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# Pathways to homelessness, and attitudes toward night shelter use for homeless men in Denver, Colorado

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# **Pathways to homelessness, and attitudes toward night shelter use for homeless men in Denver, Colorado**

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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## ABSTRACT

According to the literature there are typically personal causes to homelessness such as a mental illness or drug dependency; coupled with structural forces such as unemployment, or residential dislocation. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, overnight shelters were constructed to house homeless citizens. These facilities were dirty and overcrowded, and they did not help the homeless to improve their lives. More recently researchers studied shelter usage and found that homeless individuals felt stigmatized by staff, and trapped by authoritarian rules.

The first purpose of this study was to identify paths to homelessness for homeless men in metro Denver, Colorado. The second purpose was to ascertain why some homeless men have negative attitudes toward utilizing night shelters. In this ethnographic study, I conducted in-depth interviews and field research with 20 homeless men. This occurred at two homeless day shelters in Denver. Snowball sampling was used to identify participants for the study who were 18 years of age and who self-identified as homeless. Since I volunteered at one of these homeless shelters, I was able to establish rapport with many of the homeless men.

In addition to open-ended interview questions, probing was used to gain clarity on the participant's meaning to questions. The study used open and focused coding to identify major themes in the data. The major themes that provide insight into pathways to homelessness for this study are: "Barriers to housing", "Lack of Employment", and "Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting housing from family or friends." The themes that speak to the negative attitudes toward Denver night shelter use are: "Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules", "Shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men", and "Shelter guests are disruptive."

Symbolic interactionism and conflict theories are used to interpret the findings of this study. Future research on homeless men needs to focus on the impact of age on pathways to homelessness and how age impacts attitudes toward night shelter use. In addition, it is important to include racial/ethnic, nationality, and women and members of the LGBT community in future studies of the homeless population.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Homelessness in the United States has changed from the late 1800's until the present. At the end of the Civil War many thousands of soldiers were left without a home. These men developed skills based on wartime experience. They were equipped with hunting and gathering skills, knowledge of using railroads, and adept at finding shelter. At the conclusion of the war there were several projects occurring in the United States. Westward expansion was the predominant idea amongst Americans during this time which resulted in the creation of railroads, mines and the destruction of forests. These projects required mobile workers. The thousands of men who were homeless became a ready labor supply for these projects. The migratory workers were largely Caucasian men and were called hobos. Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century however, railroad construction was finished and the introduction of machines replaced many of the jobs hobos performed (Axelson and Dail 1988).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries many Americans were not able to provide for their families due to low wages and the decline in manufacturing jobs in city areas. By 1950, manufacturing jobs were displaced from urban areas to suburban areas. This displacement in work hit African Americans twice as hard as Caucasians since African Americans were primarily living in urban areas. Many jobs and people continued to move to suburbs during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This caused worsening poverty of people living in urban areas. Many people were in need of public assistance (Culhane 1996).

Public assistance was given to those who showed a need during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Taxpayers eventually became frustrated with the amount of money they were putting into this assistance. Some of the taxpayers also believed that this public assistance was making the needy more dependent on the government, and was causing a decline in work ethic.

Legislators decided to use poorhouses in order to reduce the amount of money going into cash assistance. Poorhouses were overnight shelters that allowed impoverished men and women as well as children to stay. Poorhouses were designed to take indigent citizens with poor work ethic, and force them into responsible citizens capable of working hard and making money for themselves. It did not take long for government officials to realize poorhouses were not accomplishing their goals of decreasing the money going to cash assistance, and transforming the poor into responsible citizens. Poorhouses were noisy, dirty, overcrowded, and more money was being spent on poorhouses than on financial aid (Culhane 1996).

In 1890 there was an economic recession which put thousands out of their homes. These homeless had a wide variety of characteristics. Some were alcoholics, some lost their jobs, and some were young men running from their homes. Other homeless included thieves, gamblers, and those evading the police. The homeless who were mobile and did not work were called tramps, and those homeless who settled in urban environments and did not work were known as bums. These homeless groups had a clear social stigma and were looked at with suspicion. This was most likely due to these homeless living a countercultural life compared to most Americans; they spent their time roaming the streets and being jobless. In the 1920's and 1930's a small number of women became homeless. They only comprised about 5% of the homeless population in the U.S. Most of these women were leaving their impoverished origins, many also were political activists, some were running from parents, and some just looking for adventure. During the Great Depression in the 1930's families created a new category of homeless because many families struggled with mortgage foreclosures, and crop and bank failures. These hardships forced many families to confront the possibility of homelessness or travel in search of economic opportunities. Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the

American public did not think fondly of the homeless. For example, in protestant churches throughout the U.S., a message of hard work and making it on your own was the dominate philosophy and work ethic; and the homeless were seen as not conforming to those ideals (Axelson and Dail 1988).

There is more than one definition of homelessness in the literature. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 provided a definition that was vastly encompassing and seems to describe both the homeless of the 1980's as well as the homeless of today. The Act says a homeless individual is one who does not have a consistent or adequate night time shelter (Fitzgerald, Shelley, and Dail 2001). The homeless of the 1980's consisted of more men than women, but there were a growing number of single women with children joining the ranks of the homeless. Homeless women with children had some important characteristics such as no friends and family support or fleeing a violent relationship that led to their circumstances (Axelson and Dail 1988). During the 1980's the working poor were also a growing category of the homeless. These individuals included men and women working low-paying jobs that did not pay enough to have consistent shelter. Also during the 1980's approximately 25% of the homeless were mentally ill or disabled and about 30% were substance abusers (Axelson and Dail 1988).

During the 1980's the lack of availability of low-cost housing caused many families to resort to emergency shelter housing. Emergency housing in urban areas was typically in dangerous areas unsafe for women and children. Unless this emergency shelter housing had a time limit attached to it, families would remain permanently. If there was a time limit attached, families would move to another emergency shelter location. The repeated use of emergency shelter among individuals and families may have contributed to a trend of chronic homelessness.



In rural areas the attitude of self-help among family members may have caused overcrowded living conditions as many families doubled up in one household (Culhane 1996).

Homeless shelters rather than poorhouses were being primarily used across the U.S. in the 1980's. Homeless shelters however, struggled to help those in need much like the poorhouses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Shelters attempted to take in men and women, offer a temporary place to stay, and help them find jobs. Many shelters during the 1980's had policies of temporary use for their clients until they found a job, so as not to create dependency on the shelter. However, many shelters did not have the resources, especially counselors that could help the homeless find jobs. In addition, many of the homeless shelters had cleanliness problems similar to the poorhouses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many homeless shelters had mice, feces and urine smell, contaminated food equipment, and overcrowding. According to Culhane (1996), during the 1980's, homeless shelters did not provide a cheap alternative to public assistance and gave very little aid to the homeless. The average stay at a shelter was short, but many homeless would use the shelters off and on throughout the year (Culhane 1996; Culhane and Kuhn 1998). An unpleasant shelter environment may have discouraged many from living there for a lengthy period. Alternatively, some shelter users may have had other places to stay in the community. The return to the shelters suggested that there was not a lack of homeless shelters available but a lack of affordable alternative housing options (Culhane 1996).

A recent study conducted by Byrne, Munley, and Fargo (2012) studied pathways of homelessness in cities across the U.S. The study found that lack of affordable low-income housing was a significant predictor of an increase in homelessness. A second finding of this study was a positive association between receiving public assistance and the rate of increase in homelessness (Byrne et al 2012). This finding is consistent with evidence that homeless shelters

in the 1980's did not decrease the number of people needing public assistance (Culhane 1996). It seems that in the 1980's as well as in the 2000's, homeless shelters did not deter users from needing public assistance.

The first objective of this thesis was to identify the major pathways to homelessness for a small group of men in downtown Denver, Colorado. The second objective was to identify reasons why some men don't like to utilize night shelters in Denver. In order to differentiate my study from others in the literature, I interviewed men at two different day shelters in Denver. Based on my literature review, there were no studies that included these day shelters or focused on downtown Denver. My study also included men with a higher educational attainment and older average age than previous studies.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 provided the introduction, Chapter 2, the literature review, Chapter 3, the methodology, Chapter 4, research findings, and Chapter 5, discussion and conclusions. Chapter 2 discusses the research studies conducted on pathways to homelessness and attitudes held by homeless men toward night shelters. In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study is discussed in detail with particular reference to Strauss and Corbin (1998), Saldana (2013), and Esterberg (2002) on developing ethnography. In addition, the study participant characteristics, participant selection and coding of the data are also discussed. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the Denver study of homeless men; and compares these findings to the literature. In Chapter 5, the discussion and conclusions provides a discussion of the major findings, the major theoretical and policy implications, methodological limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

An article by Ogden and Avades (2011) examined the reasons why some homeless adults choose to utilize social services and others do not. They state that in 2003, there were approximately 400,000 homeless roaming the streets of the United Kingdom, and a major problem for the homeless was lack of access to social services. These researchers point out that some social services are not adept at helping individuals such as the homeless who tend to be mobile. Few other studies have examined the interaction of homeless individuals with social services. Therefore, Ogden and Avades (2011) examined this interaction and how this contributed to homeless people's attitudes for and against service use. Ogden and Avades (2011) conducted in-depth interviews with 8 homeless men and women who attended a local community center in Great Britain. Many of the individuals had mental disorders and drug addictions. The interviews examined several areas of the individual's lives. Their personal history and health issues, the length of time they had been homeless, any assistance they had been given from different sources; and what could be done to help the future homeless. The researchers examined both formal and informal assistance (Ogden and Avades 2011).

Formal assistance broadly referred to mental health or social workers, substance abuse teams, and staff at the community center. Informal help involved assistance from other homeless. The results from this study indicate negative attitudes toward utilizing social services or formal help. Many homeless said they experienced being frustrated, let down and disappointed by social workers. Several said their identities were threatened, they felt ostracized from the rest of society, and felt that a stigma had been placed on them from the formal help. Many expressed that their feelings of alienation and stigmatization led them to avoid utilizing social services. Also, several stated that when utilizing homeless shelters, there were very rigid

rules and a sense of being trapped. One has to be in bed at a certain time, and one is given assistance only until one leaves the shelter. This means homeless individuals may become dependent on assistance, and then it is abruptly taken away from them. Several homeless utilized informal help from other homeless individuals, and this became very positive for some. Commiserating with other homeless however, worsened the lives of other homeless individuals. This led them to use drugs and alcohol to cope with their lifestyle and problems, which only perpetuated their poor quality of life (Ogden and Avades 2011).

Conley (1996) addresses the fact that some homeless people are not able to get off the streets. This may be related to problems with social services as addressed by Ogden and Avades (2011). Conley (1996) says that previous literature states that the homeless are becoming very resourceful and determined at surviving each day on the streets. He says it is odd that they are good at surviving on the streets but not as good at surviving off the streets. Conley (1996) says that this is sometimes due to mental illness and drug addiction within the homeless. These problems make surviving off the streets difficult. Other reasons for not getting off the streets include a lack of jobs and affordable housing (Conley 1996). There was not much research pertaining to the attempts of homeless individuals to getting off the streets, as well as the personal and institutional challenges to doing this.

To study homeless getting off the streets, Conley (1996) investigated a housing grant that would offer homeless individuals a chance to obtain non-shelter permanent housing. Conley (1996) describes the social and institutional reasons why the sampled homeless individuals chose not to leave their street homes. Conley (1996) interviewed 42 homeless individuals in New York City who had been utilizing a clinic and were seeking welfare assistance. The interviews listed the main reasons for becoming homeless as due to eviction, migration, and a combination of the

two. The sample was comprised mainly of adult black males (Conley 1996). Conley's (1996) study yielded interesting information. None of the homeless sample had stayed at homeless shelters for a long period of time. Some tried staying at the shelter for one night and went back to the streets.

There were two main reasons for not wanting to utilize the shelter system. These included dangerous and unsanitary conditions. It was said that homeless individuals at a shelter steal from others, and shelters tend to have very dirty living conditions. Then the interviewees were asked about their knowledge of the housing grant. Of those homeless that knew of the grant, many said that landlords would not want to rent to a homeless person because of their unkempt appearance. Homeless individuals say this makes them give up on finding permanent housing. Another major reason the homeless individuals did not want to move into permanent housing was because landlords see homeless people as rental risks. Many landlords don't want to rent to someone who is paying for his apartment with welfare money, because he may not be able to consistently pay his rent. Another problem listed by many of the homeless included a concern for their homeless roommate being able to afford his part of the rent. If the other roommate is not able to pay his rent, then both individuals could potentially be evicted (Conley 1996).

Personal factors that prevented homeless individuals from obtaining permanent housing were discussed. Many homeless said the trust between themselves and other homeless was a major problem. A significant reason for this was due to a drug addiction such as crack. This drug would bring homeless together as a social network, but it would also tear a group apart and instill distrust amongst the homeless. Many homeless are not able to leave the streets due to their drug addictions (Conley 1996). It seems that both attaining permanent housing and staying on

the streets with the other homeless causes problems. Similar to Ogden and Avades' (2011) study, the homeless sample in New York City commiserated with other homeless and their problems; but there was also a large amount of distrust among homeless contributed by drug addiction (Conley 1996).

Prominent social researchers Snow and Anderson (1993) are well known for studying homelessness. These researchers state that the demographics and personal problems as well as the structural causes of homelessness have been addressed by many social researchers. One can see this in Conley's (1996) article as he talks about the personal problems of the homeless that prevent them from getting off the streets. Snow and Anderson (1987) say that little research has been done about homeless identity construction. Snow and Anderson (1987) wished to explore the way in which personal significance and meaning are generated by individuals living on the streets. These researchers assessed the identities of homeless street people in Austin, Texas. The homeless population in Austin had grown from around 5,000 in 1979, to around 11,000 in 1984.

The researchers conducted in-depth interviews, as well as field research with homeless individuals in Austin for a year. The in-depth interviews included tape recorded interviews of 6 homeless individuals who had lived in Austin for various lengths of time. These interviews were then coded by two researchers to obtain inter-coder reliability. The field research was very different. This included being with the homeless for most of their days, and listening and asking questions of the homeless. The researchers took brief notes when in the field so they could focus most of their attention on observing the homeless. These brief notes expanded with the use of mental notes once out of the field (Snow and Anderson 1987).

After coming back from the field, researchers would often debrief and discuss field experiences, as well as ideas for future directions. In the conducting of the study phase, Snow

and Anderson (1987) operationalize identity talk, which is a broader part of identify. Identity talk refers to the way in which homeless individuals are able to construct personal identities based on talking to other homeless. Snow and Anderson (1987) looked into three kinds of identity talk. These include distancing, embracement, and fictive storytelling. When homeless individuals are forced to engage with others or fulfill roles that do not align with their personal identity, they have to distance themselves (Snow and Anderson 1987).

Some homeless individuals who were new to street life distanced themselves from others saying that they were not like the other homeless. One individual who had been on the streets for several years but recently got a job distanced himself from homeless street people. Some homeless who had attained a low-paying job said to the other homeless that he deserved better, distancing himself from the low-paying job. Also, some homeless who have lived on the streets for many years distance themselves from new homeless who are labeled as amateurs and dependent on social services. Other homeless insult and distance themselves from social programs like the *Salvation Army*, saying that working for this program forces you to lose your homeless identity (Snow and Anderson 1987). This is very similar to Ogden Avades' (2011) discussion on the stigma and labeling that comes with utilizing social services.

The next form of identity talk is embracement. This refers to the acceptance of a social identity or role. Some homeless, usually the ones who have lived on the streets for a substantial period of time have embraced street life. Some of these homeless have a special group that they associate with in which all have a similar ideology. This contentment with living on the streets is noted by Ogden and Avades (2011), as well as Conley (1996). Several of the individuals who have embraced their street life, have street names such as Boxcar Billy, Muskrat, and Shotgun. Embracing and ideology seem to be helpful for some homeless individuals in accepting their

street life. One man on the streets explained his religious beliefs saying that having wealth doesn't mean anything to God. He also said that he would like to get off the streets but does not have a desire to make money. He said he would like to get off the streets to tell people about God. The last form of identity talk that Snow and Anderson (1987) looked at was fictive storytelling. This includes talking about one's life experiences or future endeavors with much embellishment. Many homeless bragged about current and past job experiences. One homeless man bragged about making large sums of money at a *Harley Davidson* Dealer, but would also beg for spare change. The talking about experiences seems to be geared toward gaining respect from other homeless and non-homeless. Some homeless would also fantasize about future business plans and attaining wealth. They would talk about becoming wealthy and leaving the streets. This type of fantasizing happened more with homeless who were new to street life. Fantasizing occurred less with those who had lived on the streets for a long time and who had accepted their lifestyle (Snow and Anderson 1987).

In their book *Down on their Luck: A Study of Homeless Street People*, Snow and Anderson (1993) discuss three different topics. They address the material; social and psychological survival strategies used by the homeless, these topics are similar to those conducted by Snow and Anderson (1987) on identity construction. Also, although other research has been conducted on individual and structural factors that contribute to homelessness; they provide a very good list of structural and individual factors. In order to produce this list, Snow and Anderson (1993) conducted a case study of homeless, mostly adult men in Austin, Texas between 1984 and 1986. The first individual factor they discuss is voluntaristic, or being homeless by choice. The researchers say that very few homeless live this lifestyle due to personal choice. However, the one's that do claim to be homeless by choice have lived on the



streets for many years and have accepted the lifestyle. These could be the homeless individuals discussed by Snow and Anderson (1987) who hang out with other homeless who have lived on the streets for an extended period, and who distance themselves from the new homeless.

Borchard (2010) interviewed homeless adults in Las Vegas and found that many of these homeless had little money, but chose to spend it on leisure, perhaps as a way to avoid their problems. This type of lifestyle could be identified as voluntary homelessness (Borchard 2010).

More prevalent factors that contribute to homelessness are mental disabilities and drug addictions (Snow and Anderson 1993). However, Snow and Anderson (1993) emphasize that having a mental disability or being addicted to a drug may not be the one factor that makes an individual homeless. Homelessness results from both personal choices and factors out of the individual's control (LaGory, Fitzpatrick, and Ritchey 2001). That is, it is more likely that a combination of factors and bad luck pushes an individual into this lifestyle (Moore, Sink, and Hoban-Moore 1988). For example, being a drug addict or having a mental illness may or may not produce homelessness. If another factor is added, such as being forced out of one's house because this individual is not easy to live with, this might result in homelessness.

