Yielding Return on Housing First in a Post-Industrial City

By

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Extended Abstract: Homelessness is a perennial problem that American cities have struggled to manage in the post-Fordist era. A longstanding debate in urban studies interrogates the form, function, and legitimacy of contemporary efforts to govern homelessness. Three broad perspectives have emerged from this debate. Punitive interventions have been conceptualized as an illegitimate act of repression that promotes urban revitalization through the exclusion and seclusion of homeless individuals from "prime" spaces; supportive interventions have been viewed as a legitimate act of coercive or voluntary care that helps the unsheltered poor survive a traumatic life experience; and disciplinary interventions have been seen as an illegitimate act of discipline that produces obedient subjects who fortify rather than challenge social inequality. The sociological contributions to this debate have generally examined policing while neglecting case management by homeless service providers, decontextualized homeless service delivery from macropolitical structures, and/or narrowly defined the impact of homeless services on urban political economies. I address these shortcomings in a 12-month qualitative study of Housing First delivery in a highly segregated post-industrial city.

Housing First is a hegemonic model of homeless services that advocates immediate placement in permanent housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment. The delivery of Housing First is guided by four principles: consumer choice, noncompulsory wraparound services, recovery-oriented harm reduction, and community integration. Advocates have praised Housing First as a progressive alternative to paternalistic models that demand homeless individuals prove "housing readiness" before receiving permanent accommodation. I argue that federal policymakers have embraced Housing First as a social investment to promote economic growth by minimizing public expenditures on homeless assistance. To this end, policymakers have created institutions that transformed homeless service providers into quasi-methodologists who mediate transitions into permanent housing through the exercise of power/knowledge, informal real estate agents who steer people suffering homelessness into distressed neighborhoods, and federally subsidized property managers who grow landlord profits by minimizing transaction costs. This implies frontline workers yield returns on Housing First through

disciplinary interventions that transform people suffering homelessness into “responsible” consumers who accommodate rather than challenge market inequities that generate housing displacement among the urban poor.

My findings contribute to urban sociology by demonstrating homeless service providers serve institutional functions beyond the mere provision of support; promote urban revitalization through the inclusion of homeless individuals, reproduction of housing market inequities, and stabilization of tax revenue that local governments have come to depend on in post-industrial cities; and challenge the efficacy/legitimacy of using Housing First in a segregated rental market. This research challenges a popular notion that Housing First is *the* solution to urban homelessness. As a reactive social investment, Housing First transitions people suffering homelessness into concentrated poverty. In doing so, Housing First providers begrudgingly reproduce material conditions that render marginalized groups vulnerable to homelessness. Contrary to conventional wisdom, efforts to *prevent* homelessness require supply-side interventions that thwart early accumulation of disadvantage from happening in the first place. Existing market-based interventions impose exorbitant transaction costs that dissuade private developers from building affordable housing units. Thus, ending homelessness requires the state to invest in integrated social housing.

Introduction

In early-March 2019, I approached Union Station in Washington, D.C. with my partner to join a design tour that I had purchased for his birthday. As we approached the station's grandiose entrance, I pulled out my cellphone to find our tour guide. I unfortunately booked the tour on a cold winter day with overcast skies and frosty winds that lacerated your face. We decided to wait inside Union Station for the tour guide where the Classical Beaux-Art design, with its marble, gold leaf, and white granite interior, provided entertainment. Beyond Union Station's grand entrance, the U.S. Capitol contrasted against the dark sky like a Beacon of Hope described by Former President Ronald Reagan. Against this dramatic backdrop, Amtrak passengers entered and exited the station, local vendors sold red hats with white embroidering that read, "Keep America Great," tourists marveled at the interior design while sipping Starbucks coffee and snapping selfies with their iPhones, and Black people suffering homelessness desperately pleaded impatient White pedestrians for pocket change as they hailed taxis along the station's curb.

As an American citizen, nothing seemed out of place to me about this scene. The usual actors played their role in an urban drama that is familiar to most American readers. For my partner, an Irish-Australian citizen who, at the time of this study, worked for a local council in the United Kingdom, this was a jarring experience. "How, in the richest country on Earth, do I get approached by ten rough sleepers at the train station that overlooks the U.S. Capitol," he asked in disgust. Alex's question puzzled me. At the time, I had never traveled abroad and, therefore, could not imagine an urban landscape without surplus life begging for survival. Although I was in the middle of writing a dissertation on urban governance of homelessness, the ubiquitous presence of homelessness in U.S. cities was an unquestioned norm. "Why wouldn't you expect to see homeless people on the street," I naively asked. "Well," Alex responded, "Where I live, this would be a scandal because the local council is legally obligated to house rough sleepers so you just wouldn't see any of this." I could not argue with Alex's statement. I, like many Americans, had naturalized the presence of abject poverty on city streets and, consequently, dehumanized the mundane tragedies that I casually observed in my everyday life.

Washington Union Station is no anomaly. In 2019, when I conducted this study, over 2 out of every 1,000 Americans suffered homelessness. Risk of homelessness was unequally distributed across status groups. Latinx people were approximately 1.28 times more likely than non-Latinx, women 1.51 times more likely than men, Whites 2.85 times more likely than Asians, Blacks 4.78 times more likely than Whites, and Native Americans 5.71 times more likely than Whites to suffer homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020). In America's major cities, over 9.4 out of every 1,000 residents suffered street homelessness. As in the rest of the nation, risk of homelessness was unequally distributed across status groups in America's major cities. Non-Latinx people are 1.22 times more likely than Latinx, men 1.67 times more likely than women, Asians 3.15 times more likely than Whites, Blacks 5.12 times more likely than Whites, and Native Americans 6.81 times more likely than Whites to suffer homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020). Although homelessness declined by 20% since 2010, it remains a visible expression of deep structural inequities that define American cities in the 21st century.

Growth of homelessness in post-industrial cities is attributable to deindustrialization, White flight, gentrification, and welfare retrenchment (Wolch and Dear 1993). Visible poverty has impeded efforts by urban entrepreneurs to promote economic growth (Speer 2019). Local governing coalitions have experimented with myriad techniques to manage the impact of homelessness on urban revitalization. Urban scholars have debated the form, function, and legitimacy of institutional responses to homelessness since the 1990s (Stuart 2015). Researchers initially detailed punitive interventions by urban governments to seize public spaces from the homeless on behalf of the middle-class (Smith 1996). By the mid-2000s, critics contested the punitive thesis by noting the growing prevalence of supportive services (DeVerteuil 2006). Recent research demonstrates frontline workers coordinate punitive and supportive interventions to compel rehabilitation among homeless individuals (Stuart 2016). Little research on supportive interventions has situated homeless service providers in their contemporary macropolitical context. Neglect of federalism produces undertheorized accounts of supportive interventions that decontextualize homeless service provision from institutional functions assigned by policymakers. This shortcoming impedes sociological theorization of contemporary homeless services in urban America.

I address this shortcoming by examining the delivery of Housing First in a highly segregated post-industrial city. Housing First is a hegemonic model of homeless services that prescribes permanent housing without preconditions like sobriety, treatment, or employment (Baker and Evans 2016). Federal authorities instituted Housing First in 2010 as *the* method for designing homeless policy (USICH 2010). In this dissertation, I present five empirical papers that answer the following questions: How do frontline workers in a post-industrial city accommodate the Housing First turn in federal homeless policy? How do federal policymakers shape the meaning of homeless service delivery in post-industrial cities? How does homeless policy affect urban revitalization? I provide evidence that Housing First providers yield returns on homeless policy for federal policymakers by using demand-side interventions that bolster stratified rental markets. In this regard, Housing First providers reproduce material conditions that create the problem they try to solve. I continue by, first, situating contemporary urban homelessness in its unique macrostructural context. Next, I locate this study in the sociological literature to both delineate its scholarly contributions and conceptualize homeless governance in American cities as procurement of social investment for federal policymakers. I end by summarizing the key findings reported in each empirical chapter.

Institutional Responses to Homelessness in Post-Industrial Cities

In the 1970s, cities across the U.S. Steel Belt entered a protracted economic crisis (Teaford 1990). Soaring inflation compelled manufacturing firms to outsource jobs to labor markets beyond central cities where lower taxes, labor costs, and/or land rents increased profits. Deindustrialization reduced manufacturing employment among low-skilled workers across the U.S. Steel Belt (Smil 2013). Federal policy facilitated mass migration of White working-class households to the burgeoning suburbs that surrounded central cities (Lewis 2013; Rothstein 2017). Residential segregation created a spatial mismatch that separated nonwhite workers in central cities from middle-class jobs in suburban areas (Kain 1992). White homeowners established suburban governments to prevent taxation by cities they abandoned (Jackson 1985). Concentrated poverty grew in central cities because White households hoarded opportunity in the suburbs (Massey and Denton 1993).

Local governments adopted urban entrepreneurialism as a governing strategy to promote economic growth (Harvey 1989). Post-industrial cities throughout the U.S. Steel Belt competed for capital investment by reducing corporate taxes, repealing business regulations, and expanding public infrastructure (Logan and Molotch 1987). Local officials reinvented industrial cities to attract “new” middle-class consumers who occupied privileged positions in the knowledge economy (Ley 1996). City governments partnered with real estate developers to replace affordable housing with high end units that were inaccessible to low-skilled service workers (Teaford 1990). Federal authorities have helped this effort by financing local governments to raze affordable housing stocks in central cities (Lewis 2013; Goetz 2003). Affordable housing demolition crowded the bottom of urban rental markets as poor consumers competed for overpriced units in distressed neighborhoods (see Desmond and Wilmer 2019). As a result, housing insecurity as become a defining feature of contemporary urban poverty that fortifies economic, social, and spatial marginalization (Desmond 2012).

Housing insecurity contributed to the rise of street homelessness (Willse 2015). Unlike the mid-20th century, when urban homelessness referred to disaffiliated White men secluded in Skid Row districts (Bahr 1973), homelessness in post-industrial cities is primarily experienced by people of color who lack skills to integrate into knowledge economies (Timmer et al. 1995). Urban revitalization increased the prevalence of street homelessness by removing affordable units from local housing stocks and deconcentrated homelessness by gentrifying areas where the unsheltered poor lived (Snow and Anderson 1993). As a result, homeless individuals scattered across urban landscapes to the chagrin of urban entrepreneurs (Wolch and Dear 1993). The rise of street homelessness impeded urban renewal by branding post-industrial cities dangerous to investors and middle-class consumers (Speer 2019). In response, urban entrepreneurs have used different techniques to minimize the impact of homelessness on economic growth.

Urban scholars have interrogated novel modes of homeless governance that local boosters have used to promote revitalization. Three topics related to the exercise of power by homeless governance coalitions have dominated this debate. First, scholars have interrogated the *form* of power exercised by frontline workers responsible for governing homelessness. Contributors to this debate conceptualize power as either repressive acts that govern homelessness through exclusion or productive acts that govern homelessness through inclusion.[1] Second, scholars have debated the *function* of contemporary homeless governance. On one side of the debate, scholars argue homeless management promotes individual reproduction through the allocation of vital resources that help people survive homelessness. On the other side of the debate, scholars argue homeless governance promotes social reproduction by fortifying capitalist institutions. Third, scholars have questioned the *legitimacy* of contemporary homeless governance. A subset of authors argue contemporary homeless governance is a legitimate exercise of power that saves marginalized people from abject poverty while another subset

[1] Foucault (1990) differentiates "repression" from "productive" power. Acts of repression control homeless people through external motivation. Frontline workers use "hard" tactics such as force and coercion to exercise reductive power (Johnsen et al., 2018). Force denies homeless people the option of non-compliance. Coercion is a threat of material deprivation to manipulate compliance by homeless people. Acts of production control homeless people through internal motivation. Frontline workers use "soft" tactics such as bargaining, influence, and tolerance to exercise productive power (Johnsen et al. 2018). Bargaining achieves obedience through negotiated concessions. Influence generates compliance by manipulating the beliefs and preferences of homeless people. Tolerance is the absence of manipulation to produce desired behavior among homeless people.

		Function	
		Individual Sustenance	***Social Reproduction***
Form	***Repression***	Coercive care	Punishment
	Production	Voluntary care	Discipline
		Legitimate	***Illegitimate***
		Legitimacy	

Table 1. Theoretical Perspectives on Contemporary Homeless Governance in Neoliberal Cities

argues contemporary homeless governance is an illegitimate exercise of power that harms people suffering homelessness by reproducing institutional inequalities.

Table 1 presents a typology of governing techniques that urban scholars have differentiated. The *punitive* thesis conceptualizes homeless management as an illegitimate act of repression that promotes urban revitalization through forceful exclusion and seclusion of homeless people from prime spaces.[2] Researchers have articulated variations of this claim in three seminal studies. Davis (1990) argues “carceral” cities use defensive architecture to seclude homeless people in areas divorced from gentrifying areas of the city. Smith (1996) argues “revanchist” cities use law enforcement officers to recapture public spaces from homeless people for the White middle-class through broken windows governance. Mitchell (2003) argues the

[2] Snow and Mulcahy (2001) distinguishes three types of urban spaces: prime, marginal, and transitional. Prime space has exchange, use, and political value based on appeal to middle-class consumers, investors, and politicians. Marginal space has no exchange, use, and political value to middle-class consumers, investors, and politicians. Transitional spaces are degraded areas targeted by investors for gentrification.

right to cities is undermined by exclusionary ordinances that criminalize homelessness in public spaces. Although Davis, Smith, and Mitchell examine different modes of repression, each author conceptualizes power as the compulsory exclusion of homeless individuals from prime spaces by institutional authorities to promote economic growth. In other words, power, according to punitive theorists, is a repressive act that promotes urban revitalization by isolating homeless people through force and coercion (see Johnson et al. 2018).

Punitive theorists critique "broken windows" homeless governance (Stuart 2015). Broken windows is a logic of urban governance that attributes serious crime to tolerance of minor offenses by law enforcement (Kelling and Wilson 1982). American cities have used broken windows to remove people suffering homelessness from public spaces (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Smith 1996). Local governments have adopted exclusionary zoning to prevent homeless services from being sited in prime spaces (Brinegar 2003; Takahashi 1998), defensive architecture to stop homeless individuals from congregating on high streets (Davis 1990; Rosenberger 2020), "quality-of-life" ordinances to selectively ban "private" behaviors that homeless individuals are forced to perform in public (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Mitchell 1997), and zero tolerance policing to seclude homeless individuals from gentrified areas (Herring 2019a; Smith 1996). Punitive research has argued contemporary homeless governance is an illegitimate act of power that exposes homeless individuals to violence (Westbrook and Robinson 2020), undermines mental health (Robinson 2019), impedes access to emergency services (Beckett and Herbert 2009), hinders political mobilization (Herring and Lutz 2015), and perpetuates an episode of homelessness (Herring, Yarbrough, and Alatorre 2020). In short, punitive research indicts contemporary homeless management for punishing victims of political economic restructuring who should be defended against rather than subordinated to the demands of capital.

Urban scholars have posited three criticisms of the punitive thesis. First, critics have challenged reductionist claims of punitiveness by demonstrating beneficent motives for homeless governance (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2011; DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009; Van Eijk 2010). Second, authors have disputed the transferability of American case studies by questioning the relevance of punitive governance in European cities where supportive interventions are common (O'Sullivan 2012; Uitermark and Duyvendak 2008; Van Eijk 2010). Third, researchers have interrogated the minimization of agency by punitive theorists for depicting homeless individuals as cultural dopes (May and Cloke 2014; Parsell and Parsell 2012). This criticism has grown a body of research that suggests supportive governance eclipses or complements punitive measures (DeVerteuil 2019; Stuart 2015).

Table 1 indicates *supportive* theorists differentiate voluntary from coercive care. Past research suggests voluntary and coercive care vary in both form and function. Voluntary care is an act of productive power that restores homeless individual by providing subsistence through non-compulsory services (DeVerteuil et al. 2009). Coercive care, by contrast, uses repression to sustain the homeless through compulsory services (see Johnsen and Fitzgerald 2010). Despite disagreement over the form and function of homeless services, supportive theorists conceptualize in/voluntary care as a legitimate act of power by frontline workers. Authors in the supportive governance tradition argue paternalistic interventions are justified if they facilitate self-sufficiency, personal safety, mental health, and/or permanent housing (Johnsen and Fitzgerald 2010; Parsell and Marston 2016). From this perspective, vulnerable subpopulations lack capacity for self-care and, therefore, may require "tough love" to thwart personal harm (Watts et al.

2018). In short, supportive theorists defend contemporary homeless management as a humane rather than punitive intervention that supports people who have been marginalized by recent macroeconomic changes.

Emphasis on individual sustenance neglects institutional function(s) of homeless service providers. In 2019, the U.S. federal government allocated at least $2.6 billion to local homeless governing coalitions (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021). Policymakers provide financial resources to achieve political objectives. Lawmakers constrain the discretion of homeless service providers, establish performance standards for grantees, monitor progress toward desired outcomes, and sanction underperformance (Willse 2015). Consequently, the supportive turn in homeless governance has been guided by federal authorities to achieve outcomes selected by institutional elites. Abstracting homeless services in America from their nested political context undertheorizes institutional functions performed by frontline workers. Consequently, most supportive research offers a partial account of contemporary homeless governance in U.S. cities. A subset of supportive (DeVerteuil 2006) and punitive research (Herring 2019) has inadequately addressed this shortcoming by conceptualizing homeless services as a means for urban entrepreneurs to seclude the homeless from prime spaces. This account ignores macropolitical institutions that lend meaning to case management by homeless service provides in post-industrial cities.

The *disciplinary* thesis provides analytical tools to address this knowledge gap. Disciplinary theorists draw insight from governmentality theory to conceptualize homeless management as an act of production that creates subjects who voluntarily reproduce capitalist institutions (see Rose 1999). A governmentality is a logic of practice that institutional authorities use to produce obedient subjects who advance the political aims of elites (Dean 1999).

Disciplinary theorists have identified governmentalities that institutional authorities use to include rather than exclude homeless people (Baker and Evans 2016), demonstrated institutional authorities use myriad "technologies" to govern homelessness through power/knowledge (Willse 2015),[3] and invent disciplinary techniques to produce market participants (Hennigan 2017). Table 1 highlights the utility of this theoretical premise to advancing scholarly knowledge about contemporary homeless management. Emphasis on production rather than repression advances scholarly knowledge of institutional reproduction through the delivery of homeless services. Moreover, interrogation of institutional reproduction rather than individual sustenance challenges the legitimacy of contemporary homeless services. As a nascent perspective, disciplinary theorists offer a conceptual framework to advance knowledge about homeless governance that urban scholars have only begun to explore.

To date, disciplinary theorists, like their supportive and punitive counterparts, have neglected the nested political context of contemporary homeless services. Hennigan (2017), for example, analyzes case management techniques that Housing First providers use to control service recipients. Hennigan demonstrates Housing First case managers bolster rental markets by disciplining clients into obedient tenants. To this end, Housing First case managers exploit landlord-tenant conflicts to motivate "voluntary" participation in disciplinary interventions that responsibilize service recipients. Although it demonstrates homeless service providers fortify urban housing markets, Hennigan (2017) does not consider the institutional constraints that Housing First case managers navigate while delivering services (see Willse 2015). Consequently,

[3] Foucault (1976) argues social scientists create knowledge about human populations that institutional authorities use to control "deviant" subpopulations who threaten bourgeois social order. In this regard, knowledge is a resource that institutional actors use to render subjects "normal" through disciplinary interventions. Foucault concludes knowledge is inextricable from power relations and re/produces status hierarchies.

urban sociologists have produced a dearth of knowledge about the "products" homeless service providers are contracted by federal policymakers to create.

Yielding Returns on Housing First in Post-Industrial Cities

I address this knowledge gap by examining Housing First provision in a highly segregated urban rental market. Baker et al. (2020) theorize federal authorities adopted Housing First as a governmentality to produce transactionable consumers who independently reduce public expenditures by meeting subsistence through private rental markets rather than emergency services. Federal policymakers create institutional constraints to push homeless service providers toward desired ends. In this section, I trace the evolution of homeless policy in the United States to specify the uniqueness of present-day interventions, conceptualize Housing First as a social investment, situate homeless service provision in its macropolitical context, and specify contributions of this research to urban sociological debates about homeless governance.

Evolving Logics of Homeless Policy

Federal authorities have used myriad governmentalities to design homeless policy throughout the 20th century: charity, welfare, neoliberalism, and social investment (Hemerijck 2012). Federal lawmakers in the early-20th century defined homelessness as an individual problem properly addressed by local charities (Willse 2015). Charity groups viewed poverty as a cultural deficiency imported by European immigrants best remedied through forced labor in a poorhouse (Katz 1996). Local poorhouses used "scientific charity" to produce the industrial working class through harsh conditions to discourage able-bodied men from requesting services. In addition, local authorities used jails to house the unsheltered poor. During economic downturns, police officers filled empty jail cells with unemployed workers who could not afford private housing. The Panic of 1893 discredited scientific charity. Municipal governments established emergency shelters for unemployed workers. In short, the logic of charity delegated responsibility for homelessness to local authorities. As a result, the federal government lacked a homeless policy because it shirked blame for the problem.

In the 1930s, the Great Depression goaded federal lawmakers to embrace the logic of welfare (Hemerijck 2012). Welfarism promotes "passive" policy interventions that provide social security during economic downturns. Social insurance programs satisfy immediate rather than future needs through income transfers that deliver assistance without preconditions (Hemerijck, Morel, and Palier 2012). Federal policymakers used welfare logic to address housing insecurity. Lawmakers instituted the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) to temporarily shelter homeless workers (Willse 2015), established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934 to increase White homeownership (Rothstein 2017), and extended public housing to poor households through the Housing Act of 1937 (Radford 2000). Each policy intervention marked a departure from pre-Depression federal housing governance. Unlike previous administrations, who denied responsibility for the housing security of citizens, New Deal reformers used the logic of welfare to design social policies that prevented or ended an episode of homelessness for members of the White working-class.[4]

Macroeconomic change ended the hegemony of welfarism (Esping-Anderson et al. 2002; Giddens 1998). Federal lawmakers relied on America's industrial tax base to finance welfare programs. At that time, low-skilled workers could access manufacturing jobs that provided a family wage. Deindustrialization reduced the tax base that federal welfare programs depended on while increasing demand for assistance as unemployed workers requested benefits. Growth of

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[4] Prior to the 1960s Great Society reforms, federal policymakers limited access to housing assistance to White people (Rothstein 2017).

service industry jobs feminized labor markets while increasing the prevalence of dual earner households. The patriarchal bias of social insurance programs toward the male breadwinner family model could not accommodate social risks emergent from dual earner households in service-oriented economies. By the late-1970s, macroeconomic changes created material conditions that critics needed to delegitimize welfarism as a governmentality to inform social policy.

Neoliberals posited an alternative governmentality to address the economic crisis (Hemerijck 2012). Conservative intellectuals blamed the downturn on government intervention. In contrast to welfarism, neoliberals conceptualized the welfare state as a cause of rather than solution to urban poverty (Murray 1984). This negative state theory inspired federal authorities to scale back federal housing assistance (Rubin, Wright, and Devine 1992). Despite growth of street homelessness, the Reagan Administration slowed affordable housing construction before instituting the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to expand the national stock through private developers (Erikson 2009). The McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 marked the first federal intervention to address homelessness since FERA. McKinney-Vento funded emergency shelter, supportive housing demonstrations, and rental assistance for homeless families (Willse 2015). Unlike FERA, which established emergency shelters operated by federal authorities, McKinney-Vento financed public-private partnerships that delivered homeless assistance through local service providers. Federal authorities who designed McKinney-Vento conceptualized homelessness as an individual problem, contracted service providers to fix the personal failings theorized to cause homelessness, and, consequently, invested scant resources to expand the affordable housing stock.

Neoliberals shifted the center of U.S. politics. If the Reagan Administration created demand for welfare reform (Katz 1996), then Former President Bill Clinton met this demand by transforming social policy into an investment (Giddens 1998). The logic of social investment encourages “active” state interventions that integrate service recipients into post-industrial economies (Esping-Anderson et al. 2002). Proactive interventions such as early childhood education produce human capital so “at-risk” populations can prevent market exclusion throughout each stage of their life course (Esping-Anderson et al. 2002). Reactive interventions such as workfare enhance the human capital of marginalized people so they can be reincorporated into market relations (Giddens 1998). Both types of investment stabilize markets by responsibilizing service recipients. Responsiblization is the production of subjectivities (i.e., knowledges, sentiments, and habits) that transform service recipients into competent market participants who independently manage risks in the post-welfarist era (see Shamir 2008). For example, workfare is a reactive investment that individualizes responsibility for economic security by pushing service recipients into low-wage labor markets (Peck 2001). Federal authorities contract frontline workers to yield returns on workfare by discipling service recipients into exploitable workers who “choose” labor market participation over government dependency. Rather than punishing the urban poor (Wacquant 2009), investment logic inspires social policies that discipline the poor into self-governing market participants (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011).

Homeless Policy as a Reactive Social Investment

The Clinton Administration applied investment logic to U.S. homeless policy. “Treatment First” is a governmentality that conceptualizes homelessness as an individual problem created by personal failings (Baker and Evans 2016). To end homelessness and limit government dependency, Treatment First sets preconditions such as job training, sobriety, and/or mental health counseling on permanent housing assistance. The Clinton Administration used this logic to establish a competitive block grant, Continuum of Care, that finances homeless services throughout the United States (Cisneros 1995). Federal authorities initially used Continuum of Care to finance transitional housing: a stairstep homeless service model that culminates in independent accommodation once participants demonstrate "housing readiness" to program managers (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016). Transitional housing programs responsiblized service recipients by exploiting a traumatic life experience as leverage to "fix" characteristics that policymakers deemed problematic.

The Clinton Administration adopted Continuum of Care as a public-private partnership to empower urban governing coalitions. Cisneros (1995: 145–146) explains, "The new approach will give State and local authorities maximum flexibility to tailor Federal resources to local circumstances, needs, and priorities. In contrast to its role today, which casts the Department [of Housing and Urban Development] as the grantor, decisionmaker, and senior partner, HUD will become a supporter of local initiatives, catalyst for change, and *equal* partner in local collaborations… This new approach (Continuum of Care) encourages communities to shape a comprehensive, flexible, coordinated program to solve, rather than institutionalize, the problem of homelessness." Today, federal authorities use this framework to delegate bounded discretion to local homeless service consortiums who select goals, strategies, and interventions for addressing unsheltered poverty in their community. As a result, each Continuum of Care varies in the type of services it provides to different homeless subpopulations (see DeVerteuil et al. 2009).

By the late-1990s, homeless advocates criticized Treatment First as expensive, ineffective, and insensitive to the needs of service recipients (Padgett et al. 2016). Advocates promoted Housing First as an alternative. Housing First is a model of homeless services that promotes self-sufficiency through immediate placement into permanent housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment (Tsemberis 2010). Unlike Treatment First, Housing First assumes anyone is housing ready and homelessness is the primary barrier to making advancement toward self-sufficiency. Housing First recipients are placed in local rental markets using a voucher, master, or project-based lease configuration. Each client is given wraparound services that they “choose” à la carte to achieve personal goals (Hennigan 2017). Housing First uses political economic discourse to conceptualize service recipients as consumers rather than citizens (Hansen Löfstrand and Juhila 2012). In this regard, Housing First prioritizes consumer choice to promote community integration by normalizing service recipients as market actors. Like workfare, which integrates alienated workers into labor markets, Housing First is designed to integrate marginalized consumers into local housing markets.

Housing First appealed to policymakers for several reasons. A litany of applied research suggests Housing First outperforms Treatment First in ending chronic homelessness (Tsemberis, Gulcur, and Nakae 2004), facilitating advancement toward self-sufficiency (Collins et al. 2012), and reducing public expenditures (Henwood et al. 2015). Although subsequent research has challenged its efficacy (Kertesz et al. 2009; Leclair et al. 2019; Ly and Latimer 2015; Tsai 2020; Woodhall-Melnik and Dunn 2016), federal authorities adopted Housing First as a cost-effective, evidence-based method to end homelessness. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) stated the following in a policy briefing entitled “The Evidence Behind Approaches that Drive an End to Homelessness”: “To improve housing outcomes, communities are making a fundamental shift to Housing First… Effective Housing First approaches, developed in response to strong evidence, include: prioritizing people experiencing homelessness for new and existing affordable housing; providing rapid rehousing to families and individuals; and providing supportive housing opportunities to people with intense needs" (USICH 2017: 1). USICH's website links to a policy brief published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness that reads, "There is a large and growing evidence base demonstrating that Housing First is an effective solution to homelessness. Consumers in a Housing First model access housing faster and are more likely to remain stably housed… Clients participating in supportive services are more likely to participate in job training programs, attend school, discontinue substance abuse, have fewer instances of domestic violence, and spend fewer days in hospitalized than those not participating… Providing access to housing generally results in cost savings for communities because housed people are less likely to use emergency services, including hospitals, jails, and emergency shelters, than those who are homeless" (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2016: 2). Based on this reasoning, USICH's former policy director concluded "supportive housing implemented through a Housing First approach is the solution to chronic homelessness" (Knotts 2018). Hence, regardless of contradictory scientific evidence, federal authorities embraced Housing First as *the* governmentality to design homeless policy.

In 2010, the Obama Administration adopted Opening Doors to maximize return on homeless policy. Opening Doors is a strategic plan based on the premise, "No one should experience homelessness. No one should be without a safe, stable place to call home" (USICH 2015: 9). Federal authorities advanced this vision by "prevent[ing] and end[ing] homelessness among Veterans in 2015; finish[ing] the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017; preventing[ing] and end[ing] homelessness for families, youth, and children in 2020; setting a

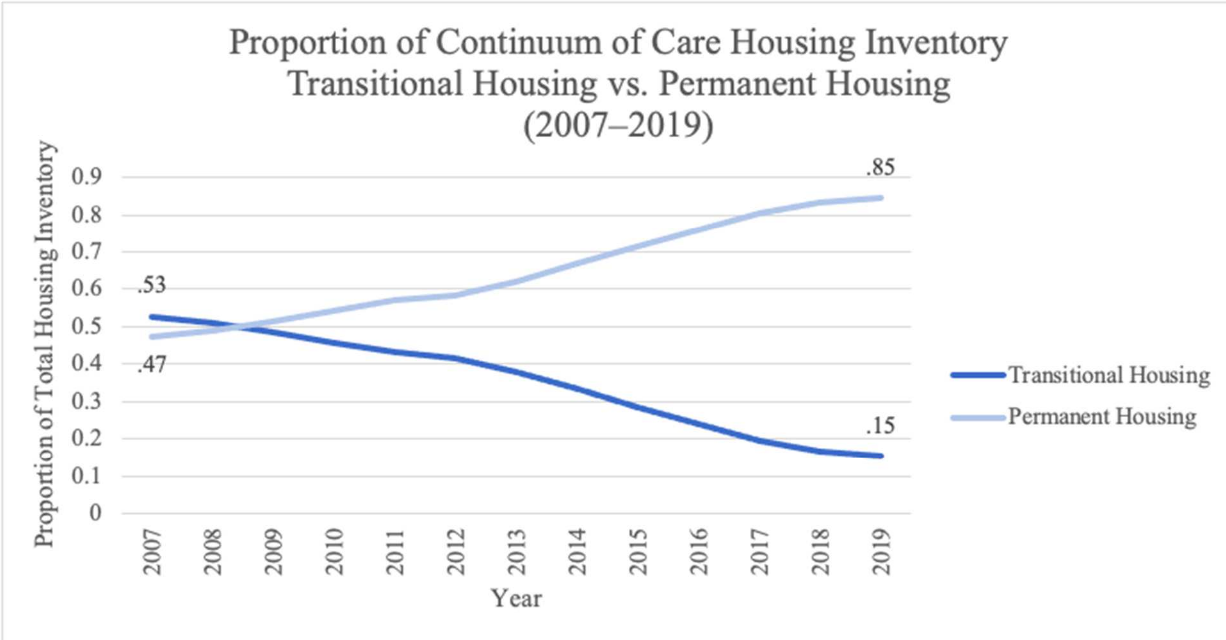

Figure 1. Characteristics of Continuum of Care Housing Inventory, 2007–2019.

path to ending all types of homelessness" through cost-effective, evidence-based practices (USICH 2015: 9). Former President Barak Obama used the language of social investment to justify the Opening Door initiative, "Investing in the status quo is no longer acceptable. Given the fiscal realities that families, businesses, State governments, and the Federal Government face, our response has to be guided by what works. Investments can only be made in the most promising strategies" (USICH 2015: 4). Opening Doors identified Housing First as *the* cost-effective way to address chronic homelessness, "For people experiencing chronic homelessness, the research is overwhelmingly clear that permanent supportive housing using a Housing First approach is the solution" (USICH 2015: 25). Consequently, Opening Doors encouraged local homeless service providers to integrate Housing First, "Since the adoption of Opening Door, the Federal government has emphasized an understanding of Housing First not just as a program model, but as an overall orientation in communities' systems responses to homelessness" (USICH 2015: 29). Figure 1 demonstrates the shift from Treatment First to Housing First had a dramatic impact on the housing models supported by Continuum of Care funds.

HUD advanced the goals of Opening Doors by regulating homeless service delivery (see Willse 2015). First, federal authorities instituted "coordinated entry" to control access to Housing First. Coordinated entry is "a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017: 4). Coordinated entry has four components: access, assessment, prioritization, and referral. Frontline workers assess individuals who present at access point(s), prioritize them for homeless services, and refer them to emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, or Housing First. Progression through coordinated entry measures the economic impact that a service recipient's homelessness imposes on public expenditures. An assessment, in part, quantifies the financial burden of a homeless service recipient to the federal tax levy. Each service referral is based on this estimate. Although policymakers intended coordinated entry as an objective method to allocate homeless services, access to permanent housing through coordinated entry is mediated by the implicit biases of frontline workers who navigate homeless service recipients through a complicated bureaucratic process (Osbourne 2019).

Second, HUD prioritized Housing First for people suffering chronic homelessness. HUD defines "literal" homelessness as anyone sleeping in a public or private place not meant for human habitation, residing in emergency shelter or temporary accommodation, or discharging from an institution where they lived for no more than 90 days after in a place not meant for human habitation, emergency shelter, or temporary accommodation (HUD 2012). A person suffers chronic homelessness if they live with a disability in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least twelve months or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least twelve months (Federal Register 2015: 75804). Federal authorities impose verification criteria that must be satisfied for the literally homeless to qualify as chronic: “An HMIS record; A written observation by an outreach worker of the conditions where the individual was living; A written referral by another housing or service provider; Or a certification by the individual seeking assistance, which must be accompanied by the intake worker’s documentation of the living situation of the individual or family seeking assistance” (Federal Register 2015: 75805). In short, to access Housing First through coordinated entry, people are *made* to suffer chronic homelessness, maintain regular contact with service providers, locate them on the street late-night at least once a month, and ensure their homeless history is documented in a federal database.

Third, HUD directs each Continuum of Care to adopt an assessment tool to prioritize homeless assistance through coordinated entry. The Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Tool (VI-SPDAT) is a popular instrument that frontline workers use to assess and prioritize homeless contacts for emergency services (see U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2015). Homeless service providers ask invasive questions about an individual’s homeless history, household income, emergency service utilization, criminal activity, personal trauma, mental health, and physical health. A service provider calculates a vulnerability score that ranges 0–17. A participant who scores 0–3 is ineligible for housing assistance, 4–8 is referred to rapid rehousing, and 9–17 is referred to Housing First.[5] HUD’s endorsement of the VI-SPDAT reflects the hegemony of investment logic. Although the VI-SPDAT includes items regarding exposure to predation, it also measures the financial burden that a respondent imposes on both public expenditures and urban revitalization. Thus, it can be argued that VI-SPDAT

[5] Rapid rehousing is a temporary housing assistance with wraparound services that lasts between 3–24 months depending on the providers.

scores in part measure the degree to which a service recipient's homelessness costs the state more than subsidized rent.

Fourth, HUD mandates each Continuum of Care to submit an annual performance report (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020). Annual performance reports include information about the number and characteristics of households who accessed coordinated entry; assessment tool(s) used to prioritize assistance for homeless individuals; referrals made to different types of homeless assistance; number of beds that were occupied and available across each lease configuration; and all financial expenditures made by the Continuum of Care. HUD uses this information to measure the performance of each Continuum of Care. Annual reports depict the distribution of funding to each component of the Continuum of Care, housing inventory, proportion of beds allocated to target populations, and demographic characteristics of the local homeless population. Federal authorities allowed grant recipients to devote Continuum of Care funding to non-chronic homelessness once its chronic cases were rehoused and tied annual funding allocation to performance in reduce homelessness among target populations.

At the time of this study, homeless service providers used these institutions to deliver Housing First in American cities. HUD regulations determine who can get what homeless services where, when, how, and why. Dependency of urban governing coalitions on federal block grants highlights the significance of nested political structures to theorizing homeless case management in urban communities. The recent shift in federal policy toward Housing First means service providers, who deliver assistance through Continuum of Care, procure return on social investments for federal policymakers by integrating homeless individuals into local rental markets. In this regard, lawmakers have rendered a subset of homeless service providers informal real estate agents and property managers who facilitate urban revitalization by helping to secure an important source of tax revenue that post-industrial cities use to attract private investment and stimulate middle-class consumption. Attention to nested political institutions enables urban sociologists to explain why frontline workers deliver what homeless services to whom and how on the streets of American cities.

