

Examining Racial Disparities in Self-Reported Satisfaction Among Homeless Shelter

Residents

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ETHN-2004-1: Quantitative Methods in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies

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June 7, 2024

Abstract

There is longstanding evidence that there are higher rates of homelessness among people of color. Despite this, research on racial disparities in the experiences of homeless individuals remains limited. Based on the existing literature, I hypothesized that race would play a significant role in individuals' self-reported satisfaction with the homeless shelters they have stayed in. Consistent with my hypotheses, the results of this study indicate significant racial disparities in shelter satisfaction. After controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation, White individuals reported lower satisfaction levels than non-White individuals, while Latine and Native American individuals reported higher satisfaction with shelters compared to non-Latine and non-Native American individuals. Furthermore, sexual orientation emerged as a significant factor for Black and Asian respondents, with straight individuals generally reporting lower satisfaction than non-straight individuals. These findings underscore the importance of considering racial factors in addressing the needs and improving the experiences of homeless individuals in shelter environments.

Examining Racial Disparities in Self-Reported Satisfaction Among Homeless Shelter Residents

White privilege, defined as the accrual of benefits based on perceived Whiteness, manifests in various forms, dictating societal norms, attitudes, and values (McIntosh 1989). In her 1993 article, "Whiteness as Property," Professor Cheryl L. Harris expands on this notion, arguing that Whiteness is not merely a pigment of skin but a currency of power, privilege, and entitlement (Harris 1993). Through the lens of "Whiteness as Property," Harris unpacks how centuries of systemic advantages have granted White individuals a myriad of rights and privileges which have shaped their economic standing, social standing, and entitled attitudes (Harris 1993). This perspective of Whiteness as a form of property also underpins beliefs and narratives concerning marginalized racial groups, perpetuating disparities in access to resources, societal perceptions, and institutional treatment between White individuals and people of color (Headley, Jones, & Carter 2023; Byron 2023; Edwards 2020). Indeed, from access to resources to perceptions of fairness within institutional systems, the notion of Whiteness as property systematically withholds benefits and privileges from people of color while reinforcing and concealing the perpetuation of White privilege.

One area where the implications of this notion are especially evident is in the realm of homelessness. Homelessness itself transcends racial boundaries, but the systems that perpetuate it are rooted in racial bias and discrimination (Fowle 2022; Olivet et al. 2021). In the context of homelessness, White privilege isn't just an idea—it's a tangible force that affects every aspect of people's lives (e.g., school, work, healthcare, housing; Harris 1993; Museus & LePeau 2019). Despite longstanding evidence that there are higher rates of homelessness among people of color (Roth 1985; Hopper and Milburn 1996; United States Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) 2015), it is only in recent years that scholars have begun to delve into the racial inequalities within this demographic (Westbrook & Robinson 2020; Townley et al. 2021; Craven et al. 2021; Aviles de Bradley 2015; Edwards 2020; Olivet et al. 2021; Paul et al. 2020).

While research has identified various racial disparities in homelessness, little has sought to explain them or to examine racial disparities in people's experiences with homeless services. Specifically, no prior study known to the author has considered how race plays a role in shaping attitudes that homeless individuals have towards the living conditions in homeless shelters. In this paper, I critically evaluate the existing literature on racial disparities in homelessness. Additionally, I aim to address a gap in the literature by presenting a study designed to examine if, how, and to what degree race, and White privilege by extension, influence homeless individuals' self-reported satisfaction with homeless shelters that they have stayed in.

Literature Review

A Critical Review of Research on Race and Homelessness

The existing body of literature on race and homelessness has predominantly centered on themes such as the criminalization of homeless people of color/interactions with law enforcement (Welsh Carroll, Flanigan, & Gutierrez 2023; Craven et al. 2021), educational experiences for young homeless people of color (Aviles de Bradley 2015; Edwards 2020), and outcomes concerning health, employment, and housing accommodation accessibility (Olivet et al. 2021; Paul et al. 2020). For example, in a survey of 202 homeless people in Greensboro, North Carolina, Craven and colleagues (2021) found that racial profiling was one of the most common reasons study participants reported for being harassed, cited, or arrested by the police. In fact, 43.6% of survey respondents indicated that they believe they have been cited or arrested because of their race (Craven et al. 2021). This highlights how White privilege might shield

White homeless individuals from such discriminatory treatment, further exacerbating disparities in legal outcomes and reinforcing the notion of Whiteness as a form of societal advantage.