The lack of family support or family problems is also a substantial factor that contributes to homelessness. Some individuals are unfortunate in that they do not have many family or friends to stay with or go to for help. This may lead them to living on the streets. Other families are very dysfunctional, and certain members of the family may have to get out of the house to improve their living situation. Unfortunately, they may not have many options other than living on the street. Another individual factor is bad luck. Sometimes people lose their job or their car is stolen. These types of incidents do not necessarily push someone into homelessness, but they can contribute to an already bad situation. If an individual was pushed out of his house due to a

drug addiction, and then he loses his job, he may need to stay at a homeless shelter for a while (Snow and Anderson 1993).

Snow and Anderson (1993) also discuss structural factors that contribute to homelessness. They say that residential dislocation is a very strong factor that will very quickly push someone into homelessness. Residential dislocation means losing one's home. Another structural factor is the decrease in affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing affects many homeless across the U.S. This factor was stated as the primary reason by 11 homeless surveyed and interviewed in Santa Clara County California, which has a homeless population of over 7,000 (Nichols and Cazares 2011). Unemployment is another notable factor. There are several reasons for being unemployed including becoming disabled, being laid off, or quitting a job. In 1980 there was a drastic increase in unemployment in the U.S. Some homeless during this time period had been laid off due to budget cuts. More specifically, Snow and Anderson (1993) say that it was a combination of deindustrialization or a transition from a manufacturing to a service economy; wage decreases, and government cuts which largely contributed to many being in danger of becoming homeless in 1980. Snow and Anderson (1993) lastly make it clear that it is not structural or individual factors alone, but a combination of the two which contribute to homelessness.

Snow and Anderson (1993) say that having a physical or mental disability can be very cumbersome for individuals trying to obtain a job. This is especially true of war veterans. In 2010 over 31,000 veterans returned home with mental and physical disabilities including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, brain injuries, and amputations. Approximately 1 out of 5 of these veterans had some mental stress associated with war, and a national estimate in 2008 stated that 1/3 of all homeless are war veterans (O'brien 2011; Khanna 2011). The duties these soldiers had

in war typically do not relate to jobs in civilian life, therefore they need to acquire a different skill set. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program works with veterans to help them find jobs that are suitable given their physical and mental ailments and skillsets. An additional problem many veterans have is obtaining housing. Disabled veterans apply for a job but usually one has to have residence to acquire a job, but because the veteran is unemployed, they don't have money for housing (Khanna 2011).

Khanna (2011) discussed the difficulty in war veterans obtaining employment and housing. Elliott and Krivo (1991) looked into housing as well as economic conditions. Elliott and Krivo (1991) focused on four structural factors: the unavailability of low-cost housing, high poverty rates, bad economic conditions, and a lack of mental health facilities. When there is a high poverty rate, there may also be an increase in homelessness because impoverished individuals are forced to choose between housing and food. In 1983 rent increased, but average income did not, the government also cut back on public housing construction. These factors combined to force many to live on the streets.

In 1965, mental health hospitals began discharging patients because they believed they could live on their own. This caused many to become homeless. Using these four structural factors as variables, Elliott and Krivo (1991) conducted a secondary data analysis. They utilized data from the 1980 Census of Population and Housing, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's study of homelessness. The dependent variable was the rates of homelessness for metropolitan areas in the U.S. Metropolitan areas were defined using both townships and locality information. The independent variables included unavailable low-cost housing, poverty, poor economic conditions, and mental health care. Each of these variables was operationalized. The unavailability of low-cost housing was operationalized as the percent of

rental units available at low-cost. Poverty was operationalized by the percent of the population below the poverty line in 1979. Poor economic conditions were defined as the unemployment rate and the percentage of unskilled jobs. Mental health care was defined as the total state per capita mental health expenditures by the mental health facilities in the state. Mental health care was also defined as the per capita mental health expenditure. This refers to the combination of money spent by state hospitals and community mental health programs for supervised residential facilities or supervised apartments in the community, and the programs that were related to them. The sample was obtained from the initial researchers who created the data using a stratified sample of metropolitan areas (Elliott and Krivo 1991).

Elliott and Krivo (1991) discovered that areas that had more low-cost housing had lower rates of homelessness than areas without low-cost housing. Also, the more money spent by mental health facilities was associated with low rates of homelessness. Interestingly, the more low-skilled jobs in an area were associated with higher rates of homelessness. Another finding which may seem counter-intuitive was that poor economic conditions were associated with lower levels of homelessness. This last finding seems to be in contrast with Snow and Anderson's (1993) finding that wage decreases, government cuts, and a transition from a manufacturing to a service economy caused many to become vulnerable to the homeless lifestyle in 1980. However, Elliott and Krivo (1991) note that the data from their secondary data analysis was not collected at the same time as the economic recession in the early 1980's. Therefore, different economic processes may have been occurring when that data was collected compared to when Snow and Anderson (1993) collected their data. Elliott and Krivo (1991) also state that although poor economic conditions are associated with lower levels of homelessness, the more unskilled jobs in an area is positively associated with homelessness rates. Elliot and Krivo (1991) say that this is

understandable because unskilled jobs are very unstable and low-paying. These kinds of jobs push more people into homelessness. Elliott and Krivo (1991) lastly state that their study indicates that factors like the economy and the housing market contribute to homelessness. Therefore, they say that several structural factors should be used when studying aspects of society that contribute to homelessness in the future (Elliott and Krivo 1991).

### **Theoretical Foundation for Research**

When investigating different pathways to homelessness and negative attitudes against shelters, it is beneficial to apply the symbolic interactionism, functionalism, and conflict theories. Symbolic interactionism says that people interact with each other and create meanings each day and that meaning produces society. It is in the process of finding meaning in surroundings and interaction that people define their rights, obligations, and identities. These definitions of meanings differ for every individual. One person might see a homeless person as being lazy, undeserving and looking for a handout. Another person's outlook may be that a homeless individual is an equal who needs assistance (Macionis 1997).

Functionalism says that society maintains order and interdependence of social systems. Society will keep its boundaries and is capable of self-maintenance in order to survive. Society can either be rigid or if changes need to occur they will be natural and flow comfortably (Ritzer 2008). Society views homelessness as the individual homeless person's problem. Since most of society is not homeless, this particular individual did not follow the structure of society appropriately, that has resulted in their circumstances. This individual needs to find a job to obtain housing; if they are unable to do that then it is no fault of the social system. If strict night shelter rules or unsanitary guests at the shelter deter the homeless individual from using the shelter, then the homeless individual was not meant to stay at shelters. If this individual gets

frostbite by staying outside, then that is the social system doing self-maintenance, very gradually pushing the weak individual out of society.

Conflict theory views society as being held together by the tension between those with power and the oppressed. Homeless individuals are forced to stay in their unfortunate circumstances due to those in power with money that benefit from their poverty. Society wants to keep a homeless individual from rising in social mobility by getting a job or becoming rehabilitated from an addiction. Conflict theory says change can occur in the system, but when it does, it is a very radical and extreme transition (Ritzer 2008). Night shelters are going to be unpleasant spaces to live in because they are run by people in power. To avoid night shelters the homeless need to find other locations to stay at night. In order for the homeless to see improvement in their lives as well as in night shelters, they need to form a cohesive unit and take over the positions of night shelter staff as well as legislators on issues like housing and public assistance.

Symbolic interactionism and conflict theories will be used to interpret the findings of my study. This will occur in my findings chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

### **The Research Problem**

Two questions guided the study: “What are the major pathways to homelessness for men in Denver?” The second question was: “Why do some homeless men in Denver choose not to utilize the night shelters?” In order to answer these questions, I used in depth interviews. The in depth interviews allowed me to address whether the major factors that I’ve seen in prior research studies such as the lack of affordable housing, lack of jobs, and mental illness, lead to homelessness for men in Denver (Conley 1996).

As for my second research question, in depth interviews allowed me to determine whether strict rules (Ogden and Avades 2011), uncleanliness of shelters and items being stolen, were major factors for Denver men to not utilize night shelters (Conley 1996). In the remainder of the methodology chapter, I will describe ethnography, and how this approach to conducting qualitative data analysis was used in my study. Next, the demographics of Denver and the homeless population will be described. Lastly, the interview process and the selection of eligible men for the study will be discussed.

### **Methodology**

My study is ethnographic because my central goal was to develop an understanding of homeless men and their night shelter usage. An ethnographic study is one in which a researcher studies a social group in their natural setting over time by collecting observational and interview data (Snow and Anderson 1986). The ethnographical data collection process is flexible and allows the researcher to adapt the participant selection process, as well as make modifications to the interview questions (Creswell 1994). By doing research this way, the themes and concepts

produced from the data will be closer to reality than if the researcher was to force the data into a preconceived theory. I also probed participants in order to ascertain if they had more to say on a question, and to allow them to expand on the questions I was asking (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

The major objective in probing the participants was to understand the meaning that each individual attributed to the question (Saldana 2013; Straus and Corbin 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasize that research should flow back and forth between the researcher and the data, and from the time the researcher decides on a research question, to the analysis of data, the researcher must have the ability to consistently ask questions and possibly change perspectives on a topic. Also possibly select different people for the interview and allow the findings to guide the ongoing data collection process. I would often select different men to interview and modify the questions I was asking based on the data I was receiving from participants. By conducting research in this way, the intricacies of social reality are more likely to present themselves more clearly (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Qualitative research such as ethnography calls for validity and reliability checks. Internal validity can take the form of triangulation. Triangulation can be achieved in three steps. For example, it is helpful to have another researcher who has not had any input in the study, code interview data and determine if the principal investigator with his personal biases is coding similarly. Also, the researcher could take the analysis to the various study participants and ascertain whether the researcher's interpretation stands up to the participants' answers. Lastly, the researcher could take the findings to the director or caseworkers of the homeless shelter and determine whether their thoughts on the study participants' reasons for being homeless align with the researcher's interpretations. If all three of these checks are done this assures a higher



internal validity. Prolonged engagement is also beneficial when conducting qualitative research. Spending plenty of time in the social setting with the subjects you're planning to research in order to understand their culture more and be more aware of assumptions can be very helpful (Creswell 1994:157).

External validity in qualitative research is different from external validity in quantitative research because in qualitative research the goal is not to generalize findings. The intent instead is to develop an analysis of social reality for the participants studied. The merit of the analysis is based on the codes, categories and themes produced from the data, as well as the qualitative research methodology used. The reliability of a qualitative study provides a useful check on its external validity also. The more specific a study is the less social settings and participants it can be replicated with. However, if the researcher shares his method of choosing participants, as well as his assumptions and biases while collecting data, this actually helps the study to be replicated and can improve the reliability (Creswell 1994).

Esterberg (2002) writes about qualitative research and guidelines for coding. She says that there are two stages to coding, the first is open coding, and the second is focused coding. Open coding involves reading over data line by line and looking for relevant information. It is important during open coding for the researcher to be open even to information that doesn't seem integral to the research. The goal with open coding is to collect examples of the relevant information from all the transcripts. These specific examples of relevant information are codes. As the researcher conducts open coding and searches for significant information, similarities will develop between the bits of information (codes); this will allow for categories and themes to arise from the data. This process of open coding should be done more than once in order to find

all relevant pieces of information in the data. Once it appears that there are no new codes to create after reading through the data, it is time to do focused coding. Focused coding entails bringing attention particularly to the themes created during open coding. During focused coding the researcher examines the themes in the data line by line in order to find additional codes and categories (Esterberg 2002).

Analytic memo writing is another crucial part of data collection and analysis. Memo writing allows the researcher to document his/her thoughts about an interview, a participant, or an occurrence within the data. Writing analytic memos is beneficial in order for the researcher to write about their own assumptions, and how their thoughts and decisions mold the interpretation of the data. Analytic memos are a crucial part of the data and coding process because analytic memos present possible ways in which categories are connected. These connections lead to the creation of theory. Analytic memos are data and can be coded just like the data provided by a participant. Saldana (2013) goes on to say that field notes may have important information that can be used to generate analytic memos. The field notes in my thesis were beneficial documents that helped to generate an analytic memo (Saldana 2013).

### **Research Site**

Metro Denver, Colorado is a large metropolitan area with a population close to 2.9 million as of November 2013. Metro Denver has a largely young population; the median age is 36.6 years. The two largest age ranges are 30-44 with 229, 548 people; and 40-44 with 216, 663 people. A significant amount of people in the metro are well educated and Denver has a higher average than other Metro areas of two earner households. This accounts for the median household income in metro Denver at \$61, 453 in 2012. The population of Metro Denver is

closely split in half between male and female. The total in 2012 for females in Denver metro was 1,479, 452; and for males it was 1, 463, 976 (Colorado Division of Local Government, Demography Section). Broken down by race, Denver metro is significantly white at 66.4%, Hispanic 22.1%, Asian 3.9%, Black 5%, and American Indian 0.5% (U.S. Census Bureau). The unemployment rate for both genders and all races just listed was at 7.4% in 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey).

The Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, an organization that has been conducting homeless point in time surveys, has very valuable findings on the status of homelessness in the Denver metro area from 1998 until 2012. I utilized data from the 2012 survey for my thesis. This point-in-time survey utilizes service providers such as day and night shelters, as well as outreach workers that go on the street in search of homeless individuals. In 2012 the survey reported 12,605 homeless men, women, and children in the seven county metro Denver areas. There were 3,211 homeless men and 2,572 homeless women. These demographics include an age range from 13 to 96 years of age, so from teenagers to the elderly. Racial data indicate that whites were the overwhelming majority of homeless at 44.3%, Latinos were at 22.7%, African Americans at 20.4%, Mixed at 6.8%, Native American's at 3.8%, and Asians were at 1.1%. The top three reasons for homelessness in 2012 by percentages were: 32.6% "Lost job/can't find work", 17.3% "Relationship or family breakup", and 17.2% "Housing costs too high." Other interesting percentages from this survey included 10.5% reported substance abuse as a reason for homelessness, 10.2% reported mental illness or emotional problems, and 7.4% reported ex-inmate status (Barringer and Lease 2012).

### **Comparison of Point in Time Survey with Denver Study Participants**

The racial percentages in my study included: 55% White, 25% African American, 10% Latino, 5% Native American, and 5% Indian. Therefore Whites, African Americans, Native Americans, and Indians were all overrepresented in my study, and Latinos were underrepresented in comparison with the point in time survey. The top three reasons for homelessness stated in my study by percentage were: 50% “Lack of subsidized housing”, 50% “Family conflict” and 35% “Family or friends to stay with but values independence more.” My study included a category called “Lack of subsidized housing.” This is very similar to the point in time survey variable “Housing costs too high”, my category and this variable both mean that housing is too expensive and there is not enough subsidized housing. That being said, the percentages “Lack of subsidized housing” as well as “Family conflict” were much higher in the Denver study than in the point in time survey; but in both the Denver study and the survey, these categories seem to be worth taking note. Also in my study, 25% reported ex-inmate status, 20% reported substance abuse, and 15% stated mental illness as a path to homelessness. These three percentages are significantly higher in my study than the point in time survey.

I had originally planned to study homeless men in Ames, Iowa at the men’s night shelter where I had volunteered several times in high school. Plans changed when I became accepted to a volunteer program in Denver where I worked at a day shelter for the homeless. During my time at the shelter I became very familiar with the homeless men as well as their personalities and demeanors. The relationship that I developed with these men provided a reason to do my research in Denver rather than in Ames, Iowa. I also decided to conduct my study in Denver because I was beginning to understand the day shelter environment and reasons men don’t like

night shelters. I wanted to conduct my study in a setting where I had gained much knowledge from men who were struggling with their unfortunate circumstances.

### **Research Format and Sampling**

I conducted in depth interviews and field research at two day shelters for the homeless in Denver, Colorado. The majority of my data is from St. Francis Center, a large day shelter that can accommodate approximately 500 guests per day. This shelter is open seven days a week from 6 A.M to 6 P.M. When the day shelter closes, many of the guests typically go to the homeless night shelters across the street. St. Francis Center offers many services for its guests such as space for people to sit down at a table and chat, sleep, or eat. There is a clothing room, shower facilities, mail pickup, and a storage area where guests can be assured that their items will be locked away and not be stolen during the night. I volunteered at St. Francis Center forty hours a week from August 2012 until the end of June 2013, as part of a volunteer program in Denver. I developed a friendly rapport with many of the guests and knew many of their names and the services they used at St. Francis Center before the interview process. The other shelter I utilized for a few of the interviews was Senior Support Services, a day shelter for the homeless close to downtown. This shelter is significantly smaller than St. Francis Center; and can accommodate perhaps 80 guests. Senior Support serves three meals and a table to sit down and be off the streets.

I used open-ended interview questions to interview twenty homeless men between both day shelters. The in-depth interview approach allows the researcher more access to participants' experiences (Babbie 2001). For my interview process I had two sets of questions. One set of questions focused on homeless men who generally prefer to not utilize night shelters. The

questions in this set assumed that the man did not like night shelters, and ascertained the reasons for this. The remainder of the questions in this set sought to determine some of the major factors that contributed to homelessness for the participant. The other set of interview questions were designed for men who mostly utilize night shelters. These questions had the assumption that the man did have a positive attitude toward night shelters, and tried to determine why that was. The remainder of the questions was geared to understanding some of the major pathways to homelessness for these men.

When I began interviewing at St. Francis Center, I simply walked around the center and asked male guests who were friendly to me if they would participate in the study. Many of the men that I knew by name and were friendly to me were more than happy to tell me their story without any financial incentive. Approximately half way through my data collection period however, I began to have difficulty finding participants. Several men that I asked to do the interview wanted financial compensation, and I wasn't able to provide it. At this point, I began snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is very beneficial when studying a population such as the homeless who are hard to locate. Snowball sampling does not lead to a random sample, but with a homeless population, this type of sampling is much better than other sampling methods where you may have difficulty attaining participants (Babbie 2001).

