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Homelessness in the West: business improvement districts as the strategic weaponization of class monopoly rent

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HOMELESSNESS IN THE WEST: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS AS THE

STRATEGIC WEAPONIZATION OF CLASS MONOPOLY RENT

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ABSTRACT

HOMELESSNESS IN THE WEST: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS AS THE

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The objective of this study is to examine business improvement districts (BIDs) as a form

of class monopoly rent (CMR) within the broader production and spatial management of the

ongoing homeless crisis in Seattle Washington. The city of Seattle Washington is home to a

plethora of successful and ever-expanding international corporations. Within and around the city

the headquarters of tech giants Microsoft and Amazon can be found. The continued success of

these companies has had a dramatic impact on the region, bringing in a multitude of high-wage

jobs which in turn has created a volatile, cutthroat real estate market. The city government

depends upon this real estate market for tax revenue. As such, it is in their best interest to assist

in the increase in property values across the city. Organizations such as BIDs are able to utilize

their close ties to local government offices, financial institutions, and cartelistic regimes of

developers in order to command complete spatial control over the public sphere in which they

exist. This includes excluding those individuals (i.e. the homeless) who may negatively affect

their future economic prospects. BIDs use self-imposed taxes and their close ties with city

government and financial institutions in order to meet their objective: the realization of CMR.

The study reviews the literature on land rent theory, homelessness and BIDs, bringing these

bodies of literature into closer dialogue. In the process, BIDs are reconceptualized as the

strategic weaponization of CMR in the pursuit of cleansing the public space within their

respective territories of any threats to their profit maximizing objectives. Based on evidence from

Seattle, WA, the paper deepens our understanding of BIDs by linking this phenomenon to the

spatial dynamics of rent within the contemporary neoliberal city and concludes by discussing the

implications for what BIDs reveal about class monopoly rent in particular, the kind of class

conflict this form of rent configures, and its role within wider processes of neoliberal

urbanization.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

> "A castaway in the sea was going down for the third time when he caught site of a passing ship. Gathering his last strength, he waved frantically and called for help. Someone on board peered at him scornfully and shouted back, "Get a boat!" (Quinn, 1999).

This quote adeptly captures the way in which the ever-expanding ranks of homeless individuals are viewed and treated within contemporary mainstream American society. Those ranks have only continued to increase on a global scale since the economic crisis of 2007-08, known as the "Great Recession." Within urban centers, the epidemic of homelessness has seemingly exploded in great numbers across the United States, just as these urban centers become increasingly important as breeding grounds for the continued accumulation of capital (Harvey, 1989). This jarring juxtaposition has caused major conflicts between homeless individuals, activists, city governments and prominent real-estate and business communities. At the center of this conflict is the reality that the visible homeless are perceived to create barriers to consumer traffic in the very areas these real estate and business communities are most heavily invested: central city districts undergoing gentrification.

This increased dependance upon the urban environment for growth by capital (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]) has accompanied the neoliberalization of urban governance since its onset in the United States in the 1980's during the Reagan Administration. In short, federal funding cuts to city governments forced them into a cycle of heightened dependence upon tax collection as their primary source of revenue (Harvey, 2005; Blomley, 2009; Anderson, 2014), harmonizing the increased reliance of tax revenue by local government with the profit-maximizing interests of privileged private sector actors, e.g., developers, major landowners, financial institutions, and other business entities.

"There are clear rules governing the relationship between the homeless and the average person on the street: speak to each other politely; don't look each other in the eye; don't ask for names; and don't give more than twenty dollars" (Keret, 2019).

Historically, homelessness first emerged to visible prominence alongside the surge of the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century, as the newly formed masses of the unhoused and underemployed formed what Marx (1987 [1887]) famously named the "Industrial Reserve Army." Indeed, this social phenomenon has always represented a key feature to the rapid spread of the industrial movement, as this displaced minority are always waiting in the wings desperate for employment, thereby giving employers the ability to suppress wages to levels deemed "acceptable" for maintaining adequate profit margins (Mitchell, 2011). In this thesis, the term 'homeless' will be used to describe individuals who have no permanent taxable shelter, and who do not have a private space in which they may exercise exclusive control. As such they are forced to exist within the realm of public space where they are inevitably at odds with the dynamics of the neoliberal city. This description does not include those who are 'homeless' in the sense that they rent an apartment or home, or even those who skirt modern understandings of sheltered living, e.g., the self-imposed "wanderer" lifestyle in tricked out camper-vans, as opposed to those who are forced to make do with ramshackle RV's and worn-out tents.

Visible homeless people have also long served as a useful reminder to the low wage worker who may see a homeless man or woman and think, "If not by the grace of God" (or the will of our overlords) to keep them in line. The scholarly literature focused on homelessness is now voluminous. However, there is a notable omission from this collection of scholarship. While there is much focus regarding issues of health (substance abuse disorders, mental health issues, communicable disease, etc.), demographics (age, race, sex, etc.), and the experience of homelessness, there has been comparatively little attention paid to the role of property in both

producing and spatially managing homelessness, as well as the prominent capitalist agents that stand to profit at the expense of this marginalized community.

The monopoly rights afforded to property owners by the private property institution is what allows property owners to mobilize their property against any and all perceived threats to their private investments and use of space. In mainstream consciousness the very act of the homeless individual 'encroaching' on their space is an affront (Mitchell, 2011), as the homeless individual is often viewed with contempt (or pity) and their impact is seen as nothing more than equivalent to broken windows and graffiti (Wilson and Kelling, 1982; Skogan, 1999). While the homeless individual may serve as an example of the downfall of man (at their own hands) to the average neoliberal subject, the many actors who are invested in the productivity of a revitalizing city district often feel the need to stand up for decency's sake (which simultaneously, and not coincidently, also means to stand up for their investment potential).

Yet, the mobilization of property does not have to be just a defensive act (Blomley, 2009). Indeed, private property is also mobilized toward the enhanced flow of rent from the land as in the case of gentrification in cities like Seattle, WA. Gentrification, now treated as "general urban policy" (Smith, 2002) across urban American and beyond, is a strategy employed by "rent-seekers" in order to close the "rent gap" for both the producers and owners of property alike (Smith, 1996).[1] However, the mobilization of space in the form of gentrification also necessarily entails the defense of such spaces against any threats that may hinder this lucrative, localized process of capital accumulation (Blomley, 2009). If follows, then, that the homeless, as an example of this

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[1] Following Smith (1996), the rent-gap is the difference between existing land values and the potential values of the same land under a different use: the wider the gap, the greater the potential for gentrification.

threat, must be spatially and legally managed when they dare to encroach on such spaces of long-term investment potential (Smet, 2016). Public property, consequently, remains the only space left for the homeless to occupy. Yet, following Blomley (2009), private property is almost always spared from critique in standard liberal criticisms of property law, ignoring its role in forcing homeless people into the public realm in the first place. Simply put, the homeless have no private spaces to call their own, a key defining attribute of homelessness. The legally-enforced rights afforded to private property owners not only allow them exclusive control over the use absolute spaces (Blomley, 2009). These rights also allow them to exclude those who lack these same rights – rights that come with title to land. Even the few "private" spaces that are afforded to some homeless people (i.e., those living in an RV) are heavily regulated, subject to the will of a city's traffic regulations.

Since the neoliberal turn in the 1980s, new laws and ordinances have been enacted that effectively criminalize the act of being homeless. The very things that homeless people have to do to survive (i.e., sleeping, urinating) are increasingly rendered illegal in public spaces, the only spaces left for homeless people to exist. These "anti-homeless" laws (Mitchell, 2003) have emerged in conjunction with public-private partnerships often termed "business improvement districts" (BIDs). The academic literature on BIDs is now as massive as the prolific spread of BIDs themselves, as they appear in large numbers across not only North America, but also the United Kingdom and increasingly elsewhere in the world (Ward and Cook, 2017). BIDs can be understood as geographically defined areas that are designed to maximize (and protect) revenue streams for businesses, and rents for landowners, within their boundaries. As these entities exist, they do so for one overarching purpose: the maximization of the potential return on capitalist investment for all business and property owners within the BIDs territorially defined boundaries.

While local governments are disciplined into prioritizing ways to enhance revenue streams, they are effectively incentivized into supporting such private-sector coalitions that stimulate enhanced property values, such as BIDs (which often form in or near central city gentrifying neighborhoods and downtown commerce).

In this way, BIDs are not just coalitions of (usually commercial) landowners, as they include investors and local government as well. It is a coalition of a disparate cast of actors that are often represented as "growth machines," a term which can be understood as a regime of elites in business and government (i.e., private and public actors) who reinforce each other's incentives for furthering development (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Giles, 2017). We see this more specifically in the structure of BIDs, where each individual landowner in the district is taxed as a means of further bolstering security, surveillance, marketing, policing, street beautification, trash pick-up campaigns, etc. (at a time when the public sector has been gutted of its ability to provide these services). The hope is that these enhanced services can increase the perceived attractiveness and safety of the district to potential consumers.

In this way, the tax is treated as a *speculative investment* (Ward, 2007), with the hope of yielding a return in the future. In short, BIDs essentially channel the power that their connections with local authorities and financial institutions afford them in order to realize the maximum collective return on this speculative investment. BIDs, however, have yet to be explicitly identified as a form of rent-seeking, which is curious as BIDs are all about *enhancing the flow of rent* by commercial landowners. The objective of this thesis is to examine BIDs as a particular growth-machine coalition in pursuit of class monopoly rent (CMR) in the context of its role in both producing and regulating

homelessness, pushing the critical analysis of BIDs, homelessness, and rent one step further, bringing these bodies of scholarship into closer dialogue.

The concept of CMR was first developed by David Harvey, which was based off Marx's concept of absolute rent. More detail will be given to its definition and role within this study in the next chapter. For the briefest of explanations, CMR can be understood as the portion of rent that is attributable to the production of artificial scarcity by rent-seekers operating within a given housing submarket (Harvey, 1974). CMR, while igniting a substantive theoretical debate in the 1970s and 1980s, has since fallen out of scholarly interest in recent decades (Ward and Aalbers, 2016; Anderson, 2019), with some commentators concluding that it represented a rare phenomenon, little more than an aberration from a normal capitalist housing market and, consequently, of little interest (e.g., see Ball, 1985).

However, in recent years there has been a revival of interest in CMR that hypothesizes that this form of rent has become increasingly prominent in the context of contemporary processes of neoliberal urbanization, more important than previously recognized in the rent literature (Anderson, 2014, 2019; Purcell, et al., 2020; Swyngedouw and Ward, 2021). With homelessness also a growing problem and signpost of the neoliberal American city, this thesis examines the following questions: to what extent is the pursuit of CMR among rent-seekers (i.e., developers, landowners, investors, and local government) productive of homelessness? And to what extent has the pursuit of CMR, via BIDs, emerged as a strategy among private-sector coalitions to control where visible homeless bodies can and cannot be? To what extent is this a means of preserving their collective investment (in CMR) from the prime spaces of development that are threatened most by the "ocular trash" that marks visible homelessness in the public imaginary?

The setting of Seattle, Washington is appropriate for the purpose of examining these questions. Seattle, like many cities located on the western portion of the United States (Portland, San Francisco, Denver) adheres to a more progressive, liberal ideology. In short, they appear to cater more strongly to issues of social and environmental justice that tend to plague large American cities in general. While these cities may *appear* outwardly progressive, many of these cities have nonetheless, in the past and present, resorted to draconian measures in order to control the spatiality of the homeless population (Gowan, 2010; Becket and Herbert, 2010; Langegger and Koester, 2017). Seattle, like many large cities on the west coast, is facing an increasing population of homeless individuals concentrated in central city districts, where services are also concentrated. The 2020 King County Point-In-Time (which is a county run effort to count the number of homeless individuals, on one night of the year) found that 11,751 people in the Seattle area experienced some form of homelessness. Homelessness takes many forms within the Emerald city, and the City of Seattle and its surrounding communities have implemented a multitude of approaches to lessen the social and economic impact of homelessness in certain areas. For example, the City of Seattle has enabled the legal placement of so-called tent-cities and has cultivated city sponsored outreach teams and programs in order to combat the effects that the rise in homelessness is having on the city and county (Cetron, 2015).

Seattle is the largest urban center in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) with a population of 723,035 within its defined city boundaries (3,979,845 in the metro area). Seattle continues to enjoy top tier status as one of the country's fastest growing cities, ranking second in 2020, and first overall in the last decade (Puget Sound Business

Journal, 2020). The city has experienced an expansive influx of people moving to the city and its surrounding areas to take advantage of the addition of many high wage jobs created by the various large companies headquartered in the region, such as Microsoft and Boeing in the 80s and 90s. Seattle's regional economy only accelerated since 2011 thanks to the arrival and growth of other global corporations as well, such as Amazon. Another benefit for the economy of the central city area is the prolific spread of BIDs, which are referred to in Seattle as Business Improvement Areas (BIA). Seattle has no fewer than 10 officially recognized BIAs in the city itself, including one multi-organizational behemoth known as the Metropolitan Improvement District.

Unlike some major urban centers in the US which have had a difficult time attracting new high-wage jobs, Seattle has added a plethora of such jobs since 2010 (see Table 1). The population of Seattle has also seen a drastic increase in the past few years. However, as table 1 also demonstrates, there has been a pitiful response to this reality in the housing sector, enabling a cutthroat housing market to emerge. Worsening matters, the housing that has emerged has not been of the kind that many low-income individuals and families can afford. As stated by Tim Burgess in 2015, former city council member and at the time vice president of the Planning Land Use and Sustainability Committee, "We as a city government and as a region have not kept pace with that growth, and we have seen… our infrastructure be surpassed by all of that growth" (DeMay, 2015). To understand the challenges that face affordable housing (and which (in)directly adds to the increase of those who are or are close to being homeless) we must first discuss what is considered "affordable."

Table 1. Increases in number of jobs, population and housing in Seattle since 2010. (City of Seattle, 2021)

Category	Increase (Numerical)
Jobs	157,736 – 34%
Population	152,440 – 25%
New Housing	67,601 – 22%

Area Median Income (AMI) is a measure the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculates based on the median household income for households of various sizes in a given area. In the Seattle area, which includes Snohomish and King counties, the AMI for a household of one is $72,400, and for a household of four it is $103,400 (Office for Planning and Community Development, 2020). For comparison, San Francisco has the highest AMI at $128,110 for a family of four in 2020 (City and County of San Francisco, 2021). Rental housing in Seattle has skyrocketed over the last decade. For example, the price for a one-bedroom apartment has risen 57% from 2011 to 2018 (Schlosser, 2019). Many existing multi-unit properties have been remodeled or demolished in order to make way for more lucrative upscale units that cater to higher wage households. This means that while most rentals remain "affordable" for those in the AMI range of 80-120%, those making less face significant challenges. According to the Office of Planning and Community Development, only 3% of rental complexes with 20 or more units were affordable at 60% AMI, and 23% were affordable to households with incomes at 80% of the AMI. As many renters receive incomes lower than 80% AMI, this makes for a shortage of units affordable to this slice of the population (Office for Planning and Community Development, 2020).

The issue is no better for those who choose the path of home ownership. With median sales prices for homes in Seattle in 2018 at $795,000 (detached house), what's affordable at 80% AMI is $299,300. Only 6% of units sold were affordable at 120% AMI (Office of Planning and Community Development, 2020). Add to this the fact that the majority of new construction in housing favors the production of more rental apartments, with 81% of new construction being allocated to apartments over duplexes (2%) or detached homes (7%) (Office of Planning and Community Development, 2020). While this may sound great from the perspective of a sustainability planning approach that prioritizes higher-density development (see Mathur, 2014), it has been punitive in terms of its class-biased impacts. The housing crisis facing cities like Seattle is multidimensional, including housing affordability disparity, wage inequality, systems of historical structural racism and classism, etc., all of which contribute to the reproduction of the political, economic, and social systems that allow for the perpetuation of homelessness today.

