people from Detroit stay in Detroit because their family is there, it is what they know, and that is their home. He made certain comments about black people and Detroit. In general, he views Detroit as a place with more black people (and, looking inside the shelter where I took field notes, that matches reality).

His main stereotypic thought was that black men seek to have many children to show their status. This, in turn, creates a population of wanton individuals that wind up in disadvantaged positions. Here are some of his comments regarding Detroit.

> *Captain: Nobody'll say… wind up in a weird place, in an alley with a gun looking*
> *for crack around here. Nobody gonna fuck with you. And, um, well they will*

mess with me. Ha ha I'm perfectly defenseless. They don't know that I would jump out of this chair and kick your ass but I really can't but I can fake it real good. I don't carry any weapons at all.

I went into the coffee shop and there was a young black male, maybe even 18 or younger, in the bathroom folding clothes. The air drier had no water drops below it so it did not appear that he had just taken a sink shower but I heard the drier turn on after I left. He folded clothes near the sink about two feet from the standup urinal where I went. Somebody was in the sit down stall, standing with the door open. A dime fell out of the black male's pocket and rolled past me into the standup stall. The black male pursued that coin after the man in the stall left without washing his hands.

The black male politely moved away from the sink prior to my needing to use it. We never made eye contact. I heard the air drier turn on (although, it may have been the women's) after I left the bathroom and the black male exited. I tried to see where he went but I lost sight of him. He did not have a bag unless it was in the stall that I did not see. He folded a t-shirt, polo, and jeans – all of which he was also wearing – so, it appeared that he had two sets of clothes.

I went outside where a hippie man stood. This white male was maybe 18 to 20-years-old and wore a Grateful Dead shirt. I have seen him before. He has a kitten on a leash attached to his khaki cargo shorts. I asked him what the cat's name was. He told me. I asked how old the cat was and he said something like 19 weeks. I asked when he got the cat and he said maybe when it was 5 weeks old and from another Midwestern state, after I asked that, too. I asked how long he had been in this town and he said about 3 weeks. I asked how long he planned to stay and he indicated, "Until I get the rest of her shots" (referring to the cat). He had a little plastic bowl of cat food and a tin of cat food. I asked where he stayed and he pointed to the backpack

and blanket and said he "plopped down wherever." I followed up with "by the church?" and he indicated, yes, "behind the (nearby) church in a little grassy area." He said he was moving to the east coast soon. I asked if the cold weather bothered him, if he planned to move south during winter. He said no, "the longer you're on the road, the less the seasons bother you." I told him about how much the cold bothers me. A passerby, older Asian woman, stopped and petted the cat. I asked him his name and he said "(Animal)… or, (other animal) … depending on where I'm at in the country."

Another morning, the first person I saw near the coffee shop at 7a was Captain in his chair outside the bathroom entrance. He had a blue bag, maybe from a local grocery store, which is not the same bag as I saw him with before. His normal plastic cup was in front of him, right on the sidewalk. I went up to him and asked if he remembered me. He looked confused, so I reminded him who I was and that jogged his memory. "You're doing the survey…" he said but I reminded him that I was doing more of a dissertation and he corrected himself and said, "Yeah, finishing the PhD." Captain later would comment that he liked this town because "intelligencia as it were." He told me that he once took a sociology class and read Tally's Corner and Black Like Me, which is the second time he has told me that. He also talked about his guitar and amp, which is the second time he told me that, too.

I asked him how he was doing. "Tomorrow is payday," he exclaimed with a smile. I asked if he stretched his money until the end of the month, how he budgeted. He said that he was a little low toward the end of the month but not much. The first of the month is a "shot in the arm," he said. I could not help but wonder if he was implying a double meaning, i.e. heroin. He is smart enough to attempt that sort of quip.

He says certain things that let me know he is sharp when he is not punch drunk. Regarding his money situation today, he said he would leave his cup out until he got $10 in it and then stop for the day. He would "get what he needed, like clothes or whatever" and then move on. My guess, from what I have seen, is that vodka is probably high on the priority list for him.

He told me he likes to read and gets books frequently at the local bookstore's 50-cent rack. The store is about 50 feet away from where he sits. I asked if he used the library and he said no. "No smoking; I can't be normal there," he explained. "And, you have to be a Michigan resident to use their computers and I'm not." This was news to me but it makes sense. Local libraries generally cater to their tax-paying constituency.

When we talked about his musicianship I asked why he did not play on the streets for money. The equipment would be too burdensome to transport, he explained. I asked him if he knew of any street performers and we discussed Blue. "Yeah, I don't remember his name, either," he said, "I used to know it. He isn't too personable." He told me about another homeless man who does magic tricks near the Main Stem and, as he told me about it, a man walked behind us and yelled "Magic (Man)! That's my neighbor; I sleep next to him" and the man kept walking. I did not see him very well to recognize him in the future but he looked about 30-years-old, white, and came from the coffee shop area.

I would later talk with the Magic Man. He hung out with Sissy and her boyfriend. All three were such nice, sweet people. The Magic Man told me about an anarchist commune in another Midwestern state and told me about riding the rails. It was fascinating. He gave details

like avoiding the automobile transport rail cars because of the temptation to start the vehicles when it was cold. He said the cars all have keys in them and enough gas to drive a few miles.

I took many field notes of that interesting conversation. Toward the end of my study, and this was essentially the final month of the fieldwork, I met some really nice people. I will genuinely miss my time in the field. I see them regularly and they ask me about my study. When I mention that I am almost finished and will give them a copy, their eyes often light up with delight.

Figure 97. Flint Dumpster Diver (2015)

Figure 98. Group of Homeless Individuals Prepare to Camp Outside Church (2015)

Figure 99. Beggars on the Street in Detroit (2015)

"Homeless Hungry Need HelP Anything you… No Drugs ALCOHOL"

*"What IS Greater Than GOD? More EVIL Than the Devil? The Rich Needs It?
The Poor Has it and if… you will Die?*

Figure 100. Please Help Spare Change (and) Food in Detroit (2015)

