

THESIS

NEOLIBERAL DIRT: HOMELESSNESS, STIGMA, AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN FORT
COLLINS, COLORADO

Submitted by

Stefanie Berganini

Department of Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2019

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Katherine Browne

Jeff Snodgrass
Dimitris Stevis

Copyright by Stefanie Berganini 2019

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

NEOLIBERAL DIRT: HOMELESSNESS, STIGMA, AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

This thesis presents a thorough investigation of the network of resources available to people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins, Colorado. It also explores the stigma faced by the homeless community, and the ways in which stigma affects services, public policy, and the everyday lived experiences of homeless people. By exploring the various programs provided by government, non-profit, and private organizations and institutions, I aim to create a conceptual map of the sources of support available to the homeless population of Fort Collins. In doing so, I analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of the existing service network, and explore the ramifications of systemic gaps on the lives of homeless people. Using data gathered through participant observation in various resource-providing organizations, as well as via interviews with non-profit executives, city administrators, homeless advocates, faith community leaders, business community representatives, and people experiencing homelessness, I attempt to present an *emic*, or insider, view of the complex issues surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins. The results of this research provide actionable information that may be used to shape public policy or other programming decisions for the local community. Both housed and unhoused residents in Fort Collins can benefit from an understanding of how the network of support services functions, how stigma affects the public's view of homeless people, and how stigma and services interact.

In Chapter 2, I first outline national-level data surrounding the occurrence and causes of homelessness. Next, I explore the formation of stigma, and the process of symbolic boundary-making that defines our everyday perception of the world. I then provide an overview of the

ways in which governance reconfigures conceptualizations of public space, with related ramifications for homeless people existing in the public sphere. Finally, I explore existing data about homelessness in Fort Collins, and chronicle the city's recent history of homeless-related governance.

Chapter 3 describes the data collection and data analysis methodologies used to generate my findings. I outline the timeline for this research, provide descriptions of my interview groups and participant observation activities, and explain the social networking process used to generate the included service network map. I also explain the transformational research framework I use to situate this work.

Using a critical political economy lens, Chapter 4 explains my major research findings. First, I present the results of my network mapping process. Next, I provide an overview of the strengths in the city's existing social service network. Then, I explore the stigmatization of homeless people in Fort Collins, and the negative stereotypes held by actors in both the general public and in significant positions of power. Finally, I detail the weaknesses in the city's current attempts to deal with homelessness – including a lack of affordable housing, a failure to provide for some basic needs, a severe dearth of mental health and substance abuse services, and a policing model that sometimes makes homelessness worse, not better – and how those weaknesses affect, and are affected by, the stigmatization of homeless people.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the preceding chapters and offers final conclusions about the state of homelessness in Fort Collins. It also posits actionable next steps, and suggests other relevant lines of research not covered by this paper.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There is no question that this thesis would not exist without the support and assistance of a great number of people. Though the words in these pages are my own, this project was by no means a solitary effort.

Thank you first and foremost to Kate Browne, who has been my fiercest advocate since the moment I met her, and who has mastered the art of being simultaneously warm and giving and tough as nails. I'm a better researcher and a better human being thanks to her guidance, and no amount of gratitude will ever be enough to say thank you. I'm eternally grateful that she chose me to be her graduate student, and that I can now call her not just an advisor but a friend. Thank you to Dimitris Stevis and Jeff Snodgrass for feedback throughout this process that helped me refine many of the work's rough edges. And thanks also to Michele Gamburd, chair of the anthropology department at Portland State University, where I received a post-bac degree before attending CSU, for providing both personal and professional inspiration during a time when I was struggling to find my path in life.

Many thanks are also due to my friends and family, both for their ongoing support, and for putting up with me rarely having time to attend social gatherings during the course of this research. Thanks especially to my dad, for always being genuinely interested in whatever wacky adventure I'm on, and for always making sure I know how proud he is of me. Thanks also to Ron Thompson for his endless faith that I could do this, to Danielle Anderson for sending messages of support at just the right moment (and for being an unfailingly thoughtful, caring, kind friend), and to David Scott for being a sounding board, for keeping me sane, and for bringing me snacks during long nights of writing. Finally, I'm grateful for the solidarity of many grad-students-turned-friends, for late night theoretical discussions and commiseration over writer's block.

Last but certainly not least, this research would not have been possible without support and welcome from the organizations where I volunteered during participant observation. Thank you also to my respondents for sharing so honestly and openly during interviews. And most importantly, thank you to the many homeless residents of Fort Collins that I met throughout this process – I am in awe of your perseverance and thankful for your kindness toward an outsider with a tape recorder. It has been an honor to hear your stories and to have your trust in sharing them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACTii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTSiv

LIST OF TABLESviii

LIST OF FIGURESix

LIST OF ACRONYMSx

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION1

 1.1 A Typical Friday Night: November, 20171

 1.2 Research Goals2

 1.2 Research Significance4

 1.4 Outline of Chapters5

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW7

 2.1 Homelessness, Stigma, and Symbolic Boundaries8

 2.2 Homelessness and Governance14

 2.3 Homelessness in Fort Collins17

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY23

 3.1 Introduction23

 3.2 Field Site and Timeline25

 3.3 Participant Observation25

 Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship26

 Faith Family Hospitality27

 Homeless Gear28

 Fort Collins Homeless Coalition28

 3.4 Interviews29

 3.5 Social Network Analysis33

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION36

 4.1 Key Community Strengths36

 Well-Connected Service Network36

 Providing for Some Basic Needs41

The Murphy Center	42
Outreach Fort Collins	43
4.2 Stigmatization and Stereotyping	46
Transients, Druggies, Criminals, and Bad Apples	46
Dehumanization	52
Homelessness as a Choice	54
Stigma and Agency	57
4.3 Key Community Weaknesses	60
Lack of Affordable and Appropriate Housing	60
Failure to Provide for Some Basic Needs	62
Lack of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities	66
Equality versus Equity Under the Law	67
Public Sentiment Guides City Action	73
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	78
5.1 Conclusion	78
5.2 Suggestions for Future Research	84
REFERENCES	86
APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	96
APPENDIX II: SOCIAL NETWORK MAP	99
APPENDIX III: CITY OF FORT COLLINS AWARDS	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Incidence of criminalization laws relating to homelessness in 187 US cities	17
Table 2: Gephi visualization settings	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Network of services related to homelessness in Fort Collins	38
Figure 2: Barriers faced by people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins	82

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACLU: American Civil Liberties Union

ADU: Accessory Dwelling Unit

AMI: Area Median Income

BFO: Budgeting for Outcomes

FCCAN: Fort Collins Community Action Network

FCHC: Fort Collins Homeless Coalition

FCMF: Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship

FFH: Faith Family Hospitality

KWIC: Key Word in Context

NCH: National Coalition for the Homeless

NLCHP: National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 A TYPICAL FRIDAY NIGHT: NOVEMBER, 2017

It's a typical Friday night in Fort Collins. The late autumn air is crisp but hasn't quite turned cold, and fallen leaves swirl across the sidewalks of the historic downtown area and crunch under the feet of passing pedestrians. Soon, these streets will be lit by the festive glow of thousands of tiny white lights hung as part of the city's annual holiday decorations. A couple walks by arm in arm past the looming steel skeleton of a soon-to-be-completed boutique hotel, his jacket draped across her shoulders as they escort the boxed remnants of their dinner home to a waiting refrigerator. From a few blocks away, the sounds of live music echo faintly through the fading golden-peach sunlight, the exact genre unrecognizable at this distance but mixed with the low clinks and mumbles of an evening melody that speaks of comfort and community.

I see and hear and smell these things through the small open window of a nearby church kitchen, where I'm up to my elbows in tepid greasy dishwater, cleaning forks and spoons with every bit of speed I can muster. I pause momentarily to remind someone to check the coffee – it's always running low – and then return to my furious scrubbing. There is a mountain of dirty plates and cups growing all around me, and I'm covered in slimy water. Behind me, two other volunteers bustle about in what remains of the cramped room, valiantly trying to coordinate several large pots of pasta and bowls of salad on a tiny kitchen island clearly not designed with this capacity in mind. Around the corner, even more volunteers dish up the meal we've made, occasionally pausing to shout "almost ready for more bread!" or "need some spoons!" into the kitchen.

This is one of the city's few warming shelters, and we've just served dinner to about 50 homeless guests. They eat, and then come back for seconds and sometimes thirds. There's a

birthday in the group tonight – a girl named Rebecca with baggy black pants and a snarky smile has just turned 21 – and the crowd has produced a cake out of thin air. Slices of red velvet are cut and shared, and the group sings a rousing round of “happy birthday”, though there’s some mumbling in the middle as not everyone knows Rebecca by name. After dinner they wander into the other open area of the church to sign up for a shower in one of the two expanded bathrooms, to curl up in a corner and sleep, or to sit and talk. Tonight, a group of men is gathered at the dining room table playing Madlibs – every word they supply is some type of sexual innuendo, and they fill the room with gleeful laughter for the better part of an hour. Karen, one of the few women present, wanders by twisting her long hair as though uncertain about something. When I ask what’s wrong, she tells me she’s weighing a decision: she arrived later than usual and has a spot near the bottom of the shower list. The hot water ran out long ago but that’s not the issue; she’s deliberating if it’s worth it to shower this late in the evening if it means wet hair outside on a chilly night.

Later, when the warming shelter closes at 10pm, tonight’s guests will wind their way out into the night, joining the slowly flowing stream of people headed home from concerts, date nights, restaurants, and bars. A few have formed into a small group with plans to split the cost of a local motel room. The rest head toward a bed at one of the city’s two overnight shelters, to the back seat of a car, or to an unsheltered spot outdoors where they hope to get a few hours of undisturbed rest. It’s a typical Friday night in Fort Collins.

1.2 RESEARCH GOALS

This thesis presents a thorough investigation of the network of resources available to people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins, Colorado. It also explores the stigma faced by the homeless community, and the ways in which stigma affects services, public policy, and the

everyday lived experiences of homeless people. By exploring the various programs provided by government, non-profit, and private organizations and institutions, I aim to create a conceptual map of the sources of support available to the homeless population of Fort Collins. In doing so, I analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of the existing service network, and explore the ramifications of systemic gaps on the lives of homeless people. Using data gathered through participant observation in various resource-providing organizations, as well as via interviews with non-profit executives, city administrators, homeless advocates, faith community leaders, business community representatives, and people experiencing homelessness, I attempt to present an *emic*, or insider, view of the complex issues surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins.

An emic perspective is not just theoretical, but experiential, and attempts to relate research from the inside out, as the participants themselves see it. Over the course of this project, I have come to understand, deeply and fully, what it is like to live without a home in Fort Collins. The experience of the city's homeless community has become so ingrained that I am able to anticipate my respondents' answers during conversations about their lives, even about topics we never discussed during our interviews. Additionally, I understand the various barriers, stresses, and everyday experiences faced by service providers as they attempt to navigate homelessness in Fort Collins. I have never been homeless, and there is no universal homeless experience; particular struggles, successes, and coping mechanisms differ from person to person. Similarly, there is no uniform experience for service providers, and all deal with a different set of hurdles as they attempt to execute their respective organizational missions. Not every homeless person in Fort Collins, nor every service provider, will identify completely with the experiences I've described. That said, my participant observation, combined with the uncensored voices of my respondents, illuminate pervasive and salient themes about which I found broad consensus.

The results of this research provide actionable information that may be used to shape public policy or other programming decisions for the local community. Both housed and unhoused residents in Fort Collins can benefit from an understanding of how the network of support services functions, how stigma affects the public’s view of homeless people, and how stigma and services interact. Specifically, this thesis aims to answer questions such as:

- What types of organizations or programs comprise the network of services for those experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins?
- What resources are known to the homeless community? Are people experiencing homelessness aware of the resources available to them?
- Are there any gaps in the existing network, where services that are needed do not exist?
- How does an understanding – or lack thereof – of the systemic factors contributing to homelessness bias conceptions of deservingness?
- What is the effect of stigma on the lived experiences of homeless people?

1.3 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

In 2012, Homeward 2020 commissioned an analysis of the city’s “homeless response system” (Corporation for Supportive Housing 2016). While useful in certain contexts, this study focuses largely on statistics related to housing outcomes and the final system map is, unfortunately, already out of date because of changes in the existing landscape of non-profits and city programs. Additionally, while this report provides a quantitative flowchart of the city’s service network, it lacks the ethnographic and qualitative detail necessary to help readers understand what navigating the system is like for service users. My research attempts to produce a more current and nuanced understanding of the organizations and interactions that comprise the

local social service network, and to supply the perspective of both service providers and the homeless population regarding the system's effectiveness.

Additionally, little data exists detailing the lived experiences of unhoused people in Fort Collins. While reports, city documentation, and non-profit white papers explore quantitative data related to homelessness, there's a gap in the literature concerning the qualitative day-to-day lives of the city's homeless residents. As a natural byproduct of the ethnographic research process, this thesis seeks to fill that gap. The voices of homeless people are sorely lacking from public discourse about homelessness in Fort Collins; I aim to elevate them. I hope that this research will be informative for the general public, and will prove useful to policymakers, non-profit administrators, and other service providers as they continue to grapple with Fort Collins' rapid growth and plan ways to make the community inclusive and welcoming for all residents.

1.4 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This paper begins with an overview of existing work related to homelessness. In Chapter 2, I first outline national-level data surrounding the occurrence and causes of homelessness. Next, I explore the formation of stigma, and the process of symbolic boundary-making that defines our everyday perception of the world. I then provide an overview of the ways in which governance reconfigures conceptualizations of public space, with related ramifications for homeless people existing in the public sphere. Finally, I explore existing data about homelessness in Fort Collins, and chronicle the city's recent history of homeless-related governance.

Chapter 3 describes the data collection and data analysis methodologies used to generate my findings. I outline the timeline for this research, provide descriptions of my interview groups and participant observation activities, and explain the social networking process used to generate the

included service network map. I also explain the transformational research framework I use to situate this work.

Using a critical political economy lens, Chapter 4 explains my major research findings. First, I present the results of my network mapping process. Next, I provide an overview of the strengths in the city's existing social service network. Then, I explore the stigmatization of homeless people in Fort Collins, and the negative stereotypes held by actors in both the general public and in significant positions of power. Finally, I detail the weaknesses in the city's current attempts to deal with homelessness – including a lack of affordable housing, a failure to provide for some basic needs, a severe dearth of mental health and substance abuse services, and a policing model that sometimes makes homelessness worse, not better – and how those weaknesses affect, and are affected by, the stigmatization of homeless people.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the preceding chapters and offers final conclusions about the state of homelessness in Fort Collins. It also posits actionable next steps, and suggests other relevant lines of research not covered by this paper.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to delve into the specific issues surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins, it's important to understand homelessness more broadly. In the United States, more than half a million people are homeless on any given night (Melville Charitable Trust, n.d.; Henry et al. 2016). About two-thirds of those individuals stay in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or safe havens; the other third sleeps in unsheltered locations such as streets, cars, or abandoned buildings (Henry et al. 2016). Though national rates of homelessness have decreased slightly over the past few years (Henry et al. 2016; Melville Charitable Trust n.d.; National Alliance to End Homelessness), those decreases are found solely in populations using sheltered locations such as overnight shelters or transitional housing; rates of homelessness among those staying in unsheltered locations have increased, though not severely enough to offset the decrease in sheltered homeless people (Henry et al. 2016). Additionally, the geographic distribution of the homeless population is not equal. While homelessness has declined overall, rates of homelessness in many urban centers are rising in the face of dramatically escalating housing costs (Melville Charitable Trust 2016).

According to a broad base of literature, homelessness is an intrinsic side effect of poverty. While issues such as mental illness, domestic violence, or substance abuse may contribute to – or extend – homelessness, the root causes of homelessness are systemic: a lack of affordable housing coupled with the inherent vulnerability of poverty (HomeAid n.d.; National Alliance to End Homelessness n.d.; National Coalition for the Homeless n.d.; Burt 2001; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2015). While people living in poverty experience the same problems as those who don't live in poverty – they lose their jobs, have unexpected medical issues, deal with mental illness, or suffer domestic violence, to name but a few examples – they sometimes lack the finances, social capital, or other resources necessary to remedy their

situation, and so become homeless. Even if/when underlying issues are addressed, the barrier of increasingly high housing costs makes homelessness difficult to escape.

National standards dictate that a coordinated systems approach – one in which a community-wide network replaces disparate individual programs – is a proven best practice for the resolution of homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness, n.d.). In these instances, “local data inform[s] decisions about how to most effectively allocate resources, services, and programs to best address the needs of those experiencing homelessness in the community” (National Alliance to End Homelessness, n.d.). In a coordinated continuum of care, those experiencing homelessness have access not only to housing resources, but also services related to disabilities, domestic violence, employment, and other issues (City of Loveland 2016). In short, the proposed best approach to resolving homelessness is the coordinated interaction between non-profits, city services, federal programs, and other support agencies.

2.1 HOMELESSNESS, STIGMA, AND SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES

Erving Goffman’s seminal work on stigma traces the concept of stigmatization from its ancient Greek roots, when physical wounds were used to mark “a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places” (1963, 1). In recent history, stigma has led – and often continues to lead – to the “labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination” (Link and Phelan 2001, 367) of mental illness (Corrigan 2005; Hayward and Bright 2009), obesity (Puhl and Heuer 2012), HIV/AIDS (Herek 1999; Valdiserri 2002; Parker and Aggleton 2003), and social welfare programs (Moffitt 1983; Besley and Coate 1992; Rogers-Dillon 1995), among other things. This stereotyping and discrimination serves to “cut [one] off from society and from himself so that he stands a discredited person facing an unaccepting world” (Goffman 1963, 19). Although stigma affects individuals who are seen to possess static

undesirable attributes, stigmatization is a dynamic process – a relational exchange that requires someone judging and someone being judged. There is an inherent power dynamic in this process, as social, political, or economic advantage offers a privileged position from which to notice and apply difference, and to cause the exclusion, rejection, and/or loss of status of others (Link and Phelan 2001).

While there are objective facts about homelessness – number of individuals without housing, statistics on employment and housing costs, etc – our perceptions surrounding homelessness are far more personal and subjective. Social constructionists hold that our subjective understandings become our objective truth (Berger and Luckmann 1966) and that social processes provide the framework through which we “describe, explain, and account for [our] world” (Franklin 1995, 397). A subjective construction of reality – one in which the focus moves from objective facts to symbolically constructed cultural norms – is inherently conflictual; Blumer (1971) notes that “a social problem is always a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions, and objectives”. The various groups involved in negotiating these truths, from the homeless themselves to policymakers, the lay public, businesspeople, and many others, are engaged in a complicated tug-of-war to define social reality (Forte 2002). Each of these groups inhabits its own “symbolic universe” (Berger and Luckmann 1966) with its own notions of who is and is not deserving of consideration or aid, and the homeless are often losers in the “social problems language game” (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1993, 29).

Thus, the social construction of stigmatization is rooted in a cultural process of symbolic boundary making. Theory in symbolic boundaries is rooted in the work of Emile Durkheim, who held that religious experience depends on the symbolic separation of sacred and profane realms (1995 [1912]). It is through a shared understanding of what defines these realms, and the behaviors and experiences unique to each, he holds, that people order their everyday lives and

determine social groups. These understandings, constructed socially and expressed individually, generate an understanding of how the world is properly structured; they “reside in men but are at the same time the life-principles of things” (Durkheim 1995 [1912], 224). Max Weber refines and complements Durkheim’s framework of social cohesion by focusing on the creation of social division and exclusion. In *Economy and Society* (1978 [1956]), he notes that discrimination between groups – and the relational power dynamics that result – are the mechanism through which humans maintain order in a world of scarcity.

Mary Douglas’ seminal work, *Purity and Danger*, clarifies the connection between symbolic boundaries and stigmatization. Her examination of social order and boundary-making centers around an analysis of dirt. Dirt, put simply, is “matter out of place” (1966, 44) - any practice, person, or experience which violates our assumed sense of how the world is or should be structured. It’s crucial to note that the systems we create to bring meaning and organization to the world are socially constructed and not universal; dirt is therefore not an absolute categorization, it “exists in the eye of the beholder” (1966, 2). When faced with such challenges to our socially constructed yet taken-for-granted systems, the people, ideas, or groups which cause an affront to our expectations trigger avoidance, disgust, and anxiety. These conflicts between expectation and reality not only mark that which is unacceptable, they also help bound and clarify what is normal and accepted in any given social construction of reality:

Ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating, and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose systems on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, about and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created (1966, 5).

In the United States, the stigmatization of homelessness is shaped by culturally shared expectations of how to fit in to society; these expectations are in turn shaped by economic

notions of productivity and usefulness. Individualism is fundamental to the American cultural imaginary, and capitalism has long been a system espousing individual power over personal success. In *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, for example, Max Weber notes that

The manufacturer who in the long run acts counter to these [capitalist] norms, will just as inevitably be eliminated from the economic scene as the worker who cannot or will not adapt himself to them will be thrown into the streets without a job. Thus the capitalism of to-day, which has come to dominate economic life, educates and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest (1992 [1930], 19).

While this spirit of individual responsibility is not new, neoliberalism elevates capitalism's core principles to new heights, continually recontextualizing all forms of value in economic terms. Since the 1970s, neoliberal policies have paired increasing precarity among workers – due, for example, to union busting and a shift toward part-time and temporary jobs – with cuts to affordable housing and social welfare programs, catalyzing the increased existence of homelessness as a pervasive social problem (Harvey 2005; MacGregor 2005; Palley 2005).

The deeply entrenched ethos of the American Dream reinforces belief in an economic meritocracy – a “just world” (Lerner 1970; Lerner and Miller 1978; Lerner 1980) in which people get what they deserve and anyone who tries hard can improve their circumstances in life. Neoliberalism reconfigures notions of citizenship and how we define worthiness in society via “a biopolitical mode of governing that centers on the capacity and potential of individuals and the population as living resources that may be harnessed and managed” (Ong 2006, 6). At the same time that norms of social worthiness have been reconfigured in economic terms, neoliberal ideals also shape a “national common sense” (Fraser 1993, 9) about how we view social problems. These values structure our social constructions of deservingness – shared conceptions of who is, or is not, worthy of help. Irene Seu's work on responses to humanitarian issues identifies three

factors which influence perceptions of deservingness: “seeing a difference”, in which helpers have evidence that those being helped have made use of previous aid in acceptable ways; “waiting in queues”, where deservingness is based on cultural similarity between helper and those being helped; and “something for nothing”, a neoliberal lens which frames deservingness as dependent on whether or not someone has earned or worked for aid (2016, 743).