In order to empirically examine the questions posed above, I provide a qualitative analysis of news media (press releases, editorials, developer websites, policy documents, BID websites, neighborhood associations, etc.) associated with the various actors involved in this ongoing and worsening tragic comedy. This approach allows me to gain an understanding of the history of and relationship between the rapid and parallel redevelopment of central Seattle and the city's growing homeless crisis, the attitudes toward both of these phenomena among city officials, planners, businesses, and residents, and the socio-political orientation of the city's major BIDs. Interviews with key actors by journalists are included, which help gain deeper insight into the underlying attitudes of such actors in regard to the homeless population (also see Anderson, 2019). In relation to the questions guiding this study, content analysis of this mass of collected information (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Fairclough, 2003), along with the previously

researched literature surrounding the main topics, will form the bullwork of the empirical portion of this study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the three major topics of analysis situated at the center of this study: homelessness (especially in regard to policies and practices geared toward its spatial management), CMR, and BIDs (BIAs in the case of Seattle). The objective of this discussion is to bring the existing bodies of scholarship on these three themes into closer dialogue, expanding upon one subject by introducing the next (and vice-versa). These bodies of academic literature serve as the foundation upon which this study contributes, and upon which the main arguments and insights are supported. Chapter 3 elaborates on the methods of data collection and analysis I employ in the study as well as their (de)limitations. Chapter 4 presents this empirical material and analysis in dialogue with the existing literature and informs the conclusions that are derived and summarized in the fifth and final chapter. The study's implications for policy and future research activities are also highlighted.

This thesis is written through the lens of Marxist political economy. With that said, this is not to say that other modes of interpretation or conceptual frames are less valid. Positions of objectivity in social science research are not possible, as everybody is shaped by their own lived experiences, political orientations and subjectivities. As such, we need to be sensitive and aware of how our own biases shape our interpretation, with the understanding that there is value to multiple modes of understanding.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Homelessness

The common, neoliberal-informed conception of the homeless individual is a vagrant, a delinquent, a danger, an alien (Mitchell, 2011). It is not a conception that identifies the homeless as people left behind by the systems of rule and order in place that define contemporary neoliberal society. In this frame, most view these people as nothing more than lazy, drug abusing (sometimes mentally disabled), beggars who willingly led themselves down this path to ultimate social ostracism. The overwhelming consensus is that if they were truly unhappy with their lot in life, the power exists within themselves to change their situation and that all it takes is a little hard work and elbow grease. Furthermore, due to the existing social stigma associated with this common understanding, those with capitalist investment in the built environment see the homeless as a very real visual threat and barrier to their future success. In short, the homeless are literally *seen* as just another form of debris that perhaps most directly and substantively maligns the beauty (and some argue safety) of neighborhoods targeted for redevelopment than any other space.

Homelessness, which can be described as "an extreme form of social exclusion and poverty" (Von Mahs, 2011), has reached a fever pitch over the last few decades, which was only exacerbated by the Great Recession (and in western US cities in particular). If the issue is not new, why then, has the last decade seen such an explosive increase in the rates of homelessness (Ryan, 2015)? Homelessness has many causes and is ***not*** an accidental process. It is not, however, as pervasive neoliberal sensibilities seem to suggest, caused by an individual's lack of

education, unwillingness to work, issues with drugs or alcohol, or mental health issues. These issues, though, which can be (unsurprisingly) exacerbated (if not induced entirely) by the soul numbing existence of homelessness, do tend to make escape from this cycle much more difficult (Mitchell, 1997). In short, the homeless constitute only a small fraction of the total number of people who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse: poverty is the greater underlying factor that generally pushes people over the edge when these mental health/substance abuse issues arise, at least in comparison to the rest of the population (see Anderson, et al., 2021).

Concerned with this ongoing epidemic in the 2000's, city governments across the USA began to implement what were known as "10-year plans to end homelessness," including the City of Seattle (Berg, 2015). These plans, which were issued under the direction of the federal government, purportedly aimed to stem the flow of people into the disgraced realm of homelessness. The program focused efforts and resources on the following five themes: retooling the homeless crisis response system, increasing economic security, improving health and stability, increasing access to stable and affordable housing, as well as increasing leadership, collaboration, and civic engagements (Berg, 2015). These plans, while thoroughly researched and approved by panels of experts, never seemed to bear fruit, as the decade following their implementation saw only an increase in the number of those cast onto the streets across the United States (Sparks, 2015; Berg, 2015). In Seattle, for example, the 10-year plan ended with an increase of nearly double the homeless population that existed at the plan's inception in 1996 (Harris, 2017).

How is it that all these supposedly well formulated systems failed? There are many factors that must be considered. It is widely understood I critical urban studies that the rise in homelessness experienced in the United States during the 1980's and 1990's can be tied to neoliberal economic and anti-welfare policies and practices pushed during the Reagan administration, policies that are still in place today (Marcuse, 2017). This attack on the "welfare" state led to numerous changes which collectively helped to decrease the fiscal capacity of local and state authorities to respond to homelessness. These include but are not limited to the piecemeal defunding of billions of dollars in affordable housing programs and assistance, while then relying on market forces in order to fill the gaps of affordable housing (WRAP, n.d.).

Moreover, if drug abuse, mental illness, and "bad choices" are the true culprit, that the root causes lie within the individual, then why are there many more substance abusers that are not homeless? Why are there just as many homeless people who are not substance abusers or mentally ill (people who are typically not *visibly* homeless)? In a capitalist economy based on scarcity, this also entails scarcity in jobs, a situation that gives employers the leverage over workers as a means to suppress wages to maintain acceptable profit margins (Mitchell, 2003). In short, homelessness is tied to poverty: it is something more likely to happen to the poor, people who might not have the social networks to draw on when, say, jobs are lost and/or eviction notices are served, people who are already vulnerable to experiencing this social condition in the first place (Langegger and Koester, 2017). And if there is not enough political will to ensure that those left without a job are adequately housed, then some degree of homelessness is inevitable despite questions of individual culpability (Anderson, et al., 2021).

Of all the major urban centers in the United States in 2013, Seattle experienced the largest increase in the cost of housing (Balk, 2014). In terms of increase to wages, Seattle

experienced a massive increase in income for the top 20% of wage earners. This increase

soared from $15,000 to $248,000 over and above their existing salaries, in just 2012-3.

The bottom 20% of wage earners, however, saw little to no increase from their

approximate $13,000/year salaries (Balk, 2014). The increases in both housing costs and

incomes at the top 20% are not coincidental, neither is the corresponding rise in

homelessness within the city. While this disparity may be seen as coincidental (and in

some eyes necessary) to the rise of Seattle as a global city, one that has in-part dismantled

its manufacturing industry for service-oriented industries (i.e., information technology,

research, development, medical, etc.) (Giles, 2017), heightened socio-economic

polarization has consequently become an endemic attribute of not only Seattle but most

of the cities that are now dubbed "global" (Lees, et al., 2013).

According to the 2020 King County Point-In-Time count, which is an annual

event in which volunteers make a count around King County of everybody experiencing

homelessness, found around 11,751 people in King County experienced homelessness

one night in January with forty-seven percent of this population being unsheltered. This is

a five percent increase from 2019 (One-Night-Count, 2020). It has been difficult for

Seattle to reconcile this epidemic with its traditionally liberal identity (Gregory, 2010).

As mentioned above, the huge disparity in wages is reflected by the numerous corporate

juggernauts that increasingly inhabit Seattle and its surrounding metropolitan region, and

the nearly ninety-two percent increase in rents the city has experienced since 2010

(Smith, 2020). The meager increase to the lower end of wage earners has not kept up with

this broader inflation in the region's housing market. This in itself causes issues: if not

directly causing homelessness it can put one directly on the knife's edge. Consequently,

the lack of affordable housing and the city's rising homeless population have become increasingly serious issues in Seattle for over a decade. There have been many attempts to lessen the effects of this housing shortage, from investment in tiny home villages and increased availability of shelter beds (Brown, 2016; Ford and Lanier-Gomez, 2016), to local state-sponsored interventions, such as the controversial case of legal "Tent Cities."

In May of 2017, the City of Seattle passed ordinance #124747. This ordinance legally allows for transitional encampments (homeless encampments) to be placed on private or public land within the city. As a member of the city council stated, "the current capacity of our housing and homeless services continuum cannot meet the needs of all those who are homeless" (quoted in Sparks, 2017: 348). Another tool in the proverbial toolbox is creating unique programs in conjunction with established health and welfare organizations in order to better serve this underprivileged community. For instance, the City of Seattle teamed up with the Evergreen Treatment Services (ETS) in order to create an organization aimed at interacting with and offering help to the homeless population within the region. ETS is a private nonprofit organization that specializes in medically assisted treatment options for those suffering from opioid addiction, as well as many other services including group counseling, HIV and Hepatitis C testing, acupuncture, etc. (Evergreen Treatment Services, 2021). The purpose of the REACH program is to "build relationships with people experiencing homelessness and connects them to the help that they need" (REACH, 2021).

The REACH street team members are interdisciplinary and consist of case managers, social workers, chemical dependency specialists and others working in close concert with civil authorities, as well as ambassadors in BIDs. REACH team members interact with homeless populations to try and steer them to whatever services (substance abuse treatment, housing

assistance, mental health evaluations, etc.) they may need (REACH, 2021). This is all good and well, but clearly none of this genuinely tackles the root issues that drive homelessness in the first place: they are akin to emergency room doctors and responders that seek to "treat" the people who come in from, say, car accidents, but do nothing to the factors that made the street unsafe to begin with (see Anderson, et al., 2021).

In recent years, many major cities across the United States have seen a noticeable increase in policy and litigation that serve no other apparent purpose than to spatially manage these ever-increasing homeless populations in order to preserve the spatial/visual aesthetics that are necessary to secure both future and pre-existing capital investment in prime spaces of affluent redevelopment (Berti, 2010; Langegger and Koester, 2017). For instance, since 1993 Seattle has passed many such laws under the umbrella term of "public safety" (Becket and Herbert, 2010). Examples of these laws include (and are in no way limited to) making actions such as panhandling, public urination, sitting on sidewalks, etc., a criminal offense, and have been publicly championed by the local state and business and real estate communities as measures intended to protect the citizens from "dangerous" scenarios (such as interacting with the homeless in public spaces). This, of course, implies that the homeless themselves are not citizens (or, at least, are not the citizens imagined in this discourse). It also ignores the reality that the homeless themselves are subject to more "danger" than, arguably, anyone else, insofar as they are way more likely to be the victims of violent crime than the perpetrators (Blomley, 2009). The only laws normally broken by homeless people are those very laws that outlaw their very existence, that make illegal the very things they are forced to do in public as a means to survive (e.g., sleep, urinate).

Of course, the underlying intent of these laws is to more efficiently manage where the homeless can legally exist within a city, as these laws are only enforced in certain areas of the city, specifically those "prime spaces" targeted for redevelopment and/or business and tourist corridors that rely on perceptions of safety among consumers on the street (Mitchell, 2003; Langegger and Koester, 2017). In short, as Mitchell (2011) asserts, the ultimate goal is the protection of capitalist investment in these particular public/private spaces, while "banishing" (Becket and Herbert, 2009) the homeless to other marginalized out of the way spaces (if not removing them from public space all together via incarceration) elsewhere in the city (or beyond), especially those spaces which are, for the moment, irrelevant from the standpoint of capitalist accumulation.

What drives the rationale behind what Mitchell (1997) famously termed the *annihilation of space by law* is the deep seeded and socially agreed upon distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (also see Mitchell, 2011; Van Mahs, 2011). Those members of the homeless population that are generally understood to be deserving of their status as homeless are those that mark themselves as "visibly" homeless insofar as they exhibit signs of intoxication, grubby clothing, etc., and, as such, are deemed not worthy of the effort of public support from "normal" members of housed society (including those members of the undeserving poor). The deserving poor represent the all-too-real repercussions of not conforming to the set rules and norms of contemporary housed society. They are, thus, alienated from and cast into the margins of the neoliberalized society that created them, the same society that would rather not be inconvenienced with visual reminders of their presence, a presence that is too often perceived as "ocular trash." As Marcuse so eloquently stated in 1988, "The very term alienation has its roots

in the frightening concept of not being at home … the homeless are aliens incarnate" (Marcuse, 2017: 357-359).

Those who are seen as deserving of their homelessness are, then, necessarily further marginalized by the "growth machines" that fuel the resurrection of the city as a site for capital accumulation (Giles, 2017). Although not explicitly stated by Giles, the term "growth machine" can be easily tied to the pursuit of CMR (also see Trettor, 2009; Harvey, 2012; Anderson, 2019). Giles (2017: 332-340) describes the growth machine as "complex systems of urban elites, business and policy makers, that reinforce and amplify each other's incentives for further development." Taking into account how growth machines dissect the urban landscape into easily managed "neighborhoods" or sub-markets in which supply/demand conditions for housing can be manipulated, then growth machine coalitions can be interpreted, in some instances at least, as regimes in pursuit of CMR. Moreover, to substantively remedy the political-economic structures that allow homelessness to exist in the US (rather than merely spatially manage it), money, following Marcuse (2017), would need to come from either the private sector (increased wages across the spectrum) or government interventions via the form of increased taxation on the top percentage of earners. This, of course, is blatantly in opposition to the driving forces behind such growth machines, as well as a persistent neoliberal hegemony that would never condone such modes of reconciliation. As Marcuse (2017; 357-359) states, "when the 1% own more wealth than all the bottom 50% together, there are powerful class issues involved from the beginning."

Of course, as Mitchell (2011) chronicles, homelessness has a very long and storied history in the United States, extending back to the very foundation of the country itself. Marx himself ([1867] 1976) famously documented the horrific treatment of those who were labelled "vagabonds" through the primitive accumulation that marked the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries in

England, violently separating people from their traditional means of providing their own subsistence. This in turn served to drive them firmly past the maw and straight into the belly of the newly born capitalist beast as either poorly compensated wage-laborers or as members of the necessary industrial reserve army. Perhaps unsurprisingly, homelessness has been a constant shadow that has followed the capitalist mode of production since its inception. And if we are not going to consider any alterations to the very class-based forces that continue to (re)produce homelessness today, then Mitchell (2011) is right when he identifies homelessness as a permanent and necessary condition in any capitalist society. While necessary to the functioning of this kind of economy, it is imperative from the point of view of those in power that the homeless be spatially managed (rather than eradicated) to preserve the very political-economic forces that guarantee the upward flow of surplus value to the upper echelons of such a highly stratified society; and which are, of course, the very same forces that, consequently, ensure that homelessness maintains a state of permanence.

Rent

The simple fact that the homeless population has increased since the ascendancy of neoliberal hegemony in the late 1980's should not come as a surprise. This is after all in accordance with the necessities of a capitalist society that is more concerned with maximizing rates of return on investments than the well-being of its less fortunate citizens. As cities today strive to increase the value of strategically located properties, more attention is being devoted to the urban landscape by finance and real estate capital as spatially locked "golden geese" of future investment potential.

Seattle itself is an example of an expansive urban center, nestled within an ever-expanding growth of high salaried jobs with a west coast liberal identity (Gregory, 2015). As such, it is subject to many of the issues that are associated with these technologic boomtowns, particularly the seemingly inevitable explosion concerning the price and availability of housing. It is also subject to the forces of collaboration, or the "social infrastructure" (Simone, 2004) through which networks of rent seekers (e.g., developers, builders, landowners, investors, local government) work to maximize the return on property investment for personal gain.

The literature engaged in land rent theory is legion and is primarily focused on the institutional conditions that account for the existence of rent in the first place, and the myriad socio-economic relations that shape the amount of rent that can be charged by property owners in a given time and place (Swyngedouw and Ward, 2021). Many categories of rent have been proposed (see Park, 2014; Ward and Aalbers, 2016), although the following three have received the bulk of scholarly attention: differential rent (DR), monopoly rent (MR), and absolute rent (AR). These categories represent the specific economic relations that can form between the owners, producers, and consumers of property, and which shape the overall amount of rent that can be charged in a given instance (Haila, 2015; Ward and Aalbers, 2016). Differential rent takes two forms: DR1 and DR2. In the urban context DR1 refers primarily to the proportion of rent that is attributed to the relative "fertility" or quality of the land, or some locational advantage. In the urban context, this can take the form of easy access to parks, proximity to commerce/employment centers, public transport, etc. DR2, on the other hand, represents the portion of rent attributed to some capital investment made upon the land (or

property), such as remodeling of structures, or infrastructural improvements (Anderson, 2019).