Yielding Returns on Social Investment

This dissertation contributes to urban sociology by analyzing methods that Housing First providers use to yield return on homeless policy in a highly segregated post-industrial city. Baker et al. (2020) argue institutional authorities use three techniques to manage social investments: objectification, economization, and subjectification. Institutional authorities objectify by producing categories, measurements, population inferences, and reports about homelessness; economize by assigning monetary value to homelessness; and subjectify homeless service recipients by creating thoughts, feelings, and actions that align with federal priorities. In short, institutional authorities reduce public expenditures by adopting cost-effective homeless policies that transform emergency service recipients into private rental market participants.

I use insight from this framework to analyze investment procurement by Housing First providers. I conceptualize contemporary homeless management as consumerisation: a disciplinary process that produces institutional subjects who can independently participate in market exchanges as a particular type of customer. Giesler and Veresiu (2014) theorize "customer" is a learned role that institutional authorities cultivate through disciplinary interventions. For example, institutional authorities create "development" consumers through cause-related marketing that individualizes the causes of and solutions to uneven development (Kipp and Hawkins 2019). The formation of development consumers involves the inculcation of values that direct consumption toward desired ends. I argue federal homeless policy is designed to discipline service recipients into transactionable rental market consumers. A transactionable consumer has basic competencies needed to independently purchase housing through private market exchanges. Homeless service providers are contracted by federal authorities to discipline the unsheltered poor into transactionable consumers who reduce public expenditure on emergency services by independently growing landlord profits through voluntary lease compliance.

I present five articles to support this claim. The first article of this dissertation asks: How do street outreach workers enter homeless individuals into coordinated entry? How does the delivery of coordinated entry in public spaces impact people suffering homelessness? How does urban poverty impact the ability of street outreach workers to do coordinated entry? Federal policymakers have transformed street outreach workers into methodologists who produce who govern homelessness by producing poverty knowledge through coordinated entry. Unlike federal policymakers, who produce categories to make social investments, street outreach workers use categories to procure returns on homeless policy. In this regard, street outreach workers use vulnerability indexes to quantify the burden a homeless individual imposes on public expenditures. To find contacts in decentralized urban areas, street outreach teams gather spatial information about the evolving place of homelessness. Decentralized engagement strains rapport needed to extract personal data, creates spatial information gaps that prevent outreach workers from locating homeless contacts to collect data, and facilitate measurement errors that deprioritize homeless contacts for housing assistance.

The second article of this dissertation asks: How do homeless service providers make referrals to Housing First programs? How do program referrals impact urban political economies? I provide evidence that service providers make Housing First referrals by using three logics to estimate transaction costs: preference, character, and psy. Housing First providers use the logic of preference to estimate search, bargaining, and enforcement costs related to client resistance. Dissatisfied clients create transaction costs by refusing to participate in a lease formation or violating the lease obligations of unsuitable units. Housing First providers use the logic of character to estimate search and bargaining costs related to landlord resistance. Landlords create transaction costs by refusing to lease Housing First recipients who have recent evictions, judgements, or criminal convictions. Housing First providers use the logic of psy disciplines—psychology, psychoanalysis, and psychiatry—to estimate search, bargaining, and enforcement costs related to mental health of clients. Symptomatic clients create transaction costs if their mental illness hinders lease formation and/or compliance. Housing First providers use these logics to form expectations of transaction costs they will shoulder while using a particular lease configuration to end a client's homelessness.

The third article of this dissertation asks: What screening criteria do private landlords use to select tenants? How do Housing First providers interpret the screening criteria of private landlords in their community? How do Housing First providers respond to these criteria while negotiating a lease for their client? I argue the neoliberalization of housing policy renders Housing First providers in U.S. cities dependent on private landlords in urban rental markets. Private landlords are interest-based stakeholders who adopt monetary and nonmonetary criteria to select tenants who maximize profit by minimizing enforcement costs. Housing First providers function as real estate marketers who navigate this constraint by presenting homeless clients as opportunities for landlords to reduce risk while growing profits. Frontline workers sell Housing First as guaranteed rent that is secured by a professional social worker who enforces lease compliance by the tenant. To landlords renting units at the bottom of urban housing markets, whose tenants often struggle to pay rent, publicly subsidized property management differentiates Housing First recipients from unsubsidized lease applicants. Marketing Housing First as a free property management service delineates unrecognized economic functions of contemporary homeless services.

The fourth article of this dissertation asks: How do Housing First recipients articulate their housing needs? What institutional constraints hinder the satisfaction of these needs? How do Housing First providers convince clients to accept unsuitable accommodation? I argue Housing First providers are informal real estate agents who help service recipients navigate stratified housing markets. Housing First recipients identify neighborhood and unit characteristics that they need to recover from a life-threatening trauma. Federal lawmakers facilitate this access to permanent housing funding case management and rental subsidies. Simultaneously, federal authorities constrain access to suitable housing by relying on private landlords, allocating paltry rent subsidies, and limiting search time in stratified private rental markets. Housing First case managers are responsible for disciplining clients to accept available units. To this end, service providers use four techniques to produce transactionable subjectivities: conditioning, internalizing, projecting, and resisting. Each technique coerces service recipients to accept unsuitable housing in concentrated poverty.

The fifth chapter of this dissertation asks: How do Housing First case managers discipline housed clients? How do the disciplinary interventions of Housing First case managers impact urban political economies? I provide evidence that Housing First case managers use four techniques to consumerise the unsheltered poor: observation, motivation, embodiment, and disenfranchisement. Housing First case managers collect information about service recipients through various sources that they use to encourage and demonstrate lease compliance. If Housing First recipients reject soft interventions, then case managers use hard interventions that goad conformity by restricting individual liberty.

My findings contribute to urban sociological debates in several ways. First, I present novel qualitative data of institutional processes that frontline workers use to govern urban homelessness. My data illuminates a number of empirical black boxes created by past research (see Hennigan 2017; Stuart 2016; Osbourne 2019). Second, I extend urban sociology by nesting homeless services in macropolitical context. This identifies a key stakeholder that determines the form and function of homeless case management. Rather than merely delivering support, Housing First providers procure returns on homeless policy for federal policymakers by providing publicly subsidized real estate and property management services. Third, I demonstrate that, in addition to promoting economic growth through the seclusion of homeless bodies from prime spaces (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019b), homeless service providers promote urban revitalization by fortifying local housing markets. Highly segregated housing markets contribute to homelessness by isolating marginalized groups from economic opportunities (Massey and Denton 1993). Housing First is a demand-side intervention that accommodates rather than challenges residential segregation. Consequently, Housing First case managers reproduce material conditions that marginalize the urban poor. Lastly, this research challenges the legitimacy of Housing First as a model of homeless services in American cities. Advocates have praised Housing First as a progressive homeless policy that alone can end homelessness. My findings question this claim by highlighting the limitation of using a demand-side intervention to address homelessness in a stratified housing market. Integrated social housing is a supply-side intervention needed to prevent chronic homelessness in American cities.

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Article 1

"I'm Sorry That We Missed You": The Problem of Place in Homeless Street Outreach

Abstract: Urban scholars have long debated the nature of contemporary homeless services. Theorization of homeless services must consider the range of actors who deliver assistance. Past research has neglected the role of street outreach workers in delivering homeless services. In the United States, street outreach teams are vital members of poverty governance coalitions who connect homeless individuals to housing assistance through coordinated entry: a federally mandated rationing system that prioritizes housing assistance based on "need." To the extent that urban scholars have examined street outreach teams, spatial constraints that impede the classification, prioritization, and referral of homeless individuals to housing assistance has been ignored. This is a notable shortcoming because locating homeless individuals is essential to entering permanent housing through coordinated entry. I present an ethnographic study that help to address this knowledge gap. I demonstrate street outreach workers rely on a diverse network to locate and integrate homeless individuals into coordinated entry; conduct assessments in public spaces that risk the privacy, safety, and liberty of service recipients; and confront structural barriers that impede transitions into permanent housing. My findings detail unique problems that homeless service providers confront while using federal institutions to help the urban poor access permanent housing.

Introduction

Literal homelessness is a stable characteristic of U.S. cities in the neoliberal era (Willse 2015). Deindustrialization, welfare retrenchment, and urban revitalization eroded the middle class while reducing housing assistance to accommodate rent inflation. By the 1980s, street homelessness dispersed across urban landscapes as institutional authorities managed the growing crisis (Wolch and Dear 1993). Local governments adopted "broken windows" policing and "quality-of-life" ordinances to stimulate economic growth (Mitchell 2003). Criminalization of homelessness coincided with rehabilitation as the "shadow state" administered supportive services (Wolch 1990). The federal government designed homeless assistance programs to standardize services throughout the nation (Willse 2015). Although the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) experimented with different service modalities, street homelessness remains a visible feature of urban poverty in U.S. cities (Stuart 2016; Herring 2019a).

Two service models have informed homeless assistance in U.S. cities: Treatment First and Housing First (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016). Federal authorities initially used the logic of "Treatment First" to design homeless policy. Treatment First conceptualizes homelessness as an individual problem whose transcendence requires personal change. To produce personal changes that thwart episodic homelessness, Treatment First promotes a "stairstep" service model through which homeless individuals demonstrate "housing readiness" as they receive independent accommodation over time. Housing advocates criticized Treatment First as an ineffective drain on public expenditures. From their perspective, homelessness is an initial barrier that must be overcome for service recipients to make advancements in self-sufficiency. By the 21st-century, federal authorities experimented with "Housing First" as a model for homeless services. Housing First conceptualizes homelessness as an individual problem whose amelioration requires immediate permanent supportive without preconditions such sobriety, employment, or treatment. After experimental researchers demonstrated Housing First as a cost-effective means to end chronic homelessness, federal authorities selected Housing First as the hegemonic model for organizing homeless services in cities across the country.

Policymakers have instituted "coordinated entry" to regulate access to Housing First. Coordinated entry is "a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017a: 4). This system has four components: access, assessment, prioritization, and referral. Frontline workers assess individuals who present at the access point(s), prioritize them for homeless services, and refer them to emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, or Housing First.[6] At the time of this study, HUD prioritized Housing First for people experiencing "chronic" homelessness.[7] HUD mandated each Continuum of Care to select a standardized assessment tool that prioritized Housing First assistance for different tiers of chronic homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017b). HUD granted each Continuum of Care discretion to select an assessment tool that prioritized assistance according to its goals. In short, access to federal homeless assistance is mediated by coordinated entry and allocated based on priorities set by institutional elites.

To date, urban sociologists have produced little knowledge about the delivery of Housing First through coordinated entry. I present an ethnographic case study of homeless street outreach

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[6] Rapid rehousing is a temporary housing subsidy with wraparound services that lasts 3–24 months.

[7] HUD defines chronic homelessness as twelve months of street homelessness by somebody who possesses a clinically diagnosed disability (Federal Register 2015).

to make three contributions that address this shortcoming. First, I provide a rare analysis of techniques that street outreach workers use to classify homeless contacts with categories invented by federal authorities. This research extends scholarly knowledge by probing the problem(s) that urban poverty creates for homeless service providers as they navigate this novel constraint (see Osbourne 2019; Snow and Anderson 2018). Second, I contribute to urban sociology by examining myriad sources of information that street outreach workers use to enter homeless individuals into coordinated entry. This extends past research by analyzing ways homeless service providers use spatial information provided by local stakeholders (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019; Stuart 2016). Third, I examine structural barriers that impede objectification: the production of knowledge about local homelessness. In this regard, I analyze problems that policy, place, and poverty create for street outreach workers as they provide coordinated entry. My findings demonstrate professional street outreach workers are institutionally constrained agents who yield returns on homeless policy by producing poverty knowledge to efficiently allocate supportive services based on criteria selected by federal authorities.

Literature Review

Urban scholars have contested the form of power that frontline workers use to govern homelessness in neoliberal cities. On one side of the debate, scholars argue homeless governance is an act of *reductive* power that controls homeless individuals through punitive interventions. Past research demonstrates institutional authorities use punitive measures to remove homeless individuals from urban spaces (Herring 2019; Hennigan and Speer 2019; Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996), coerce emergency service utilization (Johnsen and Fitzgerald 2010; Stuart 2016), and locate homeless individuals for engagement by social service providers (Clarke and Parsell

2019). On the other side of the debate, scholars argue contemporary homeless governance is an act of *productive* power that exercises control through the formation of self-governing actors. Past research demonstrates institutional authorities use disciplinary interventions to transform homeless bodies into obedient workers (Lyon-Callo 2004), tenants (Hennigan 2017), shelter residents (Evans 2011), and citizens (Whiteford 2010).

Homeless service providers exercise reductive *and* productive power while delivering case management. For example, service providers exercise reductive power by imposing conditions on assistance that force rehabilitation (Bowpitt et al., 2014; Mahoney, 2019; Quirouette, 2016), relying on coercive technologies such as CCTV to engage homeless individuals in emergency services (Clarke and Parsell 2019), and partnering with police officers to compel emergency service utilization (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Stuart 2016). In addition, homeless service providers exercise productive power by employing user fees to discipline soup kitchen patrons (Whiteford 2010), “vulnerability indexes” to prioritize homeless individuals for permanent housing (Osbourne 2019), and motivational interviewing to discipline Housing First recipients who violate their lease obligations (Hennigan 2017). This research demonstrates homeless service providers are pragmatic agents who adjust their techniques of power to varying contexts to provide support and/or promote urban revitalization (see Johnsen, Fitzgerald, and Watts 2018).

Urban scholars have devoted limited attention to the institutional “products” that homeless service providers create while disciplining the unsheltered poor. Baker, Evans, and Hennigan (2020) argue institutional elites have transformed U.S. homeless policy into a social investment that promotes long-term economic growth by producing independent market participants who limit their consumption of emergency services. Unlike social welfarism, which promoted housing security for the urban poor by building public accommodation that weakened private landlords, and neoliberalism, which discouraged government dependency through welfare retrenchment, social investment promotes housing insecurity through targeted assistance that bolsters private landlords through the consumerisation of homeless service recipients (see Hemerijck 2013; Laruffa 2018).[8] To this end, federal authorities contract frontline workers to discipline homeless service recipients into responsible rental market consumers who grow rather than shrink landlord profits. The transformation of homeless policy into a social investment has rendered professional outreach workers agents of the state who procure returns for policymakers by delivering services in American cities (see Snow and Anderson 2018).

Baker et al. (2020) argue poverty knowledge is essential to making investments on homeless policy. Poverty knowledge entails the *objectification* of homeless bodies. Baker et al. define objectification as a sociological process that produces scientific definitions, typologies, enumerations, and knowledge of homeless "populations." Policymakers mandate Continuum of Care grantees to conduct biannual point-in-time counts that produce census data on literal homelessness. Continuum of Care providers enter that data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Analysts use HMIS data to generate knowledge about homeless populations. Federal policymakers use that information to make social investments through homeless policy (Willse 2015). Baker et al. theorize macro-objectification by institutional elites who partition the U.S. homeless population into subcategories. While that level of analysis captures important actions by policymakers, Baker et al. overlook techniques that frontline workers use to objectify homeless individuals while mediating transitions into permanent

[8] I define "consumerisation" as a disciplinary process that produces basic capacities for a subject to independently participate in market exchanges as a customer.

housing. As a result, urban scholars lack knowledge of techniques that homeless service providers use to materialize abstractions invented by institutional elites.

In addition, neglect of micro-objectification hinders scholars from understanding the delivery of homeless services in various types of urban space. Smith and Anderson (2018) demonstrate street outreach workers produce poverty knowledge to determine the eligibility of homeless contacts for permanent housing assistance. Osbourne (2019) indicates the implicit biases of emergency shelter providers mediate access to permanent housing through coordinated entry. Smith, Anderson, and Osbourne ignore constraints that street outreach workers navigate while producing poverty knowledge in decentralized public spaces. Past research indicates police officers give social workers spatial information about local homelessness (Hennigan and Speer 2019), the concentration of homeless individuals in marginal spaces enables police officers to produce spatial knowledge for social workers (Stuart 2016), and complaints from local residents produce spatial information that police officers pass along to service providers (Herring 2019b). Urban scholars have overlooked the impact of place on poverty knowledge creation by street outreach workers. To produce poverty knowledge through coordinated entry, street outreach workers must locate a hidden population who is constantly being displaced (Herring 2019a). The salience of place and poverty knowledge to contemporary homeless governance means scholarly neglect of micro-objectification by street outreach workers is a notable gap that needs to be addressed.

I address this shortcoming by examining techniques of objectification that street outreach workers use to deliver homeless services in a highly segregated post-industrial county. A street outreach worker is an access point to coordinated entry who conducts vulnerability assessments, prioritizes assistance, and refers homeless contacts to services. HUD mandates street outreach workers conduct vulnerability assessments with a standardized tool. The Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Tool (VI-SPDAT) is a popular instrument that frontline workers use to assess and prioritize homeless contacts for emergency services (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2015). Items on the VI-SPDAT probe a respondent's homeless history, household income, emergency service utilization, criminal justice entanglements, mental health, and physical health. After a respondent answers the questions, the street outreach worker calculates a score that ranges 0–17. A participant who scores 0–3 is ineligible for housing assistance, 4–8 is referred to rapid rehousing, and 9–17 is referred to Housing First.[9] HUD's endorsement of the VI-SPDAT reflects the hegemony of investment logic. Although the VI-SPDAT includes items regarding exposure to predation, it also measures the burden that a respondent imposes on public expenditures and urban revitalization. Thus, it can be argued that VI-SPDAT scores in part measure the degree to which an individual's homelessness costs the state more than subsidized housing.

How do street outreach workers produce knowledge about homeless individuals? What barriers impede the construction of poverty knowledge? I argue federal policymakers have transformed homeless service providers into quasi-methodologists who yield returns on social investment by producing poverty knowledge. Unlike emergency shelter providers, who can access private spaces to objectify homeless individuals in a centralized location, street outreach workers create poverty knowledge in decentralized locations where the place of homelessness is in constant flux. As a result, street outreach workers develop network ties, including emergency service hotline operators, law enforcement officers, professional social workers, charity

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[9] Rapid rehousing is a temporary housing assistance with wraparound services that lasts between 3–24 months depending on the providers.

organizations, elected officials, and un/housed individuals, to collect spatial information about the evolving place of homelessness in their city. After locating a contact, street outreach workers must secure a place to conduct an assessment. Assessments in public space can mark contacts as homeless, thereby exposing them to arrest, violence, and/or exploitation. Myriad spatial factors can impede objectification. First, decentralized engagement strains rapport needed to extract personal data. Second, spatial information gaps prevent outreach workers from locating homeless individuals to collect data. Third, decentralized assessments generate measurement errors that deprioritize homeless contacts for emergency services. My findings extend urban scholarship by identify constraints that street outreach workers navigate while yielding returns on homeless policy through coordinated entry.

Data & Methods

I conducted this research in a large, racially hypersegregated, post-industrial Rust Belt county. Since the 1970s, Springfield County experienced a dramatic decline in its manufacturing sector (see Wilson 1987). White suburbanization simultaneously generated hypersegregation, thereby creating a spatial mismatch that largely separated people of color from high-wage employment (see Massey and Denton 1993). Poverty enveloped minority neighborhoods in Springfield County's central city. Local government responded with mass incarceration that integrated State surveillance into the daily lives of communities of color (see Wacquant 2009). Intra-metropolitan competition for high-income households dissuaded local governments from investing in supportive services such as affordable housing stock expansion (see Peterson 1981). In short, Springfield County experienced the macro-structural characteristics that urban scholars have documented in Rust Belt cities during the neoliberal era.

Springfield County's housing market poorly accommodated these macro-structural conditions. Less than 10% of the county's rental stock rented units below $500 (United States Census Bureau 2018). Roughly 65% of households earning 30% of area median income devoted 50% or more of their wages to rent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017). Local housing authorities offered meager assistance to reduce cost burden. Springfield County's public housing stock decreased from 5,000 units in the year 2000 to under 2,750 units in 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). Over the past ten years, average wait time for Section 8 rental assistance oscillated between approximately twenty and twenty-five months (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). As a result, 1-in-1,000 Springfield County residents experienced homelessness in 2018. Over 50% of Springfield County's homeless population identified as Black. Only 10% of this population qualified as chronically homeless (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019b). This means 90% of Springfield County's homeless population was ineligible for CoC assistance.

In this context, frontline workers delivered homeless services through coordinated entry. HUD grants each Continuum of Care bounded discretion to choose organizational goals, access point structure, and standardized assessment tools (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017b). At the time of this study, Springfield County's Continuum of Care prioritized chronically homeless individuals for emergency services. To this end, the Continuum of Care adopted a "No Wrong Door" access point model that enabled homeless individual to enter coordinated entry through any members of the Continuum of Care. This policy allowed emergency shelter providers, street outreach workers, and 211 staff to be conduits for coordinated entry.[10] Each service provider used the VI-SPDAT to assess the vulnerability of

[10] Federal authorities finance "211" for citizens to access local services.

homeless individuals who presented at an access point. Each street outreach worker functioned as an access point provider who conducted assessments in public spaces. Outreach worker entered this information into HMIS to prioritize Housing First assistance for chronically homeless individuals based on their estimated vulnerability.

Four professional outreach teams were contracted by the federal government to deliver homeless services on the street. Three outreach teams—PO1, PO2, and PO3—belonged to separate nonprofit organizations. Springfield County's Housing Authority administered the fourth outreach team, PO4. Despite residency in different organizations, outreach teams coordinated with one another to deliver services at different times of the day. PO1 performed outreach early-morning a few days a week, PO2 performed outreach in the afternoon, PO3 performed youth outreach in the afternoon, and PO4 performed outreach in the late-evening. Professional outreach workers partnered with voluntary organizations—VO1, VO2, and VO3—to objectify homeless individuals. Volunteer groups independently distributed essential goods such as food, blankets, clothing, and tents directly to homeless individuals. In addition, volunteer groups provided homeless individuals information about local services they could use to access permanent housing. Together, professional and volunteer outreach workers were the initial points of contact for many homeless individuals in Springfield County.

I used three sources of data to conduct this analysis. First, I conducted a yearlong ethnographic study of coordinated entry in a large Rust Belt county. I accessed Springfield County's coordinated entry system by contacting its director, Heidi, for permission to conduct observations.[11] Heidi permitted me to observe 211-operators screening homeless people with the

[11] To gain access, I had to promise gatekeepers that a pseudonym would be used to protect their identity from local and federal authorities.

VI-SPDAT and referrals to Housing First programs at closed-door housing placement meetings. I connected with the program supervisors of street outreach team at housing placement meetings. After observing housing placement meetings for four months, I requested permission to observe their case management team members conduct outreach. I conducted participant observation of street outreach for nine months. I joined outreach teams fifteen times. Outreach lasted between three and five hours.

Second, I conducted twenty-six in-depth interviews with coordinated entry providers. I requested interviews with program supervisors who attended housing placement meetings and contact information for the outreach workers who they managed. I recruited two coordinated entry staff members, eight program supervisors, and sixteen bridge case managers. Twenty-one participants identified as female (81%), 15% (4) identified as male, and 4% (1) identified as non-binary. Twenty-one were young (46%) to middle-aged (35%); however, 19% (5) were over 56 years old. Approximately 81% (21) of the sample identified as White, 12% (3) identified as Black, and 4% (1) identified as Hispanic. Half of respondents had a master's degree, 46% (12) had a bachelor's degree, and 4% (1) had an associate degree. About 35% (9) reported 1–5 years of experience in homeless services, 35% (9) reported 6–10 years, 15% (4) reported 11–15 years, 12% (3) reported 16–20 years, and 4% (1) reported over 21 years.

Third, I conducted thirty-one in-depth interviews with sixteen housed and fifteen unhoused service recipients.[12] I used two methods to recruit service recipients into the study. First, I requested client referrals from Housing First program supervisors and case managers. Next, I distributed flyers at local meal sites that Housing First recipients frequented for lunch and

[12] Housed respondents had transitioned from homelessness into permanent housing through Housing First. Unhoused respondents had accessed bridge case management to eventually transition into permanent housing through Housing First.

dinner. I included Housing First clients because their lived experiences provided valuable insight into contradictions related to the matching process. About 58% (18) of this sample identified as black, 39% (12) identified as White, and 3% (1) Hispanic. An overwhelming proportion of this sample identified as male (74%) while 26% (8) identified as female. Approximately 13% (4) of respondents were young (18–35), 58% (18) were middle-aged (36–55), and 23% (7) were over 56 years old. About 52% (16) of housed respondents were master lease recipients and 48% (15) were voucher recipients.

I conducted in-depth interviews with a recording device at locations selected by respondents. Each interview and focus group ranged 30–90 minutes; however, most lasted approximately one hour. I created a semi-structured interview guide that was used for each interview and focus group to ensure comparable responses. I encouraged all focus group members to participate by providing time for each respondent to answer questions and requesting input from quiet attendees. Once completed, audio recordings were transcribed and analyzed using MAXQDA software. I used coding methods derived from grounded theory to analyze the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I initially open coded all data to identify emergent themes. Reflecting on these categories, I returned to scholarly literature to theoretically situate the case study. After identifying the theme of stigma resistance, I used theoretical coding to organize existing codes into higher order categories that structure this paper.

A few limitations should be noted. First, this is a single case study conducted in a highly segregated rental nested within a liberal welfare regime. The service eligibility criteria, mode of service access, and range of service options is specific to this case. As a result, the transferability of this findings to cases outside the U.S.A. might be limited. Second, constraints imposed by program supervisors prevented consistent access to street outreach teams. Two professional outreach teams only permitted me to join once. The other two professional outreach teams allowed me to conduct observations one time per month. As a result, this data analysis lacks attention to the formation of relationships and processing of homeless people throughout each stage of coordinated entry. Third, although I conducted observations and/or interviews with two volunteer outreach teams, I was unable to collect data from other stakeholders who report information about homelessness to the professional street outreach teams. I will return to each of these points in the conclusion when I discuss directions for future research.

Findings

A street outreach worker was often the first point of contact who entered a homeless individual into coordinated entry. Unlike emergency shelter providers, whose clients were housed in a single location, street outreach workers combed urban landscapes to locate and objectify people whose survival depended on being invisible. To this end, street outreach teams created network ties to locate homeless individuals on the street, objectify homeless individuals by conducting in/formal assessments, and maneuvering structural constraints that thwarted objectification.

Network Ties

Osbourne (2019) analyzes techniques that emergency shelter providers use to transition residents into permanent housing through coordinated entry. An emergency shelter is a centralized space that facilitates objectification by eliminating the problem of place. In Springfield County, two factors thwarted access to emergency shelters. A limited supply of emergency shelter beds abandoned most homeless individuals to the street. A subset of homeless rejected available shelter slots to avoid restrictions imposed by service providers. Displacement defined the experience of many homeless individuals who were left on the street. As a result, street outreach workers established network ties to produce spatial knowledge about the location of homeless contacts throughout Springfield County.

To illustrate, Springfield County's shelter system did not accommodate demand for emergency services. A limited supply of shelter beds meant, on any given night, a proportion of Springfield's homeless population slept on the street. For example, I met Matt at a meal site where he ate lunch every day. During an interview, Matt, a registered sex offender, described barriers he confronted while accessing emergency shelter:

> I called 211. They said, "Go to the [Coalition for the Homeless]." I walked in there, they ran my name and said, "I'm sorry, but you can't stay here because of your background." I said, "No problem." They said, "You can go up on the street next of [Porchlight]." And I walked in there and he says, "Right now we are full." I said, "Okay." They said, "When we get available rooms, we will call you." And I've been waiting, waiting, waiting.

The emergency shelter system could not accommodate Kurt. Rule restrictions at one shelter barred access to an available bed while supply limitations prevented access to another. As a result, Kurt slept in a small encampment along a riverbank. In another incident, I observed a black mother of four children be denied access to emergency shelter on the basis of supply limitations:

> Susan, Claudia, and I spot a black mother with her four female children huddled around a small fire beneath a pedestrian bridge that crosses a river. Susan asks the mother, Pam, for information about her homelessness. Pam explains that she is escaping domestic violence. Susan calls 211 to inquire about shelter beds. An operator connects Susan to a family shelter that declines Pam because they would

> have to place multiple cots in one room. As we walk away, Susan says, "[They] said their third shift worker can't do an intake and there's not enough beds for that family. They're sleeping on concrete!"

That said, a subset of homeless individuals rejected available shelter beds because the rules limited personal freedom. A Housing First recipient, Curtis, explained his reasons for rejecting emergency shelter slots while he was homeless:

> They wouldn't allow us drinking. And I just wanted to be alone. I didn't want to be by anybody. I'll be drunk and they're like, 'Sir, you can't come in here when you're drunk. Okay. Come back tomorrow.' You know, just too many rules. Be back at a certain time, ten o'clock or you got to sleep outside.

Each excerpt demonstrates supply limitations and/or agency rules barred access to emergency shelter for a proportion of homeless individuals. Restrictive rules rendered shelter access tenuous as providers regularly banned patrons for violating protocols. A shelter ban varied from one night to indefinite prohibition. Roughly 20% of Springfield County's homeless contacts slept on the street at the time of this study.[13] As a result, street outreach teams functioned as mobile access points to coordinated entry who had to locate homeless contacts on the streets of Springfield County.

Place is problematic when locating a hidden population in urban landscapes. To find homeless contacts, street outreach workers recruited myriad stakeholders into their governing coalition. Local policy entrepreneurs built this partnership while integrating Housing First into Springfield County's homeless service system. By institutionalizing a new governmentality, advocates motivated interest groups to use inclusionary rather than exclusionary methods of

[13] Estimate calculated from Springfield County's Point-in-Time count.

governing homelessness. Mike, a homeless advocate who spearheaded Housing First integration in Springfield County, described barriers he confronted while promoting Housing First and tactics his team used to navigate these constraints:

> In a free market system, anything that disrupts someone's capital is an issue, so speaking that language helped immensely. Business owners had concerns, local alderman, county supervisors, you name it. It wasn't that people were mad, they were just very skeptical. It took a good six months of taking our show on the road. Then after, I think, [Todd] put together our first snapshot of data. We were able then to take that around to different stakeholders. I think that really nailed the coffin and that they saw how it was working.

I followed up this statement with the question, "What data did you use to sell the efficacy of this policy to skeptics?" Mike explained:

> For downtown folks, the biggest one was municipal citations. We juxtaposed 12 months prior to going into housing to 12 months post housing. We looked at the amount of citations we received a year prior to being in our program. Then, the amount of citations they received after being in our program for a year. There was a 90% decrease. We also did that with behavioral health services. We looked at detox, crisis mobile calls, inpatient stays. We saw a cost savings of $700,000. Not only did that seal the deal with law enforcement and business and certain areas of town, but also with healthcare folks.

Mike recruited stakeholders by citing the economic benefits of decriminalizing homelessness. Mike's team produced poverty knowledge that demonstrated inclusionary rather than exclusionary interventions created outcomes desired by key stakeholders. Mike used investment logic to convince stakeholders criminalization created housing barriers, such as criminal convictions and municipal fines, that perpetuated problems they tried to solve through the criminal justice system. Transition to Housing First, Mike argued, was a prudent social investment that created collective benefits in the future that superseded immediate gains from criminalization. Decriminalization rendered street outreach teams an essential contact for local authorities to manage homeless individuals. As a result, street outreach teams became members of Springfield County's growth machine who received spatial information from myriad stakeholders that specified the evolving location of homelessness. In this regard, outreach workers functioned as a humanistic face of urban renewal that relied on soft rather than hard power to manage the visibility of urban poverty (see Johnsen, Fitzgerald, and Watts 2018).

I observed street outreach workers use information from network ties to locate homeless individuals. Public officials provided data on the location of homelessness. Patrol officers spotted homeless individuals while patrolling neighborhoods and receiving complaints from housed residents. Police relayed this information to street outreach teams. For example, during my pilot research, I attended outreach coalition meetings where an officer liaison notified attendees of aggressive panhandling that had been reported by a business improvement district. I observed service providers answer police notifications during street outreach:

> SPD sent Lucy an email specifying the locations of two complaints related to homelessness. Lucy says, "We have eastside and southside. So, we could do the 2 SPD calls: 17 E. [Erlich] and 17 E. [Williams]." As we approach, Lucy says, "I think it's the first block on the left." Lucy reads the directions, "This is saying, 'South of 17 E. [Williams] by a bike path. PD reports that a homeowner reports some guy sleeping in this area.'"

The Springfield County Police Department (SPD) sent Lucy an email specifying the location of homelessness. After receiving a complaint from a housed resident, SPD sent street outreach workers an email that specified the location of a homeless contact with whom we followed up. Elected officials also notified outreach workers about the location of homeless individuals. Mike frequently received complaints from city alderman and county supervisors about disturbances from people on the street:

> I get a lot of emails from alderman, county supervisors, businesses, and they're always very interesting in how they talk about the homeless population. I don't think they necessarily always recognize how ridiculous they sound.

I followed up with the question, "What do you they say?" Mike answered:

> Like, there was some people sitting on the bench and in one of the email threads I was forwarded, it was like, 'People have to eat there. Urinating on the picnic tables. Children play in those areas. Like, this isn't what we want our city to look like."

Each excerpt demonstrated public officials disseminated spatial information about homelessness to street outreach workers. As a member of the Springfield County growth machine, street outreach teams were points of contact who mediated conflict between public officials and the urban poor. If the presence of homeless individuals impeded capital accumulation or threatened quality-of-life for housed residents, then public officials contacted street outreach teams with spatial information to enter them into coordinated entry.

Local nonprofit organizations shared information about the location of homeless contacts. In Springfield County, homeless individuals contacted 211 to be documented as literally homeless by a street outreach team. A 211 operator, Shona, created a contact list of homeless individuals who requested verification after being denied or refusing emergency shelter. Shona forwarded this list to outreach workers who followed up during their late-evening or early-morning outreach. This list included the name, location, and, if possible, phone number of homeless individuals so outreach workers could verify them on the street:

> As Sarah, Tina, and I drive to the first location, Tina asks Sarah, "Anyone from the 211 list that struck our fancy?" Sarah pulls out the list while she's driving, "There's a senior, [Mike Rubles], at [Eola Park]. That sounds familiar. Sarah reads the location description from the 211 email, "He sleeps on the entertainment stage in [Eola Park]." We do not find [Mike] at [Eola Park]. As we drive to the next location, Sarah calls the next person on the 211 list, "Hello, this is [Sarah] from [Porchlight]. We are out this morning. If you would like us to stop and see you, please call me or text me. Bye." Sarah turns to Tina, "We didn't find this in [Eola Park], but they have a phone."

Sarah and Tina used the 211 email to organize morning outreach. An operator aggregated a list of homeless individuals who requested verification the previous day. Shona forwarded this list to Sarah and Tina. The email usually included the name, location, and phone number of each caller. In this regard, 211 mediated self-referrals by relaying information to outreach workers about the approximate location of homeless individuals. In addition, professional outreach workers relied on one another for spatial information about their clients:

> We approach a White man laying down under a tree. As Pedro introduces us, the man interrupts, "I know who you are. [Jon] is supposed to look out for me to find a place." Pedro asks the man for his first and last name. The man says his name is Terry Pennington. Pedro explains, "I think we'll touch base with [Jon] to see what

> he's doing for you. Do you usually just sleep out here in the park every night?" Terry nods his head. Pedro asks, "If you're not in the park, where are you?" Terry says he goes to a campsite around [Evanston]. Pedro says he knows where that is located, "So, if I told [Jon] that you stay here would you be okay if he came to find you?" Terry nods his head.

Pressure to be invisible and cellphone disconnection meant outreach workers often lost contact with homeless individuals. If outreach workers approached someone they did not recognize, they asked, "Are you working with anyone to get inside?" If a homeless contact identified a case manager, then outreach workers updated them on the new whereabouts of their client. Professional street outreach teams also relied on secular and religious volunteer groups for spatial information about local homelessness. Voluntary organizations conducted multiple outreaches per week. Each group collected information about the location of homelessness that they relayed to professional street outreach teams. Tara, an outreach program supervisor, described a shared electronic database that allowed volunteer groups to produce spatial knowledge about homelessness:

> [Tom] from street outreach is actually a part of [VO1]. We work a lot with [Heather] from [VO2] too. These private organizations are really important and that's why [GIS location system] was created. [GIS location system] is like our professional providers can enter into that for tracking purposes. I went on an overnight shift with [Alex] and they have gang rescue and they've sex work rescue. We met with all these females and they're all considered category four. [Alex] is like, "I see these women and I know they're chronic." Then we're like, [GIS location system].

Each excerpt demonstrated coordination between nonprofit organizations to locate homeless individuals in the urban landscape. This evidence indicates manifold functions served by street outreach teams. On the one hand, outreach workers coordinated with nonprofit organizations to yield return on social investments for institutional elites. On the other hand, outreach workers coordinated with nonprofit organizations to deliver supportive services to homeless individuals who requested assistance. Thus, street outreach workers simultaneously served supportive, political, and economic functions as they responded to local demands.

That said, outreach workers identified the location of homelessness directly from housed residents. Above, Lucy received spatial information from housed residents filtered through local the law enforcement department. Housed residents that outreach workers encountered on the street located homeless individuals in public spaces. For example, Pedro, Todd, and I obtained information one evening about people sleeping in a park from two men drinking—Fred and James—on a wooden bench:

> We arrive at the southside park that SPD asked us to canvas after a homeless person was murdered. Pedro spots somebody at a picnic table. He turns to Todd, "Want to talk to him?" Todd nods his head as we park the SUV and walk towards the man on the bench. We give a large black guy a bottle of water. Todd introduces us, "We're doing homeless outreach." The guy, Fred, slurs his speech while inquiring our knowledge of the Bible. As we talk to Fred, a short White man, James, approaches us at the bench. After both men identified as housed, Pedro asks if they had seen any homeless people sleeping in the par. James points in the distance, "There's a guy there. There's another guy right there. And there's another one right over there."