In order to conduct snowball sampling, I would ask the male participant if he knew any homeless men who would be interested in participating in my study. I would also ask guests present in the room who were friendly but declined the interview, if they knew homeless men who would participate in the study. Using snowball sampling I obtained additional participants

at Senior Support Services. Due to the nature of the homeless male population in Denver, the snowball sampling technique allowed me to reach my target population.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

There were three screen questions that determined the eligibility for the study participants. First, the man had to be at least eighteen years of age; second, the man had to be currently homeless; I wanted all of the participants to be homeless at the time of the interview to facilitate recall of information. Being homeless at the time of the interview was true of all of the men except for one, because I decided that he had worthwhile information to share on homelessness and shelters, even though he had gained housing less than a week before the interview.

The last screen question asked how many times the man used the night shelters in Denver before the time of the interview. If the man used them between zero and one time, I labeled them as preferring not to utilize night shelters and the set of questions I asked assumed that the person didn't like to use night shelters. If the participant said he had used night shelters at least twice before the time of the interview, I labeled him as having used night shelters, with a generally positive attitude towards them. This set of questions was designed to ascertain why men utilize night shelters. These were very broad generalizations for categorizing the men; and often, even if a participant had used a night shelter at least twice, I learned that this did not mean he preferred using night shelters. However, this numerical categorization enabled me to place each participant with a distinct label in order to make the interview process more understandable for myself. For example, if the participant had used the night shelters fifty times before the interview, I would label him as a shelter utilizer. During the interview, if I discovered that this

participant had very negative feelings about night shelters and preferred not to use them, then I would ask him questions from the other question set.

### **Interviewing**

My IRB application was approved August 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, and is displayed in Appendix A. During my data collection process I would apply my three screen questions to any man who was friendly to me. If he agreed to participate without any financial compensation, we would go to a small office in the back of the main floor of St. Francis Center, or a meeting room a small distance away from the other guests at Senior Support Services. The goal for both locations was to ensure that the participant felt that our conversation was confidential and private from other guests. Another goal was that our location would still be within eyesight and hearing distance of employees of both centers. These goals were designed to ensure confidentiality and safety for both myself and the interviewee. Once the participant answered the three screen questions and met the criteria for interviewing, I read through the informed consent form with the participant.

The informed consent document is included in Appendix C. I explained who I was, the purpose of the study, the types of questions I was going to ask, and that the participant could terminate the interview at any time. I explained that all the responses would be anonymous. Then I showed the participant my name, phone number, and email address where I could be reached if he had any questions after the interview. The participants were allowed to keep the form because a signature was not needed. In order to bypass the signature I applied for a Request for Waiver of Documentation of Consent with the IRB. This form is located in Appendix B. Since each participant in the study is a member of a vulnerable homeless population in Denver, the IRB passed my request to not have participants sign the informed consent form. After all this information was given to the participant, I asked the participant for



permission to use my digital recorder to document the interview. No participant objected to the recording of the interview. It was important to record the interview and to transcribe it as soon as possible so that information was not forgotten (Babbie 2001).

Next I asked the participant about his general shelter usage, and his response would determine the next set of questions I asked him. During the interview if I was unsure of the meaning of a participant's answer to a question, I would ask the question in a different way, or I would say: "is this what you mean?" Also, if I sensed the interviewee had more to say on an uncomfortable topic, I would remain silent for a few seconds to see if he elaborated. If no response, I would probe by asking the same question in a very sensitive and understanding manner to make him feel comfortable and answer honestly. I would try my best not to cut off a person's answer to my question, even if he spoke for a long time about topics that didn't pertain to the question. I wanted to allow the participant to speak his mind even if he spoke tangentially on the topic, because he might provide an answer to a question that I may not otherwise obtain if I didn't let him speak fully.

If the participant digressed too far and too long off topic, I would gently prompt him back to the original question. These techniques clarified the participant's answers and hopefully allowed them to be more candid in their responses (Babbie 2001). During the interview process with the homeless men, I also conducted field research. After I transcribed a particular interview, I would describe the participant's behavior. I looked for whether it was typical, as in a sober individual with no mental illness, or if they were under the influence of drugs or had a mental illness of some kind. These field observations along with the interview transcription provided information that helped to explain a participant's answer to a question.

The race and age data in Table 1 are based on my field observations and perceptions of the men's physical appearances, unless the number is exact in which case the man told me his age. I did not ask the men how old they were at the time of the interview, and I also did not ask what their race was. That being said, the age range of the homeless men I interviewed was very wide, somewhere between 20 and 70 years of age. A majority of the men were over 40. Six of them were approximately between 50 and 60, and 9 of them were approximately between 60 and 70. In retrospect this makes sense. Many of the men that I became friendly with at St Francis Center were in their upper fifties and sixties, and these were the men that I tended to ask the most frequently if they would interview with me. Also, I interviewed several men at Senior Support Services; all of the men at that shelter are at least 55 years of age.

The data on race indicate that 11 men I interviewed were Caucasian. The next highest racial group was African Americans at 5 men. There were 2 Latinos, followed by one Native American and one Indian. The education statistics indicate that a strong majority of the homeless men interviewed had at least completed high school, 15 men. Only 2 homeless men had bachelor's degrees, 1 had three master's degrees, and 2 did not complete high school. A majority of the men in the study, eight, were divorced, followed by 4 married, 4 single, 3 widower's, and 1 man in a relationship.

**Table 1****Study Participants' Characteristics**

Table 1 below includes data on Age, Race, Education, and Relationship Status for the Denver study participants.

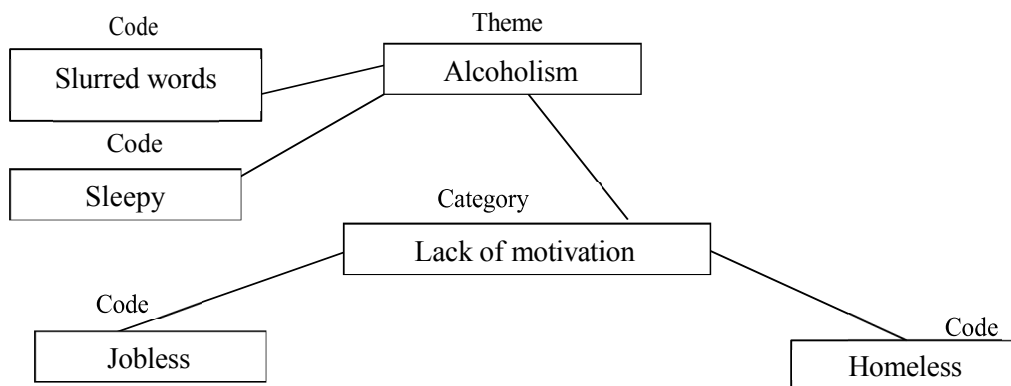
<b>Man</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Relationship Status</b>
Man 1	Mid 40's	Latino	GED	Single
Man 2	60	Indian	High school graduate	Divorced
Man 3	Mid 50's	Caucasian	High school graduate	Divorced
Man 4	Mid 50's	Caucasian	High school graduate	Divorced
Man 5	67	African American	High school graduate	Single
Man 6	Mid 60's	Native American	Incomplete high school	Widower
Man 7	Mid 40's	Latino	High school graduate	Single
Man 8	Mid 20's	Caucasian	GED	Married
Man 9	Mid 60's	African American	Incomplete high school	Divorced
Man 10	Mid 50's	Caucasian	GED	Divorced
Man 11	61	Caucasian	Bachelor's degree	Single
Man 12	Mid 50's	Caucasian	High school graduate	Married
Man 13	Mid 50's	African American	High school graduate	Married
Man 14	52	African American	High school graduate	In a relationship
Man 15	Mid 60's	Caucasian	High school graduate	Divorced
Man 16	59	Caucasian	Bachelor's degree	Widower
Man 17	Mid 60's	Caucasian	High school graduate	Married
Man 18	Mid 60's	Caucasian	Master's degree	Divorced
Man 19	46	African American	High school graduate	Divorced
Man 20	Mid 60's	Caucasian	High school graduate	Widower

## Coding and Analysis

For most of my thesis I used two types of coding, open and focused to analyze the data. However, for one of the interviews I used an analytic memo. As I discussed earlier, analytic memos are notes researchers write to themselves about observations during data collection. Analytic memos can be very useful in prompting the researcher to think more about their own assumptions in the data, as well as how their preconceived thoughts affect interpretations (Saldana 2013). Saldana (2013) goes on to say that field observations can help to create an analytic memo for analysis. On a couple of my interviews, I had more notable field observations due to the individual I had interviewed. It was helpful to create an analytic memo from this type of field note in order to bring my assumptions to the surface. One example of a field observation and its corresponding analytic memo are below.

This homeless participant seemed somewhat sleepy and was slurring his words for much of the interview. These factors point to him being intoxicated. This makes sense, since he said his major problem was alcoholism. (Field observation from interview with man 7, Latino, mid 40's, high school graduate, single)

From this field observation I was able to create an analytic memo which indicates a possible path his drug dependency created. Figure 1 illustrates the steps.



**Figure 1**

Figure 1 Analytic Memo Sketch of man 7 (Saldana 2013)

The figure 1 analytic memo sketch indicates that an interpretation of this man's "slurred words" and "sleepy" behavior, the codes, are most likely due to his "alcoholism", the main theme. The category, "lack of motivation", seems to be caused by his "alcoholism". Also, the "lack of motivation" seems to be a major reason this man is both "jobless" and "homeless", the codes. This analytic memo used data from the field observation, as well as his interview transcript. This interpretation is based on my observations of other guests at *St. Francis Center* who drink heavily, and seem to not have their priorities in line due to their alcohol dependency (Saldana 2013).

Next, the two step process of the data analysis will be discussed. The first step to the analysis was open coding which allowed me to search for codes that could eventually lead to categories and themes. The second step was focused coding which enabled me to concentrate my attention on the themes I had created during opening coding, and search for additional codes and categories for possible new themes. In order to demonstrate my coding process I will guide the reader through the first page of the interview transcript with man 3 displayed in Figure 2. The themes that were generated from this interview were: "Unable to work", and "Strict night shelter rules." The themes are marked by small circles in Figure 3. I will demonstrate to the reader how I produced the two themes for the first page of man 3. I will first use open coding to look for words and phrases that seem to be significant, being careful not to exclude anything, these words and phrases become the initial codes (Esterberg 2002).

**Are you homeless by choice?**

Uh...no, cuz right now I'm goin' through my disability..and if I get it I won't be homeless. Cuz see right now I can't work so I don't have the money to get a place. I'm trying to get—I got an application in next door at Cornerstone....so I'm getting A and D and I can get in over there with that but...

**What's A and D?**

Yeah Aid and Deficiency for Aid and Deficiency for disabled work...just one hundred and seventy five a month but...so I can get in over there on that. But, whenever they get an opening.

**What's your disability?**

I got COPD, emphysema...my left lung's shot...so I'm more or less breathing in one lung all the time. Yeah I've been going through disability four years a little over four years. And..the way my lawyer talks I'll get it this time.

**Where have you currently been staying at night?**

Outside.

**What was your reason for coming to the Denver night shelters when you were staying there?**

Uhh...place to sleep yeah a place to sleep and that out of the weather.

**You stayed there for about two years consistently?**

yeah.

**How long ago was that?**

Uh... March uhhh 2011 till last December I guess.

**Why did you decide to leave?**

Well. The Samaritan...they got rules now, when you go into overflow, all your backpacks and bags and all...you gotta leave them outside...and I'm not gonna leave my stuff outside anybody can take what they want. And the mission, mainly all the pc's they got over there... guys just got out of jail. And more or less they tell you what you gonna do and what you ain't gonna do. And its just you can ask anybody its just nothing but a headache over there. They have a rule....

**Figure 2**

Once several codes are formed, I can begin grouping significant codes together forming possible categories and themes, the process of open coding. The questions in bold were asked of man 3. The first question asked was: “Are you homeless by choice?” Under this question some possible codes are: “I’m going through my disability” and “If I get it I won’t be homeless.” These two statements seem to contradict each other, but I don’t want to exclude anything. Other codes under this question are: “can’t work”, “don’t have money to get a place”, “application at Cornerstone”, “A and D can get in.” The last two codes seem to imply that this man needs to be receiving some type of income in order to be accepted into Cornerstone. Cornerstone is a subsidized housing complex next door to St. Francis Center so I know what this man is referring to. I’m not clear however what A and D are though. Then I asked “What’s A and D?” Some codes under this are “Aid and Deficiency for disabled work”, “one hundred and seventy five a month”, “whenever they can get an opening.” These codes validate the implication earlier about needing income for Cornerstone. He seems to be receiving Aid and Deficiency income because he is disabled, and now he just needs to wait for an open room at Cornerstone.

When looking over the codes just created, “Aid and Deficiency” seems to be the reason he can apply for subsidized housing, so “Aid and Deficiency” can be a category marked by a small solid square under the theme “Unable to work.” Underneath “Aid and Deficiency” can be the code “Housing wait list” because this man’s “Aid and Deficiency” income allows him to get on the subsidized housing list. This code is marked by an arrow. Then I asked “What’s your disability?” The following are codes that correspond to this question: “COPD”, “emphysema”, “left lung’s shot”. More codes include: “disability four years”, and “get it this time.” Those last two codes don’t make sense because this man told me he was receiving “A and D”, not “disability”. I don’t want to exclude these codes though. “COPD”, “emphysema”, and “left

lung's shot" are all codes that fit underneath the category "Disabilities." The next several codes have to do with the night shelters in Denver and how long he stayed at them. "Outside", "place to sleep", "out of the weather", "yeah", and "March 2011 last December." The last code says that he stopped using night shelters for some reason. These four codes could be grouped together as one code, possibly "discontinued night shelter use." Then I asked him "why did you decide to leave?" His next statement includes several codes: "Samaritan", "got rules now", "backpacks and bags", "gotta leave them outside", "take what they want", "all the pc's they got", "guys out of jail", "they tell you what you gonna do", and "what you ain't gonna do."

Based on my volunteering at St. Francis Center, I learned that "Samaritan" is a night shelter nearby St. Francis. I am uncertain what "pc's" are, but it seems that they are people that enforce rules at the shelters. From this man's complaints about "Samaritan" I can form a theme, possibly "strict night shelter rules." This theme encompasses the code "discontinued night shelter use." There still needs to be a category underneath this theme. The category that explains why man 3 stopped using night shelters could be "must leave belongings outside." Now that I have gone through the first page of man 3's transcript with open coding, I present the themes, categories, and codes I developed in a visual. Figure 3 shows the visual.

- Unable to work
  - Aid and Deficiency
    - Housing waiting list
  - Disabilities
    - COPD
    - Emphysema



**Figure 3 continued**

- Left lung's shot
- Strict night shelter rules
  - Must leave belongings outside
    - Discontinued stay at shelter

**Figure 3**

The next step is focused coding. In this step I will concentrate my attention on the themes, codes and categories I created, in order to see if I find any new themes or interpret something differently this time. When looking at the themes this time I might add the code “PC’s are authoritative” under “Strict night shelter rules”, just to give the theme more explanatory power.

I conducted open and focused coding on all of my transcripts very similarly to the way I just demonstrated. After using these coding methods I compared themes across all transcripts. In this way I was able to group some themes, categories or codes together that were similar, or create new themes, categories or codes if I discovered them in several transcripts. For example I had coded alcoholism as a theme because four men stated it as a pathway to homelessness. After looking over interview data again however, I noticed that the connection between alcoholism and homelessness was a little more complicated. Alcoholism was tied to lack of motivation more specifically for one individual. This caused him to be apathetic about searching for jobs to get him off the street. Another individual had become evicted several times from apartments due to his drinking heavily, so he said obtaining housing was difficult for him because of his vacancy record. The two separate scenarios tied to alcoholism had to be coded differently. The first

example “lack of motivation” was coded as a category attached to the theme “lack of employment.” The second example “eviction”, became a code under the category “alcoholism” under the theme “barriers to housing.”

## CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter I discuss the findings from my interviews with twenty homeless Denver men. My two research questions are: What are some of the major pathways to homelessness for men in Denver? Why do some homeless men not utilize the night shelters in Denver? Based on the literature that guided my study I am aware that drug dependency, mental illness, lack of affordable housing, job loss, and unemployment are major pathways to homelessness (Elliot and Krivo 1991; Ferguson et al 2012; Kertesz and Weiner 2009; North et al 2010; Snow and Anderson 1986, 1987, 1990, 1994). Secondly, based on the literature the men choose not to utilize the night shelters in Denver due to the abundance of strict rules and stigmatization of homeless; and non-night shelter locations are often more comfortable for homeless compared to night shelters (Conley 1996; Hoffman and Coffey 2008; Laere et al 2009; Lyon-Callo 2000; Ogden and Avades 2011).

In this chapter, I will describe the pathways that emerged from the data to explain homelessness and reasons for the avoidance of night shelters among the twenty men that I interviewed. Through my coding and analyses, I constructed the following themes from the data: “Barriers to housing”, “Family or friend conflict”, “Unable to stay with family or friends”, “Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting housing from family or friends”, “Lack of employment”, “Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules”, “Shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men”, “Shelters are lacking in rules”, “Shelter guests are disruptive”, and “Night shelter users are unsanitary.”

### **Pathways to Homelessness**

According to Snow and Anderson (1993), homelessness typically becomes an individual's unfortunate consequence due to more than one life circumstance. Subsidized housing waiting lists were stated by 9 men, the most frequently stated of all paths leading to homelessness. Housing can be very difficult to obtain in Denver due to two reasons as stated by the participants. A person has to put his name on a housing list and wait his turn to acquire it. Some of the men I talked to have been waiting three years or more for housing. Also, in order to obtain some subsidized housing in Denver, there are often eligibility requirements. Research done by Kertesz and Weiner (2009) states that some housing programs in the U.S. require the homeless to undergo psychiatric or alcohol treatment before acquiring housing. Due to these factors, housing can be very difficult to attain for some.

#### ***Barriers to housing***

One major theme that emerged from the data was "barriers to housing." This theme is marked below by a small circle in Figure 4. From this theme, several categories and codes were identified in the data as well. Figure 4 illustrates the theme "Barriers to housing" with several categories such as "Subsidized housing wait lists", and "Ineligibility for subsidized housing" noted by a small solid square, and codes such as "ex-inmate status" and "eviction" noted by an arrow.

