SURPLUS LIFE:
THE NEOLIBERAL MAKING AND MANAGING OF HOUSING INSECURITY

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation investigates the techno-conceptual organization of homelessness, or the ways in which housing insecurity and deprivation become organized as objects of scientific knowledge and governmental intervention. As outlined in the Introduction, drawing from science studies, the dissertation uses both historical and textual interpretation and open-ended interviews to form an archive of the contemporary homeless services industry. Chapter 1 argues that housing insecurity and deprivation must be understood in terms of the co-constitution of race and property. From this view, populations living without shelter should be understood as "surplus life"—a kind of social and political abandonment that is made economically productive under neoliberalism. Chapter 2 provides an historical overview of the role of the federal government in managing unsheltered populations, and argues that the return of federal involvement in the mid-1980s effects a biopoliticization of homelessness, or a re-conceptualization of homelessness as a problem of population management and costs. Chapter 3 offers the first of two case studies of federal programs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Homeless Management Information System, or HMIS. The chapter argues that HMIS does not so much spy upon individual clients of social service agencies, but rather produces a population as a mechanism to regulate the activities of agencies, primarily by standardizing services in economic terms. The second case, Chapter 4, looks at the rise of chronic homelessness as an academic, popular, and governmental concern, and the ways this concern has challenged long-standing practices and discourses of case management. The chapter argues that chronic homelessness initiatives evidence the ways in which social programs are transformed through neoliberalism into economic enterprises. Chapter 5 considers the historical and contemporary role of sociology in governing surplus populations, and argues that the study of homelessness has served a discipline-building function for sociology. Sociology has not only made "the homeless" available for governmental intervention, but the study of homelessness has provided sociology an opportunity to produce its own role in governance as necessary and ethical. Finally, the Conclusion offers a summary of the major arguments.

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Contents

Introduction
The Techno-Conceptual Organization of Homelessness

Though the analysis that follows developed out of many years of reading, discussion, and research, the central concerns of this dissertation came to me some time before work on this project began. I had arrived in California in the summer of 1998, one year out of college and in possession of few connections and little sense of direction. I worked at a number of jobs I more or less fell into—first in a bagel shop, which I left after a short while, and then at a café. I enjoyed my job at the café and liked the solo opening shifts the best. I would spend the quiet mornings getting ready for the day, pausing my prep tasks as members of the AA groups that met at the nearby Metropolitan Community Church wandered in; they would leave half-smoked cigarettes hanging from the edge of an outdoor table and grab steaming cups of black coffee to take back to their meetings. I worked contentedly at the café until it went out of business a few months later, at which point I took on a variety of temp jobs, including one stint as a balloon handler in a parade through Beverly Hills. The parade took place on the Friday after Thanksgiving to kick off one of the biggest shopping days of the year. Short on volunteers, the event coordinators resorted to hiring participants through employment agencies to join the little kids costumed in giant shopping bags. Accompanying the shopping bag children and us hourly-waged balloon handlers, local families inched slowly down the parade route in convertible Cadillacs, waving gauzily at the scant crowds on the sidewalks.

Absent any real sense of what I could or should do for work post-college, my life may have continued down this aimless streamer- and shopper-lined path if, that January, I had not unexpectedly been hired for a job I'd interviewed for a few months earlier. The job involved providing direct supervision to the residents of a transitional living program. Transitional living programs are what they sound like, a transition from one thing to another—generally, from an unhoused or unstable living situation into an independently maintained private home. In this way, transitional living programs differ from both shelters, which are meant to provide emergency, short-term housing, and supportive housing, designed as long-term housing for people who, due to physical or psychiatric disability, are deemed incapable of maintaining their own housing.

The transitional living program that hired me provided shelter and case management services for young adults, ages eighteen to twenty-two, targeting in particular homeless youth who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or transgender. Residents could stay in the program for a total of eighteen months, presumably enough time to prepare for living on their own. I had found the posting for the job on a bulletin board at the LGBT community center that ran the program. I didn't have any social service experience, or much knowledge of homelessness, but in the year before coming to California, while living in New York City, I was involved in a variety of queer activist projects that were connected to broader issues of social, economic, and racial justice. In these settings, I began to learn about issues of housing and homelessness, and their connection to gentrification, "quality of life" crackdowns, and racial profiling.[1] At one

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[1] Essays in *Policing Public Sex* (Dangerous Bedfellows 1996) examine queer liberation struggles in the context of urban renewal and gentrification; many of the authors in that collection participated in the activist groups I'm describing, and their analyses greatly informed my own.

meeting we discussed an organizing campaign launched by a group of people living in city-run shelters. I remember that I didn't understand how homeless people could possibly initiate community organizing efforts, and in my mind I pictured some Hollywood-derived vision of a gathering beneath a highway overpass, people standing with open palms around a metal barrel glowing with fire.

After a two-day training for new hires, which focused on program rules, boundary enforcement, and conflict resolution, I started working a part-time mix of on-call shifts, usually in the evenings (coming in at 4 pm, leaving around midnight) or during the graveyard hours overnight. Providing direct supervision was the lowest paying position in the program. Despite management proclamations to the contrary, it was also the lowest-esteemed. Though we had by far the most contact with the residents, and were most frequently required to diffuse the volatile confrontations that take place in close living quarters, the bulk of the direct supervision in the "house," as it was called, was performed by people like me—inexperienced in social work and often quite young. (About to turn 24, I was just a few years older than the residents.) White people did not make up the majority of house staff, though we may have been the most represented group. Like me, many of my co-workers arrived at the house motivated by a desire to work in a queer environment. We were looking for friends, dates, or a connection to some larger community. Caseworkers, program managers, and staff therapists worked on the other side of a locked door, the "office" side. Those from the office side visited the house throughout the day to track down errant residents or check on staff and were available by

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For a discussion of quality of life laws as a strategy for policing and arresting people living without shelter, see Alex Vitale's *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics* (2008).

pager during evening, overnight, and weekend shifts. When I started my job, only one staff member on the office side was not white, although another person of color was promoted over during my time.

Like the quiet mornings at the café, quiet late evenings spent checking off chores and chatting with residents as they prepared for bed were my favorite times in the house. I also enjoyed hanging out in the living room with residents in the afternoon. They would play over and over again the same VHS recordings of Ricki Lake and Maury Povich talk shows, shouting at the screen and performing along to their favorite parts.[2] I generally found the residents likeable and interesting and funny. I think they found me serious and perhaps a bit severe, or at least that is how I felt about myself in that context. I put great effort into maintaining professional boundaries, politely but definitively diverting any conversation about my personal life and reminding residents frequently of our different roles in that setting.[3]

Over the next year and a half, I went through a pretty quick series of promotions, moving from on-call part-time staff in the house (the entry-point into the organization for almost all employees), to a permanent position, to the most desirable permanent house position—Monday through Friday, 9 to 5. I attribute my relative success in the environment to some combination of white privilege, interest in the work, desire to learn

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[2] The fact that those talk shows were frequently racist, classist, transphobic, and anti-gay did not deter the residents from enjoying them; in fact, all those "isms" were taken as part of the absurdity of the spectacle. Joshua Gamson's *Freaks Talk Back* (1998) offers an interesting analysis of the role of daytime talk shows in producing a public discourse about sexual and gender nonconformity.

[3] In "'Kids Need Structure': Negotiating Rules, Power, and Social Control in an Emergency Youth Shelter," William Armaline (2005) offers a critical perspective on the construction of youth subjectivity in residential programs. His descriptions of the practices and policies at his research site resonate with the program at which I worked and practices I myself engaged in.

more about social services, and willingness to enforce rules, including those with which I did not agree. I stayed in my coveted house position for around six months. During that time I helped get a co-worker fired for having sex with a resident. I also evicted a resident who returned to the house visibly doped up, in violation of the zero-tolerance drug policy.[4] Eventually I was promoted to a case manager position, and I found myself out of the house, on the office side.

The house provided a vital sanctuary for the LGBTQ youth living there. It was a place to be among peers, relatively protected from the harassment and violence many of them, particularly the gender non-conforming youth, faced outside. Without romanticizing things, it seems true that the residents enjoyed forming senses of self in relation to one another, even if they often related through fights and fall-outs. Nonetheless, during my time there, I came to question the official agency narrative about the youth: that they had become homeless because of their sexual and gender identities. It wasn't that their LGBTQ statuses and experiences played no role in their coming to live without shelter, but it was far from the whole story, and there was by no means a one-to-one correspondence between being queer and/or trans and being homeless.[5] The image of the youth presented to elected officials or potential funders was of a young person who was ejected from their family home upon coming out. While certainly some of the

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[4] In reporting these events, I do not mean to imply that I condone them, but expounding justifications to alleviate my guilt seems an uninteresting exercise at best.

[5] The Center for American Progress recently published *On the Streets: The Federal Response to Gay and Transgender Homeless Youth.* The study reports very high percentages of family rejection among homeless gay and transgender youth. The study also reports that homelessness is dramatically disproportionately experienced by gay and transgender youth of color (Quintana, Rosenthal and Krehely 2010: 7). However, the report does not investigate the structural reasons for this, or the ways in which the vulnerabilities produced by "family rejection" are mitigated by race and class. For an analysis of how sexual and gender marginalization link up with racism and poverty, see Queers for Economic Justice (2010).

residents had experienced just that, I observed that this was not the common trajectory. Much more common were lives of poverty. Most residents were of color and many were first- or second-generation immigrants. Most of the youth seemed to have faced at least as much violence in schools as in their homes, and many had opted to drop out before earning diplomas.[6] Many of the youth had dead parents or parents in the prison system. Many of them had grown up in some ad-hoc combination of extended family homes and state foster care. Many, in fact, entered the shelter system directly from "aging-out" of foster care. Given this complex mix of factors, it seemed to me that not all LGBTQ youth were at equal risk of losing their homes, and that the organization's narrative erased the ways in which risk is socially, economically, and racially stratified. I began to believe that saying the residents were homeless "because they were gay" was not enough, and that their experiences were better explained by looking at the complicated ways that gender and sexual marginalization interact with criminal punishment, foster care, immigration law, and schooling.[7]

My sense that the official narrative of "LGBT homeless youth" was not only inaccurate but politically suspect solidified in early 2000, when two Propositions came up on the California ballots. Also known as the Juvenile Crime Initiative, Proposition 21, which passed into law, loosened the requirements by which a youth could be designated as associated with a gang, increased punishment for "gang-related" activities, and

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[6] I was recently introduced to the use of the term "push out" rather than "drop out" in critical education studies. See for example Cammarota and Fine (2008). I thank Valerie Francisco for sharing this term with me.

[7] For an overview of how gender identity impacts experiences of state institutions, including shelters, prisons, and public benefits, see two special issues of *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* edited by Paisley Currah and Dean Spade (Currah and Spade 2007; Spade and Currah 2008).

allowed for increased surveillance of gang members and their alleged associates. Proposition 22, or the Knight Initiative, would add to existing marriage law the following text: "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid and recognized in California." This proposition passed as well.[8]

Many California social justice organizations launched campaigns in response to these propositions. Though the missions of most of these organizations did not specifically address LGBTQ concerns, their campaigns sought to mobilize voters against *both* propositions. The LGBT services center that hosted our transitional living program decided to take a position only against Prop. 22, the "gay marriage ban." From my perspective, Prop. 21 would much more directly and deleteriously impact the residents of the house, who were subject to regular police harassment and whose participation in illegal survival economies already placed them at disproportionate risk of imprisonment. Given their economic positions, they would not share in the benefits of marriage—they had no property or private health benefits to share.[9] In this moment I saw how defining the homelessness of these youth as "LGBT homelessness" had very real political consequences for what battles could and would be fought with them in mind. Narrating their homelessness as "gay" made commonsense a political battle for what were taken as gay rights; failing to interrogate the social, racial, and economic bases of their housing

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[8] See HoSang (2008) for a discussion of the role of the Proposition system in organizing California racial politics.

[9] In fact, it could be argued that gay marriage actually harms queer homeless youth, insofar as it invests in state enforcement of normative family arrangements and punishes people who live alone or with others in formations other than a sexual dyad. A number of queer scholars have taken on marriage from this angle. See for example Kandaswamy (2008) and Willse and Spade (2005).

needs cut off political alliances along lines other than sexual identity.[10] In refusing to mobilize against Prop. 21, the organization missed a key opportunity to challenge the criminalization of youth by the punishment system, a process that directly shaped the housing trajectories of our residents.

Thus, I took from my experiences at the transitional living program a number of initial insights about the politics of social services and housing. I realized that programs like my own did not simply respond to housing needs, but were active forces in shaping the larger political terrain in which housing programs exist. I also realized that housing politics lay not just in the allocation of resources, and even the forging, or refusal, of alliances. The politics lay in the very conceptualization of the problem. The concept of "LGBT youth homelessness" set limits on what needs would be addressed and what issues—such as protection from imprisonment and police harassment—would be considered irrelevant and outside the scope of proper gay politics. Almost a decade after I began that job, the political consequences of the conceptualization of housing needs would wind up being a central concern of my dissertation research.

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I left that job to return to New York City, and continued in the line of work as a hybrid caseworker/community organizer with residents of hotels and rooming houses (usually called "SROs," for "single room occupancy.") Some of these SROs were private buildings trying to drive out residents and convert to upscale tourist hotels or luxury

[10] For an influential analysis of how white gay politics has failed to engage issues of racial and economic justice, and for suggestions about how it might, see Cathy J. Cohen's "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens" (1997).

condos.[11] Others were publicly-funded nonprofits that provided housing as well as health and social services for "special needs" homeless populations. I also participated in campaigns for the housing rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and became involved in the broader tenant rights and homeless advocacy movements in New York.[12] About a year into that job, I quit along with a co-worker in protest of what we felt were institutional barriers to doing effective organizing. For the next two years, I continued organizing through a group that co-worker and I helped found, concentrating our efforts with residents of buildings in Harlem. We worked largely in the housing court system, helping tenants start lawsuits for repairs and fight eviction cases. I was able to access part-time jobs—first as a participant in a housing discrimination study, then as a paralegal for an employment rights law firm, and finally as a work-study research assistant—so we could do our organizing work for free.

During that time, I began graduate school. I was burnt out on my work, overwhelmed by the enormity of the needs we were trying to address and exhausted from the emotional toll of fighting a losing battle against the violent forces of gentrification. As I dove into my studies and gradually left housing work behind, I vowed that I was finished thinking about homelessness. A few years later, my dissertation project on biopsychiatric technologies morphed against my will into a project on the governance of homeless populations. Clearly, I had more thinking about this to do, and I understand this project to be, in part, an expression of my melancholic relationship to the failures of my

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[11] As early as the late 1980s, advocates were noting the disappearance of SROs, an important form of housing for poor people, especially those without family safety nets. See Part III of Sharon Marie Keigher's *Housing Risks and Homelessness among the Urban Elderly* (1991). I consider the implications of the disappearance of SROs in Chapter 2.

[12] I write about some of this work in "You Can't Go Home Again: AIDS and Homelessness" (Willse 2001).

own work on housing and homelessness. I am haunted by a sense of having abandoned not just that work, but also the people with whom I worked. Rather than hide away, with this dissertation I have tried to move into this haunting, to make this ghostly encounter a productive one. In this, I draw inspiration from Avery Gordon, who writes:

> The ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life. The ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way, of course. The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening. Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition (Gordon 2008: 8).

While thus far the dissertation has not put those ghosts to rest, the transformative recognition it has enacted has helped give some form to their presence in my life.

A science studies of housing?

As I dug into the academic literature on housing and homelessness, those early insights about the politics of how homelessness is conceptualized returned to the forefront of my mind. I looked to the extant scholarship not simply to learn "facts about the homeless," but to get a sense of the shape and tenor of a discourse on homelessness. I began to ask: How are social sciences, like social services, producing ideas about homelessness that forcefully shape responses to shelter needs? In addition, I found my attention drawn to the tools and techniques being mobilized to produce and support that discourse, including so-called "street counts" of unsheltered individuals, health assessments used to measure life expectancies, database systems for storing, sharing, and calculating shelter population dynamics, and ethics protocols for research involving unsheltered populations.

And so my initial concern with the conceptualization of housing needs expanded into further, connected questions: What is the role of technoscientific knowledge production in transforming conceptualizations of homelessness? How do social services and social sciences organize and manage the social, economic, and racial bases of housing needs?[13] How have ideas about homelessness, and approaches to managing it, changed in recent years? In what ways are these changes linked to broader changes in the economy and in governance? Thus the core mission of the dissertation emerged—to understand the management of homelessness in the U.S. by looking at the relationships of knowledge production, technology, and governance.

To explore these relationships, I turned to the interdisciplinary frames of science studies, a tradition that can trace its origins back through the sociology of Karl Mannheim (1936) and the historical and philosophical writings of Thomas Kuhn (1962). Today, not confined to the ethnographies of laboratory practice where it made its name (i.e. Traweek 1992), science studies has taken on surveillance technologies, genomics, pharmacology, AIDS activism, and global trades in blood and organs.[14] Further, in what has been termed the "new political sociology of science," scholars have looked in particular at the place of

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[13] My use of the term "technoscience" to signal the increasing commingling of science and technology—or the inability to clearly separate theoretical knowledge from application—follows Clough (2004). While this commingling of knowledge and technology is key to understanding governance, I will also still use those separate terms when I need to emphasize one dimension or the other.

[14] While the science studies literature is nearly endless, here I am thinking of Monahan (2009), Reardon (2005), Lakoff (2005), Epstein (1996), and Scheper-Hughes and Wacquant (2002). A good introduction to the breadth of the field of science studies is offered by Martin Biagioli in *The Science Studies Reader* (1996).

technology in state-making and governance, as well as state policy related to scientific research and technological development.[15]

As it has diversified and expanded, science studies has followed technoscience just about everywhere it goes. Thus far, however, science studies has not taken on the topic of homelessness. While the connection between housing issues and science studies might not be immediately obvious, certainly science studies has foregrounded the place of knowledge production and technology in many unexpected and provocative sites. Furthermore, within science studies, a strong tradition exists of what David Hess (1997) labels "critical STS."[16] Hess uses the term to link antiracist and feminist work, work frequently connected directly to social movements and concerned with everything from reproductive technologies to environmental justice. By the 1980s, Hess identifies in critical STS "a turn to race and gender or, more generally, culture-and-power perspectives that move away from foundational analyses rooted in a single dimension (such as class) to the interactions of race, class, gender, age, nation, sexual orientation, and other markers of difference, power, and hierarchy" (158). Karen Barad has echoed this depiction, stressing that cursory attention to "difference" is not enough. "I want to emphasize in the strongest terms possible that it would be a mistake to think that the main point is simply a question of whether or not gender, race, sexuality, and other social variables are included in one's analysis. The issue is not simply a matter of inclusion. The main point has to do with power. How is power understood? How are the social and the political theorized?" (Barad 2007: 58).

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[15] For an introduction to the new political sociology of science, see Frickel and Moore (2006).
[16] The acronym "STS" is used as shorthand for both "science and technology studies" and "science, technology and society."

While critical STS traditions are alive and well, it is nonetheless useful to remember Brian Martin's 1993 argument that such work has been suppressed in the citational practices of mainstream science studies, effecting what Martin calls "the taming of science studies" (Martin 1993: 255). I would suggest that the failure of science studies to turn to housing has to do with this precarious place afforded critical analyses of power and inequality in science studies. While the past two decades have seen the growth of work on transnational inequalities, with science studies taking on industries of technoscience across the Global South (such as Rajan 2006; Lakoff 2005), American science studies has not paid equal attention to domestic forms of subjugation. Science studies has been more likely to look at "race"—i.e. the production of ideas about racial groups in elite academic and commercial centers—than *racism*, or the material distribution of life chances through social, political, and economic institutions.[17]

If science studies has failed thus far to take homelessness into its frames, much social scientific ink has nonetheless been spilled on the topic. (In fact, I will argue in Chapter 4 that the study of homelessness has served a discipline-building function within sociology.) Social scientific studies of homelessness can be broken into a few modes. The first, and perhaps most widely known, is ethnographic accounts of so-called "street life" and "shelter life." Ethnographies of the homeless focus on life stories and personal trajectories, documenting the survival strategies employed by individuals to navigate the dangers and degradation of unsheltered life and unkind bureaucracies. Nels Anderson's 1923 account *The Hobo* established the genre (as well as the Chicago school of ethnography). Both Kim Hopper (2003) and David Snow and Leon Anderson (1993)

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[17] An example of the former would be Reardon (2004).

have produced influential ethnographic accounts of the homeless, and Mitchell Duneier's 1999 study of magazine and book street vendors, *Sidewalk*, introduced the tradition to a broad audience. (Chapter 5 offers an extended discussion of *Sidewalk*.)

On the other end of the methodological spectrum, the last two decades have seen a great number of epidemiological studies produced in departments of public health and psychology, as well as sociology. These quantitative analyses address demographic characteristics, determining factors leading to homelessness, and shelter use patterns. Such studies often pay special attention to relationships between psychiatric disabilities and homelessness. The work of Dennis Culhane and his colleagues (Culhane and Kuhn 1998; Kuhn and Culhane 1998; Culhane, Metreaux and Hadley 2002) has had an especially profound impact, not only on the discourse of homelessness, but also on the organization of housing services at all levels of government. (Chapter 3 documents this impact.)

Finally, in a third mode, urban sociologists and geographers have taken social historical approaches to chart the rise of mass homelessness as it relates to privatized housing markets, gentrification, changes in the structure of domestic labor markets and the socio-economic cleansing projects of "urban renewal." Neil Smith's 1996 *The Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* established an analysis of urban renewal that centralized issues of homelessness.[18] The field has expanded with the recent work of Alex Vitale (2008), who has focused on the impact of law and order policing and politics in urban centers.

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[18] Attention to the connections between gentrification and homelessness were also noted by artists and art historians interested in the changing politics of public space, as in *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Action: A Project by Martha Rosler* (Wallis 1998) and Rosalyn Deutsche's *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (1998).

Despite their methodological differences, both the ethnographic and epidemiological modes ultimately attempt to get at the same root question: "Who are the homeless?" The former does so through detailed portraits of specific individuals in context, whereas the latter does so by analyzing broad population patterns. In contrast, work in urban studies and geography (what I have termed the third mode) aims to shift critical attention to social, political, and economic causes of mass homelessness. From this view, stories of violence endured by individuals, or the demographic characteristics of populations living without shelter, are epiphenomenal—the measurable effects of systemic forces.

The present project is situated in that third mode and seeks to expand historically-grounded accounts by developing an understanding of the important role played by social service administration and social science research. Services and research are usually imagined to be a *response* to social problems, mitigating or documenting, for example, the effects of a private housing market on populations living without shelter. This dissertation will argue that far from simply responding after the fact to homelessness, social services and science are active forces in shaping both understandings of homelessness and the actual material experiences of living without shelter. Thus, I look to a homeless management industry, which includes both social services and sciences, as a site to assess two linked processes—the production of knowledge about homelessness and the development of governmental interventions to manage mass homeless populations. This is to shift from asking, "Who are the homeless?" to asking "How does homelessness become something to be known and managed?" That "how" will be

documented in the chapters that follow, and what will emerge is that "the homeless," far from being the starting point for governance, are its retroactive effect.

I term this relationship of knowledge production and governance "the techno-conceptual organization of homelessness." With this term, I hope to bring together the discursive and material dimensions of homelessness and to emphasize the making of homelessness into a knowable and governable category. Assessing the techno-conceptual organization of homelessness requires a deconstruction of the category "the homeless," but this dissertation aims to be more than an account of the social construction of homelessness. The limits of deconstruction are not that it suggests "there is no reality" (as zealous critics of postmodernism might have it), but rather that, in remaining at the level of language, deconstruction risks leaving questions of materiality behind. Science studies offers methods to take those very questions up by tracking the co-production of technoscience and the social. As described by Sheila Jasanoff, an analysis of co-production "stresses the constant intertwining of the cognitive, the material, the social and the normative. Co-production is not about ideas alone; it is equally about concrete, physical things. It is not only about how people organize or express themselves, but also about what they value and how they assume responsibility for their inventions" (Jasanoff 2004: 6). Such an approach aims not so much for a "reality-based" alternative to social construction, but rather a critical mode for intercepting the interimplication of knowledge and materiality, what Ian Hacking has described as a concern with "representing and intervening" (1993). This is a move that adds questions of ontology to the important epistemological questions opened up by deconstruction. And so, a science studies of the co-production of technoscience and the social need not fall prey to an uncritical

positivism that would simply accept reality as it is encountered. Rather, in this mode, science studies aims to capture the dynamic feedback loops between knowledge production and materiality, understanding knowledge production as itself a material process that unfolds within material constraints and effects material changes. This dissertation, then, attempts to unsettle the category "the homeless" from its given or naturalized state, while also recognizing the agency of the category, which is to say, the capacity of the category to forcefully effect change in the world.[19] We can say a category is "not real" and also grapple with the ways in which it is *real in its effects*. Far from a postmodern disappearing of reality, thinking in terms of the interimplication of knowledge and materiality leads us to apprehend the techno-conceptual organization of homelessness in terms of its very real and material consequences for those bodies identified through it.

Expanding off the work of Hacking, Karen Barad has argued that to understand the interimplication of knowledge and materiality is to move beyond the modernist regime of representationalism. Barad argues "that representationalism is a practice of bracketing out the significance of practices; that is, representationalism marks a failure to take account of the practices through which representations are produced. Images or representations are not snapshots or depictions of what awaits us but rather condensations or traces of multiple practices of engagement" (Barad 2007: 53). This dissertation argues that sociological concepts—including "the homeless"—can be treated as images or

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[19] The notion that a category would have "agency," or the capacity to affect other elements, is a basic insight of science studies and Actor Network Theory. Two classic accounts arguing for the agency of non-human entities are Karen Barad's "Agential Realism: Feminist Interventions in Understanding Scientific Practices" and Michel Callon's "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fisherman of St. Brieuc Bay," both collected in *The Science Studies Reader* (Biagioli 1999). See also Law and Hassard ([1999] 2004).

representations in Barad's sense. And thus the dissertation aims to expose the practices of engagement, or technologies, that have produced the homeless as objects of knowledge and intervention. If a technology translates matter/energy from one form to another, then this dissertation seeks to understand the technologies that allow for the translation of a vast set of social, economic, and political forces and their impact on lived experiences into "homelessness." It is those processes of translation I am attempting to capture with the concept of "techno-conceptual organization."

Briefly, then, this dissertation argues that tracking the techno-conceptual organization of homelessness reveals that today homelessness is being displaced from the category of "social problem" to a category I term "governance problem." The Introduction explains this shift and offers a theoretical framework for understanding it, but here I will note that if social problems concern the social and economic determinants of something like homelessness, the realm of governance problems is less concerned with where a problem comes from, and more with how to manage it. Governance problems call for maximizing resource allocation, streamlining bureaucratic structure, systemizing service approaches, and quantifying and standardizing service results. Further, despite public and governmental depictions of the homeless as costly social and economic drains, the transformation of homelessness into a governance problem puts it to work for the economy and governance; in other words, it makes homelessness productive. The transformation of homelessness into a governance problem is thus dramatically changing how housing needs are imagined and addressed, and demands as well that sociology respond to these changes.

Methods and ethics

To respond to the challenges of re-thinking homelessness in terms of knowledge production, technology, and governance, I have attempted to incorporate the insights of science studies into the methods developed for this research. I have tried especially to attend to the political consequences of research methods—what the academy locates in the realm of ethics. While the presence of Institutional Review Boards has formalized a relationship between the ethical dimension of social scientific research and the methodologies those researches deploy, typically the "methods section" of a dissertation presents ethical concerns as already resolved. The assumption is that a completed project is an ethical project, as an unethical project would have been stopped at the gates by an IRB. However, a science studies concern with the politics of knowledge production suggests that the ethical is inextricable from the methodological, and that methodological choices do not just enact an ethical protocol, but continually open and close ethical possibilities. Ethics is a gray zone of negotiations that most narratives of sociological research mask over. Furthermore, women of color feminism would suggest that all ethical dilemmas, like all political projects, are irresolvable, which is to say contingent and mutable in their implications for challenging and reproducing power relations.[20] In the account of methods that follows, I try to keep questions of ethics central; this is to resist a little bit a narrow instrumentalization of ethics.

So I will open this section on methods with two ethical parables, one that I have borrowed from the world of clinical trials and one I draw from my own time in graduate school.

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[20] I am thinking, for example, of Sandoval (2000) and INCITE! (2007).

As reported in a 1996 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, for several decades, Phase I clinical trials conducted in Indianapolis by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly recruited heavily from populations living without shelter. Phase I trials test for toxicity, to determine whether new drugs are safe to test on actual patients in Phase II trials. Recruiting for Phase I trials is quite challenging, as they are potentially the most dangerous of any drug trial, and offer participants no health benefits, as they are not being treated for anything, only monitored for reactions to a drug's harms. While in the 1990s the going rate for Phase I trials was as high as $250 a day, Indianapolis test subjects were paid $85. As Laurie P. Cohen wrote in her exposé:

> Word of mouth about testing at Lilly—a company best known for the blockbuster drug Prozac—has gradually spread through soup kitchens, prisons and shelters from coast to coast. Today, so many homeless men come to Indianapolis seeking admittance to Lilly's research clinic that Matias Vega, medical director of the local Homeless Initiative Program, credits the clinic with creating a "shadow economy." One veteran nurse at the Lilly Clinic says that the majority of its subjects are homeless alcoholics (Cohen 1996).

While some questioned the validity of these trials—the homeless participants are depicted as a binge-drinking lot who spend their payments primarily on booze—others wondered about the ethics of recruiting homeless populations, and whether or not the financial incentives, while measly, could nonetheless be seen as a form of economic coercion that took unfair advantage of destitution and desperation.

A 2002 article published in the *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* addressed the use of homeless populations in clinical trials. Under the lead authorship of Tom L. Beauchamp, one of the most prominent figures in professional bioethics, the essay approaches the issue from two angles. First it asks if homeless populations should be grouped among other "vulnerable populations" who must be legally protected from

participation in clinical trials, either because they are deemed to lack the mental faculties necessary to grant consent, or because (as with prisoners) the potential for exploitation is so great. Beauchamp and his co-authors decide that, as a population, the homeless do not qualify as vulnerable and in need of protection. Second, the article asks if it is fair to exclude the homeless as a group from the opportunity to participate in trials. The authors decide this would not be fair, and that the right to participate should not be denied people living without shelter. While we can note that a strict ban would not right the inequities that motivate participation, in abstracting clinical trials from their political economic contexts, Beauchamp and his co-authors produce an ahistoric ethics that fails to consider the questions of power highlighted by Barad and other science studies scholars.[21]

The essay further presents the question as an abstract issue by not naming any specific corporations or instances. However, at the end of the piece, in the first footnote, the following information appears:

> The authors were members of an external team of evaluators that examined current policies and procedures at the Lilly Laboratory for Clinical Research regarding the participation in drug studies of volunteers who may have no fixed or permanent residence ("the homeless"). The Advisory Panel, as it was called, was chaired by Tom L. Beauchamp. It was charged by Eli Lilly and Company to investigate the ethical issues in the participation of homeless persons and to make recommendations concerning its policies and procedures. This work was funded by Eli Lilly and Co. (Beauchamp et al. 2002: 560).

The conflict of interest is so blatant as not to require commentary. If that is what constitutes externality, perhaps someone should approach one of Eli Lilly's marketplace

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[21] The authors argue that the way to avoid economic exploitation is to make sure the wage is not so high as to be overwhelmingly persuasive. "The key is to strike a balance between a rate of payment high enough that it does not exploit subjects by underpayment and low enough that it does not create an irresistible inducement" (555). For a political economic analysis of the clinical trials industry, see Jill A. Fisher's *Medical Research for Hire: The Political Economy of Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials* (2008).

competitors and request funding to investigate the ethics of Beauchamp's Advisory Panel!

The second ethical parable I draw from my participation in a seminar hosted by the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics at the CUNY Graduate Center during the 2006-07 academic year. Under that year's theme of *Catastrophe and its Discontents*, seminar participants looked at phenomena as diverse as apocalyptic discourse in environmental studies and activism and debates about armed peacekeeping in international human rights organizations. During a visit to the seminar, architect and political theorist Eyal Weizman presented a public lecture about his work on the occupation of Palestinian territories by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF).[22] In a conversation with our seminar the following day, Weizman mentioned that the video footage he'd shared of IDF officers and other government officials was obtained under the false pretense of making a documentary. The political aims of the project and the uses to which it would be put were not revealed to the interview subjects. In response, one participant in the seminar joked that such a project would "never gain IRB approval" at a U.S. research university.

The conversation raised a question with which I have continued to grapple: How does one conduct ethical research of unethical situations? A strictly instrumentalized ethics—such as that employed by Beauchamp's Advisory Panel—would argue that members of the Israeli government and military deserve the same application of research protocols as any other research subjects. While IRBs make special provisions for vulnerable populations deemed less powerful or powerless, they do not make special

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[22] See, for example, Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (New York: Verso, 2007).

provisions for those deemed to be in *greater* positions of power.[23] In other words, the appeal to universal principles sidesteps questions of power and force, eliding the IDF's disproportionate capacity to protect itself and its interests. It is easy to see the potential for collusion between institutions of great power (universities and the IDF), in which one regulates how the other can be studied, to its benefit, such that much cannot be revealed. But more subtly, we could ask: What does an ethical frame fail to capture? How might the unethical refuse to appear in such research? And what do we do with the fact that mechanisms developed to adjudicate the ethics of research are embedded in the very institutional and governmental complexes we are trying to study? It seems that exactly the processes that concern much research, and certainly concern this dissertation—the violence and death produced by racial, economic, and social inequality—are processes that government and research institutions have played a key role in maintaining and reproducing.

This dissertation argues that sociology is a form of technoscience that is central to the governance of homelessness in the United States. At the risk of drawing ire for putting sociology in the same frame as the IDF, we must wonder about the ethics of social scientific research driven by government agendas and funds. While this conflict of interest may not be as direct or nefarious as that represented by bioethicists paid by Eli Lilly to analyze the ethics of Eli Lilly's use of homeless populations in clinical trials, Beauchamp should serve as a cautionary tale. I do not think the Graduate Center IRB was in some way suspect (they were always very helpful and nice to deal with!), but more I

[23] In her ethnography of Brooklyn community-based organizations, Nicole Marwell follows the usual protocol of using pseudonyms for persons appearing in the text, except in the case of public officials, who she identifies by name. The risk of this practice, of course, is that it re-marks poor people as anonymous (Marwell 2007).

wish to raise the issue of complicity, and the forms of complicity my project might take. Any research project is of course bigger than its principal investigator, or the IRB that approves it, or the institution in which both are based. So, unable to anticipate all the political uses to which this research might be put, I want to stir up some healthy suspicion about the place of my work in the world.

Given these ethical concerns, and given the insights of science studies regarding knowledge production, I decided that the ethico-methodological mode of this dissertation would be a conscientious and intentional engagement with the topic that highlights rather than masks my own involvement in the material. Rather, following Hacking and Barad, I understand this dissertation as itself involved in the politics of knowledge production. This is to see the dissertation, like all social scientific inquiry, as a form of technoscience, or in Barad's terms, a practice of engagement.[24] The practices I have deployed draw further inspiration from the work of Gilles Deleuze, who offers one way for conceiving of a radical interpretive sociology. For Deleuze, as for other critical scholars, "interpretation" is not merely an heuristic activity, located in the mind and separate from the world, but a material process of engagement with the material world (Deleuze 1988). In his explication of Deleuze, Brian Massumi (2002) offers a description of woodworking as a Deleuzean act of interpretation. Massumi explains woodworking as an interpretation that develops the material qualities of a piece of wood—its grain, weight, and density. The interpretive labor of woodworking cannot make just anything of the wood, or whatever the wood-worker desires. The interpretation of the wood is an undetermined but

[24] A parallel argument has also been made, of course, in critical sociology concerned with feminism and race. In "Learning from the Outsider Within," Patricia Hill Collins (1986) offered an important and early critique of the notion that sociological concepts are neutral. The implications of feminist interventions by Collins and others are considered in Clough (1994).

constricted event. The wood-worker develops those qualities that already exist in the wood, giving rise to a form, or an interpretation, that is latent but not given. A Deleuzean sociology, then, would seek such a process of interpretation: an engagement with the qualities of the world toward drawing out something that exists, but that has not been previously encountered or experienced. Turning attention to the techno-conceptual organization of homelessness is my attempt to do just that—to re-frame discussions about "the homeless" into a conversation about knowledge production, technology, and governance.