Pedro, Todd, and I initially thought Fred and James were unhoused. After determining their housing status, Pedro asked the men if they had seen anyone sleeping in the park. James pointed out three spots where he had seen someone sleeping that evening. In addition, street outreach workers serendipitously found homeless individuals panhandling on the street:

> We are driving to the next spot when we pull up to someone panhandling at a traffic light. Stephanie rolls down her window and stops beside the man, "Hello, how are you? Just checking on people. We're out doing outreach. Are you staying outside right now?" The guy nods his head, "Yeah." Stephanie asks, "Do you have any interest working on some housing? Are you working with anyone?" The guy said, "Not right now." Stephanie asks, "Would you like to get connected?" The guy nods his head while shrugging his shoulders, "Sure."

Each excerpt demonstrated street outreach workers independently identify homeless individuals while canvasing urban spaces. Through this method, outreach workers added clients to their caseload. Outreach workers exchanged contact information and scheduled a date to conduct an assessment. Entering their new client's information into HMIS notified colleagues that this homeless individual had been assigned a case manager.

Assessment

After solving the spatial problem, street outreach workers collected information to objectify homeless contacts. The VI-SPDAT is a technology that homeless service providers use to obtain personal data. HUD advises, "The coordinated entry process must ensure adequate privacy protections are extended to and enforced for all participants from the first point of access, through assessment and prioritization… The collection and disclosure of participant data [must] always be managed in a manner that ensures privacy [and] provides participants choice about what and how to share their information." (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017b: 17). Unlike emergency shelter providers, who could assess clients in private spaces that afforded control over personal data (Osbourne 2019), street outreach workers collected information in public spaces where the privacy of homeless contacts was compromised. This implies coordinated entry reduced future economic risk for the state by imposing risk on people suffering homelessness.

To illustrate, street outreach workers extracted sensitive information from homeless contacts they met on the street. In this regard, outreach workers approached unfamiliar people in secluded public spaces to conduct a VI-SPDAT screening. Homelessness is a traumatic experience that puts displaced individuals on constant guard against threat. As a result, street outreach workers cautiously presented themselves as a benevolent stranger. For example, Pedro announced himself as a homeless outreach worker while approaching encampments:

> We take off to the first location that is a tent posted under an overpass. Upon arrival, Pedro announces, "Homeless outreach. Anyone here?"

To encourage participation, outreach workers established legitimacy by satisfying immediate needs. Dana offered homeless individuals a snack before conducting an assessment:

> We arrive at the next location. Dana approaches a man, "Good morning. Homeless outreach. Are you okay? Do you want something to eat?" The man nods his head, "Please." We get him lunch and coffee. Dana asks, "What's going on?" while instructing me to fetch her iPad from the SUV. Upon my return, Dana asks the man, "Have you ever been in the shelter system?"

Todd gained cooperation by presenting himself as a means to escape homelessness:

> Todd and I see two homeless people at [Lowery] Park. We stop the SUV to engage them. As we approach, Todd says, "Hey, good evening. We're just doing some outreach. Don't mean to disturb. My name is [Todd]. We're just coming around to check on people making sure they're okay. It's also my job to help people get off the streets."

Each episode demonstrated techniques that outreach workers used to convince homeless contacts to participate in an assessment. Emergency shelter providers worked with people who voluntarily approached their agency for homeless services. As a result, emergency shelter case managers did not have to manage a stranger's fight-or-flight response in public spaces before requesting sensitive information. In contrast, outreach workers had to quickly establish their identity to homeless contacts whose protracted trauma evoked panic when uninvited strangers approached their campsite. Moreover, outreach workers convinced homeless contacts, who were often jaded by social services, that it was worth their time to participate in an assessment. If outreach workers could not solicit participation, then they notified colleagues of the person's location and collectively pressured assessment.

I observed street outreach workers formally administer a VI-SPDAT after they gained the confidence of homeless contacts. A subset of outreach workers immediately conducted VI-SPDAT screenings when they met somebody on the street. For example, Willow conducted a VI-SPDAT assessment on a man we found one morning in a public park:

> We approach a young White man who is sitting on a picnic bench under a pavilion. Willow asks the man's name. He says, "[Sonny]." Willow continues, "What's your last name?" Sonny says his last name is Robinson. Willow asks if it is okay for her to conduct a survey. Sonny nods his head. Willow pulls out her

> iPad while asking, “Would you like some coffee?” Sonny nods his head. I ask, “Would you like some cream and sugar?” Sonny nods his head before I go to the SUV to fetch his coffee. Upon return, I hear Willow ask Sonny if he has lived on the street for a long time; visited an emergency room or hospital; accessed emergency victim or psychiatric services; received move along orders from law enforcement; been institutionalized in a jail or detox; experienced physical assault while homeless; contemplated suicide; engaged in risky behavior such as drugs, sharing needles, or unprotected sex; or been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, mental illness, or learning disability. Sonny explains that he became homeless when fiancé kicked him out of the house. After becoming homeless, he got robbed in the park. Although Sonny has not engaged law enforcement while homeless, he is on probation and suffers from drug addiction. Sonny reports that he has not been diagnosed with HIV or mental illness but has a learning disability that prevented him from graduating high school.

Willow conducted this assessment at 7:30am in a public park while local residents jogged and walked their dogs before work. Willow and I approached Sonny in an SUV with a sticker on both sides that read, “Homeless Street Outreach.” This enabled pedestrians to mark Sonny as homeless, notify the police of his presence in the park, and subject him to probation violation. Moreover, the assessment requested sensitive information that pedestrians could overhear. Although HUD mandated street outreach as a component of coordinated entry, the use of outreach workers to conduct assessments jeopardized their privacy by exposing personal data to local residents.

On occasion, outreach workers shielded the privacy of homeless contacts by conducting VI-SPDAT screenings inside their SUV. For example, Dana, Sarah, and I approached a young White woman, Noleen, who we found walking through a McDonald's parking lot at 7:45am:

> Dana rolls down the window, "Hi, do you want a sandwich at all?" The woman replies, "Yes, please." I reach into the cooler beside me to pull out a paper bag. Dana asks me to get the woman coffee. I pour the coffee as Dana gets out of the car to speak to her, "So, have you ever been in the shelters before?" Dana continues the conversation inside the car because it's freezing cold outside, "We have a shelter call with 211 to try to help people get into [a local emergency shelter]." Dana explains that, in order to get Noleen into a shelter, she will need to complete a VI-SPDAT, "Did they ask you a bunch of questions on 211?" Noleen shakes her head as Kristi continues, "I can do it for you. It's called the VI-SPDAT."

Although Dana enhanced Noleen's privacy by administering the VI-SPDAT in a closed space, patrons and pedestrians could watch Noleen climb into a vehicle marked "Homeless Street Outreach." Past research demonstrates homeless women are frequent victims of physical and/or sexual assault (Jasinski, Mustaine, Weseley, and Wright 2010). Conducting a VI-SPDAT screening in a crowded parking lot enabled predators to identify Noleen as a potential victim. Hence, the quasi-private spaces available to street outreach workers lacked the privacy afforded emergency shelter providers who conducted assessments in closed-door settings.

In addition, street outreach workers also conducted informal assessments in public spaces. Participants integrated topics from the VI-SPDAT into their engagement with homeless contacts they met on the street. For example, Susan, Claudia, and I approached a middle-aged White man who panhandling one evening on the side of a busy highway:

> We see a White man panhandling on a street corner. Susan pulls up next to the man to ask him to meet us at the curb. We park the SUV as the man approaches the window. Susan offers him a snack before asking him to give Claudia his full name. The man says his name is Timothy Higgins. Claudia asks his date of birth. Timmy says his birthday is 3/02/59. Susan asks Timmy if he lives in Springfield, has any friends or family to live with, receives a monthly income, was recently employed, is interested in emergency shelter, has any physical or mental health problems. Timothy explains that he plans to reside in Springfield County; does not have friends, family, or income to access permanent housing; and has been diagnosed with diabetes and schizophrenia. Before Susan could finish her questions, Timothy abruptly dashes back to the street corner to panhandle cars stopping at the red light.

Susan and Claudia did not have time to complete this assessment. As a result, Timothy left before they could schedule a formal assessment at their office. In other instances, I observed outreach workers distribute contact information to schedule a formal assessment in a private setting:

> We drive to the Interstate overpass to speak to people living under the bridge. [Kate] approaches two men at the top of the overpass, "[Springfield County] Street Outreach." A large guy, Tomás, responds in a Spanish accent, "Hello." Kate asks how long the two men have lived under the bridge. Tomás explains they have lived under the bridge for two weeks. Kate if they are working with a

> housing case manager. Tomás, who is interpreting for his friend, says they do not have a case manager and would like to get rehoused; however, he fears his friend is ineligible for services because he is an undocumented immigrant. Kate asks if they would be willing to meet at her office to determine their eligibility, "We can set up a time. Are you usually here all day?" Tomás nods. Kate asks Lucy for a business card to jot down Tomás' phone number to assess him the following day.

Informal assessments revealed personal information in public spaces. Although Timothy marked himself as homeless by panhandling, Susan and Claudia requested personal information about his financial, relationship, and medical history on the side of a busy highway. Although Kate and Lucy scheduled a follow up meeting at their office to conduct a formal screening, they exposed a campsite to downtown pedestrians and revealed a contact's immigration status to others living under the bridge. Disclosing that information in public spaces exposes homeless contacts to violence, legal jeopardy, and/or exploitation by other people on the street.

Misclassification

Policy, poverty, and place impeded street outreach workers from objectifying homeless individuals. First, barriers to emergency shelter meant outreach workers developed rapport with homeless contacts across time and space. Service resistance prevented outreach workers from extracting personal information required to objectify homeless individuals. Second, street outreach workers confronted spatial information gaps that thwarted connection to homeless contacts who lived outside emergency shelters. Homeless contacts experienced frequent displacement. If a contact lacked resources to maintain cellphone connection, then street outreach workers could not find them for assessment. Third, street outreach workers encountered measurement errors by 211-operators. Misclassification could deprioritize somebody for homeless assistance. Each barrier reflected or created a spatial problem that could needlessly prolong an episode of homelessness if street outreach workers did not quickly solve it.

To illustrate, HUD requires personal information to access assistance through coordinated entry. To HUD bureaucrats, who understand and trust the system that they design and manage, giving personal information to an unfamiliar outreach worker is probably unthreatening. To homeless individuals, who have been abandoned by the welfare system, providing personal information to an unknown outreach worker on the street might seem pointlessly intrusive. Susan, for example, differentiated two types of homeless contacts she encountered on the street:

> [On one side of the spectrum], some are very open and appreciative and not very demanding and expecting a lot. Whether they never had experience being homeless before or with the system, and so they just have no expectations of what's available and who can help. Or, on the other end of the spectrum, people that have been homeless a long time and maybe didn't have good follow-up with people they were working with and just felt like nothing may come of this but whatever.

Paula theorized mistrust in the welfare system impeded street outreach:

> You have to understand that a lot of clients have been in the system, or had negative experiences with the system, some of them all their lives. If I grew up in foster care, I'm not going to like nobody that says social work. If my daddy or my man was on probation or parole, I'm not going to see nothing. The main thing we have to take into consideration, although we are providing services, these are

> people who haven't asked us for services. People don't want to come and ask for help. And then when they ask for help, they get attitude.

As a result, outreach workers, like Dana, accessed personal information by building rapport over time:

> I feel like it's important when we meet people outside that we earn their trust. I think it depends on each situation. Making sure you follow through if you have an appointment. Trying to meet their immediate needs. And then at that point looking at resolving the bigger picture of their homelessness.

However, Lucy identified problems that place created for rapport building:

> It's difficult for them to report honestly to those answers. It's fine to do when we know the person, the rapport is there. I don't even necessarily need to specifically ask those questions because I already know the answer. But someone that we find on the street and we have to ask those questions, that's difficult because it is very intimate things and I think they already think that they're being scrutinized by programs.

Building rapport established trust needed to extract personal information. Emergency shelters housed homeless individuals who are willing to engage service providers. As a result, this subset of Springfield County's homeless population is, for the most part, easier to engage. Moreover, emergency shelter residents are consistently engaged by service providers who can access myriad resources at a centralized facility. This enhanced the ability of shelter staff to build rapport with homeless contacts. In contrast, outreach workers were more likely to work with service resistant clients scattered across the urban landscape. This hindered outreach workers from building trust through repeated interactions and expeditious satisfaction of immediate needs. In other words, the place of poverty where street outreach workers conducted assessments hindered objectification.

I observed estrangement impact the collection of personal information during street outreach. For example, Dana, Michelle, and I searched for their client, Adam, along a riverbank on a sunny morning. After finding a young man sleeping under the bridge where Adam was said to live, Dana unsuccessfully tried to engage him:

> We approach a pathway under a bridge where we find someone sleeping on the side of the bike path surrounded by beer cans and litter. Dana announces us, "Good morning. Homeless outreach. [Adam]? Homeless outreach." The man wakes up but neither rises to speak to us nor completely reveals his face from behind a soiled blanket. Dana asks, "Are you Adam?" The man groans, "No." Dana asks if he wants us to leave before placing her business card on the ground beside him. As we walk back to the SUV, Michelle says, "It kind of looks like Adam." Dana runs back to remind him of a doctor's appointment. We get back into the car. Dana pulls out the 211 list and says, "Let's see. We did Adam," as she crosses off a name.

In addition, I observed homeless contacts withhold information during VI-SPDAT screenings. Sarah, Tina, and I approached, Rene, an older White woman who lived in a four-door sedan parked in an Aldi's car park. After completing a VI-SPDAT screening, Sarah commented as we drove to the next location:

> I'm wondering if [Rene] was in [assertive community treatment]. She talked about somebody poisoning her. I wonder if she used to be in a county [assertive community treatment] because she was talking about being out at [the Department

> of Health]. And that she's supposed to be taking anti-psychotics. And she used that terminology. And the more I talked to her, she was engaging with us, but I got that kind of going slow. Her VI is a 14.

I asked, "What gave you that impression?" Sarah responded:

> It's clear she was referring to all of the times she's been out at [the Department of Health]. And that the doctors tell her she should be taking antipsychotics. I think definitely there's a psychotic disorder there.

In other instances, I observed homeless individuals ignore the presence of outreach workers. Mike, Susan, and I encountered a homeless man sleeping on a wooden bench who never acknowledged our presence:

> We arrive at [Lettuce Lake Park]. We find an elderly White man who ignores street outreach whenever they try to engage him. Mike explains before we approach him, "We're not sure if he's deaf or catatonic or he won't talk to anyone." The man is lying on a narrow wooden bench in front of a wooden shack. Susan asks, "How are you," as we approach. The man silently rises and starts putting on clothing. His eyes are covered by dark sunglasses. Susan continues, "My name is [Susan]. Are you okay?" The man puts on his socks while continuing to ignore us. Susan gets on her knees to make eye contact. He does not make eye contact with her. Susan asks, "Can I give you my card?" After 6 minutes, we return to the SUV.

Each episode demonstrates a barrier that outreach workers confronted as they extracted personal information from homeless individuals on the street. In the first excerpt, Dana and Michelle were uncertain if the man we approached under the bridge was their client. An adequate supply of shelter beds governed by inclusive policies could reduce service resistance, allow Dana and Michelle to specify the location of homeless contacts, and clarify ambiguities while engaging homeless contacts on the street. In the second excerpt, Rene provided contradictory information about psychiatric condition. Conducting this assessment in a private rather than public space with a familiar case manager may have encouraged Rene to provide consistent responses to the VI-SPDAT. In the third excerpt, the gentleman refused to engage outreach workers. Mike and Susan wondered if suggested the man was severely disabled. Todd successfully engaged him while conducting "in-reach" at a meal site a couple months later. This suggests engagement at a facility where service providers could develop rapport through repeated interactions would elicit personal information faster than the sporadic encounters that street outreach workers performed.

Next, spatial information gaps thwarted objectification. Past research demonstrates homeless individuals are constantly displaced by institutional authorities (Herring 2019). Unlike emergency shelter providers, whose clients reside in a single location each day, street outreach workers have to search for homeless individuals who hide in the nooks and crannies of neoliberal cities. Poverty, policy, and place interacted to create spatial information gaps that impeded objectification. I observed three spatial information gaps. First, outreach workers received contact lists from 211 that identified the location of homeless contacts. Descriptions provided by 211 lacked detail that outreach teams needed to locate homeless people. For example, Sarah struggled to identify an abandoned house where a 211-caller claimed to live:

> We look for the next spot. Sarah reads the 211 description, "It just says, '12 E. [Beaumont]. Abandoned house.' I don't see a house around here that looks abandoned. I suppose we could go down the alley to see." We drive down an alley, looking from side-to-side of the SUV for an abandoned house. After we

> drive through the alley, Sarah says, “I don’t see anything around here that looks abandoned.”

Kate and Lucy could not figure out where a 211 contact stored their vehicle in a five-story parking garage:

> We enter an empty parking garage. Kate says, “Well, this should be easy. A white what?” Lucy responds, “A Ford Escape. License plate [XYZ]. And it’s only the back plate.” Kate approaches the front gate to ask permission to enter the parking structure. Kate explains that we’re with Springfield County Homeless Outreach and we’re just looking to see if anyone is sleeping in the garage. We drive up and down the five-story garage looking for a car that meets the description provide by 211. I ask, “Is this someone who doesn’t have a phone?” I read it back to her, “[Tracy] and [Jane], ER [Mater] parking lot.” Kate laughs, “I was just thinking maybe she left a phone number.” We leave the car park without finding our contact.

Each episode demonstrated a spatial information gap that impeded outreach workers from locating a homeless contact. Springfield County Continuum of Care adopted a policy that rendered outreach workers dependent on 211-operators for spatial information about homeless contacts. Both excerpts demonstrate 211 provided outreach workers incomplete information about the place of homelessness. Location descriptions often lacked detail or contact information that outreach workers needed to find somebody on the street. Time constraints hindered street outreach workers from searching for homeless contacts that provided inadequate information. As a result, street outreach workers could not assess these contacts.

Homeless contacts often moved from the location reported to 211-operators. If, for whatever reason, the contact failed to notify 211 of their relocation, then an outreach worker could not provide an assessment. Sarah, for example, discovered a male contact that we failed to locate had spent the evening in an ER rather than the park he reported to a 211-operator:

> Sarah receives a phone call, "Oh, hi. Where did you stay last night? You were in a hospital lobby. Where do you think you'll be staying tonight? You're going to be at [Lettuce Park]. Another team goes out tomorrow morning. I'm going to let 211 know that you'll be in [Lettuce Park] and ask that they stop and see you and that you were at ER last night. Okay? Bye."

Kate fumed when we could not verify somebody in a car park:

> Kate asks if we need to address any other names on the list in the downtown area. Lucy says we need to verify [Ryan] at a car park. We head to that parking lot. Upon arrival, Kate asks, "Do we drive in?" Lucy shakes her head while pointing to inlet, "No, we can park here and walk down." We park the SUV and enter the car park. As we approach the structure, Lucy asks, "How are we supposed to get into this place?" We look for an entrance. I ask, "There's multiple stories of this and we have to figure out where they are?" Kate says, "I wonder if, this was a 211 person, that person may have been there that one night they called. We don't know if they are there the next night." We get back into the SUV to move onto the next spot.

Each episode demonstrates the struggle that contact relocation presented street outreach workers. Homelessness exposes people to myriad forces that can push and pull them across urban landscapes. The foregoing excerpts illustrate how this impedes objectification. In the first episode, Sarah missed a contact who experienced a health emergency that displaced him from the location he identified to 211. In the second episode, a couple left the car park that they identified to 211. In both cases, movement hindered outreach workers from locating and assessing a homeless contact.

Outreach workers tried to close spatial information gaps by calling 211 contacts. Each 211 operator requested a callback number for outreach workers to contact homeless individuals on the street. Myriad factors prevent homeless individuals from answering the call. Homeless contacts had limited cellphone plans whose minutes they had to conserve, lacked stable access to electrical outlets to charge their cellphones, missed calls from outreach workers as they scrambled to make themselves invisible to morning traffic, and/or no longer needed assistance because they found a place to sleep. Despite the reason, homeless contacts often did not pick up their cellphone for outreach workers. Sarah, for example, called a 211-caller who did not pick up their phone:

> As we drive to the next spot, Sarah points to list while asking Tina, "This woman is off [St. James St.]. I'll call her." Sarah dials the contact on her phone. Sarah gets the voicemail and leaves a message, "Hi, this is Sarah with [Porchlight] homeless outreach. We're out this morning doing outreach. And 211 has asked us to stop and see you. If you get this message and would like us to stop by, please give me a call and we'll also text you." Sarah whispers, "She didn't answer."

Dana received notice that a phone number provided by the 211-operator had been disconnected:

> We look for a 211 contact in car park. Dana says, "It's a green Acura." Willow asks, "Is there any more information?" Dana shakes her head. We circle the car park as Dana reads a description provided by 211, "96 yellow-green Acura." No

> car fits that description. Dana rings the contact. An automatic recording answers, "The number you are trying to dial is incorrect." Dana asks Willow if she dialed the right number. Willow confirms. Dana calls again but gets the same recording.

Calls sometimes dropped when outreach workers reached a 211 contact:

> Dana calls another name from the 211 list, "Hi, Tonya. We're doing homeless outreach. We got your name from 211. Are you guys outside? I cannot hear you. Where did you guys spend the previous night? How many days have you been over there? Do you know where you're going to be tonight? Can I call you back because we'll have to do something over the phone? It's like a vulnerability tool. At 11am, we go on our shelter placement call. How old are your kids? Tonya? Hello? Hello?" Dana puts down the phone, "Hope she'll call me back."

Each episode demonstrates the impact of connectivity on spatial information that outreach workers needed to locate homeless contacts. Abject poverty meant homeless contacts lacked consistent cellphone access. This impeded outreach workers from closing spatial information gaps while locating homeless contacts on the street. For existing clients, outreach workers tried to close the information gap through email. However, this tactic often failed because homeless individuals lacked stable Internet access needed to regularly check their email. As a result, outreach workers could not locate a proportion of homeless contacts. This impeded their entry to and progression through coordinated entry.

Lastly, measurement errors misclassified homeless individuals. Recall the Springfield County Continuum of Care applied a "No Wrong Door" access point structure to coordinated entry. This policy meant 211-operators administered the VI-SPDAT. Conducting a VI-SPDAT screening over the phone denied 211-operators contextual data needed to factcheck responses.

Incomplete information biased measures if homeless contacts lied to present themselves as "deserving" poor. Paula criticized this policy after she informally assessed a man living in a park and ride:

> I hate the VI-SPDAT. Because, usually with the VI-SPDAT, it's like on the phone. You can't gauge a person's homelessness on the phone versus coming out in the field. But that's why I like doing information gathering so we can build the record of someone's homelessness.

Paula explained the salience of place to VI-SPDAT screenings. Telephone assessments spatially isolated an interviewer from the interviewee. 211-operators lost valuable information that is accessible through a face-to-face assessment. As a result, street outreach workers, like Tara, confronted and challenged VI-SPDAT mismeasurements:

> I had somebody with really high acuity and he scored a three, but it was because he didn't go to the ER. Those are the people where it's really important for an outreach worker to be like, 'I know what this VI says, however…'

I observed outreach workers contest measurements by conducting another VI-SPDAT screening. Dana rescreened Willie during an outreach episode. Willie, a middle-aged Black man, had received reconstructive plastic surgery after being shot in the face. At the time of this rescreening, Willie was banned from a local men's shelter because he spent the night in an ER to recover from an untreated concussion:

> After reviewing his HMIS file, Dana turns to Willie in the backseat of the SUV, "Your VI-SPDAT score is 8 [out of 17]. I find that hard to believe." Dana rescreens Willie with the VI-SPDAT. When she reaches questions about mental health, Dana says, "They have you down as 'No' for mental health concern. I'm

> going to switch it to ‘Yes.’ Past head injury. ‘Yes.’ They have ‘No.’” Willie explains he is recovering from a concussion that never received medical attention. Dana asks Willie if he is refusing medication prescribed by a doctor. Willie says his doctors won’t prescribe him pain medication he needs to cope with head injuries. Willie starts crying, “Mentally, I can’t handle it and be homeless.” Dana announces, “I redid this VI-SPDAT. It went up to a 10.” After Willie gets out of the SUV, Michelle comments, “The way they ask on the phone, some people don’t want to answer or somebody doesn’t understand. I think some of these questions are better in person.”

Here, Dana contested a 211 assessment. Willie experienced chronic disabilities that prevented work. Regardless, Willie had not been approved for Social Security Disability Insurance. Without household income, Willie could not independently obtain permanent housing. The VI-SPDAT score produced by a 211-operator rendered Willie eligible for rapid rehousing. However, a face-to-face assessment identified factors that made Willie eligible for Housing First. Although I could not determine the date of Willie’s original VI-SPDAT screening, the initial mismeasurement deprioritized him for permanent housing assistance.

Conclusion

This paper extends debates about the nature of contemporary homeless governance. Urban scholars have primarily examined punitive or supportive elements of homeless services (Stuart 2015). Punitive theorists posit homeless services exclude and seclude homeless individuals from prime spaces where they disrupt urban renewal (Herring 2019b). Supportive theorists argue homeless services are a beneficent means by which displaced individuals survive and/or escape the streets (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009; Clarke and Parsell 2019). Little attention has been devoted to the disciplinary functions of homeless services that produce docile institutional subjects. A few exceptions examine the production of responsible tenants (Hennigan 2017), citizens (Whiteford 2010), and employees (Lyon-Callo 2004). Limited analysis of disciplinary techniques is a notable shortcoming because states throughout the Global North have applied social investment logic to homeless policy (Baker et al. 2020). I used an ethnographic case study of homeless street outreach in a large post-industrial county in the U.S. Rust Belt to address this knowledge gap.

I provided evidence that street outreach workers produce objects of discipline through coordinated entry. Past research on objectification by homeless service providers neglects the problem of place that service providers navigate as they integrate homeless individuals into coordinated entry (Osbourne 2019; Smith and Anderson 2018). Unlike emergency shelter providers, whose clients reside in a single shelter where they can be easily contacted, outreach workers assess homeless individuals on the street. As a result, outreach workers continually locate homeless individuals to classify them in HUD's categorical system. To this end, outreach workers created a decentralized panopticon to gather information about the fluid place of homelessness. After locating a homeless contact, outreach workers confronted spatial problems while objectifying contacts in public places. Assessments in public spaces risk privacy violations that expose homeless contacts to arrest, violence, or exploitation. Myriad barriers hinder outreach workers from objectifying homeless contacts: service resistance, spatial information gaps, and measurement errors. Findings reveal problems that homeless policy, abject poverty, and urban space creates for street outreach workers. Emergency shelter policies abandon service resistant people to the streets where outreach workers struggle to build rapport through sporadic interactions. Poverty displaces homeless contacts while denying them means to notify outreach workers of their relocation. Local Continuum of Care policy begets mismeasurement by making 211 an access point where VI-SPDAT screenings were performed on hotline users.

This study can be extended in the following ways. First, this research was conducted with a Continuum of Care that used the VI-SPDAT to objectify homeless individuals through a "No Wrong Door" access system. The impact of poverty and place on objectification may be different in a Continuum of Care that adopts a centralized access structure. Future research can compare/contrast the impact of poverty and place across models of coordinated entry. Second, this research was conducted on a Continuum of Care that prioritized chronic homelessness reduction, allocated funding from emergency shelters, and used the VI-SPDAT to assess homeless contacts. This creates unique problems for street outreach workers that are likely not experienced in Continuum of Care that adopt different policies. Future research test this hypothesis by the challenges that street outreach workers confront while objectifying homeless contacts in different policy contexts. Third, this research was conducted in the U.S.A. where homeless services have rationed through coordinated entry. Federal authorities mandate outreach workers objectify homeless individuals with specific criteria that may not apply in other countries. Future research could examine the objectification criteria used in different international contexts. International comparative research would help urban scholars explain differences in the experience of homelessness.

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Article 2

"They'll Have a Hard Time Using a Voucher": The Micro-Economisation of Housing First Recipients During Program Referral

Abstract: Housing First is a hegemonic model of homeless services that advocates immediate placement in permanent supportive housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment. Federal authorities in the United States have adopted Housing First as a governmentality to make social investments through homeless policy. Although research has examined logics that federal authorities used to make this social investment, sociologists have devoted little attention to techniques that frontline workers use to yield returns on social investment in neoliberal cities. This knowledge gap hinders sociologists from theorizing contemporary urban poverty governance. I make three contributions that address this shortcoming. First, I present a unique qualitative analysis that examines techniques that Housing First providers in a U.S. Rust Belt county use to select a lease configuration for their clients. Second, I expand the definition of economisation to incorporate logics that Housing First providers use to estimate transaction costs they will confront while mediating rental market exchanges with a particular lease configuration. Third, I demonstrate, unlike federal policymakers who economise homeless populations as public expenditures to make social investments, service providers economise homeless individuals as transaction costs to yield returns on Housing First in urban communities.

Introduction

Literal homelessness, sleeping in a place unfit for human habitation, is an enduring characteristic of American society in the neoliberal era (Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996; Stuart 2016; Herring 2019a). As the stagflation crisis eroded household incomes, the neoliberal turn in U.S. housing policy rendered subsets of the poor homeless in cities across the country (Wolch & Dear 1993). In 2019, 175 out of every 100,000 Americans experienced literal homelessness. Risk of literal homelessness, however, is unequally distributed across status groups. Latinx are approximately 1.28 times more likely than non-Latinx, women 1.51 times more likely than men, Whites 2.85 times more likely than Asians, Blacks 4.78 times more likely than Whites, and Native Americans 5.71 times more likely than Whites to experience literal homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020). Thus, although homelessness has decreased by 20% since 2010, it remains a feature of American poverty that is tied to social status.

Federal responses to homelessness have evolved over time (Willse 2015). In the 1990s, welfare reformers adopted “Treatment First” as a governmentality to design homeless policy.[1] Treatment First sets preconditions such as job training, sobriety, and/or mental health counseling on service recipients because it blames homelessness on individual factors (Baker and Evans 2016). Former President Bill Clinton’s Administration used this logic to establish a competitive block grant, Continuum of Care, that financed homeless services in cities throughout the United States (Cisneros 1995). Federal authorities used Continuum of Care to fund transitional housing: a stairstep homeless service model that culminates in independent accommodation once participants demonstrate “housing readiness” to program managers (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016). Transitional housing responsiblized service recipients by exploiting a traumatic life experience as leverage to "fix" characteristics that policymakers deemed problematic.

A chorus of advocates, practitioners, and academics criticized transitional housing as costly, ineffective, and insensitive to the experience of homeless service recipients (Baker and Evans 2016). Critics argued homelessness is an initial barrier to self-sufficiency that must be overcome. A competing governmentality emerged from this critique: Housing First. In contrast to Treatment First, Housing First promotes self-sufficiency through the immediate placement of service recipients into permanent supportive housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment (Tsemberis 2010). Housing First recipients receive a subsidized voucher, master lease, or project-based lease configuration. Case managers provide wraparound services that clients "choose" à la carte to achieve personal goals (Hennigan 2017). Critics convinced federal authorities to reform homeless policy in accordance with Housing First. By 2019, federal funding for transitional housing decreased by 55%, permanent supportive housing increased by 96%, and temporary supportive housing increased by 469% (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020).[2]

Federal policymakers adopted "coordinated entry" to limit access to Housing First. Coordinated entry is "a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017a: 4). Homeless individuals progress through four stages of coordinated entry: access, assessment, prioritization, and referral. Frontline workers assess individuals who present at access point(s), prioritize them for homeless services, and make referrals to emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, or Housing First. At the time of this study, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) prioritized Housing First for people experiencing "chronic" homelessness. HUD defines chronic homelessness as twelve months of street homelessness by somebody who possesses a documented disability (Federal Register 2015). Prioritization of chronic homelessness minimizes public expenditure by targeting assistance for a minute subpopulation who consumes 50% of emergency services (Willse 2015). HUD mandated all Continuum of Care choose a standardized assessment tool that prioritized Housing First assistance for people suffering chronic homelessness in accordance with the goals of each organization (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017b).

Sociologists have devoted little attention to the delivery of Housing First through coordinated entry by homeless service providers. Smith and Anderson (2018) present an ethnographic analysis of street outreach workers who transition homeless clients into permanent supportive housing. Smith and Anderson’s research examines the identity work that outreach teams perform to render clients eligible for permanent housing assistance. Osbourne (2019) presents an ethnographic study of emergency shelter providers that shows access to Housing First is unevenly distributed. Frontline workers use implicit biases to prioritize shelter residents for navigational assistance through coordinated entry. Smith, Anderson, and Osbourne provide valuable insight into techniques that frontline workers use to navigate homeless service bureaucracies. Emphasis on eligibility neglects work that case managers do to transition Housing First recipients into permanent accommodation. In the United States, where public accommodation constituted .7% of the total housing stock in 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a), Housing First providers rely on private landlords to transition clients into segregated rental markets. This task is complicated by Housing First recipients whose lease application violates landlord screening criteria (see Greif 2018). Neglect of techniques that Housing First providers use to mediate private rental market exchanges limits sociological knowledge of institutional practices that facilitate exits from and entries into urban homelessness.

I address this knowledge gap with a yearlong observational and interview-based study of Continuum of Care (CoC) housing placement meetings in a large U.S. Rust Belt county. These closed-door meetings are a neglected site where Housing First providers select the means by which service recipients escape homelessness. This analysis contributes to three sociological literatures. First, I extend scholarship on welfare reform by examining interactional processes that yield return on social investments through Housing First (see Giddens 1998; Esping-Anderson et al. 2002). Second, I extend research on economisation by differentiating three logics that Housing First providers use to estimate transaction costs while procuring returns on social investment for federal policymakers in private rental markets: preference, character, and psy (see Çalışkan and Callon 2009, 2010). Third, I extend research on urban homelessness by demonstrating, in addition to promoting urban revitalization through the seclusion of homeless bodies from prime spaces (see Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019b), homeless service providers yield returns on social investments for federal policymakers by minimizing transaction costs and fortifying the stratified rental market of neoliberal cities.

Literature Review

Social policymakers have embraced "social investment" as a governmentality to manage poverty (Morel, Palier, and Palme 2012). Unlike welfare logic, which lawmakers used to stabilize industrial economies through "passive" income transfers during economic downturns, and neoliberal logic, which advocates draconian welfare retrenchment to reduce government dependency (Murray 1984), investment logic promotes "active" state interventions that promote market integration (Hemerijck 2012). Investment logic diffused across the Global North as policymakers confronted new social risks related to the feminization of labor markets, burgeoning service industry, and growth of dual earner households (Jenson 2010). Social policy entrepreneurs advocate preventative interventions (Esping-Anderson et al. 2002), such as early childhood education, at critical stages of the life course as well as reactive interventions (Giddens 1998), such as workfare, during crises to minimize social risks by integrating marginalized people into private markets. In this regard, lawmakers use social policy to stabilize the knowledge economy through supply-side interventions that bolster existing power relations (Cantillon 2011; Staab 2010).

Policymakers make prudent social investments by economising "problematic" subpopulations (Baker, Evans, and Hennigan 2020). *Economisation* is the symbolic construction of a social actor, problem, or policy in terms of "the economy" (Çalışkan and Callon 2009). Murphy (2017), for example, shows economists in the early-20th century theorized a surplus population negatively impacted economic growth, increased poverty rates, strained public expenditures, and rendered countries vulnerable to communism. Policymakers used this economic theory to institute family planning policies that managed procreation by marginalized groups. Federal authorities funded frontline workers to deliver family planning services that motivated voluntary birth control. Murphy demonstrates institutional authorities use economised representations to construct a population as a political economic threat, identify a policy intervention that mitigates threat(s) posed by this population, and contract frontline workers who inculcate market subjectivities in service recipients (Baker et al. 2020). In short, economisation begets social investments to secure future economic gains through targeted interventions that align the behavior of marginalized groups with the political aims of institutional elites.

Policymakers use "fictive" expectations to make investments through social policy. Beckert (2013a: 325) defines fictive expectations as "present imaginaries of future situations that provide orientation in decision making despite the incalculability of outcome." Beckert uses the adjective "fictive" to highlight the inability of economic actors to be certain their expectations will materialize in the future. Despite their imperfection, fictive expectations allow market participants to make informed decisions under conditions of economic uncertainty. Private firms use forecasts, market research, economic theories, regulatory institutions, and social networks to produce fictive expectations. A fictive expectation motivates risk-taking if market actors accept its prediction as certain (Beckert 2013b). I apply Beckert's analysis to social policymaking. Like private firms, public officials use economised representations from social science to produce fictive expectations about the long-term political economic impact(s) of various social policy options. Fictive expectations diffuse across policy networks. A lawmaker who accepts a fictive expectation as certain is motivated to adopt that social policy.

