

Recovery Landlordism:

Accumulation through Confinement in the Landscape of Winnipeg's Meth Crisis

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## Abstract

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From late Victorian Model Housing tenements to the public housing projects of high modernity, western states have attempted to use housing as a tool of moral transformation. This paper investigates the case of a Winnipeg landlord who has recently transitioned their private market apartments towards a drug addiction recovery model, and asks how a new form of rehabilitative capitalism has adopted disciplinary techniques from both the welfare and the carceral state. While the landlord has rebranded into an altruistic entity, forming new relationships with community organizations and various arms of the state, they have simultaneously created polices of confinement for their tenants including curfews, a pass system, rules of partitioning, and mandatory volunteer hours. In a long line of state-led projects that have attempted to use Foucauldian techniques of totalizing surveillance and control, the cracks in the landlord's rehabilitative project will show where disciplinary power continues to fail and to renovate itself. Interviews with tenants and other actors in the landlord's network help to understand where this project has met resistance, where it has been accepted, and where it has had to change. Further, the case study explores how confinement has been adopted into the accumulation strategies of private capital, and how rehabilitation creates new subjectivities based on intersecting categories of 'risk' in order to justify intervention.

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## 1. Introduction

In March of 2019, at the height of a moral panic over meth use in Winnipeg, a twenty-unit apartment block on Jarvis Street in the city's North End transitioned into sober-living housing for recovering addicts. In the following months, Karin Harper and Patrick Penner, the private landlords who owned the building, branded their new rehabilitative effort as 'The Living Recovery Foundation of Winnipeg' (LRF) and began to transition a handful of other blocks in their portfolio towards a rehabilitative model. Some of the buildings required sobriety, while others were branded as "Harm Reduction" and allowed tenants to use drugs. In all buildings, however, the housing was contingent on a long list of house rules that aimed to regulate tenant behaviour in and out of the apartment.

The LRF was not the only response to the meth crisis. As panic escalated over the crisis from 2017 onwards, a series of new strategies of urban governance were proposed to defend the city against methamphetamine. Landlords lobbied to expedite evictions for people who use drugs, the Winnipeg Police Service demanded more resources to uproot meth use from the city's downtown and central neighbourhoods, and public institutions – including the city's central library – introduced new policies to bar 'risky' people from entering premises. Nearly all of these strategies focused on the city's core neighbourhoods, an area the state and capital had sought to gentrify in the years leading up to the crisis. Predictably, these strategies sought to displace people associated with the meth crisis, pushing visible poverty and the imagined threat of violence away from gentrifying spaces. But the Living Recovery Foundation took another approach. Instead of evicting people associated with meth use, they created a new brand of housing that would welcome active users and recovering addicts. This contrarian approach invites us to ask: What new opportunities did rehabilitation present for Harper and Penner? If

other institutions set up walls to defend themselves against the perceived threats of the crisis, how did the Living Recovery Foundation attempt to manage entire buildings of ‘risky’ tenants? Was this a new strategy of accumulation? And if so, how can this strategy be described?

There are a few rich examples of academic literature that detail how housing has historically been deployed as a tool of moral transformation. Much of this literature focuses on the discourse of early modern slum clearance, whose proponents framed low-income and racialized people as immoral to justify the razing and rebuilding of entire neighbourhoods (e.g. Hartman, 2019; Peters et al., 2018; Rutland, 2018). In many cases, these neighbourhoods were replaced with public housing under the pretence that a rationalized architecture could transform people. In the modern housing project, scholars have explored how architecture and evictions have been used to act upon people, to render them “docile” (Lethabo-King, 2010; Shabazz, 2015). There is also a literature that examines the links between public housing and the governance of people who use drugs, the latter of which has become a key subject category to define immorality since the civil rights movements of the late 1960s. In Canada, critical scholarship has recently demonstrated how the state’s ‘supportive’ housing uses policies of confinement to monitor and ‘treat’ marginalized tenants associated with drug use (Fast and Cunningham, 2018).

This research has created a solid base from which we can understand the state’s deployment of rehabilitative housing. The state’s rehabilitative housing has always relied on costly systems of surveillance and disciplinary power to try to control and transform people in their homes, but these disciplinary techniques have always been challenged and incomplete. My thesis, however, explores how strategies of rehabilitation are activated in the places where most low-income tenants find their homes – the private rental market. Does rehabilitation look



different when it relies on profit? Given the role of profit, we can also ask how important the transformation of people really is. Indeed, my research suggests that the rehabilitation offered by the LRF was piecemeal at best, and its most significant effects occurred in other registers. If rehabilitation in public housing operates as a form of control where a certain form of individual transformation is desired, rehabilitation in the private sphere uses control for other purposes that are more specifically associated to stabilizing risky investments in a search for profit. The existing literature on rehabilitative housing helps to understand how the state has used the notion of ‘risky subjects’ to justify governance of marginalized groups of people in their homes, but there is a pressing need to critically examine how this categorization of risk functions to open up new speculative economies based on the management of marginalization.

There is also a large literature on profit making in private housing. In the past forty years, gentrification has loomed large in housing scholarship. In this body of work, critical academics have attempted to deconstruct how socio-economic groups and land uses face displacement in large cities that become increasingly dominated by finance, investment, and real estate capital. The Winnipeg Inner City, however, is not gentrifying, or not quite – and this, despite major efforts on the part of the state and capital to ensure it did. In a situation where gentrification is desired but not occurring, different kinds of questions are raised. What strategies appear when in spaces where disinvestment and marginalization have taken place, but revitalization fails? Intuitively, disinvestment creates social and economic problems to be solved. While post-industrial capital shifts away from a productive economy, rehabilitation offers new opportunities to create surplus value in the management of such troubles. My thesis examines how rehabilitation operates in spaces of disinvestment as an accumulation strategy. To understand a strategy of accumulation that speculates on the creation and management of social and economic

problems, I cross-reference housing literature with the work of scholars who have studied carcerality and colonialism. This helps to build a critique that attends to how strategies of accumulation rely not only on nefarious displacement, but also the contradictions of benevolence and confinement.

This thesis focuses on the LRF as an entry point to the contradictions of rehabilitation and accumulation in disinvested space. The body of my thesis follows five main chapters. In chapter two, my literature review will trace the use of housing as a tool of moral transformation. This trajectory begins with Foucault's analysis of France's Hôpital Générale which sought to confine 'undesirable' subjects, and shifts towards late Victorian model tenements and, finally, post-World War II housing interventions. Chapter three outlines my research methods, while chapter four provides necessary context, tracing the development of Winnipeg's meth crisis and contextualizing this moment in Winnipeg's particular history. Chapter five begins my analysis of the Living Recovery Foundation, deconstructing the notion of rehabilitation by looking at how the LRF structured its model according to drug addiction rehab and Federal rehabilitative housing programs. Chapter six looks at how the Living Recovery Foundation's model is made profitable, and what supports it leaned on to find profit. The shift towards recovery landlordism initially helped to solve vacancy problems by 'selling' rehab and capturing referrals to fill units. Finally, in chapter seven, we see how the Living Recovery Foundation uses disciplinary power not only under the pretence of rehabilitating tenants, but also in attempt to gain control over their buildings. To mitigate risks attached to their strategy of renting to "risky" tenants in a disinvested landscape, they developed disciplinary rules that sought to control tenant behaviour and expanded their use of evictions to threaten and discipline tenants who challenged their order.

The crux of rehabilitative capitalism, I conclude, lies in this confrontation between profit and disciplinary power. As other authors will tell us, disciplinary power has always been expensive, and its technologies, including architecture have been deployed to make it more effective and more austere. While such advances have aimed to make disciplinary structures more complete, they will never be totalizing. Resistance is always present and is always anticipated in the disciplinary apparatus. Recovery Landlordism demonstrates that disciplinary power can be fragile when it relies on profit but also suggests that disciplinary power gains momentum alongside the search for profit. The Living Recovery Foundation was able to capture a demand for disciplinary rehab in a particular moment sparked by a moral panic over methamphetamine. While this helped to stabilize their profits, their project soon expanded, using their rehabilitative branding to capture demand from a wider network of referrals connected to the state's neoliberal system of moral transformation. Rehabilitative capitalism allowed the Living Recovery Foundation to find profit in a disinvested space, but their strategy for accumulation would rely on finding new subjects who needed the intervention.

## 2. Literature review: Housing as a tool of moral transformation

### 2.1 Discipline through architecture

The use of housing to contain, control, and transform people has a long history. An early example can be found in Michel Foucault's (1965) analysis of the founding of Paris's first Hôpital Général in 1656. Here, the state sought to house the mentally ill, the homeless, and the unemployed all under one roof:

The unemployed person was no longer driven away or punished; he was taken in charge, at the expense of the nation but at the cost of his individual liberty. Between him and society, an implicit system of obligation was established: he had the right to be fed, but he must accept the physical and moral constraint of confinement. (48)

This 'Great Confinement' would absorb the visibly poor from Paris's public spaces. But as the excerpt also mentions, it marked an interest in using housing to shape morality, claiming that "the origin of poverty was neither scarcity of commodities nor unemployment, but the weakening of discipline and the relaxation of morals" (59).

The use of housing to alter people continued into the Victorian and early modern periods but involved a new form of power. The concept of discipline through architecture is one of the most famous contributions of Foucault's (1977) analysis of 'disciplinary' power. This new 'individualizing and totalizing' form of power spread out through the entire social body and exerted its influence on individuals and their behaviours, giving constant and slight corrections towards the ends of an ideal masse, or population. In short, disciplinary power made subjects of individuals (Foucault, 2002a, 331). It formed what Foucault highlights as 'an essential circularity' where obedience became known as a social and moral good, establishing a "constricting link between an increased aptitude and increased domination" (138). Whereas the Great Confinement of the Hôpital Général was a 'binary division' demarcating class lines, or

separating desirables from the so-called undesirables, disciplinary interventions ran throughout all social institutions and applied itself to everyday life in order to relentlessly rationalize categories of good and docile bodies.

Foucault (2002b) claimed that “space is fundamental in any form of power” (361) and accordingly, disciplinary places had distinct architectural features designed to facilitate the project. Three features were particularly important. Partitioning would make it possible to locate and distinguish individuals, to analyze and categorize them, and to engineer specific communications or relations between subjects. Enclosure made sites distinct and protected from their environments and created a monastic brand of confinement that turned the gaze inwards, within the walls. Finally, panoptic design aimed to have all corners fall under a single, centralized gaze to create the possibility of constant and omnipresent surveillance.

The power of discipline, it should be noted, was never complete – even in the case of totalizing surveillance. Anna Vermer Andrzejewski (2008) found that panoptic spaces constantly had to redesign their surveillance systems in response to - or in anticipation of - resistance. In these adaptations, Andrzejewski consistently noticed non-architectural ‘auxiliary’ forms of surveillance (i.e. guard patrols) that attempted to reinforce the disciplinary space. Even in panoptic spaces, the possibility for resistance is predetermined because of the dialectical relationship inherent in any gaze between two parties “which influences the actions of those under the gaze as well as those who exercise it” (95). Disciplinary projects were under constant renovation not simply because of shortcomings in panoptic architecture, but because resistance was expected in the encounter.

## 2.2 Early development of disciplinary housing

Housing has been a major site for the deployment of disciplinary power, as a large literature demonstrates. Nineteenth-century model housing projects are a prime example. These projects, built across Britain, France, and parts of North America, redeveloped dilapidated worker housing “to give a moral structure to public space” (Evans, 1978, 34). The model houses would now reconstruct private spaces with the aim of reshaping the lives of tenants. Using the tools of partitioning, enclosure, and surveillance, architects of the British reformatory housing projects “sought to re-mould the lower classes in their own recently crystallized image” (Evans, 1978, 33). New tenements broke up multi-family spaces into individualized and discernible family units, making it easier to track and register individuals according to the bourgeois norms of a nuclear family (29), and apartment layouts were designed to enforce clear boundaries around hierarchy, sexuality, and gender. Sex would be relegated to the private space of the master bedroom, and genders would be divided into two secondary bedrooms (31).

Moral reformers in late nineteenth-century Canadian cities were similarly interested in using architecture to transform people. In early industrial Montreal, Robert Lewis (2000) found that the creation of working-class housing played a key role in securing “a districts place in the city’s spatial division of manufacturing” (250). Early manufacturing districts became less attractive to firms because of increasing congestion and insurgent labour forces, and firms that could afford it moved outwards to newly planned districts that offered “faster distributional methods, more efficient internal layout, and better labour control” (17). Remodeled industrial districts were designed to ensure greater production, but a central part of this rationalized planning turned towards designing working-class neighbourhoods that would create docile and productive workers.

When Canadian reformers tried to imagine new designs for working-class housing, they often turned to the Model Housing estates of the mid-nineteenth century Britain. In Halifax, a proposal for a model housing project was directly inspired by British examples. In the proposal, interior spaces were partitioned, and spaces were designed to spur self-surveillance. Central courtyards, for example, contained children's activities and put them on display to the surrounding apartments, creating "a process in which the tenants would ultimately be self-surveilling and self-normalizing" (Rutland, 2018, 66). Under the project of moral reform, these efforts aimed "to take hold of life, to improve its condition, through calculated spatial interventions" (Rutland, 2018, 32).

These efforts, importantly, were invested in shaping the Canadian identity according to norms that were heavily contingent on race, sexuality, and class (Maynard, 2017; Crooks, 2018). In Halifax, the model housing project was geared toward white working-class residents; nothing of the sort was proposed for Black residents. Beyond the city, moreover, the history of residential schools is tightly tied to the history of model housing. In Sarah De Leeuw's (2007) study of residential schools in British Columbia, she explains how state projects, such as policing and colonialism are "embedded, embodied and enacted" through architecture (340). This occurred alongside the settler state's ongoing apartheid, which attempted to keep Indigenous peoples out of cities and imposed a pass system administered by colonial agents in attempt to track and control movement of Indigenous peoples across their traditional lands.

It took several decades before large-scale housing projects would successfully break ground. Halifax's model housing project was proposed by a parishioner in 1905, but the proposal was ultimately struck down due to anxieties that the new project, which relied heavily on private investment, would fail to "transform the environment of the poor while simultaneously providing

a profit to the project's investors" (ibid., 71). Critics were afraid that rising rents could lead to displacement, which would undermine the project's goal of transforming the existing tenants and could risk spreading immorality to other spaces. Instead, moral reformers in Halifax and other Canadian cities found success by advocating for smaller scale surveillance projects including installing additional lighting and increasing police patrols to target sex work (Crooks, 2018), and by pushing for legislation that controlled the mobility of racialized people such as prostitution laws, drug laws, 'sundown' curfew laws, and migration laws (Maynard, 2017).

### 2.3 Slum clearance and whiteness

At mid-century, Canadian cities finally were able to take on large-scale housing redevelopment thanks to post-war Keynesian economic programs and the cultural shift towards 'high modernism.' Nourished by the ideals of late Victorian moral reformers, the modernists intervened where they believed it was possible to improve the human condition. James Scott (1998) explains that the new era legitimized the "unrestrained use of power of the modern state as an instrument for achieving these designs" (88-89). High modernists accepted the ostensible authority of progress and scientific study and proceeded with a far greater scale of architectural redevelopment that sometimes meant "wiping the slate utterly clean and beginning from zero" (ibid., 95). Nowhere was this as clear as the project of slum-clearance and redevelopment.

Redevelopment plans targeted white and racialized working-class communities alike, but there are key differences for how this played out in Black and Indigenous communities compared to their white counterparts. These differences help to demonstrate how the modern state envisioned differently the moral transformation of racialized spaces. When white working-class neighbourhoods were targeted for redevelopment, Cities commissioned detailed studies to define and categorize blighted areas and to justify their reconstruction. When Black neighbourhoods



such as Montreal's Little Burgundy and Halifax's Africville were targeted, their racialized residents were either ignored (High, 2019, 34), or swiftly written off as slum-dwellers without any use of evidence (Rutland, 2018, 145). When Indigenous communities on Winnipeg's fringe came into view for white suburban settlement, settlers renovated old colonial tropes to paint what Owen Toews (2018) calls *suburbs nullius*, construing Indigenous neighbourhoods as "inherently inferior – sad, backwards, unhealthy, immoral – places ripe for removal and replacement" (114). For example, the residents of Rooster Town, a Métis suburb on Winnipeg's southern fringe, were assumed to be incompatible with modernity even though families attended the same institutions as white Winnipeggers in neighbouring communities. Archival photos challenge this notion, showing Rooster Towners wearing their modern clothing with pride (Peters, 2018, 127-135).

Compensation for displacement was also drastically different along racial lines. In Little Burgundy, which was construed as a white francophone community (erasing Blackness from planning documents), tenants received \$1,000 in 1967 to cover their moving expenses (High, 2019, 37). People of Africville who could not provide a land title received as little as \$500 between 1964 and 1969 (Rutland, 2018, 147). In 1959, the Métis of Rooster Town (many of whom had land titles and paid municipal taxes) received a meager \$75 per household, which would fall to \$50 if they did not move immediately (Peters et al., 2018, 149). If we take landownership as an indicator of class status, these levels of compensation suggest that the modern state's conception of a 'right to the city' was more contingent on race than class in Canada.

Perhaps most importantly, slum clearance and redevelopment projects ignored and tore apart what Saidiya Hartman (2019) describes as "the mutual aid and communal wealth of the slum" (19-20). For Indigenous Winnipeggers, "the outskirts of Winnipeg became one of a

severely diminished archipelago of places ... where work, shelter, community, and freedom from persecution could be found” (Toews, 2018, 113). Leaving Rooster Town meant losing “the ability to live in a largely Métis community” as well as the autonomy that residents had built which allowed “some control over their residences and land, and the low cost of housing” (Peters et al., 2018, 153). Similarly, the renovation of Little Burgundy “undermined the thick web of community institutions that served Montreal’s Black community” demolishing not only buildings, as High (2018) puts it, “but also neighbourhood connections” (39-40). In Africville, the severance of Black ties to the land, water, and a community that was built over six-decades destroyed “everything that allowed them to endure and make life in an anti-Black city” (Rutland, 2018, 150).

Altogether, the trajectories of these redevelopment projects show how the Canadian state envisioned social transformation differently along racial lines. While Little Burgundy and Regent Park were concerned with the moral regulation of white working-class residents “by altering the environment in which they lived” (James, 2010, 70), the redevelopment of Africville and Rooster Town included no vision for the transformation or the futurity of those communities. On this note, Rutland acknowledges “it is telling ... that nothing like a model tenements plan was ever proposed for Black-majority sections of the city” (74). If modern redevelopment sought to engineer ‘higher life’ through residential architecture, the Canadian state left no space for Blackness and Indigeneity within its rehabilitative project.

#### 2.4 The fragility of public housing

In a similar vein, early public housing projects in the United States and Canada rarely served the disenfranchised residents that it proposed to reform. The first wave of American public housing aimed to redevelop slum neighbourhoods using the familiar justification of moral improvement

through modern housing. Although the United States Housing Authority located nearly every prewar housing project on slum sites, less than 20% of the previous residents were ever given access to the new housing (Vale, 2013, 11). From the 1930s into the late 1960s, housing authorities avoided granting access to so-called ‘problem’ families, and “focused admission on [white] two-parent households with secure employment” who would fit the nuclear layouts and moderate rent structures (ibid., 12).

In Canada, rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) subsidies were only available to families, seniors, and people with disabilities until the 1980s, which kept unattached adults out of public housing (Suttor, 2016a, 188). Screening protocols limited the inclusion of welfare recipients in Canadian housing projects until the 1970s and even once people were housed, they could face eviction for poor housekeeping or disturbing other tenants (Silver, 2006, 57). Even though public housing was pitched to transform ‘immoral’ people and spaces through redevelopment, early housing authorities did not entrust such a task to the built form alone. Instead, they relied on screening and evictions to carefully mediate who belonged in the transformative projects.

This resonates with Matthew Hollow’s (2010) analysis of public housing design in Sheffield, England where it was clear the state’s normalization project did not wholly trust the built form. Going beyond disciplinary architecture, “the social sphere also had to be shaped if authorities were to be able to discipline the conduct of their subjects” (128). Whereas modernist planners such as Le Corbusier relied heavily on the normalizing power of a built form, Sheffield’s Park Hill architects took on a sociological approach which instead emphasized the important role that socialization played in moral transformation. Rather than directly shaping morality through architecture, Park Hill’s sociological approach sought to maintain architectural aspects of communal life and shared spaces that were already common in the so-called slum, but

tweaked behaviours using regulations and on-the-ground sociologists who would “instruct tenants how to act socially” (ibid., 128). Like their North American counterparts, British housing authorities were unconvinced that architecture alone would achieve the moral transformation that they had envisioned. Here too, they carefully manipulated the social fabric of public housing to avoid failure in their rehabilitative schemes.