Thus, the methods for this project are rooted in interpretive and historical traditions of sociology, especially in their science studies form. The data for this dissertation came from a number of sources selected to get a rich sense of how a discourse and management of homelessness has emerged and changed. These sources include government documents (policy reports, program evaluations, and Congressional records), professional literature (program reports of nonprofit organizations), social scientific literature, and mass media. This material has constituted an archive that has helped situate my research questions in historical context. Along those lines, I have also relied on secondary historical accounts of urban development, the welfare state, and the social and political technologies that respond to unsheltered populations.

Further, over the course of several years, I conducted face-to-face interviews with people involved in some aspect of homeless management—program directors, service providers, advocates/activists, and residents of programs. These interview subjects came from sites in New York City, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Sites were chosen for their concentration of homeless services, variance in policy and

administration, and documentation in existing literature. I conducted these interviews both one-on-one and in groups. I met with a few informants several times.

I worked from a loose interview schedule, or set of questions, that sought to get at each informant's expertise about various aspects of homeless management. Though I went into interviews with these questions, the interviews were open-ended, meaning that informants put their insights and experiences into their own words, rather than selecting from an established set of responses. The meetings generally would shift at some point from formal interview to conversation, and I would begin to offer feedback and my own thoughts in addition to asking questions. I would share my preliminary and developing analyses and ask the informants to comment. In this way, the gathering of data and the analysis of it were not distinct processes—the "data," or responses, were shaped actively by me, and my analysis was in turn actively shaped by my informants, who corroborated, corrected, and challenged my thinking as it was unfolding in relation to our conversation. I am not sure how different this might be from what happens in most open-ended interviews, or in participant-observation research, but I imagine I was somewhat unique among trained sociologists in how much of my own thinking I shared.

Finally, and related to this approach to interviews, I had several occasions during the course of my research to present my work to groups that included individuals involved in the homeless services industry. While these were not interviews, in the discussions that followed these presentations, I gained important feedback that profoundly challenged and shaped my thinking.

Everything I have claimed about knowledge production, and about my own dissertation, is laid out clearly in undergraduate textbooks on social research methods:

sociologists engage in concept formation, and their concepts should not be mistaken as mirrors of reality; sociologists affect the phenomena they study; bias is an issue in all research, at every stage.[25] I guess the difference is that rather than treating these things as shortcomings that occur on accident, I am doing them on purpose, in the sense of consciously and intentionally highlighting the practices of engagement, or technologies of knowledge production, that constitute this dissertation.

Outline of chapters

In Chapter 1, I propose a theoretical framework in which to situate the contemporary techno-conceptual organization of homelessness. In particular, Chapter 1 seeks to identify how the health and well-being of individuals and populations become constituted as objects of knowledge and intervention. The work of Michel Foucault on the place of life in politics—what he describes as *biopower*—offers a jumping-off point. Drawing from other scholars of biopower as well as work charting the emergence and consolidation of neoliberal technologies of governance, Chapter 1 argues that in the transition from a Fordist-Keynesian welfare state to postwelfare governance arrangements, the relationships of health to economy are being reconfigured. Put bluntly, I argue that in the postwelfare context, the growth of an economy is no longer strictly seen as dependent upon the growth and well-being of a national population. The mode through which the transition to post-social homeless management takes place is the shift from an imagination of social problems to one of governance problems best solved through rational and routinized applications of technoscience. In such a context, social welfare

[25] For example see Babbie (2010).

programs become economic enterprises, part of rather than a challenge to the postindustrial service economies to which knowledge production is central. These programs take as their object what I term "surplus life."

In Chapter 2, I present a brief account of two intertwined histories: changes in forms of housing insecurity and deprivation, and changes in governance strategies for managing them. Starting with the first instance of federal involvement in the 1930s, the chapter moves on to the emergence in the 1970s of what historians call the "new homeless," which I argue is a consolidation of housing deprivation as an independent and permanent feature of the national population, one explained in terms of the racialized impact of neoliberalism more so than simply changes in labor. The chapter ends by introducing the return of the federal government to issues of housing insecurity and deprivation, this time in the mid-1980s, in response to the challenges of managing this permanent and growing population. I argue that this renewed federal involvement introduces the technoscience of governance problems into the homeless services industry, and changes as well long-standing medical models of homeless management.

The next two chapters present case studies of technologies pushed by the federal government. Chapter 3 examines the development of federal data collection standards through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Homeless Management Information Systems program, or HMIS. I argue that the primary use of the "universal data elements" gathered through HMIS is the production of a population used to regulate nonprofit agencies, rather than individuals. In other words, HMIS organize the population as a mechanism *for* governance. The impact on clients is an indirect one of techno-

conceptual organization in which individuals are not targeted, but are nonetheless caught up.

In Chapter 4, the second case study, I look at the use of vulnerability indexes to measure the "death chances" of populations living without shelter. Along with statistical analyses of shelter use patterns, I argue that the technology of vulnerability indexes is key to the invention of chronic homelessness, a new techno-conceptual category that shifts homelessness from an individual level phenomenon to a population register. Vulnerability indexes and the techno-conceptual organization of chronic homelessness are having profound impacts on housing and related social and health services. I present this case as a cautionary tale regarding short-term individual-level positive outcomes, and argue that such programs must be resituated in understandings of racialized and gendered property systems.

In Chapter 5, I shift from social services to look at the social sciences as a technology central to the realm of governance problems. I argue that the study of homelessness has served a discipline-building function for sociology, a site to test out and perfect new methodological techniques. I situate this discussion in critical race analyses of methodology, which, taken together with science studies, offers a way of looking at sociology as a form of technoscience central to producing the racial knowledge through which governance unfolds.

Finally, the conclusion offers a quick summary of the major findings of the dissertation. I revisit the issues of biopower and neoliberalism posed throughout the chapters, and offer a few thoughts on what it might mean for sociology to study the production and management of surplus life.

Chapter 1
Life, Death, and Neoliberalism

What is a house? What is a home?

We have learned to think of the differences between space and place, and so we know a home is not just a house. We must pay attention to the cultural meanings and practices organized as and through homemaking. Meaning, memory, ritual, the production of domesticity and its relationships to gender, sexuality, family, and labor—all this makes a home and is made by a home. The home is an active symbolic, a space for living inside. Of course, some would reply that a home is nonetheless embedded in the built form of the house and its neighborhood, both of which exert a structural force, another affective materiality that intermingles with the symbolic. The grid of rooms within a house, the grid of houses along a street, the facilitation and restriction of movement through those grids—all this too must be kept in mind.

I want to show how this house and this home, these congealments of forces that mold and modulate bodies, individuals, and collectivities, are embedded as well in a larger technical system for sorting and managing populations. A shorthand for this system could be "housing." As a system, housing is bigger than any one house or home. At the same time, housing is constituted in part through all those specific and real houses and homes, and constituted as well by social policy and political economy. A house or a home is an extraction from this technical system called housing, an actualization of the political, economic, and social forces that swirl around inside the system. A house is not

only a building, and it is not only a place where meaning is made and constrained. As the chapters that follow will show, a house is a technology for the organization and distribution of life, health, illness, and death. A house is a thing that makes live and lets die.

And so we can ask, what is homelessness, to live without a home?

Many have reminded us that an absence is really just another kind of presence.[1] *An absence is not a lack, but a "not being there" that is affectively forceful. To be without a house, to be homeless, is not only to be not-housed, to be in nothing, outside housing. Quite the opposite; it is to be very much caught inside this housing system that makes life and death chances. Of course this is a system in which everyone is caught, including those of us who are housed. To live without a house, or without the guarantee of continued access to a house, is to be made especially vulnerable in this system of housing, to be exposed to the worst of its violence. This violent exposure is a condition we can describe as "housing insecurity." To be subject to housing insecurity is both to have your housing made intensely insecure and also to endure the making insecure of health and life that accompanies a lack of safe and stable housing. The systemic nature of this lack is masked by the objectifying category of "the homeless." When we speak of "the homeless," we mobilize a pathological category that directs attention to an individual, as if living without housing is a personal experience rather than a social phenomenon.*[2]

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[1] I am thinking here of Derrida (1978), and especially anti-colonial and feminist elaborations of post-structuralist theory, including Spivak (1987) and Bhabha (1994).

[2] The medical and pathological connotations of "homeless" are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. I want to acknowledge that many people may self-identify with the term "homeless." Further contesting the meaning of the term has been a productive political effort of activist groups; I am thinking of, for example, Picture the Homeless, an organization expressly committed to

Instead we can talk in terms of "housing deprivation." This phrase tries to express that living without housing is a structurally-produced phenomenon that should be understood as the active taking away of shelter, the social making of house-less lives; it is a productive deprivation. Housing insecurity and housing deprivation mark out some populations for the likelihood of enduring a life without housing, deprived of the life and health that a home helps secure. This "some populations" is neither arbitrary nor incidental. Rather, housing draws from already existing forms of racialized subordination, and functions to entrench and intensify the death-making effects of those racisms. Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes racism as "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (2007: 28). And so housing operates through race, to make and remake race in terms of the likelihood that some will live and others will die.

If we most often think of housing in terms of the present—the answer to the question "Where do you live?"—and if socio-cultural approaches to space and place ask us to think of the presence of the past, then thinking of systems of housing insecurity and housing deprivation, of a house as a technology that makes live and lets die, turns attention to the future. The house generates inside and outside of it possibilities of life and experiences of death. Housing insecurity and housing deprivation draw some futures near—shortened life spans, illness, death—and foreclose the likelihood of other possible futures. And so "homelessness," far from simply signifying a lack, is a crowded house, full of death and disease that take up so much space there is hardly room enough for what should be a great excess of social and political shame.

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challenging political and media discourse about homelessness by self-generating alternative representations.

Housing, racism, and biopower

What does it mean to say that a house is a technology that makes live and lets die? And that this technology operates in systems of racism? With this introduction, I aim to build a framework for considering these claims. This framework will help for thinking about how life, health, illness, and death become things to be known and managed, and how this knowledge production and governance become useful in a context of neoliberal economic restructuring. This framework will then allow me to situate the historical and empirical cases that comprise the rest of this dissertation. These cases will document the ways that homelessness is being remade as a problem of and for governance, and they will furthermore consider the implications of this techno-conceptual re-organization for those populations most subject to the violence of housing insecurity and deprivation.

Many studies have documented the impact of housing insecurity and deprivation on health and life chances. A brief consideration of these studies will help clarify the kinds of vulnerabilities and harms with which this dissertation is grappling. In 2005, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Department of Homeless Services jointly issued a report entitled *The Health of Homeless Adults in New York City* (Kerker et al. 2005). The report draws from data collected between January 2001 and December 2003 at two kinds of homeless shelters, single adult shelters and family shelters. Comparing this shelter population data to data about the general adult population, the study draws a number of alarming, if not entirely surprising, conclusions.[3]

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[3] In my summary of this and other studies, I am trying to keep the data bound to their technologies of measurement. In other words, the results, while telling us something general about the impact of housing insecurity and deprivation on health and life, should remain contextualized in relation to their sites and research methods. I also repeat the categories as used in each study.

Death rates among those who stayed in the adult shelter system were twice as high as among the general population of New York City, and adults who stayed in the family shelter system had death rates 1.5 percent higher. During the time of the study, 3.6 percent of all New York City tuberculosis cases were among the shelter populations studied, making the rate of TB diagnosis 11 times higher than in the general population. Users of the adult shelter system were twice as likely to have HIV compared with the general New York City population (Kerker et al. 2005: 16). The rate of *new* HIV cases among the shelter population was over 16 times the rate for the general adult population. This means that whereas in the general adult population there would be seventy-five new cases of HIV for every 100,000 adults, for the shelter population, there would be 1,241 new cases for every 100,000 adults (Kerker et al. 2005: 19).

In *Dying without Dignity: Homeless Deaths in Los Angeles County: 2000-2007*, the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness finds that during the 7.5 years of their study, there were 2,815 homeless deaths in LA County (Hawke, Davis and Erienbusch 2007: 4). If that figure alone is not sufficiently alarming, the study authors note "the average age of death was 48.1 years, falling far short of the 77.2 year life expectancy of the average American." The study furthermore argues:

> The 2,815 homeless people in our study were expected to live 211,878 years based on the average life expectancy of their gender and ethnicity. They only survived 135,528 of those expected years. In other words, their lives were cut short by 76,350 years. On average a homeless person's life is 36% shorter than a housed person's life. For homeless Latina females, their lives were 49% shorter than expected (5).

The report concludes with an appendix titled "In Memory Of" which lists the names of those whose deaths generate the numbers in the study. Arranged in three columns, the list of names goes on for twelve and a half pages.

Finally, a study conducted by the National Coalition for the Homeless, *Hate, Violence, And Death on Main Street USA* (2008), evidences how the systemic violence of housing deprivation further exposes people living without shelter to forms of interpersonal violence. Summarizing data from 2007, the report found that at least 160 homeless persons in the U.S. suffered violent attacks in 2007; twenty-eight died from those attacks. Those deaths represent an increase of 40 percent compared to lethal attacks on unsheltered persons the year before (10). The report contains narrative descriptions of all twenty-eight deaths, such as this one: "Felix Najero, a 49-year-old homeless man, was set on fire outside of Bethany Christian Church where he rested for the night. The fire burned seventy-five percent of Najero's body, spreading across his face, chest, and stomach. Najero died four days later in New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center" (16). The report also discusses the phenomenon of perpetrators video-recording their attacks. These recordings, known as "bumbashing" or "bum fight" videos, are subsequently published on the web and as DVDs (35).

These and similar studies demonstrate how housing insecurity and housing deprivation make people sick and make people die. The studies also underscore how the distribution of insecurity and deprivation organizes some populations as over-exposed to these violent harms. While this is a useful step toward unpacking the relationships of housing to life, health, illness, and death, we must not take the existence of these studies for granted. Rather we must ask about the production and circulation of *studies* of illness and death alongside illness and death. We can say that the documentation of these harms presupposes and reconsolidates the ways that life, health, illness, and death have been taken on as concerns for knowledge production and for political management.

Michel Foucault proposed the concept of "biopower" to analyze the relationships of knowledge production to the governance of life. According to Foucault, biopower is "what brought life and its mechanisms into the explicit realm of calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life" ([1978] 1990: 143). As Mariana Valverde points out, biopower does not describe an essence or a thing, but rather serves to organize for analysis divergent and diversely related techniques centered on the politicization of biological life (2007: 177). Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose agree, writing that "the concept of 'biopower' serves to bring into view a field comprised of more or less rationalized attempts to intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence" (Rabinow and Rose 2006: 96-7). Hence, biopower provides an analytic frame for understanding the making of "life itself" into an object of knowledge and governance.

The politicization of human life operates through a multitude of technologies that Foucault groups into two trajectories, or what he calls poles. The first is an *anatomopolitics* that takes up the body of the individual subject and its arrangement and relations in space (Foucault [1978] 1990: 139). Often this is referred to by Foucault and others simply as "discipline" or "disciplinary power." The army barracks, the workshop, the school, the prison, and the family can all be understood as disciplinary enclosures, or, in the sociological sense, institutions. The function of a disciplinary enclosure is to align the body and mind of the subject with norms of behavior and thought. This includes norms for relating with other subjects organized through the enclosure. Enclosures also mark out some subjects as abnormal.[4] Foucault described the aims of anatomopolitics in

[4] "The homosexual" is Foucault's best known example of an abnormal disciplinary subject: "The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and

terms of the production of "docile bodies" (Foucault [1977] 1995: 136) or "the parallel increase of [the body's] usefulness and its docility" (Foucault [1978] 1990: 139). Docility does not describe weakness or passivity, but rather the augmentation of both a subject's capacity to think and act and its capacity to submit to political and social norms. "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault [1977] 1995: 136). The soldier is perhaps the most obvious example of this; the factory laborer would be another.

Foucault names the second pole or trajectory of the politicization of biological life *biopolitics*.[5] Whereas anatomopolitics concerns the individual subject and his or her relations in space with other individuals, biopolitics concerns the regulation of the population, or human species. "Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem" (Foucault 2003: 245). Biopolitical technologies address individuals *en masse*, meaning that individuals, rather than being direct objects of rule, become component parts of a larger body. At this scale, biopolitical technologies seek to understand and to regulate the overall "mechanics of life" including "propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity" as well as "all the conditions that can cause these to vary" (Foucault [1978] 1990: 139). Biopolitical

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possibly a mysterious physiology" (Foucault [1978] 1990: 43). Foucault's history of the homosexual points to how subjectivity and embodiment get read through one another in a disciplinary model.

[5] In Foucauldean scholarship, there is some inconsistency in how these terms are used, with some using "biopolitical" to describe any expression of biopower. In my reading I understand biopower as the general category, and discipline (or anatomo-politics) and biopolitics to group together specific methods or technologies. My reading is shared by Paul Rabinow (1999). The separation of the two modes or trajectories should be understood as heuristic rather than essential—it allows for an observation of varying emphases as well as identification of points of contact between vastly different technologies.

technologies concerned with these life processes include demographic sciences of birth and death rates, population planning, public health initiatives, and health and life insurances.

Together, disciplinary and biopolitical technologies bring biological objects and processes into political calculation; disciplinary technologies do so by addressing the animal body of the individualized subject whereas biopolitical technologies do so by addressing the species body of the total population. Foucault argues that through these technologies, animal life in individual and species form becomes constitutive of the force field of modern power relations. He famously writes, "For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being into question" (Foucault [1978] 1990: 143).

To explain this special place of life in modern politics, Foucault contrasts modern regimes of biopower with the classical regime. Foucault argues that the new power over life is representative of a basic shift from a classical power of *deduction*, a power to take or seize, to a modern power of *production*. In the classical age, Foucault, writes,

> . . . power was exercised mainly as a means of deduction *(prelevement)*, a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it . . . . Since the classical age the West has undergone a very profound transformation of those mechanisms of power. "Deduction" has tended to be no longer the major form of power but merely one element among others, working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them . . . (Foucault [1978] 1990: 136).

This is not to say that in the modern world things are never seized, or never put to death. Far from it, as I discuss below. Rather, Foucault means to argue that technologies of governance demonstrate a tendency toward fostering and promoting productive forces and the conditions that allow for their multiplication. Life, in such a context, is not given or taken, but allowed for: "One might say that the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death" (Foucault [1978] 1990: 138).

Thus, technologies of biopower aim to know life in order to optimize it and foster its growth. But Foucault also argues that when life enters the political realm, not *all* life is deemed worthy of investment. Rather, some life, or some parts of a population, are considered a drain on the life of the overall population. This life threatens to introduce inferiority or weakness that will diminish a population's capacity to grow and thrive. So in addition to technologies that multiply and promote life, we have the development of technologies that identify parts of the population that are unworthy, that drain life. Foucault argues that modern governance eliminates this weak, cipherous life, either directly through killing, as in genocide, or more slowly, through social abandonment. He refers to these processes of elimination as "state racism." State racism is "a racism that society will direct against itself, against its own elements and its own products. This is the internal racism of permanent purification, and it will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization" (Foucault 2003: 62). State racism describes an analysis of biological capacities for living, thriving and proliferating, and death is the technique used to manage, by cutting out, those elements of the population or species

evaluated as harmful to biopolitical life; state racism produces "the break between what must live and what must die" (Foucault 2003: 254).

Valverde describes technologies that incite life and those that end it as the "two faces of biopolitical power" (Valverde 2007: 175). The death produced by state racism is not the same as the seizure of life that characterizes a classical regime; state racism is not antithetical to biopower. Rather, the death of state racism is a biopowerful death, which is to say it is productive, because it allows the overall life of a population to extend and prosper. Foucault writes. "I think that, broadly speaking, racism justifies the death-function in the economy of biopower by appealing to the principle that the death of others makes one biologically stronger insofar as one is a member of a race or a population, insofar as one is an element in a unitary living plurality" (Foucault 2003: 258). If the deaths of state racism are productive, they are also not anomalous. All regimes of biopower deploy technologies for the evaluation of life in order to make cuts into a population, separating out that life which is a drain on the life of the overall human species. In fact, Foucault writes that the modern state is necessarily racist, as state racism is what "allows biopower to work" (Foucault 2003: 258).

The concept of state racism helps account for the persistence of death—and mass death at that—in regimes of biopower directed toward multiplying and expanding life. State racism points to how death becomes a productive cutting-out that allows life to live on. In the lecture on state racism, Foucault stresses that the "racism" to which it refers is not the same thing as ideological or cultural racisms, and the races it concerns are not strictly coterminous with taxonomic/cultural racial categories (Foucault 2003: 258). Those targeted by state racism are any part of a population deemed biologically, socially,

or economically "unfit." While projects of state racism would include all kinds of ethno-racial wars and cleansing, state racism describes the production of any category targeted for elimination—so for example, in U.S., British and German eugenics, those marked as mentally or physically disabled (see Kevles 1998). Nonetheless, those writing after Foucault have emphasized that the line between projects of state racism and other forms of racism is not so sharp. As Patricia Ticineto Clough argues, "Of course, the mutual hatred among races, or the projection of hate and fear onto a population that makes it into a mythical adversary, may come to function as a support of evaluations of populations, marking some for death and others for life." (Clough 2008: 18). In other words, cultural or ideological racisms may bolster projects of economic investment in some populations and social withdrawal from others; state racism and cultural or ideological racism are not mutually exclusively. Furthermore, state racist projects of making cuts into an overall population will frequently line up with other projects of racial subordination, which have coded entire peoples as unproductive and unnecessary. To the extent that American (and more broadly, "Western," or European) concepts of race are grounded in biological categories, those categories fold easily into all biopolitical projects.

Despite Foucault's insistence on the distinctiveness of state racism, projects of state racism actually point to the vital connections between disciplinary racisms of individual subjection and biopolitical racisms of population control. While he does not pursue this connection, Foucault offers a way to think about it in his discussion of how "the norm" operates in regimes of biopower: "The norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize . . . . The normalizing society is a society in which the norm of discipline and the norm of

regulation intersect along an orthogonal articulation" (Foucault 2003: 253). Through this orthogonal relationship, biopolitical technologies of state racism may draw from an individualizing racism while tending toward what Clough has termed a "population racism" that organizes and distributes life and death chances at mass scales (Clough 2008: 19). This dissertation argues that the organization of housing insecurity and deprivation offers an instructive example of the operations of the varied forms of race norm-ing that coalesce in projects of state racism to produce group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death, in Gilmore's words. In fact, in the Collège de France lecture, Foucault uses the development of worker's housing in relation to town planning to illustrate how disciplinary and biopolitical poles work in concert:

> What were working-class housing estates, as they existed in the nineteenth century? One can easily see how the very grid pattern, the very layout, of the estate articulated, in a sort of perpendicular way, the disciplinary mechanisms that controlled the body, or bodies, by localizing families (one to a house) and individuals (one to a room). The layout, the fact that individuals were made visible, and the normalization of behavior meant that a sort of spontaneous policing or control was carried out by the spatial layout of the town itself. It is easy to identify a whole series of disciplinary mechanisms in the working-class estate. And then you have a whole series of mechanisms which are, by contract, regulatory mechanisms, which apply to the population as such and which allow, which encourage patterns of saving related to housing, to the renting of accommodations and, in some cases, their purchase (Foucault 2003: 251).

To re-cast in the terms of the present discussion, we could say that Foucault is pointing to the ways that houses and homes (or the production of docile bodies in the enclosures of families and neighborhoods) intersect with housing insecurity and housing deprivation (or the production at population levels of access to health and life security). Given the endemic relationship of state racism to biopower—or the centrality of the production of death to projects of making live—it is no surprise that housing makes live and lets die.

Housing necessarily builds up life and in so doing shores up racialized hierarchies and racialized subordination as well.

This is borne out in the history of housing in the U.S., where homes have been made inaccessible through their reproduction as exchangeable and financialized commodities that belong to entities other than those that would live there. As a form of private property, housing is deeply implicated in the history of the co-production of race and property. Cheryl Harris traces this co-production back to the founding of the United States through the "parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples"—namely, the theft of Native lands and the enslavement of African populations—which created "racially contingent forms of property and property rights" (Harris 1993: 1714). Race was not simply an ideological project, but a project grounded and made in these forms of property and property rights. As Harris writes, "Even in the early years of the county, it was not the concept of race alone that operated to oppress blacks and Indians; rather, it was the interaction between conceptions of race and property which played a critical role in establishing and maintaining racial and economic subordination" (1716).

Harris demonstrates how biological concepts of race, including the supremacy of whiteness, evolved into legal categories through their articulation in relation to a discourse of property forms and rights. During the early colonial period, as contractual periods for white indentured labor were shortened, the settler project relied more heavily on enslaved African labor, spurring a legal articulation of these relations of production: "Racial identity was further merged with stratified social and legal status: 'black' racial identity marked who was subject to enslavement, whereas 'white' racial identity marked

who was 'free' or, at minimum, not a slave" (1718). To be black was to be enslaveable, to be a form of property. At the same time, Harris argues, whiteness, rather than white people, also became a form of property—a "set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the status of being white"—that became recognized by the law as valuable, and hence given legal protections. The holding and exchanging of various forms of property is one such protected right. While imperial formations of white supremacy and black enslaveability become codified in law, this emergent legal framework instantiated European common law conceptions of property and property rights over and against various competing Native American concepts and practices. As Harris explains, "Indian custom was obliterated by force and replaced with the regimes of common law which embodied the customs of the conquerors . . . . Indians experienced the property laws of the colonizers and the emergent American nation as acts of violence perpetuated by the exercise of power and ratified through the rule of law" (1727). Andrea Smith has argued that this logic of enslaveability anchors capitalism and this logic of Native genocide anchors colonialism, and as such they function as "pillars of white supremacy" (Smith 2006: 67-8).[6]

The result of this colonial settlement is a conceptualization of race through and as property forms and property rights, which in turn provide political and economic reinforcement of the racial subordination they put in place. As Harris demonstrates, these founding subordinations have been repeatedly entrenched throughout the history of the U.S., and the protections of whiteness as property "became institutionalized privileges; ideologically, they became part of the settled expectations of whites—a product of the

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[6] The third pillar described by Smith is Orientalism, which anchors war.

unalterable original bargain" (Harris 1993: 1777). Consequently whites have greater access to property and property protection, and those organized as "non-white" have limited and insecure access. For example, during the height of social welfarism in the U.S., the federal government literally invested in securing white home ownership while disinvesting from urban cores with high populations of color, shoring up what George Lipsitz describes as the "possessive investment in whiteness" (Lipsitz 1995).[7]

From the nineteenth centuries on, an immigration system that produces some laborers as undocumented or "illegal" has extended the exclusion from property and property rights to Latino/a, Arab, and Asian Americans as well, differentially by class and migration trajectory, but structurally nonetheless. Far from being outside property relations, these "unpropertied" populations are the included exclusions that have founded private property systems, animating private property through the production of scarcity and need. It is exactly these racialized populations that are disproportionately exposed to housing insecurity and deprivation—African American, non-European immigrant, and Native American populations. A 1996 study by the Urban Institute estimated that the unsheltered populations was 41 percent black, 11 percent Hispanic, and 8 percent Native American—all disproportionate for their representation in the overall population. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) notes:

> *Homelessness disproportionately affects minorities, especially African Americans.* Minorities constitute one-third of the total U.S. population and about half of the poverty population, but about two-thirds of the sheltered homeless population. African-Americans are heavily overrepresented in the sheltered homeless population, representing about 44 percent of the sheltered homeless population but 23 percent of the poverty population and only 12 percent of the general population (HUD 2008: iv).

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[7] I explore this history in detail in Chapter 2.

In the city of Seattle, a 2002 count of people utilizing homeless services identified 37 percent as African American, as opposed to 5 percent of the general population (Burt et al. 2004: 54).[8] Similarly, based on shelter stay statistics from Fiscal Year 2008, we can determine that in New York City, about 54 percent of service users were identified as Black and about 26 percent as Hispanic (New York City Department of Homeless Services Critical Activities Report 2008). This pattern holds and increases for people who spend the longest periods in shelters. One study of "chronic shelter utilizers" identified around 71 percent of such users in Philadelphia and New York City as Black (Kuhn and Culhane 1998: 222) and one project targeting people living on the street in downtown Los Angeles identifies 85 percent of those housed as African American/Black (Common Ground Institute 2009).[9]

Thus we can re-cast the claim made at the beginning of this chapter—that a house is a technology that makes live and lets die—and understand housing as a systemic form of state racism, making cuts that determine how the investments in health and life secured by housing will be distributed. As one form of private property, housing is produced by and reproduces projects of racialized subordination. As a form of private property that directly secures life, it is necessarily and endemically a contemporary project of state racism.

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[8] I am repeating the classification categories used in the cited studies.

[9] The over-exposure of African Americans vis-à-vis other racially subordinated groups can be explained both by the disproportionate levels of impoverishment of African Americans and by the limited access of Native and migrant populations to state-supported social services.

Race and the welfare state

If the preceding analysis helps update and complicate the understanding of race and racism in Foucault's formulation, we still must attend to what the term "state" implies in "state racism." The use of the term is somewhat surprising, as Foucault is generally considered strongly opposed to state-centered theory. However, Foucault did not argue that the state is irrelevant or unimportant. Rather, he was responding to a certain contemporaneous strain of Marxian theory that exclusively centered the state in analyses of power and that considered the state simply an engine for economic domination by capitalists. Foucault argued against this view, proposing that power should not be seen as something held, and held exclusively, by either the state or an economic class.[10] Foucault's account of biopower seeks to recognize the diffuse and multi-scalar nature of power, its production and circulation through the social and through the enclosures of so-called civil society. Within this model, state apparatuses must also be understood as sites of power. In fact, I would argue that Foucault's account of the population presumes the nation-state form. The biopolitical population described by Foucault is very much a population that is aligned with a nation-state form, and it is a nation-state concerned with investing in and nurturing that population. This does not mean that states have a monopoly on state racism; the range of non-state and quasi-private institutions involved in state racism will be clear as the dissertation proceeds. But looking now at the evolution

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[10] Foucault writes, "The state is not a universal nor in itself an autonomous source of power. The state is nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of a perpetual statification (*étatisation*) or statifications, in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift sources of finance, modes of investment, decision-making centers, forms and types of control, relationships between local powers, the central authority, and so on . . . . The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities" (Foucault 2008: 77).

of welfare policy and administration will demonstrate how, insofar as the state takes on projects of distribution related to economic growth, state offices and policies have been key mechanisms for instantiating technologies of state racism across the social. From this view, the nation-state is always what David Theo Goldberg describes as "the racial state," a concept that points towards "the ways homogeneity has been taken axiologically to trump the perceived threat of heterogeneous states of being" (Goldberg 2002: 6).

The racial state, through projects of state racism, instates both homogenization and differentiation. The form this takes in the twentieth century is the social welfare state. Whereas normative views of the welfare state situate it in a progression of rights accorded citizens—such that social rights to health and life follow the securing of political and civil rights—Marxist-feminist accounts suggest that welfare state apparatuses secure and guarantee the reproduction of labor within capitalist conditions of low wages and unemployment.[11] If this view might reduce state apparatuses to "the executive branch" of capitalism, it nonetheless points toward something significant which Foucault has also suggested—that capitalist modes of production depend upon the optimization of life itself. As Foucault puts it, the development of technologies of biopower was "an indispensable element in the development of capitalism" (Foucault [1978] 1990: 140-1).

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[11] Mimi Abramovitz summarizes the contribution of socialist feminism to state theory thusly: "Socialist feminists in particular argued that the welfare state arose not only to cushion the adverse impact of industrialization (liberal theory), to foster social solidarity (social citizenship theory), and to mediate the conflict between production for profit and production for need (Marxist theory), but also to underwrite the cost of social reproduction in the home. In other words, when the imperatives of profitable production—high profits, low wages, and a degree of unemployment—came into conflict with the requirements of social reproduction, the average family's need for adequate resources to carry out its assigned caretaking and maintenance tasks forced the state to step in to shore it up economically" (Abramovitz 1996: 94).

> If the development of the great instruments of the state, as *institutions* of power, ensured the maintenance of production relations, the rudiments of anatomo- and bio-politics, created in the eighteenth century as *techniques* of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies), operated in the sphere of economic processes, their development, and the forces working to sustain them. They also acted as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, exerting their influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony. The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application (Foucault [1978] 1990: 141).

As also argued by feminist accounts of the labor and cost of social reproduction, Foucault suggests here that capitalist modes of production force a reconsideration of the management, maintenance, and reproduction of human life. He points to the ways that institutions and technologies of biopower organize and foster the synchronous growth of populations and money—"the adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital."[12] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as economic activity increasingly becomes consolidated as a national economy, population health emerges as a central concern of governance, giving rise to programs that become organized as the social welfare state. The social welfare state understands itself as securing the nation by securing a national economy, and this economy is understood to be positively correlated with the growth of a national population of productive laborers. Disciplinary technologies, administered through schools, barracks, families, neighborhoods, public benefits offices, and the workplace itself, prepped subjects to perform as organized labor. Meanwhile, biopolitical technologies, in the form of social and health insurance, allowed

[12] Of course, his use of the term "men" suggests Foucault neglects those feminist accounts and the gendered organization of this labor.

for the organization of a national economy by guaranteeing the growth and overall well-being of the population.

The evolution of social welfare programs, which in the U.S. have taken the form of Social Security and Medicaid, points to the co-production of the "two faces of biopolitics"—technologies that make live and let die—and the ways they operate to secure and reproduce racialized hierarchies. If the welfare state occasions the rise of biopowerful investments in national well-being, it must bring along with it technologies of state racism for determining cuts in those investments. Comparative studies of the historical development of welfare states bear this out. The European welfare state arises as part of the history of imperial and colonial expansion. The surplus extracted through imperialism created the national wealth to underwrite social welfare programs, and so imperialism becomes the occasion for an investment in the life of the national body. At the same time, "the challenge of imperial rule demanded an 'imperial race,' which placed a burden on the state to ensure the health and welfare of its own citizens" (Lieberman 2003: 30). In the context of capital accumulation through imperial conquer, national welfare programs served an integrative function, drawing subjects of home rule into cohesion with the state through investment in their health and well-being. Simultaneously these policies demarcated the externality of colonized populations to the heart of the nation-state through exclusion from a socially-secured well-being.

> Thus the politics of welfare state building, the construction of a means of social solidarity at home, was connected to the process of drawing race-based distinctions between national citizens and colonial subjects across national boundaries. Seen in this light, the welfare state is potentially an agent of the political construction of race-based national solidarity. By linking social groups to each other and to the state through a network of social rights, welfare state institutions created in this context were thus instrumental in defining the rights of

> differently situated racially defined groups of citizens and subjects . . . (Lieberman 2003: 30).

In this way, the state-building project of welfare was simultaneously a race hierarchy building project. While subjects of home rule were organized as national citizens whose health became an object of state concern, colonized populations were entrenched in a subordinate status as a source for extraction, not site of investment.

Centralizing imperialism in accounts of welfare state development—or, in Goldberg's terms, recognizing the welfare state as a racial state—challenges a common argument that the U.S. developed a comparatively weak or laggard welfare state due to the ways that racial heterogeneity undermined possibilities for social solidarity (Lieberman 2005: 25). As Robert Lieberman points out, what distinguished the U.S. in this period was rather the large foundational presence of subordinated racial and national groups *within* the boundaries of the U.S. nation state, rather than primarily in "external" colonies, as was the case with European powers. Thus, the integrative or social solidification functions of welfare state policies threatened the maintenance of the racial hierarchies of white supremacy in the U.S. Hence, for the U.S. social welfare state, the dilemma became how to invest in the health and well-being of only part of the population and still solidify the nation.