Federal authorities have applied investment logic to homeless policy (Baker et al. 2020). First, social scientists produced a compendium of quasi-experimental research that contrasted the economic benefits of Housing First to Treatment First. Federal policymakers used that research to redirect funding from transitional to permanent supportive housing (Baker and Evans 2016). In addition, social scientists produced observational research that differentiated homeless subpopulations based on public expenditure. Federal policymakers used that research to prioritize Housing First for people suffering chronic homelessness (Willse 2015). Lastly, nongovernmental organizations invented data management techniques that reduced public expenditures through efficient prioritization of homeless individuals for housing assistance (Community Solutions 2021). HUD instituted those practices by mandating Continuum of Care grantees allocate Housing First through coordinated entry (Osbourne 2019). Hence, federal authorities rely on macro-economisations to create fictive expectations that inform reactive social investments through homeless policy.

Little attention has been given to interactional processes that yield returns on social investment through the implementation of homeless policy by frontline workers (Baines et al. 2019; Fermin, Geelhoed, and Gründemann 2019). Past research on macro-economisation examines the attribution of market value to populations by policymakers (Beckert 2013a, 2013b; Çalışkan and Callon 2009, 2010; Murphy 2017). Urban sociologists demonstrate local elites economise homeless populations as growth impediments (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Hennigan and Speer 2019; Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996; Speer 2019). That research, which examines the relationship between macro-economisation and institutional exclusion, neglects techniques that Housing First providers use to include homeless individuals by transforming them into rental market participants. Policy researchers have demonstrated Housing First providers navigate rental market constraints while exiting clients from homelessness (Bullen and Baldry 2018; Kennedy, Arku, and Cleave 2017). That research neglects techniques of micro-economisation that Housing First providers use to initiate rental market exchanges. I argue, in contrast to federal policymakers, who macro-economise homeless populations to make social investments, Housing First providers micro-economise homeless individuals to yield returns on social investment while delivering homeless services in neoliberal cities.

Yielding Return on Housing First Through Micro-Economisation

At the micro-level, Housing First providers economise homeless service recipients as transaction costs. A transaction is a market exchange between supplier and buyer. Transactions vary by frequency, certainty, and investment (Williamson, 1979). Frequent, uncertain, idiosyncratic transactions risk opportunism by cosigners who shirk their contractual obligations. Opportunism generates transaction costs: informal expenses, beyond the price of a commodity, that tax a firm as it conducts market exchanges. Coase (1960) differentiates three transaction costs: search, bargaining, and enforcement. Search costs are investments to identify dependable partners. Bargaining costs are investments to negotiate a contract. Enforcement costs are investments to ensure a cosigner honors their contractual obligations. Expanding the definition of economisation captures in/formal calculations that institutional authorities make to govern homelessness.

Housing First providers manage transaction costs while mediating rental market exchanges. An apartment lease is a protracted legal contract that exposes the lessee and leaser to opportunism. Landlords manage transaction costs by adopting screening criteria to select reliable tenants and solicit third-party mediation to evict delinquent renters (Garboden & Rosen, 2019; Grainger 2020; Greif, 2018). Housing First providers mediate lease formation by conducting housing searches, negotiating lease applications, monitoring lease compliance, and mitigating landlord-tenant conflict (Tsemberis, 2010). Housing First providers bear search, bargaining, and/or enforcement costs for clients who struggle to obtain and/or maintain permanent housing (see Hennigan, 2017). Thus, social investments have upstream and downstream components. Federal policymakers are upstream actors who economise homeless populations as a public expenditure to make targeted investments. Frontline workers are downstream actors who economise homeless individuals as transaction costs to yield returns on social investments for policymakers.

Federal authorities give Housing First providers a technology to manage transaction costs: lease configuration.[3] The lease configuration is a rental subsidy that enables people suffering chronic homelessness to access permanent housing (Tsemberis, 2010). HUD finances three types of lease configurations: voucher, master lease, and project-based. Vouchers provide Housing First recipients a rental subsidy that is useable with any landlord accepting that source of income. Voucher recipients are lessee and required to furnish their apartment. Master lease is a rental subsidy tied to a particular unit. Unlike voucher recipients, the service provider is lessee so recipients can be immediately placed in a furnished apartment. Master leases house clients outside an institutional setting by denying consumer choice afforded voucher recipients. A project-based lease is located in a supportive housing facility that exclusively rents to people living with disabilities. In contrast to voucher and master lease recipients, project-based residents are subjected to 24-hour surveillance by an on-site case management team.

Lease configurations vary in leverage to manage transaction costs at different stages of a rental market exchange. Hennigan (2017) demonstrates Housing First providers use apartment leases to manipulate clients into accepting supportive services. Hennigan neither differentiates lease configurations nor examines logics that Housing First providers use to select configurations. This is an important omission because lease configurations increase or decrease the ability of case managers to discipline clients. Scattered-site leases facilitate cooperation by accommodating client preferences. Compliance is purchased by undermining the case manager's surveillance capacity. In contrast, project-based leases enhance the surveillance capacity of case managers by locating clients in a supportive housing facility. Monitoring capacity is gained by undermining cooperation if the unit contradicts a client's preferences. A configuration mismatch creates transaction costs that impede exit from or facilitate reentry to homelessness. Thus, logics of micro-economisation that Housing First use to form fictive expectations and select a lease configuration are crucial to procuring returns on social investment.

Table 1. Differentiation of Three Micro-Economisation Techniques

	Techniques of Micro-Economisation		
	Preference	**Character**	**Psy**
Content	Estimate a client's flexibility with respect to housing characteristics, neighborhood amenities and/or case management.	Estimate impact that a client's housing and/or criminal history will have on lease attainment.	Estimate impact that a client's psychiatric condition will have on their immediate and long-term participation in a rental market exchange.
Expected Transaction Costs	Search, Bargaining, & Enforcement	Search & Bargaining	Search, Bargaining, & Enforcement
Function	Select a lease configuration that enhances the willingness of clients to participate in protected rental market exchange	Select a lease configuration that enhances the willingness of landlords to participate in protected rental market exchange	Select a lease configuration that enhances the ability of clients to participate in protected rental market exchange

Despite its significance, sociologists have neglected logics of micro-economisation by Housing First providers. I help to address this shortcoming by answering the following questions: What logics do Housing First providers use to economise clients as transaction costs? How do Housing First provider use logics of economisation to select lease configurations? Table 1 differentiates three logics that Housing First providers use to economise clients as rental market transaction costs: preference, character, and psy. Housing First providers use the logic of preference to estimate search, bargaining, and enforcement costs related to client resistance. Dissatisfied clients create transaction costs by refusing to participate in a lease formation or violating the lease obligations of unsuitable units. Housing First providers use the logic of character to estimate search and bargaining costs related to landlord resistance. Landlords create transaction costs by refusing to lease Housing First recipients who have recent evictions, judgements, or criminal convictions. Housing First providers use the logic of psy disciplines—psychology, psychoanalysis, and psychiatry—to estimate search, bargaining, and enforcement costs related to mental health of clients. Symptomatic clients create transaction costs if their mental illness hinders lease formation and/or compliance. Housing First providers use these logics to produce fictive expectations of transaction costs they will shoulder while using a lease configuration to end a client's homelessness. In this regard, Housing First providers yield return on social investments by micro-economising homeless individuals as transaction costs to select a lease configuration that reduces public expenditures.

Data & Methods

I conducted this research in a large, racially segregated, post-industrial Rust Belt county. Since the 1970s, Springfield County experienced a dramatic decline in its manufacturing sector (see Wilson 1987).[4] White suburbanization simultaneously generated hypersegregation, thereby creating a spatial mismatch that largely separated people of color from high-wage employment (see Massey and Denton 1993). Poverty enveloped minority neighborhoods in Springfield County's central city. Local government responded with mass incarceration that integrated State surveillance into the daily lives of communities of color (see Wacquant 2009). Intra-metropolitan competition for high-income households dissuaded local governments from investing in supportive services such as affordable housing stock expansion (see Peterson 1981). In short, Springfield County experienced the macro-structural characteristics that urban scholars have documented in Rust Belt cities during the neoliberal era.

Springfield County's housing market poorly accommodated these macro-structural conditions. At the time of this study, less than 10% of the county's rental stock lent units below $500 (United States Census Bureau 2018). Roughly 65% of households earning 30% of area median income devoted 50% or more of their wages to rent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017). Local housing authorities offered meager assistance to reduce cost burden. Springfield County's public housing stock decreased from approximately 5,000 units in 2000 to less than 2,750 units in 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). Over the past ten years, average wait time for Section 8 rental assistance oscillated between approximately twenty and twenty-five months (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). As a result, 1 in 1,000 Springfield County residents experienced homelessness in 2018. Over 50% of Springfield County's homeless population identified as Black. Only 10% of Springfield County's homeless population qualified as chronic (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019b). This means 90% of Springfield County's homeless population was ineligible for CoC assistance.

To access Housing First, clients had to demonstrate 12 months of literal homelessness and a disabling condition certified by a licensed medical professional (Federal Register 2015). Each week coordinated entry staff produced a list of clients eligible for CoC assistance. Staff members used the prioritization list at housing placement meetings to select a lease configuration for Housing First recipients. Coordinated entry staff held closed-door singles placement meetings at an office located in a local suburb at 9:00am on the first Tuesday of each month. Staff members notified bridge case managers what clients qualified for assistance days before the placement meeting. Program supervisors staffed eligible clients with their case management team to identify an optimal configuration match. After the meeting, case managers presented housing options to clients who could accept or decline the offer. Follow up meetings were conducted each remaining Tuesday of the month to update coordinated entry staff about the housing status of clients.

Wraparound services were provided by in-house staff or outsourced to local nonprofit agencies. Housing First recipients were differentiated into different tiers of case management based on perceived “mental acuity.” Tier 1 served “high” functioning clients who could consistently meet daily needs. These case managers connected clients to local services without providing transportation, meeting reminders, and motivation. Tier 2 served “moderate” functioning clients who required assistance with planning and transportation. In such instances, case managers met with clients twice per month to monitor psychiatric symptoms. Tier 3 served “low” functioning clients who needed regular visits, medication monitoring, short-term hospitalization, assisted planning, and transportation to medical appointments. Housing First clients vacillated between tiers in that a first-tier client could be transferred to a higher one if they decompensated and vice versa. Thus, the degree of independence that Housing First recipients enjoyed was an ongoing negotiation between service providers.

Two sources of data were used to do this analysis. First, I conducted nonparticipant observation of housing placement meetings in the Springfield County Continuum of Care for one year (October 2017–September 2018). Table 2 describes 45 meetings that I observed. Singles placement meetings were initially conducted every week while family placement meetings were held twice per month. By early 2018, singles meetings were reduced to twice per month while family placement was discontinued July 2018 due to resource depletion. At the time of this study, the Springfield County Continuum of Care had successfully rehoused its chronically homeless families. This study, consequently, focuses solely on the placement of chronically homeless singles into permanent housing. In total, I observed 187 Housing First referrals, of which, 67.3% were matched to a voucher, 14.4% were matched to a master lease, and 18.3% were matched to a project-based facility.

Table 2. Observed Matches by Lease Arrangement (October 2017–September 2018)

	Frequency	Percent
Total Meetings	45	1.00
Singles Meeting	28	.622
Families Meeting	17	.378
Total Cases	263	1.00
Total Housing First Matches	187	.711
Total Rapid Rehousing Matches	76	.289
Total Matches by Lease Arrangement	187	1.00
Voucher Matches	126	.673
Master Lease Matches	27	.144
Project-Based Matches	34	.181

I accessed housing placement meetings by contacting the Director of Coordinated Entry at the Continuum of Care, Heidi, to request permission. After introducing my project, Heidi asked program supervisors who regularly attended the meetings if I could conduct observations. Program supervisors agreed contingent upon the use of personal and spatial pseudonyms. I jotted fieldnotes during each meeting on a portable electronic device. Following each meeting, I wrote detailed descriptions of the interactions that I observed while replacing identifying information with pseudonyms. I identified emergent themes with open coding before returning to scholarly literature to conceptualize the data. Governmentality theory offered a conceptual framework that fit this data while extending debates about neoliberal homeless management. I used this framework to group open codes into themes that constitute the subsequent data analysis.

Second, I conducted 26 in-depth interviews with coordinated entry staff members, Housing First program supervisors, and bridge case managers. This sample was recruited from housing placement meetings. I conducted eight months of observation before requesting interviews with attendees. After forming relationships with program supervisors, I practiced snowball sampling by requesting interviews and electronic introductions to elicit participation from their case management teams. I included bridge case managers because they regularly attended housing placement meetings to advocate for clients and/or provided information that program supervisors used to select lease configurations on their behalf. Their input expanded my understanding of how knowledge is produced and used by frontline workers to govern homelessness.

I conducted in-depth interviews with a recording device at locations selected by each respondent. Although most interviews were done in-person, two interviews were conducted with Housing First providers over the phone because their schedules did not accommodate a face-to-face conversation. Each interview ranged 30–90 minutes; however, most lasted approximately one-hour. I created a semi-structured interview guide to ensure comparable responses. Audio recordings were transcribed by a professional transcription service. I cleaned every transcript upon receipt before analyzing them with MAXQDA software. I used a three-step process to analyze the data. First, I open coded transcripts to identify emergent themes. Next, I returned to scholarly literature to situate this case study in governmentality theory. Third, I used theoretical coding to organize existing codes into higher order categories that structure this paper.

Table 3 describes the demographic characteristics of interview participants. I recruited 26 Housing First providers into the study: two coordinated entry staff members, eight program supervisors, and 16 bridge case managers. Twenty-one participants identified as female (80.8%), 15.4% (4) identified as male, and 3.85% (1) identified as non-binary. Twenty-one participants were young (46.2%) to middle-aged (34.6%); however, 19.2% (5) were over 56 years old. Approximately 81% (23) of the sample identified as White, 11.5% (3) identified as Black, and 3.85% (1) identified as Hispanic. Fifty percent of respondents (13) had a master's degree, 46.2% (12) had a bachelor's degree, and 3.85% (1) had an associate's degree. Roughly 34.6% (9)

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	21	80.8
Male	4	15.4
Non-binary	1	3.85
Age		
Young-Adult (18–35)	12	46.2
Middle-Adult (36–55)	9	34.6
Older-Adult (56–99)	5	19.2
Race		
White	23	88.5
Black	3	11.5
Hispanic	1	3.85
Education Level		
Master's Degree	13	50.0
Bachelor's Degree	12	46.2
Associate's Degree	1	3.85
Employment History (In Years)		
1–5	9	34.6
6–10	9	34.6
11–15	4	15.4
16–20	3	11.5
21–99	1	3.85

reported 1–5 years of experience in homeless services, 34.6% (9) reported 6–10 years, 15.4% (4) reported 11–15 years, 11.5% (3) reported 16–20 years, and 3.85% (1) reported over 21 years.

Two limitations should be noted. First, I conducted a single site case study of CoC housing placement meetings in a large Rust Belt county. Frontline workers in cities with tighter or looser rental markets, stricter housing regulations, less economic segregation, more supportive housing options, robust social housing, and/or weaker integration of Housing First principles into homeless service delivery may use different logics to govern homeless bodies. Thus, I am uncertain if these findings are transferrable to other cases, foreign or domestic, that have different structural characteristics. Second, I could not examine the construction of economised representations through case management. Bridge case managers produce knowledge about each client that is recorded in their clinical case notes. Program supervisors use clinical notes to estimate transaction costs and select lease configurations. Neglect of this process is a weakness of this study to which I return while recommending future research.

Findings

Housing First providers are institutionally constrained actors who strategically manage large caseloads. Efforts to minimize transaction costs smooth the workflow of Housing First providers by easing their clients' transition into permanent housing. As the grantor, HUD establishes institutional constraints that direct the workflow of Housing First providers toward political economic outcomes chosen by policymakers. Moreover, HUD allocates funding for lease configurations so Housing First providers can expeditiously procure returns on social investment. Housing First providers who participated in this study yielded returns by using the logic of preference to estimate a client's willingness to participate in a rental market exchange, character to estimate a landlord's willingness to form a lease with their client, and psy to estimate a client's ability to participate in a protracted rental market exchange. Housing First providers used each micro-economisation to form fictive expectations of transaction costs they would confront while mediating rental market exchanges with a particular lease configuration. Using fictive expectations enabled Housing First providers to procure a return on social investment by smoothing transitions into and minimizing exits from permanent housing.

Preference

Housing First providers used the *logic of preference* to economise clients as search, bargaining, and/or enforcement costs. The governmentality of Housing First posits "consumer choice" as a principle of service delivery (Tsemberis 2010). Service recipients are afforded choice in two ways. First, clients can reject housing that does not satisfy their unit and neighborhood preferences. Second, reliance on harm reduction lets Housing First recipients reject case management. Emphasis on individual choice is an integral part of Housing First that constructs service recipients as market participants, reduces client resistance by appealing to individual preferences, and informs a fictive expectation about consumer behavior that frontline workers use to select lease configurations. I observed participants economise clients by estimating resistance to housing that contradicted their preferences. Use of preference logic allocated housing assistance based on the expected willingness of clients to participate in a rental market exchange.

To illustrate, Housing First recipients could reject unwanted units. Resistance created transaction costs if it forced case managers to expend more effort to secure preferred housing. To conserve resources, Tara used the logic of *unit* preference to estimate client resistance:

> You want to give client preference. There are some people in this business that are like, 'It's a house and they need to take it.' Well, they don't want to live there. It's still client choice. They don't want it. They can say no.

Respondents selected a lease configuration that minimized transaction costs by maximizing consumer choice for clients with narrow unit preferences. Judy contrasted lease configurations by their ability to satisfy client preferences:

> CARE [voucher] [is] the most popular one because [clients] can pick their own unit. That would be the difference about [voucher] and [master lease]. [Master lease] units are at that location where they're at. They don't get to choose.

Ability to refuse housing introduced search, bargaining, and enforcement costs for Housing First providers. Resistance created search costs if case managers had to identify new landlords renting desirable units, enforcement costs if case managers struggled to maintain lease compliance in unwanted units, and bargaining costs if case managers had either to convince their client to accept an unwanted unit or continually mediated landlord-tenant conflicts for an unsatisfied client. To mitigate resistance, participants selected a lease configuration that accommodated client preferences.

I observed participants use this logic to select lease configurations during housing placement meetings. Trevor cited the *amenity* preference of his client, Amy, that needed to be accommodated by a lease configuration:

> "There's someone on the list," Trevor announced, "I don't know if she's come up, Amy. She's at Salvation Army [emergency shelter]. She's not willing to go to St. Paul's [project-based] unless there's a unit that doesn't have a shared bathroom, she won't go. She wants her own place. She's very persistent about it. So, doesn't want to share space with anyone. Could she be a CARE [voucher] person?" Heidi nodded her head in confirmation.

Interviewees cited the logic of preference to reduce client resistance during rental market exchanges. Housing First recipients expressed unit preferences that often could not be satisfied by many master and project-based leases. Trevor described bargaining costs he confronted when his client, Amy, rejected a project-based unit that contradicted her amenity preference. To minimize resistance, Trevor advocated for Amy to receive a voucher so she could find an acceptable unit.

In addition, participants used the logic of preference to estimate resistance to case management. Housing First provides “voluntary” wraparound services to solve “root” causes of homelessness (Hennigan 2017). Housing First programs in Springfield County varied by case management requirements and clients differed in preference for case management. Disregarding client preference for services could generate resistance that hindered surveillance of lease compliance. Participants, like Katie, used the logic of preference to estimate client resistance to case management and select a lease configuration that mitigated transaction costs:

> Interviewer: When would you advocate for clients to go into HOME?
>
> Katie: A lot of the long-term, street homeless, So, if weren’t willing to take medication and you aren’t willing to say, “Yes, I want a case manager.”
>
> Interviewer: When would you advocate for somebody to go into CARE?
>
> Katie: CARE is good for somebody who's a little more willing to engage in services, might be willing to accept a case manager.

Lease configurations varied in case management requirements. Rejection of case management created enforcement costs for Housing First providers by hampering their ability to monitor lease compliance. Prolonged disengagement created bargaining costs if lease violations required case managers to mediate landlord-tenant conflicts. Katie minimized these inefficiencies by using preference logic to select a lease configuration that accommodated their clients’ desire for case management. Although Katie described her logic for choosing between voucher programs, participants also cited case management preferences to choose scattered-site or project-based configurations. Respondents selected a scattered-site lease for clients who wanted minimal case management and a project-based lease for those who either preferred or expressed indifference toward intensive case management.

I observed participants use this logic to select lease configurations during housing placement meetings. Trevor and Kelly used this logic to estimate resistance by a client to an available project-based configuration:

> Trevor moved to discuss his client, Bill, "We can talk to Bill to see if he is open to Griffin Park [project-based]. Or do you want to just put him in one of the slots and, 'We'll get back to you?'" Kelly explained, "I was just thinking Griffin Park too for him because he doesn't have case management so then it would be kind of like…" Trevor interrupted, "I don't know if he is open to case management. He's kind of stubborn." Kelly continued, "I told him just like the two home visits to make sure everything is okay. He seemed receptive to it."

Interviewees measured client preference for case management and selected lease configurations that minimized transaction costs. Trevor and Kelly practiced this logic by estimating Bill's resistance to case management. Trevor objected to Kelly's selection of a project-based lease by citing his perception of Bill's preference for case management. Bill's alleged stubbornness portended bargaining and enforcement costs for Housing First providers if he resisted intensive case management at the project-based facility. Kelly contested Trevor's economisation of Bill by presenting evidence to legitimate selection of a project-based configuration.

Character

Next, Housing First providers used the *logic of character* to economise clients as search and bargaining costs. Landlords rely on screening criteria to select tenants who honor their lease obligations (Greif 2018). Recent studies detail criteria that landlords use to judge applicants.

Grainger (2020) demonstrates landlords interpret past evictions as evidence an applicant lacks integrity to be a responsible tenant. Electronic public records enable landlords to quickly access information about the criminal history of lease applicants (Uggen and Stewart 2015). Thacher (2008) reports landlords increasingly use criminal background checks to measure the trustworthiness of applicants. The logic of character allowed Housing First providers to produce fictive expectations about search and bargaining costs they would shoulder while exiting a client from the street with a particular lease configuration. In contrast to preference logic, which estimated the willingness of Housing First recipients to participate in a rental market exchange, participants used the logic of character to estimate the willingness of landlords to participate in market exchanges.

To illustrate, participants cited eviction as a housing barrier that imposed search costs on the leasing process. As a Housing First advocate, Mike disliked master leases for limiting consumer choice but thought they benefited clients whose recent evictions stymied independent lease attainment:

> I think it is a really good option for somebody who's going to have a hell of a time getting on a residential lease, or getting an energy bill in their name, or see potential issues and an eviction on the record will obviously keep them from pursuing other housing but having a master lease could mitigate that.

Mike economised Housing First recipients as search costs related to past evictions. Landlord resistance to eviction meant case managers would encounter multiple rejections while using a voucher. Although master lease limited search costs by making the Housing First provider lessee, it tied assistance to units often located in distressed neighborhoods that most clients wanted to avoid. Thus, efforts to mitigate one set of transaction costs created another by increasing client resistance.

I observed Housing First providers use this logic to select lease configurations during housing placement meetings. Jen, for example, transferred a client whose recent eviction and outstanding judgment hindered use of their voucher:

> Jen moved to discuss a client that confronted difficulties during the housing search process, “If somebody would want to help Janice. She’s at [a Safe Haven] right now. She has a recent eviction of $7,000 in damage…” Mike leaned forward against the conference table, “Absolutely, a master lease program might be the best option because of her judgments.” Kelly squinted her eyes in confusion while looking at Jen across the table, “She’s in CARE” [HCV]? Jen shifted her gaze toward Kelly, “Yeah,” she said while nodding her head, “She has a voucher.” Alexis leaned back in her chair, “What about this CONNECT [master lease] slot,” she asked while pointing at the housing placement list.

In a separate episode, Katie selected a lease arrangement for a client with multiple evictions:

> Katie, Melissa’s case manager, provided the update, “She only wants the Eastside.” The meeting erupted in laughter. Alexis clarified, “She won’t live in a studio.” Katie leaned over the table, “And she does have the judgment. $5,000.” Kelly requested clarification, “For an eviction?” “Multiple,” Katie replied while nodding her head. Kelly squinted her eyes, “Does she have income?” Katie nodded her head, “She won’t pay her rent,” Kelly immediately replied, “Master lease,” as Alexis nodded her head.

Interviewees economised clients as search costs by estimating difficulties that their rental history would create while obtaining a lease. Jen, Alexis, Katie, and Kelly estimated search costs based on evictions and outstanding judgments. They anticipated landlord discrimination that would prolong the search process as case managers sought a flexible landlord. In response, they selected a master lease because it reduced landlord resistance by establishing the Housing First provider as lessee.

In addition, Housing First providers economised clients by estimating search costs related to criminal convictions. Landlords can legally discriminate on the basis of criminal conviction. Ex-felons confront landlord resistance that impedes independent lease attainment. Respondents selected lease configurations that minimized search costs related to criminal convictions. Willow described her logic for referring clients who were convicted of serious felonies:

> We've had people who have committed murder. We've had people with multiple drug felonies and it's going to be hard finding a landlord who will work with some of that. [I would probably refer them to] master lease in a real world because they're not going to really look at the criminal background, even, sometimes, if they're a sex offender.

Judy echoed this point while identifying the optimal lease arrangement for clients convicted of a sex crime:

> Those who are part of what they call special population. Sex offenders. Because that particular program, CONNECT [master lease], they will take sex offenders if the unit is not near a school or if the unit is not near a daycare, but if it's within range of a day care or a school, certain radius, they won't take them. Where

HOME [HCV], they also will take sex offenders and some other programs will not.

Willow and Judy argued criminal convictions created search costs that impeded independent lease attainment with a voucher. Landlords perceive felony convictions as a sign of moral degeneracy that undermines conformity to lease obligations while local governments use financial incentives to encourage discrimination against convicted felons (Desmond and Valdez 2012). This created search costs for case managers using a voucher to house convicted felons. Participants minimized search costs by selecting master lease to circumvent landlord resistance.

I observed Housing First providers use this logic to select lease configurations during housing placement meetings. Katie, for example, used the logic of character to negotiate the placement of a client, Kyle, who was listed on the sex registry:

> Katie provided an update on her client, Kyle, “The guy we were going back and forth on the [sex] registry…” Judy nodded her head, “He’s going to Covenant House [master lease].” Katie shook her head, “They aren’t sure he can go to Covenant House. There isn’t clear understanding that he’s currently on the registry. Larry [Covenant House operations manager] following up with the landlord to figure out if that building is in a current buffer zone because, otherwise, he can’t go to Covenant House. There is a possibility of HOME. There is a unit in the buffer zone on 10th Ave., but I’m not sure he can go to Covenant House.”

Interviewees economised ex-convicts as search costs and favored master lease to house these clients. In this regard, participants initially selected a master lease for Kyle to accommodate his criminal history. However, the master lease unit was located in an area that potentially violated

State law that prohibited a sex offender from living approximately 1,000 feet from a school, religious center, or playground. Establishing a master lease inside a buffer zone imposed significant search and enforcement costs on the service provider. Katie suggested a HOME transfer if the available master lease could not accommodate her client. Although interviewees preferred master lease for convicted felons, meeting participants selected different lease configurations to manage transaction costs related to criminal history.

Psy

Housing First providers used the logic of psy to economise clients as potential search, bargaining, and enforcement costs. Medicalization is the use of psy discourses to individualize the causes of homelessness by attributing housing deprivation to mental pathology (Willse 2015). Medicalized "sick-talk" is a defining feature of neoliberal homeless management that diverts attention from systemic to personal failure (Gowan 2010). Although it interprets homelessness as a barrier to self-sufficiency, Housing First medicalizes homelessness by attributing the "root" cause of displacement to individual pathology (Baker and Evans 2016). Participants used psy logic to produce fictive expectations of search, bargaining, and enforcement costs they would confront while mediating rental market exchanges for their client. In contrast to the logics of preference and character, which estimated the willingness of service recipients and private landlords to participate in a rental market exchange, psy logic estimated the ability of a Housing First recipient to participate in a protracted rental market exchange with a particular lease configuration.

To illustrate, Housing First providers used psy logic to economise clients while facilitating exits from homelessness. Respondents cited mental acuity to select a lease configuration that eased transition into permanent housing. As program supervisor of

CONNECT, Jack argued master leases were ideal for high acuity clients who lacked the capacity to participate in a lease negotiation:

> This is probably going to be a client or applicant who is experiencing presentation issues. Maybe they're actively symptomatic. Maybe they wouldn't dress to the nines, you know? If they have to meet and greet with the landlord, are they going to interface well? The master lease system offers opportunity to people who are really struggling.

Housing First recipients could reject housing. This meant case managers had to convince clients to accept available units. This task is complicated by mental illness. In response, Sally used master leases to move high acuity clients into permanent housing:

> I have a couple of clients that, because of their mental illness, will ask for housing, and expect or need you to deliver it immediately. Those are the ones that I refer to master lease programs. Perhaps you show them an empty apartment that they could live in, and it's too overwhelming to think, "This doesn't look like a home. How do I get things for this apartment? I don't have money." For some, you need it to be move-in ready. And those are the ones I refer there.

Housing First providers also used psy logic to select vouchers. Later in the interview, Sally described HOME's flexibility to accommodate high acuity clients with specific housing preferences:

> The current client I have is moving into a HOME [voucher] apartment soon. He was someone who wanted housing, but, "I can't right now. I have this I have to do. I don't have the money." So, HOME had the ability to wait and let me show him a number of places. He had delusions about a former landlord. So, it was very

> important to me that I didn't just find him the first place and if he said he liked it, he had to go there. I had to feel like, "I'm just showing you places. You make the choice. You tell me if you feel like this is a good landlord."

Tara echoed Sally's strategy while describing the utility of HOME to house high acuity clients that desired limited case management:

> Someone that's probably not going to be able to solidify working for a long time. I had a client who got clean, he zeroed out of CARE [HCV] and then he started using again and lost his job. These individuals that are going to be up and down, they have high needs mental health, they're individuals that aren't going to want to be involved initially. They need someone that may have to bring him to detox ten different times.

Jack, Sally, and Tara used psy logic to estimate transaction costs based on mental acuity. Housing First providers problematized the mental capacity of clients as a potential impediment to lease negotiations and acceptance of housing. High acuity clients created search, bargaining, and enforcement costs by disrupting the leasing process as a lease applicant and/or violating contractual obligations as a tenant. Participants used psy logic to estimate and minimize these transaction costs by selecting a lease configuration that accommodated their clients' mental health.

I observed Housing First providers use this logic to select lease configurations during housing placement meetings. Heidi, the Director of Coordinated Entry, selected a master lease for a client whose paranoia created bargaining costs during lease negotiations:

> Before today's housing placement meeting, Heidi asked, "Is Deb outside or is she back in?" Katie explained Deb had reentered a Safe Haven after losing her

> personal documentation. Following a brief silence, Marie clarified, "The likelihood of her signing anything is slim to none. We found a landlord who would rent to her with four pending lawsuits against previous landlords. And at the last minute she'd only put a 'X' through everything." Katie leaned forward to look at Marie at the other end of the table. "I'm guessing she's going to be a HOME [voucher] person," she replied while laughing. Heidi shook her head, "Covenant House [master lease]. A place where she doesn't have to sign anything."

Alexis, Heidi, and Mike selected a master lease for a client, Katia, whose mental acuity created search costs while combing the rental market for an available unit:

> Judy asked Sally to provide a report on Katia. Sally leaned forward to deliver an update, "So, Katia is new to me. It sounds like we'll be able to get verification for the last two months." "So," Heidi continued, "I think it's just a matter of putting together the documentation [of literal homelessness]. I don't think she's going to tolerate the CARE [voucher] process. When we took her for the tour, she refused to get back into the car for me to drive her back up." Mike nodded his head, "Yeah, let's slot her for HOME [voucher]." Alexis shook her head while suggesting Katia be referred to the Covenant House [master lease]. Heidi nodded her head, "That might be best because," Mike interrupted to finish her sentence, "Already ready."

Interviewees used the logic of psy to economise clients as transaction costs. High acuity clients had characteristics that impeded independent lease attainment with a voucher. Respondents argued severe mental illness produced bargaining and search costs that impeded transitions from homelessness. To minimize bargaining costs, Heidi used master lease to house a client whose paranoia thwarted completion of legal documents. Likewise, Alexis, Heidi, and Mike minimized search costs by selecting master lease for a client whose mental illness undermined participation in apartment hunting. Both decisions created enabling conditions to transition clients from homelessness into permanent housing.

In addition, participants used psy logic to prevent reentry to homelessness. Housing First recipients were prone to lease violations if they became dissatisfied with their unit. This created enforcement and bargaining costs that participants managed by selecting a lease configuration that reduced the probability of displacement. Sandy explained her reason for selecting a project-based lease:

> [Jim] was referred to the Langdon House [project-based]. He would stand out screaming and yelling at the traffic going past. So, some place like the Langdon House, there's somebody there to be like, "Hey, why don't you maybe take that to the back of the building?" Some things like that where there is somebody 24/7 that can kind of keep an eye on things. Because, if he was in independent apartment, tenants are going to complain. Then, landlords are going to get called and then everything just kind of snowballs."

Heidi described her preference of project-based leases for clients who are substance dependent:

> We have [used] Langdon House [project-based] because they check your ID at the door. We've had people that benefit from that. It is usually been the people who have benefited from it the most are folks that got some kind of cognitive thing and people are taking over their units. It's usually coupled with drug abuse. Drug dealers just take over because they can. They just move in.

Sandy and Heidi used psy logic to estimate transaction costs created by mental illness. Participants argued mental illness and substance abuse rendered clients vulnerable to lease violations. Noncompliance required additional surveillance and intervention to enforce lease requirements. Failure to encourage lease compliance created bargaining costs if Housing First providers landlord-tenant conflicts emerged. To mitigate enforcement and bargaining costs, participants selected a lease configuration that suited their clients' mental acuity and/or willingness to engage supportive services.

I observed respondents use psy logic to select lease configurations during housing placement meetings. Katie, for example, transferred Ryan from a project-based to scattered-site lease to prevent displacement into homelessness:

> Katie moved to discuss Ryan, "He's been in HOME [voucher] since 2015. Was in an apartment in [local suburb]. Didn't do real well. Now, he's at Vineyard Apartments [project-based]. He doesn't like to be around all of those people with mental illness. He's going to just pick up and leave." Heidi immediately asked, "So, he wants to leave?" Katie nodded her head. "Well," Heidi responded, "That's an easy transfer." Katie nodded her head while adding, "He's baseline irritable and dysphoric most of the time. He's not sure about Covenant House [master lease], but he'd like to look at an apartment."

In a separate episode, Jen selected a voucher for John to accommodate his readiness for drug treatment:

> Jen moved to discuss John, "Is it possible to switch someone if they haven't been housed yet?" Heidi turned her head toward Jen, "From CARE [voucher] to something else?" Jen nodded, "John, he's at STEPS [Safe Haven]. They want him

> out every day. And I don't think he'd be successful at CARE." Judy lifted her pen from the document in front of her, "So, you're changing him to HOME [voucher]?" Mike nodded his head, "He has pretty high acuity." "Yeah," Jen quietly affirmed, "He's a heroin user. And he doesn't meet with anyone." Mike vigorously nodded while interrupting, "Sounds like HOME."

Interviewees used psy logic to economise clients as enforcement costs and select lease configurations that ensured long-term permanent housing. Katie minimized enforcement costs by transferring Ryan from project-based to scattered-site lease where he wouldn't be exposed to chronic stress. Likewise, Jen managed enforcement costs by matching John, a heroin user, to HOME because its flexible case management accommodated his lifestyle. Each participant created enabling environments that sustained permanent housing.

Conclusion

This paper extends sociological knowledge of homeless management in neoliberal cities. Despite federal, state, and local interventions, literal homelessness remains a visible symptom of deep inequities that define American society (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020). Federal authorities have transformed homeless policy into a social investment (Baker et al. 2020). Policymakers recently adopted Housing First as a governmentality to invest in America's homeless population (Baker and Evans 2016). At the local level, this cultural shift is expressed through new institutions that service providers strategically navigate while delivering homeless services in urban communities. Past research has examined macro-economisation of homeless populations by federal authorities to make social investments (Willse 2015). A dearth of sociological research has examined the work that homeless service providers do to yield returns on those investments (Osbourne 2019; Smith and

Anderson 2018). This knowledge gap impedes sociologists from theorizing contemporary governance of homelessness in U.S. cities.

A longstanding debate in urban studies interrogates the form, function, and legitimacy of homeless services (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009; Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019b). Urban sociologists have conceptualized homeless services as an act of repression that excludes and secludes homeless individuals from prime spaces to advance urban renewal (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019b). That research undertheorizes the macro-political structures that shape homeless service delivery in U.S. cities. Dependency of urban governing coalitions on federal block grants highlights the significance of nested political structures to homeless service case management. The recent shift in federal policy toward Housing First means service providers, who deliver assistance through Continuum of Care, are legally mandated to procure return on social investments for federal policymakers by incorporating rather than excluding homeless individuals into political economic structures regardless of their personal intentions. Attention to federalist institutions enables sociologists to explain why frontline workers deliver what homeless services to whom on streets across time and place in U.S. cities.