This brief period of modern working-class rental housing shifted quite rapidly once suburban expansion allowed a new whiteness to be constructed on the urban fringe. Shortly after racialized neighbourhoods in the core had been redeveloped in Canadian cities, the white working-class and ascending middle class were given the opportunity to “activate their whiteness by participating in a thrilling, futuristic remaking – and retaking – of a new segment of the region” (Toews, 2018, 118). Whiteness flew to the periphery of North American cities, sometimes driven away by ‘blockbusting’ real estate profiteers who encouraged white homeowners abandon their inner-city homes (Taylor, 2019). Meanwhile, the civil rights movement won greater access to subsidized rental and homeownership programs for Black and Indigenous people who moved into vacant housing left by the white exodus.

It was at this moment where public housing authorities truly had to reckon with the residents that they had discursively proposed to uplift. Instead, from the 1970s onwards, American public housing became sites of disinvestment and confinement as US housing authorities shifted resources towards the private rental market (Vale, 2013, 30), erected fences around the projects and subjected tenants to police raids and occupations (Oliver-Didier, 2016). During this period, a rhetorical and literal ‘war on drugs’ was waged on subjects and spaces that were targeted for state-led disciplinary interventions. The flashpoints of these interventions were often located in and around urban areas that had only recently undergone modern redevelopment,

which made urban public housing an important site of struggle as we will see in the section below.

In Canada, public housing did not privatize so quickly, but state-run housing did see an expanded use of surveillance under the rhetoric of benevolent service-provision. Public housing authorities shifted towards a ‘targeted’ delivery model in the 1970s which dedicated new social housing to people with disabilities or people experiencing homelessness (Suttor, 2016a). Although devolution and privatization would follow only a few decades later, the political will for public housing was sustained longer in Canada by reimagining who was deserving of ‘support.’ At the same time, this reimagining was influenced by the deinstitutionalization era which led to closures of psychiatric institutions across the country, and a shift towards housing ‘patients’ in community settings. This led to the creation a new category of public housing in the 1980s known as ‘supportive housing’ which included more surveillance than previous iterations of public housing under the notion that the ‘targeted’ populations required additional supervision (Suttor, 2016b, 28). The shift to supportive housing allowed the state to keep building social housing for a short while but nevertheless included polices of confinement similar to the securitization of American public housing. By the 2000s, Canadian housing policy would follow the US model of subsidizing ‘supportive’ tenancies in the private market, thereby pushing the role of surveillance into the hands of private landlords.

Public housing came to Canada wrapped in the modernist proposition that a rationalized architecture could transform tenants into docile, healthy, and productive subjects, but the disciplinary power of the built form was never complete. This is not to say, however, that the spatial techniques were unimportant. After mid-century the Foucauldian tools of partitioning, enclosure, and surveillance were reinforced and weaponized in a way that led to a more extreme

form of rationalized architecture, easily described as confinement. In the current neoliberal context where public housing has faced decades of disinvestment and privatization, we might ask: how has the state's disciplinary project moved from public housing into the private rental market and other institutions?

### 2.5 Renovated governance under neoliberalism

The rise of neoliberalism since the 1970s is commonly associated with the shrinking of the state (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Hackworth and Moriah, 2006), but the theory of a minimalist state is full of contradiction. In *Golden Gulag*, Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007) contends that the state did not disappear, but “what withered was the state's legitimacy to act as the Keynesian state” (83). The modernist period, which saw large-scale state-led projects endeavoring to ‘improve’ life, was a perhaps only a short window of opportunity where political will was strong enough for such paternalistic forms of governance. Under neoliberalism, the state continued to build great projects, but Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Craig Gilmore (2007) explain that this new ‘anti-state state’ relied on “the expanded use of cages as catch-all solutions to social and political problems” (142). In order to justify the growing use of confinement as a form of governance, renovated categories of criminality would emerge to categorize ‘illiberal’ subjects who deserved violent intervention, particularly around the criminalization of drug use (e.g. Corva, 2008; Alexander, 2010; Linnemann, 2016).

As cities restructured after mid-century, people who were relegated to a devalued inner-city began to be associated, or coded, to the area. Michelle Alexander (2010) explains that racism is “highly adaptable” and that the systems which delineate and enforce racial hierarchy “evolve and change as they are challenged” (21). Along with Toews' (2018) analysis of racialized spatial coding in Winnipeg (145), several geographers have noted a similar shift after the civil rights

movement (e.g. Gilmore and Gilmore, 2007; Corva, 2008). Overtly racist language was veiled by spatial terms such as ‘urban’ and ‘immigrant’ “in order to avoid the nasty stench of past outrage” (Gilmore and Gilmore, 2007, 145) while still prioritizing the surveillance and control of ‘problem’ communities. Two highly effective categories that recycled the power of overt racism, and reapplied disenfranchising moral terms to both subjects and spaces, were the intersecting labels of ‘criminal’ and ‘drug user.’

In the wake of Nixon’s war on crime, Reagan’s war on drugs rolled out policies that accelerated the surveillance, criminalization, and confinement of people who use drugs in the United States. The ‘wartime’ rhetoric was backed by a growing militarization of police forces that descended upon poor and racialized neighbourhoods to root out and lock up people associated with drug use. Angela Davis (1998) surmises that in this period, crime, drugs, immigration, and welfare replaced communism as “the quintessential enemy against which the nation imagines its identity” (66). In the 1980s, this imagination of Black inner-city drug users as a threat to American society was scaled up and adopted internationally to build an “abstract imagination of drugs as a threat to global society” (Corva, 2008, 188).

By 1982, Canada had joined the effort on its home soil by implementing its own national drug strategy. The strategy, which also reflected “political preferences for funding policing and prisons rather than social welfare and drug treatment” (Khenti, 2014, 192) led to racialized surveillance and incarceration in inner-city communities, where Black and Indigenous people were disproportionately targeted as threats. Robyn Maynard (2017) reminds us that this is not a new phenomenon, but rather a renovation of Canada’s late 19<sup>th</sup> century drug laws which “since their inception, [were] a mechanism of legally mandated, racially motivated surveillance, harassment and incarceration for racialized persons” (47). Rather than a historical departure, the

20<sup>th</sup> century's war on drugs marked a revision of post-slavery Canadian policy where "the ongoing subjugation of now nominally free Black people was justified by linking them to drugs, hypersexuality, danger and criminality" (ibid., 40).

## 2.6 Public housing during the War on Drugs

The war on drugs brought a new approach to public housing. In the 1990s, US drug policy bled into housing policy with Clinton's 'One Strike and You're Out' legislation, which in 1996 made it easier to evict and exclude drug offenders from public housing. Two years later, One-Strike housing policy made it possible to bar applicants who were even suspected to be "using illegal drugs or abusing alcohol" (Alexander, 2010, 145). Under this legislation, tenants were also responsible for the activity of their guests on and off public housing premises, which caused families to be "reluctant to allow their relatives – particularly those who are recently released from prison – to stay with them, even temporarily" (ibid., 147). Tiffany Lethabo King (2010) explains that One Strike rules in public housing meant that Black women "are forbidden to support their children who may be in crisis" (57), and that this logic of expulsion became "the imperative in order to relinquish the state of the responsibility to support black women and their families" (55). One Strike policies placed vulnerable tenants on a fine line between enfranchisement and mutual aid, where any step outside of the disciplinary boundary could result in eviction from both state and familial support systems. Once again, the 'mutual aid and communal wealth' of low-income tenants was under attack in racialized communities.

At the same time, the spatial character of public housing was hardened by the War on Drugs. The stigmatization of public housing as spaces riddled with criminality and drug use justified both a conceptual and a literal "fencing off" of public housing tenants from surrounding society (Oliver-Didier, 2016). Rashad Shabazz (2015) explains that the added security measures



including fences, metal detectors, curfews, police raids and patrols, and video surveillance turned the housing project into an ‘interstitial carceral space’ that represented “the spatial and architectural marriage between home and prison” (56). While the housing project offered more freedom and possibility than the prison and even had “the subsequent effect of harnessing Black political power” (63), the architectural adaptations transformed public housing into carceral spaces that ‘primed’ subjects for prison. Scholars of neoliberal housing policy are right to point to how the disinvestment and neglect of public housing across western states has changed the lives of public housing tenants, but these critiques sometimes miss the ways that the state did invest huge resources into public housing. These specific renovations were intended to securitize public housing and to create more carceral conditions rather than more beautiful or livable ones.

## 2.7 Repression and rehabilitation

The war on drugs, scholars increasingly recognize, was not waged through repression alone. Rehabilitation has also played a role. Despite the intense governance of subjects and spaces associated with criminality and drug use, the war on drugs did little to curb the use and availability of drugs. A growing sentiment “questioned if the two billion dollars spent annually on the Canadian corrections system ... might not be better spent on prevention, treatment and harm reduction” (Khenti, 2014, 192). Canada’s 2015 federal election showcased this most clearly, where the legalization of marijuana became an important tenet of the Liberal party’s strategy to gain popular appeal by positioning themselves further left than the National Democratic Party. The success of their strategy showed that the popular vote in Canada had embraced a different, perhaps more ‘caring’ governance of drug use, at least in relation to marijuana.

The pairing of repression and rehabilitation has been explored by an expanding set of scholars. This research has shown that compassionate forms of urban governance are themselves shaped by harsher forms of governance (Fairbanks, 2011; Fast and Cunningham, 2018) and absorb the tendencies of capitalist urbanization (Hennigan and Speer, 2019). Often, the agendas of benevolent and revanchist urban governance spring from the same root. As Hennigan and Speer (2019) studied homelessness management in the United States, they found that the “blending of paternalistic care and criminalization derive from a common base: the political-economic force of revitalizing cities.” Whether urban redevelopment relies on harsh forms of displacement or ostensibly kinder forms of ‘management,’ both strategies are based in speculative worldviews that aim to control the agency and movement of subjects that are imagined as a threat on the urban frontier. Similarly, in her study of the Winnipeg Police Service’s tactics in ‘softer’ forms of community policing, Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land (2017) argued the following:

The ideas promoted by tough on crime rhetoric and rehabilitative efforts are that Indigenous peoples need either containment by the state or help by the state – either way, these ideas contribute to making Indigenous control over their lands and lives unthinkable to most Canadians. (416)

Rehabilitation and repression are mechanisms of planning for a specific future bolstered by the norms they are trying to engrain. While the former is protected by the veneer of altruism, each mechanism serves to foreclose a vision of how to move forward.

## 2.8 New categories of risk and speculation

When it comes to rehabilitation, new categories of normality and pathology have emerged. Just as former disciplinary interventions were heavily shaped by overlapping categories of race, gender, sexuality, ability and class, rehabilitation operates differently across intersecting categories of marginalization. Rather than drawing distinct categories of ab/normalcy, the recent

scholarship on debilitation and rehabilitation has noticed a more Deleuzian form of categorization that is relational, or “a biosocial gradation of difference” (Fritsch and McGuire, 2019, 32). In this modulated form of categorization, it is impossible to achieve an entirely ideal or docile subject because “one is never finished with anything” (Deleuze, 1992, 5), or as Puar (2017) states: “no one is constituted as an idealized able body” (158). This means that rehabilitative categories can flex to apply to virtually any person. However, longer lasting categories of marginalization tend to predict how certain people will experience rehabilitation. In addiction rehab, Gowan and Whetstone (2017) found that “racialized and classed notions of disease followed the addicts across the social structure into their programs” (88) and these intersecting categories of race, class, and ‘disease’ predicted what kind of intervention people received. More marginalized subjects were predicted to be less ‘curable’ and their experience in rehab was more carceral than white and middle-class addicts.

The language of ‘risk’ that is applied to the ‘at-risk subject’ helps to understand how interventions are determined by intersecting categories of marginalization. Fritsch and McGuire (2019) explain that the notion of risk is constructed at the cultural level based on “ideas about continuums of disability/nondisability and/or graded scales of normalcy/abnormalcy” (32). This means that risk can be socially constructed as a technology of nation-building, which attempts to imagine what is ‘normal’ in society and where disability and other categories of difference are imagined as ‘risks’ to the figurative nation or the ostensibly ‘normal’ subject.

Risk categorization is a double-edged sword. The ‘risky subject’ is imagined according to pre-existing categories of marginalization, but the act of identifying ‘risky subjects’ can also create vulnerable structural environments for people who are subjected to such categories. More succinctly, categories of risk create risky situations for people. Black geographers in particular

have explained how the governance of marginalized subjects creates certain ‘geographies of risk’ (Shabazz, 2015) which not only categorize, but exacerbate “group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (Gilmore, 2007, 28). Further, Puar (2017) explains that colonial states rely on the creation of non-normative or risky subjects to justify violence in the present tense to secure their settler-colonial vision. Imagining risk, or a future threat, allows the state “evacuate the politics of the now from culpability” (7). Following neoliberalism’s application of categories such as ‘criminal’ and ‘addict,’ the imagining of ‘risky subjects’ diverts blame away from structures that create vulnerability and onto the individual. This sets the parameters of rehabilitative intervention as one that is more focused with transforming or controlling the subject than it is with systemic change, which does little to reverse the conditions of vulnerability.

While these categorizations of risk are particular to the state and the public sector, there are important resonances with contemporary developments in the private sector and the accumulation of capital. It is not coincidental that ‘at-risk’ subjects are at odds with the speculative economies of urban development, or capitalism more broadly. In Desiree Fields’ (2017) study of the embodied effects of financialized rental housing, she found that tenants in affordable rental housing were subjected to waves of abandonment and threatened with displacement as properties changed hands and their owners changed strategies of accumulation. Investing in low-rent, often distressed housing was a “high-risk, but potentially high-payoff” (598) strategy for landlords. However, as landlords sought to extract profit from distressed buildings, the failures of their strategies were “borne out not just in burst pipes, electrical fires and elevator failures, but in tenants’ physical health, family relationships at home and social relationships outside the home” (ibid., 599). Caught in the mess of risky strategies of

accumulation, tenants' quotidian lives were debilitated and put at greater risk of physical, social, and economic harm. Here, we see how financial calculations of risk in investments intersect with ontological assessments of human beings – in this case, tenants.

However, risk also points towards the fragility of these same structures of power. Despite the spreading and changing strategies of commodifying affordable housing, Fields (2017) reminds us that these political economies are fictitious anticipations of future yields. Financialization is always 'in the making' and the key role that tenants play as 'unwilling subjects of financialization' means that their shared opposition to such programs holds collective weight (601). On a similar note, Puar (2017) explains that the biopolitical projects of the 'speculative rehabilitative economy' are created under the terms of prehensive time. The rehabilitative state can set the terms for the present because they are construed as the necessary path to a vision of the future. Through this, the state not only controls the terms for the present, but is "seeding the fixed future into the present" by articulating and administering its vision (148). The fragility of achieving such speculative futures relies heavily on disciplinary interventions to counterbalance the risk of resistance. In this scheme, all subjects are 'at-risk' of countering the plot and no one is entirely reliable in the state's speculative biopolitical future. As disciplinary interventions are applied generally over the risky social body, "collective punishment is overturned into otherwise untenable lines of solidarity" (160) and the possibility for resistance might gain popular appeal and collective impact.

### 2.9 Treatment Housing and accumulation through confinement

Not surprisingly, housing has been an important site for the deployment of drug-war repression and rehabilitation. In 1982, when Pennsylvania's welfare policy went through a typical neoliberal overhaul, a category for the 'needy substance abuser' was created to provide

additional benefits to one ‘targeted’ group. This served to mitigate criticism for larger cuts to General Assistance but also brought changes to the housing market. To capitalize on the slightly better incomes of ‘addicts’ over other recipients, “street-level entrepreneurs began to transform dilapidated row homes into unlicensed, unregulated recovery houses at a break-neck pace” (Fairbanks, 2011, 2557). In an interview, one operator explained that he saw “the recovery house as clearing-house for moral, personal, vocational and economic revitalization” (ibid., 2561), thereby forming a clear link to the moral imperatives of Victorian and Modern housing reform, but now fixing transformation on individual pathologies. By playing a role in the transformation of their tenants, recovery landlords found new opportunities for profit in otherwise disinvested apartment buildings. To fit their new roles, they absorbed the logic and rhetoric of Welfare caseworkers and frame the struggles of their tenants as problems of choice and behavior (ibid.), detracting from structural conditions such as class and racial apartheid or the economic hardship of being ‘squeezed’ for rent.

A similar project occurred in Vancouver. While Philadelphia’s recovery houses showcase a typical privatization of health and housing under neoliberalism, tenants in the Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside saw a different shift after 2007 when the state purchased and took over management of several Single-Room Occupancy hotels (SROs), converting entire buildings into state-run ‘supportive housing.’ Fast and Cunningham (2018) connect this unusual scale of state intervention in housing with urban revitalization efforts ahead of the 2010 Winter Olympics and the ongoing public health emergency of an opioid overdose crisis. The twinning of these circumstances justified “heightened surveillance of at-risk populations” orchestrated by a partnership of healthcare workers, social workers, and police merging “enforcement and treatment in the places where they now live” (ibid., 243). Under this ‘Régime of Care’ the

disciplinary use of evictions was replaced by building transfers where instead of evicting tenants into homelessness, tenants were moved to other buildings. This made tenants realize that “it seems like you aren’t really allowed to be homeless in downtown Vancouver anymore” (tenant interview in Fast and Cunningham, 2018, 245).

### 2.10 Summary

The analysis above, formed by Vancouver’s most marginalized tenants, helps us to trace a clear connection between supportive housing in the Downtown Eastside and Foucault’s ‘Great Confinement.’ Both cases sought not only the moral transformation of its tenants, but the transformation of public space towards “the edification of a perfect city” (Foucault, 1965, 63) where certain people had no right to be. Scholarship on carcerality details how Western states have used their institutions, such as public housing, psychiatric hospitals, and prisons, to contain and confine marginalized people. Meanwhile, the gentrification literature has shown how post-industrial real estate benefits from this process of erasure which allows capital to speculate on the possibility of displacement and replacement in disinvested spaces. My thesis identifies an intersection between these literatures to uncover a new strategy of accumulation that finds profit in confinement. When the Canadian state began to sell off public housing, to close psychiatric hospitals, and in some cases, to shut down its prisons, new opportunities were created for the private market to fill these so-called rehabilitative roles. The Living Recovery Foundation exemplifies how a private landlord found profit in the project of confinement in not-yet-gentrified spaces or spaces that had failed to gentrify, and it demonstrates how profit-based rehabilitation is different from the state-owned model.

### 3. Research outline

When the Living Recovery Foundation began its transition towards addiction recovery housing, local housing workers wondered what kind of opportunities this would present for them. This formed a central question for my research, but it was also important to ask what kind of challenges the landlord faced in this transition. Preliminary information from tenants and tenant advocates suggested that the landlord had failed to implement rehabilitative programming on-site, which prompted us to ask what kind of rehabilitation was envisioned and how was it deployed in the apartment buildings. These three research questions form the basis for the following chapters of the thesis. By speaking directly with people who were involved in the LRF's project or had lived in the buildings, the research was able to build a narrative of what the Living Recovery Foundation was trying to achieve and how it met resistance on the ground.

The research for this thesis followed three main components. First, I collected and reviewed newspaper articles by the Winnipeg Free Press that mentioned meth or methamphetamine between 2010 and 2020 to chart the emersion of Winnipeg's meth crisis in the journalistic media, and to study how discourse was shaped and by whom. I supplemented this media review with other key newspaper articles related to major urban developments and police reports over the same period to contextualize the meth crisis in a wider backdrop of strategies for urban restructuring, particularly around Winnipeg's downtown.

Secondly, I review documentary materials to understand how the LRF have rebranded and adapted in the first two years since their formation. This included their own public documents, lists of rules, meeting minutes between the LRF and community organizations, and some correspondence between the LRF and their wider network. Rather than focusing on the



landlords as sole actors, I hoped to understand how they interact with a network, what roles and rhetoric they have borrowed from the state and non-profit spheres, and whether they would be accountable to this network of actors.

The third and most important component was interviews with four tenants, a local housing worker, two ex-staff members of the Living Recovery Foundation, and one of the two owners. The interviews helped to gain a more multi-faceted impression of the LRF's model, including how the program has developed in stages, the logic behind its development, and whether it might be meeting certain social needs. Interviews with people who lived in the buildings, such as tenants and staff, helped to understand how rehabilitative power operates, how it fails, and how it meets contestation on the ground.

Furthermore, this research was developed after my two years of experience as a housing worker and a tenant organizer in Winnipeg's West Broadway neighbourhood. Though I do not refer to notes or experiences from this period, the research was heavily informed by my relationships with tenants and social workers, by my own limitations as a housing worker, and through my familiarity with the local housing market.

The first two stages of research began in August 2020 and I continued to retrieve and review documents and newspaper articles until July 2021. Due to Covid-19 protocols put in place by Concordia University, I was unable to conduct in-person research and instead conducted all interviews remotely between the months of February and May 2021. Following the advice of members of Manitoba's Harm Reduction Network, I began with tenant interviews so that I could center the research more firmly in their experiences and adjust my other interviews accordingly. I then interviewed two staff and the housing worker and finished by interviewing the landlord. All interviewees received a letter of information and consent protocol in writing before the

interview and consented orally to the interviews. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and manually coded for common themes. Tenants and staff were given the option of reviewing transcripts and omitting any information that they did not want shared.