Moreover, as part of the SPARC Initiative (Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities), Oliviet and colleagues (2021) launched a mixed-methods study across eight cities in 2016 to examine the underlying societal factors contributing to heightened homelessness risks among people of color and to identify how existing homelessness response systems might perpetuate racial disparities. Their findings reveal that White homeless individuals are often afforded preferential treatment in areas such as access to economic opportunities, healthcare, and housing. Through qualitative interviews, individuals from marginalized communities shared instances of this unequal treatment firsthand. Specifically, they discussed disparities in the treatment of White clients, noting that White clients face fewer requirements, are kicked out of programs less often, and have a higher likelihood of being offered housing (Oliviet et al. 2021). This disparity underscores how White privilege operates within homelessness response systems, reinforcing the notion of Whiteness as a currency of entitlement and advantage.

In essence, the literature shows how race and White privilege not only influence the prevalence of homelessness among people of color but also shape their experiences within the homeless population. Together, the existing literature provides a compelling backdrop for understanding the potential impact of racial disparities on this aspect of homelessness. However, while much research has focused on the broader structural inequalities faced by people of color experiencing homelessness, there remains a gap in understanding how these disparities influence individuals' reported satisfaction with the services designed to support them.

With that in mind, the current work seeks to answer the following question: What is the relationship between the race of homeless individuals and a homeless individuals' self-reported

satisfaction with homeless shelters that they have stayed in? While one might speculate (based on the existing literature) that people of color experiencing homelessness would self-report lower levels of satisfaction with homeless services than their White counterparts, I provide an alternative hypothesis. That is, I believe that reports of satisfaction are not actually a reflection of satisfaction with the services provided, but rather the systemic biases, power differentials, and pervasive influences of White privilege within society. Therefore, I hypothesize that White individuals experiencing homelessness will report significantly lower levels of satisfaction with the shelters they've stayed in relative to non-White individuals experiencing homelessness (H1). I also hypothesize that homeless individuals who identify as Latine, Black, Native American, and Asian American will report significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the shelters they've stayed in relative to non-Latine, Black, Native American, and Asian American homeless individuals (H2).

A Potential Mechanism

Dissatisfaction, a common theme in the experience of homelessness, is often conceptualized as the gap between how individuals believe they should be treated and their actual treatment (Kowalski 1996). However, it's important to recognize that dissatisfaction likely isn't uniformly reported across all groups experiencing homelessness. On the contrary, it intersects with broader societal dynamics, including systemic biases (e.g., White privilege) and discrimination, which shape individuals' perceptions of fairness and satisfaction. For example, marginalized individuals, influenced by systemic biases, often harbor lower expectations, which in turn shapes their perceptions of fairness and satisfaction (Swim & Hyers 1999). That is, they may have lower expectations of satisfaction with systems that are perceived to be inherently

biased against them. As a result, they may express higher satisfaction levels even in situations where services are inadequate.

Furthermore, while White individuals may feel empowered to vocalize their dissatisfaction, people of color might consider various factors such as whether complaining will cause a change in how they are being treated, its impact on their relationships with those responsible, and how it might alter others' perceptions and attitudes toward them (Swim & Hyers 1999). Consequently, after weighing these considerations, they might choose not to report if they fear retaliation for speaking out. This phenomenon, herein termed as racialized reporting bias, has been observed in prior research in domains such as hate crime reporting, where racial minority victimizations were ~35% less likely to be reported than White victimizations (Zaykowski 2010). The same type of effect was also seen in a study of violent crimes, where the authors found that minority subjects are less willing to report acts of violence that they believe to be wrong to the police (Sigler & Johnson 2002). Given these findings and the theoretical framework outlined above, I believe that racialized reporting bias might serve as a mechanism to explain my hypotheses.

Data and Methods

I examined secondary data gathered by researchers affiliated with the University of Colorado, Denver, as part of a community-based participatory research endeavor in collaboration with Denver Homeless Out Loud (DHOL). Denver Homeless Out Loud (DHOL) is an advocacy group deeply engaged with individuals who are currently or formerly homeless. The comprehensive survey, consisting of 36 questions, emerged from discussions between the University researchers and DHOL. The survey focused on self-reported health and safety experiences among the homeless population, including interactions with law enforcement. It

covered various aspects such as demographics, duration of homelessness, sleeping arrangements, physical and mental health concerns, personal safety, and encounters with police. Data collection occurred between September 2018 and February 2019.