I contributed to this discussion by examining logics that Housing First providers use to economise people suffering homelessness. Baker et al. (2020) argue institutional elites applied investment logic to create homeless policies that reduce public expenditures by promoting self-sufficiency. To this end, institutional elites economise America’s homeless population as a public expenditure, prioritize Housing First assistance for chronic homelessness, (Willse 2015), and allocate permanent supportive housing assistance through coordinated entry (Osbourne 2019). I used qualitative data to extend that research by examining logics that Housing First providers use to economise homeless individuals. Unlike federal policymakers, Housing First providers economise homeless individuals as rental market transaction costs. Housing First providers used the logic of preference to estimate the willingness of clients to participate in lease formation and compliance, character to estimate the willingness of landlords to lease up a client, and psy to estimate the ability of clients to participate in protracted rental market exchanges with a particular lease configuration. Housing First providers used these fictive expectations to select a lease configuration that smoothed rental market exchanges. Although micro-economisation reduced the stress of rental market exchanges for Housing First providers, it also yielded a return on social investment by reducing a protracted burden on public expenditures.

Findings from this study can be used to guide future research. First, I conducted this research on a Continuum of Care in the U.S. Rust Belt that addressed homelessness in a tight rental market with a housing inventory biased toward vouchers. Each Continuum of Care varies by Housing First integration, confronts different rental market constrains, serves a homeless population with dissimilar housing needs, and relies on adopts a unique housing inventory that is biased toward a particular lease configuration. Future research could explain variation in the housing inventory that Continuum of Care adopt and techniques of economisation that Housing First providers use across political economic contexts. Second, this study examines a moment of coordinated entry. Although Smith and Anderson (2018) examine the accumulation of data that service providers use to economise clients during housing placement meetings, scholars have produced limited knowledge what happens after a housing placement meeting. Future research could analyze efforts by case managers to legitimize suboptimal lease configurations, secure a lease for clients in private rental markets, and ensure lease compliance by Housing First recipients. Third, Osbourne (2019) demonstrates the implicit biases of emergency shelter providers mediates access to Housing First. Although this paper did not examine implicit biases, it is almost certain that they shape the fictive expectations Housing First providers use to select lease configurations. If implicit biases informed by race, gender, age, sexuality, marital status, or parent stereotypes impact housing placement, then Housing First recipients experience unequal access to suitable accommodation. Future research could examine the presence and influence of implicit biases on housing placement through coordinated entry.

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Article 3

"You Have to Speak to Their Concerns:" Economising Homeless Policy While Promoting Housing First to Private Landlords

Abstract: Housing First is the hegemonic model of homeless services that has been instituted by neoliberal cities in the U.S.A. Private landlords provide an essential resource that Housing First service providers use to end homelessness. Despite their significance, urban sociologists have overlooked the recruitment of private landlords into Housing First coalitions. I present a qualitative case study that addresses this knowledge gap. First, I conducted 26 interviews with private landlords to identify constraints that Housing First service providers confront in local rental markets. Next, I conducted 43 interviews and 5 focus groups with Housing First providers to analyze techniques used to recruit landlords. I demonstrate Housing First providers are informal real estate marketers who economise homeless policy as an opportunity for landlords to maximize profit by minimizing transaction costs. This research extends urban sociology by identifying a different mechanism through which homeless services reproduce the stratified political economy of neoliberal cities.

Introduction

Literal homelessness is a stable characteristic of U.S. cities in the neoliberal era (Willse 2015). Deindustrialization, welfare retrenchment, and urban revitalization eroded the middle class while reducing housing assistance to accommodate rent inflation. By the 1980s, street homelessness dispersed across urban landscapes as institutional authorities struggled to manage the growing crisis (Wolch and Dear 1993). Local governments adopted "broken windows" policing and "quality-of-life" ordinances to stimulate economic growth by excluding and secluding homeless people (Mitchell 2003). Criminalization of homelessness coincided with rehabilitation as the "shadow state" administered supportive services (Wolch 1990). The federal government designed homeless assistance programs to standardize services throughout the nation (Willse 2015). Although the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) experimented with different service modalities, street homelessness remains a visible feature of urban poverty in U.S. cities (Stuart 2016; Herring 2019a).

Homeless management in neoliberal cities has been an object of extensive theoretical debate (Stuart 2015). The crux of this debate examines the nature and function of homeless governance in neoliberal cities. Punitive governance theorists argue homeless management is a repressive act that excludes homeless people from "prime" spaces to facilitate capital accumulation (Davis 1990; Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996).[1] Emphasis on spatial relegation leads authors in this tradition to direct analysis at policing tactics by local law enforcement officers (Herring 2019a, 2019b). In contrast, supportive governance theorists challenge the punitive thesis by conceptualizing homeless management as a restorative act that aids homeless people in "spaces of care" (DeVerteuil, May, and von Mahs 2009; DeVerteuil 2019). Emphasis on support has redirected analysis toward case management practices by social workers delivering homeless services (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009; Johnsen and Fitzgerald 2010).

Urban scholars have produced an incomplete account of homeless services. Although supportive theorists point attention at homeless services, they neglect or undertheorize the political economic functions of case management. To the extent that scholars situate homeless services in political economic context, they examine the predominance of nonprofit actors in homeless governance coalitions (Dear and Wolch 1987; May and Cloke 2014), warehousing function of emergency services (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009; Herring 2019b), political pressure to displace encampment residents (Hennigan and Speer 2019), or provision of workfare to emergency shelter residents (Lyon-Callo 2004). Little research has examined the relationship between homeless services and urban housing markets. Hennigan (2017) is an exception that demonstrates Housing First providers discipline clients into obedient tenants.[2] Hennigan's analysis of provider-client relations neglects the recruitment of private landlords into Housing First coalitions. Dependency on private landlords to delivery Housing First in the United States means inattention to recruitment is a substantive knowledge gap that needs to be addressed by additional research.

In this paper, I present findings from a qualitative case study that makes three contributions to scholarly knowledge of homeless governance. First, I provide a novel empirical analysis of techniques that homeless service providers use to recruit private landlords into Housing First coalitions. In the United States, where public accommodation constituted .71% of the national housing stock in 2019, recruitment of private landlords is a vital component of homeless governance through Housing First case management.[3] Second, I conducted in-depth interviews with local landlords to contextualize Housing First recruitment practices. Urban sociologists have ignored the impact of landlord practices on homeless service delivery. Analyzing landlord screening practices delineates a market constraint that Housing First service providers navigate while governing homelessness. Third, I extend urban sociology by identifying a new mechanism that reproduces the political economies of neoliberal cities. I demonstrate, in addition to secluding homeless people from prime spaces, Housing First providers stabilize urban political economies by fortifying the stratified rental market of neoliberal cities.

I continue by, first, situating this study in scholarly literature on homeless governance. Next, I describe both the methods used to conduct this analysis and the location of this case study. Third, I present the data analysis in two subsections: landlord screening criteria and techniques of economisation. Finally, I wrap up with summary comments and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

In the neoliberal era, social investment displaced social welfare as the hegemonic governmentality that policymakers use to manage homelessness (Baker, Evans, and Hennigan 2020). Whereas welfare logic challenged economic inequality through social policies that redistributed wealth to satisfy immediate need, investment logic accommodates economic inequality by using social policy to produce market participants who reduce social disorder in the future (Cantillon 2011; Jenson and Saint-Martin 2003; Laruffa 2018; Staab 2010). Policymakers achieve this outcome by cultivating human capital that service recipients need to independently participate in market exchanges. Past research analyzes the disciplining of poor people through investment-oriented programs. Peck (2001), for example, examines the commodification of workfare recipients through programming that pushes poor people off the dole and into low-wage labor markets. Less examined is the extension of investment logic to homeless policy.

Baker et al. (2020) argue federal policymakers used investment logic to consumerise the poor through Housing First. In contrast to workfare, which commodifies the poor through job training that renders service recipients exploitable to prospective employers, Housing First consumerises the poor by producing transactionable lessees (Hennigan 2017).[4]

Housing First is a model of homeless services that promotes self-sufficiency through immediate placement in permanent housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment (Tsemberis 2010). Unlike Treatment First models, which facilitate gradual transition from homelessness through stairstep services that require recipients to prove "housing readiness," Housing First assumes everyone is housing ready and homelessness is the primary barrier to advancing self-sufficiency. Housing First rent subsidies are provided through vouchers, master leases, and/or project-based facilities. Housing First recipients are offered wraparound services that they can choose à la carte to achieve personal goals with assistance from their case manager (see Hennigan 2017). As suggested by this description, "consumer choice" is a fundamental component of Housing First that policymakers included to enhance the autonomy of service recipients (Hansen Löfstrand and Juhila 2012). Throughout the 21st century, Housing First has diffused across the Global North as institutional authorities adapted the model to diverse urban housing markets (see Benjaminsen et al. 2009; Busch-Geertsema 2012). In the U.S.A., neoliberal reforms render Housing First providers dependent on private landlords at the bottom of urban rental markets.[5] As a result, homeless service providers recruit private landlords into their governing coalition.

Recruitment of private landlords is complicated by the logics of capital. Private landlords are interest-based actors who rent properties to generate profit (Desmond 2012; Garboden and Rosen 2019; Leung, Hepburn, and Desmond 2020). Landlords adopt screening criteria to select responsible tenants who grow profits by reducing transaction costs (see Greif 2018). A transaction is a market exchange between a supplier and a buyer. Transactions vary by frequency, certainty, and investment (Williamson 1979). Frequent, uncertain, idiosyncratic transactions expose cosigners to opportunism. Opportunism generates transaction costs: informal expenses, beyond the price of a commodity, that strain market exchanges. Coase (1960) differentiates three transaction costs. In private rental markets, *search* costs are investments that landlords make to identify dependable tenants, *bargaining* costs are investments to negotiate a lease with prospective tenants, and *enforcement* costs are investments to ensure a tenant honors their lease obligations. Housing First recipients, exiting chronic homelessness, submit lease applications that violate at least landlord screening criteria. Housing First providers strategically navigate this market constraint during the lease application process.

In this regard, Housing First providers economise homeless policy to recruit prospective landlords. Economisation is the symbolic construction of a social actor, problem, or policy in terms of "the economy" (Çalışkan and Callon 2009). For example, policymakers economised "life" by using eugenics to control the impact of fertility on economic growth (Murphy 2017), promoting investments in scientific research to enhance the economic competitiveness of domestic firms in global markets (Berman 2014), instituting childcare assistance to enhance labor market capacity and participation (Prentice 2009), and adopting environmental protections to facilitate economic growth (Miller 2014). Each example shows institutional authorities economise social problems by designating a subpopulation that threatens the economy, identifying a policy intervention that mitigates the fiscal threat posed by this group, and contracting frontline workers who produce market subjectivities in service recipients (Baker et al. 2020). In short, economisation begets social policy that promises future economic gains through a social investment that generates human capital (Laruffa 2018; Morel et al. 2012).

Institutional authorities economise homeless policy at different levels of society. At the macro-level, institutional elites economise homeless policy with monetary calculations that determine who gets what type of housing assistance when, where, how, and why (Baker et al. 2020). For example, policymakers economised homeless policy by adopting Housing First to administer homeless services. This decision reflected scientific consensus that Housing First outperformed Treatment First models at reducing homelessness and managing public expenditures (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016). In addition, federal policymakers partitioned the U.S. homeless population into three categories—transitional, episodic, and chronic—based on public expenditure utilization (Willse 2015). Policymakers narrowed permanent housing assistance to chronically homeless people because scientific research indicated monthly rental subsidies cost the state less than the emergency services this subpopulation consumed to survive the street. In short, federal prioritization of Housing First for chronically homeless people is an effort to reduce public expenditure by producing transactionable rental market consumers through the cheapest available intervention (Baker et al. 2020).

To date, urban scholars have neglected micro-level economisation by Housing First providers. Housing First providers perform functions and confront institutional constraints that differ from federal policymakers (see Lipsky 1980). Unlike policymakers, who accommodate conflicting demand for low taxes and quality services by constituents, Housing First providers accommodate conflicting demand for quality housing by clients, public expenditure reduction by policymakers, and transactionable renters by landlords. Policymakers allocate rental subsidies at

40% of local median income that render Housing First providers dependent on private landlords who rent affordable units in distressed neighborhoods. As gatekeepers of a private good, landlords are permitted by the state, barring protected classes, to deny lease applicants who threaten their bottom line. For this reason, Housing First providers appeal to the material interest of private landlords by economising homeless policy for clients whose lease application conveys economic risk. This dilemma raises the following research questions: What screening criteria do private landlords use to select tenants? How do Housing First providers interpret the screening criteria of private landlords in their community? How do Housing First providers respond to these criteria while negotiating a lease for their client?

I argue the neoliberalization of housing policy renders Housing First providers in U.S. cities dependent on private landlords in urban rental markets. Private landlords are interest-based stakeholders who adopt monetary and nonmonetary criteria to select tenants who maximize profit by minimizing enforcement costs. Housing First providers function as real estate marketers who navigate this constraint by presenting homeless clients as opportunities for landlords to reduce risk while growing profits. Frontline workers sell Housing First as guaranteed rent that is secured by a professional social worker who enforces lease compliance by the tenant. To landlords renting units at the bottom of urban housing markets, whose tenants often struggle to pay rent, publicly subsidized property management differentiates Housing First recipients from unsubsidized lease applicants. Marketing Housing First as a free property management service delineates unrecognized economic functions of contemporary homeless services: bill collection, flat maintenance, and turnover assistance. This finding extends literature on urban governance by demonstrating, in addition to secluding homeless people from prime spaces and pushing them into low-wage employment, homeless service providers reproduce the political economy of neoliberal cities by stabilizing capital accumulation for private landlords.

Data & Methods

I conducted this research in a large, racially hypersegregated, post-industrial Rust Belt county. Since the 1970s, Springfield County experienced a dramatic decline in its manufacturing sector (see Wilson 1987). White suburbanization simultaneously generated hypersegregation, thereby creating a spatial mismatch that largely separated people of color from high-wage employment (see Massey and Denton 1993). Poverty enveloped minority neighborhoods in Springfield County's central city. Local government responded with mass incarceration that integrated State surveillance into the daily lives of communities of color (see Wacquant 2009). Intra-metropolitan competition for high-income households dissuaded local governments from investing in supportive services such as affordable housing stock expansion (see Peterson 1981). In short, Springfield County experienced the macro-structural characteristics that urban scholars have documented in Rust Belt cities during the neoliberal era.

Springfield County's housing market poorly accommodated these macro-structural conditions. Less than 10% of the county's rental stock lent units below $500 a month (United States Census Bureau 2018). Roughly 65% of households earning 30% of area median income devoted 50% or more of their wages to rent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017). Local housing authorities offered meager assistance to reduce cost burden. Springfield County's public housing stock decreased from 5,000 units in 2000 to under 2,750 units in 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). Over the past ten years, average wait time for Section 8 rental assistance oscillated between approximately twenty and twenty-five months (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). As a result, 1 in 1,000 Springfield County residents experienced homelessness in 2018. Over 50% of Springfield County's homeless population identified as Black. Only 10% of Springfield County's homeless population qualified as chronically homeless (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019b). This means 90% of Springfield County's homeless population was ineligible for CoC assistance.

Housing First providers recruited private landlords in this context. Policy entrepreneurs, who integrated Housing First principles into the local safety net, produced a referral network of private landlords that they could consistently use to house homeless clients. Advocates established myriad lease configurations: voucher, master lease, and project-based. Vouchers provide Housing First recipients a rent subsidy that is useable with any landlord accepting that source of income. A master lease is a rent subsidy tied to a particular unit that names the service provider lessee. A project-based lease is located in a supportive housing facility that exclusively rents to differently abled residents. Housing First recipients occasionally rejected units from their provider's referral network. In these cases, Housing First case managers scoured Springfield County's rental market to recruit new landlords. Landlord attrition in the Housing First coalition was high. Thus, landlord recruitment was a regular burden shouldered by Housing First providers.

I conducted 5 focus groups (n=33) and 70 in-depth interviews. I used three methods to recruit study participants. First, I received permission from the "Springfield County Continuum of Care" coordinated entry director to observe housing placement meetings. I recruited study participants from this site because attendees provided bridge case management that helped homeless people become Housing First clients. I conducted eight months of nonparticipant observation before requesting one-on-one interviews from meeting attendees. After conducting

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Housing First Providers (n=77)

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age Cohort		
Young Adult (18-35)	34	44.2
Middle-Adult (36-55)	34	44.2
Older-Adult (56-99)	8	10.4
N/A	1	1.3
Gender		
Female	63	81.8
Male	13	16.9
Non-binary	1	1.3
Race		
Asian	1	1.3
Black	15	19.5
Brown	1	1.3
Hispanic	1	1.3
White	57	74.0
Other	1	1.3
N/A	1	1.3
Education Level		
High School Degree	2	2.6
A.A or A.S. Degree	6	7.8
Bachelor's Degree	27	35.1
Master's Degree	42	54.5
Employment History (In Years)		
1–5	18	23.4
6–10	23	29.9
11–15	20	26.0
16–20	7	9.1
21–25	7	9.1
26–99	2	1.3

an initial round of interviews, I requested referrals from Housing First program coordinators to interview case managers they supervised. All program supervisors introduced me to team members from who I requested participation. This snowball sampling method recruited 34 participants into the study.

Second, I contacted the Springfield County Department of Health where I connected with program supervisors who managed Housing First case management teams.[6] I received permission to present the project to Housing First program coordinators at their weekly joint staff meeting. I received contact information from attendees who connected me with their team members. I recruited study participants from 6 out of 15 local agencies providing Housing First case management. From these contacts, I recruited participation from 43 case managers. Thirty-three of these case managers participated in 5 focus groups that ranged between 3 and 10 participants while the remaining 10 participated in in-depth interviews. In total, this study included 77 Housing First case managers. Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of Housing First providers who participated in this study.

Third, I recruited 26 landlords using two methods. First, I introduced myself to the President of Springfield County's Apartments Association and leaders of local neighborhood associations to schedule a presentation during their monthly meeting. During these presentations, I introduced audience members to the research project, promised $20 to compensate participation, distributed my contact information, and welcomed attendees into the study. Second, I used snowball sampling to recruit landlord participants. I requested e-introductions from Housing First case managers who participated in the study. This facilitated access landlords who rented to Housing First recipients. In addition, I requested e-introductions from landlords who participated in the study. Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of landlord participants who participated in this study.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Landlord Participants

Demographic Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Age		
(20–29)	2	7.7
(30–39)	3	11.5
(40–49)	6	54.5
(50–59)	8	30.7
(60–69)	3	11.5
N/A	3	11.5
Gender		
Female	17	65.4
Male	9	34.6
Race		
Arab	1	3.8
Black	3	11.5
Hispanic	1	3.8
White	21	80.7
Property Orientation		
Owner	15	57.7
Property Manager	11	42.3
Organization Type		
For Profit	23	88.5
Nonprofit	3	11.5
Property Management Experience in Years		
(0–9)	12	46.2
(10–19)	2	7.7
(20–29)	9	34.6
(30–39)	1	3.8
(40+)	1	3.8
N/A	1	3.8
Number of Units Owned/Managed		
(0–99)	11	42.3
(100–999)	9	34.6
(1,000–3,500)	4	15.4
N/A	1	3.8

I conducted interviews and focus groups with a recording device. Each interview and focus group ranged 30–90 minutes; however, most lasted approximately one hour. I created a semi-structured questionnaire to ensure comparable responses. I encouraged focus group members to participate by providing time for each respondent to answer questions and requesting input from quiet attendees. Once completed, audio recordings were transcribed and analyzed using MAXQDA software. I used coding methods derived from grounded theory to analyze the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I initially open coded all data to identify emergent themes. Next, I returned to scholarly literature to theoretically situate the case study. After identifying the theme of economisation, I used theoretical coding to organize existing codes into higher order categories that structure this paper.

A few limitations should be noted. First, I did not directly observe the actions described by respondents. Although each theme was triangulated by multiple participants, this analysis is weakened by my inability to specify conditions under which each strategy was used. Second, this study relies on a purposive sample from one large Rust Belt county. This weakness limits the transferability of these findings to different political economic contexts both within and outside the U.S.A. Finally, within the organizations I recruited, Black women seemed less willing to volunteer participation. I am uncertain if my social identity—White, gay, middle-class, cis-gendered man—discouraged participation by members of this subpopulation. As a result, this study offers a partial account of the landlord recruitment that I will address while discussing directions for future research in the conclusion.

Findings

I demonstrate Housing First providers are informal real estate marketers who economise homeless services to recruit affordable property-owners into their governing coalition. The application of investment logic to homeless policy renders Housing First providers agents of market reproduction who grow landlord profits by delivering publicly subsidized property management services that reduce enforcement costs. Although this function exits a subset of people from homelessness, it fortifies rather than challenges market inequalities that facilitate housing deprivation in neoliberal cities. I continue by analyzing screening criteria that landlords used to select transactionable tenants. Next, I examine the techniques that Housing First providers used to navigate structural constraints imposed by landlord screening criteria.

Landlord Screening Criteria

Private landlords lease properties to generate profit. An apartment lease is a long-term contract that requires repeat exchange. Lease formation involves at least two parties with imperfect information that exposes cosigners to opportunism.[7] Landlords thwarted opportunism by adopting screening criteria to select dependable tenants. I differentiate landlords screening criteria into two categories. Monetary criteria measured the financial capacity of an applicant to pay rent. Nonmonetary criteria measured enforcement costs that a lease applicant would create as lessee. Here, I examine these criteria to delineate a structural constraint that Housing First navigated while exiting clients from homelessness. Housing First providers developed a "looking glass self" that evaluated their clients' lease application with the logics landlords used to differentiate transactionable from non-transactionable tenants.

Monetary criteria

Landlords used monetary criteria to measure economic risk while evaluating lease applications. Monetary criteria measured an applicant's ability to satisfy the financial obligations of a lease. Household income is an obvious monetary criterion. Lease applicants whose monthly income did not afford basic necessities such as rent, utilities, food, clothing, and transportation posed an economic risk. Landlords, like Helen, managed risk by demanding documentation of household income and establishing a monthly income requirement, "Monthly income should be at least three times the monthly rent to qualify." Landlords cited income requirements that varied from two to three times the cost of rent. Joe justified his income requirement in the following manner:

> I want to know that they're going to be able to afford the rent that I'm charging. I want to make sure that they're going to pay the rent on time because if they're not that is going to cause problems for me financially.

Amanda echoed this reasoning while describing her method for calculating an income requirement:

> I do a minimum income requirement. Let's say that the rent amount is $800 per month. I multiply that times three. I add on an extra $50 for the water. I multiply that times three. Then, my minimum income requirement would be $2550 per month. I try to ensure the tenant is not going to default on their payments.

Landlords considered myriad sources while estimating an applicant's household income. Earned wages are a common source of income; however, landlords, like Ali, also considered public assistance as a source of household income:

> Our main thing is knowing that they're generating enough income at their place of employment that they can afford the rent. We do look at them making three times the amount of the rent. We will sometimes include if they receive Social Security benefits.

Thomas elaborated this point in a separate interview:

> If my rent is $700 and you have $1000, what's the likelihood you're going to be a long-term tenant if you add up the numbers of the energy bill, your groceries? We do count food stamps as income because you have to, but you have other

> expenses. I don't think it's realistic to say that I can live on $300 a month. So, we say you have to make three times the rent.

Most landlords financed mortgages through monthly rent collection. Rent delinquency hindered landlords from meeting their financial obligations, risked property foreclosure, and strained profit accumulation. An income requirement allowed landlords to reject lease applicants who lacked financial means to afford rent. For this reason, landlords, like Helen, Joe, Amanda, Ali, and Thomas, gathered evidence that lease applicants devoted no more than 30–40% of their household income toward rent.

Multiple factors shrank landlord profits throughout the duration of a lease. First, landlords turnover units once a lease is terminated. Flipping a vacated unit incurs capital investment to restore the apartment when it is not producing revenue. Thomas, for example, stated he did not generate profit unless tenants resided in their unit for at least twenty months:

> I don't make any money until you've been there for twenty months. If my average is twelve months, I don't make money because it costs money to turn a unit over. And every time you turn a unit over, you have at least one month of lost rent. And you have damages, and it takes your resources to turn the unit.

Landlords reduced unit turnover by selecting stable tenants. Property-owners used several indicators to measure the stability of a lease applicant. Ali, for example, interpreted multiple landlord references on somebody's lease application as a sign of instability:

> If it's a choice between someone who has ten previous landlords, but they're only like six months at a time, I'd rather go with a tenant that has two previous landlords, that was for two years each landlord because you're looking for stability.

Eviction is an indicator of housing instability that taxes landlord profits. Landlords identified several ways eviction reduces profits. Amanda, for example, associated eviction with unpaid rent:

> When you have a tenant that has had a prior eviction, it's one of those cases where somebody stiffs the prior landlord, you wonder if they're going to wind up doing that to you.

Cindy connected eviction to exorbitant legal expenses:

> A hundred bucks to file. Get the sheriffs writs. That's like five bucks. You have to pay for the process server, which is like a hundred-something. You have to pay court fees. Then, if you have to get a lawyer, it adds up to a few hundred bucks. You're paying a lawyer if it goes to trial. It's just a pain in the butt.

Landlords, like Stephen, limited profit loss by discriminating against evicted applicants:

> A good tenant has no evictions. If they've got a recent eviction, I ask them, "Why were you evicted?" "I lost my job. Now, I have a job." I would give that person a shot. If they've got two recent evictions, "I lost my job." That's no longer an excuse. It's a pattern.

Each excerpt demonstrates landlords believed the exchange value of their property depended on its temporal consumption. Private landlords generate profit by selecting stable tenants who minimize property, marketing, and legal expenses. Transient renters shrank profits by increasing overhead. Protracted losses rendered a landlord vulnerable to insolvency. Thomas, Ali, Helen, Amanda, and Stephen used multiple indictors to select stable tenants from their applicant pools.

Second, landlords estimated the probability an applicant would keep their unit in good repair. Thomas previously described the impact of turnover costs on landlord profits. Disorderly tenants increased turnover costs by creating property damage beyond wear and tear. For this reason, landlords, like Frank, conceptualized the "ideal" tenant as a steward of their property:

> They [a good tenant] keep the place clean because if they don't, it could cause problems for me when I have to turn the place over when they move.

Landlords used myriad indicators to estimate the stewardship of a lease applicant. Participants contacted previous landlords with a battery of questions about the applicant's cleaning habits. Ali asked landlords, "Did they keep the place clean? Was it in good order? Was there any damage?" Joe reported, "I will ask questions like, 'Do they respect the property? Do they respect you as a landlord?'" Respondents triangulated landlord testimonies with additional indicators of stewardship. Shantel used electronic public records to infer stewardship from an applicant's criminal history:

> Misdemeanors wasn't an issue with me. Now, it is. You have vandalism. That's a misdemeanor. So, you going to damage my property, then, too.

Heather visited the home of lease applicants to evaluate the quality of their housework:

> A good tenant, when you go to pick up the application, their house is clean. There's no sticky kitchen floor. There's no holes in the screen. There're no holes punched in the wall. It looks like they take the garbage out on a regular basis.

Cindy estimated stewardship from the appearance of lease applicants:

> If you come looking at an apartment and you've got clothes on that stink and have holes and you've got this car, that tells me that the inside of your apartment is going to look like that.

In addition to temporality, landlords believed the exchange value of their property depended on the intensity of its consumption. Lessees who damaged their unit beyond wear and tear shrank landlord profits by adding maintenance expenses. Predicting the intensity an applicant would consume their unit is a calculation that landlords performed during the application process. Landlords collected information from references, electronic public records, home visits, and apartment viewings to select dependable tenants.

Lastly, landlords estimated the impact of a lease applicant on service fees. Landlords often included utilities in the cost of rent. Frequent house guests at tenants' apartments used private utilities such as water, electricity, and trash collection. As a result, tenants who regularly hosted guests increased utility costs for landlords. Landlords, like Ellie, reduced overhead by selecting tenants who limited traffic:

> I'm renting to you. I'm not really renting to everybody else that you bring into the house. We can tell there's extra people in the house when the water bill goes up high and the electricity and things like that.

Nora used landlord references to estimate the burden a lease applicant would impose on utility fees:

> I look for how easy was it to work with them. Did they have a lot of traffic at the building? Did you have issues with significant others living there illegally? How was their ability to take care? Would you rent to them again if you had to?

Local governments subsidized police services through tax levies. City officials punished excessive nuisance calls by issuing landlords inordinate fines (see Desmond and Valdez 2012). Landlords, like Taylor, used electronic public records to estimate the likelihood an applicant would overuse police services:

> I look and see how many years, if they got a felony, and what it was. If it was possession and selling. I steer away from that because I can't have a drug house. They close you down in the City of Springfield.

Each excerpt demonstrates landlords believed the exchange value of their property depended on service consumption. Lessees who overused private or public services taxed landlord profits. Landlords maximized profit by collecting information about the burden of lease applicants on service fees. Landlords informally plugged pieces of information—household income, rental history, criminal record, references, and demeanor—into an econometric model to estimate the transactionability of each applicant.

Chronic homelessness suggested a lease applicant experienced abject poverty. A subset of landlords questioned the ability of homeless applicants to satisfy their monetary criteria. Chad, for example, responded to the question, "What concerns would you have renting to somebody who's experienced prolonged homelessness," in the following manner:

> One, their income level. I'm not a charity. This is my job. That's my paycheck. Let's say they're homeless, but they somehow manage to work every day. I would look into that. I need to be ensured that you're going to have money the next month or the next month or the next month.

Fran questioned the ability of a homeless applicant to pay rent and take care of their unit:

> I'd have to know what kind of income the people were having and how they would be guaranteeing that they would pay the rent. Then, we'd have to discuss how to take care of things.

Frank extended Fran's concern by citing potential property nuisance:

> My concern there would be for the stability of the person. Are they going to be able to pay their rent long-term? Are they going to be able to maintain the home? Are they going to clean it? Are they going to create a disturbance around the property? They have to fit our criteria. If you're chronically homeless, to be able to provide three years' worth of rental history, it's going be difficult.

Chad, Fran, and Frank interpreted homelessness as a potential violation of their screening criteria. A homeless applicant subsidized by Housing First reported household income below the standard requirement that most landlords adopted. Furthermore, HUD's restrictive eligibility criteria meant Housing First recipients, by necessity, reported rental histories that violated landlord screening criteria. Hence, the political economy of Housing First in Springfield County had contradictions that hindered frontline workers from transitioning clients into permanent housing.

Nonmonetary criteria

Landlords used nonmonetary criteria to approximate the psychological stress they would endure while squeezing profit from a lease applicant. A lease requires cosigners to coordinate repeat exchanges. Toxic landlord-tenant relations create distress that study participants avoided. Chad, for example, was an established landlord who prioritized nonmonetary criteria during the leasing process, "Earlier [in my career] it was all about the money, the money, the money. Now, it's minimizing headaches." Established landlords reported low mortgage debt that enabled them to select tenants based on social psychological factors. In this regard, participants selected transactionable tenants who voluntarily obeyed their lease obligations.

To illustrate, landlords evaluated the demeanor of lease applicants to select dependable tenants. Landlords distinguished economic from personal capacities to be a tenant. A lease applicant of financial means may not comply with their contractual obligations. Noncompliant tenants generate enforcement costs that impede profit generation. Landlords, like Ellie, conceptualized a good tenant as a dependable person who consistently paid their rent on time:

> A good tenant is somebody that pays their rent on time. And someone that is not trying to scheme or play you, "Oh, I got the money today, but I got to go to the bank and get it," and then they never show up.

Cindy described psychological distress she experienced while disciplining delinquent tenants:

> First, when you start to realize, "We've got trouble here." Then, you're calling and they're not answering. You're trying to find them. Then, you're serving them with the notice. You're going to the post office to get it certified. You've got a million other things to take care of. Then, the mental stress, the emotional stress.

Landlords used several indicators to measure the dependability of lease applicants. Chad rejected applicants who arrived late to unit viewings:

> You get a pretty good first impression with people. One, if they're super late, I leave and then they'll call me and, "When can I reschedule?" I'm like, "You can't. I don't want you anymore. Respect my time." Thanks, but no thanks.

Nora based her assessment of an applicant's dependability on their employment history:

> If I see somebody who's worked two months as a waitress at Joe Schmoe's, and then they worked three months somewhere else, and they worked six months here. It sends red flags up to me. If they have a hard time in a job working with people, how are they going to work with me when I ask them, "I need you to remember to put the trashcan back from the driveway because it's a city ordinance."

Property management required landlord-tenant coordination. Landlords established payment schedules to collect revenue. Tenants who failed to pay rent on time distressed landlords. Moreover, landlords coordinated with tenants to comply with local regulations. Unreliable tenants put landlords in conflict with government officials. Landlords adopted nonmonetary screening criteria to reduce this stress. Chad used apartment viewings and Nora used employment histories to evaluate the interpersonal skills of lease applicants.

Next, landlord participants measured the thoughtfulness of lease applicants. Most respondents rented units in multifamily apartment buildings. Disruptive tenants generated noise complaints that landlords had to mediate. Conflict mediation demanded time that landlords, like Chad, devoted to other purposes:

> If I have a tenant who pays on the first, and now he's getting complaints from other tenants, I got to get rid of them even though they paid perfect. It drives you nuts. When you're just getting calls all the time, "They're downstairs being super loud again." My free time is very valuable to me.

Grace defined a good tenant as someone who respected property management staff and neighbors:

> There's a lot of different factors. Noise disturbances. General attitude to our employees. We have had people come in very unruly, intoxicated, swearing, being a little disorderly with tenants as well.

Landlords used myriad tactics to deny disruptive lease applicants. Nora asked past landlords, "Did they have a lot of traffic at the building? Did you have issues with significant others living there illegally," while conducting reference checks. Shantel used criminal background checks to identify lifestyle characteristics that portended disruption:

> Loitering. What property were you at loitering? You have four loiterings in one month. They give you a ticket. You got kicked out by baby mama or baby daddy. Loitering. There's somewhere in there that there's a restraining order with that person.

Erica conducted observations during apartment viewings to estimate the probability an applicant would disturb tenants:

> A good rule is to listen to the conversations that they're having with people if there's people with them. There was one particular group where the boy was like, "Oh can you imagine big, huge parties we could throw in this basement." We're probably not going to rent to you now.

Disruptive tenants created headaches for landlords who mediated conflicts. Unchecked disruption motivated quiet tenants to break or decline lease renewal. A bad reputation discouraged "good" tenants from applying for leases at the landlords' property. Although landlords considered long-term factors, immediate concerns worried participants, like Chad, who minimized the stress of property management. To this end, landlords used multiple measures to select thoughtful tenants.

Lastly, landlords sought tenants with communication skills so they could smoothly manage their properties. Delayed maintenance reports prevented landlords from addressing emergent problems. Inadequate communication hindered landlords from entering a unit to conduct maintenance. Although deferred property maintenance shrank profit, it also distressed participants if landlord-tenant conflicts emerged over unit access. For this reason, Nora sought tenants with good communication skills:

> A good tenant is somebody who is alert you to everything that goes wrong. If there's a leak, "Nora, our plumbing is not working." I'll send somebody out immediately. A tenant who has communication skills gives you the ability to have a relationship.

Alan described the significance of communication skills to rent collection:

> A good tenant would be someone who pays their rent on time or communicates if they are going to be late. We are very lenient. If all tenants communicated plans, we wouldn't have to evict anybody.

Frank connected communication skills to crime control:

> If they see somebody that's doing something wrong to the property, report that. If they suspicious activity, please report that. Residents live at the property. They're going to be there 24/7. We're not. You want residents to be your eyes and ears and report things that they do see.

Landlords relied on references to collect information about an applicant's communication skills. Ali asked landlords, "Did they give proper notice? Would they rent to the tenant again?" Shantel asked, "Do they get along well with you or cooperate with you when things are needing to be done?" Frank asked, "Did they give proper notice to leave or did they just bail?" Protracted rental market exchanges require interpersonal communication. Poor communication frustrates rent collection, property maintenance, and/or unit turnover. Landlord-tenant hostility created stress that landlords avoided by using nonmonetary screening criteria to select tenants with strong communication skills.

Chronic homelessness suggested a lease applicant would generate nonmonetary enforcement costs. A subset of landlords thought homelessness reflected a pattern of individual disorganization. According to this logic, selecting a homeless applicant welcomed property disturbances that landlords avoided. Thomas, for example, described his concerns about the nonmonetary taxes a homeless applicant would likely impose as a tenant:

> Interviewer: What concerns would you have renting to somebody who is homeless?
>
> Thomas: I've rented to some non-profits. They have what they call trackers [i.e. case managers]. I don't think anybody else that's there has worked to educate the tenants. I get concerned that, in my mind, there has to be some [personal] improvement. Why were they homeless? What are their social skills? What are their job skills? I'm always trying to improve myself. I think that's what we should all strive for.
>
> Interviewer: Would you agree with this statement, "You want your tenants to pay rent and have a certain moral character?"
>
> Thomas: Oh, very much, very much. I want them to be a good neighbor. I want them to care about the community. I want them to treat it like a home, like it's theirs. I believe if they have that attitude, they'll treat their neighbors and the unit better.

Thomas demonstrated the disadvantage of using private landlords to end homelessness. Landlords expressed conservative views on poverty and social policy. Most landlords blamed the urban poor for being homeless and/or believed welfare programs should foster independence rather than dependence. As a result, most landlords stigmatized Housing First recipients as broken welfare cheats who lacked the moral character to be good tenants.

Techniques of Economisation

Landlord screening criteria was a market constraint that Housing First providers navigated while delivering homeless services. Most Housing First recipients submitted lease applications that violated at least one landlord screening criteria. Susan, a Housing First case manager, provided the following response when I asked, “How would you describe the housing barriers your clients confront as they transition into permanent housing,” during a one-on-one interview:

> Addictions, criminal backgrounds, housing history, lack of landlord references, and I think there’s the hidden discrimination. Their gross monthly income has to be three times what the rent charge is. So that automatically excludes anyone who’s receiving rent assistance. I think it’s an attempt to avoid people on rent assistance by being very specific with their income.