## 4. Situating Winnipeg's Meth Crisis

*Together, we can make a stand against a plague that is claiming too many lives, and causing too much violence. (Chief Danny Smyth, WPS 2018 Annual Report)*

### 4.1 Settler planning for the segregated city

Winnipeg is a large, but isolated city in the Canadian prairies. The 2016 census counted over 700,000 residents, yet the city sits at a seven-hour drive from any other major urban centre. It was originally a meeting place for Indigenous nations – home to the Anishinaabe, Cree, Ojibwe, Dene, and Lakota peoples – and like most cities in the Urban Prairie West, became an important Métis settlement as the political heart of the Métis Nation (McCreary et al., 2019). Shortly after an Indigenous-led provisional government negotiated with the Canadian state to bring the province of Manitoba into the dominion, settler militias led by the Lieutenant-General Wolseley invaded and stole the territory that would become known as Winnipeg in August 1870. In the decades that followed, Canadian settlers began to lay a grid over the territory that would plan for a defensible socio-economic distribution in the city. Smaller lot sizes were intended to keep property values low in the North End and other central neighbourhoods that would become known as the inner-city, while sprawling lots divided by borders including highways, rivers, and railyards protected wealthy enclaves in southern, and later, suburban neighbourhoods (Toews, 2018, 81).

From its inception, Winnipeg has always been “a spatially, socially, and economically segregated city” (Silver, 2016, 27). Around the turn of the century, the city absorbed immigration from central and eastern European countries to fuel an industrial boom harnessed by racial capitalism. The new immigrants served the colonial project “based on their supposed capacities for whiteness,” but were still racially demarcated from the city’s WASP capitalist class enough

to justify that they “would be subsequently dispossessed, pushed into cities, and forced to sell their labour under hyper-exploitive conditions” (Toews, 2018, 78). Exploitation was just as prominent in the home as the shop floor. In 1909, the reformer J.S. Woodsworth (1972[1909]) wrote that some landlords had managed to cram forty-three occupants into five rooms, and followed one tenant who paid 67% of his income towards rent for three rooms to house a six-person family (217-218). The dialectics of the industrial era allowed a managerial class to build Victorian mansions in southern neighbourhoods like Crescentwood, Armstrong Point, and River Heights, while working class communities were confined to poor central neighbourhoods.

In the period following the Second World War, Winnipeg’s central neighbourhoods experienced disinvestment as the population of these neighbourhoods declined from 153,700 to 93,800 over six decades (Silver, 2016, 33). Jim Silver (2016) explains that this was due in part to the social mobility of the white working class, which was also able to seize greater geographic mobility as racism towards Eastern Europeans began to dissipate. However, Silver clarifies that “discrimination did not disappear in the post-Second War era; it was simply redirected” (33). As other racialized communities moved into the city’s vacant housing stock, they would face the brunt of this abuse. Despite the vacancy crisis, the disinvested landscape still held plenty of economic potential for absentee landlords who bought older homes at low-value, “invested little in maintenance and often crammed in as many renters as possible by transforming the buildings into rooming houses” (ibid., 33).

The duality of segregated housing is more complex than questions of uneven development. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2019) helps us understand how this duality goes further than the simple relation of affluent suburban landlords drawing rent from the inner city. In *Race for Profit*, she details how the value of white suburban neighbourhoods is appraised

according to the absence of Blackness, and as affluent neighbourhoods become more expensive and more exclusive, this creates greater possibility for “the financial exploitation of urban Black renters and buyers desperate for better housing” (37). Simply put, segregation not only structures the conditions for profit and appraisal in affluent white neighbourhoods, but also creates the opportunity to charge higher rents for poor housing where low-income and racialized tenants are forced to live. Rather than seeing expensive suburban housing and dilapidated inner-city housing as two different housing markets in a segregated city, Taylor (2019) closes the gap, surmising that “there was a single United States housing market that was defined by its racially discriminatory, tiered access – each tier reinforcing and legitimizing the other (37).”

In Winnipeg, the relationship between whiteness and land value has always hinged on a settler colonial entitlement to land (Tomiak, 2019). While settler colonialism still considers Blackness as a threat, the erasure of Indigeneity is a more fundamental agenda of settler colonial urbanism. Using Taylor’s analysis, we can attend to how the segregated city works to create fictional land value in the areas that have attempted to erase Indigeneity, while simultaneously creating conditions for confinement and exploitation in racialized inner-city neighbourhoods.

#### 4.2 Attempts at renewal on the new urban frontier

On May 31<sup>st</sup> 2011, jubilee took over Portage and Main, the city’s central intersection, as hockey fans gathered downtown to celebrate the return of the Winnipeg Jets. True North Sports and Entertainment had successfully bid to move a Nation Hockey League (NHL) team from Atlanta to Winnipeg’s new downtown arena. After losing the original Winnipeg Jets franchise in 1996, which had been based in an arena near the suburban Polo Park mall, the return of the NHL to Winnipeg’s downtown signified a new dawn for urban renewal. The Sports, Hospitality, and Entertainment District (SHED) designated around the arena would strive to break new ground to

reintroduce affluent suburbanites to Winnipeg's downtown. Mayor Sam Katz exclaimed that it "a fantastic day for the city ... for decades on, everybody will get to experience the NHL and the economic impact and the wonderful pride that comes with being a city that has the best of the best" (CBC Sports, May 31, 2011). The Premier of Manitoba, Greg Selinger, promised provincial support at a press conference saying, "we missed you and we're going to make it work forever now that you're back" (ibid.). The return of the Jets to Winnipeg's downtown has been a cornerstone of 21<sup>st</sup> century revitalization efforts, but it can be put in context with other desperate strategies of state-supported gentrification that sought to redraw the lines of segregation and disinvestment in the city.

For several years leading up to 2011, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) had placed emphasis on rooting out drug use and homelessness from Osborne Village, a trendy neighbourhood located across the Assiniboine River from Winnipeg's downtown, which in 2012 received a designation as 'Canada's Great Neighbourhood' by the Canadian Institute of Planners (CBC News, April 26, 2012). In response to the return of the Jets, the WPS began to shift attention in their annual reports and planning documents towards increasing "its visibility and enforcement efforts" downtown (WPS, 2012, 4). This turn towards downtown policing was supplemented by new strategies of 'predictive policing' and a growing emphasis on narcotics. The 2012-2014 Strategic Plan reported a goal of targeting cannabis grow ops and meth labs, but their Violent Crime Strategy and Street Reach Initiative each focused on predicting pathways to criminality and called for the monitoring and early intervention of inner-city youth who were considered at-risk of entering the drug trade.

The return of Jets fanfare succeeded in bringing thousands of affluent suburban Winnipeggers to the downtown's entertainment district, but it was a still a challenge to market

the central city as a viable option for the middle class to take up residence. In 2010, the City of Winnipeg contributed \$5 million towards a condo development in a northeastern corner of the downtown marketed as ‘The Waterfront’. Three years later, the new units were mostly vacant and city councillors voted by a margin of 13 to 3 in favour of offering \$10,000 rebates to new owners who would remain in the condos for five years. An additional \$5.5 million was dedicated towards additional lighting, foot patrols, patio improvements and beautification around The Waterfront in attempt to draw in middle-class residents and consumers (Kives, 2013). Like earlier iterations of homesteading on the prairie, speculative development on “the new urban frontier” leaned significantly on support from what Neil Smith (1996) calls “the cavalry of city government” in attempt to restructure the built environment into a frontier of profitability.

Celebrating hard-fought advances, the 2015-2019 WPS strategic plan announced that “Winnipeg’s downtown area is becoming a vibrant district with several major new developments and a growing population” but cautioned that “crime rates remain higher in this area than in other parts of the city” (10). Again, the WPS expressed the need for ‘preventative policing’ and developed strategies that proposed to predict crime “rather than simply reacting to crime after it occurs” (12). Posturing towards a progressive racial sensibility, the WPS vocalized the racialized dimensions of their strategy by naming Indigenous peoples and Newcomers as their targeted risky groups. They acknowledged that colonialism has created harms including “dispossession of land, language, and livelihood,” but surmised that Indigenous peoples living in Winnipeg “are disproportionately exposed to the risk factors for victimization and involvement in crime” (12). Similarly, the Strategic Plan acknowledged that Newcomers face racism in housing and employment options, which predisposes them “to the risk factors for crime and victimization” (12). Whether the gaze was coloured by revanchism or paternalism, the WPS’s preventative

policing strategy united both notions to justify an expanded surveillance over racialized Winnipeggers, especially where they saw a threat to downtown redevelopment.

Since the return of the Winnipeg Jets, the skyline has raised several new towers, but capital continues to lean on the state for ever greater footholds. In 2018, True North Real Estate Development – a division of the same company who owns the Jets – received over \$45 million from the City and the Province to build four towers including a hotel, condos, offices, luxury apartments, and a commercial plaza in the back yard of their hockey arena. True North claimed that the subsidy was key to unlocking the project and would help Winnipeg “to compete and attract outside investment capital” for future developments (Lett, 2018). Surely enough, only a year later, the Toronto-based developer and landlord, Starlight Investments, indicated interest in redeveloping Portage Place, a heavily subsidized downtown mall built in the 1980s. In 2019, Starlight launched a successful bid to buy the downtown lot including the mall, a surface lot and underground parking at the modest price of \$69.9 million. But the developer stalled, insisting that the project needed subsidy from three levels of government to close the deal. While the City and the Province committed \$20 million \$28.7 million respectively, Starlight has held on for federal backing, now requesting federal support to the tune of \$50 million in grants and \$240 million in loans before it can break ground (Kavanagh, 2021).

Despite a decade of state-sponsored urban renewal and intensified ‘predictive’ policing, the future of Winnipeg’s downtown remains insecure and contested. Zachary Hyde (2018) explains that developers use notions of insecurity to build a rhetoric of risk around urban developments. This allows them to posture as ‘giving back’ to the community by investing in their own projects while securing greater financial supports from local governments to make sure that developments break ground. The rhetoric of risk allows developers like True North and



Starlight to capture subsidies in downtown real estate, but this rhetoric relies on concrete symbols of risk that stimulate social anxieties. In other words, abstract risk requires an imagination of risky antagonism against which the public can recognize the need for social investment in private development. In Winnipeg, the state had already associated risk to Indigenous peoples and other racialized subjects who had experienced longstanding marginalization in the settler city, but during the meth crisis, the public's imagination of risk would figure more specifically around people assumed to use methamphetamine. This relationship between antagonistic risk and urban development attached a speculative value to 'risky subjects.' The financial risks of speculative development were shifted onto subjects. On the one hand, this functioned to shield developers from responsibility for their high-risk investments in unlikely gentrification, while at the same time, the presence of racialized residents and people who use drugs was weaponized to garner additional public support for revitalization efforts that would create new profitable frontiers for private capital.

#### 4.3 Disinvestment in the rental market

Downtown redevelopment saw growing levels of state subsidy throughout the 2010s, but the uneven character of this investment was made most evident by cuts to *Neighbourhoods Alive!* – a mainstay provincial program that had supported community organizations in inner city neighbourhoods with core funding since 2000. In 2017, the North Point Douglas Women's Centre lost a quarter of their budget (Kavanagh, 2017) due to the cuts to *Neighbourhoods Alive*. The Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Community Association was also forced to lay off six staff and to pause their programming (Annable, 2017). For nearly two decades, these organizations had developed community programming to support residents who faced poor prospects for employment and housing in disinvested neighbourhoods. The budget cuts halted community organizations and forced them restructure in a moment of renewed interest in downtown

gentrification; the precise moment when inner-city residents were adjusting to heightened levels of policing in their communities and new strategies of accumulation tied to their homes.

In 2015, Armour Management was formed by Cam McIntyre, of defunct property management company Winpark Dorchester, and Mike Romani, who had worked as a trainer and equipment manager for the Winnipeg Jets. They started with a hefty portfolio of buildings that were adopted from Winpark Dorchester and quickly became the self-professed largest private landlord in Winnipeg's inner-city. By 2019, they were managing 5,000 units in 96 buildings, 40 of which they owned outright, while 56 were managed for other owners (MacLean, 2019). To achieve such a massive portfolio over a short time, they implemented new management strategies to quickly raise rents in the buildings. For example, after tenants of an eleven-unit building on Furby Street were harassed and evicted by Armour in 2017, the West Broadway Tenants Committee launched a media campaign to expose the management company's tactics, which would become notorious for flouting tenant protections and speeding up evictions by way of force and neglect. Throughout the campaign, it became public knowledge known that Armour was purchasing low-rent buildings en-masse, refusing to perform maintenance or repairs, 'renovicting' tenants without following legitimate protocols or timeframes for the evictions, and raising rents by up to 80% (Wurmann, 2018).

For tenants earning low-incomes and those on social assistance, renovictions left them with few options for new housing. Alice Murdock, who was evicted from her home of 16 years admitted "it's not easy to find a place" (ibid.). Another evictee, Jenny Houdayer, explained that there were no options under \$700 that would allow her to keep her dog (ibid.). The lack of affordable housing options also meant that tenants living in buildings managed by Armour had little choice but to put up with absenteeism and abuse. Ben Simcoe, a local housing worker,

explained that “they take advantage of people who have a bad rental history by providing them with a place to live, but then violate their rights as tenants, who feel they must go along with things as is because they have nowhere else to go” (MacLean, 2019). This is not to say that tenants accepted their conditions. Jim McKenzie pressed Armour for months to fix the unfinished and mouldy ceiling in his bathroom before finally leaving to move into a rooming house (ibid). Marilyn Alexiou rounded up local media in order to apply pressure on the landlord to install fire extinguishers in her building (Grabish, 2019). Together, media campaigns organized by low-income tenants and tenant associations amassed a what Desiree Fields (2017) calls a collective experience of ‘unwilling subjectivity,’ and mobilized a critique of disinvestment that centred the blame on Armour’s strategy of accumulation.

#### 4.4 Voices of the Meth Crisis

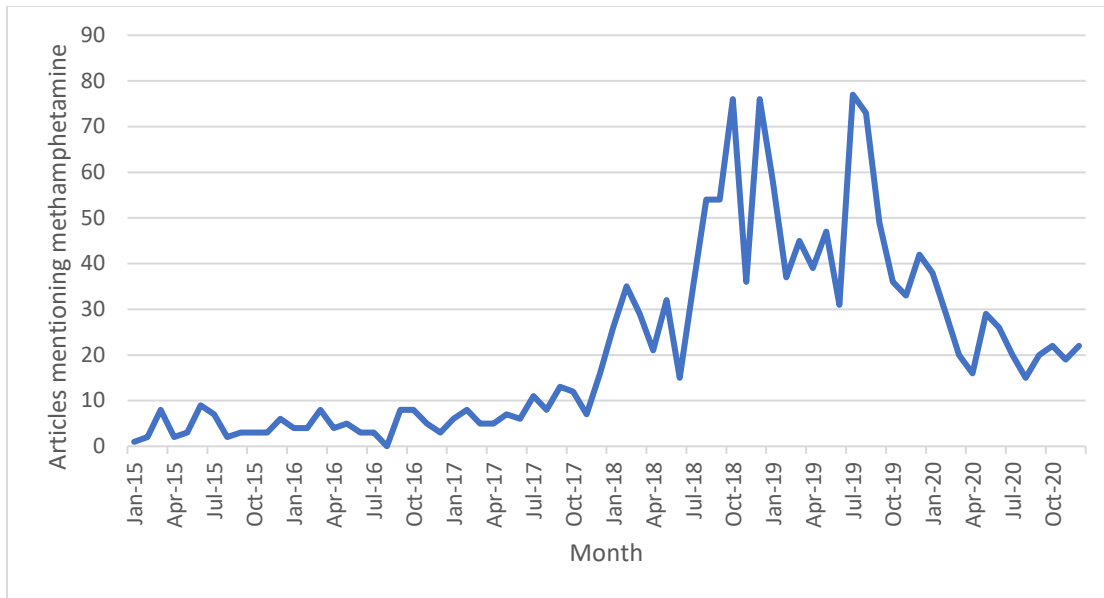
In the fall of 2016, meth began to grow into a new generalized symbol for risk in Winnipeg. In September, Shelley Marshall of the street-nurse outreach program, Street Connections, first suggested to the Winnipeg Free Press that methamphetamine use was becoming more prevalent but that the drug was overshadowed by fentanyl because “the harms are more invisible” (Zoratti, 2016). The mid-2010’s were a period of rising international concern about overdoses related to opioid use. Whereas political responses to earlier drug crises had doubled down on violent criminalization, public discourse over the opioid crisis veered so far into the domain of public health that even tough-on-crime political candidates like Donald Trump embraced a treatment-based approach to the crisis. At the end of 2016, police, public health workers, and community groups in Winnipeg claimed that meth use was growing more prevalent in the city, but the drug did not capture the public’s full attention until a year later. However, the concurrent conversation around the international opioid crisis may have set a tone for more ‘caring’ approaches to drug crises that veered away from earlier forms of wartime rhetoric.

In 2017, the tone around meth use ripened into fear-driven discourse as journalistic media used crystal meth to explain violent and unruly encounters between the Winnipeg Police and civilians. In May, an off-duty officer shot a man who was running through a downtown skywalk carrying a pole with scissors taped to one end. The Winnipeg Free Press reported that the victim had a recent history of meth use and quoted a witness calling the victim “undone and completely irrational” (Winnipeg Free Press, 2017). In June, the Free Press ran another story about a confrontation between police and a man who was allegedly in psychosis, yelling at the police and urging them to shoot him. This time, with twenty officers confronting one person, police opted to use tasers to incapacitate the man, but Constable Jar Murray warned that “in this specific situation, officers ... were pretty close to maybe having to use lethal force” (Prest, 2017). Murray explained that “we believe this incident was the result of a drug-induced psychosis. That’s something that we’ve seen more often lately” (ibid.). At the end of the year, Police Chief Danny Smyth distinguished between how the police would treat fentanyl and methamphetamine. While he saw the former as “a health problem, not a law enforcement problem,” the Winnipeg Police Service believed that that methamphetamine had spurred an increase in “violent crimes, strong-arm robberies, break and enters, and fraud” – all metrics that would place methamphetamine under police jurisdiction. The WPS insisted that “there’s obviously a requirement for police” but also that “it’s a huge strain on police resources,” implying that while police should play a key role in confronting meth use, they would rely on greater support through funding and partnerships to stem the tide (Da Silva, 2017).

Danny Smyth’s claim that meth use created a risk of violence and criminality fits into a broader pattern of drug-war discourse. The cultural imagination around stigmatizing drugs like methamphetamine and crack cocaine authors transformative narratives for people who use these

drugs. These narratives regularly push Smyth's notion that drugs make people do other crimes, thus making the user a criminal, and suggests that people who use these drugs develop greater resistance to the 'stopping power' of police weapons (Linnemann, 2016). Often this works to recycle demonizing characterizations of racialized peoples that would be otherwise be considered inappropriate in the post-civil rights era. Like racist cultural productions, the 'dope-fiend' discourse establishes the possibility for dangerous outcomes as it functions to cast substance users into non-human categories to further "justify all manner of inequality and horrific violence" as means of intervention (ibid., 216). For police, such drug-war narratives serve to justify the brandishing of more powerful weapons and the disclosure to deploy them. For instance, by September 2017, Winnipeg police had shot four people in a span of four months, killing Adrian Laquette and Evan Caron in two separate incidents over ten days. Police Chief Danny Smyth explained to the press that the shootings were caused by the "wild behaviour" created by methamphetamine (Sanders, 2017). Smyth added that the drug problem was not only placing police officers in risky situations but that "certainly the community as a whole is facing this," implying that the crisis posed a greater threat to society as a whole.

Figure 1: Meth in the Winnipeg Free Press 2015-20



The Meth Crisis is made visible in Winnipeg’s media. Using the journalistic media to gauge public attention to methamphetamine, the early months of 2018 stand out as the first signs of a generalized moral panic. In 2015 and 2016, the Winnipeg Free Press published an average of 4.3 articles per month that mentioned meth or methamphetamine, and busy months in 2017 saw only around a dozen articles per month leading towards a high point of 16 articles in December. After the new year however, the Winnipeg Free Press published 26 articles in January and 35 articles in February, and the numbers rose steadily throughout 2018 reaching a high point of 76 articles in the month of October, ahead of a municipal election. That year, the Winnipeg Free Press averaged 40.75 articles per month that mentioned methamphetamine – nearly ten times the rate of earlier years. This meant that any time someone opened a newspaper in 2018, they were likely to find at least one article mentioning methamphetamine. Such frequency formed the basis for what Stuart Hall et al. (1978) called an ‘ideological displacement’ or a discrepancy between the actual risk of a problem and a public reaction to a greater symbolic threat – in this case a generalized threat of violence and property damage which Chief Smyth claimed would affect

“people that live in all corners of the city” (Thorpe, 2018). Personal anxieties over violence and property damage coalesced around a more generalized fear that the ‘scourge,’ ‘plague’ or even ‘tsunami’ of meth threatened to destroy the city and along with its gentrifying efforts for downtown renewal (Lett, 2018).