As noted in Westbrook & Robinson (2021), approximately 560 individuals were approached at cluster sites and extended invitations to participate. Refusals were documented, yielding a response rate of 86.5%. Surveys were deemed complete if respondents filled out the sections pertaining to sleeping locations, health issues, and interactions with police ($n = 484$). For a more comprehensive review of the procedures used for survey creation, data collection, and data-entry, see Westbrook & Robinson (2021). To facilitate analysis for the present study, the survey responses were encoded and organized into an SPSS dataset.

Dependent Variable - The analyses below focus on a single dependent variable termed “Shelter Satisfaction”. This variable is assessed through a series of eleven sub-questions regarding the respondent's feelings towards different facets of shelters they recently utilized (e.g., overall environment, level of privacy, cleanliness, and maintenance). Each sub-question employs a 1-7 scale where respondents indicate their satisfaction level ranging from "Terrible"=1 to "Delighted"=7. These responses are summed to generate a composite score variable ($M = 32.11$, $SD = 16.23$; $\alpha = .97$).

Independent Variables - The data analyzed below focus on one primary independent variable that I have called “Race”. The “Race” variable is a demographic variable that is operationalized by asking respondents, “Which racial/ethnic group do you most identify with?” Response options include “White, non-Hispanic/Latino”=1, “Hispanic/Latino”=2, “Black or African-American”=3, “Asian”=4, “American Indian”=5, “Hawaiian/Pacific Islander”=6, or “Mixed/Other”=7. Based on my predictions, the key levels of interest for this variable are

“White, non-Hispanic/Latino”=1, “Hispanic/Latino”=2, “Black or African-American”=3, and “American Indian/Native American”=5. In order to better analyze these specific levels, I recoded “Race” into six new dichotomous variables labeled “**White**”(R1: 0= not White, 1= White), “**Latine**”(R2: 0= not Latine, 1= Latine), “**Black**”(R3: 0= not Black, 1= Black), “**Asian**”(R4: 0= not Asian, 1= Asian), and “**Native American**”(R5: 0= not Native American, 1= Native American).

Control Variables - In my analyses, I have decided to hold constant and control for the influence of the following variables: **Age** (1= Less than 18 years; 2= 25-34 years; 3= 18-24 years; 4= 35-44 years; 5= 45-54 years; 6= 55+), **Gender** (1= Man; 2= Woman; 3= Transgender Man; 4= Transgender Woman; 5= Non-binary or other), and **Sexual Orientation** (S1: 1= Heterosexual; 0=Not Heterosexual). For analysis, gender was recoded into a new variable called **New Gender** (G1: 0= woman, 1= man).

Analytic Strategy - I first investigate descriptive, univariate, and bivariate statistics using simple means, chi-square tests of independence, and bivariate correlations. Then, I place these variables into five separate Ordinary Least Squares Regression analyses because of the dependent variable’s shape and to control for possible confounds.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were run on a series of demographic variables to get a basic sense of the demographic makeup of respondents (See Table 1). Respondents were majority men (68% men, 28% women, 2% transgender men, 1% transgender women, 1% non-binary or other) and majority White (42% White, 18% Hispanic/Latino, 15% Black/African American, 1% Asian, 7% Native American, 0.2% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 16% Mixed/Other). Out of the all the

respondents, 371 of those respondents completed all of the questions for the “Shelter Satisfaction” composite variable, 357 respondents completed the question about age, 353 respondents completed the question about race, 353 respondents completed the question about gender, and 355 respondents completed the question about sexual orientation. For a more complete breakdown of demographics for respondents used in our analyses, see Table 1.

