UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Homelessness in Orange County: Examining the Role of the State through Street-Level Encounters

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy

by

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2021

DEDICATION

To

My family, who continuously show me the difference between a house and a home.

To Richard, Carlos, and Juan; Los Martínez.

In Lak'Ech

Tú eres mi otro yo. / You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti, / If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo. / I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto, / If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo. / I love and respect myself.

(Luis Valdez, *Pensamiento Serpentino*, *1973*)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my village, it is made up of family (given and chosen), friends, and mentors. All of you have supported me every step of the way. When others thought I could not do it, you backed me up and said, “watch her.” I want to especially thank my committee. My chair Dr. Victoria Basolo has offered her unwavering support throughout all these years. Dr. Ananya Roy has been a source of inspiration in my career and who I will always strive to emulate. Your intellectual prowess is admirable, but your kindness is insurmountable. Dr. Torres believed in me from day one and always challenged me to be the best I could.

I would like to thank my family. Thank you to Richard, my dear husband, who took on more than most husbands are willing to do, so that I could prioritize my studies and my research. To my children, Carlos and Juan, thank you for being patient with mommy when I could not be there because I was writing my dissertation. You are the reason I work so hard. My mother, Maria Esther Nevarez, and my siblings, Aldo Nevarez and Dr. Natalie Nevarez, who have always loved me and accepted me, even when it was not as easy to do. For always accepting that I was not a “niña normal” and letting me thrive regardless. To my father, who did not live to see this goal accomplished but never doubted it would happen. To my best friends Dr. Alexei Marquez and Dr. Isoken Adodo Ibie, I am honored to be on this journey with you. To Julieta Salazar, Brianda Bustamante, and my compadres Dr. Curtis Acosta, Patricia Acosta, and Dr. Sean Arce who are living proof that family is not always blood.

To my grandparents, Juan Tirado Lizarraga, Mariana Tirado Lopez, Rafael Nevarez Orozco and Juana Nevarez Sandoval who all left their homeland so that one day their children and grandchildren could have better opportunities than they did. I promise that this is only the beginning. I will always strive to make you all proud.

Thank you to my cohorts who stood by me every step of the way. Dr. Mariana Garcia Junqueira, Dr. Narae Lee, Dr. Edith Medina Huarita, Dr. Nene Osutei, Dr. Paroma Wagle, and Dr. Michelle Zuñiga. Other colleagues, mentors and supporters who always cheered me on and believed in me, Dr. Kaitlyn Alvarez Noli, Dr. Scott Bollens, Dean Nancy Guerra, Ashley Hernandez, Niki Iranpour, Nathan Mahaffey, Amalia Medina, Dr. Seth Pipkin, Dr. Maria Rendon, Dr. David Snow, and Dr. Huixin “Echo” Zheng. Special thanks to the members of the Research to Practice Criminology Lab led by Dr. Kirk Williams; Alex Aguirre, Matt Barno, Courtney Echols, Dr. Amanda Fisher, Veronica Gonzalez, Dr. Amy Magnus, Dr. Kasey Ragan, Liz Rodriguez, and Lyric Russo. Also, all the members of the Law and Ethnography Lab led by Dr. Susan Coutin and Dr. Lee Cabatingan, especially Joanne DeCaro, Navjyot Gill, Jordan Grasso, Dr. Gabriela Gonzalez, and Linda Sanchez.

Finally, thank you to those who allowed me into their lives so that this project could be a reality. To the woman I call Felice in this dissertation, this project simply would not be without you. The men and women that I met on the streets of Beach City changed my life and my perspective. I am now a better more loving and open person because of them.

Unfortunately, because of the importance of maintaining the anonymity of the study participants, I cannot name them, but they know who they are. Thank you to Pat Davis and David Duran for their continued support. To all the members of Housing is a Human Right OC for letting me learn from them and their advocacy. To Brooke Weitzman who dedicates her life to serving others. To my former professors Dr. Arlie Adkins and Dr. Ladd Keith for always believing that this girl from San Luis could join the ranks of academia.

We did it! Si se pudo!

VITA

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PUBLICATIONS

Adkins, A., Barillas-Longoria, G., Nevárez Martínez, D., & Ingram, M. (2019). Differences in social and physical dimensions of perceived walkability in Mexican American and non-hispanic white walking environments in Tucson, Arizona. *Journal of Transport & Health*, *14*, 100585 (online first).

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Homelessness in Orange County: Examining the Role of the State through Street-Level Encounters

by

Deyanira Nevárez Martínez

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy

University of California, Irvine, 2021

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This research study centers the everyday interactions between street-level bureaucrats at the frontline of public service and homeless residents. It follows in the tradition of examining the state ethnographically which allows for the monolith that is the state to be disaggregated into its different parts by zeroing into different bureaucracies, in this case the homeless social service bureaucracy. This, to examine how and why discretion—the legal authority of government officials to enforce the law—is exercised. Street-level bureaucrats are low-level public service employees such as teachers, police officers, and firefighters (Lipsky, 1980). In the case of homelessness policy and service delivery, street-level bureaucrats are most often law enforcement, code enforcement, public health workers, and non-profit sector workers. Using qualitative methods including interviews, ethnographic observation, and document analysis, this study seeks to understand how and why street-level bureaucrats use their discretion to regulate homelessness and poverty and how this regulation fits within a larger backdrop of urban governance, institutional behavior, and structural violence in a Southern California city referred to here as, Beach City.

INTRODUCTION

Teresa came to Beach City with her elderly husband after they got evicted from a home they loved in Northern California. After a couple years in "the box"—their RV—Randy passed away from cancer. Teresa was now an elderly and disabled widow left to fend for herself in her RV. Once a vivacious regular on TV gameshows and a restaurant owner, Teresa found herself alone and struggling with alcoholism. For a few years, she was able to get by using state park passes and parking at local business parking lots like the local 99 cent store. However, eventually, this would become unsustainable as restrictions on parking became more stringent. After entrusting her RV to a friend while she traveled to her hometown to bury her husband, her parents, and her sister, Teresa returned to an abandoned RV "with five tickets on it and an impound notice." The tickets had all been issued by Tammy, a code enforcement officer who Teresa claimed had been harassing her relentlessly. After a long process of having to fight the tickets in court, Teresa faced a $540 fine to get her RV out of impound. She remembers that day vividly. When she was asked for an ID, she was unable to produce one, because her license had been taken by the police. She recalled that "all I had was that expired passport. And I hadn't looked at my passport in years because I haven't been able to afford to travel." She cried as she remembered what they told her: "No, we can't accept that." She retorted, "It's a passport!" To which they replied, "We find it hard to believe that you didn't know it was expired." It was at this point that she asked to enter the RV so she could retrieve her birth certificate. They declined, adding, "You have to have a photo ID to go into your vehicle." So they kept her RV—and Teresa has been living on the streets in Beach City ever since.

Teresa does not have an uncommon story amongst the homeless in Beach City. In fact, her story is typical of what you will hear if you get to know Beach City's unhoused population. She is also a case study on how anybody can end up in this situation when the death of a family member, an unforeseen medical emergency, or a divorce happens unexpectedly and how encounters with the front-line workers that implement homelessness policy on behalf of the state can be traumatic and have little if any effect in the pursuit of permanent housing. Since losing her RV, Teresa's physical, mental, and emotional health have deteriorated substantially. In addition, she has picked up a new addiction and must rely on the kindness of others to survive. But how does this interaction show us anything about the state? This research study centers the everyday interactions

between street-level bureaucrats at the frontline of public service and homeless residents. It follows in the tradition of examining the state ethnographically, which allows for the monolith that is the state to be disaggregated into its different parts by zeroing in on different bureaucracies—in this case, the homeless social service bureaucracy. I carry out this ethnographic study of the state to examine how and why discretion—the legal authority of government officials to enforce the law—is exercised. Street-level bureaucrats are low-level public service employees, including teachers, police officers, and firefighters (Lipsky, 1980). In the case of homelessness policy and service delivery, street-level bureaucrats are most often law enforcement, code enforcement, public health workers, and non-profit sector workers. Using qualitative methods including interviews, ethnographic observation, and document analysis, this study seeks to understand how and why street-level bureaucrats use their discretion to regulate homelessness and poverty and how this regulation fits within a larger backdrop of urban governance, institutional behavior, and structural violence in a Southern California city referred to here as Beach City[1].

Beach City is located in Orange County, California. The biennial point-in-time (PIT) count by Orange County showed that between 2013 and 2019 the number of the unsheltered population in the county went from 4,251 to 6,860 (Kurteff Schatz et al., 2015; Orange County Homeless Management Information System, 2019). In 2019, the unsheltered PIT count showed an increase of over 2,000 individuals since the last count in 2017. Two-thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine individuals were considered sheltered homeless while 3,961 were unsheltered. In 2020 and 2021 the sheltered population was

[1] All names (people and places) are pseudonyms.

3,017 and 2,441 respectively (Orange County Homeless Management Information System, 2021). The most recent unsheltered PIT count occurred in early 2021 but numbers for that count have not been publicly released.

Beach City is a coastal community that has with a population of less than 100,000 a median value of owner-occupied housing units of over $900,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates)[2]. Historically, it is (and has been) politically conservative and majority white. It has one of the largest homeless populations of all coastal cities in Orange County and has seen a substantial increase of its homeless population in the last decade.

The homelessness bureaucracies in Beach City observed for this study can be said to be the quintessential street-level bureaucracies that Lipsky (1980) describes because demand for housing by unhoused residents is high and housing for them is virtually nonexistent. In this respect, it is impossible for these bureaucracies to ever meet their stated goal of ending homelessness. Street-level bureaucratic theory is especially useful to examine the everyday interactions of the state with citizens because of its treatment of discretion by those tasked with enforcing the will of the state at the most basic level. As Sylvestre (2010) aptly states, "by showing how the law actually operates...we obtain a more accurate understanding of state power and structure" (p. 804).

[2] Statistics and demographics for "Beach City" (pseudonym) are often provided but not cited. The author has left out city specific citations and reference list entries in order to avoid inadvertently identifying the location of the study. In an ethnographic study dealing with sensitive information such as the perspective of street-level bureaucrats employed by a city, county, and non-profits that contract with the city and county, this confidentiality and protection of informants always takes priority over retrievability.

In this introduction, I present the research questions that motivated the three papers that make up this dissertation. I provide an overview of the context in which the research was conceived and how it was executed. Then, I provide a summary of the papers and how they fit together into a coherent body of work along with the contributions it makes to the study of the role of the state in homelessness, housing precarity, and the criminalization of poverty in the United States. Finally, I end with a discussion on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project and limitations of the research as well as possible future research directions.

Research Questions

The three papers of this dissertation seek to address the role the state is playing in homelessness. The study is motivated by the overarching question: *How does the state, through street-level bureaucratic discretion and street-level encounters, shape homelessness in Beach City, CA?* Each paper explores this question by answering a set of distinct and related questions.

- What dynamics affect street-level bureaucratic discretion?
- How do different institutional fields involved in homelessness service and policy provision collaborate and/or act independently and how does that influence the discretionary behavior of street-level bureaucrats?
- How do unhoused residents experience their everyday interactions with street-level bureaucrats?

These questions are answered using an ethnographic methodology. A total of N=60 qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with street-level

bureaucrats (both public sector and non-profit sector workers) and unhoused residents. Because the focus of the study is to get at the nature of the everyday interactions between the state via street-level bureaucrats and the unhoused, it was important to speak with individuals on both sides of this issue. Of the 60 interviews, 31 were conducted with homeless residents, and 29, with frontline workers and volunteers. These frontline workers and volunteers include 8 individuals that are what I call "traditional street-level bureaucrats," or government employees, and 18 "new street-level bureaucrats," who include non-profit employees and service delivery providers. In addition, I interviewed 3 volunteers who do the work independently and without any affiliation to a group or agency. This distinction is important because while these people are all part of the homeless service delivery system in Beach City, they have distinct and potentially competing goals in their approach and ability to perform the work. In my interviews with traditional street-level bureaucrats, I spoke with city, county, and state employees but did not encounter any frontline federal employees in the field. As for new street-level bureaucrats employed by non-profits, I spoke with individuals employed by small (usually city specific) non-profits with staffs of about 20 or fewer employees and larger non-profits. These larger organizations often have 50 or more employees and operate countywide. They have outreach contracts with many of the cities in Orange County. If a frontline government worker encounters an unhoused person, they will often direct them to these new street-level bureaucrats that are paid by the city and the county to work with the homeless.

An Overview of Homelessness and Motivation for the Study

In the years since the 2008 recession, the language of crisis in the housing market has been constantly invoked and the state of the current housing market and recent recessions have been blamed for increases in homelessness rates. However, it is important to acknowledge that housing is always in crisis for the most vulnerable in our society (Engels, 1935; Madden & Marcuse, 2016). As Madden and Marcuse point out, "[t]he reappearance of the term 'housing crisis' in headlines represents the experiences of middle-class homeowners and investors, who faced unexpected residential instability following the 2008 financial implosion" (p. 10). In reality, the United States has had a long history of homelessness.

Tent cities and homeless encampments have received substantial media attention in the last few years, especially when they occur in what have historically been wealthy communities. Tent cities in Silicon Valley, CA (Chen, 2017), Orange County, CA (San Roman, 2019), and Portland, OR (Schmid & Monahan, 2016) have highlighted this issue for many. However, they are not a new occurrence. Tent cities have been a constant phenomenon in the urban landscape of the United States since the nineteenth century. During the Depression of 1894, several groups of unemployed men known as Coxey's Army set up makeshift encampments on their way from several U.S. cities to Washington D.C. to protest unemployment and advocate for poverty alleviation legislation (Mitchell, 2016).

In the 1920s, sociologist Nels Anderson (1923) published one of the first ethnographies of homelessness. In it, Anderson documented the life of hobos on Madison Street in Chicago. He estimated that between 30,000 to 75,000 men (mostly single) were

homeless in the city. In the editor's note, famed sociologist Robert Park states that these men, "[live] together within the area of thirty or forty city blocks" (Anderson, 1923, p. vi). Similarly, during the Great Depression of the 1930's millions of people lost their homes and ended up in squatter settlements known as "Hoovervilles." Hoovervilles were named after President Herbert Hoover, who was largely seen as responsible for the policies that led to the Great Depression (Speer, 2016). Hoovervilles gave way to state sanctioned encampments that were meant to eliminate "tramps" and offer the poor a "routine of hard work" (Speer, 2018). Ultimately, this era of homeless encampments mostly disappeared when the U.S. entered World War II in 1941 (Rusche & Kirchheimer, 2003).

The period following World War II was one of economic boom. But homelessness is known to increase after the end of wars when veterans return home to limited government support (Solari et al., 2013) and this era was no exception. The economic recession of the mid-1970s and the Reagan economic policies of the 80s witnessed a return of homeless encampment in the United States. During this time, the Reagan administration substantially cut federal subsidies for low-income housing and mental health care which exacerbated the issue (Blau, 1993; Wolch &Dear, 1993). The encampments of the 1980s and 90s tended to be located in major urban centers like Skid Row in Los Angeles and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. They lasted from a few months to a couple of years and were mostly violently removed by police actions (Wright, 1997; Smith, 2005).

By the end of the 1990s, encampments in major cities had become a semi-permanent and visible phenomenon. The camps continue to exist through fluctuations in the economy, housing costs, poverty rates, unemployment rates, and homeless rates

(Herring, 2015). Herring and Lutz (2015) sarcastically describe the heightened coverage of homeless camps after the 2008 economic crash as a "journalistic 'discovery.'" While this coverage made connections to the Great Recession, the reality is that the 2008 crisis had little to do with the appearance of the camps. In fact, the majority of the camps highlighted by the media had been in existence before the crisis (Herring &Lutz, 2015).

The history of homeless encampments in California parallels the history of homeless encampments in the United States. The majority of contemporary encampments have roots in policies of retrenchment started in the 1980s. According to part one of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2018 report titled, *The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*, California and New York have the highest numbers of people experiencing homelessness. In California, 41 out of every 10,000 individuals are homeless with a total of approximately 161,548 homeless individuals. This represents approximately 28% of all homeless individuals in the country. In addition, California has the largest share of unsheltered homeless in the United States with 113,660 individuals without shelter which is approximately 51% of all unsheltered homeless in the U.S. (Henry et al., 2021).

In recent years, several scholars have focused their work on discrete homeless encampments in California. In 2014, Herring completed a qualitative study of 12 encampments in eight municipalities, five of which were in Northern California. Drawing on observations and interviews his study found that there are four distinctive[3] socio-spatial

[3] Herring (2014) describes the four distinctive socio-spatial functions of homeless seclusion as contestation, toleration, accommodation, and co-optation. Herring offers this typology as an analytic lens through which to

functions of encampments. Additionally, he offers that these camps serve paradoxical functions; they are both tools of containment of homeless populations for the state and safe spaces for the most vulnerable in the community (Herring, 2014). Speer, working in Fresno, presents an ethnographic study of seven encampments. She applies a Global South framework to the struggles of the homeless in the United States to make the case that while society in the United States find encampments unsuitable for habitation their solution has mainly been to try to provide limited housing and ignore sanitation needs. She concludes that in order to develop more egalitarian and inclusive cities, jurisdictions should focus more on infrastructure (Speer, 2016).

Recently, there has been an abundance of attention onto homelessness in the Silicon Valley. In 2014, a mass eviction forced the 300 residents of "The Jungle," the largest homeless camp in the nation, to abandon the sixty-eight acres that had been home to many of them for years (Herring, 2015). In places like Ventura County, local officials have sanctioned a "transitional" housing encampment where residents can live in domes and pay rents as low as $300 a month. This has helped with efforts to alleviate homelessness without substantial investment in infrastructure (Martinez, 2017).

Similarly, Los Angeles has a long history of homelessness. As the premier scholar on Los Angeles, Mike Davis (1990, 1991) has written on the hellish experience of being homeless in LA. He chronicles the history of a site near downtown Los Angeles where the Arroyo Seco meets the Los Angeles River that has been a refuge to the homeless for over a

explain the logics of each function similar to Snow and Anderson (1993), who used a typology to examine the survival strategies of the homeless.

century. Davis states that the site "has been occupied by the vagabond and the unemployed…[t]he California regiment of Coxey's Army camped here during the great Depression of 1893-94. In the early twentieth century, it was the site of a famous hobo colony; in the 1930s, it became one of L.A.'s several 'Hoovervilles' " (Davis, 1991, p. 325). More recently, Forrest Stuart's ethnography of the 50 square block area adjacent to Los Angele's downtown known as 'skid row' has highlighted the harmful effects of 'therapeutic policing' which has the effects of harassment and incarceration rather than rehabilitation (Stuart, 2016).

It is currently estimated that there are over 7,000 homeless people in Orange County (Orange County Homeless Management Information System, 2019). This represents a substantial increase from reports prepared only a few years ago (Snow & Goldberg, 2017). The County has been involved in two lawsuits filed in February of 2018. The litigation was initiated by The Legal Aid Society of Orange County and the Elder Law and Disability Rights Center (*Tammy Shuler et al. v. Orange County*, 2017). These lawsuits asserted that plaintiffs had unsuccessfully attempted to access housing resources from the county, thus denied such, and therefore not subject to the county's criminalization of their homeless status and shelter location(s). Plaintiffs' attorneys asked for a temporary restraining order to halt evictions from the Santa Ana River Trail (*Orange County Catholic Worker v. County of Orange et al.*, 2018). U.S. District Court Judge David Carter granted the initial restraining order but since then ordered Orange County to clear the largest homeless camp in the county which was located at the Santa Ana riverbed and provide temporary shelters for its residents and create plans for long-term housing solutions for the camp's

homeless residents. (*Orange County Catholic Worker v. County of Orange et al.*, 2018). This has sparked additional challenges in the absence of alternatives for people that reside in encampments. In 2018, a settlement in the *Catholic Worker* case limited many south Orange County cities from enforcing anti-camping and loitering laws until there were an appropriate number of shelter beds provided in the south SPA. However, south Orange County city mayors responded to this simply by asking to be able to transport their unhoused population into north and central SPA shelters citing empty beds in those areas (Gerda, 2020). In June of 2019, Judge David O. Carter, who had been tasked with overseeing the *Catholic Worker* case, was removed from the case for five south Orange County cities because it was found that Judge Carter could be perceived to be biased based on statements he had made in the past (*Housing is a Human Right et al. v County of Orange et al.*, 2019). The case for these cities was reassigned to Judge Percy Anderson, who has since then dismissed the lawsuit, stating that a single lawsuit could not encompass all five cities and, instead, individual lawsuits had to be filed for each (*Housing is a Human Right et al. v County of Orange et al.*, 2019). In a manner similar to the Santa Ana case, on Tuesday, April 24, 2019, Federal Judge Edward Davila granted a restraining order halting the removal of the residents from the Ross Camp in the Bay City of Santa Cruz (*Quintero et al v. City of Santa Cruz et al.*, 2019).

While homelessness has been an issue in Southern California for decades, academics have paid little attention to this housing phenomena in Orange County as evidenced by the lack of studies examining the issue especially in contrast with the attention the issue has gotten in neighboring LA County. An extensive economic report by David Snow and Rachel

Goldberg from the University of California, Irvine for the United Way of Orange County in 2017 along with a few law review articles and small studies are a notable exception (Simon, 1995; Wright & Vermund, 1996; Takahashi et al., 2013; Lemings, 2019). This dissertation is motivated by this lack of attention and takes an in-depth ethnographic perspective.

The Homeless Participants in This Study

Starting in the late 1980s, scholars began typologizing the homeless experience into categories associated with the length and number of times an individuals had experienced homelessness. These categories are; chronic, episodic, and transitional (Lovell et al., 1984; Morse, 1986; Fischer & Breakey, 1986; Koegel, 1987; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Hopper, 1989; Sosin et al., 1990; Jahiel, 1992; Kuhn & Culhane, 1998). According to this typology, the transitionally homeless are individuals who are forced to spend short amounts of time on the street after a catastrophic event like a death in their family. They are homeless as short time before securing a more permanent arrangement and do not return to homelessness (Kuhn & Culhane, 1998). The episodically homeless go in-and-out of homelessness and often suffer with mental illness, addiction, and unemployment (Kuhn & Culhane, 1998). Finally, the chronically homeless are those individuals that have been on the street for extended periods of time (years) and are often older than the transitionally and episodically homeless (Kuhn & Culhane, 1998).