Perhaps the ideological displacement of the meth crisis is best described by the following interview from 2019 with a person who uses meth from *The West Broadway Methamphetamine Strategy*, a community-based planning document that forms a local strategy for the crisis:

It depends on what level you want to call [it] a crisis though... the public would look at it as a crisis cause they don't understand. We look at it as a crisis cause nothing is being done. It's totally two different opinions... but it's still a crisis no matter which way you look at it. (qtd. in Charron and Canfield, 2021, 43)

The interviewee identifies a lack of support for users, which has created a crisis of material and social conditions for people who use meth. But they also empathetically acknowledge that the public is panicking due to their own lack of understanding. It's important to note that in the 489 articles that mentioned meth in the Winnipeg Free Press throughout 2018, no article quoted an active user. In a handful of cases, newspapers quoted recovering users about their path to sobriety, but otherwise the public remained entirely shrouded from the views and experiences of people who were using methamphetamine.

Following 2018's sharp incline of public concern over meth use, the Winnipeg Free Press maintained volumes of thirty or more articles per month that mentioned meth until March 2020, when attention swerved towards the Coronavirus pandemic. Throughout this period, the discourse consistently characterized people who used meth as violent and unpredictable, and meth use was framed as an ‘epidemic’ or a ‘plague’ that had taken hold of subjects and spaces in the inner-city and threatened to spread throughout the social body. Police told the public that

they assumed anyone using methamphetamine was armed (Thorpe, 2019) and attributed rising levels of property crime to the drug (e.g. May, 2019, WPS, 2019). Public institutions including hospitals, recreation centres, and public libraries enhanced their security and, in some cases, introduced metal detectors and bag checks to mitigate the risks of violence. Following Gilmore and Gilmore's (2007) argument that cages have become 'catch-all' solutions to social and economic problems, spatial interventions seeking to bar and control mobility were part and parcel of the strategy for mitigating the social and economic risks that were believed to emanate from methamphetamine.

#### 4.5 New opportunities for profit through confinement

Winnipeg's Meth Crisis complicated the end of a decade of desperate renewal on the urban frontier of the settler city. The return of the Winnipeg Jets in 2011 successfully brought affluent white suburbanites to the downtown - literally throwing 'White Out' street parties during the playoffs – and offered dreams for a new socioeconomic order in the city. However, speculative investment in the downtown was always counterbalanced by the risk of crime, especially when it came to residential developments for the middle-class. It appears that this 'risk' was effectively mobilized to garner heavier state-subsidization for developments and greater levels of policing in inner-city communities. While this fear-mongering rhetoric of risk was indeed made profitable for downtown developers, it was also overtly racialized and made to target Indigenous and Black inner-city residents. From 2017 onwards, fears around a multiplicity of problems related to long-time disinvestment including homelessness, violence, and illness were subsumed into the neat, and yet, vaguely applied category of 'meth use'. The moral panic over methamphetamine created subjects and spaces of exclusion, which would serve to expand the allowable reach for disciplinary measures throughout the social body in the name of managing the risks of urban capital. In the disinvested spaces that were associated with meth use, this presented new



opportunities for landlords to find profit through the expansion of carceral conditions in the private rental market.

Landlords, including Armour Management, used the crisis to shift blame away from their failed revitalization strategies onto their tenants. Having gambled in real estate that had experienced decades of disinvestment, their attempts to revitalize low-rent apartment buildings had always been risky endeavors, but the meth crisis presented new challenges. Beyond dealing with actual problems related to drug use and drug-war interventions in their buildings, the landlords also saw their real estate face greater stigma as public discourse painted low-income neighbourhoods as a landscape of potential violence and crime. Instead of countering the discourse with boosterism or revitalization rhetoric, landlords leaned into the demonizing rhetoric to call for expedited evictions (Kusch, 2018) and to deflect blame for absenteeism. After suffering a blow of bad press for their strategic neglect of buildings (Wurmann, 2018), Armour's president, Mike Romani, used an interview with CBC to flip the script and blamed damages on the meth crisis:

“In the last 14 years, I had no fires, not one. In the last year, I've had six. I would suggest every one of them would be drug-related ... It is an epidemic. If people have not been affected by it today, wait a year.” (Von Stackelberg, 2019)

The meth crisis was further appropriated to create new opportunities for landlords who had invested in high-risk real estate. In the same month as the CBC interview, an apartment block managed by Armour in the North End was transitioned towards sober-living addiction recovery housing. It was the first experiment of what would become known as the Living Recovery Foundation of Winnipeg. Shortly afterwards, landlords Karin Harper and Patrick Penner cut ties with Armour Management and began to promote themselves as a community-based solution to the meth crisis. Now, the landlords openly sought to bring recovering users into their buildings,

but made the housing conditional on a long list of house rules including curfews, surveillance, and mandatory ‘volunteer’ work hours. Like the Hôpital Général of 17<sup>th</sup> century Paris, the risky subject was housed so long as they accepted ‘the physical and moral constraint of confinement.’

## 5. Two faces of rehabilitation

*“If that was an infomercial, you’d have my money! But now I’m just sitting here, no money, thinking this was just a shit infomercial.” (Tenant A, interview, March 11, 2021)*

Rehabilitation, as a concept, is generally seen as an altruistic project of curing or improvement, whereby the transformation prepares a person or a place for a specific futurity. In contemporary politics, rehabilitation is sometimes assumed to represent a benevolent counterpoint to punishment. However, considering that places of punishment, such as the modern prison, were themselves devised as rehabilitative institutions, the distinction between punishment and rehabilitation merits analysis. The following chapter examines what we might consider the two faces of rehabilitation. On the one hand, rehabilitation is an effective discursive tool that helps to construct rehabilitative actors and their interventions as ‘good’ or benevolent. But on the other hand, rehabilitative interventions often rely on disciplinary methods borrowed from more overtly punitive, or perhaps cruel, institutions. For the Living Recovery Foundation, the two faces of rehab allowed the landlords to reposition themselves as benevolent, and yet, carceral actors. This would open new opportunities for public and non-profit partnerships while simultaneously expanding their disciplinary power over tenants. After deconstructing rehabilitation, chapter six will dive more deeply into the new possibilities for profit that the LRF found in so-called rehabilitative housing. Finally, chapter seven will explain how rehabilitation’s disciplinary power was an important part of the LRF’s struggle to secure a return on their investment in a high-risk disinvested landscape.

### 5.1 Making ‘docile bodies’

The Living Recovery Foundation’s rehabilitative model sprouted from Armour Management’s own search for profit in a disinvested, ‘risky’ landscape. Before the LRF, Armour attempted to run their own rehabilitative experiment by adding rooming houses to their portfolio which would

be used as ‘transitional housing.’ Armour had recruited a staff person named Ashley from a local non-profit organization who could use her experience as a housing worker to litigate cases in the tenancies court. The new hire was instrumental to Armour’s operations, which stretched across a large portfolio of ‘low-barrier’ housing. Unlike most property management companies, Armour used very little screening for incoming tenants. Other management companies use screening to minimize the risk of suffering losses – whether real or perceived – from a failed tenancy such as falling behind on rent payments, damaging the building, or disturbing other tenants. Instead, Armour absorbed this risk and followed a model of high turnover where they could quickly fill vacancies, but also regularly had to evict tenants that were causing losses. While many evictions were mediated outside of tenancy courts, Ashley was hired to activate her experience as a tenant advocate and her familiarity with the tenancy branch to help Armour evict ‘problem’ tenants.

Crossing the aisle from defending tenants to evicting them may have been an ethical dilemma, but Ashley used her proximity to Armour to help create what she saw as an important new service: Rehabilitative Rooming Houses. For tenants without good rental or employment references, or simply with extremely low-incomes, rooming houses are one of the most realistic points-of-entry into the rental market. This category of housing fit well with Armour’s lax screening protocols, and the management company began to purchase rooming houses that would be used to house their more ‘high needs’ tenants. Ashley decided that she wanted to be involved in this new stage of Armour’s strategy and proposed to create a rehabilitative program with on-site supports. Under her guidance, the rooming house project evolved into a broader program focused on managing tenant lives. The new rooming houses were branded as ‘Winnipeg Lifestyle Housing,’ and prior profit-making objectives were merged with an attempt to transform tenants.

Ashley explained that the transitional housing she envisioned would work within Armour's broader strategy by providing housing for 'difficult to house' tenants by "teaching people how to live independently and then of course, graduating them to live on their own, in Armour's portfolio or wherever." After working for non-profits and social enterprises, she saw this as a way of leveraging private capital to create a social service. While the access to capital offered an expedient opportunity to create the program, the approach, of course, hinged on Armour's profit-making objectives. For Armour, the primary aim was to profit from a disinvested, risky landscape. The rooming houses were assets in a housing category of shrinking supply and growing demand in Winnipeg's inner-city (Kaufman and Distasio, 2014) and this alone made the housing a promising market. If Ashley's program succeeded, the rooming houses would create a sort of 'training ground' for tenants which might allow them to minimize efforts spent on evicting problematic tenants in other parts of their portfolio.

This initial foray into rehabilitative housing became the basis for the LRF. In 2019, Karin Harper and Patrick Penner split from Armour and formed the Living Recovery Foundation. The split allowed Harper and Penner to distance themselves from negative media campaigns that tenants had mobilized against Armour in buildings that were owned by Harper and Penner. It also represented a new stage in their own strategy of accumulation where the owners sought to find greater profit margins across their portfolio without contracting a third-party property management company. The couple recruited Ashley from Armour to apply her rehabilitative housing model to their apartment buildings. It was at the height of the moral panic around meth use when the Living Recovery Foundation transitioned towards a rehabilitative project that was specifically aimed at housing people who were exiting drug addiction rehab. In the early days of

the project, Ashley developed a disciplinary system that extended the regimen of rehab into the home:

It was really important to me for people to continue their recovery. You know, and your livelihood in this apartment building was based on continuing your path to sobriety. I think that was really important. (Ashley, interview, April 17, 2021)

Rather than offering any medical or psychological support, the rehabilitation offered by the LRF was premised entirely on a disciplinary structure. The housing was intended to be conditional according to a set of rules, not only including sobriety, but also imposing a routine of mandatory meetings, a curfew, and unpaid labour. Behaviour was further regulated by rules stipulating that violent conduct – including “threats of violence or verbal abuse” - would result in immediate eviction or a return to rehab. The rules, if successfully implemented, would subjugate tenants to a disciplinary system commonly found in addiction rehabilitation models known as ‘strong-arm’ or ‘carceral rehab’ (Gowan and Whetstone, 2012). The introduction of a disciplinary rule system into the apartment would give new powers to the landlord, not only to manage tenant behaviour, but to justify surveillance and evictions that would normally run against tenancy protections. The LRF’s mimicry of strong-arm rehab was not coincidental. Part of their early strategy was to position the housing as a transitional step for people leaving rehab and having a disciplinary system on paper helped the LRF to build this link. Their transitional position was convenient for at least two reasons: it provided a chain of referrals between rehab centres and the apartments, and provided the landlords with a disciplinary option of sending tenants back to rehab instead of evicting them. This was important because a return to rehab allowed the tenant to maintain their primary address with the Living Recovery Foundation, and crucially, rent would continue to be paid to the landlord.

After only a few months on board, Ashley left the Living Recovery Foundation, and the landlords hired a handful of additional staff to continue developing the project. Some of the staff were recruited directly from 12-step recovery meetings to apply their own experience of rehab to the buildings. The new hires had a first-hand familiarity with recovery agencies and their proximity to these agencies was mobilized to help the LRF capture more referrals from rehab centres and parole offices. These staff revamped Ashley's program to imitate something closer to their own experience of rehab, as one person explained: "we try to mirror rehab with routines and guidelines and rules, so that when they come out of it, it's not a bad transition" (LRF staff, interview, May 4, 2021). They pitched the program to every recovery-based program in the city and formed new relationships with agencies to obtain automatic referrals for people who were exiting rehab without a fixed address.

The rehabilitative programming at the Living Recovery Foundation treated drug use as a behavioural problem. The aim, accordingly, was to transform behaviour. The regimen of controlled routine and forced labour that they borrowed from rehab was intended to create a disciplined lifestyle that would ostensibly keep tenants sober. A staff member explained that the 8am check-in meeting was intended "to make sure that these individuals who don't have a routine or structure in their life start building it at eight in the morning. Not one in the afternoon and you know, waste their life away, which will just lead them back into addiction or whatever" (LRF staff, interview, May 4, 2021). Whetstone and McGowan (2017) have compared strong-arm rehab to other models of rehabilitation that act on addiction as a problem of spiritual disconnection or medical illness. The strong-arm approach, adopted by the LRF, tends to be employed in institutions that treat more marginalized addicts, and defines addiction as an

outcome of lifestyle choices to enforce “a powerfully intimate process of moral reform outside the prison walls” (85).

It is not surprising that the LRF’s rehabilitative regimen went beyond curing addiction.

Forced labour was intended to instill discipline regardless of whether tenants were staying sober:

The reason that the volunteer hours number came up, like not too high not too low, is because we had a few people in Jarvis who were able to just be like ‘eh whatever, I slept in’ and just never got it. They weren’t relapsing, they weren’t causing issues, but like they weren’t getting it. (LRF staff, interview, May 4, 2021)

Even after unpaid work hours were completed, tenants were expected to be home before the nine o’clock curfew for an evening check-in. This presented another opportunity for staff to monitor and correct behaviour. Officially, tenants were expected to participate in the evening meeting scheduled to coincide with the 9pm curfew. There was some leniency here, however. Staff admitted that sometimes tenants were too exhausted to participate and would retreat to their units. The staff explained that at times they would let this slide, but “if it’s routine that they’re pulling that, then it was corrected” (LRF staff, interview, May 4, 2021).

The rules, volunteer hours, and evening meetings made the LRF into a particular kind of space. As the rehabilitative project nestled itself alongside rehab, the housing effectively was inserted into a carceral continuum sitting only one or two links from prison. Gowan and Whetstone (2012) have found that the criminal justice system has become the largest referral source to publicly funded drug treatment in the United States, making what they call ‘carceral rehab’ “a primary site for the re-socialization and control of the poor” (70). The importance of this referral process, and the significance of the Living Recovery Foundation’s own referral system, is that it builds a chain of logistical and ontological continuity from one institution into the other. Foucault saw that the modern criminal justice system relies on a proliferation of extra-



juridical institutions and personnel to ‘judge’ and ‘cure’ behaviour, meaning that behaviour is both criminalized and adjusted well outside of the court or the prison. But the particular proximity of rehab to the prison has shaped a co-constituted understanding of addiction “which unites moral and therapeutic frameworks in the construct of the ‘high-risk and high-need’ ‘criminal addict’” (Gowan and Whetstone, 2012, 75). As such, the logic of criminalization has meant that carceral rehab’s focus tends to rely on moral transformation rather than biochemistry or psychology, and subsequently “the reprogramming process [takes] on a highly racialized character” (ibid., 81) where problematic behaviour is often given cultural and racial terms of reference. This means that the subject perceived as requiring a rehabilitative intervention is primarily defined by notions of behaviour and morality – which have always been defined according to intersectional categories of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality – more than their relationship to substance use or addiction.

Thus, the brand of rehabilitation proposed by the Living Recovery Foundation borrowed heavily from the disciplinary structure of ‘carceral rehab’ which effectively developed an extension of the modern prison into the home. Their format proposed to ‘cure’ addiction, but a greater emphasis was placed upon the creation of ‘subjected and docile bodies.’ Acting on tenant bodies in this way, however, served other interests besides “curing” drug addiction. As I will now explain, this disciplinary form of rehabilitation also provided an opportunity for a landlord with declining stock to reposition themselves as an ostensibly altruistic actor in a network of organizations concerned with providing housing *and* moral transformation to ‘at-risk’ subjects. Later, in the sixth section, I will describe how this model of rehabilitation fit into the landlord’s strategy of accumulation and yet, how it was also complicated by their search for profit.

## 5.2 Selling rehabilitation

Rehabilitative power relies on the production of subject formations to survive. Springing from racial and class oppression, it operates dialectically in attempt to not only form ‘bad’ subjects and justify their oppression, but also to create ‘good’ subjects who take up positions of power and domination. In this sense, the Living Recovery Foundation’s rehabilitative discourse was just as concerned with transforming their own image away from one of ‘bad slumlords’ into a ‘good institution.’ They used their own moral reconfiguration to leverage relationships with social service organizations to help them fill vacant units. In time, the strategy would also help to align the landlord with non-profit and state agencies to find other opportunities for profit within these public-private-non-profit partnerships.

Under Armour’s banner, the buildings had developed a bad reputation and one of the first steps of the LRF’s new strategy was to evict tenants. Their rehabilitative branding worked to soften criticism that had been waged against Armour for their own wide-spread evictions and they pitched their evictions as a positive turning point for their buildings in attempt to attract new tenants. When she began to take over the management of her buildings, Karin Harper explained that the apartments had become ‘drug and gang infested’ and attempted to evict and bar people associated with street gangs and the drug trade. One tenant who was originally sold on the Living Recovery Foundation but left after a couple months describes the landlord’s transformational discourse this way:

Armour let the building fall to shit, and these people bought out their buildings, like they just left Armour to go do their own thing, and that’s how Living Recovery came about. And they had explicitly said “yeah we kicked out a lot of the riff raff, yeah this place was awful we had so many gangsters here and all this, we called the cops so many time.” So, they were always adamant in how they were trying to change the building. (Tenant A, interview, March 11, 2021)

While the evictions made the buildings more attractive to potential tenants, the rehab branding added to the appeal. The new branding presented the Living Recovery Foundation as an opportunity for tenants to practice sobriety in ‘Sober Living’ buildings, or to use drugs more safely in ‘Harm Reduction’ buildings. In interviews, tenants repeated that the reason they ended up renting from the Living Recovery Foundation was first and foremost that they needed housing, but the possibility of having access to rehabilitative programming was also a draw. One tenant describes the draw this way:

I was looking for stability. I was looking for a place I could go where I wouldn't be surrounded with triggers or influences. I wanted to be stable in the community because that area is already so tainted. (Tenant B, interview, March 23, 2021)

In this case, the tenant was also offered an opportunity for employment and a chance to participate in the altruistic project. Specifically, she was offered reduced rent to recruit other tenants and help them transition into the buildings. Once she moved in, the deal never materialized and her rent was not reduced, but what she really missed was the chance to help her community:

It's had trouble economically, socially, and I wanted to be part of a positive movement. So, when I heard that I could house somebody and help them transition, it was really exciting. I was really excited about this job offer and I kept contacting people and asking them “when can I do this and how are we going to do this” and I tried to participate, but nothing ever happened. (Tenant B, interview, March 23, 2021)

Tenants were faced with few housing options when they moved into the Living Recovery Foundation, and while they were sometimes mis-informed about the conditions of their tenancy, their decisions to move in were not coerced by the landlord. Tenants did want to live in a rehabilitative program, and some sought out the disciplinary structure that the LRF was selling. However, the question of agency is complex and must at the very least be contextualized within a neoliberal notion of self-improvement that is more universal than drug addiction.

Under neoliberalism, western states worked to shed their modern responsibilities for improving life, preferring instead to cast the burden of welfare into the realm of individual choice (e.g. Alexander, 2010; Corva, 2008). Recent trends around the notions of self-improvement and self-care are an extension of this same movement that leans away from a collectivized or state-led responsibility to mitigate the risks and fallout of capitalism and towards building what Gowan and Whetstone (2017) call a ‘bio-political risk management’ system. Following these trends, we are encouraged to shoulder the risks of late capitalism – poverty, illness, unemployment, housing insecurity – by becoming “enthusiastic and cheap ‘good subjects,’ frenetically active in our own governance” (83). While rehabilitative and disciplinary programs are systems of control, there is demand for such programs across society - well outside of rehab.

Tenants, then, were making choices under particular social conditions, conditions which drive people to be self-improving, responsible subjects. Therefore, we should neither blame tenants for choosing a disciplinary system, nor should we necessarily celebrate their willingness to seek out rehabilitation. Instead, we can trace the marketized and moralized demand for disciplinary and rehabilitative programs to understand how the Living Recovery Foundation was able to reposition itself as an altruistic or caring solution to the consequences of late capitalism (i.e. economic marginalization, poor health), while subjecting tenants to a system of bondage under manufactured consent. Like many ‘choices’ people make, those of tenants here contributed to the accumulation strategy of the LRF – a strategy premised, in part, on rebranding the company’s holdings, making them more attractive to potential tenants.