      According to Marx ([1894] 1981), MR represents the portion of rent that is attributable to an entirely unique (to that piece of land) feature that cannot be found elsewhere (access to a well in dry climate, mineral deposits, unique landforms, etc.). The category of AR, however, represents the minimum amount of "socially acceptable" rent that a landowner/lord will accept based off the abilities and powers granted to them by the private property institution (which is what allows rent to be demanded by property owners in the first place) to manipulate and stack the market in their favor. It is in this context that Harvey (1974; also see Harvey and Chatterjee, 1974) develops the category of "class monopoly rent" (CMR), which is essentially the same thing as AR re-conceptualized in the urban context (Ward and Aalbers, 2016; Anderson, 2019). This study examines the role of one particular manifestation of this form of rent – business improvement districts – in terms of shaping the spatial contours of homelessness production and management in cities like Seattle today. To what extent do BIDs represent the strategic mobilization of CMR to accomplish this objective?

      Interest in land rent theory eroded in the early to mid-twentieth century as the theory's agricultural roots were seen as antiquated and irrelevant in the context of the rapid urbanization that marked this time period (Ward and Aalbers, 2016). A return to the Marxist theory of rent occurred in the early 1970's via David Harvey's work concerning the application of Marx's categories (MR and AR) to the urban context (Harvey, 1974; Harvey and Chatterjee, 1974). The notion of CMR was introduced by Harvey during his in-depth analysis of Baltimore Maryland's inner-city housing markets in order to emphasize the role of both class and monopoly in Marx's notion of AR. Unlike the other related categories of rent, CMR, as a theory of housing submarkets (Revington, 2021), is based on the owners/producers of property collaborating

(intentionally or unintentionally) to maximize the realizable rent on their properties within a spatial confined (and thus limited) space, or "submarket." The proportion of the rent that is attributable to this collaboration can be understood as CMR.

An example of CMR is the production of what Harvey (1974) has referred to as "artificial scarcity" within the market, i.e., in the case of the Baltimore study, slum-landlords intentionally removing units from circulation that rented below acceptable rates of return or were too costly to maintain (Harvey, 1974). The aggregate effect of this is the 'artificial" reduction of supply. In turn, rents can then rise for everyone invested in the housing market in question, effectively lining up with the dynamic theorized by Marx, just applied to roach-hotels as opposed to plots of agricultural land. In short, by virtue of having the collective power to do this, the owners and producers of property are effectively able to collectively extract the socially acceptable minimum, a baseline or "reservation price" below which landowners opt to keep units out of circulation (also see Harvey, 1975; Anderson, 2014). This also tends to lead to a seeming paradox: *increased rents and vacancies at the same time,* which Harvey (1974) demonstrated as a classic empirical signpost of CMR.

How exactly does this happen? In low-income markets, "landlords may set their expected rate of return on the estimated market value of their fixed capital assets at say, 15 per cent annum" (Harvey, 1974: 242). If the market becomes oversaturated with low-income properties, then the rate of return realized by investors may fall below this 15 percent. When this is the case, landlords are left with a few options (legally afforded to them by the private property institution) in order to remedy the situation. One option is to simply bite the proverbial bullet and accept the loss on return. However, it is more likely that they may "milk" the properties while at the same

time beginning to disinvest from them by simultaneously reaping the maximum amount of rent from a property, while saving on costs such as maintenance, upkeep, and remodeling. Via this neglect the unit eventually decays to the point that it is no longer considered rentable. This in turn decreases the availability of affordable units within the market, which simultaneously results in artificial scarcity within the market in question that did not previously exist, which allows the rates of return to increase back to acceptable margins and beyond (Harvey, 1974; Harvey and Chatterjee, 1974).

Another way we can see this collaborative behavior among property owners/producers is in the context of one of the most important and visually apparent aspects of neoliberal urbanization: gentrification. Urban areas that exhibit a sufficiently wide-enough "rent gap" (i.e., the gap between existing land values and the potential values of the same land under a different use, see Smith, 1996) usually become subject to increased speculation for investment by capital as they offer a chance for increased accumulation through gentrification, redevelopment/rezoning, etc. Part of the necessary restructuring of units that is a hallmark to gentrification is the reduction in the amount of affordable housing units to make way for more lucrative units (Blomley, 2009). Sassen indicates that gentrification goes hand in hand with competition between cities, as it is one of the ways in which cities compete as a means for attracting capital to their city as opposed to other cities (Sassen, 2001; also see Harvey, 1989; Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Attracting capital, especially in the form of businesses with middle-to upper-income workers, both underpins this gentrification and is underpinned by it. As such, cities use gentrification as a means of competition with other cities in order to maximize the appeal of an area to potential corporations and their middle to middle-upper income workers.

Since the federal funding of cities has been increasingly limited since the introduction of neoliberal policies in the 1980's (Harvey, 2005), local governments have been forced to rely more and more upon enhancing property taxes in order to keep their coffers full. This can be accomplished through gentrification, and this places city governments in alliance with private market actors, forming a particular class of actors that Anderson (2019) and Hansen (2020) have termed the "unholy trinity of CMR," citing the alliance between not only landowners and investors, but the local state as well – each operating as rent-seekers to their mutual benefit.

Ward and Aalbers (2016) identify the discursive branding of particular neighborhoods as non-substitutable by rent-seekers as a second form of CMR, distinct from the supply-reducing strategies identified by Harvey (1974). There may be many gentrifying neighborhoods with new affluent condos across a given metropolitan region, but we are told that there is only one "Bronzeville" in Chicago (Anderson, 2014), or "Pearl District" in Portland (Anderson, 2019) (also see Hansen, 2020). Trettor (2009) and Harvey (2012) identify a similar dynamic at the inter-urban scale in the context of how cities brand their historical and cultural resources as unique (e.g., museums, historic housing stock), as a form of "monopolistic competition" with other cities doing the same thing (also see Emmanuel, 1985).

I suggest, however, that discursive branding campaigns, which are important for shaping the consumption habits of higher-income consumers (people who are typically not as limited in their choices for housing as lower-income populations), represent merely one particular manifestation of this second form of rent. Whereas Harvey's (1974) CMR implicates the reduction of supply as a means of manipulating supply/demand conditions,

this second form of CMR, tied more closely to processes of gentrification by growth-machine coalitions, is related to *enhancing demand within supply-limited spaces*. In the context of BIDs, the socially-constructed boundaries of the BID act as the *barrier to capital entry in the market* often cited in relation to Marx's concept of AR. Discursive-branding of non-substitutability, i.e., the cultivation of senses of uniqueness and exclusivity, in submarkets, or neighborhoods, with clear boundaries that make supply relatively inelastic, is merely one concrete example of this second form of CMR. Other forms, I suggest, would be TIFs (see Anderson, 2014, 2019; Hansen, 2020) and BIDs, the object of analysis in this study.

BIDs and Property

The unifying element that joins these otherwise disparate bodies of literature is Blomley's (2009) notion of the *mobilization of property* via the inherent monopoly rights granted to the owners of property. As stated by Klodawsky and Blomley (2009 p. 573), "a right is a privilege or claim to which one is justly entitled. Conversely, to be denied a right is to be placed at a particular disadvantage, forced to acquiesce to the rights claimed of others." By virtue of the monopoly rights afforded to landowners, they are able to exclusively determine how the land is used and by whom (Blomley, 2009). Real estate offers a unique investment challenge. It is a long-term investment that has the potential to continue for many years to extract rent from tenants/consumers (Smet, 2016; Giles, 2017). As real estate is an immobile asset spatially locked in place, this offers a unique characteristic for there is no other place *exactly* like it, an inherent monopoly.

The process of gentrification can be seen as an example of the mobilization of property toward both enhanced revenue streams for owners and producers (as well as those with a claim

on a portion of this revenue stream, i.e., the interest paid to mortgage lending institutions and

property taxes paid to local government) and the management of threats to the process. However,

Blomley (2009) argues that it is not just property, but private property in particular that needs to

be indicted in regard to homelessness. This is important because the homeless are seen (by

neoliberal capital and certain aspects of "respectable" society) as human detritus that serve no

other function than to blemish the finely crafted veneer of these spaces of possible investment.

Thus, in order to be able to have complete control, both spatially and legally, of an area is of

crucial importance to the capitalist interests that mark each actor invested in a given growth

machine coalition (including the local state) (Blomley, 2009; Mitchell, 1997). As Harvey (2007:

2) notes:

> "Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual framework characterized by *strong private property rights,* free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices."

The role of private property is, thus, important, as for those who are homeless, there

exists no such private property in which they may exercise complete sovereignty. A homeless

individual does not have the opportunity to just "go home" when they are feeling done with the

world at large (Sparks, 2010). This mobilization of property also serves to reinforce (and is

reinforced by) contemporary neoliberal policies, i.e., anti-homeless laws, policies which serve to

reproduce and entrench the idea in the mass majority of the population that the homeless are

"somehow broken, defective, and deviant" (Sparks, 2017: 349).

As spaces for further investment and development, I suggest that BIDs play an

unrecognized yet important role in the pursuit and realization of CMR. BID's represent

coalitions of businesses and property owners in a particular district or neighborhood that

collectively contribute extra taxes that go toward "cleansing" the street of any and all obstacles to consumer foot traffic (both legitimate and perceived), especially the visual presence of homeless people. It is effectively a form of rent-seeking insofar as this collective investment attempts to realize enhanced flows of profit for businesses and, thus, *rent* for landowners, the actors that are collectively being taxed in the United States. The enhanced revenue, or savings from doing this (viewed as a return on investment) can be viewed as rent insofar as it would not have been realized without the intervention of the taxes. It would be impossible for the coalition of actors to successfully extract this rent (i.e., as the return on investment that the tax represents) from consumers without the support of governmentally enforced property rights, as the rights guaranteed to private property represents the means through which landowners are able to mobilize that property against the threat that the homeless individual poses to their collective investment potential.

BID's, or their varying nomenclatures such as Business Improvement Areas (BIA), Business Revitalization Zones (BRZ), Community Improvement Districts (CID), Special Services Area (SSA), or Special Improvement Districts (SID) are nothing new to the United States. While originating in North America they have rapidly proliferated around the globe in recent decades (Hoyt and Devika, 2007; Ward 2007; Cook, 2008; Lippert, 2012, Ward and Cook, 2017). BIDs are treated by invested actors, i.e., commercial landowners, investors, and city government, as a tool to be applied to a geographically defined area. They are defined as:

> "…organizations administrated by a board that manages funds produced by a mandatory levy on all commercial property owners in a downtown or commercial retail strip…the levy is to overcome free-riding property owners who might not otherwise cover the costs of service provision and physical improvements benefiting the entire district" (Lippert, 2012 p. 168).

The emergent surge in popularity of BID's can be associated with the benefits that they bring to the business/property owners, such as an increase in yearly revenue. Their existence on what is now a broad, globalizing scale can be tied to the extensive deindustrialization and mass suburbanization that plagued the 1970's and 1980's in the global North (Ward, 2007). It is important to note that in many cases BID members see themselves as the de facto representation of landowners and businesses within their domain, engaging in urban revitalization and economic development in the realm of the private sector to ensure their district is profitable (or, at the very least, yielding the socially acceptable minimum), especially in comparison with other districts within their respective cities (Cook, 2009).

This study deepens our understanding of BIDs insofar as they represent not only a form of rent-seeking (of which they are rarely identified as), but a particular form and strategic mobilization of CMR that is somewhat distinct from the more commonly identified forms discussed elsewhere in the rent literature. Indeed, BIDs quite clearly implicate DR2 as well (and gentrification in general, see Jaeger, 2003). I am not disputing this. Rather, what I hypothesize is that they also, and inseparably, represent the speculative pursuit of CMR insofar as they effectively "[break] up the urban sphere into competing … [and] discrete, governable spaces" (Ward, 2007a; 667). In this way, they become absolute spaces with a limited supply of properties (and, thus, the rentiers and businesses that are able to participate), spaces produced by the cartographically imposed boundaries that effectively define each BID (and act as barriers to capital entry). BIDs, however, do not necessarily entail the collective removal of some properties from circulation. The manipulation of supply/demand conditions comes not by actively limiting supply in the way described by Harvey (1974), but enhancing demand among potential

consumers within a geographically-bounded (and thus, property limited) commercial space,

which essentially produces the same effect on property values, not too dissimilar from TIFs,

historical preservation districts, and other similar "district" designations mobilized by such

growth machine coalitions. Discursive-branding campaigns, likewise, fall into this more general

form of CMR, as noted above. And inasmuch as BIDs have proliferated on a global scale, it

follows that the pursuit of at least this particular form of CMR has also become global, much

more prevalent and structurally important today than how CMR has historically been portrayed

in the rent literature, i.e., as something that's only manifest in rare or exceptional cases (see

Harvey, 1982; Haila, 1990; Park, 2014; Ward and Aalbers, 2016; Anderson, 2019).

In just the United States, we see that the shadow of BID's has spread across major city

centers over the last three decades (Ward and Cook, 2017). Seattle is no exception, although

BIDs are referred to in this city as Business Improvement Areas. The methods and results are the

same. With ten recognized BIA's spread across Seattle, these organizations are primarily

designated depending on geographic location (such as neighborhood), an iconic local feature (a

park), or centered on areas of commerce (City of Seattle, 2021b). According to the Seattle Office

of Economic Development's spring 2012 handbook (*Business Improvement Areas At Work in*

Seattle), BIA's are described in the executive summary as:

> "funding mechanisms for business district revitalization and management.
> Specifically, the mechanism is an assessment collected from businesses and/or
> properties within defined boundaries. The funds collected are used to provide for
> the *mutual benefit* of the businesses and properties being assessed… Under one
> name or another, well over 1,000 such districts exist throughout the United States,
> with many more in Canada and throughout the world. BIAs include programs and
> services such as marketing, public area maintenance, security, parking,
> streetscape improvements, and professional management" (Seattle Office of
> Economic Development, 2012 p. 2 [my italics]).

What many of these Seattle area BID's have in common is their attitude toward obstacles and barriers to increasing their rate of return. As stated above, part of the levy is used to increase funding for marketing, public area maintenance, streetscape improvements and security (City of Seattle, 2021). In order to do this, they must deal with what are termed "Prolific Offenders" in the 2019 report titled "*Systems of Failure – Report on Prolific Offenders in Seattle Criminal Justice System,*" which is a sixty-one-page document sent to elected officials in Seattle. The report was produced as a group effort consisting of multiple BIAs across Seattle: the Pioneer Square, Chinatown/International District, SODO, Downtown, Ballard, the University District and Seattle's Tourism Industry. The report's intent was to voice concerns relating to these "Prolific Offenders" that pose a continued threat to businesses (Alliance for Pioneer Square, 2021a; Chinatown-International District, 2021; Ballard Alliance, 2021). Key findings from the report include:

> "A substantial portion of the criminal activity that has the greatest impact on Seattle's busiest neighborhoods is committed by a relatively small number of prolific offenders who have a large number of criminal cases in Seattle and King county courts… Many are drug-addicted, have mental health problems and do not, or cannot comply with terms of their sentences and deferrals. They continuously cycle through the criminal justice system with no changes in their behavior and are repeatedly returned to Seattle's streets to commit more crimes and may often pose harm to themselves and others" (Lindsay, 2019 p. 3).

While this may seem like a report on dastardly individuals who are out to cause mischief and mayhem with no regard to the businesses affected, we can see in the choice of language who their report is targeting. Key terms such as "drug-addicted," "mental health problems" and "repeatedly returned to Seattle's streets" (as if they have an alternative) clearly signify individuals who are likely homeless. As if there were any doubt:

> "The three predominant underlying issues for the prolific offender population studied for this report were substance use disorders, mental health conditions, and homelessness… Of the 100 individuals examined based on significant recent criminal activity, all 100 of them had indicators that they struggle with substance use disorders… 38 of the 100 had been identified for a mental health evaluation… All 100 individuals had indications that they are currently or recently homeless based on police reports" (Lindsay, 2019 p. 5)

This report demonstrates the attitudes shared by BIAs in Seattle in response to the epidemic of homelessness that plagues the city. The vision of these organizations is to provide an unobstructed path through the throng of unnerving homeless and terrifying panhandlers who "lack purchasing power to or a return residence [and] are deemed obstacles to smooth pedestrian flow and efficient consumption" (Lippert, 2012).