Between February and December of 2020, I interviewed 31 unhoused residents of Beach City. Out of these 31 individuals, 21 are men, 9 are women, and one is a trans woman. The majority (27) are white, 3 are Latinx, and 1 is Black. In terms of the amount of time that they have experienced homelessness, most are long term chronically homeless

(23), 2 have been homeless for less than a year, and length of homelessness is unknown for 6 of them. Some of these individuals lived in a vehicle (7) or in motels (2). All the homeless residents interviewed had addiction issues either currently using or in their past.

Study Themes

The three papers that make up this dissertation focus on different aspects of the everyday interactions between street-level bureaucrats and unhoused residents of Beach City. The first paper examines the data in all the interviews and observations as a whole. It focuses on the role of anti-homeless coalitions on the discretionary behavior of street-level bureaucrats. In Beach City, we see that local community politics affect the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats. A local anti-homeless coalition communicates officially and unofficially with street-level bureaucrats through local elected officials like members of the city council, local media outlets, and social media. The paper argues that factors involved in triggering enforcement and criminalization are highly influenced by urban governance and local political dynamics which are shown to play a role in the discretionary decision-making process of those on the frontlines of homelessness in Orange County, California. I find that a highly vocal anti-homeless coalition of "concerned citizens" have a disproportionate impact on homelessness policy and service delivery in Beach City.

The second paper is a result of analyzing the data collected from street-level bureaucrats and consistent with the literature that conceives of street-level bureaucrats as institutionally created actors the paper makes the case that discretionary decisions made by street-level bureaucrats involved in the homeless service and policy delivery network in Beach City make discretionary decisions partially based on institutional logics including

deeply entrenched carceral logics. The street-level workers in Beach City were observed taking discretionary action based on institutional norms individually; however, they also appeared to be guided by a larger meta-logic that is being reproduced at the issue field level and is reinforced through overt and covert collaborations that reinforce each other's discretionary action and perpetuate a myth that housing exists and that they are there to supply it to individuals living on the street. When it inevitably does not happen, the homeless are blamed for refusing help and identified as service resistant.

The third paper also has a major focus on the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats, but it analyses the data to isolate how unhoused residents experience the effects of such actions. In a traditionally ethnographic style, this third paper tells a story through vignettes that highlight instances when unhoused people directly encountered the state. The data analyzed highlights the structural violence experienced by unhoused individuals at the hands of street-level bureaucrats on behalf of the state. These interactions ended in death, family separation, stress, and frustration for those needing assistance because of their material condition as homeless individuals but were met with arbitrary and frustrating outcomes that create a difficult system to navigate for the unhoused and those attempting to help them. Confirming and extending previous studies, I found that neoliberal logics such as privatization, marketization, and deregulation are driving homelessness service and policy provision in Beach City and do nothing to solve or decrease homelessness. In fact, in this neoliberal context, the services that are supposed to assist the chronically homeless have been turned into productive economic enterprises. In addition, in a global context of extreme and deep poverty, the structures in place in the

homeless service delivery network hide and normalize the violence experienced by the homeless in plain sight and this further marginalizes and victimizes the homeless and traps them in endless cycles of homelessness that lead anywhere except out of homelessness. Together, these papers give an overview of homelessness in a community. These papers also collectively address the role of the community, the state, and the unhoused residents in this complex system of homelessness, homelessness policy, and service deliver.

Limitations and COVID-19

It is noteworthy to mention that the fieldwork for this study occurred during the months of February and December 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic spread, increasing restrictions on in-person gatherings meant that most of my interviews took place over the phone or on Zoom. I am grateful that by the time the state of California shut down in mid-March 2020, I had completed many of my in-person interviews with unhoused residents, who are much harder to reach via phone due to the unreliability of their access to phones. The shutdown forced me to think creatively about my data and made it so that I had to rely more on electronic sources of data. For example, I "attended" the weekly city council meetings in Beach City by viewing them on the city's YouTube channel with the rest of the community. As the pandemic spread, I had to make decisions that prioritized my health, the health of my informants, and that were consistent with University of California COVID research protocols. At times, these precautions severely hindered my ability to be in the field at all. Nonetheless, I was able to collect rich ethnographic dataset that informed this study.

There are several limitations to this research that provide a guide and directions for future research. One limitation is my status as an embedded volunteer with Housing is a Human Right OC (HHROC) and Transforming Trips. While my project was not about studying HHROC as an organization, my affiliation with the organization might have hindered my ability to reach street-level bureaucrats. At the same time, being able to rely on the already established contacts and network of HHROC even during the COVID-19 pandemic was a major reason why the research was still able to happen.

The findings and limitations of the study will continue to inform my research agenda in the future. In the future, I plan to focus my examination on street-level bureaucrats or the homeless but not both at the same time. This strategy will allow for the study to be more focused and give deeper insight into perceptions and mechanisms in order to be better able to detangle them to pinpoint theoretical contributions more clearly.

Implications and Contribution

As discussed in further detail below, the findings of this dissertation have implications for research on homelessness. By analyzing the effect of local urban governance and local community political ideology it allows us to reflect on the effect of the neoliberalization of government services and how the system may not be prioritizing service users. The study holds broad implications for understanding the system by focusing on the role of the state. First, this study extends Beckett and Herbert's (2009) work on banishment by exposing the mechanisms through which banishment is set into action by individuals actors exercising discretion that is informed in some instances by political pressure. Beckett and Herbert already recognized the political pressure experienced by

actors like the district attorney (DA) and prosecutors. However, in this study we see that this is not the only source of political pressure. There is also pressure coming from highly organized anti-homeless coalitions that alter the behavior of those executing banishment at the frontlines.

In addition, this study extends the work of scholars that identify street-level bureaucrats as institutionally constructed actors, and it explains how this position as an institutionally constructed actor including within institutions with deeply entrenched carceral logics affects their role in service and policy implementation in homelessness in Orange County, California. Also, two major contributions of this dissertation are the recognition and explanation of the concepts of "the myth" and "performative productivity," how they are related and mutually reinforcing, and how invested the state is in their perpetuation. The myth is the idea that housing is available and that there is an entire workforce of people out there ready to provide it and work with anybody that wants it and that the reason we still have homeless individuals on the street is that the homeless refuse to accept it. The perpetuation of the myth is less conspicuous with the smaller non-profits, churches, and volunteers who, in many instances, are just trying to alleviate immediate suffering by distributing food, care packages, giving out clothes, or caring for wounds. However, they ultimately participate in the productive performance put on by the street-level bureaucrats and non-profit workers by helping individuals connect with them in order to sign them up for lists that will go nowhere. This collaboration is seen as "collusion" by some volunteers "to reinforce one another's [lies]" (personal communication, 2021). Their perspective is that the shelters enact the myth that they are transitioning clients to housing,

but homelessness never ends. The police enact the myth that unhoused people are service resistant as a justification for criminalization, which also provides an explanation for the shelters' lack of progress. As such, this system is creating a situation that is inflicting structural violence on the homeless.

This structural violence is perpetuated by *performative productivity*, or a set of practices employed by these actors as the terms of service. They include setting up meetings, filling out countless forms that require invasive divulging of private information, signing up for waitlists that go nowhere, and surrendering their rights and often accepting an externally imposed moralistic framework. The terms are non-negotiable, thus compelling the homeless to participate in the performance manner required or risk loss of eligibility for any non-housing services they may or have been able to attain, as minuscule or limited as these may be.

However, the most important aim of this project is to assist the many individuals in need of housing and hope that by pinpointing major perpetrators of violence creates accountability. The United States has the resources to eradicate poverty. It has deliberately chosen not to. Therefore, responsibility lays squarely with the state to assist those that have fallen prey to the criminalization of poverty.

Paper 1: The Influence of Anti-Homeless Coalitions on Street-Level Bureaucratic Discretion in Policy and Service Delivery

> If they could, the Beach City Council would pay any other city to put a shelter up for the homeless here. They want them anywhere but here.
>
> —City Employee, Beach City, (personal communication, December 9, 2020)

Introduction

The state of the current housing market and recent recessions have been blamed for increases in homelessness rates. However, while recent studies find connections between rental costs and homelessness (Glynn et al., 2018) it is important to acknowledge that housing is always in crisis for the most vulnerable in our society (Engels, 1935; Madden & Marcuse, 2016). As Madden and Marcuse (2016) point out, "[t]he reappearance of the term "housing crisis" in headlines represents the experiences of middle-class homeowners and investors, who faced unexpected residential instability following the 2008 financial implosion" (para. 2). This "crisis," then, is nothing new to our unhoused populations. Over 27% of all homeless individuals in the United States live in California, which is experiencing unprecedented housing unaffordability (Culhane et al., 2020). The state has the largest share of unsheltered homeless in the country and some of the highest poverty rates in the nation, with approximately half of the population self-reporting financial constraints due to their housing costs (Johnson et al., 2020).

A comprehensive understanding of the housing situation in California specifically, and the United States generally, cannot be addressed without close examination of the material conditions of the poor and the actions of public servants charged with

implementing and delivering housing regulations and policy. For these reasons, this research focuses on everyday interactions between street-level bureaucrats and homeless residents to examine how and why discretion—the legal authority of government officials to enforce the law—is exercised. Street-level bureaucratic theory is useful because of its treatment of discretion of those tasked with enforcing the will of the state at the most basic level because, as aptly stated by Sylvestre (2010), "by showing how the law actually operates...we obtain a more accurate understanding of state power and structure" (p. 804). Because of the abstractness of "the state" as an analytical category there has been movement by several scholars to focus rather on the practices of the state. Migdal (2001), for example, focuses on the differing environments or a hierarchy in which state actors operate. Specifically, he proposes an organizational arrangement consisting of four levels: (1) the trenches, (2) dispersed field offices, (3) central agency offices, and (4) commanding highs. Of these, the one with most analytical utility for this project is "the trenches." According to Migdal, the trenches consist of individuals that bridge the state and society, in a manner similar to street-level bureaucrats. These individuals—including tax collectors and police officers—exist in the middle and are tasked with applying state rules and regulations. In this same vein, Ismail (2006) proposes the analytical utility of the everyday state. Everyday state theory proposes that "the everyday practices of government and rule that are deployed at the microlevel of everyday life" keeps us from mystifying the state and obscuring state power (Ismail, 2006, p. xxxiii). Additionally, in their everyday interactions with government, individuals become subjects and develop understandings and feelings about government (Ismail, 2011b). Therefore, the everyday state focuses on the relation

between the government and citizens (Ismail, 2006, 2011a, 2011b). In this way, it is similar to the anthropological treatment of everyday state-citizen encounters (Auyero, 2010; Corbridge et al., 2005). In this tradition, the state is not conceived as a superior entity rather it is a collection of multiple actors and their encounters with citizens. According to Nugent (2008), it is "incoherent assemblages of sites, processes, and institutions" (p. 198), while Painter (2006, 1995) describes these interactions as "spatialized social practices" which ensure compliance through "consent, or coercion, or both" (Painter, 1995, p. 34). These conceptualizations focus on relationships between a multisided state that is entrenched in social practices and processes and individuals and how then subjects make sense of them. This is why, in efforts to explore the role of the state in homelessness, I examine how street-level bureaucrats enforce the written law (i.e., the law in action) for housing-related cases and the effect of their discretion on communities as observed in one city in Orange County, California (referred to as Beach City in this study).

Street-level bureaucrats are low-level public service employees such as teachers, police officers, and firefighters (Lipsky, 1980). In the case of homelessness policy and service delivery, street-level bureaucrats are most often law enforcement, code enforcement, public health workers, and non-profit sector workers. Using qualitative methods including interviews, ethnographic observation, and document analysis, this study seeks to understand how and why street-level bureaucrats use their discretion to regulate precarious housing arrangements and how this regulation fits within the larger backdrop of urban governance.

This consideration of discretion has become especially important in the current legal context with the decision of the United States Supreme Court to decline to review the decision in *Martin v. City of Boise* (2019)[4], leaving intact the Ninth Circuit's decision of September 4, 2018. The decision prohibited governmental entities from enforcing ordinances that ban public camping unless they first provide enough shelter beds to house every person experiencing homelessness within their jurisdiction. Law enforcement cited Robert Martin for resting outside a shelter in Boise, Idaho; a court found him guilty at trial and fined him $150. Martin and other plaintiffs successfully argued the two city ordinances which banned sleeping and camping on public property violated their Eighth Amendment rights, "criminalizing them for carrying out basic bodily functions" (*Harvard Law Review*, 2019). While *Martin* remains the law of the Ninth Circuit, whose jurisdiction includes California, the *Martin* framework prohibits making homelessness illegal when there are no housing alternatives and compels local governmental entities and their street-level bureaucrats to proceed accordingly as they shape and implement their governance of the homeless.

The 20 amici briefs filed in support of the City of Boise argued in favor of discretion at the level of local government. Notably, the amici brief filed by the California State Association of Counties and 33 California counties and cities argued in favor of the need for local governments to preserve flexibility and discretion as an important element of a multidimensional, "creative, and effective" response to the homelessness crisis ("Brief

[4] Hereinafter referred to as *Martin*.

California Counties and Cities," 2019, p. 3). This includes the use of police powers and criminalization of the homeless for being without shelter and often left with no other option but to rest, sleep, or camp in a public space. Similarly, the amici brief of the California Sheriffs' Association, California Police Chiefs Association and California Peace Officers' Association offers an ominous portrait of the homeless with whom law enforcement has daily contact to make the case for discretion. Supporting local municipalities in their role of regulating health, safety and welfare, these police associations view their professionals as the most directly impacted public sector servants since they have frequent contact with the homeless ("Brief State Sheriffs' Association," 2019, p. 3). They consider the *Martin* decision an impediment to the exercise of core peace officer functions, including the ability to make on the scene decisions about citing individuals for basic health and safety law violations (p. 4). They urge restoring their flexibility to make enforcement decisions without review or sanctions (pp. 5–6). The *Martin* decision's restrictions on law enforcement have attempted to reduce their role as the primary street-level bureaucrats engaging with the homeless and make more significant the role of other street-level bureaucrats in the homelessness arena by compelling cities to provide shelters for all their homeless residents.

As the housing market excludes more individuals, more and more people end up in precarious housing arrangements. When local government becomes involved, a variety of street-level bureaucrats like police, social workers, public health workers—along with non-profit workers on government contracts—become the frontline. As has been pointed out by scholars before, while most studies on homelessness focus directly on federal neoliberal

policy and its effects on a larger scale, these accounts fail to show the effects on and of local policy. As Murphy (2009) states, "the neoliberal devolution of the responsibility of managing homelessness to the local level shifts the site of policy production to the socio-political context of the city" (p. 309). This means that local governments have been forced to both reform their welfare and poverty assistance programs while the responsibility for alleviating it has also been shifted to them. Cities have responded by assembling "localized networks of social service, housing, and medical providers [that] comprise a critical, and understudied, site of local poverty management interventions, particularly because their policy and programmatic imperatives often diverge considerably from the primary tenets of neoliberalism" (Murphy, 2009, p. 309).

By focusing on the localized network of social service by looking at the discretionary actions of a variety of street-level actors involved within this network, this paper argues that factors involved in triggering enforcement and criminalization are highly influenced by urban governance and local political dynamics and ideology, both of which play roles in the discretionary decision-making process of those on the frontlines of homelessness in Orange County, California. This argument resonates with that of Kurwa (2018), who found that "the criminalization of poverty […] can […] be enforced by local residents, a privatized version of the street-level bureaucrats who hold so much control and decision-making power" (p. 65) in regard to Section 8 recipients in California's Antelope Valley. In the case presented here, I find that a highly vocal anti-homeless coalition of "concerned citizens" have a disproportionate impact on homelessness policy and service delivery in Beach City. These concerned citizens are mobilizing police, whose role had been reduced through

Martin, and placing them back in high enforcement roles through increased reporting of "criminal activity" (sometimes legitimate and sometimes questionable in its validity) along with the intimidation of non-profit workers and other members of their local community who may not agree with them but do not wish to become the target of their discreditation efforts.

In a context where these non-profits have become the street-level bureaucrats of homeless policy service delivery, this stands to interfere with their ability to assist homeless residents. In fact, Herring (2021) has recently found that in large part due to *Martin*, in San Francisco criminalization has increased when the city has opened shelters in an area because they increase policing near these services in order to satisfy local elected officials and the local surrounding communities. This is also a major finding of this study. Like all cities in the Ninth Circuit, Beach City is prohibited from criminalizing homelessness and required to provide shelter before enforcing anti-camping and loitering laws. However, because of local political dynamics and city pressure, law and code enforcement over enforce everything else, things such as jaywalking, parking laws, property in the park, being on the train platform without a ticket, cigarettes on the beach, and littering. As a result, Beach City has continued to criminalize the homeless without having to abide by the ruling in *Martin* and provide adequate alternatives.

Homelessness Policy and Service Delivery

The McKinney-Vento Act was the first and is the only federal legislation aimed at providing federal support for homeless service programs at the local level (Wong et al.,

2006). It was passed in 1987 and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. The legislation was meant to serve as a homeless assistance program. It sets the framework for Continuums of Care (CoC) which are local planning bodies that coordinate resources for the homeless at the local level (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2010). The CoC is meant to increase coordination between existing programs locally to improve access for clients at every level in their transition from homelessness to permanent housing (Goodfellow & Parish, 2000). The CoC model consists of four parts, outreach/intake/assessment, emergency shelter programs, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2010). In a perfect scenario, in the outreach, intake, and assessment stage, local outreach staff employed by cities, counties, and non-profits identify individuals experiencing homelessness and assess their needs in order to refer them to the appropriate services. At the same time, they place them in an emergency shelter where they will begin receiving services like mental health and rehabilitation services and which will eventually allow them to move into transitional and permanent supportive housing (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020). However, this sequence is often disrupted as housing options at all these levels (emergency, transitional and permanent supportive) are inadequate.

As the homelessness crisis in California has increased, so has the role of the government; however, the bulk of the assistance for individuals and families experiencing homelessness has historically been provided by local jurisdictions with federal and state funds (Petek et al., 2020). This means that local governments have significant say over how state and federal funds are used for homeless needs (Petek et al., 2020). Also, historically,

service provision was delivered by frontline government workers directly employed by local city and county departments such as social service and community development departments. As local governments have defunded such departments, cities and counties have moved to a model where they contract with local non-profit service providers to accomplish the goals of the CoC. Local governments are vulnerable to localist views that promote "not in my back yard" (NIMBY) attitudes, which means that the non-profits delivering services to individuals at the local levels are also experiencing this and trying to navigate these dynamics on the ground.

In recent decades, the role of street-level bureaucrats has been reshaped and the public sector no longer controls policy and service delivery. New public management (NPM) principles and a neoliberal turn towards contracting and privatization has changed delivery mechanisms on the ground. Policy and service delivery now most often occurs as a collaboration between public sector bureaucrats, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and public-private partnerships (Brodkin, 2015). This has resulted in non-profits becoming increasingly dependent on government funds to do their work (Smith & Lipsky, 1993). Similarly, some claim that government has become dependent on these social service organizations to provide all social services and they are no longer able to do it themselves leading to what scholars have called the ''hollow state'' or ''third party government'' (Milward & Provan, 2000; Salamon, 1987). Some scholars have found that this dependent relationship has led some non-profits, including homeless service organizations, to shift advocacy goals towards things such as brokering resources rather than policy change or direct advocacy on behalf of service users (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Frumkin & Andre-

Clark, 2000; Hwang & Powell, 2009; LeRoux, 2009; Mosley, 2012). Most importantly, this shift has distanced them from the publics they are meant to serve. According to Alexander and Fernandez (2021) by professionalizing non-profits have "foregone a critical source of their power" (p. 372) and with that have lost their ability to stand up for their publics.

Theoretical Context

Urban Governance

The local nature of homelessness policy and service delivery means that local political dynamics that dictate who has power have significant effects on how these policies are crafted and implemented. There are several theories that attempt to discern who or what really governs or rules a city. These theories include economic theories such as growth coalition theory, which suggests that business and community elites control power in cities, pluralist theories that posit that power is dispersed among different interest groups, and regime theory/analysis which combines components of both. Growth coalition theory suggests that elected officials are heavily influenced by coalitions of community and business leaders seeking to maximize economic growth (Molotch, 1976; Logan & Molotch, 1987). Logan and Molotch (1987) exemplify economic growth by focusing on land exchange value. Harvey (1989) goes a step further and likens the whole city to a business calling them "entrepreneurial cities." This focus on market forces and the economic development pits the city against that which limits growth potential as urban space becomes a place of heightened social surveillance (Coleman et al., 2005; MacLeod, 2002). Of this "commodification" of public space, MacLeod (2002) states that

> Not least in that the fragile maintenance of value inscribed into this recommodification of space is ever more intricately dependent on a costly system of surveillance— performed through a blend of architectural design, CCTV, private security, and a range of legal remedies—seemingly designed to inculcate "acceptable" patterns of behavior commensurate with the free flow of commerce and the new urban aesthetics. (p. 605)

These components being emblematic of governmental attempts to alienate the homeless population from cities. This tendency to alienate or banish the homeless not only from revitalizing and booming downtowns but from the margins is confirmation for some scholars that there is a new framework for urban governance, one that aims to control the visibility of poverty by excluding rather than rehabilitate or reintegrate (DeVerteuil et al., 2009; Beckett & Herbert, 2009; Young, 1999).

Other scholars who push this growth perspective make the case that cities are competing for development and middle-class residents and are essentially "groupless" (Peterson, 1981, p. 116). Early conceptualizations of this perspective made the case that these middle-class residents would "vote with their feet" essentially migrating out of cities that do not provide the services desirable to them (Tiebout, 1956). In this competition of jurisdictions to provide amenities, spending becomes important. Further, in this model, Tiebout recognizes that it is not only the federal or central government that can offer public goods. In fact, he argues that local governments produce packages of public goods and that depending on community size these packages will be able to be offered at lower cost to residents. Then, individuals and families that are "perfectly mobile" or otherwise able to move at any time will do so in order to find the best bargain for their tax dollar (Tiebout,

1956). Tiebout focuses on the idea of attracting citizens by providing packages of public goods, however, the opposite is also true and Peterson made the case that by undersupplying services like affordable housing jurisdictions can also prevent unwanted citizens from living in their city (Peterson, 1981).

Choi et al. (2010) found links between political ideology, as measured by presidential and gubernatorial Democratic votes, and spending. The research generally suggests that ideology at all levels of government affect spending (Connolly & Mason, 2016). This research also suggests that liberals support more spending on social programs, including housing, health, and welfare. On the other hand, conservatives usually favor lower spending on such services (Feather, 1985; Kluegel, 1990; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). More recently, researchers have found that local spending mirrors the federal trends on spending based on liberal vs. conservative ideology of policy makers (Tausanovitch & Warshaw, 2014; Bertelli & Grose, 2009, 2011; Clinton et al., 2012).