### 5.3 Rehabilitation in public and non-profit partnerships

The LRF’s initial focus of finding tenants who were exiting rehab soon broadened. In the initial stage, the landlord required that tenants had completed a recovery-based program. Soon, however,

they widened their scope to canvass referrals from grassroots organizations, non-profit organizations and homelessness outreach programs, and government institutions such as Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) welfare offices and Child and Family Services foster care (CFS).

Their turn towards referrals from non-profit and state agencies placed the landlords in closer proximity to those institutions, and the new partnerships proved transformational in their own right. The new relationships brought access to new tenants and new streams for referral, but they also shifted the framing of the LRF. Karin Harper explained that her involvement with state agencies allowed her to gain some expertise on how these systems operated:

It's evolving all the time because I'm not a social worker, but I've been learning as we go along here. I know how CFS works now. I know how most of the agencies work now, so I know what I'm talking about when I talk with people. EIA I'm an expert in, you name it. (Karin Harper, Interview, May 12, 2021)

Presumably, this new familiarity with social service discourse - adopted through her proximity to non-profit and public agencies - also led to the original labeling of buildings as 'Harm-Reduction.'

Unsurprisingly, rehabilitation could be applied vaguely to capture a wide variety of subjects seen to require some form of moral transformation, including Indigenous people who may or may not have used drugs. An early LRF staff member attended meetings held by Indigenous-led grassroots organizations such as Aboriginal Youth Opportunities and Fearless R2W to canvass for prospective tenants. Reflecting on the staff's presence at these meetings, one tenant explained that "it's almost like he was following vulnerable people around. Like that's one of the things that made him shady is that he was everywhere. He would insert himself into Indigenous cultural things" (Tenant C, interview, March 10, 2021). Like the Winnipeg Police Service's strategy of identifying Indigenous peoples as a priority group for 'preventative policing,' the Living Recovery

Foundation used this category of ‘vulnerability’ as a target group for rehabilitation. The view that Indigenous people required rehabilitation fits into a longer history of settler-colonialism in the Prairie West, and the landlord’s strategies reveal a specific settler-colonial logic around how and over whom they expected to exert their rehabilitative power.

The LRF’s connections to foster care programs reveal a similar dynamic. From early on, the rehabilitation proposed by the Living Recovery Foundation had close ties to the state’s foster care system and processes of arbitrating family reunification. When the staff went to grassroots Indigenous organizations, his selling points for recovery went beyond individual addiction. A tenant recalls that he “always said that he was starting up a couple of buildings for recovery, like for people who were trying to get their kids back from CFS and whatnot” (Tenant C, interview, March 10, 2021). In fact, his proposition had substance. A non-profit housing worker explained that living in a building that was classified as sober-living could help parents to build a case for reunification with apprehended children simply because “it looks really good to CFS that they’re living in a sober-living building” (local housing worker, interview, May 6, 2021). In this sense, the landlord did not need to provide any actual programming or services to find a role within the state’s rehabilitation of ‘deviant families.’ The disciplinary rhetoric of their housing, loosely based around the moralized notion of sobriety, was enough to play a role within the colonial state’s arbitration and reconstruction of the subject and the family.

Despite the new rhetoric that branded buildings as ‘harm reduction,’ tenants living in LRF buildings refuted the landlords’ use of the term, explaining that there were no services or resources on site to reduce harms related to drug use. One tenant determined after his first few nights that the building was “just another slum apartment” (Tenant D, interview, February 3, 2021). Organizations referring tenants to LRF may not have known about these failures, but some of them

certainly did. For example, a housing worker from a local non-profit knew that the buildings had remained disinvested and did not include any on-site supports, but she nonetheless ascribed good moral standing to the landlords for their efforts:

Nobody starts something like this because they're rotten people. I think that they are trying to give back to a community that they're very familiar with. And I know that they're folks that are good people, family people. (local housing worker, interview, May 6, 2021)

Even once organizations became aware that most of the Living Recovery Foundation's buildings had no active programming or supports for tenants, the landlords' discourse and their new proximity to non-profits and the state was enough to lend them a certain moral value. These categorizations as 'good' people and 'family' people are accredited according to patriarchal and racial norms of a 'good family' that have long been constructed in relation and opposition to the 'deviant' poor and racialized household (Roberts, 1994a). Their moral value was dialectical and was most clearly in relationship with the deviant characterization of tenants living in their buildings. Such moral value was integral to a concept of rehabilitation through behavioural transformation because it was activated to legitimize the landlords' dominance while simultaneously categorizing their tenants as immoral and therefore in need of intervention. Despite the rebranding, then, the LRF had nothing to do with harm reduction.

#### 5.4 Disinvestment and debilitation

All interviewed tenants spoke to some extent about their disappointment with their housing conditions. Despite the landlord's rhetoric of 'fixing up' the buildings, the apartments remained unsecured and unrepaired. In interviews with tenants, the recovery housing was regularly characterized as a 'scam' or a 'front' to explain the disjuncture between what was promised and what was provided. One tenant used the metaphor of an infomercial to explain how he felt scammed by the landlord's rhetoric:

It was all really good features, you know really interesting things that would grip your attention being like “oh they’re taking initiative, they’re fixing their buildings, they’re helping people in distress, homeless, hospital stuff, doing wellness checks.” If that was an infomercial, you’d have my money! But now I’m sitting here, no money, thinking this was just a shit infomercial. It’s just awful. Like you gave me a Sham-Wow that didn’t take up any liquid, like you sold me garbage. (Tenant A, interview, March 11, 2021)

Rather than providing a space and structure for recovery, the poor conditions created by earlier waves of absenteeism and disinvestment persisted, which created confusing and debilitating environments for tenants. A common concern in interviews was the lack of security as entrances and exits went unrepaired, posing risks to tenant safety and to the security of their belongings. For one tenant, the fear of experiencing a break-in was exacerbating their anxiety:

We still have no mailboxes, the back doors keep getting busted – like fire escape doors, which is literally illegal because they’re not supposed to be left open, they’re supposed to latch properly and the top one doesn’t do that. My anxiety is starting to make me a little paranoid now because I’ve been living here for so long. (Tenant C, interview, March 10, 2021)

Because the rehabilitative process relied on policies of confinement to correct behaviour rather than material improvements to their living environment or access to material and social resources, debilitation was the logical outcome. For instance, tenants transitioning from homelessness found that the housing did not offer much more of a reliable possibility for acquiring and holding onto belongings. Two of the tenants interviewed - both of which had previously been homeless - lost their belongings due to break-ins. In one case, the tenant was forced to leave his apartment during a fire and the landlord neglected their responsibility to secure the building. When he returned several days later, most of the units had been looted. Another tenant explained that break-ins were expected due to the lack of security and unrepaired entrances, so their strategy was simply to “try not to buy things that people would want to steal” (Tenant C, interview, March 10, 2021). Despite having turned to the Living Recovery Foundation for a chance to participate in a process of



rehabilitation, tenants found it impossible to accumulate wealth or to feel secure within these buildings. Instead, they would look to improve their lives outside of the apartments.

### 5.5 Housing First

Ironically, these housing conditions, which gave tenants many reasons to want to leave, were soon conjoined with a housing logic based on stability – Housing First. The LRF’s relationship to Housing First began in 2020, a move that followed the expansion of such programs Canada over the last decade. The central premise of these programs, as the name suggests, is that the first step towards social improvement – transitioning out of poverty, homelessness, addiction – necessitates access to permanent and stable housing. This follows an altruistic, but distinctly neoliberal approach to ‘solving homelessness’ that mobilizes case work to try to work around barriers such as screening protocols and housing unaffordability that keep marginalized people out of housing.

Given that Housing First programs are fixed in a rehabilitative framework, it is important to deconstruct how recovery is defined under the policy. From 2009 to 2013, the Mental Health Commission of Canada ran a Housing First pilot study in called At Home/Chez Soi in five Canadian cities, including Vancouver and Winnipeg. Vancouver was chosen as a case study because the homeless population was deemed to have higher rates of substance use and tended to be concentrated in a specific neighbourhood – the Downtown Eastside.<sup>1</sup> While Housing First policy is usually based in a theory of service delivery that does not require participants to practice abstinence, reducing substance use was still included as a measure of successful rehabilitation in Vancouver’s report. The report concluded that successful examples of recovery “involved positive

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<sup>1</sup> While Vancouver’s emphasis on substance-use certainly fits the script for how the Downtown Eastside’s homeless population has been characterized, the researchers may have overemphasized the actual presence of substance use in order to construct a ‘paradigmatic city’ (Beauregard, 2003) for the sake of the case study. Only 29% of the study’s participants reported daily substance use, half of which used marijuana as their drug of choice, which has since been legalized in Canada, and to some extent de-stigmatized for regular use.

outcomes associated with quality, stable housing, positive expressions of self-identity, reduced substance use, and greater social support” (Currie et al., 2014, 23).

In Winnipeg, the study population for Housing First was also characterized as having higher than average rates of substance use, but the case study primarily sought to use Winnipeg as a paradigmatic city for Canada’s urban Indigenous population. Once more, in the same vein as the preventative policing strategies that were published around the same time as the *At Home/Chez Soi* reports, the researchers referred to a legacy of colonialization to delineate a category of vulnerability for Indigenous peoples. Of the study’s participants, 49% had lived in foster care, 42% had a parent or grandparent who had attended residential school, and 11% had attended residential school themselves. This meant that the possibility of repairing relationships damaged by colonialism factored heavily in the case study’s description of recovery, and the goal of family reunification was particularly emphasized in the Winnipeg study.

At its root, Housing First carries forward the individualizing, neoliberal logic of the LRF’s approaches to rehabilitation described earlier. Because Housing First policy relies first and foremost on securing individual tenancies rather than challenging colonial systems that create vulnerability more broadly, there is a distinctly neoliberal flavour to the policy which takes for granted the power of housing to transform individuals. As my literature review showed, such a logic harkens back to the transformational visions of earlier public housing developments like Winnipeg’s own Lord Selkirk Park Housing Development. The essential shortcoming of this logic is described by Jim Silver (2006) who explains that “the implicit assumption driving governments’ approach to the Development appears to have been ... that the construction of new housing would, by itself, solve deep-seated social problems, and thus there was no need for any expenditure beyond the cost of the housing itself” (56-57). While earlier iterations of Canadian housing policy

relied on housing construction to rehabilitate ‘risky subjects,’ the dominant model since 2000 has relied on securing and stabilizing tenancies in the existing private rental market stock (Suttor, 2016a). Like earlier approaches adopted by the LRF, Housing First does little to address the systems that have created vulnerable conditions for tenants, including longstanding disinvestment and exploitation in the housing market where tenants find their homes.

Like earlier LRF framings, its engagement with Housing First provided new possibilities for profitability. Some of these possibilities drew on the labour of social workers. Housing First programs rely on support workers who spend significant hours assisting in the housing search process by performing small but exhaustive roles such as scanning through listings, helping to fill rental applications, and attending apartment viewings. More importantly, Housing First support workers attempt to negotiate tenancy agreements with the gatekeepers who have historically barred access to housing for people who are assumed to pose a greater ‘risk’ to their search for profit. To help negotiate against these discriminatory notions of risk, Housing First programs offer rent top-ups and repair subsidies as incentives to landlords who house their participants. When a tenancy agreement is signed and the participant can move into an apartment, this is seen as a first step towards the goal of an individualized rehabilitation. In reports on the effectiveness of Canadian Housing First policy, a tenant’s stability in these brokered tenancies is seen as an indicator towards curing a wide list of problems beyond housing insecurity including addiction, self-esteem, broken relationships, illness, and isolation (Distasio et al., 2014; Currie et al., 2014). As a housing provider, the LRF was able to lean on these social supports, which helped them find new opportunities for profit that will be covered in the following chapter.

## 5.6 Housing and fugivity

It is less clear how the turn to Housing First helped tenants living the LRF buildings. The Living Recovery Foundation was branded as a housing option for tenants to improve themselves, but the poor housing conditions had not changed from previous waves of absenteeism and disinvestment. If housing makes people sick, if it is contingent on policies of bondage that isolate tenants and sever relationships, and if tenants are unable to accumulate their own forms of wealth, why should they stay put? The essential focus of Housing First on providing stability, then, is undermined by the housing conditions in which people are meant to find it. Given these conditions, moreover, it is hard to see instability, people moving from one place to another, as a character defect. It is preferable to see it as fugitivity, an act of agency. Fred Moten (2021) explains that the concept of fugitivity applies not only to describe “running from, but also running towards” (Building a Stairway, 14:04-14:16). This helps to understand that when tenants left the Living Recovery Foundation, often after only a few months of tenancy, they were not simply leaving the debilitating conditions of the disinvested and confining housing, but also seeking out another path for their own process of rehabilitation. While we should remember to fit wellness and self-improvement into a larger coercive contract to participate in society, fugitivity can explain how tenants act to reappropriate – and to some extent to redefine – the terms of their rehabilitation.

In all four of my interviews, tenants shared stories that framed their move-outs - or in one case, their desire to leave - as acts of agency, or fugitivity. The following interview excerpts help to understand housing mobility as both running from and running towards:

I was victim of a home invasion. B n E's [break and enter] on a daily basis. Ugh. It was terrible and dangerous and once I found out I was pregnant I got a spot in Villa Rosa and after I was home-invaded, I never went back. I just left my whole life back in there. Just walked out. (Tenant A, interview, March 11, 2021)

The tenant's story is a testimony of a horrible experience that sparked the painful process of leaving a home. However, it also represents a choice on behalf of the tenant, with what little agency was available to her. Here, she chose to abandon her lease to find a different, albeit temporary, housing situation in a non-profit natal residence for women and their children. In another example, another tenant had found some success through his employment and relationships outside of the apartment buildings, but like others, was unable to feel secure in his apartment. Soon, he too decided to leave his lease and return to couch surfing with friends until he found another apartment:

Yeah I had gotten robbed, they went into my suite, took everything and I was like okay well I can't make myself a life living here and at the time I was working and I was doing a lot of positive things for myself, so I was like well I'm just gonna move into a friend's place again until I could find another place, which I did pretty quickly actually. And it was a lot better yeah, I ended up living there for about a year. It was safe. Yeah, a good environment. (Tenant D, interview, February 3, 2021)

Breaching a tenancy agreement and moving out to find other options can certainly be seen as an act of defiance, and given the pathological construction of housing (in)stability, fugitivity might even be understood as an act of deviance; a countermovement against the expectation that an apartment is a better place to improve oneself than the street. But following the critical guidance of Dorothy Roberts (1994a, 1994b), it could be complicated to describe this as an act of resistance. She warns that "we must discern the transformative potential of what is largely a response to subjugation" (1994b, 183), which I take to mean that we should not romanticize as radical the everyday acts allow people to survive or escape ongoing structures of dominance. For these tenants, moving was still only an act of survivance. Although it did secure better conditions for them as individuals, their fugitivity was not intended to challenge the landlord's rehabilitative power or the notion that their movement was pathological.

## 5.7 Summary

Like past drug scares, the Winnipeg meth crisis allowed the state and capital to shift blame for disinvestment onto people associated with drug use and placed the burden of moral improvement on the shoulders of those same ‘risky subjects.’ This process of marginalization allowed absentee landlordism to persist with debilitating conditions while the housing itself was paradoxically branded as a pathway for moral improvement. While the Living Recovery Foundation began by constructing its rehabilitative model specifically around drug addiction, using the meth crisis as a launching point to expand the landlord’s disciplinary power, their strategy of accumulation would eventually fall back on federal housing policy and more long-standing settler-colonial power relations to find profit. The LRF offered a brand of rehab that borrowed from carceral institutions, and while it is easy to wage criticism against their disciplinary structure, it also met a certain demand. The buildings offered no actual programming and rules were selectively enforced, which suggests that the transition was far more concerned with capturing demand for rehabilitation than transforming tenants.

Under neoliberalism, the demand for rehabilitation is fuelled by both internal and external motivations that shift the burden of social uplift onto individuals. Tenants did ‘choose’ to live with the Living Recovery Foundation, but this choice was structured first by a lack of alternative housing options, and secondly by a coercive pressure for self-improvement. On the other hand, their fugitivity from the LRF - in some cases into homelessness - runs against the grain of socialization and housing policy that sees housing ‘stability’ as a marker of rehabilitation. This defiance rings true as act of agency that rejects poor housing conditions, and searches instead for a place of dignity. Fugitivity from the LRF’s rehabilitative housing has not yet offered a political challenge to the categories that subjectify and allow rehabilitative power to persist. However, as we will see in the next sections, fugitivity did have the unintended consequence of complicating the

landlord's search for profit as well as their expansion of disciplinary power. In this way, we will see how individual fugitivity and refusal could operate to protect tenants on a collective level as it subverted the disciplinary and economic logic of evictions.

## 6. Accumulation in a disinvested rental market

*“I just think it’s important to know that at the end of the day, these are just landlords that are trying to fill units.” (Ashley, interview, April 17, 2021)*

### 6.1 Speculation without gentrification

The rehabilitative discourse transformed the Living Recovery Foundation’s position in relation to the state, non-profits, and their tenants, but the essence of their strategy would always return to a private landlord’s basic economic equation – managing vacancy and collecting rent. If they could solve these problems, Karin Harper and Patrick Penner would continue to accumulate wealth and add new properties to their expansive portfolio. David Harvey (2012) writes that “land is not a commodity in the ordinary sense. It is a fictitious form of capital that derives from expectations of future rents” (28). In this sense, the Living Recovery Foundation’s expanding portfolio represents not just a growing number of assets to secure their wealth, but also a speculative strategy on how profit will be generated by their properties over time. However, the Living Recovery Foundation’s search for profit shows us something different than the strategies of accumulation that have more typically been studied by urban geographers. While Harvey’s analysis sees “displacement and dispossession ... at the core of the urban process under capitalism” (18), the Living Recovery Foundation’s rehabilitative capitalism speculates on an ability to find profit through the management of existing low-income residents in disinvested areas.

Originally, the landlords attempted a more typical strategy of buying low-rent buildings and finding profit through renovation – doing repairs and aesthetic improvements and charging higher rents:

We’re all inner-city buildings, that’s what we have and when we purchased each of these buildings, we went in and did a massive, crazy renovation for each one. I think our dream was to go into the inner-city, take over these buildings that were either partially condemned or all condemned, and make them a nice place and



maybe start bringing up the neighbourhood a little bit. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

Landlords use renovations not only towards the physical reconstruction of their buildings, but also towards a social reconstruction. Tenancy legislation in Manitoba allows landlords to evict tenants to make way for major renovations, a process which is colloquially known as a renoviction. While tenants were pushed out of their homes, the renovictions would also allow the landlords to apply to Manitoba's Residential Tenancies Branch for above-guideline rent increases (AGIs) and swiftly bump up the collectable rents across their portfolio. In theory, the AGIs could serve to recuperate the costs of renovations over a few years and would permanently raise rents across the building stock. Usually this sequence has been used as a replacement strategy based on attracting higher-paying tenants to gentrify the buildings (e.g. Logan and Vachon, 2008). In this case however, it is likely that Harper and Penner were housing many of the same people who had been pushed out by earlier waves of renovictions.

The scale of their revaluation strategy meant that the landlords were renovating and replacing many units all at once, which created high levels of vacancy in their buildings. Armour Property Management, who was contracted to fill and manage their buildings, was a good fit because their hands-off approach included some of the most relaxed screening protocols for incoming tenants. This presented a Catch-22 for the landlords as it would serve to move people in quickly, but the new tenancies tended to involve higher risk for the landlords. For instance, while most management companies in Winnipeg use income screening – refusing to accept tenants who do not earn three times the cost of rent – Armour did not. On the one hand, this offered an inclusive option for tenants and whose incomes had not kept up with revaluation strategies in apartment buildings (and who had been forced to find new housing due to renovictions), but it also meant that

many of Armour's tenants were squeezed. Paying most of their income towards rent, tenants were vulnerable to falling behind on rent payments, never mind affording other essentials.

Armour's laissez-faire and high-risk management style, which also eliminated on-site caretaking and avoided repairs, saw the newly renovated buildings quickly deteriorate while vacancy problems persisted with short tenancies. The property management could not keep up with their turnover. Under Armour's watch, the revaluation strategy had failed; rents had increased, but the owners were faced with a vacancy crisis. Furthermore, the landlords needed to change their strategy because the costs of another wave of renovations might not be recuperated by simply applying for another AGI. It was uncertain whether the market could be squeezed further than what tenants were already paying. Reflecting on this period, Harper concluded that "what we found out the hard way is that basically whatever property management you're using has to be a management company that knows how to deal in the inner-city, because it's its own animal" (interview, May 12, 2021). She had given up the ghost of gentrifying her buildings and needed something other than a strategy of replacement.

Taking over management of her own portfolio, Harper tried a new approach that would apply Armour's laissez-faire screening protocol to fill units, but would specifically cater to subjects associated with the meth crisis in Winnipeg's inner-city, and design a tenant management system according to this population.