The social construction of homelessness, and related stigmatization and determinations of deservingness, are driven by capitalist values which prioritize economic productivity as the means for judging societal usefulness. People experiencing homelessness, by interrupting the “supposed harmony of the spectacle of capital” (Gerard and Ferrugia 2015, 2231), appear as dysfunctional outsiders in our economic system. Their failure to live up to society’s expectations – to maintain a “productive” life – is seen as proof of Goffman’s “blemishes on individual character” (1963, 4). This stigma is rooted in our collective social imaginary – our construction of what is “normal” in our society. People who do not meet these expectations become “incongruous” (Goffman 1963, 3) and arouse feeling of negativity and disgust. The stigmatization of homelessness is specifically rooted in our economic imaginary, whereby those experiencing homelessness are viewed negatively because they are no longer “useful and/or functional members of capitalism” (Belcher and DeForge 2012, 934).

When combined with neoliberal ideals of productivity and opportunity, the assumption that homelessness is caused by individual, personal failings has serious detrimental effects on the public’s willingness to support homeless people and homelessness-related programs. There is a broad academic literature supporting the public’s unwillingness to help those who can be blamed for their problems, as opposed to those who are considered innocent or acted upon by outside forces (see Lerner and Miller 1978; Bernard 1993; Campbell et al 2001). The homeless are, for example, blamed for their circumstances similarly to the housed poor, but stigmatized more

harshly (Phelan et al. 1997). Media outlets reify the stereotype that the homeless are mentally ill deviants (Shields 2001), and people experiencing homelessness are perceived as incompetent, cold, contemptible, disgusting, and undeserving of pity (Cuddy et al 2008). These negative judgments are severe: Cuddy et al's study of social perceptions and stereotypes found that "homeless people were rated so negatively on both warmth and competence that often they are three standard deviations out from the mean of the rest of the groups and had to be removed from the cluster analysis so that they did not distort it" (2008, 135). People experiencing homelessness represent the "unpredictable stranger" (Lupton 1999, 13), a primitive, cultureless, undersocialized, and pathological deviant (Hopper 1991) and the embodiment of dangerousness, non-productivity, and personal culpability (Takahashi 1997).

This intense level of stigmatization has real and serious effects on the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Violence against the homeless has increased every year since the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) began keeping statistics in 1999. Homelessness is not a protected class in determining hate crimes, yet from 1999 to 2015 three times more homeless people were killed in "bias-motivated attacks" by housed people than were killed in all officially recognized hate crimes put together (National Coalition for the Homeless 2016, 5). In addition to experiencing high *rates* of violence, homeless people are often subjected to especially brutal and senseless *types* of violence. Reports of mob or group beatings are common, as are deaths involving multiple unprovoked stab or gunshot wounds, and homeless people have been deliberately driven over by vehicles (Boetel 2014), beaten to death with cinderblocks (The Associated Press 2014), and doused in lighter fluid and then set on fire (Scheibe and Wilson 2015), to mention but a few more heinous examples. In a study of over 500 homeless individuals from across the United States, 15% of respondents had been raped or sexually assaulted, and unlike sexual crimes against housed individuals, where the attacker is usually known to the

victim, the vast majority of sexual crimes against the homeless were perpetrated by strangers (Meinbresse et al 2014). Additionally, people experiencing homelessness face high rates of forced prostitution, police brutality, harassment, media exploitation, and abduction (National Coalition for the Homeless 2014). Sadly, these statistics vastly under-represent crimes against the homeless; the NCH specifically notes that “because the homeless community is treated so poorly in our society, many attacks go unreported and unrepresented” (2016, 1).

The combination of stigma and blame positions the homeless as problematic outsiders in American society. To adapt Mary Douglas’ framework, homelessness exists as a kind of “neoliberal dirt” whereby the existence of unhoused people – and their failure to fit our norms of proper economic life – causes disgust, anxiety, and often outright hostility or violence. Not only do people experiencing homelessness illuminate a failure in our shared belief that capitalism’s “rising tide lifts all boats” (Kennedy 1960), but the resulting cognitive dissonance triggers us to blame those who are homeless for their condition (Belcher and DeForge 2012), and to single out their lack of economic productivity and perceived personal faults as reasons to hold them undeserving of public help.

2.2 HOMELESSNESS AND GOVERNANCE

Governance – the process of generating laws, norms, and power dynamics which shape our social practices (Bevir 2012) – is a core constituent of the symbolic boundarymaking process that generates stigma. Stigmatization of the homeless is not solely expressed on an individual level; perceptions of deservingness and blame are also reflected in public policy and the governance of public spaces. “Government cannot get to work without first problematising its territory” (Bacchi 2009, xi), and governance inherently positions emergent issues such as homelessness as social problems in need of solutions. Though policymaking is often thought of

as a reactive process that seeks to deal with exogenous factors, governance is in fact an active process that shapes and defines social issues. Policy decisions have far-reaching consequences, as “the way in which the ‘problem’ is represented carries all sorts of implications for how the issue is thought about and for how the people involved are treated” (Bacchi 2009, 1). Instead of addressing the economic or social roots of homelessness, related governance often involves the manipulation of public versus private space in an attempt to remove homeless people and the problems they are believed to cause.

People experiencing homelessness have no private space to call their own and must inherently reside completely in public space. Yet the definition of what constitutes public space, as well as the acceptable actions that may be performed in it, are continually contested. The “homeless body” (Kawash 1998) is both physical and symbolic, and its governance combats a perceived public threat in both literal and ideological terms. In the case of homelessness, threats to public order are continually framed in what Prashan Ranasinghe calls the “community-civility-consumption triad” (2011, 1926). In an economic system where consumption is the driving impetus of society, public spaces are no longer a public good, but have been reconfigured both spatially and conceptually to enable consumerism. In these “bourgeois playground[s]” (Smith 1986, 32), threats to “civilized consumption” (Ranasinghe 2011, 1935) are rebranded as public disorder. In this sense, space is socially produced, and different types of space “condition the subject's presence, action and discourse, his competence and performance” (Lefebvre 1991 [1974], 57). As Don Mitchell points out, though “homeless people are nearly always in public, they are rarely counted as part of *the* public” (2003, 135). The construction of space thus becomes less about public versus private spheres and more about defining acceptable versus unacceptable uses of public spaces. The mixing of savory and unsavory actors in spaces of economic activity triggers “bourgeois anxiety” (Harvey 2006, 29) that necessitates the increased

surveillance and removal of unwanted groups. Despite being supposedly communal areas, public spaces act as zones of exclusion which limit the presence and actions of marginalized populations, and related policy responses focus on the “sanitization and homogenization” (Ferrell 2001, 169) of these locations. Attempts to control and regulate unwelcome uses of public space lead to “the annihilation of space by law” as policies seek to “cleanse the streets of those left behind by globalization” (Mitchell 1997, 305) and to remove spaces where the homeless may legally exist.

Increasingly, the attempt to make public spaces safe for select users leads to the criminalization of the activities homeless people must undertake to meet their basic needs. Criminalization resituates everyday homeless survival strategies as illegal behavior (Smith 1994) and includes “increasingly punitive” (Takahashi 1996, 291) laws which regulate acts such as sleeping, lying down, or sitting in public, or living in a vehicle. These policies seek to discourage the visibility of homelessness, and to force homeless people out of the public spaces in which they must exist. The use of criminalization tactics has increased drastically in recent decades, and scholar Randall Amster claims that the escalating use of force and imprisonment to regulate the lives of homeless people has reached “ethnocidal proportions” (2008, 86). The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP) has tracked the incidence of laws criminalizing homelessness in almost 200 American cities since 2006, and groups various criminalization policies into categories: camping in public; sleeping in public; sitting or lying down in public; loitering, loafing, and vagrancy; begging in public/panhandling; living in vehicles; and food sharing (2016). A summary of their findings on the prevalence of various criminalization policies, as well as the relative change in the amount of those policies over time, can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Incidence of criminalization laws relating to homelessness in 187 US cities. Table created from data in National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 2016. *: City-wide versus location-specific data was not specified. **: Location-specific sleeping bans are the only governance area to decline in prevalence, and only because location-specific policies are increasingly being replaced by city-wide sleeping bans.

	Prohibited City-Wide	Prohibited in Specific Public Spaces	Change in Number of City-Wide Policies, 2006-2016	Change in Number of Location-Specific Policies, 2006-2016
Camping in Public	33%	50%	69%	48%
Sleeping in Public	18%	27%	31%	-11%**
Sitting and Lying Down in Public	47%*		52%*	
Loitering, Loafing, and Vagrancy	32%	54%	88%	14%
Panhandling	27%	61%	43%	7%
Living in Vehicles	39%*		143%*	
Food Sharing	6% *		No data	

Unfortunately, criminalization has little effect on preventing the existence and visibility of homelessness, as homeless people have no option but to exist in public space no matter the consequences. Because of this, criminalization often makes homelessness harder to escape (Foscarinis et al 1999; De Las Nueces 2016) at the same time that it wastes public resources on ineffective policies (Smith 1994; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2016). In addition to arguably making homelessness worse, criminalization forces homeless people into increasingly complex routines in order to meet their daily needs. Aware of their own position and attempts to exterminate their presence, people experiencing homelessness become adept at “creat[ing] their own landscape that often frustrates attempts to control their use of space” (Valado 2006, 10). Ongoing attempts to criminalize homelessness are therefore not only self-defeating, but also a “manifest injustice” (Sossin 1997, 700) in the everyday lives of homeless people.

2.3 HOMELESSNESS IN FORT COLLINS

Nestled against the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, Fort Collins is growing quickly. The city's population has tripled in the last forty years (Kendall 2018), and according to census data analyzed by *The Coloradoan*, the Fort Collins-Loveland area is the 12th fastest-growing region in the United States (Garcia 2015). The median sale price of a single family home has increased by over \$100,000 in the past several years (Fort Collins Board of Realtors 2013; 2017), and the Housing Affordability Index – a measure of median home price compared to median income – has gotten over 15% worse in the past year alone (Fort Collins Board of Realtors 2017). As of September 2018, the average sale price of a single family home in the city is \$405,000 (Fort Collins Board of Realtors 2018) while the area median income is just over \$55,000 (City of Fort Collins n.d.) In Fort Collins, the 2018 housing vacancy rate is only 1.55% – up from 1.11% in 2017 (City of Fort Collins 2018), but still much lower than the national average of 6.8% (United States Census Bureau 2018).

In all areas of Colorado, as in many other parts of the United States, the federal poverty level underestimates the actual financial needs of average working families; the Census Bureau notes that “while the thresholds, in some sense, represent the needs of families, they should be interpreted as a statistical yardstick rather than as a complete description of what people and families need to live” (DeNavas-Walt et al 2013, 51). Calculated to determine the income required to “meet each basic need at a minimally adequate level, without public or private assistance” (Pearce 2015, 3), the Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standard is a more well-rounded guideline which takes into account costs related to housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare, savings, and taxes. In Larimer County, where Fort Collins is located, the income needed for self-sufficiency ranges from \$22,775 to nearly \$85,000 a year depending on family type (Pearce 2015). Since the Self-Sufficiency Standard's first Colorado publication in 2001, a family with one working adult and two children, for example, needs to make over 50% more to

make ends meet – from \$36,797 in 2001 to \$56,887 in the most recent publication (Pearce 2015, 11). According to the Colorado Fiscal Institute, a minimum-wage worker in Larimer County would need to work 82 hours per week in order to not spend over 30% of their income on housing (2017).

According to the most recent data, collected during the first quarter of 2018, 339 people in Fort Collins are currently homeless, and have been so for more than six months (Housing First Initiative 2018). At the time of the last comprehensive point-in-time count in 2016, nearly a quarter of the city’s homeless population slept in unsheltered locations not intended for human habitation, and 39% of the homeless population was chronically homeless (Homeward 2020 2016a). According to the same point-in-time data, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins has increased by 10% since 2013 (Homeward 2020 2016a). During the first quarter of 2018, the city’s coordinated service network was able to help only 16 people secure housing (Housing First Initiative 2018). In addition to people currently experiencing homelessness, there are over 600 Fort Collins residents considered to be at risk of homelessness (Homeward 2020 2016b).

In recent years, the visibility of homelessness in Fort Collins has increased as housing becomes less affordable and population growth spreads development into areas frequented by the city’s homeless population. During this time, the City of Fort Collins has been involved in multiple contentious policy debates as a result of proposals which criminalize, or attempt to criminalize, various elements of homeless life. In 2015, a class-action lawsuit alleged that Fort Collins’ panhandling ordinance was an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment. In addition to its intended purpose of restricting aggressive solicitation, the lawsuit argues that Fort Collins police regularly applied the panhandling ordinance too broadly, in violation of residents right to “engage in peaceful and nonthreatening charitable solicitation in public spaces” (Landow

et al v. City of Fort Collins 2015, 2). As a result, the city removed the contested elements of the panhandling ordinance and agreed in a later settlement to forbid police and other officials from interfering with the display of signs asking for charity (ACLU of Colorado 2015).

A few months later, the City held a public meeting to discuss four potential methods for curbing “disruptive behaviors” in the downtown area (City of Fort Collins 2015). One of the program options, called the “shared public spaces” ordinance, proposed limits for the amount of time allowed for behaviors such as sitting or lying on curbs, sidewalks, and benches in the mixed-use Old Town area (Kyle 2015a). Amid resistance from advocacy groups for the homeless, city council members firmly rejected the idea of such a “sit-lie ordinance”, noting that such a proposal was “draconian” and would negatively affect marginalized members of the community (Kyle 2015b). Instead, the council voted to fund a one-year public outreach program that later became Outreach Fort Collins, one of the key social services identified in my research (see Chapter 4). Faced with the continued visibility of homelessness, however, the city reactivated the idea of a sit-lie restriction in 2017 with the proposed “appropriate use of public space” ordinance. As originally drafted, the ordinance proposed to make it unlawful, within the downtown area, to “sit, kneel, or lie down” in public spaces within 20 feet of any commercial property or public walkway, to recline or lie down in any chair or bench, to leave personal property unattended, or to remain sitting for longer than 1 hour, among other stipulations (City of Fort Collins 2017). The ordinance was quickly opposed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), who called it “outrageous”, “cruel”, “absurd”, and “discriminatory” (Woodliff-Stanley 2017, 1), and by advocacy groups who claimed that the provisions “directly target unhoused people” and would be used specifically to discriminate against the homeless (FCCAN n.d.). City council did not adopt the proposed public space ordinance, instead opting to update an existing

obstruction ordinance with language regulating actions around benches, pedestrian signal buttons, trash cans, and water fountains (City of Fort Collins 2017).

During public discussions related to the obstruction ordinance, city council received mounting public feedback about the need for improved storage options for people experiencing homelessness and agreed to investigate the issue. In August of 2017, the city’s Social Sustainability Department proposed a partnership with the Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship to provide a storage option. Conceived as a one-year pilot program, the proposal consisted of 20 small storage lockers to be placed behind the church and available to users with 24-hour, camera-monitored access. The church requested \$10,500 in City funding to purchase and install the lockers and oversee the program. In January 2018, after a City finding that “none of the [existing] service providers were interested in expanding their locker programs” (City of Fort Collins 2018, 4), the city manager’s office forwarded the proposal to city council for consideration. In February of 2018, city council denied the locker proposal’s request for funding. After being told by the City that the project could go forward if the church provided the money on their own, the Mennonite Fellowship launched a crowd-funding campaign and raised \$10,200 to self-fund the locker project (GoFundMe n.d.). Shortly thereafter, the City informed the church that the locker program would need to file a “minor amendment” application with the city zoning department because the lockers constituted a “change in use” of church property. At the July 19, 2018 planning and zoning hearing regarding the application, the church’s legal counsel – provided by the ACLU of Colorado – contended that serving the homeless was not a change in use given the Fellowship’s long history of providing service to the homeless community. The planning and zoning board voted to approve the locker project, stipulating only that the area be lit at night and monitored by a security camera (FCTV 2018b). The decision was appealed weeks later, prompting the issue to move back in front of city council for a final decision. On October 9,

2018 city council voted that the locker project may continue, but only with stipulations – such as a limit on operating hours and a requirement for on-site staff supervision – that defeat the project’s intended purpose (FCTV 2018c). On November 6th, 2018, the Fellowship sued the city, alleging the “imposition of unreasonable, vague, and overly burdensome conditions” (United States District Court 2018, 3) applied in a discriminatory fashion. As of this writing, the lawsuit is yet to be decided, and the Fellowship will suspend the locker program on November 30th, 2018.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In science, as in all aspects of life, “in diversity there is beauty and there is strength” (Angelou 2014, 6). I firmly believe that the best science – the most well-rounded analysis and insightful results – comes from the application of multiple complementary methodologies. Thus, this study comprises a mixed-methods approach which integrates numerous lines of inquiry, both quantitative and qualitative. I gathered qualitative data via field notes collected during participant observation as well as from semi-structured interviews. Interviews also included a free-list component, which generated data I could quantify for the social network portion of this study. Finally, this research utilizes both inductive and deductive approaches. I began to formulate my initial interview protocol based on *a priori* knowledge gained via an exploratory literature review as well as past personal experience with people who are or have been homeless. The early stages of my participant observation employed grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 2002) in an iterative cycle of theorizing, refining, and re-theorizing in order to finalize my interview protocol. All told, this study includes the voices of 24 interview respondents, and represents over 200 hours of participant observation.

In planning this research, it was crucially important to me that my work be useful to the people I’ve studied – that it help inform policymakers about the issues faced by Fort Collins homeless residents, and provide usable steps to make the city, and the lives of its homeless residents, better. This type of public-facing work goes by many names: applied anthropology, public anthropology (Borofsky 2001; 2011), action anthropology (Tax 1958; 1975), engaged anthropology (Low and Merry 2010), and others, each with their own nuances. I support the goals of each of these frameworks without having a preference for any particular term; as such,

I've chosen to describe this work using the umbrella label of “transformational research”, which includes any critical anthropological scholarship examining social, political, or economic inequalities and seeking to “bring about changes in social structures to equalize power relationships and improve access to resources and power” (Schensul et al. 2015, 192).

Transformational research focuses on nine principles:

1. the use of anthropological research to reduce imbalances in political power and economic resources, limited access to needed resources, and environmental constraints;
2. developing and building personal and enduring relationships with members of local communities experiencing inequities;
3. engaging local groups and community members in research as an approach to strengthening community organizing and community development;
4. sharing knowledge and research technology resources;
5. involving researchers in community activism, development, and transformational change as a means of solidifying relationships with communities, shaping and transforming their sociopolitical perspectives, and improving research;
6. enhancing the ability of marginalized populations to access, utilize, and conduct research that addresses their needs and aspirations;
7. co-constructing research with community members and groups that seeks to understand and have maximum impact on remedying social inequalities and structural violence;
8. generating empirical data, using a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative methods as a basis for the positions and actions of both community members and anthropologists; and
9. contributing through these processes to anthropological theory, method, and data related to human and community development and transformational change and its limitations (Schensul et al. 2015, 193).

It has been my aim to embody the principles of transformational research throughout the course of this project. This research uses a critical framework to assess the interactions of stigma, social services, and public policy, and to examine the barriers faced by a severely marginalized and underrepresented population. I have become a member of local activist groups, spoken at city council meetings, and developed long-lasting relationships with some of the people and organizations I've come to know throughout this process. I also plan to host a public-facing, non-academic presentation of my results, and to create an executive summary of my findings which

will be sent to interviewees and city administrators. It is my hope that, in addition to contributing to the wider body of anthropological knowledge, the findings from this research will be used to create real, actionable change that benefits the entire Fort Collins community, housed and unhoused alike.

3.2 FIELD SITE AND TIMELINE

This research was conducted from fall 2017 to fall 2018 at multiple field sites in Fort Collins, Colorado. Participant observation began in August 2017 at sites detailed in Section 3.3 below and continued concurrent with interviews, eventually concluding in summer 2018. Interviews began in October of 2017 and concluded in April of 2018. Interview coding and the construction of social network maps began after the completion of interviews, and final data analysis was completed in late summer 2018.

3.3 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation makes up one of the most important elements of this research. Observing the day-to-day lived experiences of Fort Collins homeless residents, over the course of more than 200 hours, allows me to put interview responses into context, and to understand more deeply the nuance and complexity present in analyzing issues of stigma, power, and policymaking. People experiencing homelessness, due to the transient nature of their existence, can be a difficult group to reach. In subcultures where insiders are by nature wary of outsiders, participant observation offers a way to build rapport and gain the community's trust (Musante 2015). Through volunteering for several organizations that provide services for the homeless – described in further detail below – I gathered a high-quality body of data that brings me “closer to understanding the participants' point of view” (Musante 2015, 258). Ultimately, this

immersive experience provides a “thick description” (Geertz 1973) of the everyday lived experiences of the homeless community, and contributed data for future phases of research.

During all volunteer/participant observation activities, it was made clear to organizational staff, other volunteers, and any homeless individuals interacted with repeatedly and/or at length that I served in a dual capacity as both volunteer and investigator. Any time a service provider introduced me to someone during the course of my participant observation, part of that introduction included an overview of my thesis topic and an explanation of my dual role as volunteer and researcher. It was also made clear to those I interacted with that my participant observation served to observe and collect data on a broad, systemic level, and that specific individuals were not the subject of investigation without their consent and formal agreement to be interviewed.

Simply by virtue of the fact that I live in Fort Collins, my everyday routine also provided some level of participant observation. My normal habit of occasionally attending city council meetings (or watching via livestream) offered useful insights when I began to pay specific attention to issues related to homelessness, and to the way these issues were represented by various parties. I also met and observed homeless people in parks, on public transit, while riding my bike, and in other day-to-day locations. These interactions, however, make up a small fraction of my participant observation; the vast majority of data comes from time spent with the four organizations detailed below:

Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship

The Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship (FCMF) was established in 1972 and is now located at 300 East Oak Street in a neighborhood that borders both residential homes and Fort Collins’ commercial Old Town district. In an effort to practice the “radical inclusivity” of Jesus (FCMF,

n.d.), the church provides – among other community services – one of the city’s few warming centers for those experiencing homelessness. Every Friday night for a large portion of the year (typically September through July, though it varies based on the availability of volunteers) the church is open from 5-10pm for homeless residents to shower, rest, and eat. Each week, a team of volunteers purchase and prepare food, serve meals, organize the rotation of visitors through the two available showers, and clean the building once the warming center is closed. I joined a volunteer team and began conducting participant observation at the warming shelter, more commonly referred to as “Friday night dinner”, in September of 2017 and continued to do so one week per month through the remainder of this project.

Faith Family Hospitality

Faith Family Hospitality (FFH) was conceptualized in 2010 as an initiative of the Fort Collins Interfaith Council after discussions about how to help alleviate the issue of insufficient shelter space for homeless families (FFH, n.d.). Now its own independent non-profit, FFH offers several programs specifically geared toward families experiencing homelessness: case management, a day center (housed in the FCMF building), overnight shelter hosted by a network of over 30 local churches, and a soon-to-be-completed bridge housing project for longer-term housing options. I applied for a position on the board of directors at Faith Family Hospitality during the summer of 2017 and have served as a board member at large since August of 2017. During that time, I’ve participated in board meetings, strategic planning retreats, fundraising events, and other day-to-day organizational business. This perspective not only introduced me to homeless families in Fort Collins, but also serves as an example of the behind-the-scenes operation of organizations in the social service network.

