

Within the red lines: A qualitative case study of food insecurity among homeless people in one of Kansas City's historically redlined districts

by

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## **Abstract**

Deepening inequality in the United States has led to increased homelessness and food insecurity. Most research on the links between food insecurity and homelessness in the United States is guided by cumulative risk and stress process theories. Both theories shed light on the individual and community-level factors that influence variations in food insecurity among homeless populations; however, food justice researchers criticize such models for focusing solely on contemporary factors without accounting for historical systemic injustices. At the same time, little research has been conducted to fill the gap in knowledge about the connections between historical systemic inequalities and contemporary food insecurity among homeless populations. How do contemporary and historical forces of inequality interact to affect people's experiences with both homelessness and food insecurity? In my study, I investigate how redlining (racial residential segregation) as a mechanism of inequality affects people's experiences of homelessness and food insecurity. Based on ethnographic observations and 21 oral history style interviews with homeless shelter workers and homeless people experiencing food insecurity in one of Kansas City, Missouri's most historically redlined districts, District 25, I find that the type of homelessness an individual experiences affects their food insecurity. More specifically, my findings show how the relative proximity of where people sleep to centers providing food on specific schedules, the amount of time people spend looking for a place to sleep, and people's access to information and community connectedness impact their food insecurity. I also find that the concentration of emergency resources in District 25 paired with hostile architecture and violence emanating from outside the district confine people to an area where decades of disinvestment have diminished food and housing security.

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## Dedication

To my three younger brothers, JR, Isaeah, Dimitri, without possibly knowing it, you have served as the motivation for my continued journey within higher education. If nothing else, I hope you see that even people like us, especially people like us, with our background and lived experiences, can make a difference in this world. To my best friend Melissa, I would not be where I am today without the unwavering support you have shown me throughout the last thirteen years of our friendship. Thank you for believing in me, sometimes more than I have believed in myself. To my mentors, Dr. Marianne Paiva, Dr. Mary Kay Siefers, and my sweet Miss Nancy (who is also a doctor, might I add), words fail to express how thankful I am for your mentorship and support. Thank you for choosing to walk this journey with me and for showing me that there is power in being my true, authentic self. To my mother Chantel, my grandmother Yvonne, and my tata, Tito, I hope I have and can continue to make you proud. I love you.

The completion of this thesis is about more than just me. It's about the countless people surviving amidst the issues I discuss throughout this thesis. It's about the people who often feel unseen and unheard in our society. I see you. I hear you. This feat is as much yours as it is mine. I will never stop using my voice to amplify yours.

The fight for justice continues. *La lucha por justicia continua.*

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

In the United States alone, more than 34 million people are food insecure (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2021). Food insecurity, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), refers to the experience of having “inadequate access to the resources that are necessary for a nutritious diet” (Food and Agriculture Association of the United Nations [FAO], 2015, as cited in Burgess & Shier, 2018, p. 826). For the purpose of this research, I am adopting a modified version of the FAO’s definition of food insecurity to further explore the social aspect of acquiring food. This modified definition, previously used by Baggett et. al. (2011), specifies that “food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain” (p. 829). In wealthier countries like the United States, the issue of food insecurity is not usually the result of mass food shortages or a lack of widespread food unavailability, but rather a reflection of rampant poverty and a welfare state failing to meet the needs of the 37.9 million people currently impoverished country-wide (United States Census Bureau, 2021; Riches, 2002; Riches, 2011, as cited in Burgess & Shier, 2018). As such, people living in poverty in the United States often find themselves relying on charity-based food models such as food pantries; a “Band-Aid” solution to a deep, social wound (Riches, 2002, as cited in Burgess & Shier, 2018).

Because food insecurity disproportionately affects people living in poverty, people experiencing homelessness are at an increased risk of experiencing food insecurity compared to the general population, as they are often considered a “subset of poorer persons” (Markowitz & Syverson, 2021, p. 920). The purpose of categorizing people experiencing homelessness within a subset of “impoverished” or “poor” is to distinguish between people living in poverty and people



living in extreme poverty as they struggle to meet other basic needs such as stable housing and safety. Researchers like Baggett et al. (2011), Booth (2006), and Whitbeck (2006) have noted that it is the clustering of these concerns--for stable housing, safety, among other fundamental needs--that make “homelessness a clear predictor of food insecurity” (Baggett et al., 2011; Booth, 2006, p. 216; Whitbeck et al., 2006). Food acquisition, and especially the acquisition of healthy food, often falls second to locating a safe place to sleep every night (Baggett et al., 2011; Gundersen et al., 2003; Lee & Greif, 2008, as cited in Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021).

As the homeless population continues to grow past half a million in the United States (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2018, 2023)<sup>1</sup>, more research is needed to understand the dynamics of food insecurity experienced by homeless populations. The process of building such understanding, however, requires an analysis that richly explores the dynamics of food insecurity among homeless populations while also taking a socio-historical approach to understanding how such dynamics came to be as they are today.

Most research on the links between food insecurity and homelessness in the United States is guided by cumulative risk and stress process theories. While both theories shed light on the individual and community-level factors that influence variations in food insecurity among homeless populations, food justice researchers criticize these models for focusing solely on

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<sup>1</sup> According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, approximately 580,500 people experienced homelessness on any given night in 2020. This data represented an increase of 2.2% compared to data gathered in 2019. In January 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released their newest report on nationwide homelessness for the year 2022 which showed that an estimated 582,500 people experienced homeless on any given night in 2022, which represents an increase of 3% compared to data gathered in 2020. (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2023)

contemporary factors without accounting for historical systemic injustices. Little research, however, has been conducted on the connections between historical systemic inequalities and contemporary food insecurity among homeless populations in the United States. How do contemporary and historical forces of inequality interact to affect people's experiences with both homelessness and food insecurity? In my study, I investigate how redlining (racial residential segregation) as a mechanism of inequality affects people's experiences of homelessness and food insecurity.

Based on ethnographic observations and 21 oral history style interviews with homeless resource providers and homeless people experiencing food insecurity in one of Kansas City, Missouri's most historically redlined districts, District 25, I find that the type of homelessness an individual experiences affects their food insecurity, and that redlining affects the type of homelessness an individual experiences. More specifically, my ethnographic work shows how the relative proximity of where people sleep to resource centers providing food on specific schedules, the amount of time people spend looking for a place to sleep, and people's access to information and community connectedness impact their food insecurity. At the same time, the concentration of emergency resources in District 25, paired with hostile architecture and violence emanating from outside the district, confine people to an area where decades of disinvestment have diminished food and housing security. My work thus contributes detailed insights on how historic and contemporary mechanisms of inequality affect people's experiences of homelessness and food insecurity.

## Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Similar to the housed population in the United States, food insecurity is not experienced uniformly by people experiencing homelessness (O'Connor & Fitzpatrick, 2017). Much of the research that has focused on the variation of food insecurity experienced by homeless persons has been primarily guided by two theoretical frameworks– the cumulative risk theory (Rutter, 1979; Sameroff, 1998; Sameroff et al., 1993 as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019) and the stress process theory (Aneshensel, 1992; Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021; Pearlin et al., 1981; Thoits, 2006). Both theoretical models have shed light on the individual and community-level factors that influence the variation in food insecurity among homeless populations. However, food justice researchers have criticized such models for focusing solely on the contemporary factors that influence food security without accounting for historical systemic injustices that have made these contemporary factors what they are today (Shaker et al., 2022; Swope et al., 2022; Woods et al., 2014). At the same time, little research has been conducted to fill the gap in knowledge about the connections between historical systemic injustices and contemporary experiences of food insecurity. Following a review of the cumulative risk and stress process theories, I indicate how my research helps redress this specific gap.

Previous research has made evident that experiences of homelessness serve as a prominent risk factor for experiencing food insecurity (O'Connor & Fitzpatrick, 2017). But, as Shaker et al. (2022) noted in their research, focusing solely on one risk factor, such as the factor of individual health, is not enough to fully make sense of the variation of food insecurity

experienced among the homeless population. For this reason, researchers like Hernandez et al. (2019) have used the cumulative risk theory to account for the multiple individual and community-level risk factors that influence the variation of food insecurity experienced among the homeless population. The cumulative risk theory is the “accumulation of risk factors that places individuals in jeopardy for negative health consequences” (Rutter, 1979; Sameroff, 1993; Sameroff et al., 1998; as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019, p. 2). The theory specifies how individual health, risky or addictive behaviors, and housing status influence one another (Rutter, 1979; Sameroff, 1998; Sameroff et al., 1993; as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019). The stress process model is similar to the cumulative risk theory, but it also accounts for the various resources that homeless individuals have access to, such as community connectedness. Because of the significant overlap in both the cumulative risk theory and the stress process model, I provide a brief statement about the stress-process model and then I go into detail about both theories.

The stress process model postulates that an “unequal exposure to stressors, as well the varying role of coping resources is what influences variations in outcome” (Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021, p. 4; Aneshensel, 1992; Pearlin et al., 1981; Thoits, 2006; Lee and Greif, 2008). Notably, though not a major theoretical framework used throughout the food justice literature, I also cover attribution theory later in this literature review to best explain the role of community connectedness as it relates to food security among homeless populations (Corrigan et al., 2003; Weiner et al., 1988).

### **Individual Health**

Individual-level studies focusing on the variation of food insecurity experienced by homeless persons have highlighted the role of individual health as a key risk factor influencing

who will experience food insecurity, for how long, and its severity (Bhargava et al., 2008; Choi et al., 2017; Hanson & Olson, 2012 as cited in Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021). Food insecurity and individual health exist in reciprocity of one another (Seligman & Schillinger, 2010; Choi et al., 2017). Pre-existing health conditions, especially those requiring the use of prescription medication, may force an individual to choose between buying food and purchasing a much-needed medication due to cost (Baggett et al., 2011).

Choosing to purchase food over medication may worsen health conditions, and choosing to purchase medication over food worsens food insecurity, further contributing to poor health (Baggett et al., 2011). Experiencing homelessness also increases the likelihood of developing or exacerbating chronic illness (Hadley & Crooks, 2012 as cited in Burgess & Shier, 2018) and nutrition related diseases such as diabetes and hypertension (Koh et al., 2016). This is especially true for older (>50) adults experiencing homelessness, who make up approximately half of the single homeless population in the United States (Tong et al., 2019). Similar to the older-aged, housed population, older adults experiencing homelessness also share a high prevalence of experiencing functional and cognitive impairments, which may inhibit their ability to meet their food needs (Tong et al., 2019). Experiencing homelessness while also living with mental illness fosters similar constraints on an individual's ability to acquire food, worsening food insecurity (Seale et al., 2016). Rates of mental illness have shown to be consistently high among homeless individuals (Seale et al., 2016). Studies have associated the self-perceived notion of being homeless and failing to meet “basic social expectations” as a contributing factor to the high rates of depression exhibited by homeless individuals (DeForge et al., 2008 as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019, p. 2)

Notably, a common symptom of mental illnesses such as depression is irregular appetite which can have a negative impact on food security (Seale et al., 2016). An inability to access mental health services (often due to cost) can force an individual to self-medicate with drugs, alcohol or other highly addictive behaviors (Seale et al., 2016; Hernandez et al., 2019). Studies have demonstrated high rates of drug and alcohol abuse among homeless individuals, including an estimated 30% to 60% of individuals who exhibit a “lifetime presence of alcohol use disorders” (Baggett et al., 2015 as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019, p. 2). The purchase of alcohol, drugs and other items used to support addictive behaviors may reduce the amount of money available for food, further contributing to food insecurity (Hernandez et al., 2017 as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019).

### **Community Connectedness**

Individual-level studies have also highlighted the role of community connectedness as a vital “psychological and material resource” that further contributes to the variation of food insecurity that is experienced throughout the homeless population (Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021, p. 5). McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined community connectedness as a “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986 as cited in Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021, p. 5). Booth (2006) and Fitzpatrick and Willis (2021) find that community connectedness reduces food insecurity among persons experiencing homelessness (Booth, 2006; Fitzpatrick & Willis, 2021). Booth (2006) found that just over one-third of all respondents relied on their ‘community’ to meet their food needs, with one respondent saying, “...I rely on my friends for a lot of things and I think if I didn’t have them, I’d go hungry a lot of the time” (p. 215). However, lack of community connectedness resulting from social exclusion is often associated with homelessness, exacerbating food

insecurity among homeless people (Pettinger et al., 2017; Bassuk & Beardslee, 2014; Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009; Fitzpatrick et al., 2007; Folsom & Jeste, 2002; Lee et al., 2010; Lippert & Lee, 2015; Markowitz, 2011; Pescosolido et al., 2010 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021).

Researchers have found “attribution theory” to be a useful framework for making sense of exclusionary practices that take place against stigmatized people and populations (Corrigan et al., 2003; Weiner et al., 1988). As explained by Markowitz and Syverson (2021), attribution theory states that the “perceived causes of stigma-inducing traits or behaviors affect responses to stigmatized individuals” (p. 920). To paraphrase Markowitz and Syverson, ‘when stigmatizing traits and behaviors are perceived to be caused by factors outside of a person’s control, the person is viewed as less blameworthy and more deserving of support than if their traits and behaviors are perceived as within their control’ (Markowitz & Syverson, 2021, p. 920). When social stigma leads to social exclusion, and social exclusion leads to social isolation in the form of anti-vagrancy ordinances that “seek to remove [the homeless] from public areas in order to limit their visibility,” their ability to access social support greatly decreases, worsening experiences of food insecurity (Markowitz & Syverson, 2021, p. 920).