During the early New Deal, key positions in the federal government were held by Southern elites committed to maintaining a labor and social system of racial apartheid in the post-Reconstruction South. As what became the Social Security Act was first being drafted, these Southern Congressmen were able to successfully exclude agricultural and domestic workers from eligibility—de facto denying African Americans and women access to national entitlement programs. Accompanying this limited national social

assistance program was the development of public assistance programs (including what is commonly today referred to as "welfare") administered by subnational state and local governments. Effectively, a bifurcated welfare apparatus arose, with social entitlements controlled by the national government, and public assistance programs controlled by subnational governments. The federal entitlements programs served an integrative function by securing the health and well-being of the white male population of laborers (and women and children attached to them) and binding it to the state, while excluding from those investments the internally subordinated population of African Americans, and later other racial/ethnic groups.[13] Public assistance became the welfare apparatus available to African Americans who were excluded from Social Security, as well as women who disqualified for entitlements designed for male heads of household. These benefits were "means-tested, relatively stingy, and stigmatizing" (Manza 2000: 304). Furthermore, being under local control and largely free of federal oversight, public assistance programs were amenable to arbitrary and discriminatory policies and practices that allowed whites to remain superordinate to local black populations by denying access to benefits and subjecting beneficiaries to punitive consequences for enrollment. Thus, whereas national Social Security programs invested in the reproduction of a laboring citizenry, public assistance functioned to maintain racialized and gendered hierarchies, in terms of both economic and national status, and to surveil and regulate the poor. Ruth Wilson Gilmore summarizes these results of the New Deal thusly:

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[13] While Native peoples in the U.S. have been subject to racialization within white supremacist formations, their designation as "domestic dependent nations" within the U.S. means that the social and health needs of Native populations, when addressed by the federal government, have been managed through alternate tracks, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

> On the domestic front, while labour achieved moderate protections and entitlements, worker militancy was crushed and fundamental US hierarchies remained intact. The hierarchies map both the structure of labour markets and the socio-spatial control of wealth. Thus, white people fared well compared with people of colour, most of whom were deliberately excluded from original legislation; men received automatically what women had to apply for individually; and, normatively, urban, industrial workers secured limited wage and bargaining rights denied household and agricultural field workers (Gilmore 1998/99: 176-7).

And so federalism became the structure that could simultaneously serve the state-building demands of welfare policy and the race hierarchy building needs of U.S. white supremacy. During expansion of New Deal programs in Johnson's Great Society, access to public benefits increased for excluded populations, and along with this increased access came a racialized backlash. As poverty alleviation programs became associated with populations of color, entitlements were challenged through populist and conservative Republican channels (Gilens 2003). It took a neoliberal Democratic administration, under Bill Clinton, to fully roll back welfare and transform it into today's weakened version.

Thinking of social welfare programs in terms state racism, it is not surprising that welfare reform in the 1990s revived discussion of making receipt of benefits dependent upon submission to sterilization (Neubeck and Cazenave 2001: 145-176). The life-securing and life-promoting technologies of the social welfare state have always been accompanied by active and de facto eugenic measures designed to eliminate the weak or unhealthy elements that exert a drain on the overall wealth, well-being, and vitality of the population. From this view, we can understand Foucault's claim that all modern states are racist states. We can also understand, despite his emphasis in the lecture at the Collège de France on the Third Reich, that this does not apply only to only the most obvious cases of

explicit genocide. The modern state is necessarily racist because it makes and takes up populational life, and in so doing enacts methods of state racism so that such life can live.

And so the presence of the term "state" in state racism is not incidental. Instead, as the evolution of welfare bears out, in engaging simultaneous projects of homogenization and differentiation, the state makes race in terms of investments in health and the organization and distribution of life chances. "So racism is bound up with the workings of a State that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power. The juxtaposition of—or the way biopower functions through—the old sovereign power of life and death implies the workings, the introduction and activation, of racism" (Foucault 2003: 258). The charge of the state—to organize and purify a national body—puts state racism at the core of state-building and state power. Racism is the necessary mode through which biopower is taken on by the state—"racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power, as it is exercised in modern States" (Foucault 2003: 254). This is not to say that other projects of distribution could not also be classified as technologies of state racism.[14] But it is to say that because of its concentrated power to distribute, the state is inevitably and unavoidably racist.

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[14] Dean Spade has argued that any project of redistribution is a biopolitical project, and thus necessarily engages in state racism. Comment at "The U.S. Nonprofit Industrial Complex and its Discontents," panel discussion, Annual Meeting of the American Studies Association, in Washington DC, November 2009.

Surplus life: economizing neoliberal illness and death

> We . . . no longer use the NPIC [non-profit industrial complex] term "homeless" because it is another way to turn our problems into profit for NGOs and NPICs across the globe. - *Tiny, aka Lisa Gray-Garcia*[15]

One last question remains for developing a biopower framework to account for the production of life, health, illness, and death through housing insecurity and deprivation. While Foucault's work has continued to inform scholarship across the social sciences and humanities, especially since the publication in English of his lectures at the Collège de France, little commentary exists about the historical limitations of Foucault's work in describing the contemporary moment.[16] I would argue that in particular we must attend to changes to the state form and in the economy in order to reassess the theoretical tools Foucault's work provides. Put bluntly, Foucault's model of biopolitics describes a twentieth century social welfare state that no longer exists. The historical developments in neoliberal economy and governance since the time Foucault wrote require a theoretical reformulation of biopower.

One way to think about the historical limits of biopower as described by Foucault is to point to ways in which a Durkheimian model is at play in the relationship Foucault posits between the species body of the population and the animal body of the individual human subject. Emile Durkheim, of course, compared modern social formations to a body writ large, suggesting that the different components of modern society functioned like the organs and systems of the human body. For Durkheim, the institutions of modern society work cooperatively to produce stability, allowing a society to function and stay

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[15] Quoted in "Media Justice and the Crime of Poverty--an interview with Tiny from POOR Magazine" (2010).

[16] Patricia Ticineto Clough (2008), Jasbir Puar (2007), and Melinda Cooper (2008) are notable exceptions.

alive (Durkheim [1893] 1997). I would argue that Foucault makes a similar move. In positing the "two bodies" of biopower—the animal body of the individual subject and the social body of the population—Foucault transfers a view of the human body onto the population. For Foucault, the biopoliticized population is something like the disciplined body writ large.

This translation between the individual body and the social body means that Foucault presumes that the biopolitical population, like the biological organism or individual human subject, would possess a homeostatic drive—an impulse to maintain overall systemic stability, to stay alive.[17] Thus, as described by Foucault, biopolitical technologies are directed toward maintaining this equilibrium: "This is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers" (Foucault 2003: 249). This explains why, for Foucault, projects of state racism must identify illness and weakness and cast out those elements; such elements drain the population body of energy and life, pulling it toward death. Thus, Foucault posits that the undesirable parts of a population are treated as akin to a cancer cell in a human body—a dangerous internal element that must be expunged before it sucks all life away. In this model, the production and maintenance of population norms pushes away from death and embeds the population in life. And so Foucault writes that the aim of biopolitical technologies

> is not to modify any given phenomenon as such, or to modify a given individual insofar as he is an individual, but, essentially, to intervene at the level at which these general phenomena are determined, to intervene at the level of their

[17] This reading of homeostasis and biopower is informed by Clough (2004) and Parisi and Terranova (2000).

> generality. The mortality rate has to be modified or lowered; life expectancy has to be increased; the birth rate has to be stimulated. And most important of all, regulatory mechanisms must be established to establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis, and compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field (Foucault 2003: 246).

The model of homeostasis subtending Foucault's account of biopolitics demands a state that desires to grow and live on through its national population. The state seeks to do so by making population patterns knowable and predictable in order to direct the population toward life.

I do not wish to argue that the social is or is not like a human body—or even that the human body operates always in terms of homeostasis—but I want to point out that the homeostatic-organic model that underwrites Foucault's biopolitics also underwrites the Keynesian welfare state and the concept of the national economy to which it is attached. Keynesianism introduced a set of state controls to mitigate the effects of capital's fluctuations. As David Harvey demonstrates, it did so by generalizing Fordist principles across economic and social realms. If Fordism sought to systemize mass production through a regularization of labor in the factory, Fordist-Keynesianism sought to bring that grid of regularization to labor outside the factory, to labor as a population subject to the ebbs and flows of economic cycles. "The problem, as an economist like Keynes saw it, was to arrive at a set of scientific managerial strategies and state powers that would stabilize capitalism, while avoiding the evident repressions and irrationalities, all the warmongering and narrow nationalism that national socialist solutions implied" (Harvey 1989: 129). In the U.S., this happened through the introduction of the New Deal, which effected a "tense but nevertheless firm balance of power . . . between organized labour, large corporate capital, and the nation state" (Harvey 1989: 129). By supplementing low-

wages and investing in the health needs of a racially and gender stratified workforce, as described by Gilmore above, the New Deal regularized the well-being of labor while allowing for continued capital expansion. In this way, Keynesianism, like Foucault, assumed that the body politic, the national population of laborers, must thrive and grow in order for the nation to do the same; the health of one beget the health of the other.

By the mid-1960s, the limits of Keynesianism to stabilize the inherent tumult produced by capitalist competition became apparent. Rather than an endemic part of capitalism, this was understood as the failures of regularization as a project:

> More generally, the period from 1965 to 1973 was one in which the inability of Fordism and Keynesianism to contain the inherent contradictions of capitalism became more and more apparent. On the surface, these difficulties could best be captured by one word: rigidity. There were problems with the rigidity of long-term and large-scale fixed capital investments in mass-production systems that precluded much flexibility of design and presumed stable growth in invariant consumer markets. There were problems of rigidities in labour markets, labour allocation, and in labour contracts . . . (Harvey 1989: 141-2).

In other words, Keynesianism demanded a rigidity that was out of phase with the irregularity of capital. Needed instead were political interventions that matched this irregularity. Patricia Ticineto Clough describes this as a shift away from viewing the economy as a closed system toward an engagement "in terms of disequilibrium in open systems under far-from-equilibrium conditions" (Clough 2004: 11).

Post-Keynesianism, then, introduces what Harvey describes in terms of a "flexible accumulation" that attempts to correct the rigidities of Fordism. Flexible accumulation involves both a flexibility of production—a move to just-in-time production as opposed to simply mass production—as well as a flexibility of labor, meaning its informalization. Flexible accumulation requires as well a post-social state, and so we have the introduction of a neoliberal reduction and dismantling of social welfare programs. As

Jacques Donzelot succinctly describes it, "Neo-liberalism wants intervention only if it serves competition. It neglects the social and even condemns it by only accepting social policy as a struggle against exclusion on condition, again, that it is not aiming to reduce inequalities" (Donzelot 2008: 131). Neoliberal reforms shift responsibility for managing the dangers of living in capitalism away form the state and once again directly onto individuals, who must figure out for themselves how to survive low wages and endemic underemployment. As Gilmore puts it, "The sum of these displacements was socialised, in a negative way, by the state's displacement from its Keynesian job to produce equilibrium from profound imbalances" (Gilmore 1998/99: 179).[18]

Of course, surviving in these conditions is not so easy, and the dismantling of social welfare nets and the related deindustrialization of the domestic economy has brought great social disorder in the form of entrenched poverty and a widening racialized wealth gap. This destructive restructuring has resulted in greater numbers of dispossessed populations alienated from the restructured labor market, which relies on overseas and domestically undocumented labor. This alienated labor can be described as "surplus populations." Some use the term only to mean Marx's reserve army of labor—those who, blocked from labor but capable of being brought back in, function to keep wages low by keeping competition for low-wage jobs high. But in the contemporary context we see that this removal from formal labor becomes more or less a "permanent redundancy"

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[18] This socialization has occurred through the family, as family structures are meant to pick up the slack of the social welfare state that once saw itself as stabilizing the family. One way to frame today's unsheltered population—understood to be largely single adult men—is as impoverished people with no family network to absorb them. This simultaneous reliance upon and abandonment of the family might help explain the hysterical paranoia around family values that characterizes the recent neoliberal era in the U.S.

(Gilmore 1998/99: 182) beyond the requirements of a reserve army. The great masses of people living today without shelter are part of these neoliberal surplus populations.

If the neoliberal state does not protect against permanent redundancy, it must nonetheless deal with the populations generated out of it. The Keynesian welfare state directed itself to the laborer, and understood the maintenance and growth of labor as its goal. Thus it targeted laborers who needed a supplement to their wages in order to reproduce their own lives, and in varying ways (and degrees) assisted those designated unfit to labor, due to being to old, too female, or too improperly embodied. Neoliberal social programs, on the other hand, have become in many ways detached from a strict relationship to labor. In the neoliberal context, the freedom of market mechanisms, and not the health of a population, are understood to guarantee the well-being of a national economy from which individual well-being is presumed to flow. The 2009-10 debates about healthcare reform clearly illustrate this, as state-sponsored healthcare was understood as dangerous to the nation and the populace, a threat to a free market of healthcare services and goods. In such a context, instead of securing the health of a labor force through investments in labor, social programs seek to manage populations. Rather than serve the economy by keeping labor happy, healthy, and alive, such programs serve the economy directly as *part of the economy*, as a social welfare industry. Today, this social welfare industry includes governmental offices, private and quasi-private social service agencies, academic institutions, and commercial sectors, especially real estate developers in the form of Business Improvement Districts. Through this industry, the production of social scientific knowledge and the provision of social services becomes an important site for the circulation of capital. Some have described the growing social

service sector as the "nonprofit industrial complex" (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence 2007), and others designate ours as a unique stage of "philanthrocapitalism" (Edwards 2008). In the epigraph that opens this section, housing activist Tiny, aka Lisa Gray-Garcia, recognizes the category of "homeless" as a technical apparatus of such philanthrocapitalism—what I have been terming "an object of knowledge and intervention"—and recognizes as well the stake nonprofits have in stable categories such as "the homeless."

The effect of the neoliberal shift from the social welfare state is a thorough re-imagination of social programs as economic programs. In his lectures on German and American neoliberalism, Foucault describes this as "a sort of complete superimposition of market mechanisms, indexed to competition, and governmental policy. Government must accompany the market economy from start to finish" (Foucault 2008: 121). Donzelot characterizes this as the move from social welfare to social investment:

> As it happens, we have a first movement going from the social to the economic and which consists in investing in the competitiveness of the employee in the name of the social, through education, training and the struggle against unemployment. A second movement goes from the economic to the social and leads to the requirement that investment in the latter must be profitable. This may be translated, for example, into a particular emphasis being put on prevention rather than compensation in the areas of health, employment and retirement. As a minimum, this criterion of profitability takes the form of the requirement of transparency in the conduct and results of a social policy, which, to say the least, is not made easy by reasoning purely in terms of acquired rights. Let's say, the transition from the Welfare State to the Social Investment State (Donzelot 2008: 131-2).

In the context of neoliberal restructuring, it is not enough for social programs to serve capital by mitigating the effects of capital exploitation. Rather, social programs are themselves subject to the logics and rigor of capital competition, and must demonstrate capacity to survive in competitive environment of limited resources. As Foucault puts it,

neoliberalism demands and calls forth "a state under the supervision of the market rather than a market supervised by the state (Foucault 2008: 116).

In this shift from Keynesianism to the competitive management of populations through social welfare industries, risk is not just privatized, as Gilmore argues, but re-imagined. Efforts to bend flexibly to the fluctuating demands of capital growth effect a reconceptualization of risk and disorder from a danger to a possibility. As Harvey describes it, the challenge becomes learning to "play the volatility right" (Harvey 1989: 286). Naomi Klein has recently popularized this argument with the concept of "disaster capitalism" (Klein 2008).[19] Under neoliberalism, risk and disorder are not understood as needing to be reduced or contained, as in the Fordist-Keynesian model. Rather they become opportunities for capital growth. This marks a general shift to *investment in* risk and disorder that characterizes neoliberal approaches to economics, a shift that allows for perceiving social problems and their embodiment—permanent surplus populations—as economic opportunities. The opportunity is not a larger reserve army of labor. Rather, this opportunity is realized in the development of new service and knowledge industries directed toward managing surplus populations. Neoliberal economic restructuring, including the destruction of cities that produces mass housing deprivation, generates a disorder that from a Fordist-Keynesian model may appear as a threat to capital growth. Neoliberal technologies of governance transform that disorder into opportunities for investment and growth by absorbing it into service and knowledge industries. The

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[19] It has also meant a rise of risk, and has driven what Randy Martin (2002) describes as the financialization of everyday life, in which individuals bear those risks and take on speculative roles of finance capital. Similarly, we see the increased importance of things like carbon futures, where we bet against security and wager on disaster. Kaushik Sunder Rajan (2006) suggests that the post-Fordist shift drives a move to more and more speculative forms of investment in risky life.

homeless management industry investigated in this dissertation is one such example of this, where post-social programs meet post-industrial economies.

We can thus update Foucault's original formulation of state racism to account for contemporary neoliberal economy and governance. In a context of the neoliberalization of social welfare programs into social welfare industries, illness and unproductivity may not need to be reduced or eliminated, as they would be in the social welfare state. Rather, illness and waste, and populations organized as such, become fertile sites for economic investment, as they multiply opportunities for developing and extending governance mechanisms, making the economic life of governance possible. Neoliberal technologies reconfigure biopolitics such that waste and illness are not losses or drains that must be eliminated. Rather they are the very conditions of possibility for neoliberal social welfare apparatuses. Furthermore, under post-Keynesian neoliberal restructuring, economic growth is not understood as dependent upon the well-being of a population. Instead, neoliberal investment demands a proliferation of risk, uncertainty, and instability. Surplus populations then, are not simply let to die, but in their slow deaths are managed by social service and social science industries.

This contradicts, of course, popular and racist arguments that homeless populations are a social waste, draining the economy and offering nothing in return. This view is dangerously reproduced when scholarship fails to account for the ways that neoliberalism brings the persistence of social disorder into the economy. Some have argued, for example, that contemporary mass homelessness can be understood through Giorgio Agamben's discussion of "bare life" (Agamben 1998). Drawing from the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt, Agamben argues that bare life describes those

populations excluded from political order and stripped of political agency, incapable of assuming representation. This line of thinking has drawn necessary attention to the interrelations of symbolic and political disenfranchisement. For example, Leonard Feldman's *Citizens Without Shelter: Homelessness, Democracy, and Political Exclusion* (2004) documents how policy and police apparatuses increasingly make living without shelter an illegal and impossible subject position that codifies a cultural figuration of unsheltered populations as subhuman or animal.[20] The limits of this analysis result from its neglect of the economic realm, a failure to account for the ways in which neoliberal technologies are simultaneously governmental and economic. Aihwa Ong points out in her critique of Agamben's model of bare life.

> Indeed, different degrees of political and moral claims by the politically marginalized can be negotiated in the shifting nexus of logics and power. There are conceptual limits to models that pose a simple opposition between normalized citizenship and bare life. Giorgio Agamben draws a stark contrast between citizens who enjoy juridicallegal rights and excluded groups who dwell in "a zone of indistinction." But ethnographic study of particular situations reveals that negotiations on behalf of the politically excluded can produce indeterminate or ambiguous outcomes. Indeed, this is the complex work of NGOs everywhere, to identify and articulate moral problems and claims in particular milieus. At times, even business rationality may be invoked in seeking sheer survival for those bereft of citizenship or citizenship-like protections (Ong 2006: 7).

Following Ong, we must notice the ways that political and social exclusion can be a form of economic inclusion, an occasion for moral claims set to business rationalities. Another way to say this is that the processes of extreme marginalization and dehumanization of unsheltered populations, which Feldman describes and others corroborate, take place inside an economy and to the benefit of that economy. Rather than bare life, I would say

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[20] For example, Feldman points to how courts have refused to recognize homelessness as an "involuntary status" (60-2).

that these surplus populations constitute a form of surplus life—life that is considered unnecessary, and that is nonetheless productive of surplus value in a neoliberal economy.

The past few decades have seen an expansion of federal funding for homeless services as well as the growth of nonprofit organizations focused on addressing unsheltered populations. The homeless management industry, as part of the nonprofit industrial complex, gains cultural legitimacy through its moral claims on behalf of politically abandoned populations, and financial backing for its promise to reduce the negative impact of those neoliberal surplus lives on social and economic order. This social service sector growth has happened simultaneous to a continued growth of populations living without shelter. Like those founding exclusions that first made racialized private property systems possible, populations living without shelter are the internally abandoned populations that allow for neoliberal governance and economies. And so the post-social welfare state moves beyond Foucault's formulation of a zero sum game in which those marked as ill or unproductive, like "the homeless," would be treated only as negation or loss. State racism in the neoliberal context is a process of calculation and distribution in addition to deprivation. Contemporary programs targeting unsheltered populations should not be mistaken for political and social rescue of abandoned populations. These programs emerge to manage the costs of social abandonment, and to transform the illness and death that result from housing deprivation into productive parts of post-industrial service and knowledge economies. Neoliberal forms of state racism allow for the continued reproduction of housing insecurity and deprivation as forms of racial subordination, even while transforming those "losses" into productive economic enterprises.

For Foucault, death, through state racism, makes life because it eliminates that which would sap the population of its strength and vitality; it is a cutting out of loss and negation. But understanding death, the production of death, and the management of death as economic activities forces recognition that that which is ill or dying need not be eliminated to grant biopolitical life to a population. The activity of dying, of being ill, offers *economic* life and productivity, as matter to be neoliberally and biopolitically managed. Social welfare policy and administration, as biopolitical technologies and economic enterprises, may invest in life and health as objects of governance without challenging the conditions that reproduce and distribute illness and exposure to premature death. In the neoliberal context, economic activity and biopolitical death grow side by side. Housing deprivation is one case of this.

Thus, biopolitical programs today, such as those discussed in the following chapters, should not be misread through the lens of the social welfare state. Rather, they must be taken on as what they are—competitive neoliberal industries of population management. As such, far from "ending homelessness," these programs secure the very economic conditions that expose populations to housing insecurity and deprivation. In so doing, they reproduce and extend the uneven distribution of life and death in neoliberal housing and the circulation of surplus populations as surplus life.

Chapter 2
Managing the Homeless: From Pathology to Population

In the bifurcation of social welfare programs in the U.S., housing and other services for populations living without shelter have been grouped with public assistance rather than federal entitlement programs. Hence the responsibility for administering these programs has fallen on subnational state, county, and municipal governments, as well as on private and quasi-private organizations, from churches to modern social service agencies. Within this homeless management nexus, the federal government has played a limited but quite powerful role. The current period of federal involvement begins in 1987, and is preceded by only one other such period, during the early New Deal, from 1932-34. These moments of federal involvement tell an important story about the changing nature of state governance and the relationship of those changes to the pressures of economic restructuring. As we will see, if the early New Deal represents a stabilization of social and economic order through investments in labor, the return of federal involvement in the mid-1980s might better be thought of as a stabilization of consumption in the context of new service and knowledge economies.

Federal intervention into housing insecurity and deprivation must contend with long-standing discourses about the causes of homelessness and the most effective strategies for managing it; those discourses shape federal responses, and are being re-shaped by them as well. I will argue that federal programs launched in 1987 introduced a new dimension of governance to a long-standing disciplinary dimension. If that

disciplinary dimension seeks to mold individual homeless *subjects* by changing their thinking and behavior, this new dimension concerns the organization and regulation of a homeless *population* and its impact on government resources and local economies. Thus, the return of the federal government forces what I term a biopoliticization of homelessness, a techno-conceptual reorganization of homelessness from pathological subjects to problem populations. Nonetheless, biopolitical technologies of homeless management do not mark the end of discipline. To the contrary, disciplinary technologies of homeless management offer a track across which biopolitical technologies roll out.[1] But in that process, disciplinary technologies—and the homeless subjects constituted through them—are transformed.

Housing insecurity and federal intervention

In what follows, I consider changes in the forms of housing insecurity in the U.S., as well as the changing role of the federal government. I look especially at two eras of federal involvement—in the early 1930s and in the mid-1980s to today—as well as the interim era, in which an unofficial policy of containment stood in place of active federal intervention.

Early colonial settler era to WWII

From the early days of white colonial settlement of North America through most of the history of the United States, people living without shelter have been considered a local

[1] In a well-known essay, science studies scholar Bruno Latour presents the argument that any new technology rolls-out across already existing technologies. Latour compares any new scientific practice to a train—a train cannot run in an empty field, it must travel across pre-existing tracks (Latour 1998).

problem to be dealt with by local institutions. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period of reform known as the Progressive Era, the jailhouses of growing cities often allocated space for non-carcerated individuals who needed shelter to spend the night (Kusmer 2002: 3). During the same period, charitable organizations, usually church-based, built lodging houses to address shelter needs. In exchange for shelter, food, and prayer services, lodgers were required to perform what was known as a "work test," consisting of several hours of manual labor, such as breaking stone or cutting lumber (Ibid.: 74). While the work served a small productive economic function—the sale of the stone or wood generated funds for maintaining lodging houses—as the term "test" implies, its greater function was adjudicative, ferreting out those whose moral fiber failed to measure up to the standards confirmed by labor. The work test identified those *willing* to work, but temporarily unable to secure employment. At the same time, in language similar to contemporary evocations of the "deserving" versus "undeserving" poor, "tramps" who traveled illegally on railcars and lived in semi-permanent camps outside the legal and moral purview of municipalities were looked down upon in disdain for what was understood to be a shunning of modern industrialized existence through a refusal to work (Ibid.: 74-5). While tramps opted out of the lodging house system, the task remained for lodging house administrators to identify and eliminate those among shelter-seekers with morally inferior tramp sensibilities. By the beginning of the twentieth century, municipal-run lodging houses emerged alongside those that were privately run. These city shelters often did not require a work test and were thereby viewed more favorably by lodgers who resented the paternalism of the test.

Despite being petty and paternalistic, the work test signaled an important connection between labor status and housing status. During this period, housing insecurity largely resulted from the economic insecurity of marginalization from work, and was understood in these terms (Rossi 1989: 18). The number of people living without shelter and seeking shelter at lodging houses fluctuated along with economic downturns and upswings, as well as with seasonal cycles of agricultural and industrial production. The economic crisis that began in 1929 and became the Great Depression greatly increased the number of unemployed and marginally employed, and therefore the numbers of impoverished people unable to afford private housing accommodations (Ibid.: 194). The Great Depression not only marked an increase and diffusion of housing insecurity and deprivation, but also the first time the federal government of the United States directly addressed unsheltered populations. This was not simply a case of responding to a growing need. That housing deprivation became a "national problem" had as much to do with the emerging federal governmental infrastructure of the New Deal as with the fact that housing insecurity was becoming generalized across the United States.[2] As we will see again in the 1980s, national crises are not natural occurrences; the recognition of something *as* a national problem requiring federal intervention is a contingent and contested process. During the 1930s, a national capacity for intervention, in the form of New Deal administrative initiatives, allowed housing insecurity to register as a national crisis, rather than one simply diverted back to local jurisdictions. Furthermore, as Kenneth Kusmer points out, this era of federal involvement marked a response to conditions that were considered acceptable for African Americans and

[2] For accounts of the New Deal, see Amenta (2000); Quadagno (1994); Skocpol (1995).

Mexican migrants, but intolerable when white males were subjected to them (Kusmer 2002: 232). Insofar as housing insecurity was seen as an epiphenomenon of general (white male) labor insecurity, it fell within the purview of federal intervention.

The federal response to the growing unsheltered population in the 1930s was in fact fairly swift and bold; it turned out to be short-lived as well. At that time, local laws still operated under settler colonial logics, and access to lodging houses depended on establishing "settler rights" (Rossi 1989: 18), or what today might be thought of as local residency claims.[3] To be admitted to a lodging house required proof of belonging in that jurisdiction. The great masses of unsheltered people living "on the road" posed a challenge to these protocols. Many no longer had claims to settler rights, due to being in transit for extended periods of time. Many others lacked the means to return to where those rights were held. The displaced masses of this period pressured the existing settler rights system, such that the federal government created the new category of "federal transient"—something like an internal refugee (refugeed from local settler status) who was now granted a direct relationship to the federal government in lieu of a relationship to a local government (Ibid.: 210).[4]

Beginning in 1932, through the newly formed Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the federal government established or subsidized urban Federal Transient Centers as well as camps in rural regions. These supplemented the private and municipal lodging houses already in existence but overwhelmed by the dramatic increase in need. The urban centers served to connect residents to the contingent employment

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[3] This is another example, of course, of the ways that inclusion into state apparatuses is always a process of both homogenization and differentiation/exclusion.

[4] Not until 1969 did the United States Supreme Court put an end to settlement issues regarding social welfare programs.

opportunities of the city. Older transients, those aged 40 and over, were often directed to rural camps, and therefore moved outside of urban labor circuits. As Peter Rossi notes, "From this distance the federal camps appear to have been rural warehouses for those considered unemployable" (Rossi 1989: 25).

Within a few years, New Deal administrators turned their efforts to large-scale infrastructural public works projects, and FERA was quickly and somewhat unexpectedly dismantled in the summer and fall of 1934, less than two years after its founding, and despite the fact that FERA centers and camps had housed an estimated one million people (Kusmer, 2002: 218). Some centers continued to operate without federal funding, and others permanently shut down, dispersing their residents to lodging houses or other communities (Rossi 1989: 25). The first era of federal intervention had come to a close.

From post-war to post-industrial neoliberalism

By 1943, the war economy kicked in, and the phenomenon of unsheltered traveling masses began to die down. Tramp culture and camps also began disappearing as seasonal tramp labor was increasingly displaced by developments in industrial agricultural technology (Rossi 1989: 21). What remained was a population confined more or less to the "Skid Rows" of urban centers (Ibid.: 27). Much of this population, what one author describes as "prosperity's discontents" (Hopper 1997: 17), would not fit contemporary technical definitions of "homelessness," as for the most part they lived not on the streets, but in lodging houses and private hotels, or SROs. In addition to this housing, Skid Row districts provided a concentration of low-cost consumer services, social services, and opportunities for underground and contingent day labor (Wright and Rubin 1997: 212).

Official perception of Skid Row residents retained the moral judgments of earlier eras. For example, one commentator writing in 1948 claimed, "The skid rower does not bathe, eat regularly, dress respectfully, marry or raise children, attend school, vote, own property, or regularly live in the same place. He does little work of any kind. He does not even steal. The skid rower does nothing, he just is. He is everything that all the rest of us try not to be" (cited in Kusmer 2003: 230). The statement, typical of the era, projects the failures of industrialization onto individuals who are figured as embodying the antitheses of the American work ethic and gender/family norms.

Without accepting the moral judgment of the commentator cited above, we can ask what is new or distinct about Skid Row residents versus earlier unsheltered populations. The concentration of unsheltered populations in Skid Row districts represents what I would argue is the solidification of housing insecurity as a distinct phenomenon that can no longer be understood as simply a subset of unemployment; it is the beginnings of a new permanent redundancy. From this time on, unsheltered populations become increasingly marginalized from all but the most underground forms of labor, as well as from the organizations and institutions of modern urban life other than those whose missions targeted unsheltered populations. A complex set of conditions coalesce to produce new forms of housing insecurity and deprivation such that bringing someone into legal or regular employment became an insufficient redress. As a result, housing insecurity and deprivation become quasi-independent dimensions of the population, and unsheltered populations come to crystallize around a set of common characteristics. This occurs through a set of changes related to economic restructuring beginning as early as the 1950s, producing what by 1975 historians were calling the "new

homeless" (e.g. Hopper 1997; Kusmer 2002; Rossi 1989). The category means to capture a cluster of demographic characteristics: the new homeless are depicted as younger, more destitute, and extremely marginalized from employment, and their ranks are understood to include more women and greatly disproportionate numbers of people of color (Rossi 1989: 38-39). Because the category of "new homeless" evokes the level of the individual subject, making housing deprivation something of an identity, we might instead think in terms of an emergent neoliberal housing insecurity. I want to consider the processes that produce housing insecurity within neoliberalism in order to clarify why housing deprivation takes on the demographic characteristics it does.

Starting in the 1950s, the federal government directed its attention to Skid Row districts, though not out of concern with the well-being of the people who lived there. Rather, government officials looked to Skid Row through a financial lens, in terms of property values and opportunities for economic investment and growth (Rossi 1989: 28-29). Social scientific studies at the time did not deal with the plight of those living in subsistence conditions within Skid Row districts, but with how government and industry could "revitalize" the neighborhoods for what would turn out to be neoliberal post-industrial/service economies catering to tourists and wealthy urban consumers. By the 1960s and 70s, cities across the United States were tearing down their Skid Rows, emptying and demolishing residential hotels, and driving out the businesses frequented by Skid Row residents (Kusmer 2003: 236).

Clearly, the elimination of this form of housing had both immediate and long-term effects—immediate in the displacement of residents, and long-term in the erosion of

a form of private housing on which future populations in need of low-cost shelter could no longer depend. Wright and Rubin document the loss of this housing stock:

> In San Francisco, 17.7 percent of the existing SRO units were destroyed or converted in a four-year period in the late 1970s, with further losses since. Similarly, in New York City there was an overall 60 percent loss of SRO hotel rooms between 1975 and 1981. The number of New York hotels charging less than $50 per week declined from 298 to 131 in that period; of hotels dropping out of that price range, the majority are no longer even hotels and have been converted to other uses, mainly to condominiums. Denver lost 28 of its 45 SRO hotels between 1971 and 1981, Seattle lost 15,000 unites of SRO housing from 1960 to 1981, and San Diego lost 1,247 units between 1976 and 1984 (Wright and Rubin 1997: 211).

Urban renewal efforts did not only target Skid Rows, but impoverished inner-city neighborhoods generally, which were violently bisected by highway construction that facilitated white flight to booming post-war suburbs (Harris 2006; Lipsitz 1995). This flight was subsidized by the federal government through Federal Housing Authority programs that underwrote home ownership for predominantly white areas while denying loans to communities of color. The sum total of these developments was to increase and intensify housing insecurity for urban populations of color, who found low-income rental housing options disappearing and mortgages for home purchase out of reach. Thus, from the 1960s on, the size of the unsheltered population began to grow. Members of this population would find themselves struggling to survive in a reconfigured urban landscape created out of the ruins of Skid Row and other low-income neighborhoods and increasingly hostile to their presence.

The destruction of Skid Rows and other inner city neighborhoods was only one part of a large web of political, social and economic changes, what together constituted a neoliberal restructuring of urban communities and economies. This was a creative destruction that cleared the way for the social and economic forces of gentrification to

move in, what Neil Smith describes as a "new urbanism" (Smith 1996). As Smith documents, this new era of gentrification, as part of a larger neoliberal remaking of the city and its economy, transformed formerly neglected or abandoned urban centers into sites of intense real estate speculation:

> This new urbanism embodies a widespread and drastic repolarization of the city along political, economic, cultural and geographical lines since the 1970s, and is integral with larger global shifts. Systematic gentrification since the 1960s and 1970s is simultaneously a response and contributor to a series of global transformations: global economic expansion in the 1980s; the restructuring of national and urban economies in advanced capitalist countries toward services, recreation and consumption; and emergence of a global hierarchy of world, national and regional cities. These shifts have propelled gentrification from a comparatively marginal preoccupation in a certain niche of the real estate industry to the cutting edge of urban change (Smith 1996: 6-7).

Further aspects of neoliberal economic restructuring multiplied the life-threatening effects of "renewal" and gentrification. De-industrialization, the emergence of service economies, and the rollback of welfare programs increased economic disparity and alienation from labor markets for former Skid Row residents (Kusmer 2003, 239; see also Hopper 1997: 23). Beyond Skid Row, the strongest impact of these changes, like urban renewal programs, was felt by urban populations of color. Kenneth Kusmer points specifically to the intensification of African American exposure to housing insecurity through declining employment opportunities, barriers to education and new job industries, and the racialized effects of the 1970s economic recession (Kusmer 2003: 242). From the 1970s on, the over-exposure of these racially subordinated populations intensifies and becomes entrenched. But rather than a decisive break (implied by the category "new homeless"), neoliberal governance enacts a drawing out and consolidation of housing insecurity and deprivation as forms of racialized subordination.

What the "new homelessness" winds up looking like is shaped not only by these political economic forces, but by social responses as well. The average age of people living without shelter lowers due to the expansion of Social Security, providing a greater level of economic security for those who age out of labor. Women's housing insecurity is managed through public assistance and domestic violence programs that attach women to family structures (Skocpol 1992; see also Kusmer 2002: 10-11). This gendered and gendering apparatus has not eliminated women's experiences of housing insecurity—which have grown alongside the "feminization of poverty"—but they have directed that insecurity through alternative channels of management. Thus, the population of people living on the street is disproportionately male. The police and prison systems scoop up the majority of this population, leaving behind a small fraction to be dealt with by the homeless services industry.[5]

Neoliberal economic and social transformations did not only increase the numbers of people living without shelter, but "by the end of the twentieth century a much enlarged homeless population was apparently on the way to becoming a permanent feature of postindustrial America" (Kusmer 2003: 239). Unlike periods in which economic upturns significantly reduced housing insecurity and deprivation, the recovery of the U.S. economy from the recession of the 1970s did not decrease housing deprivation (Burt and Aron 2000); the numbers of people living without shelter continued to grow from the 1970s on. I am not suggesting that economic recessions and labor structures no longer contribute to housing insecurity and deprivation. Rather, I wish to point to the ways in

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[5] The massive expansion of the prison system from the 1970s on, as well as the extremely disproportionate targeting of racially subordinated populations for imprisonment, is well documented. See, for example, Gilmore (2007) and Wacquant (2009).

which neoliberal housing insecurity and deprivation can no longer be explained, or contained, by employment. In the neoliberal era, housing insecurity becomes an embedded feature of population dynamics, a permanent redundancy that is an intrinsic dimension of the national population rather than an epiphenomenon of something like unemployment. Neoliberal reforms also reveal that we cannot think in terms of a dependent categorical variable—housed or not housed—that could then be simply related to a set of independent variables—gender, race, and age, for example. Rather, housing insecurity is constituted out of those social dimensions, and housing-deprived is another way of naming the surplus populations produced by the inequalities of those dimensions. Housing insecurity has a "nature," if you will, and its nature is a concentration of vulnerabilities. The next section looks to how these neoliberal surplus populations, as they spill out of their former containment in Skid Row, become managed in the contemporary era.