Homeless Gear

Homeless Gear – which rebranded during the course of my writing and is now called Homeward Alliance – is an umbrella organization coordinating nearly a dozen homeless-related programs in Fort Collins. In addition to managing the Murphy Center for Hope, Homeless Gear’s nine programs include initiatives to help those experiencing homelessness find jobs, access healthcare, adjust to life after incarceration, and more. The Street Outreach program, where I volunteered, is a mobile resource operating three nights a week during the cold months of the year. This large cargo van filled with food, blankets, clothing, toiletries, and other supplies is driven by a team of volunteers to various locations around Fort Collins in an attempt to “distribute supplies, share resource information, build relationships, and help connect people to other services in the community” (Homeward Alliance, n.d.). I volunteered as a Street Outreach driver two times per month – each shift lasting about 7-11pm – during the fall/winter season of 2017. In addition to driving the van, a typical volunteer shift involved working with a co-volunteer to plan a route to various locations frequented by those experiencing homelessness, talking to homeless people at each stop, offering information about local resources, handing out needed supplies and food, and keeping the van organized. The outreach program attempts to reach those sleeping outside, and this portion of my participant observation provided in-depth information about the experience and needs of homeless residents either sleeping in cars or sleeping fully outdoors without shelter.

Fort Collins Homeless Coalition

The Fort Collins Community Action Network, (FCCAN), formerly known as the Center for Peace, Justice, and the Environment, is a grassroots, volunteer-based organization dedicated to bringing together advocates for local causes including sustainability, transit access, immigration,

and more. The Fort Collins Homeless Coalition (FCHC) is one of the FCCAN affiliate organizations, and exists to “protect and advocate for dignity, rights, and choices for people experiencing homelessness” (FCCAN, n.d.). Specifically, the group advocates around issues including the criminalization of homelessness, the lack of public bathrooms and water fountains, and the availability and conditions of emergency shelters. I began attending weekly coalition meetings in January of 2018 and continued to do so throughout the course of this research. In addition to meetings and other various events and activities, I also attended community “know your rights” training and informational tabling events, and helped research and write a public bathroom funding proposal for the city’s upcoming 2019-2020 budget.

3.4 INTERVIEWS

In addition to participant observation, the data for this project was primarily gathered through a series of semi-structured interviews. Participants were selected by purposive sampling – a methodology ideal for reaching hard-to-find populations (Bernard et al., 2017) such as those experiencing homelessness – in order to generate a group of key informants. Existing interview participants also served as seeds to generate more interviewees via respondent-driven sampling (Guest 2015). Existing literature does not agree on a minimum sample size in qualitative research studies, so I chose to recruit a minimum of 20 respondents based on research suggesting appropriate minimum sample sizes between 15 and 20 respondents (Bertaux 1981; Kuzel 1992). Final sample sizes were determined inductively based on research suggesting a baseline minimum sample size plus as many more interviews as are needed to achieve theoretical saturation (Charmaz 2006). In the end, this research gathered interview data from 24 respondents, divided into two groups of twelve.

To elicit data that offers both depth and comparability, interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. In contrast with open-ended interviews, which are casual and highly variable, semi-structured interviews focus on the same set of questions for each respondent in an effort to produce data that can be compared across interviewees. And unlike fully structured interviews, in which respondents are asked the exact same questions in the same order with little to no deviation from a set questionnaire, semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility needed to probe deeper into responses and uncover necessary context. Not only is a certain degree of flexibility required given the diverse background of respondents in this study, but existing literature shows that the probing semi-structured format is ideal for eliciting longer and more substantive interview responses (see, for example, Converse and Schuman 1974; Matarazzo et al 1963; Matarazzo et al 1964; Spradley 1979). I created an interview protocol for each respondent group – included in Appendix I – and used it as a guide to shape each interview. Though the protocol is meant to include all topics of interest for each interview, the interviews sometimes deviated from the questionnaire when and where it was deemed beneficial to dig deeper into particular topics not included in the question list.

The first interview group includes respondents currently experiencing homelessness. Homeless, for my sampling and interview purposes, refers to anyone without “a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” (USICOH 2018, 1), including those who sleep in locations such as emergency shelters, motels, cars, or outdoors. These interviews were conducted in a person-centered format (Levy and Hollan 2015) in order to understand respondents’ individual experiences as well as their understanding of the broader network of services. I sought to understand not only the participant’s limited life history as it relates to experiencing homelessness, but also their perceptions and experiences regarding stigmatization and availability of resources. Interviewees experiencing homelessness were first encountered during

participant observation. The first round of respondents consisted of willing interview participants recruited via convenience sampling during the course of volunteering and other participant observation activities. As the first interviews were completed, the initial interviewees were often able to point me toward other willing respondents, or contacted other homeless people in their personal network who then approached me directly. Additionally, some respondents from the service provider group (see below) knew of clients who were willing to be interviewed. The combination of convenience sampling and respondent-driven sampling streams provided an ample group of interviewees with no need for further recruitment methods. These word-of-mouth recruitment methods were ideal, as personal connections served to build rapport and bolster my trust within the homeless community. Additionally, those experiencing homelessness do not always have access to internet, cell phones, or other technology required by recruitment techniques such as emails or web postings.

The second interview group includes respondents involved with the services and policies relevant to homeless people in Fort Collins. These interviews focused on topics including interviewees' perceptions of the existing continuum of services, their organization's programs and funding sources, and thoughts on the changing dynamics of homelessness in Fort Collins. Given the relatively small size of the community and my attempts to keep my informants anonymous, I won't detail the exact roles and positions of the members of this group beyond explaining that these respondents have roles such as non-profit executive, faith community leader, advocate, police or city administrator, business community representative, and similar. The individuals in this group represent the various stakeholders involved with administering Fort Collins' social safety net, creating and enforcing homeless-related policy, representing the interests of the housed Fort Collins community, and/or advocating on behalf of the homeless. Given the varied roles of these respondents, it's difficult to apply a fitting label to this group. I've

chosen to refer to these individuals as “service providers” given that they all, in some way or another, provide some service to the local community related to issues surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins. This label is far from perfect, however, and it’s important to note that it does not mean these individuals are all involved in direct service provision to homeless people, or that their role in the network is inherently beneficial to those experiencing homelessness.

All interviews were recorded following the acquisition of consent from each interviewee, and both digital audio files and transcriptions are stored in a password-protected computer directory. Once transcribed, text was coded with the help of MaxQDA data processing software (VERBI Software, 2018) to identify salient themes. The initial set of codes was generated deductively based on participant observation and existing theoretical knowledge. Additionally, using markers such as repetition, transition phrases, and metaphors, additional themes and related codes were uncovered inductively as coding progressed. Text coding was refined with the use of Key Word in Context (KWIC) analysis (Bernard et al. 2017), which provided a method for examining the specific context of significant terms in the text.

Those experiencing homelessness live in a state of precarity and marginalization. Additionally, all service provider respondents occupy important roles in their respective organizations. In light of these dynamics, and in order to make respondents comfortable in providing honest answers, all reasonable steps have been taken to present the data in a way that makes the interviewees unrecognizable. Each respondent was assigned a code (e.g. “03SP” for the third service provider interviewee) in a linked list during transcription, and respondents were referred to by code, not name, in all analysis thereafter. Pseudonyms were randomly generated via www.behindthename.com and have been used where direct quotes or names are included, pronouns may have been changed, specific job titles are not mentioned, and the names of employers or other specific locations have been redacted. Much of this research focuses on

systemic gaps in the social service network, and the repercussions of the way homeless people are treated by society at large. In addition to providing anonymity for my respondents, I hope that the removal of identifying information also curbs the urge to focus on or blame specific individuals for the issues described herein, and instead helps readers focus on – and hopefully improve – the broader systemic and/or institutional dynamics I’ve described.

3.5 SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

First conducted in the 1960s by Stanley Milgram (1967), social network analysis allows for the study of “patterns of interaction between actors” (McCarty and Molina 2015, 631). While these actors are often individuals, it is also possible to map the interaction between individuals and institutions, or the connections between institutions themselves. I’ve used the latter form of analysis to create a social network map illustrating the relationships and interactions between the local organizations related to homelessness in Fort Collins. As opposed to ego-centered networks, which revolve around a single focal point, the visualization included in this study represents a modified “whole network” approach (McCarty and Molina 2015) which seeks to illuminate the connections of all agents within a bounded space. In this case, the bounded space includes all organizations providing some service related to homelessness in Fort Collins. This method seeks to represent the interactions of all members within the boundary group, and thus offers a way to visualize the entirety of the perceived support network available to the Fort Collins homeless population.

While it’s considered a best practice to collect responses from every member of the network, this is sometimes not possible when networks grow large. In Fort Collins, the service network generated by my respondents comprises nearly 100 organizations (n = 86), and such large-scale data collection was not possible given my resources and project timeline. Instead, each interview

respondent was asked to participate in generating a comprehensive set of social network data via a free-list activity (Wheeler 2015). Though not every respondent was interested or able to participate in this portion of the data collection, eleven individuals provided responses; these responses were more than enough to reach data saturation and provide a complete list of nodes in the service network. Using the survey method (McCarty and Molina 2015), each participant was asked to list all of the organizations they could think of – including their own – that provide some type of service related to homelessness in Fort Collins. After generating a list, each respondent was then asked to indicate up to five organizations they felt were the most crucial for homeless people, and to note any organizations they partner with and/or refer clients to.

One of the goals of a whole network approach is to illustrate how each node in the network is related to every other node. As mentioned above, though my respondents provided a complete list of all the organizations in the network, I was not able to obtain freelist data from every one of the eighty-six organizations included. Thus, the network visualization included in this thesis serves as a quasi-whole-network analysis. A more robust social network analysis, in addition to revealing complete information about the connections between all nodes, could also indicate information regarding the directionality, strength, stability, and multiplexity of those connections (Juarez and Jasny 2012). An analysis of that depth was not possible given my time frame and resources, nor was it the objective of this portion of my analysis. While my modified approach yielded useful data and met my goals, it should not be construed that the visualization derived from this process constitutes a full social network analysis. In collecting network information, my aim was simply to illuminate the community's shared understanding of its own service offerings, and to assess – from the service providers' points of view – the central nodes within the network.

After collecting freelists, data was compiled and organized in LibreOffice Calc (5.4.4.2) and mapped in Gephi (Bastian et al 2009). The Gephi visualization included in this paper uses a Force Atlas distribution to highlight nodes with particular centrality in the network, with a Noverlap filter applied to prevent hidden or overlapping nodes. The Force Atlas visualization settings are as follows:

Table 2: Gephi visualization settings.

Inertia	Repulsion Strength	Attraction Strength	Max Displace.	Auto Stabilize	Autostab Strength	Autostab Sensibility	Gravity	Attraction Distribution	Adjust by Sizes	Speed
0.1	200.0	10.0	10.0	ON	80.0	0.2	30.0	ON	ON	1.0

A full data visualization with accompanying organization list and color-coding explanations is included in Appendix II.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 KEY COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

Well-Connected Service Network

In Fort Collins, the network of organizations related to homelessness is both extensive and well connected. My freelist respondents reported 86 organizations that in some way impact the lives of homeless people in the city. A full listing of organizations is included in Appendix II. These organizations range from city departments to churches to non-profits to development associations. I've grouped them into 18 categories based on either the type of organization or the specific population they serve. Organizations often fit into more than one category, and not every organization's mission is solely related to homelessness. I've tried to group them according to the category that best fits the organization's primary mission; Northern Colorado AIDS Project, for example, serves an at-risk population, but is primarily engaged in connecting clients to medical care and is thus in the "health care" category. Specific categories in the service network include:

- *Advocacy:* Organizations which focus specifically on advocating on behalf of Fort Collins homeless population.
- *At-risk populations:* Organizations which focus on specific marginalized populations, such as the disabled or victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence.
- *City:* Includes city administration, such as city council and specific departments related to homelessness, as well as groups which focus on citywide planning/development.
- *Clothing/gear:* Organizations that operate clothing and/or gear closets which homeless residents may visit to choose supplies.

- *Community space*: Organizations or places which do not provide a direct service, but rather a safe gathering space for non-service-related activities.
- *Donors*: Organizations identified as major funders of homeless-related programs.
- *Employment*: Organizations that focus on building job skills or connecting homeless residents with job opportunities.
- *Faith community*: Churches and other religious organizations that provide one or more homeless-centered programs (e.g. warming shelters, community meals) as part of their ministry.
- *Family/youth services*: Organizations that focus specifically on providing services to homeless families, children, and/or unaccompanied youth. This includes services related to education and family-specific supplies (e.g. diapers) as well as legal programs like Child Protective Services.
- *Food*: Organizations that provide meals, groceries, or other food access.
- *Health care*: Organizations which provide for the physical health of residents.
- *Housing*: Organizations which provide permanent supportive housing, low-income housing, or help with rent/security deposits.
- *Legal/law enforcement*: Organizations that offer legal representation or advice for people experiencing homelessness, as well as courts, police, and correctional facilities.
- *Mental health*: Organizations that provide for mental, not physical, health care needs.
- *Multiple*: Organizations that house a variety of services or programs such that their primary mission is to act as coordinator or service hub rather than providing one specific type of service.

- *Shelter*: Organizations which provide emergency overnight shelter for people experiencing homelessness.
- *Transportation*: Organizations that comprise the public transit network, as well as those that offer services for bicycles.
- *Veterans*: Organizations that offer services specifically for military veterans.

Figure 1 provides a visualization of the service network. A full legend with organization names and color explanations is included in Appendix II. In this map, organizations – represented by circles, or “nodes” – are color-coded by type, and the size of various nodes represents my respondents’ opinions as to the most crucial organizations in the network. A line between two nodes indicates that the connected organizations partner in some way, be it through collaborating on programs or referring clients to each other.

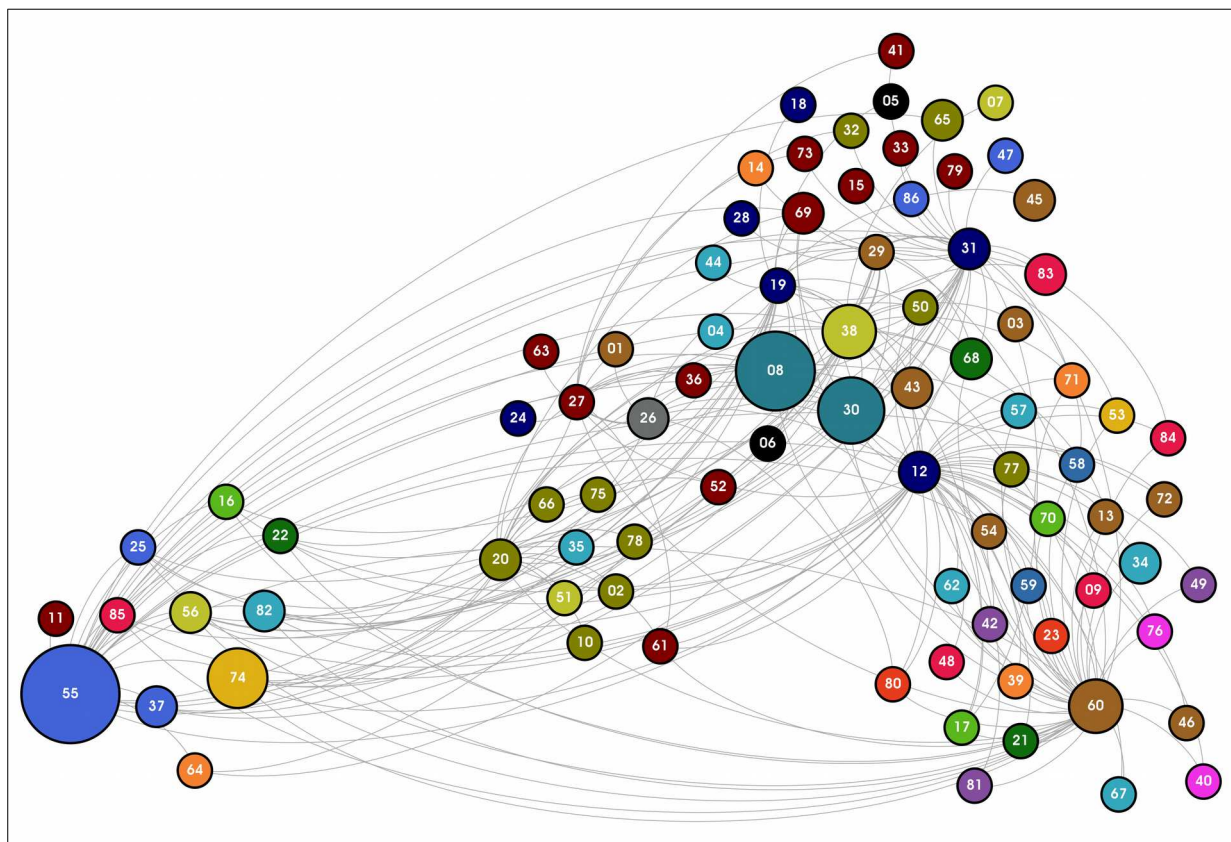


Figure 1. Network of services related to homelessness in Fort Collins. Full map key available in Appendix II.

Node #12, for example, represents the City of Fort Collins. Multiple service-provider respondents noted that the City, as detailed in Section 4.3, prides itself on serving as funder and connector of existing organizations rather than being a direct service provider. This influential role is represented visually as well, as the City's node connects to the nodes for Transfort (#80), the Murphy Center (#55), Matthew's House (#50), the Junior League Career Closet (#40), and about forty other groups. Node #20 represents Faith Family Hospitality, the only organization in Fort Collins specifically focused on services for homeless families. FFH serves as a central link between organizations such as Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center (#75), Child Protective Services (#10), and Project Self-Sufficiency (#66), indicating the organization's importance not only in providing direct services, but also connecting families experiencing homelessness to other family-specific services. And, as a final example, the nodes representing Fort Collins' faith community (#11, 15, 27, 33, 36, 41, 52, 61, 63, 69, 73, and 79, in maroon) illustrate the crucial role of area churches and faith-based non-profits. Their placement across various locations in the network map represents the diversity of connections and services these organizations provide for the local community. Groups in the "faith community" category make up 14% of the total network, and represent services including warming centers, seasonal overflow shelter, food distribution, and more. These organizations provide vital services sometimes not duplicated elsewhere in the map, almost exclusively via volunteer time and donations.

Overall, the dense amount of connections in the map illustrates the high degree of communication and partnership among the city's homeless-related organizations. The average path length in this visualization is 2.383, meaning that any organization in the network is, on average, about 2 connections away from any other organization. A familiar concept thanks to games like "six degrees of Kevin Bacon", a short path length indicates an efficient and well-

connected network. The low average path length here indicates that members of the service network are not only aware of what other organizations exist, but are active in collaborating with each other, and referring homeless clients to appropriate services. This deep knowledge of the system was reported qualitatively as well, with various respondents mentioning “tight knit relationships”, “good coordination and cooperation”, “being proactive in the community”, and a desire to “help people navigate the system” while working “side by side” with other organizations in the network. Also of crucial importance, Fort Collins’ homeless residents seem equally knowledgeable about the various resources available to them. Susan, one of the service provider respondents, mentioned that the majority of referrals to her organization come from other homeless people, and that “the best resource for people who are homeless is typically other people who are homeless.” The homeless people that I interviewed confirmed that often, when they don’t know where to go for specific needs, their first response is to ask other homeless people where to find resources.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, a coordinated system of services provides the best method for supporting those experiencing homelessness. Though there are certainly gaps and significant areas for improvement, as discussed in Section 4.3, the network of organizations related to homelessness in Fort Collins is large, and well-connected. Additionally, the network seems to understand its own strengths: there was a broad consensus among my respondents as to the organizations most crucial to the lives of people experiencing homelessness. The ranking of organizations in terms of importance, including the percentage of respondents who nominated the organizations in each tier, is as follows:

1. The Murphy Center/Homeless Gear (100%)
2. Catholic Charities (70%)
3. Fort Collins Rescue Mission (50%)

4. SummitStone Health Partners (40%)
5. Housing Catalyst; Outreach Fort Collins (tie, 30% each)
6. City of Fort Collins; Faith Family Hospitality; Fort Collins Homeless Coalition; Fort Collins Social Sustainability Department; Health District of Larimer County; Homeward 2020; Larimer County Community Corrections; Larimer County Jail; Neighbor to Neighbor; Poudre School District; Salvation Army; Serve 6.8; UC Health; Veteran's Administration (tie, 10% each)

Providing for Some Basic Needs

Through this well-connected network, people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins are able to meet many of their everyday survival needs. Respondents reported that food options, for example, are sufficient, though it may take time to visit the relevant locations to secure it. In addition to food, my respondents noted that they are usually able to secure clothing, hats, and gloves, and gear such as blankets or sleeping bags. Other respondents mentioned that they were able to find basic medical services when needed, and the members of homeless families that I spoke with said that enrolling their children in school was also not an issue. While these are positives, several other critical needs are not provided for in the existing service network, as described in more detail in Section 4.3. It's also important to note that accessing these services can be time consuming, and people experiencing homelessness spend a significant portion of their day simply traveling to and from the disparate locations they need to visit in order to meet their basic needs. Elaine, one of my homeless respondents, recounts a daytime schedule that typifies this process:

On weekdays we come back from wherever we were, whether it's a hotel or the [location redacted] in our truck. Drive my daughter to school, and then try to

avoid going to Catholic [Charities] for lunch unless we have to, or to the food bank, or somewhere else if we have food stamps in. Then [my partner and I] sleep in the car, because we both have disabilities so we try to rest. Pick my daughter up from school. Go to The [Rescue] Mission for dinner, or The Mennonite Church if it's Friday. Help her with her homework while we're there. Do her bedtime when we leave.

Arranging a schedule which provides for basic survival requires not only a significant amount of time and energy, but an in-depth knowledge of what services are available and when they operate. Many programs are only open during certain periods of the day, or on specific days of the week, or are closed during certain seasons. The problem solving, planning, and adaptability that it takes to cobble a patchwork of services into daily subsistence demonstrates a resourcefulness on the part of homeless people that is often taken for granted by the housed population.