A majority of service providers reported clients who confronted similar housing barriers. Frontline workers challenged landlord discrimination by marketing Housing First as a free property management service that generated profit through bill collection, property maintenance, and turnover assistance. This technique economised homeless policy by constructing Housing First as a means to safely squeeze profit from market pariahs.

Bill Collection

Frontline workers marketed Housing First case management as informal bill collection. Landlords previously voiced concern about timely rent payment. Property-owners avoided insolvency by establishing household income requirements and estimating enforcement costs a lease applicant would impose on rent collection. Housing First providers navigated this market constraint by presenting Housing First as guaranteed rent that professional case managers secured by delivering bill collection services.

To illustrate, frontline workers understood private landlords rented properties to generate profit. Policy entrepreneurs, like Mike, applied this knowledge while recruiting landlords into Housing First:

> You have to speak to their concerns. They're not social service providers. People think that landlords who work with us have some obligation to house our clients. They don't. I do not go into 'housing is a human right.' They don't give a shit about that.

Although Mike was a Housing First program supervisor, case managers, like Jennifer, Ashley, and James, shared his view that landlords were interest-based actors:

> During a focus group with Housing First case managers, I asked, "What do you think the landlords prioritize in terms of…" Before I could finish the sentence, Jennifer, Ashley, and James interrupted, "Rent money."

Defining private landlords as interest- rather than value-based actors motivated frontline workers to market Housing First as an instrument of capital accumulation. Stan, for example, advertised Housing First as guaranteed rent to prospective landlords:

> They [landlords] know we've [Housing First recipients] had problems in the past but know that at least 70% of the rent guaranteed covered, "You're not going to have to worry about that. You're going to get your check like clockwork."
> Landlords say, "I can work with that."

Tina expounded this statement by clarifying the Springfield County government paid 70% of monthly rent:

> For me, it's asking basic questions, "Hey, are you familiar with the programs?" If somebody does have a voucher, "It's going to be paid through the county. The person will pay 30%, but you will definitely get your rent paid."

Meager rent subsidies rendered Housing First recipients dependent on affordable property-owners. This proved a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, dependency on affordable landlords meant Housing First recipients often could not access suitable accommodation that met their needs. On the other hand, dependency on affordable landlords gave Housing First providers an advantage over unsubsidized applicants whose poverty meant they could not consistently guarantee rent payment. Stan and Tina exploited this advantage by branding Housing First case managers as bill collectors who guaranteed a significant proportion of monthly rent.

Landlords expressed concern that Housing First recipients would not pay their portion of the rent. Case managers eased anxiety by naming themselves representative payee whenever possible. A representative payee is appointed by the Social Security Administration to control the finances of income recipients deemed "incompetent." Housing First recipients often received Social Security Disability Insurance that enabled case managers to seize control of their finances. Housing First providers, like Nina, cited representative payeeship to assuage landlord concerns about rent nonpayment:

> Some of them are willing to be flexible if we are the payee because I'm able to say, "Look, I'm legally required to pay rent. There's no way he's not going to have rent paid."

Whitney presented representative payeeship as a way to reduce enforcement costs related to rent collection:

> I try to advocate with the landlord for them, "We're the payee. They don't have that income, but we will make sure that you get your rent on time because we're the payee."

Jamie cited representative payeeship to minimize landlord concerns about the communication skills of Housing First recipients:

> If my clients have a payee, it's very good because the landlords typically understand and can rest assured that they're going to get their rent on time every month. And they're going to be notified if there is a glitch. And they don't have to necessarily have to talk to the client. They're going to get a phone call from a professional.

Landlords appreciated representative payees for protection against enforcement costs. Housing First providers, like Sabrina, reported some landlords demanded clients have a representative payee:

> They know that we're the payees. They know they are going to get their money. And that has been like kind of a make or break with some of our clients as well. If they don't have a payee, then it's much harder.

Representative payeeship empowered Housing First providers, like Natalie, to mitigate landlord discrimination against evicted applicants:

> We are the payee in a lot of cases. So, we can guarantee rent from people. If the landlord knows, "Oh, you're the payee? Cool, we accept them." They don't even care about evictions in a sense.

Each excerpt demonstrated the economisation of homelessness by Housing First providers. Based on their screening criteria, case managers reported landlords feared Housing First recipients would shirk their portion of monthly rent. Housing First providers managed perceptions of economic risk by citing their role as representative payee. In this regard, frontline workers marketed Housing First case managers as bill collectors mandated by the federal government to ensure rent payment. This technique of economisation constructed homelessness as a social problem from which landlords could profit by leasing Housing First recipients without shouldering enforcement costs during rent collection.

Maintenance Staff

Frontline workers presented Housing First case managers as informal maintenance staff. Landlords previously cited concern about property maintenance. Poor housekeeping, prolonged guests, and/or criminal behavior shrank profits strained landlord-tenant relations while creating unwanted stress. Established landlords prioritized enforcement cost reduction during the application process to ease rental market exchanges. Housing First recipients submitted applications and/or presented demeanor that conveyed poor stewardship of rental property. Housing First providers navigated this constraint by citing proactive and reactive interventions that reduced property damage.

To illustrate, frontline workers marketed Housing First participation as a resource to reduce property destruction. Landlords interpreted chronic homelessness, eviction, outstanding judgments, and long-term unemployment as evidence a Housing First recipient would damage their rental property. Housing First providers, like Noleen, addressed this concern by expanding the role of case managers beyond bill collection:

> There is some education in terms of a lot of the landlords that don't typically participate in programs like this. It's Housing First, but it's not housing only

> because we provide intensive case management. It's not just, "We're going to throw them in your apartment and pay your rent." No, we're going to be involved.

Sophia highlighted the duty of case managers to monitor Housing First recipients for landlords:

> I try to just let them know [that] it's guaranteed rent plus case management. We're doing home visits. We're checking on them. That gives [clients] an incentive that somebody is watching over them. And then letting them [landlords] know like you can always call, email, text me, and we'll intervene.

Holly marketed Housing First case management as a service to reduce property damage:

> I try to sell it as it's guaranteed rents. The programs I have now not only has a case manager there once a month. And we try to keep everything clean and make sure that nobody else staying there.

Noleen, Sophia, and Holly economised homelessness by marketing Housing First providers as maintenance staff. Landlords previously described "ideal" tenants as those who maintained their unit, promptly reported maintenance problems, and monitored their properties to prevent disturbances. Landlords perceived Housing First recipients who displayed haggard appearance, exhibited unstable housing, demonstrated long-term unemployment, experienced recent evictions, and/or reported outstanding judgments as enforcement costs that strained capital accumulation. Frontline workers navigated this constraint by presenting Housing First case managers as landlord surrogates who monitored clients, maintained the unit, and limited traffic at the property. In this regard, frontline workers economised homelessness by managing how landlords perceived the intensity at which a Housing First recipient consumed their unit.

In addition, Housing First providers managed landlord perceptions of risk by citing material resources for property maintenance. Landlords established household income requirements to select tenants who could afford rent. Housing First providers added landlords questioned their clients' ability to maintain their apartment on a paltry income. Lucy addressed this concern by promising donations from local charities:

> We've had landlords who say, "Yeah, I get that you're going to pay the whole rent and security deposit and utilities, but how are they going to pay for their hygiene? How are they going to pay for their cleaning supplies?" So, we say, you know, "We have donations."

Housing First providers also promised compensation for property damage. Housing First program supervisors established contingency funds to financed application fees, security deposits, moving costs, and property damage. Fiona cited this service to assuage landlord concerns about property damage:

> I think a lot of times too they know that you are going to be there. If they mess up the apartment, we'll take care of the finances.

Lucy and Fiona economised homelessness by referencing organizational resources that reduced risk of property damage. Property damage beyond wear and tear shrank landlord profits by increasing maintenance costs. Landlords managed risk by rejecting lease applicants who were likely to damage their property. Although an application suggested a prospective lessee had the competency to maintain their apartment, household income indicated whether they possessed resources to apply those skills as a tenant. Lucy and Fiona challenged this mode of income discrimination by promising supplementary resources that minimized a landlord's exposure to property damage.

Turnover Assistance

Frontline workers presented Housing First as turnover assistance. Landlords previously described turnover costs such as maintenance, marketing, and/or legal expenses. Landlord profits grew with the amount of time a tenant resided in their unit. As a result, landlords scrutinized lease applications to select stable tenants. Housing First providers navigated this constraint by marketing Housing First as a means of preventing eviction and unit vacancy.

To illustrate, frontline workers branded Housing First as eviction prevention services that reduced unit turnover. Past eviction portended profit loss and psychological distress to landlords. Most Housing First recipients reported at least one eviction on their lease application. In response, Housing First providers cited case management to minimize landlord concerns about eviction. Casey, for example, wrote advocacy letters that attributed past eviction to disconnection from services:

> "When this person had this eviction, this is what was going on. They didn't have a connection with services. Now, they're doing this. They're working on that." And just try to sell them as much as possible. And like the gains that they've made.

Jennifer, Ashley, and James promised 24-hour property management services while negotiating leases for evicted clients:

> Jennifer responded, "I think a lot of times they know that you're going to be there. And they have someone that…" Ashley interrupted, "Checking in on them," before Jennifer continued, "'Call the business line 24-hours a day. There's someone you can get a hold of.' So, I think that's a little bit helpful too," and James concluded, "What seals the deal is give them your cell number. 'Here's my cell number. So, if anything happens.'"

Casey, Jennifer, Ashley, and James managed landlords' perception of risk by framing Housing First as a free eviction prevention service. Landlords previously described myriad ways eviction shrank profit. Housing First providers understood how landlords interpreted eviction. Case managers minimized perceived risk by citing their professional responsibility to control Housing First recipients once they became tenants. In this regard, Housing First case managers provided landlords their contact information so they could immediately address emergent concerns. This technique economised homelessness by minimizing perceived turnover costs that landlords anticipated from their client.

In addition, Housing First providers cited alternatives to eviction that reduced the costs of unit turnover. Landlords appreciated an extra set of eyes on tenants; however, the rental history of Housing First recipients made landlords fret of another eviction. Housing First providers, like Mike, addressed this concern by promising to vacate problematic tenants from the property:

> A lot of it was the guaranteed rent every month [that motivated landlords to accept Housing First recipients]. Also, recognizing that, with a private tenant not in a program who's causing issues, it's themselves having to deal with it to evict them. With a program, you have supports in place not only financially for damages and double security deposits and stuff like that, but if somebody need to get out, they don't have to do it, the program would do it. That was a selling point for a few folks, and then the wheel just greased from there.

As a Housing First program supervisor, Mike established a publicly funded contingency fund to prevent eviction. This resource allowed Mike to manipulate the risk landlords attributed to Housing First recipients. Mike cited organizational resources to differentiate Housing First recipients from their unsubsidized counterparts in an applicant pool. This technique rendered

Housing First recipients more appealing to landlords who rented to poor consumers whose poverty placed them at risk for eviction.

Lastly, frontline workers marketed Housing First as a resource to reduce unit vacancy. In addition to timely rent payment, landlords needed occupied units to generate profit. Housing First providers exploited this market constraint during lease negotiations. Jason, for example, recruited landlords for a master lease program by stressing the ability of Housing First to reduce vacancy:

> If I'm approaching a new landlord, I'm going to give you the positives of our program. One of them being guaranteed rent, "We're going to pay that rent whether there's anyone in that apartment right now or not. Our apartments are generally occupied." We just had a guy pass away so that apartment probably won't be filled for a month. But he [the landlord] knows he's still getting paid for that.

Unlike Housing First voucher programs, master leases named the service provider rather than client as lessee. Master lease configuration appealed to landlords because the service provider continued paying rent if the unit became unoccupied. Citing this feature of master lease enabled Jason to manage the risk of unit turnover that landlords attributed to Housing First clients. In this regard, Jason economised homelessness by promising to eliminate costly unit turnover for prospective landlords.

In short, Housing First providers used three techniques of economisation to recruit landlords into their governing coalition. Competent property management created a reputation that motivated landlord participation. Mike recruited landlords as Springfield County's homeless service system integrated Housing First principles. During an interview, Mike described the impact of effective property management on landlord recruitment:

> There are enough private landlords throughout the area that they talk. A lot of times, we would start with one client. And they'll say, "Alright, we're going to see how this goes." And we will pump all our energy into making sure that client was solid. Then, a month or two later, be like "Hey, do you have another open?" And we sort of trickle down from there.

Accommodating landlords enhanced the reputation of local Housing First programs. Satisfied landlords became a surrogate real estate marketer for Housing First providers. From Mike's perspective, a satisfied customer provided the best advertisement:

> We worked with [a large property management company] back in the day and so they understood how we operated, and [a large property management company] has a big enough footprint in the area, using their name and some of the successes we had with them helped some of the other developers. I think some of these landlords realized that, with our due diligence and holding them accountable, it worked out for both.

By relying on customer testimony, Housing First providers marketed their program as an effective property management service. As success stories polished the reputation of Housing First, failures soiled it. The initial roll out of Housing First in Springfield County suffered landlord attrition due to ineffective property management. Landlord attrition reduced housing options for service recipients. A dearth of suitable housing caused service recipients to resist Housing First case management. Client resistance hindered service providers from meeting

HUD's demand for expeditious reduction of chronic homelessness (USICH 2015). As a result, Housing First providers prioritized property management to maintain federal funding.

Conclusion

Urban scholars have examined homeless governance as cities accommodated the neoliberal turn in social policy (Stuart 2015). Past research demonstrates a subset of U.S. cities adopted punitive interventions to manage the initial growth of homelessness (Davis 1990; Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996). Punitive interventions exclude and seclude homeless people from prime spaces to grow urban economies (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019b). Critics of the punitive thesis argue repressive interventions, common to U.S. cities, are less prevalent in European and Oceania cities that primarily rely on supportive services to govern homelessness (Clarke and Parsell 2020; Huey, 2007; Laurenson and Collins 2007; Van Eijk, 2010). Supportive governance theorists have produced extensive research on case management by homeless service providers (Cloke et al., 2010; Conradson, 2003; DeVerteuil et al., 2009; DeVerteuil & Wilton, 2009; Evans et al., 2015). Urban scholars, however, have produced a partial depiction of the political economic functions of contemporary homeless services. Past research neglects Housing First case management despite an international shift to this service model (see Baker and Evans 2016).

This paper addresses that knowledge gap. I used multilocational interview data to analyze techniques that Housing First providers in a large post-industrial Rust Belt county used to recruit landlords into their governing coalition. First, I analyzed 26 interviews to differentiate screening criteria that landlords used select transactionable tenants. Landlords collected information about lease applicants to select lessees who generated profit without hassle. Second, I used data from 43 in-depth interviews and 5 focus groups (n=33) to analyze techniques that Housing First providers used to solicit landlord participation. A dearth of public housing in the United States renders private landlords essential to Housing First implementation. Housing First providers function as real estate marketers who accommodate the screening criteria of private landlords by economising homeless clients. Frontline workers market Housing First as a free property management service that smoothly generates profit for private landlords. This observation extends urban sociology by identifying another mechanism by which homeless services fortify the political economy of neoliberal cities beyond the seclusion of visible poverty from prime spaces.

Findings from this study suggest at least three directions for future research. First, while this study presents a novel analysis of provider-landlord relations, it examines a specific dimension of this relationship. Future research could address techniques that Housing First providers use to reduce enforcement costs by smoothing landlord-tenant conflicts. Second, although this study presents data on both sets of actors, it lacks the strength of participant observation. As a result, the breadth and depth of this analysis is limited. Future research could advance this study by conducting an ethnographic analysis of landlord recruitment by Housing First providers. That research would delineate the range of techniques and conditions in which Housing First providers use various tactics to recruit landlords. Third, the political economies of urban housing markets in the U.S. differ from those nested in generous welfare states (see Benjaminsen et al. 2009; Busch-Geertsema, 2012). Housing First providers outside the U.S. likely confront different problems while exiting homeless clients from the street. Future research could conduct comparative analyses to understand the impact of different housing markets on Housing First implementation.

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Article 4

"I Didn't Have Too Many Choices": Disciplining Housing First Recipients into Transactionable Lease Applicants

Abstract: Housing First is a hegemonic model of homeless services that promotes self-sufficiency through the immediate placement of service recipients in permanent supportive housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment. Urban sociologists have neglected the role of Housing First case managers in transitioning people suffering homelessness into permanent accommodation. I make three contributions that address this shortcoming. First, I demonstrate Housing First emphasis on "consumer choice" minimizes legitimate needs as simple preferences that can be ignored by policymakers and frontline workers. Second, I identify political economic constraints that pressure Housing First providers to prioritize the objectives of institutional elites while mediating rental market exchanges for clients. Third, I show Housing First providers accommodate political economic constraints by producing transactionable lease applicants who voluntarily accept unsuitable housing. My findings specify burdens that service providers and recipients endure when Housing First is implemented in segregated private rental markets to reduce public expenditures.

Introduction

Visible homelessness is a stable characteristic of post-industrial cities in the United States (Willse 2015). Deindustrialization, welfare retrenchment, and urban revitalization eroded the middle class while reducing housing assistance to accommodate rent inflation. By the 1980s, street homelessness dispersed across urban landscapes as institutional authorities struggled to manage the crisis (Wolch and Dear 1993). Local governments adopted “broken windows” policing and “quality-of-life” ordinances to stimulate economic growth (Mitchell 2003). Criminalization coincided with rehabilitation as the “shadow state” administered supportive services (Wolch 1990). The federal government designed homeless assistance programs to standardize services throughout the nation (Willse 2015). Although the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has experimented with different service models, street homelessness remains a visible feature of urban poverty in U.S. cities (Stuart 2016; Herring 2019a).

The nature of contemporary homeless management is an object of theoretical debate among urban scholars (DeVerteuil 2019). I contribute to this discussion by analyzing the responsibilization of Housing First recipients.[14] Baker, Evans, and Hennigan (2020) theorize institutional elites in the U.S. have adopted social investment as a governmentality to select homeless policies that reduce public expenditures and stimulate economic growth by promoting self-sufficiency. Past research illustrates the use of investment management by policymakers to produce “exploitable” workers through workfare (Peck 2001). Federal authorities have applied investment logic to homeless services by prioritizing chronic homelessness for Housing First

[14] Responsibilization is the production of subjectivities (i.e., knowledges, sentiments, and habits) that transform service recipients into competent market participants who independently manage social risks in the post-welfarist era (Shamir 2008)..

(Willse 2015).[15] Although past research examines the disciplining of Housing First lessees (Hennigan 2017), urban scholars have produced no research on techniques that Housing First providers use to transform homeless service recipients into "transactionable" lease applicants (Baker et al. 2020).[16] This gap limits sociological knowledge of institutional constraints that homeless service providers navigate while delivering assistance, techniques that Housing First providers use to govern homelessness, and impact of contemporary homeless governance on Housing First recipients.

I present a qualitative research design to make three contributions that address this shortcoming. First, I provide a novel empirical analysis of lease attainment by Housing First case managers. Attention to lease attainment identifies functions of and contradictions in contemporary homeless governance that past research on Housing First tenancy ignored (Hennigan 2017). Second, I specify institutional constraints that facilitate and hinder lease attainment by Housing Frist recipients. Analysis of sociological forces that constrain lease attainment extends recent research on permanent housing access (Osbourne 2019; Smith and Anderson 2018). Third, I examine techniques that Housing First providers use to produce transactionable lease applicants within institutional constraints established by federal

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[15] The U.S. federal government defines chronic homeless as someone who has lived on the street for 12-months and possesses a documented disability. Housing First is a model of homeless services that provides housing and wraparound services without preconditions.

[16] A "transactionable" lease applicant is a consumer that possesses subjectivity to form an apartment lease in the private rental market. In contrast, a "non-transactionable" lease applicant is a consumer that lacks subjectivity needed to form an apartment lease in the private rental market.

policymakers.[17] Analyzing "client-centered" techniques demonstrates soft power that Housing First providers use to marginalize service recipients.[18]

Literature Review

Three topics have dominated scholarly debate about contemporary governance of urban homelessness: form, function, and legitimacy. First, urban scholars have interrogated the form of power exercised through homeless governance. Contributors to this debate have conceptualized homeless governance as either a repressive act that governs unsheltered poverty through exclusion or productive acts that governs homelessness through inclusion.[19] Second, urban scholars have debated the function of homeless governance. In this regard, researchers have differentiated individual from societal purposes of institutional responses to homelessness. Third, scholars have interrogated the legitimacy of homeless governance. A subset of authors has argued contemporary homeless governance is a legitimate exercise of power that saves the unsheltered poor from a life-threatening trauma while another subset argues homeless

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[17] "Governmentality" is a logic of practice that institutional authorities use to discipline subordinates into obedient subjects.

[18] Client-centered case management is a governmentality that Housing First providers used to produce transactionable lease applicants.

[19] Foucault (1990) differentiates "reductive" from "productive" power. Acts of reduction control homeless people through external motivation. Frontline workers use "hard" tactics such as force and coercion to exercise reductive power (Johnsen et al., 2018). Force denies homeless people the option of non-compliance. Coercion is a threat of material deprivation to manipulate compliance by homeless people. Acts of production control homeless people through internal motivation. Frontline workers use "soft" tactics such as bargaining, influence, and tolerance to exercise productive power (Johnsen et al., 2018). Bargaining achieves obedience through negotiated concessions. Influence generates compliance by manipulating the beliefs and preferences of homeless people. Tolerance is the absence of manipulation to produce desired behavior among homeless people.

governance is an illegitimate exercise of power that harms the unsheltered poor by reproducing institutional inequalities.

I contribute to this debate by examining the responsibilization of Housing First recipients. Baker et al. (2020) argue federal policymakers have adopted social investment as a governmentality to design homeless policy. In this regard, federal authorities have adopted homeless policies that produce "responsible" subjects who independently minimize public expenditures by reducing emergency service consumption. Baker et al. differentiate three investment management techniques: objectification, economization, and subjectification. Academics objectify by producing knowledge—categories, measurements, population inferences, and reports—about the homeless population. Policymakers economize by assigning monetary value to different subpopulations of the homeless. Frontline workers subjectify homeless service recipients by creating thoughts, feelings, and habits that align with investment management priorities. The production of subjectivity is a key to responsibilizing service recipients.

Federal policymakers contract Housing First providers to responsibilize service recipients. Giesler and Veresiu (2014) theorize consumer subjectivity is a constructed object necessary for markets to function. Institutional authorities produce consumer subjectivity through disciplinary interventions that direct consumption in desired ways. Kipp and Hawkins (2019), for example, trace the production of "development" consumers through cause-related marketing that individualizes the causes of and solution to uneven development. Kipp and Hawkins demonstrate Giesler and Veresiu's claim that consumer subjects are produced by institutional authorities. I extend that insight by conceptualizing Housing First providers as institutional authorities who discipline service recipients into transactional rental market consumers. Federal lawmakers contract frontline workers to responsibilize Housing First recipients to reduce emergency service consumption (Baker et al. 2020).

Producing transactionable consumers through entails the normalization of Housing First recipients. In contrast to moralization, which directs consumption by cultivating personal values (Kipp and Hawkins 2019), normalization facilitates consumption by cultivating basic competencies needed for independent market participation. Workfare, for example, normalizes service recipients by producing exploitable workers who choose market participation over government dependency (Peck 2001). Workfare develops practical knowledges that align service recipients with employer expectations (Peck 2001), motivate voluntary exploitation in low-wage service jobs (Purser and Hennigan 2018), and discourage working class solidarity amongst service recipients (Broughton 2001). Similarly, federal authorities contract Housing First case managers to discipline service recipients into transactionable consumers who reduce public expenditures by relying on the private rental market rather than emergency services for subsistence.

Past research neglects the normalization of Housing First recipients into transactionable lease applicants. Smith and Anderson (2018) examine identity work that case managers perform while presenting their clients as eligible for permanent housing assistance. Osbourne (2019) analyzes implicit biases that frontline workers use to prioritize Housing First assistance for “deserving” shelter residents. Hennigan (2017) probes techniques that Housing First case managers use to produce obedient tenants. Each study neglects techniques that frontline workers use to lease Housing First recipients in stratified rental markets. This is a notable gap because lease attainment determines whether Housing First recipients access suitable housing that meets their needs. Unsuitable housing exposes clients to chronic stress that inhibits gains in self-sufficiency pursued by Housing First. Research is currently needed to address this critical gap.

In this paper, I answer the following questions: How do Housing First recipients articulate their housing needs? What institutional constraints hinder the satisfaction of these needs? How do Housing First providers convince clients to accept unsuitable accommodation? I argue Housing First providers are informal real estate agents who help service recipients navigate stratified housing markets. Housing First recipients identify neighborhood and unit characteristics that they need to recover from a life-threatening trauma. Federal lawmakers facilitate this access to permanent housing funding case management and rental subsidies. Simultaneously, federal authorities constrain access to suitable housing by relying on private landlords, allocating paltry rent subsidies, and limiting search time in stratified private rental markets. Housing First case managers are responsible for disciplining clients to accept available units. To this end, service providers use four techniques to produce transactionable subjectivities: conditioning, internalizing, projecting, and resisting. Each technique coerces service recipients to accept unsuitable housing in concentrated poverty.

Data & Methods

I conducted this research in a large, racially segregated, post-industrial Rust Belt county. Since the 1970s, Springfield County experienced a dramatic decline in its manufacturing sector (see Wilson 1987). White suburbanization simultaneously generated hypersegregation, thereby creating a spatial mismatch that largely separated people of color from high-wage employment (see Massey and Denton 1993). Poverty enveloped minority neighborhoods in Springfield County's central city. Local government responded with mass incarceration that integrated State surveillance into the daily lives of communities of color (see Wacquant 2009). Intra-metropolitan competition for high-income households dissuaded local governments from investing in supportive services such as affordable housing stock expansion (see Peterson 1981). In short, Springfield County experienced the macro-structural characteristics that urban scholars have documented in Rust Belt cities throughout the neoliberal era.

Springfield County's housing market poorly accommodated these macro-structural conditions. Less than 10% of the county's rental stock lent units below $500 (United States Census Bureau 2018). Roughly 65% of households earning 30% of area median income devoted 50% or more of their wages to rent (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017). Local housing authorities offered meager assistance to reduce cost burden. Springfield County's public housing stock decreased from roughly 5,000 units in 2000 to under 2,750 units in 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019a). Over the past ten years, average wait time for Section 8 rental assistance oscillated between approximately twenty and twenty-five months (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2019a). As a result, 1 in 1,000 Springfield County residents experienced homelessness in 2018. Over 50% of Springfield County's homeless population identified as Black. Only 10% of this population qualified as chronically homeless (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019b). This means 90% of Springfield County's homeless population was ineligible for CoC assistance.

To access Housing First, clients had to demonstrate 12 months of literal homelessness and a disabling condition certified by a licensed medical professional (Federal Register 2015). Each week coordinated entry staff produced a list of clients eligible for CoC assistance. The prioritization list was used at housing placement meetings to select a lease configuration for Housing First recipients. Coordinated entry staff held closed-door singles placement meetings at an office located in a local suburb at 9:00am on the first Tuesday of each month followed by biweekly family placement meetings at 11:00am. Staff members notified case managers what clients qualified for assistance days before the placement meeting. Program supervisors staffed eligible clients with their case management team to determine optimal configuration matches. After the meeting, case managers presented housing options to clients who could accept or decline the offer. Follow up meetings were conducted each remaining Tuesday of the month to update coordinated entry staff about the housing status of each client.

I used three sources of data to conduct this analysis. First, I conducted nonparticipant observation of housing placement meetings in the Springfield County Continuum of Care for one year (October 2017–September 2018). Throughout this period, I attended 45 singles or family placement meetings. Singles placement meetings were initially conducted every week while family placement meetings were held twice per month. By early 2018, singles meetings were reduced to twice per month while family placement was discontinued July 2018 due to resource depletion. At the time of this study, the Springfield County Continuum of Care had successfully rehoused its chronically homeless families. In total, I observed 187 Housing First referrals, of which, 67% were matched to a voucher, 15% were matched to a master lease, and 18% were matched to a project-based facility.

I accessed housing placement meetings by contacting Heidi, the Director of Coordinated Entry, to request permission. Heidi asked Housing First program supervisors who regularly attended the meetings if I could conduct observations. Program supervisors agreed contingent upon the use of personal and spatial pseudonyms. I jotted fieldnotes during each meeting on a portable electronic device. Following each meeting, I wrote detailed descriptions of the interactions that I observed while replacing identifying information with pseudonyms. I identified emergent themes with open coding before returning to scholarly literature to conceptualize the data. Governmentality theory offered a conceptual framework that fit this data while extending debates about neoliberal homeless management. I used this framework to group open codes into themes that constitute the subsequent data analysis.

Second, I conducted twenty-six in-depth interviews with Housing First providers. I requested contact information for case managers who program supervisors managed and interviews with program supervisors who attended housing placement meetings. I recruited 2 coordinated entry staff members, 8 program supervisors, and 16 bridge case managers. Twenty-one participants identified as female (81%), 15% (4) identified as male, and 4% (1) identified as non-binary. Twenty-one were young (46%) to middle-aged (35%); however, 19% (5) were over 56 years old. Approximately 81% (21) of the sample identified as White, 12% (3) identified as Black, and 4% (1) identified as Hispanic. Half of respondents had a master's degree, 46% (12) had a bachelor's degree, and 4% (1) had an associate degree. About 35% (9) reported 1–5 years of experience in homeless services, 35% (9) reported 6–10 years, 15% (4) reported 11–15 years, 12% (3) reported 16–20 years, and 4% (1) reported over 21 years.

Third, I conducted thirty-one in-depth interviews with housed (16) and unhoused service recipients (15).[20] I used two methods to recruit Housing First clients into the study. First, I requested client referrals from Housing First program supervisors and case managers. Next, I distributed flyers at local meal sites that Housing First recipients frequented for lunch and dinner. I included Housing First clients because their lived experiences provided valuable insight into contradictions related to the matching process. About 58% (18) of this sample identified as Black, 39% (12) identified as White, and 3% (1) Hispanic. An overwhelming proportion of this

[20] Housed respondents had transitioned from homelessness into permanent housing through Housing First. Unhoused respondents had accessed bridge case management to eventually transition into permanent housing through Housing First.

sample identified as male (74%) while 26% (8) identified as female. Approximately 13% (4) of respondents were young (18–35), 58% (18) were middle-aged (36–55), and 23% (7) were over 56 years old. About 52% (16) of housed respondents were master lease recipients and 48% (15) were voucher recipients.

I used an electronic recording device to conduct interviews and focus groups at a location selected by each respondent. Each interview and focus group ranged thirty–to–ninety minutes; however, most lasted approximately one-hour. Once completed, recordings were sent to a private transcription service where the audio was transcribed. I analyzed the transcriptions using MAXQDA software. To this end, I used coding methods derived from grounded theory to analyze the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I initially open coded interview transcripts to identify emergent themes. Next, I returned to scholarly literature on homeless management to theoretically frame the case study. After identifying the themes of transactionability and responsibilization, I used theoretical coding to group existing codes into higher order categories that structure the data analysis of this paper.

A few limitations should be noted. First, I did not directly observe the actions described by case managers. Although each theme was triangulated by multiple participants, this analysis is weakened by my inability to specify conditions under which each strategy was used. Second, this study relies on a purposive sample from one Rust Belt county. This weakness limits the transferability of these findings to different political economic contexts both within and outside the U.S. Third, this study examines the legitimation of unsuitable housing to people suffering homelessness by frontline workers. I limited the scope of analysis for clarity. This decision excludes discussion of guidance that Housing First providers offered clients to participate in lease negotiations. As a result, this study offers a partial account of the lease attainment process that I will address while discussing directions for future research in the conclusion.

Findings

Housing First providers are informal real estate agents who mediate rental market exchanges for people suffering homelessness. Institutional constraints facilitate and impede the ability of service recipients to access suitable housing. Housing First providers use client-centered techniques to legitimate marginalization and convince clients to voluntarily accept unsuitable apartments. I present qualitative data to demonstrate each point by examining housing needs identified by service recipients, institutional constraints confronted by Housing First providers, and techniques case managers used to facilitate rental market exchanges for Housing First recipients.

Housing Needs

Housing First philosophy prioritizes "consumer choice" to normalize service recipients as rental market consumers (Hennigan 2017). Although this feature of Housing First is commendable for reducing stigma, the discourse of "preference" misconstrues essential needs as nonessential wants that can be ignored by service providers. As a result, frontline workers are under resourced and pressured to coerce Housing First recipients to accept unsuitable apartments. During one-on-one interviews, former and current homeless participants identified essential neighborhood and unit characteristics that they needed to transition into permanent housing. This evidence suggests placement in unsuitable accommodation subjects Housing First recipients to a disabling environment that hinders personal well-being, self-sufficiency, and/or social reintegration.

Neighborhood characteristics

To illustrate, interview participants identified essential neighborhood characteristics: familiarity, safety, and residents. Respondents cited *familiarity* as an indispensable housing need. Neighborhood familiarity begets spatial consciousness, emotional security, and self-efficacy. Participants, like Larry, needed a familiar neighborhood to access public transportation:

> I was looking for apartments around [downtown] because I was used to being around there because I was at the [emergency shelter] all the time. I knew the bus routes. I mean, so that was one of the reasons I wanted to live around there.

Most respondents remained dependent on public transit once they entered permanent housing. Placement in permanent housing required resources to furnish the apartment, maintain the unit, and satisfy daily subsistence needs. Access to bus lines allowed Housing First recipients to perform these functions of tenancy. Familiarity with neighborhood bus routes provided Housing First recipients emotional security and self-efficacy as they transitioned into that unfamiliar role. Alan cited familiarity with Springfield County's food system as a reason he needed housing on the north side:

> I don't know anything about the south side. I grew up on the north side; so, I knew where all of the meal site programs. I knew about over here.

Like Larry, Alan remained dependent on social services once entered Housing First. Food is an essential good that Alan needed to access once he became a tenant. Familiarity with neighborhood food pantries and meal site schedules assured Alan that he would survive as a Housing First recipient. Whereas Larry and Alan needed a familiar neighborhood where they could easily meet basic needs, Gary needed to secure housing in an unfamiliar neighborhood where he had not experienced trauma. During an interview, Gary stated the following while describing neighborhood characteristics he needed to avoid once he could transition into permanent housing:

> I like people to say, "Good morning." People go into some neighborhoods [on the north side], "What the hell you looking at?" That attitude you see on the street. I got stabbed in the face with a pencil on the bus. Went to the hospital. Put me in a wheelchair. Pushed me down the street. Dumped me on the corner from the hospital.

Jim, a Housing First recipient who resided on the east side of town, needed an unfamiliar neighborhood where he had not experienced traumas related to homelessness:

> I didn't want to live downtown. I've seen seven people overdose right over here. I wanted a place to be where I could go out and take a walk.

Each respondent demonstrated the significance of neighborhood familiarity to Housing First recipients. Familiarity created comfort or discomfort to interview participants. Larry and Alan needed a familiar neighborhood to confidently navigate everyday life. In contrast, Gary and Jim needed an unfamiliar neighborhood where they could heal from the myriad traumas of homelessness. For them, the stress of developing new spatial consciousness in an unfamiliar neighborhood was less burdensome than reliving agonies they suffered on the street.

Respondents also identified neighborhood *safety* as an essential housing need. Residency in a distressed neighborhood exposes Housing First recipients to chronic stress that undermines mental health (see Hill and Maimon 2013). As a result, respondents, like James, needed housing in a safe neighborhood that shielded them from crime:

> I don't want to live downtown. It's not safe. I just had a friend who got mugged right at the next bus station. He got pretty badly beaten up.

Tonya echoed this point in a separated interview while answering the question, "Are there areas [of town] you wouldn't want to live in?"

> North side. From what I hear on the news and stuff, it's not very pleasant. People getting killed and a lot of gang activity. I don't want to be scared to sit in my yard.

Whereas James and Tonya suffered homelessness during their interview, Zac was a Housing First recipient who had been placed in a distressed neighborhood. During an interview, Zac described the neighborhood's impact on his lifestyle and mental health:

> If I had a choice, I would have gotten away from the drugs and the alcohol but volunteering to be part of the government housing program, they pretty much put me right in the middle of the worst area. I was at the highest risk neighborhood. It was fucking hell. I was just like, "Fuck it. Let's get high."

James, Tonya, and Zac identified neighborhood safety as an essential housing need. James and Tonya needed housing in a safe neighborhood that shielded them from violence. Political economic constraints relegated Zac to a distressed neighborhood where he experienced chronic stress. Deleterious neighborhood conditions undermined Zac's mental health and encouraged substance abuse. Zac's example demonstrates unsafe neighborhoods undermine the aim of Housing First to promote self-sufficiency (see Tsemberis 2010).

Interviewees identified *residents* as an important neighborhood characteristic. Past research indicates the urban poor use social ties to obtain income (Duneier 1999), housing (Desmond 2012), and childcare (Small 2009). The salience of these relationships impacted the housing needs of interview participants. William, for example, needed to live downtown where he would be close to friends:

> I live on the south side before, but all of my friends don't know where I live. People weren't going to know where I was at. That turned me away from it.