Table 1: Means and SDs of Variables in the Analyses

	Mean	SD	<i>N</i>
Shelter Satisfaction	32.11	16.23	371
Age (1= Less than 18 years; 2= 25-34 years; 3= 18-24 years; 4= 35-44 years; 5= 45-54 years; 6= 55+)	4.27	1.38	357
White (R1: 0 = not White, 1 = White)	.41	.49	353
Latine (R2: 0= not Latine, 1= Latine)	.16	.37	353
Black (R3: 0= not Black, 1= Black)	.16	.36	353
Asian (R4: 0= not Asian, 1= Asian)	.01	.11	353
Native American (R5: 0= not Native American, 1= Native American)	.07	.26	353
New Gender (G1: 0= woman, 1= man)	.72	.45	353
Sexual Orientation (0= not heterosexual, 1= heterosexual)	.83	.38	355

Bivariate Analyses

In order to examine the relation between my key independent variables and my dependent variable, cross-tabulations were conducted, and chi-square independence tests of significance were run with the alpha level set .05 (See Table 2). These analyses showed significant differences for White vs. non-White individuals and for Native American vs. non-Native American individuals in relation to shelter satisfaction. The first significant chi-square test was performed to examine the relationship between “**White**”(R1: 0= not White, 1= White) and shelter satisfaction. This analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between

White individuals and non-White individuals in ratings of Shelter Satisfaction, $X^2(57, N = 353) = 76.06, p = .047$. White individuals tended to report lower ratings of shelter satisfaction compared to non-White individuals. The second significant chi-square test was performed to examine the relationship between “**Native American**”(R5: 0= not Native American, 1= Native American) and shelter satisfaction. This analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between Native American individuals and non-Native American individuals in ratings of Shelter Satisfaction, $X^2(57, N = 353) = 81.45, p = .018$. Native American individuals tended to report higher ratings of shelter satisfaction compared to non- Native American individuals.

Table 2: Chi-Square Independence Tests for Variables of Interest compared to Shelter Satisfaction

Variable Comparison	X² Value	N	p-value	Significant Difference ($\alpha = .05$)
White	76.06*	353	.047	Yes (Lower ratings for White individuals)
Latine	70.41	353	.109	No
Black	62.77	353	.289	No
Asian	28.40	353	.999	No
Native American	81.45*	353	.018	Yes (Higher ratings for Native American individuals)
Man	48.80	353	.742	No
Heterosexual	58.85	355	.408	No

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Bivariate Correlation

From the bivariate correlation analysis displayed in table 3, some interesting patterns emerge. For example, of particular interest is the significant negative correlation between

identifying as White and reported shelter satisfaction. Conversely, I found a significant positive correlation between identifying as Native American and reported shelter satisfaction. I also found that identifying as a man is significantly negatively correlated with reported shelter satisfaction. Additionally, I will note that many of the variables associated with race were significantly negatively correlated with one another. This is unsurprising, as they are also confounded with one another.

Table 3: Correlations Among Variables in the Analysis
(Pearson's r)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
1. Shelter Satisfaction	1								
2. Age	.006	1							
3. White	-.15**	-.02	1						
4. Latine	.05	.01	-.39**	1					
5. Black	.03	.04	-.36**	-.20**	1				
6. Native American	.11*	.02	-.24**	-.13**	-.12*	1			
7. Man	-.10*	-.06	0.03	-.01	.03	-.07	1		
8. Heterosexual	-.09	.06	.07	-.01	.06	-.05	.10	1	
10. Asian	.02	.01	-.09	-.05	-.05	-.03	.07	-.06	1

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Multivariate Analyses

In my first multivariate analysis, I conducted an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis to examine whether identifying as White vs. not White is a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction when controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation. Consistent with my hypotheses, I found that identifying as White vs. not White was a statistically significant

predictor of reported shelter satisfaction. Those respondents who identified as White were less likely to report high shelter satisfaction compared to those who did not identify as White (see Table 4 below). Additionally, the respondents age, gender, and sexual orientation are not statistically significant predictors of reported shelter satisfaction for any model in this analysis.

Table 4: Ordinary Least Squares Regression on Shelter Satisfaction Ratings for White vs. Non-White Respondents.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	34.15*** (1.12)	34.51*** (2.91)	39.53*** (3.64)
White American	-4.28* (.16)	-4.17* (1.76)	-4.23*(1.78)
Age		-.13 (.63)	.04 (.65)
Man			-2.84 (1.97)
Heterosexual			-4.51 (2.35)
R-Squared	.02	.02	.04

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) are presented.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

In my second multivariate analysis, I conducted an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis to examine whether identifying as Latine vs. not Latine is a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction when controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation. I found that identifying as Latine vs. not Latine was not a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in model 1 (see Table 5 below). However, after adding in control variables, identifying as Latine vs. not Latine was a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in model 2 and model 3. Those respondents who identified as Latine were more likely to report high shelter satisfaction compared to those who did not identify as Latine. Additionally, the respondents age, gender, and sexual orientation are not statistically significant predictors of reported shelter satisfaction in any model.