The Murphy Center

As indicated above, the Murphy Center, a “one-stop shop resource center for people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless” (Susan, service provider respondent) is key to the network of services in Fort Collins. The Murphy Center serves as a central hub for 17 different non-profit programs, enabling people experiencing homelessness to access multiple services at a single location. The Murphy Center itself also houses a limited array of direct services such as mailboxes, lockers, showers, and laundry facilities. This “one-stop shop” approach exemplifies the service community’s commitment to partnership, as well as the attempt to provide a full continuum of service to address the needs of the homeless population. For many of the organizations housed in the building, the Murphy Center serves as a satellite office. As one service provider explains,

They've all made the decision that this is a place where it's worth sending a staff member. The Murphy Center has access to guests, to people who we want to serve, and they have access to us. We also have access to a collaborative building where they get to work with all the different agencies. I think what that allows us to do is really focus on our pockets of service without having to worry that other things aren't being taken care of. We don't have to worry about that as much because we can walk down the hall and make sure that this person who we're working with is familiar with someone working for another organization they need.

This central hub model is also crucial because it serves as the primary entry point into the service network when people become homeless. During my interviews, I asked homeless respondents what they would tell newly homeless people who needed advice about how to access services. Without fail, the consistent first response was "go to the Murphy Center". Having such a well-known resource hub means that homeless people can more quickly create a plan to access the things they need and spend less time navigating what might otherwise be a fragmented and confusing service system. The importance of the Murphy Center is reflected in my network map: the Murphy Center (node #55) is the largest node on the map, as everyone who participated in the freelist activity included the Murphy Center on their list of the organizations most crucial to the lives of homeless people in Fort Collins. Additionally, the Murphy Center has a much lower betweenness score than similar sized nodes. Betweenness is a measure of connectivity, or the number of lines which pass through a node. The Murphy Center's betweenness score is relatively low because it's the final destination in many referral chains, which again illustrates its key position in the network. Once connected with the Murphy Center, many people experiencing homelessness don't need to be referred elsewhere.

Outreach Fort Collins

As described in Chapter 2, Outreach Fort Collins is the continuation of a successful 2015

pilot project to address “disruptive behaviors” in Fort Collins’ Old Town area. Modeled after street outreach teams that are more common in larger cities, the organization’s staff serve as first responders for concerning incidents that are not illegal, or where personalized outreach contact would be more beneficial than police involvement. During operating hours (9am-5pm Monday through Wednesday and 9am-8pm Thursday through Saturday), a call to the Outreach Fort Collins phone number results in the dispatch of an outreach team member to the location of concern. Due to its focus on the busy Old Town neighborhood, the team is able to keep response times short: “usually around five minutes, but almost always under ten” (Gary, service provider respondent). The three full-time and two-part-time members of the outreach street team are trained in multiple crisis-response techniques including de-escalation, mental health first aid, and motivational interviewing, among others. When outreach staff respond to a call, their goal is to create human connections with the individuals in question, to educate about – and refer people to – relevant services, and to curb the need for unnecessary police intervention. As one service respondent notes, the presence of the same small group of outreach staff means that the team is able to “develop a rapport and know what a person’s background is and how to engage them in constructive conversations”. This personalized approach is especially important with individuals who are chronically homeless or service-adverse. Susan, one of my service provider respondents, explains that Outreach Fort Collins is helpful because “folks who are identified as high needs by service providers, the police department, or the hospital or whatever, Outreach Fort Collins is really excellent at getting that segment of the population to [our services]”. In contrast with the Murphy Center, Outreach Fort Collins (node #60) has the highest betweenness score in the network map by a large margin, indicating the organization’s role as a vital connector of people and services.

Outreach Fort Collins is one of the few organizations in the service network actively focused on breaking down the stigma surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins. In addition to interacting with homeless individuals that are the focus of outreach calls, the staff is proactive in communicating about homelessness with the downtown business community. Outreach interactions are ranked on a scale of 1 to 5; responses of 3, 4, or 5 indicate escalated behavior that is considered “disruptive” to the Old Town atmosphere. According to calculations made from data available on Outreach Fort Collins’ website, the overwhelming majority of outreach responses – 94% during the period of April-September 2018 – rank as level 1 or 2. As one service provider notes,

A lot of calls are around mental health, substance use, health concerns for somebody. If you see somebody laying outside that hasn’t really moved in a couple hours, [they’ll] go check up on somebody if they’re behaving erratically. We’ve had some calls with people with pretty severe mental health issues that have gone into stores and stuff downtown. [Outreach is] a good way to engage that population.

In addition to building rapport with homeless individuals in the downtown area, Outreach’s mission to “educate, build relationships, and build trust” also helps local business owners understand the complicated issues surrounding homelessness. This, in turn, allows business owners to acknowledge any discomfort they may feel toward the homeless community, and to find ways of dealing with concerning situations without involving the police. This also helps business owners begin to build their own connections with the homeless people that frequent the downtown area and to re-humanize a previously dehumanized population. Much like the Murphy Center, the service community seems universally aware of the benefits of this approach, and Outreach Fort Collins was ranked as a highly crucial organization during my freelist activity. The group’s activities serve not only to resolve specific problematic behaviors, but to help dissolve

broader tensions between the housed and unhoused Old Town community. As one service provider notes:

The businesses downtown have said that they've seen a change in demeanor with a lot of the homeless population [since Outreach Fort Collins started]. That maybe they're still in groups in the same places but their behaviors have changed a little bit. Or I think at one point, they might have been scared to engage with a homeless person. Now I hear stories from merchants that they are knowing these people by name and kind of understanding their background and are talking to them. ... That just happens once you eliminate that stigma and really try and focus on the fact that they're people too, they have lives. They may need some assistance, but ultimately, you should treat them with respect. So I think that kind of back and forth, the respect of a merchant and a homeless individual, both sides pick up on that. And once that starts to happen, then the conversations happen and the fear goes away and you just feel better about the situation.

4.2 STIGMATIZATION AND STEREOTYPING

Transients, Druggies, Criminals, and Bad Apples

Though Outreach Fort Collins has begun creating connections between some business owners and homeless residents, this doesn't mean that the situation is entirely positive. The homeless population in Fort Collins faces intense stigmatization, not only from individuals in the housed community but also from powerful institutions such as the business community and local government. These stereotypes are reported by homeless people themselves, as well as by many of my service provider respondents. I also encountered these views regularly throughout the course of my participant observation, sometimes from unexpected sources. At a city council meeting, for example, I overheard an influential local business owner say to a friend, her voice full of derision, that she had no sympathy for "dirty bums". Many of the most negative examples of stigmatization in my data come from respondents who occupy high-ranking roles in city or police administration. Perhaps most troubling, however, is the fact that even non-profit

administrators directly serving homeless people are not immune to these beliefs. While most of the people I interviewed who work directly with homeless people are aware of and try to mitigate harmful stereotypes about homelessness, some others reinforce these negative valuations of homeless people. One non-profit administrator from my service provider group, for example, told me that, while many homeless people deserve help, others – especially those with substance abuse or mental health issues – “just need to move along”. Overwhelmingly, homeless people in Fort Collins are stigmatized and stereotyped as being dangerous, on drugs, criminals, lazy, entitled, and a wide variety of other negative characteristics. The city’s homeless residents live every day as the embodiment of the “unpredictable stranger” described in Chapter 2.

My homeless respondents describe, for example, a binary set of conflicting stereotypes regarding employment. Despite the fact that many of my homeless respondents have jobs, they are often cast as unemployed and lazy. Douglas, for example, described leaving work with a hard hat and safety gear visibly tied to his backpack, only to have passengers in a vehicle shout “get a job!” and swerve dangerously close to the sidewalk in order to scare him as they drove past. On the other hand, respondents also note that if they look too clean, or have certain belongings judged by the public to be non-essential, it’s assumed they must have enough money to escape homelessness. As Elaine relates, “People say ‘Oh, you’ve got a phone. You must have a job. Why are you homeless?’ To have food stamps, to have TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] for my kid, you have to have a phone to answer. It doesn’t mean I can afford the housing in Colorado.” Both of these judgments position homelessness as an individual problem, and imply that people are simply not working hard enough, not managing their life correctly, or are otherwise personally to blame for their situation.

Other stereotypes are more broad; one homeless respondent, for example, said that the police “pull you over specifically because you look homeless, and they try to give you a ticket or try to

find something else wrong just because you look homeless and that makes you suspicious.”

Stigma also creates barriers that directly affect homeless people’s ability to improve their circumstances. Even when otherwise qualified, respondents report being denied when trying to open checking accounts, buy a tiny house, or earn money by donating plasma if they list their Murphy Center mailbox as an address. Still others describe treatment that is much more severe. Eli and Lillian told me that they’ve repeatedly been reported to the police or Child Protective Services on the assumption that their daughter is in danger:

Lillian: We’ve gone through two whole cases with Child Protective Services, because they see our kid with dreadlocks in her hair, and we live off the land instead of in a giant house, and so we must be on meth and abusing our child. We went through it twice, proving that we’re not starving her. That we’re not on illegal drugs. That we’re not making her cold in the middle of the night.

Eli: We both did drug tests and everything.

Lillian: She’s not sick any more than other kids. She has better grades than the other kids. A higher reading level, and she’s happy.

Eli: She’s only in third grade and her reading level’s in sixth grade.

Lillian: She’s fine. But people keep calling [the authorities]. You’re already trying to get on your feet, but they’re constantly calling.

And people who are homeless experience not just stigmatization and harassment, but sometimes outright violence at the hands of the housed population, as Isabelle explains:

I got attacked and I had the back of my head bashed in. I don’t remember half of it. The dude found out I was homeless and decided to do something about it. I’ve been told I need to get a job. I’ve been harassed many times. I even got yelled at when I was holding somebody’s kid, and the person thought it was mine and said that I need be a responsible parent and give my kid up.

Many of my service provider respondents also testified to the extreme negativity the homeless community faces. Sherry, a non-profit administrator, describes the difficulty she faced when trying to start a program to provide housing for people experiencing homelessness:

We had a lot of accusations about crime. We had one business owner who said, 'What are you going to do about it when my secretary gets raped at night?' I mean, what?! We had other people who said, 'Well, they're going to be camping in my yard all the time because these are homeless people.' I'm like, 'No, they will have housing so they will have no reason. They'll be camping in your yard if we *don't* give them an apartment'. We had people who said, 'Well, everybody moving in over there is a sex offender, everybody moving in over there is a meth user.' All kinds of claims that people would state as fact, when in reality that was not the case. I took it very personally at first and then eventually realized, oh, okay, my job is basically to just stand up here [during public meetings] and be a punching bag for an hour, and then say, 'Thank you for your input'.

Another service provider remarked on the inconsistency in pointing out the housing status of homeless people in the media:

Ultimately, I think a lot of this is stigma. And it's not always warranted. You never hear stories in the news about the homeless person that doesn't have a criminal record. You hear about people, like the murder that happened by the lake, and in the headlines it says 'transient man accused of murder'. Now, how often do you think the newspaper is going to say 'housed man accused of murder'. ... Criminal behavior happens for either side. It's not really comparable. You're actually four times more likely to be the victim of a crime – a violent crime – if you're homeless than if you're housed. That's a statistic that's well recognized, but it doesn't matter.

These stereotypes are applied to the homeless population with a broad brush, despite consistent confirmation from my service provider interviews that most troublesome behavior – the type that requires repeat police contact or outreach calls – is perpetrated by a small group of “high utilizers”. As one service provider notes, “The mindset is that everyone that's homeless is disruptive, is breaking the law, is on drugs, is X, Y, or Z. What we really see is that there's a core group of, I would say, twenty or less, at least downtown. We get half our calls on the same five to

ten people.” The homeless community is also aware of these “bad apples”, and the negative effects of overgeneralizing problematic behavior: “You know, there are some people, some crazy motherfuckers around here, but a lot of us aren’t. A lot of us are really, really – like, I can not stress this enough, we’re just literally trying to get back on our feet” (Lillian, homeless respondent). These stereotypes are often self-reinforcing, as the perception of bad behavior or dangerousness makes the housed population even less likely to voluntarily interact with those experiencing homelessness. And these stereotypes impact all portions of the population, including those in positions of power. While discussing the homeless population as a whole, one respondent from the service provider group, a high-ranking city official, told me that “A lot of these people are resource-resistant. Most of them, their criminal records are extensive. These are bad dudes.”

Often, people attempt to categorize and defend this stigmatization by explaining that they have no problem with “people who actually live here”, and that their concern lies with “transients” who come to Fort Collins for a short-term stay in order to abuse public services before moving on. Many service providers, however, note that this phenomenon is largely imagined or over-exaggerated, and that the truly transient people who do pass through Fort Collins usually don’t access social services. One service provider notes that the perception of transients may be due to the shifting locations of homeless people in the city: “This guy might seem new to someone that’s not keeping track, but he’s just been in a different place. Because there’s kind of a nomadic, migrating pattern a lot of times with these individuals where they’ll go to one area of town for a while and then go to another area and come back.” Both homeless respondents and service providers note that the MAX, a relatively new rapid bus line running north-south through town, has made it easier for the homeless population to disperse from the

Old Town area. Many others note that it shouldn't matter why or when people come to Fort Collins. As Alec, a city administrator, explains:

I don't distinguish people in that way, because I think that if you were in Florida and you heard that there were jobs in Colorado, and you drove out here, and you apply for a job and you didn't get a job, and suddenly you're here without a job, are you transient? Or are you trying to move to Colorado? I mean, I don't really see that as a good distinction. I like to see people ready to engage in services and wanting to be part of the community, or people who are not willing to engage in services and are not interested in being part of the community. Those are the two groups that I see, and they could be people who have lived here a really long time or they could be people who just got here yesterday.

Others, however, have fully internalized the idea that transients are coming to Fort Collins to abuse services, and extend that stereotype to anyone who looks homeless. I asked Andrea, another city administrator, about the increased visibility of homelessness in Fort Collins. Her response that Fort Collins is "very caring and giving, but also not suckers" exemplifies the antagonistic stance that seems to pervade public opinion regarding the homeless population. She continued:

I don't think it's necessarily getting worse in terms of numbers of people. I think what is happening is, with transient population, they're displacing those that have been in our town that are homeless. It forces them out because of the nastiness. You know, transients with their pit bulls, and you know, bad actors, and picking fights, and with a lot of challenges. Mental, and yelling, and angry, and drugs, and alcohol-induced problems.

My homeless respondents confirm that this stereotype is widespread, and that the supposed distinction in public sentiment between transient and deserving homeless doesn't actually exist. One respondent pointed at her daughter and told me "This one is being harassed all the time and she grew up here." Another said that "We're all fucked with, whether we grew up here or not. There's no bias here, they judge everybody".

Dehumanization

The most prevalent theme in my discussions about stigma revolves around dehumanization – the idea that people experiencing homelessness are somehow less than full citizens, or even less than fully human. Regularly and routinely, the homeless residents of Fort Collins contend with the stereotype that they are undeserving, at fault for their circumstances, and viewed as less than the city’s housed residents. Isabelle, one of my homeless respondents, expresses the frustration that comes with being valued as less than a full person:

For example, it’s never the person that gets raped’s fault. Everyone knows you don’t blame the victim with that. We need another thing like that that says you’re a fucking dick if you say that the homeless are just bad people. [We need] signs that are like ‘let homeless people sleep’. Things advocating that we’re decent living beings.

Key to the process of dehumanization is the conceptualization of homelessness as a defining personality trait or permanent state of being, rather than a phase of life that is often temporary. Homeless people are branded by their housing status, and it subsumes all other parts of their personhood. During one of my shifts on the Homeless Gear outreach van, a young man visited the van in need of a jacket. I offered him various options: one jacket was too small, a white jacket would be too easy to see when trying to sleep outdoors unnoticed, another was too thin to provide enough warmth. I offered a thick blue jacket with a large Denver Broncos logo and he responded “No thanks, I hate the Broncos”. When I recounted this story to a friend, they reacted with surprise and said “I didn’t realize that homeless people like sports”, as though those experiencing homelessness lose all personal interests and preferences at the same time they lose housing. This type of response is by no means rare, and my homeless respondents repeatedly expressed that all they want is the recognition that “we’re people too”. Some service providers also understand this dynamic, and try to focus on “changing what people think of homelessness –

from ‘this is a homeless person’, to ‘this person is having a bad experience, now let’s get them connected because we know we can make it better’” (Vivian, service provider respondent).

One particularly troubling side effect of dehumanization – in addition to its fundamental devaluation of human life – is that it problematizes homeless people’s attempts to meet their basic needs. Sleeping, finding food, going to the bathroom, socializing, and related activities are no longer viewed as the worthy and necessary processes of life, but as optional, antagonistic, and disrespectful displays inflicted on the housed public. Even the most harmless activities are viewed by outsiders with suspicion, as illustrated by Gary, one of my service provider respondents:

We get calls from different park areas all the time. ‘There are homeless people here, there’s a group of them congregating.’ And I say, ‘Okay, what are they doing?’ There’s still a stigma that homeless people shouldn’t be here because I’m here and they scare me. So I say, ‘What are they doing that’s scaring you?’ ‘Nothing, but I’m just worried that they’re going to be doing drugs.’ And I’m like, ‘Have you seen them doing drugs?’ ‘No, but I’m worried that they’re going to be violent or that they’re going to approach my kid,’ or all these other things. I’m like, ‘Is there anything that this group or this individual is doing that’s making you feel that way or is that just how you feel?’ And it’s okay to say, ‘No, it just makes me uncomfortable,’ because that leads to a much broader and, I think, educational opportunity.

This treatment has serious and demoralizing effects on the city’s homeless residents. When asked about the most difficult part of her job, one service provider responded that “I think the hardest part is when we’re working with somebody and it feels like they’ve lost hope, that’s the hardest thing to deal with. I think the most frustrating thing is these misconceptions around homelessness.” Like Gary, many service providers are aware of the prevalent dehumanization of homeless people, and work actively to break down this unconscious form of judgment where they can. Others, however, note that dehumanization is linked to the economic devaluation of

homeless people as non-productive, and thus harder to dispel. One service provider, for example, questions the link between dehumanization and capitalist notions of personal value:

We don't expect this to happen for the disabled community or the elderly community. We would [provide] for another community that needs specific services, except that we dehumanize the homeless. I think it comes from capitalism. I really do. It comes from deep-rooted neoliberal capitalism. We only give priority to things that make money or people that make money and it's really a problem.

Yet, though some members of the service provider group recognize the prevalence of capitalist values in assigning deservingness, many others fail to appreciate – and sometimes even perpetuate – this dynamic, as illustrated by another service provider: “We don't want our money going toward people who are just taking what they can get. We wanna invest our money in our community of people who are here, who live here, who want to live here, and who are invested and contributing to the community as well.” Vivian, a city administrator, said she understands why local businesses may put up with disruptive college students but not with homeless people:

Some people might say, ‘well, they're spending a lot of money in these bars’, or the business community could see it as ‘at least they're generating revenue for my business or the downtown’. But people could more generally see the homeless population as not generating any revenue but more taking away the feel of safety or whatever downtown without contributing anything.

Most respondents, however, find fault with attitudes such as these, noting that the non-critical “nonprofit industrial complex” (Walt, service provider respondent) helps perpetuate hegemonic norms of public space use and is thus part of the problem, not the solution.

Homelessness as a Choice

Another common stereotype of the homeless population is that being unhoused is a personal

lifestyle choice – that homeless people *want* to be homeless. I encountered this belief surprisingly often, sometimes from people in significant positions of power in Fort Collins. One high-ranking city official, for example, told me that

I think some people are disingenuous, not trying to really represent the situation as it exists. These aren't necessarily citizens in our community that are having difficult times. ... You know, there's panhandlers that make hundreds of dollars a day tax-free. Go to the hotel, get a couple of fifths [of alcohol], they're out there the next day. I mean, that's a chosen lifestyle.

At a city council meeting regarding the Mennonite Fellowship's locker program, residents opposed to the project repeatedly voiced concern over behaviors they felt were made by choice. One neighbor said that the lockers would "enable challenging behavior" and that, while activities such as airing out clothing or taking a nap on the church's property are not technically illegal, they "don't feel neighborly" and she doesn't want her daughter to "grow up thinking those behaviors are acceptable" (FCTV 2018b). Where they appear in my interviews, sentiments such as these are strongly held and seem foundational to the rest of the respondents' views on homelessness. Interviewees of the opinion that homelessness is a choice were also those expressing the most frequent stereotyping of the homeless as a generalized group of criminals, drug users, or otherwise deviant.

When asked if most homeless people want to have a place to live, homeless interviewee Lori responded that "I've only met maybe three homeless people out of my whole 24 years that actually wanted to be homeless. And they lived in the woods. Lived off of nature, did what they needed to do. Not one of them was here in town trying to be part of society." During the entirety of my research, I found no evidence to support the notion that people voluntarily remain on the street because of panhandling and its supposedly high income potential. Additionally, I heard of only two people who claimed to be homeless by choice. In both cases, the decision to describe

homelessness as voluntary seems to be less a product of personal choice in housing options, and more a defense mechanism in the face of repeated demoralizing experiences. One person, for example, told me while explaining his choice to be homeless that “living outside is a form of suffering and if you suffer you’re gonna gain strength from your suffering, and knowledge from your suffering. You become shameless, you don’t care what other people think of you and if you don’t care then you’re capable of making independent actions.” This reaction not only exemplifies the attempt to find the positive elements of an otherwise negative experience, but also reflects the deeply felt effects of stigmatization and judgment from the housed community. The second person described “choosing” to remain homeless after first having abusive roommates and then spending months working with multiple social service agencies only to find no available housing options.

For people who are homeless, especially people who are chronically homeless, framing homelessness as a choice, even if it’s not one, may be one of the few avenues for control in a life that otherwise feels disempowering. In conceptualizing their homelessness as voluntary, these individuals illustrate an acute understanding of their options and the hurdles they face; they grapple for power and autonomy where they can find it, in a system that often offers them few solutions. Some service providers also seem to recognize these dynamics. From Vivian, a city administrator:

I think there’s a very small percentage of the homeless population, people without houses, who choose that lifestyle. But for most people, it just isn’t something we would choose. It’s a very hard life. I can’t even imagine being outside for an hour when it’s in the middle of the night right now let alone the whole night. I think there’s a little bit of naivety when people are saying, ‘They’re just choosing that.’ Even people who are experiencing homelessness may say, ‘Yeah, I’m choosing this,’ but it’s also because they’re trying to protect themselves. That’s maybe a way to seem in control of their life. Instead of saying, ‘Yeah, I have issues. I need help,’ or ‘These things happened to me and I need help,’ it feels safer for them to say, ‘I’m fine. I chose this. I’m good.’

The common assumption that homelessness is voluntary directly rejects the structural factors that often precondition housing issues. After seeing first-hand the difficulty and precarity of everyday homeless existence, the harassment and judgment that homeless people experience as a part of their everyday lives, and the immense emotional and physical wear that comes from living unhoused, I fail to see how homelessness is a “lifestyle” that many would voluntarily choose. This assumption is not only largely baseless, it is also extremely detrimental due to the ease with which it insinuates itself into public sentiment and policymaking. The claim that homelessness is a choice is inherently dangerous for homeless people and should be actively challenged wherever and whenever it appears.