Likewise, Tim needed proximity to his child, "Preferably, somewhere on the south side to be closer to my son," as well as Jason who wanted to live near family, "I wanted to be close to family." In contrast, Paul avoided distressed neighborhoods whose residents suffered substance dependency:

> I like the east side. It's the best side of town. There's educated people over here. There's people over here trying to make something out of their life. People on the east side are not too quick to get addicted. Their addiction is not their future.

Ryan expounded this point by pursuing a neighborhood that discouraged criminal activity:

> Probably, somewhere around this way or somewhere on the east. Less chances of going to commit a crime. Less likely for me to commit a crime as well. I'd be lying to you if I told you I haven't committed criminal acts out here.

Paul and Ryan were homeless at the time of their interviews. Kevin, a Housing First recipient, explained his need for a neighborhood whose residents limited access to illegal drugs. Before entering Housing First, Kevin had been abstinent from crack cocaine for two-and-a-half years. Residency in an apartment building with active drug users facilitated fifteen relapses after Kevin entered Housing First:

> You're around other people who have been using. It's got sixty-six apartments in the building. You don't know who's smoking or what they're doing. I came out my door the other day. There was three people in the hallway smoking crack cocaine.

Each excerpt demonstrates the salience of neighborhood residents to housing needs. On the one hand, some participants needed neighborhoods where friends and family lived. Proximity to their support network would enable William, Tim, and Jason to access and provide help. On the other hand, Sammy and Ryan avoided neighborhoods where the lifestyle of residents mitigated their quality of life. Kevin's experience demonstrated the negative impact of neighborhood residents on Housing First recipients. After his substance abuse facilitated rent nonpayment, Kevin surrendered legal control of his finances to the Housing First case manager. Proximity to active drug users thwarted advancements in self-sufficiency that Housing First is supposed to create.

Unit characteristics

In addition, participants identified essential *unit* characteristics: type, size, condition, and altitude. Many participants needed independent rather than shared housing. Independent housing is a unit *type* that includes private amenities: bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. In contrast, shared housing is a unit type where residents enjoy communal amenities. Respondents, like Jason, needed independent housing to avoid exposure to negative peer pressure:

> I wasn't looking for no rooming house. I wasn't looking for a junkie house. I was just looking for a nice one-bedroom or a studio.

Patrick elaborated this point by describing his aversion to communal kitchens:

> I personally want something with a kitchen. I have a little hard time with communal kitchens. I don't think the food is safe in some places where you share a kitchen.

Shared housing had a negative reputation that repelled many respondents. For participants, like Jason and Patrick, who wanted a fresh start, recovery from substance dependency, or relief from the trauma of homelessness, independent housing was needed to create emotional and physical security by shielding them from negative peer influences.

Unit *size* also mattered to participants. Most respondents had family members with whom they wanted to reconnect and host at their apartment. Appropriately sized housing to accommodate guests was essential to establish or reinforce these social bonds. As a result, participants specified the number of bedrooms they needed in a new flat. Tom, for example, was a father who needed a two-bedroom apartment to accommodate visits from his son:

> Maybe a one-bedroom place. Preferably a two-bedroom, so I could have a room for my son or something, so he could come visit me.

As a parent, Tom needed a two-bedroom apartment to host his child. Performance of institutional roles requires access to resources. Resource deprivation undermines the credibility of an actor's claim to a role amongst audience members. Poverty deprives homeless men of an essential resource to perform their parental role. As a result, homelessness can negatively impact parent-child bonds. Recovery from homelessness, by parents, requires housing large enough to reestablish and nurture bonds with their children.

Unit *condition* was also essential to participants. A dilapidated unit hinders physical and mental health. Decrepit units expose tenants to toxins that cause disease. In addition, crumbling apartments can generate psychological stress if tenants fear for their health and safety. It is not surprising, then, that Shantel expressed need for a upkept unit:

> I would take an efficiency. I would take an apartment, but it depends on the area. How it's kept. Is it clean? Does it got rats? Does it got roaches?

Not every Housing First recipient accessed a maintained unit. Don, for example, moved from an emergency shelter into a dilapidated apartment through Housing First. Although he celebrated his transition into permanent housing, Don sunk into a major depression upon settling in his unit:

> I swear this place was a motel. It had the most hideous architecture. There was no maintenance. The roof would leak. I remember we had these old doors. And we had a really bad wind at one point. And the screen door just went. Never replaced. The washer was cold water. [I wanted] something that was livable.

Don eventually transferred to a new case manager who, appalled by the condition of his unit, helped him relocate to a new project-based facility on the county's east side. Don reported his depression immediately lifted once he moved into a new unit:

> I'm not the same person that I was. I was in one of my depressive modes. I was defeated. I never thought environment would make such a difference.

Don's experience demonstrates unit condition impacted the mental health of Housing First recipients. The meager rental subsidy allocated by HUD constrained Housing First recipients to apartment units no more than 40% of median rent. As a result, most Housing First recipients accepted dilapidated units managed by negligent landlords. The condition of these units made participants, like Don, suffer depression that limited gains in mental health and self-sufficiency. Transfer to a new project-based unit dramatically improved Don's mental health. Hence, unit upkeep was a need of Don's as he transitioned into permanent housing.

Unit *altitude* was also essential to participants. Most respondents grew up in one of Springfield County's high poverty neighborhoods. Residents of first floor apartments are vulnerable to property theft and assault because criminals can enter the unit from a door or window. Memory of such incidents created psychological distress for several respondents. As a result, participants, like Paul, needed an apartment above the ground floor:

> I never want a ground unit again. They bust your window out. They break into your house. But if you're on the second floor or the third floor, that cuts all that out. I've had that happen to me right here in [Springfield].

Robert extended this point while describing the impact of violence on his housing needs:

> I didn't want to be on the first floor. I was staying on [10th] and [Franklin] and they shot up in the house. I just had a phobia about being on the first floor. I know a lot of people that got killed. I just didn't want to be on the first floor.

Paul and Robert demonstrated housing needs related to unit altitude. Impoverished neighborhoods in Springfield County experienced high rates of property theft, gang violence, and gun death. Housing is related to crime in that unit altitude impacts the vulnerability of a resident. Paul and Robert understood this relationship and required housing above the ground floor to feel safe. In addition, respondents had physical disabilities that required accommodation. Affordable housing in Springfield County, accessible through Housing First subsidies, was concentrated in older buildings that lacked an elevator. As a result, respondents, like Lisa, with physical disabilities needed first-floor accommodation:

> [I needed] first floor because I have physical problems. My knees, I had the knee surgery. My back, you know, my back just acts on me.

Housing First recipients did not always receive a first-floor apartment that accommodated their physical disability. Walter, for example, received a fourth-floor apartment in an older building that lacked an elevator despite a diagnosis of congestive heart failure:

> I have severe congestive heart failure. It's [my apartment] too high up. Just like you witnessed me when I walked up those stairs and I was out of breath. Those four flights is really hard on me.

Lisa and Walter demonstrated the salience of unit altitude to Housing First recipients with physical disabilities. In older buildings, upper floor apartments were accessed through a stairwell that burdened clients with physical disabilities. Climbing four flights strained Walter's heart to the point he clutched his chest and gasped for air when I helped him carry groceries up to his apartment. For clients like Walter, accessing a first-floor apartment meant the difference between life and death.

That said, a few respondents cited the urgency to escape homelessness as their primary housing need. Liam, who was homeless at the time of this study, needed shelter of any type in any part of Springfield County:

> Any place. As long as I have a place, I don't care. As long as I have a bed and a TV and stuff I wouldn't care. It wouldn't matter to me.

Jonathan, a Housing First recipient, echoed this point when he described his transition from homelessness:

> When you're homeless, you don't care, man. You just want to get off the streets. I wanted to go somewhere where I'm laying down comfortable. I don't care what happens around as long as my house is secure. I got a key to it. I'm straight.

Liam and Jonathan demonstrated a proportion of respondents lacked specific housing needs. Don's experience demonstrated the immediate relief of escaping homelessness faded over time if a unit's location and/or physical characteristics became intolerable (see above). This indicates the accommodation needs of Housing First recipients were fluid rather than static. Evolving needs obliged case managers to accommodate clients after they get initially rehoused. Thus, governing homelessness through Housing First is an ongoing process that required institutional flexibility that case managers often lacked.

Institutional Constraints

Political economic constraints thwarted satisfaction of housing needs. Federal policymakers' reliance on private markets meant Housing First case managers used lean subsidies to secure leases with profit-driven landlords whose screening criteria barred unit access for clients with prior evictions, outstanding judgments, and/or criminal convictions. Federal prioritization of public expenditure reduction afforded case managers limited resources to rehouse clients. Federal incentives financially punished delayed reduction of chronic homelessness by reducing grant allocation. Local administrators responded to this incentive by pressuring Housing First providers to place clients in unsuitable housing. Political economic constraints compelled Housing First providers to compromise the housing needs of clients while advancing the objectives of institutional elites.

To illustrate, federal policymakers adopted the "Opening Doors" initiative to expeditiously end chronic homelessness (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2015). Opening Doors incentivized chronic homeless reduction by granting a Continuum of Care that reached "functional zero" permission to reprioritize funding for people suffering transitional or episodic homelessness. This incentive motivated Continuum of Care administrators in Springfield County to prioritize the expeditious reduction of chronic homelessness. Heidi, the Director of Coordinated Entry, explained her reason for participating in the Opening Doors initiative:

> Heidi: We submit it [chronic homelessness count] to HUD. So, once HUD reviews that and approves it, then, the vouchers open up because we can say, 'We have functional zero chronic homelessness. So, now, we don't have to be so stringent about chronic homelessness. We can use vouchers for near-chronics.
>
> Interviewer: Will they give you more money?
>
> Heidi: Potentially.

This excerpt demonstrates institutional flexibility rather than financial resources motivated Heidi to participate in Opening Doors. Heidi used her managerial role during housing placement meetings to press service providers to prioritize the objectives of policymakers:

> Heidi shifted discussion to the chronic initiative, "So, for the chronic initiative, we've been very flexible, but I would advocate that we start monitoring how long they are looking for housing. Why are they still looking? What do we need to do to get them in? Especially, now. It would be ideal if these folks were housed next month so that we could say to HUD, 'We've housed them. You can look at how well we do keeping the chronically homeless housed as quickly as possible.'"

Heidi had previously outlined the benefits of reaching functional zero to Housing First providers during a housing placement meeting. In subsequent meetings, Heidi cited these advantages while pressuring Housing First providers to lease clients in unsuitable units. Heidi also coerced Housing First providers to limit consumer choice by transferring voucher recipients to master lease:[21]

[21] Vouchers granted clients flexibility to lease up in an affordable unit with any landlords willing to accept that source of income. In contrast, master lease tied rent assistance to a particular unit that was often dilapidated and located in a high poverty neighborhood.

> Kelly moved to discuss James, "What's he looking for?" "He needs something because he has physical disabilities," Judy explained, "So, CONNECT [master lease] gave him a unit on 9th, first floor." Sandy explained that he has been looking for a new apartment. Kelly turned to look at Sandy, "Where does he want to go?" "Originally," Sandy replied, "He wanted to be around [a local suburb]." "Well," Heidi interjected, "The concern was that he wasn't looking and it's been four months. So, maybe if there's a unit that was already to go that he could just move into it. That was the thinking of the switch to CONNECT.

Opening Doors incentivized local administrators to quickly end chronic homelessness regardless of costs shouldered by clients. Heidi responded to this incentive by pressuring local Housing First providers to center the goals of federal policymakers. Heidi used housing placement meetings to garner cooperation from Housing First case managers by legitimating client marginalization. Moreover, Heidi used placement meetings to devise methods to pressure clients into accepting unsuitable housing and confront service providers who did not quickly lease up their clients.

Political pressure coincided with economic constraints. Modest rental subsidies and local retrenchment of public housing rendered Housing First recipients dependent on a limited pool of private landlords who lent low-quality affordable housing in high poverty neighborhoods.[22] As a result, case managers, like Cindy, relied on network ties for information on flexible landlords who were willing to lease up their clients:

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[22] Administrative records indicated 67% of voucher recipients and 98% of master lease residents lived in neighborhoods where the poverty rate exceeded 20%.

> You learn of places word of mouth [by] talking to other case managers. We figure out which ones are good [and] which ones are bad. You also learn over time of different landlords that are more accepting of our clients than others.

Each Housing First provider cited professional networks as their primary source of rental market information. Most participants relied on a list of flexible landlords provided by the Springfield County Housing Authority. A landlord referral network allowed case managers to appease political pressure by quickly housing clients. As Cindy hinted, “You also learn over time of different landlords that are more accepting of our clients than others,” participants cited landlord discrimination as an economic constraint that rendered them dependent on this network. Susan, for example, stated source of income discrimination prevented Housing First recipients from satisfying housing needs:

> I think there’s hidden discrimination. Their income has to be three times the rent. I think sometimes it’s an attempt to avoid people on rent assistance by being very specific with their income. So, that automatically excludes anyone who’s receiving rent assistance because they’re talking about full rent not rent portion.

Michelle stated landlord discrimination against eviction and judgements limited housing options:

> The biggest one is rental history. Some have no rental history. Others have evictions and judgements so that it’s finding landlords that will be willing to work with them and are a little more flexible. Unfortunately, some are strict about, you have this many evictions or you owe this amount we’re not able to rent to you.

Willow described landlord discrimination against felons:

> We’ve had people who have committed murder. We’ve had people with multiple drug felonies. It’s going to be hard finding a landlord who will work with that.

Kelly reported mental health stigma constrained access to units outside their referral network:

> I've had it happen where I've been with a client and I have introduced myself as a case manager. [And they responded] "Oh, why do you have case management? What's wrong with you?" I think that's primarily why we end up working with the same circle of landlords who understand already our population.

Each excerpt depicts landlord discrimination that constrained Housing First providers from securing suitable units for their clients. For clients with unique needs, landlord discrimination required extensive housing searches that contradicted HUD's demand for expeditious reduction of chronic homelessness. That said, the previous quotes identified barriers to landlord recruitment into Housing First. Participants, like Casey, also described barriers to landlord retention in Housing First:

> It's really hard to get people. And once they're done, they won't work with it anymore. If somebody worked with [CARE] and had a bad experience, they're not working with anything else either.

In the U.S., where public accommodation constituted only .7% of the housing market in 2019, Housing First depends on participation by private landlords. As local governments demolish public housing stocks across the country (Goetz 2003), failure to recruit and retain private landlord participation hinders frontline workers from implementing Housing First. Although they provided an essential resource that facilitated transition from homelessness, the discriminatory practices of private landlords in Springfield County constrained exits from and facilitated entries to homelessness through Housing First.

Housing First providers often responded to these institutional constraints by steering clients to unsuitable housing. Cindy and Kelly previously described steering practices that were ubiquitous to providers who participated in this study. Housing First recipients also implicated their case managers in steering. Jason, for example, reported his case manager provided a list of potential units he could access with his voucher:

> No, it [my current apartment] was already found. [Chris] showed me one apartment on [Mildmay Rd.], I didn't like it. He showed me this apartment I'm in right now. And I liked it.

A Housing First case manager steered William to a unit that was located in a neighborhood divorced from his support network. In addition to external pressure, William's conscience coerced him to accept an unsuitable unit:

> I didn't have too many choices. It was mainly the payment, the $250, and then it was on the south side. You got to think about other people that's homeless and the room that they gave me for free. So, they had found me a place for $250 and I said, "I'll do it."

Housing First recipients occasionally acquiesced to steering practices that put their life at risk. Despite having congestive heart failure, Walter's case manager steered him into a fourth-floor unit that lacked elevator access:

> They have apartments already set up. [My case manager said], "We ain't got much to choose from. This is the only one we got. We're trying to get you off the streets." I told her like this, "I'll deal with this right now, but will you check into it? I don't have plans to move a lot of stuff in there because I'm on the fourth floor.

Housing First providers functioned as informal real estate agents who mediated rental market exchanges. All Housing First recipients had a documented disability. The Fair Housing

Amendment Act of 1988 prohibits steering of people with disabilities (Federal Register 2013). To the extent that Housing First providers steered clients on the basis of disability, institutional constraints motivated them to commit a felony. Accepting structural inequality to help clients immediately escape chronic homelessness is a tradeoff most readers would make. Although steering allowed Jason to access suitable housing, it separated William from his support network and placed Walter in a unit that undermined his physical and mental health. In this regard, institutional constraints prevented the needs of vulnerable service recipients from being met through Housing First. Humanization of people suffering homelessness requires resistance to rather than accommodation of institutional constraints that marginalize the urban poor.

Responsibilization

Housing First providers disciplined service recipients to accept unsuitable housing. Institutional authorities have invented governmentalities and techniques that Housing First providers use to discipline homeless service recipients (Hennigan 2017; Osbourne 2019). Client-centered case management is a technique that Housing First providers used to produce transactionable lease applicants who possess subjectivities to participate in rental market exchanges as a consumer. Housing First providers used four client-centered techniques to legitimate marginalization by conforming their clients' expectations rental market constraints: conditioning, internalizing, projecting, and resisting. Each technique accommodated institutional constraints that relegated Housing First recipients to unsuitable units.

To illustrate, client-centered case management is a strengths-based method of social service provision designed to cultivate rapport and independence through coordinated pursuit of personal goals (Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017). Housing First case managers, like Alex, identified client-centered case management as the technique they used to control clients:

> I'd like to think that we go about it in a client-centered way. We find that the most effective way to help a person get to achieve their goals is to actually do them together. So, personally, that's been something that I've always kind of adhered to.

Most participants agreed that client-centered rather than paternalistic case management was the most effective way to control Housing First recipients. In this regard, case managers, like Sarah, gained cooperation by positioning themselves as partners rather than authoritarians:

> I try to meet clients where they're at. And just kind of let them guide their goals. I think it's really important that they have buy-in to their goals because if it comes from like an expert, "You need to do this, this, and this," often that doesn't turn out well because they're not necessarily invested.

Reducing defensiveness created rapport that enabled case managers to subjectify clients. Participants, like Jen, used her rapport with clients to produce utilitarian reasoning:

> I think client self-determination is important. Clients are adults making their own decisions. Even if it's a bad decision, all I can do is tell them what I think about it and give them opportunity to weigh both sides before making a decision.

Each excerpt depicts client-centered case management as a governmentality that practitioners used to transform clients into neoliberal subjects. Positioning themselves as a partner rather than paternalist allowed Housing First case managers to cultivate utilitarian reasoning skills needed for independent participation in rental market exchanges.[23] In this regard, participants used client-centered techniques to normalize clients by creating internal motivation and fundamental competencies to function as lease applicants.

Participants used four client-centered techniques to produce transactionable expectations in Housing First recipients: conditioning, internalizing, projecting, and resisting. Housing First providers *conditioned* clients by allowing market discipline to curtail their expectations. In this regard, case managers, like Thomas, manipulated client expectations by allowing them to experience lease application rejections before steering them to units provided by landlords in their referral network:

> I will be upfront with them, "I know you want to get a house. I have a feeling we're going to have more success if we're looking at some of these other areas. Let's see what happens." I'll always be honest, I'm going to give it a try. Then, try to steer them towards what's more realistic, "I know you want to get a house sooner rather than later. We might be more successful if we're looking here, here, and here."

Hanna also cited this technique in a separate interview:

> If we've been looking for a while or they've been denied and they haven't found something that they like, then they tend to kind of loosen up. I try to let them guide it, but I try to be transparent, "I totally understand this is the area you want to be in. It's just we're not having luck there. So, maybe we could try this place."

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[23] Most respondents in this study who possessed a post-secondary degree in social work described client-centered case management as an effective standardization technique. Participants who cited a different case management philosophy were not college graduates. This suggests client-centered case management was an institutionalized governmentality in the Springfield County CoC.

Thomas and Hanna used conditioning to produce transactionable expectations. Thomas and Hanna positioned themselves as a partner who jointly advanced a client-centered rather than system-centered agenda by validating the housing needs of clients and allowing them to suitable units in the private rental market. After a client experienced multiple rejections, Thomas and Hanna exploited their frustration and disappointment to modify their expectations and steer them toward landlords in their referral network.

Not every Housing First recipient accepted options available through their case manager's referral network. Housing First providers had to legitimate available options to resistant clients. To this end, Housing First case managers *internalized* responsibility for suitable housing. Dawn, for example, affirmed her role as a partner and validated her clients' needs before blaming them for limited housing options:

> I always start with, "Yes, we're going to try that area that you're interested in. I understand you want to live on the south side, but that's where everyone wants to live. Plus, unfortunately, your criminal history might also be a variable…"

Susan also internalized blame by encouraging disgruntled clients to evaluate their application from a landlord's perspective:

> I remind them from a landlord perspective, "I trust you. But as a landlord, this is a business. I have bills to pay. Am I going to rent to you when you stopped paying rent to a landlord? We'll start with what you want, but we may have to shift."

Dawn and Susan legitimized unsuitable housing by assigning blame to their clients. By validating personal goals before internalizing blame, case managers circumvented defensiveness and sustained rapport while problematizing their client rather than a segregated housing market designed to isolate stigmatized groups (Rothstein 2017). In this regard, Dawn and Susan produced subjectivities that accepted market inequalities as a norm to be accommodated not challenged.

In addition, Housing First case managers used *projection* to legitimate unsuitable housing. Projection framed acceptance of unwanted housing as an opportunity to demonstrate transactionability and obtain suitable housing in the future. This technique minimized client resistance, conformed client expectations to rental market constraints, and motivated clients to accept unsuitable housing. Michelle, for example, described this technique in an interview:

> You're wanting to be realistic, but also client-centered, "This is kind of what you can rent right now." Or encouraging them to rent somewhere they may not want to for the first year, getting that rental history started. And then maybe being open to moving somewhere else after that.

Travis cited this strategy to convince master lease recipients to accept housing in high poverty neighborhoods:

> We ask that they give us a year there. We can see where this thing goes and find out, what your needs are, where we can go. We paint it as a steppingstone. When the opportunity arises, we staff them for a new apartment.

Michelle and Travis used projection to develop means-end reasoning to encourage rental market participation despite immediate frustration. After internalizing blame, both respondents encouraged clients to interpret unsuitable housing as a temporary inconvenience to access a suitable accommodation in the future. In this regard, Housing First case managers created transactionable lease applicants that voluntarily pursued short- and long-term personal goals within constraints imposed by an inequitably structured housing market.

Housing First providers did not always acquiesce to political constraints. Participants *resisted* political pressure by recentering their clients' needs during interactions with local administrators. Tara, for example, dismissed Opening Doors as a disingenuous political ploy that marginalized the housing needs of her clients:

> The concentration on functional zero is a bunch of crap. They're getting ready to claim functional zero and there's 30 tents in the courtyard. It matters to HUD. It matters to the mayor. It's way political. And that's where my frustration lies.

Local administrators coerced Tara at housing placement meetings to manipulate clients into accepting unsuitable housing. Tara resisted institutional pressure to steer clients into unsuitable housing by demanding they receive a voucher:

> You've seen me at the meetings telling them, I'm like, "That's not going to work." I got into an argument about this at [a housing placement meeting]. Someone had a spot available and [Amy] didn't want it. She wasn't comfortable and they gave me a ton of crap about it, "She refused housing." No, she didn't. She's got a ton of physical needs and she doesn't want to share a bathroom. She ended up getting housed in CARE [voucher]. I won that battle. But I'm like, "Why do I have to fight about this? It is still client centered. She's willing to wait. You guys should be too."

Tara slated administrative pressure to place her client shared housing. To her, delayed transition was an acceptable inconvenience to place her client in suitable housing. When Tara's client rejected an available unit, administrators reclassified them as "refused housing" to reduce chronic homelessness reported to HUD. Tara contested this decision by contrasting administrative actions against the logic of client-centered case management. Resistance of political constraints improved the housing of Tara's client, but did not challenge the market structure that relegated other clients to unsuitable housing. Resistance to political but not economic structures, while commendable, reproduced a social structure that marginalized Housing First recipients as they transitioned into permanent housing.

Conclusion

This paper extends our knowledge of contemporary homeless management. Urban scholars have debated the form, function, and legitimacy of homeless services. Three perspectives have informed the debate. Punitive theorists have primarily argued homeless service providers are an instrument of capital who promote urban revitalization by repressing the unsheltered poor (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019). Supportive theorists claim homeless service providers provide restorative interventions that enable the unsheltered poor to survive and/or escape the street (DeVerteuil et al. 2009; Johnsen and Fitzgerald 2010). Both perspectives undertheorize contemporary homeless services by decontextualizing it from macropolitical structures and neglecting the case management of Housing First providers. Disciplinary theorists have partly addressed these shortcomings by examining disciplinary techniques that Housing First case managers use to goad lease compliance by service recipients (Hennigan 2017).

I addressed this gap by examining the responsibilization of Housing First recipients in a large U.S. Rust Belt county (Baker et al. 2020). Housing First promotes consumer choice to normalize clients (Hennigan 2017). Political economic constraints pressure Housing First providers to accommodate inequitable housing markets that relegate clients to unsuitable units. Inadequate housing undermines the mental and physical health of service recipients. To minimize client resistance, Housing First providers use client-centered techniques to manipulate them to accept available units. This fortifies market inequalities by producing transactionable lease applicants who accept and perform their marginalized status. Unlike Herring (2019b), which observes police officers exclude homeless bodies from prime spaces and seclude them in marginal ones, Housing First providers in Springfield County include homeless bodies in local rental markets by secluding them in impoverished neighborhoods. This yields return on homeless policy for federal lawmakers and promotes urban revitalization for local boosters.

This paper makes three sociological contributions. First, I provided rare insight into techniques that Housing First use to lease up clients. Past research has examined techniques that case managers use to render somebody eligible for Housing First assistance (Osbourne 2019; Smith and Anderson 2018). I extend that research by analyzing techniques case managers use to transform Housing First recipients into transactionable lease applicants who acquiesce to market constraints. Next, I extend knowledge of political economic structures that facilitate and constrain the subjectification of Housing First clients (see Hennigan 2017). Institutional elites impede Housing First recipients from meeting their needs. Housing First case managers are contracted to produce subjectivities that accommodate this decision. Third, I examine the exercise of agency by Housing First providers while responsibilizing clients within political economic constraints. I demonstrate case managers acquiesce and resist institutional pressure to marginalize clients.

I end with two suggestions for future research. First, this paper did not analyze the methods that case managers used to subjectify clients before and during the lease negotiation with prospective landlords. This is a notable gap in our knowledge of Housing First case management since the leasing negotiation process mediates transition from homelessness. Future research might examine this interactional process. Second, I conducted this study in a post-industrial U.S. county. Housing First, in this context, is administered in a highly segregated private rental market. In Western European countries, where social housing stocks are larger and rental markets are less segregated, Housing First recipients confront different political economic constraints on their housing options. Future research could compare these findings with the experience of Housing First providers/recipients in other countries to understand how political economic contexts facilitate and/or impede transitions from homelessness.

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Article 5

"This is *Your* Sanctuary": Disciplining Housing First Recipients into Transactionable Renters

Abstract: Urban scholars have long debated the nature of contemporary homeless management in American cities. Past contributions to this debate generally ignore disciplinary interventions by social service providers, provide limited theorization and empirical description of Housing First case management, and/or decontextualize homeless service delivery from its macropolitical structure. I address these shortcomings by analyzing the consumerisation of Housing First recipients into transactionable renters who possess basic competencies needed to function as a rental market consumer. Housing First providers use four techniques to normalize service recipients: observation, motivation, embodiment, and disenfranchisement. Producing a transactionable renter yields return on homeless policy by reducing public expenditures on emergency services, grows profit for private landlords by smoothing rental market exchanges, and stabilizes a vital source of tax revenue for local governments in the post-industrial era. My findings extend urban sociology in two ways. First, I present theoretical tools for classifying disciplinary techniques that Housing First providers use to integrate homeless service recipients into urban political economies. Second, I provide an empirically nuanced account of disciplinary techniques that Housing First providers use to stabilize urban political economies by providing federally subsidized property management services to private landlords.

Introduction

Literal homelessness is a stable characteristic of U.S. cities in the neoliberal era (Willse 2015). Deindustrialization, welfare retrenchment, and urban revitalization eroded the middle class while reducing housing assistance to accommodate rent inflation. By the 1980s, street homelessness dispersed across urban landscapes as institutional authorities tried to manage the crisis (Wolch and Dear 1993). Local governments adopted "broken windows" policing and "quality-of-life" ordinances to stimulate economic growth (Mitchell 2003). Criminalization coincided with rehabilitation as the "shadow state" administered supportive services (Wolch 1990). The federal government designed homeless assistance programs to standardize both services throughout the nation (Willse 2015). Although the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) experimented with different service models, street homelessness remains a visible feature of urban poverty in U.S. cities (Stuart 2016; Herring 2019).

The function of contemporary homeless services has been an object of theoretical debate among urban scholars (Stuart 2015). Punitive theorists have argued homeless services seclude the unsheltered poor in marginal spaces where they do not impede urban revitalization (Herring 2019). Supportive theorists have retorted homeless service providers make beneficent interventions that help the unsheltered poor survive a traumatic life experience (DeVerteuil, May, and Mahs 2009). Disciplinary theorists claim homeless service providers are agents of social reproduction who stabilize urban housing markets (Hennigan 2017). I contribute to this debate by analyzing the discipline of Housing First recipients into transactionable renters by case managers. Baker, Evans, and Hennigan (2020) theorize institutional elites redesigned homeless policy as a social investment that reduces public expenditures by promoting self-sufficiency. Federal policymakers have adopted Housing First—a model of homeless services that advocates immediate rather than gradual placement in permanent housing without preconditions such as sobriety, treatment, or employment—as a cost-effective demand-side intervention to end homelessness (USICH 2015). Lawmakers contract local service providers to yield return on Housing First by transitioning homeless individuals into permanent housing. Urban scholars have produced little knowledge about techniques that Housing First providers use to discipline service recipients once they have moved into permanent accommodation (Baker and Evans 2016; Hennigan 2017).[24] This is a notable gap in scholarly knowledge that hinders specification of mechanisms by which frontline workers govern poverty and facilitate urban revitalization in post-industrial cities.

I present qualitative research that makes three contributions that address this knowledge gap. First, I situate homeless service delivery in macropolitical context to identify functions assigned to case managers by federal policymakers (Baker et al. 2020). This methodological decision highlights an exogenous function of local disciplinary interventions that urban scholars have neglected. Second, I challenge the punitive thesis by highlighting an inclusionary function of contemporary homeless services (see Herring 2019). While emergency shelter providers exclude and seclude homeless individuals from prime spaces, Housing First case managers integrate homeless individuals into market relations through disciplinary interventions. Homeless services, therefore, vary in function across providers. Third, I provide evidence that, in the context of Housing First, "support" is indistinguishable from market discipline (see Clarke and Parsell 2020). Disciplining Housing First recipients in a stratified rental market involves the

[24] A "transactionable" renter is a consumer that possesses subjectivity needed to initiate and maintain participation in rental market exchanges. In contrast, a "non-transactionable" renter is a consumer that lacks the knowledges, sentiments, and habits needed to initiate and maintain participation in rental market exchanges.

provision of free property management services that legitimate and reproduce structural inequalities. The degree to which Housing First providers help the urban poor is relative to the structure of rental markets used to exit clients from homelessness.

Literature Review

Three topics have dominated debate about contemporary homeless management. First, scholars have interrogated the form of power exercised by frontline workers. Debate participants have conceptualized homeless governance as either a repressive act of exclusion or productive act of inclusion.[25] Second, scholars have interrogated the function of contemporary homeless governance. On one side of the debate, scholars have argued homeless management promotes individual sustenance through the dissemination of essential goods and services. On the other side of the debate, scholars argue homeless governance promotes social reproduction by fortifying capitalist institutions. Third, scholars have disputed the legitimacy of homeless governance. A subset of authors has argued homeless governance is a legitimate exercise of power that saves marginalized people from abject poverty while another subset argues contemporary homeless governance is an illegitimate exercise of power that harms people suffering homelessness by reproducing institutional inequities.

[25] Foucault (1990) differentiates “reductive” from “productive” power. Acts of reduction control homeless people through external motivation. Frontline workers use “hard” tactics such as force and coercion to exercise reductive power (Johnsen et al., 2018). Force denies homeless people the option of non-compliance. Coercion is a threat of material deprivation to manipulate compliance by homeless people. Acts of production control homeless people through internal motivation. Frontline workers use “soft” tactics such as bargaining, influence, and tolerance to exercise productive power (Johnsen et al. 2018). Bargaining achieves obedience through negotiated concessions. Influence generates compliance by manipulating the beliefs and preferences of homeless people. Tolerance is the absence of manipulation to produce desired behavior among homeless people.

Three perspectives have informed theoretical debate about contemporary homeless management: punitive, supportive, and disciplinary. The punitive thesis conceptualizes homeless management as an illegitimate act of repression that promotes urban revitalization by isolating homeless individuals from prime spaces (Herring 2019; Mitchell 2003; Smith 1996). The supportive thesis argues contemporary homeless management is a legitimate act of repression or discipline that helps the unsheltered poor survive a life-threatening trauma (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009; Johnsen and Fitzpatrick 2010). The disciplinary thesis paints homeless management as an illegitimate act of discipline that integrates the unsheltered poor into inequitable market relations (Lyon-Callo 2004; Hennigan 2017). All three perspectives take a position on each topic of debate about homeless governance. I contribute to this discussion by drawing insight from the disciplinary perspective to analyze Housing First case management in a post-industrial city.

I conceptualize Housing First case management as a mode of responsibilization. Responsibilization refers to the production of subjectivities (i.e., knowledges, sentiments, and habits) that transform service recipients into competent market participants who independently manage social risks in the post-welfarist era (Shamir 2008). In the 1990s, federal authorities transformed social policy from a passive to active intervention that responsibilized service recipients into market participants (Hemerijck 2012). For example, federal lawmakers imposed work requirements, job training, and time constraints on welfare recipients. In this regard, policymakers redesigned welfare to commodify the poor by transforming service recipients into exploitable workers who voluntarily acquire subsistence through private labor markets (Peck 2001). To this end, lawmakers contract frontline workers to cultivate practical knowledges of workforce participation (Collins and Mayer 2010), motivate voluntary exploitation in low-wage service jobs by stigmatizing welfare dependency (Purser and Hennigan 2018), and undermine working-class solidarity among service recipients (Broughton 2001). Hence, commodification is a type of responsibilization that pushes unemployed workers into labor markets.

Critical theorists have applied the concept of responsibilization to analyze consumer markets. Giesler and Veresiu (2014) theorize consumer subjectivity is a constructed rather than natural object. Institutional authorities produce consumer subjectivity through disciplinary interventions that direct consumption toward desired ends. In the neoliberal era, consumer subjectivities have been created to individualize social problems that were previously addressed by the welfare state. Kipp and Hawkins (2019), for example, trace the production of conscious consumers through cause-related marketing that individualizes the cause of and solution to uneven development. Evans, Welch, and Swaffield (2017) analyze efforts to reduce food waste by producing responsible customers who value conservation. Both examples demonstrate consumer subjectivities are produced through disciplinary interventions that assign individuals responsibility to solve social problems by changing their consumption habits.

I coin the term, “consumerisation,” to describe disciplinary interventions that transform institutional subjects into transactionable customers. Consumerisation, like commodification, responsibilizes people into independent market participants. Unlike commodification, which produces exploitable workers who voluntarily depend on labor markets for subsistence (Peck 2001), consumerisation creates responsible customers who practice consumption in ways preferred by institutional elites. Kipp and Hawkins (2019) previously demonstrated the “moralization” of consumers into responsible market actors who use value-based reasoning to purchase commodities. By promoting conscious consumerism, institutional elites liberalize market exchanges by delegating regulatory responsibility from the public to private sphere

(Giesler and Veresiu 2014). Consumerisation also involves the normalization of institutional subjects. In contrast to moralization, which assumes competent actors who can voluntarily participate in market exchanges, normalization is the production of basic competencies that people need to independently purchase commodities through different types of market exchanges. Normalization, in other words, transforms an institutional subject into a transactionable rather than moral consumer.

I conceptualize Housing First as a disciplinary intervention that consumerises the urban poor through normalization. Housing First individualizes the causes of homelessness, thereby making service recipients rather than housing markets the object of reform (Baker and Evans 2016). In the United States, where public accommodation constituted only .7% of the total housing stock in 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020), Housing First providers use demand-side subsidies to secure permanent accommodation for clients in private rental markets. Federal authorities contract Housing First case managers to discipline service recipients into transactionable renters who independently grow profit for private landlords. By producing transactionable renters, Housing First case managers provide federally subsidized property management services that minimize transaction costs for private landlords, seclude homeless individuals from prime spaces, and stabilize an essential source of tax revenue for post-industrial cities.

Hence, the function of Housing First case management in the United States extends beyond the conventional wisdom of urban scholars. Punitive theorists have criticized homeless services as a means to promote urban revitalization by excluding and secluding the unsheltered poor from prime spaces (Herring 2019). Housing First case managers, rather than excluding the unsheltered poor from urban political economies, promote economic revitalization by including homeless individuals in private rental markets through consumerisation. Moreover, supportive theorists have conceptualized Housing First case management as a client-centered intervention that advances the personal goals of service recipients (Clarke and Parsell 2020). In the United States, where service providers are contracted by federal policymakers to minimize the economic impact of homelessness through private rental markets, Housing First case managers perform institutional functions by disciplining the poor into transactionable renters. Hennigan (2017) demonstrates this point by analyzing the techniques that Housing First case managers use to consumerise service recipients. Although Hennigan (2017) demonstrates homeless service providers perform institutional functions beyond seclusion and caretaking, it lacks a conceptual framework to classify disciplinary techniques, nuanced account of interventions that Housing First providers use to consumerise service recipients, and contextualization of Housing First case management in macropolitical context.