I think we just decided that we couldn't fight the meth and the drug use downtown, and that's where our buildings were. Somehow, we needed to get on board and figure out how to get our buildings safe, keep people safe. These people suffer a lot of trauma, they're not doing this because it's fun for them. I'm not sure exactly what our role is except acceptance, and trying to keep them safe, keep them on the right track. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

Her altruistic rhetoric is compelling, and my critique is not intended to evaluate the sincerity of her approach. However, terms like ‘acceptance,’ ‘safety,’ and ‘keeping them on the right track’ can be used to chart the three central aspects of Harper’s new strategy, which I have attempted to sort into the three chapters of my analysis. The previous chapter deconstructed the notion of keeping tenants ‘on the right track’ and the following chapter will examine how Harper attempted to secure her buildings. The current chapter will focus primarily on her search for profit, which will demonstrate how her policy of ‘acceptance’ sought to fill units with a wide net of referrals. Further, we will see that the Living Recovery Foundation’s strategy of “predatory inclusion” (Taylor, 2019) allowed the landlords to extract even more value from their tenancies than what would have been possible under a strategy of replacement.

## 6.2 Selling rehab to fill units

The moral panic over meth use offered excellent marketing potential to drug addiction rehabilitation through media recognition, moral branding, and the mobilization of public resources, and the Living Recovery Foundation made this a cornerstone of their initial strategy. On paper, Ashley’s rule system marketed the buildings as a transitional space between rehab and the apartment, positioning them as a logical referral option for out-patient housing from rehab centres. From early on, the Living Recovery Foundation worked hard to broker these referrals relationships:

All of the rehab groups that were in operation in Manitoba were approached, so a couple of them were signed up to be first shop. So as soon as someone was released and they had nowhere to go, they were introduced to our program. They would sit down and have an interview with us, they would bring their documentation to say that they completed their treatment or that they detoxed, which was the criteria. And from that interview, they would apply for housing through EIA, and then EIA would pay directly, and they were in. So, it was quite simple that way to fill it, and we actually filled it immediately. (Ashley, interview, April 17, 2021)

The referral process eliminated some of the need for a third-party management company, which the landlords had previously contracted primarily to fill vacancies and collect rent.<sup>2</sup> Automatic referrals from rehab agencies created a steady flow of incoming tenants and included a slight screening process under the criteria that they had to have graduated from rehab. Additionally, the landlords streamlined the task of collecting rent by requiring that rent would be paid directly to them through Manitoba's welfare agency, Employment and Income Assistance (EIA). This was not a perfect system. The landlord would still be in regular communication with welfare workers to solve problems with rent payments, but the mechanics of a centralized bureaucracy worked perfectly to collect rent on a large-scale. Rather than hiring a property management company to create the infrastructure for rent-collection, Harper could repurpose the state's mechanism to funnel rent directly to her company.

With a steady flow of incoming referrals from rehab and a predictable mechanism for collecting rent, the Living Recovery Foundation was able to begin systematically renovating their buildings once again. Still, the limited incomes of tenants on EIA kept a low ceiling under which the landlords could foreseeably collect rent and recuperate their costs. If she wanted to maintain her current referrals system and rent structure, Harper could not rely on AGI rent increases. Instead, the LRF found ways to keep the costs of renovations as low as possible:

Actually, they didn't want to put that money into construction and part of my contract was to renovate these apartment buildings. So, I went in, I did a scope of work. I had done this quite a bit with my other job, so I was quite familiar with what needed to be done. I kind of made a budget for them of what it would cost to repair this building. They had a construction team in that would do the stuff that I wasn't licensed to do, and the aesthetics of the building were up to me. I recruited eleven

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<sup>2</sup> Sure, management companies are generally contracted to do more than fill units and collect rent, but the management companies previously contracted by Harper and Penner did little to 'manage' buildings. They removed on-site caretakers and avoided repairs. Therefore, the property management's role was fairly simple which also made it easily replaceable by a referral system.

volunteers who had addiction history and were on probation and needed hours. We'd go in there and renovate it. We'd get one floor done at a time and then we'd fill it. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

Their rehabilitative branding not only allowed the landlords to fill units with referrals, it also allowed them to capitalize on unpaid labour from state-mandated volunteer hours to renovate their buildings. The new strategy, which relied neither on state funding nor rent hikes to cover the cost of renovations, was originally applied to six of their most disinvested buildings and improved the units to a marketable condition. With the help of unpaid labour, renovations helped sell the notion that the landlords were 'fixing up' their buildings and made the units more attractive to tenants.

One tenant spoke about how he appreciated the aesthetic qualities of his newly renovated unit:

I was told that the unit that I moved into was redone, and I believe it. It was a nice unit. Like honestly to this day, if that building could have worked out, I would have loved living there. Like right about now, I'd be doing bar-b-cue out on the balcony or something. (Tenant A, interview, March 11, 2021)

After Ashley left, new staff were hired to adjust Ashley's rule system to emulate the routines and guidelines of rehab and to introduce twelve-step meetings in some of the buildings. In the end, the rehab programming was only successfully introduced for a short term in one of the buildings, but the emulation of rehab branded their housing as a form of pseudo-treatment centre. Two staff were hired directly from twelve-step meetings to help attract tenants who were looking for rehab. One of the staff explained that they were an asset to the landlord because "we brought to the table where do we go to present, where do we go to get people, where do we go to be prepared for filling these suites and to build Living Recovery" (LRF staff, interview, May 4, 2021). The new staff put additional efforts towards Ashley's early outreach strategy, using their first-hand experience to promote the LRF as a place where tenants could practice recovery outside of the formal rehab centre. For this landlord, this would help to bring in new tenants and would supplement their referral system.

### 6.3 Manufacturing scarcity to find profit

Vacancy rates are not a problem specific to the apartment buildings owned by Karin Harper and Patrick Penner. In the neighbourhoods where they operate, vacancy rates were above 7%, in 2020 - almost double the city-wide average of 3.8% - and the rates have recently been trending upwards. For example, in the Spence neighbourhood, where six of the eight LRF buildings are situated, the vacancy rate is nearing double-digit figures; up to 9.4% in 2019 compared to 7.9% in 2017. To rapidly fill units in such a high-vacancy landscape, the landlords repositioned their apartments to find new demand. As a pseudo-treatment centre, the LRF capitalized on a high demand for affordable rehab and created a new category in the private rental market that they would monopolize. No other private landlord offered rehab housing, and certainly not at the LRF's scale. By redefining their housing to capture demand for rehab, they manufactured a new category of housing that immediately had a scarcity of alternative options. Their original plan of capturing demand for drug addiction rehab secured a steady flow of tenants that helped to solve the vacancy problem. But the demand was so strong that the landlords were able to squeeze significant value from these apartments. Turning to the most disinvested buildings in their portfolio, the landlords collected more rent from the LRF's 'risky tenancies' than average rentals in the surrounding areas.

At first, the demand for LRF's rehabilitative housing filled their vacancies, but since most of their tenants only received a basic housing allowance of \$576 from EIA (slightly more for those on disability), the rents were not yet profitable. Harper explains that to solve this problem "we encourage roommating because then I actually get my full amount" (interview, May 12, 2021).

Staff from the LRF tell the story slightly differently:

We have two-bedroom units that we'd like to do on a roommate basis. So, two to a unit. Those units were based at \$576 a month or \$700 a month, and then they would stick two people in at \$576 each, so they would be making money off these

people. And these people would be deemed to be roommates with each other, whether they liked it or not. (Ashley, interview, April 17, 2021)

With the increased demand under their rehabilitative brand, the landlords were effectively able to subdivide their two-bedroom units into a more profitable rooming-house model, but without making structural changes that would afford any of the privacy or security in typical rooming-house units. Nevertheless, they could now charge upwards of \$1,152 for a two-bedroom apartment in the most disinvested buildings of their portfolio. The doubled tenancies were highly lucrative compared to the rest of Harper and Penner's buildings, but they were also more profitable than better-quality units in same neighbourhoods. In 2020, the average price of a two-bedroom was \$819 in Spence and \$738 in Point Douglas. Amazingly, the doubled tenancies in LRF's buildings, which were intentionally picked as some of the most disinvested buildings in the city, were collecting near the city-wide average rent of \$1,259 for a two-bedroom apartment. Using their rehabilitative branding, the landlords managed to transform some of the city's worst apartments in a high-vacancy inner-city housing market into highly profitable units.

The LRF's ability to make disinvested units highly profitable shows how urban capital works to reevaluate real estate even in spaces that do not gentrify. Geographers who study gentrification tend to refer to Neil Smith's Rent Gap theory to explain how speculative real estate applies pressure to people living in disinvested buildings and neighbourhoods. Samuel Stein (2019) identifies three stages to this process, which he tends to connect to deindustrializing spaces: an initial stage of investment that creates the built environment, a second stage of disinvestment and property abandonment which brings down the value, and a third stage of reinvestment to capture greater profits margins than other locations would yield. He explains that the third stage of revaluation occurs in disinvested areas because speculators "identify a gap between the rents that land currently offers and the potential future rents it might command if some action were taken,

such as evicting long-term tenants, renovating neglected or unstylish properties, or demolishing and reconstructing buildings” (49). While this thesis is recognizable in large cities where there is enough capital to flow into disinvested spaces and enough housing demand to gentrify low-income neighbourhoods, such a sequence has had limited success in Winnipeg. Even in West Broadway, a neighbourhood that has arguably faced more gentrification than others in Winnipeg’s inner-city in the last decade, the average rents have remained relatively stable in recent years. In 2020, the average price of a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,046; only up 0.7% from the 2018 average. Similarly, there were no significant changes in rent in Spence or Point Douglas under the same time frame. Despite the desperate attempts to gentrify Winnipeg’s downtown over the last decade, rents in inner city neighbourhoods have plateaued well below the city’s average.

In not-yet gentrified spaces, or spaces that may never gentrify, landlords will look beyond the speculative real estate market to build their strategies of accumulation. The Living Recovery Foundation is an example of another strategy that finds profit in urban spaces regardless of speculative property value. By offering themselves as a solution to the meth crisis, they found ways of raising rents and solving vacancy problems by fabricating a demand that had more to do with the management of their tenants than the asset value of their properties. In a landscape of rising vacancy and stagnant rents, the Living Recovery Foundation repositioned their apartment buildings as sites of moral transformation. Regardless of whether they were offering rehabilitative programs on site, their predatory inclusion of risky subjects allowed them to find greater opportunities for profit than otherwise possible in the private rental market. Eventually, the landlords recognized that there was no need to even claim that supports were offered on site. They found that their policy of inclusion alone was enough to capture a demand for ‘low-barrier’ housing. With this in mind, they rebranded their ‘Harm Reduction’ housing as ‘Housing First.’



However, the ‘Sober Living’ housing still held a special role within their rehabilitative framework. In these buildings, the landlords found new lucrative partnerships with the state’s foster care system and rebranded the housing to ‘Clean and Sober Family’ and ‘Family Reconciliation.’

The turn towards housing was an extension of the LRF’s existing approach and allowed the landlords to capture even greater demand and to find new supports that would assist their search for profit. In an email sent to her network in early June 2021,<sup>3</sup> Karin Harper offered a progress report in honor of the Living Recovery Foundation’s second anniversary:

This city has a huge shortage of low barrier housing. It has been suggested to me by more than one agency that we are the only true Housing First in the city. With a few exceptions, we give everybody a chance to be housed. ... Our LRFW buildings are pretty much full, a vacancy or two at all the buildings, we are getting to the point where we will likely only be housing people that come to us through an agency/group and have support workers that are willing to work with us. I know who those agencies and workers are and I am happy to work with them. Every week we are approached or discovered by a new agency or group, there is no shortage of people in need of low barrier housing. (Karin Harper, email correspondence, June 3, 2021)

As it was explained in the last chapter, Housing First policy relies on negotiating tenancies in the private rental market, and even though participants are given additional resources to help leverage these negotiations, most landlords will refuse to take on Housing First tenants. According to a local housing support worker, the two main screening protocols that bar tenants from housing are their rental history and source of income. She explained that overlapping systemic struggles related to a person’s marginalization create conditions for a bad rental history, which sometimes manifest as multiple evictions:

Like say addiction, domestic violence, or just having foot traffic in their suite, damages, mental health. Folks get evicted because of all those things. And then we

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<sup>3</sup> In this email, her network included community organizations, religious groups, community health centres, Indigenous organizations, rehab centres, shelters, state health authorities, foster care offices, and the justice department among others.

go to apply at a rental agency like Astroid Management, Sun Rex, D7, and they don't have good history, their application right away is going to be rejected. (local housing worker, interview, May 6, 2021)

While many landlords are hesitant to take in marginalized tenants, the LRF's shift to Housing First was a logical expansion of their existing strategy and also provided them with new opportunities. There are significant benefits afforded to landlords who accept Housing First participants. Every year the federal government transfers funds to agencies offering Housing First programs to attach portable benefits to a fixed number of participants who are on EIA and paired with a housing support worker. Housing First participants receive a rent top-up which allows them to pay an extra \$250 towards rent, have access to a repair subsidy to cover any damages during the tenancy, and are attached to a support worker who can offer third-party mediation between the tenant and landlord. Together, these benefits are meant to counter-weigh the risks of taking in a Housing First participant and in theory, they afford the tenants greater choice in the market. Housing support workers find that the rent top-up has been especially helpful in negotiating tenancies, but nevertheless, many landlords continue to reject Housing First participants. For the Living Recovery Foundation, which had already developed a strategy of accumulation based on acceptance, the top-ups allow them to find greater profit without the trouble of doubling up tenancies. For a single tenant with a Housing First top-up, they are able to collect up to upwards of \$826 in rent, which is far beyond Spence's average of \$697 for a one bedroom, and even exceeds the average rent of a two-bedroom unit at \$819 in 2020.

The rent top-ups help to bolster profits, but Harper explains that an even greater incentive is the security afforded by collaborating with housing support workers. Echoing the update in her email, she explained that having solved her vacancy problem, she now was developing her own criteria for housing:

So now I'm full enough that I can start to be a bit picky about what I'm doing. And so, what I mean by that is not the person, it's the support behind that person. So, I'm getting down to where I don't want to house unless they have an agency behind them, or a support worker behind them. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

According to Harper, Housing First participants (with rent top-ups and repair subsidies) only represent a small proportion of her tenancies at this point. While there is a limited number of Housing First top-ups available each year, there are far more tenants who are affiliated with various housing supports through state and non-profit agencies. For Harper, this direct line of communication to a housing support worker allows her large-scale operation to function. In the same way that receiving rent directly from EIA affords the landlord a sense of predictability and simplifies the process of collecting rent, communication with a support worker allows her to solve problems more efficiently through the reliable systems of her referral network. In this sense, the resources that would have normally been dedicated to contracting a property management company can be salvaged. She could now call on support workers to intervene and solve tenancy problems in her buildings. Partnerships in a wider network of public and non-profit agencies helped to create a greater flow of referrals to her buildings than rehab alone, but these partnerships also helped to eliminate some of the need for third-party property management. This would reduce the LRF's operating budget and would allow Harper to personally oversee her entire portfolio.

By offering low-barrier housing under the branding of 'Housing First' the Living Recovery Foundation was able to renovate their strategy for capturing referrals, casting a net that went far beyond drug addiction rehab without abandoning these roots. With a greater flow of referrals, Harper and Penner were able to transition two other buildings from their portfolio towards the LRF's model, one of which was added to their 'Housing First' arm. In Housing First buildings, Harper had low standards for the length of tenancies and would celebrate the mere fact that "more

and more I've got people that have been with us for over a year, which is really great." However, in the other added building, she tested a new category of longer-term housing that would allow her to increase her profit based on the rehabilitation and reunification of families living in her buildings.

#### 6.4 Expanding through Family Reunification

In similar fashion to her doubled-up tenancies, she would seek to increase the yields of her apartments over time as children were reunited with their parents in the Living Recovery Foundation's buildings. As a new addition under the LRF umbrella, 485 Sherbrook was managed by a sister agency called Makoon Transition. By dedicating the building specifically to First Nations families with children apprehended by the state or that were 'at-risk' of apprehension, Makoon was able to receive federal funding under Jordan's Principle.<sup>4</sup> The funding stream allowed Makoon to offer programs on-site in the basement of the apartment building in a similar fashion to the early addiction rehab programming at Jarvis. On their website, Makoon lists a series of programs including relapse prevention, training classes for topics like parenting, wellness, nutrition, anger management, and healing courses for trauma, domestic violence, and spiritual healing. Once again, rehabilitative rhetoric was used to position the landlord in close proximity to other referral agencies, but this time the referrals were sought from the department of Child and Family Services, Manitoba's foster care system.

The shift to family reunification housing opened an even larger pool of referrals for the Living Recovery Foundation, which would make it even easier for the landlords to fill their units. But the transition to reunification housing was grounded in finding new ways of maximizing rents

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<sup>4</sup> Jordan's Principle is not a program, but a legal obligation on behalf of the Government of Canada to address (and fund) gaps in health, social and educational services for First Nations children.

collected from the apartments. In two of the Living Recovery Foundation's buildings, the family-oriented branding served to draw referrals from CFS, but Harper was selective about the tenants that she accepted:

I don't house them unless they've given me their CFS worker's number and consent to speak with, because I want to actually know that their babies are coming back. Because if I'm giving someone a unit at a family building, they need to be very close to either giving birth, or getting kids back, or have their kids. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

While the housing still branded itself as a transformative option for families, the landlords only accepted tenants that were already on the cusp of reunification or that were secure enough that there was less risk of having their children apprehended by the state. This screening policy offered great potential for returns on her rents. Harper explained that her line of communication with CFS and other agencies allowed her to speculate on how much rent she could receive for housing a family:

I moved a pregnant woman in a few months before she was due. But she's now given birth to the baby, and what does that mean? It means she can pay full rent now, because before she was just paying a single person's EIA amount, but now she'll be paying what she would get for having one child in her care. And I do that a lot too. I've got somebody in the building, she's gone through everything she's supposed to go through, she's still doing programming outside of AFM. She gets three visits a week with her child, and again I'm accepting her single status and then one child ends up back in her care and then her rent will be according to that. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

When the Living Recovery Foundation doubled-up tenancies, they were able to collect far more rent than otherwise possible in their buildings, but the forced roommating process was bound to cause tension in tenancies. By shifting their strategy towards family reunification, the landlords were able to mimic the doubling strategy, but with more willing (and theoretically longer lasting) tenancies. This afforded the landlords another chance to renovate their rehabilitative branding by connecting their project with the highly valuable moral symbol of the family, but more

immediately, it also presented new opportunities for profit. A single parent living without children in the home would have a total monthly income of \$948 from EIA, but a parent with three children in the home could receive up to \$3,267 per month. By speculating on the reunification process, the Living Recovery Foundation was able to find opportunities for profit similar to what is possible through gentrification. The landlords effectively brought in tenants that were expected to have higher incomes than their previous tenants and adjusted their rents according to these changes in household income.<sup>5</sup>

The shift towards family reunification housing is not innovative nor is it an unpredictable strategy of accumulation in the Prairie West. While it signals a stark example of rehabilitative capitalism – finding profit through the moral transformation of subjects – it also shows how rehabilitative capitalism is grounded in a continuous trajectory of settler colonial economies. For settler colonialism to survive on Turtle Island, settlers rely on rhetoric of benevolence and care to assert their entitlement to the land (Razack, 2015; Stewart and La Berge, 2019). Settler colonialism has always fabricated dialectical subject categories to characterize settlers and settled space as ‘moral’ and ‘progressive’ in contrast to the imagined lawlessness and immorality of Indigeneity. Hardly veiled as moral superiority, this logic formed a white supremacist entitlement to land and resources that allowed settler economies to thrive during the industrial boom. In post-industrial

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<sup>5</sup> As you might have guessed, this is an illegal rent increase. Manitoba’s rent control legislation stipulates that the landlords can only increase rent once per year, that they must provide notice to the tenant three months before the increase, and that the rent increase can only be under the yearly guideline unless the landlord can prove that they had additional costs (such as capital investments including renovations or a more expensive operating budget). However, with the previous waves of renovations, it is entirely likely that the landlords had reached a ceiling of collectable rent that was far above what they were charging. When this happens, landlords in Manitoba will maintain the rent increase, but then offer a ‘discount’ to tenants, which brings rents down to a marketable rate but still allows them to spike the rent when they believe the market will bear it. However, even if the Living Recovery Foundation was using this strategy, they can only adjust or remove the discount upon renewal of the lease (once per year) which is clearly not the case given that the vast majority of their tenancies currently are not lasting a year. Therefore, this is clearly illegal, but nevertheless the process has been accepted by agencies and tenants working with the landlord.

settler economies however, Stewart and Laberge (2019) recognize new extractive strategies that find value not only in the continued appropriation of land and resources, but also through the management of Indigenous peoples:

The twenty-first century settler colonial economy in Canada expands through narratives of welfare and care – where there is neither welfare nor care in these cases, but rather the extraction of surplus value found in disposable lives that render value through their management (209).