Organizations such as BIAs and BIDs have become embroiled in debates about securitization and privatization of public spaces (Ward, 2007), as well as expanding their role in local governance via established partnerships with local government offices (Hoyt and Devika, 2007). As Lippert (2012) illustrates with a quote from a BID organization representative "Our BID makes donations to… and supports a number of political causes" (Lippert, 2012). One important aspect of the relation is established "Ambassadors" whose job it is to patrol the area to provide a sense of security to the average person, while they are meandering the well-manicured green spaces and trash-less streets that ideally mark the shopping experience. As noted by Lippert (2012: 172):

> "As mobile models patrolling urban spaces, ambassadors uniformed and youthful bodies are to embody the 'clean and safe' image of the new consumption landscape, to cleanse and blend with an idealized physical and social refuse-free reality."

The ambassadors are servants of the BID and work in conjunction with local authorities to ensure their area of influence is free of refuse (both physical and human), however they are

depicted in a caring favorable fashion. As the U District Partnerships website titled

"Ambassadors" indicates:

> "The U District Partnership (UDP) launched an Ambassador Team in July of
> 2017. Patrolling the U District Business Improvement Area (UDBIA) from
> Thursday to Sunday, this dedicated team helps keep our neighborhood safe,
> welcoming, and livable… Patrolling the neighborhood to provide additional
> public presence and deter negative behavior… Reporting graffiti, illegal dumping,
> or other cleaning needs to our Beautification Team… Supporting our neighbors in
> need by sharing with them information about social services and connecting them
> with local providers such as the REACH Program" (The U District Partnership,
> n.d.).

For the municipality, however, they serve a different purpose. As Ward (2007)

states "they function as the eyes and ears of the police ensuring the securitization of

consumption," which raises an interesting question about whether or not non-state actors

should have the authority to govern persons and places as they use this authority and

power to leverage their investments in order to reshape the environment (both human and

built) to suit their needs (Cook, 2009; Lippert, 2012). These needs include demolishing

areas that project the 'broken windows theory' imagery. The 'broken windows' thesis

posits that by allowing visual indicators of public disorder, crime and anti-social behavior

invariably follow and if remain unaddressed, such as a broken window, graffiti on a bus

bench, etc., this will encourage further crimes escalating in severity (Wilson and Kelling,

1982). While obstacles such as overflowing garbage cans, illicit substances and graffiti

are obviously to be cleansed, 'clean and safe' may also refer to the landscape itself. Such

as the cleansing of the built environment by remodeling/rebranding strip malls and

convenience stores in order to create that "idealized physical and social refuse-free

reality" (Lippert, 2012).

This is not to say, however, that within these organizations all things are bright and beautiful. Researchers have criticized organizations like BIDs as sites of uneven distribution of power. Within some districts, the weight of votes heavily favors the wealthier property and business owners at the expense of smaller and/or less privileged landowners. In this way, "some allege that BID's functions more like clubs of property and business owners that have been given the power to manage public spaces" (Hoyt and Devika, 2007) insofar as BIDs are able to leverage this collective power in conjunction with local officials in order to maximize their collective returns (as CMR or property taxes).

It should also be noted that tension can exist between property owners/producers and state actors, as the local state is often charged with competing objectives, i.e., enhancing revenue streams versus procuring funding for affordable housing and homeless shelters). However, insofar as local government is disciplined in the neoliberal epoch to prioritize enhancing revenue streams, then they are forced into alignment with the interests of property owners/producers (see Anderson, et al., 2021). As representatives of growth machines in pursuit of CMR, BIDs actively and collaboratively seek to control their districts as collective absolute spaces (both public and private) as a means of protecting the well-crafted veneer of civility and safety (by mobilizing the exclusive power afforded to them via the private-property institution), at the expense of some of most marginalized and vulnerable within our population, the homeless.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND CASE STUDY CONTEXT

To address the research questions proposed in the introduction, I employ a mixed-method approach to acquire the empirical data presented and analyzed in the next chapter (chapter 4). To keep this study within the bounds of a MA thesis, the focal point for this investigation is Seattle, Washington. Seattle is indicative of other large American cities, especially those that house headquarters of commercial juggernauts (Nike and Intel in Portland, Silicon Valley in the San Francisco Bay Area, etc.). Seattle has experienced major increases to high-wage jobs over the last few decades. Many of these cities like to communicate to the rest of the nation a socially liberal image where issues of racism and poverty are combated with efficiency and grace yet, in the same instance, seem to also be neglected and abused through chronic mismanagement. In short, while the study is situated within the context of Seattle, it is not to be understood as a unique case study, but more as a proxy for urban America in general.

The theoretical focus of this study is to try and understand, as well as call attention to, the role that CMR plays in helping to (re)produce and spatially manage the epidemic of homelessness plaguing our nation today. To do this, the study draws on various sources of news media concerning the City of Seattle as well as the surrounding communities that make up the metro area over the last five years. These resources primarily consist of news articles in established local periodicals such as *The Seattle Times* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* in relation to the study's topic and research Websites related to the city and county level government were consulted in addition to official websites of certain private actors, i.e., the numerous BIAs in the Seattle metropolitan area (some of these websites were so similar in their wording that it makes one think they all follow the same template), as well as four reports and

policy related documents. In total, around 70 documents were collected and reviewed in order to support the arguments put forth in this thesis. This empirical material was then compiled, coded, and subject to content analysis in relation to the study's research questions (see Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Fairclough, 2001, 2003; Lindlof and Taylor, 2010), and is presented in the form of a "constructive narrative" in the next chapter.

I searched a list of keywords and phrases through the various media selected for review, e.g., "homeless and rent," "Seattle and homelessness". I then created a list of possible sources for information regarding, specifically, homelessness, business and their interactions in Seattle. The textual documents that satisfied the search were then categorized on the basis of certain themes that were inductively identified after initially reading these documents (see Strauss, 1987; Fairclough 2003). For example, abbreviations were used to represent each theme: HL is the abbreviation for articles relating to homelessness, HR relates to housing and rent, BID is for business improvement districts, and SCM denotes spatial control and management. These articles were sourced first by typing in keywords into the Google search bar, for instance "Seattle and homeless", "Seattle and rent", etc., this led me to an excellent source for information in the Seattle Times "project homeless" archive of news articles all relating to various aspects of the issues surrounding homelessness in Seattle, dating back to June 11th 2016. This was useful as it gave me a timeline to begin my investigation as this is the moment that homelessness in Saettle reached "crisis" conditions (as well as keeping this work within the scope of a MA thesis). A further google search of "Seattle BIDs" resulted in the collection of information in the form of organization websites from all 10 BIAs in the city of Seattle.

From there the collected articles and reports were further categorized in the case of an article, report or website overlapping into multiple categories. For example, a news article with

the original theme of HL, may also reflect aspects of SCM. These particular documents formed a new category reflecting the overlapping interest of the piece. Please see Appendix A for a textual matrix outlining the categorizing process (Strauss, 1987). This information was then used to form the empirical portion of this study in that it draws on these textual documents (i.e., news articles, policies, private organizational websites, etc.) in order to tie together the pieces that construct the image of BIDs as regimes in pursuit of CMR, and its impact on the production and spatial management of contemporary forms of homelessness.

It is typical of local news sources such as newspapers (many transitioning to a more online formula) to do their upmost to tie themselves to the identity of the city to which they serve, and to ingratiate themselves to their audiences, by providing what they feel is appropriate structuring of news. This is done in order to reflect not only the major concerns of the community, but also reflect the emotions that the city's various communities exhibit. After all, as the late Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan stated "People don't actually read newspapers. They step into them every morning like a hot bath" (McLuhan, 2011: 184). This sort of qualitative analysis of news and policy documents is valuable as it allows for one to identify the key players involved in local government, private business, etc. It is also useful insofar as it helps better understand current political and social reasoning in relation to the key actors in the context of issues like homelessness and housing injustice. The quotes given in these articles can also be useful in accessing the socio-political and economic mindset these players have, and thus, the implications for our understanding of CMR. By examining popular news media, especially comments and testimony from those whose identity is so closely tied to the

city, serves to enlighten the reader toward how the broader cultural landscape is constituted and represented.

It is also important to note the limitation of this form of narrative analysis, as news media is also cited as one of those locally embedded institutions that form urban growth machines (Logan and Molotch, 1987). As such, nothing should be interpreted at "face-value," but rather as reflections of people's broader socio-political orientations and the broader webs of discursive constellations and ideological systems within which they are entangled (Fairclough, 2003).

While there is a plethora of existing scholarly literature on BIDs, the variations, and workings of all aspects of rent, as well as numerous bodies of work revolving around homelessness, there is precious little that seeks to tie these concepts and bodies of literature together within a broader, inseparable totality. This study presents evidence in support of these links (between homelessness, CMR, and BIDs) as a means of answering the research questions stated in the introduction. It is my intention in the following chapters to lay out and empirically support as clearly and concisely as possible the arguments I have formulated with respect to CMR in the (re)production and regulation of homelessness in large American cities. It is my hope that this research may be used as a springboard for future scholarly research in the ongoing renaissance of land rent theory, and the forces of monopoly and spatial control via the mobilization of property in the context of the contemporary neoliberal city in North America and beyond.

Historical Background: Seattle, WA

Seattle, Washington is idyllically set on an isthmus nestled between the Puget Sound to the west, Lake Washington to the east, and bordered by the Cascade Mountain range. Protected

from harsh climate extremes thanks to the moderating effects of the Sound, Seattle is an excellent case study for the phenomenon presented in this thesis as the problems facing it plague many other cities along the Americas West Coast and beyond. Seattle is the largest city in the state of Washington, as well as the PNW with a metro population of nearly 4 million people (Census Reporter, 2021). The city itself is a major seaport on the pacific coast with significant trade with Asia as well as acting as a home port for commercial fishing fleets. It has a history of housing major corporate entities such as Boeing (which had its headquarters there until 2001) and the Weyerhaeuser Corporation. Seattle has only continued to enjoy economic success in recent years, with the unprecedented growth of internet book seller turned internet behemoth, Amazon. Along with this economic surge, the increase in population has spiked rapidly over the past decade, with more than 150,000 people moving to the area since 2010 (City of Seattle, 2021; also see Hansen, 2020).

However, there is a darker side to Seattle when it comes to the residential landscape. Historically, Seattle (like many other North American cities) has enacted a multitude of public policies and private practices that have excluded people of color, those of immigrant status, and lower-income individuals and families from living in certain areas. Ordinance No. 5 for example, introduced in 1865, effectively prohibited people of indigenous backgrounds from residing within the city. The first zoning law established in Seattle in the 1920's was to outlaw the building of multi-unit structures in much of the city in order to, as Harland Bartholomew (a planner from St. Louis) stated in 1919, "preserve the more desirable residential neighborhoods" as a means of preventing

the influx into "finer neighborhoods … by colored people" (Office of Planning and Community Development, 2020).

We currently see different (though similar considering their effects) manifestations of this occurring in the Seattle area: the severe lack of affordable housing is one of the many obstacles facing many of the same communities that have historically faced with this kind of discrimination. In this study, one neglected, marginalized population is highlighted, the homeless population. The homeless population in Seattle is one of the highest (per capita) in the nation, with over 11,000 residents within the city being counted in 2020 (King County Point-In-Time, 2020).

Within Seattle and its surrounding areas, recent years have seen a marked increase to wages, yet it is only in the top 20% of wage earners that this increase has been realized. The bottom 20% of wage earners have seen little to no improvement on overall salaries (Balk, 2014), leading to a widening of inequality and socio-economic polarization. This is coupled with a shockingly drastic shortage of affordable housing within the Seattle area. Seattle and its outlying communities have been plagued with a sharp rise in prices related to housing (Schlosser, 2019). To compound these obstacles, the price of housing in the Seattle area has skyrocketed in recent years and, as experts predict, this will only continue to rise. In regard to this increase in home prices, Seattle has been leading the pack nationally for a decade (Puget Sound Business Journal, 2020). Rents have similarly experienced extreme increases in the past decade: rents increased by over 50% for the average one-bedroom apartment between the years of 2011 and 2018 (Schlosser, 2019). These two phenomena (homelessness and rising property values) are not unrelated. In the following chapter I empirically deepen our understanding of this relationship in the context of BIDs conceptualized as the strategic mobilization of CMR.

CHAPTER 4: BIDs, CMR, AND HOMELESSNESS IN SEATTLE

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which the mechanisms of CMR are implicated consistently through the interactions between private, public, and unsheltered actors within the context of Seattle's BIDs (which are called BIAs in Seattle). Seattle is not alone in its indulgence in the carnival of chaos that exists on the streets of its BIAs. Indeed, many other major urban centers across North America and beyond now deal with similar issues. As such, the following analysis of Seattle should be interpreted as standing-in for the large American city in general. I begin with a brief description of the current issues the City of Seattle is facing in terms of an increasing population of homeless individuals, and its underlying causes. The discussion will then shift toward an empirical focus on the ways in which BIAs contribute to these underlying causes, namely, via the strategic mobilization of CMR. Following this, I will illustrate the underlying emotions, from the point of view of BIA actors, related to the detrimental impact they associate with the homeless on their well-ordered kingdoms. In the process, I identify the central tenets driving the discursive and material practices of Seattle's BIAs and the unified attitudes these organizations exhibit against the systems that have supposedly failed them (i.e., inadequate government, social pathology). Lastly, the relationship between local government and Seattle's BIAs is addressed, followed by the mega-corporate response to the related issues that currently face capital in the Emerald City.

Homeless in Seattle

In many sprawling urban centers such as Seattle, homelessness continues to burden city government, social services, business leaders, and the general public alike (Curtis, Marah A., et al. "Life shocks and homelessness." *Demography* 50.6 (2013): 2227-2253.). As noted by Bernstein (2016) with respect to Seattle, "the increases in homelessness around here aren't just in

Seattle, but all-over urban King County." Moreover, Flaccus and Mulvihill (2020) have the

following to say about the matter:

> "a homeless crisis of unprecedented proportions is rocking the West Coast, and its
> victims are being left behind by the very things that mark the regions success:
> soaring housing costs, rock-bottom vacancy rates and a roaring economy that
> waits for no one."

While apparently decreasing steadily in 2019, the increase in those being forced into

homelessness in the Seattle area has begun to rise again: "after dipping for a year by some

estimates, homelessness in King County rose again last year and could be poised to rise further"

(Greenstone, 2020).

While homelessness continues to be discussed at nearly all scales of government, as

noted earlier, very little has come from these discussions in terms of policies and practices that

sufficiently identify and actually address the root causes of homelessness (although, in the

Seattle area lack of affordable housing is understood to be a leading cause). Indeed, while some

in the academic world argue that the contemporary form of homelessness is synonymous with

the rise of the industrial revolution and increasingly pro-capitalist cultural ideology (see

Mitchell, 2003, 2011), most in the policy world still adhere to the argument that the homeless

man or woman is in such a predicament due to the culmination of specific and unique life

choices and lack of motivation to conform to society's rules and regulations as they are currently

understood. There may even be some that argue it is a mix of these things, as well as a myriad of

other issues that lead a person into the grimdark, brutalizing and socially isolating existence of

homelessness.

In the case of the Seattle and greater King County area, however, it is becoming

increasingly apparent that the drastic increase in housing and rental prices, which have

skyrocketed in recent decades, has occurred while wages (especially at the low-wage end of the

pay scale) have stagnated. A recent study from the University of Washington utilizing data from

the real-estate firm Zillow illustrates, there is a "strong link between rising housing prices and

rising homelessness" (Flaccus and Mulvihill, 2020). Coleman (2017) adds that "King County has

the third-largest concentration of homeless people in the country, a new federal report shows ….

National homelessness figures compiled by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development show that with an estimated count of 11,643 in 2017, King County trails behind

only Los Angeles and New York in overall homeless population."