Unlike the economic perspective that places power on coalitions of business and community leaders, Dahl (1961) suggests that no one group dominates the power structure of cities and that instead there is a pluralistic distribution of this power among different interest groups. In this view, regular citizens can still get a response from elected officials regarding issues they care about because of their ability to penetrate politics (Dahl, 1961, pp. 91–93). One of the interest groups this literature has focused on over time has been homeowners (Einstein et al., 2019; Fischel, 2005). Economist William Fischel (2005)

identifies these homeowners as “homevoters” who vote with the goal of maximizing the value of their homes.

Regime theory/analysis of urban governance comes predominately from Stone’s (1989) seminal studies of Atlanta. According to this theory a coalition of elected officials, business elites, and voters have the power in urban governance (Stone, 1989). Stone explains that while elected officials have the power to create policy, they are unable to do so without support from business leaders and the public. Regime theory/analysis emphasizes cooperation among groups however communities may differ greatly in their governmental arrangements and how they bring important individuals together into an alliance (Stone, 2006). Domhoff’s (2005) interpretation of the difference between growth coalitions theory and regime theory is that growth coalitions start with the private economic sector while regime theory starts with government.

A study by Gilens and Page (2014) set out to test the different theories of power in American politics. They found that the average American has a miniscule near zero non-significant effect on public policy and that the preferences of the economic elite have far more independent impact on urban policy. In response, Branham et al. (2017) found that the rich and the middle class each win about half of the time. While not common, some studies of urban governance, predominantly in Europe, take into account the roles of high-ranking bureaucrats and suggest that maybe power lies with them and they get elected officials to enact their will (Elliott & McCrone, 1982). However, no such studies in domestic urban governance take into account the role of street-level bureaucrats in these dynamics.

Street-Level Bureaucracy

From its inception, a core tenet of bureaucracy has been that there should be uniformity in implementation and application of policy (Weber, 1964). Of course, discretion and the human element appear inevitable in the application of public policy and complicate the prospect of uniform implementation. According to street-level bureaucracy theory, the decisions and actions of street-level bureaucrats—including low-level public service employees such as teachers, social workers, police officers, and planners—represent the policies of the government agencies they work for (Lipsky, 1980). By all accounts, one of the powers and functions of the state is to create laws. However, how these laws move from abstract text to on-the-ground outcomes is important. The implementation of policy occurs largely through the actions of street-level bureaucrats, who, as Coslovsky (2016) puts it, "operate at the frontlines of public service" (p. 1103).

Street-level bureaucratic discretion serves an important purpose, and it is essential to the work of government. Street-level bureaucrats are charged with providing direct service to citizens often needing a quick turnaround to solve everyday problems that could have an effect on public health, public safety, and other important issues. This decision-making ability is what translates abstract legal text that exists as "nothing but paper" into policy outcomes (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). *Discretion* refers to the freedom to make decisions or having latitude of choice and that make street-level bureaucrats de facto policymakers (Vinzant et al., 1998; Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003). Salo Coslovsky (2016) explains that street-level bureaucrats are often forced to make decisions concerning

problems brought to them by the citizenry and since these decisions cannot be expeditiously reviewed by supervisors, street-level bureaucrats exercise enormous discretion, which can lead to over and/or under-enforcement of policies. In homelessness policy and service delivery, these street-level bureaucrats are often making decisions about whether to cite a person for petty crimes or performing their bodily functions outside due to their lack of shelter. It is important to note that citation and law enforcement is emphasized here because, with regards to homelessness, the role of police has historically been inflated due to their frequent contact with this population. A homeless person may come in contact with a police officer every day, but they may not be able to see a social worker or other service provider for weeks or even months. This results in what Forrest Stuart (2016) calls 'therapeutic policing.' This type of policing uses social work type outreach but rather than being helpful it has many harmful effects, such as, harassment and incarceration rather than rehabilitation. The homeless are often excluded from prime spaces (Snow & Anderson, 1993) by cities that pass ordinances regulating bodily functions like sleeping as well as other coping mechanisms like panhandling (Beckett & Herbert, 2011; Stuart, 2013). They are then relegated to marginal spaces where cops employ a 'recovery management' type of policing that attempts to force the homeless into rehabilitation or other such program that often do more harm than good (Stuart, 2014).

Coslovsky (2016) observed that because demand is so much greater than supply, bureaucrats are forced to "ration their services" (p. 1105) as it relates to discretion. This rationing leads to different coping strategies on the part of bureaucrats, including, in some cases, routines or "rules of thumb" that can be used as simplification devices (Feldman,

1992). These can include some negative simplification devices like stereotyping, classification, discrimination, morality judgements, and ideologies (Baumgartner, 1992; Handler, 1992). Additional issues affecting discretion can be teamwork arrangements, social expectation, bureaucratic ideology, and local community political orientation (Brown, 1981; Stensöta, 2011; Tendler, 1997).

New Public Management and Non-Profits as Street-Level Bureaucrats

In the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberal efforts to limit the powers of government in the United States saw the rise of retrenchment politics and increased cuts in spending on social programs (Pierson 1994). This era saw the rise of the New Public Management (NPM) movement, which effectively and permanently diminished the role of the government at the street-level. The NPM movement was an ideological movement led by conservatives worldwide but was especially influential in the United States and Europe. The movement was highly critical of what they saw as big government and bureaucratic red tape. Leaders of the movement in the United States included politicians like Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore (Lynn, 2008). The basis behind NPM is free-market economics. In the 1990s, then-Vice President Gore led a program called "Reinventing Government." This program was based on the work of David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in their 1992 book titled *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* and sought to bring private sector efficiency into Federal government programs and encouraged businesses or non-profit service providers get involved in governance (Gore, 1993). The idea was that in a free market these actors could make the processes of managing public organizations and service delivery more efficient

and less costly (Gore, 1993). Critics have stated that higher efficiency was often achieved but only at the expense of quality of service and by diminishing public accountability (Haque, 2000).

As a result, non-profits were compelled to adopt business-like frameworks of service provision that prioritized efficiency and productivity instead of advocacy, civic, and political goals (Maier et al., 2016; Salamon, 1997; Weisbrod, 1998). This turn prioritized expertise of staff which made them better managers but created distance between them and their users or publics (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Hall, 2010; LeRoux, 2009). These organizations then prioritized funding rather than their social aims (James, 2004; Suykens et al., 2019). As an example, Fairbanks (2009) offers an ethnography on recovery houses that argues that these organizations saw self-help as the only solution to addiction and that recovery houses were an essential part of a public/private regime that seeks market solutions to government spending on social services.

Suykens et al. (2019) suggest that this prioritizing of economic resources means that at an organizational level these non-profits become focused on the concepts of "consumerism," "commodification," "market-orientation," and "venture philanthropy" (p. 625). This framework shifts service users to clients, services are given based on demand, and stakeholders receive marketing instead of information while donations become "investments" (pp. 625-626). And while NPM claims to foster innovation researchers have found that organizations will become reluctant risk takers and less innovative (Valentinov, 2012; Sandberg et al., 2020; Skocpol, 2003).

A major aspect of NPM and professionalization on non-profits deals with accountability. Ebrahim connects accountability to power and makes the case that when accountability takes priority donor expectations regarding finances and transparency measures come out on top (Ebrahim, 2005). The power is then shifted from the publics to boards of directors, donors, highly trained and educated staff and those with seats at the table (Guo et al., 2013, p. 47). This means that the larger organizations categorized as "high capacity" are most often led by white individuals with strong relationships with donors and overwhelm grass roots organizations that serve the poor and people of color who are unable to obtain resources for their work (Danley & Blesset, 2019; Harris, 2016; Nickels & Clark, 2019). In this neoliberal NPM model economic resources are of the utmost importance. Therefore, anything that gets in the way of securing resources from private, corporate, or government donors is a huge threat. Negative public perceptions and opinion can be this threat. Researchers have found that donors are more likely to give to organizations perceived as efficient (Tinkelman & Mankaney, 2007; Okten & Weisbrod, 2000; Jacobs & Marudas, 2009).

Being Homeless in Beach City

The Setting: Orange County California

The biennial point-in-time count by Orange County showed that between 2013 and 2019 the number of the unsheltered population in the county went from 4,251 to 6,860 (Kurteff Schatz et al., 2015; Orange County Homeless Management Information System, 2019). In 2019, the point-in-time count showed an increase of over 2,000 individuals since

the last count in 2017. Two-thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine individuals were considered sheltered homeless while 3,961 were unsheltered.

The County has been involved in several lawsuits related to homelessness (filed in February of 2018). The lawsuits were filed by The Legal Aid Society of Orange County and the Elder Law and Disability Rights Center (*Tammy Schuler et al. v. County of Orange*, 2017). These legal actions claimed that plaintiffs had unsuccessfully attempted to access housing resources from the County, therefore, attorneys asked for a temporary restraining order consistent with the *Martin* case to halt evictions from the Santa Ana River Trail (*Orange County Catholic Worker v. County of Orange et al.*, 2018)[5]. U.S. District Court Judge David Carter granted the restraining orders but soon after ordered the County to clear the riverbed and provide temporary shelters for residents and create plans for long-term housing solutions for these individuals (*Orange County Catholic Worker v. County of Orange et al.*, 2018).

Major camps throughout the county have periodically been cleared as shelters open as a result of the ongoing federal litigation. However, many of the homeless residents of the county are still experiencing precarious housing arrangements. They continue to come face-to-face with street-level bureaucrats employed by the cities, county, and non-profits, in outreach and enforcement positions. Shelters have been slow to come to fruition due to political issues at the municipal level (Custodio, 2018; Gerda, 2018; Robinson, 2018). Furthermore, a major disconnect exists in the varying ways that different parts of the

[5] Hereinafter referred to as "*Catholic Worker*."

county are dealing with the issue. For example, the South Service Planning Area (SPA), which services 12 cities in South Orange County and some unincorporated areas, has only one shelter. The shelter is in Laguna Beach and has 30 beds. That number is already low and individuals with ties to the city get priority, which leaves the rest of the South SPA with very limited options. As a result, cities are often unable to enforce their urban camping laws because of the *Martin* ruling. This creates a difficult situation for both street-level bureaucrats and residents. Street-level bureaucrats like sheriff's deputies and police are left without enforcement powers, and outreach staff have limited options regarding the services they can offer people on the street.

The Setting: Beach City

Beach City is located in Orange County, California. It is a coastal community that has seen an influx of wealth in the last few decades. It has a population of less than 100,000 and a median value of owner-occupied housing units of over $900,000. The median gross rent is $1,880. According to local real estate websites, the average monthly rent for a studio, one-bedroom apartment, two-bedroom apartment, and three-bedroom apartment is $1,484, $1,885, $2,335, and $2,842, respectively. It is historically conservative and majority white. It has the third largest homeless population of all coastal cities in the county and has seen an increase in this population in the last decade.

In early 2018, Beach City along with many cities across California passed ordinances that "prohibit[ed] camping upon public property, private open space, and fire risk areas." In 2019, after the Ninth Circuit ruling in *Martin* that the city could no longer enforce their

2018 ordinance, the Beach City Council voted unanimously to relocate a homeless encampment that developed at one of their city beaches to a city owned lot nearby. The lot was near a waste treatment plant and had previously been considered as a site for an animal shelter but was rejected by the council because there were concerns about safety due to its proximity to the plant. Beach City along with its neighboring cities has actively resisted the building of an emergency shelter. In fact, a local non-profit has offered the city both land and money to make the shelter a reality, but there has been little to no enthusiasm from anybody in government.

Methods

Fieldwork

Fieldwork for this project occurred over 10 months in Beach City. This ethnographic research was undertaken between February to December of 2020. The primary methods used to collect data include in-depth semi-structured interviews (n=60), over 200 hours of participant observation, archival research, and document analysis. The archival research conducted included archived newspaper articles in the *Orange County Register*, the newspaper of record of the city, and other periodicals. Other archival material included social media accounts of the Orange County Sheriff's Department for the city and local community groups, records of city agencies, transcripts and video of public hearings and city council meetings, and reports spanning from January 2019 to December 2020.

Participant Observation

Participant observations allowed for the observation of interactions between actors within the local context in order to better understand both the interactions and the context

in relation to each other. As Goffman (2001) states, you "[subject] yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals" (p. 154). Field notes were meticulously kept during all visits and interactions.

Participant observations were conducted in several venues throughout the city. These include during volunteer activities with food delivery with Housing is a Human Rights OC and Transforming Trips, two local Orange County non-profits. In addition, community events and public meetings were attended. Throughout the fieldwork interactions such as arrests, searches, outreach contacts, medical visits, among other interactions were observed.

Qualitative Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Sixty qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews with street-level bureaucrats (SLBs), both public sector and non-profit sector workers, and unhoused residents were conducted. Thirty-one interviews with unhoused residents of Beach City and 29 interviews with frontline workers. These frontline workers include what I call "traditional street-level bureaucrats," who are government employees, and "new street-level bureaucrats," who include non-profit employees and service delivery providers (Table 1). This is important because while they are all part of the homeless service delivery system in Beach City, they have potentially competing goals in their approach and ability to perform the work. In my interviews with traditional street-level bureaucrats, I spoke with city, county, and state employees but did not encounter any frontline federal employees in the field. In terms of new street-level bureaucrats—those

employed by non-profit organizations and the ones fronting the work on service delivery for the unhoused—I spoke with individuals employed by small (usually city specific) non-profits with staffs of about 20 or fewer employees. Additionally, I also spoke with employees from the larger non-profits. These organizations, which often have 50 or more employees, operate countywide as well as in neighboring counties, and they have outreach contracts with many of the cities in Orange County. If a frontline government worker encounters an unhoused person, they will often direct them to these new street-level bureaucrats.

Traditional Street-Level Bureaucrats	New Street-Level Bureaucrats
City Employees (Code Enforcement, Local Park Rangers, Lifeguards)	Small Non-Profit Employees/Volunteers (20 Employees or Less, Church Groups)
County Employees (County Health Agency, CalOptima, Sheriff Deputies)	Large Non-Profits (20 Employees or More, contract with cities/counties)
State Employees (State Park Rangers)	
Federal Employees	

Table 1: Interview Participants

The semi-structured format was chosen because it is the best way to gain fuller understanding from our respondents (Weiss, 1994). An interview guide was used in the interview process. The guide listed key concepts that guided a conversation-style interview in which the themes that arose as important were guided by the participants. I asked questions about a variety of topics, including perceptions of homelessness, enforcement strategies, and the way that individuals perceive their roles in the larger homelessness conversation. Initial contact with street-level bureaucrats and residents was made through involvement in local organizations and attendance at local meetings. After initial contact was made, referrals (also known as snowball sampling) were used to

gain additional contacts from those who agreed to participate (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015).

Document Analysis

Many interactions between street-level bureaucrats and residents were challenging or impossible to observe, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic shut down Orange County; in order to triangulate information gathered through interviews from both bureaucrats and residents, archival research was used to supplement the data. These included archived newspaper articles in the *Orange County Register* as well as the newspaper of record of the city and other periodicals.[6] Other archival material included the social media accounts of the Orange County Sheriff's Department and other community groups, records of city agencies, and transcripts and video recordings of public hearings and city council meetings.

Additionally, these data were used to triangulate data retrieved through interviews and observation. In this context, triangulation—which is used to increase the validity of the study—specifically refers to using different methods to verify the findings (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015).

Coding

I transcribed interviews, field notes, and additional documents, coded them for major themes, and analyzed them for discernible patterns. Specifically, I drew on Saldana's (2016) definition of a pattern as a "repetitive, regular, or consistent occurrence of

[6] The local newspapers remain unnamed in this paper to reduce identifiability.

action/data that appears more than twice" (p. 4) to guide my data analysis and organization. First, I open-coded the fieldnotes and interview data. This consisted of line-by-line analysis to identify themes. I followed this with a second round of focused coding, to see how the themes identified came together in a coherent narrative (Emerson et al., 2011). In addition to coding, I kept memos associated with this coding. Memos are tools used by qualitative researchers to record the development of their ideas and their coding schemes (Glaser, 1998). Memoing begins the process of theorizing from your data by "transform[ing] field-note descriptions into theoretical accounts" (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007, p. 68).

Findings

After review of the data, local political context emerged as a central theme affecting the issue and solutions to homelessness in Beach City. Both residents and frontline government workers identified the local political orientation as a challenge. There were two categories of actors that were involved in the heightened effect of political context: (1) local elected officials and (2) a coalition of residents of the city who the unhoused and street-level bureaucrats call "concerned citizens" in a tongue-and-cheek manner. It is important to note that there is considerable overlap between the two groups with several of the elected officials in the city being members of the concerned citizens coalition before becoming elected. Based on the data, I argue that this highly vocal coalition has had a disproportionate impact on homelessness policy and service delivery in Beach City. They have done this through highly organized efforts to intimidate local elected officials,

bureaucrats, and activists. These efforts have often taken place largely on social media and have had a chilling effect throughout the community.

Local Elected Officials

Local politics and, more specifically, local politicians play a significant role in the way that local bureaucrats choose to do their job. Both traditional and new street-level bureaucrats experience pressure from the anti-homeless coalition. However, the pressure experienced by new street-level bureaucrats is twofold. On the one hand, they have to worry about their organizations losing contracts that the council can vote on directly. This influence is something that is apparent to even the local unhoused population. In fact, the unhoused population in Beach City is very well versed in their local politics. While the average resident of a generic city in the county might be unsure who represents them on their local council, most unhoused residents in Beach City know every member of their council by name and can tell you their position on the issue of homelessness and their voting record on local ordinances targeting them. For example, Winston, a thirty something year old African American man who has been homeless in the area for about five years, points out just how much energy the council puts into criminalizing the unhoused. In an interview, he noted that "when the camp was open and a little bit before, every single week they [the council] spent at least half of the agenda of the city council meeting talking about homelessness…and were making laws every, every two weeks […] and...[…] making new laws to affect less than 1% of […] the population." It was not lost on Winston that none of the discussion of the council ever involved housing them, other than corralling them in a lot

surrounded by chain link fence as a solution. Similarly, Jimmy, a man that lives in his car in an alley and sells items he finds online, told me about the time one of the local sheriff's deputies impounded his car for being past due on his car registration. Jimmy described that he knew his registration was coming due and had even spoken with the deputy about his plan to get the money through his recycling. He was $70 dollars short on the day he needed to renew, and he even showed it to the officer. She decided to impound the vehicle anyway, causing Jimmy to have to come up with $800 almost overnight to get his vehicle and his home out of the impound. He explained that he believed that "she [deputy] was purposely working for the city council and she thought she was getting brownie points for kissing ass…to the city council and trying to get rid of one more, homeless person one more eyesore or high homeless person." This perception came from the fact that Jimmy was very aware what the deputies heard from the council if not directly at least through their comments to the local newspaper and through statements at local meetings. Jimmy has attended city council meetings and, along with Winston, has even addressed them directly at call to the audience. They were not the only ones that saw the council as directly involved in their despair. In fact, according to some unhoused residents, members of the council were directly involved in harassment that extended beyond passing ordinances to drive them out. For example, Teresa described that, "there's the guy that got into city council […]…he comes around and yells and calls us names and everything else."

The unhoused population are not the only ones that see the actions of the council as direct attacks. Local non-profit sector workers recognize these actions as well. In fact, in some instances, these actions have direct effects on the services provided by these workers

to members of the community even without ordinances mandating the change. As seen in the anti-camping ordinance passed by the council in 2018, fire risk is often cited as a reason to banish the unhoused from being outside. This became an issue when a local food pantry was forced to stop providing the homeless with perishables such as meat. Mike, a veteran who works as a case manager for this non-profit, told me that it was "to reduce the amount of trash, especially [because of] the fires in the canyons." The reasoning was that because the unhoused do not have access to refrigerators or kitchens they would dispose of the perishable food that they cannot cook. While trash certainly exacerbates wildfires and wildfires are a risk throughout California there were no documented fires that prompted this change other than the city council stating this as a reason for attempting to limit the amount of perishable food given to the unhoused.

Mike and his group are not the only ones changing their assistance to the homeless because of the actions of the council. However, while Mike's group changed their services willingly, Bonny's group did not have a similar experience. Bonny is a retired resident of Beach City. Since retiring she has been working with her church in their homeless ministry. Her church is a registered non-profit and receives small amounts of funding from the city for several of their programs. Bonny shared that a while back they "were doing lunch full meals in the park for anyone that showed up. And we'd get 30 people, and we'd provide, like I told you earlier […] hygiene kits and […] clothing and all kinds of supplies were readily available, and we would take orders and fund raise to meet them." She continued that, "the city council after several years at that, shut us down […] they threatened […] a lawsuit and […] to send police." Whether there was legal basis behind the threats did not

matter because it had the intended effect of scaring them into stopping their actions. Similarly, Jeremy, who runs a Bible study at the beach for his non-profit, explained that they have been "kicked out" of almost every public space in town by the council. Regarding an exchange he had with a sheriff's deputy, Jeremy shared with me, "I was told by one of the officers…, 'you're making my job harder, they're [city council] telling me to get you out of here…so you got to find someplace else and it's not legal for you here." Jeremy asked the officer where it was legal to stay: "He [the officer] was telling me that every place I went, he was told to remove me. They put signs up on the train platform not because of the homeless people sleeping there, mostly […] to get us out of there doing Bible study." This example is key at showing that local elites wish to get rid of the homeless regardless of what they are doing and as these conversations show, local street-level bureaucrats are highly influenced by the city council by buying into their agenda of banishment regardless of the actual authority to do so. They threaten both volunteers and the homeless, which has the consequence of excluding them from prime and all other spaces.

However, local street-level bureaucrats are also influenced by the second group of significant actors: the concerned citizens. It is noteworthy that there is some crossover within these groups and that, in the last two elections, the concerned citizen coalition has put forth successful candidates for council. One of these candidates who is now on their second term on the council and is especially anti-homeless caused a minor controversy within activist circles when he stated in an email that his "primary concern is the protection of those who pay taxes in this city. With that goes the need to start reducing and

ultimately eliminating[7] the presence of those who are living on our streets and in our canyons" (personal communication, 2020). In late 2019, after the city closed an encampment on a city lot the then Mayor was questioned by the local newspaper about how the city would stop additional encampments from forming. His response was that two ordinances passed by the council on the same day as they voted to close the camp would stop this from happening. One of the ordinances designated the train platforms at the train stations as "ticket-required areas" while the other mandated the use of two-sided tents that provide unobstructed views of the interior. It is curious that the Mayor would choose to go on record with the newspaper with such a statement considering the council made it a point to state that the intention of these ordinances was not to target the homeless and that they applied to every resident in the city, presumably for legal purposes related to *Martin*.