Stigma and Agency

Much of the dehumanizing social imaginary surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins positions the homeless as both lacking an understanding of their position and devoid of agency and power. In my experience, however, this is far from the truth. Fort Collins’ homeless residents not only understand the political and social ramifications of their existence and the tension their presence creates, but also their own power – and its limits – as actors within the systems that marginalize them.

The city’s homeless population is aware of Fort Collins’ rapid growth and development trends, and the fact that social service locations increasingly force them into the public eye. Many people I spoke with said that they would stay out of the downtown area if they could, and others wished that social service locations were in a more remote area so they could have less interaction with the housed population. My respondent Lori sums up this feeling when she notes that “I would just stay out of town if I could. You know, if the resources were outside of town, I

wouldn't even be here. They put 'em in a really bad spot, being in the money making zone". This centralization of service locations necessitates the presence of homeless residents in the Old Town neighborhood, in direct conflict with the area's primary purpose as a hub of commercial and social activity. Lori, again: "Oak and College, that's our home base. Nobody goes more than twenty blocks away from there cause then it's like a no help zone".

Forced to exist in public spaces where they are not welcome, homeless people develop a nuanced understanding of the power dynamics working against them. They also understand the capitalist recontextualization of acceptable public space usage, and how to express the limited amount of economic power they hold. The following exchange occurred during a group conversation about businesses development in areas frequented by homeless people. It highlights a shrewd understanding of the local political economy:

Pascal: If a business that is newer than the shelters or the homeless people has a problem, can't we make the business move?

Megan: No, because they have money, and they have power.

Eli: And when you become confrontational or aggressive, you're playing into their stereotype of you. You have to change people's mind.

Jodi: Yeah, and if there's economic interest in kicking out what they see as a blight, they're going to do it. They've written off and moralized that we don't deserve to be here.

Sebastian: There are coffee shops in town that are cool with homeless folks, where you can hang out if you buy coffee every few hours. It's part of capitalism's rules, we simply do our best not to shop there [at unfriendly businesses] and that will hurt their wallets. We should favor those who favor us.

Though ensuring everyday survival takes up a substantial portion of homeless people's time and energy, they still attempt to be active and empowered economic actors. Their precarious position

and struggle to secure basic needs make them more – not less – aware of hegemonic political and economic values.

Unfortunately, an awareness of local power structures does not mean that homeless people are successfully able to make their voices heard. I was witness to multiple conversations, for example, about the prevalence of bedbugs at local shelters. One respondent noted that some people choose to sleep outdoors even if shelter space is available: “a lot of people don’t want to stay at Catholic [Charities], because you go in there, but you come out with bedbugs and that makes it even harder to sleep”. Despite being aware of issues such as these, homeless people also know that service providers are the ultimate arbiters over who can and cannot access their services and so feel disempowered to act. I heard from multiple people who were either scared to report unacceptable shelter conditions, or who knew others who had been disallowed in shelters for “making trouble” in reporting such occurrences. During one bedbug conversation, a housed advocate offered to set up an appointment with the shelter staff in question, and to accompany the homeless residents who had experienced the bedbug problem. When presented with physical bedbug specimens collected at the shelter, the shelter administrator implied that the bedbugs were brought in by overnight homeless guests and therefore the shelter bore little responsibility outside its normal cleaning procedures for correcting the problem.

Though homeless people are aware of ways to improve services, their complaints often go unheard until validated by a housed advocate. And even when homeless voices are heard, their concerns are often not taken seriously. This not only literally silences the voices of the people with the most first-hand knowledge of how services do or do not function well, it reinforces a power dynamic that continually dehumanizes homeless people. The failure of service providers to solicit input from people experiencing homelessness is a basic failure of participatory planning, and also reinforces many of the systemic gaps contributing to homelessness. To

homeless people, the failure of local institutions and service providers to ask for – let alone appreciate – their insights reinforces feelings of stigmatization and indicates a lack of care for homeless lives. One evening during Friday night dinner at FCMF, I asked my respondent Lori if the city administration understands the experiences of homeless people; she responded immediately and vehemently with “Of course not, or they would be in here right now asking people what they need.”

4.3 KEY COMMUNITY WEAKNESSES

Lack of Affordable and Appropriate Housing

Almost all of my homeless respondents are unhoused for one reason: they cannot afford housing prices in Fort Collins. In asking about systemic gaps in services related to homelessness in the city, my respondents from both interview groups unanimously identified a lack of sufficient affordable housing as a top concern. As the city grows, rents and sale prices are rising rapidly – much faster than area median income (AMI) – and Fort Collins is facing an affordable housing crisis. Rising housing costs affect people of all socioeconomic levels, with many affordable or low-income units being filled by people who used to be considered middle class.

As Sherry, a non-profit administrator who specializes in housing, explains:

Most of our properties are designed for people who are somewhere between 30% and 60% AMI, which seems like, ‘Oh, well you’re still serving low-income people.’ And we are, in the grand scheme of things, but we’ve got school teachers, nurses, people like that who are having a hard time qualifying at 30% of the area median income level, which is just ridiculous.

The increasingly expensive housing market in Fort Collins means that many affordable or low-income housing programs or initiatives fail to provide options for the homeless population. As

Lynette, one of my service provider respondents, notes, “if you don’t have a job making over twenty-five dollars an hour, don’t come to Fort Collins. You are destined to struggle.”

Many respondents also note that stigmatization of the homeless population makes it difficult to provide housing options even where funding is available. Permanent supportive housing, which provides long-term housing coupled with case management and social services, is especially crucial, yet lacking. Service providers who specialize in housing programs note that “we have a lot of not-in-my-backyard attitudes about all affordable housing, but especially permanent supportive housing or housing that is targeting previously homeless people”. In an economic environment where many housed people struggle to afford their rent, homeless-specific housing programs are often met with resentment; homeless people, who are perceived to not work as hard as the housed population, are seen as less deserving of housing assistance. These sentiments, reported often by my service provider respondents, complicate the establishment or continuation of affordable housing projects specifically geared toward alleviating homelessness.

Much of the precarious housing situation is dependent on how the city directs Fort Collins’ rapid growth. As one non-profit leader notes,

We’re more concerned about what that population growth is going to do to the housing market in general. If that population growth is all highly educated people making really good money who can spend \$1,500 a month on a one-bedroom apartment, then that’s going to really cause problems. If we’re incentivizing normal growth where it’s across all economic levels, then that’s fine. In fact, that could actually be helpful because there will be developers actually developing apartments that people can afford to live in.

Respondents from both interview groups note that while simply increasing housing inventory is crucial, the *types* of housing options in Fort Collins also matter. Mobile homes were mentioned multiple times by homeless respondents as a viable but negatively stigmatized housing option,

and many other respondents were in favor of legislation or development incentives making it easier to create tiny homes or other accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Additionally, many respondents questioned the harm being done by “U+2”, a city ordinance that places limits on housing occupancy. City administrators, for their part, recognize these urgent issues, but also attempt to limit or mitigate the City’s perceived responsibility. As Alec notes,

Price escalation has been a real issue for our community and wage increases for all of our community have not dramatically changed. The gap between what people make and what they should be or could be spending on income is bigger. More people are spending more of their income on housing in a way that may be less financially secure for them. I think more than half of our community is spending more than 30% [of their income on housing], and more than a quarter is spending more than 50%, which is extremely cost burdened, and that’s across lots of price ranges. We have a system that is struggling. We have inventory shortages because the recession slowed down production so much that we’re really just starting to catch up with pre-recession production rates. But that’s a long time, that’s 10 years of sub-optimal production. We’re behind. The inventory that is available is priced high and is very competitive to get. It doesn’t necessarily even have the features people want. There’s very little condos and townhomes, although that’s improving, but that’s important for people’s first home. We do have a stressed housing system, and we’re doing what we can for it, but a lot of it is that real estate’s a market-driven commodity, and we can’t control them.

Failure to Provide for Some Basic Needs

As described in Section 4.1, the service network provides for some of the basic needs of the city’s homeless population, though other pressing needs go unmet. In the absence of housing, people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins lack adequate places to sleep, and sufficient access to daily needs such as storage, showers, and bathrooms.

Unmet Need #1: Safe, Legal Places to Sleep. The most pressing of these unmet basic needs is the ability to find a safe and legal place to sleep. The city’s two overnight shelters have insufficient space to meet the demand of the homeless population. Even the presence of seasonal overflow shelters, which add additional capacity to the emergency shelter network during winter

months, do not mean a guaranteed safe place to rest. As Douglas notes, “there are people almost every day that I’ve been [there] who are denied from the shelter because it’s been cold and they get full. And even their overflow – they just fill up. The rest of us, we literally have to go hide [outdoors] and we get up as soon as the sun does or else we get a ticket.” Others question where they’re supposed to go if no legitimate shelter options exist: “If you sleep literally on the dirt, you get harassed by cops, or in your vehicle you get harassed by cops, and that’s been what’s really, really frustrating. I’m like, ‘Either we have to have somewhere to go or we have to get left alone if we’re just sleeping.’” Isabelle notes the dehumanization inherent in limiting legal sleeping options: “We’re humans. We have to eat, and we have to sleep, or we’ll die.”

Unmet Need #2: Safe Places to Be During the Day. Homeless respondents also note the need for a public space they can use during the day without feeling profiled or uncomfortable. Jefferson Park, a common daytime socializing and hang-out spot for people experiencing homelessness, was recently developed into an upscale bar and soda fountain. This has pushed the homeless population into areas more commonly frequented by the city’s housed population, such as the area around the nearby public library. Neighborhood residents, noting the increased number of homeless people in the area, fail to understand the systemic dynamics at play and attribute the cause to nearby social services, further deepening their unwillingness to support these programs. Service providers also recognize the need for public spaces where the homeless are allowed to exist without judgment, especially in the afternoon hours when few services are operating:

I think that, unfortunately, there isn’t really an acceptable place for people to be outside of the Murphy Center’s morning hours. Afternoon, really between noon and 6pm – when the shelters start to open and do their lotteries [for overnight beds] and meals are being served – it’s hard to be anywhere without being visible and public. And our homeless folks know that, they know that people look at them differently. I think that if I had a wishlist, that would be one of the things – just a

place for people to be. Indoors, warm, where you can chill out on a couch. How many times have any of us had a really, really bad day at work or with a personal relationship or anything like that and just needed to go home and veg out? I just need to disconnect from everything else that's going on in my life sometimes and binge-watch Netflix or make a nice meal or read a book or do whatever. And we're able to do that. Homeless people aren't. So they're constantly being reminded that they're homeless, they're constantly being told, 'Hey, do you know that you can get services around this or that?' It's service, service, service. And sometimes, you need to get away from that. ... It'd be really nice to have a true drop-in center, like a recreation center where people could go. Maybe they have exercise equipment so people can get their endorphins going so they don't feel depressed all the time. And really, this is going to sound strange, but not so much service-centric (Gary, non-profit administrator).

Unmet Need #3: Adequate Storage Options. In addition to safe places to rest, storage was also identified as a frequent need among respondents. Homeless people carry everything they own on their backs, a burden which causes logistical issues at the same time that it deepens stigmatization from the housed public. The Murphy Center offers lockers, but they are only available from 8am - 5pm Monday through Friday, and some users find the lockers too small to be of practical use. For Fort Collins' homeless population, many of whom work in construction or other jobs with long or overnight shifts, access to extended-hours storage is an important issue. Douglas describes the effect that carrying a large backpack has on his ability to get and keep a job:

I think that a place to store your stuff is very important. The Murphy Center doesn't work. I know they created storage over there. But let's say I want to go to a job interview. If I don't wanna look like a bum, I don't want to go in there with a backpack. I don't wanna have to store my backpack outside of the building because somebody might walk by and take it. So being able to store it, and that being a 24-hour access thing, is important. I can't go to the Murphy Center during the day because they close at 5 and I get off work at 5 or 6, so I have to carry two pairs of pants and shirts and hygiene. Just having those items makes my backpack big. Even though my value doesn't come from social acceptance, it still hinders me in everyday life. Because people recognize me and associate me with having a backpack and being homeless and being broke and that's a very socially unacceptable thing. When I show up to work with a big-ass backpack, I get automatically put in a place where 'this guy is probably not gonna do his job

properly', I get treated differently than everyone else even though I'm working just as hard. And I'm capable of taking other people's shit, but I get a lot more shit than other people because of it. I left [work] to go to [a local grocery store] and having a big backpack, people are just looking at you like you're fucking disgusting. And that's just one day, you know? And that day could have been prevented, those nasty misconceptions that are formed just from that one day having that big backpack could've been solved with me having a place to store that backpack for 24 hours. So, you know, that's a really impactful thing. It might not seem like it's an impactful thing, but it's really important and helps people.

Unmet Need #4: Extended-Hours Services. Along with storage space, homeless respondents identified the need for extended-hours access to other services that may be provided at existing locations, but during limited hours. Fort Collins, for example, has only one 24/7 public restroom, leaving people with few options during the night-time hours. Access to showers and other hygiene needs is also limited. Patrick told me that he's not able to use the showers at the Murphy Center because he gets off work too late. He described a recent day at his construction job when "the dude I'm working with was like 'bro, you stink'. And I was like 'I can't really do anything about it'. You know, I did some ghetto stuff and took my hard hat and poured some water in it, but I don't have foot powder cause I can't afford it. So I kinda have to deal with going to work with stank-ass feet. And let's say I do a restaurant or retail job – that is not going to work." The City of Fort Collins is currently in the process of formulating a budget for the 2019-2020 budget cycle, and one of the many funding proposals would provide extended evening and weekend hours at the Murphy Center. During meetings related to the FCMF locker project, city council promised to "ratchet up their efforts" (FCTV 2018a) to provide extended-hours service for the homeless community in Fort Collins; as of this writing, however, the Murphy Center funding proposal is "below the line" in budget negotiations, meaning that it's highly unlikely to be approved.

Lack of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities

In addition to gaps in meeting some of the basic needs of people experiencing homelessness, Fort Collins also faces a serious deficit in mental health and substance abuse services to provide for residents' long-term health. Fort Collins, for example, has no adult detoxification unit; the closest center is in Greeley, about a 45-minute drive away in a neighboring county. One police administrator notes the complications this causes: "When I first started here, on a regular basis I had to drive over to Greeley. But that wasn't sustainable, because then our officers are over in Greeley, and there's police calls happening here." Transportation for trips deemed necessary by the police is now provided by third-party contractors. This lack of accessibility translates to situations in which people in a state of severe alcohol or other substance abuse related crisis may be left without care. One service provider explained the negative effects for people in dangerous situations: "at this point the police's stance is 'if you can get up and walk then we're not taking you to detox because we're not driving you to another county', and there are plenty of times that people are clearly not safe but they can technically walk a few steps, so the police aren't going to do anything with them." Mental health care is also spread thin, with long wait times. Sherry, one of my service provider respondents, explained the urgent need for more accessible mental health care:

The providers will even tell you that they've got same-day access. Well, that means you can talk to somebody that day, and then get scheduled for an intake appointment for two weeks later, and then get scheduled for your medication appointment three months later. You get somebody who finally is willing to accept that have a mental health issue and then it's going to be three or four months before they can get medications. That doesn't make sense. I think that there are good services that exist, but they need to be significantly easier to access.

Many service providers note that, in addition to being desirable simply because they help people in need, better mental health and substance abuse facilities also make good financial

sense. Currently, emergency room visits, trips to a detox facility, or overnight stays in jail are paid for by taxpayers, at great cost. Susan, a non-profit administrator, explains the ramifications of the existing system:

If there was a place that people could go and spend the night that would both help them with their addiction or help them with their mental health, but also not be jail or an emergency room, it would help. An emergency room trip is two grand plus whatever happens in the ER. That's before you even enter the door, two grand, right there. Versus a night in the detox facility, which will be much less. I think it would help people – but also for those who may not want to directly help homeless people in that way or don't see [those types of services] as a value, it is literally a value because over time, you'll see decreases in utilization of emergency costs and other things that people don't realize they're paying through their taxes.

Others note that the gap in these types of services puts a significant strain on police, who must try to manage the prevalence of untreated mental health or substance abuse issues in lieu of proper medical options. Unfortunately, public sentiment has not favored recent opportunities to create or improve these facilities. In 2016, Larimer County voters rejected a .25% sales tax increase that would have provided over \$16 million for mental and behavioral health services. In the November 2018 election, a similar proposal is again on the ballot, and would provide a comprehensive mental and behavioral healthcare plan in the region. The ballot initiative's proposed master plan mirrors the sentiments of my respondents: "While many quality services currently exist in our community, Larimer County does not have a continuum of behavioral health treatment and support services that is sufficient to meet the needs of our residents" (Mental Health Matters 2018, 3).

Equality versus Equity Under the Law

In the face of mounting public pressure, city administration is left to decide what to do with

an increasingly visible homeless population. While continuing to fund many of the programs in the social service network, the city also creates and/or enforces policies which criminalize or otherwise incentivize homeless residents to leave the public sphere.

On the one hand, city and police administrators stress that “in America the law is designed to be applied equally and fairly” (Neil, service provider respondent), and that “there are certain behaviors in our community, whether you’re experiencing homelessness or not, that you should be held accountable for” (Vivian, service provider respondent). At the same time, while a commitment to equality under the law seems to hold in the case of violent or serious crimes, it’s applied less evenly in the case of smaller disturbances. I talked with several respondents, for example, about why the public reacts so negatively to homeless activity in Old Town, but doesn’t seem to mind similar activity from college students overindulging in the local bar scene. One member of the police department responded that

I think the biggest difference in how people perceive it is the time of day and what activities occur during that time. Most of our homeless-related complaints are during the daytime. And by daytime, I’m referring to the start of the day through the early evening. Through the dinner hour when there’s families downtown, going to restaurants and dining out on patios and whatnot, right? That’s when we get the most issues with homeless folks. During the daytime, certain behaviors might be like, ‘Hey, I don’t like my kids seeing that, it makes me more frightened because I have my family with me.’ And that’s not when the college kids are downtown. And then somewhere around 9, 10, 11pm, it flips and that’s when you see more of the younger crowd, going out for the nightlife and bars and things like that. And even if they’re actually causing more issues, the folks who are downtown, who might be exposed to those issues, don’t particularly care about those types of issues, right? Because most of the people downtown at night, not all, but many people downtown at night aren’t going to get really concerned about the fact that there’s drunk people because it’s the bars, and they’re probably there for the bars too.

This discourse privileges the experiences of a select group of people, and makes certain behaviors illegal for some, but not for all. Usage of public space becomes acceptable as long as it

conforms to normative standards of activity. Students are acknowledged as part of the community, and they contribute economically to downtown businesses. People experiencing homelessness, on the other hand, are viewed as disruptive outside elements in otherwise orderly public spaces.

This disputed use of the public sphere, where people in positions of power feel spaces should be kept safe for the consuming public and homeless people feel they have an equal right to patronize public areas, perpetuates a cycle of antagonism and distrust on both sides. The police feel that people who are homeless are deliberately flouting the law, and people experiencing homelessness feel penalized simply for trying to exist. One police administrator told me that the department prides itself on a community policing model that prioritizes “public outreach, problem solving, and networking with other people and organizations”, and one service provider referred to some of the downtown officers as “social workers at heart”. Another service provider noted that “our downtown officers know a lot of these individuals on a more personal level than just their criminal background. It’s really quite refreshing to see someone who’s a high utilizer of police services and an officer engaging in conversation that isn’t disciplinarian”. Police and park rangers are knowledgeable about community resources, and carry copies of the city’s social service resource list while they work.

But while some feel that the police are modeling positive behavior, many others do not agree. As one non-profit administrator noted, “if you’re homeless, any contact with the police feels like harassment”. Many people I spoke to, whether homeless, advocates for the homeless, or service providers, pointed out that interactions with police can begin a cascading chain of events that makes it more difficult for people to escape homelessness. Usually these cycles start not with serious or violent offenses, but with small transgressions like camping or loitering

tickets. Walt, a non-profit administrator, describes how current policing techniques can hurt, not help, the homeless population:

I understand where the police are coming from in some cases, because they are getting a lot of calls. But they also have to recognize when they're pulling those statistics that they are skewing their own data. You give somebody a ticket for loitering, knowing the person can't pay that ticket. They don't pay the ticket, then they get a bench warrant issued, then they go to jail 30 to 90 days. Now you can say, 'Well, look at this. We had this person in our jail for 30 to 90 days.' Well, that's because you decided to issue them a ticket for doing the exact same thing that the 23-year-old CSU student sitting fifteen feet away from them was doing. I think a lot of it is people getting loitering, illegal camping, open container citations – things that come from the fact that they have no private space. We've got a lot of people in our jail who experience homelessness and a lot of it is because we're charging them with things because they're homeless, which the police seem – Well, I shouldn't generalize. Some people within the police and sheriff's department seem to think that will incentivize the person to leave, because they're being pestered so frequently. That doesn't work for two reasons. One, a lot of times going and spending some time in the jail, especially in the winter, is better than freezing to death on the street so they're not that upset about it. Two, you've now put a bunch of criminal charges on their background check and destroyed their credit because they have a bunch of court fees that they haven't been able to pay, so good luck to them getting into any kind of apartment. You've basically just thrown up additional barriers to them getting out of homelessness. Yeah, it's very frustrating.

Some city administrators, however, seem ignorant of these issues. One of my service provider respondents expressed frustration with homeless people who don't respect the law, noting that "We've had examples of multiple tickets. If they do go to jail, they're back there the next day, in the afternoon. There's no consequences. We try to give people options, for example in municipal court, where they can work things off. But there's some that could care less and frankly, I don't have too big a heart for those that could care less."

When I asked homeless respondents about their biggest barrier to escaping homelessness, after affordable housing many responded that "the cops constantly harassing people" is their main source of struggle. Across the board, the homeless people I spoke with reported feeling

unsafe around – and antagonized by – police. In January of 2018, the assistant police chief sent a report to city managers detailing homeless-related crime data from 2017. It noted that criminal activity from the transient homeless population is increasing alongside a “disregard for law enforcement”, and that Natural Areas rangers, who hand out mostly camping tickets, now need defensive tactics training (Cronin 2018, 3). The report notes that homeless people come to Fort Collins to “enjoy the generosity of the people and businesses in this city”, that “Fort Collins is a destination place which provides free resources”, and that dedicated public policy and community education can “identify and eliminate the reasons these criminal transient/homeless people are coming to Fort Collins” (Cronin 2018, 4). Attempts to keep outside homeless criminals from staying in Fort Collins targets the entirety of the homeless population, and further entrenches the harmful typology of transient versus deserving homeless noted in Section 4.2. Homeless people must exist in the public sphere, and making some aspects of their public life illegal or unwelcome further contributes to dehumanization. As one service provider notes: “When you criminalize, you absolutely have to dehumanize. You can’t criminalize people without dehumanizing them and once people are dehumanized, there’s really not a whole lot of incentive to find a way for them to have housing. Because they are less than human, right?”