Issues of Affordable Housing

In order to address this issue of increasing owner-occupied and (possibly more important

in this context) rental prices coupled with the extreme decrease in availability of affordable

housing units, King County has issued numerous reports detailing the costs and steps required to

meaningfully address homelessness in the area, with an initial estimate stating that it would cost

King County an additional $450 million in public spending a year, an estimate which was soon

upgraded from $450 million to $1.1 billion. This, of course, is in addition to the $235 million the

county already spends trying to address the issue. Much of this spending would be concentrated

upon increasing the volume of affordable housing units:

> "They estimated nearly 16,000 more affordable units would be needed to house
> everyone who was homeless in King County in 2018. An additional 37,000 new
> affordable-housing units would be needed to ensure thousands of extremely low-
> income people would not lose their housing … in Seattle and King County about
> what we see as one of the true root causes of our homelessness crisis – the lack of
> affordable housing for thousands of area residents" (Davila, 2020).

The issue of a noticeable gap in affordable housing in Seattle and its surrounding

communities clearly indicates a major financial hurdle many people fail to clear when trying to

attain permanent housing in the cutthroat market of King County. As the current market rates in

Seattle suggest, following Long (2020), "Prices rose 12% year-over-year among the areas most

affordable homes, those priced under $461,032 … a typical home now costs $753,600."

Additional contextual details are provided below:

> "Combined with gentrification, an estimated 15,622 housing units disappeared in the downtown area between 1960 and 1980. They and other cheap housing units were replaced over the next decades with much more expensive places to live downtown" (Greenstone, 2019).

> "Long a bastion of affordable housing, South King County is seeing prices rise as developers and landlords cater to people fleeing Seattle's housing market … While Zillow-estimated median rent in Seattle rose less than 1% from January 2018 to June 2019, rents in south county cities within the partnership rose about 4.5% … When there are fewer affordable units, the time spent in (homeless) shelters goes up … The decade leading to 2017 saw a loss of 36,000 affordable units countywide" (Baxter, 2019).

> "Seattle, among 100 large cities in the U.S., [is] third for the degree of gentrification we've experienced since 2000 … But there is a detrimental side to gentrification. As property values and rents rise, original residents – poorer and often people of color can be pushed out of the neighborhood" (Balk, 2019).

The necessity for increasing the amount of affordable housing units within the city is not new. In a city like Seattle with an already built-up environment, fierce competition for ownership of land targeted for redevelopment inevitably unfolds in a neoliberal-capitalist society to the detriment of those who are most vulnerable to the threat of becoming homeless.

Affordable Housing and You

As properties change hands and new owners seek to develop pre-existing properties to maximize their potential rate of return, many tenants are faced with evictions, forced to reapply for a new (and likely pricier) contract elsewhere with little to no notice. And with these increased prices, gentrification, and land targeted for redevelopment, many less fortunate people are forced onto the precipice of homelessness, a condition I characterize as akin to a "victim of forced relocation" deprived of anywhere to go for asylum (se Bourgeois, 2009), and forced to fight for survival on the street as a result of the "structural violence" perpetuated by a hostile competitive, capitalist society that absolves itself of any responsibility or culpability. The following passage

captures this process of structural violence (considering the material impacts that come with

losing one's home):

> "The story of Fox Cove is an example of a trend across South King County,
> where once affordable rental units , especially those closer to Seattle, are
> disappearing. Developers see opportunities to revamp old apartments in those
> outlying cities. In the process they are pushing out residents who have lived there
> for years … In mid-September, a developer bought the 36-unit apartment complex
> in South Burien, just west of Highway 509 and an easy shot to Sea-Tac Airport.
> Burien officials believe the company plans to remodel the property and lease the
> units for more than the current rents … with new ownership tenants can reapply to
> live there, but many interviewed do not expect they can afford the new rents
> anyway. One Fox Cove resident said she pays $965 a month for her two-bedroom
> unit. The latest median list rent in Burien for a two-bedroom is $1,575 according
> to Zillow … The King County Regional Affordable Housing Task Force
> estimates 3600 affordable units are lost annually throughout the county" (Davila,
> 2018e).

The targeted, fast paced onslaught of gentrification is not limited solely to the traditional real

estate market. In a somewhat surprisingly ironic (but was it really?) twist, the potent economic

forces that have driven Seattle's skyward success more generally is what actively contributes to

the creation of the homeless crisis (in conjunction with labor market dynamics) (see Langegger

and Koester, 2017). Moreover, the same forces driving this upward success also conspire to

actively displace those who are already homeless:

> "The University Temple Methodist Church sanctuary above the basement that
> hosts ROOTS was built to serve more than 800 people a century ago, but today,
> services usually draw 100 congregants or fewer. At the same time, the church's
> property value has more than doubled in the last five years … Peace for the
> Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS), a 25-bed shelter on Capitol Hill, faced a
> similar dilemma when Mt. Zion Baptist Church sold the property hosting the
> shelter to a developer in 2016" (Brownstone, 2019a).

While the eviction of a service aimed to assist homeless youths may seem impractically

cold-hearted, the issue of eviction hangs like the proverbial sword of Damocles over many who

walk the precipice of homelessness. However, in this case, the sword dangles over the heads of

those without power, who have already exhausted all options available to them to keep

themselves from going over the edge. As an article written by Heidi Groover and Vernal

Coleman for the *Seattle Times* in 2018 notes, "Over half of Seattle renters hit with eviction

notices last year owed one month's rent or less, and many tenants who are ultimately evicted

wind up homeless." Yet another article from 2019 illustrates the insane reality renters in the

Seattle area are facing when it comes to very real concerns of late payments and eviction notices:

> "But Luxmore's failure to pay $2 last month means she is facing eviction form the home she shares with her three young children … Apartment property manager Ballard Realty Inc. issued a notice to Luxmore on Dec. 12th warning she had three days to pay the $2 or else vacate … Luxmore has since paid the $4 owed in rent for December and January, according to her attorney. But because she did not pay within the three days of the initial notice; the company is legally within its right to pursue eviction … Last year, a joint study by the justice project and the Seattle Woman's Commission found that more than half of Seattle renters who receive eviction notice owned one month's rent or less. Those evictions, the study found, often resulted in tenants becoming homeless" (Davila, 2019).

Even in cases where funds have been donated/collected to assist people living unsheltered lives,

the affordable units provided are clearly inadequate for human habitation. In many cases, these

older homes (renovated into apartments) and apartment complexes are riddled with building-

code violations and left to decay to a point when they are no longer legally viable for habitation,

squeezing every cent of potential from the property until the building is condemned and goes to

auction. In one of many similar cases, we see the abuse of this system firsthand in the case of

Carolyn Malone:

> "But after months of sleeping in her car, Malone, a 72-year-old retired educator, was desperate to move back indoors. So last year, when Mary Hackney, director of a Seattle transitional-housing provider, offered Malone a room in the Central District home for $500 a month, she moved in. A rental subsidy from the city of Seattle helped pay for her first few months' rent" (Coleman, 2018).

These subsidies provided by rental-assistance programs are funded by the City of Seattle as well

as state agencies such as the Departments of Commerce and Corrections. All of these programs

have a consistent flaw: they exhibit a neglect in checking for code-enforcement records for any

prior violations. Because of this, much of this money in the form of subsidies is going to

predatory property owners who take advantage of overburdened and underserved organizations

that are trying to affect change in the lives of unfortunate citizens. Note the similarities here to

the context of 1970s Baltimore in which Harvey first introduced the concept of CMR. Malone's

story continues:

> "Inside the two story, turn of the century home was in even worse shape. She [Malone] found broken smoke detectors in the hallways and bedbugs on her bedroom carpet. Rodent droppings lined the stairwell leading to the illegal basement windows, where cardboard covered broken windows and mold stained the walls … Weeks later, a city inspector, responding to Malone's complaint, discovered 75 building-code violations at the house. Several had lingered since a previous visit from Seattle code enforcement a month before Malone moved in … Malone's experience was not unique. In the past four years, Steps to Ethically Profiling Stability (STEPS), the nonprofit run by Hackney, has collected at least $180,000 from three taxpayer-funded rental-assistance programs while housing its clients in homes with long histories of neglect and disrepair … Hackney is a small player, but her record reveals weakness in government oversight of those programs, which allowed public money to pay for rooms in dilapidated and potentially unsafe homes … Those homes were seized in foreclosure and later sold at auction while her clients lived there. In the end, after public dollars were spent, Malone was evicted and ended up right back where she started. Homeless" (Coleman, 2018).

BIAs I: Such a Unique Place

In the minds of property and business owners the visible homeless pose a unique threat to

the ideal environment in which maximized consumer spending is imagined to unfold. There are

many established regimes within the urban environment that navigate the treacherous boundaries

between business and social work, including some social justice organizations which take a

humans first approach. They use their resources to bring the issues facing groups such as the

homeless to mainstream attention in order to generate a positive community-based reaction to the

issue, such as campaigning for sites for used needle disposal/exchange, food/clothing drives, etc.

BIDs, on the other hand, exist in order to lobby for the concerns of territorially-rooted groups of

property/business owners insofar as they use their political clout to argue for stricter control on issues of theft, trash, graffiti, and panhandling, including the presence of visible homelessness which is perceived to tarnish the ideal consumer environment.

In Seattle, BIAs exist in order to protect the rights of property and business owners in order to maximize the returns on their place-based investments. There are currently ten established BIAs in the City of Seattle. Their influence can be felt over a large area of the city, with many designating their boundaries to include areas with supposedly *unique* and interesting history and culture, and/or physical landscape features that tend to illicit tourism. For instance, the Ballard Alliance clings to the maritime heritage of the Ballard neighborhood with claims such as "Ballard thrived as the "Shingle Capitol of the world" and was its own city …. Strong Nordic roots have shaped Ballard's culture for more than a century and that heritage is showcased in the Nordic Museum" (Ballard Alliance, 2021). The Pioneer Square BIA, like that in Ballard relies on the historical importance of its geographic boundaries, for nowhere else in Seattle is "the historic birthplace of Seattle and Seattle's first historic district" (Alliance for Pioneer Square, 2021a). The BIA of West Seattle claims heritage to such importance as well, proclaiming "Like other Seattle business districts, it has gone through cycles of boom and bust since then, but it has remained, as the *West Seattle Enterprise* confidently predicted in 1907, "the center of Greater West Seattle"" (West Seattle Junction Association, 2021). Most BIA's try and tie themselves to their area's unique cultural and social qualities. The associations in charge of Seattle's Chinatown and International District play more toward the strong cultural ties that many Asian countries and communities share as is stated on their webpage: "the CIDBIA coordinates several of the neighborhood's major events including the Night Markets and Lunar New Year Celebration, in addition to Dragon-fest" (CIDBIA, 2021). A similar notion of cultural

identity ties the U-District together, as it is the area that serves the students and professors that call the University of Washington home. Others still will use their district's "rise from ruin" to stake additional claim to uniqueness. For example, BIA's such as SODO use the transformation of the land from an unappealing tideland to a collection of sawmills, meat packers, seaports and other industrial carcasses to being the home of the "first Costco store, a giant Sears store and distribution center that later became Starbucks' headquarters, and sports stadiums" (SODO, 2021). The Downtown Seattle Association has a similar story to tell, as is stated on their webpage "Downtown Seattle has evolved into one of the most dynamic urban centers in the country … Today more than 300,000 people work in downtown [and] over 80,000 live here" (Downtown Seattle Association, 2021). Figure 1 illustrates the location of these BIAs across the City of Seattle. Missing from this map is the Metropolitan Improvement District.

Figure 1: Map of Seattle Area BIAs (City of Seattle, 2021d).

They work to tie themselves to *distinct* neighborhoods and districts and function as representatives for the district. In this process of cementing their associations and socially constructed "districts" into the island-like structure of property submarkets, the specter of CMR is brought into analytic relief. Each BIA seeks to monopolize the unique aspects of the built-environment (and associated historical narratives) within their geographically defined boundaries. Here is Harvey's "monopolistic competition" associated with this form of CMR. Whether realized or not, each BIA has the goal of rewarding only those property owners within their geographically defined area's with the power to utilize the purportedly peerless aspects found within their borders. This effectively, following Smith (1992), reconfigures the terrain of competition (in the context of commercial land rent) to the scale of the BIA, whereby each BIA represents an alliance, or class monopoly, of property owners in competition with other similar alliances elsewhere in a given urban landscape. Of course, the more that BIAs strike claims to non-substitutability, each BIA begins to sound similar (especially the more superficial the claims are), lessening the proportion of rent attributable to the kind of "discursive-branding of non-substitutability" identified by Ward and Aalbers (2016) as the second form of CMR.

However, this is only one feature of Seattle's BIAs. Members of BIAs understand their existence and the effects they engender (i.e., a more attractive built-environment amenable for shopping) as a beneficial boon to their economic outlook. However, insofar as this beneficial boon is the result of measures taken to collectively enhance the value of land across the absolute space of the BIA, then it can be conceptualized as CMR. Indeed, the whole point of BIAs is not only CMR, but its strategic mobilization to both produce and safeguard the ideal built-environment for higher-income consumers. Discursive-branding of non-substitutability is one such measure. Enhanced surveillance, security, fundraising, cooperation with city government,

and urban beautification and streetscaping, etc., are others insofar as each works to *enhance demand among consumers within a supply-limited "district" of properties*. I argue that this is the second form of CMR (which can manifest in many different ways), compared to the supply-reducing dynamic identified by Harvey (1974). Other forms of demand enhancement within finite spaces have also been recognized in the context of TIF, developer cartels, urban growth boundaries, etc. (see Anderson, 2019; Hansen, 2020; Anderson, et al., 2021; Revington, 2021).

BIAs II: Do Not Deviate from the Script

The Seattle BIAs, like many others, tend to use flowery phrasing and positive images to elaborate their contribution to the defined boundaries in which they operate. Examples of these organizations include the *Alliance for Pioneer Square*, which states its purpose is "to help preserve what makes Pioneer Square the most authentic, engaging, and dynamic neighborhood in Seattle" (Alliance for Pioneer Square, 2021a); *The U District Partnership,* whose stated purpose is to "serve all who work in, live in, and visit Seattle's University District by fostering and sustaining a vibrant, diverse, and healthy neighborhood for the common good" (The U District Partnership, n.d.). The *Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce* (CHCC) states on their webpage that the Broadway/Capitol Hill BIA is "dedicated to promoting business in the Seattle area and building a strong community," although no other information is given on their home webpage (Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, 2021). Elsewhere we are told that the Chinatown/International District (CIDBIA):

> "Works to improve and promote Seattle's Chinatown-International District. In addition to providing public safety and sanitation services … The BIA also advocates on behalf of its constituents with respect to a host of public policy, planning, safety and quality of life issues" (CIDBIA, n.d.).

Visit Seattle, which is the association that is in charge of the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area, is characterized as:

> "a private, nonprofit marketing organization serving as Seattle and King County's official destination marketing organization (DMO) for more than 50 years. Through our efforts, we work to enhance the employment opportunities and economic prosperity of the region" (Visit Seattle, 2020).

To tread a different path, the *Columbia City Business Association* (CCBA) has painted itself as a "vibrant organization of businesses, property owners and residents dedicated to making Columbia City a thriving and authentic place to work, play, and live (Columbia City, n.d.). If that wasn't enough, the SODO BIA states the following:

> "The SODO BIA was created under the auspices of the City of Seattle in 2014. The mission of SODO BIA is to Advocate for a Safe, Clean and Moving SODO, for the benefit of the property owners, businesses, tenants, employees and patrons of the SODO district" (SODO, 2020).

It is interesting to note that the capitalized phrases of 'Safe', 'Clean' and 'Move' are all topics of the SODO BIAs 2020 work plan, as indicated on their website. The same topics are listed on the website as "Safe SODO: Security, Safety and Prevention," which aims to increase the visible police presence in the SODO neighborhood in order to "address chronic issues and develop relationships with [the] SODO business community." If this does not entice you make the trip to SODO, perhaps the *The Ballard Alliance's* mission statement is more in tune to what you are looking for:

> "Mission of the Ballard Alliance is to ensure the Seattle neighborhood of Ballard remains a unique and economically vital community for its visitors, residents, business and property owners" (Ballard Alliance, 2021).