Table 5: Ordinary Least Squares Regression on Shelter Satisfaction Ratings for Latine vs. Non-Latine Respondents.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	31.65*** (.94)	32.05*** (2.86)	37.11*** (3.61)
Latine American	4.40 (2.33)	4.64* (2.35)	5.28* (.22)
Age		-.13 (.63)	.02 (.65)
Man			-2.94 (1.97)
Heterosexual			-4.55 (2.35)
R-Squared	.01	.01	.04

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) are presented.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

In my third multivariate analysis, I conducted an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis to examine whether identifying as Black vs. not Black is a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction when controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation. I found that identifying as Black vs. not Black was not a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in any model (see Table 6 below). Additionally, the respondents age and gender are not statistically significant predictors of reported shelter satisfaction in any model. However, sexual orientation was a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in model 3. When controlling for Black vs. not Black, age, and gender, those respondents who identified as heterosexual were less likely to report high shelter satisfaction compared to those who did not identify as straight.

Table 6: Ordinary Least Squares Regression on Shelter Satisfaction Ratings for Black vs. Non-Black Respondents.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	32.33*** (.09)	32.81*** (2.86)	37.99*** (3.61)
Black American	.29 (2.39)	.46 (2.40)	1.20 (2.41)
Age		-.15 (.63)	.02 (.65)
Man			-2.91 (1.98)
Heterosexual			-4.86*(2.38)
R-Squared	0	0	.02

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) are presented.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

In my fourth multivariate analysis, I conducted an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis to examine whether identifying as Native American vs. not Native American is a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction when controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation. Consistent with my hypotheses, I found that identifying as Native American vs. not Native American was a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in all models (see Table 7 below). Those respondents who identified as Native American were more likely to report high shelter satisfaction compared to those who did not identify as Native American. Additionally, the respondents age, gender, and sexual orientation are not statistically significant predictors of reported shelter satisfaction for any model in this analysis.

Table 7: Ordinary Least Squares Regression on Shelter Satisfaction Ratings for Native American vs. Non-Native American Respondents.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	31.75*** (.89)	32.29*** (.26)	37.16*** (.33)
Native American	8.52* (.30)	8.67** (3.29)	7.92* (.31)
Age		-.16 (.63)	.003 (.65)
Man			-2.59 (1.97)
Heterosexual			-4.50 (2.35)
R-Squared	.02	.02	.03

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) are presented.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

In my final multivariate analysis, I conducted an Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis to examine whether identifying as Asian vs. not Asian is a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction when controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation. I found that identifying as Asian vs. not Asian was not a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in any model (see Table 8 below). Additionally, the respondents age and gender are not statistically significant predictors of reported shelter satisfaction in any model. However, sexual orientation was a statistically significant predictor of reported shelter satisfaction in model 3. When controlling for Asian vs. not Asian, age, and gender, those respondents who identified as straight were less likely to report high shelter satisfaction compared to those who did not identify as straight.

Table 8: Ordinary Least Squares Regression on Shelter Satisfaction Ratings for Asian vs. Non-Asian Respondents.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	32.37*** (.87)	32.85*** (2.85)	38.01*** (3.61)
Asian American	.38 (8.20)	.46 (8.19)	1.05 (8.21)
Age		-.14 (.63)	.04 (.65)
Man			-2.91 (1.99)
Heterosexual			-4.72*(2.37)
R-Squared	0	0	.02

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses) are presented.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Conclusion and Discussion

In this paper I use univariate, bivariate, multivariate data to determine the relationship between the race of homeless individuals and their self-reported satisfaction with homeless shelters that they have stayed in. I hypothesized that White individuals experiencing homelessness would report significantly lower levels of satisfaction with the shelters they've stayed in relative to non-White individuals experiencing homelessness (H1). I also hypothesized that homeless individuals who identify as Latine, Black, Native American, and Asian American would report significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the shelters they've stayed in relative to non-Latine, Black, Native American, and Asian American homeless individuals (H2).

Consistent with hypothesis 1, after controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation, White individuals reported lower satisfaction with shelters compared to non-White individuals.