HUD and the new crisis of homelessness

In 1982, a senior official in the Department of Housing and Urban Development told the *Boston Globe* that "no one is living on the streets" (cited in Hopper 1997: 47). Unfortunately, such willful denial did not make this so. The residents of Skid Row districts did not simply disappear when those neighborhoods and the housing they offered were destroyed. Far from it: the complex forces of neoliberalism increased the size of unsheltered populations, who, no longer concentrated (or contained) in Skid Rows were dispersed more broadly through urban public places, where they were considered threats to exactly those tourist and consumer economies for which the death of Skid Row was

meant to make room. Thus, neoliberalism produced its own problem population, its own uncontainable excess. It was in this context that housing insecurity re-emerged as a national concern, this time as "the homeless crisis." The federal government, already involved in projects of urban renewal, stepped in to secure neoliberal urban economies by managing the disorder those economies created. This new moment of federal intervention evidences what Eve Cherniavsky has called "the duplicity of the modern nation-state," which she argues is "the double imperative to advance the public good and to secure private property in its myriad and proliferating forms" (Cherniavsky 2009: 4).

A series of federal agencies charged with housing issues followed the dissolution of FERA but did not deal with unsheltered populations. Rather, these agencies, which were re-organized as HUD in 1965-66, dealt first with increasing home-ownership and providing rental assistance for low-income families, and later became involved in the urban renewal programs documented above.[6] Not until 1987, with the passage by Congress of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, did targeting homelessness become part of HUD's broad mission of urban development. The introduction to the act, later renamed McKinney-Vento, delineates both a crisis and a federal responsibility to respond:

> The Congress finds that—
>
> (1) the Nation faces an immediate and unprecedented crisis due to the lack of shelter for a growing number of individuals and families, including elderly persons, handicapped persons, families with children, Native Americans, and veterans;

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[6] There is very little documented history of HUD available. Lawrence L. Thompson, who worked in the department for over twenty-five years, self-published *A History of HUD* following his retirement. His account has helped form my own, which is based as well on Congressional records and HUD's own documentation.

> (2) the problem of homelessness has become more severe and, in the absence of more effective efforts, is expected to become dramatically worse, endangering the lives and safety of the homeless;
>
> (3) the causes of homelessness are many and complex, and homeless individuals have diverse needs;
>
> (4) there is no single, simple solution to the problem of homelessness because of the different subpopulations of the homeless, the different causes of and reasons for homelessness, and the different needs of homeless individuals;
>
> (5) due to the record increase in homelessness, States, units of local government, and private voluntary organizations have been unable to meet the basic human needs of all the homeless and, in the absence of greater Federal assistance, will be unable to protect the lives and safety of all the homeless in need of assistance; and
>
> (6) the Federal Government has a clear responsibility and an existing capacity to fulfill a more effective and responsible role to meet the basic human needs and to engender respect for the human dignity of the homeless (U.S. Code, Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, §11301).[7]

The McKinney-Vento Act was the first federal policy addressing populations living without shelter since the dissolution of FERA. The Act responded to the new crisis of homelessness both by putting in place new mechanisms and by reorganizing systems that were already in place. McKinney-Vento founded the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) "to coordinate the federal response to homelessness and to constellate a national partnership at every level of government and every element of the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation" (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2009: 4). The ICH works across all federal agencies whose missions intersect with housing insecurity and deprivation; in addition to HUD, these include the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Veterans Affairs.

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[7] The mention of Native Americans in the Act is notable, especially considering the lack of homeless programming targeting these populations, as well as the lack of other groups being named, especially African Americans. The federal government winds up developing a separate "Indian housing" program in response to Native housing insecurity.

The mission of the ICH was revitalized, and it was made a fully independent agency, under George W. Bush. Today the ICH plays a significant role in setting policy direction and shaping public discourse.

The McKinney Vento Act also established funding for new programs that operate through subnational government offices and nonprofit organizations. HUD has been granted primary responsibility for managing these homeless funding tracks and programming initiatives, grouped together as Special Needs Assistance. Programs include funding for emergency shelter, supportive housing programs for populations diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities, housing for unsheltered populations living with HIV/AIDS, and rental assistance for formerly unsheltered or at-risk families and individuals.[8] Ironically (or perhaps not), HUD's homelessness initiatives are situated within its Community Planning and Development office, or CPD. An extension of its urban renewal efforts from the 1960s and 70s, HUD's CPD efforts have been roundly criticized for increasing rather than challenging racial inequality in housing and business development.

The differences between the role of the federal government in the 1930s and today illustrate the shift from the social welfare state that was just emerging during FERA to the contemporary post-social or neoliberal state. Today the U.S. federal government does not run its own shelters or programs, as was the case with Federal Transient Centers and camps during the 1930s. Rather, through the McKinney-Vento Act, the federal government provides funds to private agencies and subnational state and municipal

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[8] This dissertation will go on to investigate in detail two of HUD's recent programs. Chapter 3 looks at the development of databases protocols and reporting requirements for agencies receiving HUD funding. Chapter 4 explores HUD's chronic homelessness programs.

governments to administer housing and related services. In 1987, the first year of McKinney programs, Congress provided 350.2 million dollars in funding for those programs (National Coalition for the Homeless 2006); in fiscal year 2009, HUD's budget for its Homeless Assistance programming was 1.677 billion dollars (HUD 2009: 14). Despite this "out-sourcing" of service administration to lower levels of government and private agencies, I would argue that the McKinney-Vento Act instantiates an *increase* of federal authority, compared with both the time of FERA as well as the over fifty years of federal non-involvement between FERA and McKinney-Vento. The nature of this federal authority is not simply a top-down hierarchy, but rather a "heterarchic" arrangement of what can be described as "metagovernance," or the governance of governance (Jessop 2007). Through the McKinney-Vento Act and its programs, the federal government enacts a multiplication and reorganization of the scales of governance, overseeing and linking up local municipalities, regions, states, and federal offices.[9] Within these heterarchic arrangements, the McKinney-Vento Act instates programmatic parameters, including what kinds of populations can be housed, what kinds of housing can be built, and how services and outcomes must be assessed and reported. In a sense, federal policy on housing insecurity functions as a domestic form of structural adjustment, in which states, municipalities, and localities are "free" to innovate within restrictions attached to funding. And this funding, it should be noted, only ever covers a small part of an agency's operating costs—no nonprofit or municipal agency is fully funded by HUD. Agencies are however often required to secure HUD funding in order to qualify for

[9] In addition to Jessop (2007) for this model of neoliberalism I am drawing from work in political sociology and geography, including Brenner (2004); Brenner and Theodore (2002); Peck (2002); and Smith (2002).

funding from other sources, including subnational state, municipal and private foundations.

It is worth noting the ways this picture of federal metagovernance contradicts both common assumptions about the state in neoliberalism, as well as ideas the state might have of itself. Wendy Brown, cautioning against too dismissive a view of the state, suggests that one characteristic of U.S. neoliberalism is an "anti-Big Government" rhetoric that masks an intensification of federal authority (Brown 1995). The case of HUD bears this out. HUD has been a very powerful force in reshaping the techno-conceptual organization of housing insecurity and deprivation. Its funding parameters and reporting requirements are fundamentally changing the provision of housing and associated services for unsheltered populations. Its authority, though, is not the kind that clamps down. Rather, through the mechanisms of metagovernance, HUD plays a piloting role, setting parameters and facilitating between state, municipal, and private entities. Metagovernance in this case is a grid of control overlaid on top of already existing networks, knowledges and practices of a disciplinary homeless services apparatus. This dispersed and decentralized apparatus, in place long before the advent of neoliberal privatization and devolution, is shaped by HUD, but also creates the conditions of "path dependency" (Brenner and Theodore 2002) that partly determine what HUD is able to enact. Through the McKinney-Vento Act, housing insecurity and deprivation have been organized as what is now accepted as a "crisis of homelessness." This crisis, established through responses to it, is shifting popular, academic, and governmental conceptions of homelessness. The next section will look at the long-standing conceptions of homelessness that are re-worked in the contemporary era.

Making the homeless crazy

The dominant discourse on homelessness in the U.S. has its roots in medicine in general and psychiatry in particular. This is evidenced in American popular culture, which is saturated with images of "crazy homeless people." Newspapers and television news programs offer lurid crime and disorder narratives that depict the mental instability of street people as threatening the safety of "us" normal middle class denizens of cities. As Robert Desjarlais argues, in such accounts, homeless figures provide a stand-in for social and political anxieties about modern existence in capitalist conditions of urban disorder and uncertainty:

> A common problematic vision is apparent in many accounts: the homeless live in an underworld; they are a ghostly, animal-like brood who threaten the peaceful, artful air of cafes, libraries, and public squares. Television shows and Hollywood movies … create pictures of ghostly, ragged vagabonds haunting the post-industrial wastelands of American cities, while newspaper accounts thrive on images of death, transgressions, and grotesque bodies . . . . The homeless themselves serve to counter images of health, wealth, purity, and high culture. The imagery passes swiftly, unquestionably, as if it was in the nature of sentences, of putting words onto paper, to set pain against beauty and wretchedness against form (Desjarlais 1997: 2).

In these popular and mass media productions, the homeless individual is rendered unmoored from the social and familial and also unmoored from their minds and the common morality and rationality thought to reside there, soldering a conceptual link between psychiatric disorder and urban disorder. The "mad homeless" is figured as less than a person (sub-human, animal-like in nature or appearance, parasitical); the mad homeless is also simultaneously figured as an excess of personhood (their bodies and possessions occupying too much inconvenient space, their internal fluids leaking out, their bringing of the private practices of sleep and defecation into public spaces of subways, doorways, streets).

These excesses and shortcomings of personhood have served to reinforce feelings of disgust and to sanction social abandonment. But even more importantly for this dissertation, the figuration of the homeless as less than human also animates social rescue. Consider, for example, professor of psychiatry Stephen B. Seagar's *Street Crazy*, which offers an account of the nine years Seagar spent providing mental health services to homeless patients in Los Angeles. The book opens with a story about "Mr. Smith," against whom Seagar sought a court order to continue treatment:

> Mr. Smith was the first patient I'd taken to court to detain for further treatment. He'd come to our facility five days earlier having been found at the bottom of a drainage ditch soaking wet, babbling and bleeding. According to passers-by, a pack of feral dogs had mauled him. Not spotted, he would have died during the night.
>
> Despite our ministrations, Mr. Smith still looked terrible. Save one molar and incisor on the left, his mouth was toothless. Our clean hospital clothing hung on a skeletal frame like drop cloths over attic furniture. A leg infection was barely beginning to heal. The facial lacerations, recently scabbed over, would cause permanent scarring. Mr. Smith was fifty-six years old, had been homeless for fifteen years and suffered from chronic schizophrenia.
>
> The district attorney, representing the hospital, stood. "Do you think living under a car is appropriate shelter?" he asked.
>
> "Shit, yes," Mr. Smith said.
>
> "And eating garbage gives you enough nutrition?" he asked.
>
> "I've been sick some but ain't dead yet. No maggots in me." He grinned crookedly (Seagar 2000: x).

After affirming Mr. Smith believes the underbelly of a car to be appropriate shelter because it keeps him dry, and also understands that garbage with maggots is to be avoided as food, the presiding judge releases Mr. Smith from the courtroom, and from the hospital's supervision.

The passage certainly points to a variety of structural failures that have exposed Mr. Smith to such horrific violence and harm, including a social order that abandons people to barely survive in life-threatening conditions of poverty and a bureaucratic legal

system that substitutes superficial inquiry for substantive engagement with cases. The emotional thrust of the passage, however, derives from the doctor-author's own failure, as he is reduced to bearing helpless witness to Mr. Smith's return to the feral dogs and maggots of crazy street life. Scarred, skeletal, more object of furniture than proper person, the hapless and grinning Mr. Smith unwittingly complies with his condemnation. Seagar ends the narrative recounting his own sudden outburst: "'He'll die out there,' I blurted to the psychiatrist sitting beside me . . . . 'Probably so,' she said" (Ibid.: xi). While steeped in melodrama, *Street Crazy* points to the continuities between popular and professional depictions of homeless selfhood, and points as well to how that discourse of selfhood is mobilized in support of a medicalized homeless management. This management, as we will see, has taken the form of invasive and coercive social welfare technologies that promise to rescue the homeless from themselves.[10]

The image of the mad homeless draws power from a long-established American discourse about poverty that assigns to individuals blame for their own impoverished conditions, substituting personal failing for social, economic, and political explanatory factors. This social fantasy of personal responsibility has opened a ground for processes sociologists have termed "medicalization." First coined by Irving Kenneth Zola, medicalization describes the techno-conceptual practices whereby a social problem becomes imagined and addressed as an individual or medical problem (Zola 1972). Medicalization should not be read in a narrow or always literally "medical" sense, but is meant to evoke how the body and mind of the individual subject become targeted as the

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[10] As should become clear, I do not mean to deny the reality of psychiatric disabilities among people living without shelter. But I want to point to the history of how ideas about those disabilities develop, and to unsettle presumptions about the best (or only) ways to meet the needs of such populations.

source of social problems. Medicalization deeply subtends conceptions of poverty in the United States, producing the failed inverse of liberal myths of individualism, such that case-specific explanations of individual blame trump social, economic, and political accounts of the reproduction of poverty and unequal distribution of wealth. Today, medicalization does its work broadly and flexibly, positing a wide range of disorders operative in numerous modes, including the surveillaint-punitive mode of welfare policing (targeting disorders of sloth and dishonesty), the social-Darwinist mode of education reform (targeting disorders of genetic limitations out of step with the evolutionary demands of modern capitalist life), and even a palliative-pastoral mode of social services (mitigating the effects of a mental sickness that is no fault of its bearer).

The medicalization of homelessness has been well documented by sociologists and anthropologists (Cress and Snow 2000; Lyon-Callo 2004). But the medicalization of homelessness is not only a specific instance of the medicalization of poverty. Rather, the medicalization of homelessness is an intensified case that emerges from two things: first, the relationship of modern mass housing deprivation to deinstitutionalization and, second, the impact of living without shelter on mental health.

As regards the first, the emergence of contemporary unsheltered populations has been understood as linked to the closing of state mental health asylums in the early 1980s. The first asylums to house and treat those designated "insane," "imbecilic," or "feeble-minded" were constructed in the mid-nineteenth century (Tomes 1994). As the numbers of people committed in asylums grew, and as government-sponsored asylums came to house poorer populations, the notion of the asylum as a safe haven for its patients gradually eroded; the asylum no longer served to protect the patient from disturbing or

stressful conditions, but rather to remove the disturbed and disturbing patient from the family, community, or larger social environment (Scull 1981). In a context of expanding projects of imperialism, domestic anti-immigrant sentiments and legislation, and cultural panics over "race suicide," asylum supervisors turned to eugenic measures such as sterilization to prevent their apparently incurable and increasingly indigent patients from reproducing (Dowbiggin 1997).[11]

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a continued decline in asylum funding and conditions, as well as new innovations in medical treatments, including frontal lobotomies and electro-convulsive shock therapy. Then, in the early 1960s, an unexpected alliance formed between anti-psychiatric lobby groups and government reformers, with both groups calling for the de-institutionalization of patient populations.[12] While the anti-psychiatry movement criticized state asylums for their inhumane, unsanitary conditions and draconian practices, government officials saw these institutions as economically inefficient means of managing the mentally ill. The passage of the federal Community Mental Health Act in 1963 effectively closed great numbers of state- and municipal-run mental health asylums as funding was redirected to community health centers. As Robert Desjarlais argues, the results were less than advocates had hoped for:

> As is well known, the plans did not go as well as their architects envisioned they would. To begin with, the number of people released into the community was more than existing services could manage. In turn, many proposed community treatment programs went unrealized and patients often left hospitals without any provisions for care, employment, or housing. In addition, many states proved

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[11] For an important analysis of how categories and diagnoses of mental illness are racialized, and emerge in the context of imperialism and post-colonialism, see Suman Fernando, David Ndegwa, and Melba Wilson, *Forensic Psychiatry, Race and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

[12] This moment found its strongest sociological expression in the work of Thomas Szasz (1974), which has been connected to Foucault's work (1961) and the work of Erving Goffman (1961) to constitute something of an academic anti-psychiatry moment.

> reluctant to allocate funds for community-based services, community mental health centers delayed or resisted providing services to the chronically mentally ill, and many communities preferred not to have the mentally ill live in their neighborhoods (Desjarlais 1997: 30).

The net effect was a drastic reduction in mental hospital housing, which shrank from 559,000 beds in 1955 to 451,000 beds in 1965, and merely 177,000 beds by 1980 (Blomberg and Lucken 2010: 221-2). The impact of this shrinking resource was intensified in the 1980s, when liberal interest groups fighting involuntary commitment found allies in the Reagan administration. Together, these groups helped dismantle involuntary commitment laws, the former on humanitarian grounds, the latter with neoliberal arguments about "economic inefficiency." Regarding the limits of this unlikely alliance, Alexander R. Thomas argues,

> Perhaps what is most interesting about the change in policies of involuntary commitment is the coalition that helped bring it about: a combination of "law and order" conservatives, economic conservatives, and liberal groups that sought reform in the provision of mental health services. But the policy shift had hardly anything at all to do with the mentally ill or the practitioners who treated them. It was designed to lower taxes and shift responsibility away from the federal government (Thomas 1998).

As with the Community Mental Health Act of 1963, those seeking financial savings were the long-term winners, with people living with psychiatric disabilities paying the difference.

Though its unclear to what extent deinstitutionalization can be held responsible for the growth of populations living without shelter, deinstitutionalization contributed to modern housing deprivation in at least two ways: first, by literally relocating former asylum inmates to city streets, and second, by removing a designated destination (however deplorable) for people with psychiatric disabilities. In the U.S. privatized housing market, the ability of any individual to access and maintain housing is dependent

first upon their access to financial resources largely tied to labor. Insofar as employment capacity is determined in part by the successful performance of normative behavior and embodiment of normative health, conditions of severe and persistent mental illness become obstacles to entering the labor market and, in turn, securing housing. As long as housing is not guaranteed to all people regardless of financial resources, psychiatric disabilities cannot but contribute to individual experiences of housing insecurity.[13] Further, we must keep in mind that this deinstitutionalization is taking place simultaneous to the erosion of social welfare safety nets, the destruction of SRO and other low-income housing, and the fiscal abandonment of urban cores to speculative investment and corporate tax evasion.

Beyond its exact role in the expansion of housing insecurity and the growth of unsheltered populations, deinstitutionalization helped forge a link in the cultural imaginary about the homeless. This link has been further corroborated by the well-documented and not surprising impact of living without shelter on mental and physical well-being. Enduring life without shelter involves an incredible confluence of "mental stressors": risks and experiences of physical and emotional violence; the harms of being deprived of food and medical care; overwhelming daily experiences of instability, insecurity, and fear; and subjection to the degradation of police systems, welfare bureaucracies, and emergency shelters. Housing deprivation enacts a constant and intense exposure to trauma that for some people will undoubtedly materialize as states or behaviors diagnosed as mental illness (Kim and Ford 2006). Finally, even for those

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[13] Many would argue that jails and prisons are the new mental health asylums. See Daly (2006) for a summary of research on the prevalence of psychiatric disabilities among imprisoned populations.

without psychiatric disability, living without shelter produces signs interpreted by others as "being crazy," such as carting possessions around, or appearing dirty, that are in fact material consequences of housing deprivation.

Thus while social scientists have discussed and debated the relationships between psychiatric disability and homelessness in terms of correlation and causation, the medicalization of poverty, the historical role of deinstitutionalization in multiplying housing insecurity, and the effects of housing deprivation on mental health and physical appearance have made the relationship real in effect, meaning in popular, government, academic, and social service imaginations and practices.

From medical problems to governance problems

As a result of this historical confluence of factors, the medicalization of homelessness has produced "the homeless" as a category to which a pathological dimension is endemic. Among all of capitalism's cast-offs, the homeless in particular have been imagined as incapable of self-management and in need of direct and constant supervision and intervention. As lodging houses morphed into modern social service agencies, and as a professional class of social workers came to coordinate and execute their missions, the idea of "working on yourself" shifted from a moral model to a medical one. If early colonial and Progressive reformers sought to save the souls of those seeking shelter, in the modern era, the body and mind became objects of concern instead, and these objects become managed through disciplinary technologies of case management aimed at knowing and reforming the individual homeless subject. In case management systems, a social worker, or caseworker, assumes responsibility for guiding the client, or case,

through a process of self-evaluation to determine the individual causes at the root of their problem. Working together—although often within the confines of non-negotiable program requirements—worker and client develop a "case plan" to right the course of the client's life. For those living in modern housing programs, such plans might involve participation in educational or vocational programs and instruction in money management. Furthermore, case management programs have frequently mandated treatment for psychiatric disabilities and drug/alcohol use, as such conditions and behaviors have especially been understood as barriers to what is called "housing readiness." Sobriety and compliance with psychiatric drug regimes have frequently been pre-conditions for admittance to housing programs and minimum requirements for remaining housed. Finally, case plans typically include enforced waking and sleep times, limits or bans on outside visitors, and bans on sexual activity. Theresa Funiciello has referred to this case management model of welfare provision as a "tyranny of kindness," signaling the coercive nature of paternalistic programs that demand submission to reform protocols in the name of the client's own good (Funiciello 1993). Funiciello's term perfectly expresses the contradictions of disciplinary power as described by Foucault—that humanist projects of developing mental and physical capacities proceed through projects of submission and control, such that we come to understand that it is only through submission that the subject can be improved and liberated.

This medicalized model and its disciplinary technologies for managing the case have not disappeared. However, the return of federal involvement in homeless management has added another dimension to this discourse. This happens as part of what Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell refer to as the "roll-out" phase of neoliberalism (2002:

384). Peck and Tickell argue that the ideological development of American neoliberalism by the Chicago School was first followed by a "roll-back" phase. Ushered in through the administrations of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and Margaret Thatcher in the U.K., the roll-back phase involved the dismantling of social welfare programs, the increasing privatization of social administration as well as public space, and the devolution of authority to lower levels of government. This dismantling is then followed by a roll-out phase, in which new, neoliberalized mechanisms of governance are developed and put into place. Rather than an expected (and professed) shrinking of the state, in this phase of neoliberalism state institutions reassert authority over decentralized welfare apparatuses and reorganize the structure and delivery of social welfare services. Peck and Tickell argue:

> . . . [T]here seems to have been a shift from the pattern of deregulation and dismantlement so dominant during the 1980s, which might be characterized as "roll- back neoliberalism," to an emergent phase of active state-building and regulatory reform—an ascendant moment of "roll-out neoliberalism." In the course of this shift, the agenda has gradually moved from one preoccupied with the active destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions (broadly defined) to one focused on the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations (384).

Much of what gets rolled-out aims to control the disorder of surplus populations created by neoliberal economic restructuring. This includes social welfare programs with intensified social control functions, such as workfare (Peck 2001). It also includes a much enlarged and increasingly aggressive punishment system that serves a predominantly warehousing function (Gilmore 2007; Wacquant 2009). This occurs alongside an ever-expanding military and defense apparatus deployed overseas. "Security" from internal

and external threats becomes the dominant trope in response to neoliberal multiplication and intensification of social disorder.

The federal programs discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 are part of this roll-out phase. In some ways, the McKinney-Vento act is a kind of laggard social welfare program, arriving as it did during a period of fiscal and social conservatism in the mid-1980s. McKinney-Vento responded to the economic threat posed by unsheltered populations by increasing funding and other forms of government involvement in homeless management. By the mid-90s, neoliberal ethics had caught back up with HUD in the form of demands to reform its mission and its approaches to homelessness. The first phase of McKinney-Vento programs attempted to insert some federal oversight over the already existing networks and practices of homeless services agencies. For example, the medical model of homelessness required that individuals move through tiered services, from emergency shelters, to transitional living programs, and finally into private housing or permanent supportive housing. McKinney-Vento formalized relationships between these tiers with its Continuum of Care model. In the latter phase of McKinney-Vento programs, from the late 90s to the current period, federal involvement becomes more active, more intrusive, and more radical.

McKinney-Vento has added to medicalized models a conception of homelessness as a governance problem—a problem of inefficient use of resources and unscientific methods of management. To understand governance problems, we can think about the history of social welfare programs as a back-and-forth tension between a concern with social problems, or the structural impact of various forms of social and economic inequality, and medical problems, focused on individuals. The Keynesian welfare state

addressed itself to social problems in a way that sought to care for the would-be laborer and his dependents. These social problems included structurally produced economic inequality in periods of un- or under-employment, poor health, and old age. As reforms to the administration of welfare programs increased access for populations of color in general and African Americans especially, a latent discourse of medical problems eclipsed a discourse of social problems. This is to say, while the Keynesian welfare state understood certain social adjustments would be made necessary by and for the smooth, regular functioning of capital, in the backlash period that led to the roll-back phase of neoliberalism, lazy or incompetent individuals, rather than capital, were increasingly understood as the true source of social problems.

In the current roll-out phase of neoliberalism, the third discourse of governance problems is layered on top of competing discourses of social and medical problem. If discourses of social problems and medical problems both offer fixes, though differently directed, the discourse of governance problems is concerned more with the ongoing management of a problem, rather than a resolution. Governance problems are organized through concerns foregrounded by neoliberalism—fiscal responsibility, cost benefits analysis, standardization of responses, streamlining of central bureaucracies, and surveillance over decentralized bureaucracies. Governance problems concern allocating resources in the most efficient ways possible given a set of social problems that are viewed as intractable. Recasting homelessness as a governance problem means that administrative responses must mutate. While they do not lose all guise of a social welfare program, responses to governance problems are perhaps best characterized as "technical solutions." As Aihwa Ong describes it, technical solutions arise in a context in "which

governing activities are recast as nonpolitical and nonideological problems"(3). Technical solutions are shot through with the abstracting and quantifying language of neoliberalism, which casts all concerns as economic in nature, and reconceptualizes all problems, including homelessness, as amenable to economic calculation and intervention.

In this context, the expected time-order is reversed. If neoliberalism can describe, as Ong has argued and others have corroborated, the application of technical solutions to diverse geopolitical contexts (to various nation-states under various political regimes, as well as at supra- and sub-national scales), we should not mistake governance problems as that which neoliberalism attempts to solve. Rather, governance problems are the retroactive *effect* of neoliberal technical solutions and their transformations of the social, political, and economic. Neoliberal techniques of governance instantiate governance problems in the social, such that they come to seem the obvious and necessary targets of governance. But of course, the birth of a governance problem is neither inevitable nor given. Rather, it is the product of multi-scalar processes and their interactions with already-existing norms and forms of governance.

The techno-conceptual reorganization of homelessness as a governance problem is pressuring a biopoliticization of homelessness as well, in which a homeless population and its patterns and costs becomes a privileged object of knowledge and concern. I would argue that this biopoliticization follows from the ways in which neoliberal governance problems and conjoined technical solutions privilege technologies that can intercept and modulate the population, which makes life quantifiable and hence commensurate with the financial. We can see biopoliticization of homelessness, for example, in the proliferation

of population counts and demographic studies and intensified concern with reorganizing funding through more "scientific" management.

The biopoliticization of homelessness pressures a reconfiguration of the medicalized dimension and its related disciplinary technologies of management. This does not mean that the contemporary era marks an end of discipline. Rather, the contemporary discourse of homelessness as a problem of governance is changing how individuals are imagined and treated. This has not resulted in a complete abandonment of disciplinary techniques. In some cases (as we will see in the Chapter 3) those techniques are forestalled or undermined by biopolitical imperatives. In other cases (as especially illustrated in Chapter 4), they are reconfigured in service of biopolitical ends.

The shift to the population as a primary concern of knowledge and governance also does not mean that the pathological dimension of homelessness falls away, even if some of the disciplinary technologies associated with its pathologization are de-emphasized. The population itself can imagined to be pathological—endemically disordered and costly. In fact, in an analysis of neoliberalism as "structural liberalism," Angela Harris has argued that unruly surplus populations uphold liberal notions of the subject and its (failures of) agency. Harris writes,

> By structural liberalism, I mean two interrelated political-philosophical commitments: (1) the separation of family, market, state, and civil society into separate and independent "spheres" which should in principle be governed differently; and (2) a commitment to the ideal of the self-governing subject, through which individuals and groups deemed incapable of self-government may be subjected to kinds of regulation that would otherwise be deemed incompatible with liberty (Harris 2006: 1543).

Just as the privatization and concomitant racialization of property forms and relations depend upon included exclusions, the liberal free subject of neoliberalism requires those

for whom freedom is an impossibility. This is not only a symbolic unfreedom. Permanently redundant populations are the economic, as well as political, condition of possibility for neoliberal consumer capitalism and its constitutive individuals of free choice.

Sociology must contend with these complicated ways in which the population arises as an object of knowledge and intervention, and the way it preserves and transforms medicalized models of pathological subjects. If sociologists take on only the limited task of deconstructing medicalized discourse to reveal the social bases that lay beneath, we risk being left behind by a governance that has begun to lose interest in reforming the individual. A sociological critique of medicalization remains relevant, but it cannot account for the techno-conceptual organization of unruly surplus populations in terms of a problem of governance. Furthermore, the chapters that follow will argue that the social sciences have been drawn into the realm of governance problems, assigned with setting out the technical knowledge parameters that render homelessness available to intervention. But this has occurred thus far with little critical sociological reflection, not only in terms of the role of the academic industrial complex in governance, but as regards the broad reconfiguring of the social, political, and economic by a neoliberal translation of medical and social problems into problems of and for governance.

Chapter 3
Universal Data Elements: Population and the Governance of Governance

> *It was not, "Oh good, this is going to help us do our jobs better." Nobody felt that way. It was like, "Shit, this is another thing. Another hurdle we have to jump through in order to fight tooth and nail for our tiny bit of money from the federal government."*
>
> *My advice to any nonprofit would be to not seek federal funding. If you can do it without, it's so much easier. You have so much less reporting to do if you have foundations and individual donors—the stuff is so much less onerous. The government just makes it impossible, and there's so many restrictions.*[1]

In 2001 Congress mandated that HUD collect national data on populations living without shelter as well as data on the effectiveness of federally-funded programs targeting this population. The 2001 Congressional directive required that local jurisdictions receiving McKinney-Vento funds produce "unduplicated counts" of clients they served, meaning that all agencies in that jurisdiction coordinate data collection so that every client was counted, and counted only once. As a Senate report stated:

> . . . HUD must collect data on the extent of homelessness in America as well as the effectiveness of the McKinney homeless assistance programs in addressing this condition. These programs have been in existence for some 15 years and there has never been an overall review or comprehensive analysis on the extent of homelessness or how to address it. The Committee believes that it is essential to develop an unduplicated count of homeless people, and an analysis of their patterns of use of assistance (HUD McKinney homeless assistance as well as

[1] The statements are from the transcripts of open-ended interviews I conducted with people working in the homeless services industry. In this chapter and the next, these quotes are indicated in the text with italics. All interviews were conducted on condition of anonymity. When necessary, I specify the bare minimum to identify the speaker's position, but I have resisted the tendency to narrate the dissertation in terms of a story of individuals. I am treating the interview data as I treat any other source—a piece of information to circulate with other pieces of information, including analytical essays, historical accounts, and primary documents.

> other assistance both targeted and not targeted to homeless people), including how they enter and exit the homeless assistance system and the effectiveness of assistance (Office of the Federal Register 2003: 43431).

Efforts to meet this directive have subsequently become embedded in the requirements attached to McKinney-Vento funds. To facilitate these data collection requirements, since 2004 HUD has required all agencies receiving McKinney-Vento funds to implement the use of a homeless management information system—also called an HMIS—and it has developed a number of technical support programs to facilitate this. HMIS designates any information management software, of which many versions exist, that a service agency uses for recording "client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons . . . . An HMIS is typically a web-based software application that homeless assistance providers use to coordinate service provision, manage their operations, and better serve their clients" (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 2006b: 1). Promoting HMIS among agencies it funds has assisted HUD with the two tasks named in the Senate report cited above—producing a national count of homelessness and assessing patterns of use in programs targeting homelessness.

Though HUD's initiative is fairly recent, the use of computer-based applications for managing client records is not new in homeless service provision. As with other sectors of social and medical care, the move from paper to databank has been in motion for some time now, a shift scholars have designated the "electronic turn" in social work (Garrett 2005: 531). Within a history of social work practices, the use of HMIS has been understood as replacing a "case notes" system of an earlier era of service provision, in which a social worker produced narrative accounts of clients in terms of their needs, services accessed, and changes in their condition and circumstance. An HMIS is not,

however, simply a computer-based repository of notes (which might imply, for example, typing up case notes in a word-processing program). Rather, it is a database management system that provides fixed inquiry fields (demographic details, categories of need, kinds of service) in which standardized measures are input. The use of an HMIS does not signal simply a shift from the pen stroke to the keystroke, but from qualitative to quantitative records and assessments. Consequently, an HMIS changes not just how case notes are recorded, but what can be recorded, and in what forms. While HUD promotes the use of HMIS as simply making the work of case management easier and more efficient, many in the homeless services industry take another view, as indicated by the quotes from informants that open this chapter. From the view of many service providers, HUD's HMIS program looks more like a bureaucratic hindrance than a help.

This chapter will consider the changes provoked by the databasing of homelessness enacted through the HMIS program. It will argue that the shift follows from neoliberal concerns of governance and enacts a biopoliticization of homelessness. Despite concerns of service providers and scholars that the database represents an intrusive form of surveillance, I will argue that the primary use of HMIS is to produce knowledge of a population more so than to spy upon individuals. This population production has great consequences for individuals, but those consequences are in many ways an indirect secondary effect. Furthermore, I will argue that as much as HMIS instates the population as an object of knowledge and governance, it produces the population as a mechanism *for* governance. The homeless population produced through HUD's HMIS program is used to regulate agencies and as such represents a form of

decentralized federal control over the dispersed and multi-scalar homeless services industry.

The first section of this chapter will consider the technological capacities of the database in relation to the technical requirements of HUD's HMIS program. It will also consider the ways in which HUD promotes HMIS as an improvement over earlier case management technologies. The next section considers critiques of HMIS and the electronic turn more broadly, as well as limits of those critiques. In the third section, I present evidence that the primary use of HMIS data by HUD is to regulate agencies, rather than to track individual clients. In this way, HMIS becomes an opportunity for new forms of metagovernance over a dispersed social welfare apparatus. Finally, the chapter concludes with some thoughts on the consequences of the biopoliticization enacted by the HMIS program.

Databasing the homeless

A database is a system for the classification, organization, and retrieval of heterogeneous materials or elements (Manovich 2001). It is not the first such system; various other methods have obviously existed for quite some time (Bowker and Star 1999). Eugene Thacker notes dictionaries, encyclopedias, anatomical atlases, maps, and statistical charts as the forebears of the contemporary computer database (Thacker 2006: 105-6). Given the social service context in which we are considering the use of databases, another obvious historical precedent is the filing cabinet stuffed with manila folders, containing everything from case notes to identity documents, photographs, medical records, and copies of bureaucratic forms related to health benefits, income support, and legal

proceedings. All of these systems employ a specific method of organization that "depends on the technical specificity of the system; whereas the dictionary and encyclopedia utilize an alphabetic system, the anatomical atlas utilizes a diagrammatic logic, and statistics utilizes a series of tables, charts and quantitative graphical elements" (Ibid).

Each of these systems offers a means to organize various elements into some sets of relationships, particularly with an eye towards ease of retrieval. But the possibilities are neither endless nor neutral. Each system carries a logic of organization that constrains not only the organizational mode—or sets of possible relationships between elements—but constrains the form of the compositional elements as well. For example, in a dictionary, while an illustration of an "apple" may supplement a textual description of the word "apple," it cannot stand on its own. The illustration's lack of an alphabetical attribute denies its entry into this system, except as back up for the word-element "apple" (which possesses an appropriate attribute—it begins with the letter "A"). A statistical chart that displays how many respondents to a survey are White, Black, Asian, or Hispanic cannot include the narrative descriptions of family lineage, ethnicity, and immigration that people commonly use to describe their own "race." Such narratives must be operationalized, or assigned attributes that make them organize-able within this system; otherwise they cannot materialize in the chart. Finally, while the copy of a summons for creating a public nuisance can easily find its way into a social worker's manila folder, warmly tucked between case notes and a birth certificate, a plate of food refused in protest of the police at mealtime cannot. This is to say, the refused meal cannot enter into the official record, as the structure of organization (a folder within a system of

folders) cannot accommodate such an element. So while the computer database is not the first system of classification, organization, and retrieval, it is uniquely capable of integrating any number of other systems into itself: the database can organize and present elements as alphabetical lists, as statistical graphs, as a series of illustrations. This occurs through a process of digitization, or the translation of the raw material into binary form.