"Concerned Citizens"

While elected officials are writing and passing ordinances that influence the way that street-level bureaucrats perform their duties directly the second set of actors affect them more indirectly. It is easy to see the influence of local politicians on the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats, but this theme was discussed by all unhoused residents and does have a direct effect on the actions of local politicians and therefore as seen in the section above also indirectly influences how those at the street-level chose to enforce. Interviewees often spoke about the "concerned citizens" that terrorize them and often harass them. Jonathan, a young millennial who grew up in Beach City and whose parents

[7] Emphasis in italics added by the author.

and sisters often drive by his hangout to check on him, told me about the "people [who] drive by […] slow […] scoping it out like you're being watched kinda thing, you know slowly, or they'll throw rocks at cars." Jonathan explained that they threw these rocks at the cars that provided shelter for people, which can be recognized because they are bursting at the seams with the possessions of unhoused people who pack their whole lives into their cars. Similarly, Nathanial, a Navy veteran described a similar situation to a news crew at the Beach, stating that concerned citizens have "burnt a whole in my umbrella and my tent, they've driven by throwing things at us from eggs to great big washers."[8]

These concerned citizens are very active at the local levels of government and have been successful in helping elect several city council members in the last few years. They are highly organized and attend city council meetings often and are regular commenters during call to the audience. In addition, they are known to use the interactions they have with the unhoused as reasons to push the council for punitive ordinances. This group of individuals is known for taking pictures of and harassing of the unhoused population of Beach City. For example, Danielle—who has lived in Beach City since she was 13 years old, after her mother left without her during one of her stints in juvenile hall— told me about an altercation she had with a city council member and his friend. She told me that "he was down here talking his shit and I grabbed his shirt…he had the camera, like, in my face, and I got arrested for assault and battery." Danielle is still dealing with legal actions from this incident. In a highly publicized event in the city, a woman was attacked by a homeless man

[8] The name of this local news broadcast in Beach City has been removed to reduce identifiability.

after she approached his tent and began filming. This event appropriately resulted in community concern for the woman that was attacked. However, it did not spur an equally appropriate conversation about the right of unhoused folks to privacy and their right to refuse being filmed.

Many of these incidents, the back-and-forth from community members, and organizing efforts can be seen on social media. One of the more controversial groups is a closed group that focuses on "crime and safety." In order to join the group, one has to answer a series of questions and be approved by administrators. The questions include the following: "Do you live in Beach City? What are your thoughts on an emergency shelter? Permanent supportive housing? Who are your friends in this group? What do you wish to get out of this forum? And how will you be an active participant in addressing crime and safety?" (Facebook group, 2020). Taken together, these questions suggest that this group sees crime and safety directly connected to emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing. Local activists and supporters of a shelter and permanent supportive housing also get harassed online. Brandon, a local volunteer and formerly homeless person, has experienced this firsthand. As a single father he has previously had his children accompany him as he attempts to help the local homeless residents of Beach City. This has resulted in concerned citizens recording him and posting the video on social media alleging that he was buying drugs. Eventually someone called Child Protective Services (CPS) on him based on this incident.

In a different incident, Felice, a well-known volunteer who is a professional social worker and has previously served as a street-level bureaucrat for a local non-profit has had her picture shared online and tagged as an "enabler" because of her work helping feed the local homeless. The treatment these volunteers receive also creates a chilling effect that prevents other community members from expressing their opinions on the issue. Even if they would be agreeable to supporting a shelter, they do not dare express that to their neighbors who might be members of the concerned citizen coalition for fear of social repercussions. Jenna, also a local volunteer who has only recently become involved after forging a relationship with Teresa, a local homeless woman described an incident at a local city council meeting where she accompanied Felice to disseminate information:

> ...we wanted to give information to—to our County taskforce and we had our T-shirts, to distinguish us. And there were people there yelling, 'Felice, go home.' Are you freaking kidding me?...I mean, she wasn't even talking out loud, she was just there with flyers and... and stuff, and they're like, 'Felice, go home. Felice, go home.'

This incident was described to me several times in interviews. It is ever-present in the minds of residents. Cynthia, a local pastor who has attempted to bring a coalition of churches together to address homelessness after describing the incident told me that these tactics are part of, "the political vitriol that we have going on nationally, regionally and locally, people are afraid to stand up for something they believe because they're afraid of being personally attacked."

As with elected officials, it is not only the unhoused that are making these connections. Doug and his wife Karen, who have lived in Beach City for 13 years, are retired

and run a daily meal program in the neighboring city that many unhoused residents of Beach City attend daily. The program has been controversial and demonized by several coastal cities. Doug and Karen told me that

> one of the head sheriffs spoke to our men's group [at] church. And he said, it takes two of my deputies off the street to drive all the way up to Santa Ana to house them couple hours up there, a couple of hours, you know, that kind of stuff. He said, 'We just don't have the manpower to do that,' and when we spoke about the proposed shelter, he continued that, 'It's the old NIMBY thing, you know, everybody wants the problem to go away, but they don't want to do anything […] in their neighborhood. They want to ship them all out to the Inland Empire.'

Discussion

Interpretation

Historically, coalitions of local business and community leaders in Beach City have had success in getting their will passed through council. A prominent example is the opposition to a toll road extension proposed to pass through several beach cities in South Orange County. There is large crossover between the members of these groups and those that oppose solutions for the unhoused community in Beach City. The organizing infrastructure that the groups have built in their opposition to the toll road has been useful and successful in mobilizing for other efforts as well. For example, the same group has also mobilized to oppose a proposed shelter and the development of permanent supportive housing in the city. In addition, this dynamic has allowed for punitive ordinances to be put in place. Examples of this include highly restrictive parking rules that target areas where unhoused individuals are known to park their vehicles overnight and funding for anti-homeless hostile architecture and landscaping in public areas. These dynamics have

remained unchecked in the city for years. In 2018, a settlement in the *Catholic Worker* case limited many south Orange County cities from enforcing anti-camping and loitering laws until there were an appropriate number of shelter beds provided in the south SPA. However, south Orange County city Mayors responded to this simply by asking to be able to transport their unhoused population into north and central SPA shelters citing empty beds in those areas (Gerda, 2020). In June of 2019, Judge David O. Carter who is tasked with overseeing the *Catholic Worker* case was removed from overseeing the case for five south Orange County cities because it was found that Judge Carter could be perceived to be biased based on statements he has made in the past (*Housing is a Human Right et al. v County of Orange et al.*, 2019). The case for these cities was reassigned to Judge Percy Anderson who has since then dismissed the lawsuit stating that a single lawsuit could not encompass the five cities and instead individual lawsuits had to be filed for each (*Housing is a Human Right et al. v County of Orange et al.*, 2019).

So, even though under *Martin*, Beach City is prohibited from criminalizing homelessness and required to provide shelter before enforcing anti-camping and loitering laws, under city pressure, sheriffs and code enforcement over-enforce everything else, including jaywalking, parking laws, property in the park, being on the train platform without a ticket, cigarettes on the beach, littering, and the like. Given this context, I argue that the city has continued to criminalize the homeless without having to abide by the ruling in *Martin* and provide adequate alternatives. This has created a situation where the highly coordinated anti-homeless concerned citizen coalition has continued to be successful in eliminating existing services for the homeless as well as stalling any development of a shelter or facility

that would provide services to the homeless residents of Beach City. As a case in point, Beach City has refused to consider one local non-profit organization's offer of land and $1,000,000 to assist in the building of a homeless shelter. The offer was made officially by an attorney representing the offering non-profit at a Beach City council meeting. The council declined the offer and has moved to try to take the land from the organization through eminent domain claiming that the land is needed for open space. This move is largely seen in the community by opponents and supporters of a shelter as a move to try to stop such development.

The dynamics observed in Beach City suggest that local middle and higher middle-class elites have a major influence on local politics—specifically, on the issues of development and homelessness. Also, local elites are highly influencing the discretion of street-level bureaucrats. The field work conducted for this study suggests that a highly vocal anti-homeless coalition of "concerned citizens" representing the business community and homeowners' pressure local elected officials, some of whom are homeowners and local business elite themselves, and the elected officials directly and indirectly pressure street-level bureaucrats to perform their duties in a certain way. This pressure is multi-tiered, some is overt like the local resident that shows up to council meetings with a machete or online harassment of local officials after they vote in any way that can be interpreted as "pro-homeless." Some of this pressure is more covert and traditional political pressure; local businesses people donating money to hire the local political communications firm to run hit pieces against them during election years. These street-level bureaucrats also understand the local political dynamics so well that they take highly informed, if potentially

biased, actions that they believe to be consistent with the local political environment out of fear of repercussions to themselves or their organization's contract with the city, these dynamics are depicted in Figure 1.

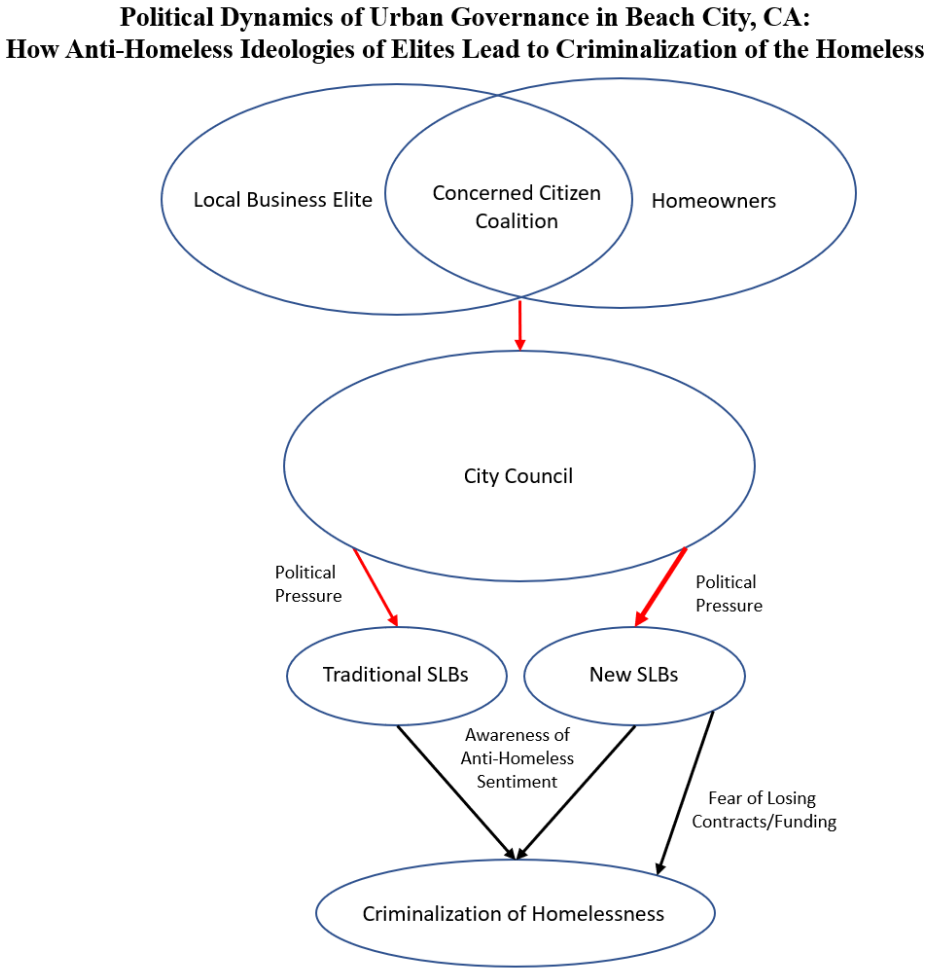


Figure 1: Political Dynamics of Urban Governance in Beach City, CA

The anti-homeless concerned citizen coalition has been successful in halting any action concerning the development of a shelter or facility aimed at providing services to the homeless residents of the city. However, they have also been effective at chipping away at

the services already provided to this population in the city. Members of the coalition personally harass volunteers and outreach workers while also putting pressure on the council to defund programs they view as problematic. The harassment experienced by local volunteers is easily seen online. In some instances, members of the coalition have fabricated controversies to put pressure on the council to act in their favor. An example of this came when members of the coalition were found to have released rats near the train tracks to make it appear that the homeless presence was creating unsanitary conditions that promoted the infestation of rodents. However, animal control found that the rats had been store bought and did not result from the presence of the homeless in the area. This points to a trend found in the data regarding the social response and resistance to unwanted development related to homelessness (e.g., emergency homeless shelter, permanent supportive housing, day center).

Social Response and Resistance to Unwanted Development

For decades, scholars have identified and described different social responses and resistance to unwanted development. It is unclear where some of these terms come from, but they have been used by planners and scholars dating back to the 1980s, when—according to some accounts, such as William Safire's (2008) article in the *Christian Science Monitor*—pro-nuclear activist Walton Rodger coined the term "not in my back yard," now better recognized by its acronym NIMBY. In this same vein, others like urban planner Frank Popper (1981) coined the term "locally unwanted land use," also known as LULU. Many similar terms have been coined since, including "build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone" (BANANA), "citizens against virtually everything" (CAVEs), "not in anybody's

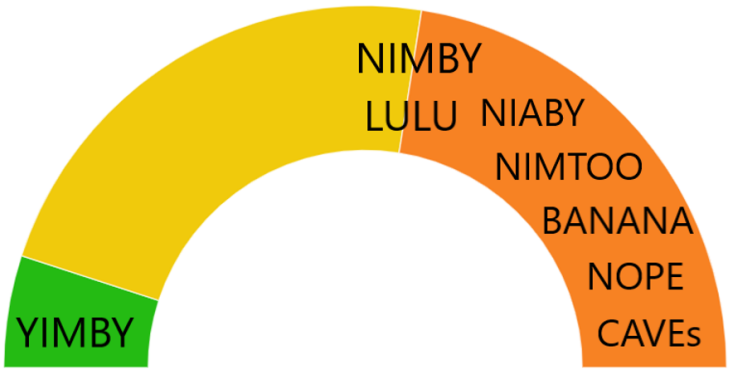
backyard" (NIABY), "not in my term of office" (NIMTOO), and "not on planet earth" (NOPE) (Schively 2007). In a recent turn of events, the term "yes in my back yard" (YIMBY) has also been introduced into the universe of this lexicon by pro-development activists (Lake, 1993).

NIMBY attitudes are on full display in Beach City in regard to any kind of shelter facility. The hallmarks of NIMBYism manifest in signs at city council meetings telling homeless individuals to "get out of town" and activists to "go home" or "take them to your house." These displays follow a familiar pattern we have become accustomed to described by Oakley (2002):

> NIMBY tactics tend to exhibit certain regularities. During the initial stage, a vocal minority living within the vicinity of the proposed site expresses its concern about the project. Generally, they mask their true intentions of exclusion through a rhetoric of seemingly innocuous reasoning: inadequate level of public services to support another facility, preserving the neighborhood's historic character, and ensuring orderly development (Bates & Santerre, 1994; Wolch & Dear, 1993). (p. 100)

This traditional response is illustrated in figure 2. In the figure, you can see where the different social responses to new development are depicted on an odometer. The responses that have been identified up to this point go form pro-development YIMBY in the green to the more restrictive responses in an orange area. These restrictive responses are depicted in orange and not red because they are often couched in concern with the rationalization that the development should happen it just should not happen in the proposed site. This is characterized by Oakley as a "mask."

Social Response and Resistance to Unwanted Development



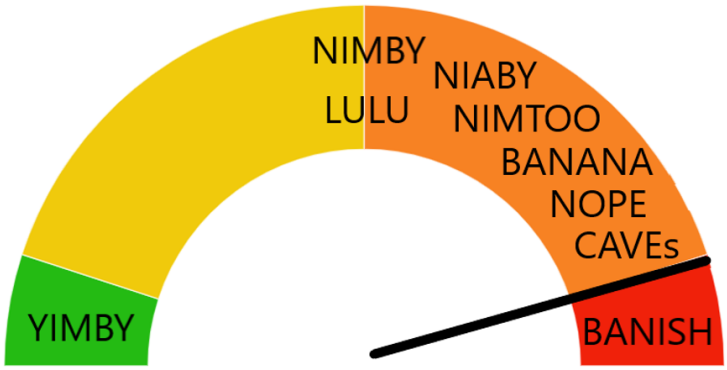
BANANA: Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone
LULU: Locally Unwanted Land Use
NIMBY: Not In My Backyard
NOPE: Not On Planet Earth
CAVEs: Citizens Against Virtually Everything
NIABY: Not In Anybody's Backyard
NIMTOO: Not In My Term Of Office
YIMBY: Yes In My Backyard

Definition Sources: Popper, 1981; Schively, 2007

Figure 2: Social Responses and Resistance to Unwanted Development

However, there is one main difference observed in the Beach City context. In Beach City, the opposition omits "the mask" all together. In fact, there is a complete omission of this "rhetoric of seemingly innocuous reasoning" with explicit statements of desired exclusion by members of the anti-homeless concerned citizen coalition and elected officials. It extends from simply wanting to stop future development to wanting to get rid of and diminishing existing facilities. This is reflected in figure 3, which extends the odometer to include a red area. This red area captures what I call "banish the undesirable," or BANISH.

Social Response and Resistance to Unwanted Development



BANANA: Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone
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NIMBY: Not In My Backyard
NIMTOO: Not In My Term Of Office
NOPE: Not On Planet Earth
YIMBY: Yes In My Backyard

Definition Sources: Popper, 1981; Schively, 2007; Nevarez Martinez, 2021

Figure 3: BANISH Social Response and Resistance to Unwanted Development

Similar to what Beckett and Herbert (2010) observed in Seattle, homeless residents in Beach City are banned from occupying public spaces even those that are marginal spaces through hyper-criminalization. This banishment is a specific type of spatial and social exclusion. While some of this has fluctuated in the last few years—during which the *Martin* and *Catholic Worker* cases emerged and Beach City hosted a temporary encampment on a city-owned lot—since the dismissal of most south Orange County cities from *Catholic Worker*, things have gone back to business as usual. Many of the city's homeless residents have once again retreated to the hills and canyons, where lush vegetation provides security from being seen. In Seattle, Beckett and Herbert

(2010) identified laws that criminalized the presence of the homeless in public space a "response to concerns from the business community about the effects of disorderly people on consumption patterns" (p. 64). Relatedly, they state that "individuals may be targeted for how they look and what they symbolize rather than specific behaviors" (p. 15). These individuals are essentially "banished" from public space for being poor (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). This is consistent with what happens in Beach City. This study extends Beckett and Herbert's work on banishment by exposing the mechanisms through which banishment is set into action by individuals actors exercising discretion that is informed in some instances by political pressure. Beckett and Herbert already recognized the political pressure experienced by actors like the District Attorney (DA) and prosecutors. However, in this study we see that this is not the only source of political pressure. There is also pressure coming from these highly organized anti-homeless coalitions that alter the behavior of those executing banishment at the frontlines.

Limitations and Future Research

This study had several limitations that in future studies could be eliminated or at least mitigated. First, fieldwork for this study began in February of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic forced Orange County to shut down in March of 2020. This forced me to re-evaluate many of my methods. For example, instead of in-person interviews, most of my interviews were conducted over the phone. Also, many observations were conducted online; for example, city council and community meetings were held on Zoom. The transition was not too challenging, because I was already embedded within the housing justice movement in Orange County and knew many of the individuals that I would

eventually interview. The shutdown forced me to not only rely on interviews and observations but also on archival data. Ultimately, this made the data richer and provided much-needed context for the study.

The findings in this study show the effects of the dynamics of local urban governance on the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats who respond to homelessness. I did this by interviewing unhoused residents of Beach City and the street-level bureaucrats that interface with them. In the future, a study that focuses solely on the perceptions of street-level bureaucrats and how they see themselves and legitimize their actions would further inform the scholarly literature on the criminalization of homelessness in the United States.

Conclusion

In short, it is important to look at the discretion exercised on behalf of the state by street-level bureaucrats, especially in light of the idea that the decisions and actions of street-level bureaucrats represent the official policies of the government agencies they work for (Lipsky, 1980). The street-level bureaucrats, or low-level public service employees, in this study include law enforcement officials, city and county workers, and non-profit sector workers contracted by the city or county to do homeless outreach. In Beach City, we see that local community politics affect the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats. A local anti-homeless coalition communicates officially and unofficially with street-level bureaucrats through local elected officials like members of the city council, local media outlets, and social media. This paper argues that factors involved in triggering enforcement and criminalization are highly influenced by urban governance and

local political dynamics which are shown to play a role in the discretionary decision-making process of those on the frontlines of homelessness in Orange County, California. I find that a highly vocal anti-homeless coalition of "concerned citizens" are having a disproportionate impact on homelessness policy and service delivery in Beach City.

Paper 2: Institutional Meta-Logics: The Influence of Institutional Collaboration on Street-Level Bureaucratic Behavior

Introduction

The study of street-level bureaucracy focuses on the use of individual discretion by bureaucrats as a response to constraints in their work environments, such as, limited resources (Lipsky, 1980; Brodkin, 1997; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003) as opposed to the effect of an institutional logic on their decision making. Garrow and Grusky (2013) were the first to point out that street-level bureaucratic discretion is related to the consistency between regulation and core institutional logic and that perhaps street-level bureaucratic discretion has been overstated in this way. They describe front-line workers "not as agents with objective interests and preferences, but as institutionally constructed actors whose values, interests, and practices are partially determined by the institutional logics that structure organizational fields in which they operate" (p. 104). They form part of a growing literature that aims to merge street-level bureaucracy theory and institutional theory to address the changing environment in which front-line workers are operating (Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2010; Hasenfeld, 2010; Sosin, 2010; Garrow & Grusky, 2013; Rice, 2013, 2019). Since then, other scholars have pointed out that street-level bureaucrats are not only responding to institutional logic; in some instances, because of the increased role of non-profits in governance and the hybridity of policy implementation and delivery, they are also responding to conflicting institutional logics (Thomann et al., 2016). Some, suggest that the difference in implementation is due to the semi-autonomous decision-making abilities of actors from institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2017).

Others agree that the discretionary actions of front-line workers are not simply individual preference or unsystematic (Soss et al., 2011; Feldman, 1992).