Every participant was asked whether he had searched for affordable housing. This is a broad term and means something different depending on the person. If the phrases "waiting lists", "low-income" or "subsidized housing" emerged from the data, then I placed the individual in the subsidized housing category under the theme "barriers to housing". If none of these terms appeared in the data I would place the individual in the non-subsidized housing category under

the theme “barriers to housing”. There were only two men for whom the above phrases were not mentioned in their transcripts. Therefore non-subsidized housing did not become a category in the final paper.

Nineteen of the study participants said they were receiving financial assistance such as social security, disability, or had part time or seasonal work. So, all men except for one satisfied the income requirement for subsidized housing.

- Barriers to housing
  - Subsidized housing wait lists
  - Ineligibility for subsidized housing
    - Ex-inmate status
  - Alcoholism
    - Depletes money
    - Eviction
  - Part time or seasonal work
    - Not enough money to pay for housing

#### **Figure 4**

##### ***Barriers to housing: subsidized housing wait lists***

There were nine men who spoke about applying for subsidized housing and were placed on a list with many others. Man 3 described his frustration about waiting lists:

“When I was at the Samaritan they wanted you to try and find housing...I went over to the Coalition..got a list of nine different places...and just about every one of ‘em got like a two to three year waiting list. Then...Cornerstone they said you can get there within a

year. Well March has been a year and I haven't heard nothin' from em' since." (man 3, mid 50's, white, high school graduate, divorced ).

Man 1 described similar fatigue in waiting for housing, and his frustration was increased because he was physically disabled:

"Yeah I'm waitin' I've been on the list for almost two years. I've been disabled almost twenty-eight years.. goin' on thirty. He says, women and children first. He said it will be a year or more...I've been waiting and waiting...calling my sister to see if they call her cuz I use her as a second address..second..you know phone. An, they never call." (man 1, mid 40's, Hispanic, GED, single)

Another participant expressed to me that even though he is a war veteran that doesn't mean he gets housing more quickly than others:

"Yep then you gotta (incoherent) for veterans it seems like it but it has a long waiting list also just like anything else. You have to go through the procedures and everything else." (man 5, 67 years old, African American, high school graduate)

Man 17 had an arguably cynical view of obtaining subsidized housing in Denver. When I asked this man if he had looked for affordable housing in Denver he responded:

"No. Cuz, they, they even got a list over here, uh cuz they got this building right next door, but they got a list saying they're not taking no applications cuz they stay pretty, it's pretty hard to get housing here even if you go up to the Coalition for the Homeless. It might take a year or two." (Man 17, white, 61, high school graduate, married)

Another participant told me that he had obtained housing less than a week before the date of our interview. Prior to that however, he had been looking for several years. This man had degenerative disc disease; and it was because of this his housing application was accepted. Man 20 described:

"Well before I had, gotten it I'd been looking for it for four years. I get off into nothing then finally here comes Uncle Sam. My doctor declared me permanently handicapped (I'm talking over him) housing slips in. Seeing how you're handicapped- Gets you up off the streets." (man 20, approximately 65, white, high school graduate, widower)

Another man said to me that he had subsidized housing years ago, but then lost it because the owners of the housing decided to sell the property. Now this man says he has to start the process of acquiring housing again:

“Well when i...first became homeless and came up here..I wen’t to the Coalition and they said they couldn’t help me unless I got a job, unless I was workin’ so then I started workin’ and I moved into a condo and I shared it with somebody but then the owners decided they were gonna sell it...weren’t gonna renew our lease. So then uh...I moved into a motel for about six months, then left Samaritan House cuz I was workin’ over there. And um...now I’m back in the same spot I was when I first came to Denver. It was like one big circle.” (man 2, 60 years old, Indian, high school graduate, divorced)

### ***Barriers to housing: alcoholism***

Another category that manifested itself in the data under “barriers to housing” was alcoholism. Van Laere, de Witt, and Kazlinga (2009) researched pathways to homelessness for 120 homeless adults in Amsterdam. They found three main routes to homelessness. These included: being evicted at 38%, relationship conflict that led to having to leave a consistent shelter at 35%, getting out of prison at 6%, and other miscellaneous reasons at 22%. In the eviction group, alcohol was the major catalyst that led to eviction. Also, in a study produced by North, Eyrich-Garg, Pollio, and Thirthalli (2010) alcohol was used and abused by more people than cocaine. Alcohol was the major substance abuse problem for my Denver study also. Alcohol was the main substance reported by three men in the study as fitting under the theme “Barriers to housing.” Man 6 and I discussed how alcohol has affected him looking for housing: “Have you had a hard time locating affordable housing in Denver?” Man 6 responded:

“Yes because my vacancy... record.”

I asked: “You’re what?” Man 6 said:

“Cuz um I was being uh uh how would you say when you get kicked out of an apartment?”

I respond: “Evicted?”

“Yeah you know I’m always gettin’ kicked out because of partying to heavy.” (man 6, mid 60’s, Native American, Incomplete high school, Widower)

Man 9 told me that he struggles with drinking because he is depressed about his circumstances.

He went on to say that he would have enough money from his retirement check to get a motel for a night if he didn’t spend a majority of his money on alcohol. Man 9 described:

“And if, when I get my money this time I’m gonna try to get me at least a motel room for a month. Cuz I was drinkin’ a lot and that’s what my that’s why I messed my money up and then I started smoking weed and that didn’t help none either.” (man 9, African American, mid 60’s, Incomplete high school, Divorced)

***Barriers to housing: ex-inmate status***

Ex-inmate status became a code underneath “ineligibility for subsidized housing”. Ex-inmate status was prevalent in homelessness research as a reason for difficulty obtaining housing or a job. Claggion (2008) studied prison recidivism rates for African American males in Washington D.C. One of his findings was the probability of recidivism for African American males after release from jail or prison. Claggion (2008) determined that African American males who remain unemployed after release have a 56% higher probability of recidivism than males who do become employed after release. This 56% probability could be due to these men having difficulty finding good jobs and or housing due to their criminal record, so they choose to commit a crime and return to prison where they will at least have basic needs provided for them. Two of the men in the study who were ex-inmates said applying for housing is difficult when you have a criminal background. Man 20 stated:

“Mmm no just about the only things I found that, really hurt me tryin’ to find housing you know was my, my background. Uh well I got a DUE background.” (man 20, mid 60’s Caucasian, high school graduate)



Man 20 described that this means a “domestic violence background”. Man 10 responded that his felon background has affected him recently in trying to obtain housing, much like man 20:

“No, I’m homeless because my felon record. And it’s hard for a felon to get a job and get housing.” (man 10, mid 50’s, Caucasian, GED, Divorced)

Man 10 goes on to talk about applying for benefits:

“And that’s what’s hard about it that’s why...my V.A. vet is trying to help me get housing and a job and schooling. She’s gonna let me know on the first week of December...matter of fact.” (man 10, mid 50’s, Caucasian, GED, Divorced)

***Barriers to housing: part-time or seasonal work***

According to a study done by Ferguson, Bender, Thompson, Xie, and Polio (2011), 28% of young homeless adults said they have full or part-time jobs. Seven of the men in the Denver study reported having part time or seasonal work but not enough income to afford housing. I did not expect to find this, but this does align with the study done by Ferguson et al (2011). Man 2 has been homeless since he was laid off around 2000. He occasionally grills for *Coors Field* in Denver as needed. Man 2 described to me:

“I fell back on that that’s how I got employed at Coors Field because I did have experience in that. But then when the season’s over...the Pepsi Center, like I was tellin you earlier...all month long I worked two days and its because really they don’t have any grill cooks over there they just have cooks type deals everythings done in the kitchen stuff so.” (man 2, 60, Indian, High school graduate, Divorced)

Man 14 explained to me that he works for temporary labor companies if they have a need and if the job is something he is physically capable of doing. However, he told me he then has to make a choice between eating and staying at a motel. Man 14 explained:

“It’s just that at the- now when I’m making my money, I’m only getting paid so much a day, so now and if I wanna stay inside thirty or thirty-five buck- dollars of the fifty is going to the motel room. So that leaves only what ten fifteen dollars to get something to eat and then you have to go through to try to get um uh food stamps or something like

that so you know it's just one thing after another.” (man 14, 52, African American, High school graduate, In a relationship)

Man 16's circumstances were very similar. He said that he works for a business distributing fliers, but he does not work very often and is not able to save his money:

“If I was working every day all the time I could be saving money. That's not a bad, that's not something I can't do, it's just not working out that way.” (man 16, 59, Caucasian, Bachelor's Degree, Widower.)

### ***Family or friend conflict***

Another major theme was “family conflict.” Snow and Anderson (1993) found that a lack of family support can be a route toward homelessness. Figure 5 below illustrates the theme “family conflict” delineated into categories and codes.

- Family or Friend Conflict
  - Not able to stay with family or friends due to tension
    - Conflict with sister
    - Conflict with brother
    - Conflict with parents
    - Conflict with ex-wife
    - Friends kicked out because not paying

### **Figure 5**

#### ***Family or friend conflict: conflict with sister***

Four men in the study stated having a negative relationship with their sister that did not allow for the homeless men to stay with this family member. Man 17 said he had a sister in California and I asked him about the possibility of staying with her:

“My sister’s in California and, me and her just don’t hit it off. She turned, she left her husband he died, she turned gay when she was forty-two and, my family dis-, disowned her and...” (Man 17, white, mid 50’s, high school graduate, married).

Man 12, who said he was homeless at the time of the interview because he was on parole, described that he was staying on his sister’s couch:

“When I (incoherent) last time when I wasn’t really homeless (exhales heavily) 2001 I was sleeping on my sister’s couch.”

He continued, saying that his sister forced him into a shelter:

“I really didn’t wanna go there because I was basically just thrown there.” (man 12, mid 50’s, high school graduate, Caucasian)

Man 7 had a similar circumstance where his sister kicked him out of her house. Man 7 said to me in the interview that he is a “lush”, this statement seemed to be true as this man appeared to be intoxicated in the interview. He described that the agreement was that he could stay with his sister but he could not drink. Man 7 said:

“Well you know I I have family members but I let my daughter my sis my sister let me stay at her place but she says “you can stay here but you can’t drink.” And then she comes down I go to sleep in the basement and she says “I smell liquor in you. You can’t (incoherent).” (man 7, mid 40’s, high school graduate, Latino, single)

At the end his statement I couldn’t understand what he was saying because he was slurring his words.

***Family or friend conflict: conflict with brother***

Another code was that 3 men said they had a negative relationship with their brother.

Man 6 described to me that he stayed with his brother for two years until an argument caused man 6 to leave voluntarily:

“And then uh...I was sittin’ outside like I like to read a lot you know and uh (incoherent) so when you come in make sure you come in uh with you shoes off. I said “what?” He said “come on in with your shoes off.” (laughter) “man I just got through (incoherent) the house.” I said “you know what you can have this house and you can shove it man

you know I'm bookin' man." (man 6, mid 60's, Native American, Incomplete high school, Widower)

Man 6 chuckled a little while he recounted the story that led him onto the streets. It seemed like man 6 felt his previous behavior was irrational. He said later in the interview that sometime later when he left his brother's place, his brother asked him to move back in. Man 6 said he chose to stay on the streets because he had become familiar with homelessness. Man 9 described conflict with his brother was due to man 9's parents dying and man 9's brother obtaining power of attorney. I asked man 9 where he was staying before homelessness:

"I was staying at my mom and dad had a house on thirty-fifth and Garfield. And then after she passed my mom passed away daddy was livin' in it he let my brother to power of attorney and he got a brand new house a brand new car and after daddy died he took every all of daddy's stuff. And told me and my brother we had to leave." (man 9, mid 60's, African American, Incomplete high school, Divorced)

Man 9 said he has not spoken to the brother that kicked him out. Man 11 explained to me that he is saving the little money he has by being homeless. He said he would rather be homeless than stay with his family:

"So I decided rather than live with my family because and (incoherent) we'd end up killing each other so I decided "well I'll just sleep in the shelters until this property sells." Well it hasn't sold yet." (man 11, 61, Caucasian, Bachelor's degree, Single)

The property that man 11 was telling me about was a condominium in Denver that man 11 lived in before he spent most of his inheritance. Man 11 said his family does not approve of his homeless lifestyle, this seems to further the conflict:

"Yeah they try to say 'well your shaming the family and this and that' and I say "well I don't care." (man 11, 61, Caucasian, Bachelor's degree, Single)

***Family or friend conflict: friends kicked out because not paying***

One interesting code was "friends kicked out because not paying". I asked man 1 why he stayed at night shelters rather than some other place, and whether he had friends in the area.

Man 1 said:

“Yeah I stayed with friends. ...but you know you run out of money you run out of friends.”  
(man 1, mid 40’s, Latino, GED, Single)

So then I asked him if he was paying his friends. He responded:

“No you know I was buying pizza and beer and stuff...”(man 1, mid 40’s, Latino, GED, Single)

I then assumed from this statement that when man 1 could no longer afford to buy pizza and beer his friends pushed him out. Man 1 stated in reply:

“Yeah well, their wives did, their girlfriends did. “Tell em”” You know, “tell em I’m homeless.” ‘I don’t care he aint got money he aint buying booze.’ ” (man 1, mid 40’s, Latino, GED, Single)

### ***Unable to stay with family or friends***

Another theme called: “Unable to stay with family or friends” emerged. This theme means homeless individuals did not have family or friends to stay with for some reason other than conflict with family or friends. Figure 6 breaks this theme down into its categories and codes.

- Unable to stay with family or friends
  - No friends to stay with
    - Friends are homeless too, or unable to provide shelter
    - Apartment rules don’t allow for others to stay
  - No family contact information
    - Family lives in another state

**Figure 6**

***Unable to stay with family or friends: apartment rules do not allow for others to stay***

Two men stated that apartment rules did not allow for these men to stay with their family or friends. Man 8 described to me that he had friends with housing in the Denver area but their housing rules stated that no other individual could stay there. Man 8 stated:

“No if you’re going...all all the friends that I know have uh they all live apartments and they have the same sort of uh...uh rules in their lease as for letting people stay that pretty much the standard is that you can have overnight guests for fourteen days and uh either one quarter or one half year depending on the lease.” (man 8, mid 20’s, Caucasian, GED, Married)

***Unable to stay with family or friends: friends are homeless too, or unable to provide shelter***

Another participant, Man 12 was in prison, but at the time of the interview he was on parole and spending his day at *St. Francis Center*. My perception is that he was in his mid-50’s and Caucasian. I first asked him: “Are you homeless because you want to be?” He replied:

“I am homeless because I’m on parole.”

I asked him further: “Alright. Um, I guess why come to the night shelters rather than a friend’s place or family, things like that?” His response was similar to that of man 8:

“Cuz most of my friends are...either homeless themselves or they’re in a place where they can’t...put me up.” (man 12, mid- 50’s, white, high school graduate)

***Unable to stay with family or friends: family lives in another state***

Later I asked man 8 about staying with family. He said that his mom passed away recently and he has other family members but no way to reach them:

“Uh, the closest family I have uh are in somewhere in Kansas and I don’t have contact information for them.” (man 8, mid 20’s, Caucasian, GED, Married)

***Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting shelter from family or friends***

Snow and Anderson's (1987) study which looked at identity construction within the categories of embracement, distancing, and fictive storytelling; sheds some insight on the reason for the several men in the Denver study stating that they chose to be homeless rather than live with family or friends. Snow and Anderson (1987) say that the individuals who have been homeless for a lengthy time tend to embrace their homeless identity more than those individuals who are new to homelessness.

Seven men in the study held an attitude of independence, were older, and several had been homeless for a lengthier time. This indicated that embracement of independence rather than staying with family or friends would be salient. The same embracement appears to be true for the men who reported having too much pride to stay with family or friends, or not wanting to be a burden to family or friends. Pride and burden seemed to have similar characteristics as independence in the data, so they are under the theme of independence. Figure 7 below shows the theme "Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting shelter from family or friends", broken down into categories.

- Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting shelter from family or friends
  - Does not want to burden family or friends by living with them
    - Wants to let children live their lives
  - Too much pride to live with family or friends
    - Cope with homelessness by maintaining autonomy and self-respect

### **Figure 7**

#### ***Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting shelter from family or friends***

Independence emerged from the data usually during discussions about options to stay with family or friends. I gathered from the coding process that desiring independence had a lot to do with self-respect and pride as a way of coping with the homeless lifestyle. Independence seemed to emerge from the data after I asked man 13 about staying with his family. He quickly added that his family has offered for him to move in with them, but that as long as he's taking care of his health, other life circumstances don't bother him. I then asked: "You like being independent you're an adult you do your own thing?" He responded:

"Yeah pretty much." (man 13, mid 50's, African American, high school graduate, Married).

I asked him again because I did not want to ask a leading question. "Is that kind of part of it?"

He said:

"Yeah pretty much yeah yeah." (man 13, mid 50's, African American, high school graduate, Married).



Man 5 has been homeless for many years because he has physical and mental disabilities. He uses the night shelters in Denver and seems to be happy with them. I asked about staying with family or friends instead. He said most of his family is no longer living but some of them live in Arkansas where is he from. He added that he won't go back home unless he is nearing the end of his life. Then I asked him: "What about staying with friends?"

"My friends most of the ones I had they has passed I don't care (incoherent) I don't care to stay with anyone else I like being on my own independent cuz you know you have no problems you know." (man 5, 67 years old, African American, High school graduate, Single)

I asked him further about why he wouldn't want to stay with friends. He responded:

"Its more independence (incoherent). You can stay with people but you never know if they wanna be bothered with your you know my likes or they dislikes or discomfort. And then I'm sick also (incoherent). Like I said I earned my keep up here." (man 5, 67 years old, African American, High school graduate, Single)

When man 5 said "I earned my keep up here", he was referring to working at the shelter consistently in order to maintain a bed for himself. His job at the shelter and sense of independence seemed to be more fulfilling than moving in with family or friends.

Man 16 had a wife and daughter that were killed in a drunken driving accident. After this incident man 16 developed a negative outlook on life and eventually lost good paying jobs. He either stays at night shelters or camps. I asked him: "Well okay um, did you have options to stay at friend's places? I think you mentioned earlier staying with friends." Man 16 responded:

"Yeah well I mean I paid rent, part of it." (man 16, Caucasian, 59 years old, Bachelor's degree, Widower)

Then I asked: "Oh okay, why not continue staying with em', because of the money issue or..?"