The kinds of data that HUD generates through its HMIS program are not unique to this historical moment, but belong to a long history of number-gathering and its evolution into the modern statistics of which HUD's HMIS program is a part (Scott 1999; Cohen1999; Porter 1995; Hacking 1990). While gathering numbers predates the rise of the modern state form, statistics (the etymology refers to "state data") marks the shift from a gathering of numbers for numbers sake to the production of numbers put to work. As such, the development of statistics and a bureaucracy to support their generation is central to the rise of the nation state. The "numbers work" of the state might solidify as natalist policies, electoral districts, unemployment forecasts, or insurance rates (Porter 1995).

At first glance, HUD's HMIS program could seem to be simply an extension and perhaps intensification of the "avalanche of numbers" (Hacking 1982) that has washed across the United States since the imperialist invasion of the Americas. But some important shifts are provoked by the use of the database. If governmental number-gathering has always been activated, here we have a kind of data—which is to say, digital data—that realizes that action component in its very form. A database is not simply a collection of numbers, but it is numbers constructed in relation to action—the algorithmic functions of the computer, or, more specifically, the database management system

(DBMS). While other systems of organizing heterogeneous materials (dictionaries, atlases, filing cabinets) may have struggled with how to allow for the efficient retrieval or reorganization of those materials, the computer database organizes matter in the form of matter-set-to-retrieval. In fact, the computer database departs from older systems in that referring to a process of retrieval is something of a misnomer. Within a database system, the process of retrieval is really more a process of generation. A dictionary can only contain those elements entered into it (even, say, an online dictionary that can be frequently updated). A database, on the other hand, makes more than what was already there; the DBMS allows for the production of data, not simply its organization and retrieval. What might be "processed data" at the end of one algorithm is available to become "raw data" for another set of computations, or retrievals. Thus, data entered into a database should not be thought of as fixed or stable. Data are mobile points of connection that facilitate the dynamic algorithmic functions of a computer: organizing data into new combinations, new relationships and, most importantly, new calculations to make new data itself.

These dynamic properties of digital data are brought into the realm of homeless social services through HUD's HMIS program. Agencies participating in the program may choose to develop their own version of an HMIS or, more likely, purchase an already existing, customizable HMIS program from any number of private vendors.[2] HUD itself does not provide an HMIS application. Nor does HUD require that agencies use any specific version of an HMIS. What it does require, and what marks its entry into HMIS, is the collection of "universal data elements" by every HUD-funded agency on

[2] HUD provides links to forty-seven vendors that sell McKinney-Vento compliant HMIS software packages. See http://www.hmis.info/Software/. Accessed 14 June 2010.

each client it serves. The universal data elements required by HUD are Name, Social Security Number, Date of Birth, Ethnicity/Race, Gender, Veteran's Status, Disabling Condition, Residence Prior to Program Entry, Zip Code of Last Permanent Address, Program Entry/Exit Date.[3] The universal data elements must be collected in forms that meet data standards set by HUD. The data standards ensure that the universal data elements will be commensurate across agencies. For example, data standards outlined for the universal data element "Name of client" are as follows:

> *Data Source*: Client interview or administered form.
>
> *When Data Are Collected*: Upon initial program entry or as soon as possible thereafter.
>
> *Subjects*: All clients.
>
> *Definition and Instructions*: Four fields should be created in the HMIS database to capture the client's full first, middle, and last names and any suffixes (e.g., John David Doe, Jr.). Try to obtain legal names only and avoid aliases or nicknames. Section 5 of this Notice discusses how to treat missing information for open-ended questions.
>
> *Required Response Categories*: Current name: First name, middle name, last name, suffix; Other Name Used to Receive Services previously: First name, middle name, last name suffix (Office of the Federal Register 2003: 43439).

Similar data standards are provided for each of the required elements.

According to HUD, the collection of universal data elements in standard form will correct miscounts of homeless populations accessing services at multiple locations. Collected from dispersed locales by agencies using any number of software applications, these data will then provide the raw material for aggregate population counts and trends

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[3] HUD additionally requires what it calls "program-specific data elements" for some streams of McKinney-Vento funding, such as its Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2006).

analysis required by Congress, as data produced at each locale will be commensurate in form and thus can be set to calculation together.

> The universal data standards will make possible unduplicated estimates of the number of homeless people accessing services from homeless providers, basic demographic characteristics of people who are homeless, and their patterns of service use. The universal data standards will also allow measurement of the number and share of chronically homeless people who use homeless services. The standards will enable generation of information on shelter stays and homelessness episodes over time (Office of the Federal Register 2004: 45890).

Data gathered through the HMIS program is reported and analyzed by HUD in its *Annual Assessment Report to Congress.* It has thus far published four such studies, the most recent one in July 2009 using data gathered from October 2007 to September 2008 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2009). This most recent report points to the success of HMIS implementation, which HUD not only requires for agencies it funds, but encourages for any agency that provides homeless services; whereas the 2008 report used data collected from 98 communities, that number jumped to 222 communities for 2009.[4]

HUD argues that the use of an HMIS benefits not just the federal government, but also the agencies providing services. In language familiar within a general turn towards quantitative models in health and social services (Clark et al 2003; Strauss and McAlister 2000), HUD argues that an HMIS allows a variety of tasks to be completed more efficiently and accurately, "bringing the power of computer technology to the day-to-day operations of individual homeless assistance providers" (Office of the Federal Register 2004: 45897). According to HUD, the first set of tasks an HMIS improves upon are

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[4] HUD's encouragement that agencies it does not fund also become HMIS-compliant calls to mind nations vying for future International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans by putting in place structural adjustment programs such as those the IMF might require.

related to service provision, and involve the use of standardized intake and assessment procedures. This is meant to replace the largely "anecdotal" methods of earlier eras of case management. Rather than each caseworker developing an individualized, subjective assessment, one method of accounting for something like "disability status" is developed. Using equivalent measures allows for the translation of one worker's notes to any other worker and eliminates the labor of producing those measures case-by-case.

Additionally, HUD argues that HMIS make for better collaborative work across agencies, "[k]nitting together housing and service providers within a local community into more coordinated and effective delivery systems . . ." (Office of the Federal Register 2003). This can occur because, although privacy protections prevent the sharing of unique identifiers such as names and Social Security numbers with HUD, this data can be shared between agencies. Hence, an HMIS allows for the tracking of clients utilizing multiple agencies within a Continuum of Care in a local community. HUD offers the example of an agency being able to determine if a client requesting service has already received that same service from another agency. While this clearly serves to police the poor from "double-dipping," HUD sells it as a way for agencies to better allocate resources where they are needed and useful.

In addition to benefiting service provision, the use of HMIS is understood as creating more accurate "pictures" of homelessness, which both serve agencies and allow HUD to produce an unduplicated count of the national homeless population. Thus, the unique goals of both service agencies and the federal government are met through the implementation of HMIS:

> HMIS can help local communities understand how many people are homeless in shelters and on the street; how many people are chronically or episodically

> homeless; the characteristics and service needs of those served; and which programs are most effective at reducing and ending homelessness.
> HMIS can help HUD and Congress understand: how many people are homeless in the United States; who is homeless; where people receive shelter and services and where did they live before the became homeless; the patterns of homeless residential program use; and the nation's capacity for housing homeless people (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2006b).

A presentation prepared by Abt Associates (a private, for-profit research corporation that contracts with the government) for HUD's use in "recruiting" agencies to HMIS explains that "HMIS is a tool, not the goal." This phrase is meant to show that HUD is not attempting to change what service providers do, only help them along—with funding attached to the *requirement* the agency use an HMIS. Comparing service provision and counting methods with and without the use of an HMIS, the Abt presentation demonstrates how HMIS not only accomplishes what traditional methods cannot, but also better realizes the accomplishments of older methods. According to this presentation, traditional service provider reports are not able to produce unduplicated counts (as the same client may be counted as a unique individual at two or more different agencies) and are not able to assess patterns of "entering and exiting homelessness" (patterns here understood to be statistical portraits). On the other hand, not only can HMIS accomplish these two goals, it can also capture "in-depth information on clients and needs," the one accomplishment accorded traditional, narrative-based service provider accounts. HMIS is able to do this through user configurability, such that areas of need or service specific to an agency can be tracked with HMIS, in addition to the data required for producing the compliance reports containing an agency's of universal data elements. From this perspective, HMIS offers the best of both worlds: it captures the universal (such as names and exit/entry dates) and the particular (the specific data

interests of agency and locale); HMIS allows for accurate counts of homeless populations; adds a longitudinal dimension of patterns over time; and (contrary to critics, whose arguments are explored below) preserves the richness of caseworker's understandings of clients and their needs though an amassing of quantitative detail.

HMIS thus introduces the technical capacity for a biopolitical reorganization of housing deprivation. This does not mean that "the homeless" were never before imagined to exist as a population. Quite the contrary—one effect of the dehumanization of those living without shelter is the long history of their treatment as an anonymous mass. To imagine that the homeless would share a set of generic characteristics and exhibit "patterns of shelter entry and exit" is already to biopoliticize. HUD's HMIS program draws out this latent biopolitical dimension, making a "homeless population" knowable and amenable to governance. In some ways, earlier case management technologies tried to counter the massifying effect of housing deprivation by introducing the idea that each individual client of a program had a history that must be understood in order to be changed. The quantification of services through HUD's HMIS program does not undo this pathologizing individualization, but it does re-abstract it to the generalizable level of a statistical population. As a staff person at one agency told me about their work prior to HMIS, *The type of data we kept about them was much more personal and much less statistical.* What it might mean to shift from the personal to the statistical will be explored next.

Against the electronic turn

While scholars have not yet addressed HUD's HMIS program, much work exists on the general electronic turn in social and health services. Two bodies of literature in particular have looked to the role of technology in transforming contemporary approaches to managing social problems—critical social work studies and surveillance studies. Here I want to consider the kinds of concerns raised in those literatures as well as the limits of those concerns for addressing how the databasing of homelessness is reorganizing housing deprivation as a population problem that demands biopolitical intervention.

While HUD's promotion of HMIS plays out familiar technophilic themes—HMIS makes things easier and faster, saving money and time—critics in social work studies recapitulate technophobic themes that warn against handing control over to "the machine." To appreciate these concerns, we must remember that disciplinary social work understands an intersubjective relationship between client and caseworker, as described in Chapter 2, as forming the foundation from which social service provision can most effectively operate. By the late 1960s or early 70s, this relationship became insecure, as psychiatric-based theories and practices came under fire (Webb 2006: 121-5). The inability of psychodynamic practices to produce cures in patients, especially as evidenced by the growing and burdensome indigent populations of state-run mental health asylums, offered an opportunity for the rise of neuroscientific models that located mental illness not in the history of the case, but in the misdirected activity of the brain (Shorter 1997; Dowbiggin 1997). The erosion of psychodynamic authority cleared room for the introduction into social work of the demands of evidence-based medicine, in particular

the requirement to produce the "hard science" of numbers about diagnosis and treatment. HMIS is one more instance of evidence-based medicine catching up to social services.

Thus, the liabilities that HUD understands the use of HMIS as correcting—the ad-hoc, interpretative, anecdotal practices of the well-meaning but un-scientific social worker—critics of the electronic turn understand to be precisely the unique resource that social workers offer. This is a resource threatened by the use of machines. Bob Sapey, for example, draws from studies of the relationship between decision-making and communication media to argue that the complexity of the social worker's milieu demands the "richness" of interpersonal conversation:

> … [M]essages which are sensitive or complex and which require a greater degree of explanation to be understood, will require a medium that will permit more direct interaction between the sender and receiver. The richest medium is generally face-to-face talking, in which non-verbal communication can be incorporated and there is opportunity for response and exploration of the issues (Sapey 1997: 810).

Thus the depth offered by psychodynamic casework contrasts with the superficiality or surfaciality of electronic data. As the interpersonal relationship gives way to an impersonal information exchange, the electronic turn instates an evaporation of the multi-dimensional knowledge structures of social work. Technologies like HMIS are understood to intensify, if not enact, a rationalization and instrumentalization of knowledge.

> Identities are constructed according to the fields that constitute the database, so that in striving for clear and objective representations and decision making, the subjectivity and social context of the client can be deconstructed into a variety of lists and factors associated with, in particular, "need" and "risk." Categorical thinking, based on the binary either/or logic, dominates, which puts individuals into categories and, in the process, obscures any ambiguities. Rather than be concerned with presenting a picture of the subject, as previously, social work increasingly acts to take subjects apart and then reassembles them according to the requirements of the database. Practitioners are required to produce dispersed

> and fragmented identities made up of a series of characteristics and pieces of information which are easy to input/output and compare. In the process, the embodied subject is in danger of disappearing and we are left with a variety of surface information which provides little basis for in-depth explanation or understanding (Parton 2006: 11).

Such a criticism would counter HUD's insistence that databasing social work can preserve the richness of the social worker's understanding of clients. In the passage above, the use of computer technologies does not only damage the caseworker/client relationship, but erodes the client him or herself. The amassing of data that HUD argues adds up to a complete picture from this view is simply a quantitative increase in superficial content (Aas 2004).

The limits of this critique for understanding HUD's HMIS program is that the critique imagines that the introduction of computers effects a complete eclipse of qualitative approaches. Program managers and caseworkers, however, describe the use of HMIS as layering upon existing practices. Many case managers have continued to keep their own private anecdotal records on clients while also keeping records through the HMIS database. The explanation offered for this practice does corroborate the critique made in social work literature—that too much is left out of the HMIS program, and that it cannot record much of the information upon which case managers rely. Many workers describe entering HMIS data retroactively, when it is time to submit the information to their supervisors who prepare reports for HUD. Some describe turning hand-written records over to supervisors who then translate that material into HMIS. In these ways, the quantification of clients co-exists with subjective/anecdotal accounts. Agencies participating in HMIS produce a kind of double-speak, in which they explain their clients

and services both in traditional case management terms and in the quantitative-technical terms of HMIS applications.

If scholarship on the electronic turn has over-stated the extent to which databasing pushes out other approaches, in arguing for the advantages of HMIS over older forms of case management, HUD overstates the fail-safe aspects of this technological form. It is fairly easy to anticipate the fallacies embedded in HUD's promotional materials for HMIS. While HUD contrasts the clean data produced by an HMIS with the subjective and incomplete accounts of case managers and "one-night counts," database programs of course also fall short or fail—systems crash, networks go down, files get mysteriously deleted.[5] Furthermore, in the process of retrofitting case notes into HMIS, or supervisors inputting subjective notes gathered by case managers, there is no guarantee that the data collected by HUD is as accurate as HUD presumes. In fact, in conversations agency supervisors readily admitted to inputting false information as they begrudgingly complied with HMIS requirements. *There was general consensus in our Continuum of Care that this was a piece of crap. People would do whatever they needed to do to secure their funding but were in no way eager to give HUD this information. It just felt unpleasant. You know, here's another thing we're gonna tell you you have to do.*

Entering inaccurate information sometimes resulted from incomplete records, so that missing information needed was guessed at. Other times, the inputting of false information was a deliberate effort to appear to be in compliance with HUD requirements. For example, one agency that began using HMIS during the early years of HUD's program worked with many women from sex work industries. Given the

[5] The one-night count has not disappeared. New York City annually recruits volunteers to participate in its one-night count.

criminalization of sex work, and the over-exposure of poor women to criminal prosecution for sex work, many of the targeted clients of this program experienced periods of imprisonment. HUD's technical definition of "homeless" requires that an individual have spent at least the past thirty days without shelter. Living in a jail or prison is considered being housed, so clients could not be taken into the program from jail or prison and would have to spend thirty days without shelter before qualifying for entry. Obviously, living without shelter would put these women at great risk for re-arrest, and exposing them to this harm was considered by this organization to run counter to their mission. As one staff person explained it, *We weren't allowed to take women who'd been in jail but we took women who were coming out of jail all the time and just lied about it. Our attitude was very much, "These are ridiculous restrictions upon us, so we're just going to do whatever we can."* This required that the agency enter false universal data elements regarding the client's previous address.

The danger of both the social work literature critique and some of the resistance from agencies is that it may romanticize earlier eras of the homeless services industry and naturalize earlier technological practices of case management. By basing critiques on the intrusion of the computer itself, critics fail to consider the long history of the technological configuration of social work practices. When past technologies are accounted for, their role is understood in very much the sense that HUD understands HMIS—as a tool taken up by the social worker in support of the central, intersubjective tasks. For example, Nigel Parton points to a set of technologies central to social work prior to the electronic turn, from the 1950s to the 1970s:

> While "the relationship" was the primary tool or "technology" of the work, there were also a variety of other technical devices that were drawn upon so that

> individuals would be rendered as knowable, calculable and administrative "subjects." These devices were in the form of a variety of written reports but also included other devices, such as the car and the telephone, which made it increasingly possible to negotiate time and place more efficiently and quickly (Parton 2006: 6).

Here Parton offers an important analysis of the technical apparatuses that made earlier models of case management possible, and recognizes the interpersonal relationship itself as a technological form (scare quotes notwithstanding). However, unfolding within a technophobic reaction to computer-based technologies, this analysis renders the written report, the telephone, the car, and the relationship less technological and therefore less dangerous. Thus Parton argues,

> What becomes evident is that, increasingly, such [technological] developments not only acted to support and refine the work, but become a major influence in reconfiguring the form of knowledge itself. Such developments become increasingly evident with the introduction of new systems of information technology (IT) and, more recently, ICTs [information and communication technologies] (Ibid.).

The ways in which computer technologies make the technological configuration of social work "increasingly evident" is mistaken for evidence of social work being *increasingly technological*. A guilt by association is projected onto practices that rely on computer information technologies, producing in turn a foil of innocence for those practices that relied on "tools" thought to be less-technological and more genuinely human/humane.

But of course, the management of housing deprivation is always already technologized. The use of any one technology in social work neither enhances nor degrades a core or true practice of the service provider. Rather, the act of service provision is always a set of technical operations. While the forms of knowledge production may change along with changing technologies, there is no form of knowledge absent a "technical substrate" (Clough 2000): knowledge is always bound to the

technologies that allow for its registration and distribution. The written report, the car, and the telephone did not simply aid the intersubjective relationship between caseworker and client, they made it possible, and did so through the disciplinary production of the client *as* a case: an individual subject technically open to intervention, which is to say, available to be studied, known, and treated. The knowledge of the caseworker, the loss of which cautionary tales currently bemoan, is not simply an heuristic position that offers depth against the gleaming surface of digital transfers. Rather, it is a technology that binds together the individual subject—the case—and draws that subject into relations of what we must think of as disciplinary management. From this perspective, we can understand case management as a technical apparatus of disciplinary power, and the humanism that critics of HMIS worry is being undermined by the electronic turn can be understood as, rather than a palliative program of assistance, a constitutive political project.[6]

With this insight in mind we must not ask what HMIS simply degrades or enhances, but what it produces. Surveillance studies has offered a way of recognizing the productive capacities of surveillance technologies in an already-technologized environment. While this literature often picks up on technophobic themes of anti-capitalist critique, it also draws attention to what information technologies of surveillance create and make possible, not simply what they corrupt (Monahan 2006; Haggerty and Ericson 2006). This is to think of how surveillance technologies organize possibilities and kinds of living, rather than simply record life as it is. Surveillance technologies are not just tracking individuals, but actively generating objects of intervention—data. In this

[6] For an excellent account of disciplining mechanisms and subject-production in a homeless shelter, see Lyon-Callo (2004).

sense, surveillance technologies are not seen just as repressive (controlling people and their movement), but productive of something new. In considering this, Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson designate an emerging "surveillant assemblage," or the coming-together of once independent systems of surveillance. One result of this new assemblage is the production of what they and others call the "data double":

> Today . . . we are witnessing the formation and coalescence of a new type of body, a form of becoming which transcends human corporeality and reduces flesh to pure information. Culled from the tentacles of the surveillant assemblage, this new body is our "data double," a double which involves "the multiplication of the individual, the constitution of an additional self" (Poster 1990:97). Data doubles circulate in a host of different centres of calculation and serve as markers for access to resources, services and power in ways which are often unknown to its referent (Haggerty and Ericson 2000: 613).

Here, Haggerty and Ericson offer an alternative understanding of information technologies such as HMIS. Pointing to the diffusion and linking up of surveillance technologies across the social, they argue that the surveillant assemblage does more than "spy upon" past actions. Rather, these technologies orient toward the future, determining the distribution of access to resources and life chances in arenas of health, education, employment, consumption and civic life.

This is true, but I want to push this analysis a bit further. To argue that the data double "serves as a marker" for access does not say strongly enough how information technologies open and close channels through which possibilities of life itself circulate. The marker is an active agent, drawing capital and bodies towards it. And I would say that not only does this happen in ways unknown to the data's referent, but in fact, in its circulation and especially in its form as statistical probabilities, data becomes divorced from its referent and takes on a life of its own. Statistical data that compose consumer and risk profiles derive from the calculation of aggregates that exceed an individual

referent. HUD's population counts are one such excess of data. This is to point to the existence of a field of data of which any one individual is only an incomplete compositional piece, but in which all individuals are caught up. This is also to challenge the assertion that surveillance data form "an additional self" or a "new type of individual," as Haggerty and Ericson claim (614). The concept of "data double" hovers too closely to the individual subject, reducing data to a shadow, or a reflection, of a specific person, and therefore it cannot account for what is produced by the technology above and beyond the scale of an individual body/subject.

In other words, the data double has been chained to the object of disciplinary management—the subject's body and its movement in space. But HUD's effort to produce a national homeless population must be considered in terms of a biopolitical project that disciplinary models of surveillance studies cannot fully describe. What uses are made of that population are considered in the following section.

HMIS and subnational governance

Technologies of biopolitical governance allow for biological life processes to be set in relation to economic calculations. In treating life en masse and describing life in terms of overall processes and patterns, biopolitical technologies can begin to think of populations in terms of inputs—including financial entitlements, like social wages, and health resources and insurances—and outputs—or what kind of economic activity the population produces in turn. HUD's HMIS program brings a set of biopolitical technical and economic concerns into the field of homeless management. It does by standardizing and quantifying the assessment of clients and services. It also does this through a kind of

economic restructuring enacted by its funding requirements. While these funding requirements have a sort of trickle-down effect on clients, in shifting from the register of disciplinary surveillance to biopolitical management, HUD intervenes more directly on agencies than on clients. Agencies are the economic actors that HUD seeks to regulate, and the population of homeless clients becomes the access point for HUD's intervention.

One of the most direct and obvious ways that HMIS impacts agencies that receive McKinney-Vento funds is that, despite HUD's claims to the contrary, HMIS compliance creates more work to do. This includes the labor of being trained in HMIS and using the database. The HMIS program also creates more work through additional reporting requirements. *We talk about this all the time, like how the paperwork just changes slightly every year. Now they want us to use a logic model. And every year there's more components for getting our pittance. Less than a quarter of our annual budget comes from this money. But it's this huge hassle, and our other money is kind of dependent upon it.*[7] HUD promotes HMIS as if the information it generates is transparent, or will simply "analyze itself," rearticulating a mythology of digital information as instantaneous and self-contained. But in fact the aggregation of data requires quite extensive and complicated record keeping and reporting to generate the numbers and make them work. It also requires plenty of extra-database, human-based computations and analysis, including seemingly endless forms upon forms that agency staff must manually complete. As the financial officer at one organization told me,

> *Honestly, it is hundreds of hours per year spent… To get this money we do the McKinney application, and there's bidder's conferences that we go to to learn*

[7] A logic model is tool used to assess the kinds of services and outcomes an agency could provide. Logic models are becoming increasingly present in social service funding. I discuss a close cousin of the logic model in the State of Arizona further on.

> *how to fill all these things out and every year there's new components to it. And then we do a technical submission and an Annual Progress Report [APR]. There's just reams of paperwork and it all kind of asks the same questions but then your outcomes on your APR affect your next year's funding cycle and you'll have to do it a year in advance, so everything's happening really far out. Adding the HMIS component is just yet another piece that everybody has to deal with.*

The impact of this new work is even greater for many agencies due to the digital divide. A common practice in housing programs is for clients to "graduate" from being residents to being staff.[8] Thus, many people move into social work with inadequate training and preparation for the technical skills demanded by HMIS.

> *If you think about who often staffs these direct service projects, it is often people who are in recovery themselves, or maybe don't have any computer skills to speak of. This was very much the case with us, where it was much easier for them to take case notes and just handwrite them—a ton of unfamiliarity with computers, and distrust and awkwardness. And so it was a much more onerous task for them to have to enter stuff into an unfamiliar database.*

This helps explain why the work of inputting data into HMIS might be done by people who do not have personal knowledge of the case. It also suggests an unfair and uneven burden on agencies that employ members of the population they serve, a burden that is erased by HUD's insistence that computers simply make things faster and easier.

The layering up of quantitative work on top of qualitative work—or the insertion of information technologies into an already existing milieu of case management technologies—produces additional labor demands at all levels of an organization, from the case managers and supervisors who must use the databases, to financial officers who must adjust budgets and file reports. The net effect, as a staff person at one agency

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[8] There are many reasons to be critical of the practice of hiring former clients, and in noting the differential impact of HMIS on organizations that employ former clients, I in no way mean to endorse it. For one, former clients rarely move up in the non-profit hierarchy, but rather are generally contained in lower level, low-wage positions. Furthermore, the work itself is quite stressful, and many providers note high levels of relapse into unhealthy drug use among clients who become staff.

explained it, is to de-emphasize services in what science studies would call another instantiation of an actuarial turn:[9]

> *It's another bureaucratic piece. We all have to learn how to use the software, we all have to add it into our budgets. You now have to allocate at least one percent of your budget for HMIS. Even if it doesn't really cost you that much, you need to say that you're spending that money. So everyone had to redo their budgets. Each piece is yet another hurdle. We're moving you further from the services that you provide, taking person-hours away from any kind of direct service and putting them in more bureaucracy.*

As the statement testifies, in the context of the actuarial turn, the tasks of financial calculation come to permeate more and more aspects of life, including occupations previously considered more strictly interpersonal or humanistic.

Making clients and services quantifiable also makes them calculable in relation to financial resources, and it is here that we see some of the biggest impact of the HMIS program. This is not the first introduction of financial concerns by the federal government into the homeless services industry. Far from it. As the financial officer cited above explained, *Even before HMIS, if you look at the [McKinney-Vento] application, that's what HUD wants to know. They want to know income at entry, income at exit. How many people did you connect them with [in terms of] connecting residents with mainstream benefits. It's one of the main criteria.*[10] While not entirely new in its concerns, HMIS allows for is a tighter regulation of the financial cost of service approaches, and a reorganization of service approaches along lines of supposed economic efficiency.

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[9] On the actuarial turn, see Porter (1995).

[10] "Mainstream benefits" in this statement refers to public assistance (i.e. "welfare") and income support (such as disability payments). These are forms of financial support that are not coordinated through HUD and are not limited to those designated homeless. Hence, the goal is to move clients off of "homeless money" and onto general support systems.

The concern with money follows logically from HUD's role as financier of housing and related health services. The Senate report cited at this chapter's open expresses dismay at what was a fifteen-year lapse in federal oversight of homelessness initiatives, a lapse that would seem symptomatic of social service provision in the bifurcated post-welfare state. With services provided by such great numbers and kinds of agencies, the federal government's capacity to monitor and assess these programs has faced obvious challenges. I would argue that HUD's HMIS program is an exemplary case of neoliberal or post-welfare state governance in that it permits the state both to disperse and contract. Putting in place database systems allows for any number of nodes, or agencies, to operate independently within a structure that is decentralized but nonetheless subject to parameters or controls. In many ways, this may be more powerful than a centralized database, or even perhaps a centralized state. The network is mutable and can survive even when nodes in the system fail; for example, one local jurisdiction's bad data would not stop the flow of data to HUD overall. Furthermore, as demonstrated above, the labor of generating data does not need to be centrally organized or coordinated by HUD. The use of universal data elements produces commensurate materials that can both operate at local levels (within the agency and its target constituencies, as well as in local Continuum of Care jurisdictions) and at national levels. At the local level, the data can be attached to a unique client, and can therefore serve an agency's work of case-by-case monitoring. At the national level, the data sheds its unique identifiers and becomes part of an aggregate, thus satisfying claims for privacy and drawing together to form a national count—which is to say, the universal data elements organized by each local database can be used to generate other data that can be processed again into the shape of a national

count that Congress demands. This aggregation of data can be thought of as something like the collectivization of labor that produces more than the sum of each laborer. In this case, "the population" is the surplus of the collectivization of the universal data elements.

This population is not only an object of regulation. The population in this case acts as a mechanism for governance, a technology deployed toward regulating the economic activity of agencies that receive HUD funding. This regulation occurs in a kind of de facto way in the new demands on labor already discussed. It also occurs through more direct ways by setting information about clients in relation to money being spent. As a manager put it, HUD wants to know "what are we getting for our money":

> *We want to know the size of the problem and we want to know dollars per capita. How much are we spending per person, per unduplicated homeless person in the United States, what are we spending? And is it more than a hardworking "average American" would make in a year, then that's obscene. Never mind that people might have severe mental disabilities and that costs money to help people with.*

HUD's assessment of what it is getting for its money is happening in a number of ways at subnational levels. The use of HMIS data by the Washington D.C. Continuum of Care offers a good example of the valuable surplus generated by universal data elements, as well as the practices of "governance of governance," or the use of a homeless population to regulate service agencies. Working with the Department of Health and Human Services, the D.C. Continuum of Care has developed an Annual Performance Plan that all D.C. service agencies receiving McKinney-Vento funds are required to submit. These plans are used to evaluate agency performance, and to help determine how D.C. will allocate its McKinney-Vento funds. As a report on this initiative notes,

> The ability to use HMIS data for more than required reporting is a tremendous asset to the CoC [Continuum of Care]. The D.C. Performance Measurement System has enabled CoC staff to collect data on each program's performance and

> monitor progress toward individual program and broader community goals. As shown . . . the Annual Performance Plan is a well-defined, structured way in which to hold providers accountable and ensure everyone clearly understands what is expected (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2007b: 28).

Three accountability factors are tracked by the Annual Performance Plan using HMIS-generated data: the occupancy rate of the program; the income clients obtained while in the program (including public benefits); and either the successful transition to or maintenance of permanent housing. The income streams tracked by DC's HMIS program reflect the statement about mainstream benefits quoted above. "Mainstream" means both income from employment as well as public benefits not specific to homeless management—including public assistance (or "welfare"), disability, and unemployment insurance. In other words, this factor signals non-dependence on HUD-funded services.

The three factors tracked in D.C. are used to create comparative quantitative measures of agency performance, which are in turn used, though not solely, to determine D.C.'s funding priorities. While we do not want to misread this as some sort of automated technocracy that matches dollars to scores, we should note what a far cry this use of HMIS is from HUD's promotion of it as a way to do what agencies already did, only better and faster. These three measures, which translate client experiences into agency scores, operationalize *better* and *faster* as commands that agencies must respond to in order to remain competitive in a context of scarce and restricted funding.[11] Individual

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[11] In pointing to the regulation of homeless service agencies, I do not mean to endorse their activities, or suggest they should not be regulated. I mean only to point to how the productive capacities of universal data elements are used for many purposes well beyond the counting or even tracking of homeless individuals. The professionalization of social services, the use of social services to extend state power, and the role of social services in maintaining inequality all remain to be explored in this context. Such issues are taken on in relation to homelessness by Lyon-Callo

experiences of finding and maintaining appropriate shelter, or accessing income necessary for survival, are absorbed into a governance mechanism in which the regulation of the poor functions not only as social control, but also as a mechanism for the regulation of social services. Being a target of homeless social services here becomes a kind of labor used to produce a population *for* governance and *as* governance.

The State of Arizona has gone even further in systemizing its use of HMIS universal data elements to regulate and fund agencies, and provides another telling case of how data generated through HMIS is put to use toward the production of not just a population, but of subnational governance itself. In Arizona, McKinney-Vento funds are channeled through a central State agency, which then distributes those funds to municipal and county governments and nonprofit organizations. For agencies receiving its McKinney-Vento Act funds, Arizona has developed what it calls a "self-sufficiency improvement score" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2006a: 22). The score is generated through the use of a matrix that measures fifteen different domains considered part of self-sufficiency, including Income, Employment, Adult Education, Mental Health, and others. For each of the domains, clients receive a score representing the following levels of self-sufficiency: 1=In Crisis; 2=Vulnerable; 3=Safe; 4=Building Capacity; or 5=Empowered (Arizona Homeless Evaluation Project 2006). The State provides guidelines for what constitutes each level for each of the domains. For example, in the area of Employment, possessing no job earns a score of one; a temporary, part-time, or seasonal job with no benefits and inadequate pay earns a score of two; a full-time job with adequate pay but few or no benefits earns a three; a full-time job with adequate

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(2004) and Funiciello (1994), and more broadly by Piven and Cloward (1993) and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (2007).

pay and benefits earns a four; and the maintenance of such a job earns a five. Thus, a client's self-sufficiency would range from fifteen, for a client determined to be "in crisis" in all fifteen domains, to a highest possible score of seventy-five for a client determined to be "empowered" in all fifteen areas.

These data for the self-sufficiency matrix are required to be collected when clients enter and exit programs. Agencies can then calculate a self-sufficiency improvement score by looking at the presumed increase from time of entry to time of exit; a client who moved from "in crisis" to "safe" in all domains would be said to have increased their self-sufficiency by fifteen points. In terms of the clients of service agencies, this score accomplishes two things. First, it creates a standard measure of "self-sufficiency," thereby operationalizing what otherwise HUD would consider vague and subjective outcomes; now a number can be attached to a client's ability to care for themselves. Secondly, it allows their *progress* over time with an agency to be measured, giving a longitudinal dimension to this data. The self-sufficiency score serves as a good example of exactly the concerns raised by critics of the electronic turn. The self-sufficiency improvement score represents an amalgamation of various areas of need and service but also their quantification. The subjective sense of being able to care for oneself, as well as the caseworker's interpretation of this, here is eclipsed by a numerical measure. As described by critics earlier, this is the client decomposed and recomposed as data points.

However, the State of Arizona and HUD's commentary on this program makes clear that how this data will be used to serve clients is of almost incidental concern. Arizona plans to use this data to create aggregate rates of self-sufficiency improvement for *agencies*. Thus, Arizona can compare and rank agencies, and funding can be directed

at them based on their successful generation of data that improves—marking the introduction of "performance-based contracting" in the homeless services industry (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2006a: 22). For agencies, making their *numbers* "get better," and not necessarily their clients*,* will draw in more money; improving rates of self-sufficiency may not be the same thing as improving the lives of people living without shelter in Arizona. Here we can see the quick movement from an individual who might look something like a case, to their reconfiguration as a data profile of numerical scores, to their absorption as part of larger data body (clients of an agency) out of which is generated numbers to draw in funds. If anything, HUD here is successfully regulating agencies, not clients, and it is doing so through "flexible regulation." Arizona operates within a given set of parameters (the gathering of universal data elements by each agency supported with HUD funding) that can be actualized in any way the State of Arizona deems appropriate. It is "free" to make other uses of HMIS, and it has done just that. By providing flexible limitations, HUD allows states, cities, and Continuums of Care to innovate. They thereby function as test laboratories, producing new uses of HMIS that HUD can circulate as models, to be repeated and further elaborated upon by other locales.

The clients become a way of determining where money, resources, and technical information will flow, and what the life of an agency might be. This is a case of the governance of governance that operates through disciplined bodies mined for population data. And the population generated (a population of agencies, overlaying a population of Arizona homeless) feeds back on those disciplined bodies, the raw material out of which this data generation takes place. So, for example, an individual in Arizona will find the

service options that become available to him or her will be dependent on (1) how that individual is sorted within the general population and (2) how population data for that track has determined what agencies exist for that track and what services they offer. This is not a population as a representation of "the people," but rather a plane of intervention formed from the raw material of homeless clients that draws bodies back into itself. The answer to critiques that HMIS signals an invasion of privacy has been the creation of "masked data" that cannot be traced back to a specific client at the federal level. But whether or not a specific individual can be related back to data generated out of that individual, the life of that data will absorb and transform the life of that individual. The population is a living entity injected with biopolitical force that acts back upon that which made it.