### **Intersectionality**

In addition to these individual-level factors, researchers have also identified sociodemographic characteristics existent at the community or ‘neighborhood’ level that contribute to the variation of food insecurity that exists across homeless populations (Shaker et al., 2022). Notably, the risk of homelessness is unevenly distributed across race and gender groups (Johnson, 2010; Meanwell, 2012; Passaro, 1996 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021). Despite the considerable increase in women experiencing homelessness since the 1980s (Burt et al., 2001; DeWard & Moe, 2010; Rochelle & Kaufman, 2004), men still makeup the

majority (70%) of the homeless population within the United States (HUD, 2023; Markowitz & Syverson, 2021). Similar to the overrepresentation of men across the homeless population, African Americans are also experiencing homelessness at higher rates when compared to other racial groups HUD, 2018; Markowitz & Syverson, 2021).

Researchers have observed that, despite their predominance across the U.S. homeless population, men are provided less access to resources compared to women and children (Gowan, 2010; Passaro, 1996; Snow & Anderson, 1993 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021). Studies have connected this trend to “ideas about gender, dependency, and deservingness, as well as the higher rates of chronic homelessness among men” (Burt & Cohen, 1989; Passaro, 1996 as cited in Meanwell, 2012, p. 73). Because men are stereotypically expected to serve as “providers” for themselves, service personnel and the general public have shown to be less sympathetic toward their need for support (Gowan 2010; Snow & Anderson, 1993 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021). Although, the lack of support provided to men experiencing homelessness may be tied to other factors such as their overrepresentation in the homeless population (70%) and that the risk of experiencing severely poorer health and even premature death is vastly higher among women than men, yielding a greater need for services and support for women experiencing homelessness (HUD, 2023). By the same token, further investigation is needed to better understand how “men’s only” shelters factor into the literature on gender and homelessness.

Alongside homeless men, African Americans, regardless of gender, also experience increased discrimination, posing yet another barrier to support and resources to meet their food needs (Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009; Duneier & Carter, 1999; Gowan, 2010; Meanwell, 2012; Passaro, 1996 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021). While African Americans comprise just



over one-tenth of the U.S. population, they account for roughly 40% of the homeless population nationwide (HUD, 2018 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021). Consistent with attribution theory, research has highlighted that racist stereotypical beliefs, particularly on behalf of white Americans, attribute socioeconomic disparities between Black and white people to a “lack of drive and motivation” among African Americans, reducing their perceived worthiness of support (Kluegel, 1990 as cited in Markowitz & Syverson, 2021, p. 921). Similarly, due to racist stereotypical beliefs that tend to associate the Black race with crime and violence (Pager, 2003), African Americans may be further excluded from accessing resources or support to help alleviate existing food insecurity due to their assumed “dangerousness” (Markowitz & Syverson, 2021).

Kumar et al. (2007) noted that food security also varies among sociodemographic groups existent within the homeless population based on factors such as access to transportation and their geographic proximity to grocery stores or food resources. A study conducted by Raphael et al. (2006) found that a lack of car ownership or car access is disproportionately associated with low-income households and marginalized racial groups. More specifically, Raphael et al. (2006) observed that even within low-income populations, African Americans are more likely than white Americans to experience a lack of car access and car ownership, despite experiencing similar economic situations. Consistent with Raphael et al.'s (2006) findings, Baek's (2016) study on food access and public transportation highlighted that it is typically people of lower socioeconomic status and African Americans who share the most concern for their ability to access public transportation.

Blanchard & Lyson (2002; 2006) described public transportation as a “necessity” for people who lack car ownership or car access and do not reside within walking distance of grocery stores or food resources (Baek, 2016). When public transportation is unavailable or

inaccessible, people may become reliant on convenience stores for their grocery needs, resulting in lower food security (Baek, 2016). Similarly, people may also grocery shop or acquire food resources less often and spend more time and money acquiring transportation, resulting in smaller or less nutritious food purchases, or the prolonging of food acquisition, further worsening food insecurity (Cafiero, 2013 as cited in Baek, 2016).

### **Food insecurity: An Issue of Social Injustice**

Like other forms of social injustice, food insecurity is caused by structural factors; “it is related to limited economic opportunities, neighborhood divestment, substandard housing, environmental pollution, among several other forms of harm in US urban neighborhoods—which extend from over a century of structural racism’ and social inequities” (Shaker et al., 2022, p. 102). “Understanding food (in)access today requires understanding how spaces came to be sites of (un)healthy lives” (Harper et al., 2009; McClintock, 2011 as cited in Shaker et al., 2022, p. 103). Nardone et al. (2020; 2021), Nelson et al. (2020), and Shaker et al. (2022) conducted some of the first quantitative studies examining the connection between the practice of redlining and contemporary food access. However, scholars have yet to qualitatively explore how a city’s history of redlining contributes to experiences of contemporary food insecurity among the homeless population. Scholars who have used qualitative methods to explore how people experience the impacts of redlining have not yet focused specifically on food insecurity among homeless people within redlined neighborhoods (e.g., Wesch, 2018).

My research examines the contemporary factors that influence food insecurity among homeless people while also explicitly accounting for, what Sadler et al. (2021) terms, the “legacy effects” of the socio-historical, discriminatory practice of redlining. My central research questions are: What factors contribute to the variation in food insecurity that exists among

homeless people in one of Kansas City's historically redlined districts? How does the city's history of redlining contribute to contemporary experiences of food insecurity among this population?

## Chapter 3 - Methodology

Since I was particularly concerned with learning more about how redlining affects experiences of food insecurity among homeless people, I chose to conduct my research in a neighborhood within Kansas City that has been the site of prolonged redlining. This kind of strategic research site, as explained by Merton (1987), is an environment where the phenomenon of concern is emphasized to a high degree, giving me, the researcher, an advantaged form of access to explore the phenomenon in detail. A strategic research site is also one in which the phenomenon can be observed in its complexity. As Katz (2001) argues, the opportunity to observe complexity enables the researcher to test and refine explanations using “negative cases” that the scholar must account for in their explanation of the phenomenon. The process of retesting and refining explanations increases the generalizability of the study in theoretical terms (Desmond, 2014; Katz, 2001; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012; Spillman, 2014).<sup>2</sup>

### **Strategic Research Site: Kansas City, Missouri**

According to Krysan and Crowder (2017), the diversification of most (90%) metropolitan areas in the United States has increased over the last 30 years; however, in a few U.S. metropolitan areas, Kansas City, Missouri included, dense racial segregation continues to serve as the “norm” for the community (Clark, 1986; Krysan & Crowder, 2017; Gotham, 2002; as

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<sup>2</sup> Generalizability is defined differently in quantitative methods than in ethnographic methods. In quantitative methods, researchers seek to generalize the findings from samples to populations. In ethnographic methods, researchers seek to create generalizable explanations of social phenomena that can be retested and refined in future studies (see especially Small, 2009).

cited in González-Pérez, 2021). Though not as severe as it was in the early to mid-1900's, racial segregation exhibited in some of today's metropolitan communities is an undeniable remnant of social-historical systemic injustices, including redlining that can be traced back roughly a century (Gonzales- Pérez, 2021). This is the case for Kansas City, Missouri. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of the history of racial residential segregation in the U.S. as well as in Kansas City, Missouri.

The segregation of U.S. metropolitan neighborhoods became most prominent in the 1920's, following the end of the Civil War and during the era of Reconstruction and Jim Crow laws (Dissecting the Troost Divide, 2020). During this time, Homeowners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) used a grading scale to provide potential investors with a suggested "mortgage security grade" for many large city areas across the United States (Shaker et al., 2022). As Nelson et al., (2020), as cited in Shaker et al., (2022) explained:

Neighborhoods that received the grade "A" (green) meant that they were the "best" neighborhoods and that residents there were prime candidates for receiving bank loans. The grade "B" (blue) applied to neighborhoods that were "still desirable." "C" (yellow) meant that the neighborhood's desirability was declining. A grade of "D" (red) was given to neighborhoods that were deemed "hazardous." (p.103)

The practice of color-coding neighborhoods based on their perceived security became known as the practice of "redlining." African Americans and many people of color were often constrained to living within the borders of "red" neighborhoods (Nelson et al., 2020). As "red" and typically inner-city neighborhoods grew to be predominantly Black, suburbs existing on the outskirts of larger cities became more desirable for white populations, contributing to the practice of "white flight" ("Dissecting the Troost Divide," 2020). Residential redlining was

paired with “supermarket redlining,” a deliberate practice of neighborhood disinvestment and “infrastructural exclusion” (Deener, 2017) which created a lack of access to grocery stores and supermarkets in urban communities, a trend that still impacts food access and food security in the present day (Zhang & Ghosh, 2016 as cited in Shaker et al., 2022).

While the practice of “redlining” became illegal in 1968, the legacy of racial segregation and the subsequent practices of neighborhood disinvestment and white flight continue to exist in many U.S. neighborhoods (Joyner et al., 2022). As Gonzales-Perez states (2021), “this deep segregation is [most] noticeable in cities with large African American populations, as is the case of Kansas City, Missouri” (p. 347).

### **Redlining in Kansas City, Missouri**

Kansas City, Missouri holds a deeply rooted history of racial segregation, particularly as it relates to the historically red-lined Troost Avenue, or “Troost Divide;” a 10.7 mile-long street running through the center of Kansas City, Missouri that is socially and historically referred to as the “dividing line between the haves and have nots” (O’Higgins, 2014, p. 1). Andrew R. Gustafon, curator of Johnson County Museum’s “Redlined” exhibit described Kansas City, Missouri’s history of redlining as the following: ‘Throughout the 1920’s and into the 1930’s, investors viewed areas east of Troost Avenue as a “bad” investment, deeming those areas as hazardous and risky, and for those reasons, worthy of being redlined or provided with a “D” grade on the HOLC grading scale (Gustafon, 2022). Meanwhile, neighborhoods west of Troost Avenue were seen as a “better” investment and worthy of infrastructure and resources.’ According to Charlie Keegan, host of the Kansas City-based news segment “Two Americas,” by the early 1930’s, most companies including banks had redlined approximately 52% of Kansas

City, Missouri's metropolitan area, making a lack of resources the new normal for African Americans living on the east side of Troost Avenue ("Two Americas," 2022).

As McKittrick (2013) argues, "we can trace the past to the present and the present to the past through geography" (p. 7). In 2018, Michael Wesch documented the stark difference in racial demographics, architecture and community investment that changed as he approached the historic Troost Divide. 'As I walked from The Plaza headed toward Troost Avenue,' he said, 'I passed an art museum, finely-manicured lawns, beautiful gardens, public ponds— even the sidewalks were artsy and decorative.' As Wesch approached Troost Avenue, however, 'signs of poverty were everywhere' (Wesch, 2017). 'Barred windows, fast-food restaurants with tempered glass barriers between the guest and the cashier, no gardens or nice sidewalks,' Wesch added as he walked along Troost Avenue. Most of the people he saw east of Troost were Black, while Black people were few and far between on the west side of Troost, but, as Wesch described, "Troost Avenue is evidently more than just a racial divide, it is a dividing line of wealth, income, education, and opportunity" (Wesch, 2017).<sup>3</sup>

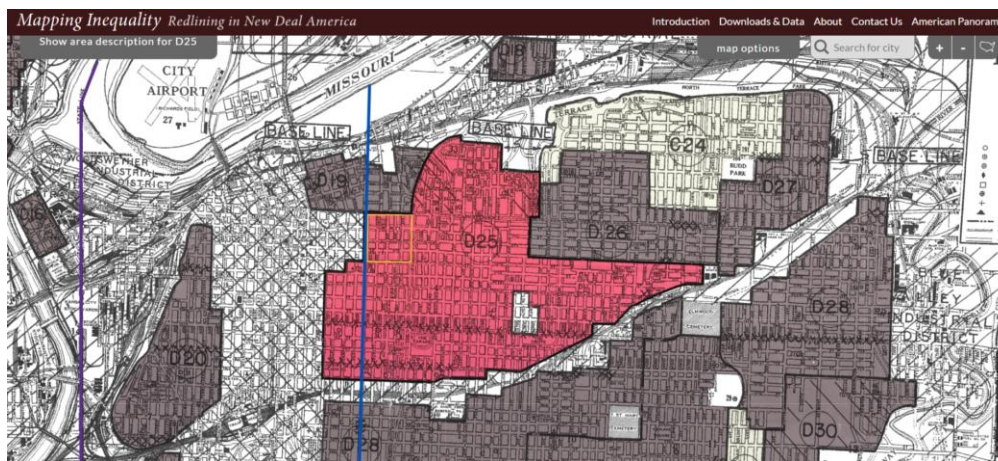
Using Kansas City, Missouri as the strategic research site for my research, I conducted my qualitative study in the neighborhood historically referred to as "D-25" or District 25, located on the upper north-east side of Troost Avenue; one the larger red-coded, grade "D" neighborhoods in the Kansas City metro. According to data collected by the University of

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Wesch sought to better understand the legacy of redlining along the historic Troost Avenue. His experience in the field began at The Country Club Plaza, 15-blocks of shopping, dining, and European-style architecture located just west of Troost Avenue. The Country Club Plaza, also colloquially referred to as just "The Plaza," was established in 1922 during the height of redlining in Kansas City. During this same time, J.C. Nichols, the creator of The Plaza, was also known for creating "award-winning housing" and an "oasis for the wealthy" according to Wesch (2017), which gave military personnel a place to return to following their service in World War II; a place that would be notably situated in neighborhoods like Prairie Village, located west of Troost Avenue.

Richmond’s Digital Scholarship Lab (2016), District 25 was once a historically redlined, predominantly Black area within the Kansas City, Missouri metro. It contained the “principal negro habitat of Kansas City, Missouri” throughout the late 1930’s, and was colloquially referred to by some African Americans as the “negro district” (“Mapping Inequality,” 2016). District 25 was home to a predominantly low-income population of “wage earners and laborers” (“Mapping Inequality,” 2016).