Man 16 said:

"Uh; no because I prefer to have my own household. And camping is my own household." (man 16, Caucasian, 59 years old, Bachelor's degree, Widower)

Man 16 went on to say that independence is very important to him, even if that means being homeless and outside.

***Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting shelter from family or friends: does not want to burden family or friends by living with them***

I did not have questions relating to burdening family or friends. However, as I talked with participants about living with family or friends as an alternative to being homeless, six men said they were concerned about burden. When looking at the interview data, burden seemed to be similar to independence. That is, a homeless individual decides not to impose himself on family or friends because they don't want to produce a challenging living environment for their loved ones. They also believe they can survive on their own without the shelter provided by family or friends. Man 17 said that he was staying with a family in Denver for a while but they moved away:

“So, but and I, I play, I I play pretty much solo. And I like to stay by myself.” (Man 17, 61, Caucasian, high school graduate, Married).

Then I asked him about staying with his parents in Seattle, Washington, he responded:

“I don't think so because they're getting, pretty old and they really don't they don't need to be taking care of me. I'm too old.” (Man 17, 61, Caucasian, high school graduate, Married)

It seems that this man does not want to burden his elderly parents with his challenges.

Man 3 has COPD and emphysema. He stays at night shelters or on the streets. I asked him why he doesn't stay with his family. His response indicated that he does not want to add to his children's challenges:

“No cuz they got kids of their own...you know how it is. I don't know if you've ever had kids or not like that but..you out workin you gotta wife you got kids you trying to support them you can't got time try to support everybody else. Nowadays it's a r—its hard.” (man 3, mid 50's, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

I then asked: “So you’re worried it would be a burden?”

“No uh uh I ain’t gonna do that. Cuz uh..my dad had his business...I didn’t really realize till after I got married and living in a house paying rent and buying groceries and all that.” (man 3, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

Shortly after he added:

“Yeah then you get into things like “how’s he able to do all that?” back then compared to the way it is now...it’d be a lot harder now doing that. Cuz (incoherent) NO I wouldn’t put myself burden on them.” (man 3, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

Based on man 3’s experience growing up with his dad working hard to provide for his family, man 3 does not want to make life any more difficult for his children by living with them. Man 2 told me that he believes he is too young to move in with his children, he wants to work more.

Man 2 described:

“Oh yeah.. yeah like I said I’m still young enough...so I could still do things on my own..i can still work..i mean..if I was had to be in a old old age home or somethin’ like that then I’d probably go ahead and talk to the family.” (man 2, 60, Indian, High school graduate, Divorced)

I asked him if he thought the reason for not staying with his children was prideful. He responded:

“Yeah that...I don’t know if you wanna call it pride.... But that’s the way I look at it you know..i I raised them they got their own families they’ve got their own problems. They don’t need an additional one.” (man 2, 60, Indian, High school graduate, Divorced)

It appears that man 2 would rather be homeless than cause an extra problem for his family by living with them. Man 19 moved from Philadelphia to Denver to start a new life. He was unable to stay with family in Denver due to subsidized housing capacity rules. I asked man 19 if there were any other people in the area he could stay with including friends. Man 19 responded:

“I- I- I- have a couple people but (coughs) you know I I was working and I was given em’ a few dollars here and there to stay for a night or two or whatever. But, I’m not workin’ now cuz I’m going to school full time, so.” (man 19, 46, African American, High school graduate, Divorced)

Man 19 did not elaborate as to why he discontinued staying with friends. Given the statement though, since he did not mention anything about friends asking him to leave due to no payment; it seems logical to conclude that man 19 chose to discontinue staying with friends because he did not want to burden them with his presence if he was unable to pay them.

***Being independent while homeless is more important than accepting shelter from family or friends: Too much pride to live with family or friends***

Similar to independence and burden, my interview did not include direct questions pertaining to pride; this attitude emerged from the data with the discussion on living with family or friends. Pride is a category within the theme of independence because of the 4 men who reported pride being a reason for not staying with family; pride seemed to hold with it a connotation of ownership for the homeless individual. The four homeless men seemed to feel that they had ownership of their homeless lifestyle by choosing to not live with family, and this brought about pride and feeling independent. Man 9 described conflict he had with one brother, but then he added that he had other siblings. I asked him if these other family members had offered for him to stay with them. Man 9 replied:

“No. And I ain’t asked em’.” (man 9, mid 60’s, African American, Incomplete high school, Divorced)

I asked further if it was an issue of burdening his family members. He responded:

“No, it’s just my pride I don’t wanna beg from them.” (man 9, mid 60’s, African American, Incomplete high school, Divorced)

Man 10 had a similar conflict with some of his siblings like man 9, but he said he has others that he is on good terms with. One of these brothers invited him to his place for Thanksgiving. I asked man 10 why he doesn’t ask them for help again. Man 10 responded:

“I don’t ask them for nothing.” (man 10, mid 50’s, Caucasian, GED, Divorced)

I asked further: “Why is that? Man 10 stated:

“Pride I guess.” (man 10, mid 50’s, Caucasian, GED, Divorced)

I asked further if it was burden too, or just pride. Man 10 explained:

“Mmmm because I know I got...my part time job and... And then plus the food stamps and...just my pride I guess.” (man 10, mid 50’s, Caucasian, GED, Divorced)

### ***Lack of employment***

The next major theme that appeared in the data was “Lack of employment”, which was a reason provided by many men for not being able to afford housing. Figure 8 below shows this theme along with its categories.

- Lack of Employment
  - Laid off
  - Can’t obtain job due to age
  - Can’t get job due to jail time
  - Lost job due to money addiction
  - Can’t get job due to disability
    - Physical
    - Mental
  - Lack of motivation due to alcoholism

### **Figure 8**

Research conducted by Snow and Anderson (1990) noted that the homeless typically includes large numbers of people with disabilities and lack of social contacts. They list five types of homeless disabilities, these include: physical health issues, mental illness, substance abuse,

criminal behavior, and low levels of social support (Snow and Anderson 1990). Khanna (2011) and O'Brien (2011) write about the large number of war veterans in the U.S. with mental and physical disabilities after 2008. They say that veterans have much difficulty acquiring jobs due to their disabilities, so many of them become homeless. I did not set out to interview homeless war veterans though, so it was unexpected to me that 6 of the men in the Denver study had physical health problems in which they cannot work. Then again however, a majority of the men in the Denver study were over 50, and had more life experience and thus more likely to have a physical disability than an individual in his 20's or 30's. Therefore, the large number of men with physical disabilities makes more sense for this study.

***Lack of employment: physical disability***

One man whom I interviewed told me about the jobs he held throughout his life. Then he went on to say how he was not able to work anymore because he smoked much of his life and this led to acquiring COPD and Emphysema. In the passage below the man expressed the way in which he used to look at the homeless before he was unable to work. He said that now he thinks other non-homeless view him as lazy:

“People see me, ‘why doesn’t he get a job?’ ‘Well..I can’t get a job. One of the reasons like I said...I got COPD and emphysema. They can’t see the inside of me. The only thing they see hey I can work. Well I can’t work..I go to work and I can’t breathe.” (man 3, mid 50’s, Caucasian, high school graduate, Divorced ).

Man 1, a Hispanic man about 50 years old, had a story similar to Man 3 about becoming disabled and not being able to work anymore. He explained that he injured himself on his job, and that radically changed his life:

“Well I was doing a lot of work. You know..mechanic, backyard mechanic working for other people. An then I was...got messed up and I couldn’t make a fist or even hold a damn hammer. You know...” (man 1, mid 40’s, Latino, GED, Single )

Man 1 has been unable to work since the injury, and he receives a disability check each month.

Man 5 is 67 and cannot work due to physical disabilities. He is a Vietnam war veteran and developed post traumatic stress syndrome due to the war and he also told me he had a brain aneurism. It was very difficult to understand him in the interview, probably due to his mental health. Very incoherently he described his arthritis, seizures, and gout as well as war experience:

“Yeah I’m a war veteran Vietnam war veteran. Tried to get benefits (incoherent) cuz I have seizures and I have (incoherent) arthritis all through my joints everything from- (I interrupt him) Yeah I have and you have I got gout while at the Mission didn’t know that through the V.A. I had gout. (incoherent) these swelling in bones. (incoherent) arthritis through my joints...that’s from uh Korea sixty-seven sixty-eight I was over there. (incoherent) That got me homeless that’s where got me started over there.” (man 5, 67 years old, African American, high school graduate )

Man 15 has a bad hip due to old age. He is a homeless man of German heritage, and he lost his computer technician job in 2008. After losing his job he looked for similar jobs for a while but then became discouraged and gave up on his search. He now works temp jobs in Denver for a meager income, but he said sometimes he is not able to work these jobs because they are typically hard labor and he has a weak hip:

“But I mean most of the stuff I have a I have a I have a bad hip and so most of the stuff that they offer which is predominantly construction and all that I mean I mean I simply can’t do it.” (man 15, mid 60’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced )

***Lack of employment: mental disability***

Mercier and Picard (2011) note that there is often an association between mental illness and disability, and poverty. They studied 68 homeless men and women with mental issues in Montreal. The researchers wanted to determine what these homeless men and women stated as a major determinant for becoming homeless. Sixty percent stated mental health issues were their main determinant for becoming homeless (Mercier and Picard 2011). Mental illnesses were not as prevalent as physical disabilities but were reported by three Denver study participants for not

being employed. Man 8 appeared to be in his mid-20's and he said to me that he has been on social security disability since 1996. He explained that he has seizures, this explanation came out when he was telling me about why he stays at night shelters:

“Uh, to stay out of the elements. I have health uh, I have health conditions where I have seizures that can be triggered by both heat and cold.” (man 8, mid 20's, Caucasian, GED, Married)

Later when he told me about being on SSDI (Social Security Disability), I asked him what he was receiving disability for and I iterated that he has seizures. Man 8 responded:

“Well those were those those started later my initial diagnoses were uh Aspergers disorder and uh bi-polar, and major depressive disorder.” (man 8, mid 20's, Caucasian, GED, Married)

I asked him further if having these mental illnesses negatively influenced his homeless lifestyle.

He replied:

“It makes it harder for me uh the major depressive disorder makes it harder for me to follow through because there are some days that I well actually nowadays it seems like most days I just wanna lay my head down do nothing.” (man 8, mid 20's, Caucasian, GED, Married)

Man 5 was described earlier due mainly to his physical disabilities, he also has mental health issues that do not allow him to work. I asked him if mental health influenced his homeless circumstance and he answered:

“Well let me see I've been to psychiatrists...I'm a Vietnam veteran and I've been to see and I have a primary care doctor from V.A. and I'm going to one now like I told ya I had a aneurism (incoherent) in my head now yeah. So I'm going through it right now...I've been locked up, not locked up been in (incoherent) institution for Vietnam veteran.” (man 5, 67, African American, High school graduate, Single)

He further explained that he has Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Then I asked him if his PTSD weighs on him:

“Well I uh...I did good until I had my first stroke see my whole left side (incoherent) I had a stroke (incoherent) PTSD I didn't know what it was (incoherent) called it physical disability Vietnam I didn't know what it was. A lot of veterans we don't know till we



exposed we been exposed to a atmosphere and climate we don't know anything about...chemical warfare and everything man you don't know till you come home. Sixty days (incoherent) that was from sixty...from the sixties to the seventies eighties (incoherent) now its even worse my friend (incoherent) the guys come back from Iraq my gosh whatever they're using over there man (incoherent)." (man 5, 67, African American, High school graduate, Single)

***Lack of employment: can't obtain job due to age***

Age was a significant path that led to homelessness for several of the men in the Denver study. Dennis and Thomas (2007) studied the pros and cons of having younger and older people working. The advantage of having an employee who is 50 or older is that they are experienced, loyal, have a positive attitude, and respect authority. The negative aspects of an older employee from an employer's perspective are that they are not flexible, not able to use technology, and are more expensive than younger employees (Dennis and Thomas 2007). Among the Denver study participants, three men who were all approximately in their mid to late 50's, said they did not think any employer would hire them due to their age.

Man 2 is sixty-one, and he's been laid off since 2008. He described that he believes his age is affecting his appeal to employers:

"Uh..got laid off from work about three four years ago...during that big nation wide layoff and all that. And I haven't been able to find a job since. Uh..i guess basically it might be due to my age. Uh...I don't know, because a lot of things I'm qualified for. I just haven't been called." (man 2, 60 years old, Indian, High school graduate, Divorced)

Man 16 is fifty-nine and is trying to improve his life by getting a job. He has various interests but is concerned that his age could be an obstacle in finding work. He spoke to me about his interests:

"I would've loved to go back to school go back to college I'm great in languages and architecture, I speak Spanish fluently." (man 16, 59, Caucasian, Bachelor's degree, Widower)

He went on to tell me about his immediate goals:

“And what I wanna do is get housing so I can get back in the program you know get back on the you know to work and become a responsible citizen again. You know all that kinda...” (man 16, 59, Caucasian, Bachelor’s degree, Widower)

Then he continued with his frustrating reality:

“But I don’t, I’m not getting those opportunities, I’m fifty-nine years old; they’d much rather higher somebody whose way better at a computer than I am or you know...” (man 16, 59, Caucasian, Bachelor’s degree, Widower)

***Lack of employment: can’t get a job due to jail time***

Claggion (2008) maintained that ex-inmates had a difficult time acquiring housing once released. This finding is similar to the Denver study participants who stated that it’s difficult to obtain a job once released. Two men in the study said obtaining a job is difficult with a criminal background. Man 12 was on parole at the time of the interview and seemed depressed about his circumstances. I asked man 12 about his criminal background and he responded:

“Uh...plain and simple I did something wrong and...I’m gonna pay for it.” (man 12, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Married)

I then asked him if, once he becomes a free citizen, he will have trouble getting housing and a job. He replied:

“Um, I’ll have certain restrictions I’ll have to live with.” (man 12, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Married)

***Lack of employment: laid off***

Three men stated being laid off as a reason for not currently having a job. Man 2 who was referenced earlier for not being able to find a job due to his age, was laid off during a recession. I asked him at the beginning of the interview if he was homeless by choice and he replied:

“No, not homeless by choice. Uh..got laid off from work about three four years ago...during that big nation wide layoff and all that. And I haven’t been able to find a job since.” (man 2, 60, Indian, High school graduate, Divorced)

Man 15 very similarly said he lost his computer technician job during an economic recession.

He went on to say that he searched for a new job in the same field but with no luck:

“And unfortunately in those years what I’m doing most of those most of those jobs simply have disappeared.” (mid 60’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

I asked him if he also lost his housing while he searched for work and he stated:

“Well that was basically that was basically that was basically the result of it I mean I was basically going through my savings and trying to find a job but I didn’t find anything suitable actually I didn’t find anything at all.” (mid 60’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

***Lack of employment: lost job due to money addiction***

The most unique reason within the theme “lack of employment” was reported by man 4.

Man 4 lost his job due to becoming involved in a money scam. We started the interview by talking about the path that led him to homelessness:

“Um...just uh..i guess I have to say spending getting involved in a scenario that was probably in a lot of ways..almost parallel to an addiction.” (man 4, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

I asked if he was implying something like gambling:

“Yeah but not actually going to the gambling table per se. But yeah...thinking that uh.. you know..your gonna get something on the other end. And um...so then it was just a process of events that took place.” (man 4, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

He continued and said he thought he was going to eventually come out of this endeavor with more gains but was sadly mistaken:

“Yeah and you know basically I suppose uh..a good way to lay it out is..more of a scam than anything else...type scenario. But it’s the old story “my gosh I’m this far in I know I don’t have far to go and I’ll be on the other side of it. Umm... there really is no other side...uh you end up kinda really in a black hole. So to speak...your going backwards your not going forwards.” (man 4, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

Later in the interview he explained that the company he was working for let him go:

“Yeah I mean it just kinda spiraled forward. And then in uh June of 2011. Was it June? NO it was June of 2010. June of 2010 my car went away so I was driving a company at that time a company vehicle. And then the company let me go uh..late January...of 2011.” (man 4, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

I asked if they were laying people off in general and he replied that it was due to his lack of focus at work and his preoccupation with his money making endeavor :

“No it was just uh..pretty much what was going on with me was really affecting me totally.” (man 4, mid 50’s, Caucasian, High school graduate, Divorced)

### **Attitudes Against Using Night Shelters in Denver**

A large number of the homeless men in the Denver study had negative things to say about staying at night shelters in metro Denver. Ogden and Avades (2011) interviewed 8 homeless individuals about their thoughts on social services and homeless shelters. Three major categories arose from their data: responsibility, identity, and feeling trapped (Ogden and Avades 2011). The category that pertains the most to my study is “feeling trapped.” This refers to shelters being too authoritarian and guests having little control (Ogden and Avades 2011). An article by Hoffman and Coffey (2008) also commented on shelter staff saying they are disrespectful and rude to guests. Half of the men in my study said that night shelter rules are too strict and unnecessary. Conley (1996) interviewed forty-two homeless adults about reasons why it has been difficult for them to get off the streets. Conley discovered two reasons why the individuals he interviewed discontinued staying at night shelters after only a brief stay. The threat of one’s items being stolen, and with that, being physically harmed; and secondly, shelters are unsanitary places (Conley 1996). Similarly, the Denver study indicated that theft, violence, and unclean conditions are major reasons to not use night shelters.

#### ***Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules***

The theme “night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules” became the most prominent of the themes for attitudes toward night shelters. This theme emerged from the interviews in discussion on night shelter rules and policies. With this theme came four categories including: “Guests belongings”, “shelter hours”, “slow process when entering a

shelter”, and “rules change frequently”. Within each of those categories there were specific responses. The specific responses became codes, and the codes with the most number of men are displayed. Figure 9 displays the theme “Too many strict and unnecessary night shelter rules” as well as the categories and codes that aligned with this theme.

- Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules
  - Guest’s belongings
    - Guests are forced to leave belongings outside, could be stolen
  - Shelter hours
    - Shelter hours are unaccommodating for those who work
  - Slow process when entering a shelter
    - Guests must wait in line a long time for screening
  - Rules change frequently
    - Frequently changing rules makes evening stressful, may be penalized for not following rules

**Figure 9**

***Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules: guests’ belongings***

Man 20 has been homeless since 2008. He said he prefers to sleep outside if the weather accommodates but when it gets cold he’s forced to use night shelters. He has used a night shelter called the Samaritan House many times, but recently one of the rules has turned him off:

“The only thing I don’t like about Samaritan House is um, if you’ve got gear that won’t fit on your mat, you gotta leave it outside, to get stolen.” (man 20, Caucasian, mid 60’s, High school graduate, Widower).