Figure 101. Very Hard Day for Street Performer (2015)
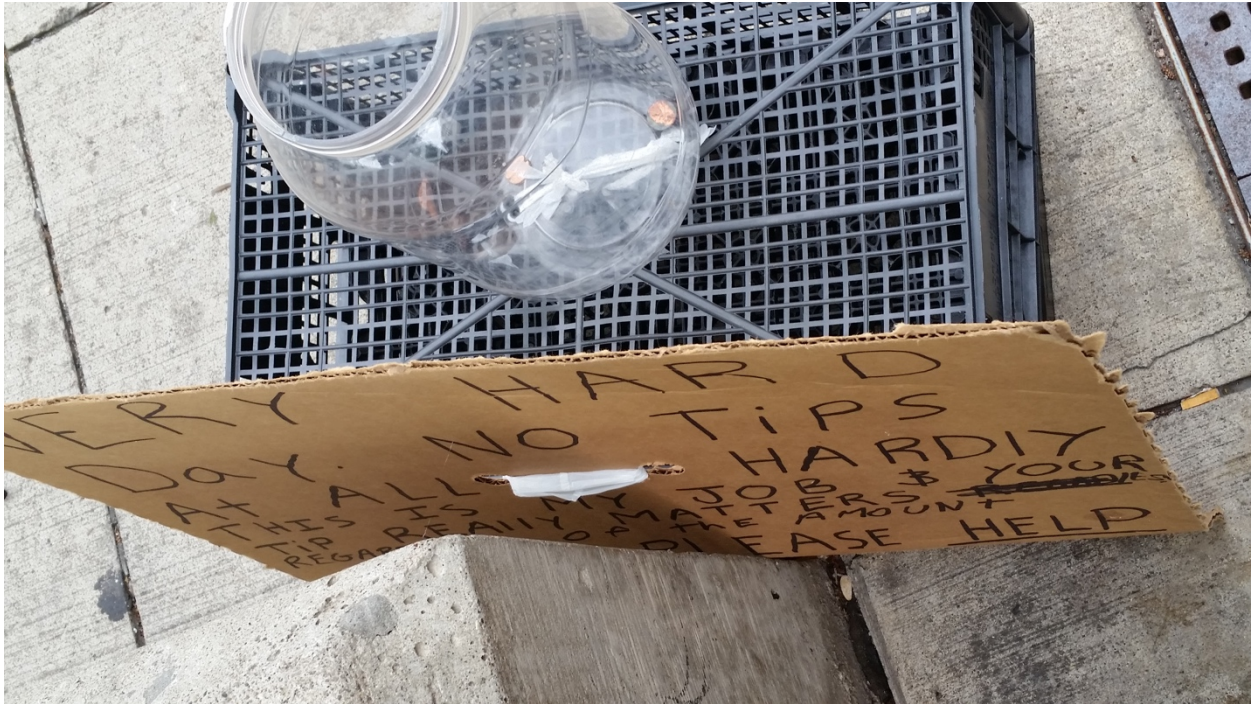
VERY HARD DaY. NO TiPS At ALL HARDlY THIS IS MY JOB & YOUR TIP
REAllY MATTERS REGARDLESS Of thE AMOUNT PLEASE HELP

Figure 102. Tired Man; Sitting with Sign (2015)

College Town: September

My final substantive conversation was with the Magic Man. Here are some of the field notes I recorded after our conversation; of note I prefaced the conversation by stating I work at the dental school and was interested in teeth now:

- Not all homeless people without teeth smoke crack; in fact, hardly any do
- When a homeless person has a tooth problem, the dentist does not give a veneer or filling; extraction is the only option (due to no insurance)
- When I ask a homeless person to talk to me about oral health, that person might have no teeth or dentures; he would not want to talk to me about a deficit that he has
- When I ask a homeless person to talk to me about oral health, he might think… "Fuck that, why the fuck would I talk to this guy about teeth?" Perhaps he feels "slighted."
- Magic Man is a "professional box car jumper" and a squatter
- He mentioned Freight Train Riders of American (FTRA)
- He has an anarchy circle mixed with a peace tattoo signifying his allegiance to a boxcar gang
- Many boxcar gangs have tattoos like a thumbs up on their face
- He is "going to grow up some day" so he does not have face ink (although his earlobes are extended)
- He has a black cherry tattoo on his chest (it also has the peace or anarchy sign) for The Black Cherry anarchist community and squatter house in Toledo
- He told me a story about being stabbed for $13
- He said you can find boxcar gangs and train routes through graffiti tags
- Trains with the Chiquita banana lady always go to Florida
- Trains carrying metal go to Pittsburgh
- Grain cars head west
- He complained about laws that penalize homeless, like $150 tickets for panhandling
- It exacerbates the existing problem
- He knows Sissy and her boyfriend
- He lives independently (not near the church) because he was tired of getting stepped on while sleeping and waking up with his stuff stolen
- He says he does not like riding automotive train cars because:
  o They are see-through
  o There is a temptation to get in the car which leads to a felony; each car has the keys in it and a gallon of gas
- I gave him my card and said we should do lunch some time; He said he might call me
- I asked if he would be around for weeks or months; he hesitated at "months" and said he would be around for weeks

I was happy to get the chance to speak with him. He piqued my interest in modern

hoboes, boxcar jumpers, and squatters like him. Maybe I can do more research on that

population for a future project. Coincidentally, my final field note involved the rails. I was in

Lansing and following a tip that a man lived in an abandoned boxcar in the middle of the city.

My source gave me clear instructions on how to get to the boxcar. I spotted it from an overpass.

I parked about 100 yards away and walked through some heavy brush to gain access to

the tracks. There was one cargo train stopped on the tracks but there was no train traffic. This

was neither a rail yard nor a depot. The only thing blocking me from getting to the abandoned

single boxcar was this long stationary train. I approached the tracks hesitantly because I did not

want to touch the train even though it looked like it was stationary for years. However, I

remembered that my study was almost over and this was my last chance to meet a real hobo. I

stepped onto the tracks and approached the train to jump over it and toward the boxcar with the

man inside. "Hey!" Immediately, a pickup truck spun its tires on the track about 100 yards

away and started driving directly toward me. I put my hands up and stood still. Two men got

out of the truck and told me to leave immediately or face a $500 fine for "trespassing." They

said I was on government property and committing a crime. This was news to me. I apologized

and told them I would leave immediately.

It was a fitting end to my fieldwork having federal agents chase me off and threaten me

with a fine. It reminded me that structural forces push the homeless into institutions. When they

seek shelter in an abandoned house, police fine and arrest them. When they seek care in a

psychiatric hospital, the governor shuts it down. When they beg for money on the side of the

road, the township board makes it a crime. When a social scientist attempts to talk to a modern

day hobo in his home… I was not able due to threat of sanctions.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Sensitizing Themes

Throughout this study, I focus on sensitizing concepts and I extract themes using various sociological methods. Most of the data is ethnographic and visual. I did not convey hypotheses or test certain assumptions. Instead, I use sensitizing concepts to guide my research. Narratives are especially helpful when researching marginalized groups like the mentally ill, disadvantaged families, and the working poor. Homeless individuals are extremely poor. Government officials overgeneralize the homeless experience and improperly categorize the homeless in reports. I argue that quantitative analysis does little to address the problem of homelessness in America. Therefore, I include a substantive story line narrative in this manuscript.

I looked at several aspects that contribute to the homeless identity. First, I noticed structural forces that put the individual in situations that necessitate detrimental coping strategies. Second, I examined how the public generally perceives those coping strategies. Third, I recorded interactions that shaped the identities of certain individuals. I included those who were and were not "unhoused" but whom the public labels "homeless." Finally, I developed a better understanding as to the variability of the homeless experience. This final component is the most valuable result of my research and an emergent theme that I did not expect.