**Figure 1. Map of District 25, Kansas City, Missouri, February 1, 1939**



SOURCE: “Mapping Inequality,” University of Richmond, Digital Scholarship Lab (2016)

Notably, because the district was formed before zoning restrictions came to be in Kansas City, Missouri, District 25 was composed of “small factories, commercial institutions such as laundry facilities” and a large number “negro apartments” that took up a majority of the landscape within District 25, followed by older houses (average of 50-60 years old) that were “poorly kept” (“Mapping Inequality,” 2016). District 25 was an area that was devastated by disinvestment and incredibly low property value. While this study focused solely on a concentrated portion of District 25, as shown in Figure 1, it is worth mentioning that “the colored



belt extended from the vicinity of Troost east to the vicinity of Cleveland, south to 27th Street and north to the vicinity of 12th Street” (“Mapping Inequality,” 2016).

I chose to conduct my research in and immediately adjacent to two homeless resource centers in District 25: Hope Faith Ministries and City Union Mission. Hope Faith Ministries is a daytime-only collaborative center that offers various resources to anyone seeking basic needs assistance. The other resource center, City Union Mission, is a men's homeless shelter that offers 294 bed spaces for men who are substance-free and experiencing homelessness. My hope going into this research was to conduct ethnographic observations in and around these resource centers, and to conduct interviews with employees (who I refer to as “informants”) and people seeking services at both centers (“participants”) to gain insight on food access for homeless people within the local area.

### **Gaining Access**

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University to move forward with my study, I contacted both resource centers via email with the hope of beginning the process of data collection within the following weeks. I had pre-existing connections with members of these organizations. My advocacy work surrounding issues of housing and homelessness had allowed me to build many connections with resource centers across Kansas City, Topeka, and Manhattan, Kansas. During Spring Break in 2022, I led a group of students on a weeklong visit to Kansas City, Missouri where we volunteered and familiarized ourselves with various homeless resource centers, their staff, and the local communities. Through this experience, I established connections with Hope Faith Ministries and City Union Mission and have maintained these relationships through my current advocacy work. Drawing on

these pre-existing connections, I received a supportive welcome to conduct my research in and around both centers.

In June 2023, I scheduled in-person interviews with members from each organization. The scheduled interviews with the employees from each of the two resource centers were scheduled outside of the times that I planned to conduct field observations and participant interviews with people locally experiencing homelessness to allow me to focus solely on either group (informants or participants), one at a time. I also chose to conduct interviews with informants prior to my time in the field with participants to allow me to get a better idea of what the setting would look and be like on any given day prior to immersing myself in it.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

My inclusion criteria were that each participant be at least 18 years old and identify as homeless. Notably, there are various definitions used to define the term “homeless,” though my study will use the definition most commonly used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, 2023) which is an “individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” (p. 4). This definition includes individuals or families who:

have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; are living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution” (HUD, 2023, p. 4).

In choosing to use a broad definition of the term “homeless,” I gathered more variation in experiences of food insecurity among homeless people; a strategy often used to learn more about how social mechanisms work (Katz, 2001).

### **Interviews**

I constructed two semi-structured interview guides to collect data for this study. One guide was specifically curated for interviews with resource center employees who I refer to as “informants,” and the other was created for interviews with homeless individuals in the community, who I refer to as “participants.” I developed both interview guides based on my two central research questions (see Appendix A for full interview guides). The questions within each interview guide were broken up into 5 main categories: Setting/Neighborhood and Living Situation, Food Access and Eating Patterns, Social Network and Social Support, Health, and Demographic questions.

Within each section of questions, I included sample questions such as “could you describe to me your current living situation?” and “describe to me what keeps you in the local area.” I purposefully asked questions that would encourage study participants to share concrete details about situations and incidents (Weiss, 1995, p. 66). These details enabled me to learn more about the mechanisms of homelessness and food insecurity, as well as about people’s lived experiences of these phenomena in this particular area of Kansas City, Missouri. Throughout each interview, I took notes on the various non-verbal actions portrayed by the interviewee as they spoke on their lived experiences. This included taking notes on facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice, which provided insight on people’s emotional responses to the sharing of various experiences and details.

I intended to conduct up to 20 qualitative interviews with homeless individuals and up to six interviews with resource center employees (three from each center). Given that qualitative (and especially ethnographic) research does not seek to empirically generalize from samples to populations (Becker, 2001; Katz, 2001; Small, 2009; Spillman, 2014), I was most concerned with the variation of experiences I learned about through the interviews. As Small (2009) suggests, obtaining a range of information related to a social phenomenon or social process is useful in refining and retesting my theoretical framework, lending itself to the creation of a rigorous, generalizable theory. I aimed to ensure that I gathered as much varying information from study participants and informants as possible.

I conducted a total of 18 qualitative interviews with study participants and 3 qualitative interviews with informants (2 interviews from informants from Hope Faith Ministries and 1 interview with an informant from City Union Mission). Interviews with informants ranged from 25-40 minutes in length. Interviews with participants ranged from 22-56 minutes in length. It is worth noting that these time ranges were based off the audio recordings and do not include the time I spent building rapport with each participant, gaining oral consent, and making ethnographic observations. I used oral consent because I want to be mindful of the possibility that participants (more so than informants) may not feel comfortable providing their signature. (Please see Appendix B for my full consent script.) Recording interviews provided me with an accurate record of what was said, while also allowing me to focus my hand-written jottings on non-verbal actions and reactions that I observed as an active participant within the field (Emerson et al., 2011; Duneier, 1999).

Given the nature of semi-structured interviews, I began each interview following the interview guides I created and proceeded to tailor my interview questions to what would allow

me to establish a deeper understanding of the information shared by each interviewee (Weiss, 1995). The ability to follow the lead of each interviewee and the unique experiences they shared allowed me to dig into points of data that evoked emotion and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, points of silence, and varying tone of voice (Pugh, 2013; Weiss, 1995). To conclude each interview, I verbally shared a debriefing statement (found at the end of Appendix A) with each participant, and I thanked them for their time and willingness to speak with me.

### **Ethnographic Observations**

Participant observations, as previously mentioned, are an important component of qualitative research. Providing thick descriptions of people's actions, reactions, and interactions provides invaluable insight into the meaning that people attribute to social life and how they respond to what is happening (Desmond, 2014; Emerson et al, 2011; Goffman, 1989). To record my ethnographic observations, I hand wrote jottings in a notebook that I carried with me each day. I made jottings in a non-intrusive manner by actively listening to each participant and then between interviews, quickly making note of reactions and key incidents I wanted to elaborate on in greater depth upon leaving the field (Emerson et al., 2011). I then wrote up full fieldnotes at the end of each day. I recorded field notes confidentially, without using any names or identifying information.

I observed people trying to access resources, including as they entered the facility attempting to receive benefits and as they exited the facility, either having received resources or having been denied resources. I recorded actions, reactions, interactions, conversations, situations, language used, and what people did. In short, I observed as much as I could about what happened, and I wrote it all up in my fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 2011).

### **“Getting in:” Rapport and Reactivity**

Despite having visited both City Union Mission and Hope Faith Ministries in the days prior to conducting my field work (to conduct interviews with informants), every individual I spoke with throughout my time in the field was a stranger to me, and I to them. My first day in the field was by far the most awkward day for me out of the six days I spent there. Since I spent the most time that day building rapport and being socialized into the sites, I share some of my fieldnotes from that day in what follows. My notes reflect how people reacted to me, which provides important context for what I was able to learn in the field. I use these reactions to check my own interpretations of what people shared with me, and to empower my readers to do the same (see especially Katz, 2001).

I began day one at Hope Faith Ministries, parking my car in the narrow parking lot located in front of the building. As I walked up to the “volunteers and staff only” entrance, I rang the buzzer waiting to be let into the facility. I had made eye contact with a few individuals who were standing next to one another having a conversation in front of Hope Faith. I smiled, they smiled back, and I continued to wait. “How can I help you?,” a voice echoes through the black speaker attached to the buzzer I had rung a few minutes prior. “Hi, my name is Jess and I spoke with Terry about possibly speaking with individuals experiencing homelessness in the area. She should be expecting me,” I replied. “Come on in, I’ll let her know you’re here,” she responds as a ringing noise goes off through the small black speaker and the door unlocks.

I walk into the facility and greet the first person I see, Amanda, who is the receptionist at Hope Faith. “Terry should be right out,” she said while picking up the facility landline to answer a call. Within a few short minutes, the door to the left of the front desk opens and it’s Terry. “Hi Jess, it’s so good to see you!” Terry extends her arms for a hug. I lean in to hug her, “it’s great to see you too, Terry. I’m excited to be here, thank you for having me.” I proceed to follow Terry

through the door labeled “staff only,” and through the halls of Hope Faith which could arguably be compared to a maze of sorts.

“Since you’ve been here before, I won’t spend too much time with you, if that’s okay. Just let me know if you have any questions.” Terry walks me through the hallways and into the last “staff only” space before entering into the cafeteria-like setting where guests are encouraged to eat and gather. “No worries at all,” I respond to Terry, “if you need me, I’ll be somewhere in or just outside of the facility speaking with people.” Terry smiles and as she proceeds back into the maze-like hallways, I walk in the opposite direction ready to engage in conversation with participants. Within minutes of being admitted to the building, I was free to talk with people who had gathered inside, and this was the case for the rest of the days that I spent at Hope Faith. The trust I had built with the staff throughout previous experiences over the years had allowed me free access to conduct my research in and around their facility.

### **Who are you and what services do you offer?**

As I walked up the cement ramp into the eating area, I saw six rows of individuals sitting at long cafeteria-style tables (foldable tables with benches attached) eating breakfast and staring up at a television mounted onto the wall. “Good morning miss how are you today?” a gentleman shouts from the third table. I wave, “I’m well, how are you?” I respond. “Not too bad, not too bad,” he says while he continues to eat what looked like a pastry of sorts on a pale-yellow food tray. I continue to make my way through the eating space and make the decision to begin my interactions with individuals in the second large social space where ministry usually takes place later in the mornings. A little nervous, I decide to sit at the last possible table out of the six rows for a brief second to visually scan the environment and decide how I was going to make my first approach. After sitting at the end of the sixth table for less than a handful of minutes, I notice a

Black man with a near-balding head of grey, curly hair walking toward me. “Is anyone sitting here?” he asks. “No, please feel free.”

“My name is Nick. What services do you offer?” he says to me as he leans in across the table to hear my response. “Nice to meet you Nick, I’m Jess. Unfortunately, I don’t offer any services. I am a graduate student at Kansas State University, and I am working on a research project. As part of this project, I’m interested in speaking with individuals experiencing homelessness in the local area. I want to learn about food and housing resources in the area, people’s experiences with accessing food around this part of the city, among a few other things.” Nick smiles. “I see, so you’re not with an agency or like a program or anything, right?” he responds. “That’s correct, I am here as a student hoping to learn about people’s lived experiences with food in the area,” I respond. “Oh okay, well I thought you were offering something but that’s okay. You can ask me questions if you want, I’ve been homeless for several years and I live just up the street in a tent,” Nick responds. Nick and I spent roughly 30 minutes talking. Toward the end of our conversation, Nick began talking to me about the difficulty he has faced in securing a bed in a local shelter.

Katz (2001) speaks about the importance of “reactivity,” and seeing the researcher’s presence in a setting as an opportunity for sense-making. The questions people asked me, the way people introduced me to one another, and their overall interactions with me help me make sense of what’s important to them. For example, by Nick beginning his interaction with me by asking what services I can offer him, that tells me that receiving services are of importance to him. It also provides me with insight as to how I am perceived by people in the field. Why didn’t Nick assume I was also experiencing homelessness? Why did he assume I was offering a service?



Nick's question about what services I offer was common, in fact I was asked about services at least twice per day throughout my time in the field. Most people seemed to cast me into the role of service provider, which is important insight on their view of the local situation (Duneier, 1999; Katz, 2001). People will often try to find roles for ethnographers entering the field. I thus note Nick's questions, which were typical, to reflect insider views of the structure of the situation, and perhaps why people so readily received me. Nick and many others were still willing to talk with me after learning I had no services to offer (note his comment, "that's okay," which seemed to reflect some disappointment), and I explore below what they said about why they were willing to do so (or not). Only one person declined to talk with me.

Each person I met introduced me to someone else, and I was careful to seek a variety of experiences. For example, Nick introduced me to Wade, who introduced me to Jerrell, and so forth. After the first couple of interviews, I asked participants a question along the lines of "do you know someone who might have a different experience regarding *x*," to which a majority of respondents responded "yes" or "I think so" and introduced me to another individual. In Nick's case, he said, "I couldn't tell you much about shelters 'cus I haven't stayed in one in ages but you see my friend over there in the red hoodie, he's staying at City Union and I think he's been stayin' there for at least a few weeks now. I'll tell him to come talk to you."

Each individual introduced me to another person in a slightly different manner, landing somewhere along the lines of "this is Jess and she's a graduate student at K-State working on some research to try and share our stories with people who aren't homeless."<sup>4</sup> I took this to

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<sup>4</sup> While each participant had received an in-depth overview of the purpose of my research prior to beginning their interview with me, a majority of participants chose to leave out a majority of the information I shared with them about my study when introducing me to another person.

mean that people in this setting see importance and value in sharing their lives experiences or “stories” with others, particularly those who are not part of the homeless community. However, some people were more eager than others to speak with me. One person told me that I “caught him on a bad day,” to which I responded, “no worries, I hope tomorrow is a better day for you.”