When I asked my homeless respondents about their experiences with police, one told me that “it’s not just that the cops are trying to do their job, it’s that they’re being assholes while they do it. They’re abusing their power”. Another said that she has been present during instances when “cops have walked up to people and told them ‘the only reason we’re giving you tickets is to chase you out of town and we’re gonna keep giving you tickets until you leave’”. During my interview with Neil, a police administrator, he mentioned one specific downtown police officer as an example of good community policing and someone who “is a great resource, and knows his stuff big time.” In a later discussion with a group of homeless respondents, I asked about the

community policing model. Without prompting, one person mentioned the recommended police officer by name, noting that “he’s an asshole”, to which another person added “yeah, we’ve all dealt with him, and none of us like him.” A few months later, the officer in question resigned from the police department after an investigation into his excessive use of force while apprehending a shoplifter during his off-duty hours; the police department recommended he be fired for, among other things, striking the suspect “with his fist and baton more than 50 times” (Hindi 2018).

Isabelle and Eli express the frustration – shared by many of my respondents – that the police are choosing to needlessly interfere with their lives:

Isabelle: If we weren’t harassed we would do much better getting out of homelessness than we are, because now we’re more tired. We don’t trust [social service] programs or the city. We are pissed off. The people that do have addictions are gonna go that way more because they’re being harassed by the cops. When they harassed me I almost lost the land I was trying to buy to get out of homelessness, because they’re giving me more tickets. If they would just leave us alone. We don’t want to deal with them either. We would like to get out of our situation.

Eli: Cause, you know, we waste their time so much.

Isabelle: Yeah. And I’m like, did I kill somebody? Did I shoot your dog? I don’t understand. I don’t understand why I’m the problem here.

Eli: Can you just go bust something actually worth busting?

When I asked homeless respondent Lori if she feels the police are people she could turn to if something happened to her, she immediately responded “No. Absolutely not.” In addition to repercussions for people who are currently homeless, negative experiences with the police also create inter-generational trauma that will have lasting effects for years to come. Isabelle described an interaction with an officer who accused her of teaching her young daughter to dislike the police: “They’re like ‘Oh, you told her to think that’. I was like ‘No, she sees you

wake her up in the middle of the night and not let her sleep’. You need sleep to live. I never told her what to think. She’s seeing the treatment of homeless people, and it makes her not like them. She’ll never trust the police.”

Public Sentiment Guides City Action

As an institution, the City of Fort Collins favors indirect involvement with issues surrounding homelessness. While serving as a funder and partner to various social service programs, multiple city officials told me that the city has no interest in becoming a direct service provider. According to Andrea, a high-ranking city official, “The role of the City is one of convener/catalyst. Not so much social services. The county provides social services, and through our faith-based community, and others, those are the delivery of services. But being a convener/catalyst is, I think, the appropriate role for the City.” Another notes that any involvement in issues surrounding homelessness is a recent development: “Homelessness remediation has primarily been a state, federal, and county issue. Cities have only been called upon really in recent history to intervene because the problems around homelessness are getting bigger and the responses the other governments were doing were not enough.”

City departments accomplish their goal of convening and/or catalyzing responses to homelessness by, among other things, guiding community projects through land-use or other approval processes, reducing fees for developers, and providing grants or other funding to many of the organizations in the social service network. Another city administrator told me that

I envision that [our work] will almost always be community partnerships. The city’s role in this is really about coordinating, collaborating, bringing together the partners. There are many players involved, from the faith community and all across the board, and we think ‘How do we best, as a community, address this issue in a way that works for us?’

As one non-profit administrator noted, the City is “one of the most active players, if not the most active player, in a lot of conversations when it comes to homelessness”. As an institution, the City, along with several other major non-profits in Fort Collins including the Murphy Center and Outreach Fort Collins, follows an overarching plan to make homelessness “rare, short-live, and non-reoccurring”. Stewarded by local nonprofit Homeward 2020, the plan involves three strategic goals: better data collection, more effective housing solutions, and a more responsive and sustainable social service system.

Key to the City’s role in facilitating this process is a focus on community-originated programs. During the spring competitive process, for example, community organizations can submit a project proposal to apply for city grant funding. Most other initiatives are funded through the “budgeting for outcomes” (BFO) procedure, which proposes various programs and initiatives for consideration during the City’s biannual budgeting process. As one city administrator explained, “Programs are not something we’re leading. We expect the community to provide them if it’s important to them, but we help with facilitation.” This places the responsibility for caring for the homeless on the shoulders of the community, and positions the city as a benefactor helping serve the public will. When I asked, for example, what could be done about the fact that people have to sleep outside, but the city restricts camping, one city administrator told me that “The camping ban itself allows you to camp for a week on private property. If the community really thought that was an important thing, they could get a rotation going.” He also told me about an idea he’d had whereby area churches might coordinate to allow car camping in their parking lots: “This church is going to have five spots. They’re going to have a porta-potty or their building will be open for sanitation purposes. They will have a case manager there who will help people every night.” He then concluded that it was unlikely to

happen as the faith community hadn't brought forth that type of idea, and he wasn't sure the city would support it anyway, because "we don't want to keep doing things that aren't really changing things for people, and making them more comfortable for a night isn't as good as moving them out of homelessness." When I asked another city administrator about the possibility of private landowners organizing a rotation of camping spots on their property, she said "I mean, don't quote me on this because I'm not the code enforcement people. But if people were not violating our ordinance and they were organizing in that way, and their neighbors weren't complaining, and a lot of other things, it might work."

This community-driven model, while keeping the City out of direct service provisioning, relies heavily on the goodwill of public groups and the time and energy of an increasingly large number of volunteers. Members of the faith community I spoke with, for example, were happy to propose and manage small grassroots projects, but often couldn't meet the expectations of case management or constant supervision required for funding or official partnership with the City. Others feel that the faith community is already doing its best to fill the gaps not covered by city or non-profit programs, and resent the insinuation that their pool of volunteers should now do even more. Some service providers also expressed frustration that partnership, funding, or official approval from the City is often necessary to start or continue programs, but City involvement introduces delays, confusion, or radical reorienting of program priorities. One non-profit administrator told me that "The bait and switch we get from the City is disgusting. I feel like I've made a deal with the devil when I talk to them." Part of this issue stems from the fact that multiple city departments are often involved in community partnerships, and a program supported by one department at one step of the process may not pass smoothly through another department. A focus on community-driven programs also relies on the public support of residents in program neighbors. Given the stigma surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins, and the fact

that city administrators already acknowledge that “we have a lot of residents that are not happy that so many of our partner organizations are near their location” (Alec, service provider respondent), relying on community-proposed programs seems exceedingly problematic.

Adding to these issues is a concern raised by many of my respondents about the fact that, while the City doesn’t provide direct services, it does create and decide upon enforcement of all public policy related to homelessness. This position sometimes places the city at odds with the very issues it claims to be trying to solve. One homeless respondent told me that he has tried many times to explain the need for better homeless-related policy to city council, with little success:

I say, your priority is your responsibility to make sure that the Fort Collins citizens are living a quality life. Instead of providing resources to help someone live a quality life, you make camping tickets and you’re arresting people for camping outside. So your solution to the homeless problem was [to] arrest people and give people tickets that they’re not gonna be able to pay and start making the incarceration rate go up. Not a good idea. You don’t have to do that.

Another told me that “we’ve talked to the mayor and city council and stuff, and they don’t give a shit. The mayor, he basically laughs in our face”. Others feel that city officials are incentivized to minimize the visibility or seriousness of homelessness because of economic power dynamics.

Fort Collins holds dozens of state and national awards for various characteristics related to livability, tourism, and city culture (for a full list, see Appendix III). One non-profit administrator explained a frustration, common to several of my service provider respondents, about how this impacts public policy:

I think that’s something that isn’t often said, but does underlie a lot of the [policy] conversations. When the city’s talking about trying to address homelessness in downtown and everything, they know that we both have won all these awards and continue to be up for these awards, and they don’t want whoever is deciding these

awards be walking along Old Town streets and having to see people who are experiencing homelessness. I do think that that impacts things.

One city administrator told me that pressure from the business community to reduce the visibility of homelessness “remains pretty constant and high”. Many of my respondents, from both interview groups, expressed concern about bias in policymaking and the prioritizing of non-homeless concerns. One respondent told me that:

It’s really frustrating trying to get our voices heard by city council. We’ve shown up to a lot of city council meetings where they’re voting on things related to homelessness or criminalization or whatever. And we have this organized group of people there to show support for homeless folks and programs to help them, to show that the community really does support these things. And sometimes nobody shows up to say otherwise, or to oppose us. Members of the business community know when the meetings are, and they don’t come. But still, city council says they can’t decide or can’t vote because they need more time to hear from the business community. They claim to care about what we think but in the end they care about keeping the businesses happy. And businesses don’t have to go through the process normal citizens do because they can just go have lunch with [City Manager] Darin Atteberry.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

In the United States, our neoliberal economic system positions homelessness as an individual issue or personal failing, despite a wide body of data supporting the fact that homelessness is largely a structural, and not individual, problem. As one of my respondents notes, “Capitalism requires poverty and neoliberalism requires homelessness.” An economically constructed social imaginary centered on individual blame leads to the extreme stigmatization of those experiencing homelessness, which creates real and detrimental barriers in the everyday lives of homeless people. In Fort Collins, my respondents illuminate a local situation that mirrors evidence from nationwide academic literature: while mental health and substance abuse issues may contribute to – and are often worsened by – homelessness, the root of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing and incomes that do not pay a living wage. At the same time, economic values reorient the acceptable uses of public space, privileging the experiences of some members of the community while attempting to force homeless people from public sight.

Where there is a lack of broad, community-wide awareness about these issues, little is done to focus on the larger structural problems leading to homelessness. Deep-seated beliefs that homelessness is an individual failing also mean that the systemic root causes of homelessness go unappreciated and often unaddressed. A failure to deal with these mechanisms means that people will continue to lose their housing, and service providers are left to try and support people once they’ve become homeless. Often with a full understanding of the complicated position they occupy, non-profit administrators, faith community leaders, and others involved in providing for the day-to-day needs of the Fort Collins’ homeless population must offer stopgap measures to help homeless people survive, knowing that the systemic fixes that would help prevent

homelessness in the first place are likely not forthcoming. They have limited power to stop homelessness from happening, and instead try to deal with it as best they can after it occurs. This dynamic becomes apparent in responses to my question about whether it's possible to eliminate homelessness:

That's like saying world peace will be achieved, or hunger will be stopped. The reality is, the systems that we have are so ingrained in our society, it would need to be some sort of an apocalyptic event where we became egalitarian as a result. But I think there's always going to be people that have, and people that have not. I would love to live in a world where I believed that the issue could end, but I just don't see that being a reality with the structures that we have right now (Gary).

I was in a conversation once and somebody was saying something about how ending homelessness isn't possible – there are too many external factors, all that. And somebody else said, 'Well that's what people said about segregation. You can't end segregation, there are too many external factors, it's too ingrained in our society. And we did end segregation.' But we didn't end it. We didn't end racism. We didn't end the effects of it. So much would have to change, like the fabric of our country and our world, in order to actually end homelessness where nobody ever becomes homeless, nobody ever (Susan).

I don't know if we can eliminate it, but we definitely shouldn't accept it. I think we should be taking care of ourselves as a society and as a community. Because we should all care about each other, but that doesn't happen when we dehumanize. So I think we need to fight against the economy that's creating it and I think we need to do that on every level (Walt).

While accepting that ending homelessness isn't possible given the way our society currently operates, many organizations providing direct services to the homeless still attempt to make change where they can. In adopting the goal of a "functional zero", they aim for an acceptable middle ground in which "people really do rarely become homeless, where people when they do become homeless quickly move out of homelessness, and where nobody who escapes homelessness actually slips back into homelessness" (Susan, service provider respondent). Part of recontextualizing success in practical terms means understanding how to communicate these goals to program funders. As one service provider explains,

I will tell you that 100% of the people that are actually doing the work around homelessness don't believe it's going to end. That's a tagline because the people that aren't involved in homeless services don't want to hear 'Homelessness is never going to end. Here, give us money. Here, fund us, we're not going to change the problem.' That phrase [about being able to end homelessness] is a marketing tool that a lot of places use. And so I think a way we change that language that still brings in support is the goal of making homelessness rare, short lived and non-recurring. That's much more realistic.

And, though perfect solutions may not be possible, non-profit administrators and faith community leaders also note that any attempt to help make the lives of homeless people better is still worth pursuing.

In Fort Collins, despite these systemic obstacles, the community's social service network for the homeless does some things well. Services are numerous and well connected, some groups are actively focused on breaking down the stigma surrounding homelessness, and people experiencing homelessness are able to meet some of their day-to-day basic needs. The network, however, also includes serious gaps: affordable housing is insufficient, mental health and substance abuse resources are limited or non-existent, and some important basic needs go largely unaddressed. Additionally, the city's approach to policing criminalizes some elements of homeless people's daily lives and sometimes makes attempts to escape homelessness more difficult. City policymakers, relying on the tides of public opinion, also affect the prevalence of homelessness in their decisions to support – or not support – various initiatives aimed at improving the lives of homeless people.

This already complicated environment is made even more complex by the presence of deeply ingrained stigma against homeless people. In Fort Collins, as elsewhere in America, homeless people are stereotyped as lazy, entitled, criminal, drug addicts, or otherwise deviant. They pose a threat to acceptable uses of public space, and dehumanizing attitudes toward people

experiencing homelessness further deepen misunderstandings and limit compassionate responses. In their failure to engage in the economic or productive activities deemed necessary and worthy by the rest of society, homeless people cross social and economic boundaries, thus triggering even more resentment in the communities where they live. In Fort Collins, these issues are made worse by public framing which positions homelessness as voluntary or generalizes all homeless people as transients – outsiders who have come to Fort Collins to abuse public services and prey upon the city’s goodwill.

Unfortunately, as they will in the rest of the United States, people will continue to become homeless in Fort Collins. While attempting to recover from their circumstances, Fort Collins’ homeless residents navigate a broad patchwork of social services in an attempt to meet their everyday needs. They go to work, they care for their children, they try to find safe places to sleep, to go to the bathroom, to take a shower. They live every moment in the public eye, continually watched and judged by the housed public. They contend with a law-enforcement system that they feel penalizes them simply for existing. And often, while doing all of this, they are told that they are lazy, undeserving of help, and at fault for their circumstances. They are tired, they are worn, and they want a better life. Is it any wonder that, in the face of constant dehumanization, people who are homeless sometimes become angry or disruptive, and our stereotypes become self-fulfilling? As once service provider explains,

People will just ignore these folks like they’re invisible. And when that happens, the response is, ‘I’m going to make sure they remember me now’. And that’s when things get escalated. Homeless people are being dehumanized a lot of the time. And I think if you just, if anybody could just smile and say hi. It’s okay to say ‘No, I don’t have money for you, I’m sorry, have a good day’. And 99% of the time, they’ll compliment you or say ‘thank you, have a good day’, or ‘God bless you’. I think that’s something that we all need to do is treat them as part of the community. They are part of us as a whole. So we need to lift them up just like we would like to be lifted up.

Figure 2 illustrates these complicated dynamics. Styled after Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943), this diagram provides a visualization of the many barriers faced by homeless people as they attempt to regain housing. Fort Collins homeless residents are not simply tasked with finding a permanent place to live; they must contend with a variety of immediate, short-term, and long-term barriers in their attempts to escape homelessness. These issues vie for attention, and people experiencing homelessness must find ways to prioritize their personal safety and immediate survival needs alongside short-term barriers such as a lack of acceptable public spaces where they may spend their time, and a policing system which, as detailed in Section 4.3, imposes its own set of hurdles. Long-term barriers illuminate the roadblock that occurs when the structural roots of homelessness are not understood and integrated into

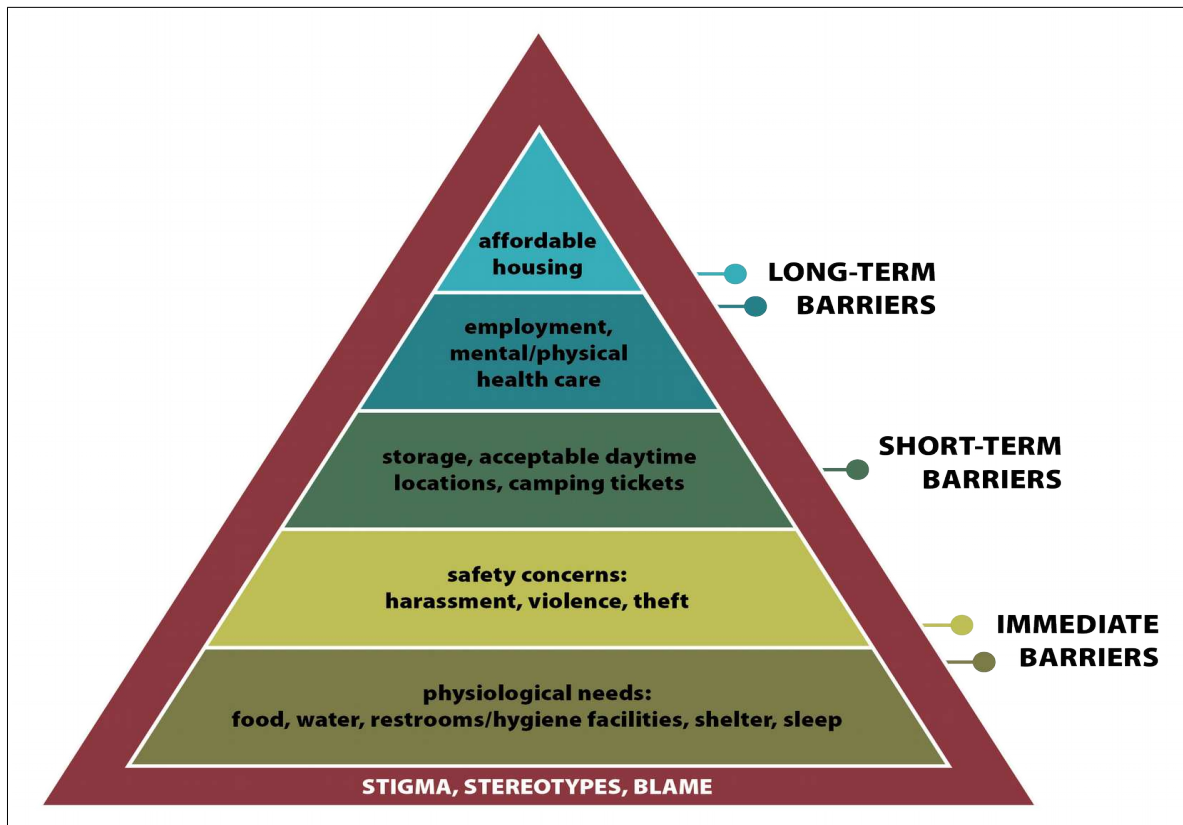


Figure 2. Barriers faced by people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins.

community solutions: no matter how thorough the local support network, and no matter how well people experiencing homelessness avail themselves of community resources, homeless people will face serious issues making long-term changes to their living situation so long as housing remains unaffordable and/or jobs do not pay a living wage. These issues become even more challenging given the stigma, stereotypes, and attribution of personal blame facing homeless people. These negative valuations mean that people experiencing homelessness do not face the world on a level playing field; they begin their journey back to housing already at a deficit, and their struggle become that much more difficult.

As discussed in Chapter 2, homelessness is preconditioned by structural issues inherent to capitalism. Neoliberalism drastically escalates capitalism's long history of income inequality, making homelessness more prevalent at the same time that it reduces public welfare programs and frames homelessness as a personal failing. Given the broad academic consensus surrounding these dynamics, one might expect homelessness to be an issue that is publicly understood and planned for. Yet, the homeless are harshly stigmatized and held at fault for their condition, leading to a lack of public will to support social services or programs to alleviate homelessness. In this sense, homelessness exists as an externality of neoliberal capitalism – a naturally occurring side effect of our economic system that we do not attribute to its structural causes. Given this dynamic, a system of public policy that relies on community demand for homeless services is doomed to fail. It is vital that the city – both the community of residents and the institutions that shape and enforce public policy – take efforts to better understand the lived experience of the city's homeless residents and to acknowledge and understand the effects of deeply rooted stereotypes of homeless people. Additionally, if the City is truly interested in minimizing homelessness in Fort Collins, city leaders must be willing to analyze the self-defeating cycle often triggered by current policing practices, and take a more proactive approach

to initiating and sustaining programs to alleviate homelessness. As pointed out by Maria Foscarinis, founder of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, “Public concern is not enough. ... Long-term solutions to homelessness require an informed public that is prepared to demand that its representatives in government take meaningful action.”

5.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As anthropologists, our research aims for a deep understanding of the subjects we study, though we accept that we may never have a truly insider perspective. Still, we hope to understand the people and situations in which we work well enough to accurately and faithfully represent them to outsiders. Inherent in this process is the knowledge that the more we learn, the more there is to know. In that sense, this thesis is far from complete. It’s impossible to fit everything I would like to say into a 100-page manuscript, and I’ve had to make choices about the most important and emergent issues to include. Even if I could condense a year of investigation into this space, it would still leave absent many relevant and important lines of inquiry outside the scope of my project. I hope that future research will take up some of these questions. In particular, the following represent a few topics for further study as they relate to homelessness in Fort Collins:

- How is stigma applied differently to women and homeless families versus single homeless men?
- What are the long-term emotional, physical, and psychological effects of being unhoused on Fort Collins’ homeless population?
- What are the effects of tourism and short-term vacation rentals such as Airbnb on Fort Collins’ housing inventory?

- What has been the effect of marijuana legalization on population growth and the arrival of “transients”?
- How is local policymaking affected by the fact that city council members only serve part-time?
- What cities have administrations or departments that provide direct services for homelessness, and how might similar programs work well – or *not* work well – in Fort Collins?
- How does the stigmatization of homeless people in Fort Collins compare to other cities of similar size with more diverse populations?
- What can a Gramscian analysis tell us about the institutional power dynamics inherent in perpetuating the stigmatization of homeless people?