The largest of these BIAs is the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID). The MID was founded by the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) in 1999, and encompasses 285 square blocks in downtown Seattle, spanning North/South from Denny Way to Pioneer Square, and East/West from the waterfront to Interstate 5. The association "provides cleaning, safety, concierge and homeless outreach services in six center city neighborhoods" (Downtown Seattle Association, n.d.). These, or very similar mission statements exist on the front page of each

association's webpage. While these examples may not share the exact same dialogue when it comes to defining their roles in the neighborhood, it gives readers a better understanding of the scripted, well thought out and ordered nature of these BIAs. Even when claims to uniqueness are asserted, they are pre-packaged within language that reads very similarly.

BIAs III: The Meaning Behind the Words

The mission statements shared (almost identically) between all ten of the established BIAs (as well as the "Mega-City" version of Seattle BIAs, the MID) seem simple enough: establish a welcoming, clean, thriving center for tourists, residents, and workers alike. It is also communicative of the goal of each BIA to increase the success of the business and property owners who pay the dues to the BIA. This success can be identified as CMR insofar as the return on this investment (the speculative tax that each landowner pays) is attributable to the landowners collaboratively working together to enhance demand among consumers within a supply-limited space. But how do these associations go about achieving these lofty goals? In terms of managing trash and graffiti most Seattle area BIAs rely upon contracting outside firms to deal with the issues, such as in the Chinatown/International District: "currently Seattle Surface Cleaners spend eight hours removing litter and graffiti in Chinatown-ID every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday" (CIDBIA, 2018). These associations also work closely with various offices of city government such as the police department, the office of health and human services, waste management, Seattle Public Utilities, the City's Parks Department, etc. in an effort to combat any obstacles to creating an idealized aesthetically pleasing aura to entice visitors and shoppers to flock to their carefully crafted and *entirely unique* offerings.

The most celebrated and publicized way these BIAs show their compassion to the homeless is via socially progressive (on the surface) programs such as the ambassador program,

which is basically a team of people with special skills that go around the defined boundaries of these areas communicating with homeless people in order to direct them to services (many of which cannot be found within the BIA boundaries). These individuals are at the beck and call of the BIAs and are expected to respond to "issues" in a timely manner, lest nerves become frayed, and tempers rise. This was the case in 2018, when "The Seattle City Council moved … to reduce a proposed expansion of the city's team responsible for overseeing removal of homeless encampments" (Davila, 2018). In response, Mike Stewart, CEO of the Ballard alliance "wrote in an email to the council before the vote that his neighborhood has had to "wait weeks and months for Navigation Team service. If anything, the City should be allocating more funding to the Navigation team to allow for additional capacity" (Davila, 2018).

While normally it can be difficult to understand the meaning of well-manicured text, the websites that represent these business associations offer a wealth of additional knowledge. Other than their Stepford-Mission statements they also list the specific services they provide to their respective bounded area, such as information regarding time of trash/graffiti removal, numbers to report incidents of drug crime/suspicious activities, etc. What precisely does this concierge and outreach service that many BIAs gush over truly accomplish, other than a legal and socially acceptable way to monitor and spatially manage the existence of this most downtrodden class of citizens? With all this time and effort put into establishing service and outreach programs, such as the aforementioned Ambassador Program, how do these associations truly view the homeless individual?

BIAs IV: The Source of Contention

One of the most illuminating texts regarding the issue of the relationship being forged between Seattle's business organizations and its growing homeless community is titled *System failure – Report on Prolific Offenders in Seattle's Criminal Justice System***.** This report was

commissioned on February 25th, 2019, by a number of concerned business districts across

Seattle's neighborhoods. These concerned business districts included Pioneer Square,

Chinatown/International District, SODO, Downtown, Ballard, the University District and

Seattle's tourism industry (which is considered as a BIA in its own right). Each of these

organizations are named as contributors to the report, although explicit discussion of the report

can be found only on the websites belonging to Pioneer Square, SODO, Downtown, and MID.

The purpose of the report was to showcase the failings of the criminal justice system in King

County in regards to what are labeled "prolific offenders" as indicated by this statement.

> "For several years, our organizations have raised concerns about growing public safety challenges in our neighborhoods. And many of you, your customers and visitors are asking for help in the face of thefts, assaults and other crimes" (Alliance for Pioneer Square, 2021b).

These "prolific offenders" are identified in the report as 100 individual cases in which the

offender had four or more bookings in King County within a year. According to the findings of

this report this relatively small number of individuals are claimed to be linked to a large portion

of the reoccurring criminal activity that "has the greatest impact on Seattle's business

neighborhoods" (Lindsay, 2019).

The authors of the report took special care to note causes of the booking, the impacts the

individual's actions had on the community, and most importantly why the criminal justice

system fails to reduce their recidivism. One aspect of this report is titled "Behavioral Health

Indicators" in which three metrics are recorded: Homelessness, Substance Use Disorders, and

Mental Health Flags. The indicators are related to the percentage of the 100 offenders that fall

into these categories, as table 3 shows all, or 100% of the offenders suffered from both substance

use disorders and homelessness, while 38% showed signs of issues related to mental health. The

indicator of homelessness is most valuable for our discussion; however, the correlation between

homelessness and substance abuse disorders should come to no surprise.

Table 3. Indicators of prolific offenders from System Failure report. (Lindsay, 2019).

Indicator	Percentage (%)
Homelessness	100%
Substance Abuse Disorders	100%
Mental Health Flags	38%

The understanding of homelessness as an individual deficiency and danger to the general

public (property and citizen alike) plays a key role in the bias these BIAs exhibit against the

population of citizens who are unhoused. As these people have no personal space to call their

own, many of the ways the criminal justice system approaches rectifying the situation on behalf

of the BIA are not effective. As stated on page 6 of the report.

> "Many of the individuals included in this report were regularly released from the King County Jail at 12:00am. For homeless individuals struggling with substance use disorders and mental health conditions, this practice can be hazardous to the individual and to the immediate surrounding neighborhood" (Lindsay, 2019 p. 6).

Criminality and homelessness are problematically conflated in the minds of the business elites

that manage these BIAs. The sixth point listed in the report serves to make this connection clear:

> "Three predominant underlying issues for the prolific offender population studied for this report were substance abuse disorders, mental health conditions, and homelessness. Of the 100 individuals examined based on significant recent criminal activity, all 100 of them had indicators that they struggle with substance abuse disorders. These indicators included police reports, prior recent arrests for possession, and court-ordered drug evaluations. 38 of the 100 had been identified for a mental health evaluation in at least one or more of their recent court cases but undoubtedly others in this population have mental health challenges that are serious but did not arise to the level of requiring a court competency evaluation. All 100 individuals had indicators that they are currently or recently homeless based on police reports and court records" (Lindsay, 2019 p. 5).

BIA's V: Fight for the City (and their place in it)

BIAs also come to represent (and help to produce) the social identity of a neighborhood and are tools for those who live/work within them to ensure the optimum environment for various consumer activities. It is unsurprising that these business alliances would use the clout of their positions within their communities to gently nudge the local authorities into action that benefit their interests (while seeming to be coming from a place of concern for the overall neighborhood). We see this illustrated in various themes, such as the aforementioned report condemning the King County criminal justice system, but also in terms of the penchant among BIAs to lobby City Hall in order to get a response to the homeless epidemic they feel plagues their streets (and their hope to realize CMR), as well as the kind of activism against anti-homeless laws and policies that activist groups deem harmful to the public. However, given the recent social shift in the discussion and understanding around the state of homelessness (Brown, 2017; Przbylinski, 2020), it is not always a given that business alliances can ensure policies are passed that they deem beneficial to them.

As mentioned in a *Seattle Times* newspaper article from June 23, 2020, by Sydney Brownstone, titled *Seattle City Council votes to repeal loitering laws, but groups say much more is needed*, the proposal to decriminalize misdemeanors associated with loitering was met with disappointment by pro-business leaders, as indicated in the following statement from a representative of the Downtown Seattle Association who "emphasized the need to consider public safety and community outcomes." Again, in 2018 a newspaper article was published in the *Seattle Times* that illustrates the contentious issues of the impact of the homeless on businesses, from the perspective of both private business as well as BIAs within the City.

> "Business alliances in Seattle have lobbied City Hall to get more beat cops and faster camp cleanups for some time. But now, frustrated with a lack of action,

many in Seattle's urban core are trying to deal with the problem on their own"
(Greenstone, 2018b).

Seen as a failure to ensure the continued success and safety of their districts, these BIAs have

banded together to address the issues themselves, a form of collaboration which further

reconfigures the scale of competition even further upwards to the macro-urban scale. A non-

public forum (held in SODO "right under the peering eyes of the Starbucks mermaid at its

headquarters") featuring representatives from Seattle area BIAs such as SODO,

Chinatown/International District, Ballard, the U-District, and Pioneer Square, as well as local

City leaders such as various city council members, police-precinct captains, the City's fire chief

and the deputy mayor, was held as a means for the business community to address issues of

concern. The rhetoric espoused by representatives of Seattle businesses during the forum made

the case all too clear.

> "Organizers pushed speakers to discuss homelessness as an issue different from
> crime, but most business leaders spoke of camping and crime in the same breath
> … and a crowd of small-business owners, from a small-batch ice cream shop in
> the U-district to a planter-box maintenance company in Pioneer Square, lined up
> to share their grievances – mostly regarding needles, tents and people who are
> arrested and return again and again to cause the same problem" (Greenstone,
> 2018b).

> "Ballard is experiencing an influx [of homeless people] larger than almost
> anywhere else in King County. The annual Point in Time count found a fourfold
> increase in the homelessness in central Ballard in just one year … the rise is
> testing the traditionally liberal policies of Ballard, and the loudest voices are now
> talking about crime" (Greenstone, 2018a).

As they feel the city has not properly dealt with the situation, many of these BIAs have begun to

hire their own caseworkers through various 3rd party organizations, some of whom also work

with the city during removal and cleaning of homeless camps. These BIAs include Ballard,

which had already hired a caseworker, while others such as the U-District are insisting on aid

from the city in order to have a caseworker of their own: "SODO Business Improvement Area

(BIA) which has Starbucks director of intelligence on their board of directors just approved more than $85,000 to hire a caseworker for a year" (Greenstone, 2018b). This is important insofar as "the caseworkers the alliances are hiring can offer business owners someone to call when a person won't leave their parking lot or doorstep" (Greenstone, 2018b). This is viewed as an invaluable service to these associations when being forced to deal with these dilemmas as they arise. Timber giant Weyerhaeuser (located in the Pioneer District) chief administration officer Denise Merle has stated that "employees have walked over needles, trash and human waste and endured frightening encounters with "aggressive individuals" after which … one employee had to seek medical attention" (Greenstone, 2018b).

As the city has failed in its obligations to the (business) community (the result of a neoliberal-induced gutted public sector), many residents and business owners/operators are becoming more reliant on the BIA to solve their problems. This, in turn, reinforces the influence of the BIA over the neighborhood that defines (and is defined by) it. This relationship (both beneficial and hostile) between the private actors involved in property development and ownership and local government is imperative to the BIA: the BIA is a means by which businesses and property owners can leverage their fiscal contributions paid to local (city, county, etc) governments via increased property taxes in order to influence the passage (or repeal) of legislation that affects their ability to realize their anticipated return on their investment, which can be understood as CMR. Business and real estate communities often initiate lawsuits against local government when this leveraging results in outcomes that are deemed less than satisfactory (see Anderson, et al., 2021).

Seattle Strikes Back (at the Homeless) to Control and Manage

While BIAs seem to lead the forefront on the attack against visible homelessness, the city

itself has begun to wake up to its own growing set of concerns on the topic. With issues relating

to illegal camping and RV parking, panhandling, trash, assaults, and petty thefts, the City has

responded with extreme measures. Driven primarily by complaints from businesses and residents

in reaction to unseemly amounts of trash from illegal RV camping, Seattle implemented a plan to

break up large groups of urban campers in RV's and other vehicles in order to clean up and

negate the impact these gatherings may have on the surroundings.

> "The program which quietly started in mid-May, has resulted in the collection of
> almost 42,000 pounds of garbage and waste from cleanups around RV's and other
> vehicles parked in SODO, Georgetown, Ballard and the Central District … Seattle
> has struggled for years to address the needs of people living in vehicles caught
> between businesses and neighborhood leaders who want the City to consistently
> enforce parking laws, and advocates for homeless people who say those vehicles
> are a last resort in a city with increasingly high rents and home prices" (Davila,
> 2018d).

This seemingly benign (and arguably quite important) set of actions may be perceived as

community-based (pro/re)action to the concerns of the area's residents. Yet, underneath lies a

more sinister set of goals that the city, business owners, and residents are truly rooting for, as the

visual aspects of large populations of homeless people are those that tend to get spotlighted. For

instance, the trash and waste generated by large communal encampments of ramshackle sheds

and tents that negatively affect the aesthetic value and security of well-manicured (and in some

instances deeply invested) areas tend to grab the attention of the large pools of consumers who

frequent these very "prime" areas of commercial development. Seattle has taken the

diametrically opposed socially irrational approach of being both friend and foe in the same

moment. Like the two-faced Roman god Janus, Seattle will promote legal homeless

encampments and allocate services to them, while with their other mouth demand and enact

legislation that works to dismantle and destroy these encampments in the name of public safety

(which clearly applies to everyone except the homeless themselves).

An End to Urban Compassion?

In recent years, however, while facing increased scrutiny and intolerance from the people

of Seattle, the city has taken to implementing measures to remove homeless encampments with

increasing frequency. As Davila reports:

> "The team will grow from 22 members to approximately 30, with the help of $500,000 from King County and the state … Between January 2017 and the end of March this year, almost 200 unauthorized encampments of varying sizes were removed in Seattle, according to data the city provided" (2018a).

> "the biggest increase has been in the number of encampments that have been cleared immediately and without notice. The city removed 89 encampments since the beginning of 2018 without having to provide 72-hour notice" (2018b).

It is apparent that the City's battle against camping is reflective of their need to spatially control

where and when the homeless may exist: "By allowing camping, the city forfeits what's left of

its tenuous control of the situation" (Westneat, 2017). It is no wonder that these BIAs are so

enamored with the police as the following quote from Deon Joseph a member of the LAPD

states:

> "Many times, police officers are made to be the tip of the spear for systemic failures, like homelessness, like mental illness…. When the system fails, guess who they call to deal with it? We are responding to system failures, and we get blamed because we are the tangible form of government that people can say, 'bad government, look at what you're doing!' … I think these systemic failures give society the perception that we failed. No, we are responding to failure" (Klinker, 2020).

How does this partnership take place? These policies are not the only tactic that the City

has implemented in order to maintain control over a capitalist-friendly spatial distribution of

homelessness. Increasing actions by the police to negate the presence of the homeless are not

only draconian, but some are downright underhanded in their execution: these actions are

undertaken in order to show the regular citizenry that Seattle is "getting tough on homeless street

camping and its perceived contribution to low-level crime" (Westneat, 2019). These tactics range

from increased police presence used to move the homeless along: "This past spring, 100 Seattle

police officers received special training in how to quickly move homeless people off city

sidewalks, streets and other public rights-of-way" (Brownstone, 2019b). City governments also

discourage giving money to panhandlers, which tends to be coupled with a concurrent police

crackdown on the issue as well (Greenstone, 2017b).

The following excerpt from a 2019 *Seattle Times* article makes this interaction (and the ideology

driving it) between civil authorities and homeless populations clear.

> "Paris was hanging around near a Goodwill outlet store, on Sixth Avenue South in SODO. It is a regular gathering place for the homeless and the near-homeless, as it's a liquidation center … Paris noted a silver bicycle, an old Sirrus Pro model, leaning against a tree in the dirt near some shrubs. According to her testimony, she thought it odd someone had left a bike there, unlocked, and unattached, in this high-crime neighborhood. So she started wheeling it around the Goodwill parking lot, asking if it belonged to anyone … It did belong to someone – the Seattle Police Department … The cops had placed it there three hours earlier, as bait … this was a sting operation that targeted homeless people, defense attorney Brandon Davis argued in one pretrial brief. 'It is one of the poorest areas in the city. SPD placed this bicycle near a Goodwill, a store that serves people with low incomes, and left the bike unlocked. Prosecution of such a person is befitting of Dickensian London, not 21st century Seattle" (Westneat).