I conducted research at three main locations: (i) a heterogeneous city; (ii) Detroit Skid Row; and (iii) a college town. The heterogeneous city has a combination of manufacturing, government, and scholars in its populace. These locations provided a spectrum of size and environment types. I chose these venues because they are structurally different, e.g. historically,

economically, geographically, etc. I wanted to see if the vast structural differences would produce distinct outcomes for the homeless in each community.

Key Findings

Structural forces were the strongest determinant of the homeless experience. At the same time, I only came to notice these structural forces because I watched for them. This supports my claim that homelessness is misunderstood. It is a social problem with visible outcomes and hidden causes. Structural forces varied by location but were omnipresent, often manifesting as cultural behaviors. For example, the college town offers a relatively decent county shelter where many individuals seek refuge. The college town also has a street paper that employs many impoverished individuals and a bustling shopping district where individuals can panhandle and sleep. These options divide the homeless into two categories, institutionalized and quasi-autonomous. There are homeless who comply with authority and those who avoid it.

Regular people tend to view both of these identities as deviant. The shelter dwellers are "needy" and the panhandlers are a "nuisance" in the college town. Even when panhandlers are housed or soon-to-be-housed, people often perceive otherwise. Commoners and legislators group the homeless into a single category, failing to consider the harsh conditions and variability of the homeless experience.

Many homeless individuals are incredibly resilient. I first encountered the homeless can collector who strove to beautify a college campus while accumulating a meager income. He lived either in a tent or at the local mission, interacting with tailgaters to sustain an informal micro-economy. One of his coping strategies, can collecting, was not deviant but his tent dwelling was. He lived in a tent to maintain some sense of autonomy but congregated with other

deviants there, contributing to a grouped identity of "tent city" inhabitants. Since many

individuals in tent city are alcoholics or drug addicts, people ascribe the "bum" label to even the

most resilient can collector.

Many homeless individuals are resilient victims of both macro and micro-atrocities.

Detroit urban renewal and its economic downturn displaced many Skid Row communities but

the scale of desolation affected families and individuals. I spoke with women whose husbands

raped them or whose family members were assaulted to the point of dismemberment. Their

place of refuge did not even have cots to sleep on. Sometimes, they chose between harsh

conditions and death. These individuals live in much different circumstances than the

unemployed hobo of the 1950s. However, the government counts them all the same.

The structural forces that create harsh circumstances are as strong as the forces that keep

people down and out. My field notes rarely mention rehabilitation. Yet, many homeless

individuals deal with issues that require some form of counseling services. Drug addiction,

mental illness, and physical disabilities are prevalent among the homeless but these issues are not

addressed until after the need for housing is met first. I argue this is due in large part to

"homelessness" being the primary identifiable label ascribed to these individuals.

I recorded many instances where homeless individuals were metaphorically kicked while

down, both structurally and culturally. I exhibit one of the most glaring examples of a structural

change to one established routine in Image 80. This man, and several other "homeless" people,

rested on these benches in a college town. One day, the benches were gone. I present another

example of hidden inequality in Image 47. That photograph shows how the city plows snow

pathways for pedestrians but does not clear a path to the benches where many homeless

individuals sit to rest. Culturally, passersby frequently ignore the ambitious street newspaper

sellers and panhandlers alike. Passersby perceive these resilient behaviors and survival strategies

as a nuisance.

Figure 103. The Bench (2015)

I must emphasize that the man in Image 80 may or may not be homeless. This is a theme

throughout my research. There are several indications he sleeps rough: excessive belongings,

layered clothing, nomadic behavior, avoidance of institutional support, etc. However, this is a

socially constructed identity based on an assortment of elements. He may be housed (or, soon-

to-be-housed) but passersby view him as another homeless bum. Local residents assume many

individuals who congregate in the local city park are homeless when, in fact, those individuals

have housing.

I also stress the variability of homeless experiences both regionally and locally. In this

study, I explain how drastically different the Detroit Skid Row experience is from the college

town experience. Even within the college town and heterogeneous city, there are different types

of homeless individuals like shelter dwellers, tent cities, and many others. Some homeless

individuals work, others are disabled, but structural forces consistently marginalize all. Although coping strategies vary by location and individual, almost are all viewed as deviant. Grouping the "homeless" into a single class of people does little to address root causes of marginalization and extreme poverty.

<div align="center">Relevance of the Study</div>

The purpose of this research is to support an argument that citizens, government officials, and academics must redefine "homelessness." Homelessness is a socially constructed identity that changed over time but still contains many outdated ascriptions. Researchers must expose the structural forces (e.g. capitalism and Fordism/industrialism) that produce unfortunate circumstances for millions of Americans living below the poverty level. People need to recognize that homeless individuals navigate extremely difficult and oppressive conditions. Government officials should stop criminalizing these coping strategies. Lack of knowledge exacerbates the problem of extreme poverty.

I conducted a survey of 96 college students as a part of this study (Appendix B). Since this study is a robust ethnography, I did not mention the survey results in the preceding content. The survey results did not line up with much of the specific content in the ethnography and I did not perform any statistical analysis on the responses. However, the survey results seem to confirm much of what I argue throughout this manuscript. Perceptions often do not match reality.

I presented a picture of a homeless man on the survey. Only 4.2% of respondents thought he was definitely homeless. I know he was homeless because I slept on the same floor with him in the shelter. I presented pictures in the survey that I took in Ann Arbor. Yet, respondents

guessed "Ann Arbor" the least when asked where the pictures were taken. Answers also indicated a separate reality for respondents in that none of them ever slept on a cafeteria floor. In other words, 0% of respondents ever slept in conditions like my subjects and I did during this study. More research is needed to determine how disparate the public perception of homelessness is from the reality.

The primary consequence of rising inequality in Michigan is extreme marginalization of impoverished individuals. The secondary consequence of this structural marginalization is cultural stigmatization of oppressed people. This is the true "cycle of homelessness." Individuals with the fewest life chances are repeatedly constrained by structural and cultural forces. Even if those individuals receive assistance, their mental illness or disability sometimes pushes them back into homelessness. Structurally, certain necessary public assistance is decreasing (e.g. mental health funding) even though the federal government reports that financial support is increasing (Table 1). Culturally, individuals continue to view the homeless as a monolithic nuisance and elect officials who criminalize homelessness. Many of the consequences perpetuate the problem; it is a cyclical problem.

I present a set of sensitizing themes based on extensive fieldwork. First, structural forces create undesirable situations that extremely poor people navigate. Some of their coping mechanisms (e.g. begging, collecting cans) are grouped together into a single "homeless" behavioral identity even though some of them are housed. Second, their coping strategies are perceived to be deviant and sometimes even criminalized. This is a problematic cycle whereby individuals are constrained by certain structures (e.g. institutions, depleted economies) that limit any amount of upward mobility. Third, extremely poor individuals are grouped into a "homeless" category (or, subcategories; See Table 2). This oversimplification perpetuates

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stereotypic perceptions of an already stigmatized collection of individuals. Finally, I convey the emergent theme of homeless variability. There are as many different homeless identities as there are homeless people in America. There is no magic pill (i.e. federal program) to cure the epidemic.