By the time day 3 came around and I had visited both resource centers multiple times, I returned confidently to both sites seeing several familiar faces and receiving several waves from people I had spoken with in days prior, and even people I had simply seen before at either (and sometimes both) facilities. I knew several people by name and many people knew mine. I felt comfortable joking with some of the individuals I had spoken with, and they felt comfortable joking with me too. “I don’t know how you ain’t dyin’ of a heat stroke,” one individual said to me jokingly as I finished up an interview in the parking lot of Hope Faith. “It’s hotter than the devil’s asshole out here!” By day 3 I was certain I had built rapport.

On day 5, Nick and I had a conversation about our initial encounter. He shared with me that he used a process of elimination to try and figure out who I was and what I was doing at Hope Faith. “I’ve been comin’ here a while so I know you’re not a staff person. And, if you were security or something like that, you would have on a uniform. And you look way too damn clean to be homeless. So, the last option is that you’re here offering services to the homeless.” This conversation indicated to me that I had successfully built rapport with Nick, as he was willing to tell me more about how he initially perceived me. My rapport with informants and participants alike enabled me to check my initial impressions and interpretations for accuracy.

### **Positionality**

"How might [my] social position influence my work?" (Duneier, 1999). As a participant-observer attempting to understand the social interactions taking place within the setting, my

positionality affects what I am able to observe—'obscuring some things and illuminating others' (paraphrasing Tweed, 2006, p. 18 as cited in Falcone, 2018, p. 254)—as well as how I understand and attribute meaning to the observed social processes (Geertz, 1973; Duneier, 1999). By acknowledging this, I took extensive care to examine my blind spots, and to be sensitive to what is important to the people I interviewed and observed (without imposing my own meanings, questions, and interpretations), in order to interpret as accurately as possible.

Notably, my experiences (or lack thereof) informed the questions I asked and affected what I paid attention to (McCorkel & Meyer, 2003). For example, I have not spent ample time in historically redlined neighborhoods, which may mean that I overlooked some aspects of social life that others may view as important within the setting. To account for this, I described interactions in detail, while also consistently attending to “when, where, and according to who,” as it relates to the descriptions I provided throughout my field notes (Emerson et al., 2011). I tried to avoid using impressionistic words in my field notes, focusing instead on depicting scenes through action (Emerson et al., 2011). I paid special attention to variations in events, noting my own first impressions and how other people reacted, as well (Emerson et al., 2011). I noted how people expressed feelings, and what terms they used to describe people, places, and situations (Emerson et al., 2011). Lastly, I tried not to rely on generalizations or my own preconceived notions about what I may perceive to be important within the field (Emerson et al., 2011).

My own previous experiences with homelessness may also affect how I interpreted what people told me, what I observed, and how I interpreted events within the setting. As Mendoza-Denton (2000) writes, “What I present as a text was filtered through my sensibility, my interpretation as well as my equivocation. Even what I noticed and considered as ‘data points’ were selected in my perception according to the sum of my prior experiences and my take of the

situations encountered" (Denton, 2000, p. 44; see also Falcone, 2018, p. 225). I accounted for this by thoroughly analyzing all of my data, looking for variations and counterevidence, and considering multiple competing interpretations and explanations. I also acknowledge my standpoint—what it reveals and obscures--empowering the reader to question my interpretations and hold me accountable for showing how I arrive at my interpretations, ultimately making my work more reliable (in an ethnographic sense) (Katz, 2001; Becker, 2001).

My first encounter with homelessness occurred at the age of 5 or 6. Living with my biological parents, two active gang members at the time, I observed and experienced the effects of frequent incarceration, employment instability, violence, food insecurity, and homelessness. Little did I know that my personal experience with these issues would ignite a passion within me to fight for the basic needs of people living through similar social issues to those I experienced while in the care of my biological parents.

In 2018, a professor of sociology at California State University Chico introduced me to the local low-barrier homeless shelter in town. What began as a few volunteer hours per week at the shelter turned into overnight shifts as a shelter monitor and homeless outreach worker for the following three years. Ironically, as our guests utilized our services for shelter, metaphorically, so did I. From the colloquial slang our guests used, their mannerisms and actions, and especially the issues they expressed going through, all reminded me of my parents; it felt like home. No two days working with unhoused community members were the same. Some days were far better than others. Nevertheless, throughout this experience, I grew to care greatly about the issue of homelessness. I grew to understand the mechanisms that perpetuate a level of extreme poverty across familial generations. Most importantly, I grew to look beyond individual experiences of

homelessness to form connections between the social processes brought on or exacerbated by homelessness.

The culmination of these experiences have inspired my interest in better understanding issues affecting homeless populations. More specifically, how systemic inequalities contribute to the individual lived experiences of people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity. My deep interests drive me to get to the bottom of these phenomena using the most rigorous standards in my ethnographic work.

### **Ethics**

There were two main ethical considerations related to my research: consent and confidentiality. Consent provided by anyone partaking in my research needed to meet the following three criteria: “knowledgeability, voluntary, and competence” (Thorne, 1980). To ensure that each person interested in partaking in my research knew enough about my research and their rights as a potential participant to be able to make an informed decision about whether to participate, I created an oral consent script (Appendix B) that I read to each person prior to beginning the interview process. Since I conducted research in and around resource centers, I was also careful to make clear to anyone interested in participating that doing so (or not) will have absolutely no bearing on them receiving assistance from the resource centers. I was also attentive to the issue of autonomy, meaning that each person was in a position to be able to decide whether to participate.

During my time in the field, there was a point during an interview where I faced an ethical dilemma related to consent. I was interviewing an individual who, toward the end of the interview, began exhibiting disorganized speech and speaking to themselves in third person. I was caught by surprise when this began because none of their prior actions had led me to think they

potentially struggled with issues surrounding mental health, which could have impacted their ability to give consent. Shortly after they began exhibiting this behavior, they paused and said to me “I’m sorry, my head’s not right sometimes. I think my mental health is getting worse.” I looked at them and assured them that there was no need to apologize and that we could stop the interview at that moment. They insisted on continuing with the interview. “I want to continue, if that’s okay [*pause*]. Plus, my brain doesn’t always act up like this... it kind of just comes in waves but a majority of the time I’m just fine. Can we continue?”

Although I was conflicted about whether to continue the interview, I honored their wishes to proceed. After speaking with my thesis advisor about this experience, I decided to include the information provided by the individual as part of my data because I ultimately was convinced of their informed consent and their experiences are just as worthy of being heard. Prior to the brief episode in which the individual exhibited symptoms of mental illness, they showed no signs of mental distress that could have otherwise led me to believe they were incapable of providing full, voluntary consent to participant in an interview. They indicated the same full, voluntary consent a second time, when I asked again after the episode, and there were no further indications of distress.

According to the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC), more than 20 percent of the U.S. adult population lives with a mental illness (CDC, 2023). Despite this fact, evidence-based research continues to exhibit a lack of inclusivity when it comes to those living with mental health disorders (Dakic, 2020). This issue largely stems from a need to protect vulnerable subjects who may be unable to provide comprehensive, voluntary consent to participate in research as a result of their mental state (Dakic, 2020). On the other hand, it raises the concern of exclusivity and keeping a large population of people and perspectives out of research.

In considering the concept of confidentiality within my research, there were two major aspects to consider, external and internal confidentiality. External confidentiality refers to the process of ensuring that those outside of the field are unable to identify informants within the field (Tolich, 2004). Internal confidentiality refers to ensuring that people from within the field cannot identify other subjects (Tolich, 2004). People within the field are often closely associated and may be especially able to identify one another (e.g., couples and colleagues within small, concentrated spaces) (Tolich, 2004). To maintain both external and internal confidentiality within my research, I used pseudonyms and I left out any information in my results that could be used to identify a participant or informant. There is a possibility, however, given the geographic proximity between the two organizations, the work they are both involved in, among several other factors (gender, years of employment at the organization), that informants from either organization may be able to recognize each other within the presented findings. I did my best to be cognizant of this fact by excluding any identifying information from my analysis (e.g., years worked, position or role in the organization). Also, some participants adamantly requested they be recognized by name, but I was unable to honor this request because I had to protect the confidentiality of everyone, and naming one person could facilitate identification of another.

### **Data Analysis**

My process for data analysis varied slightly from what I had planned in my thesis proposal. Prior to beginning the data collection process, I had planned to use the computerized transcription software, “Otter.ai” to transcribe all of the audible data collected from the interviews I conducted. However, I found that I had overlooked the significant background noise that would be present in the outdoor social spaces where I conducted my interviews, oftentimes near busy city streets. The interviews I conducted with informants also took place in the outside

vicinity of the resource centers in the days prior to speaking with participants, so even those interviews needed to be transcribed manually. Thus, after spending 6 days in the field in early June, 2023, I spent roughly two weeks manually transcribing each interview in full. I tried several different methods of listening and documenting to speed up the transcription process while maintaining accuracy. My final strategy was to significantly reduce the playback speed of each interview recording and type exactly what I heard, word for word. This may, in theory, seem like it would make the process slower, but in practice, it saved me from having to replay the same part numerous times to capture every word that was said and document it.

After transcribing all of the interviews, I organized them in individual sub-folders that I labeled using pseudonyms for participants and informants. I also had a subfolder with all of my field notes that I had typed up at the end of each day. All of my subfolders related to this study were then housed within one parent folder on my password-protected personal computer that only I have access to.

I analyzed the data using open coding and focused coding (Emerson et al., 2011). First, however, I carefully read and re-read all transcripts and fieldnotes. I strategically chose to begin this process soon after I had finished transcribing all the interviews as I had already begun familiarizing myself with the data through the transcription process, but I wanted to read through all of the transcripts and fieldnotes to ensure that I was familiar with all of the data I collected, instead of focusing on what I had most recently transcribed. After re-reading all of the transcripts and fieldnotes, I proceeded to do line-by-line coding, working closely with the text and capturing the essence of its importance or relevance with a short phrase or word (Emerson et al., 2011). After line-by-line coding, I made note of the themes that emerged through my codes. I followed that up with another line-by-line reading to refine my codes and note patterns and variations.



The process of open coding served as my first attempt to make sense of the data I gathered. It required that I read each line to begin formulating ‘themes and ideas’ at a fine level of detail (Emerson et al., 2011). After completing the first part of the two-part analysis process, I employed a similar method of analysis known as "focused coding" to identify 'central topics' or themes across the data (Emerson et al., 2011). As themes emerged, I incorporated theory (Rosiek, 2014). Through the process of analytic induction, I used theory to help me make sense of the data and to develop ideas about what was happening. I then tested those ideas using the data, refining ideas (and theories) along the way (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012; Katz, 2001).

The following chapter is organized to reflect the themes and subthemes that emerged from my data. I present each theme and all of the variations on the themes evident in my data. The data passages are representative of the themes and subthemes. I also present the passages that challenged or complicated the themes in order to explore the full variation with the phenomena of food insecurity and homelessness. This type of analysis enabled me to deeply explore mechanisms of inequality in food insecurity and homelessness.

## Chapter 4 - Findings

My study was guided by two central research questions: What factors contribute to the variation in food insecurity that exists among homeless persons in one of Kansas City's historically redlined districts, and how does the city's history of redlining contribute to contemporary experiences of food insecurity among this population?

In this chapter I present the findings from my analysis of ethnographic observations and in-depth, oral history-style interviews with homeless individuals within the historically redlined community in Kansas City, Missouri, also referred to as District 25, and housing and food resource providers working in support centers within the district. My findings revealed 2 major themes and 6 sub-themes. First, my findings show that the type of homelessness an individual experiences affects their food insecurity. More specifically, my findings show how (a) the relative proximity of where people sleep to centers providing food, (b) the amount of time people spend looking for a place to sleep, and (c) people's access to information and community connectedness in relation to their time spent homelessness impact their food insecurity. Second, my findings show how the factors of convenience and confinement, both experienced by individuals experiencing homelessness in District 25, directly affect their food insecurity. More specifically, my findings suggest that: (a) the concentration of emergency resources in District 25, (b) the emanating violence experienced outside of the district, and (c) hostile architecture all confine people to an area where decades of disinvestment have diminished food and housing security.

### *Types of Homelessness: Space/Time Interactions and Their Effects on Food Insecurity*

As food justice literature and homeless literature alike have established, the experience of homelessness in itself serves as a clear predictor of food insecurity; however, in conducting my

research and interviewing several individuals who identify themselves as “homeless,” it became evident to me that the level of food insecurity experienced across homeless individuals in District 25 varied greatly based on their individual experience surviving without consistent shelter. Hence, various aspects or factors within the homeless experience served as a barrier for some individuals in meeting their food needs, while serving as a resource for others. Two of the most significant factors were the distance between where people slept and the resource centers that provided food on specific schedules, and the amount of time people spent looking for a place to sleep. My findings suggest how sleeping far from shelters forces people to devise complex adaptations for accessing food, while sleeping at or close to resource centers helped people to receive food on schedule (or double up on meals to endure subsequent gaps in meals). My findings also suggest how people who spent the most time searching for places to sleep struggled to access food, largely by causing fatigue that led them to miss scheduled meals while blocking them from accessing alternative means of food acquisition (e.g., via food stamps).

In District 25, all 18 individuals I interviewed self-identified as homeless, but their specific homeless situations varied greatly. For 12 of them, homelessness involved sleeping in “the woods.” While it is unclear as to whether “the woods” was a euphemism or the actual “woods,” several individuals referred to where they live in the woods as their “camp” or “campsite.”<sup>5</sup> For 4 of them, homelessness meant sleeping in public spaces that, if possible, elevated them off of the ground, such as park benches and public playgrounds located in District 25, or miles further east of the district. And for 2 of the individuals that I interviewed,

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<sup>5</sup> I spoke with an informant to gather her understanding of the phrase “the woods,” and she shared with me that “the woods” could be used in reference to forest-like pieces of land with lots of trees in the nearby areas. She also shared that some of the individuals she has worked with use the phrase “the woods” to refer to their campsite even if it located in the city below an overpass, near a bridge, and so forth.

homelessness involved sleeping in either the City Union Mission Shelter or at the ReStart Shelter located less than 5 miles southwest of resource centers such as Hope Faith. Despite all 18 individuals experiencing some variation of homelessness, their individual experiences related to shelter put some individuals at greater risk for more severe food insecurity than others.