The biopoliticization of housing deprivation

HUD's effort to produce a national homeless population, then, must be considered in terms of a biopolitical project that disciplinary models in critical social work and surveillance studies cannot fully describe. In the contemporary context, discipline does not fall away. Rather, disciplinary mechanisms serve as flashpoints between an individual and a population. In this case, HUD's data standards allow for translation between these two political registers. Technologies of disciplinary psychodynamic case management—including the intersubjective relationship of caseworker and client, as well as institutional arrangements of non-profit agencies, service plans, and federal mandates—provide a track across which biopolitical techniques of information management can roll out. Understood as inadequate to the task of population management, disciplinary case

management is absorbed in a weakened state into a biopoliticized terrain in which its technologies continue to reproduce, though in mutated form. And so social work is neither simply enhanced nor eroded by a technology it deploys, but rather is itself deployed inside this technically-reconfigured context. In order to survive, social work must transform to move within the contours of this new milieu; the innovations of the Washington D.C. Continuum of Care and the State of Arizona are examples of these creative adaptations. Though the disciplining techniques of case management may continue to accomplish some of their older goals, they survive insofar as they hold the subject available to biopolitical interventions that will in some ways leave the subject behind, as service agencies become privileged objects of governmental intervention.

The consequence, then, of scholars and critics remaining at a disciplinary register is not that such analysis is wrong. The problem is that when an individual subject is assumed as the object of intervention, such analysis cannot fully account for the productive operations of power at play, and the consequences of this for individuals dependent upon federally-reconfigured social service provision. Whereas HUD would imagine the "unduplicated population counts" of its HMIS program as simply a statistical reflection of what actually exists, we can rather understand HUD's program as arranging homelessness *as* a population, and therefore as vulnerable to biopolitical calculation. Thus clients of homeless service agencies are caught in a field of data not tied directly back to them, but to which they are very much bound. Contrary to HUD's claims, this population does not merely present an accurate picture of homelessness in the U.S., but it rather re-makes homelessness by reconfiguring what needs are allowed to register, and what services can address those needs. In fact, the population precedes the lives that

made it, as the individual becomes drawn into the possibilities of life determined by biopolitical technologies. The individual must come to reflect the population, not the other way around. And so, far from merely a reflection of the people that made it up, the population of universal data elements works toward "making up people," to play with Ian Hacking's formulation (Hacking 2007). With this phrase, Hacking points to how the categories of statistics determined what kinds of people could be conceptualized—what kinds of laborers, for example, or that people would be categorized in terms of the labor they performed at all. I want to point to how the production of populations makes some kinds of living possible, while foreclosing others. HUD's HMIS program produces a population of universal data elements that circulates powerfully in the biopolitical context of contemporary governance. Providing privacy protections for individual homeless clients—as critics demanded and as HUD has done—does not shield that individual from such feedback effects of this population data. Surveillance technologies in this context do not "clamp down," but rather let loose. They let loose a biopolitical register toward the proliferation of governance and its populations, which is to say, they free new objects of intervention that may not look like any one individual, but of which the individual client, in order to survive, must become a part. The client gives life to the population, and this life is organized not only as an object of governance, but a mechanism for governance. In a context of renewed federal intervention, the universal data elements allow for the roll-out of new kinds of oversight that reorganize homeless services in terms of quantified outcomes set in relation to financial costs and savings. And for "offering" themselves up as raw material for the productions of HMIS, clients receive life in return: access to the bare minimum of food, shelter, and healthcare. Within biopolitical homeless

management, for individuals in desperate need of resources controlled by social service agencies and basic to survival, there may be no life outside the life given by the population. The conditions of housing insecurity remain intact even as the technologies of homeless management are recalibrated and modernized.

Chapter 4
Investing in Vulnerability: The Invention of Chronic Homelessness

> *I mean the good thing is that we're really making an impact. We're really housing people. At times I'm like, oh my god, I'm just so The Man right now, selling out big time. But then at other times, you know, I see the folks that we're able to get inside. And they're the people that nobody else has ever been able to really talk to, or have wanted to talk to. You know, the quote-unquote "resistant to services" people. And we spend time with them, and we don't give up on them.*

In 2007, a coalition of Los Angeles government offices and nonprofit organizations launched Project 50, a social service and housing program targeting what researchers, politicians, and journalists have recently begun calling the "chronically homeless."[1] As defined by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, "A chronically homeless person is . . . an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more *or* has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years" (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 2008: iii). Unlike individuals or families for whom living without shelter is a temporary episode, the chronically homeless are understood to exhibit long-term patterns of cycling in and out of shelters, hospitals, and jails, interspersed with periods of living unhoused and "on the streets."

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[1] In this chapter, "chronically homeless" should always be read as if in scare quotes. As will become clear, I want to foreground the provisional and constructed nature of the term, even as I investigate its deployment. I take the term seriously due to its very real material consequences, but I aim to resist its reification. In my use, it should be understood to mean "populations targeted as chronically homeless."

Following a model tested first in New York City, Project 50's team of outreach workers set out to identify chronically homeless individuals concentrated in downtown Los Angeles in a neighborhood still called Skid Row. Mortality rates are so high in Skid Row—three times that of the surrounding county—that in the 1970s one group of researchers referred to the neighborhood as a "death zone" (O'Connell 2005: 1). In recent years, Skid Row has been undergoing a dramatic "revanchist turn" (Smith 1996) as it is re-territorialized by luxury housing developments and consumer amenities. An increasing, and increasingly hostile, police presence has accompanied this real-estate push-out. Since 2006, the so-called Safer City Initiative has targeted unsheltered individuals in Skid Row for criminal punishment; it represents one of the greatest concentrations of police force in the United States (Blasi and Stuart 2008).

Armed with outreach questionnaires, Project 50 workers initiated face-to-face conversations with Skid Row residents. In these conversations, they gathered targeted information about the lives of their interview subjects, including how much time they'd spent in hospitals, shelters, and living on the street, their medical backgrounds and histories of substance use, as well as any current health conditions. For each Skid Row resident interviewed, the information obtained was measured against what is known as a "vulnerability index." The index used by Project 50 identifies eight conditions linked to increased mortality among street populations:

1. more than three hospitalizations or emergency room visits in a year
2. more than three emergency room visits in the previous three months
3. aged 60 or older
4. cirrhosis of the liver
5. end-stage renal disease
6. history of frostbite, immersion foot, or hypothermia
7. HIV+/AIDS

8. tri-morbidity: co-occurring psychiatric, substance abuse, and chronic medical condition (Common Ground Institute n.d.)

The index comes out of research that demonstrates that possessing any one of these indicators significantly decreases an individual's lifespan. The "50" in Project 50 refers to the goal of the outreach efforts: to use the index to identify the fifty people in Skid Row most likely to die in the coming year. These individuals were offered immediate placement into a housing program, with none of the typical case management requirements regarding social services or sobriety. One radio program described Project 50 residents as those "fortunate enough to be determined the most unfortunate" (Bergman 2007).

Project 50 is just one among hundreds of chronic homelessness programs launched in municipalities across the United States in recent years. Chronic homelessness programs depart from long-held assumptions about people living in poverty and long-established technologies for managing those populations, and thus their emergence and rapid spread defies easy explanation. As Chapter 2 argued, popular conceptions of poverty in the United States have maintained that individuals living in poverty, and not social or governmental institutions, produce impoverished conditions. Such discourse of personal responsibility has been accompanied by intensive networks of social welfare technologies that seek to regulate the poor by intervening in individual behavior. As Chapter 2 also demonstrated, persons living without shelter have especially been understood as incapable of self-management and in need of invasive social assistance. Many decades of formal and informal policy have made treatment for substance abuse and psychiatric disabilities a mandatory condition for entering and remaining in housing programs. Such earlier policy argued that drug/alcohol and psychiatric treatment, as well

as social services focused on money management, job training, and a wide range of other so-called life skills, make formerly "shelter-resistant" individuals "housing-ready."

Thus, chronic homelessness initiatives are quite surprising, as they facilitate immediate access to housing with no social service or work requirements, bypassing the coercive social control technologies associated with the contemporary workfare state (Peck 2001) and the war on the poor. This departure in policy is even more surprising considering that those categorized as chronically homeless are disproportionately men of color who actively consume drugs and alcohol and lack close family ties.[2] Far from usually finding themselves the privileged targets of housing programs, members of this population, typically demonized as the "undeserving poor," are more commonly barred from social service agencies and housed in prisons and jails.[3]

Long before the advent of chronic homelessness initiatives, advocates and activists organized against mandatory health and social services in housing programs. Socially progressive or radical service organizations, convinced that mandatory services actually kept people out of shelters, experimented with making services optional (Tsemberis and Eisenberg 2000). This model, known as Housing First, remained marginal within the homeless services industry until its adoption by the federal government for chronic homelessness initiatives. How, then, did this unexpected moment arrive, and through the efforts of the neoconservative administration of George W. Bush ("Feds push efforts" 2006)? Should this be taken as an unexpected compassionate turn in social policy and administration? Does it represent a reversal of social abandonment, as

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[2] The association of "chronic homelessness" with racial status and substance use was developed in Culhane and Kuhn (1998), to be discussed later in this chapter.

[3] Among others, Löic Wacquant has connected the erosion of social safety nets with the expansion of punishment systems. See Wacquant (2009).

vilified populations deemed most likely to die become targeted for life-saving housing interventions rather than displaced to zones of exclusion?

The chapter that follows will argue that the rise of chronic homelessness as a concern results from the convergence of two historical forces. The first is a counter-discourse in homeless social services that challenges medical models and technologies of homeless management. This is the early Housing First movement and a related discourse of public health. The second is the production of an economic analysis of homelessness that emphasizes the financial cost of leaving populations housing deprived. This economic analysis is produced first by social scientists and then picked up and circulated by government offices and mass media. Looking at how these historical forces intersect makes the arrival of chronic homelessness initiatives less surprising, and will point toward the limits of these initiatives as well. Despite the promise of chronic homelessness programs—namely, the lifting of barriers to access and the immediate provision of housing—this chapter proposes a cautious interrogation of the relationships between the technical calculation of death chances and the securing of health and life resources. This is to take seriously the tension expressed by the statement presented at the chapter's open. The informant quoted, a social worker with an activist background, expresses some dismay at working within the government—"I'm just so the man right now"—while also asserting the incontrovertible fact that their program is housing exactly the people who have been most blocked from social welfare benefits. I will argue that the tension that statement points to—and the surprise of finding a progressive housing agenda picked up and promoted by the U.S. federal government—arises from the ways in which managing vulnerable populations enables neoliberal economic expansion.

"Housing First" and the de-medicalization of homelessness

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the primary mode for managing homelessness within the dominant medical model has been through case management technologies. In contemporary social work practice, the medical logics embedded in case management technologies have assumed a taken-for-granted status, forming an inherited culture that has made case management seem obvious and necessary. This has been formalized by HUD in the Continuum of Care (CoC) model, which has mandated progression through stages of housing—from emergency shelter, to transitional housing, and ultimately in either private marketplace or supportive permanent housing. Thus, the old Progressive-era work test has survived in a new form—rather than cutting stone or lumber, modern shelter aspirants demonstrate worth through commitment to working on themselves and making it through the Continuum. As a former caseworker and current director of a housing program told me, *I think there's just this really old-fashioned treatment approach to things, where you have to earn your way to housing. I can't really say that I've ever seen any kind of formal funding requirement of sobriety or anything like that. You basically worked your way up the Continuum.* As the statement suggests, notions of deserving versus undeserving poor are embedded in practices that withhold housing and other services from those who have not "earned" it. As it also suggests, associations of homelessness with alcohol abuse and drug addiction has especially called forth the necessity of professional intervention in the form of social work technologies. That informant continued, *People thought that they needed to have folks that were clean and sober. It was sort of just a requirement that was handed down but never really written anywhere.* A staff therapist of another organization explained that mandatory treatment

draws legitimacy from the popular conception that "addicts" require shaming and direct intervention. But it is also produced by the professionalization of social work, and the organizational status of the case manager over the client.

> *I think to some degree it's a thing we're conditioned to about substance use generally. But I think its sort of a natural extension of being in the social services world as well. Because just the logic of social services is that we're being paid to make life better for these people. Therefore, our judgment is paramount. And they ought to be following that. And so going into a setting where we don't just impose our judgment on things I think doesn't feel right to some people. And then you complicate it further with our conventional view of addiction stuff, where it's all about, you know, shaming someone until they come around and start making better decisions for themselves . . . the whole thing just becomes a big mess I think.*

Thus, moral, medical, and popular conceptions of selfhood and homelessness naturalize the compulsory deployment of case management technologies. As a result, the provision of housing services has almost always been conjoined to coercive attempts at fixing problem individuals.

In contrast to compulsory case management technologies of social and health services, Housing First represents a potentially radical break from medicalized models by separating shelter provision from social and health services. Housing First programs make available traditional social and health services, but as the designation suggests, housing is the first thing provided, and services are not required for admittance. Housing First represents a social commitment to the principle that all people deserve housing at all times, and an organizational commitment to putting resources into supporting all residents. Seattle, Washington-based Downtown Emergency Services Center, which has become a model for agencies around the country, outlines the following core components of a Housing First approach:

1. Move people into housing directly from streets and shelters without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance.
2. The provider is obligated to bring robust support services to the housing. These services are predicated on assertive engagement, not coercion.
3. Continued tenancy is not dependent on participation in services.
4. Units targeted to most disabled and vulnerable homeless members of the community.
5. Embraces harm reduction approach to addictions rather than mandating abstinence. At the same time, the provider must be prepared to support resident commitments to recovery.
6. Residents must have leases and tenant protections under the law.
7. Can be implemented as either a project-based or scattered site mode (Downtown Emergency Services Center n.d.)

Before being named as such, Housing First practices were being put in place by a small number of nonprofit agencies targeting unsheltered populations. These organizations, each of which was attempting to reach what one staff person called "the hardest to house" and another "the worst of the worst," came to a reverse logic about the relationship of services and housing. Compulsory psychiatric and drug treatment, rather than enabling people to stay housed, came to be seen as *barriers* that kept people on the streets. From this view, compulsory requirements set up residents to fail (at sobriety, for example), and thus to be evicted and deprived of housing once more. A self-fulfilling prophecy was put in place: residents in fact appeared not to be ready for housing. Speaking of this process that leads to eviction, one caseworker commented, *It deepens people's impressions that these clients are impossible to house. Every time that happens, then they feel more strongly about that.*

As suggested in the DESC principles cited above, proto-Housing First programs evolved out of contemporaneous harm reduction movements in U.S. AIDS activism. In the realm of HIV/AIDS prevention, harm reduction argues that abstinence models do not keep people safe, and that education efforts should rather be aimed toward developing

safer practices. Services must meet clients "where they're at" and provide tools for making healthier choices of how to have sex or use drugs. Translated to the realm of housing, harm reduction suggested that rather than coercing residents to accept an organization's concept of housing readiness, organizations should simply provide housing—housing is a safer option than living unhoused, and clients can be supported in making informed choices about their needs and interests regarding services. Since many housing organizations were already working with populations targeted by harm reduction HIV/AIDS prevention, they were already prepped for Housing First. *It wasn't some huge internal dialogue we had to go through to get comfortable with Housing First as an idea. There was some pushback from some of the staff. But those values were pretty much in all of our seminal documents, part of orientation, part of ongoing supervision, part of service training. It wasn't a huge thing for us; it just felt like a very natural evolution*.

The early adoption of Housing First did not occur all at once. Rather, it was a piecemeal effort that required re-evaluating long-held assumptions rooted in the medicalization model. Service providers describe a kind of organic process of trial and error that led their respective agencies to develop "low-demand" environments that would eventually be named and organized as Housing First. The director of one such early-adopting agency describes the shift at that agency from "housing readiness"—the notion that only some people were prepared to accept and stay in housing, and that others must first go through mandatory treatment.

> *We employed a readiness concept. "So-and-so" is not ready for this housing because he's not keeping his appointments with their case manager. Or "so-and-so" is not ready because he's a crack addict and he's not doing anything. And yet, because of who we are . . . . We were sort of known in the community as the organization of last resort. If you were so crazy, or so into drug and alcohol use, and the Y didn't want to serve you anymore, they would refer you to [us]. Social*

> *workers and emergency departments, police officers—if they encountered someone who was very disorganized, very dysfunctional, they would take them here. So we had all that experience. But we were right out of the box with a housing project and we sort of, to a certain degree, followed this readiness thing. But because we had all this experience, we also stretched that a little bit, and took some risks with people.*

As the statement indicates, an organizational commitment to finding ways to house those populations who were most neglected by compulsory services drove these early experiments in Housing First.

Of course, the medical model and its technologies of compliance proved quite sticky. Even as agencies experimented with low-demand environments with optional treatment services, pathologizing assumptions about homeless populations were not automatically or easily abandoned.

> *When we developed [our first permanent low demand housing] we sort of had this naïve assumption that this group was gonna trash the building. And so we built in this humongous line item into the budget for repairing things. Because our thought was, "We're not gonna kick them out, we're just gonna fix the things that they break." And it turned out, that didn't happen. And I think that was part of the change in our thinking to "these people are really not any more difficult to house than anybody else."*

> *Even though we were close to these people, I think we bought into the same stereotypes. That they're a bunch of animals who are gonna rip the place to shreds. It's embarrassing to think about it now.*

Despite some of these reservations, organizations that experimented with low-demand or Housing First approaches quickly saw that freeing clients from mandatory services did not render them incapable of staying housed.

> *And over the first few years of operation we discovered that the people that we were taking risks with were just as likely to succeed in housing as those people that we predicted were housing reading. About the time we were coming to that realization, the Safe Haven idea was introduced at the federal level.* [4] *And the next*

[4] Safe Haven is the designated category for HUD-funded housing programs targeting persons with psychiatric disabilities.

> *housing project … we decided that we wanted to build this housing project, and we wanted to use it as an engagement tool. So we set our caps to recruit residents that we knew to be crazy and homeless and not connected to anybody's [services] program, including our own.*

As the experiments bore results, the idea that some populations possess an untamed desire to live on the street came undone. Along with it, the notions of "service resistant" and "housing ready" seemed increasingly implausible.

> *There was all sorts of mythology out there about, this is the one group of homeless people that is just not gonna come inside. They would prefer to be outside and just drink themselves to death. It turned out that was not the case. We had to make 79 offers of housing to get 75 people to accept housing.*
>
> *I think we're experiencing evidence that homeless people want housing, and can maintain it. When I started . . . what they told me was, homeless people won't talk to you, they don't want housing. They would be labeled as "service resistant," which is just meaningless. It's just a meaningless thing to call a person, it doesn't mean anything. It's not rooted in behavioral science, it's just a cop out.*

As the director of one program pointed out to me, the success of these early experiments was rooted in the fact that agencies were offering permanent housing, as opposed to temporary placement in an emergency shelter while the clients got clean and sober. Again, what was emerging was an organizational recognition that clients respond to the conditions of housing opportunities, just as does everyone. Rejection of heavy service requirements or the lack of privacy and comfort in emergency shelters was being recognized as a reasonable reaction that agencies must take seriously. *Everybody knows that shelter is not a place anybody wants to be. So quote-unquote "shelter resistant," I never believed a word about it. If you give somebody housing, they're gonna go in. So why even tag somebody with that description? I'm resistant to shelter, anybody would be.*

Slowly a new logic emerged—that populations that refused compulsory services would accept no-strings-attached housing. This led to new outreach approaches, as Housing First principles got structured into every stage of work.

> *So we focused on going out to the folks on the street. They started to ask people, "Will you work with us toward permanent housing?" They didn't talk to them about, like, you need to get clean, you need to go into [emergency] shelter, you need to get mental health services. The first question was, "Will you work with us towards permanent housing? Your own apartment—your own place with a door that locks. And if you're willing to work with us, we will stick with you until it happens." And that's how they were able to reduce [street] homelessness.*

As the bind between housing and compliance technologies loosened, pathological conceptions of homeless populations lost their logical force. Housing First technologies edged out disciplinary logics that individuals must be reformed to be housing ready. Rather than a war on the poor mentality that assigns individuals personal responsibility for conditions for living in poverty, a new view of *institutional* responsibility emerged. From this view, government and nonprofit organizations, not individuals living without shelter, bore responsibility for housing failures.

> *If this person goes back on the streets then you the housing provider need to realize that you failed the individual. It's not the individual that has failed himself, but we have failed to figure out how to work with him. And you need to be confident that you have exhausted the possibilities. I think too much still we just give up on people and say, "Well, they didn't jump through all the hoops we wanted them to, so they clearly don't want this housing." Well that's nonsense, nobody wants to go to sleep back on the street.*

> *I think we should be held accountable for outcomes that are really difficult to achieve . . . . For a long time, we as a sector put the onus on the individual to figure out how to work with us. And now I think the shift is…. it's our job to figure out how to work with that individual, and it's not ok just to say, "They don't wanna come inside." We have to figure out how to get that person inside and how to negotiate with them and serve them.*

For organizations to accept and understand the ways that technologies of compliance perpetuate housing deprivation requires fundamentally reconceptualizing the role of

nonprofit organizations.; it requires understanding the provision of housing—rather than the reforming of the individual—as the appropriate goal. This means, as many described it, that "housing is an outcome" rather than a tool for enforcing compliance in self-help regimes.

> *A lot of people can't seem to accept the idea that being housed is an outcome for homeless people. They want to know, "So, what's happening to their mental health symptoms? And are they getting jobs, and are they abstinent from substance use?" and all that kind of stuff. Which for some people certainly it's the route they end up taking and it helps and all that. But the point of housing is housing. It's an outcome for all of us. It isn't to facilitate something else for us. It's to have a home base. Why can't it be for them as well?*

Housing First principles demand a rejection of the polarizing pathologization embedded in disciplinary social work regimes. Rather than marking out "the homeless" as a special category of individual, Housing First insists that housing deprived populations deserve the same access to housing as any of us who are able to pay for that privilege.

Thus, throughout the 1990s, before being named as such, Housing First approaches developed organically through organizational experiments with housing under-served populations. When Pathways to Housing, an early advocate of this approach, published research indicating that mandatory services do not impact ability to find and maintain housing (Tsemberis and Eisenberg 2000), Housing First was organized as a named concept, and began to formally travel around social service networks. Thus, the leader of an effort to convert service-heavy supportive housing to Housing First describes recognizing the new common sense of Housing First. That manager, charged with dramatically reducing the street population of a tourist urban core, described hearing about Housing First and recognizing almost immediately that Housing First would be the most "efficient and effective way" of getting that population housed.

In challenging pathological conceptions of homelessness and attempting to address the needs of under-served populations, Housing First advocates enacted what could be thought of as a de-medicalization of homelessness. In other words, the idea of homelessness as an incarnation of a failed selfhood is undermined, and along with it, the compulsory use of case management technologies is undermined as well. Accompanying this de-medicalization been a new discourse that reframes homelessness as a public health issue. This discourse also concerns medical issues, but does not treat housing deprivation as a pathology that must be cured. Rather, this new discourse draws attention to the health *consequences* of living without shelter, such as those outlined in Chapter 1. Through this discourse, advocates emphasize that living without shelter dramatically harms health and shortens life—hence Project 50's goal of locating those most likely to die in the coming year. Insisting on the health needs of unsheltered populations has been an attempt to undo the stigmas attached to cultural conceptions of the homeless:

> *The health piece is less stigmatized. We're able to use it as a more powerful advocacy tool. If you scratch an alcoholic you're gonna get liver disease. If you scratch, unfortunately, someone with severe and persistent mental illness, you're gonna find diabetes and heart disease from the secondary [effects] of taking the psych meds. So you can find a way to less stigmatized manifestations of things all the things we see on the streets and use that.*

This counter-discourse of public health also seeks to mobilize political sympathy against demonizing portraits of the undeserving poor. Advocates describe it as a means of redirecting attention and garnering support. Referencing their agency's work doing public presentations on the health consequences of housing deprivation, one staff member told me:

> *Almost always . . . it's common for one of [the government officials] to start weeping. And then publicly, because it's framed as a life or death issue, not as a behavioral health issue, they have the clearance to take bold decisive action.*

> *They're like, "Oh my god, they're gonna die." And they have this little mini freak-out on Thursday, and then on Friday, they step up.*

Another worker, describing efforts in their local community, echoed this sentiment:

> *The number one most vulnerable guy we found . . . was in the middle of going through chemotherapy on the street when we found him. How can you as a public official not act? I mean, that's just ridiculous, there's no reason that man should be on the street. And so it takes away, I think, a lot of the "people are drug users, or they're crazy, or they're undeserving of our services." And brings it down to a level which everyone can relate to, about being how awful it is to be sick, and especially sick on the street.*

While there is no doubt that for advocates the public health discourse is a powerful mobilizing tool, it is not clear how much credit the discourse deserves for changing the political landscape of homeless social services. As it turns out, economics is playing at least as important a role as empathy.

The invention of chronic homelessness

Looking closely at how public health concerns get rolled out suggests that we must attend to an economic dimension of those health concerns. This economic dimension follows from what I would call the invention of chronic homelessness. By invention, of course, I do not mean to deny that some people endure much of their lives deprived of housing. Nor do I mean to downplay the incredible risks to health and life posed by housing insecurity and deprivation. Rather, I want to draw attention to how a certain conception of a sub-category of homelessness—the chronically homeless—becomes the condition of possibility for the mobilization of public health discourses and Housing First practices. And in turn, I want to attend to how that condition of possibility sets limits on what becomes of those discourses and practices.

The terms "chronic homelessness" and "chronically homeless" start appearing in media discourse as early as the 1980s. The usage at that time, and up until the mid-1990s, is fairly loose.[5] The terms are used to describe a state any person might be in. So, for example, a newspaper article might describe someone by saying, "Throughout his 20s and 30s, John was chronically homeless"—as in, John was frequently without a home. Beginning in the mid-1990s however, the meaning of these terms begins to congeal, and they come to refer to a specific *subset* of homeless people, rather than a state any person might be in. This solidification of the concept happens as a result of research conducted out of the University of Pennsylvania by Dennis Culhane and Randall Kuhn. In a series of studies published in 1998, Culhane and Kuhn argue that people who stay in emergency homeless shelters can be organized into three categories: the transitionally homeless, the episodically homeless, and the "chronically homeless." In the first study, Culhane and Kuhn explain: "The *chronically homeless* population could be characterized as those persons most like the stereotypical profile of the skid-row homeless. These are people who are likely to be entrenched in the shelter system, and for whom shelters are more like long-term housing than an emergency arrangement" (Kuhn and Culhane 1998: 211). Thus, the chronically homeless are one subset of all those who use shelters. Culhane and Kuhn described them as "over-utilizers"—their shelter stays last the longest, and they are most likely to return. In the second study, Culhane and Kuhn argue that the chronically homeless tend to share a number of characteristics, and they write, "in general, being older, of black race, having a substance abuse or mental health problem, or having a

[5] Using newspaper databases, I conducted Boolean searches for chronic* homeless* from 1980 to 2009 in the *New York Times, Los Angeles Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle*, and reviewed all articles in which those terms appeared. My discussion of news coverage and terminology is based on that research.

physical disability, significantly reduces the likelihood of exiting shelter" (Culhane and Kuhn 1998: 23).

Culhane and Kuhn's research did not only solidify the concept of chronic homelessness. It also introduced an economic dimension to the category. The extended stays and high rates of recidivism attributed to the chronically homeless are understood to be most significant in terms of their drain on the shelter systems; Culhane and Kuhn argue that chronically homeless individuals use a "disproportionate amount of resources" in the homeless service industry. In other words, with their long and frequent shelter stays, they are the most costly. Subsequent research by Culhane and others went further, correlating shelter stay statistics with data from hospitals and jails to show that the chronically homeless in fact brought high costs to these other institutional sites as well (Culhane, Metreaux and Hadley 2002).

The concept that there exists a distinct subset of chronically homeless people has turned out to be quite compelling, and since the publication of Culhane and Kuhn's study, it has circulated widely through mass media. In the years just around the publication of Culhane and Kuhn's study, newspapers begin to consistently use the term "chronically homeless" to refer to a specific set of people. In its circulation, the concept has brought the economic analysis along with it. Media accounts frequently refer back to the idea that chronically homeless populations are expensive. Malcolm Gladwell's widely read 2006 article for the *New Yorker,* "Million Dollar Murray," follows one of the chronically homeless as he moves about draining institutions of money. In the piece, Gladwell summarizes further research that tracks the impact of the chronically homeless on hospital systems.

> Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, a leading service group for the homeless in Boston, recently tracked the medical expenses of a hundred and nineteen chronically homeless people. In the course of five years, thirty-three people died and seven more were sent to nursing homes, and the group still accounted for 18,834 emergency-room visits—at a minimum cost of a thousand dollars a visit. The University of California, San Diego Medical Center followed fifteen chronically homeless inebriates and found that over eighteen months those fifteen people were treated at the hospital's emergency room four hundred and seventeen times, and ran up bills that averaged a hundred thousand dollars each (Gladwell 2006)

Many social service agencies have produced their own studies, making note of some of the same costs. As a program manager told me, *We had someone run the Medicaid numbers on about 100 clients, and they were costing $24,000 a year pre-housing. It was costing us $24,000 a year to do nothing.*

In 2001, HUD named ending chronic homeless one of its programming priorities. By 2003, President Bush included this goal in his Fiscal Year Budget, followed by an endorsement of such efforts by the U.S. Council of Mayors (Burt et al 2004: xiii). Chronic homelessness programs have been a central feature of what are known as 10-Year Plans, municipal initiatives to end street homelessness in a decade. By 2009, at least 234 communities in the United States had established 10-Year Plans (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2009). As partnerships between municipal governments, nonprofit organizations, and business leaders, the 10-Year Plans are typical arrangements of neoliberal governance. Like the destruction of Skid Rows that began in the 1960s, 10-Year Plans today aim to clean up city centers to improve opportunities for capital investment and growth.

Social service models that require psychiatric and drug/alcohol treatment have been considered an obstacle to 10-Year Plans, insofar as they keep the chronically homeless out of housing programs and on the streets, in the way of business ventures,

wealthy residents, and tourists. Thus, the Interagency Council on Homelessness and HUD have called for a "paradigm shift" in social services and housing. As stated by *Strategies for Reducing Chronic Street Homelessness*, a report prepared for HUD, "The people on whom this project focuses are, by definition, those for whom these programs and services have not produced long-term solutions to homelessness. Their resistance to standard approaches has been a challenge to communities committed to ending chronic street homelessness" (Burt et al. 2004: xx). While the statement still emphasizes individual-level resistance, rather than the institutional barriers pointed to by my informants, its suggestion that mandatory requirements be lifted gels with what housing program residents and advocates have long argued—that there is a mismatch between organizational requirements and clients needs. This, rather than an untamed desire to live on the streets, explains resistance to shelter (Tsemberis and Eisenberg 2000; see also Armaline 2005). The paradigm shift called for in *Strategies for Reducing Chronic Street Homelessness* removes barriers to access by delinking "housing and service use/acceptance, so that to keep housing, a tenant need only adhere to conditions of the lease (pay rent, don't destroy property, no violence), and is not required to participate in treatment or activities" (Burt et al. 2004: xxi). HUD's programs also call for harm reduction, rather than zero-tolerance, approaches, "where sobriety is 'preferred but not required,' which often translate into a 'no use on the premises' rule for projects that use HUD funds" (Ibid.).

The federal government understands that chronic homelessness programs may be a difficult transition for housing providers, who have traditionally relied on more directly coercive measures for managing resident populations, as well as the funds attached to

such approaches. One director of a program, who formerly managed a housing program as it underwent a transition to Housing First, recounted feelings of resistance when first confronted with "hard to house" clients. *I'd say – he's not ready for our housing. You gotta send him to the shelter, you gotta send him to transitional housing, and then he can apply from there. With us doing this project there was a real tension in our organization, with one part of our organization trying to house people, and the other part saying they're not housing ready.* HUD has recognized the organizational challenges, and the organizational resistance they are likely to bring:

> For mental health and social service providers, low-demand environments mean they cannot require tenants to use services, and they have to deal with both mental health and substance abuse issues, and do so simultaneously. In addition, tenants may not use their services consistently, thus reducing reimbursements on which the providers may rely. For housing providers, a low-demand residence means that tenants may not act as predictably as the property managers might wish. For both, the challenges are as much philosophical as financial, in that the new model demands that they conduct business in ways that had formerly been considered not just impractical but wrong (Burt et al. 2004: 10).

Despite these obstacles, HUD has made programs that incorporate chronic homelessness initiatives a strong priority of its Homeless Assistance grants. This includes funding allocated through the Samaritan Housing Initiative to develop permanent housing exclusively for populations designated chronically homeless (National Archives and Records Administration 2008: 39844).

Thus, as a result of its attachment to chronic homelessness initiatives and 10-Year Plans, Housing First has become a prioritized and even mandated approach. In a sense, then, the target of "the compulsory" has shifted from individual clients to organizations. And this compulsory has the force of the financial behind it. Many leaders of a loosely conceived Housing First movement argue that the traditional funding structure of the

homeless services industry encouraged leaving populations unhoused.

> *You know, to get the provider community . . . rethinking the way that they've been doing business for 20 years has been enormously challenging. Because what's the incentive for doing that? If the money you're getting isn't changing, if no one is paying you to do anything different that you've been doing? If there's no consequence . . . then it's kind of understandable, why would you change what you're doing?*

The reorganization of federal funding now provides this financial incentive for taking on Housing First approaches. Organizations that previously received government contracts based on outreach (or what is described as "contact") are now being required to document placements and placement duration. *In the past, the contracts we're really only based on contacts. So you could be constantly contacting people on the street and not housing anybody, and it wouldn't make a difference.* This has required a willingness to work with and for demonized populations. One municipal program director joked that many organizations that saw their work as providing health and treatment services (rather than housing) were unable to make this shift, "So we put them out of business." The change in federal funding priorities has been reproduced at all levels of government, including city contracts. City funding often provides the bulk of money for an organization, along with private foundation grants. Federal funding, though underwriting only a small portion of the work, functions as something like a "seal of approval"—agencies must secure federal funding to qualify for other kinds of funding. In that way, federal funding requirements often "trickle down" to lower levels of government.

> *And so when we demonstrated that there were results from this program, the city ended up withdrawing all of its outreach contracts and re-issuing an RFP [request for proposals]. So they re-issued that money, what they've now started paying outreach workers to do is to house people. And since they've done that, they've housed 1100 people. So there's just been a huge shift…. In part because of this shift from an approach which is about making contact to one which is about a census reduction in street homeless people. And therefore requiring*

> *housing providers, and especially providers who were supposed to be serving this population, to take the hardest to house, and figure out how to keep them in housing.*

Thus, the reinterpretation of housing deprivation as an economic burden has forced an economic overhaul of housing services as well. It is not surprising, then, that in taking up chronic homelessness as an object of knowledge and intervention, the federal government has translated the economic dimensions of the category into business plans for its management. An Interagency Council on Homelessness presentation on 10-Year Plans offers the following reasons to focus on chronic homelessness:

- This group consumes a disproportionate amount of costly resources.
- Addressing the needs of this group will free up resources for other homeless groups, including youth/families.
- Chronic homelessness has a visible impact on your community's safety and attractiveness.
- It is a finite problem that can be solved.
- Effective new technologies exist to engage and house this population.
- This group is in great need of assistance and special services (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness n.d.a: 3).

The presentation is a textbook example of neoliberal post-social thinking in action. The first two points make explicitly economic arguments. The third point makes an implicit economic argument, evoking the cost to urban economies posed by perceived dangers and dirtiness. The fourth and fifth points make pragmatic arguments—it can be done—and only the last point makes something like a social welfare argument about the needs of the population itself. The presentation elaborates on only the first point, regarding the disproportionate consumption of resources, positing that the chronically homeless

represent only 10 percent of the overall homeless population, but consume 50 percent of resources (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness n.d.a: 4).[6]

That chronic homelessness demands savvy economic responses is made even more explicit in a second presentation, entitled *Good . . . to Better . . . to Great: Innovations in 10-Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community* (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness n.d.b). The presentation draws from *Good to Great*, a study by Jim Collins that identifies the attributes of corporations that sustain long-term competitive edges over other corporations and perform "above market." The Interagency Council presentation applies the principles of Collins's study to analyze chronic homelessness programs and identify how "great" programs employ the same principles found by Collins as key to corporate success—"disciplined people, disciplined thought, disciplined action." The presentation encourages not only partnerships between government offices, nonprofit agencies, and private sector business leaders, but suggests that 10-Year Plan leadership be placed in someone "of high standing in the community who is *not* primarily associated with homelessness." This is meant to lend credibility to the efforts, distancing them from touchy-feely social programs and providing a sheen of respectability.