<p style="text-align:center">Discussion and Implications</p>

The federal government continues to lump the "homeless" into a single point-in-time count of 30 categorical types. The current "Opening Doors" effort aims to prevent and end the problem with a current focus on chronic homelessness. I suggest that this approach, from the outset, addresses a symptom of the problem rather than the root cause. Many programs aim to reduce the outcomes of stratification like detrimental circumstances, decreased upward mobility, and various components of the homeless experience. Such programs offer housing, job training, and an assortment of food, clothing, etc. I argue strongly that these approaches will not eliminate the problem of homelessness in America.

Figure 104. Cycle of Homeless Identity

Counting the homeless is a bureaucratic way to manage the problem. I convey a process that forms the public understanding of homelessness in Figure 28. Counting the homeless occurs at the end of the process after structural forces produce circumstances of extreme poverty. The homeless count is a superficial way to quantify a qualitative issue. Homelessness is a qualitative problem because each individual experience is different. The homeless experience in Detroit, for example, is starkly different from the homeless experience elsewhere. Legislators, commoners, and scholars should recognize this variability.

I suggest that all parties redefine "homelessness." It is not a monolithic problem. In fact, the condition is often ascribed to individuals with housing. This ascription leads to a variety of false assumptions and faulty public knowledge. Many of those assumptions involve victim blaming and stigmatization that compounds the problem.

Contribution to the Discipline

Sociologists should continue to emphasize the structural forces that produce extreme poverty and examine marginalization more qualitatively. I deconstructed the homeless identity in this study by starting with general knowledge of a single phenomenon (can collecting) and produced grounded theory research on the circumstances of extreme poverty. My research encompassed three major sociological components: identity construction, coping behavior, and structural forces that produce both of those outcomes. My choice to study homelessness emerged from my grounded theory study of the can collecting phenomenon. I recommend other scholars begin studies with a phenomenon (outcome) and deconstruct it to form new knowledge.

This study is essentially phenomenological but contributes to both applied and theoretical sociology. I encourage other scholars to consider qualitative approaches when studying various

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economic, even macroeconomic, issues. Financial appropriations that address social problems

are not pragmatic when those approaches fail to address the root cause of the issue. Quantitative

sociologists must recognize their laboratory is incubated. More fieldwork is needed to fully

grasp most social problems.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discussion of positivism (Comte, 1896), social

facts (Durkheim, 1895), and verstehen or "mutual understanding" (Weber). Comte (1988:20)

says, "Interior observation gives birth to almost as many (psychological) theories as there are

observers" and I agree with him. Durkheim (1895:37) suggests, "It is only after we have traced

the currents back to their source that we will know from whence they spring" and I agree with

him. When discussing ethnic groups, Weber (1922:390) emphasized the importance of

examining "the perceptible differences in the conduct of everyday life; of special importance are

precisely those items which may otherwise seem to be of small social relevance." Weber

emphasized the importance of evidence to verify accuracy of insight. He distinguished between

rational and empathic understanding. I suggest that my distinction between quantitative and

qualitative examinations of homelessness is similar.

I make no deep theoretical claims in this manuscript. However, that itself is antagonistic

toward theoretical claims. It is important that scholars consider grounded theory as a valid, if not

preferable, social scientific method. Grounded theory aligns with the perspectives of many great

sociological thinkers. I am not sure when the discipline shifted toward emphasizing statistical

models as preferable heuristics.

I present a very pragmatic, empathic study in this manuscript but I see no evidence that

my study is irrational. I suggest that Durkheim oversimplified "rationality" by exclusively

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affixing it into logical and mathematical endeavors. I preface my fieldwork with statistical background regarding a social fact. Extreme poverty and stratification, both social facts, manifest as coping strategies (observable behaviors). I empirically examined extreme poverty through embedded observation and self-reflection, objective and subjective. I only came to understand the origins of such circumstances, by "tracing the currents back" to the origins of the social problem.

I urge future sociologists to take a similar activist approach to research. I share my research as much as possible both in academia and with my subjects. This is the only way to create real change. I suggest Americans make this change "post haste" rather than "post facto." Managing social problems with quantified data delays any real solution. Scholars ought to maintain the principles of the discipline, as I do in this research, by starting with empathic observation and broach the root cause of the problem afterward. This process circumvents the unethical pursuit of supporting a hypothesis to serve interests other than those of the subjects.

Epilogue

Studying a marginalized group from a privileged position is an important but paradoxical journey. I recognize my place situated between two peer groups (my social circle and subjects, respectively). I consider myself equivalently a peer to the wealthy physicians with whom I work and the impoverished individuals I study. In fact, my annual income is probably closer to the latter group. I will never fully understand either identity unless and until I join the group.

I was homeless once. My experience as a 20-something couch-surfing car-sleeper informed my newly developed understanding of the differences in homeless circumstances. My college degree, lack of physical or mental disabilities, family, and social support networks

contributed to my upward mobility, eventual housing, and economic stability. Millions of Americans have similar social capital. Millions of Americans lack such social capital. I see major problems stemming from privileged legislators representing homeless individuals.

Homelessness is a politically charged topic. Many Americans perceive the nation to be full of opportunity and individualism. Few consider the alternative that the country is structured to produce an economically stratified citizenry and those who land above poverty are more fortuitous than skilled. In what follows, I share a few of the memorable comments that came from discussions with friends and subjects about my research.

First, I spoke with a subject and told her I was researching the different ways that homeless individuals generate income. I told her I saw beggars, can collectors, drug dealers, and prostitutes among others. She stopped me cold and cut in, "It's like this… Some people are lawyers and some people work at Starbucks. The homeless are no different. Some beg and some sell newspapers. Some use the shelter and some sleep in tents. We're no different than everybody else." Although I paraphrased the statement, the point remains. Her comment aligned with one from a close friend. "Everybody copes with circumstances, not just homeless people. I don't understand why you keep talking about coping with circumstances." This comment is just as accurate as the first. However, many or fail to realize exactly how bleak the circumstances are for those living in extreme poverty. I can only hope I shed some light on the variability of circumstances for the subjects of my study.

Second, I presented my research publicly and received a comment afterward in response to something I said in my lecture about empathy. Someone in the audience pointed out that many who read my work directly relate to homelessness in a very personal way. That comment was important to consider. The more I present my research, the more I learn about homeless

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college students and other colleagues with homeless family members. I even discovered at least one homeless student in my own classroom. The phenomenon is more prevalent than even I know.

Finally, I learned that many privileged people simply could not empathize with marginalized individuals. I remember one conversation I had with someone in particular. I explained that America has been precisely stratified for at least 50 years. The American capitalist system continues to produce proportionally divided economic classes. I told him how 20% of Americans have lived below poverty for a century (roughly estimated for the discussion). He replied, "Couldn't it just be that 20% of the population are lazy every year for the past 50 years?" I reminded him that certain racial groups are proportionally more impoverished. Nothing dissuaded him from the worldview that hard work leads to financial success.