Wade, a 47-year-old Black man who has been occupying one of the 294 shelter beds in City Union Mission Shelter for just over a month, indicated how sleeping in shelters protected against the most severe forms of food insecurity. He said:

“I’m homeless but not to the extent that many of the others are around here... like because I’m stayin’ in a shelter every night, at least for now, I don’t have to spend my days goin’ to a million different places for food. City Union serves us breakfast, I handle my business during the day, and I head to the shelter in the evening where I know I will be served dinner.”

As Wade mentioned, there are benefits to staying in a shelter, one of which is the access an individual has to meals solely being offered to shelter residents. Similarly, staying in a shelter that offers consistent meals to its residents reduces the amount of time and energy an individual has to put forth to acquire food on a daily basis, allowing them more time to partake in other activities and opportunities to improve their housing situation and their overall food insecurity.

Wade also shared with me that he is a recovering alcoholic, which may impact his access to a shelter where he is most readily able to access food. His comment that he is staying in a shelter "at least for now" indicates the possibility of a relapse and being forced to vacate his shelter bed due to their policy on sobriety. According to an informant from City Union Mission, this policy was put in place to protect individuals who are attempting to remain sober from those who are currently using drugs or alcohol. Policies regarding sobriety, however, are not unique to

City Union Mission. In fact, unless otherwise stated as a "low-barrier"<sup>6</sup> shelter, most "regular" shelters have some variation of this policy in place. The consequence of such policies, however, is that they can serve as a barrier for individuals who are currently using drugs or alcohol that want to receive support for their addiction alongside receiving consistent shelter. Losing access to the shelter bed will also exacerbate food insecurity, as illustrated by people who lacked direct shelter access.

For example, in contrast to Wade's access to shelter, Tiffany, a 27-year-old Black woman, has been living in the woods about three miles from Hope Faith resource center. She explained how sleeping far from shelters contributed to the most severe forms of food insecurity:

What does my housing situation look like? [chuckling and shifting her focus from my face to her hands, which she's rubbing against one another on top of the wood table set up between us]. You're looking at it. I mean, I just sleep wherever. Sometimes I spend most of my night looking for somewhere to sleep that isn't freezing, isn't too close to other people but close enough so that they could hear me scream for help if I needed to, isn't wet, isn't infested with bugs... On nights like these I tend to sleep in late and sometimes I miss breakfast at Hope Faith so I'm stuck waiting for the lunch meal to be served, and then I double up on lunch by going to Hope Faith and the Community Kitchen around the corner so at least then I have dinner. Sometimes I'm so tired that I sleep through lunch, too, and then I'm left with two options, I either go through trash cans in the area looking for food, or I just don't eat.

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<sup>6</sup> According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (2018), low-barrier shelter refers to a homeless shelter that has a minimum number of expectations or requirements for an individual to utilize their shelter service. Generally and from my own experience working in low-barrier homeless shelters for three years, low-barrier shelters run on the basis of "accepting people as they are now."

By "nights like these," Tiffany was referring to nights when she gets little to no sleep because she is spending most of her time looking for a place to sleep. Exuding energy throughout the night and subsequently not sleeping causes Tiffany to sleep later into the next day, which causes her to miss out on receiving food from resource centers such as Hope Faith that distribute food on a scheduled basis. Sometimes, however, the circumstances for Tiffany are much worse and she sleeps through the breakfast and lunch time food offerings at local centers which forces her to make a challenging decision: scavenging through trash looking for food or simply not eating.

Regardless of the choice Tiffany makes in this instance, she is forced to experience worsening food insecurity. Searching through trash cans for food does not guarantee that she will find enough food to eat, much less, nutritious food. Consuming food that has been disposed of can lead to health problems such as food poisoning. It is often difficult to know how long a food item has been sitting in the trash, whether it has expired or rotted, been tampered with or exposed to other hazardous materials in the trash, or whether it has been contaminated by wildlife also in search of food. By the same token, consuming no food at all can be detrimental to one's health and overall wellbeing. Going without any food to eat for extended periods of time can cause further fatigue and overall poorer health, lessening one's ability to acquire food due to a lack of energy.

Being far away from a resource center but knowing where to sleep (i.e., not having to spend a lot of time looking for a place to sleep), created intermediate forms of food insecurity. People who knew where to sleep seemed to have more time to devise strategies to adapt to missing meals at far away centers. For example, Sherry, who has been sleeping in a tent in "the woods" for nine years with her husband just a few miles away from Hope Faith Ministries,

explains that she and her husband have developed a routine over the years that helps ensure they receive a meal, even though they are far away from resource centers. She indicates that she and her husband have had to develop a rather complex strategy to account for eventualities that might interfere with food access:

We sleep in a tent, but it's been a while since we've went without eating, which people probably assume we starve all the time, but we don't. We're homeless, not dumb. Since we've been out here a while, we know the ropes pretty well and we have a routine for gettin' ourselves some food. In the morning we walk over to Hope Faith for breakfast and, you know, they typically open around 7am. We hang out here for a few hours until lunch is served, we eat lunch and then we stop by the Community Kitchen just on the other side of the gas station at the corner here, and we get a second lunch. Now my husband... he can eat, so sometimes that second lunch doesn't last us very long but we have food stamps so we'll go by a gas station and pick up snacks and they even let us buy some of the hot food with our food stamps so sometimes we will skip the free lunches all together and get us something good from the gas station.

Sherry's comments reflect significant efforts to ensure that she and her husband don't miss a meal, especially since "he can eat." They either have to wait for hours near a resource center and/or double up on meals and/or rely on food stamps. Still colloquially referred to by its previous name, "food stamps," the federally funded program known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) heavily restricts the purchase of hot food items. Yet, in some instances, individuals like Sherry and her husband are able to find a loophole to this restriction by purchasing hot food from places like gas stations. By "something good," Sherry was referring to the concoction of "French fries, nacho cheese, chips, and jalapenos" that made

up one of her “favorite foods.” Thus, to Sherry, something “good” did not refer to the nutritional value that the food provided her and her husband, but rather the satisfying taste of the food. The meal that Sherry described to me is high in saturated fat and lacks both macro and micronutrients that are necessary for adequate nutrition. Eating meals such as the one described to me by Sherry on a regular basis can worsen chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes.

While Sherry did not mention whether she or her husband currently experience any chronic health conditions, it is worth noting that living with such ailments can worsen instances of food insecurity by forcing people to spend money they would have otherwise used for food on visits with medical providers and prescription medications to manage their chronic health conditions. SNAP benefits cannot be used to cover medical expenses. Instead, its aim is to provide people living in poverty with an opportunity to purchase healthier food options with less restriction due to the cost of food. In Sherry's case, however, purchasing healthy food to cook at home is not a feasible option given that she and her husband live in a tent. Their inability to cook food limits what food items they can purchase and eat, posing further constraints on their ability to meet their food needs, which in turn worsens their overall food insecurity.

***Length of Homelessness: “It feels like I’m learning something new every day”***

As Sherry’s comments indicated, the length of time people have experienced homelessness affects their knowledge about how to acquire food. Accessing food from the various resource centers and getting food stamps is complicated. Even when people are able to figure out how to get food stamps while experiencing homelessness, they then have to figure out where they can use their food stamps, especially if they want hot food. The extended amount of time it takes for individuals to figure out how to meet their food needs upon becoming homeless



prolongs the time they spend without shelter, further contributing to their likelihood of remaining homeless and experiencing worsening food insecurity. For example, LaVerne, a 34-year-old white woman who moved to District 25 less than 9 months ago, had limited experience with homelessness in the area, which posed barriers to food access and ultimately worsened her overall food security. As she explained this to me, the layers of complexity in attaining food while homeless, and the depth of knowledge of the “system” that people need, became especially evident:

I moved out here to be with my fiancé. Out of nowhere he had some heart problems, and we basically went bankrupt from medical bills in less than a few months. I mean, we didn't have tons of savings to begin with, but I never imagined myself homeless, but here I am. And you know, *it's hard figuring out what to do and where to go since I've never been homeless before, let alone in a new city. So it feels like I'm learning something new every day.* Like just yesterday this guy that has a tent next to ours came home with a bunch of shit from the gas station and I asked him how the hell he could afford all that if he didn't work. Well low and behold, the fucker has food stamps! [Laughs] I was so confused because I know damn well he isn't putting our camp site as his home address, and he told me that Hope Faith has mailboxes for people to receive mail. *Now how was I supposed to know that?!* I mean seriously, *if I didn't ask him about it, I would've probably gone months without ever finding out.* So when I got here today, I asked about a mailbox and of course, there's no more available. Listen, I'm not saying it's unfair but some of these people around here are veterans at this shit and live a lot easier than I do, or at least it feels that way [*emphasis added*].

LaVerne learned of a means for attaining food stamps while homeless, but by the time she did, mailboxes were unavailable. Yet more knowledge of alternative means becomes necessary for dealing with a complex and urgent issue. Individuals who have experienced homelessness in the area for extended periods of time, “veterans” as LaVerne refers to them, generally have more access to resources because they know what resources exist.

Similar to the way in which LaVerne found out about the mailboxes available at Hope Faith Ministries, other participants shared that the length of time they have spent being homeless in the area has allowed them to build connections with both other individuals experiencing homelessness and with local organizations that provide assistance, increasing their access to information about food access. Further, individual and organizational connections affected people’s overall sense of “community connectedness.” I found that community connectedness provides people with a sense of confidence that they will receive support locally, while its inverse, being disconnected, can undermine confidence and further cut people off from crucial resources. I explore these themes throughout the following discussion.

***Community Connectedness: “They got my back and I got theirs”***

Oscar, a 36-year-old Black old man who has been experiencing homelessness for 3 years in the area, mentioned to me that he knew where to go for food because the local public library had fliers known as “street sheets.” The street sheets are usually kept in clear plastic holders on the entrance walls of the library for people to take. However, they aren’t always available, and knowing someone who can provide a copy can make a big difference.

In describing to me what the “street sheet” was, Oscar began looking through his backpack, presumably to show me the document he was referring to. After unsuccessfully looking through his backpack for a minute or two, he stood up from the lunch table bench he had

been sitting on just across the table from me and shouted across the room, “Julia, you got a street sheet on you?” A young Black woman, who I later found out had celebrated her 28th birthday the day prior, yelled back, “nah, I ain’t got one but let me ask Paul, that n\*gga always has one.” Julia got up from the lunch table bench where she was sitting with three older white men who looked twice her age, and walked down the concrete slope inside Hope Faith Ministries to speak with another man in the open space adjacent to where Oscar and I were sitting. “Julia will find you a street sheet. Even if Paul doesn’t have one, someone over there does.” After roughly five minutes, Julia walked over to where Oscar and I were talking. “Paul didn’t have one, but John did. He had two copies so you can keep this one.” Julia extended her hand across the table and handed me a crinkled white sheet of paper with black typed lettering covering the front and back. “Thanks for getting that for me,” Oscar said as I grabbed the street sheet from Julia’s hand. I smiled at Julia and thanked her as well. This is an example of how both personal and organizational/institutional connections convey resources to people experiencing different types of homelessness, and why being connected is so important.

The length of time in which someone experiences homelessness also affects the level of community connectedness that an individual feels. Outside of the sharing of information, individuals I spoke with also shared that they feel supported from other people experiencing homelessness in their community based on the relationships they have built with one another over time. Morrice, an older Black man who has been homeless for 13 years in the area, explained:

You know, I been out here for so long that I can’t go nowhere in this area without seeing someone I know. Now, I’m an introvert by nature but when you’re homeless, that’s not really an option. You gotta form community out here to survive the streets and it takes

some time to form those relationships. When I first became homeless, it was hard because, like I said, I'm an introvert and people don't really wanna help someone they don't know or ain't ever seen before. Now, after time, I started talkin' to more people and as time went by, I was like ok, I actually got a community out here. They got my back and I have theirs, you know. Like I know that if I was starving right now, any of these n\*ggas out here would share a meal with me even if they didn't know when they were gonna eat next. And I'd do the same for them. But like I said, those relationships ain't built overnight, it takes time, you feel me.

Morrice spoke to the importance of community connectedness as it relates particularly to food access. Based on the relationships Morrice has built over time, he feels confident that the people within his community, regardless of their situation, would not allow him to go without eating. Thus, while Morrice may experience varied degrees of food insecurity, he can rely on his community to ensure his food insecurity does not reach a point of severity in which he is "starving." This type of support, as Morrice mentioned, takes time to foster, and people like LaVerne who have spent less than a year experiencing homelessness in the area may not reap the benefits of community connectedness for months or even years to come, making her safety net from severe food insecurity weaker compared to that of "veterans" like Morrice.

Darryl, a 67-year-old Black man who has been staying overnight in City Union Mission for roughly 6 weeks, suggested that he was thinking ahead to situations in which community connectedness would become even more crucial for him than it was in the present moment. He said,

Now technically I ain't really gotta come over here to the uh... Community Kitchen or Hope Faith or none of that if I ain't want to because I'm old and I don't really eat much

and City Union serves me my breakfast and dinner and that's really all I need. But I keep comin' around for the community. You know, God forbid I get kicked out of the shelter where I'm at or somethin' else happens, it ain't gon' do me no good just keepin' to myself. I come back here, okay yeah, sometimes for the food because they be servin' some good stuff sometimes, but for the most part, it's 'cuz this is my community and these people are like my family. They got my back and as old as I am honey, you know, I got theirs too.