According to the presentation, a key element of "disciplined thought" is the implementation of a "business plan" to combat chronic homelessness. Great plans include the following elements of disciplined thought:

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[6] This data is also not correct. The 50 percent figure is rounded up from the 46.9 percent established by Culhane and Kuhn's research, which only applies to number of shelter days "consumed" by chronically homeless residents in they shelter systems they studied (Kuhn and Culhane 1998: 219).

- Business Principles – familiar concepts, such as investment vs. return, that bring a business orientation to the strategy
- Baselines – documented numbers that quantify the extent of homelessness in the local community
- Benchmarks – incremental reductions planned in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness
- Best Practices – proven methods and approaches that directly support ending chronic homelessness
- Budget – the potential costs and savings associated with plan implementation.

Thus, the invention of chronic homelessness becomes an opportunity for a thorough reimagining of social services as economic ventures. The problem of chronic homelessness becomes a problem of inefficient use of resources. The solution becomes better management of social welfare administration through the application of business principles.

Thus, the federal government's interest in Housing First is not so surprising after all. As one advocate told me, *From a conservative's perspective, it saves money. It saves taxpayers money. Research has even shown it's even cheaper in the long run to fund Housing First programs because it reduces recidivism rates. And it's really expensive to go from shelter to street to psych hospital to jail to community courts, through all these revolving doors.* Recognizing the limits of political empathy, advocates have been able to leverage the economizing of health to advance their social agenda. Asserting the cost savings offers an irrefutable logic. *So that's what I use sometimes when I'm talking to a government type. I'll talk about how it's really beneficial for people, but then if I'm really trying to sell somebody on it who hates homeless people, that's what I'll tell them about it. So that's why they're interested.*

While advocates argue that the economic costs of housing deprivation become a way to translate across political divides, connecting advocates and politicians, I will

argue in the concluding section that it represents instead a new political constitution of housing needs. In this context, the economizing of life, health, illness, and death may provoke unexpected investments in vilified and long-abandoned populations. As part biopolitical governance, these programs serve to shore up and extend neoliberal economic industries that produce housing insecurity in the first place.

Economizing death

While many agencies and advocates are enthusiastic about this move to Housing First models, some have critiqued the language of chronic homelessness discourse. A report issued by the National Coalition for the Homeless states, "The term 'chronic homeless' treats homelessness with the same language, and in the same fashion, as a medical condition or disease, rather than an experience caused fundamentally by poverty and lack of affordable housing" (National Coalition for the Homeless 2002). Of course chronic homelessness programs have a complicated relationship to medicalization. On the one hand, although the concept of "chronic homelessness" does carry a pathologizing taint, in practice the programs actually leave behind many of the disciplinary techniques of pathologization. If "chronically homeless" codes shelter needs as medical problems, as if some people are addicted to being homeless, we must nonetheless note that it is exactly the technologies of medicalization that chronic homelessness programs seemingly undo, insofar as they allow for immediate access to housing without service and treatment requirements. Policy reports on chronic homelessness initiatives continue to stress the responsibility of the individual, evoking some of that old moral argument. But rather than the individual's self-work being a necessary first step toward housing provision, the

current model provides housing regardless of an individual's willingness to submit to medicalizing, disciplinary regimes.

On the other hand, in its adoption of Housing First through chronic homelessness programs, the federal government does not offer a critique of pathologization. While federal chronic homeless programs suppress the compulsory use of case management technologies, they do so through the argument that requiring services is not cost effective, insofar as that requirement acts as a barrier that keeps people on the street where they cost cities money. Pathological conceptions of homeless populations did not disappear with the rising validity of Housing First approaches. In fact, some argue that the persistence of these pathological conceptions provides a stumbling block for the adoption of Housing First in anything more than name. *If these providers feel like there's some kind of a gravy train for working with high utilizers and they don't know how long it's gonna last, and they want in on it, they're gonna say they're doing Housing First but they're afraid to do it. What I've seen at [our Housing First project] is people come to visit and they have all sorts of fears about what it would really be like to house this group of people in our community or wherever.* The persistence of pathological conceptions opens a space for the re-articulation of medicalized notions and the re-assertion of disciplinary technologies of compliance. Chronic homelessness programs allow for two ideas to exist side-by-side: that there is something wrong with these people, but nonetheless we need to house them. In the context of medicalized social problems, sympathy and disdain peacefully co-exist.

Not only do federal chronic homelessness programs leave the pathologization of housing deprivation in place. These programs also expand housing opportunities only for

people designated chronically homeless. So, as much as chronic homelessness initiatives function to bring people into permanent housing, they also serve a population-sorting function that excludes other people from housing. As Foucault once wrote, "[K]nowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting" (Foucault 1988: 88). Those that chronic homelessness cuts from housing are populations whose costs are not directly carried by city institutions, but whose health and housing are nonetheless quite precarious. If we keep in mind that the federal government defines the chronically homeless as "unaccompanied adults," we can see that if you have a family that can absorb the work of the welfare state, you are considered a bad investment and unworthy of housing; only those with absolutely no familial safety net are brought into housing.

The earlier history of the concept of chronic homelessness indicates something about this cutting function. "Chronically homeless" as a category was introduced prior to Culhane and Kuhn in New York City by Rudy Giuliani. During his first mayoral campaign in 1993, Giuliani released a position paper in which he promised as mayor to limit shelter stays to ninety days for all shelter users except what he called the "chronically homeless." So the category has always served a sorting function, cutting out those who deserve investment from those who do not. While the public reacted with confusion to Giuliani's term, and some with hostility to his plan, soon enough Giuliani's suggestion that there was a chronic subset of shelter-stayers would be accepted as commonsense, and Culhane and Kuhn would provide the economic justification for what has in effect been a national policy that instates what Giuliani called for—the privileging of one part of the unsheltered population, and the exclusion of the rest. As a population-sorting mechanism, chronic homelessness preserves the idea that some deserve housing

and some do not. But if an a previous era, you proved you were among the deserving poor through your willingness to submit to mandatory case management technologies, today, the determination of who deserves housing moves from a moral calculation to an economic one.

Further, even within those targeted for chronic homelessness programs, distinctions continue to be made. Agency managers describe a process "creaming" for chronic homeless housing—as in picking the cream of the crop among clients they already know. This is especially the case for "scatter-site housing," when programs rent apartments in buildings that also house private tenants with no program affiliation. In such cases, questions of sobriety, and even stratification of kinds of substance use, arise.

> *The big thing now in Philly, and also in New York, in some scatter-site programs . . . is that they won't take people that are active crack users. Heroin is fine, schizophrenia is fine, but crack—no. Because they say that it attracts more criminal activity, more groups of people that are taking over apartments, and more dangerous behavior, sex work, and all of this. And that, you know, one lonely heroin addict is easier to deal with when you have to deal with landlords and an apartment building with other people in it that aren't in a Housing First program.*

The stratification of need points to the lack of a structural critique in the rush to Housing First. The National Coalition for the Homeless report cited above goes on to point out that in addition to reproducing homelessness as a pathology or addiction, chronic homelessness programs will do nothing to alter the structural conditions that produce housing insecurity and deprivation. And at the same time, the adoption of Housing First by federal, state, and municipal governments runs the risk of instrumentalizing Housing First and emptying it of its disrupting potential, as financial incentive rather than social or political commitment directs agencies to adopt (or claim to adopt) Housing First approaches. *Now, because it is ensconced in policy, and it's everybody's priority—*

federal as well as state and local government—everybody's doing it. And the reality is, a bunch that are saying they're doing it, aren't.

Finally, while there is an immediate benefit of getting people housed, the successes of chronic homelessness programs are short-term and not sustainable. As one advocate commented*, And so people start throwing up units and developers are like, "Great, the money's out there, the capital's out there." But there's no operating [funds] to sustain that.* The case of chronic homelessness programs in one city attest to the shortsightedness of this strategy. In this city, agency advocates were able to obtain records from public hospitals and calculate the seventy-five "most expensive homeless people" in the area, specifically, those with the most frequent or longest visits to public hospitals. Program managers then conducted targeted outreach to locate these individuals and place them into housing. However, as a staff member of that program noted, as beds open up (as residents move on, or die) and "less expensive" people are brought in, the savings to the city will decrease. In other words, the relative cost of housing versus hospitalization will *increase*, perhaps until the chronic homelessness program actually becomes more expensive than leaving people unhoused and reliant on hospital systems. As business ventures, chronic homelessness programs have no loyalty to an ethic of housing people, despite the commitment of individuals working within those programs to just such an ethic.

Nonetheless, most advocates remain enthusiastic about the rise of Housing First as federal policy. They suggest that the economic argument—"it is more expensive to leave people unhoused"—is ultimately a politically efficacious means to reach a socially desirable end. While it is hard to argue against the immediate provision of housing for

vulnerable populations—or, for that matter, the provision of housing for all people at all times—I would suggest that the economic here is more than simply an argument. Rather than a contradiction in politics that results in a surprising socially desirable end, we can understand this as a reconstitution of the political in the form of a neoliberal biopolitics. The genius of Culhane and his colleagues' research is that they were able to mobilize neoliberal discourse of cost and efficiency to successfully advocate what humanist or ethical discourses have failed to do—that people in need of shelter should be housed as quickly as possible. In re-casting housing insecurity in terms of financial cost, their research provides an economic justification for permanent, long-term housing. The danger of the research is of course the same thing—its synchronicity with a neoliberal reshaping of social justice imaginations. While others have pointed out the rise in neoliberal governance of managerial strategies derived from private business sectors, the strategies are not simply an external logic applied to a stable social field, but rather a transformative force reshaping the very conception of something like housing deprivation. The invention of chronic homelessness retrofits a social problem as an economic problem. Thus, while at a discursive level chronic homelessness evokes addiction and hence individual behavior and personal attributes, in practice, it functions as a statistical model for assessing the economic costs of a subpopulation; chronic homelessness is at its heart an economic category.

Culhane and Kuhn's stratification of shelter use effected an important shift in how individual level behaviors can be linked to the organization of shelter services. The focus of Culhane and Kuhn's argument is not on what is wrong with the chronically homeless and how to fix them. The characteristics they attribute to the chronically homeless—

"being older, of black race, having a substance abuse or mental health problem, or having a physical disability" (Culhane and Kuhn 1998: 23)—remain at the aggregate level to identify a subpopulation. The research goes as far as acknowledging that inadequate "'safety net' programs" force individuals to rely on emergency shelter systems (Ibid.: 41). It does not go as far as advocating structural changes that might slow or end the reproduction of housing insecurity—for example, challenging discriminatory renting practices. But neither do the authors argue that service providers need to end drug and alcohol use among their clients; in fact, as noted above, the application of their research has de-emphasized the importance of sobriety and other individual-level interventions. For Culhane and Kuhn, and the federal policies that followed their research, the most important changes that must be made are in the allocation of resources at organizational levels.

Given the shift to biopolitical concerns provoked by the invention of chronic homelessness, the end of mandatory social and psychiatric services is not so surprising after all. The biopoliticization of housing insecurity moves away from targeting individual behaviors as the point of intervention, as the population instead is taken up as the proper object of governance. In putting forth a biopolitical model that abstracts attributes and behaviors of individuals and organizes them as a statistical population, the invention of chronic homelessness undercuts the disciplinary technologies of the case management system. In other words, disciplinary mechanisms of individuated control, considered inadequate or ineffective, are being suppressed by population management techniques. In matching the profile of the chronically homeless, subjects are in effect biopoliticized, or absorbed into a governance that regulates a population's costs by

economizing and securing its health and life chances. Concern with the apparently limited resources of municipalities—rather than with individual well-being—motivates this biopoliticization. The invention of chronic homelessness de-emphasizes individual compliance with service requirements in favor of economic containment of population costs, a move that is unexpectedly benefiting an abandoned and usually despised and degraded population. The shift to population level concerns legitimated the Housing First model not because the federal government accepted that mandatory services are paternalistic or offensive, but because it saw mandatory services as a deterrent it could no longer afford.

Thus the invention of chronic homelessness points to the reconfiguration of disciplinary sites through biopolitical projects. As the persistence of pathologization attests, this is not an end to discipline. Chronic homelessness programs, like the HMIS program discussed in the previous chapter, represent a rerouting of disciplinary technologies in a context of the biopoliticization of homelessness. If HMIS generate a homeless population as a mechanism for regulating service agencies, chronic homelessness initiatives form the population as a target of governance itself. Disciplinary case management puts in place the intersubjective relationships that advocates use in outreach efforts to make contact with people on the street and engage them toward learning their health histories. Nonetheless, while the vulnerability index used by programs such as Project 50 engage at the individual level, its use is not toward developing a full, deep understanding of the individual *as* an individual. Rather, the index is used to glean specific points of data that connect that individual to a population defined in terms of health patterns and economic costs. That individual then becomes understood

not so much as a case, but as a data match with a statistical profile. In this sense, the index translates between the individual and the population across a ground of economized health concerns.[7] As I argued in the case of HMIS, like any technology the vulnerability index is not simply a tool, but must be recognized for its productive capacities. In translating back from the population, the index reproduces the homeless individual, not as pathological subject in need of mandatory case management, but rather, as a component part of a population that must be collectively managed through forms of housing that contain its economic impact.

Patricia Ticineto Clough helps characterize such "post-disciplinary" social programs, which she understands as indicating

> the increasing abandonment of support for socialization and education of the individual subject through interpellation to and through national and familial ideological apparatuses. The production of normalization is not only, or even primarily, a matter of socializing the subject; increasingly, it is a matter of directly bringing bodies and bodily affective capacities under an expanded grid of control, especially through the marketization of affective capacity (Clough 2004: 14-15).

For sure, the discourse of chronic homelessness continues to perform the disciplinary work of pathologizing residents of housing programs. In so doing, it may hold in place the imperative of reforming the individual, even if such an imperative is not mobilized as strongly in the present moment.[8] But in the meantime, a biopolitical model that addresses individuals as component parts of a population whose death and life chances are correlated with economics and managed through economic means, or what Clough refers to as "marketization," overrides the imperatives of socializing into responsible selves.

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[7] For a comparison of different approaches to analysis of "economization," see Çaliskan and Callon (2009).

[8] The imperative of "self work" is certainly being mobilized in other contexts—drug courts, for example.

Within this model, the immediate provision of housing becomes the most economically efficient means of managing this population. The biopoliticization of homelessness signals and produces the transformation of social programs into economic programs, a transformation that characterizes Donzelot's description of the transition from the social welfare state to the social investment state (Donzelot 2008). The economics do not end with the analysis that produces the category "chronic homelessness," but extend into and transform the programs to which that category gives rise.

I would argue, then, that the greatest danger in chronic homelessness programs is that they are part of neoliberal economies, and thus they enable and extend, rather than challenge, the very economic conditions that produce housing insecurity and deprivation in the first place. In our conversations, some advocates suggested to me that the fact that their programs benefit businesses by "cleaning up" city neighborhoods is not an irresolvable problem. A staff person at one such program told me:

> *I think we have the same interests. The business community in downtown, some of the leaders are a little bit . . . hard to swallow. But we have the same interests, right? I mean, I don't think they give a crap about homeless people, but they wanna see no one sleep on the street and we wanna see no one sleep on the street.*

But we must ask if the interests of the neoliberal economy and populations living without shelter can ever be the same. As proponents of the programs note, 10-Year Plans come into being through the support of police and local business organizations, both of which eagerly support the effort to remove unsheltered individuals from public view. In this way, 10-Year Plans function as the second phase of the neoliberal reorganization of the city begun in the 1950s with the destruction of Skid Rows. 10-Year Plans attempt to clean up the mess made by the evaporation of SROs and other forms of low-cost housing by removing the individuals left behind. 10-Year Plans do nothing to alter the structural

conditions that reproduce, and distribute housing insecurity and deprivation. In this sense, the Plans preserve an earlier assumption of housing insecurity, as if removing "problem individuals" from "the streets" is an adequate solution. The fact remains that "the streets"—here we can substitute labor markets, privatized housing, police/prison systems, and inadequate public assistance programs—will continue to produce unsheltered populations.

Chronic homelessness initiatives are economic programs in that they (attempt to) remove obstructions to the smooth functioning of neoliberal consumer/tourist economies in urban centers, benefiting in the short term a small handful of clients who fit the profile of the chronically homeless. Chronic homelessness programs are furthermore economic in a second sense—the *management* of housing insecurity is itself an economic enterprise. The proliferation of chronic homelessness programs, the circulation of funding, the commissioning of studies and reports—all of this forms part of what scholar-activists have begun calling the "nonprofit industrial complex" (INCITE! 2007), where the post-social state meets post-industrial service and knowledge industries. Contrary to rhetoric that associates "the homeless" with waste and cost, housing insecurity and deprivation prove to be sites of economic productivity in which individuals organized as "chronically homeless" become the raw material out of which studies and services are produced. While consumer/tourist economies may be served by removing unsightly reminders of poverty from view, the social service and knowledge industries that manage this removal are at odds with an end to housing insecurity. An actual elimination of housing insecurity and deprivation would also mean an end to the service and knowledge industries proliferating around managing and studying populations living without shelter.

Hence, the complex of agencies and organizations produce new forms of industry, none of which fundamentally challenge the social, political, and economic reproduction of housing insecurity and deprivation, even if they reduce their immediate effects.

Many advocates argue that chronic homelessness initiatives contain something of an inherent contradiction in that they serve both the economic needs of neoliberal cities and the needs of a vulnerable population. But there is no contradiction. Chronic homelessness programs serve the economy twice over: first by removing an economic obstacle and then by investing in a growing nonprofit industry of population management. The invention of chronic homelessness effects the economizing of the social that characterizes neoliberalism, not simply by subjecting social programs to economic logics, but by transforming social programs into economic industries. The classic or Keynesian social welfare state organized the national population by stratifying it in terms of labor. Populations organized as potential or former workers, or as vital to the reproduction of labor, would be invested in through social programs; those subject to extraction but organized as outside labor would be socially abandoned. Under neoliberal biopolitics, the targets of social programs need not be addressed as labor. Rather, the clients of such programs are labored *on* by social service and knowledge industries, industries that sustain rather than challenge the neoliberal economies that produce housing insecurity and deprivation.

Chapter 5
Sociology and/as Governance

> Assessing that truth [of sexuality] required the sociologist who could analyze the obscurity of the social. The manifest quality of African American culture, in other words, had to be deciphered by the sociologist. By making the social a sign that had to be deciphered for its racial, gender, and sexual truths, the twentieth century made it possible for racialized surveillance to operate as a scientific discourse.
>
> Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black* (78)

Thus far, this dissertation has proposed that neoliberal economy and governance operate together in a state of symbiotic turmoil. Neoliberal social and political reform allows for neoliberal strategies of capital extraction—through, for example, the informalization of labor and the transformation of urban cores into sites for financial speculation. These very conditions of neoliberal economic growth produce new and more widely dispersed forms of social and economic inequality; the racialized housing insecurity that has grown since the 1970s is a part of this, one case of neoliberal surplussing of populations. In turn, neoliberal governance must innovate within the conditions of economic insecurity and social disorder it produces. The contemporary homeless management industry is one such innovation—a complex of federal, subnational, and quasi-private entities charged with containing the impact of unsheltered surplus populations on urban consumer and tourist economies while allowing for the extreme conditions of social and economic inequality that produce housing deprivation to persist.

Of course, this chaotic symbiosis remains uneasy and contested; it is by no means singular or unitary in nature. Roderick Ferguson argues that we must attend to the points

of conflict between economy and governance, as these conflicts are both disruptive and productive. In *Aberrations in Black*, Ferguson reflects on the social, political, and economic transformations of the U.S. in the early decades of the twentieth century—industrialization, urbanization, and the Great Migration of African American labor from the south to cities of the north. In the course of these transformations, Ferguson argues, the interests of capital and of the state were not always aligned. The geopolitical upheaval and reorganization of labor produced surplus populations with new and nonheteronormative embodiments of race, gender, and sexuality. These surplus populations served the needs of emergent industrialized production through a multiplication and diversification of labor. But these populations also challenged the homogenizing drive of the state, which sought to organize labor-citizen status through heteropatriarchal family structures that enforced normative embodiments of race, gender, and sexuality. As Ferguson writes, "Surplus populations point to a fundamental feature of capital: It does not rely on normative prescriptions to assemble labor, even while it may use those prescriptions to establish the value of that labor. Capital is based on a logic of reproduction that fundamentally overrides and often violates the state's universalization and normalization of heteropatriarchy" (Ferguson 2004: 16). For the U.S. settler state, still in a slow process of consolidation post-Reconstruction, capital's overriding of heteropatriarchal norms and structures provoked "anxiety about the sanctity of 'community,' 'family,' and 'nation'" (17).

Thus, even as the U.S. set the conditions for industrialization and the Great Migration, it perceived the resulting nonheteronormative surplus populations—forms of labor necessary for capital expansion—as a threat to social order. The state desired to

know this disorder in order to reduce, manage, and contain it. The call for knowledge was answered by sociology, which, as Ferguson documents, stepped in to observe, classify, measure, and narrate the shape of surplus populations for the benefit of the state.

> As sociology positioned itself as part of the state's reform agenda, its production of racial knowledge about African Americans as nonheteronormative subjects also mediated its relationship with the state. A whole set of methodologies was deployed to produce that exteriority as part of the racial knowledge about African Americans. The Chicago School sociologists . . . expressly used ethnography to measure the effects of economic change on black racial formations in the urban North and the South. Statistics emerged as the apparatus for tallying African American cultural dysfunction for the good of liberal capitalist stability. Statistics became an invaluable tool not only for measuring demographic changes around African American migration, urbanization, and employment, but for producing knowledge about the importance of such changes (Ferguson 2003: 76).

Sociology organized the disorder of industrial capitalism as new social scientific objects of knowledge amenable to governmental intervention. This intervention took the form of urban planning and new social programs of racial containment. Sociology thereby resolved the tension between capital expansion and state control; producing racialized surveillance as a scientific discourse, sociology secured the continued reproduction of surplus populations, which now could be known and managed so as not to disrupt too much the working of the state. In its circulation of racial knowledge for the mutual benefit of the state and capital, sociology affirmed rather than challenged the discursive production of "non-white" gender and sexuality as an always incipient aberrant threat (see also Steinberg 2007).

Thus, as both "critic and supplicant" of the state (Ferguson 2003: 26), sociology helps enforce social order, allowing both governance and capital to thrive by entrenching the state in the midst of the upheaval produced by capital's reproduction of surplus labor. But sociology secures more than just the state and capital; it secures itself as well.

Sociology accomplishes this through renewed processes of professionalization and institutionalization that mark out "urban disorder" as its exclusive domain of expertise (Steinmetz 2005). In so doing, sociology makes itself indispensable to the state, aligning itself with the state and the state, in turn, with sociology.

In this chapter, I move from the period of industrial capitalism documented by Ferguson to the contemporary context of post-industrial knowledge and service economies. I seek to understand the role of sociology in managing mass housing deprivation. Of course, the social sciences have already been present in the earlier chapters; social scientific studies underwrite the federal reorganization of the homeless management industry, making legible, for example, the category of chronic homelessness. But in this chapter I want to examine not only what sociology gives to governance, but also what sociology gets back in return.

We will find in the neoliberal present a similar set of exchanges between governance, capital, and sociology which Ferguson documents during the emerging Keynesian welfare state—a mutually-beneficial securing of the state, capital, and sociology within continued conditions of economic exploitation and racialized subordination. Sociology has especially benefitted from the study of "the homeless," as such study has served a sort of discipline-building function within sociology. It has done this by offering an opportunity to test out and perfect new social scientific research methods. Homelessness is constructed by sociology as an object that continually tries to escape it—the state of homelessness is positioned as difficult to define, and the homeless are discursively constructed as lacking the very attributes that constitute the individual of social scientific inquiry. Thus, sociology organizes "the homeless" as a methodological

challenge, and the study of homelessness affords an opportunity to overcome that challenge and strengthen the capacities of social science to know the social world.

The study of the homeless has furthermore granted sociology an opportunity to produce an image of itself over and against the image it produces of the homeless. As Ferguson points out, sociological studies of urban disorder invest in and extend material discourses that pathologize and racialize surplus populations as nonheteronormative aberrations. For Ferguson, this normalizing function can be traced back through the failure of historical materialism, in its liberal origins, to interrogate the racialized, sexualized, and gendered dimensions of labor. "As it kept silent about sexuality and gender, historical materialism, along with liberal ideology, took normative heterosexuality as the emblem of order, nature, and universality, making that which deviated from heteropatriarchal ideals the sign of disorder" (Ferguson 2004: 6). I will argue that the sociology of homelessness has also taken the failure to properly embody normative heterosexuality as one of the outward signs of homelessness. And in positing its own encounter with the homeless as methodologically rigorous and ethical, sociology poses itself as having a proper, heteronormative relationship to labor, the labor of documenting the other. Taking one of the most influential recent sociological studies of homelessness, Mitchell Duneier's *Sidewalk*, as a case in point, I will show how the study of homelessness has served an onto-epistemological function for sociology that has simultaneously normalized the position of sociology in the governance of social disorder, and naturalized the distribution of housing insecurity through racialized subordination.

Sociology and the homeless

From its first encounters with housing deprivation, U.S. sociology has grappled with questions of conceptualization and operationalization—how to define homelessness, and how to count it. In his 1933 study *The Hobo*, Nels Anderson recognized both the difficulty and significance of the task. As Kenneth Kusmer describes,

> In conducting the first census of the homeless in 1933, sociologist Nels Anderson identified a homeless person as "a destitute man, woman or youth, either a resident in the community or a transient, who is without domicile at the time of enumeration. Such a person may have a home in another community, or relatives in the local community, but is for the time detached and will not or cannot return." This succinct definition recognized that a homeless person could be either a permanent resident of a community or a traveler, that the condition of homelessness could either be voluntary or involuntary, and that family relationships were significant in determining whether or not a person became homeless (Kusmer 2003: 4).

While acknowledging the significance of Anderson's research for the history of the study of homelessness, Kusmer points to the limits of Anderson's definition. In restricting "the homeless" to describing those who are immediately living "without domicile," Anderson potentially underrepresented the scale and reach of housing insecurity. Kusmer points to the various temporary and inadequate forms of domicile that many otherwise homeless people might be living in.

The question of scope is at the heart of debates about how to define homelessness. As suggested in earlier chapters, from a technical perspective, government programs have some interest in narrow definitions, in order to regulate access to apparently limited resources. Social science also has some reason to invest in narrow definitions. In his survey of research methods employed in studies of the homeless, Peter Rossi notes a range of definitions for homelessness, from quite narrow (restricted, like Anderson's

definition, to those literally living without shelter) to much broader and quite inclusive definitions (my own housing insecurity would be an example of this). Rossi writes,

> Clearly, more inclusive definitions imply a higher floor for the concept of decent housing, but they also enlarge the size (and change the composition) of the homeless population. More inclusive definitions also expand and considerably complicate the task for researchers; they set very fuzzy boundaries for homelessness, allowing guesstimates to range more widely (Rossi 1991: 47-8).

This discussion raises what for me remains an important concern. While clearly Rossi, like other researchers, is concerned to adequately address a problem he recognizes as quite urgent, in his discussion he nonetheless accepts that the problem of definition must be resolved from the perspective of the capacity of research. In other words, the problem of definition becomes a technical problem of what research can practically capture. Rossi writes, "In all the homeless research, operational definitions tend to be less inclusive, focusing primarily on . . . the 'literally homeless,' as opposed to the 'precariously housed' . . . The more restricted definition tends to be used in practice because the more inclusive ones are extremely difficult to implement, except at prohibitive costs" (Rossi 1991: 48). Rossi concludes that no research program can resolve the limits of its conceptualization, so instead all research must be clear about the conceptualization employed.

The demands and exigencies of research thus foreclose the possibilities of broader and more inclusive definitions. The historical forces that produce and organize housing deprivation, including for example the socio-legal co-constitution of race and property, are lost in the process of that narrowing as well. The narrower definitions necessarily result in smaller and more conservative estimates of the number of people recognized as living with insecure housing. I remain skeptical about the power of numbers to reveal the truth, and skeptical as well about there being a direct correlation between knowing

numbers and actually addressing the root causes of a problem; as Chapter 3 indicated, HUD's unduplicated counts have been mobilized primary to regulate and limit the work of social service agencies. Nonetheless, narrower definitions, in obscuring the extensive nature of housing insecurity, imply that housing deprivation is a bounded and containable phenomenon, rather than an endemic feature of racialized private property systems and the uneven impact of neoliberal social and economic reform. The narrower conceptualization also isolates "the homeless" as an enclosed category and as a special domain of expertise and intervention. The narrower definitions employed in research have real intellectual and political consequences, as they make it difficult to shift focus from a technically-organized and entrenched category to the complex set of factors that produce structural exclusion from safe, adequate, and permanent housing.

As Rossi points out, social science benefits from this definitional limiting by getting a workable concept and manageable sample sizes. I would argue that social science is then positioned to further benefit from the opportunity to develop techniques to capture those marked out by this definition. In a sense, homelessness is a gift to sociology, and the gift is that of a methodological conundrum. By focusing on the individual, sociology organizes "the homeless" as a subject that lacks the attributes that count in sociology, or what sociology counts—a fixed, stable, legal identity; a more or less permanent and legal address; a calculable and trackable income. So the homeless pose a challenge: How to count that which cannot be found? Or, how to render the homeless as a subject to be investigated and known? I would suggest that the fact that the homeless slip away from quantitative social science is not evidence of a methodological failure, or a mere accident. Rather, sociology produces the homeless as an object that

would escape it. The homeless are meant to escape—and, in turn, to be captured. Quantitative studies of homelessness are rich with details about the statistical innovations developed to identify and count the homeless; these studies often dedicate more pages to a discussion of methods than to the results or their implications. The almost fetishistic attention to methods in quantitative studies of the homeless suggests that the studies are as much as about the capacities of social science as about housing deprivation.

If quantitative methods strive to make the homeless countable, qualitative sociology has responded by laying claim to that for which statistical analysis cannot account—the richly detailed "full sense" of the individual homeless person. Qualitative sociology has often posed itself as an antidote to quantitative sociology, promising depth and specificity to the supposed surface abstraction of statistical measures. But the relationship between quantitative and qualitative work is in fact reciprocal rather than antagonistic. One could argue that the struggle for quantitative work to provide measurable definitions preps the field for the work of qualitative sociologists by focusing on bounded individuals. Qualitative research can then step in to provide those individuals with a human face. In this way, quantitative and qualitative work function together to co-organize the homeless in both statistical and narrative forms.

Among various qualitative approaches—including critical interpretive modes, cultural studies, and historical studies—ethnography has assumed the greatest legitimacy in an institutional context of the supremacy of quantitative methods. In fact, ethnographies of the homeless have not only been central to the production of knowledge about the homeless, but central to the development of sociology as a discipline. Anderson's *The Hobo*, discussed above, was not only the first census of the homeless. It

was also the first urban ethnography of what became the Chicago School; the study of hobo life gave sociology ethnographic practice. A few decades later, Douglas Harper's photographs of traveling unsheltered men would found visual sociology (Harper 2006). George Steinmetz (2005) has suggested that the triumph of quantitative models in U.S. sociology in the post-war period was secondary to the triumph of positivism. The rise of statistical approaches within sociology was enabled by the ways these approaches more closely or obviously matched the demands of positivism, especially as formalized by the state through the National Science Foundation. While this made all forms of qualitative sociology secondary to more "scientific" (i.e. more expressly or defensively positivist) quantitative methods, ethnographers have managed to claim some of the positivist pie. This may be in part because of the expressly positivist dimension of most ethnography—you cannot get much more real than "being there." In its claim to observation, ethnography meets and affirms one of the core principles of positivism—that the world is observable and from there, knowable. As Patricia Ticineto Clough argues, by the post-war period, the twin positivisms of qualitative and quantitative methodologies worked together to form a "statistical personage" to be managed at least in part through scientific knowledge production: "With the further linking of a positivist empiricist methodology to a behaviorism that rejected any structural depth, a statistical personage is constructed as the subject of social science generally and sociology in particular" (Clough 2009: 45).

The task assumed by ethnography in sociology—to give a human face to those personages misrepresented by numbers and popular discourse—is strongly present in ethnographic accounts of street and shelter life. To get a sense of how this technology of ethnography organizes the homeless as an object of knowledge and intervention, I want

to turn now to consider a recent key text in that tradition, *Sidewalk*, as well as debates surrounding that text. *Sidewalk* and the resulting debates, I will argue, struggle to articulate the proper role of sociology in relation to governance. In so doing, they do not only give a face to the homeless, but give a face to sociology as well.

Sidewalk wars

In 2002, the same year that the federal government announced that fighting chronic homelessness would be a HUD budgetary priority, a debate ensued on the pages of the *American Journal of Sociology (AJS)* regarding the proper work of ethnographic research on urban poverty. The occasion for the debate was the publication of an extended review by Loïc Wacquant of three recent ethnographies, authored respectively by Catherine Newman, Elijah Anderson, and Mitchell Duneier. In addition to Wacquant's commentary, the *AJS* issue included responses from the three authors. Although there is much to say about each of those author's texts, here I will focus on Mitchell Duneier's *Sidewalk* and the issues raised in Wacquant's review and Duneier's response. *Sidewalk* tells the story of the largely "unhoused" vendors of books and magazines who work along a stretch of Sixth Avenue in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City.[1] Not only is *Sidewalk* taught in undergraduate and graduate classrooms around the country (if not the world), it has furthermore proven to be a crossover hit. Reviews of *Sidewalk* have been published in the *New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Atlantic Monthly,* and *Village Voice Literary Supplement*, and director Spike Lee has expressed interest in producing a film based on the text. *Sidewalk* developed out of many months of

[1] "Unhoused" is Duneier's term.

participant-observation research, conducted in several stages over many years, during which time Duneier worked with the vendors, selling magazines and books. As is well documented in the text, book and magazine street vending is difficult work with long hours, and Duneier's dedication to the task has been widely praised and celebrated.

Wacquant offered less laudatory words in his review of what he labels a "neo-romantic tale." In his discussion of *Sidewalk*, subtitled "The Saints of Greenwich Village: Duneier on Homeless Sidewalk Vendors," Wacquant accuses Duneier of depicting the sidewalk vendors as hard-working "saints" who dedicate their lives to following and enforcing strict moral codes. Wacquant finds this to be a simplistic portrait. But even more importantly, Wacquant argues that *Sidewalk*'s hagiographic mode dangerously feeds into and supports a neoliberal discourse of personal responsibility through a validation of the moral calculations that fuel welfare retrenchment and the contemporary war on the poor. A minor controversy followed regarding the evidence marshaled by Wacquant in what was quite an aggressive and caustic critique of *Sidewalk*. To support his argument, Wacquant supplies a variety of citations from *Sidewalk* which, as Duneier points out in his reply, are often truncated in such a way as to significantly alter the immediate meaning.[2] It is true that in his review Wacquant alters most of the quotations from *Sidewalk*. It is not clear, however, if this means that his central argument—that *Sidewalk* offers an endorsement of neoliberal retrenchment of social welfare programs and the informalization of labor—is consequently invalid. Unfortunately, Wacquant's unique method of citation has perhaps discredited critique of *Sidewalk*—and if it did not, Duneier's forceful reply may well have stunned would-be critics into silence.

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[2] Duneier compares the text as presented by Wacquant and the original full text from which quotes are gleaned on pages 1553-60 of his response (Duneier 2002).

Nonetheless, below I want to re-open consideration of *Sidewalk*'s implications in neoliberal discourses and technologies of governance.

Referencing all three works of his review, Wacquant summarizes the complicity of urban ethnography with what he terms an "ambiant neoliberalism":

> By leaving social movements, politics, and the state out of the picture and by acquiescing to extreme levels of class inequality, urban ethnography spontaneously accords with and even endorses the ambiant neoliberalism. And its recommendations, anchored in the presumption of individual responsibility, the centrality of "values," and the sacralization of work, help legitimate the *new division of labor of domestication of the poor*, distributed among a dictatorial business class, a disciplining welfare-workfare state, and a hyperactive police and penal state, leaving a cosmetic philanthropic and private-foundation sector to mop up the rest (Wacquant 2002: 1521).