Over the course of my research, many people asked me how to solve homelessness. Structural forces are the most powerful component of the phenomenon. Increasing awareness of the problem is a start toward resolution but not the solution. Redefining the concept of "homelessness" is helpful but not comprehensive. Reducing the stigma placed upon coping strategies contributes to a reduction in perceived deviance. However, the only way to eliminate "homelessness" is to dismantle to structural forces that produce the symptoms. Those structural forces are the same forces that maintain the status quo. The nation should democratically elect leaders who represent marginalized groups. The solution to homelessness is simple – give everybody a house. "Homelessness" is not the problem.

Misunderstanding homelessness is a problem. I conducted research to redefine homelessness through participating in the lived experiences of those who cope with the experiences of extreme poverty. I am not the first to take this approach. Kerouac (1960:183)

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wrote, "The woods are full of wardens." I encountered some wardens, local and federal, along my journey. Gramsci wondered if "making everything a matter of pure intellect" reduced his quality as a revolutionary (Fiori, 1970:157). I wondered the same thing so I "sympathetically participated," as Weber suggested, in order to "adequately grasp the emotional context in which the action took place" (1922:5). My approach suited the purpose.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Detailed Methodology

Phase 1 Method: Can Man on Campus

The purpose of this phase of the study is to discover the consequences of a set of social norms that regulate the way in which individuals pursue objectives. Using the data acquired, I examine whether social actions taking place during a football tailgate are a result of intellect (rational) or because of accumulated past experiences (empirical). These interactions occur when empty beverage containers are discarded by football fans and collected by an individual, commonly labeled as the "Can Man," to exchange for monetary compensation. This is a very basic conversion of cultural (or social) capital to financial capital. Goffman's theory of social constructionism will be applied to the data collected through online surveys, casual interviews, focus groups, and embedded ethnographic observation. The study will take place over the course of a single American college football season. I expect that participants will express minimal awareness of the hegemonic perpetuation of their actions, leading me to conclude that the existence of the Can Man is a result of subconsciously accumulated past experience (i.e. empirically based behavior).

During the 2013 American college football season, there were a total of seven home games on the campus under study. This created an ideal seven stage data collection framework. However, I adjusted my research schedule due to low initial survey response rate and other seasonal factors. An online survey was distributed and 9 responses were gathered. Focus groups did not occur due to investigator lack of time and resources. I planned to acquire a baseline description of my participants (sample) at both the first and final games of the season because the weather changes so dramatically between August and December, the duration period of data collection. However, I was only able to obtain minimal demographic online survey data during

weeks 2 and 3 of the season due to investigator time, resources, and general lack of response

from subjects during these weeks. I assumed that the Football Fan base will change over the

course of the season, for example, decreasing the proportion of anxious undergrad students until

the end of the season when there will likely be fewer. I assumed that this would contingently

decrease the number of overall empty cans and therefore decrease the sample size (n) of Can

Man participants. However, the purpose of gathering a baseline at these two points in time is not

to confirm the decrease in n, it is strictly to gather data for demographic purposes.

I planned to gather demographic baseline data differently for the Football Fan and Can

Man because I assume they have different interests and availability of response tools. The

Football Fan is likely to have a smart phone (continuing afterwards, access to the internet) while

the Can Man might not. Additionally, the Can Man is working on the days under study and

therefore might not be thrilled to stop earning money in order to respond to a survey. The

Football Fan probably has more discretionary time to contribute. Although, in an effort not to

infringe on either participant's time, I made both data collection methods as brief as possible.

Football Fan demographic baseline data was acquired through a "Super Quick Survey"

online. The link to the survey was distributed on the first and second football game dates by

passing out business cards. There were only seven questions, six of which specifically sought

answers to SES questions. The final question helped certify that the participant should be

included in the sample by asking to confirm attendance at the event under study.

Can Man demographic baseline data were acquired through an informal audio recorded

interview. The same questions were asked of the Can Man that are on the Super Quick Survey.

However, because the interviews were informal, the questions were not asked verbatim. I

needed the respondent to feel comfortable with me as I embedded myself in the community throughout the duration of the study. Therefore, I asked the questions very casually in an effort to gain the most accurate data. The recording device was a handheld device, e.g. an iPhone.

The subsequent weeks of the study were aimed at describing the interaction. In order to do this, video and audio recordings were generated in the public space around a football tailgate on campus. This passive observation in a public space required no consent. Consent was implied and the intent of the interview was clearly stated. There was no possible harm to the participants and the presence of the observer was not expected to alter the behavior of the participants in any significant way. In an effort to recruit participants for other parts of the study, a business card was distributed during these weeks asking individuals to contact the researcher if interested in contributing to a focus group. No participant contacted the researcher after the initial interaction.

Midway through the study, focus groups were planned to take place on the campus. These focus groups were supposed to involve participants recruited during weeks two and three. Ideally, there would have been focus groups of Football Fan and Can Man participants although it will be more difficult to recruit Can Man because the pool is smaller. There were far more individuals who make up the Football Fan population. The focus groups were meant to discuss questions revolving around the quick surveys and casual interviews. The focus groups would have been very casual and would not have a definitive set of questions nor would any question be read verbatim. This would have allowed for open discussion and more accurate data collection. The focus groups would have been audio and video taped and participants would have been required to give passive consent after a verbal consent is read. No focus group participants were recruited due to apparent lack of interest.

It was possible for me to pose as a "Can Man" myself during the study to completely embed myself within the culture but I did not due to limited time and resources. Also, I am not certain I would have gained much new knowledge and insight about the experience. This method would have involved incomplete disclosure. In other words, I would have disguised myself to be more discrete and blend in. Also, I would have recorded reactions through personal experience, an essential element of ethnography. It would not have been prudent for me to disclose my identity as such. I assume that the experience would be tiring, boring, and somewhat demeaning.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man on Campus

In this phase of the study, participants include attendees of tailgates during the college football season as well as those individuals who collect empty beverage cans for redemption of monetary value. These are generally individuals ranging from 18 to 79 years of age. All participants were over 18 years old. The total expected number of participants was n=75. The criteria for the inclusion of subjects was that they must be present in a public space during the designated time (football event Saturday during season). For surveys, focus groups, and interviews the only criteria is willingness to participate. There was no criteria for the exclusion of subjects for this phase of the study except that all participants must be at least 18 years old. For participant observation (including ethnography) and casual interviews, I used convenience sampling, i.e. whomever I came in contact with on the day of research. For focus groups and surveys, I distributed business cards with a web link.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man on Campus - Risks and Benefits for Subjects

The risks for this phase of the study were extremely minimal because I conducted research in an open, common public forum. I suppose if the Can Man spoke to me for a moment

then he risked a little bit of collection time (small amount of lost income). We could have talked about personal feelings in the focus group that may have caused participants to feel slightly embarrassed. However, these risks were quite minimal. I constantly maintained awareness of the Can Man's interest. In other words, if he had a gaze of annoyance that he was losing income (i.e. eyeing empty cans) then I was ready to cordially cut the interview short. I monitored the individuals who participated to see if anyone displayed signs of high-level embarrassment. I was ready to redirect the discussion to mitigate any undesirable feelings.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man – Reducing and Minimizing Potential Risk for Subjects (Safeguards)

There was no use of force or threats, however the sample under study (football fans) can become inebriated, i.e. drunk, through no influence of the researcher. The researcher remained sober at all times to dissuade any minor conflicts that may have arisen between participant groups. It was also possible that individuals of the Can Man sample were drunk or even had mental illness. All precautions were taken. This was a public venue with safeguards in place (e.g. police). The potential for coercion was minimal although the group was minimally vulnerable due to potentially diminished mental capacity (e.g. drunk).