As previously mentioned, in Seattle the issues of illegal vehicle camping have reached

local headline status, with proclamations such as "More than 2000 people in King County live in

vehicles – some of them dilapidated RV's that are hazardous and even inoperable" (Greenstone

and Brownstone, 2019) becoming the new urban norm. In response to this illegal RV camping,

Seattle has taken to introducing myriad legislative items in order to address the growing concern

from residents and business owners alike. Part of this legislation aims to derail the potency of

"car-ranchers" (i.e., people that buy/sell/resell used RV's over and over again), even after being

legally "removed" from the market: "as Seattle has been towing these RVs in the last few years, a few keep reappearing" (Greenstone and Brownstone, 2019). In order to curb this practice and appease local business owners and operators in some of Seattle's more notable BIAs, Seattle has issued a decree that RVs deemed a public health hazard (due to trash, human waste, and drugs) will be destroyed:

> "Businesses in areas like SODO and Ballard, where many people are living in RVs have been vocal critics of city politics that allow RVs to continue to pop up. Erin Goodman executive director of the SODO BIA, said the legislation is a good first step" (Greenstone and Brownstone, 2019).

While this is an acceptable measure in order to protect the extraction of CMR by businesses and property owners that contributes to increasing accumulation of more tax revenue for the City, it has an extremely traumatic impact on those who have made these vehicles their home. In the case of one Seattle area man who was living in his truck, the City impounded his vehicle after it was towed for being illegally parked. This issue forced the man from a semi-sheltered form of homelessness into an unsheltered form of homelessness, an insidious form of displacement described by Coleman (2017a) as part of the fight for the streets – a fight which boils down to control of space by class monopolies of businesses, property owners, investors, and local government: "the city has significant interest in being able to control traffic and parking."

Seattle: A Post-Apocalyptic Wonderland

Another form in which the spatial management and control of the city takes is via city/state sponsored beautification and development of areas highly trafficked by the homeless population. The very real practice of mobilizing space via hostile-to-homeless installations has become commonplace, such as in the upscale neighborhood of Belltown whereby "Seattle's Department of Transportation installed bike racks in Belltown last year and told The Stranger … they were explicitly designed to keep people from camping there" (Greenstone, 2018c). The City

of Seattle is no stranger to these measures. For instance, in 2017, the Seattle Department of

Transportation (SDOT) spent over 1 million dollars to install fencing in order to keep homeless

people from entering/using these spaces:

> "Transportation departments are spending at least $1.1 million to keep homeless
> people separated from Seattle highways … Seattle is blocking off nearly two
> miles in Sodo under its Spokane Street Viaduct …The extra-strength fence stands
> 10-foot-4, with small mesh that's hard for climbers to grab. A supplemental
> shipment of thin blades[1] was discreetly cinched along the top … The [Washington
> State Department of Transportation] WSDOT fenced a cloverleaf ramp from I-90
> to Rainier Avenue South, where camp dwellers crossed traffic … Additional
> fencing will be installed under I-5 at the Columbian Way exit near an area known
> as The Jungle … Other goals include preventing thefts, biohazards and car-
> pedestrian crashes" (Lindblom, 2017).

As if there were any ambiguity here, a further news article from but a year later makes the

installation of these devices explicitly clear:

> "SDOT does not plan to halt the construction of the fences in Ballard because
> they are important for safety, the agency said … The use of infrastructure to
> discourage sleeping or camping by homeless people is known as "hostile
> architecture" it can be as explicit as the city of Spokane's dumping tons of basalt
> boulder under Interstate-90 last fall to discourage people from camping, or
> Tacoma dropping boulders on a grass parking strip where people congregated a
> year before" (Greenstone, 2018c)

The installation of a maximum-security style barrier topped with "thin blades" (similar to those

used on the US/Mexico border fence) seemingly carries an underlying threat: while these

measures seem reasonable on the surface, the underlying intent is similar to the crackdown of

illegal RV camping, an effort by the City to preserve what spatial control it has over homeless

bodies. This intent to spatially manage the homeless population is clear. However, with limited

services available to the nearly 13,000 homeless individuals in Seattle, the affect is more of a

sweep/dispersal from neighborhood to neighborhood: "Neighbors say some campers from

Spokane Street merely moved several blocks." Daniel Malone, executive director of the

Downtown Emergency Service, added the following statement:

> "There definitely wasn't enough shelter for the number of people … Fencing is
> helpful when it shields people from traffic or dangerous sites … But fences can
> merely shift people or problems somewhere else … You wouldn't need all the
> fences, the hygiene centers and the rest areas if everybody had a place to live"
> (Lindblom, 2017).

In short, it is in prime spaces of development where homeless bodies are threatened to

capitalist interests most, and whereby CMR is strategically mobilized, even weaponized, as a

means of cleansing these spaces of this threat. Consequently, homeless populations are displaced

from the spaces that tend to be in close proximity to where services are located, relocated to

other more marginalized urban spaces where their presence is less visible (and thus threatening)

to retail capital and higher-income consumers (Langegger and Koester, 2017; Anderson, et al.,

2021). This, of course, makes the everyday lives of homeless people even more precarious and

difficult as they have to navigate a more expansive geography of mobility just in order to

survive.

When one is asked to think of what necessities of life are universal, food and water are

two that frequently pop up. However, the homeless individual does not have the luxury to be

complacent when it comes to where their next meal will come from. Within Seattle, as well as

many major (and smaller) cities across the U.S., there exist numerous organizations that exist

solely to feed those who are in desperate need, such as various food banks (Ballard Food Bank,

West Seattle Food Bank, Pike Market Food Bank, etc.), community kitchens, private volunteer

organizations, etc. (EATER, 2021). However, at a national level there has been a recent move to

hinder volunteer efforts to feed homeless people in public: "About 40 cities nationwide had

active laws to restrict food sharing as of November 2014." This includes the capital of

Washington State, Olympia, and as is mentioned by interim director of the National Coalition for the Homeless, Megan Hustings, "restrictions on public feeding are most commonly enacted or enforced when the homeless population becomes visible" (Brumback, 2017).

From Small Screen to Reality

Creating new and increasingly hostile ways to regain control over otherwise unused portions of land is a blatant move in order to displace and reposition those homeless individuals who use these areas for their survival. An even more disturbing plan of action was put forth by a King County councilmember in 2019. In a move reminiscent of the classic South Park episode *Night of the Living Homeless* (in which the boys Stan, Kyle, Kenny and Cartman must save the town from being overrun by an epidemic of homelessness – and eventually do so by busing the homeless people out from South Park to a different town), King County councilmember Reagan Dunn proposed spending around $1 million in additional funding to purchase bus tickets in order for "homeless people who want to reconnect with family or close friends in other states, away from Seattle" (Gutman and Brownstone, 2019). While this move may seem abhorrent to many today, it is a practice that has been in effect in many urban centers (Seattle included) since the 1980s, with limited success. It may seem like an altruistic move by councilmember Dunn, as his own words suggest:

> "Folks will say you're just busing away the homeless population, but if you look a little deeper, you realize it's about family reunification … Dunns proposal comes a week after he came out as a vocal opponent of Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan … plan to consolidate the regions fragmented homelessness services into a regional authority, an effort to streamline services and, hopefully get more people off the streets" (Gutman and Brownstone, 2019).

However, this plan does come with complications. First, of those members of King County's homeless community that were surveyed, 84% were found to have already been residents when

they became homeless, as Lauren McGowan, a senior director of the United Way, states in the

following comment:

> "It perpetuates the narrative that people experiencing homelessness should leave
> our community, that they are not from here, that they are not welcome here …
> The reality is that the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness in our
> region are from this community" King County already has a program in place to
> purchase bus tickets for people who wish to leave and reunite with family
> elsewhere" (Gutman and Brownstone, 2019).

Even when a ticket is purchased for an individual, there is no guarantee that their new destination

will provide them with a means to escape homelessness. According to a 2017 investigation by

the Guardian, cities across the United States have used this tactic to relocate many people. They

give the example of San Francisco, where between the years of 2013 and 2016 half the number

the City had claimed to help were simply given a bus ticket. The investigation found that "Seattle

received 54 people in 2016 from western cities and counties that had paid for their homeless

residents to move elsewhere" (Gutman and Brownstone, 2019).

In yet another example of cities in the Seattle area increasing their actions against the

homeless population, Peterson notes in a 2019 article in the Seattle Times that "the city of

Puyallup spent more on legal matters related to homelessness over the past five years than it did

helping local nonprofits that serve homeless people." Elaborating further, Peterson (2019)

reported the following:

> "Homeward Bound also sued the city after the City Council voted last year to
> restrict new providers serving homeless people to work in specified zones. The
> ordinance limited homeless shelters and drop-in centers to an area in the
> northwest corner of the city, where many of Puyallup's manufacturing
> warehouses are located" (Peterson, 2019).

Puyallup is not alone in its measured approach to the future placement of services that exist

solely to serve the homeless population. For example, a recent proposed homeless shelter to be

located within the City of Bellevue has faced numerous challenges from the local business

community with respect to what location is acceptable: the city was urged "to put the shelter not

at Eastgate, but in an industrial area near a planned Sound Transit light-rail station in the Bel-

Red neighborhood" (Greenstone, 2017a). During the period between 2015 and 2017, in the

Eastside the number of people who were forced to sleep unsheltered doubled, and yet "they just

don't like the location, which is near some homes, a park-and-ride lot, Bellevue College, a day-

care center and elementary schools" (Greenstone, 2017a). It should be stressed that while these

policies and practices do not directly have anything to do with Seattle's community of BIAs,

they are nonetheless policies that are favorable to the stated mission of each BIA, and work to

spatially manage homeless bodies in ways that are usually favorable to their interests.

The Dastardly Dichotomy of Business

While the issue of affordable housing is clearly a major factor in the increase in

homelessness across not only Seattle, but all of King County, it is important not to forget what

drives this problem: an insane real estate market. As is stated in a January 2018 article in the

Seattle Times, "the initiative comes as Microsoft and other tech giants have driven the region's

economic boom face increasing pressure to help mitigate affordable-housing shortages"

(Coleman and Rosenberg, 2018). The very economic success that companies such as Boeing,

Microsoft and Amazon have brought to the region, has led to this gap in affordable housing. The

initiative mentioned in the previous quote from the article by Coleman and Rosenberg refers to a

$500 million dollar pledge from the software giant Microsoft, which is to be used in order to

"address homelessness and develop affordable housing across the Puget Sound region … Most

of that money will be aimed at increasing housing options for low- and middle- income

workers" (2018). The move of Microsoft into financing development of affordable housing came

on the heels of its announcement of a massive expansion of its Redmond headquarters. This

initiative has been placed forward on the sacrificial alter of public image. Of this $500 million, $225 million will be loaned out by Microsoft to developers at below-market rate, in order to help said developers tackle high land and construction costs to "preserve workforce housing on the Eastside" (Coleman and Rosenberg, 2018).

However, as in the case of Portland Oregon, (see Anderson, 2019; Anderson, et al., 2021), Seattle has a spotty track record of ensuring that property development follows the outlined requirements. The Incentive Zoning Program and Affordable Housing (IZPAH) which is a program which was enabled to allow for certain considerations for commercial and residential developers. These considerations permit "additional development capacity," when and if these developers provide for affordable housing. However, in 2015, the City of Seattle allowed for a new rule:

> "… that outlines the conditions by which affordable housing provided to satisfy requirements for bonus non-residential floor area according to SMC 23.49.012 may use certain public subsidies and tax incentives" (City of Seattle, 2021).

In an article written by Daniel Beekman in the *Seattle Times* in 2017, it is noted that for nearly four years city officials have failed to collect payment for affordable housing from developers of luxury condominium projects, an amount totaling over $3.4 million. Beekman (2017) further notes that "in the meantime, two 41 story towers were built, condos began selling for more than $500,000 each and Seattle struggled with a painful affordable-housing crisis." This, however, is not the first instance of this, as city councilmember Mike O'Brien requested the Office of the City Auditor to look into the IZPAH. They discovered "missing developer contributions, late payments, documentation discrepancies, uncollected fees and other issues" (Beekman, 2017). Further, as Beekman (2017) reports, "on some projects the bonus square footage on the developer's plans differed from the amount in their affordable housing contributions" (2017). In another instance, the Union, UNITE HERE Local 8, uncovered a case where the development of

a new hotel in the Denny Triangle could yield a payment of $12 million devoted to affordable

housing, however the city planned on only demanding $9 million in payment (Beekman, 2017).

In order to combat the consequences these major-corporations have had on the housing

market; the Seattle City Council passed a referendum which included a "head-tax" on companies

in order to generate more funds. This "head-tax, would charge 26 cents per employee hour on

Seattle area companies that gross more than $20 million a year in profit. While nonprofits would

be exempt, over 500 companies would be affected by this proposal (Beekman, 2018). The funds

gained by this "head-tax" was to be earmarked for affordable housing and homeless services, of

the money generated (proposed to be around $75 million in 2019) 75% was to be used to create

2,000 units for affordable housing, with the rest going to homeless services (Beekman, 2018).

All this in order to combat the decrease in affordable housing and increase in homelessness that

can be seen as the direct response to the success of these companies, as is mentioned in the

legislation while discussing the growth and prosperity these fortunate companies have achieved:

"this growth and prosperity has directly contributed to the rapid increase in the numbers of

individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness" (Beekman, 2018). The response by

companies such as Amazon were predictably hostile to the measure:

> "Some of Seattle's largest companies including Amazon are bankrolling the No
> Tax on Jobs campaign to repeal the tax … When the referendum effort launched
> last month, the No Tax on Jobs campaign quickly snagged more than $325,000 in
> pledges, including $25,000 each from Amazon and Starbucks … Amazon is
> expected to owe more than $10 million under the head tax next year" (Beekman
> and Wu, 2018).

The dichotomy shown by businesses in regards to the issue of homelessness is apparent. While

many of these companies show public interest in helping the homeless out of their situation, their

actions and policies speak volumes to the opposite.

> "After defeating the head tax, many Seattle businesses say they remain committed to addressing the regions homelessness crisis, though the details of what they're willing to do are still materializing … On one hand, businesses agree that the crisis is worsening and say something must be done. On the other hand, local businesses marshaled nearly $200,000 to fund the signature gathering campaign that led to the Seattle City Council's vote Tuesday to undo the tax" (Romano, 2018).

The evidence presented here characterizes a war-like struggle between capitalist interests and anything that poses a threat to those interests. In the context of BIDs in particular, the collaborative efforts among territorially-bounded businesses and property owners amount to nothing short of a strategic mobilization of CMR. While this is a mobilization constituted through a number of measures, as outlined above, many of these measures are geared toward the quite explicit erasure of visible homelessness from the BID boundaries. As such, in the context of the structural violence this strategic mobilization of CMR unleashes on the homeless, I suggest that it is a CMR that is also, and more specifically, "weaponized" against what is portrayed by the business and real estate communities that form BIDs as a mortal enemy within a broader class warfare that strikes at the heart of neoliberal capitalism: the homeless themselves. This conceptualization exhibits a subtle yet visceral darker outlook on anything (and anybody) that negatively effects the realization of CMR, the ultimate goal of BID policies and practices. It should also be stressed that BIDs do not just spatially manage where homeless bodies can be (i.e., well beyond their boundaries). They also are implicated in the active production of homelessness as well insofar as BIDs are designed to contribute to the resuscitation of property values (generally in central city gentrifying spaces). In Seattle, insofar as its geography of BIAs are contributing factors in the city's skyrocketing land values, then these class monopoly regimes are also contributing factors in both the production and distribution of homeless bodies across the city.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

To understand the role that the extraction of CMR plays in the contemporary production and spatial regulation of homelessness in Seattle (as well as many other major urban centers across the US), we have to be able to read between the lines. These lines are blurred, as the various aspects of the interactions between property owners/developers, local government, the common citizenry, and the homeless individual resemble a Rat king (a collection of rats who, by some mechanism have their tails intertwined) than a coherent community. Insomuch as each individual embedded with this "social infrastructure" (Simone, 2004) is working toward a common goal, however tied together they may be, and thanks to greed and misunderstanding, they constantly pull in multiple directions which ultimately render their efforts fruitless. The constant back and forth between each interested party ensures that no change of substance can be reached with respect to truly ending homelessness on the scale in which it currently exists across urban America and beyond. Moreover, all kinds of reform may be considered, but so long as the (neoliberal) capitalist mode of production remains fundamentally unaltered, no amount of reform will make the kind of difference that is necessary to stop the spilling of less fortunate souls onto the streets to fend for themselves in the first place.