Darryl makes an effort to reinforce ties and connections, both for his own (food) security and for that of the people around him. He indicates that his age affects his perspective. By virtue of his older age, he may (1) have more experience and knowledge to share with other people who could benefit from it, and (2) he may anticipate needing additional support as he ages, especially if he faces a set-back, like getting kicked out of the shelter.

### **“Hub for the homeless:” Convenience and Confinement**

I found that the city's history of redlining contributes to contemporary experiences of food insecurity among the homeless population in part by creating a tension between what people referred to as convenience and confinement. As they explained it to me, emergency resources for homeless individuals were concentrated in District 25 because of the many people experiencing homelessness there, which made staying in the area “convenient,” but they were also trapped there by fear of violence outside the area and external forces such as hostile architecture that confined them to the area. Related to the concentration of emergency resources, Sam, a 28-year-old Black man who has been experiencing homelessness for the majority of the last 6 years described the area like this:

So basically, around here you got all the resources for food and shelter. You got City Union Mission just a few blocks south of here. [We were standing in the parking lot of the Kansas City Community Kitchen when this interview took place.] You got Hope Faith just around the corner from here if you walk up to the gas station and make a left. You got ReStart just a few blocks away, too. All of the resources are pretty much right here, which, I mean, if you're homeless in Kansas City, this area is really where you wanna be.

While my research only took place in the public spaces adjacent to City Union Mission and inside and around Hope Faith Ministries, I drove from Hope Faith Ministries to City Union Mission and from there to ReStart and back to the Community Kitchen located just around the corner from Hope Faith to gain a better sense of just how close in proximity these locations all were to each other. What I discovered was that all of these locations are a 5-mile distance of one another. Walking from the furthest location north (Hope Faith) to the furthest location south (ReStart) would take an individual approximately 9 minutes at "average" walking speed. From the perspective of the people I interviewed, walking from one resource center to another in District 25 was not a cause for concern. In fact, the ability to bypass public transportation and simply walk from one place to another was mentioned in four different conversations as "more convenient" for individuals despite having to carry much of their belongings with them from one location to the next.

Lenny, a 52 year old Black man experiencing homelessness in the area, explained how the convenience of a "hub" of emergency resources also kept people confined to the area. In his words,

You know, this is really like the uh.... hub for the homeless, if you will. Now, it's nice that everything we homeless folk need is right here in this area but for a lot of us, it can also be a reason we don't leave this area. I mean really, if there ain't no reason for us to go anywhere else, why would we? Whether you view it as a good thing or a bad thing, it keeps the homeless out of the rest of the city for the most part, and we ain't got nothing y'all want in this part of town so it keeps y'all away from here.

The phrase "we ain't got nothing y'all want in this part of town" speaks to the continued presence of neighborhood disinvestment as a result of racial redlining that has plagued District 25 for roughly a century. It also speaks to the lack of opportunity that exists within the area for the homeless individuals who currently live within the District. The resources that people referenced were emergency resources. They were not the kinds of resources needed to assist people in finding permanent stable housing and food.

### ***Violence emanating from outside the District***

For some of the individuals I spoke with, the clustering of homeless individuals in District 25 is a reflection of the proximity and clustering of homeless resources in the area. For other individuals, individuals like Raylin and Mark who have experienced homelessness in the area for roughly 6-8 years, individuals experiencing homelessness have spent a majority of their time within the area due to safety. Raylin, a 32-year-old Black woman who has experienced homelessness in the area for the last 6 six years, explained:

It's more of a safety thing for me. I've had people say nasty things to me and sometimes, the things people say feel worse than being physically hurt, especially if you're already feelin' down. I don't need that. I don't need to be reminded that I have nothin' goin' for me, or that I did this to myself or that I'm not wanted somewhere. I just don't. At least in

this area, we pretty much all goin' through it. And because people here know what it's like to be homeless and the many reasons that people become homeless, I don't feel like I need to defend myself or my experiences. I've had people just call me a druggie or a low-life out in the city and they know nothin' 'bout me. They don't know me from Adam. But people meet one homeless person or they see something on the news or on social media and assume we all on drugs or crazy or just terrible people and that's just not the case.

In this excerpt, Raylin speaks to experiences of verbal harassment she has experienced in spaces outside of District 25 in Kansas City. She made the point that verbal harassment, to her, felt worse than being physically hurt as it would further contribute to her "feelin' down." Rates of mental illness are consistently high among individuals experiencing homelessness (Seale et al., 2016). Some of the contributing factors to high rates of mental illness, especially depression, are self-perceived notion of being homeless and "failing to meet basic social expectations" (DeForge et al., 2008 as cited in Hernandez et al., 2019). This is important to note as mental health can have a direct impact on appetite, motivation, and energy levels (Seale et al., 2016). A low or irregular appetite can cause an individual to skip meals. A lack of motivation can lead to feelings of hopelessness and social withdrawal which could weaken or even break social ties that were once depended upon to meet their food needs. And lastly, low energy levels or fatigue can lessen a person's ability to visit the various resource centers needed to meet their food needs, subsequently worsening food insecurity.

In the second half of Raylin's comment, she talks about stereotypes often placed on the homeless community that further contribute to negative perceptions and attitudes toward individuals belonging to the homeless community. Negative stereotypes can lead to generalizations about populations and can be especially hurtful if interpreted as the truth,



subsequently affecting the way people interact with individuals belonging to the stereotyped population. Negative stereotypes can lead to maltreatment and can increase the likelihood of physical and verbal harassment taking place against stereotyped groups. Any form of harassment can lead an individual to be physically or mentally hurt, hindering their ability to acquire food. They are also intended to distract from the historic systemic mechanisms of inequality—redlining paramount among them—that cause homelessness and food insecurity.

Mark, a 47 year old Black man from Kansas City, Missouri, elaborated on how the concern for his emotional and physical safety outside of District 25 forces him to seldomly leave the area. He said,

What keeps me here? That's a good question. [Rubs his chin and pauses.] No one is keeping me here, and I guess I could leave if I wanted to, but I don't very often because being around other homeless makes me feel safe. When I first started sleeping in the streets, I would just sleep wherever. I didn't know any better. It didn't take me long to realize there were places people just didn't want us [the homeless] to be seen or even exist. Some people will straight up tell you, like I've been called every name in the book. Some will show with their actions. Like me personally, I've experienced some crazy shit happen while just minding my own business in other parts of the city. Like one time, I was sleeping on a sidewalk in downtown, man... I was so tired that day. And out of nowhere, I just felt a huge hit to the back of my head. Someone kicked the fuck out of my head, like straight up, for no reason at all. I wasn't in no ones way or nothin'. Just because we're homeless doesn't mean we aren't people. It's just not safe. So yeah, I could leave this area if I wanted to, but at least here I know I'm in an area where I won't

really be bothered and don't nobody really go around hurtin' people just for the hell of it."

Like Raylin, Mark stays in District 25 for safety. Mark has been verbally and physically harassed in spaces outside of District 25 in Kansas City. Similar to the maltreatment that Black people experienced at the height of the redlining movement, individuals experiencing homelessness are treated poorly, even physically hurt as people [outside of the homeless community] attempt to assert feelings of unwantedness toward the homeless community.

**Continued segregation: "They don't want us livin there with em"**

I was interested in knowing if people's experiences in areas outside of District 25 had changed over time, and if so, how. Mark is a native to Kansas City, Missouri and he and his mother grew up just a few blocks further east of the City Union Mission parking lot where our interview took place. As a young child, roughly 12 or 13 years old, he, his mother, and his two younger brothers also experienced homelessness in Kansas City, Missouri less than 5 miles east of District 25. He told me,

You know, when I was younger and me and my brothers and my mama was homeless, I remember we would spend a lot of time in the downtown KC area, especially in the early mornings and I remember because during the winter me and my brothers would sit up against the outside of the Crowne Plaza building while our moms would try and buy a coffee from some lil shop down there and we would always be trynna count how many cars would pass by. [Smiles.]. Damn, I ain't thought of that in a while, that's crazy. [Chuckles.]. Now that was what... maybe the late '80's and that was during a time when downtown was a place where people would go to for work, right. People with money ain't really live down there at that time; they ain't want to. It was a place people would

go to. And I think because people weren't spending their whole lives livin there, right, like they would only go there for work or to spend the day or whatever, they didn't care as much that we was homeless in that area. But I've definitely seen a shift in the last couple decades in the city. Downtown went from this "urban" place that people would come to from 9 to 5 or on the weekends, to now the rich people wanna live there and if they livin' there, you know damn well they don't want us livin' there with em.

Mark's comments suggest a process of gentrification in Kansas City that may exacerbate racial residential segregation and the confinement of people of color to historically redlined areas like District 25.<sup>7</sup> People experiencing homelessness in District 25 may seek security by staying within the district. In the process, they are cut off from resources of upward mobility available outside the area—as indicated in Mark's comments about the concentration of wealth downtown where he and other people experiencing homelessness can't go--while constantly having to battle forces keeping them confined to District 25.

### ***NIMBYism, Hostile Architecture, and the Reproduction of Homelessness and Food Insecurity***

I found in my research that one set of forces keeping people confined to District 25 is what scholars refer to as "hostile architecture," which is a form of anti-homelessness related to NIMBYism. NIMBYism or "NIMBY" for short refers to the anti-homeless rhetoric, "Not in My Back Yard." NIMBYism is most commonly expressed through the support of anti-homeless policies put in place by local governments. It is also expressed in everyday interactions toward

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<sup>7</sup> Gentrification, a term first coined by urban sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964, refers to the process of neighborhood or vicinity disinvestment followed by stark reinvestment in later time as middle- and upper-class people migrate to the area (Wyly, 2015). This drastic change in investment of an area often changes the social and cultural landscape that once existed alongside the long held disinvestment of a community (Wyly et al., 2013; Smith, 1979; Van Holm & Wyczalkowski, 2019). This change is often accompanied by the displacement of low-income people, including and especially targeting low-income persons and homeless individuals (Rybeck, 2020).

individuals experiencing homelessness, such as discrimination or even physical violence. In recent years, NIMBYism has taken a newfound form in hostile architecture. Hostile architecture, as described by Chellew (2018) is an “intentional urban design strategy that guides or restricts behavior with the purpose of preventing crime and protecting property, targeting people who rely on public space to live” (Chellew, 2018 as cited in Suleiman, 2022, paras. 1-2). Architectural design in combination with public policy are used to push individuals experiencing homelessness out of public spaces (Rosenberg, 2017).

During the time I spent in District 25 conducting my research, I came across hostile architecture firsthand, on the short, concrete borders of the front facing facade of Hope Faith Ministries. As I was waiting to enter the resource center one early morning, I decided to wait outside with everyone waiting to be let in (instead of waiting in my car close by). A handful of minutes went by, and Joshua, one of the custodial workers at Hope Faith who refers to himself as “formerly homeless,” walked out of the metal, garage-style doors on the side of the building where people typically entered for check in. “This is nothing new you guys, we aren’t gonna open until all of this mess is cleaned up,” Joshua shouted. Joshua was referring to the tents, backpacks, and clear trash bags filled with people’s belongings that were laid sporadically across the front-facing sidewalk of Hope Faith.

After waiting outside of Hope Faith for roughly 20 minutes, I did what most people would do when they’ve been standing for an extended period of time: I looked for somewhere to sit. I considered sitting on the curb of the sidewalk in front of Hope Faith, but I didn’t want to invade people’s space as they were gathering their belongings. My next best option was to sit atop the concrete border of the front facing facade of the center. I could see the concrete border from the corner of my eye as it was located slightly behind where I was standing. I took a few

steps back until I could feel that back of my shins touching up against the concrete and without hesitation, I sat. As I sat down, I suddenly felt the sharp edge of concrete that rimmed the upward facing border of the facade. “What the fuck,” I said under my breath, and I promptly stood up. A man standing nearby heard me curse and he chuckled. He then said to me, “they have that there so people like us can’t sit and get comfortable... they don’t want us hanging out around the building so they take away any place we might get comfortable. You good?” “I’m good,” I responded.

### **Redlining, homelessness, and food insecurity**

My findings provide rich qualitative insights into how the city’s history of redlining contributes to contemporary experiences of food insecurity among the local homeless population. Redlining affects the types of homelessness people experience, which affects their food insecurity. People in this district are cut off from the resources and opportunities that would enable them to secure stable housing and food access. Meaningfully addressing homelessness and food insecurity requires redressing the historic systemic forces of inequality that perpetuate these phenomena.

## Chapter 5 - Discussion and Implications

This study contributes to the limited body of food insecurity and homeless literature that explores the ‘legacy effects’ of social injustices such as redlining on contemporary experiences of food insecurity among individuals experiencing homelessness. The “legacy effects” of redlining such as community disinvestment and segregation are still present within District 25 roughly a century after its initial inception. What was once home to low-income, Black laborers living in poorly kept homes surrounded by small factories and a trend of widespread disinvestment within the red lines of this district is now what some homeless individuals living in the area refer to as a “hub for the homeless.” Within this historically redlined district, there are several food and housing resource centers, more than there are in any other part of the metropolitan area, and little to no business development or other meaningful investment.

The clustering of homeless resources in the area is a prominent reason individuals experiencing homelessness live and congregate in this area of the city, according to data gathered from my study participants. The creation of such a “hub for the homeless” serves many positive functions within the local homeless community. One of the positive functions and outcomes of this resource-clustering strategy in District 25 is that it has allowed for those experiencing homelessness in this area to form a community amongst themselves. Forming a sense of community connectedness is crucial for individuals experiencing homelessness as it creates actual and perceived support among its community members. Personal and organizational ties conveyed resources, while a sense of community gave people confidence to seek out and maintain these crucial ties. Participants shared that feeling a sense of community among other individuals experiencing homelessness increased their access to information that added to their

knowledge of food and housing resources in the area. A sense of community also increased the likelihood of receiving tangible support such as money or food from their peers experiencing homelessness in the area, also a positively contributing factor to their food security.