After a brief pause he added:

“Now that’s one reason I don’t sleep there.” (man 20, Caucasian, mid 60’s, High school graduate, Widower).

Man 3 has been homeless since about March of 2005. He stayed at Samaritan House for about 3 months consistently. Recently however he decided to stay outside due to the same rule that upset man 20:

“Well. The Samaritan...they got rules now, when you go into overflow, all your backpacks and bags and all...you gotta leave them outside...and I’m not gonna leave my stuff outside anybody can take what they want.” (man 3, Caucasian, mid 50’s, High school graduate, Divorced)

Man 20 continued to emphasize the strictness of Samaritan House. He said that the room that the mats go into could easily be used to hold the homeless men’s belongings. Unfortunately however, that is not an option for the men:

“Basically. Now they got a room over there, that holds all those mats. How hard is it, for the guys to go in there, they got a bag.... put the put the gear right in the room where those mats come out of.” (man 20, Caucasain, mid 60’s, High school graduate, Widower)

### ***Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules: shelter hours***

Two homeless men told me that night shelter hours are not accommodating, especially if you have a job. Man 11 has been homeless for around 5-8 years in Denver. Over the course of his adult life he spent much of his inheritance money, so the last 5-8 years he has been saving the little money he has left by staying at night shelters. Most of that time he has stayed at Samaritan House. Man 11 had an issue with the hours night shelters are available. He described that men who work until late at night find themselves stuck on the street:

“I think they could improve the hours I mean they’re they’re real rigid on the hours I think that they should have something twenty four seven so people that are getting off

work can get in. Sometimes you know they they don't let anybody after eleven go in there. But what if you work eight to twelve? You're out on the street." (man 11, Caucasian, 61, Bachelor's degree, Single)

Man 16 said that he works for a company handing out fliers, and the shelter hours often do not accommodate to his schedule:

"Okay. And then um I I do fliers right now so I work at six I come back here and everything's closed. " (man 16, Caucasian, 59, bachelor's degree, Widower)

***Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules: slow process when entering a shelter***

Two men spoke about frustrations with rules and having to wait in a long line before being allowed in a night shelter:

"There's some kind of psychological issue with them I think, a lot of them didn't pass a police exam so they're security people and they're you know they look down on us yeah they do. I mean they wouldn't let us in til nine o'clock. They don't care if it's you know, hurricane sally out there they won't let you in." (man 11, Caucasian, 61, bachelor's degree, Single)

Man 17 had been homeless for about 2-3 months at the time of the interview. He has used night shelters about 30-40 times. He said that due to media attention of long lines at one of the night shelters in the winter, one of the night shelters was under harsh scrutiny:

"Yeah, a- a- it'sll, sometimes you gotta stay in line three four hours, you know it's, they had channel nine news over here. Couple years back, and it was ten below zero, and they weren't even lettin' people in everybody's out there, the news recorded all that. That was the last day they did that. Cuz it went right on channel nine news." (man 17, Caucasian, 61, High school graduate, Married)

***Night shelters have too many strict and unnecessary rules: rules change frequently***

Five men said that night shelter rules are not only too strict, but they also change too frequently and without notice. Man 3 said that night shelter rules are not written up and made visible. This enables the night shelter staff to change rules as frequently as they like:

"Well see they don't put no rules on paper. That way they can change em' when they want to. It its on paper then you can hold em' to it. If its not on paper...they can change

their mind when they want to.” (man 3, Caucasian, mid 50’s, high school graduate, Divorced)

Man 15, a homeless man in his late sixties from Germany has used night shelters in Denver about 50-100 times. He prefers to sleep outside, but he said that recently much of his winter gear was stolen so he has been unable to avoid utilizing night shelters. He stated a frustration about night shelter rules:

“Um as far as Jesus Saves (night shelter) is concerned what what I find what I find incredibly annoying is that their rules and whatever they have (incoherent) going changes on on a whim. You know and then they they do things I mean literally they do things one day this way you come back the next night everything is different. Nobody bothers to elaborate, the PC’s don’t know anything about that.” (man 15, Caucasian, mid 60’s, High school graduate, Divorced)

Man 15 did not elaborate on what he meant by “PC’s”, but I assume it means something similar to night shelter staff. Man 18, a white man in his late sixties was homeless at the time of the interview because he had not received his social security check yet. He stated that he has used the shelters many times and that night shelter rules changing could be due to a high turnover rate among night shelter staff:

“And they seem to change all the time too I mean every every week it seems there’s something different some new rule some new guy comes in and decides he wants to do something this way or that way.” (man 18, Caucasian, mid 60’s, Master’s degrees, Divorced)

### ***Shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men***

Ogden and Avades (2011) collected data from eight homeless men and women in Great Britain in order to ascertain their attitudes on service providers. These researchers determined three themes in their interviews. These themes included: responsibility, identity, and feeling trapped. These service providers were not specifically homeless shelters, but service providers and homeless shelters have some parallels. Several of the participants in the study said that



they felt stigmatized and judged by service providers (Ogden and Avades 2011; Lyon-Callo 2000).

When coding the Denver study transcripts, I discovered complaints from men about being looked down on and judged. There was also one comment about staff being racist. These comments became codes and they came about because I asked the men if they felt stigmatized at night shelters. Their responses formed the following categories: “shelter staff stigmatize men”, and “shelter staff is racist toward men”. A theme arose from these categories that is identified as “shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men”. Four of the men in the Denver study said they have felt stigmatized by night shelters, and one man mentioned racism being a factor. Below is Figure 10, which shows a visual of the theme and its categories and codes.

- Shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men
  - Shelter staff stigmatizes men
    - Men feel judged and looked down on
  - Shelter staff is racist toward men

**Figure 10**

***Shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men: shelter staff stigmatizes men***

Man 11 had some heavy criticisms of Denver night shelters. He said that night shelter staff stigmatizes guests and they enjoy it:

“Oh clearly. Oh yeah there is there is a definite hierarchy and they. I think it’s because they’re mad because they have to pay mortgage and rent and so on and were not, we’re marching in there and going to bed. Especially the security there, they’re so, they’re downright mean. I mean they’re downright horrible people, and they enjoy it.” (man 11, Caucasian, 61, Bachelor’s degree, Single)

Man 12 has been homeless off and on since 2001, and was homeless at the time of the interview due to being on parole. Man 17 was newly homeless and hadn't used the night shelters many times. Both men 12 and 17 responded that they sometimes feel stigmatized by the night shelter staff. I asked man 17 if the night shelter staff sometimes makes him feel underclass, he responded:

“Sometimes the staff do.” (man 17, Caucasian, mid 60's, High school graduate, Married)

***Shelter staff is disrespectful to homeless men: shelter staff is racist toward men***

Man 11 went on to say that there may also be racism as a driving force:

“You know and uh, uh I think there's some uh inadvertent racism involved. And I think that uh uh, like I say there's some class distinction that people that have been there for a while think the newbies are you know less than they are and. There's some strange dynamics you know.” (man 11, Caucasian, 61, Bachelor's degree, Single)

***Some shelters are lacking in rules***

In contrast to the theme “Night shelter rules are strict and unnecessary” which had many comments associated with it, the opposite theme appeared in the data among 5 men. This theme was “Some shelters are lacking in rules.” This theme was broken down into more specific codes and categories. The category with the most men included “shelters accept intoxicated guests” with four men forming criticisms. The other categories only have one participant per category with a comment so were not included. Figure 11 below provides a visual.

- Some shelters are lacking in rules
  - Shelters accept intoxicated guests
    - Encourages alcoholism
    - Fighting
    - Disruptive behavior
  - Shelters don't enforce being quiet at night
    - Can't sleep
  - Shelters don't check for weapons
    - Fighting occurs at shelters

### Figure 11

#### *Some shelters are lacking in rules: shelters accept intoxicated guests*

Man 2 has been homeless for about 3-4 years after being laid off. He has used Denver night shelters hundreds of times. He said that things are calmer at night shelters without alcohol involved:

“Like at the Denver Rescue Mission they don't uh..give anybody breathalyzer tests—go in drunk and all this. They do that at Crossroads also cuz I stayed there for awhile. And Samaritan House you have to blow zero on a breathalyzer and no alcohol whatsoever to get in. So things are a little more calmer.” (man 2, Indian, 60, high school graduate, divorced)

Man 2 explained to me that he believes night shelters should be stricter and not allow homeless that have been drinking, into the shelter. It seems that man 2 is saying that shelters that don't breathalyze are allowing men who spend their money to get intoxicated, a place to stay.

Man 19 has been homeless for about a month and a half and has used night shelters about 25 times. He complained about guests being intoxicated, disruptive, and fighting:

“Uh the rules are basically general I like I said one of the main rules is when you go upstairs you got to take a shower. Uh no fighting, no fighting is tol- tolerated um, you have to be respectful of people, people do a lot of cussin’ while chapel’s goin’ on stuff like that people come in drunk. Which I don’t see why, they know the people that drinks every day, and come in, and get loud and belligerent doin’ the service. Which I I hate, I hate that, but, my thing is why do you keep letting the same people in if they gonna keep doin’ the same thing? You know, so I have a problem with that, but, it’s their rules, you know, you just fod- f- follow their rules and, they stay’ll be as comfortable as you make it.” (man 19, African American, 46, high school graduate, divorced)

### *Shelter guests are disruptive*

Another theme which appeared in the data: “Shelter guests are disruptive”, was similar to the theme “Some shelters are lacking in rules”. The main difference was that the comments that generated the theme “Some shelters are lacking in rules” were criticisms directed at the shelter *rules* for allowing guests into the shelter that are intoxicated, loud, or physically belligerent. The theme “Shelter guests are disruptive” includes criticisms specifically about the rude behavior that some guests bring which make the stay at shelters very unpleasant. Figure 12 below displays a visual for the theme “Shelter guests are disruptive”.

- Shelter guests are disruptive
  - Dangerous atmosphere
    - Guests use drugs
    - Guests fight each other
    - Guests steal items
  - Guests are too loud at night
    - Unable to sleep

**Figure 12**

***Shelter guests are disruptive: guests are too loud at night***

Nine men had specific complaints about the men who use night shelters. Four men stated that other men at night shelters are too loud at night and it is very difficult to sleep. Man 16, a fifty-nine year old white man has been homeless for several years but has used the night shelters very infrequently because he prefers to stay outside and be independent. Man 16 implied that there should be some rules about being quiet at night because he works in the morning:

“Uh you know there’s no rules about being quiet. People come in here sleep all day, and then talk all night at the shelter. You know it’s annoying. You know they should have some kind of rules that you know, lights out at ten, quiet time boys. People gotta sleep, some people actually go to work.” (man 16, Caucasian, 59, bachelor’s degree, Widower)

Man 9, an African American man complained that guests snore and cough at night. He was frustrated by this due to the health concern, and because this keeps him awake. Similarly, man 17 talked about guests snoring and coughing:

“It It’s terrible. Especially this one over here they put the, (sniffles) if you don’t get a bed upstairs, and you’re required to have a TB card to get get I have that but...you gotta sleep down on the floor, on a mat, and there’s no separation between em’, you got people...you know hittin’ ya at night they’re snoring they’re fartin’ ....and it’s, coughing all night.” (man 17, Caucasian, 61, high school graduate, Married)

***Shelter guests are disruptive: dangerous atmosphere***

Two men said that fights between guests at night shelters occur often and make spending the night at the shelter a frightening experience. Man 15, a man of German heritage has been homeless about 3 years and has used the night shelters very infrequently. He expressed that his cold weather camping gear had recently been stolen so he had no choice but to stay in shelters. He stated that he would rather be outside in the winter and cold than inside a shelter with drugs and violence:

“Um the other thing that, and that’s my main reason why I don’t like going to the shelters is like it it’s all this like...(exhales heavily)...(exhales heavily) for the lack of a better word bad attitude you know; you can never be sure if you go into the bathroom if your stuff is if i- if your stuff is still there there’s not a single evening at at either one of those shelters where the cops don’t show up. You know the fighting the drugs I mean that’s that’s just not an environment that I that I choose to that I choose uh to be in if I have if I have a choice I mean honestly I’d rather be cold then being assaulted I mean (laughs). Plain and simple.” (man 15, Caucasian, mid 60’s, high school graduate, divorced)

Three men complained that guests steal each other’s belongings while asleep. This finding directly relates to Conley’s (1996) study. Man 16 described his frustration with crime at one of the night shelters:

“And uh you know, they want my shoes, they took my friend’s pants over there the other night you know. Um, if they see something they want, and you’re not sleeping on it, it’ll probably be gone in the morning. The theft rate is enor- e- e- enormous.” (man 16, Caucasian, 59, bachelor’s degree, Widower).

Man 19 stated similarly:

“...people you know you’re trying you’re in you’re bunk trying to get sleep people are up all night walkin’ about, people are lookin’ to see what they can steal.” (man 19, African American, 46, high school graduate, divorced)

### ***Night shelter users are unsanitary***

The next theme that was notable in the data had to do with homeless men preferring not to use night shelters because of the other men that use the shelters are coughing and sneezing much of the time and getting others sick. Figure 13 below shows the theme “Night shelter users are unsanitary”.

- Night shelter users are unsanitary
  - Health concern
    - Some guests snore and cough
    - Some guests have bed bugs

**Figure 13**

***Night shelter users are unsanitary: health concern***

Four men said that guests snore and cough through the night, and said it is due to health concerns that they prefer to not stay at some night shelters. I did not think this would be a complaint of Denver night shelters. However, this finding aligns similarly with a study done by Conley (1996) who found that a significant number of adults that attempted to stay at a shelter in New York City to get off the streets did not stay for more than one night before leaving due to the dirty conditions. Man 9, an African American man in his late 60's has been homeless for about 5 years and prefers to stay outside unless the temperature is too cold. He has used the night shelters off and on for about one year. Man 9 talked about the germs that are easily spread at the shelter:

“Yeah but, when you go up in th-- that Mission they snore and they cough they don't cover their mouth and half of em' (incoherent) its mandatory to take a show and they don't. It stinks like hell up in there.” (man 9, African American, mid 60's, incomplete high school, divorced)

Man 14, an African American man in his mid-sixties' has been homeless for about 3 years and has used the shelters about 25 times. He said he prefers to stay outside due to health reasons, similar to man 9:

“Right being outside though, I believe is still more healthier. Cuz you're in a confined room and you got like hundred some people in there and they're coughing and sneezing and there's all your germs.” (man 14, African American, 52, high school graduate, in a relationship)

**Theoretical Analysis**

Symbolic interactionism and conflict theory provide the optimal explanations of homelessness for participants in the Denver study. Based on the results of the study, a major pathway to homelessness for several men was the desire for independence and pride by not

living with family or friends. The symbolic interactionists argue that these older men in the Denver study who desired independence and pride probably felt that they could not maintain these self-concepts by using family and friends as a crutch while being homeless. In order to cope with their homeless struggle, they likely decided that being independent and prideful meant being alone and trying to survive homelessness without family or friends' shelter.

Conflict theory offers an alternative explanation of homelessness for Denver participants. Conflict theorists contend that when a homeless man can no longer work due to a physical disability, those in power who are employers do not want to employ this person because he will not produce as much as someone without a disability; and the employer will lose money. Similarly, if the disabled man applied for subsidized housing and found himself waiting for two years, it is probably because people in power don't want to create low-income housing for the homeless. The people in power do not make a profit from low-income housing. Moreover, conflict theorists maintain that night shelters have many rules because the staff in power want to keep the homeless from getting unruly and overthrowing the shelter. In order for shelter rules to possibly change, homeless people who use the shelter have to voice their complaints to the staff. Through strength in numbers, homeless men can demand changes in shelter rules which could cause drastic changes in power from the shelter staff having complete power and control, to democracy in the operation of night shelters.



## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate homeless men in Denver. The study focused on two major questions: What are the major pathways to homelessness for men in Denver? What are the reasons homeless men in Denver prefer to not utilize night shelters? The literature revealed that drug dependencies, mental illnesses, unemployment, job loss, and the lack of affordable housing are pathways to homelessness (Elliot and Krivo 1991; Ferguson et al 2012; Kertesz and Weiner 2009; North et al 2010; Snow and Anderson 1986, 1987, 1990, 1994). In addition, homeless men who prefer to not use night shelters have this attitude because night shelters tend to be strict and stigmatizing, and non-shelter locations are often more comfortable for these men (Conley 1996; Hoffman and Coffey 2008; Laere et al 2009; Lyon-Callo 2000; Ogden and Avades 2011).

### **Summary of Themes Related to Pathways to Homelessness**

For all of the men in the Denver study, there were several pathways to homelessness. The most notable pathways included subsidized housing waiting lists, physical disability, the lack of family and friends to stay with, and family conflict. These findings are consistent with Snow and Anderson (1993) which found that homelessness typically results from more than one circumstance. For example, the loss of a job and the lack of family support combined with a lack of motivation due to alcoholism could lead to homelessness. A summary of the major themes from the Denver participants is presented below.

#### ***Barriers to housing: subsidized housing wait lists***

An overwhelming number of men said that one of the reasons they were homeless is due to housing issues. I asked all men if they had difficulty acquiring affordable housing. As I

stated in the findings section, affordable housing is a broad term and means different things for different individuals. For those who had some income affordable housing meant subsidized housing, and for those that did not have income affordable housing meant non-subsidized housing. Unexpectedly, nineteen of the men had some type of income which made them eligible for subsidized housing. It became apparent however, that homeless men in Denver confronted two major problems in acquiring subsidized housing. The first problem identified by the participants was the small amount of subsidized housing in the Denver area. Many subsidized housing complexes have waiting lists for prospective tenants. Several of the homeless men indicated that they were on more than one waiting list, and that they had been on the wait list three years. The second problem the participants noted was that subsidized units often have eligibility criteria for future tenants. The participants in the study emphasized that often it was difficult to meet all of these requirements.

Similar to the Denver study of homeless men, Conley (1996) studied a group of homeless adults in New York and found that housing was difficult for them to obtain. However, Conley (1996) did not cite the same reasons as my study for why housing was difficult to obtain. Conley (1996) references that landlords often don't like to rent to homeless individuals because they worry about not getting paid. The Denver study participants revealed other factors such as subsidized housing wait lists, as well as the eligibility criteria as factors that make obtaining subsidized housing more difficult for some.