Phase 1 Method: Can Man –Potential Benefits for Subjects

In this study, I examine the relationship between the privileged class (football fan) and the disadvantaged indigent. It is a subjective thought to whether bringing these groups together would be advantageous. I make no claim that my research does such a thing. The purpose of this study is to discover the consequences of a set of social norms that regulates the way in which individuals pursue objectives. I think that purpose contributes to the benefit of all parties involved.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man – Protecting Subject Privacy

All of the methods were conveyed to participants very clearly. The actions taking place in a public forum were very public (i.e. privacy not ensured). There were public interviews and public observation. None of the identities in public have any assurance of being protected. The focus group would have been videotaped. There was no assurance that the tape would be kept private. I never stated otherwise. This is a public sociological study. The only omitted identities occur with the online survey during which I did not ask for the participant identity. I did not include the online survey results in the analysis because of the low number of responses.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man – Data Storage

The online survey data was stored on Google servers. It was a Google form. Although it was on a private server, the data is secure. Google would not risk disclosing it. There are no identities attached to online survey results therefore the risk of disclosure, although extremely minimal, is not likely to be problematic. All of the other data is public and could potentially be stored in public places (e.g. video on YouTube or field notes on a public blog). Again, this is primarily a public study occurring most often in a public place. It may be stored in perpetuity. Certain sites archive internet data and therefore the length is outside of my control. Potentially, everyone on earth has access.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man – Confidentiality and Anonymity

The only identifying data is the face of the participant. However, the face of the participant exists in the public space regardless of whether or not I conduct a study. Therefore, the issue is moot. To be clear, there is no confidentiality. The only anonymous method is the online survey. All other methods and data are public.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man – Consent Procedures

All but one of the methods in this phase of the study rely on implied consent. In the majority of cases, I was in a public place and I identified myself as a researcher. If the participant continued the interaction, implied consent is assumed. This assumption was made because of the public space venue and activities normally occurring during the daily experience of the participants involved. The only scenario that involves explicit consent would have been the focus groups, during which I would have read a clearly stated consent agreement. During the ethnography and informal interviews, subjects were not required to sign a consent document. I read a consent agreement and stated that those who continue to participate were willingly providing consent. In other words, I gave them the option to leave. Much of the data were video recorded. Because of the explicitness and the confirmation on video, signed agreement is not necessary.

Phase 1 Method: Can Man – Oral Consent

For this study, I only conducted informal interviews (including audio tape), embedded ethnography (including video tape), and a quick online survey. All of these components required verbal consent that was recorded using audio or video equipment when appropriate. The study was approved for focus groups but no focus groups were ever conducted under this approved study. Therefore, I exclude the focus group consent form from this section because it is irrelevant.

Phase 2 Method: Homeless, Man. Social Norms and Order in the Shelter

This phase of the study encompasses the experience of the homeless individual. Interactions are a key component of the homeless experience. This includes interactions with other homeless individuals, passersby (e.g. when begging on the street), and institutional staff

members or volunteers. This research will analyze interactions and other experiences of the homeless individual both inside (an institution) and outside (in public). In sum, the study will provide insight as to the motivations and behaviors of homeless individuals.

Phase 2 Method: Project Description

The purpose of this study is to discover the consequences of a set of social norms that regulates the way in which individuals pursue objectives. I will examine whether social actions taking place at homeless shelters are a result of intellect (rational) or because of accumulated past experiences (empirical). These interactions will occur between homeless persons and shelter staff. Goffman's theory of social constructionism will be applied to the data collected through casual interviews and embedded ethnographic observation. I expect that participants will express minimal awareness of the hegemonic perpetuation of their actions, leading me to conclude that the existence of the Homeless Man is a result of subconsciously accumulated past experience (i.e. empirically based behavior).

Phase 2 Method: Procedures

I will conduct casual interviews and embedded ethnography at homeless shelters. This is passive observation in a public space and consent is necessary. While no consent form will be used and no signatures obtained, implied consent will be obtained for all participants. When possible, implied consent will be audio recorded. The procedure to obtain implied consent will be an introductory statement by the researcher indicating that I am a researcher and the subsequent questions are for research purposes. Initial introductory statements will be made to all participants. I will say something like, "Hello. I'm doing research as a grad student at Michigan State. Do you mind if I ask you a couple questions?" There will be no possible harm to the participants and the presence of the observer is not expected to alter the behavior of the

participants in any significant way. The questions will be geared toward finding out what the

participants think about each other and those they interact with. I will also get their

understanding and opinion of 'the system' that they are in (meaning, the shelter and homeless

support systems).

Phase 2 Method: Measures

This is a qualitative study. I will digitally record as much as possible using discrete audio

and video equipment when appropriate. By appropriate, I mean that use of a video camera will

only be used in larger settings like a lunchroom. "Video equipment" should include a still

photography camera and pictures. When put to paper, the video data become still photos. The

qualitative study uses words as data as well as gestures and other units of analysis that occur

during interactions, i.e. not numbers. Qualitative analysis will be performed using data analysis

software like Dedoose.

Phase 2 Method: Subject Population

Subjects will be homeless individuals at least 18 years old. Homeless is a vague term and

does not mean "absolute lack of residence" but could very well include out-of-work destitute

individuals who congregate at locations regularly attended by the homeless. Subjects will also

include those who interact with the homeless during this study. The total expected number of

subjects (including controls) for the entire project period is approximately 525. Throughout the

study, there was an emphasis on the embedded ethnography which relies mostly on visually

recorded data and field notes. I included the term "approximately" to define my subject count

because counting subjects is not precise within an embedded ethnography. For example, I

observe begging on a public street in the city. My subjects are the homeless individuals and

those with whom they interact. I cannot count every person on the street during a busy day.

Therefore, it is appropriate to approximate my subject counts.

Phase 2 Method: Location

The research will be conducted at homeless shelters throughout Michigan. I will conduct

research only at shelters listed on government sources, like michigan.gov and nrd.gov or similar

reputable sources.