The pursuit of CMR depends on the success of the collaborative partnerships (or infrastructure) that binds rent-seeking actors and institutions together, such as a "growth machine" formation like the actors invested in the various BIAs in Seattle, i.e., landowners/developers, investors, and local governments within the Seattle region as such an example. Within Seattle (and across the global North), BIDs operate in such a way that they embed themselves into (and even work to constitute) the identity of the geographically defined boundaries in which they operate. In the case of Seattle, these organizations use the socially

constructed cultural and/or historical "uniqueness" of their districts to produce and realize CMR. In the process, BIAs then become active "class monopolies" that collectively own a slice of the purportedly non-substitutable resource they are selling. Insofar as consumers are shaped by this, then BIAs effectively come to monopolize this uniqueness to their own benefit.

However, while this is in itself a key aspect of CMR – the discursive-branding of non-substitutability – there is merely one of myriad practices that BIAs employ to protect their rent-seeking interests, i.e., enhancing surveillance, security, fundraising from investors, partnerships with police, local government, etc. In addition to place-branding, these activities are each motivated by the need to curtail the presence of unwanted visible barriers to consumer foot-traffic, with the homeless being at the top of the list, akin to an enemy in need of being "taken out." Of course, the very act of "taking them out" (i.e., displaced to more marginalized and invisible spaces) only works to produce more homeless bodies on the street, a never-ending ironic cycle that perpetuates the existence of homelessness, a product of the very actions taken to erase this social condition from visibility. In conjunction with TIFs, cartelistic formations of developers, historical preservation districts, and urban growth boundaries, I suggest that each of these otherwise disparate and "concrete" manifestations of CMR represent the same "abstract" form of CMR: the enhancement of demand for land within a territorially bounded, and thus finite, space where supply is relatively inelastic. Based on the findings presented in this study, I hypothesize that this form of CMR has emerged as a key, structural ingredient to the operation of contemporary, neoliberalized housing markets.

If we can term the homeless individual as a "victim of forced relocation," someone forcibly (and sometimes violently) displaced from their homes and forced into a life of hardship and uncertainty, then we can also view the public realm in which they exist as an active

battlefield. This is a battlefield whereby different and conflicting forces are constantly waging war over the production of space as a means of achieving conflicting goals. In the context of BIDs, the question is whether space is to be mobilized toward the pursuit of CMR by commercial and real estate capital or transformed into refuges for those kicked to the curb by the cultivation of monopoly powers by the very same kinds of rent-seekers. Is space to be mobilized toward ensuring everyone is sheltered in a respectable, dignified manner? Or is it to serve the progressive accumulation and circulation of capital in and through the built environment? The strategic mobilization of CMR by BIDs represents an example of the latter which is contingent on negating the former. In doing this, the pursuit of CMR by BIDs becomes mobilized as a weapon in this long-standing war waged by capital against the most marginalized members of the contemporary industrial reserve army. In Seattle, this is an ongoing and quite violent war (considering the brutal physiological and emotional impacts it has on the homeless) that is currently being won by capital.

Of course, this outcome is not inevitable, as most western European countries exhibit in some cases far less rates of homelessness, although this is a phenomenon on the rise even in countries like Sweden (Mitchell, 2011, Gagnon, 2020). In a neoliberalizing world where the local state's priorities are disciplined into alignment with private capitalist interests, then this is a battlefield tilted to the advantage of capital from the get-go. Where the local state continues to receive broader-scale forms of state funding (state, provincial, or federal), as in most places in Europe compared to the United States, then the legions of homeless souls are likely to fare better in this ongoing class war (although it is also simultaneously a race war insofar as non-white minorities constitute disproportionate numbers of homeless populations) (see Butcher, 2020).

While these "warzones" may not be littered with bombed out vehicles and smoldering craters, the battlefield here is instead littered with trash, human-waste, graffiti, worn-out tents, and bedraggled RV's amid commercial zones of middle- to upper-income consumerism and entertainment. Instead of perimeter fencing and landmines being used for the safety of occupants within, we see perimeter fencing and large chunks of native rock placed with immaculate precision in order to keep campers and consumer foot traffic visibly separate. In the most acute cases, we are talking about the *same spaces* being used and contested by these two oppositional forces, with the local state caught in the crossfire.

In Seattle, the number of these refugees continues to climb. As for the root causes (i.e., labor market conditions and housing market dynamics), neither have been sufficiently addressed in any substantive way. However, the lack of affordable housing has many fingers pointed toward it as a source of contention and is increasingly identified as a serious component to the violent interruption of *normal* life that the homeless individual is forced to undertake. Some would shift the blame to the success of corporate behemoths such as Microsoft and Amazon as adding more high paying jobs, therefore driving up the price of homes based on standard supply/demand dynamics. More closely, however, we see the actions of the developer, landlord and landowner (oh my!) as predatory, akin to a war profiteer: rather than supplying arms, it is the pursuit of CMR that acts as the symbolic military machinery.

Let us recall the case of Ms. Malone, who was placed into a sub-standard housing unit at the grace of public funds. In this example (which is one of hundreds) we see a clear example of the creation of artificial scarcity via targeted neglect and the "milking" of a property until it is no longer legally habitable, to be then sold at auction for future development. In the corporate realm private companies (mercenaries) are stepping up and filling the void that traditionally was filled

by local government by offering financing to developers for affordable housing. As the state continues to find itself being de-invested, it falls more to the private actors such as BIAs and corporations to step up and provide funding for the services traditionally provided by the state. In this way, the formation of class monopolies can be understood as a structural outcome of neoliberal governmentality, a response by capital to a public-sector gutted of its ability to provide adequate services. The cultivation of monopoly powers in these ways, by BIDs, has thus stepped in to fill a funding void previously provided by the local state. The line between the public and private realms is consequently made blurrier, another defining characteristic of neoliberal governmentality.

Within the aesthetic battlefield of Seattle, we can lend the term "militant movement" to our beloved BIAs, one that over time has gained more traction and power within their embattled geographic districts, and the overall political landscape of the urban built environment. It is here we can see the tendrils of CMR at work: within these defined geographic boundaries, developers and landowners are collaboratively working towards enhancing their threshold of potential economic gain, while cementing their ties to the neighborhood. Like many, they use a public face of kindness and caring to reproduce the idea of the BIA as a benefit to the success of the area in question. Through this scripted narrative they position themselves as representatives of these areas and they actively work to court organizations that may prove a beneficial ally in the battles to come, what could be called a "coalition of the willing." However, the rhetoric they propagate makes clear the ideological positions that informs their actions, including an understanding of those poor souls cast out of housed society (among the biggest losers in this class war) that works to absolve any culpability among BID rent-seekers for their pursuit of CMR. These business associations and corporate representatives mince no words in describing their main

threat as the very refugees their economic success has helped to create. Terms like homeless and crime are used nearly interchangeably as they discuss the policies and failures of local government actors to answer their call for aid (at least to their satisfaction).

The collaborative relationship between private and public actors is key to this particular formation of CMR. As we have seen, BIDs actively raise funds in order to lobby the City and County to influence policy in their favor. They rely upon the local government's favor in order to increase police presence to preserve their status quo. The City, with its decreased federal funding and consequent increased reliance on property taxes (which BIAs tend to increase) are happy to do so, as they are forced to prioritize this over their other social welfare objectives. We see this with the increased action of Seattle police departments in responding to and moving along homeless individuals as well as myriad other draconian measures implemented to seize complete spatial control, to neutralize all visible threats to capital in general and the restless pursuit of CMR in particular. As the boundaries between the private and public realms become ever blurred (as corporate and BIA operatives are forced to take on more formerly government oriented social services), the resulting ensembles of private-public actors, or what I call the "social infrastructure of CMR," becomes more intertwined, complex, and mutually dependent.

As it stands, it seems that the pursuit of CMR is playing a key role in the production and spatial management of those who end up as another statistic, or casualty, on the King County Point in Time Count. One front of this battle takes the form of a fight for the accumulation of CMR among BIA collectives (via self-imposed taxes operating as an investment in this CMR). The local state is then forced to navigate competing objectives which ultimately take the form of actions that mitigate and displace the "visible" effects of the homeless, a necessary response to appease the implicated capitalist interests associated with Seattle's BIAs (which are also a major

source of the local state's revenue). Within the housing market there are endless examples of predatory actions being taken by rent-seekers against those who are most vulnerable to the dangers of homelessness. This study has nuanced and deepened our understanding of one such predatory action: the role of BIDs as the strategic mobilization and weaponization of CMR. The study also serves as a springboard for further empirical examination of CMR in modern urban settings, as well as the further development of the theory of monopoly under capitalism.

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APPENDIX A

Table 2. Textual matrix of themes for empirical analysis.

Author	Source	Format	Theme	Title
Alliance for Pioneer Square (2021)	Alliance for Pioneer Square	Website	BID	Business Improvement Area
Alliance for Pioneer Square (2021)	Alliance for Pioneer Square	Website	BID/HL	System Failure
Gene Balk (2014)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR	As Seattle incomes soar, gaps grow between richer and poorer.
Gene Balk (2016)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR	$80,000 median: Income gain in Seattle far outpaces other cities.
Gene Balk (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR	Seattle is third most gentrifying city in the US, and that might not be as bad as you think.
Ballard Alliance (2021)	Visit Ballard	Website	BID	About Us
Erasmus Baxter (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR/HL	In an increasingly expensive South King County, cities band together for affordable housing.
Daniel Beekman (2017)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR/HL	Seattle neglected to collect $3.4 million for affordable housing as two skyscrapers were built.
Daniel Beekman (2018)	Seattle Times	News Article	BID/HR/HL	Seattle city council releases plan to tax businesses, fun homeless help.
Daniel Beekman and Sarah Wu (2018)	Seattle Times	News Article	BID/HR	Head-tax fight hit's Seattle's streets referendum campaign faces deadline.
Steve Berg (2015)	National Alliance to End Homelessness	Report	HL	Ten-year plan to end homelessness.
Sydney Brownstone (2019a)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR/HL	In Seattle fast paced redevelopment displaces the safe spaces for homeless young adults.
Sydney Brownstone (2019b)	Seattle Times	News Article	BID/HL	Seattle police increasingly involved in moving homeless people from sidewalks.

Kyle Brumback (2017)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	Cities, volunteers clash over feeding homeless in public.
Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce (2021)	Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce	Website	BID	About the Chamber.
Ari Cetron (2015)	Seattle Magazine	Magazine Article	HL	Tent cities and Seattle's growing homeless population.
Chinatown-International District (2021)	CIDBIA	Website	BID	Clean streets and pedestrian environment.
Chinatown-International District (2021)	CIDBIA	Website	BID	About us.
Vernal Coleman (2017a)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/HR	Homeless man challenges Seattle over impound of truck used as residence.
Vernal Coleman (2017b)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	Washington state homeless numbers grew over last year.
Vernal Coleman (2018)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/HR	Out of homelessness, into a hovel: Public money spent on Seattle houses with bugs, trash, no water.
Vernal Coleman and Mike Rosenberg (2018)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR/HL	Microsoft pledges $500 million to tackle housing crisis in Seattle Eastside.
Columbia City Business Association (2021)	Columbia City	Website	BID	Welcome to Columbia City
Viana Davila (2018a)	Seattle Times	News Article	BID/HL	Seattle to expand team that oversees homeless-camp removals.
Viana Davila (2018b)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	Seattle increasing removals of homeless encampment.
Viana Davila (2018c)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	King county needs to spend $400 million a year to solve homeless crisis, new report says.
Viana Davila (2018d)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/HR	42,000 pounds of garbage: Seattle quietly cleaning up, cleaning out hot spots for people living in vehicles.
Viana Davila (2018e)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR	In a sign of gentrifying South King County, an entire Burien apartment complex faces eviction.
Viana Davila (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR	Seattle woman faces eviction for failing to pay $2 she owed in rent.
Viana Davila (2020)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR/HL	Make that $1B: New report ups the price to fix King

				County's affordable-housing crisis.
Daniel DeMay (2015)	Seattle Post Intelligencer	News Article	HR	Thanks to an influx of tech jobs, Seattle is booming – bur it's not easy to deal with.
Downtown Seattle Association (2021)	Downtown Seattle Association	Website	BID	About us.
Downtown Seattle Association (2021)	Downtown Seattle Association	Website	BID	Downtown Ambassadors.
A.M. Evans (2016)	Washington Department of Housing Services	Report	HL	A road home: 10-year plan to end homelessness 2016 Homeless Summary.
Gillian Flaccus and Geoff Mulvihill (2017)	Seattle Times	News article	HL	Seattle isn't alone: Homeless crisis stretches up and down West Coast.
Scott Greenstone (2017a)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/BID	Proposed homeless shelter takes center stage in Bellevue elections.
Scott Greenstone (2017b)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/SCM	Give to panhandlers or don't? Some towns try cracking down.
Scott Greenstone (2018a)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/BID	Ballard's homelessness quadrupled last year, and anger is spilling over.
Scott Greenstone (2018b)	Seattle Times	News Article	BID/HR/HL	Feeling abandoned by City Hall, Seattle businesses try to respond to homelessness.
Scott Greenstone (2018c)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/SCM	Seattle is putting fences under bridges to keep campers out – and some say that's wrong.
Scott Greenstone (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	Why are people in Seattle homeless?
Scott Greenstone (2020)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	While homelessness rises in the U.S., its actually going down in Washington State feds, say.
Scott Greenstone and Sydney Brownstone (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/SCM	Seattle to target junk vehicles and car ranchers who rent them to homeless people.
Heidi Groover and Vernal Coleman (2018)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR/HL	Evictions in Seattle often over a months rent of less, add to homeless crisis report finds.
David Gutman and Sydney Brownstone (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	King County councilmember proposes spending $1 million

				to bus homeless people out of region.
King County (2021)	King County	News Article	HL	Point-in-time count estimates a 5 percent increase in people experiencing homelessness.
Mike Lindblom (2017)	Seattle Times	News Article	SCM/HL	Washington spending 1.1 million to fence off highways and bridges from the homeless.
Scott Lindsay (2019)	Alliance for Pioneer Square	Report	HL/BID/SCM	System Failure: Report on prolific offenders in Seattle's criminal justice system.
K.K. Long (2020)	Seattle Times	News Article	HR	Home prices shot up over the summer; Seattle No. 2 in nation for growth.
Josephine Peterson (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL/SCM	Puyallup has paid more to attorneys defending its homeless laws than to homeless service providers.
Puget Sound Business Journal (2020)	Puget Sound Business Journal	Report	HR	Report: Seattle is one of the US fastest growing cities.
Benjamin Romano (2018)	Seattle Times	News Article	SCM/BID/HL	With head tax defeated, questions swirl around businesses' response to homeless crisis.
John Ryan (2015)	KUOW Public Radio	News Article	HL	After 10-year plan, why does Seattle have more homeless than ever?
San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (2020)	City of San Francisco	Website	HR	Maximum income by household size derived from the unadjusted area median income for hud metro fair market area (HMFA) that includes S.F.
Kurt Schlosser (2019)	Geek Wire	Article	HR	Seattle is second toughest housing market in the U.S. for first-time buyers, Zillow reports.
Seattle Office of Economic Development (2021)	City of Seattle	Website	BID	Business improvement districts at work in Seattle.
Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (2019)	City of Seattle	Report	HR	Housing choices background report.
SODO BIA (2021)	SODO BIA	Website	BID	History.

Nick Twietmeyer (2016)	Seattle Weekly	News Article	HL/SCM/HR	Key quotes from a homeless Seattle man's AMA.
The U-District (2021)	U-District Partnership	Website	BID	About us.
West Seattle Junction (2021)	West Seattle Junction Association	Website	BID	About.
Danny Westneat (2017)	Seattle Times	News Article	HL	Our homeless crisis sure doesn't feel like an emergency.
Danny Westneat (2019)	Seattle Times	News Article	SCM/HL	Police sting uses unlocked bike as bait outside a Seattle Goodwill.
Visit Seattle	Seattle Tourism	Website	BID	Visit Seattle.

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