### ***Family or friend conflict***

In addition to subsidized housing, men in the Denver study had other reasons for not having consistent shelter. A large number of the men said they had conflict between

themselves and a sister, brother, or friends which did not allow for an alternative place to stay. This finding is consistent with research done by Snow and Anderson (1993) who state that a lack of family support can be a factor that pushes an individual toward homelessness.

***Independence, pride, and burden are reasons to not accept shelter from family or friends***

Many of the men in the Denver study said they have family or friends with housing they could stay with, but they valued their independence more. This finding was a shock to me and something I did not find in previous research. This desire for independence seemed to be a coping mechanism while struggling with homelessness. This finding is also an important contribution of the Denver study of homeless men to the literature. For the men in the Denver study, their being over fifty years of age could have contributed to their desire for autonomy and self-reliance.

A few men said they didn't want to burden family or friends by moving in with them, and a few others said they had too much pride to stay with family. There were no studies in the literature that investigated the relationship between homelessness and pride. Only a couple of men said they did not want housing. One of these men had applied for subsidized housing but had been waiting for over three years and had given up on that idea. He had the fallback of moving back home to Mississippi, was currently content staying outside in the woods or by a river. This finding is consistent with Snow and Anderson's (1993) research in Austin, Texas where they discovered a small number of homeless adults who were homeless voluntarily. Snow and Anderson (1993) maintained that voluntary homelessness was very uncommon, and typically occurs with individuals who have been homeless for a long period of time and have accepted the lifestyle.

***Lack of employment: can't obtain job due to age***

Several men in the Denver study felt that they had a difficult time finding a job because of their older age. This finding is similar to the results of a study conducted by Dennis and Thomas (2007) which described several arguments for and against hiring older employees. However, one should use caution when drawing parallels between the Denver study and this article because Dennis and Thomas (2007) studied the negative aspects of employing elderly non-homeless individuals rather than homeless individuals. There were no other studies in the literature that examined the relationship between homelessness and unemployment among older men. The Denver study could be unique because there could be an interaction between age, homelessness, and employment.

***Lack of employment: laid off***

Only a few participants in the Denver study were laid off. Each of these men had additional reasons for not having housing, thus more than one circumstance forming the pathway to homelessness as Snow and Anderson (1993) stated.

***Lack of employment: physical disability***

Consistent with the literature, a large number of participants in the Denver study had difficulty obtaining a job due to a physical disability or injury. Snow and Anderson (1993) noted that having a physical disability can be a factor in losing a job; and Khanna (2011) and O'Brien (2011) discussed the difficulty veterans have in obtaining work due to physical and mental problems associated with war. The purpose of the study was not to interview homeless war veterans though. So it was unexpected that several of the homeless in the Denver study had physical disabilities.

***Lack of employment: mental illness***

Although ten of the men in the Denver study had a mental illness, only three had a mental illness that was severe enough to prevent them from working. Similarly, Ferguson's et al (2012) study of homeless young adults found that locating employment was difficult because of a mental illness. Surprisingly, there were a small number of men in the Denver study with a mental illness. Snow, Baker, and Anderson (1986) argue that mental illness is not as prevalent in the homeless population as the general public may think. Snow et al (1986) states that 15% out of 911 homeless individuals they studied manifested having a mental illness. The researchers note that this is not a meager percentage, but it is a much lower percentage than has been stated in other research on mental illness within the homeless population (Snow et al 1986).

***Alcoholism as a pathway to homelessness***

Only a few participants in the Denver study mentioned that consistent heavy drinking led to their homeless lifestyle. This finding is consistent with Snow, Anderson and Koegel's (1994) conclusion that that there are not as many homeless alcoholics as the public may believe. The results for alcoholism from the Denver study are contradictory because one man was evicted from several apartments because of heavy drinking, while another man seemed to have lacked motivation in getting a job.

**Summary of Themes Related to Attitudes Toward Night Shelters**

In the study of homeless men in Denver, there were several reasons for negative attitudes toward night shelters. For a significant number of men in the Denver study, there were too many strict night shelter rules that change frequently. Previous research on homeless and night shelter usage yielded similar findings. Ogden and Avades (2011) discovered that the homeless in Great

Britain dislike night shelters because one has to be in bed at a certain time. Ogden and Avades (2011) and Hoffman and Coffey (2008) also found that the homeless often feel stigmatized and judged when using services like night shelters.

Some of the men from the Denver study said they felt stigmatized by night shelter staff, and one individual said he felt racism on behalf of the staff. Many of the other complaints by the Denver study participants included things such as: the shelter and guests are unsanitary, guests talk and are too loud at night, theft is very common as well as drug use, and many guests arrive to the shelter intoxicated and this causes fights. Conley's (1996) study of homeless in New York City found similar problems with a high theft rate resulting in violence, as well as shelters being unsanitary. Culhane (1996) studied flaws in poorhouses and shelters of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and found that these facilities were very unsanitary also.

### **Summary of Participant Characteristics**

Two of the men in the Denver study had bachelor's degrees and one had three master's degrees. The literature review did not reveal that the homeless are highly educated. One of the men with a bachelor's degrees said he lost his direction in life after his wife and daughter were killed in a car accident. This led him to become apathetic and downgrade to low paying jobs. Another man with a bachelor's degree held several jobs in his life, but then made the choice to travel and spend all of his inheritance. He became homeless to save his remaining little money. The man with the three master's degrees has had several high paying jobs in his life time, but left them voluntarily and moved to Costa Rica. It was surprising to find that men in the Denver study had graduate degrees because there were no studies in the literature on homelessness and educational attainment. A majority of the participants in the Denver study completed high

school and a few did not finish high school but attained a GED years later. The results indicate that high educational attainment does not protect a person from homelessness.

Most of the men in the Denver study were divorced. There were no studies on marital status and homelessness, but it is reasonable that homelessness would strain a marriage. For example, if a man was divorced, the household he shared with his spouse is no longer available as a shelter. However, several of the Denver participants are currently married. One of these men was homeless along with his spouse, and I actually knew his spouse because he used the same shelter as the participant. Another of these men said his wife and children live in the Eastern United States and he visits occasionally but he prefers to live in Colorado. Two other married men said they were currently married but were separated due to marital difficulties. Thus, homelessness may create undue hardship for men currently married or divorced in the Denver study.

### **Research Limitations**

This study included a larger number of men 50 and older compared to men in their 20's and 30's. During my time of volunteering at St. Francis Center, the men whom I developed more of a rapport with and who seemed agreeable and friendly were older men at the shelter. A few of the men thought it was most likely due to their age that they have been unable to obtain a job; and several more of the men had some type of injury did not allow them to work at the time of the interview. These responses would probably not have been given by men in their 20s and 30s. Perhaps younger men would be more likely to get hired because they are less likely to have injuries due to functional limitations of aging. Moreover, younger men may be less likely to use

pride, not being a burden, and independence as reasons for being homeless as compared to older men who have more life experience.

A problem for this study was my tendency to ask leading questions based on an earlier participant's response to a question. For example, to the question of whether night shelter staff stigmatized guests, if the participant said no, I sometimes would ask: "You mean you don't feel stigmatized? Like you're underclass there?" After I asked this leading question sometimes the participant responded with a different answer.

The questions on housing could have caused the participants to focus on low-income/subsidized housing rather than regular housing. That is, I asked participants if they had experienced difficulty in acquiring "affordable housing". Asking the participants if they had difficulty acquiring "housing" may have generated varied responses.

The men selected for interview in the Denver study were based on my personal interactions as a volunteer at St. Francis Center for a year. I usually asked the people I knew and were friendly to me. If I had asked homeless men I had never met, I may have gotten very different answers. My gender and age may have affected the men's responses to questions. The fact that I am a young white male could have caused socially desirable responses. The two sets of interview questions for the study were structured and may have led to rigid responses for the participants. An unstructured, open-ended interview would have allowed the participants to express their meanings to the study questions.

Undoubtedly, the results of the present study would be different if it included homeless men on the street, or in homeless camps in Denver. Moreover, men who use day shelters may have different paths to homelessness and different attitudes toward night shelters than homeless



men who do not use day shelters. I'm familiar with day shelters, but I have not entered a night shelter in Denver, and I have not had adequate experience observing the homeless on the streets or in camps in Denver. That lack of experience and bias on my part affects the interview questions I asked.

The skew toward older ages, small number of study participants, and homeless day shelter location; impact the reliability and external validity of the study. The internal validity of the current study is limited because a second coder was not used for inter-coder reliability and study participants were not consulted for their perspectives on the analysis and results of the study. Also, the directors and staff of St. Francis Center or Senior Support Services were not asked for their perspectives on the participants to compare with my analysis.

### **Future Research**

Future research on homeless men in Denver should focus on the impact of age on pathways to homelessness and how age impacts attitudes toward night shelters. Perhaps younger homeless men would not struggle with the excess of rules, theft, stigma by staff, physical fights, drug use, and unclean conditions as described by older homeless men. Also, the impact of education and marital status are important to include in the study of homeless men. Because the majority of the men in the Denver study were white, it is important to include racial/ethnic and national diversity in future research. In addition, women and members of the LGBT community should be included in future studies of homelessness.

### **Implications**

The findings from the study of twenty homeless men in Denver, Colorado have policy implications to reduce homelessness and improve the use of night shelters. The results suggest

that more funding should be allocated for subsidized housing and more subsidized housing units need to be created to accommodate the needs of homeless individuals and families. The Denver participants suffered with physical disabilities, mental health issues, and obstacles due to age and criminal records. Consequently, community and social service agencies need to provide multiple and varied types of resources and outreach programs to meet the needs and demands of a diverse homeless population.

The Denver homeless participants revealed that reforms are needed in the development, and implementation of rules for homeless night shelters. The night shelter staff should include night shelter users in their design and implementation of night shelter rules in order for night shelters to effectively serve the homeless population. Perhaps including homeless users of night and day shelters in the enforcement of rules, selection criteria and social activities of the shelter, would contribute to democracy within the shelter environment and diminish the stigma associated with homeless shelters. Studies of homelessness based on multi-methods (combined qualitative and quantitative studies) would improve our understanding of this important and growing social problem.

Institutional Review Board  
Office for Responsible Research  
Vice President for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207  
515 294-4566  
FAX 515 294-4267

**Date:** 8/8/2012

**To:** Thomas Lux  
1400 Gateway Hills Park Dr, Apt 812  
Ames, IA 50014

**CC:** Dr. Gloria Jones-Johnson  
202 East Hall  
Jim Lux  
5218 Valley Rd

**From:** Office for Responsible Research

**Title:** Contributors for being Homeless, and Reasons for and against Shelter Utilization by Homeless People

**IRB ID:** 12-329

**Approval Date:** 8/7/2012                      **Date for Continuing Review:** 8/6/2013

**Submission Type:** New                      **Review Type:** Full Committee

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.**
- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study, when documented consent is required.**
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.**
- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) any other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.**
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.**
- **Complete a new continuing review form at least three to four weeks prior to the date for continuing review as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.**

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

ALL 7/23/2012 email  
 (LX)  
 Contributors

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)**  
**Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans**

RECEIVED

JUN 26 2012

Title of Project: Causes for being Homeless, and Reasons for and against Shelter Utilization by Homeless People

Principal Investigator (PI): <b>Thomas Lux</b>		Degrees: Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
University ID: <b>142671529</b>	Phone: 515-291-7910	Email Address: tlux@iastate.edu
Correspondence Address: 1400 Gateway Hills Park Dr. apt 812		
Department: Sociology		College/Center/Institute: Iowa State University
PI Level: <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured, Tenure-Eligible, & NTER Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Adjunct/Affiliate Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborator Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Emeritus Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting Faculty/Scientist <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Lecturer/Clinician <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer/Clinician, Ph.D. or DVM <input type="checkbox"/> P&S Employee, P37 & above <input type="checkbox"/> Extension to Families/Youth Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Field Specialist III <input type="checkbox"/> Postdoctoral Associate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate/Undergrad Student <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify: )		

By IRB

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS (Required when the principal investigator is a student)		
Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Dr. Gloria Jones-Johnson		
University ID: 142671529	Phone: 515-291-7910	Email Address: gjj@iastate.edu
Campus Address: 202 East Hall		Department: Sociology
Type of Project (check all that apply): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Class Project <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify: )		

Alternate Contact Person: Jim Lux	Email Address: jlux@iastate.edu
Correspondence Address: 5218 Valley Rd Ames, IA 50014	Phone: 515-232-4908

**ASSURANCE**

- I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate and consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies. Misrepresentation of the research described in this or any other IRB application may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.
- I agree to provide proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any problems to the IRB.
- I agree that modifications to the originally approved project will not take place without prior review and approval by the IRB.
- I agree that the research will not take place without the receipt of permission from any cooperating institutions, when applicable.
- I agree to obtain approval from other appropriate committees as needed for this project, such as the IACUC (if the research includes animals), the IBC (for research involving biohazards), the Radiation Safety Committee (for research involving x-rays or other radiation producing devices or procedures), etc.
- I agree that all activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and Iowa State University

[Redacted Signature] 6/25/12  
 Date

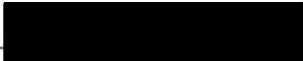
[Redacted Signature] 6/18/2012  
 Supervising Faculty Date  
 (Required when the principal investigator is a student)

[Redacted Signature] has determined that departmental requirements are met, the investigator(s) has/have approved the research, and the research design is scientifically sound and has scientific merit.  
6-25-12  
 Date

Committee Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review Date: August 7, 2012
Use Only	Approval/Determination Date: August 7, 2012
Approval Not Required: <input type="checkbox"/>	Approval Expiration Date: August 6, 2013
Not Research: <input type="checkbox"/>	
No Human Subjects: <input type="checkbox"/>	Risk: Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More than Minimal <input type="checkbox"/>



IRB Reviewer's Signature



August 8, 2012

### Research Involving Humans Study Information

Please provide answers to all questions, except as specified. Incomplete forms will be returned without review.

#### Part A: Key Personnel

List all members and relevant qualifications of the project personnel. Key personnel includes the principal investigator, co-principal investigators, supervising faculty member, and any other individuals who will have contact with the participants or the participants' data (e.g., interviewers, transcribers, coders, etc.). This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that each person will perform on the project. For more information, please see Human Subjects - Persons Required to Obtain IRB Training.

NAME	Interpersonal contact or communication with subjects, or access to private identifiable data?	Involved in the consent process?	Contact with human blood, specimens, or other biohazardous materials?	Other Roles in Research	Qualifications (i.e., special training, degrees, certifications, coursework, etc.)	Human Subjects Training Date
✓ [Redacted]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			12/9/2010
✓ [Redacted]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			7/2/03
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

*Received pages 3-10 on 7/10/2012 (UK)*

Please complete additional pages of key personnel as necessary.

Part B: Funding Information

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	1. Is the project federally funded? If <b>Yes</b> , please provide the complete name(s) of the source(s); please do not use acronyms. <b>Please attach a complete copy of the federal grant proposal from which the study is funded.</b>

Part C: General Overview

2.	<b>Study Objectives</b> – Briefly explain in language understandable to a layperson the purpose and specific aim(s) of the study.
To determine the major individual and structural contributors of homelessness for adult men in Ames, IA, and Denver, CO; and to determine the reasons for and against homeless shelter utilization by adult homeless men in Ames, IA, and Denver, CO	

3.	<b>Benefits to Society and Participants</b> – Explain in language understandable to a layperson how the information gained in this study will advance knowledge, and/or serve the good of society.
If I am able to determine the major contributors of homelessness for adult men in Ames and Denver, and the reasons for and against homeless shelter utilization in Ames and Denver; this information can potentially be helpful in decreasing the adult men homeless population. In addition, it may improve homeless shelters in Ames and Denver and make them more more inviting	
4.	Describe the direct benefits to research participants; if there are no direct benefits to participants, indicate that. Note: Monetary compensation cannot be considered a benefit to participants.
Depending on the information I obtain from adult homeless men in Ames and Denver, my research might aid in improving the lives of adult homeless men in Ames and Denver who utilize the homeless shelter and those who do not utilize the homeless shelter.	

Part D: Anticipated Enrollment

*per PI during meeting. 7/17/2012 IRB (UK)*

Estimated number of participants to be enrolled in the study Total: <sup>60</sup> 40 Males: <sup>60</sup> 40 Females:	
Check below if you intend to include persons from the following groups: <input type="checkbox"/> Minors (Under 18) Age Range of Minors: <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses	Check below if this project includes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults, non-students <input type="checkbox"/> Minor ISU students <input type="checkbox"/> ISU students 18 and older



<input type="checkbox"/> Cognitively Impaired	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain)
<input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners	
<b>List estimated percent of the anticipated enrollment that will be minorities if known:</b>	
American Indian:	Alaskan Native:
Asian or Pacific Islander:	Black or African American:
Latino or Hispanic:	

## Part E: Participant Selection and Recruitment

Please use additional space as necessary to adequately answer each question.

5. Explain the procedures and rationale for selecting participants, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria (e.g., where will names come from, what persons will be included or excluded and why, etc.).

Adult homeless men will be non-randomly selected from the homeless shelter in Ames and Denver as well as non-shelter locations around Ames and Denver. This may include next to creeks, under bridges, and in the woods. The requirements for being selected are that the males are at least 18 years old, and that the individual is by definition homeless. According to the Illinois State Board of Education Legal Department, a homeless person is defined as an individual who does not have a permanent and adequate place to reside at night.

6. Describe the procedures for contacting participants (e.g., letter, email, flyer, advertisements, phone call, etc.). Attach copies of any letters, scripts, flyers, or advertisements that will be used.

I will contact the directors of the homeless shelters in Ames and Denver to gain access to adult homeless men in the shelter, as well as learning of locations where i can find non-shelter using homeless men. I will also be using snowball sampling to locate adult homeless men in non-shelter locations around Ames and Denver. This will include asking the homeless men who agree to interview with me if they know of other locations in Ames and Denver where I can find homeless men. Men will be approached in person and verbally asked to participate in a manner designed to build rapport and be non-threatening.

per PI during 7/17/2012 IRB meeting. (vt)

## Part F: Research Plan

Include sufficient detail for IRB review of this project independent of any other documents.