Phase 2 Method: Sample Rationale

This number (n=525) is the expected quantity of persons whom I will encounter during a

multiple day embedded ethnography at various homeless shelters. It is a convenience sample

that is acceptable for a qualitative study of this magnitude which these research objectives.

Phase 2 Method: Criteria for Inclusion of Subjects

Whenever possible, I will ask the staff at the homeless shelter for a "lay of the land"

meaning who might be willing or unwilling to participate in the research. I will include those

individuals recommended by staff first and will try to avoid any potential unwilling participants.

The criteria is simply a convenience sample of who is at the shelter, but I will respectfully align

myself with those who are most likely to be willing participants (with the insight of staff

members).

Phase 2 Method: Criteria for Exclusion of Subjects

First, I will ask staff members if they believe any individual would be unwilling to

participate in the research. I will avoid those individuals on the staff members' direction.

Second, I will use my qualitative research training to visibly assess an individual's unwillingness

to participate. If any individual appears discouraged or unwilling, I will remove myself from the interaction as soon as possible.

Phase 2 Method: Subject Identification and Enrollment (Initial Contact)

For participant observation (including ethnography) and casual interviews, I will use convenience sampling, i.e. whomever I come in contact with on the day of research. To get to the location, I will contact the shelter administration or designee who can provide me access to the venue.

Phase 2 Method: Risks and Benefits for Subjects

The risks will be extremely minimal because I am conducting research in an open, common public forum. I suppose if the Homeless Man speaks to me for a moment then he risks a little bit of meal time or is taken away from whatever activity he is doing. We might talk about personal feelings that causes participants to feel slightly embarrassed. However, these risks are quite minimal.

It is possible that the subject may begin to describe illegal activities to me during the research such as involvement in prostitution, drug use, or theft. I will use the response as data, however I will seek to divert the conversation away from any discussion of illegal activity.

I will acknowledge their comments, but I will avoid continuing the pursuit regarding details of any illegal activity. For example, if a subject indicates that they have performed illegal activities for money, I may nod my head and then follow-up with an unrelated question like "Where do you sleep when it gets cold?" I would mark down a generic note in my data but I would remove any identifiable characteristics as they do not relate to the objective of my study in any way.

Phase 2 Method: Reducing and Minimizing Potential Risk for Subjects

If, at any time, the participant feels uncomfortable the interaction can immediately stop. The participant has the option to leave the interaction at any time. There is no pressure to participate.

Phase 2 Method: Potential Benefits for Subjects

Homelessness is a social problem in the United States and throughout the world. My study may be used to help eradicate homelessness or perhaps improve the day-to-day interactions between homeless individuals and those who come in contact with them.

Phase 2 Method: Relevant Recent Literature

Homelessness is a unique topic for study due to the numerous elements that make up the experience. Some homeless individuals may use intravenous drugs. While the purpose of this research is not to examine drug use, there may be an occasion that the researcher becomes present nearby drug use. Small, Maher, and Kerr (2014) discuss the need to protect both the researcher and subjects in such instances. Their research mentions several safeguards that have already been included here. They also explain the need to employ arbitrary code names and descriptions of demographic characteristics (age, ethnicity, and gender) when referring to participants. Such code names render the individuals unidentifiable. Homeless individuals are very vulnerable. Valera, Cook, Macklin, and Chang (2014) provide insight for doing research with other vulnerable populations including criminals. In their study, participants generally understood concepts of participation, compensation, and confidentiality. However, their sample had trouble understanding informed consent and the specific components of IRB. Their research suggests the need to be certain the interview subject(s) understand the study completely so that the researcher does not simply enroll them based on rudimentary knowledge.

Visual sociology is a relatively new and underused method. Flick (2014) conveys a possible alternative to visual sociology through transcribing the pictures and audio data. However, Fick's alternative will not provide the data analysis that is intended for presentation in this study. Harper (2012) conveys a thorough explanation of the importance, validity, and essence of visual sociology. In his text, he describes the importance of visual sociology in explaining the embedded observation in full.

In sum, the homeless experience encompasses many different elements and is best analyzed using multiple methods including visual sociology. Since visual data exposes the identity of certain subjects, methods should be used to safeguard any connection of the visibly identifiable subject(s) to other descriptions. Code names can be used in other areas of qualitative data analysis so that those subjects remain unidentifiable. When studying homeless individuals, it is important to separate the public performance data (e.g. begging) from any private or illicit activity.

Phase 2 Method: Protecting Subject Privacy

All of the methods are very clear. The actions taking place in a public forum will be very public (i.e. privacy not ensured). There will be public interviews and public observation. None of the identities in public have any assurance of being protected. The study includes video tape. There is no assurance that the tape will be private. I will not ever state otherwise. This is a public sociological study.

Phase 2 Method: Data Storage

The audio and video data will be stored on Google servers, Microsoft servers, LiquidWeb servers, and on MacHighway servers. Although it is on a private server, the data are secure. The

providers would not risk disclosing it. There are no identities attached to interviews therefore the

risk of disclosure, although extremely minimal, is not likely to be problematic. All of the other

data are public and could potentially be stored in public places (e.g. video on YouTube or field

notes on a public blog). Again, this is primarily a public study occurring most often in a public

place. It may be stored in perpetuity. Certain sites archive internet data and therefore the length

is outside of my control.   Potentially, everyone on earth has access.

Phase 2 Method: Confidentiality and Anonymity

The only identifying data will be the face of the participant if on video. However, the

face of the participant exists in the public space regardless of whether or not I conduct a study.

Therefore, the issue is moot. To be clear, there is no confidentiality. The only anonymous

method is the online survey. All other methods and data will be public.

The anonymity is ensured because names are never asked. There will be audio

recordings, but I will never date stamp or indicate the location of my field research. I am only

concerned with the anonymous responses to my questions and the identities of the respondents

would only be discovered through voice recognition or a combination of circumstantial evidence

(i.e. homeless and probably in Michigan since that is where I live).

Phase 2 Method: Consent Procedures

This study requires informed implied consent so that all participants have the opportunity

to make a fully informed decision whether or not to participate in the research. At all times, the

subjects will have the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns to the researcher about

their participation. This study involves a single researcher, John Girdwood, who will acquire all

consent and inform and educate all subjects as to their involvement, if agreed upon. This research will not involve children. The consent will be obtained through the following process.

The researcher will be embedded in the population at a homeless shelter. The researcher will approach an individual at the homeless shelter with an audio recorder visibly in hand, i.e. not hidden. The researcher will seek permission to speak to the respondent by asking the following: "Hi, do you mind if I ask you a couple questions?" If the respondent agrees to have a conversation by answering "yes" or "okay" then the researcher will immediately tell the respondent "I am doing research for my dissertation at MSU." This means that the respondent has been asked to proceed with questioning and has been informed that the research is for a dissertation at Michigan State University. This two-stage consent process allows time for the individual to consider proceeding, in other words, it gives the respondent two chances to withdraw (i.e. first, to withdraw from a conversation and second, to withdraw from research).