Consistent with hypothesis 2, after controlling for age, gender, and sexual orientation, Latine and Native American individuals reported higher satisfaction with shelters compared to non-Latine and non-Native American individuals. Contrary to hypothesis 2, Black individuals did not report significantly higher levels of satisfaction with shelters compared to non-Black individuals.

Additionally, although not central to my hypotheses, sexual orientation played a significant role

in reported satisfaction, with straight individuals generally reporting lower satisfaction than non-straight individuals. However, this effect was only significant when controlling for Black vs. not Black and Asian vs. not Asian.

Implications

The findings of the current study have several implications for both practice and theory. First and foremost, these findings have practical implications for how we interpret the self-reported responses of homeless individuals. Rather than taking self-report data at face value, researchers should aim to understand the structural and historical factors that might influence the responses of these individuals depending on which identities they hold. This approach would hopefully provide researchers with a more complete understanding of the underlying factors that shape the narratives and experiences of homeless individuals. That is, by recognizing that these self-reports are situated within broader social and historical contexts, researchers can develop more nuanced and accurate interpretations of the data. This, in turn, can lead to more effective and targeted interventions and policies that address the specific needs of different subgroups within the homeless population.

Theoretically speaking, these findings align with Cheryl Harris's notion of "Whiteness as Property," indicating that White individuals, even when homeless, exhibit distinct perceptions and experiences compared to non-White individuals (Harris 1993). The lower satisfaction with shelters among White individuals might reflect a sense of entitlement and higher expectations tied to the privileges and rights inherent in Whiteness. This outcome also aligns with the idea that White privilege might provide a baseline expectation of better treatment and resources. Support for these theoretical perspectives highlights the need for shelter services and policies to

recognize and address the diverse experiences and expectations of homeless individuals rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach.

Moreover, these findings support my theorizing regarding racialized reporting bias (Swim & Hyers 1999). Given what the literature shows in terms of the disparate experiences of homeless people of color, it seems unlikely that the higher reports of shelter satisfaction by this group reflect their lived experience relative to White people. That is, non-White individuals' higher satisfaction ratings may not necessarily reflect better experiences but rather different expectations and a potential reluctance to voice dissatisfaction due to systemic biases and historical disenfranchisement. This phenomenon parallels findings in other contexts, such as hate crime reporting and violent crime reporting, where minorities underreport incidents due to potential repercussions (Zaykowski 2010; Sigler & Johnson 2002).

Limitations/Future Directions

Though this study is unique in its purpose and findings, a couple of limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study was conducted in a single city. Comparative studies across different cities or regions would provide a more reliable test of the conclusions of this paper. Specifically, comparative studies could provide insights into how local policies, cultural contexts, and available resources influence the racial disparities in homelessness and satisfaction with services. For example, cities with better social services and more progressive housing policies might have different patterns of homelessness and satisfaction compared to cities with fewer resources and more punitive policies. Additionally, understanding these regional variations can inform more targeted and effective policy interventions which are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of different communities.

A second limitation is that the present study is based on a quantitative analysis of homeless persons' self-reported experiences. Quantitative studies often do not capture the full complexity of the homeless experience. For instance, individuals might not fully understand or be aware of all the services available to them, or they might not accurately assess the quality and impact of these services. Thus, incorporating qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide more nuanced insights into the experiences and perceptions of homeless individuals. Likewise, future studies should also delve deeper into the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexual orientation in shaping the experiences of homelessness to gain a more comprehensive understanding of unique identity-based experiences.

Finally, while the results of this study provide support for many of my hypotheses, they cannot speak directly to my theorizing regarding mechanistic explanations. That this, there is no way to measure the effects of white privilege, whiteness as property, or racialized reported bias with the current data, preventing me from drawing any conclusions about the mechanisms operating to produce these results. Therefore, future research would do well to design questions to specifically test these mechanisms.

In sum, the current study provides valuable insights into the relationship between the race of homeless individuals and their self-reported satisfaction with homeless shelters that they have stayed in. Moving forward, future research should consider comparing studies across different cities or regions, incorporating qualitative methods, delving deeper into the unique outcomes of intersectional identities, and designing questions to directly speak to the proposed theoretical frameworks. By pursuing these directions in the future, researchers can contribute to a more holistic and nuanced understanding of homelessness, ultimately informing more equitable and effective policies and practices.

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