Their analysis also identifies how ‘risk’ is mobilized to shift blame away from the vulnerable conditions created by colonization towards individualized cases “requiring the (benevolent) care or intervention of settler professionals and institutions” (212). In this sense, Stewart and La Berge argue that the ‘risky’ Indigenous child becomes commodified as settler economies based in child-protection and crime prevention grow around a benevolent rhetoric of concern for the child. In 2020, there were 9,849 children in Manitoba’s foster care system, 90% of which are Indigenous. For the settler state, whole economies are formed around managing children in care, but also children who are ‘at-risk’ of apprehension. For the Living Recovery Foundation, family reunification similarly represented a new opportunity for the landlords to expand and to extract value from the continued collision between the Indigenous family and the colonial state. Sherene Razack (2015) writes that “Indigenous suffering becomes something non-Indigenous peoples will ameliorate, and public discourse shifts from land claims to rescue” (59). In this way, the state and capital find new roles and strategies of accumulation through the management of Indigenous pain, but the rhetoric of care attached to these strategies reveals a fundamental insecurity: settler entitlement to the land will always be an illegitimate performance.

By selling rehabilitation, the Living Recovery Foundation tapped into a referral system that would stream tenants directly into their buildings. Beginning during a moral panic over meth use, the landlords first positioned their buildings in close proximity to addiction rehab agencies and

offered to house anyone who would live according to their disciplinary rule system. This allowed the LRF to quickly fill vacancies with tenants and referrals who struggled against screening protocols elsewhere in the market, but also gave the landlord a new moral branding that would help them access a wider network of state and non-profit partnerships. The new partnerships allowed the landlords to expand their referral network and to stream more tenants into vacant units, which helped the LRF to fill their disinvested buildings despite competing in a high-vacancy rental market. With the vacancy problem solved, the LRF expanded their portfolio by buying new buildings and converting more buildings towards the rehabilitative model. The next step in their strategy of accumulation was to reevaluate their units. By doubling tenancies, they were able to charge far more rent than what was otherwise possible in their disinvested buildings, but the Living Recovery Foundation found an even greater potential to speculate on a colonial family reunification process. Throughout their development, the Living Recovery Foundation has identified ways to make their disinvested apartments highly profitable by accepting tenants with few other housing options, but their strategy of accumulation would always face contestation, and this made it a risky endeavour. This is where another aspect of recovery landlordism became important.



## 7. Expanding disciplinary power over risk

*“Stones can make people docile and knowable.” (Foucault, 1977, 172)*

### 7.1 House rules for risky tenancies

Their policy of ‘acceptance’ repositioned Karin Harper and Patrick Penner as altruistic landlords and helped to attract tenants and tenant referrals who faced difficulty finding housing elsewhere. However, their acceptance was conditional. Tenants were required to sign a long list of house rules that suggested that they would be subjected to policies of confinement in the buildings. Spatial interventions seeking to control the movement of ‘risky subjects’ were common throughout Winnipeg’s meth crisis, and even though the Living Recovery Foundation positioned themselves as a rehabilitative solution to the crisis, repressive policies were part and parcel of their strategy. The house rules went to extreme lengths to subvert tenancy protections, and despite a general malaise over the rules throughout the landlord’s network, there was little backlash from outside of the apartment buildings.

Early versions of the house rules followed lengthy two- and three-page lists dedicated to each of the Living Recovery Foundation’s twin categories: Clean and Sober, and Harm Reduction. The Clean and Sober rules included mandatory 12-step meetings and banned possession of any alcohol, drugs, or drug paraphernalia, but the rules of confinement were applied more broadly. Both sets of house rules included a curfew from 11pm until 5:30am and required mandatory work hours set at 10-20 hours for Harm Reduction and 20-40 hours for Clean and Sober tenants. The disciplinary rules were clearly intended to control ‘time’ for tenants. Earlier, we saw how the staff aimed to correct idleness, which they saw as morally problematic. But a regulated routine had purpose beyond the logic of moral transformation. The curfews, check-ins, and voluntary hours attempted to confine tenants, cutting away moments where they could possibly be free during the days or evening.

The rules of confinement aimed to limit ‘when’ tenants could be free, but they also attempted to control their movement, or ‘where’ they could be. In Harm Reduction and Sober Living buildings, rules of partitioning banned tenants from entering their neighbours’ units, and even stipulated that “at no time will residents be permitted to have physical relations with other participants.” The rules for Clean and Sober tenants also proposed to regulate tenants’ lives and relationships outside of the buildings by instilling a pass system:

After 60 days and if you are in good standing with the Program, you will be allowed two weekend overnight passes per month. Passes must be approved by staff in advance. The address and contact information for where you will be staying must be supplied. You will be drug tested upon return to the building. If you are away from the building overnight without an approved pass, you will be drug tested, given an automatic strike and possibility discharged from the program. (LRF house rules, obtained February 26, 2020)

The pass system was frighteningly reminiscent of Canada’s colonial pass system which attempted to monitor Indigenous movement and to prevent Indigenous peoples from entering cities.

Tenants were further monitored under the pretence of ‘wellness checks.’ This proved to be one of the landlord’s preferred rules, and has been maintained since the beginning in all of the Living Recovery Foundation’s buildings. The altruistic pretence of ‘wellness checks’ demanded that tenants give up their right to 24-hour written notice before a landlord could reasonably enter the tenant’s unit. While the house rules attempted to confine tenants to their units, the landlords and staff were given full freedom of movement within the building. With the landlord and staff having full access to any unit at any moment, there was an expanded sense of surveillance in the intimate spaces where tenants lived, robbing them of the privacy that would normally be afforded under tenant protections.

The rules of confinement were originally devised to emulate rehab, but even once the LRF abandoned the notion of offering addiction rehab on-site, the rules stuck around. The landlords tweaked the rules and applied them throughout their portfolio in attempt to mitigate challenges associated to their risky strategy of accumulation. Harper explained that the rules progressed over time in attempt to solve problems as they appeared:

I think it was just a progression with the rules. I think it might have started with the past person that took over the building. And then we kind of just kept going with them. ... It was like “okay what are our challenges in these buildings” and the rules started to roll out from there. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

It is not unusual for landlords to ask tenants to sign a list of house rules in Manitoba.

Rooming houses, in particular, will often have rules around guest visitation including the number of guests allowed and whether or not guests can stay overnight. While the curfew, pass system, and forced labour appear to impose extreme limits on tenant freedoms and livelihoods, it is not clear whether existing legislation can effectively protect tenants against this kind of carceral expansion. Manitoba’s legislation regarding house rules leaves a lot of room for interpretation. Section 11(2) of the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) stipulates that landlords may establish and enforce additional house rules as long as they are made known to the tenant in writing and are ‘reasonable.’ Section 11(3) further defines that a rule is reasonable if it “promotes a fair distribution of services” to residents, if it “promotes the safety, comfort or welfare” of residents or staff, or if it “protects the landlord’s property from abuse” (Residential Tenancies Act, 2021, Sec. 11.3.a.i-iii, p. 19).

The only process under which tenant could challenge the rule system through Manitoba’s Residential Tenancies Branch (RTB) is if they were given an eviction notice for breaking a rule and then contested the eviction at a tribunal. As we will see later, the Living Recovery Foundation’s evictions rarely involve the RTB, but even if a tenant did mount this sort of formal

(and highly individualized) contestation, it is not clear that the legislation be interpreted in the tenant's favour. House rules are deemed reasonable largely on the notion that they protect the "safety, comfort or welfare" of staff as well as tenants, or that they protect the landlord's property. In the context of an ongoing moral panic over methamphetamine, where police had blamed users for virtually all property damage and violent crime in the city, and where public institutions had normalized spatial restrictions of their own, it is difficult to predict whether the RTB's adjudicators would have ruled against the LRF's disciplinary rules. Furthermore, even if they did rule to protect an individual case, this would have solved little for the collective.

In March 2020, Manitoba's Residential Tenancies Branch did have to confront such a dilemma when they held a hearing to consider the Living Recovery Foundation's exemption from tenant protections under the RTA. At the determination hearing, Harper pitched the Living Recovery Foundation as 'transitional housing,' which served to "provide safe and secure housing to vulnerable individuals so they can successfully transition to permanent housing" (Residential Tenancies Branch, Order no. W2020-001264). She proposed that the transitional model allowed her "to operate independently of the rules that govern ordinary residential tenancy relationships (i.e. tenant rights, rent control and eviction rules)" which meant that she could quickly evict problematic tenants without involving the RTB. If the LRF had been accepted under the category of transitional housing, they would have effectively been exempt from the RTA, and Harper put everything on the table at the hearing in hopes of being awarded the exemption. She admitted that the housing included no counselling or rehabilitative programming on site, but provided the building rules as evidence of their rehabilitative model and explained that her staff performed daily wellness checks to monitor tenants. She even told the RTB that she charged tenants "a one-

time ‘non-refundable fee’ at the start of residency, which is the amount equivalent to half the monthly residence.” In other words, she was openly charging non-refundable security deposits.

The Residential Tenancies Branch determined that the Living Recovery Foundation was not exempt from the Act, and the adjudicator smugly added that “while the landlord did not characterize the monies paid by the residents to occupy their units as ‘monthly rent’ or a ‘security deposit,’ I find that this is essentially what they are paying.” While the RTB rejected their application for exemption, they did not penalize the landlord for the stolen security deposits, the privacy breaches, or any other of the dodgy evidence that the LRF had provided. Without so much as a slap on the wrist, the RTB’s hearing effectively sanctioned the LRF’s continued use of house rules and privacy breaches in the buildings. As we will see later, the determination that the LRF was not exempt from tenant protections under the RTA had little bearing on how the landlords were able to enforce house rules under an expanded threat of eviction.

Even for local housing workers who were tasked with preventing evictions for their clients, they did not know how to contest the rule system. When one interviewee was asked whether the rules were allowed, she explained that she was unsure:

That’s a big debate. When I started in this position, I was pretty much told these rules are basically a breach on our human rights, like it doesn’t seem right. But ultimately, they’re enforcing them, and people are being evicted because they’re breaking them. And I’m pretty sure there are complaints with RTB against Living Recovery and from what I know, nothing is being done of it. So, I think that’s part of the reason she’s transitioning to this new model of treatment so that she can enforce these house rules. (Local housing worker, interview, May 6, 2021)

Despite a general feeling that the rule system was unethical, housing workers were unsure how to hold the landlords accountable through the formal avenues of tenancy legislation. In January

2020, a working group comprised of housing workers and local politicians met to organize a response to the rule system, but here too they were unable to devise a plan that would hold the landlords to account. Instead, some people at the table offered that the group could help train or educate the LRF to become a more legitimate rehabilitative institution. Others countered by admitting that even ‘legitimate’ treatment centres imposed carceral rule systems and evicted tenants without notice or process, so it was unclear what this would accomplish. Even if they were disturbed by the landlord’s practices, local housing workers did not find a way to subvert the Living Recovery Foundation’s carceral expansion, and some continued to help tenants find housing in the buildings. One of the Living Recovery Foundation’s previous staff explained that this was a common dilemma for housing workers who help with housing searches while also advocating for better living conditions:

I’m surprised that there’s six buildings and that there’s no flack on the way that [the tenants] are being treated, but you’ve got to think of it on the other side too. These non-profits that are helping these individuals are desperate for housing, and there are so many barriers. No history, no references, addiction, a criminal record. Nowadays, [landlords] want credit checks, they want criminal record background. So, for someone in that situation, an advocacy team will push for this whether they believe in it or not. (Ashley, interview, April 17, 2021)

Just as the LRF’s capture of demand for rehab housing had structured their opportunity for profit, a lack of housing options for marginalized tenants had convinced housing workers to accept the carceral conditions of the housing. For tenants who were transitioning from homelessness, they were faced with limited choices. They could live under conditions surveillance and spatial regulation on the street, in shelters, and in other more legitimate transitional housing centres, or they could accept polices of confinement with one of the only landlords that would house them.

## 7.2 The struggle for control

The landlords did, however, struggle to impose a disciplinary structure. The few attempts to organize from outside the buildings were ineffective, but contestation within the buildings subverted the LRF's search for control. In one building, the landlords were able to impose a disciplinary structure for a short while, due to the extensive involvement staff on-site who monitored tenants and managed their routines. But in other buildings, tenants were mostly unconcerned by the rules:

Originally, I think there was supposed to be something like a curfew of 11pm, no coming back intoxicated. Yeah, I do remember reading something like that but I never signed anything. And it was never ever enforced because like the one caretaker there, it was just one guy by himself, small guy and I couldn't see him ever enforcing that given how far gone that place was you know?

*S - So you don't think that anybody really followed the curfew?*

No. I definitely didn't and no one else did. (Tenant D, interview, February 3, 2021)

Another tenant assumed that the rules functioned to feign a semblance of control, rather than attempting to exert power over tenants. When they were asked what would happen if someone broke a rule, the tenant explained that she had never seen the staff enforce the rules:

Even the guy that was there last, he was like "well I drink when I'm off work." There was no rule implementation.

*S - so why do you think they got people to sign these rules if they weren't really implementing them?*

Oh, so it would be seen on paper that they had people there that were living sober, but there was no checks or drug tests. Yeah there was nothing...

*S - so it was more for their own image than their relationship to the tenants, you think?*

Oh yeah. (Tenant B, interview, March 23, 2021)

Both tenant interviews explained that the landlords and staff had limited power over tenants in the buildings. In interviews with previous staff and the landlords, they blamed the presence of

gangs to explain their lack of power. One staff person suggested that gangs were the main force that resisted the landlords' disciplinary expansion. They surmised that "the inability to control the gangs was, I think ultimately that was a key piece to their inability to progress" (LRF Staff, interview, May 4, 2021). In many cases, it was not possible for the Living Recovery Foundation to subjugate tenants because the landlords and staff were themselves fearful of the possibility of confrontation.

It can be complicated to consider the radical potential of gang resistance to disciplinary expansion, and this kind of resistance can have conflicting outcomes. On the one hand, Robert Henry (2019) examines how the presence of Indigenous gangs "challenges settler colonialism as they claim urban spaces through territorialization" (223). While Henry credits gangs with the power to contest settler control over urban spaces, he also explains this can be paradoxical because settlers will then refer to gang presence in order to reinforce their own claims to space. When spaces and people become categorized as gang-involved, they are seen as a violent threat to settler urbanism. Fear attached to the perceived presence of the Indigenous street gang subsequently "aids in the validation of state-sanctioned violence and removal of Indigenous peoples from urban spaces" (244). In the case of the Living Recovery Foundation, Harper often referred to the gang presence to legitimize her rule system. She explained that "we've worked really really hard to get the gangs out" and that "the rules are primarily, like the first five or six really serious rules are about violence and safety" (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021). In this way, the curfew was posed as a security measure, and the LRF's rules warned that any "criminal activity," violence, or verbal abuse would lead to an immediate eviction. Although the Living Recovery Foundation felt their power shrink in the face of gangs and squatters who



challenged the landlords' claim over space, the real and symbolic threat of a gang presence was also used to reaffirm the LRF's colonial right to settle the space.

The staff and landlords may have blamed their struggle for control on the presence of gangs, but contestation against the LRF's rule system cannot simply be attributed to gang members. Crucially, tenants explained that *no one* was adhering to the rule system. People ignored the policies of confinement more generally throughout the buildings, which undermined the landlord's grasp at control. If the landlords had felt challenged by gang members alone, it would have been easy enough to evict them with the full backing of the state. Manitoba's Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Act dedicates police forces to investigate and rapidly evict substance users, sex workers, and gang members from apartment buildings. But the problem of contestation was more widespread throughout their buildings. While this contestation was never organized as a formal strike or collective act of resistance, tenants effectively subverted the Living Recovery Foundation's policies of confinement on a collective level. Eventually, having failed to successfully implement a curfew, mandatory labour, or a pass system, the landlords would remove those rules from their lists.

Even though the landlords failed to apply a disciplinary apparatus throughout their buildings, they still used the rule system to flex their power over tenants. One tenant shared the following story to explain how 'wellness checks' were used to activate surveillance as a violent form of disciplinary punishment:

It was then, when they were taking Brandon through – our very young caretaker – [LRF Staff member] decided to kick a piece of garbage down the stairs and be like “this needs to get all cleaned up.” And I just walked through calmly onto my floor and I just mutter out, because I couldn't help it I guess, I said “fucking ridiculous” because you know, Brandon does not deserve that kind of shit. I get to my door now, this frickin' guy starts rolling up on the stairs, being like “what did you say?” Starts rushing at me in the hallway. I'm already halfway through my door,

and I just kinda shrug and be like “nothing?” I’m mid-closing my door now and he blocks me from closing the door and he’s pretty much just demanding that I let him in to do a room check, and I’m sitting here like “guy, I’m in the middle of a call with my mother, like do you mind? Buzz off.” Nope. Came right into my unit. Started looking around. I asked him if that was a taser in his hand, and he flashed his flashlight right into my eyes. I was like “okay guy.” Looks back at me asking me “does this look like a taser?” Like no, but they do make taser flashlights, they do exist. But just unlawfully entered my unit, and it’s going to be a point I touch on regarding all of this. They felt untouchable in the process. (Tenant A, interview, March 11, 2021)

Shortly after the confrontation, the landlord asked the tenant to leave the building for using violent language with the staff, but having already decided to leave, the tenant appropriated the move-out as an act of his own agency. However, his example of the privacy breach provides a hint of the power that was granted to staff and the landlords through their access to tenant’s units. The landlords attempt to control behaviour by through policies of confinement had been largely unsuccessful, but their own freedom of movement and power of surveillance were used as an intimidation tactics that attempted to quell contestation.

In a similar analysis to the other tenant who saw the rules as existing primarily “so that it would be seen on paper that they had people there that were living sober,” this tenant recognized that the wellness checks served a different purpose in practice than they did rhetorically. When his referral agency had been in contact with the Living Recovery Foundation, a major selling point from the program was the concept of wellness checks. When he was considering the program, he admitted “I was totally down with having someone knock on my door periodically, you know throughout the week, being like “hey, you alive? You doing good?” But instead, he found that staff would enter units without waiting to receive consent from tenants. While the altruistic rhetoric of care was used to attract referrals, he recognized wellness checks as a disciplinary strategy that attempted to subjugate tenants:

Yeah, I'm trying to correlate this with the fact that they made it sound healthy and productive, when in reality, these quote 'wellness checks,' I guess they called it, were just to size up people or to make them feel like shit. I don't know – I genuinely do not know! The fact of the matter is that it was not what was agreed upon and that's angering. (ibid.)

The rules were selectively applied when the landlords felt that it was possible to flex their disciplinary power. This inconsistency, along with rhetoric that sounded altruistic but felt carceral, created confusing situations for tenants. Despite their long list of rules, the landlords failed to implement a clear structure, and in a sense, this created a challenging environment for tenants. The policies of confinement were contested through generalized everyday acts of deviance, and while this may have hindered the landlords' disciplinary power to some extent, it did not necessarily improve living conditions. Tenants felt unsafe in their unsecured apartments, and the normalcy of quick turnovers might indicate the general unwillingness of tenants to live in such unruly buildings. But the confusion also lies more fundamentally in the paradox of the Living Recovery Foundation's project. While the landlords presented their disciplinary apparatus as a rehabilitative system that would keep tenants safe and allow them to improve themselves in a structured environment, the rules were instead activated to debilitate tenants in attempt to subjectify them as docile and productive bodies.

### 7.3 Surveillance in the built form

The Living Recovery Foundation's struggle to discipline their tenants has always been shaped by their own austerity. As Foucault (1977) explains, disciplinary power has always been an expensive undertaking, requiring constant surveillance to monitor and correct behaviour. In response to this problem, architecture has been an important component of the disciplinary apparatus by designing spaces that make surveillance more efficient. Urban structures that were intended to control and transform residents, such as working-class housing, hospitals, asylums, prisons, and schools, were configured to instill the possibility (or at least the feeling) of an

omnipresent gaze. Foucault (1977) describes this as a new function for architecture that was designed to exert biopower over residents:

An architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control – to render visible those who are inside it, in more general terms, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them (172).

Across Canadian history, architecture has consistently been deployed as an attempt to transform subjects. Sarah De Leeuw (2007) explains that residential schools were designed to “embody” colonialism by imposing late-Victorian structures amid cleared landscapes, and that the spaces were designed to “enact” the project with “long straight hallways and large open areas that facilitated staff supervision and control of First Nation students and ensured the students were always within the monitoring and colonial gaze of school staffs” (345). Colonialism has always relied on heavy levels of investment to monitor, control, and transform subjects, but ‘panoptic architecture’ offered a opportunities of austere surveillance where colonial agents could activate the disciplinary power of their gaze over as many subjects as possible.

In the contemporary period, ‘supportive housing’<sup>6</sup> continues to rely on an architecture of austere surveillance. The first iterations of supportive housing in Canada came as alternatives to placing people in psychiatric institutions, which had declined across the country from the 1970s onwards due to the deinstitutionalization movement (Suttor, 2016b). Early versions of supportive housing were located in repurposed multi-unit apartment buildings and boarding homes.