This paper extends the work of scholars that identify street-level bureaucrats as institutionally constructed actors, and it explains how this position as an institutionally constructed actor affects their role in service and policy implementation for homelessness in Orange County, California. Ethnographic data gathered from research conducted with a variety of institutional actors and street-level bureaucrats is analyzed to address the following research questions: How do different institutional fields collaborate and act independently and how does that influence the discretionary behavior of street-level bureaucrats? To this end, this paper focuses on the relationships among law enforcement, health care workers, and non-profits in order to decipher how these public-private service collaborations are affecting the decision-making behavior of the actors involved. Interviews with law enforcement, health care workers, and non-profit workers in addition to other adjacent field actors elucidate the importance of a guiding political and cultural logic that arises from the economic, political, cultural, and social structures that street-level bureaucrats encounter in the field as institutionally created actors.

Orange County—and its geographic location in Southern California more broadly—presents a compelling case for this study because of the heightened state of the housing and homelessness crisis currently being experienced in the area. This creates a situation where all institutional hands are on deck. Therefore, this study gives a direct view into the reality of how the state has mounted a response and how it has played out on the ground. The study looks at the institutional field of homelessness in Beach City, CA. As is common in

ethnographic research, the author has masked the city by assigning it and all participants pseudonyms.

Theoretical Context

Institutional Logics

Institutional theory has been a leading explanation in the study of organizations for many decades. In the 1960s and 70s, scholars identified the important role of culture and what they described as institutionalized rules (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) that are "taken-for-granted" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341; Starbuck, 1976). They suggested that the adherence to these rules led to isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell describe Hawley's description of isomorphism as "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions," which they say leads to "homogeneity in structure, culture, and output" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, pp.147–149).

In the 1990s, scholars began to identify logics as what gave meaning to institutions (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Haveman & Rao, 1997; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Scott et al., 2000). This new approach to institutional analysis, known as the institutional logics approach, moved away from the focus on isomorphism and homogeneity to the variety of logics within institutions and what they meant for individuals and organizations in differing contexts. According to Friedland and Alford (1991), there are five main institutions in society, each with its own logic: (1) the market, (2) the state, (3) democracy, (4) the nuclear family, and (5) Christianity. Thornton et al. (2012) build on this and suggest

that community is also an institution of note in society. A logic is an organizing principle that underlays each of these institutions. Friedland and Alford (1991) believe that institutions are a system that help individuals make meaning of their life experiences through of set of practices or logics. Logics are essentially the way the social world works (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101). Thornton and Ocasio (1999) also defined institutional logics as "the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (p. 804).

The literature on street-level bureaucrats and their role within institutions as institutionally constructed actors is more limited, and it is here that this paper seeks to make a contribution. Scholars of street-level bureaucracy emphasize the discretionary actions of front-line workers (Lipsky, 1980). In street-level bureaucratic theory, these actors are described as policy makers and described as creating policy in two distinct ways—first, through their discretionary actions which have a wide impact on their clients and, second, through the fact that in concert their actions add up to "agency behavior" (Lipsky, 1980, p. 13). These behaviors are a result of bureaucratic mechanisms such as routinizing procedures, modifying goals, rationing services, asserting priorities, and limiting or controlling clientele, all of which are often a result of vague direction and inconsistent work objectives (Lipsky & Weatherley, 1977). Rice offers that street-level bureaucracy should be merged with institutional theory because street-level bureaucracy theory has become insufficient in the face of complex environments (2012). She sees this as laying the groundwork for a micro-institutionalist theory of policy implementation (Rice,

2012). In merging these two theories, scholars have suggested that differences in administering services by front-line public servants is related to the institutional logic of the organizational field in which these bureaucrats are embedded (Garrow & Grusky, 2013). The accepted "rules of the game" of the organizational field in which these street-level bureaucrats operate influences their decision making (Garrow & Grusky, 2013, p. 104).

Institutional Fields

The study of institutional logics has focused almost exclusively on institutional fields. Institutional fields are "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148), meaning those organizations that make or produce similar products and services. According to DiMaggio, the process of institutional definition of a field occurs in four parts; increased interaction among organizations in the field, emergence of interorganizational structures and patterns of coalition, an increase in the information that a field must contend with, and a mutual awareness and recognition among participants that they are in the same enterprise (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). They continue, that it is at this point that these organizations become homogenous and isomorphic (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This isomorphism to their institutional environment provides and maintains legitimacy, which in turn ensures survival of the organization even though there may exist a gap between institutional environment and how work gets done. Such gaps are then rationalized through what Meyer and Rowan (1977) identify as institutional myths.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that fields are an ideal level of analysis because it allows the researcher to look at the "totality of relevant actors" (p. 148) rather than simply competing. However, while this is true, by focusing on the field they are not taking into consideration the actions of the individual actors but still taking them in the aggregate. This study by focusing on the discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats as institutionally created actors will fill this gap.

In the case of street-level bureaucrats involved in policy and service delivery for the homeless, the institutional field consisted exclusively of public sector civil servants until very recently. However, in recent decades, as principles of New Public Management (NPM) and the retrenchment of government from public policy and service delivery has spread in the United States, private actors or new street-level bureaucrats have entered the realm. The field now consists of traditional street-level bureaucrats employed by government and new street-level bureaucrats employed by non-profits and the private sector. This has created an environment where street-level bureaucrats are navigating conflicting or competing logics (Thomann et al., 2016).

Multiple/Conflicting Logics

Several studies have identified the existence of competing, conflicting, or multiple logics within organizations (Besharov & Smith, 2014; McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Jay 2013; Tracey et al., 2011; Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Kraatz & Block, 2008; Bider, 2007; Zilber, 2002; Haveman & Rao, 1997). These studies have returned mixed results with some scholars linking multiple logics within organizations with conflict

(Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Zilber, 2002), while others have suggested that multiplicity eventually settles into coexistence and blending (McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Binder, 2007). Also, expanding on these disagreements between researchers, some see multiple logics as the kiss of death, suggesting that they will ultimately lead to the demise of an organization (Tracey et al., 2011) while others maintain that these multiple logics make organizations resilient and innovative (Jay, 2013; Kraatz & Block, 2008). When it comes to the institutional field, some have suggested that multiple logics are present at the field level as well (Reay & Hinings, 2009).

When it comes to the study of multiple logics within governance, scholars have focused on the individual actors and their actions (Buffat, 2014; Considine & Lewis, 2003; Schedler & Rüegg-Stürm, 2014). Thomann et al. (2016) describe the contemporary field of policy delivery and governance where individual actors navigate the often-conflicting logics of the state and the market. Regarding this hybridity, Thomann et at. (2016) found that "private implementing actors" (p. 57) perform deficiently when these conflicting logics are also accompanied by weak accountability measures.

These scholars propose that these actors are embedded within "hybrid" organizations and are navigating conflicting institutional logics. These logics are described as a state logic which focuses on "legality, equity, security and correctness" and a market logic that focuses on "profit, performance, competition, effectiveness and efficiency" (Thomann et al., 2016, p. 58; see also Meyer et al., 2014; Skelcher & Smith, 2014). In addition to this hybridity and the decisions they make because of scarce resources, street-level bureaucrats that work with homelessness must deal with the tension between

different institutional fields coming together to work on what they largely perceive to be a major social problem. Most institutional studies focus on individual institutional fields and do not look at interaction between fields or analyze whether there exists a collective cultural and political logic that different fields are all acting upon. These institutional studies also do not look at how a deeply rooted carceral logic is affecting these interactions. By analyzing these interactions, this study aims to begin this line of questioning to contribute to the literature on institutional logics and more specifically to the literature that aims to frame street-level bureaucrats as institutionally created actors and how their discretion is affected by their institutional context.

Institutional Theory and Street-Level Bureaucracy

As the landscape of public policy delivery has changed in the decades since Lipsky wrote his seminal *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service,* scholars have noted the need to account for these differences. Rice (2013) suggests that in today's "era of activation" (p. 1054), those who implement social policy are experiencing situations that force us to extend our view past the intraorganizational dynamics. According to Rice (2013), activation refers to principles of decentralization and individualization of social services. She states that,

> [a]ctivation policies have been widely implemented in the areas of unemployment, social care, and to some degree even pensions since the early 1990s, based on the notion that in the postwar era, overly generous welfare states nourished a habitus of dependency among benefit recipients. Consequently, activation provides strong incentives for clients to find work and become economically self-sufficient, either in the form of "carrots" (like job retraining, personal care, personal labor market reintegration budgets) or "sticks" (job application requirements, sanctions). (p. 1039)

These conditions provide street-level bureaucrats with incredible leeway in determining what these policies will become (Rice, 2013; Borghi & Van Berkel, 2007; Newman, 2007). However, at the same time, these conditions are forcing front-line workers to engage with issues like the formulation of organizational goals and policy, managing budgets, and extending their reach into an extensive network (Rice, 2013; Durose, 2011; Ellis, 2011; Henman & Fenger, 2006). This means that we need to expand the scope of how we envision these actors, their motivations, and their decision making. She proposes a micro-institutionalist model of policy implementation that conceptually embeds street-level bureaucratic actions within "economic, political, cultural, and social structures" (Rice, 2013, p. 1040). Similar to a social ecological approach, by looking at street-level bureaucracy through an institutional frame we can capture the totality of the cultural symbolism (Firey, 1945; Stokols, 2018) that individuals are assigning to the totality of their environmental context and how it is affecting their decision-making behavior.

This "activation" that Rice describes is related to what others have called neoliberalism or New Public Management (NPA). Under these schemes, the role of street-level bureaucrats has been reshaped and the public sector no longer controls policy and service delivery. These principles are the result of an ideological movement led by conservatives worldwide and resulted in a move towards contracting and privatization that has changed social service delivery mechanisms on the ground. Policy and service delivery now most often occurs as a collaboration between public sector bureaucrats, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and public-private partnerships (Brodkin, 2015). Non-profits

or what Hasenfeld (2010) identifies as human service organizations have become entrenched in this process. He argues that these organizations are the "quintessential embodiment of institutional organizations" (2010, p. 42).

Carceral Logics

The concept of carceral logics is a critical approach that comes from carceral state studies. The carceral state concept has been espoused by scholars in a range of social science fields and constitutes an emerging and robust viewpoint on the practices underlying how the logics and practices of punishment and prison inform the ways economic, political, and social worlds manifest (Martensen, 2019). While some scholars have previously focused on the police and other criminal justice actors in their article about the front-end of the carceral state other scholars also involve other street-level bureaucrats like teachers (Meiners, 2016) and social workers (Bergen & Abji, 2019). This literature suggests that this system of mass surveillance and control has grown to such a degree that it has transformed all public institutions such as schools, public housing, and other social programs (Gottschalk, 2015). These institutions, which include social service organizations working on the front-line, work directly with the state to regulate and punish their client populations (Wacquant, 2009; Gustafson, 2011). Richie and Martensen (2020) call these "carceral services" because they assist the state to control, surveille, and punish the poor . They point out that while social workers might be "well meaning," they are still complicit with mass incarceration (Richie & Martensen, 2020). These are not the only conditions that connect homelessness to the carceral state or carceral logics. In fact, some have highlighted the cycle created when someone is incarcerated. Incarceration itself exacerbates poverty,

increases unemployability, and strains family relationships, all of which increase the likelihood that a formerly incarcerated person will become homeless (Gowan, 2002). Incarceration is a cycle that reinforces itself. Homeless individuals have a high likelihood of being incarcerated, and incarcerated people have a high likelihood of becoming homeless. At the same time, they are being surveilled and punished by the social workers that are supposed to help them and criminalized by police whom they often see more often than social workers.

Marie Gottschalk (2015) offers that in a democratic state, the carceral state relies on an extraordinary system of surveillance that relies on institutions like police, prosecutors, corrections, and the courts. One of the hallmarks of the carceral state and logic is that it implicates large sectors of the population, including those who have never been arrested or convicted of crimes. While this system of mass surveillance and control affects marginalized groups the most, it has grown to such a degree that it affects all public institutions (Gottschalk, 2015). On the ground, these carceral logics are advanced by those on the front-end of the carceral state (Miller et al., 2018). A group of individuals that includes street-level bureaucrats.

Research Design and Methodology

Ethnography

This study used an ethnographic qualitative research method. As Zilber has previously stated in his study of institutionalization, ethnography is an ideal method to study institutions (2002, p. 237). He points out that similar to societies and communities

more broadly, institutions often have "accepted and taken-for-granted cultural meanings" (Zilber, 2002, p. 237) that will be viewed in distinct ways by different members of these organizations. Invoking the work of organizational anthropologists like Bate (1997), he makes the case that ethnography is a suitable method because it includes intensive observation and participation which is ideal to "uncover[…] not only overt behavioral patterns, but also the subjective experiences of organizational reality and the ongoing negotiations between members and subgroups over the interpretations and understandings of this reality" (Zilber, 2002, p. 237).

Institutional ethnography is compelling because it seeks to discover "how things work" and "how they are actually put together" and most importantly "lays stress on the project of being faithful to the actualities of social organization and relations" (Smith, 1987, p. 147). In this study, this idea is particularly crucial because I investigate several institutional fields that incorporate many agencies with their own respective actors all collaborating on the issue of homelessness in a Southern California city.

As is common in ethnographic research, the author has omitted certain citations and reference list entries to avoid inadvertently identifying the location of the study. In an ethnographic study dealing with sensitive information, such as the perspective of street-level bureaucrats employed by a city, county, and non-profits that contract with the city and county, this confidentiality is important to protect informants.

Level of Analysis

The scholars that brought the study of institutional logics to the forefront did so by focusing on three different levels of analysis: individual, organizational, and societal

(Haveman & Gualtieri, 2017). Friedland and Alford (1991) suggested that there the main institutions in society were the capitalist market, bureaucracy/the state, politics, family, and religion all with their own institutional order. Therefore, since its inception, scholars in the field have studied institutional logics within these different levels of analysis, individual, intraorganizational, inter-organizational, field, or societal levels (Haveman & Gualtieri, 2017). By focusing on the collaborations between institutional fields this study's level of analysis is the inter-organizational field.

Beach City, CA

Beach City is located in Orange County, California. It is a coastal community that has seen an influx of wealth in the last few decades. It has a population of less than 100,000 and a median value of owner-occupied housing units of over $900,000. It has high rental prices, and the median gross rent is $1,880. The community has a long history of conservative local politics and it is racially homogenous. It has the third largest homeless population of all coastal cities in the county.

Homelessness has become an important issue in the community. When speaking with a local politician about the issue, they told me that the city had recently done a survey of residents and the issue was identified by 76.3% of respondents as important saying that "addressing the homeless issue should be the top priority for city council." In addition, the city has assembled several committees, boards, and commissions to assess, evaluate, and propose solutions to the problem. A joint commission of the public safety board and the human affairs commission is currently tasked with studying the issue and making recommendations for possible solutions to the council.

Fieldwork

This paper is based on ethnographic data that was collected between February to December of 2020. The primary methods used to collect data include in-depth semi-structured interviews and overt participant observation. As is typical of ethnographic studies this study is also informed by informal conversations and the researcher's interactions with individuals at the research site. This study is part of a larger research project that investigates the role of street-level bureaucratic discretion in homelessness in Orange County. For this paper, I focus on a subset of 29 formal, semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals at the front-line of policy and service delivery for the homeless in Beach City.

Participant Observation

Participant observations allowed for the observation of interactions between individuals within the institutional field helped to understand if and how institutional logics are affecting the discretionary action of these actors. This approach was done to determine if they truly are institutionally created actors. I did this by embedding myself in the organizational field as a volunteer. By doing so, I was able to embody Hammersley and Atkinson's (1995) definition of ethnography—that is, "participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research" (p. 1).

Participant observations were conducted in several venues throughout the city during volunteer activities with Housing is a Human Rights OC and Transforming Trips,

two local Orange County non-profits involved in food delivery to the homeless. These activities enabled me to observe the way that street-level bureaucrats interacted with the homeless, with each other, and with volunteers. Initially, these front-line workers were hesitant to interact with me. However, as time went on and we had ongoing conversations about my work and theirs we built rapport and they were willing to share information both in formal interviews and informal conversation as well as share additional contacts of others that would speak with me. Throughout the fieldwork, I observed interactions such as arrests, searches, outreach contacts, medical visits, among other interactions.

Qualitative Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Twenty-nine semi-structured in-depth interviews with street-level bureaucrats, both public sector and non-profit sector workers, and unaffiliated volunteers were conducted. These front-line workers include eight traditional street-level bureaucrats, who are employed by government, and fourteen new street-level bureaucrats, who are employed by traditional or hybrid non-profits. Additionally, four homeless outreach volunteers for local churches that operate with city funding were also interviewed. Finally, three unaffiliated community members who dedicate their time to helping the homeless were also interviewed. Interviewees were selected through a snowball sampling strategy. Snowball sampling "yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). This sample was bolstered by

their level of activity in the field and their street-level presence in the lives of the unhoused in Beach City.

Based on DiMaggio's model—which suggests the process of institutional definition of a field occurs in four parts, including increased interaction among organizations in the field, emergence of interorganizational structures and patterns of coalition, an increase in the information that a field must contend with, and a mutual awareness and recognition among participants that they are in the same enterprise (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)—I have identified six distinct institutional fields that continuously interact with each other on the issue of homelessness in Beach City (Table 1). These are (1) public health workers, (2) quasi-law enforcement, (3) law enforcement, (4) non-profits, (5) religious group members, and (6) interested community volunteers. Public health workers are county government workers employed by the Orange County Health Agency. The quasi-law enforcement field consists of individuals such as Beach Cities marine safety officers (lifeguards), code enforcement, and city park rangers, all of whom have citation authority and often give tickets to homeless residents in the city. The law enforcement field consists of Orange County Sherriff Deputies and California State Park Rangers. In addition to these street-level bureaucrats I included interviews with unaffiliated volunteers that are members of the community and members of a volunteer community groups that do not have non-profit status. While they are not street-level bureaucrats themselves they helped provide some context and perspectives on the actions of the street-level bureaucrats on the ground.

Field	Type
Public Health	County Government
Quasi-Law Enforcement	City Government
Law Enforcement	County, State Government
Non-Profit	Hybrid/Traditional
Religious	Church, Interfaith
Community/Community Group*	Unaffiliated Volunteers

Table 2: Homelessness Policy and Service Delivery Institutional Fields in Beach City, CA
*No non-profit Status

Data Collection and Analysis

A total of 29 interviews were conducted with street-level bureaucrats at different levels of government, non-profits, religious groups and unaffiliated community volunteers all involved in outreach and service delivery to the homeless in Beach City. These individuals were selected based on their involvement and engagement with the homeless. Contacts were made with these individuals after encountering them in the field. In addition, some contacts were made after recommendation by other members of the same organizational field. Interviews were conducted with law enforcement officers (at different levels of government), public health workers, employees of small city-based non-profits, employees of large county-wide, statewide, and national non-profits with presence in Beach city, as well as religious based volunteers, and unaffiliated community volunteers. The small city-based non-profits in the study are considered traditional because they do not have contracts with the city for outreach. However, they may do some of their work with small city-based grants and other state funding. The large non-profits have substantial contracts with Beach City and/or Orange County. They provide outreach services on behalf

of these local governments to the homeless in the area. Small and large non-profits are responsible for a wide range of services. Independently or with government contracts, they provide health services, addiction care and rehabilitation services, food, shelter, and case management.

Interviews were conducted mostly over the phone because of COVID restrictions and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Respondents were asked about their day-to-day activities and about the most common ways in which they interact with the homeless. They were asked about what discretion (if any) they have when carrying out their job and if they felt they had the necessary resources needed to carry out their jobs. These, among other questions, all built on each other to create a picture of what these individuals are doing daily as they work with the homeless. Transcribed interviews, field notes, and additional documents were coded using open coding and then a focused coding scheme for major themes and analyzed for discernible patterns. Specifically, I drew on Saldana's (2016) definition of a pattern as a "repetitive, regular, or consistent occurrence of action/data that appears more than twice" (p. 4) to guide my data analysis and organization. First, I open-coded the fieldnotes and interview data. This consisted of line-by-line analysis to identify themes. I followed this with a second round of focused coding, to see how the themes identified came together in a coherent narrative (Emerson et al., 2011). In addition to coding, I kept memos associated with this coding. Memos are tools used by qualitative researchers to record the development of their ideas and their coding schemes (Glaser 1998). Memoing begins the process of theorizing from your data by "transform[ing] field-note descriptions into theoretical accounts" (Montgomery & Bailey 2007, p. 68).

Findings

The Criminalization of Mental Health Crisis

This paper focuses on the relationship between law enforcement, health care, and non-profits in Beach City to illustrate how collaboration influences the decision-making process of the front-line workers that interface with the homeless every day. These relationships are the archetype of the types of collaborations that occur between different organizational fields working within the same policy space. This is because they are frequent, they are expected, and sometimes they are codified. For example, they are codified in ordinances, policies, and agreements (memoranda of understanding) that outline the way that these collaborations should happen. However, there is an incredible amount of discretion that these street-level bureaucrats are given. A prime example of these collaborations occurs between mental health professionals and law enforcement when a homeless person might be having an episode on the street. These interactions can be highly volatile which prompted a grand jury in Orange County to write in 2015 that, "[f]or a dangerous and severely mentally ill person, contact with a police officer in the field can be an entry point to the criminal justice system, to a psychiatric treatment facility, or to the morgue" (pp. 13–14). This has prompted the creation of several specialized first responder Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) that assist law enforcement in the field. These include the Crisis Assessment Team (CAT) and the Psychiatric Emergency and Response Team (PERT). The CAT is a 24-hour mobile behavioral health response team for adults in Orange County. They can be called by law enforcement, social service organizations, and family members. They complete an assessment and can initiate holds and involuntary

hospitalizations. The PERT is made up of mental health field clinicians that are assigned to specific cities and ride along with law enforcement. Both teams also provide follow-up services ("CAT/PERT Program," n.d.). According to the MOU between the Orange County Health Agency and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, "[w]hen possible, the deputy is to facilitate and in person contact between the individual and the assigned CAT clinician in the following manner: Contact the PERT for response to the scene, [i[f PERT is not available for a response, the deputy on scene may contact the CAT […] for assessment by a CAT clinician not assigned to OCSD, [w]hen PERT is not available, OCSD may develop a system to make a referral to PERT for follow-up at a later time" (Collaborative Partnership Agreement Between the Orange County Health Agency and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, 2014–2015). This agreement only addresses how members of the OCSD will contact the CAT and PERT however contact with these teams can also begin from social service organizations and residents. In these cases, CAT can determine on their own whether they want law enforcement present. It is up to field clinicians whether they call for law enforcement or not; they almost always do. When asked about what situations would require a field clinician to call law enforcement an employee with the OC Health Care Agency responded, "What situations wouldn't require it?" When pressed for reasoning, they responded that members of the CAT cannot "go hands on" and that this is important because there is often a need for restraint. This implies that field clinicians may preemptively be calling law enforcement before assessing whether the patient will need restraint. On the law enforcement side, Isaac—a law enforcement officer working in Beach City—agrees that mental health is a huge issue in Beach City and with the homeless in

general. He believes that the solution is that "we [law enforcement] need the ability to commit people for longer periods of time to stabilize" (interview, 2020). In his point of view, the fact that there are only short-term holds of approximately 72 hours for individuals with severe mental illness is a problem. Isaac continued to say that in his experience, "in California,…we get a hold on them. We take them to the hospital. We, you know, put them in. And then three or four hours later, after they get like one pill that calms them down and levels them out, the hospital releases them" (interview, 2021). He sees this as a problem because he believes that individuals often need more help than this but also told me that he believed there was no additional help for these individuals after that pill in terms of long-term programs or assistance. Here, we see a system where discretion by clinicians is being used to preemptively involve law enforcement in their interactions with the clients specifically with the homeless. On the law enforcement side, we see the same willingness to bring in the CAT and PERT teams whenever possible with regards to the homeless, in fact, the MOU states that, "[t]he Behavioral Health team will intervene in a myriad of situations, some of which may not involve individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness. The key element of collaboration is to respond and effectively resolve those calls for service where law enforcement personnel interact with individuals, many of whom are homeless and living with behavioral health disorders" (Collaborative Partnership Agreement Between the Orange County Health Agency and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, 2014–2015). This willingness from law enforcement to collaborate points to a recognition that the criminal justice system is perhaps not the appropriate

venue to handle individuals experiencing homelessness. However, on the health care agency side the default appears to be to lead with law enforcement involvement.