During the conversation, if the respondent wishes to leave at any time, he is welcome to do so. The researcher will never beg to continue the conversation. This is of no benefit to the researcher. There are plenty of potential respondents. The researcher will gauge the respondents' interest at all times and if, at any time, the respondent appears to be worried or fearful then the interview will immediately stop. Not only does this process allow the respondent to withdraw, it provides a secondary mechanism for the researcher to protect the respondent.

Phase 2 Method: Research Presents No More than Minimal Risk to Subjects

None of the questions pose greater than minimal risk. The intent of the research is to acquire data that would result from any normal conversation about everyday activities in a public place. The observation will occur in a public place and interviews are intended to replicate

nothing more than casual conversation about mundane activities. Should the respondent divulge any illegal activity references, the interviewer will divert the conversation. The research is also anonymous, meaning no names will be asked and locations are not conveyed by the researcher.

<u>Phase 2 Method: Procedures for which Written Consent is Normally Required</u>

Interviews sometimes require signed consent. However, the interviews in this research are a result of embedded participatory ethnography. It would not be prudent to stop daily routines to have the respondent sign a form. In fact, the action of signing a form in front of the participants' friends and associates might draw more attention to the situation. I do not suggest that consent be avoided. I simply argue that consent be obtained through a method other than signing a form. The main elements of a signed consent form can be conveyed verbally. Therefore, while it is sometimes normal to require signed consent forms for interviews, the interviews in this study occur during embedded ethnography and therefore are outside the scope of general written consent procedures.

<u>Phase 2 Method: Oral Consent</u>

While the requirement to obtain consent is necessary and important, some participants may be illiterate and/or fearful of having to fill out forms due to their experiences with institutionalized systems like government agencies and homeless shelters. Consent is still vital, but the method of transmission may be more viable if conveyed and received orally rather than on paper which requires reading to comprehend. Another reason to avoid a written form is that it is not possible to visibly see if a participant is literate and therefore signing a form may not exhibit a full understanding of the words on the paper. For these reasons and with this study sample, I propose a very clear oral consent based on principles of consent and a script.

The script will be followed as closely as possible with all content conveyed. While it may not be verbatim, here is a template: "Hi, I'm John and I'm a sociologist from Michigan State. I'm doing a study on shelters and I'd like to ask you some questions about your experiences. I would like to tape record our conversation so that I could get your words accurately, maybe go back and listen to it later in case I miss something. If you ever feel uncomfortable, just let me know or you can simply stop talking with me at any time. You don't have to answer any questions if you don't want to. Or, if you want me to turn off the recorder, I can do that. I can't pay you and there is no benefit for participating. There may be some things that I can't record, for your protection. For example, if you tell me about anything illegal I will have to turn off the recorder. I will not share these recordings with anybody but myself and the other people helping me. I will do everything I can to protect your privacy, but there is always a slight chance that someone could find out about our conversation. If you have any questions, please call the number listed on this card. Now, I'd like to ask you if you agree to participate in this study and talk to me about your experiences. Do you agree to participate and to allow me to record our conversations?" The business card included contact information for the researcher, primary investigator, and Michigan State University IRB.

Appendix B: Survey Results

I administered this survey to 96 individuals at a mid-sized Midwestern university. All respondents were undergraduate students. The survey below (layout) looks like the instrument.

IMAGE OF ABANDONED BUILDING
IN DETROIT WHERE SQUATTERS LIVE

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Looking at the sign in the picture above, if you passed a beggar on the street with this sign, how likely is it that you would **give money**? (**Choose one**)		If you knew somebody lived in the building above, would you consider him or her to be **homeless**?		If you knew somebody lived in the building above, which of the following might be true? (**Mark all or none that apply**)	
Yes, I would give money to this person	22.8%	Yes	54.7%	They probably use drugs	65.5%
No, I would not give money to this person	20.7%	No	45.3%	They are mentally ill	27.6%
It would depend on how they looked	7.6%			I am kind of scared of them	56.9%
I would rather give them food, not money	48.9%				

IMAGE OF HOMELESS SHELTER CAFETERIA

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Looking at the picture to the left, which of the following statements might be true about this room? (**Mark all that apply**)

It is a place where people eat	90.6%
It is a place where people sleep	11.5%
It is a place where violence occurs	6.3%
It is safe place	50%
It might be a church cafeteria	81.3%
It might be a school cafeteria	79.2%

Looking at the picture above, which of the following statements apply to your experiences? (**Mark all that apply**)		Looking at the picture above, which of the following statements would most likely to be true? (**Mark all that apply**)	
I have eaten a meal in a place like this	63%	I would expect to be served a sandwich here	96.6%
I have slept on the floor in a place like this	0%	I would expect to pay for my meal here	42.7%
This looks like my school cafeteria	65.2%	I would choose to eat here instead of McDonald's	15.7%
This looks like my church cafeteria	45.7%	I would choose to eat here instead of at home	2.2%

| IMAGE OF:

white male
approximately 30-years-old
playing guitar on street
corner
milk crates, cardboard sign, tip jar
lived in shelter (homeless)

REMOVED TO PROTECT IDENTITY OF SUBJECT | These two pictures, left and right, were taken on the same day in the same town. Of these two individuals, who are you more likely to give money to? (**Choose one**) | IMAGE OF:

white female
approximately 30-years-old
sitting with cane on street corner
cardboard sign:
"Homeless Praying
for a Merry Christmas"
lived in shelter (homeless)

REMOVED TO PROTECT IDENTITY OF SUBJECT |

I would give money to both	44.7%
I would give money to neither	22.3%
I would give money to LEFT only	23.4%
I would give money to RIGHT only	9.6%

Looking at the man in the picture above, how likely is he to be **homeless**?	There are 2 individual beggars pictured on this page. How likely is it that either one is **disabled**?	Looking at the woman in the picture above, how likely is she to be **homeless**?
Yes, he is most likely homeless 4.2%	Yes, both are probably disabled 8.4%	Yes, she is most likely homeless 56.4%
Maybe he is homeless 88.5%	Maybe one of them is disabled 86.3%	Maybe she is homeless 42.6%
No, he is not homeless 7.3%	No, neither one is disabled 5.3%	No, she is not homeless 1.1%

Looking at the man in the picture above, how much **money** do you think he makes begging **in one 8 hour day**?	Where do you think the pictures **on this page** were taken? (**Choose one**)	Looking at the woman in the picture above, how much **money** do you think she makes begging **in one 8 hour day**?

$10	26%	Saginaw	22.3%	$10	45.3%
$50	39.6%	East Lansing	23.4%	$50	31.6%
$100	22.9%	Ann Arbor	6.4%	$100	11.6%
$250	7.3%	Detroit	40.4%	$250	3.2%
$500	0%	Not in Michigan	7.4%	$500	4.2%
More than $500 in an 8 hour day	4.2%			More than $500 in an 8 hour day	4.2%

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