Keeping a majority of homeless resources in one area of the city also reduces barriers to physically accessing the resources. Participants shared that having several resource centers within walking distance of one another allows individuals to go from one center to the next without having to worry about transportation. This is particularly important when taking into consideration the factor of age and physical health. More than half of the United States homeless population is over the age of 50 (Tong et al., 2019). Like with any population of aging adults, the older someone gets, the more likely they are to develop health issues affecting both their cognitive and physical abilities (Tong et al., 2019; Seale et al., 2016). Thus, having resources within close proximity to one another reduces the need to rely on public transportation to receive food, further increasing food security.

Aside from the positive functions that exist as a result of the clustering of homeless resources within district 25, however, the data collected from this study also leads me to believe that there are many negative outcomes. For instance, because a majority of individuals shared they feel inclined to stay within the area because their (immediate) needs can be met there, such confinement hinders building connections beyond District 25. District 25, despite having a concentration of emergency services, is actually resource poor. Areas in Kansas City that historically and currently receive much more investment than the redlined community of District 25 are more likely to provide people with access to resources and opportunities that would increase their chances of securing stable housing and food. District 25 is an enclave of sorts when it comes to the opportunities and resources an individual has access to, worsening their

chances of obtaining information or social capital that could increase a person's likelihood of improving their socioeconomic status, subsequently increasing their long term food security. While enclaves can provide immediate, positive support to their members (who typically build enclaves to cope with discrimination from the broader dominant society), the lasting outcome of being segregated from the larger community can limit the information, opportunities, and resources an individual has access to (Shashkevich, 2019).

It is also crucial to consider some reasons outside of the clustering of services that confine people to the vicinity, including experiences of maltreatment and physical assault linked to the gentrification of the greater Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area. Unfortunately, negative attitudes, maltreatment and even aggressive behaviors towards individuals experiencing homelessness are not new nor unique to Kansas City, and especially not to District 25. Research conducted in 2015 across the United States concluded that pervasive discrimination experienced by individuals who were homeless reduced their access to services that could support them in meeting their basic needs, and subsequently led to poorer health (Echenberg & Jensen, 2009; Scutella et al., 2012). Similarly, discrimination could also keep individuals away from social spaces that they perceive as dangerous or unsafe, hindering their ability to form social connections that could potentially “protect the individual against the negative impact of homeless discrimination” (Johnstone et al., 2015, p.1). These processes are more severe around District 25. Decades of redlining paired with aggressive gentrification perpetuate and exacerbate segregation and threats to local homeless people's safety and wellbeing.

### **Implications**

My findings, to great extent, support both the cumulative risk theory and the stress process theory by speaking to the various risk factors and resources that contribute to the variation in



food insecurity that exists among the homeless individuals in District 25. More specifically, my findings indicate that individual health, community connectedness, intersectionality, and social injustice all serve as factors that contribute to the variation in food insecurity that exists among homeless individuals. Since my study focused on how structural factors interact with food insecurity and homelessness, my findings also address how historic systemic forces of inequality exacerbate these contemporary factors. In particular, my work builds on the factors of community connectedness and social injustice by showing precisely how social networks variously convey (or fail to convey) information and resources and how these networks and resources are circumscribed by the historic forces of redlining. This trifecta, in turn, impacts variations in homeless experiences, which in turn impacts the severity of food insecurity.

Thus, while my findings provide support for cumulative risk and stress process theories, they also address how historic systemic forces of inequality exacerbate contemporary factors. Specifically, my findings address the multi-faceted nature of the experience of homelessness, viewing the experience itself as an overarching theme for the several individual, influencing factors that lie within it. As previous research evidently suggests, homelessness serves as a clear predictor of food insecurity. Yet, my findings call for a more in-depth look at the experience of homelessness itself moving forward. The many individual factors that exist within the homeless experience make some experiences of homelessness greater risk factors for longer, more severe experiences of food insecurity than others. The findings from my study also provide rich, qualitative insight into how the “legacy effects” of redlining serve as a contemporary factor in and of themselves. Though based in historical occurrence, the “legacy effects” of this injustice must not be treated as if its existence were no longer present in today’s society. Instead, my findings suggest that the “legacy effects” of historic systemic injustices such as redlining should

be treated as important and pertinent to the study of contemporary experiences of food insecurity as other, more visible factors such as individual health.

In a practical sense, my findings also highlight the need for service providers and more so, policy makers, to better understand the multidimensionality of the homeless experience. Understanding the interwoven mechanisms that make some homeless individuals more susceptible to experiencing severe, more prolonged food insecurity, particularly within historically redlined areas, will aid in better addressing the needs of homeless communities. For policy makers in particular, forming such understanding is crucial as they hold the power to make structural change for some of the most vulnerable and impoverished constituents within their society. My findings could serve as a springboard for rich learning that will ultimately improve the lives of homeless communities existing in historically redlined areas while simultaneously redressing such social and historical causes of homelessness and food insecurity.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

There are multiple strengths and weaknesses to my study. The first strength was that, despite being in the field for only six days, I was able to speak to several people which provided me with immense variation in my data. Second, I found that my ability to build strong rapport with individuals experiencing homelessness in the area aided in my ability to speak with people with a variety of experiences and gain rich insight. Third, I was able to pair oral history style interviews with ethnographic observations that provided important context to what people shared. Some of the limitations to my study include the limited time I had in the field. Given that I was only in the field for six days and the Institutional Review Board only allowed me to conduct research at or immediately adjacent to resource centers within District 25, I was unable to capture the lived experiences of homeless individuals who do not utilize formalized resources to meet their food

needs. That said, the variation in experiences among people I spent time with enabled me to identify key mechanisms affecting variation in food access among people who are homeless in the area.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

As Katz (2001) in particular argues, replicability in ethnographic research is best achieved by carrying work forward. For future research, and based on my findings, I recommend exploring food insecurity among people who do not utilize emergency resources in redlined communities. I also recommend further examining how the lack of social integration of homeless communities directly impacts their ability to meet their food needs, especially historically redlined communities across the U.S., as well as risk factors for homelessness and food insecurity among people who are housed in redlined areas.

Conducting this research has left me with not only new research questions, but also new policy questions. One policy question, in particular, is how do we, as a society, equitably reintegrate safe spaces for the homeless, similar to the colloquially termed “hub for the homeless” in Kansas City, Missouri, without further perpetuating the underlying segregation it currently imposes on the local homeless community?

My own experiences with homelessness and the research and advocacy work I have conducted alongside homeless communities throughout the state of California and now the Midwest leads me to believe that the answer to this question must come from the local homeless community itself. That said, I do see researchers and advocates serving a crucial role in safely and justly reintegrating safe spaces for the local homeless community back into society.

For starters, researchers and advocates alike must work together to better understand why this form of segregation exists. We must look to the past to understand the here and now. We

must also be willing to ask difficult questions, specifically geared toward better understanding the negative beliefs held by housed individuals toward the homeless. What are the root causes of redlining, NIMBYism, and hostile architecture, and how can we move beyond treating the symptoms of negative and harmful rhetoric toward homeless communities to dismantling the anti-homeless rhetoric as a whole within society?

My research builds on a long line of research and advocacy that must continue to take place to improve the lives and wellbeing of homeless individuals living in historically redlined communities. The findings from my research highlight the concentrated forms of inequality that exist within geographic-specific spaces as a result of the historical practice of redlining and its “legacy effects” that are still present within today’s society. It contributes detailed insights on how contemporary and historic mechanisms of inequality affect people’s experiences of homelessness and food insecurity. In understanding these mechanisms, we are better able to make lasting, meaningful change.

As researchers, we must continue to produce quality research surrounding the issue of homelessness and find ways to share the information gathered beyond our social circles in academia. We must not only aim to improve society, but we must also actually make improvements. Similar to a statement posed by Brian, a 49-year-old man who has been experiencing homelessness for 13 years in District 25:

“Maybe research like this can serve as the foundation for public symposiums where people who aren’t homeless can learn about our lives. I bet a lot of people would be surprised at how similar we are. I mean, really. We are someone’s brother or sister, someone’s parent, someone’s child, but most of all we are human. The only thing separating you and me is a home.”



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# Appendix A - Interview Guides for Participants and Informants

## Interview Guide for Oral History Interviews

Name: Jessica Ramirez

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time/Date:

**Note:** Below are the interview processes and questions for my interviews with participants throughout this study. Due to the nature of qualitative research, I may ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses. Follow up questions will be consistent with the below lines of inquiry (related to my research question).

### Questions and Interview Process:

#### Part 1: Introductions

1. Confirmation of Informed Consent (Oral), allowing for questions and clarifications.

#### Part 2. INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS:

##### Setting/Neighborhood and Living Situation:

1. Could you describe the area to me?
  - a. Tell me about how you came to this area.
  - b. How long have you been living here?
2. Walk me through a typical day in your life in this neighborhood.
  - a. Where do you start your day? How does your day start?
  - b. Where do you go?
  - c. How do you get to where you need to go?
  - d. Are there any places you avoid or where you feel uncomfortable? Could you describe them to me?
3. Describe to me what keeps you in the local area.
  - a. Do you prefer staying in this neighborhood over other neighborhoods? If so, why?
4. Could you describe to me your current living situation?
  - a. Could you walk me through how you find places to sleep?
5. Could you give me an example of a time recently when you searched for a place to sleep?
  - a. What happened?
  - b. What were your thoughts about that?

- c. How did you feel?
- 6. How has your living situation in the local area changed over time? Could you give me an example?

**Food access/Eating Patterns:**

- 7. Thinking back over the last two or three days, where did you go to get food to eat?
  - a. How did you get there? (Did you walk? Take the bus? Drive?)
  - b. How did you know to go to this place (these places) for food?
- 8. Tell me about the last time you went grocery shopping. Where did you go?
  - a. How far did you need to travel to get to the store?
  - b. How did you get there?
  - c. How often do you go to this grocery store to purchase food?
- 9. Could you describe to me the ways in which your eating patterns/habits have changed (if at all) while experiencing homelessness in this area?
  - a. Could you give me an example?
- 10. Could you tell me about local shelters or places a person could go to receive help with getting food or shelter?
  - a. What are they?
  - b. What services do they provide?
  - c. How many are there in the local area?
- 11. Would you be willing to draw a map of the area with me and show me where the best resources are?
  - a. How did you learn about them?
  - b. Can you describe the process of using these resources?
  - c. Describe to me how you feel when accessing food at shelters or resource centers in the area.
- 12. Have you tried accessing shelters or resource centers in other areas?
  - a. How did that go?
- 13. Would you please describe a time when you were unable to access food locally, were denied access to food, or simply could not acquire the food you needed?
  - a. Walk me through what happened.
  - b. What did you do?
  - c. How did it affect you?
- 14. Could you tell me about a time you did something you were proud of in order to access food?
  - a. Walk me through what happened leading up to this.

**Social Network/Social Support:**

- 15. Tell me about...your social network/support system.
  - a. Who have you met in the local area?
  - b. Who do you spend time with?



- c. Walk me through some of the ways you depend on your social network/ support system, if at all?

**Health:**

- 16. In your own words, walk me through how you would describe your health today.
  - a. How has your health changed while living in this area? Could you give me an example?

**Demographics:**

- 17. In what year were you born?
- 18. What place would you say you are from?
  - a. Where would you say your family is from?
- 19. In terms of gender, how do you identify?

**Snowball Questions:**

- 20. What else should I be asking to learn more about what it's like trying to access food and other necessities in the local area?
- 21. Is there anyone that you recommend I talk to that may have a different experience than yours living in this area?

**Part 3: Debriefing statement to be read aloud at the conclusion of the interviews**

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and be part of this study. My hope is to represent your words as accurately as possible within my research. I will keep your contributions confidential. I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity Please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty, and you are welcome to contact me or the individuals listed on my contact card at any time if you have questions or concerns. Thank you for your contributions to my thesis research.

**Note: The contact card given to each participant will have my contact information, the contact information of Dr. Alisa Garni (PI), and the contact information of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Kansas State University.**

## **Interview Guide for Informant Interviews**

Name: Jessica Ramirez

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time/Date:

**Note:** Below are the interview processes and questions for my interviews with participants throughout this study. Due to the nature of qualitative research, I may ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses. Follow up questions will be consistent with the below lines of inquiry (related to my research question).

### **Questions and Interview Process:**

#### **Part 1: Introductions**

1. Confirmation of Informed Consent (Oral), allowing for questions and clarifications.

#### **Part 2. INTERVIEWS WITH INFORMANTS:**

##### **Setting/Neighborhood and Role within the Community:**

1. Talk me through the neighborhood we are in.
  - a. What type of housing can be found throughout this neighborhood? (Apartment, Houses, Unhoused, etc.)
  - b. Could you tell me what kinds of businesses are located in this area? (Grocery store, etc.)
2. When did your organization begin working in this neighborhood?
  - a. Was your organization located elsewhere prior to its current location here? If so, where and what encouraged the move to this area?
3. Could you walk me through the role your organization plays in this neighborhood?
  - a. Could you describe your day-to-day work within the community?

##### **Service Utilization and Food Access:**

4. Could you describe how people access services locally?
  - a. How has this changed over time?
5. Walk me through some of the challenges people may face when trying to utilize local services.
6. How would you describe food accessibility for the population that can be found in or around/nearby your organization?
  - a. Could you tell me more about how you came to this description? Walk me through some of the factors that influenced the description you provided.