The Intimidating Enforcement and Non-Profit Partnership

When it comes to non-profit actors in this area, none are more influential than the larger non-profits that contract with cities to do direct street outreach with the homeless. Employees of these organizations have mostly replaced government workers as the front-line of service and policy delivery for this population across the entire country. Throughout Orange County, three major non-profits hold the majority of the contracts with the cities and the county. In Beach City, all three have a presence however only two have held major outreach contracts. City politics and public opinion had a major role in changing from one to another and the city has since ended all contracts and is in the process of hiring an in-house outreach employee. Throughout the county, local activists and unaffiliated volunteers have an apprehensive relationship with these non-profits. The activists and volunteers told me that they believe that these organizations are engaging in deceit because in their view the only way to end homelessness is to provide homes and from their perspective these non-profits are raking in million-dollar contracts to do outreach that will not create more housing. Another significant source of discomfort for these volunteers and activists are the overt and covert public-private service collaborations with law enforcement and quasi-law enforcement actors. Some volunteers suggest that they suspect that, "they might share information off of the public record, or even conspire to increase the client population of the non-profits" (personal communication, 2021). In Beach City, the collaborations have been explicit and continuous. In fact, it was observed through this

ethnographic study that in Beach City, it is the norm to have both city park rangers and code enforcement officers accompany non-profit outreach workers on all their outings. This police presence often intimidates the homeless population. I often encountered non-profit outreach workers in the field—once as I was interviewing Mia, a long-time unhoused resident of Beach City, who has spent almost a decade in the canyons of the city and suffers from severe social anxiety. During the interview, non-profit outreach workers came to ask if she needed assistance. When they left, Mia and I got back to our interview, and she told me how uncomfortable those experiences are for her: "like right now like when it all happened, it really made me feel...the girls [non-profit outreach workers] are like trying to talk to people. There's that guy standing off to the side like muscle. Like why do you need that? Are you really afraid of everybody?" The person she references as "that guy" is a code enforcement officer and many of the unhoused folks in Beach City know him well because he often cites them for code violations or makes them move locations. Mia has had some traumatic experiences with law enforcement including being woken up by a deputy pulling a gun on her and her boyfriend while they slept, which, coupled with her severe anxiety, has made it so that she does not accept help from the non-profits especially when they come with "muscle." It is so bad that she has gone through two pregnancies camping in the bushes without receiving any assistance from anyone. She confided in me that if there is more assistance to help pregnant women who are homeless, she did not know about it and she would not have gone looking for it—because, as she shared with me, "I just have, I have extremely bad anxiety and things like that, and I don't do... I don't know, so I pretty much sat alone."

This collaboration is especially hard for some of the homeless individuals in Beach City because of how involved code enforcement was with an outdoor shelter approved by the city in 2019. At this time, after the Ninth Circuit ruling in *Martin* that the city could no longer enforce their anti-camping laws until the city had sufficient shelter beds for all their unhoused residents, the Beach City Council voted unanimously to relocate a homeless encampment that developed at one of their city beaches to a city owned lot nearby. The lot was near a waste treatment plant and had previously been considered as a site for an animal shelter but was rejected by the council because there were concerns about safety due to its proximity to the plant. After the camp closed, code enforcement took residents possessions and stored it in a city owned location. People were very upset and unable to get their things for several months and when they were finally able to get information, they were told the items had been ruined and they would not be getting them back. Winston, a thirty something year old African American man who has been homeless in the area for about five years told me that eventually he had given up on getting his own things, but he had friends that really needed their things. His friend Scott, an elderly man, needed tools to work, and his friend Brenda really wanted some drawings her estranged children had made for her when she was well. In an interview with me, he shared, "I begged him and begged him to get these two suitcases, um, of my friend's […] belongings." The relationship between the homeless and their material possessions is complicated. Many of them form emotional connections with things that the rest of us might find undesirable or disposable. One of my first experiences with this came when I was helping Scott move things into storage because he was going to go into a hotel room paid for by Project Roomkey and he

could not take everything he usually carried around with him into the room. We packed all of his stuff into the back of my truck and we headed to the U-Haul Storage facility. I had to convince him to throw away a bag of clothes that had gotten wet and was growing black mold. Ultimately, I was successful, and we threw the bag away. I was unable to convince him to get rid of a carwash mitt however because "one day he might have a car again." At this point, I realized that these connections were about much more than the material possessions themselves. They were about hope and they were about to possibilities that might be available in the future and sometimes about things that were precious to them in the past. So, I picked up the mitt and we put it in storage. Stories like this shed light to why these collaborations may be counterproductive to those wishing to assist the homeless in Beach City by forcing them to interact with those that dispossess them of their most precious and often only possessions as inconsequential as they seem to us.

The Ultimate Collaboration: The Myth

To the extent that those at the street-level in Beach City, and to some degree in other places in Orange County, claim to effectively address homelessness the numbers suggest a very different reality. Orange County and the many cities within it as well as many jurisdictions throughout California and the entire nation spend a lot of money trying to "alleviate" homelessness. We can argue about whether the amounts are important or not, however, we can probably agree that the issue does not appear to be getting any better, some argue that this is because the homeless like to live on the street. However, based on the data, in Beach City, this can be said to be part of the public-private service collaboration between institutional fields or the issue field of homelessness that I call "the myth." The

myth is the idea that housing is available and that there is an entire workforce of people out there ready to provide it and work with anybody that wants it and that the reason we still have homeless individuals on the street is that the homeless refuse to accept it. This myth is constantly reinforced by the figures that local governments "invest" into solving the issue. In Beach City, for example, the city has awarded $100,000 in contracts to two non-profits since July 2018 (contracts obtained via CPRA request).

When a homeless individual in Beach City is approached by the local non-profit that contracts with the City to do outreach, they get placed on the monthly report as an "outreach contact" for the organization. They will then arrange meetings with the outreach team to fill out forms for all the services they are eligible for. Many times, this process starts with the non-profit providing the client with a voucher to get an identification or driver's license from the DMV. This process can be very complicated especially if the individual has not had a driver's license issued in the state before, does not have access to a birth certificate, or if their driving privileges have been previously suspended because of driving under the influence (DUI) or other tickets and citations. However, if they are able to get through this initial hurdle or if they had an identification all along, they are able to set up meetings to start the process to get signed up for programs like California's food stamp program known as CalFresh and MediCal which is California's public health insurance program for those that meet low-income requirements. In Orange County MediCal is coverage is offered by CalOptima (California Department of Social Services, 2021, "CalFresh Program"; CalOptima, 2021, "Medi-Cal Getting Started"). To sign-up for these services individuals need to have access to a mailing address. Some will have addresses of family

members or friends that live locally and allow them to use their address. Others will use the P.O. box of a local non-profit if they know about this strategy. When these processes are complete, they may be able to sign up for a housing voucher. If a person has been able to get all of their documents in order, here is where the real problems arise, Orange County's housing voucher program is notoriously overrun with a large waiting list. It is currently closed and not taking any new applicants so a homeless person currently going through this process that scores low on the vulnerability index would not even be able to sign-up for it. For those that are lucky enough to be able to sign up for the list, it will take years to get a voucher. Still, even getting the voucher does not guarantee that one will be able to find a landlord willing to take it (Phillips, 2017; Galvez, 2010). This means that there is a scenario where an unhoused person that has all the needed documentation (most do not) could show up to every appointment with their case manager and fill out all documents and still have to return to sleep on the street-again, potentially for years before they are able to get into housing. As an example, Teresa—an elderly woman who ended up homeless after her RV was impounded and she was unable to retrieve it—later found out that she had been purged from the list after waiting for four years. She had to initiate the process all over again and restart the clock. While eligibility and placement on the list can move up based on one's vulnerability—which is based on many things that the unhoused may live with—it is a slow and painful process.

It is not much different when it comes to more temporary shelter. Beach City is in wealthy South Orange County, CA which is known as the South Service Planning Area (SPA). Orange County is separated into three SPAs (North, Central, and South) and it is

impossible to cross SPA lines for services. This means that there are very limited resources for housing for individuals in the South SPA and in Beach City which only has one small capacity shelter in the entire SPA which gives priority to the residents of their city (not Beach City). When pressed about a hypothetical situation where a person experiencing homelessness in Beach City may be asking for shelter, Sarah who is an employee of the non-profit that contracts with the City for outreach told me that, "…well if they are born and raised in [Beach City] and you know, they don't have any substance abuse or anything like that…we don't have a lot we can do unfortunately…[…]…" She continued by explaining the process they would go through with the individual, "we can do a VI-SPDAT…[…]…to see if they qualify for, you know, get them on the list for [a voucher], on the housing voucher, and then that list is long it takes a while. So, you know, there aren't any places to house them in the near future. But if they do match for a housing voucher after all their documentation is completed. Then we would then help them navigate the unit market with that voucher to try to get them a more permanently house" (Interview, 2020). Sarah mentions drug abuse as an exception in this quote because checking into drug rehab is a potential way to enter the system into housing. However, this is easier said than done. Jacob, a local man known to many in town who went to the high school in Beach City and currently lives at the Beach has a severe alcohol dependency. He recently reached out to Felice, a local activist, on a day I happened to be with her. Felice, who grew up in Beach City, knows Jacob since they were in high school and on this day he told her that he wanted to get sober. Felice took Jacob to a rehabilitation clinic where they were told that they could not accept Jacob that day because he was sober. The clinic's refusal to accept Jacob broke

Felice's heart, because once Jacob was drunk again, any desire and hope he had of getting sober faded away into a drunken mess of emotions trying to endure living on the street. It was painful to watch. Felice and I later found out that this is standard practice, because if a person who is not intoxicated gets checked in, there is a possibility that insurance will not pay for the services (California Substance Abuse Agency, personal communication).

Frustration from the community in Beach City is at an all-time high, especially, after a 2018 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision that prohibits local jurisdictions from enforcing local anti-camping laws if a city does not have sufficient shelter beds. Sarah told me in an interview that "we've also received complaint calls [from concerned citizens] but there's really not much we can do, there isn't a shelter…. um, you know, we can't, we can't enforce that area." It is complicated to understand, and the residents only see large sums of money going to the outreach organizations but no reduction in homelessness. This along fuels the myth that individuals are service resistant and deny help and therefore want to live on the street. Isaac, a sheriff's deputy assigned to Beach City, often said that activists and volunteers were "enabling" individuals to stay on the street. This is a line that is often used to target activists and volunteers; it is weaponized against them without any regard for the systems that are keeping people unhoused. This same line has been used to shame volunteers at high profile events like city council meetings about homelessness. Volunteers who provide items like food, clothes, and hygiene products are told to "stop enabling" and they should "take those people home with them." Isaac, the sheriff's deputy, once told me that the reason individuals will stay on the street is because "on Monday they get food from Felice, on Tuesday they'll get food from someone else, and then on Wednesday another

groups will do it…so they have no motivation...they don't have to work for anything." By framing it in this way, homelessness is the fault of volunteers that feed the homeless rather than failed policies. Karen—who has lived in Beach City for 13 years and is retired—runs a daily meal program with her husband Doug in the neighboring city that many unhoused residents of Beach City attend daily. Karen defended herself , sharing with me that "an 85 year old man and his wife who had been living in their car for four years…[local organization] got them off the street, um, and unfortunately by then the husband was almost immediately hospitalized and passed away…[local organization] as a board made the decision to purchase this Boost for her. She needed lots of supplemental calories…she was too skinny. So…is that enabling too? I don't think so."

Even in the cases in which services are refused it is often much more nuanced and a result of many failed attempts and interactions. To return to Jacob's experience, he lives near the Beach in an area that has been a highly contested space between unhoused residents and housed residents of Beach City. He gets bounced from one side of the sidewalk to the other on a weekly basis. While Jacob is homeless, he is someone whose residence at the Beach has become a fixture of the landscape there. I can always find Jacob when I need to find him because he is where he lives—at the beach. This consistency and permanency have become important to him in a time in his life where other things are not guaranteed. He has recently been offered a hotel room through a local non-profit in town. However, he has decided not to stay in the room and only use it to go "clean up." He is very upset, saying that he is not going to "give up his place" at the Beach. To Jacob, the hotel room is going to be temporary. He believes the non-profit that got the room for him knows

this as well and, because he is from Beach City, he knows there are no other options for him other than try to get on the voucher list and it will be years before that can or would materialize so after fighting so hard with concerned citizens, the city, code enforcement, and the police to leave him alone at the Beach, he is not going to give up his spot which is his only sense of permanency in the world. There is always the possibility that things will work out and that individuals can get placed, however, for someone like Jacob who has become jaded by the system, it has become very difficult to engage with any of the services presented to him.

This issue came up with individuals as the global COVID pandemic increased the funds that the state and county allotted for Project Roomkey and other programs like it to emergency house people. Project Roomkey is a state funded program that was launched by the state in March 2020 as a response to COVID. According to the California Department of Social Services, Roomkey's mandate "is to provide non-congregate shelter options for people experiencing homelessness, protect human life, and minimize strain on health care system capacity" (California Department of Social Services, 2021, "Project Roomkey/Housing and Homelessness COVID Response"). Eligibility for the program is determined by the county. It included unhoused people that were recovering or were exposed to COVID and in Orange County individuals over 65 and those with comorbidities that put them at-risk were also eligible. For a while in 2020, Felice, a dedicated volunteer in Beach City who has also worked as a street-level bureaucrat for a non-profit with the unhoused and is a trained social worker, had the phrase "Housed = Liberties, Unhoused = Loss of Liberty" on her van in reference to what unhoused individuals were reporting they

were experiencing while in Project Roomkey hotels. She had initially written these words so they can be seen as part of a "Drive-By Rally" she participated in on April 24, 2020. The rally was organized by Housing is a Human Right Orange County (HHROC). HHROC "is a coalition of volunteers working together to achieve supportive, affordable, and permanent housing for homeless individuals in Orange County" (Housing is a Human Right, 2021, About Us section). The flyer describes the event as, "…Protest Rally..[…]…focused on the double-standards, injustice, and inhumane treatment of those experiencing Homelessness; while residing under Project Room Key. Additionally, the county is NOT filling empty rooms, wasting taxpayer funds and ignoring those qualified for Project Room Key…[…]…for supporting and implementing double standards resembling prison life for those experiencing Homelessness instead of following the State Project Room Key requirements and guidelines" (Housing is a Human Right OC, 2020). The word quickly got around the unhoused community that Project Roomkey was very restrictive and most unhoused residents of Beach City refused to go. Recent reporting by Knock LA, a non-profit community journalism project, exposed what they called the punitive policies of Project Roomkey. Through in-depth interviews with 10 current and former Roomkey residents, Knock LA claims to "illuminate systemic problems with the program, problems that often-reminded residents of prison and/or the shelter system, particularly the ways in which these institutions seek to control residents' time and space" (Lutzker, 2021). Similar reports have come out throughout the State including Orange County which prompted several solidarity rallies. Some will say that a homeless person should be grateful for the three meals a day, housing, and protection against COVID during a

pandemic, however, as a unhoused resident recently stated to a community group, "I had no freedom at all, I couldn't go on a walk, I couldn't go smoke a cigarette, I couldn't go to the grocery store. I know there is COVID but no one is outside your door telling you…you can't go to Walmart." Some proponents of Project Roomkey say that, because of COVID, we have an imperative to prioritize society over individuals. Yet, to the homeless, it feels eerily like an attempt to take their freedom away. Consistent with the concept of carceral logics, emergencies often create exceptions that deny individuals of their personal freedoms and rights.

The perpetuation of the myth is less conspicuous with the smaller non-profits, churches, and volunteers who in many instances are just trying to alleviate immediate suffering by, for example, distributing food, care packages, giving out clothes, or caring for wounds. However, they ultimately participate in the productive performance put on by the street-level bureaucrats and non-profit workers by helping individuals connect with them in order to sign them up for lists that will go nowhere. This collaboration is seen as "collusion" by some volunteers "to reinforce one another's [lies]" (personal communication, 2021). Their perspective is that the shelters enact the myth that they are transitioning clients to housing, but homelessness never ends. That the police enact the myth that unhoused people are service resistant as a justification for criminalization, which also provides an explanation for the shelters lack of progress.

The collaborations explained in this section can be seen in Figure 4. The institutional fields identified as active in the homelessness issue field in Beach City are public health workers, quasi-law enforcement, law enforcement, non-profits, religious group members,

and interested community volunteers. Public health workers are county government workers employed by the Orange County Health Agency. The quasi-law enforcement field consists of individuals such as Beach Cities marine safety officers (lifeguards), code enforcement, and city park rangers all of whom have citation authority and often give tickets to homeless residents in the city. The law enforcement field consists of Orange County Sherriff Deputies and California State Park Rangers. Collaborations between the different institutional fields can be seen in the figure. The red symbolizes the ultimate collaboration and those involved in its perpetuation. Religious and community groups are included in the myth insofar as they continue to funnel individuals into the productive performance put on by state and non-profit actors. However, they are not completely engulfed by the myth, because their main role is providing services that alleviate suffering.

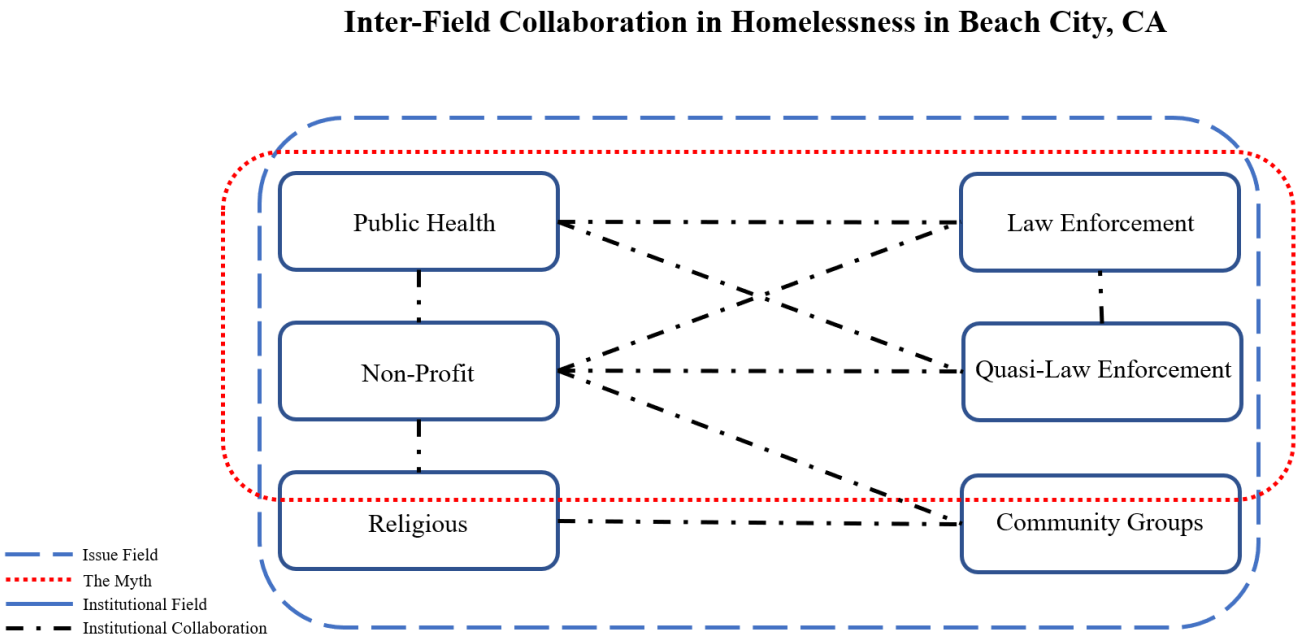

Figure 4: Inter-Field Collaboration Homeless in Beach City, CA

Discussion

These examples are of public-private service collaborations guided by the dynamics and complexity of the issue of homelessness and the difficulty of reaching the affected community. But what about the discretionary behavior of those working on the front lines? Are these service collaborations simply overtly coordinated public-private services partnerships at the institutional level? This study finds that it is more complicated and that the fact that street-level workers have such discretion makes these collaborations more intricate and convoluted. Looking more closely at the collaboration between law enforcement and the Orange County Health Agency on the CAT and PERT program, for example, elucidates that rather than immediately assisting individuals experiencing behavioral health issues this approach reinforces the criminalization of the homeless because of deeply entrenched carceral logics within both of these fields and within the bureaucrats tasked with executing the collaboration. The agreement between the agencies clearly states that the "team will intervene in a myriad of situations, some of which may not involve individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness" and specifically refers to those who are homeless in the statement immediately after (Collaborative Partnership Agreement Between the Orange County Health Agency and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, 2014–2015). The simultaneous choices that field clinicians are making to preemptively involve law enforcement, in addition to the idea that what we need is to commit those who need behavioral health, is further advancing this criminalization. The idea that the ability to commit individuals against their will is a tool missing in the "tool belt" of law enforcement is something that was told to me by every law enforcement officer

interviewed for this study. It was also mentioned by health agency employees who lamented that "Ronald Reagan defunded mental hospitals." (interview, 2020). This is consistent with Ben-Moshe's (2017) work on homelessness and the carceral state that mass incarceration has created a system of mass homelessness because many behaviors found in individuals with mental health issues have been criminalized; however, Ben-Moshe specifically warns against the arguments I heard in Beach City that prisons are the "new asylums," because it is still advancing a mode of institutionalization that in turn reproduces carcerality.