Yes  No 7. Does this project involve using existing data or records? If **Yes**, describe the data/records in the Research Plan, question 9.

Yes  No 8. Does this project involve secondary analysis? If **Yes**, describe the source of the data in the Research Plan, question 9.

9. **Research Plan** – The information needed here is similar to that in the “methods” or “procedures” sections of a research proposal—it should describe the flow of events that will occur during your interactions with subjects. Please describe in detail your plans for collecting data from participants, including **all** procedures, tasks, or



interventions participants will be asked to complete during the research (e.g., random assignment, any conditions or treatment groups into which participants will be divided, mail survey or interview procedures, sensors to be worn, amount of blood drawn, etc.). This information is intended to inform the committee of the procedures used in the study and their potential risk. **Please do not respond with "see attached" or "not applicable."**

I will conduct both field research, as well as in depth interview questions with adult homeless men at the Ames and Denver shelter and non-shelter areas. Field research means that i will be studying the homeless men in their enviroment both at the homeless shelter and non-shelter areas, and will be taking notes. I will taking notes on behaviors that could indicate mental problems and drug addictions. That is, I will be jotting notes down about behaviors as I interview individuals. Generally speaking, if an individual's behavior seems abnormal compared to nonhomeless people i have encountered in my life who do not have mental disorders or drug addictions, i will take note of this abnormal behavior. Such abnormal behavior could include thing like participants mumbling to themsevles throughout the interview. Or, it could include things like fidgiting hands, feet, and head. No names and locations will be disclosed in the paper so identifying participants will be impossible. Lastly, I will conduct In depth interviewing by asking the adult homeless men several open ended questions that correspond to my research questions.

*A second person will accompany the PI into non-shelter areas to help ensure safety. He is familiar with appropriate ways ~~to~~ to approach homeless men. per PI during 7/17/2012 IRB meeting. (K)*

10. For studies involving deception or where information is intentionally withheld from participants, such as the full purpose of the study, please explain how persons will be deceived or what information will be withheld. Additionally, a waiver of the applicable elements of consent will be needed. Please complete the Waiver of Elements of Consent form. If this question is not applicable, please type N/A in the response cell.

N/A

Yes  No 11. Does your project require the use of a health care provider's records concerning past, present, or future physical, dental, or mental health information about a subject? The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act established the conditions under which protected health information may be used or disclosed for research purposes. If your project will involve the use of any past or present clinical information about someone, or if you will add clinical information to someone's treatment record (electronic or paper) during the study, you must complete and submit the Application for Use of Protected Health Information.

Yes  No 12. Does this project involve an investigational new drug (IND)? Number:

Yes  No 13. Does this project involve an investigational device exemption (IDE)? Number:

Yes  No 14. Does this project involve DEXA/CT scans or X-rays?

Yes  No 15. Does this project involve pathology or diagnostic specimens? If **Yes**, indicate whether specimens will be collected prospectively and/or already exist "on the shelf" at the time of submission of this review form. If prospective, describe specimen procurement procedures, indicate whether any additional medical information about the subject is being gathered, and whether specimens are linked at any time by code number to the participant's identity. If this question is not applicable, please type N/A in the response cell.



## Part G: Consent Process

A copy of any translated informed consent documents and an English version should be submitted with the application. Provide the name of the individual who translated the consent documents and their qualifications for translating consent documents below.

If the consent process does not include documented (signed) consent, please request a Waiver of Documentation of Consent. If any information about the study is intentionally withheld or misleading (i.e., deception is used), a Waiver of Elements of Consent must be requested. Links to the forms for requesting waivers are also available at the IRB website.

16. Describe the consent process for adult participants (those who are age 18 and older). Include information about who will obtain consent from participants; how/when consent will be obtained in relation to actual data gathering; whether someone other than the subject will provide consent (e.g., a legally authorized representative); etc.

I, the principal investigator, will have consent forms for all adult homeless men, if the individual is less than 18, he will not be able to participate. I will also have a waiver of documentation of consent, so each participant will not need to sign the informed consent form. This measure will protect each participant.

The PI will verbally read the document and explain the study to participants + answer any questions they may have. per PI during 7/17/2011 IRB meeting. (KJ)

17. If your study involves minor children, please explain how parental consent will be obtained prior to enrollment of the minor(s).

N/A

18. Please explain how assent will be obtained from minors (younger than 18 years of age) prior to their enrollment. Also, please explain if the assent process will be documented (e.g., a simplified version of the consent form, combined with the parental informed consent document). According to the federal regulations **assent** "...means a child's affirmative agreement to participate in research. Mere failure to object should not, absent affirmative agreement, be construed as assent."

N/A

## Part H: Data Analysis

19. Describe how the data will be analyzed (e.g., statistical methodology, statistical evaluation, statistical measures used to evaluate results).

This is a qualitative study, so the interviews will be transcribed using open, axial, and selective coding. The grounded theoretical approach will be used in the analysis in order to allow the themes to emerge from the data.



## Part I: Risks

The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to participants' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological, emotional, legal, social or financial risks.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	20. Is the <b>probability</b> of the harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research greater than that encountered ordinarily in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	21. Is the <b>magnitude</b> of the harm or discomfort greater than that encountered ordinarily in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests?

22. Describe any foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants and how they will be minimized and precautions taken. <b>Do not respond with N/A.</b> If you believe that there will not be risk or discomfort to participants, <i>you must explain why.</i>
<p>Some of my questions might make the homeless men feel uncomfortable. However, I will ask them continuously how comfortable they are feeling with the questions, and encourage them to not respond if they are feeling uncomfortable. <i>The PI has experience with the homeless population through his volunteer work at the shelter in Ames. see meeting minutes for the 7/17/2012 IRB meeting for more details. (KS)</i></p>
23. If this study involves vulnerable populations, including minors, pregnant women, prisoners, the cognitively impaired, or those educationally or economically disadvantaged, what additional protections will be provided to minimize risks?
To minimize risk, I will have a waiver of documentation of consent. So, each participant will read the informed consent document but will not need to sign it.

## Part J: Compensation

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	24. Will participants receive compensation (including course credit/extra credit) for their participation? If <b>Yes</b> , please describe compensation plans below.
<p><b>Note:</b> Do not make the payment an inducement—only a compensation for expenses and inconvenience. If a person is to receive money or another token of appreciation for their participation, explain when it will be given and any conditions of full or partial payment. (For example, volunteers will receive \$5.00 for each of the five visits in the study or a total of \$25.00 if they complete the study. If a participant withdraws from participation, he/she will receive \$5.00 for each of the visits completed.) It is considered undue influence to make completion of the study the basis for compensation.</p>		

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**Part K: Confidentiality**

25. Describe below the methods that will be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. For example, describe who will have access to the data, where the data will be stored, security measures for web-based surveys and computer storage, how long data or specimens will be retained, what (if any) identifiers will be retained, etc.

I will require that each participant read an informed consent form. No participant will sign the form however. The waiver of documentation of consent will be used so that the participants will not need to reveal their names. With each participant's permission I will be recording the audio of the interview. In both Ames and Denver the interview transcripts along with the field notes I take, and the audio recorded will be kept at my residence in a secure location. All of the interview data will be transcribed on my computer. I will be the only person with access to this data because there is a password required to login to my computer. The interview transcripts which includes the field notes will be destroyed along with the audio from the interviews once the thesis is written.

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**Part L: Registry Projects**

Yes     No    26. Does this project establish a registry? If Yes, please provide the registry name below.

**Note:** To be considered a registry: (1) the individuals must have a common condition or demonstrate common responses to questions; (2) the individuals in the registry might be contacted in the future; and (3) the names/data of the individuals in the registry might be used by investigators other than the one maintaining the registry.

**Checklist for Attachments**

Listed below are the types of documents that should be submitted for IRB review. Please check and attach the documents that are applicable for your study:

- Federal grant application (only for federally funded research)
- A copy of the informed consent document or letter of introduction containing the elements of consent
- A copy of the forms requesting waivers of elements of consent or documentation of consent, where applicable
- A copy of the assent form if minors will be enrolled
- Data-gathering instruments (including surveys)
- Recruitment fliers, phone scripts, or any other documents or materials participants will see or hear

The original signed copy of the application form and one set of accompanying materials should be submitted for review.

Yes     No

1. Does this project involve human cell or tissue cultures (primary OR immortalized cell lines/strains) that have been documented to be free of bloodborne pathogens? If the answer is *Yes*, please answer question A below and attach copies of the documentation.

A. Please list the specific cell lines/strains to be used, their source and description of use.

CELL LINE	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF USE

B. Please refer to the ISU *Bloodborne Pathogens Manual*, which contains the requirements of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. Please list the specific precautions to be followed for this project below (e.g., retractable needles used for blood draws):

N/A

Anyone working with human cell lines/strains that have not been documented to be free of bloodborne pathogens is required to have Bloodborne Pathogen Training annually. Current Bloodborne Pathogen Training dates must be listed in Section I for all Key Personnel. Please contact Environmental Health and Safety (294-5359) if you need to sign up for training and/or to get a copy of the Bloodborne Pathogens Manual.

PART N: HUMAN BLOOD COMPONENTS, BODY FLUIDS OR TISSUES

Yes     No

2. Does this project involve human blood components, body fluids or tissues? If *Yes*, please answer all of the questions in the "Human Blood Components, Body Fluids or Tissues" section.

A. Please list the specific human substances used, their source, amount and description of use.

SUBSTANCE	SOURCE	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF USE
<i>E.g., Blood</i>	<i>Normal healthy volunteers</i>	<i>2 ml</i>	<i>Approximate quantity, assays to be done.</i>

B. Please refer to the ISU *Bloodborne Pathogens Manual*, which contains the requirements of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. Specific sections to be followed for this project are:

N/A

**Anyone working with human blood components, body fluids or tissues is required to have Bloodborne Pathogen Training annually. Current Bloodborne Pathogen Training dates must be listed in Section I for all Key Personnel. Please contact Environmental Health and Safety (294-5359) if you need to sign up for training and/or to get a copy of the Bloodborne Pathogens Manual.**

## APPENDIX B.

IRB ID# \_\_\_\_\_ 12-329 \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT**

Principal Investigator Name:	Thomas Lux
Phone Number:	515-291-7910
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:tlux@iastate.edu">tlux@iastate.edu</a>
Title of Study:	<b>Causes for being Homeless, and Reasons for and against Shelter Utilization by Homeless People</b>

Iowa State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) may waive the requirement for obtaining a signed informed consent document from each research participant if the investigator can provide specific reasons that the research meets regulatory criteria. *The IRB will make the final determination as to whether or not a waiver is appropriate based on the information provided by the investigator.*

**Please note:** A waiver of documentation of consent only means you do not need to have participants sign a document prior to their participation. Participants must still be given an opportunity to give consent to participate in the research and must be provided sufficient information upon which they can base their decision. A waiver of documentation is not a waiver of the consent process.

Please describe with details specific to your research how your research study satisfies the criteria listed in either #1 or #2 (a) and (b) below. The space will expand as you type.

1. The only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.
Justification: Participants will not be at risk of physical harm in any way, but they will be asked to think about uncomfortable topics such as their: drug abuse history, family breakup history, past war experiences, mental illness history, and how loneliness and social stigma affects them. Participants are asked to not answer these questions if they feel uncomfortable in doing so. However, participants may feel some discomfort in thinking about these topics without even answering the questions. I think this is still minimal risk though. Also, participants' names and locations will not be disclosed in the thesis, so it will be impossible to locate and identify individuals after reading the thesis.
2. (a) The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects.
Justification:
(b) <u>And</u> , involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.
Justification:

## APPENDIX C.

### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT for HOMELESS MEN

**Title of Study: Contributors to Homelessness for Men, and Reasons for and Against Night Shelter Utilization by Homeless Men in Denver**

**Investigators:** My name is Thomas Lux. I am a Master's student in Sociology at Iowa State. I will be the only one recording interview information.

-This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to:

-Determine some of the major contributors of homelessness for adult men in Denver, CO.

-I am also interested in forming a better understanding of why some homeless men choose to utilize the night shelters in Denver and others choose to live in other locations.

-My hope is to better understand how to decrease the homeless men population in Denver.

-You have been specifically selected to participate in this study because of your current lifestyle.

-You should not participate if you are under the age of 18 or are not a male.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview and share personal information. Some of the questions may make you feel uncomfortable. These questions pertain to:

-Drug history

-Mental illness history

-Family breakup history

-Past war experiences

-The affect that loneliness and social stigma has had on you.

With your permission, I will be taking notes during the interview as well as recording the audio of the session.



Your participation will last for approximately 20-25 minutes. I will not need to interview you more than one time.

I want to emphasize that your participation or lack of participation in this study will not affect your receiving of any benefits from Denver homeless shelters, or any other social service programs in Denver.

### **RISKS**

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks, discomfort in answering certain questions pertaining to:

- Drug history
- Mental illness history
- Family breakup history
- Past war experiences
- The affect that loneliness and social stigma has had on you.

### **BENEFITS**

- No direct benefit to you
- Information gained may reveal major contributors to homelessness for men in Denver.
- Objective is to decrease the size of homeless men population in Denver.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION**

- Not answering certain questions that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Not participating

### **COSTS AND COMPENSATION**

- No costs from participating in this study
- You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

### **PARTICIPANT RIGHTS**

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary



- You can refuse to participate or leave the study at any time
- You will not lose any benefits of which you are otherwise entitled if you do not participate or only answer certain questions
- If you feel any discomfort at all on any question, you can skip questions that you do not wish to answer.
- It is a requirement that you are at least an 18 year old male
- If you are not 18 or over and you are not a male, you are not able to participate in this study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Records identifying participants will not be shown to anyone to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations
- The public will also not see them
- However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.
- To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: the audio of the interview, as well as the interview transcripts (your answers to questions, and my notes of the interview), will be kept in a secure location at my residence.
- If the results are published, your identity will not be revealed to anyone.
- Your information will not be shown to anyone and you will be kept safe
- To ensure your safety, you will not need to reveal your name or sign this document.

### **QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Thomas Lux at 515-291-7910, or [tjndlux@gmail.com](mailto:tjndlux@gmail.com). You can also contact my major professor Dr. Gloria Jones-Johnson at [gjj@iastate.edu](mailto:gjj@iastate.edu).
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

**APPENDIX D.**

Soc 590  
Dr. Jones-Johnson  
Thomas Lux

## Interview Questions for Thesis

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria Questions:**

1. Are you 18 years of age? (If yes, next question, if no, exclude)
2. Would you describe yourself as being currently homeless? (If yes, next question, if no, exclude)
3. Since you were 18, approximately how many nights have you stayed at night shelters in Denver, if at all? (0 to 1 time utilization, move to Part A; at least twice, move to Part B)

**A. These questions pertain to men who choose not to utilize the night shelters in Denver**

1. Would you say you are homeless by choice? Why?
2. Have you had difficulty obtaining affordable housing in Denver?
3. Where do you stay at night?
4. Where did you previously stay at night?
5. Were you forced to leave or why did you leave?
6. Did leaving your previous location contribute to living your current lifestyle?
7. Why are you staying in your current location as opposed to other locations or a night shelter?
8. Have you had a difficult time obtaining jobs in Denver?
9. Did losing a job contribute to your current lifestyle?
10. Have you felt labeled and stigmatized by the Denver night shelters?
11. Are there specific reasons you choose not to utilize the Denver night shelters?
12. Do other homeless in your surroundings support you or help you to improve your life?
13. If you are a war veteran, do you feel that problems caused by the war have influenced your current lifestyle?
14. Has a mental illness contributed to your current lifestyle?

15. Has a substance abuse problem contributed to your current lifestyle?
16. Have negative family relationships contributed to your current lifestyle?
17. Do you think your current lifestyle has caused you to feel like an outcast? How do you cope?
18. Do you experience feelings of shame and the social stigma attached to homelessness? How do you cope?
19. Do you experience negative self-esteem? How do you cope?
20. Do you experience feelings of loneliness? How do you cope?
21. Do you blame yourself for your current lifestyle?
22. Are you satisfied with your current lifestyle? What are your future plans?
23. Do you have any social support or friendship groups?
24. Is there anyone who can provide you a place to stay even if it's temporary?
25. What is the highest level of education you have received?
26. Are you currently single or married?
27. Have you ever been married?
28. Do you have any other experiences with homelessness that you'd like to share?

Thank you for your time and effort!

**B. These questions are specifically for men who choose to utilize the night shelters in Denver**

1. Would you say you are homeless by choice? Why or why not?
2. Where do you stay at night?
3. What would you say is your reason for coming to Denver night shelters?
4. How do you feel about Denver night shelter rules and policies?
5. Do you feel stigmatized by the night shelters?

6. Have you had a difficult time locating affordable housing in Denver?
7. Where were you staying before arriving at your current location?
8. Were you forced to leave your prior location?
9. Why did you leave?
10. Did leaving your prior residence contribute to your current lifestyle?
11. Why did you decide to stay at the night shelter rather than a friend's place or some other location?
12. Do other homeless in your surroundings support you or help you to improve your life?
13. Have you had difficulty staying employed in Denver, why?
14. Did you lose a job prior to coming to the night shelter?
15. Did this contribute to your decision to utilize the night shelter?
16. Did you have any reasons for not wanting to use the night shelter?
17. Has a mental illness contributed to your current lifestyle?
18. If you're a war veteran, do you feel that problems caused by the war have influenced your current lifestyle?
19. Has a substance abuse problem contributed to your current lifestyle?
20. Have negative family relationships contributed to your current lifestyle?
21. Has your current lifestyle caused you to feel like an outcast? How do you cope?
22. Do you experience feelings of shame and the social stigma attached to homelessness? How do you cope?
23. Do you experience self-esteem problems? How do you cope?
24. Do you experience loneliness? How do you cope?
25. Do you blame yourself for your current lifestyle?
26. Are you satisfied with your current lifestyle? What are your future plans?
27. Do you have any social support?

28. Is there anyone who can provide you a place to stay even if it's temporary?
29. What is the highest level of education you have received?
30. Are you currently single or married?
31. Have you ever been married?
32. Do you have any other experiences with homelessness that you'd like to share?

Thank you for your time and effort!

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