Sidewalk does pay what I would consider cursory attention to the operations of the police and state in the lives of the vendors. From my view, the most compelling section of *Sidewalk* is Duneier's documentation of the strategies employed by the management of Penn Station in midtown Manhattan to make the public spaces of the train terminal more amenable to surveillance, and to therefore undermine the possibilities for eking out a subsistence existence therein (Duneier 1999: 122-32). However, these kinds of social control mechanisms, and the larger political economic context in which they are embedded, are left largely in the background of *Sidewalk*, as individual tales of turmoil and triumph assume center stage.

I would argue that these stories bring along with them everything Wacquant describes above—namely, a legitimation of moral ascription and sanctions tied to work ethics and personal responsibility. However, I want to suggest that the limit of Wacquant's critique is that, like Duneier, he fails to consider the ways in which this ambiant neoliberalism draws from and reproduces the racialized organization of

heteronormative work and family structures. In other words, both authors do not account for the gendered and raced dimensions of both housing insecurity and the strategies mobilized to contain the impact of housing deprived surplus populations on urban social and economic order. Lisa Duggan argues that such an analysis is central to the task of understanding the operations of neoliberal governance:

> In order to facilitate the flow of money up the economic hierarchy, neoliberal politicians have constructed complex and shifting alliances, issue by issue and location by location—always in contexts shaped by the meanings and effects of race, gender, sexuality, and other markers of difference. These alliances are not simply opportunistic, and the issues not merely epiphenomenal or secondary to the underlying reality of the more solid and real economic goals, but rather, the economic goals have been (must be) formulated *in terms of* the range of political and cultural meanings that shape the social body in a particular time and place (Duggan 2004: xvi).

In their debate about whether or not *Sidewalk* endorses neoliberal economic restructuring, Wacquant and Duneier overlook the relationship of those economic programs to a cultural discourse of race, gender, and labor. Thinking of housing insecurity and its management as produced by and productive of gender and racialization draws attention to the ways that a latent discourse of family operates in Duneier's text. I would argue that the ambiant neoliberalism which Wacquant senses but inadequately documents is found in that family discourse, and what is neoliberal about *Sidewalk* is its articulation of black masculinity through heteronorms of family and labor. *Sidewalk* is haunted by an earlier "culture of poverty" discourse that produced the black family as aberrant due to the failed gender of black males—a failure to articulate a proper work ethic and do so within a heterosexual nuclear family arrangement. *Sidewalk*'s endorsement of neoliberalism occurs through its recapitulation of this discourse, which, though unnamed, organizes the narrative of redemption Duneier presents. Thus, what Wacquant does not offer but what

Sidewalk demands is the kind of analysis Ferguson first named queer of color critique, a mode of analysis attentive to the interimplication of institutions of racial, sexual, and gender regulation.

In the next two subsections I consider, first, the moral value ascribed work in *Sidewalk* and, second, the way this "sacralization of work" is positioned as a mode for the reparation of broken family relations and the redemption of failed masculinities.

The hard work of being poor

The narrative of *Sidewalk* presents a strong validation of work and work ethics in its depiction of book and magazine vending. Duneier does not only demonstrate that this is difficult and arduous work which takes talent and skill—claims that seem obviously true, and that I have no interest in refuting. My concern rather is the ways the text imbues this labor with moral quality. In the narrative of *Sidewalk*, selling books and magazines are not only a way to raise subsistence funds. These activities come to represent "moral" choices that constitute "decent lives." As Duneier wrote in his *AJS* reply, "A core issue of my work was to understand the ways in which 'moral' behavior and 'decency' are and are not constructed within settings seemingly unfavorable to such behavior" (Duneier 2002: 1551). What constitutes morality and decency is left unexplicated by Duneier—his use of quote marks suggests that we all know, or should know, what those terms mean. It becomes clear that in the context of *Sidewalk* they are meant to indicate participation in legalized informal survival economies. For example, in response to the negative associations that passersby might have of the Sixth Avenue vendors, Duneier argues that

this public should recognize that engaging in labor is an attempt to live a moral and decent life:

> . . . [W]hen people sleeping *on these blocks* decide to stay there, it becomes questionable to many passersby whether they are really struggling to live "decent" lives. The answer, I think, is that such acts pose no challenge to what we saw in the first three chapters of this book: each of these men is engaged in such a struggle. This is most evident in the way they choose to support themselves: through honest entrepreneurial activity (Duneier 1999: 170).

Duneier presents the assignation of indecency as if it needs no critical inquiry or justification in research, and he counters his own claim with the value he assigns to sidewalk vending. Wacquant's critique is useful for gaining some critical perspective on this validation of hard work. In concentrating on the labor of the vendors, the political economic conditions that produce legalized informal labor as the best options for surviving in poverty fade to the background. In not only concentrating on this labor, but in fact celebrating it, *Sidewalk* revalorizes capitalist work ethics that have been leveraged against social safety nets in the context of the workfare state. Validating this labor as moral and decent accepts the social abandonment of these populations as inevitable as well.

In response to Wacquant's accusation along these lines—that *Sidewalk* bolsters neoliberal economic reform—Duneier writes, "Only a reviewer of *Sidewalk* who constructed an unreliable hodgepodge of distorted quotations would imagine these men as propaganda for the neoliberal state; rather, they are casualties of the neoliberal state, whose tenuous existence is continually threatened by the political leaders and business groups who vehemently seek their removal" (Duneier 2002: 1565). But the neoliberal state is not characterized only by withdrawal and abandonment. Rather, neoliberalism also involves the deployment of technologies of subjectivity that remake the individual

within the context of increasing economic polarization and the erosion of social safety nets.[3] Processes of privatization have not only outsourced governing activities to private and quasi-private entities, but have shifted responsibility for public concerns onto re-privatized individuals. Duneier concludes *Sidewalk* by arguing, "It is vital to the well-being of cities with extreme poverty that there be opportunities for those on the edge to engage in self-directed entrepreneurial activity" (Duneier 1999: 317). I would say that in fact it is vital to the well-being of neoliberal capitalism that individuals be abandoned to self-directed entrepreneurial activity. In other words, entrepreneurs are exactly what neoliberalism demands—people who can figure out how to make something out of nothing, who can determine on their own how to survive eroding social welfare nets, sinking wages, and decreased opportunities for formal employment and job security. Vendors may "self-direct" their labor, but those selves are neoliberalized selves, and that labor is certainly not in conditions of their own choosing. While the subjects of *Sidewalk* should hardly be blamed for figuring out how to live through increasing impoverishment to survive neoliberal inequalities, it is not so clear they should be congratulated for their hard work in doing so—or at least the congratulating could be left to the state.

As a result of this framing in terms of morality and decency, the historical conditions of capitalism and liberalism that have organized hard work and personal responsibility as laudable qualities pass without critical commentary in the text. Even without engaging contemporary scholarship on neoliberalism, Max Weber's classic *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([1958] 2003) suggests we must be suspicious about the associations of moral worth with entrepreneurial activity such as that

[3] On new technologies of the self as empowered entrepreneur, see Dean (1999) and Cruikshank (1999).

documented by Duneier. The validation of the vendors' hard work as moral behavior derives from a historically specific arrangement of productive forces and legitimating discourses. In failing to address the historical context of the moral codes of *Sidewalk*, Duneier fails to attend to how those codes uphold the very systems of inequality that concern him— capital's stratified exploitation of labor. Furthermore, as the next subsection demonstrates, those codes are not universally applied, but are figured through race and gender systems. The sacralization of work is not only historically specific, but produced through and productive of heteropatriarchal racial formations.

Bad men doing good: heteronorms of family and masculinity

The discussion of entrepreneurship and moral worth is made explicit in *Sidewalk*, even while the implications of the historical articulations of labor and decency are left unaddressed. Under the surface of this explicit conversation another discourse unfolds that is left unacknowledged. This is a discourse of how gendered norms of behavior, including the connection of proper masculinity to hard work, should relate to heteropatriarchal family structures. In addition to a willingness to engage hard work, *Sidewalk* locates proof that the subjects are leading "decent" and "better" lives in reparative family relations. In seeking appropriate heteropatriarchal relationships—in the roles of father, brother, son, grandparent, and husband/boyfriend—Duneier's subjects repair as well a black masculinity that decades of social science and social policy have depicted as damaged by and reproductive of a "culture of poverty."[4] In narrating sidewalk

[4] The culture of poverty thesis was first advanced by Daniel Patrick Moynihan in what has become known as the Moynihan Report (Office of Policing Planning and Research 1965). My reading of the recapitulation of the culture of poverty thesis is indebted to the work of Kerwin

vending in terms of attempts to "live decently," the text revalidates not only neoliberal expectations of personal responsibility, but expectations of an indecent black masculinity that subjects must struggle to overcome as well. Ferguson points to an earlier history of this discourse in the context of the Great Migration and industrial capitalism. The contemporary recapitulation indicates the capacity of neoliberal governance to preserve and mutate earlier governance regimes and discourses while setting new arrangements between technologies and objects of rule.

One of the central figures of *Sidewalk*, Hakim Hasan (the original inspiration for the project, and the author of an Afterword) presents himself to Duneier as a "public character," as described by Jane Jacobs ([1961] 1992) in *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. That text provides many of the conceptual frames for *Sidewalk*, and Duneier takes up Hasan's identification as a public character, connecting it to Elijah Anderson's concept of the "old head" who advises younger males in African American neighborhoods. Duneier emphasizes especially the relationship between Hasan and a 19-year identified as Jerome. Weaving in a narration of Jerome's own broken family with stories of how Hasan provides books to Jerome and encourages him to get a GED, it is hard not to see Hasan positioned as the father figure Jerome has lacked. Jerome is quoted as saying about his father,

> He used to be a carpenter the last time I talked to him, a year or two ago. He used to take care of us when we was younger, but everything changes. My parents haven't been together from when I was born. And my mother and I don't have a deep relationship. I mean, we talk, and I know she's my mother. I'm fortunate to just be alive, because she left me when I was a day old. And my father, I just don't know about it. We need to have a father-and-son discussion. I'm trying to

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Kaye (2010). Kaye points to the ways that contemporary strategies of social control may deploy newly depoliticized versions of this discourse.

> have me and my daughter be close, so we can have discussions, because I don't want it to be like me and my father (Duneier 1999: 28).

Hasan's mentorship is cast as a reparative move that attempts to fix the broken black family. Hasan is quoted as narrating his mentorship in such terms, saying, "As I have developed a relationship with men like Jerome, they start to talk to me about their father and mother and the chasm between them. And I identify with that, because, when I was growing up, my father and mother didn't make it, and it was my mother who raised all of us. So I can identify very, very deeply with him" (36). Hasan's mentorship of Jerome is presented as breaking the cycle of the broken family for both of them.

We also see morality and decency tied to proper masculine-familial bonds in an exchange that Duneier has with a vendor, Marvin, regarding his work with another vendor, Ron. Early in the text, Ron is presented as a sometimes unreliable work partner due to his drug use. Duneier reports on his questioning Marvin about working with Ron:

> I asked Marvin why he seemed to sacrifice his own well-being and put up with Ron.
>
> "He's like the little brother I always wanted," Marvin explained. "I care kind of daily for him, 'cause I trust him. It's like a blinded love I have for another human being. His goodness is there, but it is blocked by his drug use. He still can be a good man, and I'm trying to teach him how to be good. There is a lot he doesn't want to go along with . . ." (55).

This brotherly relationship, like the father/son mentorship, is connected in the text to the efforts to work in decent and moral ways.

For Duneier, the failure to live in proper family arrangements is a powerful force in his subjects' lives. Duneier argues that we can find evidence that the men do in fact care about some things when we look at their feelings about these failings: "Even if the 'Fuck it!' mentality is pervasive in its impact on a person's life, all of the men on Sixth Avenue do 'give a fuck' about certain things. This is illustrated by their sense of shame

and embarrassment, emotions most firmly rooted in how they believe they look in the eyes of family members" (62). Ron's developing relationship with his aunt becomes the occasion for the subjects to reflect on the positive impact family relationships can have. Marvin is quoted as comparing Ron's relationship with his aunt to another vendor, Mudrick, and his relationship with his granddaughter:

> "It's just like you," said Marvin. "When you granddaughter wasn't here, you were running around with the guys and blowing all your money. Soon as your granddaughter was born, you know you love your little granddaughter, you have a little responsibility for her, and you give her everything. He's supposed to give his aunt everything that he can" (75).

Ron is depicted as doing just that. In one scene, Duneier is asked to cover a shift at the vending tables for Ron. Ron wants to return to his aunt's house because he believes she may have left the stove on. Duneier writes this in terms of the redemption it evidences: "Ron's decision to get on the subway and go all the way up to Harlem was an example of his not saying, 'Fuck it.' A person who had given up on family and responsibility would have taken his chances that his aunt would discover the hot stove on her own. He wouldn't have cared" (75).

The connection between hard work, proper masculine family relations, and decent living is confirmed when Duneier returns to his research site after some time away:

> Six months later, when I was back in New York working on the street, Ron looked very different to me. Whereas once he'd had the disheveled appearance of a man who never shaved or showered, now he was clean-cut. He explained that he was still living with his Aunt Naomi, and had continued taking good care of her. Now that his cousin was gone, she had given him the spare bedroom . . . . (72).

The narrative confuses the material results of living in appropriate and consistent housing as opposed to on the street—a clean-cut versus a disheveled appearance—with moral uplift. The improvement in Ron's appearance is not evidence that Ron is a better man, it

is evidence that he is living in better conditions. Duneier and photojournalist Ovie Carter (whose images are published alongside the text of *Sidewalk*) accompany Ron on a trip home, where they witness him taking care of his aunt. The visit ends with a scene that takes place just after they leave:

> . . . As we waited for the elevator, we heard Ron yell to [his aunt]: "Do you want your boiled milk now?"
>
> Ovie went back inside, and before they noticed him he made the accompanying photo of Ron serving the boiled milk. It illustrates, perhaps better than any interview might, the positive changes that Ron was making with the support of Marvin on the street (78).

The fact that they were on their way out, and that Ron and his aunt did not realize Carter had returned, is meant to emphasize that the photo that accompanies the text is not staged. It calls to mind Clough's argument about the function of narrative in realist ethnography: "In realism, then, narrativity is given a particular function: It permits characters to be presented as if they are completely absorbed in their own activities and therefore are seemingly completely unaware of the beholder and the painter outside the painting or the reader and writer outside the text" (Clough 1998: 24). This display of "good nephew" behavior, then, corroborates the narrative description with visual evidence, freeing the story from its technologies of construction and infusing it with objective realism. None of the photos in *Sidewalk* are captioned, and this is the only photo that is addressed directly by the text, according it a pivotal position in the narrative's development.

Finally, Duneier suggests that his subjects attempt to apply the lessons they are learning about family to their sexual relationships with women. When one subject discusses his girlfriend with Duneier, Duneier asks, "Do you curse in front of her?" which presumably is a measure of a decent and moral relationship—god forbid we curse

in front of the womenfolk! Duneier gets an affirming reply: “No! No cussing! No drinking beer! No smoking cigarettes! I cannot do that with her. She’s a beautiful person. That’s the respect she want from me. Not in front of her” (Duneier 1999: 201). And so despite dedicating a chapter to how the vendors sexually harass women on the street, Duneier argues the following:

> While my analysis here centers on behaviors that some passersby find objectionable, it cannot be overemphasized that at other times on the sidewalk (and at other times in their lives) each of these men would be seen acting in “positive” and straightforward ways toward others, including the women in their lives—girlfriends, mothers, and granddaughters as well as general passersby (190).

Thus, moral uplift is coded as an attempt to enter the sphere of heteronormativity, especially through hard work. *Sidewalk* re-aligns proper masculinity with labor and family, reproducing both an aberrant black masculinity and the possibility of its recuperation into the realm of moral labor.

Much of the material for this discourse on reparative family/masculinity work is provided by the subjects through stories and quotes. My concern is not whether or not these stories are true. In offering a critique of this discourse in *Sidewalk*, I do not mean to deny the reality of these relationships, or the painful emotional experiences often suggested by the stories. But I want to raise the question of what it means to organize the narrative of the text through these stories, and what it means to tell these stories as opposed to others. These stories did not just magically appear in the text—they were solicited, selected, and organized by Duneier. They are the raw material out of which the text is produced, and to say the experiences are real does not preclude noting that their existence in the text should not be taken for granted. In emphasizing narratives of masculine redemption and reparative family and family-like bonds, *Sidewalk* dangerously

recapitulates an individualized narrative that underwrites the culture of poverty thesis. This emphasis is a methodological choice not to engage a discussion of the historical dis/organization of black families, from the early slave trade through to contemporary welfare reform. Duneier's attention to critiques of literature on "the family" is quite brief and cursory—one paragraph, which focuses on a general issue of single-parent households—thereby neglecting the historical conditions that produce black families as disproportionately single parent-headed, including mass imprisonment and economic insecurity, and that pathologize non-heteronormative families in turn (Duneier 1999: 37). Duneier reports on a conversation between Jerome and Hasan in which Jerome remarks, "You know how black families is. They don't really stick together" (28). As sociologists, we must ask what it means to report this conversation between two people who share a set of racialized experiences that Duneier does not. What are the implications of publishing this heartbreaking observation without then detailing the vast set of social, political, and economic forces that create the conditions of impossibility that black families exist within?

The ethnographic field and the violent light of humanity

In his *AJS* reply to Wacquant, Duneier describes *Sidewalk* as part of his broader academic project to understand how individuals negotiate moral norms and how these negotiations reveal what he calls "the common elements of humanity" (Duneier 2002: 1574). In fact, Duneier argues that such a project is the important contribution that ethnographic research can make to social science: "The capacity of urban ethnography to humanize its subjects is one of its greatest strengths, providing an important antidote to the opposite

tendencies among theorists of both the right and left who depict such people only in abstract terms, devoid of their quintessentially human qualities" (Duneier 2002: 1575). For Duneier, this counters Wacquant's claim that he depicts the vendors as saints. Rather, Duneier argues that *Sidewalk* offers complex portraits composed of both moral shortcomings as well as moral competencies, and in revealing the latter, Duneier hopes to show that the vendors do possess those quintessentially human qualities.

At no point in *Sidewalk* or his *AJS* response does Duneier explicitly name what might constitute these quintessentially human qualities. The narrative thrust of the text suggests that to be human is at the very least to exhibit a capacity to understand and navigate moral codes of conduct. As Duneier wrote in *AJS*, "*Sidewalk* does not depict the vendors as saints, but rather brings to light their basic humanity, and yes, the desperate attempt of many, against nearly insuperable odds, to live 'moral' lives" (Duneier 2002: 1573). Perhaps because those human qualities are never specified, and the outlines of a moral life never filled in, Duneier fails to grapple with the historical specificity of the concept of humanity, and the ways in which a discourse of humanity is inexorably bound to categories of the inhuman. Feminists and critical race scholars have long pointed to the historical circumscription of the category "the human" and its emergence in relation to the modern state, capitalism, and imperialism, literature which Duneier does not address. Duneier's use of the expression "quintessentially human" evacuates history, and is a fairly bold move to make at the end of the 1990s, after many decades of feminist, critical race, and anticolonial critiques of just such universalism. Recently, Andrea Smith has emphasized not only the historical origins of "humanity," but also the continued violence of the category in the present. Because the legibility of humanity depends upon its

distinction from inhumanity, discourses of humanity must continually reproduce and reinvest categories of the inhuman. Smith writes, "Unfortunately, the project of aspiring to 'humanity' is always already a racial project; it is a project that aspires to a universality and self-determination that can exist only over and against the particularity and affectability of 'the other'" (Smith 2010: 42).[5] Smith's comments are directed to one tendency in Native Studies to assert the common humanity of Native peoples, a move meant to counter racist and genocidal constructions of indigeneity, but her caution is equally applicable to the project of ethnography outlined by Duneier.

Drawing from Smith's analysis, we can see that establishing the humanity of sidewalk vendors requires a contrast, an other, the inhuman. I would argue that Duneier finds his affectable others among his very subjects, those working and living on Sixth Avenue. In other words, in order to humanize the subjects of his book, Duneier must first dehumanize them. He does this in two ways. The first is in contrasting the vendors with others on the street. He writes, "Wacquant barely discusses my chapter on panhandlers and other layabouts. The reader would never know from his review that in an effort to explicitly provide a contrast group for the entrepreneurially driven vendors, I took on an extensive study of those unhoused black men on the street who refuse to take up the option of working as scavengers and vendors" (Duneier 2002: 1563). Putting this in terms of a refusal to work, with the strange Victorian language of "layabouts," and setting this in contrast to decency and morality, Duneier produces this "sub-class" of Sixth Avenue as affectable others.

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[5] On the relationship of "affectability" to racial subordination, Smith is drawing from Silva (2007).

Secondly, to further make his case, Duneier devotes four chapters of Sidewalk to documenting a variety of what he characterizes as "indecent" behavior, including public urination and the sexual harassment of women. It is not beyond the pale of comprehension that these behaviors are performed by the subjects. They are performed by many people, in many contexts, and Duneier makes some effort to show the structural constraints, which already seem fairly obvious—the men have nowhere else to go to the bathroom, for example. But what must be called into question is the place of this behavior in the text. For Duneier, documenting the failure of some of his subjects to live "decent" lives proves that they are complex, and that his portraits are balanced and objective. While Duneier grants ethnographic justification to these portraits, I would argue that the images contribute to the race knowledge project of social science surveillance. Perhaps this would not be the case if Duneier spilled equal ink on detailing the indecent behavior of everybody else who appears in the text. While in a footnote Duneier acknowledges that he also "urinates and defecates" (353), how he does that is not scrutinized; nor is the urination and defecation of other interview subjects, such as bookstore owners and lawyers. Their relations with women and families, their sleeping habits, their drug and alcohol consumption all take place beyond the confines of the sidewalk, and hence lie outside of scrutiny. The burden of bearing the field—in this case, the sidewalk—is placed squarely on those least able to escape the public scrutiny that accompanies the surveillance measures that regulate the poor and that, as Ferguson suggests, sociology has always played an important role within. Thinking about how humanizing produces affectable others helps make sense of the emphasis given the photograph of Ron pouring milk for his aunt. Only with very low expectations could such

an act be surprising, and so the text must enact those low expectations in other to then deliver on its promise of challenging them. For Duneier, some of those assumptions are justified no doubt by his expectations of who composes his readership as well as who composes the passersby (whom he refers to as "citizens"—another suspect word, critique of which will have to wait for another day). But this presumed audience enacts another layer of dehumanization, casting the vendors outside of the public, and enacts as well a naturalization and normalization of white middle class values and expectations.

Furthermore, in focusing on the behavior of individual vendors, only limited attention can be paid to structural forces. This is painfully clear in the accounts of bathroom use. While suggesting that we need more public restrooms, Duneier also notes the limits of this as a social control mechanism.

> On a recent trip to Paris, I walked the streets with a French sociologist, Henri Peretz, looking for one of the maintenance trucks that perform upkeep for the city's self-cleaning public toilets. When we tracked one down, and I told the driver (through Henri) of my hope that one day the people of New York would have such resources, he complained that in Paris some unhoused people had taken up nightly residence in the bathrooms, using them as shelters. This suggests that even public bathrooms will not always be available for people to do their bodily functions. Every policy has its unintended consequences (Duneier 1999: 187).

Duneier's fixation with decency and enforcing norms of behavior prevents him from commenting on how truly horrifying it is to think about locked toilets as the best option made available for some people to spend the night. In expressing his hope that New York would someday have self-cleaning public toilets, perhaps Duneier could dream a little bigger. By restricting his concerns to the performance of moral or indecent behavior, he dehumanizes people living without shelter once more by bypassing an opportunity to express moral outrage at the right target—social policies that create abject and horrifying conditions of poverty.

The submersion of inquiry into the violence of housing insecurity raises questions about the basic frame and premise of *Sidewalk*. Inspiration for the text comes from Jane Jacobs, and I think some of the problems of *Sidewalk* are inherited from there as well. With *Sidewalk*, Duneier takes up a central theme supplied by Jacobs—questions of safety in dense urban settings. In a passage that *Sidewalk* cites with no critical commentary, Jacobs presents the following argument:

> Nor is it illuminating to tag minority groups, or the poor, or the outcast with responsibility for city danger. There are immense variations in the degree of civilization and safety found among such groups and among the city areas where they live. Some of the safest sidewalks in New York City, for example, at any time of day or night, are those along which poor people or minority groups live. And some of the most dangerous are in streets occupied by the same kinds of people. All this can be said of other cities (Jacobs [1961] 1992: 31; cited in Duneier 1999: 192).

Although Jacobs is trying to be critical of racism against "minority groups," the frame of civilization employed derives from racial subordination and colonization. Like its related discourse of humanity, a discourse of civilization re-inscribes imperialist racist logics—Jacobs does not measure levels of civilization in "non-minority groups," those whose civilized nature can be taken for granted. Whether intentional or not, Duneier makes a similar move by not detailing the indecent or immoral behavior of the other figures in the text, making their morality, decency, humanity—their civilized natures—beyond question. By accepting Jacobs' framework of safety and "eyes on the street," Duneier privileges the (feelings of) safety of passersby and "citizens" over and against the safety of the vendors, whose lives are threatened and shortened by poverty. Toward the end of *Sidewalk*, Duneier writes, "A new social-control strategy is needed. At its core can be unrelenting demands for responsible behavior, but there could also be new kinds of enlightened understanding from the citizenry, leading to greater tolerance and respect for

people working the sidewalk" (Duneier 1999: 313). In this call for enlightenment and social control, we see all of *Sidewalk*'s themes come together. Clearly the citizenry does not include the vendors, who must both meet "unrelenting demands for responsible behavior" and hope for tolerance and respect. In uncritically mobilizing the term "citizen," *Sidewalk* elides the violence of the term and affirms what is always the purpose of the category—to exclude under the guise of universalism. The violence of housing deprivation is naturalized, and a law and order/war on poverty discourse of safety is affirmed rather than challenged. In accepting the frame of "safety," Duneier marks out the public/citizens as in need of protection. By reassuring that the presence of legalized informal laborers on those streets will not disrupt that safety, Duneier renders the violence of housing insecurity normal and mundane.

This call for enlightenment is central to the project of humanizing and civilizing that *Sidewalk* enacts. Pheng Cheah (1995) has argued that such enlightenment is itself a form of violence, what he describes as a violent light. And who should point out the path to enlightenment? The sociologist, of course, who can be trusted to provide an ethical guide for social control as he returns from the field unscathed, with facts and ethics in tact. As Clough argues, "Staging the researcher's entering and leaving the field, the ethnography demonstrates that a boundary has been twice crossed, making possible the empirical correspondences, comparisons, and contrasts (across that boundary) that the ethnography presents as factual representations of cultural perspectives, historical events, and social situations" (Clough 1998: 17). The objectivity of the ethnographic enterprise, as characterized by Clough, grants credibility to its ethical dimension as well.

Duneier makes forceful claims that the ethics of his project are embedded in his research choices—recall that he argues in *AJS* that what ethnography has to offer is the humanization of degraded subjects. We have already seen that the text also enacts the degradation it seeks to challenge. The discourse of ethics within *Sidewalk* effectively casts the subjects of the book outside the ethical, making the ethical the legitimate purview of sociology. In the appendix to *Sidewalk*, Duneier explains his approach to informed consent. Duneier writes:

> I did not believe that anyone could make an informed judgment about whether they would like their name and image to be in the book without knowing how they have been depicted. With this in mind, I brought the complete manuscript to a hotel room and tried to read it to every person whose life was mentioned. I gave each man a written release which described the arrangement whereby royalties of the book are shared with the persons who are in it. But I did not tell them that I would do so until the book was nearing completion.
>
> It was not always easy to get people to sit and listen to the larger argument of the book and to pay attention to all the places where they were discussed. Most people were much more interested in how they looked in the photographs than in how they sounded or were depicted. I practically had to beg people to concentrate on what I was saying. It also did not help that they now knew they would share in the profits, a factor that sometimes made them feel less motivation to listen carefully, on the assumption that I could be trusted. The following conversation, while somewhat extreme, illustrates (among other things) that the effort to be respectful by showing the text to the person in it sometimes turns out not to seem very respectful at all. In this case, I end up insisting that the individual listen to me, and imposing my agenda on someone who seemed annoyed by my efforts (Duneier 1999: 348).

The transcript that follows details Duneier's efforts to get one of his informants to listen as he reads out loud sections of the text. Throughout the conversation, the informant interrupts, insisting that the ritual is not necessary while calling out for a friend to bring him a drink. Although in the passage above Duneier suggests that his efforts to be ethical may not "seem very respectful," he does not question his research protocol. In fact, after

the transcript, Duneier writes that because the informant was drinking a beer, he had to go back and repeat the process all over again.

What other possibilities for research are foreclosed in this process? Rather than stick to the protocol, Duneier may have usefully abandoned for a moment his frames of morality and respect. Doing so perhaps would have allowed him to understood what was happening as informed and willful resistance to his sociological project. In not questioning the ethics of his own protocol, and in not taking the resistance seriously, Duneier makes the determination of proper, ethical research as belonging to the sociologist, not the vendor. The role of sociology in governance is legitimated and marked as ethical. And the affectable others are marked as in need of sociological intervention—first to govern them, and then to grant them their humanity.

Conclusion
Surplus Life

While finishing up work on this dissertation, I received a postcard in the mail from the Doe Fund, a local nonprofit homeless services agency. In addition to housing programs for unsheltered and formerly incarcerated populations, the Doe Fund runs a sort of private workfare program, in partnership with Business Improvement Districts throughout the city, in which they employ clients to perform basic street cleaning and maintenance. This "job-training" program is called Reading, Willing & Able, and participants wear bright blue jumpers emblazoned with the name of the program and organization as they empty trash cans and sweep sidewalks.

The postcard that arrived in my mailbox, a solicitation for contributions, included the following text:

> Thanks to the support of neighbors like you, the "men in blue" are an essential presence in the lives of millions of residents.
>
> Instantly recognizable in their signature bright-blue uniforms, they work each day to improve our communities and transform and rebuild their own lives. Having spent years homeless or incarcerated, the work they do within our neighborhoods enables them to advance towards better futures as independent, contributing members of society.
>
> With your support, we can ensure that more lives are made productive, and that our streets remain vibrant, clean, and safe.

I have seen the Doe Fund's worker-clients around the city for years, and have often marveled with disgust at the branding of the agency directly on the bodies of the workers—the so-called "men in blue." The postcard's text regurgitates a quite-familiar

pathologization in the usual terms of personal responsibility derived from the war on the poor—this time with a humanitarian sheen of nonprofit intervention. But the postcard signals more than this as well, which I want to consider here as a way of concluding this dissertation.

According to the Doe Fund's 2008 Annual Report, participation in Ready, Willing & Able helps clients "develop a strong work ethic and improve their ability to work in teams, solve problems, relate well to peers, and take supervision. Working 35 hours a week, trainees develop a positive attitude and become reliable workers—and they contribute to a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant New York City" (Ready, Willing & Able Annual Report 2008: 2). The Annual Report states that for their contribution to the cleanliness, safety, and vibrancy of the city, participants are paid between $7.40 and $8.15 an hour.

The Annual Report does not detail the Doe Fund's organizational expenses, but because the Doe Fund is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, that information is publicly available through the IRS. According to the Doe Fund's IRS Form 990, in 2007 (the most recent available record) the organization's founder and president, George McDonald, was paid a salary of $404,425. The Doe Fund also employs McDonald's wife, Harriet Karr-McDonald, as Chief Development Officer, the position that oversees fundraising efforts, for which she receives a salary of $220,462. To keep track of all this money, the position of Chief Financial Officer is filled by the couple's son, John McDonald, who is paid $201,753 for his services. Form 990 also reports that the Doe Fund rents office space from a building owned by the McDonalds. The rent charged for ten months of 2007 was $12,481 per month, and $12,855 for each of the remaining two months, for an annual rent

of $150,520. Thus, with all salaries and rent, in 2007 the McDonald family received $977,160 in compensation from the Doe Fund.

2008 looks like it will have been an even more lucrative year for the McDonalds. That year, George McDonald was awarded the William E. Simon Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Social Entrepreneurship from the Manhattan Institute, a conservative policy think tank that describes itself as

> an important force in shaping American political culture and developing ideas that foster economic choice and individual responsibility. We have supported and publicized research on our era's most challenging public policy issues: taxes, health care, energy, the legal system, policing, crime, homeland security, urban life, education, race, culture, and many others. Our work has won new respect for market-oriented policies and helped make reform a reality (Manhattan Institute n.d.).

The William E. Simon Prize carries a cash reward of $100,000 paid to the individual being honored, in this case George McDonald.

Based only on his annual salary for 2007, George McDonald's wage works out to about $7,777 every week, as opposed to the $285.25 earned in a week by Ready, Willing & Able's highest paid participants. The disparity points to the economic function that population management serves in a neoliberal economy. While participants in Ready, Willing & Able are paid a small pittance for their labor making New York City streets cleaner, their larger value is in their mere existence as a population in need of governance. With this dissertation, I have tried to show how housing deprivation itself is put to work for the economy, and not just the individuals subject to it.

In tracking the economic value of housing deprivation, I have sought to demonstrate that another register of power has emerged in the homeless services industry over the past twenty years or so, which I have labeled the realm of the governance

problem. Discourses and technologies of the governance problem have reorganized housing deprivation as a concern with the proper management of services and allocation of resources. I have also tried to show that this has pressured what I have called a biopoliticization of homelessness. Following Foucault, I understand biopolitical technologies of governance to be those that organize life itself in terms of populations and their patterns and costs. The biopoliticization of homelessness has meant that a homeless population has become a privileged object of knowledge and intervention in the governance of housing deprivation. For the Doe Fund, that population has translated into 15 million dollars in fundraising revenue in 2008 (Ready, Willing & Able Annual Report 2008: 11). For the city of New York, the Doe Fund's management of this population has translated into 3 million bags of collected trash (Ibid.: 2).

The homeless subject—revealed in critiques of medicalization and associated with more long-standing disciplinary technologies of case management—has not disappeared in these processes of biopoliticization. But the pathological homeless subject is being remade in the context of the neoliberal governance problem. As I argued in my analysis of HUD's HMIS program, the individual does not precede the population, but rather the individual homeless subject comes to be through the population that increasingly stands in for it. The life of the individual subject gives life to the population, and is constituted in turn through that population.

This is what I aim to describe with the concept of "surplus life." If Agamben's discussion of bare life helps describe a certain kind of internal abandonment that is productive of political and social order, it forgets, as Aihwa Ong points out, to think about the economics of that abandonment. With the term surplus life I want to remember

that social abandonment is an economic enterprise that is productive of a kind of surplus value. The management of surplus populations as surplus life keeps that life barely alive and in circulation within an economy. Surplus life circulates as numbers, such as costs to hospitals, or self-sufficiency improvement scores. Those numbers live through surplus life, and become the condition of possibility for it. The unsheltered populations subjected to Eli Lilly's drug testing, as discussed in the Introduction, seem a paradigmatic case of surplus life—and the ethical analysis of that testing seems a paradigmatic case of how that life gets managed. That the bioethics panel hired to investigate Eli Lilly concluded that the key to ethical involvement is paying subjects just enough to participate is a gross and horrific example of how surplus life is governed and reproduced. That "just enough" is the condition of surplus life in neoliberal governance and economy—just enough to live, just enough to be economically productive, just enough not to cost too much in dying.

My analysis of the homeless services industry as a neoliberal strategy for managing surplus life has been an occasion to rethink, through the contemporary context, one of the basic premises of Foucault's thought. Whereas Foucault understood illness as counterposed to biopower, and death as the limit of biopower, the management of surplus populations through the homeless services industry points to the productive capacities of illness and dying. Foucault nonetheless also reminds us to think about what else is produced, what other excesses. What life is secured and grows through the near-death of surplus life? As the case of the Doe Fund suggests, the management of surplus life works toward securing the life of its management. In other words, surplus life is turned against

itself, as it becomes a resource for strengthening neoliberal economic exploitation and the governance technologies that make that exploitation possible.

Finally, this dissertation has been an occasion to rethink not only homeless services, and the work of Foucault, but the work of sociology as well. In its historical and current role as an arm of the state, sociology has been central to the governance of populations living without shelter. Sociology has set those populations into calculation with economics and, in defending its own good intentions, has granted ethical justification to projects of population management as well. By asking only limited questions—how to better manage homeless services, or how to get the homeless to best manage themselves—sociology perpetuates the conditions of surplus life, accepting those conditions as an inevitable, rather than historical, arrangement. Putting sociology in tension with other fields of inquiry has been my small effort to reframe housing insecurity and deprivation toward asking different questions. In so doing, I hope to contribute to a sociology that might undermine, rather than underwrite, the technologies of neoliberal economy and governance that produce populations living always near death, as surplus life.

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