The collaboration between code enforcement and the local non-profit outreach is equally problematic and has its own unintended consequences. For example, over my time in the field, I witnessed code enforcement routinely undercount the homeless population of Beach City. In fact, code enforcement held the position that the point-in-time (PIT) count "was incorrect," and that the methodology "had to be flawed" and "definitely capturing people that were not supposed to be counted." Based on my time in the field in Beach City interacting with the homeless population, this is untrue. The PIT is an accurate representation of what homelessness looks like in Beach City. The city's estimates are dictated by the local outreach non-profit's number of contacts. Whether this is collusion or not it does not matter. Rather, the important matter here is that the non-profit is only reaching those who come in direct contact with code enforcement and not reaching those that hide in the canyons or are not as visible. Thus, the nonprofits are closing themselves off from a great deal of individuals that need assistance. To be sure, because of how Beach City structures their homeless services, there is overlap between those that code

enforcement will come into contact with and those that a non-profit is meant so serve however there will be some left out. This is an unintended (perhaps intended for some) consequence of this collaboration. While these public-private service collaborations are sometimes guided by official policy, the ways in which they occur on the ground are not often guided by such policy but rather the economic, political, cultural, and social structures that street-level bureaucrats encounter in the field along with their own institutional and deeply entrenched carceral logics. In other words, context matters and the stories that these institutions tell themselves about how the work and collaborations get done is often different than how it actually happens on the ground.

Conclusion

One of the biggest impacts of Lipsky's theory of street-level bureaucracy is that it recognizes that discretion is driven by organizational factors such as demand for services or resources which always outweigh supply. The homelessness bureaucracies in Beach City observed for this study can be said to be the quintessential street-level bureaucracies that Lipsky was describing because demand for housing by unhoused residents is high and housing (temporary or permanent) for them is virtually nonexistent. In this respect, it is impossible for these bureaucracies to ever meet their stated goal of ending homelessness. Individually, consistent with the literature that conceives of street-level bureaucrats as institutionally created actors making discretionary decisions based on institutional logics (Garrow & Grusky, 2013) the street-level workers in Beach City were observed taking discretionary action based on institutional norms. However, they appear to be guided by a larger meta-logic that is being reproduced at the issue field level. These collaborations

reinforce each other's discretionary action and perpetuate a myth that housing exists and that they are there to supply it to individuals living on the street. When it inevitably does not happen, the homeless are blamed for refusing help and identified as service resistant.

Paper 3: Homelessness in Southern California: Street-Level Encounters with the State and the Structural Violence of Performative Productivity

The Camp

In 2019, after the Ninth Circuit ruling in *Martin v. City of Boise* (2019), a decision that legally prohibited local governmental entities from enforcing ordinances that ban public camping unless they first provide enough shelter beds to house every person experiencing homelessness within their jurisdiction, the Beach City Council voted unanimously to relocate a homeless encampment that developed at one of their city beaches to a nearby city-owned lot. The vacant lot was near a waste treatment plant and had previously been considered as a site for an animal shelter but was rejected by the council because there were concerns about safety due to its proximity to the plant. Beach City, like its neighboring cities, has actively resisted the building of any emergency shelter. The encampment, which the local unhoused folks call "The Camp," had been highly contentious in town. Eventually, the city decided to kick out everyone who did not have a "direct tie" to Beach City. This was done without notice, and the residents of the encampment thought they were leaving for cleaning and would be allowed to come back. To establish proof of a "direct tie," individuals were required to show a valid driver's license or other identification, to provide a utility bill indicating prior residence in the city, or to bring a family member who lived in the city and could vouch for their connection to Beach City. These requirements were difficult for unhoused populations who often have their documents stolen or confiscated by police and might have strained relationships with family. The morning the encampment was cleared, there were 72 residents living there and

after the city imposed the direct tie requirement only 29 were allowed re-entry. While notice of the clearing for "cleaning" purposes had been posted for a while many were upset because they did not know they would be denied re-entry. When the City Manager spoke about the clean-up and reported the reduced numbers, the audience began to cheer. During public comments, a woman whose pet had been stolen and later found in the camp stated that Beach City had to stop the "invasion" of the homeless because it was hurting the city's reputation.

In retrospect, what was most striking to me about this meeting was that a bureaucratic hurdle had been created to facilitate kicking the homeless out of the camp, and it was very clear that everyone understood it as such. While there were no unhoused folks there to make a statement, I was sure they understood the same thing. This is familiar to them. The bureaucratic state is ever present in their lives in many ways. In fact, it is hard for them to get away from the constant watchful eye, the constant presence of the state. In many ways, the state is much more present in their lives than in the lives of many other populations. This is consistent with the connections that Ananya Roy made in a piece about "propertied citizenship" in which she quoted Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, as quoted by the *New York Times*: "[p]roperty gives you the ability to resist the demands of the state, which is always going to try to control your life" (Roy, 2003, p. 464; for a more robust discussion of property in relation to homelessness, see Roy, 2003; Baron 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Blomley, 2009). In other words, the state dictates where a homeless person can lay down to rest. It dictates if, when, and where they can eat, sleep, use the restroom, or wash up. As Akhil Gupta (1995) has explained, the state is "implicated in the minute texture

of everyday life" (p. 375), and when it comes to the homeless, the criminalization of their existence amplifies this. For these reasons, this research focuses on everyday interactions between street-level bureaucrats and unhoused residents to examine when and how discretion is exercised and how unhoused residents experience these actions. As the housing crisis worsens, more and more people end up in precarious housing arrangements, when local government responds, street-level bureaucrats, like police, social workers, public health workers, and code enforcement, are the frontline. However, they have limited resources to assist and are often embedded in political contexts that are not conducive to decrease homelessness in anyway. This puts them in a difficult position as they attempt to deliver services at the street-level. In this context, this study examines the resulting structural violence observed as well as the way it is experienced by those that are unhoused.

Focusing on this population, this article considers the structural violence inflicted by street-level bureaucrats on behalf of the state. These bureaucrats perpetuate "the myth" that housing is available and that the central reason we still have homelessness is that the homeless are service resistant and refuse to accept the opportunities offered to them. This perception, part of the myth, is constantly reinforced by the productive performance imposed by street-level bureaucrats and others embedded in Beach City's system of homeless assistance. These frontline government workers, non-profit workers, and interfaith and other volunteers all participate in maintaining this system. Further, these actors set forth the conditions upon which services are available. The structural violence perpetuated by performative productivity is the set of practices employed by these actors

as the terms of service. They include setting up meetings, filling out countless forms that require invasive divulging of private information, signing up for waitlists that go nowhere, and surrendering their rights and often accepting an externally imposed moralistic framework. The terms are non-negotiable, thus compelling the homeless to participate in the performance required or risk loss of eligibility for any non-housing services they may or have been able to attain, as minuscule or limited as these may be. Drawing on interviews and over 200 hours of ethnographic observations, I contend that this performative productivity is tantamount to structural violence on behalf of the state.

Street-Level Encounters with the State

The construct of the "state" can be elusive. Scholars have grappled with the construct for centuries, from Marx to Weber to Zizek. Some contemporary scholars have compared it to Jacques Lacan's "objet petit a" contending that it is akin to a fantasy or myth (Ismail, 2006). Taussig (1992) compares the state to a "Godlike metaphysical entity." Mitchell (1999) identifies this as a paradox; that the state appears to exist as both "material force" and "ideological construct" (p. 76). Abrams (1988) describes the difference as two objects of analysis: the "state-system" and the "state-idea." According to Abrams (1988), the state-system is "a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centered in government and more or less extensive, unified and dominant in any given society" (p. 58). He defines the state-idea as "an overt symbolic identity progressively divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice" (p. 58). In these descriptions, Abrams suggests that the state can be both institutionalized practice and a symbolic ideology. Mitchell (1999), however, does not believe that we can "separate the material forms of the state

from the ideological" or "the real from the illusory" (p. 77). In his perspective, Abram's "state-idea" and "state-system" should be conceived as two parts of one same process. He argues that the state is a set of "techniques that enable mundane material practices to take on the appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form" (Mitchell, 2006, p. 170).

To avoid the slippery nature of the concept scholars have focused on the institutionalized microlevel practices of government (Sayer, 1994; Migdal, 2001; Ismail, 2006; Gupta, 2012). Migdal (2001), for example, focuses on the differing environments or a hierarchy in which state actors operate and he proposes that there is a four-level organizational arrangement. The four levels are; the trenches, dispersed field offices, central agency offices, and commanding highs. Of these, the one with most analytical utility for this study is "the trenches". According to Migdal (2001), very similar to street-level bureaucrats, the trenches consist of individuals that bridge the state and society. They exist in the middle and are tasked with applying state rules and regulations. Migdal (2001) states that this category includes individuals such as, tax collectors and police officers.

Likewise, Ismail (2006) proposes the analytical utility of the everyday state. Everyday state theory proposes that "the everyday practices of government and rule that are deployed at the microlevel of everyday life" (p. xxxiii) keep us from mystifying the state and obscuring state power. In their everyday interactions with government, individuals become subjects and develop understandings and feelings about government (Ismail, 2011b). Thus, the everyday state focuses on the relation between the government and citizens (Ismail, 2006; Ismail, 2011a; Ismail, 2011b). In this way, it is similar to anthropological treatment of everyday state-citizen encounters (Auyero, 2010; Corbridge

et al., 2005). In this tradition, the state is not conceived as a superior entity rather it is a collection of multiple actors and their encounters with citizens. According to Nugent (2008), it is "incoherent assemblages of sites, processes, and institutions" (p. 198), while Painter (1995, 2006) describes these interactions as "spatialized social practices," which ensure compliance through "consent, or coercion, or both" (Painter, 1995, p. 34). These conceptualizations focus on relationships between a multisided state that is entrenched in social practices and processes and individuals and how subjects make sense of them. While street-level bureaucratic theory is useful due to its treatment of discretion of those tasked with enforcing the will of the state at the most basic level, the everyday state provides a focus on its treatment of the interactions of the representatives of the state and citizens in what Ismail (2006) calls "quotidian practices" (p. xxxiii). By focusing on such quotidian practices and how citizens negotiate their relations with local officials and representatives of the state we can understand how individuals relate to what is done "in the name of the state" (Ismail, 2011a, p. 846).

In her study of informal settlements in Cairo, Ismail (2011b) found that individuals often felt humiliated in their interactions with government agents and agencies. Ismail argues that the understandings and feelings that citizens form about the government based on their interactions with it explain everyday happenings on "the street, in public and in private offices, in schools and homes" (Ismail, 2011a, p. 851). Similarly, Gupta (1995) —in his ethnography of a small North Indian village he calls Alipur—explores the extent to which the state is implicated in "the mixture of everyday life" (p. 375). Specifically, Gupta discerns how the discourses of corruption in local bureaucracies in postcolonial India

function and how the state is constructed and imagined through this discursive process. Throughout his writing, Gupta challenges traditional state theory by showing how state rule manifests itself through unequal spatial forms of everyday mundane practices (Gupta, 1992; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Sharma & Gupta, 2006; Gupta & Sivaramakrishnan, 2010).

Gupta conceptualizes a new theory of the state. He does this by rethinking Foucault's theory of biopower and Agamben's theory of sovereign power and bare life and applying it to the Indian context of extreme poverty. In his view, Foucault's theory alone is insufficient because it promotes a passive relationship to death. Foucault argued that previously the sovereign (e.g., Kings) had followed a rule where they "made die and let live" but that one of the markers of the modern western sovereign state, the capitalist system, shifted towards a "make live and let die" system (Foucault, 2007). Gupta offers that poverty in India requires a thanatopolitical theory that shows an active killing of subjects by a sovereign power. This is more in line with Giorgio Agamben's theory of sovereignty and bare life where he argues that the sovereign power can actively kill people by creating exceptions (Agamben, 1998). These exceptions create an individual that Agamben calls homo sacer, someone that is inside and outside the law simultaneously. According to Agamben, homo sacer can be killed and it does not violate any laws and it does not affect the legitimacy of the sovereign to kill them (Agamben, 1998, p. 8). Gupta argues that the extremely poor in India "could be a perfect example of what Agamben means by homo sacer in that their death is not recognized as a violation in any respect: not a violation of a norm, a rule, a law, a constitutional principle, not even perhaps of the idea of justice" (Gupta, 2012, p. 17). He poses the critical question, "[d]oes not providing food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare to someone who is obviously in dire need

represent killing?" (p. 17). Gupta notes that nobody is ever punished for the deaths resulting from extreme poverty. This is applicable to the situation of the extremely poor in the United States especially the unsheltered homeless. Death rates in Orange County have set records in 2020, 330 unhoused individuals died on the street compared to 200 in 2019 (Brazil, 2021). This continues to happen, and nobody is ever punished because these deaths are not seen as outside the norm. They are seen as collateral damage and the direct result of the emergency of the housing crisis. Poverty should be understood as an intentional act of violence in this context, these deaths are preventable. However, like Foucault, Agamben only gets us so far in understanding the violence experienced by those in extreme poverty. Gupta points out that Agamben's exclusions and state of emergency exemplifies someone that is not involved in the process. Gupta argues that in India, the poor are active participants in the democratic process but that the issue is arbitrariness in the processes and outcomes that are supposed to help them. This production of arbitrariness comes from bureaucratic processes that perpetuate systematic violence against those in poverty. For Gupta, the only way to understand this is to focus on the everyday and mundane practices of the state. In this framework, the state is willfully killing its subjects by accepting poverty as normal and including them in bureaucratic processes rather than excluding them. Gupta focuses on writing as a key feature of the work that bureaucrats perform in order to further the idea of cohesive state power. In this way, these "mundane" state practices systematically create exclusions "through 'normal' bureaucratic procedures in ways that depoliticize killing the poor" (Gupta, 2012, p. 279).

Structural Violence

Closely related to Gupta's theory of state power is the concept of structural violence. Structural violence first appeared in peace studies in the late 1960s (Galtung, 1969) and it is the mechanism through which the state is perpetrating violence against the poor throughout the world. It refers to sets of social constructs and structures within institutions that keep individuals from living a healthy life where all of their basic needs are met. In his seminal article, Galtung (1969) analogizes and describes structural violence as "built into structure. Thus, when one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence" (p. 171). Unlike physical violence, structural violence is obscured, almost invisible, and while structural violence is not the same as physical violence, they are not unrelated. Gilligan (1996), for example, argues that it is irrelevant which type of violence is more dangerous or lethal because they are intimately related to each other and one usually causes and reinforces the other. Structural violence is often fortified by military and armed forces and systematically tortures and keeps individuals in perpetual and impossible to escape cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

Behavioral and physical violence often cause bodily harm; however, we do not often think about the bodily harm caused by disproportionate inequality. While some economists suggest that poverty is the result of market forces, scholars of structural violence suggest that poverty and hunger are a hallmark of structural violence (Bornstein, 2005). This framework identifies a perpetrator and victim and places responsibility where it is appropriate (Bornstein, 2005). While structural violence is often obscured by the lack of a

direct perpetrator, however, scholars like Farmer suggest an explicit rationale behind the systemic distribution of structural violence (Farmer, 2005). Farmer extends Galtung's concept of structural violence. He suggests that these violent acts are a consequence of human agency that are predicated on unequal power that unequally distributes resources. This system exploits some and rewards others and this results in advantages for some and constant disadvantages for others. These disadvantages are also affected by one's social standing in society. Social standing is affected by characteristics such as race, gender, and disability. In the United States race is a clear example of how social standing is institutionalized and results in very skewed life outcomes (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). These social structures are what often obscure structural violence. According to Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004), structural violence is "everyday violence [or] part of the normative fabric of social and political life. Structural violence is generally invisible because it is part of the routine grounds of everyday life" (p. 4). Issues like, race, gender, and class come up frequently in the study of structural violence and social positions that make individuals vulnerable to human rights abuses (Ho, 2007).

Poverty as Structural Violence

Gupta identifies the invisible millions that die in poverty every year in large numbers and asks,

> [w]hat makes such violence invisible? How does one think about not only deliberate acts of violence such as police brutality, but also political, administrative, and judicial action or inaction that prevents poor people from making a living, obtaining medical aid, and securing such necessities of life as food, clothing, shelter and sanitation? Why is faster, more effective state intervention not forthcoming to relieve the suffering of millions of the poorest and most disempowered? How does one describe the violence in the absence of events like communal riots, or the

> displacement of people by dams and other spectacular development projects, or police or army brutality? What are the juridical and social conditions that make the violence of such exceptional poverty normal? Most important, how is violence like this taken for granted in the routinized practices of state institutions such that it disappears from view and cannot be thematized as violence at all? (Gupta, 2012, p. 5)

Structural violence scholars' discussions about life chances and outcomes are not completely dissimilar to Amartya Sen's (1985) conceptualization of poverty as "unfreedoms." Sen's capabilities approach states that poverty is the absence of basic capabilities or "freedoms" to avoid such perils as hunger and disease (Sen, 1985). Gupta (2012) makes explicit these connections and asserts that poverty becomes a structural violence issue when "some people are unable to achieve their capacities or capabilities to their full potential" (p. 20) especially in a context where others are able to do so. Thus, poverty represents a systematic or structural barrier to the basic freedoms described by Amartya Sen. These barriers to basic freedoms increase the inaccessibility of other freedoms, making the poor disproportionately vulnerable to additional violence. In this way, poverty is a constant inability to access adequate shelter, food, healthcare, and water, along with other basic necessities of life.

Poverty in the United States

Deep and extreme poverty is increasing in the United States. Brady and Parolin (2020) recently found significant increases in both deep (increase between 48% to 93%) and extreme poverty (increases between 54% to 111%) (p. 2337). They contend that when homelessness is added, "deep poverty would be 7% to 8% higher and extreme poverty 19% to 23% higher in 2016" (p. 2337). This finding is important because the issue has been

politicized and is controversial and highly contested in the United States. While there is intense debate about extreme and deep poverty, there seems to be agreement that it exists and that is substantial, at least in the sense that any amount of extreme poverty is too much. However, there is a wide variation in the estimates of these numbers (Jencks, 2016; Parolin & Brady, 2019). For example, according to Shaefer and Edin's influential 2013 study, approximately 1.65 million households and 3.55 million children were living in extreme poverty in any given month in the United States. They assert that this type of extreme poverty has risen sharply since 1996 because of welfare reform and that means tested assistance programs intended to help prevent such hardships for families (Shaefer & Edin, 2013). Shaefer and Edin use the World Bank metric of global poverty which is $2 a day. Following Shaefer and Edin, a string of studies had similar findings (Chandy & Smith, 2014; Fox et al., 2015). The debate continued and in 2018 Deaton found that an estimated 3.2 to 5.3 million Americans live on less than $4 a day. Similarly, in 2018, Philip Alston the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights estimated that 18.5 million Americans live in deep poverty. In response, the Heritage Foundation authored a report contesting these numbers and estimating that only about 0.5% of the U.S. population lives in deep poverty (Hall & Rector, 2018). On their website, The Heritage Foundation titles an article about their report by using the headline, "Don't Believe the UN's Propaganda About 'Extreme Poverty' in the U.S." (Hall & Rector, 2018).

The variability in the figures that scholars report is striking. In addition, and of special importance for this study, is the fact that the homeless are not considered when talking about extreme poverty. This is a shortcoming of this research and scholars like

Brady and Parolin (2020) acknowledge that because of this their estimates of individuals in extreme poverty are probably "lower-bounds" (p. 2354). Similar to how we have a wide range of varying estimates of individuals experiencing extreme and deep poverty, we do not have exact numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness in the United States. Estimates from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) point-in-time (PIT) count indicate there are approximately 580,466 homeless individuals in 2020 (Henry et al., 2021). However, estimates from the National Center for Homeless Education show that for school years 2016-2017 through 2018-2019, the number of homeless school aged children enrolled in school was 1,387,573 (NCHE, 2021) meaning that the total number of homeless individuals is higher than that captured by HUD in the point-in-time count.

The reason for the discrepancy is due to different methodologies and different ways of understanding and defining homelessness. The HUD point-in-time count produces a one-night snapshot of homelessness in the country. HUD coordinates with local organizations that are members of the Continuum of Care (CoC) to count everyone on the street on one night in late January every year (Henry et al., 2021). A limitation of the PIT is that by focusing on a single night it does not capture individuals that go in and out of homelessness in a given year or individuals that are able to secure housing on some nights but not others. In addition, in contrast to the data collected by the NCHE, the PIT does not capture those that are in shelters, doubling up, couch surfing, or staying in hotels or motels (Kilduff & Jarosz, 2020). Kilduff and Jarosz suggest that the PIT is an undercount and that the best way to conceive of the PIT numbers is to think of them as "a snapshot of

the *minimum* number of people who are homeless in a community, a state, or the nation" (para. 8).

The 2020 HUD PIT estimated that California had 161,548 persons experiencing homelessness (Henry et al., 2021) while the NCHE estimated that there were 271,528 homeless children enrolled in school in the 2018-2019 school year (NCHE, 2021). At a local level, the biennial point-in-time count by Orange County showed that between 2013 and 2019 the number of the unsheltered population in the county went from 4,251 to 6,860 (Kurteff Schatz et al., 2015; Orange County Homeless Management Information System, 2019). In 2019, the point-in-time count showed an increase of over 2,000 individuals since the last count in 2017. Two-thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine individuals were considered sheltered homeless while 3,961 were unsheltered.

Ethnographer Vincent Lyon-Callo (2001) suggests the possibility of framing homelessness in relation to the material and historical conditions that contribute to the increased social inequality in society. He suggests this approach because he believes that as the wealth gap has increased, homelessness has become a routine everyday feature of life for the extremely poor in the United States. Lyon-Callo (2001) directly calls out the structural inequalities that produce these outcomes and argues that the way that we govern the homeless and work towards managing it, through temporary sheltering or increased criminalization of behaviors linked to homelessness, does little to decrease it. The managerial approach he describes focuses on "diagnosing, detecting, and treating" the perceived deficits "within the bodies of homeless people" and do not address the structural transformations that society has undergone in the last decades (Lyon-Callo, 2012, p. 216).