Canada’s deinstitutionalization movement, which was led by disability activists who criticized

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<sup>6</sup> Supportive housing is a vague category of housing that generally includes supports for mental illness and/or addiction and is usually subsidized. See Suttor’s typology on pages 5-8 of *Taking Stock of Supportive Housing* for a breakdown of what he defines as supportive housing.

the carceral practices of institutions, won more freedom than what was possible in the psychiatric institution. But as people with disabilities moved into the community, the state maintained its concern for low-cost surveillance of the population. The privately-owned apartment buildings presented a cheaper option than psychiatric institutions or building new apartments, and the “the congregate model also facilitated efficient staffing” which was favourable “given that clients were believed to require daily support and perhaps supervision” (Suttor, 2016b, 27). Disability-rights activists recognized that “this was essentially a replication ‘in the community’ of the supervised living that had long existed in psychiatric hospitals” (ibid, 28). In a way, this transition forms a similar historical example to Rashad Shabazz’ (2015) analysis of the relationship between the prison and the housing project. While the apartment is certainly less carceral than the institution, the architecture of each space was designed according to the same Foucauldian logic of hierarchized and austere surveillance. Both spaces were built to reinforce disciplinary power.

When they failed to exert control the buildings, the LRF turned to the built form to try to control and monitor tenants. To avoid movement in and out of vacant suites, the landlords put plywood over doors and windows to strengthen the architecture. In one building, tenants explained that the landlords also attempted to build a wall that was intended to separate two sides of the building which were respectively categorized as Harm Reduction and Sober Living. Tenants recognized the wall as an attempt to control their movements and eventually it was torn down:

They tried doing some changes, like I had mentioned before that they had one side that was supposed to be the sobriety program and the other one was supposed to be harm reduction. I think it just went like that eventually because they couldn’t control everybody in that building right? So, they tried building up a wall and stuff like that, which ended up getting smashed down. ... Yeah, they just built like

a drywall wall up there or whatever and was hoping that would separate the two sides from each other. (Tenant D, interview, February 3, 2021)

Another tenant also saw that the wall was intended to “cut us off from each other” but explained that the wall had the unintended and dangerous consequence of locking tenants in the building when other exits were broken.

A fire truck had to come one day, and they broke the door – the main door downstairs – and it was unusable. Like it wouldn’t open and [another tenant] couldn’t get out of the building because he didn’t have a second exit. So, he had to come through my door on the third floor for quite a while. (Tenant B, interview, March 23)

In similar fashion to the Haussmannization of Paris’ streets, the Living Recovery Foundation reconfigured the built environment in attempt to establish more predictable patterns of movement and to better monitor tenants. Even when they did not change the built form itself, the landlords introduced house rules would determine which exits and entrances tenants could use. Harper explains that they prohibited the use of fire exits and attempted to divert all movement to the main entrances “because we need to know who’s in the building. We need to be seeing people coming in and out, that way we can keep track of if we’ve seen a resident or not” (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021). However, the architecture of confinement effectively placed tenants at greater risk of harm in a debilitating environment that was designed to contain them. In the context of the wall, tenants resorted to mutual aid, at times offering access to their units and allowing their neighbours to move more freely. Eventually, they tore it down altogether.

#### 7.4 Towards panoptic partnerships

The apartment buildings that the Living Recovery Foundation was based in were already designed to support hierarchized surveillance, and the landlords attempted to instill new rules and spatial limitations that would make their surveillance more effective. Even still, reconfigurations of the built form did little to assert a disciplinary structure, and their control

over the buildings was largely incomplete as most tenants continued to move freely and to defy rules. However, the landlord's search for efficient, cost-effective surveillance was not limited to the built environment. When the Living Recovery Foundation rationalized their organizational structure – relying on EIA for direct rental payments, a referral network to fill units, and housing workers to help manage tenants – they were able to find new opportunities for profit. But this bureaucratic structure also created a new possibility for panoptic surveillance.

The Living Recovery Foundation's new model used state agencies and housing workers to collect rent and manage tenancies, which allowed them to eliminate the *cost* of a management company, but it also served to eliminate the *buffer* of property management. When her buildings were managed by Armour, Harper had little contact with tenants, but now she finds herself much more involved in the lives of tenants:

What's different is that pretty well anybody coming into the building I've had contact with. I don't meet any body; I've got on-site caretakers for that. But I do speak with almost all of them at some point on the phone. If they've got my phone number, they text me, they call me. A large percentage of our people have an agency behind them, so I'm in very good contact with the support workers. I've had contact with psychiatrists, I've had contact with moms and dads. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

By offloading much of the management work onto public and non-profit agencies, Harper's austere and rationalized strategy allowed her to assume a centralized position of surveillance over her buildings where she would personally monitor far more tenants than ever before. As a centralized point of contact, she could pull information from a network of partnerships and relationships that would allow her to better 'know' her tenants. In Family Reunification housing, tenants were required to give Harper their consent to collect information from social workers so that she could track their progress towards reunification. Harper acknowledges that "this is way more contact than you'd ever get with a landlord" (ibid.,) but insists that social workers also

appreciate having a direct line to the landlords because the shared information helps them to monitor their participants:

[Tenants] hear from social workers all the time how much they appreciate how much contact they have because we do call them. I'll call them and say "so-and-so's not doing so well, this is what we're finding and I think they need a couple more hours a week. Could you go touch base?" (ibid.)

Under her new policy of requiring that tenants have an agency behind them, Harper has been able to extend her gaze over more tenants than previously possible, but she also leans on these supports to help intervene with tenants. Harper explains that these interventions are not only called in moments of 'crisis' but more generally to correct behaviour and discipline tenants:

Like I said, we don't have funding, so I don't have a lot of staff. I have usually one to two caretakers per building, but we couldn't possibly deal with everybody's neurosis, psychosis, you name it. So, when something's going sideways, I have to be able to pick up the phone and say "I need your help, I need you over there." And I'm not talking about a dangerous situation, I'm not talking about if we need to actually call the police for a wellness check or something. I'm just talking about behaviour starting to get weird, or they're clearly in some sort of psychosis, or it's clear they've gone off their meds, or you know what so-and-so's not getting the rule about this, could you go have a chat with them. (ibid.)

For the landlords, a disciplinary intervention can be as simple as emailing what Harper calls a 'Behaviour Letter' to the social worker, who will take it upon themselves to deliver the message and correct the tenant's behaviour. In this way, Harper uses her network not only to collect and exchange intimate information about a large number of tenants, but also as a mechanism to exert her disciplinary power without needing to meet tenants face to face. Using their network, the Living Recovery Foundation built a hierarchized and austere system of surveillance that allows the landlords to monitor and correct slight changes in behaviour while isolating themselves from the possibility of directly and personally blow-back from tenants.



## 7.5 The disciplinary power of evictions

When the landlords fail to correct behaviour, or to ‘rehabilitate’ tenants, they rely on evictions to expel deviant tenants. Here too, the Living Recovery Foundation turn to their partnerships with housing workers and social workers to efficiently orchestrate evictions. Although the Residential Tenancies Branch determined that the Living Recovery Foundation was not exempt from tenancy legislation, tenants are still required to sign off on house rules and the landlords attempt to enforce the rules with the help of social workers and under the threat of eviction. But given the uncertainty as to whether she could legitimately file an eviction based on her house rules, Harper has avoided the RTB altogether for this process:

So then, our rules and our intake are a handshake deal. And this is also partially why I rely heavily on our support because if I have to go to RTB, they end up with this record with RTB forever, and it becomes even harder for them to be housed. So, none of the social agencies want us to go to RTB. So, when it’s decided that it’s not working out in the building, everybody’s working together to ensure that we’re not going to the RTB. (Karin Harper, interview, May 12, 2021)

On the one hand, the landlords avoid the RTB because they are unsure whether they could successfully evict a tenant, but if tenants try to dispute their eviction, there is also a risk that they could lose a hearing and subsequently face even greater difficulty finding housing with a recently tarnished rental record. Out of concern for this longer-term risk, social workers will mediate a move-out and relocation plan for tenants. Housing workers were unsure whether any eviction from a Living Recovery Foundation building had ever gone through the RTB, and one explained that “from what some of my co-workers have gone through, I think it’s before the RTB process [that tenants are evicted]” (local housing worker, interview, May 6, 2021). The housing worker continued by explaining that the rules still existed in a grey area; because they hadn’t been tested in an eviction hearing, it was unsure whether the RTB would accept the rules. With this risk in mind, social workers felt compelled to mediate evictions. This not only allowed the landlords to actualize

the threat of eviction, but also significantly reduced the amount of work that would go through a formal eviction procedure.

In a simplistic sense, evictions serve to punish tenants that defy the landlord's search for docile and productive bodies, but evictions are also intended to correct behaviour more broadly. Tiffany Lethabo-King (2010) explains that evictions from public housing are an important part of the transformative project because "the eviction serves to instruct (potentially non-complying) public housing tenants of their fate if proper self-conduct is not adhered to" (51). Discriminatory eviction policies, like One Strike evictions for drug-users and gang-members, also serve to create categories of "evictable bodies" whose displacement becomes naturalized. For 'risky subjects' living in buildings owned by the Living Recovery Foundation, tenant protections offered less security against evictions because legislation such as Manitoba's Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act had already categorized those same subjects as more easily 'evictable bodies.' In this sense, the disciplinary weight of evictions is exerted disproportionately on subject categories that fall further outside of lines of perceived moral norms. This makes eviction not only a tool to punish, but more crucially "a technology of discipline which seeks to racialize, criminalize and remove black women [and other marginalized groups] from an 'urban frontier' in order to perpetuate a racist and colonial order" (ibid., 61).

Just as public housing's role in moral transformation relied on the threat of eviction to 'rehabilitate,' the Living Recovery Foundation's search for control relies on mediated evictions. Without actualizing the threat of eviction, their rules would carry no true weight. Meanwhile, the Living Recovery Foundation's search for control has had to negotiate with their simultaneous, and perhaps more important search for profit. This struggle between control and profit means that their model of rehabilitative capitalism faces limitations that may not have had the same impact on the

state's disciplinary institutions. In public housing, the state bears no significant risk when they evict a tenant. Risk is assumed by the public and vacant subsidized units do not hamper the housing authority's ability to sustain itself. Even if vacancy was a threat to the housing authority, lengthy waiting lists help to ensure that there will never be a problem filling units. On the other hand, vacancy can pose a greater threat to a private landlord who may not have the same access to a waitlist and who is more existentially tied to their ability to collect rent. As such, their disciplinary measures are only effective insofar as the housing remains profitable. With a similar analysis, one of the Living Recovery Foundation's earlier staff members reflected on the landlords' inability to enforce house rules:

I imagine it's quite simple, it's rent right? Why would they kick someone out and risk not having rent being paid directly to them? So yes, the rules are there create accountability for tenants, to protect the landlords – so if it's bad enough they can remove that tenant without many issues ... If it's not bad enough, then I don't see them enforcing it because they're going to lose that tenant and that's a monthly payment that they're gonna have to go seek again. (Ashley, interview, April 17, 2021)

As the staff remarked above, the landlords tried to impose a disciplinary structure as part of their rehabilitative rhetoric “to create accountability for tenants” but also “to protect the landlords” against the risky strategy of taking in vulnerable tenancies en-masse. But in both cases, they failed to create a structured and disciplined environment. Given the regular turnover in Living Recovery Foundation buildings, which is partially caused by eviction, but more generally due to ‘fugitivity,’ the landlords have had to be selective in the way that they use evictions to flex their disciplinary power. With this in mind, we can predict that when their search for profit is less tenable, the less they will be able to flex this disciplinary power.

## 7.6 Rehabilitative capitalism

We can build a theory for rehabilitative capitalism that sees a link between profit and control, but we can also look more closely at this struggle to understand how actors have threatened or supported the Living Recovery Foundation's parallel search for profit and power. In the last chapter, we found that fugitivity – or move-outs as an act of agency – represented an individualized refusal to living in buildings operated by the LRF, as well as a search for something better. Fugitivity contested the landlord's search for profit and power on an individual level, but now we might also recognize move-outs as a form of resistance similar to a boycott or a strike that have implications for the collective. Because the LRF finds profit by managing 'risky subjects', tenants produce value (and sometimes are the workforce) as much as they are the consumers. By walking away from the LRF's housing, they also can change the conditions under which tenants continue to face in the buildings. If move-outs were less frequent, and vacancy was not a problem, the landlords could use evictions more freely to apply their disciplinary power, and perhaps they could even enforce some of the more extreme rules such as a curfew or a pass-system. But given that Harper had few tenancies that lasted over a year, we can expect that her disciplinary power was significantly hampered by wide-spread fugitivity and generalized deviance in her buildings.

On the other hand, it is important to consider how the Living Recovery Foundation transitioned to plug the holes left from wide-spread move-outs. Addiction rehab in the context of the meth crisis gave great marketing potential to the landlord that was hoping to rebrand and capture referrals, but by shifting towards Housing First and Family Reunification, they were able to open their buildings to a much wider pool of referrals. The new network of referrals enabled their strategy of accumulation by filling new buildings, but at the same time, the larger flow of referrals worked against the problem of fugitivity by quickly filling units after move-outs. If the Living Recovery Foundation has indeed solved their vacancy problem, as Harper claims in her

network emails, this might also mean that their disciplinary power has been bolstered. From outside the buildings, there has been no successful contestation of the LRF's disciplinary power. If agencies within the LRF's referral network truly have concerns about the rule system, they should align themselves with the tenants who refuse to follow the rule system and who refuse to remain housed in the LRF's buildings. Housing workers and social workers can support tenant resistance by participating in the boycott; they can avoid referrals and refuse to help the landlord correct tenant behaviour.

It must also be said that the landlord's search for profit, and by extension their search for control, has gone beyond simply filling vacancies. While vacancies were a problem early on, their strategy of accumulation shifted towards making tenancies far more profitable than what would have been otherwise possible. Whether by doubling tenancies or capitalizing on family reunification, the LRF has found ways of making their disinvested apartment units highly lucrative. In the context where the LRF can collect extravagant rents for her units, vacancies have less of an effect on their bottom line, which subverts the effectiveness of tenant fugitivity. As Harper has explained, the Living Recovery Foundation has been able to modulate their rents according to changing tenant incomes, ignoring rent control and maximizing profit as soon as new yields are available.

This is particularly concerning in the context where Harper has found new possibilities for inflated rents by speculating on the family reunification process. Perhaps this is where their rehabilitative capitalism is the most palpable. Here, moral transformation is not merely a coercive pressure to participate in society; transformation is actively mediated and monitored by the colonial state. For parents who fail or refuse to become docile and colonized bodies in the eyes of the state, they simultaneously become less productive for the Living Recovery Foundation, making

not only their family structure untenable, but also applying risk to their housing tenure. When Harper explained “I want to actually know that their babies are coming back,” we can take this to anticipate that parents who lose their children to the foster system will soon become targets for eviction. This creates new potential for disciplinary power in the buildings, where docile tenancies are not simply more profitable, but through their profitability, lend the landlords a greater ability to activate the threat of eviction over deviant tenants. In other words, the Living Recovery Foundation’s capacity to find profit by speculating on family reunification simultaneously allows them to grow their disciplinary power over less docile and less productive bodies.

The Living Recovery Foundation has generally failed to create a disciplinary structure, and it is in the cracks in their system where we can learn about the limits of rehabilitative capitalism. Unlike the state, carceral policies in the private market fluctuate to accommodate a primary concern for profit. However, the Living Recovery Foundation has also shown that moral transformation is highly profitable. While they may have failed to enforce some of their more carceral policies, there is always a possibility that these policies could return as their strategy of accumulation becomes more successful or that they could appear in other, more successful iterations of rehabilitative capitalism. Under rehabilitative capitalism, disciplinary power appears to hinge on profitability, but once a strategy of accumulation develops, disciplinary power can grow alongside it, allowing an even greater possibility to find profit through the management of risky subjects.

## 8. Conclusion

When I first asked tenants what kind of rehabilitative programming was being offered at the Living Recovery Foundation's buildings, they found the question ridiculous. It seemed that tenants and social workers were all aware that the landlord did not offer services to the tenants. And yet, referral systems only grew over time. Was rehabilitation really something that people expected to find through the Living Recovery Foundation? Interviews suggested that tenants and referral agencies accepted the carceral rule system in exchange for access to housing, but it is also important to note that the carceral rules stand out as the only 'service' that the landlord claiming to offer. Rehabilitation was offered as an altruistic service, but it was also openly disciplinarian. Furthermore, the disciplinarian structure was not a departure from the state's concept of rehabilitation. Under this structure, the Living Recovery Foundation was able to find new opportunities for profit attached to the state's concern for moral transformation as the landlords shifted into new roles based on drug addiction rehab, Housing First, and family reunification. The shift towards recovery housing did not offer any obvious benefits for tenants, but it did allow the landlords to restructure their own strategy of accumulation to find greater profit and power in a disinvested landscape.

Even under this carceral model of rehabilitation, the Living Recovery Foundation's disciplinary structure was incomplete. Their house rules may have been the only rehabilitative service, but the landlords struggled to enforce these policies of confinement and consistently readjusted as they faced challenges. Tenants affected their living conditions through everyday acts of defiance where they rejected the house rules and where they moved out to find other forms of housing and rehab. While they may not have been intentional acts of collective resistance, move-outs made it more difficult for the landlords to enact their disciplinary power which relied on the

threat of eviction. However, as the landlords were supported by a greater network of referrals and public resources, their disciplinary power grew while their strategy of accumulation became more secure. These findings are not new, but rather a repetition of what tenants have long known that “the power and profit of landlords always depends on eviction” (Metro DCDSA, 2017, 4). Their power to evict allowed the landlords to develop greater control over their tenants, which suited the carceral model that they had always proposed.

This thesis examined the LRF as a window into a new accumulation strategy. Rehabilitative capitalism finds surplus value in the disciplinary transformation of marginalized subjects in disinvested spaces. Other, more recognized strategies of post-industrial urban capitalism speculate on the possibility of displacing and replacing people and land uses with different, higher paying real estate. Instead, rehabilitative capitalism takes up the state’s role of social transformation to draw value from the social ills of urban capitalism and colonialism (e.g. poverty, housing insecurity, addiction). This also leaves rehabilitation in a different place than state-led rehab. Intuitively, capital is only concerned with rehab insofar as it is profitable and where there is possibility for growth. However, the logical conclusion of such a strategy of accumulation leads us to a paradoxical understanding of rehabilitative capitalism. It is more concerned with management than transformation and its outcome is closer to debilitation than rehabilitation.

In its first two years, the Living Recovery Foundation shifted from drug-addiction recovery to Housing First and to Family Reunification Housing. To become more profitable and more powerful, the LRF adjusted its mandate to capture broader groups of people who were assumed to need the intervention. Rehabilitative capitalism relies on dialectical subject categories to find profit, but its expansion also relies on widening these subject categories to find new areas for profit or creating new subjects that need intervention. In this search for profit, genuine cure and care are



antithetical to rehabilitative capitalism because a subject's true social and material improvement negatively affects the strategy of accumulation.

My findings build on the work of several critical geographers and abolitionists, borrowing heavily from two theorists in particular. Jasbir K. Puar's (2017) notion of the speculative rehabilitative economy helps to understand that this structure is not concerned with 'curing' people. It is concerned with debilitation, or the creation of 'damaged subjects' in need of intervention. Rehabilitative interventions not only foreclose other possibilities and futurities, but also justify ongoing violence, such as colonial occupation, under the existential veneer of a better future. Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (2007) work has identified confinement as a spatial fix for places that have witnessed deindustrialization and other forms of socioeconomic abandonment. Rehabilitation offers a similar spatial fix that creates opportunity for profit by managing socioeconomic damage, much of which has been caused by recent decades of mass-incarceration and neoliberal policies of abandonment. Taking Gilmore and Puar's theories in tandem, we can see that rehabilitative capitalism reaps profit from damages sown in the past and present but is uninterested in repair. Rather, rehabilitative capitalism, relies on speculative futures where categories of damage are abundant and growing.

These findings are fruitful in the current moment and the coming years, which will bear plenty of opportunity for reconstruction. As we repair the social and economic damages caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and its attendant crises, we should remain attentive to proposals for recovery. A theory of rehabilitative capitalism can be useful as we evaluate plans for urban reconstruction in the landscape of a crisis. Revitalization and rehabilitation are agendas coded with moral language that points to categories of damage, deviance, or disease that pose a 'risk' to future visions. When rehabilitative projects surface, we can attend to the categories that are created to

justify such interventions. Who is determining what needs fixing? What kind of recovery do they propose, and who does the recovery serve? It is easy to find ourselves caught in altruistic rhetoric, not wanting to fall on the wrong side of moral categories, but perhaps if we ask these questions, we can resist the expansion of systems that find profit through confinement.

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