REFERENCES

- ACLU of Colorado. March 30, 2015. "ACLU Announces Settlement with Fort Collins Over Panhandling Law." American Civil Liberties Union. Online: <https://www.aclu.org/news/aclu-announces-settlement-fort-collins-over-panhandling-law>
- Amster, Randall. 2008. *Lost in Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness*. New York, NY: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
- Angelou, Maya. 2014. *Rainbow in the Cloud: The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House LLC.
- Bacchi, Carol. 2009. *Analysing Policy: What the Problem Represented to Be?* Frenchs Forest, Australia: Pearson Australia.
- Bastian M., Heymann S., Jacomy M. 2009. "Gephi: An Open Source Software for Exploring and Manipulating Networks". International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media.
- Belcher, John and Bruce Deforge. 2012. "Social Stigma and Homelessness: The Limits of Social Change." *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 22: 929-946.
- Berger, Peter. and Thomas Luckman. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Bernard, H. Russell, Amber Wutich, and Gery Ryan. 2017. *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Bertaux, Daniel. 1981. "From the Life History Approach to the Transformation of Sociological Practice." In *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences*, edited by Daniel Bertaux, 29-45.
- Besley, Timothy and Stephen Coate. 1992. "Understanding Welfare Stigma: Taxpayer Resentment and Statistical Discrimination." *Journal of Public Economics* 48(2): 165-183.
- Bevir, Mark. 2012. *Governance: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Blumer, Herbert. 1971. "Social Problems as Collective Behavior." *Social Problems* 18(3): 298-305.
- Boetel, Ryan. June 9, 2014. "Hit-and-Run in Downtown May Have Been 'Malicious'." *Albuquerque Journal*. Online: <https://www.abqjournal.com/412893/cops-1-dead-3-injured-in-albuquerque-hit-and-run.html>

- Borofsky, Robert. 2000. "Commentary: Public Anthropology. Where to? What Next?" *Anthropology News* 41(5): 9-10.
- Borofsky, Robert. 2011. "To Laugh or Cry?" *Anthropology News* 41(2): 9-10.
- Burt, Martha. 2001. "What Will it Take to End Homelessness?" The Urban institute. Online: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/what-will-it-take-end-homelessness>
- Campbell, Danielle, Stuart Carr, and Malcolm MacLachlan. 2001. "Attributing 'Third World Poverty' in Australia and Malawi: A Case of Donor Bias?" *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 31(2): 409-430.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- City of Fort Collins. n.d. "Demographic Information: General Population Characteristics." Online: <https://www.fcgov.com/planning/trends.php>
- City of Fort Collins. August 13, 2015. "Disruptive Behaviors Downtown Public Meeting." City of Fort Collins Event Calendar. Online: <https://www.fcgov.com/events/?m=8&y=2015>.
- City of Fort Collins. January 24, 2015. "Preliminary Draft – Legal Review Pending: Ordinance Amending Article III of Chapter 17 of the City Code." In City Council Work Session agenda, prepared by Jeff Mihelich and Mike Trombley. Online: http://citydocs.fcgov.com/?cmd=show_related&vid=72&dt=SUMMARY+AGENDA&rid=JAN-24-2017.
- City of Fort Collins. August 15, 2017. "Ordinance No. 100, 2017 of the Council of the City of Fort Collins Amending Portions of Chapter 17 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins Regulating Trespass and the Obstruction of a Highway or Passageway." Online: <https://www.fcgov.com/publicnotices/view-ordinance.php?id=2035&ts=a549a941c08c9e7c9f656f08f3deb996>
- City of Fort Collins. March 1, 2018. "Fort Collins Population Estimates." Online: https://www.fcgov.com/planning/pdf/2018_0301_population_estimate.pdf?1519940018
- City of Loveland. "Annual Action Plan 2016." Accessed June 26, 2017. <http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/home/showdocument?id=31271>.
- Converse, Jean and Howard Schuman. 1974. *Conversations at Random: Survey Research as the Interviewers See It*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Corporation for Supportive Housing. 2016. Summary of System Mapping and Redesign Process.
- Corrigan, Patrick. 2005. *On the Stigma of Mental Illness: Practical Strategies for Research and Social Change*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Cronin, Kevin. January 22, 2018. "Review of 2017 Data Concerning Criminal Activity Committed by a Segment of the Homeless/Transient Population." Letter to City Manager Darin Atteberry.

Cuddy, Amy, Susan Fiske, and Peter Glick. 2008. "Warmth and Competence as Universal Dimensions of Social Perception: The Stereotype Content Model and the BIAS Map." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 40: 61-149.

De Las Nueces, Denise. 2016. "Stigma and Prejudice Against Individuals Experiencing Homelessness." In *Stigma and Prejudice: Touchstones in Understanding Diversity in Healthcare*, edited by Ranna Parekh and Ed Childs, 85-102.

DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, Bernadette Proctor, and Jessica Smith. 2013. "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010." United States Census Bureau. Online: <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p60-245.pdf>

Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Durkheim, Emile. 1995 [1912]. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Karen Fields. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Faith, Family, Hospitality. n.d. "The FFH Story." Online: <http://www.faithfamilyhospitality.org/the-ffh-story/>

FCTV. February 6, 2018. "Fort Collins City Council Meeting 2/6/18." Online: <https://fortcollinstv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=2Qs8Bc8UAzBU>

FCTV. July 19, 2018. "Fort Collins City Council Meeting 7/19/18." Online: <https://fortcollinstv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=tFY7jO18cuOR#>

FCTV. October 9, 2018. "Fort Collins City Council Meeting 10/9/18." Online: <https://fortcollinstv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=8INYHun9xqXJ>

Ferrell, Jeff. 2001. "Remapping the City: Public Identity, Cultural Space, and Social Justice." *Contemporary Justice Review* 4(2): 161-180.

Fort Collins Board of Realtors. 2017. "Monthly Housing Report: May 2017". Accessed June 25, 2017. <https://fibr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/FCBR-May-Monthly-Housing-Report.pdf>

Fort Collins Board of Realtors. October 9, 2018. "September 2018 Monthly Housing Report." Online: <https://fibr.org/document/september-2018-monthly-housing-report/>

Fort Collins Community Action Network (FCCAN). n.d. "About FCHC." Online: <http://fccan.org/fchc/fchc-about/>

Fort Collins Community Action Network (FCCAN). n.d. "2017 Sit/Lie Ban Statement." Online: <http://fccan.org/fchc/decriminalize-homelessness-and-poverty/no-sit-lie-ban-in-fort-collins/2017-sit-lie-ban-press-release/>

Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship (FCMF). n.d. "FCMF: Authentic, Compassionate, and Inclusive!" Online: <http://www.fcmennonite.org/>

Forte, James. 2002. "Not in My Social World: Cultural Analysis of Media Representations, Contested Spaces, and Sympathy for the Homeless." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 29(4): 131-158.

Foscarinis, Maria, Kelly Cunningham-Bowers, and Kristen Brown. 1999. "Out of Sight – Out of Mind?: The Continuing Trend Toward the Criminalization of Homelessness." *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* 6(2): 145-164.

Franklin, Cynthia. 1995. "Expanding on the Vision of the Social Constructionist Debates: Creating Relevance for Practitioners." *Families in Society* 76(7): 395-406.

Fraser, Nancy. 1993. "Clintonism, Welfare, and the Antisocial Wage: The Emergence of a Neoliberal Political Imaginary." *Rethinking Marxism* 6(1): 9-23.

Garcia, Adrian. March 27, 2015. "Fort Collins 12th Among Fastest-Growing Metros." *The Coloradoan*. Online: <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2015/03/26/fort-collins-th-fastest-growing-metro/70513738/>

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 3-30. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gerard, Jessica and David Farrugia. 2015. "The 'Lamentable Sight' of Homelessness and the Society of the Spectacle." *Urban Studies* 52(12): 2219-2233.

Glaser, Barney, and Anselm Strauss. 2002. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

GoFundMe. n.d. "Fund Homeless Locker Project + Mural." Online: <https://www.gofundme.com/lockers4homeless>

Guest, Greg. 2015. "Sampling and Selecting Participants in Field Research." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by H. Russell Bernard and Clarence Gravelee, 215-249.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, David. 2006. "The Political Economy of Public Space." In *The Politics of Public Space*, edited by Setha Low and Neil Smith, 17-34.

Hayward, Peter and Jenifer Bright. 2009. "Stigma and Mental Illness: A Review and Critique." *Journal of Mental Health* 6(4): 345-354.

Henry, Meghan, Rian Watt Lily Rosenthal, and Azim Shivji. 2016. The 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Washington, D.C.: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development.

Herek, Gregory. 1999. "AIDS and Stigma." *American Behavioral Scientist* 42(7): 1106-1116.

Hindi, Saja. September 20, 2018. "Fort Collins Police Officer Resigns After 'Unnecessary Use of Force' in Target Shoplifting Arrest." *The Coloradoan*. Online:

<https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2018/09/20/fort-collins-police-officer-resigns-after-unnecessary-use-force-target-shoplifting-arrest/1374734002/>

HomeAid America. n.d. "Top Causes of Homelessness in America." Online:

<http://www.homeaid.org/homeaid-stories/69/top-causes-of-homelessness>

Homeward 2020. 2016a. "2016 Fort Collins Point-in-Time Count." Accessed July 1, 2017. <http://www.homeward2020.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Point-in-Time.pdf>

Homeward 2020. 2016b. "2016 Annual Data Report." Accessed June 27, 2017.

<http://www.homeward2020.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-Annual-Data-Report-1.pdf>

Homeward Alliance. n.d. "Street Outreach." Online: <http://www.homewardalliance.org/street-outreach/>

Hopper, Kim. 1991. "A Poor Apart: The Distancing of Homeless Men in New York's History." *Social Research* 58(1): 107-132.

Housing First Initiative. 2018. "Quarterly Report: Quarter 1 2018). Online:

http://www.homeward2020.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Homeless-Gear_Report-Quarter-1-2018.pdf

Ibarra, Peter. and John Kitsuse. 1993. "Vernacular Constituents of Moral Discourse: An Interactionist Proposal for the Study of Social Problems." In *Reconsidering Social Constructionism: Debates in Social Problems Theory*, edited by James Holstein and Gale Miller New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Juarez, Paul and Lorien Jasny. 2012. "Social Network Analysis." In *Injury Research: Theories, Methods, and Approaches*, edited by G. Li and S.P. Baker: 475-491. Berlin, Germany: Springer Science + Business Media.

Kawash, Samira. 1998. "The Homeless Body." *Public Culture* 10(2): 319-339.

Kendall, Lewis. March 28, 2018. "Did Fort Collins Grow Too Big Too Fast?" *High Country News*. Online: <https://www.hcn.org/articles/the-montana-gap-has-fort-collins-grown-too-big-too-fast>

Kennedy, John F. 1960. "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, Municipal Auditorium, Canton, Ohio: September 27, 1960." *The American Presidency Project*. Online: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=74231>

Kuzel, Anton. 1992. "Sampling in Qualitative Inquiry." In *Doing Qualitative Research*, edited by Benjamin Crabtree and William Miller, 31-44.

Kyle, Sarah. August 14, 2015. "A Closer Look: Ideas to Curb Bad Behavior in Old Town." *The Coloradoan*. Online: <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2015/08/14/closer-look-ideas-curb-bad-behavior-old-town-fort-collins/31711141/>.

Kyle, Sarah. August 25, 2015. "City Council Says No to 'Sit-Lie' Ordinance." *The Coloradoan*. Online: <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2015/08/25/city-council--shuts-down-sit-lie-proposal--disruptive-behaviors/32345133/>.

Landow, Abby, Jeffrey Alan, Susan Wymer, Lawrence Beall, Greenpeace Inc, and Nancy York. *Landow et al v. City of Fort Collins*. No. 15-cv-00281. United States District Court for the District of Colorado.

Mental Health Matters. 2018. *Larimer County Community Master Plan for Behavioral Health, Executive Summary*. Online: <https://www.larimercountymentalhealth.info/>

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991[1974]. *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Lerner, Melvin. 1970. "The Desire for Justice and Reactions to Victims." In *Altruism and Helping Behavior*, edited by J. Macaulay and L Berkowitz, 205-229. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Lerner, Melvin. 1980. *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. Berlin, Germany: Springer.

Lerner, Melvin and Dale Miller. 1978. "Just World Research and the Attribution Process: Looking Back and Ahead." *Psychological Bulletin* 85(5): 1030-1051.

Levy, R. and D. Hollan. (2015). Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation. In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by H. Russell Bernard and Clarence Gravelee, 314-342.

LibreOffice Calc. n.d. LibreOffice version 5.4.4.2. [Computer Program]. Berlin, Germany: The Document Foundation.

- Link, Bruce and Jo Phelan. 2001. "Conceptualizing Stigma." *Annual Review of Sociology* (27): 363-385.
- Low, Setha and Sally Merry. 2010. "Engaged Anthropology: Diversity and Dilemmas." *Current Anthropology* 51(Supplement 2): S206-S226.
- Lupton, Deborah. 1999. "Dangerous Places and the Unpredictable Stranger: Constructions of Fear of Crime." *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 32(1): 1-15.
- MacGregor, Susanne. 2005. "The Welfare State and Neoliberalism". In *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*, edited by Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, 142-148.
- Maslow, Abraham. 1943. "A Theory of Human Motivation." *Psychological Review* 50: 370-396.
- Matarazzo, Joseph, Morris Weitman, George Saslow, and Arthur Wiens. 1963. "Interviewer Influence on Durations of Interviewee Speech." *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 1(6): 451-458.
- Matarazzo, Joseph. 1964. "Interviewer Mm-humm and Interviewee Speech Duration." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice* 1: 54-63.
- McCarty, C. and J.L. Molina. "Social Network Analysis." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Meinbresse, Molly, Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein, Amy Grassetto, Joseph Benson, Carol Hall, Reginald Hamilton, Marianne Malott, and Darlene Jenkins. 2014. "Exploring the Experiences of Violence Among Individuals Who Are Homeless Using a Consumer-Led Approach." *Violence and Victims* 29(1): 122-136.
- Melville Charitable Trust. n.d. "The Issue". Accessed June 19, 2017. <https://melvilletrust.org/work/the-issue/>
- Milgram, Stanley. 1967. "The Small World Problem." *Psychology Today* 1: 61-67.
- Mitchell, Don. 1997. "The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in The United States." *Antipode* 29(3): 303-335.
- Mitchell, Don. 2003. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Moffitt, Robert. 1983. "An Economic Model of Welfare Stigma." *The American Economic Review* 73(5): 1023-1035.
- Musante, Kathleen. 2015. "Participant Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by H. Russell Bernard and Clarence Gravlee, 251-292.

national Alliance to End Homelessness. n.d. "What Causes Homelessness?" Online: <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/>

National Alliance to End Homelessness. n.d. "Creating Systems that Work." Accessed June 23, 2017. <http://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/creating-systems-that-work/>

National Alliance to End Homelessness. 2016. "The State of Homelessness in America." Accessed June 19, 2017. <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2016-soh.pdf>

National Coalition for the Homeless. n.d. "Homelessness in America." Online: <https://nationalhomeless.org/about-homelessness/>

National Coalition for the Homeless. 2014. *Vulnerable to Hate: A Survey of Hate Crimes & Violence Committed Against Homeless People in 2013*. Washington, DC: National Coalition for the Homeless.

National Coalition for the Homeless. 2016. *No Safe Street: A Survey of Hate Crimes and Violence Committed Against Homeless People in 2014 & 2015*. Washington, DC: National Coalition for the Homeless.

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. 2015. "Homelessness in America: Overview of Data and Causes." Online: https://www.nlchp.org/documents/Homeless_Stats_Fact_Sheet

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. 2016. *Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*. Washington, DC: National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

Ong, Aihwa. 2006. *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Palley, Thomas. 2005. "From Keynesianism to Neoliberalism" Shifting Paradigms in Economics." In *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*, edited by Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, 20-29.

Parker, Richard and Peter Aggleton. 2003. "HIV and AIDS-related Stigma and Discrimination: A Conceptual Framework and Implications for Action." *Social Science & Medicine* 57(1): 13-24.

Pearce, Diana. 2015. *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2015*. Denver, CO: The Colorado Center on Law & Policy.

Phelan, Jo, Bruce Link, Robert Moore, and Ann Stueve. 1997. "The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label 'Homeless' on Attitudes Toward Poor Persons." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60(4): 323-337.

Puhl, Rebecca and Chelsea Heuer. 2012. "The Stigma of Obesity: A Review and Update." *Obesity* 17(5): 941-964.

Ranasinghe, Prashan. 2011. "Public Disorder and its Relation to the Community–Civility–Consumption Triad: A Case Study on the Uses and Users of Contemporary Urban Public Space." *Urban Studies* 48(9): 1925-1943.

Rogers-Dillon, Robin. 1995. "The Dynamics of Welfare Stigma." *Qualitative Sociology* 18(4): 439-456.

Scheibe, John and Kathleen Wilson. January 18, 2015. "Homeless Man Set on Fire in Ventura While Sleeping." *Ventura Country Star*. Online: <http://archive.vcstar.com/news/crime/homeless-man-set-on-fire-in-ventura-while-sleeping-ep-884131832-349287431.html>

Schensul, Stephen, Jean Schensul, Merrill Singer, Margaret Weeks, and Marie Brault. "Participatory Methods and Community-Based Collaborations." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by H. Russell Bernard and Clarence Gravelee, 185-212.

Seu, Irene. 2016. "'The Deserving': Moral Reasoning and Ideological Dilemmas in Public Responses to Humanitarian Communications." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 55: 739-755.

Shields, Todd. 2001. "Network News Constructions of Homelessness: 1980-1993." *The Communication Review* 4(2): 193-218.

Smith, David. 1994. "A Theoretical and Legal Challenge to Homeless Criminalization as Public Policy." *Yale Law & Policy Review* 12(2): 487-517.

Smith, Neil. 1986. "Gentrification, the Fronteir, and the Restructuring of Urban Space." In *Gentrification of the City*, edited by Neil Smith and Peter Williams, 15-34.

Sossin, Lorne. 1997. "The Criminalization and Administration of the Homeless: Notes on the Possibilities and Limits of Bureaucratic Engagement." *N.Y.U. Review of Law and Social Change* 22(3), 623-700.

Takahashi, Lois. 1996. "A Decade of Understanding Homelessness in the USA: From Characterization to Representation." *Progress in Human Geography* 20(3): 291-310.

Takahashi, Lois. 1997. "The Sociospatial Stigmatization of Homelessness and HIV/AIDS: Toward an Explanation of the NIMBY Syndrome." *Social Science & Medicine* 45(6): 903-914.

Tax, Sol. 1958. "The Fox Project." *Human Organization* 17: 17-19.

Tax, Sol. 1974. "Action Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 16: 514.

The Associated Press. July 20, 2014. "3 Teens Held in Albuquerque Homeless Killings." *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Online: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/teens-held-in-albuquerque-homeless-killings/article_3bda2f1e-a2db-5ca8-b44c-d8035867936a.html

United States Census Bureau. July 26, 2018. "Quarterly Residential Vacancies and Homeownership, Second Quarter 2018." U.S. Department of Commerce. Online: <https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/files/currenthvspress.pdf>

United States District Court. November 6, 2018. *Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship et al v. The City of Fort Collins et al*. Case 1:18-cv-02867-NYW. Accessed online via PACER: <https://pcl.uscourts.gov/pcl/index.jsf>.

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICOH). 2018. "Key Federal Terms and Definitions of Homelessness Among Youth." Online: https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Federal-Definitions-of-Youth-Homelessness.pdf.

Valado, Martha. 2006. "Factors Influencing Homeless People's Perception and Use of Urban Space." PhD diss., University of Arizona.

Valdiserri, Ronald. 2002. "HIV/AIDS Stigma: An Impediment to Public Health." *American Journal of Public Health* 92(3): 341-342.

VERBI Software. 2018. MAXQDA 2018 [Computer Program]. Berlin, Germany: VERBI.

Weber, Max. 1992 [1930]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Weber, Max. 1978 [1956]. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Weiner, Bernard. 1993. "On Sin Versus Sickness: A Theory of Perceived Responsibility and Social Motivation." *American Psychologist* 48(9): 957-965.

Wheeler, Susan. 2015. "Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by H. Russell Bernard and Clarence Gravelle, 343-390.