Lyon-Callo also argues that neoliberal logics such as privatization, marketization, and deregulation are driving homelessness service and policy provision which do nothing to solve or decrease homelessness. In this way, even "housing first approaches" that purport to provide housing under the assumption that the first step to help someone who is unhoused is to provide them with housing without any hurdles, like requiring that they be sober or have a job are insufficient because they turn services targeted at the chronically homeless population as economic initiatives rather than social services and continue to reinforce the neoliberal conditions that produce housing insecurity to begin with (Willse, 2010). Like Gupta, Willse invokes Foucault's theory of biopower. He insists that in a neoliberal context Foucault's theory needs to be reframed because it is not simply a zero-sum game anymore. In a neoliberal context, social service programs serving the chronically homeless have been turned into productive economic enterprises (2010, p. 179). Thus, it is important to recognize that as we explore issues such as homelessness, researchers should not focus on the impacted community from a framework that advances a deficit perspective; that whatever is happening is a result of individual characteristics of those that are members of this community. Consequently, this study employs a "studying up" perspective to explore how power structures functions to perpetuate homelessness.

Disaggregating the State

This study employs a studying up ethnographic methodology. Nader suggested researchers should shift their focus when thinking through issues of social importance. In doing so, Nader (1972) asks, "what if in reinventing anthropology, anthropologists were to study the colonizers rather than the colonized, the culture of power rather than the culture

of the powerless, the culture of affluence rather that the culture of poverty?" (p. 5). This study does this by focusing on homelessness with a keen eye on the street-level bureaucrats delivering services as state agents and their actions towards the homeless rather than those impacted by homelessness to discern how the state is interacting with those who live on our streets. I do this by following the methods of Ismail (2006), Gupta (1995, 2012), and Lyon-Callo and Hyatt (2003) and focusing on the everyday practices of those at the street-level of homelessness social service delivery to observe street-level encounters with the state.

This study follows in the tradition of examining the state ethnographically. This technique allows for the monolith that is the state to be disaggregated into its different parts by zeroing in on different bureaucracies, in this case the homeless social service bureaucracy. As the homelessness crisis in California has increased, so has the role of the government; however, the bulk of the assistance for individuals and families experiencing homelessness has historically been provided by local jurisdictions with federal and state funds (Petek et al., 2020). This means that local governments have significant say over how state and federal funds are used for homeless needs (Petek et al., 2020). Also, historically, service provision is delivered by frontline government workers directly employed by local city and county departments such as social service and community development departments. As local governments have defunded such departments, cities and counties have moved to a model where they contract with local non-profit service providers to accomplish the goals of the CoC and in recent decades, the role of street-level bureaucrats has been reshaped and the public sector no longer controls policy and service delivery. A

neoliberal turn towards contracting and privatization has changed delivery mechanisms on the ground. Policy and service delivery now most often occur as a collaboration between public sector bureaucrats, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and public-private partnerships (Brodkin, 2015).

Thus, this study seeks to make an impact by focusing on a variety of these street-level actors and, like Gupta, placing special attention on forms, statistics, and other bureaucratic process and writings to identify how services are structured. By offering an examination of the state through local-level encounters to understand poverty and homelessness as a structural issue. To make salient this point, the following section will include a series of vignettes that present the street-level presence of the state in the lives of homeless individuals in Beach City to highlight the ways in which the system is arbitrary and unhelpful and can lead to death.

By breaking up the state into everyday interactions and disaggregating Gupta wishes to problematize the translocality of the state. By this, Gupta (means that it is necessary to narrow in on "localized offices, institutions, and practices in which it is instantiated" (Gupta, 1992, p. 77). *Translocal* can be an ambiguous term, however. Peth (2018) defines it as "a variety of enduring, open, and non-linear processes, which produce close interrelations between different places and people." This is important because it clearly opens a path for a relationship between the social unit of the extremely poor in India and in the United States. Relatedly, Roy (2003) emphasizes transnationalism as a way to interrogate these relationships or what she identifies as "the interface of First and Third Worlds" (p. 463). In this case, transnationalism refers to a network of interconnected

identities and capital flows that cross political borders (Roy, 2003; Castells, 1998). By utilizing this transnational approach, we can move past mere comparisons to examinations and analysis to allow for "one site to pose questions of another" (Roy, 2003, p. 466). It would be easy to make simplistic comparisons of those experiencing extreme poverty in the informal settlements in India and the homeless in the United States. However, Roy is challenging us to think deeper than this and use the experiences to ask tough questions whose answers can further the cause of dismantling the imperial frontier "at the heart of the American Dream" (Roy, 2003, p. 484). As such, this study contributes to the urban planning literature that takes a "thinking/seeing from the south" perspective (Robinson, 2002; Roy, 2003, 2005; Watson, 2009).

The Devastation of the Homeless Encountering the State in Beach City

The Man With the Family That Cared and a Plan in Place

The first time I met Spencer, he was at his usual spot, outside the Beach City Senior Center. I was there for a meeting on homelessness that was organized by a group of local activists. The side of the senior center that faces the street has black gates and a big door, but it had a big lock on it. I was looking at it confused about how to enter the building, I was already five minutes late to the meeting. Spencer was sitting on the corner near a light post, and he said, "You have to go through the back where the parking lot is." I looked at him and said, "Thank you," as I made my way around the building. From that day on, I would come to expect to see Spencer by the senior center. Like Jacob at the Beach or Jimmy in the alley, he had found the spot where he was comfortable and where he wanted to be. The area around the senior center was his home and you could count on him being there. On one of

the days that I was out with Felice, a trained social worker and dedicated volunteer in Beach City who has also worked as a street-level bureaucrat for a non-profit with the unhoused worker, delivering food to some of the unhoused folks that live near a freeway off ramp we met up Kendra at a fast-food restaurant parking lot. Kendra works for a small non-profit that helps individuals with many services. During my time in Beach City, I saw Kendra deliver people's mail and help them access their CARES Act stimulus funds when they did not have identification to cash checks. She would do this by having the individuals sign the check over to the non-profit then depositing the check and once it cleared giving the cash to the individuals. She started to tell Felice and I that she had been working with Spencer because his health was severely deteriorating. His dementia was really getting in the way and he needed to get indoors soon. She was optimistic because she had been in contact with Spencer's sister, and she was hopeful that they would soon be able to get him into a safe place. One morning a few weeks later, Bertha, the director of the senior center, found Spencer dead outside the building. So, what happened to Spencer between the time that he had been on a path to shelter and when he passed away? Well, he broke his pelvis and was taken to the hospital. He was in the hospital for several days recovering and was released to a rehabilitative care facility closer to Beach City. He then was allowed to check himself out of this facility even though he suffered from worsening and deteriorating dementia; four days later, he died of hypothermia outside his beloved senior center. When his sister called the facility to check on him and learned that Spencer had been allowed to leave, she contacted Kendra to go check on him. Sure enough, Spencer was at the senior center, but Kendra was unable to find a place for him to go because there is no shelter in

Beach City or any of its surrounding cities. So, even though Spencer was not physically or mentally well, there was nowhere for him to go. He would have to stay outside as he had elected to check himself out of the post-surgery rehabilitation facility.

I learned at his vigil that he had lived in Beach City since the 1960s and he had owned a thriving landscaping business that he eventually lost to alcoholism. His nephew sent in a beautiful eulogy where he described Spencer as his "crazy uncle" who he loved and would miss. The truly sad part about Spencer's story is that he and his family were doing everything possible to get him housed. Even though his sister had moved away in the 70s to be with her husband and children, she was in contact with local non-profits and the city trying to navigate the bureaucracy so that "he would at least die with dignity in a warm bed, with food" (local newspaper, 2021). They had a plan and she had convinced Spencer to go along with that plan. Spencer and his family were actively working on accessing housing and medical care for him. Spencer had even been part of a lawsuit against the city where he explained that "[i]f there were an indoor shelter with services, I would be very excited to try staying there and hope for help getting into housing I could afford based on my limited income. But, as far as I know there is no shelter in [Beach City] that will take me and no housing that I can afford on my limited income." Spencer lived on his Social Security check and could only afford a hotel room a couple of nights a month.

The Woman With a Place to Stay that Could Be Taken Away at Any Time

Teresa is a local unhoused Beach City resident that is an elderly and disabled widow who lost her RV when local law enforcement impounded it and she was unable to get it out because she did not have adequate identification. In her younger years, Teresa had been a

vivacious regular on TV gameshows and a restaurant owner in her rural Northern California hometown. Now, she is alone and an alcoholic but that has not tempered her lively and high-spirited personality.

I first met Teresa when Felice and I took her and Danielle, another local unhoused woman, to lunch at the local Denny's because it was pouring rain and we thought it would be a good way to get them out of the rain for a little bit and wait it out. Teresa is always wearing nice clothes that she tries to keep as clean as possible. She wears bright colored skirts and blouses and is always wearing a large hat and bright colored lipstick (even under her COVID-19 facemask) and her beloved dog, Buddy, is always with her.

Teresa has developed a friendship with Jenna a local woman who is very active in the local catholic church and cares about trying to help the homeless. Jenna has done a lot to try and help Teresa over the last couple of years and when the COVID-19 pandemic started she was very concerned because Teresa is in several high-risk categories. For several weeks Jenna took some of her personal money and fundraised from individuals in her church and other personal friends to put Teresa up in a hotel. However, this approach proved unsustainable very quickly. Jenna and Felice decided to try and get Teresa into Project Roomkey, which was specifically designed to get people like Teresa into hotels during the pandemic. There was only one small problem; there is no Roomkey hotel in Beach City. The closest Roomkey accommodations were a couple cities away and Teresa was unwilling to go. Like many in her situation, Teresa has grown to love Beach City in the many years that she has lived there and finds the idea of being displaced very emotionally distressing. She has a community of friends and supporters and does not want to go to a

place where she will not have any of these things. Jenna and Felice were able to somehow convince one of the organizations that manages Roomkey resources in Orange County to allow Teresa to get into a local Beach City hotel that would be paid for with Roomkey money. This was a big win; however, they have been unable to replicate it as other Beach City residents get turned down for similar arrangements. Teresa is still in the hotel, but struggles almost every week to get the organization to continue to pay for her hotel. This process is very stressful for her, and although they have threatened to cut off the funding many times, they have continued to pay for it. Jenna and Felice, who would like to help other local homeless individuals to make similar arrangements, feel like they cannot push too hard because they risk putting Teresa's funding in jeopardy if they make a big fuss. Teresa confided in me that she feels very guilty. She told me that during a worldwide epidemic when the world is suffering, and many people are going through very hard and difficult times, "she is very happy," because it has meant that she can be indoors (interview, 2020).

The Family That Could Not Keep It (or Stay) Together

I first heard about Kimberly and her family through Frances. Frances is an unaffiliated volunteer that started helping the homeless when her teenage daughter expressed an interest in getting involved. Frances also has a history of addiction and homelessness which makes her able to connect with homeless individuals in a way that many other volunteers cannot. She texted me and asked if I was in Beach City because there was a family that had just been placed in a transitional housing facility there and they needed some supplies. She knew that I was doing my research in Beach City and that I

knew folks that could potentially help them. I replied and told her that I could help, and I got Kimberly's phone number. Based on my observations in Beach City, homeless families with children can access assistance much faster than single homeless adults. It turned out that Kimberly and Frances met at a park in a different part of the county. When Frances was delivering food to a group of unsheltered individuals there Kimberly overheard her and approached her. She told her that she had been in a motel that was paid for by a large non-profit, but they had been kicked out when she was unable to do an intake over the phone because her phone would not work. Frances is well connected, so she was able to make a few phone calls to secure a motel for the family of four for a couple of nights before they would then be transferred to a transitional housing facility.

My in-person interactions with Kimberly were very short because residents of the transitional housing facility were unable to have visitors. However, we kept in touch via text messages. They would eventually get relocated several times from Beach City to other surrounding cities, because, according to Kimberly, she had a hard time keeping their apartment as neat as the facilities required with two young children. Eventually, without a stable place to live, they ended up getting their two young children taken away by Child Protective Services (CPS). The last time I spoke with her she told me that they had been kicked out from the last transitional housing facility because they missed a meeting with their housing case worker. She explained that their car was not working and said she had emailed and called and left a message for the caseworker. She did not hear back from the caseworker until that afternoon, when she saw an email from the caseworker telling her she had missed the meeting and they would have to move out. Unfortunately for Kimberly

and her husband, without the children, it has become nearly impossible for them to find new housing.

The Trivial Everyday Encounter That Says a Lot About The System

I once donated a pair of shoes to Felice that I was unsure anybody would be able to use because my foot is so small. When she saw them, Felice said, "I know exactly who can use these! These will go to Amanda!" She was right, Amanda and I are similar in age and we both have similar petite frames. Sure enough, when Amanda tried on the shoes they fit like a glove. Amanda and I also have other things in common, we both have young kids for example. Amanda has been on the street for several years because of an addiction. She lives on the street with her on-and-off boyfriend who people affectionately call "Spike." Spike and Amanda have a rocky relationship and it is not uncommon to see Amanda limping or with bruises. One time it was so bad that she had a deep cut on her arm. She asked for hydrogen peroxide and a bandage, and fortunately, we had it available for her. She swore that she was never going to get back together with Spike. However, they were back together again one week later. The life of homeless women is complicated and many stay with abusive partners because they provide them with money or drugs, or simply because they want and need companionship and, in a weird and ironic way, because they need protection. When Amanda received her CARES Act money, which came as a result of government action due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was unable to cash her check because she did not have an ID. She decided to reach out to the local nonprofit that contracts with the city for outreach to the homeless to see if they could help her with funds to get her birth certificate so that she could get the process to get an ID started. It costs

roughly $28 to request a birth certificate from most California counties (Orange County Birth Records, 2021). The outreach worker told her they did not have funds for that however they could provide her with a voucher to get her ID from the DMV. Amanda felt disillusion by this and found it particularly frustrating to have a voucher for something that would be very hard for her to get without obtaining her birth certificate first.

Findings

These interactions highlight instances when unhoused people directly encountered the state. Based on this studies conception of the state, residents encounter the state every time they attempt to access a service and every time they are unsuccessful. They also highlight structural violence experienced by these individuals at the hands of state actors. These interactions ended in death, family separation, stress, and frustration for those needing assistance because of their material condition as homeless individuals. In fact, they were met with arbitrary and frustrating outcomes that create a difficult system to navigate for the unhoused and those attempting to help them. Confirming and extending previous studies, I find that neoliberal logics such as privatization, marketization, and deregulation are driving homelessness service and policy provision which do nothing to solve or decrease homelessness and that in this neoliberal context the services that are supposed to assist the chronically homeless have been turned into productive economic enterprises (Lyon-Callo, 2012; Willse, 2010). In addition, in a global context of extreme and deep poverty the structures in place in the homeless service delivery network hide and normalize the violence experienced by the homeless in plain sight (Gupta, 2012). This

further marginalizes and victimizes the homeless and traps them, as long as they survive, in cycles of homelessness that lead anywhere except out of homelessness.

Performative Productivity

While Gupta mentions bureaucratic performance several times in his study, he does not focus on it. In fact, he explicitly calls out the performative aspects of corruption in the bureaucracy in India when he acknowledges that, "however open the process of giving bribes and however public the transaction, there was nevertheless a performative aspect that had been mastered" (Gupta, 1995, p. 379). This happens in Beach City as well. It is of course a different context and corruption is not necessarily part of the equation, but there is a performance that has been mastered by all involved in the bureaucratic process. It is a well-choreographed dance of: getting individuals screened using the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), an assessment tool used to measure the health and social vulnerabilities and housing needs of homeless individuals (Brown, Cummings, Lyons, Carrion, and Watson, 2018); getting a vulnerability score; entering them into the Coordinated Entry System (CES) (OC Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures, 2019) and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) (HUD Exchange, HMIS, 2021); and then most often going back on the street because there is no housing match for them. Every person described in the above vignettes has been engaged by this performance. Ultimately, they (and their family in the case of Spencer) knew that it would be very difficult to get housing, but they perceived the penalty of not doing so as greater. When Spencer's sister found out that Spencer had been released from the care facility, Kendra had to warn her that there would be no place for him to go after he

had checked himself out, because there is no shelter in Beach City or the surrounding cities. But they both cared deeply about Spencer, so they did what they could. Kimberly told me in despair once, "I can't keep the apartment as neat as they want it. I have two toddlers…if I went to their houses and they had two toddlers I doubt their house would be as neat as they want mine to be, but I just have to keep doing these checks because if I don't they'll kick us out and if we get kicked out I don't think we can get help in the future." In this way, every part of the process is not only about what you are doing at that point but also about services you might be seeking in the future. I am not sure that the system is as coordinated as people imagine it to be, but the perception that it is, keeps individuals in a perpetual cycle of meeting requirements that are guided by morality or religiosity (in the cases where folks have sought services from religious organization that get government funding) and that they know will not ultimately change the precarity of their housing situation. In Amanda's case, the performance culminates when she is given the DMV voucher that she cannot use and because the agencies track the vouchers, the other side of this interaction is also important in highlighting the productive enterprise. The outreach worker who gave Amanda the voucher almost certainly tracked this as "client engagement," and it appears in the monthly report to the Beach City Council. These reports are part of the nonprofit maintaining their outreach services contract with the city.

This set of practices are employed by these actors as the terms of service. They include setting up meetings, filling out countless forms that require invasive sharing of information, signing up for waitlists that go nowhere, and surrendering their rights and often accepting an externally imposed moralistic framework that requires sobriety and/or

employment. If a person wants any services at all, the terms are non-negotiable, thus compelling the homeless to participate in the performance manner required or risk loss of eligibility for any non-housing services they may or have been able to attain, as minuscule or limited as these may be. This may not be a problem if it resulted in real change for those experiencing homelessness. However, as it stands, the practice simply serves to foot the bill of the productive economic enterprises that are the nonprofits contracted to administer the assessments.

These performances are intimately intertwined with the structural violence that is extreme and deep poverty. As Gupta (2012) points out, poverty becomes structural violence when some are precluded from fulfilling their basic needs and achieving their full capabilities, especially in a context where others are allowed to do so and flourish. The particularly cruel component of performance productivity is that it places a huge burden on the homeless because of their poverty and yields little if any returns on their investment. The homeless are investing their time but also having to navigate things like long public transportation trips (in the cases that this is available) and having to look for rides that are hard to come by, all while navigating mental health issues, addictions, or disabilities. All of these which in combination to their extreme poverty makes them vulnerable to additional violence from anti-homeless individuals, other homeless individuals, and law enforcement. In this way, poverty is a constant inability to access adequate shelter, food, healthcare, water, as well as personal safety and other necessities of life.

Arbitrariness

Even though Teresa is an incredibly nice and deserving woman, there is no reason why she is able to be in a hotel in Beach City under Project Roomkey when nobody else has qualified for that. Teresa got lucky that Jenna and Felice were able to find someone with the authority to say yes on the phone one day, perhaps because they were in a good mood that day. Their inability to replicate this success showcases how discretion can lead to disparate outcomes. Teresa's story amplifies what Gupta classifies as arbitrariness. According to Gupta, arbitrariness comes about when some individuals who are similarly positioned as others have different outcomes. So, while poverty is a structural issue that affects millions of people and inflicts systematic violence at the aggregate, at the individual level there is a degree of arbitrariness that creates outcomes for some that inconsistent with the overall system.

Those at the street-level have a big impact on the lives of the homeless. In many instances, they have the flexibility to make decisions that can greatly change an individual's life, such as in Teresa's case. In Teresa's case, bureaucratic discretion had a profoundly positive impact on her life. She has experienced more security during a time when the homeless community felt particularly unsafe due to the pandemic. This arbitrariness also creates mistrust in the system from those that attempt to engage and cannot replicate a positive outcome without any clear understanding of why the different outcomes occur.

Discussion/Conclusion

This study extends Gupta's work in several areas. Frist, it follows the logic that citizens encounter the state at the local level in everyday mundane interactions with

bureaucracy. In particular, this study focuses on the homeless and how the state is highly present in their lives through their everyday dealings with the homeless service bureaucracy. Also, this study narrows in on the issue of poverty as structural violence and how the state perpetuates and inflicts this violence. One of Gupta's arguments is that the state uses bureaucratic writing as a way to exploit; unlike Gupta rather than focus on the writing, I focus on the activities that accompany the process. It is not completely unrelated to Gupta's conceptualization of the harms of bureaucratic writing. In fact, Gupta mentions writing as a part of a performance several times in his book. He specifically asks if perhaps we should see bureaucratic writing as "a kind of performance" (Gupta, 2012, p. 143). This is what this study does. In addition, it affirms that Gupta is right about literacy. Gupta warns of thinking about literacy as the solution to the issues of structural violence on the poor in India. In fact, this study—in which all the participants are literate (at least in the most basic level of being able to read and write)—shows that the extremely poor are still dealing with similar structural issues in their attempts to navigate bureaucracy and get assistance.

In addition, like Gupta, I find that arbitrariness is a common result of program implementation. This is something he calls out in his own writing and clarifies the need to theorize about it more fully in different contexts. In his work in India, he encounters corruption and what he calls "massive misallocation of funds" (Gupta, 2013, p. 688), but he goes on to say that he, "ha[s] not seen any body of work that tries to theorize the kind of arbitrariness that results when one does not confront massive misallocation and corruption, but essentially correct application of bureaucratic procedure that is indifferent to outcomes" (p. 688). While it might not be completely clear whether there is

misallocation of funds in the programs administered in Beach City, it is important to note the different contexts. The United States and India are supposed to be different. The Global North is considered developed, modern, and wealthy, while the Global South is perceived to be developing and poor. However, this study observes that similar processes are occurring in regard to the structural and material position of the poor and the way that the poor fare in the system.

Pinpointing a perpetrator of violence creates accountability. Unlike India, the United States does have the resources to eradicate poverty. The U.S. has deliberately chosen not to do so. Therefore, responsibility lays squarely with the state. Finally, it is important to point out that the homeless are not completely powerless and resist in many ways. Many resist by refusing to participate in the productive performance described in this article. By doing so, they are labeled as "service resistant" but the reality is that most of them did not start refusing services until they attempted to access housing a handful of times and were unsuccessful. The state should recognize the harmful effects of the current system and actively seek to reform in a way that the homeless are actually able to access the resources needed to survive and thrive.

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