In this paper, I answer the following questions: How do Housing First case managers discipline homeless people? How do the disciplinary interventions of Housing First case managers impact (extra-)local political economies? I provide evidence that Housing First case managers use four techniques to consumerise the unsheltered poor: observation, motivation, embodiment, and disenfranchisement. Housing First case managers collect information about service recipients through various sources that they use to encourage and demonstrate lease compliance. If Housing First recipients reject soft interventions, then case managers use hard tactics that goad conformity by restricting individual liberty. Consumerisation of service recipients yields return on Housing First by reducing reentries to homelessness that tax emergency services, grows landlord profit by minimizing transaction costs, and stabilizes a sources of tax revenue that local governments have come to depend upon in the neoliberal era. In this regard, the disciplinary interventions of Housing First case managers fortify national and local political economies through the inclusion rather than exclusion of homeless individuals from market relations.

Data & Methods

I conducted this research in a large, hypersegregated, post-industrial Rust Belt county.[26] Since the 1970s, Springfield County experienced a dramatic decline in its manufacturing sector (Wilson 1987). White suburbanization simultaneously generated hypersegregation, thereby creating a spatial mismatch that separated racial minorities from high-wage employment (Massey and Denton 1993). Poverty enveloped minority neighborhoods in Springfield County's central city. Local government responded with mass incarceration that integrated state surveillance into the daily lives of minority residents (Wacquant 2009). Intra-metropolitan competition for high-income households undermined local governments from investing in affordable housing (Peterson 1981). In short, Springfield County experienced the macro-structural changes that urban sociologists have documented in Rust Belt cities during the neoliberal era.

In this context, social service providers delivered Housing First through the federal CoC program. CoC is a federal block grant allocated to local homeless service consortiums to provide assistance within constraints established by HUD. To access Housing First, clients had to demonstrate both 12 months of literal homelessness and a disabling condition. Each week, CoC staff produced a Housing Prioritization List of clients eligible for assistance. The prioritization list was used at coordinated entry meetings to select a lease configuration—voucher, master

[26] I used a pseudonym because participants would not contribute to the study unless the place identity was masked.

lease, or project-based units—for Housing First recipients. The CoC provided two Housing First voucher programs: HOME and CARE. In addition, the CoC offered two master lease programs: Covenant House and CONNECT. In contrast to portable vouchers, master leases were fully furnished apartments that named the Housing First provider rather than client as lessee. Finally, the CoC provided fourteen project-based facilities.

I conducted forty-four in-depth interviews and five focus groups with Housing First providers in a large post-industrial county located in the U.S. Rust Belt. Participants were recruited from two sources. First, I conducted yearlong nonparticipant observation of coordinated entry meetings hosted by the Springfield County Continuum of Care. To access these weekly meetings, I contacted the director of coordinated entry, Heidi, who obtained permission from program supervisors. I conducted a recruitment presentation where I introduced my project to program supervisors who granted me permission to do observations for one-year. After completing eight months of observation, I requested contact information for case managers who program supervisors managed and interviews with program supervisors who attended coordinated entry meetings. All program supervisors introduced me to team members from who I requested participation. Through this strategy recruited thirty-four participants into the study.

Second, I contacted the Springfield County Department of Health Services where I connected with program supervisors who administered case management programs that served Housing First recipients. After introducing the project during weekly staffing meetings, I asked to make recruitment presentations to case management teams supervised by nonprofit program coordinators who attended the meeting. Each program supervisor agreed. During those presentations, I described the project and obtained contact information from each program coordinator who connected me with their team. I recruited respondents from six out of fifteen

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Housing First Providers (n=77)

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age Cohort		
Young Adult (18-35)	34	44.2
Middle-Adult (36-55)	34	44.2
Older-Adult (56-99)	8	10.4
N/A	1	1.3
Gender		
Female	63	81.8
Male	13	16.9
Non-binary	1	1.3
Race		
Asian	1	1.3
Black	15	19.5
Brown	1	1.3
Hispanic	1	1.3
White	57	74.0
Other	1	1.3
N/A	1	1.3
Education Level		
High School Degree	2	2.6
A.A or A.S. Degree	6	7.8
Bachelor's Degree	27	35.1
Master's Degree	42	54.5
Employment History (In Years)		
1–5	18	23.4
6–10	23	29.9
11–15	20	26.0
16–20	7	9.1
21–25	7	9.1
26–99	2	1.3

nonprofit agencies providing Housing First case management. From these contacts, I successfully solicited participation from forty-three case managers. Table 1 provides demographic characteristics of the seventy-seven Housing First providers who participated in this study.

I used an electronic recording device to conduct interviews/focus groups at a location selected by each respondent. Each interview and focus group ranged thirty–to–ninety minutes; however, most lasted approximately one-hour. Once completed, recordings were sent to a private transcription service where the audio was transcribed. I analyzed the transcriptions using

MAXQDA software. To this end, I used coding methods derived from “grounded theory” to analyze the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I initially open coded interview transcripts to identify emergent themes. Next, I returned to scholarly literature on homeless management to theoretically frame the case study. After identifying the themes of exploitability and responsibilization, I used theoretical coding to group existing codes into higher order categories that structure the data analysis of this paper.

A few limitations should be noted before I continue. First, I did not directly observe the actions described by case managers. Although each theme was triangulated by multiple participants, this analysis is weakened by my inability to specify conditions under which, beyond client characteristics, each strategy was used. Second, this study relies on a purposive sample from one Rust Belt county. This weakness limits the transferability of these findings to different political economic contexts. Third, I recruited participants from six of fifteen agencies that administered Housing First. Agencies that did not contribute to the study employed program supervisors who ignored my emails requesting an introduction to their case management staff or case managers who refused participation during a recruitment presentation. I am uncertain if characteristics of these agencies differentiate them from participants.

Findings

Giesler and Veresiu (2014) argue “consumer” subjectivities are constructed by institutional authorities through disciplinary interventions. Hennigan (2017) demonstrates Housing First providers use case management to consumerise service recipients but offers limited theorization and empirical depiction of their practices. I extend Hennigan (2017) by distinguishing four techniques that case managers use to consumerise Housing First recipients: observation, motivation, embodiment, and disenfranchisement.

Observation

Institutional authorities conduct surveillance to discipline subjects (Rose 1999). Past research demonstrates the salience of observation to homeless management. Police officers conduct surveillance to marginalize homeless people (Herring 2019) while Housing First providers use observation to assimilate homeless people into private rental markets (Hennigan 2017). Mandatory home visits enable Housing First case managers to gather information needed to normalize service recipients. Hennigan identifies technologies—psychological indices and case notes—that Housing First case managers use to surveil clients. I extend that research by examining informal techniques that Housing First providers employ to conduct observations, assess clients, and select disciplinary interventions.

To illustrate, Housing First programs in Springfield County mandated home visits that case managers used to gather information about service recipients. Participants, like William, used information collected during home visits to measure the normalization of clients:

> It's important to meet people out in their homes to make sure everything's all right. We've got some guys who have poor hygiene. And, so, we do try and get out to see people in their homes, just to make sure we're not going to get a five-day [eviction] notice because there's garbage everywhere.

William demonstrated the importance of observation to consumerising service recipients. Housing First providers applied their knowledge of rental market norms during home visits to measure client normalization. In this regard, William used his knowledge of landlord expectations to evaluate his clients' housekeeping practices. If William observed inadequate habits of housekeeping, he intervened to prevent eviction by producing that subjectivity.

That said, Housing First providers used various methods to conduct observations. Housing First providers used proxies to conduct observations. Surveillance is performed by an array of institutional actors (Rose 1999). Housing First providers expanded their gaze by relying on surrogates for information. Jeremy, for example, relied on neighbors to notify him if a client became disruptive:

> We have one unit, I think there's 17 in one building, and some of these people have been with us for 10 years and have us since we've started. And we'll have developed relationships with their case managers. And we'll say, "Hey, rumor has it around," the client will tell the case manager, "You see a lot of people coming in and out of there and some people think that there's something going on." So, a lot of our client's will inform on the other clients.

In addition, Lana used landlords and colleagues to inform on her clients:

> A landlord has emailed Michelle from Springfield Country saying that sometimes he has a lot of trinkets outside on the ledge. Apparently, he was throwing things over the railing and putting garbage down. I did address it the one time we got an email, "I just wanted to touch base because your landlord had contacted Michelle and he'd appreciate it if you could maybe clean some of this up out here."

Use of proxies allowed case managers to collect information that was unobservable during home visits. This provided more data to measure client normalization and select appropriate interventions. In addition to neighbors, respondents gathered information from police officers, family members, and electronic public records. Hence, Housing First providers were one node in a surveillance apparatus that was used to normalize homeless service recipients.

Although case managers employed formal technologies to surveil clients, they also used informal methods to collect data during home visits. Patrick, for example, gathered ocular and auditory data:

> We could look for whether meds are laying around in one of their little med holders. If the apartment is more disorganized than normal or if there's evidence of a lot of substance use or something like that. If it's disorganized just because they just took a break from just kind of keeping the place straight or it's more of a negative symptom type issue or they don't have the motivation to clean up versus, if it is more like, "Whoa, this person looks nothing like, their normal baseline," or they have more energy or they're thoughts are disorganized.

Nona, in addition, collected olfactory data:

> We have to do house visits every week. We want to make sure that, as the people who are also paying the rent, we need to make sure that everything is okay because that's also on us. So, I come in, "Oh, it looks like you didn't clean up this week." We also know that if they normally keep their place tidy, and then all of a sudden, it's not when you come, then we have concern about, like, potentially mental health or like, a change. . . If it does smell like marijuana, that would be a conversation of, "What's going on? Do you feel stressed out?"

Home visits allowed Housing First providers to gather information on multiple factors to estimate, interpret, and discipline clients. Patrick collected ocular and auditory data by examining his clients' medication cassettes, personal demeanor, and flat cleanliness while Nona gathered olfactory data by smelling her clients' apartment. While both respondents collected evidence to measure their clients' mental health, a disorganized apartment suggested clinical intervention might be needed to prevent lease violations that, if unaddressed, could cause an eviction. Respondents, thus, medicalized tenancy, used psychiatric discourses to diagnose causes of lease violation, and employed clinical interventions to render unstable clients pliable to normalization.

Facts do not speak for themselves. Housing First providers interpreted observations before selecting interventions. Participants reported confusion while understanding information gathered during home visits. To Katrina, the appearance of “disorder” could trick her into making internal rather than external attributions for their clients’ behavior:

> I’ve met with him maybe six times now and his cot is always in a different spot. I was like, “Hey man, what’s going on?” And he was like, “I put it in the bedroom at first and then I put it up against the window and then it got hot and I brought it to the other side.” After a while, I realized he was moving it because he doesn’t have any other furniture. I realized he’s improvising. I had to make sure I wasn’t interpreting like he has a mental health symptom.

Home visits overwhelmed Housing First providers with information that they had to interpret. As professional social workers, participants were trained to interpret clients through psychiatric discourses. Katrina used ocular data to initially interpret her client’s actions as mental illness. After collecting auditory data, she externalized the cause of his behavior to poverty. This allowed Katrina to select an appropriate intervention to normalize her client.

Housing First providers adjusted surveillance to client normalization. Participants reduced the frequency of home visits once a client became normalized and vice versa. Patricia, for example, described her strategy to accommodate a client who inflicted property damage after rejecting psychotropic medication:

> Increase our visits. Then, we can get them in to see the doctor and see if maybe there's some med change that can happen too.

In contrast, participants, like Pearl, varied the timing of home visits to observe clients who habitually violated lease obligations:

> I have another client. She has moved this guy in. That's not supposed to happen unless she wants to add him to the lease. I've been explaining, "He can't be here." A lot of times I pop up on her. And she hates it. I told her this Wednesday, "I pop up on you because this is the type of stuff I want to see. You tell me that things are different, but there's an apartment full of people."

As a technique of normalization, Housing First providers adjusted observation to client transactionability. Participants, like Patricia, increased the frequency and expanded the scope of observation by conducting more home visits and/or recruiting psychiatrists if they attributed lease violation to mental illness. In contrast, Pearl adjusted the timing rather than frequency of surveillance to coerce a defiant client into a self-governing tenant. Hence, respondents manipulated the breadth and depth of surveillance to manage normalization.

Motivation

Housing First providers used observational data to *motivate* client normalization. Rose (1999) analyzes "psy" technologies that enhance the disciplinary power of institutional authorities. Client-centered case management—a strengths-based method of social service provision designed to cultivate rapport and independence through coordinated pursuit of personal goals (Department of Housing and Urban Development 2017)—is a psy technology that Housing First providers used to normalize clients. Participants used client-centered techniques to produce knowledges that internally motivate lease compliance. Respondents produced transactionable subjectivities by making suggestions that linked lease compliance to personal objectives and setting boundaries to disincentivized lease violations. These techniques were used to produce self-governing agents by redefining lease compliance as an act of personal choice.

First, participants used suggestion while adjusting clients to permanent housing. Before getting housed, clients spent their days surviving the street. Permanent housing freed up time previously devoted to survival by meeting an essential need. Participants, like Eva, reported adjustment problems as clients experienced isolation upon exiting the street:

> Many of them have been on the streets for over a year. And they've really just been focusing on surviving. I noticed that once they get into housing, they find they have to confront a lot more trauma and their mental health. One of my clients has pretty severe social anxiety and depression. When he got housed, he started struggling with getting out of the house. He just sits a lot in his house dealing with that kind of past trauma. Then, he went to smoking weed to kind of self-medicate.

Participants argued homelessness created post-traumatic stress that hindered clients from settling into their apartment. Clients sometimes coped with this trauma by adopting strategies, like substance abuse, that risked landlord-tenant conflicts. To prevent displacement, respondents, like Nona, used knowledge of their clients' personal goals to suggest new habits that managed uncomfortable sentiments within lease constraints:

> I had a [client] who we moved in on a Friday evening. I was like, "I'm going to leave my work phone on. So, if you need anything over the weekend." They did call me over the weekend, "Hey, it's so quiet in here." And we just had conversations about, "Yeah. What could you do if you wanted to? How do you problem solve rather than just feeling all of their feelings?"

Housing First participation required new subjectivities that *could* experience permanent housing without violating lease obligations. Many clients lacked knowledges, sentiments, and habits to cope with the experience of permanent housing. Participants, like Nona, adjusted clients by probing their personal interests and/or making individualized service referrals. This gave clients an opportunity to develop new habits that managed sentiments of independent housing within lease constraints.

In addition, participants used suggestion to produce gatekeepers who regulated access to their unit. Landlords prohibited extended guests to reduce crime, utility costs, and tenant complaints. Housing First recipients felt guilty for denying homeless friends despite the risk of eviction. Respondents, like Rebecca, encouraged clients to mitigate these sentiments by practicing utilitarian logic:

> We talk about it, "If you move somebody else in, you're both going to lose this." "Oh yeah, I understand. I'm not going to do it." And they're like, "Well, this person helped me when I was outside. And remember being out there and nobody would help me. So, I want to help them." "I get that, but you can't because then neither one of you will have a place to go."

Rebecca used utilitarian logic to create interest-based suggestions that motivated unit regulation. In contrast, Stacy cited "property rights" to create value-based suggestions that motivated voluntary gatekeeping:

> We talk about how hard you had to work to get this place, and that you're not helping anyone by doing their work for them. If I had done the work for you, do you think we would've gotten this far? No, because you work for yourself. You

learn to appreciate it. This is your sanctuary. Your place. You choose who comes here.

Most participants reported clients who struggled to regulate access to their unit. Importation of emotive bonds presented a moral dilemma to Housing Fist recipients. For clients who distrusted the welfare system and anticipated future homelessness, severing supportive ties seemed like a dangerous mistake. Housing First providers motivated clients to regulate unit access without undermining rapport. Rebecca and Stacy used economic logics to encourage gatekeeping through suggestions that appealed to self-interest and personal values. This produced knowledges in clients to independently mitigate sentiments by prioritizing tenant over social obligations.

Second, participants motivated clients by setting boundaries. Respondents described clients who became non-transactionable after rejecting their suggestions. Defiant clients committed lease violations that risked eviction and limited housing choice. Respondents, like Lucy, used negative consequences to motivate acceptance of standardization services by non-transactionable clients:

> I've had clients, if they were to relapse or stop taking their medications, and they stop paying rent, and it kind of rabbit holes. That's when I just monitor to make sure that they're not a danger. I've also tried to convince clients to maybe go inpatient. It's their choice. Sometimes, it's like, learn the hard way. If they don't want to listen to anything you have to say, "What do you want to do then?" I have a client right now. He's like, "I want to stay under the bridge." I will meet you there, then.

Lucy perceived Housing First recipients as rational actors who responded to incentivizes. By exposing clients to the "natural" consequences of their actions, Lucy created knowledges to coerce acceptance of normalization. Moreover, Lucy used client-centered rhetoric to manage personal distress by framing her client's displacement as a personal choice and her abandonment as respect for client autonomy. This allowed Lucy to externalize responsibility for exposing vulnerable clients—whose psychiatric condition thwarted their receptiveness to negative incentives—to life-threatening trauma.[13]

In addition, participants withheld advocacy to normalize clients. Housing First providers are responsible for negotiating rental leases for clients. Housing First recipients possessed rental histories and/or criminal backgrounds that undermined their position in a lease negotiation. Case managers used their professional role to minimize stigmatization during the application process. Participants, like William, used their advocacy role as leverage to motivate cooperation:

> We're a very honest group of people. I'll tell [landlords], "Yeah, he's working on it." Some landlords will take that at face value. But we had to give him a reality check, "You will be on the street if you don't take the proper steps. There's no magical solution anymore." And it's like, "What are you doing today?" "Well, I'm trying to find me a place." "Okay. Go look. Bring back information. We are fine to help you, but we're not going to be actively meeting with landlords and, "Yeah he's a great guy."

William withheld lease advocacy to motivate conformity. In the absence of advocacy, William's client would struggle to secure housing and possibly become homeless. William presented that scenario to manipulate his clients into becoming normalized. By giving an ultimatum, William produced a transactionable knowledge that associated undesirable consequences with lease violations that could be avoided through conformity to rental market norms.

Embodiment

Moreover, Housing First providers used observational data to *embody* transactionable subjectivities. In addition to describing elements of "good" tenancy, respondents produced these subjectivities by demonstrating abstractions through action. This gave clients practical knowledges of tenancy to develop transactionable habits—housekeeping, communication, and gatekeeping—that facilitated permanent housing. In this regard, Housing First providers used client-centered techniques to normalize clients by embodying the ideas needed to advance their personal objectives.

To illustrate, participants embodied effective housekeeping. Landlords desired tenants who maintained their units to prevent costly repairs. Participants reported knowledges that clients imported to their apartment that excluded competent homemaking. To prevent displacement, case managers, like Sandy, demonstrated housework so clients could independently maintain their unit:

> There's a lot of teaching that has to go into activities with living. We usually strategize what can be most beneficial for that person. So, we'll do a lot of teaching, and we'll help people with grocery shopping. But, we'll, like, our mental health tech [will] help people with cleaning, developing cooking skills, those types of things to help them maintain their housing.

Sandy, like other participants, cited housekeeping habits as a transaction barrier that destabilized their clients' housing. To produce this subjectivity, Housing First providers demonstrated housework so clients could imitate their behavior, develop practical knowledges, form transactionable habits, and independently maintain permanent housing.

Respondents embodied effective communication to minimize landlord-tenant conflicts. Leases require ongoing interactions to make rent payments, address maintenance problems, and/or turn over the unit. Poor communication skills create unwanted stress that landlords avoid. Housing First recipients, respondents claimed, lacked subjectivities to effectively communicate with landlords. Heather produced this knowledge by demonstrating "appropriate" methods to converse with landlords:

> My biggest thing when I've seen people go from homelessness into a home is communication with their landlords and neighbors. My client, who ended up moving into that horrible apartment, none of the doorbells work, and his phone wasn't working. Then, communicating with the landlord that the doorbell was broken. He was in the office all the time and just gets pissed at them because he has no idea how to ask for things in the right way. I have him just watch me and how I handle things and just stay calm.

Rental leases are protracted legal contracts that require ongoing landlord-tenant communication. Housing First recipients often lived in older buildings that required regular maintenance. Consequently, clients had to effectively communicate with landlords to address problems. Hostile interactions could result in eviction. Heather avoided displacement through embodiment of effective communication to produce transactionable renters.

Lastly, Housing First recipients struggled to regulate access to their unit. Although case managers motivated clients to restrict access, efforts to produce gatekeepers did not always succeed. In response, participants, like Alice, embodied gatekeeping for clients by threatening extended guests:

> If I go into a private residence, and my client is having a lot of friends, and the landlord has approached me, I'll talk to my client. And [if] the client doesn't have the heart to tell them to leave, I have put people out of people's houses. And tell

> them, “I don’t want to see you over here again. If I see you again, I’m going to call the police.”

Alice embodied gatekeeping by threatening squatters with police intervention if they did not vacate her client’s unit. Alice demonstrated effective regulation for clients who, in the future, possessed knowledges to manage sentiments and independently evict extended guests. This reduced the probability of lease violations, displacement, and emergency service consumption.

Disenfranchisement

Finally, Housing First providers used observational data to *disenfranchise* unruly clients. Housing First recipients occasionally resisted disciplinary interventions, became homeless, and/or resumed emergency service consumption. Federal incentives pressured case managers to ensure housing stability of clients; however, the legal right to refuse treatment rendered client-centered techniques, such as motivation and embodiment, ineffective. Participants partnered with psychiatrists and the court system to disenfranchise these clients. Respondents used involuntary guardianship to seize control of their clients’ finances and involuntarily institutionalization to coerce psychiatric treatment. In this regard, Housing First providers curtailed the civil liberties of unstable clients to prevent homelessness by facilitating rental market exchanges.

To illustrate, Housing First providers exercised involuntary guardianship by petitioning the Springfield County probate court to become representative payee. Representative payeeship is appointed to case managers by the Social Security Administration to control the income of SSDI recipients deemed incompetent. Financial mismanagement could result in eviction if clients failed to pay rent. Participants, like Tina, thwarted displacement by becoming a representative payee:

> Their behaviors play a big part in their staying stable in housing, because they can act out, and then the landlord wants them out. They’ve got tenants who are their own payee. They might go smoke up they money, or drink it up, or whatever they do, and then they’ll get evicted that way. So, in those instances, we seek to take their funds from them, and become their payees.

Rose described her use of guardianship to prevent displacement by distributing her client’s income throughout the month:

> Our guy we just moved from the smaller landlord. He had sold his couch and his TV. We’re his payee. We’re responsible to pay their rent. Once the rent is paid, we don’t have to give them everything on the first. We can say, “Alright, you’re getting $75 a week. I’m coming to your house on this day. We can go to the bank together and then to the grocery store.”

Participants initially motivated disruptive clients to voluntarily grant their agency representative payeeship. If motivational tactics failed, respondents practiced involuntary guardianship by partnering with psychiatrists to appoint themselves representative payee (see Social Security Administration 2020). Limiting financial liberty enabled Housing First providers to prevent lease violations by rationing resources throughout the month.

In addition, Housing First providers used involuntary institutionalization to normalize clients through compulsory psychiatric treatment. Housing First recipients had a legal right to refuse treatment unless they posed an imminent threat to themselves or others. Participants claimed medication noncompliance resulted in psychosis, lease violations, and/or displacement. As Lucy previously demonstrated (see page 20), participants initially motivated voluntary institutionalization. If motivation failed, case managers, like Taylor, allied with psychiatrists to petition involuntary commitment:

> I have a client that has a delusional disorder, and he hasn't been medicated. He has a delusion right now that there is women trapped in the apartment, and they're starving. It's like these people are trapping these women upstairs, so he's been pounding on their door. The landlord has had it, because there have been other issues. He hasn't paid rent on time. The landlord's been very forgiving. He won't answer the door if the landlord is knocking. He won't return phone calls. He did push the maintenance guy. We tried to do a [court petition] because we really felt he was a danger to himself and to others.

Involuntary commitments mandated medication compliance that made it possible to normalize clients upon release. Participants, like Christie, facilitated standardization by coupling involuntary institutionalization and guardianship:

> I had a guy. He was his own payee for most of the time. He was refusing meds. He wasn't paying rent. He ended up having to go inpatient. The landlord continued to really work with him because he knew we were involved. He got to a point, 'If this man doesn't have a payee, I'm not going to rent to him any longer.' So, while he was at the hospital the psychiatrist there put in for him to have a payee. We applied. We got approved. So, since we are able to pay his rent the landlord continues to work with him.

Participants used involuntary institutionalization as a last resort to render clients amenable to normalization. Involuntary institutionalization negated the right to refuse treatment. Clients were temporarily housed in a psychiatric hospital where they were mandated to take psychotropic medication. Upon release, the State directed medication compliance. If clients refused medication, case managers contacted the county sheriff to get them re-institutionalization. Respondents used institutionalization as an opportunity to partner with psychiatrists to curtail their clients' financial liberty. By evoking psychiatric authority, Housing First providers used disenfranchisement to facilitated rental market exchanges by rendering non-transactionable clients pliable to normalization.

Conclusion

This paper extends our knowledge of contemporary homeless management. Urban scholars have debated the form, function, and legitimacy of homeless services. Three perspectives have informed the debate. Punitive theorists have primarily argued homeless service providers are an instrument of capital who promote urban revitalization by repressing the unsheltered poor (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019). Supportive theorists claim homeless service providers provide restorative interventions that enable the unsheltered poor to survive and/or escape the street (DeVerteuil et al. 2009; Johnsen and Fitzgerald 2010). Both perspectives undertheorize contemporary homeless services by decontextualizing it from macropolitical structures and neglecting the case management of Housing First providers. Disciplinary theorists have partly addressed these shortcomings by examining disciplinary techniques that Housing First case managers use to goad lease compliance by service recipients (Hennigan 2017).

I extend Hennigan (2017) with a theoretical framework to conceptualize Housing First case management. Drawing insight from governmentality theory, I argued consumer subjectivity is a constructed object that is formed by institutional authorities through disciplinary interventions. Federal policymakers contract Housing First providers to normalize service recipients into transactionable renters who independently reduce their burden on public expenditures by smoothing capital accumulation for private landlords. In this regard, Housing First providers use four disciplinary techniques to consumerise homeless service recipients: observation, motivation, embodiment, and disenfranchisement. Case managers conducted observations to gather information and measure normalization, motivated clients to develop knowledges, sentiments, and habits that honored lease obligations, embodied responsible tenancy during interactions with clients to facilitate lease compliance, and disenfranchised insubordinate clients to avoid eviction by rendering them transactionable. Housing First providers, thus, include rather than exclude clients by aligning of their subjectivities with the political and economic aims of institutional elites. In doing so, Housing First case managers yield returns on homeless policy for federal policymakers by public expenditures on emergency services, grow landlord profits by providing taxpayer subsidized property management services, reduce the visibility of poverty in American cities, and stabilize a market that local governments increasingly rely on for tax revenue.

I conclude with suggestions for future research. First, Housing First recipients have agency to accept or resist standardization; however, this study, by examining the experiences of case managers, ignores the experiences of Housing First recipients. Future research might address this shortcoming by answering the following questions: How do clients experience the standardization process? Second, this case study was conducted in the U.S. where the federal government has abandoned social housing. As a result, U.S. Housing First providers are forced to lease up clients in private rental markets. Housing First providers in delivering services in welfare regimes with a larger public housing stock have different options to accommodate clients. How does Housing First case management vary across welfare regimes? Third, this paper relies on interview and focus group data and, therefore, lacks the strength of participant observation. Future research could advance this study by using observational data to trace the process of standardization service delivery in different contexts.

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Conclusion

Housing First is a hegemonic governmentality of homeless management in the United States (Baker and Evans 2016). Unlike Treatment First, which uses transitional housing to ease homeless individuals into permanent accommodation through stairstep services, Housing First advocates immediate placement in permanent supportive housing without preconditions (Tsemberis 2010). Federal authorities have embraced Housing First as a roadmap for designing homeless policy. Lawmakers adopted Housing First as a cost-effective method to reduce government spending on emergency services through a reactive social investment (Baker et al. 2020). HUD’s investment in homeless policy has consequently shifted Continuum of Care funding from transitional to permanent housing. In 2005, 35% of Continuum of Care funds supported transitional housing. By 2019, that figure dropped to 5% as outlays for permanent housing increased to 85% of the Continuum of Care budget (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021).

Dependency of local governing coalitions on federal resources means homeless systems throughout urban America are integrating Housing First (Baker and Evans 2016). The federal government has provided a notable proportion of funding for homeless services to cities since the late-1980s (Willse 2015). In 2019, federal authorities distributed at least $2.6 billion to local homeless services consortiums (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021). Reliance on federal assistance means local homeless service providers are contracted to advance the political objectives of institutional elites (Baker et al. 2020). Federal authorities use myriad tactics to coerce homeless service providers to advance their aims while delivering assistance to clients (Willse 2015). Failure to honor a federal mandate threatens the funding of a service provider. Economic dependency enables federal lawmakers in part to control the delivery of homeless services in post-industrial cities. Theorization of homeless governance requires urban sociologists to situate Housing First case management in this nested political context.

Despite its relevance to contemporary homeless governance, urban sociologists have devoted little attention to the delivery of Housing First in post-industrial cities (Baker and Evans 2016). Urban scholars have debated the form, function, and legitimacy of power exercised by frontline workers through homeless governance. Punitive research has argued homeless services is an illegitimate act of repression that bolsters urban revitalization by excluding and secluding homeless individuals from prime spaces (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019; Smith 1996). Supportive research has retorted homeless services is a legitimate act of repression or production that helps the unsheltered poor survive a traumatic life experience (DeVerteuil and Wilton 2009). Disciplinary theorists largely contend homeless services is an illegitimate act of production that fortifies institutional inequities (Hennigan 2017). Urban sociologists have devoted scant attention to Housing First despite its influence on federal policymaking. Transition to Housing First by federal, state, and local governments has redefined homeless services in cities across the country. This macropolitical change has transformed homeless services in ways that challenge existing interpretations posited by urban scholars.

My findings extend scholarly debates about the *form* of contemporary homeless governance. I demonstrate Housing First providers include homeless service recipients through disciplinary interventions that produce transactionable consumers. Past research has conceptualized homeless service providers as instruments of capital who partner with law enforcement officers to seclude the unsheltered poor from prime spaces (Hennigan and Speer 2019; Herring 2019b). My research indicates this is a half-truth based on narrow sampling of homeless service providers. While it is true that day center, emergency shelter, or soup kitchen workers seclude homeless individuals from prime spaces, Housing First providers integrate service recipients into private rental markets through responsibilization. That inclusionary services are provided in some marginal spaces indicates productive and repressive interventions are administered in tandem with one another.

In addition, I provided novel empirical analysis of institutional processes navigated by homeless service providers. Hennigan (2017) demonstrates Housing First providers mediate rental market exchanges by disciplining clients into transactionable renters. Hennigan's analysis depicts one moment in a protracted institutional process that culminates in a market subjectivity. My research extends Hennigan (2017) by analyzing interactional processes that precede tenancy. I demonstrate program referral is an important moment that determines the type of leverage a case manager will have to discipline clients into transactionable renters once they access permanent housing. This insight helps us explain the power Housing First case managers can exercise on different types of clients. Urban sociologists have also neglected coordinated entry. Osbourne (2019) is an exception that demonstrates emergency shelter providers are gatekeepers who mediate access to permanent housing. Osbourne's research was conducted in a centralized location where the place of homelessness is unproblematic. Coordinated entry is often conducted outside emergency shelters in decentralized public spaces where the place of homelessness is uncertain. This research contributed new data on the constraints street outreach workers navigate while navigating the unsheltered poor through coordinated entry.

Second, my findings extend scholarly debate about the *function* of contemporary homeless governance. I identified a novel mechanism by which homeless service providers bolster urban political economies. Past research has demonstrated the role of emergency shelters in facilitating urban renewal by secluding homeless in marginal spaces (Herring 2019b). Housing

First providers, by relying on private landlords to rehouse clients, fortify urban political economies by stabilizing the local housing market. By providing informal property management services, Housing First providers help generate landlord profits, decrease property damage, thwart neighborhood decline, and enhance property values that local governments increasingly rely on for tax revenue. In doing so, Housing First case managers simultaneously facilitate urban revitalization by limiting the presence of homeless individuals in prime spaces. Hence, my research expands sociological knowledge of how homeless service providers impact urban political economies.

In addition, I situated contemporary homelessness governance in macropolitical context. Past research has analyzed the interests of local boosters who perceive homelessness as a threat to urban renewal (Speer 2019). That research decontextualizes the practices of frontline workers from macropolitical institutions that shape the function of homeless services. Neglect of governmentalities informing homeless policy formation by federal authorities limits sociological analyses of urban governance in post-industrial cities. Nesting homeless services demonstrates Housing First providers yield returns on homeless policy for federal authorities. Housing First providers collaborate with urban entrepreneurs to govern homelessness; however, federal authorities constrain the discretion of local homeless consortiums to direct action toward desired outcomes. Thus, Housing First providers in post-industrial cities negotiate demands from myriad stakeholders whose interests may align or conflict over time.

Third, my findings inform scholarly debate about the *legitimacy* of contemporary homeless governance. I highlighted limitations of relying on a demand-side intervention to solve urban homelessness in a stratified rental market. Housing First presumes homelessness is an individual problem whose resolution requires personal transformation of service recipients

(Baker and Evans 2016). Housing First case management only varies from Treatment First by the method(s) service providers use to coerce clients. Unlike Treatment First, which exercises hard power through conditional services that coerce involuntary engagement, Housing First relies on soft power to achieve voluntary compliance through client-centered case management (Hennigan 2017). Focus on individual factors neglects market inequities that contribute to homelessness (Kain 1992). Failure to deconcentrate poverty in urban housing market may hinder Housing First recipients from full integration into American society. Hence, accommodating market inequalities through a reactive demand-side investment without a preventative supply-side investment portends the perpetuation of urban homelessness.

In addition, I demonstrate problems associated with using Housing First to reduce public expenditures. Housing First is an excellent, albeit incomplete, demand-side intervention to tackle urban homelessness. However, my research indicates the delivery of Housing First must be client-centered to secure suitable accommodation that promotes lease maintenance. Federal authorities, who adopted Housing First to reduce public expenditures, have centered their interests over service recipients by prioritizing rapid housing rather than consumer choice. My findings demonstrate the interests of service recipients and policymakers do not always align. HUD administers selective incentives that motivate local administrators to prioritize the interests of policymakers over service recipients. This can undermine the quality of services allocated to people suffering a traumatic life experience.

Policy Implications

My findings suggest some post-industrial cities may need to expand their affordable stock. Existing supply-side interventions offered by the federal government are inadequate to deal with urban homelessness. The Reagan Administration instituted the Low-Income Housing

Tax Credit (LIHTC) through the Tax Reform Act of 1986 to incentivize affordable housing construction through private markets. LIHTC grants state and local allocating agencies roughly $8 billion per year to issue tax credits for acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of rental housing for low-income households (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021). Scally, Gold, and DuBois (2018) critique LIHTC for providing temporary affordable housing that increases to market rate 15–30 years after construction, imposing rent burden on extremely low-income households, imposing a time-consuming application process that disincentives participation by adding transaction costs to building construction, and reproducing residential segregation by concentrating affordable housing in poor communities of color. Hence, leaning on private developers to fix homelessness reproduces a social structure that generates housing insecurity.

Federal authorities need to invest in *integrated* social housing. Integrated social housing is publicly owned accommodation that is situated next to private units in a multi-family apartment complex or mixed income public accommodation located next to private housing. Reinvestment in public accommodation is essential to solving homelessness for several reasons. First, direct financing reduces transaction costs by reducing the number of players involved in a project and personal investment that developers make to navigate bureaucratic processes required to build affordable housing units. This would decrease time to produce affordable housing and increase participation in affordable housing construction among private developers. Second, social housing eliminates profit incentive and allows the state to end rent burden for extremely poor households and/or house people with problematic histories that hinder lease attainment in private rental markets. Third, local governments can exercise their regulatory power to ensure social housing deconcentrates poverty. This would enable the urban poor to access employment opportunities, avoid chronic stress, and increase self-sufficiency. In this regard, integrated social housing would decrease (re)entry to urban homelessness.

In addition, my findings also identify problems of using Housing First to reduce public expenditures. Housing First is a great demand-side intervention that is needed to tackle urban homelessness. However, my research suggests the delivery of Housing First must be client-centered to secure suitable accommodation that promotes lease maintenance. Federal authorities adopted Housing First to reduce public expenditures. To this end, policymakers initiated the Opening Doors campaign to center the interests of political elites. My findings demonstrate the interests of service recipients and policymakers do not always align. HUD administers selective incentives that motivate local administrators to prioritize the interests of policymakers over service recipients. Prioritizing the interests of federal policymakers ironically impedes their investment on homeless policy. Placement of Housing First recipients in unsuitable accommodation can generate housing insecurity. An expeditious end of homelessness might generate immediate economic benefits; however, expeditiously ending homelessness in unsuitable accommodation undermines a social investment if a Housing First recipient is constantly displaced. Hence, removing incentives to quickly end homelessness would enable homeless service providers to secure suitable housing for clients.

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