Woodliff-Stanley, Nathan. February 16, 2017. Letter to Mayor Wade Troxell and Fort Collins City Council, on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado. Online: <http://static.aclu-co.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-02-17-FC-City-Council-ACLU-FC-sit-lie-ordinance.pdf>

APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

For service providers:

1. GENERAL INFO:
 - a) I'd like to start with asking you to tell me a little about your organization. What type of services do you provide, how long have you been providing those services, etc?
 - b) What population does your organization serve? Are there geographic boundaries to your service area? (Ask follow up questions to determine whether the organization serves only the homeless – versus anyone in need regardless of housing circumstances – as well as if they serve the entire homeless population, or only certain segments.)
 - c) How long have you been in this position or a similar position at this organization? Have you worked for other organizations that provide goods or services for homeless folks?
2. FUNDING and RESOURCES:
 - a) Can I ask you a few general questions about how you are funded?
 - b) Do you have a donor or group of donors? Do you apply for grants? Are they only local, or also federal? What's the proportion of individual donations vs grants?
 - c) Are you able to tell me about what size budget you work with annually? And how much of that goes into providing services for homeless?
 - d) Is your funding the same from year to year or is it uncertain from one year to the next? Has the funding landscape changed at all in the last 5 years (gotten easier/more difficult/more competitive)?
 - e) Do you ever have to turn people away due to lack of funding and/or resources? If so, in what kinds of circumstances might this happen? Are there particular times of day and/or year when this happens?
 - f) How dependent are you on volunteers? How large is your staff, and your volunteer pool? How many clients/guests/homeless folks do you serve in an average year?
3. PROGRAMS, OUTREACH, and PARTNERSHIPS
 - a) How do homeless folks find out about your organization? What kind of outreach do you do?
 - b) Do you refer clients to other organizations? Do other organizations refer clients to you? If so, what are those organizations?
 - c) Have your programs changed at all over the past 5 years? If so, what are those changes and why were they made? Is there anything that you would like to see your organization do that it does not do right now?
 - d) As a service provider, do you see any gaps in the network of programs for homeless folks in Fort Collins?
 - e) *FOR CITY PROGRAMS:*
 1. When you think about your organization's way of connecting with non-profits in town or other non-government groups that help homeless people, are there any groups that you always turn to for certain things?
 2. Do any other groups offer similar services as you? Do you work together or serve different areas? Are there frustrations or successes you can share?
 - f) *FOR NON-PROFITS:*

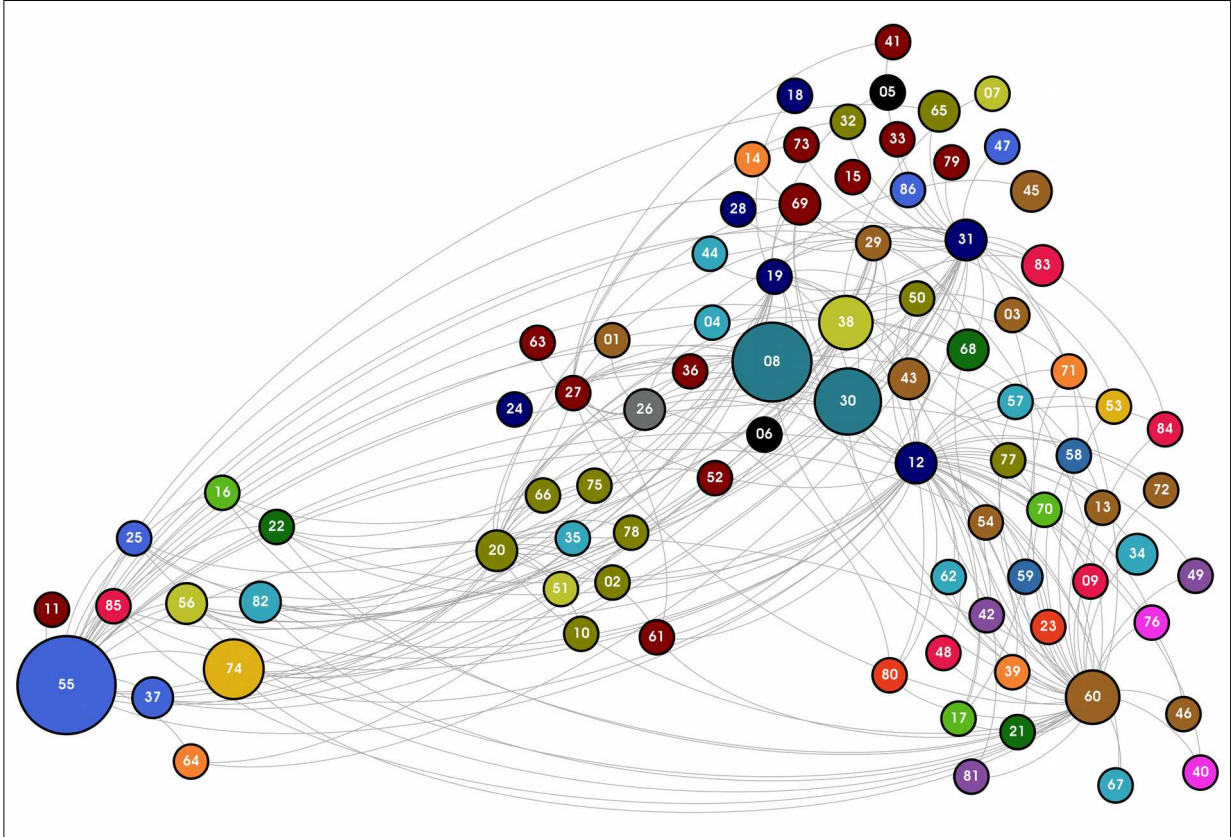
1. Tell me about your interaction with the city regarding homelessness. How do you work with them? Are there frustrations or successes you can share?
2. Do any other groups offer similar services as you?
4. CHALLENGES:
 - a) What is the most difficult part of your job?
 - b) Have the past few years of rapid growth in Fort Collins created any financial or social pressures or other problems for your organization? (If needed, offer increasing rent/property taxes, public sentiment, and changes in the number of homeless folks as potential examples.)
 - c) In your view, what's the biggest hurdle to resolving the issue of homelessness in Fort Collins?
 - d) In your view, what's the best possible solution for homelessness in Fort Collins?
5. SUCCESS:
 - a) How do you measure the success of your programs?
 - b) Are there specific ways in which donors measure the success of your programs? Are there any specific metrics or statistics you're asked to submit with funding applications?
6. FREE-LIST:
 - a) Could you take just a minute or two and jot down a list of all the groups/programs/organizations you can think of that do something related to homelessness in Fort Collins? Please include your own organization.
 - b) Now please place a star next to those that you think are most important for homeless folks.
 - c) And finally, place an "x" next to those organizations that your organization works with.
7. WRAP-UP:
 - a) Is there anything else you'd like to add or that you feel is important for me to know?

For those experiencing homelessness:

1. PERSONAL:
 - a) Name and age
 - b) How long have you lived in Fort Collins?
 - c) How long have you been homeless?
 - d) Is this the first time you've experienced homelessness?
 - e) Do you live alone, or do you take care (or help take care) of anyone else?
2. EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS:
 - a) Can you describe what happens after you wake up? What is a typical day like for you?
 - b) On a typical day, what do you need that you can usually count on getting? Where do you get those things?
 - c) Are there things you need that you can't always count on getting?
 - d) What are the things you (and the people you take care of) need most?
3. RESOURCES:
 - a) What kind of help or resources would make everyday life better?
 - b) Have there been times when you've wanted some type of help and didn't know where to turn?

- c) When you want or need something in particular, who would you ask to find out how to get it? What's the latest program/resource you learned about? How did you hear about it?
 - d) Do you usually hear about new resources from other homeless folks, or directly from the organization providing the resource?
 - e) Are there certain times of year (or other specific times) when it's harder to meet your day-to-day needs? Why do you think that happens?
 - f) Are there any places in town you wouldn't go, even if they offered a service that might help you?
4. BASIC NEEDS:
- a) What places do you go where you feel most comfortable or safe? How much time do you spend there?
 - b) Where do you prefer to sleep, and why? How often do you sleep outside vs in a shelter vs in a car?
 - c) What would be your ideal housing situation?
5. When you're interacting with various organizations in town, what's the most frustrating part of the experience? What's the best or most helpful part of the experience?
6. Have you had any interactions with Fort Collins' police? How do you feel about the police in Fort Collins?
7. FREE-LIST:
- a) Could you take just a minute or two and jot down a list of all the groups/programs/organizations you can think of that do something related to homelessness in Fort Collins?
 - b) Now please place a star next to those that you think are most important for homeless folks.
 - c) And finally, place an "x" next to those organizations that your organization works with.
8. Do you think homelessness is a problem in Fort Collins? What do you think would help solve the problem the most?

APPENDIX II: SOCIAL NETWORK MAP



Network of services related to homelessness in Fort Collins.

Color Key:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Advocacy:</i> Organizations which focus specifically on advocating on behalf of Fort Collins homeless population. <i>At-risk populations:</i> Organizations which focus on specific marginalized populations, such as the disabled or victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence. <i>At-risk populations:</i> Organizations which focus on specific marginalized populations, such as the disabled or victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence. <i>Community space:</i> Organizations or places which do not provide a direct service, but rather a safe gathering space for non-service-related activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Health care:</i> Organizations which provide for the physical health of residents. <i>Housing:</i> Organizations which provide permanent supportive housing, low-income housing, or help with rent/security deposits. <i>Legal/law enforcement:</i> Organizations that offer legal representation or advice for people experiencing homelessness, as well as courts, police, and correctional facilities. <i>Mental health:</i> Organizations that provide for mental, not physical, health care needs. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Clothing/gear:</i> Organizations that operate clothing and/or gear closets which homeless residents may visit to choose supplies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Food:</i> Organizations that provide meals, groceries, or other food access. |

■ *Donors:* Organizations identified as major funders of homeless-related programs.

■ *Employment:* Organizations that focus on building job skills or connecting homeless residents with job opportunities.

■ *Faith community:* Churches and other religious organizations that provide one or more homeless-centered program (e.g. warming centers, community meals) as part of their ministry.

■ *Family/youth services:* Organizations that focus specifically on providing services to homeless families, children, and/or unaccompanied youth. This includes services related to education and family-specific supplies (e.g. diapers) as well as legal programs like Child Protective Services.

■ *Multiple:* Organizations that house a variety of services or programs such that their primary mission is to act as coordinator or service hub rather than providing one specific type of service.

■ *Shelter:* Organizations which provide emergency overnight shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

■ *Transportation:* Organizations that comprise the public transit network, as well as those that offer services for bicycles.

■ *Veterans:* Organizations that offer services specifically for military veterans.

Organizations:

- 01: ACLU of Colorado
- 02: Adoption Dreams Come True
- 03: Adult Protective Services
- 04: Banner Health
- 05: Blue Ocean Foundation
- 06: Bohemian Foundation
- 07: CARE Housing
- 08: Catholic Charities
- 09: Cheyenne VA Medical Center
- 10: Child Protective Services
- 11: Churches/Faith Community
- 12: City of Fort Collins
- 13: Colorado Legal Services
- 14: Colorado State University
- 15: Community of Christ Church
- 16: Crossroads Safehouse
- 17: Disabled Resource Services
- 18: Downtown Business Association
- 19: Downtown Development Association
- 20: Faith Family Hospitality
- 21: FoCo Cafe
- 22: Food Bank for Larimer County
- 23: Fort Collins Bike Co-Op
- 24: Fort Collins City Council
- 25: Fort Collins Department of Human Services
- 26: Fort Collins Homeless Coalition
- 27: Fort Collins Mennonite Church
- 28: Fort Collins Parks and Recreation Department/Natural Areas Rangers
- 29: Fort Collins Police Department
- 30: Fort Collins Rescue Mission

31: Fort Collins Social Sustainability Department
32: Geller Center
33: Grace Presbyterian Church
34: Health District of Northern Larimer County
35: Healthy Harbors
36: Holy Family Church
37: Homeward 2020
38: Housing Catalyst
39: Internal Revenue Services
40: Junior League Career Closet
41: Knights of Columbus
42: Labor Ready
43: Larimer County Community Corrections
44: Larimer County Health District
45: Larimer County Jail
46: Larimer County Justice Center
47: Larimer County United Way
48: Larimer County Veteran Services
49: Larimer County Workforce Center
50: Matthew's House
51: Mercy Housing
52: Mill City Church
53: Mountain Crest
54: Municipal Court
55: Murphy Center/Homeless Gear
56: Neighbor to Neighbor
57: Northern Colorado AIDS Project
58: Northside Aztlan Center
59: Old Town Library
60: Outreach Fort Collins
61: Peak Community Church
62: Planned Parenthood
63: Plymouth Congregational Church
64: Poudre Fire Authority
65: Poudre School District
66: Project Self-Sufficiency
67: Salud Family Health Centers
68: Salvation Army
69: Serve 6.8
70: Sexual Assault Victim Advocates
71: Social Security Office
72: Special Agency Session
73: St. Joseph's Catholic Church
74: SummitStone Health Partners
75: Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center
76: The Dream Room
77: The Family Center/La Familia

- 78: The Nappie Project
- 79: The Town Church
- 80: Transfort
- 81: Trojan Labor
- 82: UC Health
- 83: Veteran's Administration
- 84: Veteran's Compass
- 85: Volunteers of America
- 86: Weld County United Way

Most Crucial Community Organizations:

1. The Murphy Center/Homeless Gear
2. Catholic Charities
3. Fort Collins Rescue Mission
4. SummitStone Health Partners
5. Housing Catalyst; Outreach Fort Collins (tie)
6. City of Fort Collins; Faith Family Hospitality; Fort Collins Homeless Coalition; Fort Collins Social Sustainability Department; Health District of Larimer County; Homeward 2020; Larimer County Community Corrections; Larimer County Jail; Neighbor to Neighbor; Poudre School District; Salvation Army; Serve 6.8; UC Health; Veteran's Administration (tie)

Selected Network Statistics:

- Average degree: 5.372
- Network diameter: 4
- Average clustering coefficient: 0.777
- Average path length: 2.383
- Total number of connections: 234

APPENDIX III: CITY OF FORT COLLINS AWARDS

- A Overall Rating - Fort Collins Renters: Apartment List - July 2018
- No. 1 City in America for Cycling: *PeopleForBikes* - May 2018
- 14th Best Place to Live : *Livability.com* - Mar 2018
- 5th Best Performing City: *Miliken Institute* - Jan 2018
- 3rd Largest Reduction in Crime in Colorado(2012-2016): *ValuePenguin* - Nov 2017
- No. 4 Bloomberg Brain Index: *Bloomberg* - Oct 2017
- Best Places to Raise a Family in Colorado: *Elite Personal Finance* - Oct 2017
- 9th Best City to Raise a Family in Colorado: *WalletHub* - Sep 2017
- 18th Best City for Career Opportunities: *SmartAsset* - Sep 2017
- 3rd Best College Town to Live in Forever: *College Ranker* - Jul 2017
- 12th Best Midsize City for First-Time Home Buyers: *WalletHub* - Jul 2017
- 25 Best Towns Ever: Where to Live Now: *Outside Magazine* - Jun 2017
- 1st Stable and Growing Housing Market: *Realtor.com* - Jun 2017
- No. 156 Best City for Summer Travel with Families: *lendedu* - Apr 2017
- No. 186 Best City for Staying in Shape: *lendedu* - Apr 2017
- 16th Best Place to Live: *Livability.com* - Mar 2017
- 11th Happiest City in America: *Yahoo! Finance* - Mar 2017
- Top 100 Best Cities to Start a Family: *lendedu* - Feb 2017
- 9th Top 150 Cities for Millennials Report: *Millennial Personal Finance* - Feb 2017
- 2nd Best Cities for Small Business Owners: *ValuePenguin* - Feb 2017
- 17th Best Places to Buy a Forever Home: *Good Call* - Jan 2017
- 8th Best-Performing City: *Milken Institute* - Dec 2016
- Runner Friendly Community: *Road Runners Club of America* - Oct 2016
- 12th Best Midsize City in America for New College Graduates: - Aug 2016
- Best Recreational/Travel Map Design: *Cartography and Geographic Information Society* - Apr 2016
- 4th Happiest City in America: *24/7 Wall St.* - Apr 2016
- 4th Community in Overall Well-Being, 2014-2015: *Gallup Healthways* - Feb 2016
- 14th Best-Performing City : *Miliken Institute* - Dec 2015
- Top 3 Digital City : *Govtech.com* - Nov 2015
- Top 10 Best Metros for Female Entrepreneurs: *Forbes* - Oct 2015
- 13th Best Place to Live: *Livability.com* - Sep 2015
- No. 4 Safest Drivers in America: *Allstate Insurance Company* - Sep 2015
- No. 11 Healthiest Housing Market: *WalletHub* - Aug 2015
- Top 10 Swim City in the US: *USA Swimming* - Jul 2015
- Ranked No. 4 Next Top 10 Cities for Tech Jobs: *Fast Company* - Jul 2015
- One of 6 Communities Featured in the "Places of Invention" Smithsonian Exhibit: *Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation* - Jul 2015
- Top 20 Best Places for STEM Grads: *NerdWallet* - Jun 2015
- Ranked No. 9 of 2015's "Top 10 Healthiest Cities": *Livability.com* - Apr 2015

- Ranked No. 3 in College Ranker's "50 Best College Towns to Live in Forever" list: *College Ranker* - Mar 2015
- Ranked No. 6 in NerdWallet's "America's Most Innovative Tech Hubs": *NerdWallet* - Feb 2015
- Top-10 City in the 2014 Digital Cities Survey: *Center for Digital Government's Digital Communities Program* - Nov 2014
- Winner of the Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Organization at the Local Level Award: *North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)* - Nov 2014
- 24th Best Place to Live: *Livability.com* - Nov 2014
- Finalist for the Best of the Web Awards: *Center for Digital Government* - Oct 2014
- 1st In The Country By Let's Move! For Healthy Efforts: *National League of Cities* - Sep 2014
- 10 Great College Towns to Retire To: *Kiplinger* - Sep 2014
- 9th Best Bike City: *Bicycling Magazine* - Sep 2014
- America's Safest Driving City: *Allstate* - Aug 2014
- America's Most Satisfied City: *Time* - May 2014
- Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence Peak Award: *Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence* - May 2014
- Timberline Award: *Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence* - Dec 2013
- 2nd Best Place for Job Seekers in Colorado: *NerdWallet* - Dec 2013
- 2013 Best Towns in America: *Outside Magazine* - Oct 2013
- Ranked 7th on Best Places for Business and Careers: *Forbes* - Aug 2013
- Ranked 2nd on Top 10 Metro Areas for High-Tech Startup Density: *Kauffman Foundation* - Aug 2013
- Platinum Bicycle Friendly Community: *League of American Bicyclists* - May 2013
- Gold Level Certification: *Solar Friendly Communities* - Apr 2013
- 2012 Tree City USA: *The Arbor Day Foundation* - Apr 2013
- Robert Havlick Award for Innovation in Local Government recognizing the Sustainability Services Area formation: *Alliance For Innovation* - Mar 2013
- 4th Healthiest Mid-Size City in U.S.: *2012 Gallup-Healthways Survey* - Feb 2013
- 2012 Project Award Winner, Re-construction of the SH 392 & I-25 Interchange: *American Public Works Association, Colorado Chapter* - Jan 2013
- 2012 Top Downtown in the Country: *Livability.com* - Nov 2012
- Ranked 3rd on Allstate America's Best Drivers Report: *AllState* - Sep 2012
- One of the Ten Best Vacation Cities for Beer Lovers: *Yahoo! Travel.com* - Jul 2012
- Ranked 3rd in the nation on Best Places to Do Business list: *Forbes.com* - Jun 2012
- Ranked 11th on America's Top 50 Bike-Friendly Cities: *Bicycle Magazine* - May 2012
- Fort Collins-Loveland, Third Skinniest Metro Area on the Well-Being Index: *Gallup and Healthways* - Mar 2012
- Fort Collins-Loveland Municipal Airport, winner of two "Best in Colorado" awards: *Colorado Asphalt Pavement Association* - Mar 2012
- One of the Top 10 Best Places to Retire: *CBS Money Watch* - Feb 2012
- Ranked First, Safest Drivers in America: *Allstate Insurance Company* - Sep 2011

- Ranked 3rd on the Best Bicycle Cities list: *League of American Bicyclists and TheStreet.com* - Aug 2011
- One of the top 15 Best Places for triathletes to live and train: *Triathlete Magazine* - Aug 2011
- Ranked 5th Best Places for Business and Careers: *Forbes* - Jun 2011
- Fort Collins, One of the Top 10 Cities Adopting Smart Grid Technology: *U.S.News and World Report* - May 2011
- Top Colorado City for Job Growth, Fort Collins-Loveland: *2011 Best Cities for Job Growth, newgeography.com* - May 2011
- One of the Top Ten Places to Retire in the Nation: *Charles Schwab's On Investing* - Apr 2011
- Third Happiest Metro Region, Fort Collins-Loveland, CO: *Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index* - Mar 2011
- 2011 Governor's Arts Award: *Colorado Creative Industries and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade* - Mar 2011
- One of the Top 10 Best American cities to invest your real estate dollars in 2011: *Trulia.com* - Dec 2010
- Named 5th Most Educated City in the country based on education levels of our adult population: *Portfolio.com* - Dec 2010
- Fourth Best State for Business, Colorado: *Forbes magazine* - Oct 2010
- One the Top 25 Best Places to Retire: *CNNMoney.com* - Sep 2010
- One of the Top 10 Best College Towns: *Small-Sized Cities Category, USA Today* - Sep 2010
- One of the top six 'Smarter Cities' for Energy: *Natural Resources Defense Council, (population 100,000-249,999)* - Aug 2010
- 6th Best Place to Live in the Nation: *Money Magazine* - Jul 2010
- One of the Most Underrated Cities in the West: *Life.com* - Jun 2010
- One of the Greatest Places to Live in the West: *American Cowboy magazine* - Apr 2010
- Ranked 4th Best Places for Business and Careers: *Forbes* - Apr 2010
- One of a Dozen Distinctive Destinations: *National Trust for Historic Preservation* - Feb 2010
- Ranked 3rd 'Smarter City' for sustainability: *Natural Resources Defense Council* - Jul 2009
- Named one of 10 Great Places for Entrepreneurs to Retire: *Forbes* - Jun 2009
- Ranked 1st Best Place to Live and Work for Young Professionals (pop. 100,000-200,000): *Next Generation Consulting* - Mar 2009
- Named 2nd Best Metro for Business and Careers: *Forbes magazine* - Mar 2009
- Ranked 7th Best Midsize Metro in the nation: *bizjournals.com* - Mar 2009
- One of Top 20 Places to Thrive: *Best Boomer Towns* - Feb 2009
- Ranked 10th Best-Educated City in America: *Forbes magazine* - Nov 2008
- One of the Best Places to Raise Your Kids: *Business Week* - Nov 2008
- LEED Gold designation for the Northside Aztlan Community Center: *U.S. Green Build Council* - Oct 2008
- Gold level Bicycle Friendly Community: *League of American Bicyclists* - Sep 2008
- 2nd Best Place to Live: *Money magazine* - Aug 2008

- One of 8 Enriching Towns for Art and Music Lovers: *Where to Retire magazine* - Apr 2008
- Named 3rd Best Place for Business and Career: *Forbes magazine* - Mar 2008
- Ranked 39th Best Place to Live and Launch a Business: *CNN/Money* - Mar 2008
- Top 10 Digital Cities: *Center for Digital Government* - Sep 2007
- One of 30 Fast Cities, due to innovation and creativity of workforce: *Fast Company magazine* - Jul 2007
- 9th Best Place to Invest in Real Estate: *Business 2.0* - May 2007
- Top 10 College Towns for Grown-Ups: *Kiplinger's magazine* - Mar 2007
- Named a Preserve America Community: *First Lady Laura Bush* - Mar 2007
- One of America's Most Walkable Small Cities: *msn.com* - Mar 2007
- One of the Best Places for Business and Careers: *Forbes magazine* - Mar 2007
- Fort Collins listed among the Top 10 College Towns for Grown-Ups: *Kiplinger magazine* - Mar 2007
- Fort Collins Ranked 4th among College Towns With Great Golf : *Business Week Online (Golf Digest)* - Nov 2006
- Fort Collins came in 9th on "Where to Buy Now": *Business 2.0 magazine* - Nov 2006
- #1 Best Place to Live in the Nation: *Money Magazine* - Aug 2006
- Listed as 23rd among 63 Hot Mid-Sized Cities for Entrepreneurs: *Entrepreneur magazine* - Aug 2006
- Fort Collins is one of the 50 Best Places to Live (ranked 34th): *Kiplinger's magazine* - Jun 2006
- Seated as the 6th Best Places for Business and Career: *Forbes magazine* - May 2006
- Ranked 2nd (moved up from 9th place in 2005) for having the Safest Drivers: *Allstate Insurance* - May 2006
- Rated as the 6th most Affordable Communities/Best Places to Raise Your Family: *Frommer's* - May 2006
- Fort Collins received the Preserve America Grant: - Mar 2006
- Fort Collins is one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People: *America's Promise* - Sep 2005
- City of Fort Collins earns "Bicycle Friendly Community" national award: *League of American Bicyclists* - Aug 2005
- American Dream Town. Fort Collins rated as one of the Best Towns in the U.S.: *Outside Magazine* - Aug 2005
- Fort Collins drivers are the ninth best in the nation: *Allstate Insurance Company's ("America's Best Drivers Report.")* - Jun 2005
- Fort Collins & Larimer County Named Top Nature-Friendly Communities: - Jun 2005
- Selected as 4th best place to live in the United States: *Men's Journal* - Apr 2005
- City of Fort Collins selected as "Top Retirement Spot": *Where to Retire magazine* - Apr 2005