7. How does homelessness affect people's access to food locally? Could you give me an example?
8. Could you tell me about a time when someone was unable to access food or shelter in the area?
  - a. What happened?
  - b. Where did (or do you think) the individual went following this event?
  - c. When did this occur?
  - d. How common is it?

**Community Health:**

9. How would you describe the health of the population that can be found in or around/nearby your organization?
  - a. Could you tell me more about how you came to this description? Walk me through some of the factors that influenced the description you provided.
  - b. Is there a particular health condition you see most frequently experienced by the people in this community/ the people your organization serves in this area?
10. What services would you like to see in the community?

**Transition Questions:**

11. What else should I be asking to learn more about what it's like trying to access food and other necessities in the local area?

**Demographics:**

12. Do you live in this neighborhood?
  - a. If not, could you walk me through some of the things you see on your commute to work?
13. Do you spend time in this neighborhood outside of work?
14. How long have you worked for this organization?
15. In what year were you born?
16. In terms of gender, how do you identify?
17. Please describe to me, beyond your official title, what your role is within this organization?

**Part 3: Debriefing statement to be read aloud at the conclusion of the interviews**

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and be part of this study. My hope is to represent your words as accurately as possible within my research. I will keep your contributions confidential. I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity Please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty, and you are welcome to contact me or the individuals listed on my contact card at any time if you have questions or concerns. Thank you for your contributions to my thesis research.

**Note: The contact card given to each participant will have my contact information, the contact information of Dr. Alisa Garni (PI), and the contact information of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Kansas State University.**

## **Appendix B - Oral Consent Script (English and Spanish)**

### **Oral Consent (English)**

PROJECT TITLE: “Within the Red Lines: A Qualitative Case Study of Experiences of Food Insecurity among Homeless People in one of Kansas City’s Historically Redlined Districts”

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hello, my name is Jessica Ramirez and I am a graduate student at Kansas State University in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work. I am here today conducting research for my master’s thesis in Sociology. I’d like to tell you more about my research and potentially interview you as part of my research study. The interview process should take no more than 30 to 45 minutes. Would you like to learn more and potentially participate in my research?     Yes / No

If No:

Okay, no problem. Thank you so much for your time.

If Yes:

Okay, great! I’d like to start by going over the inclusion criteria to serve as a participant within this study. For this research, I am specifically looking for participants who identify with the following statements:

I am 18 years old or older.

I am currently experiencing homelessness.

Do you identify with these statements? Yes / No

If No:

Okay. Unfortunately, you don’t meet the inclusion criteria to participate in this study. But, I thank you so much for your time and willingness to speak with me. I hope you have a great day!

If Yes:

Great! I'll start by telling you about my research, your rights as a potential participant within my research, and after obtaining your verbal consent to interview you as part of my research study, we will move into the actual interview and discussion.

#### PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH:

The purpose of my research is to learn about the experiences of food insecurity\* and food access (or lack thereof) among people experiencing homelessness in and around this part of Kansas City, Missouri. I am conducting my research in this part of the city because I am also interested in learning how the practice of redlining (which began in Kansas City nearly a century ago) may influence or contribute to the experiences of food insecurity and food access in the present day.

If you are unfamiliar with the term “food insecurity,” it is a term used to describe times or experiences when an individual or family does not have consistent access to enough food or food that meets their nutritional needs.

If you are unfamiliar with the term “redlining,” it is a term used to describe the discriminatory practice of denying services (typically financial) to residents of certain areas based on their race or ethnicity.

#### PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

As part of my research, I would like to ask if you would be willing to talk with me about your experiences related to accessing enough food and accessing nutritious food in and around this part of the city. During our conversation, I may also ask if you'd be willing to sketch out a map of the locations you most frequently get food from, as well as where useful related services are, using Troost Avenue as the starting location from which you travel to meet your food needs. I can explain more about that during the interview process itself.

#### EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

I would also like to ask for your consent to audio record our discussion today, so that I can have an accurate record of the information that you provide to me. Please know that no personally identifying information will be linked to published reports of this study. If you mention any names, I will change them (I will use pseudonyms) for confidentiality. You may choose for elements of our discussion not to be recorded. The information that I collect as part of this research will not be shared with any other researchers other than myself and Dr. Alisa Garni who is overseeing my thesis research at Kansas State University. The tape and the transcripts will be kept [in a locked file cabinet in my locked, private office at Kansas State University in Manhattan]. If you are uncomfortable having this interview tape-recorded, I, with your permission, will write notes instead. Again, all information will remain confidential and your name will either not be collected or will be changed so that no one can identify you. Only your age, gender, and length of time you've spent in the neighborhood will be noted in the study.

This consent and all research records will be kept confidential to the fullest extent provided by the law.

#### TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:

Please understand that your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from my study. If you agree to provide an interview, I will ask you a series of questions that you may answer at your leisure. This process will take [how much time you think it will take], depending on how much you wish to discuss. The interview will take [here]. I will be the only person conducting the interview.

#### RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:

As a participant within this research, apart from slight inconvenience, I do not anticipate that you will face any risks or discomfort associated with your participation in my research study. You will not receive money for participating in this research. Your participation will help scholars to understand how people experiencing homelessness in this area meet their food needs.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, I will provide you with my contact information, as well as the contact information for the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Kansas State University: University Research Compliance Office, 203 Fairchild Hall, Manhattan KS, 66502; Phone: 785-532-3224; Fax: 785- 532-3278; E-mail: [comply@ksu.edu](mailto:comply@ksu.edu). You may also contact:

Dr. Lisa Rubin, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Dr. Brad Woods, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

If you have questions or research-related problems, you may reach me through the Department of Sociology at KSU at (785) 532-6865. You may also reach the Department Head, Dr. Donald Kurtz, at the first telephone number listed above.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may

withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled. I will voice my consent and or wish to withdraw from the study directly to Jessica.

**TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:**

Do you understand this project is research, and that your participation is completely voluntary?  
Yes / No

Do you also understand that if you decide to participate in this study, you may withdraw your consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of any kind? Yes / No

Do you agree to participate in an interview today? Yes / No

If Yes: Do you consent to having our interview discussion today be audio-recorded?

## Oral Consent (Spanish)

TÍTULO DEL PROYECTO: “Dentro de las Líneas Rojas: Un Estudio de Caso Cualitativo de Experiencias de Inseguridad Alimentaria entre Gente sin Hogar en uno de los Distritos Históricamente Marcados en Rojo de Kansas City”

### INTRODUCCIÓN:

Hola, mi nombre es Jessica Ramírez y soy estudiante de posgrado en la Universidad Estatal de Kansas en el departamento de Sociología, Antropología, y Trabajo Social. Estoy aquí hoy realizando una investigación para mi tesis de maestría de Sociología. Me gustaría contarle más sobre mi investigación y posiblemente entrevistarle como parte de mi estudio de investigación. El proceso de la entrevista no debe tomar más de 30 a 45 minutos. ¿Le gustaría aprender más y potencialmente participar en mi investigación?

Sí / No

Si responden “No”:

Está bien, no hay problema. Muchísimas gracias por su tiempo.

Si responden “Sí”:

¡Bien, excelente! Me gustaría comenzar repasando los criterios de inclusión para servir como participante en este estudio. Para esta investigación, busco específicamente participantes que se identifiquen con las siguientes afirmaciones:

- Tengo 18 años o más.
- Actualmente estoy experimentando la falta de vivienda.

¿Te identificas con estas afirmaciones? Sí / No

Si responden “No”:

Bueno. Desafortunadamente, no cumple con los criterios de inclusión para participar en este estudio. Pero le agradezco mucho su tiempo y disposición para hablar conmigo. ¡Espero que tengas un buen día!

Si responden “Sí”:

¡Excelente! Comenzaré hablándole sobre mi investigación, sus derechos como posible participante dentro de mi investigación y, después de obtener su consentimiento verbal para



entrevistarlos como parte de mi estudio de investigación, pasaremos a la entrevista y discusión reales.

#### PROPÓSITO Y BENEFICIOS DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN:

El propósito de mi investigación es conocer las experiencias de inseguridad alimentaria\* y el acceso a los alimentos (o la falta de estos) entre gente sin hogar en esta parte de Kansas City, Missouri y sus alrededores. Estoy realizando mi investigación en esta parte de la ciudad porque también estoy interesada en saber cómo la práctica de la línea roja (que comenzó en Kansas City hace casi un siglo) puede influir o contribuir a las experiencias de inseguridad alimentaria y acceso a los alimentos en el presente día.

Si no está familiarizado con el término "inseguridad alimentaria", es un término que se usa para describir momentos o experiencias en los que una persona o familia no tiene acceso constante a suficientes alimentos o alimentos que satisfagan sus necesidades nutricionales.

Si no está familiarizado con el término "línea roja", es un término que se usa para describir la práctica discriminatoria de negar servicios (generalmente financieros) a los residentes de ciertas áreas en función de su raza o etnia.

#### PROCEDIMIENTOS O MÉTODOS A UTILIZAR:

Como parte de mi investigación, me gustaría preguntarle si estaría dispuesto a hablar conmigo sobre sus experiencias relacionadas con el acceso a alimentos suficientes y nutritivos en esta parte de la ciudad y sus alrededores. Durante nuestra conversación, también puedo preguntarle si estaría dispuesto a dibujar un mapa de los lugares donde obtiene alimentos con más frecuencia, así como dónde se encuentran los servicios relacionados útiles, usando Troost Avenue como el lugar de partida desde el cual viaja a satisfacer sus necesidades alimentarias. Puedo explicar más sobre eso durante el proceso de la entrevista.

#### ALCANCE DE LA CONFIDENCIALIDAD:

También me gustaría pedir su consentimiento para grabar en audio nuestra discusión de hoy, para que pueda tener un registro preciso de la información que me proporciona. Tenga en cuenta que ninguna información de identificación personal se vinculará a los informes publicados de este estudio. Si menciona algún nombre, lo cambiaré por confidencialidad. Puede elegir que no se registren elementos de nuestra conversación. La información que recopile como parte de esta investigación no se compartirá con ningún otro investigador que no sea yo y la Dra. Alisa Garni, quien supervisa la investigación de mi tesis en la Universidad Estatal de Kansas. La cinta y las transcripciones se guardarán [en un archivador cerrado con llave en mi oficina privada cerrada con llave en la Universidad Estatal de Kansas en Manhattan]. Si no se siente cómodo con la grabación de esta entrevista, yo, con su permiso, escribiré notas en su lugar. Nuevamente, toda la información permanecerá confidencial y su nombre no se recopilará o se cambiará para que

nadie pueda identificarlo. Solo su género, edad, y tiempo de permanencia en la vecindad se anotará en el estudio.

Este consentimiento y todos los registros de la investigación se mantendrán confidenciales en la máxima medida prevista por la ley.

#### CONDICIONES DE PARTICIPACIÓN:

Comprenda que su participación en este estudio es voluntaria y que tiene derecho a retirar su consentimiento o interrumpir su participación en cualquier momento sin penalización. Tiene derecho a negarse a responder preguntas específicas. Su privacidad individual se mantendrá en todos los datos publicados y escritos que resulten de mi estudio. Si está de acuerdo en proporcionar una entrevista, le haré una serie de preguntas que puede responder en su tiempo libre. Este proceso tomará [cuánto tiempo cree que tomará], dependiendo de cuánto desee discutir. La entrevista se llevará [aquí]. Seré la única persona que realice la entrevista.

#### RIESGOS O MOLESTIAS PREVISTOS:

Como participante de esta investigación, además de un pequeño inconveniente, no anticipo que enfrentará ningún riesgo o incomodidad asociada con su participación en mi estudio de investigación. No recibirá dinero por participar en esta investigación. Su participación ayudará a los académicos a entender cómo las personas sin hogar en esta área satisfacen sus necesidades alimentarias.

#### INFORMACIÓN DEL CONTACTO:

No está renunciando a ningún derecho legal debido a su participación en este estudio de investigación. Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, le proporcionaré mi información de contacto, así como la información de contacto del Comité de Investigación con Seres Humanos de la Universidad Estatal de Kansas: Oficina de Cumplimiento de la Investigación Universitaria 203 Fairchild Hall, Manhattan KS, 66502; Phone: 785-532-3224; Fax: 785- 532-3278; Correo electrónico: [comply@ksu.edu](mailto:comply@ksu.edu). También puede comunicarse con:

Dra. Lisa Rubin, Presidenta, Comité de Investigación con Sujetos Humanos, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Dr. Brad Woods, vicepresidente asociado de cumplimiento de investigaciones y veterinario universitario, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Si tiene preguntas o problemas relacionados con la investigación, puede comunicarse conmigo a través del Departamento de Sociología de KSU al (785) 532-6865. También puede comunicarse

con el Jefe del Departamento, el Dr. Donald Kurtz, al primer número de teléfono que se indica arriba.

CONDICIONES DE PARTICIPACIÓN: Entiendo que este proyecto es de investigación y que mi participación es completamente voluntaria. También entiendo que si decido participar en este estudio, puedo retirar mi consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin explicación, sanción o pérdida de beneficios o posición académica a la que de otro modo podría tener derecho. Expresaré mi consentimiento o deseo retirarme del estudio directamente a Jessica.

CONDICIONES DE PARTICIPACIÓN:

¿Entiende que este proyecto es de investigación y que su participación es completamente voluntaria? Sí / No

¿También entiende que si decide participar en este estudio, puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin explicación, sanción o pérdida de ningún tipo? Sí / No

¿Estás de acuerdo en participar en una entrevista hoy? Sí No

Si responden “Sí”:

¿Está de acuerdo en que la discusión de nuestra entrevista de hoy sea grabada en audio?