How is Social Capital Conceptualised in the Context of Homelessness? A Conceptual Review using a Systematic Search [1]

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Abstract_ *Homelessness – comprising a spectrum of precarious living situations – is an increasing trajectory worldwide. Little attention has been given to the social relationships of people affected by homelessness. However, adopting a relational lens may provide greater understanding of people's experiences, the relationships they form and ways to redress the impact of homelessness. Social capital – the existence of, access to and resources afforded by relationships – provides a useful perspective to interrogate this further. The literature on social capital and homelessness remains disparate, with little consensus regarding how social capital is understood in this context and limited robust demonstration of its utility. This review uses a systematic search to identify how social capital has been conceptualised in homelessness research, and synthesises these conceptualisations into a framework using narrative synthesis. Nineteen texts (17 peer-reviewed articles and two doctoral theses) were included. The proposed framework suggests three dimensions: social relationships, services and*

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support. Conceptualising social capital as support by focusing on the resources afforded by relationships provides greatest insight into people's experiences and may guide improvement of services. Future research should interrogate these various sources of support and identify if they translate into meaningful help – such as housing or exiting homelessness.

Keywords_*homelessness, social capital, social relationships, conceptual review, systematic search*

Introduction

Homelessness – where individuals contend with a range of precarious living arrangements – is a profound and worsening problem, with rates increasing across the globe, including within the EU, Australia and many nations in the UN defined 'developing world' (Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA, 2018; Speak, 2019; Parsell, 2020). Within the European Union, there are an estimated 410 000 people experiencing homelessness (roofless and houseless) on any given night (Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA, 2015). Homelessness has complex and multifaceted roots which include poverty, inequality, and housing policy (such as the availability of stable and affordable housing and secure tenancy agreements) (Bramley *et al*., 2015; Downie *et al*., 2018; Clarke *et al*., 2020; Pleace, 2019). Stakeholders in national and local governments, housing and justice systems, and charities are making efforts to address homelessness, with varying degrees of success. This includes the introduction of Housing First (Abbé Pierre Foundation and FEANTSA, 2018), the Homelessness Reduction Act from local authorities in England (UK Parliament, 2017), legal approaches such as removing priority needs tests and facilitating greater tenancy security (Pleace, 2019), and welfare reform (Downie *et al*., 2018).

Little attention has been given to the nature and role of relationships in the context of homelessness. However, adopting a relational lens may be helpful in at least five ways. First, it may help to understand pathways into homelessness (Barker, 2012). Historically, homelessness has been viewed by some as the weaning of and detachment from social institutions and informal social networks (Bogue, 1963; Spradley, 1970; Bahr, 1973; Rossi *et al*., 1986). Without having access to relationships when faced with unforeseen or negative circumstances, individuals may find themselves in a precarious situation without the necessary resources and/or

support available (Wiseman, 1970). In fact, social networks, may serve as a buffer against the acute end of homelessness, for example, through providing temporary housing solutions (Tănăsescu and Smart, 2010).

Second, a relational lens may provide greater understanding of the benefits derived from certain bonds. For example, through exploring the relationships of street children and subcultures in Moscow, it is possible to identify what is afforded by these relationships; namely access to social mobility and the labour market (Stephenson, 2001). Additionally, homeless mothers often seek out social relationships in the hope of acquiring material resources that are otherwise unavailable, for example food vouchers and diapers (Juando-Prats, 2017). Disentangling the support embedded in relationships may help to provide a greater understanding of why certain relationships are formed and maintained. This point speaks to the importance of not simplifying and polarising the interpersonal relationships of people affected by homelessness. Yet, at the same time, it remains important not to romanticise and idealise exploitative relationships and precarious situations.

Third, adopting a relational lens may help to promote a more strength-based narrative around homelessness. There remain assumptions both across research and practice, that people affected by homelessness are socially isolated with low social functioning (Solarz and Bogat, 1990; Fitzpatrick *et al*., 2000; Duchesne and Rothwell, 2016). More widely, there continue to be ongoing stigmatising (Groundswell, 2020) and problematic narratives around homelessness (Parsell and Watts, 2017). In focusing on the networks and support systems available to individuals affected by homelessness, such assumptions can be challenged. In turn this may also highlight the important role of individuals and communities, whom perform a vast proportion of informal care and emotional labour; simultaneously throwing into question the role and effectiveness of the state or third sector organisations. Additionally, focusing attention on social relationships is vital and an important aspect of all human existence, yet often overlooked during the process of othering and dehumanising marginalised groups (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Argyle, 2001; Stevenson and Neale, 2012).

Fourth, adopting a relational lens may also help to improve service provisions. There is evidence that even within formal services, it is often the interpersonal relationships between clients and staff that serve as successful sources of support (Neale and Stevenson, 2014; Stevenson, 2014). Thus, shifting attention to the importance of stable and sound relationships, on which trust and support can be built, may improve the efficacy of services. Social relationships can also have an influence on engagement with services. For homeless youth, receiving instrumental resources (such as money, food or a place to stay) from street peers was associated with decreased likelihood of engaging in employment services, yet receiving emotional

resources from street peers (having someone to count on) increased the likelihood of engaging in employment services (Barman-Adhikari and Rice, 2014). As such, focusing on interpersonal relationships may serve as a useful framework when thinking about how to provide effective and tailored services and capturing the nuances of doing so – recognising the differential effect of certain forms of support.

Fifth, using a relational lens may help to guide and improve interventions to end homelessness. For example, insight can be gained through focusing on network diversity, when disentangling how certain relationships may leverage an individual or hinder their social mobility (Burt, 1987; Briggs, 1998). For instance, among low-income mothers, having heterogeneous networks that provide advice and encouragement to get ahead, create opportunities for social mobility; through accessing more diverse resources and information that may otherwise not be available to them. Whereas having homogenous networks – such as individuals of the same socioeconomic status – can be limiting, and reproduce social inequalities (Menjívar, 2000; Domínguez and Watkins, 2003). Another example of guiding and improving interventions, applies to re-housing programmes. For single homeless people who are rehoused, having family contacts and receiving support from relatives and friends are positively associated with housing satisfaction and feeling settled (Warnes *et al*., 2013). Being mindful of the importance of social relationships and the benefits they may offer appears to be a useful angle when thinking about interventions to end homelessness.

This focus on social relationships should not and does not diminish the aforementioned structural and political issues that cause, perpetuate and sustain homelessness. However, there is arguably scope to further explore the social worlds of those affected by homelessness. One route into exploring social relationships and resources is through social capital. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.119) social capital is "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." Social capital has attracted interest across disciplines including sociology (Portes, 1998), epidemiology (Szreter and Woolcock, 2004; Kirkbride *et al.*, 2008), global development (Krishna and Shrader, 2002) and public health (Muntaner *et al*., 2001; Harpham *et al*., 2002; De Silva *et al*., 2005). It appears to be an insightful lens into understanding social interactions, placing emphasis on what is afforded by relationships from different individuals and its associated health outcomes.

Increasingly, efforts have been made to apply social capital to the context of homelessness (Barman-Adhikari and Rice, 2014; Neale and Stevenson, 2014; Neale and Stevenson, 2015). However, it should be noted that this body of literature is varied and disparate. As with many concepts (Ayed *et al*., 2019) there is little consensus

regarding what exactly is being referred to when referencing social capital. This creates chasms in the literature, with little space for accumulation of knowledge, as social capital is being understood in vastly different ways. Further, questions remain as to whether social capital as a concept can be applied to homelessness. This is because most social capital literature is grounded in the seminal works of a few authors, which were rooted in very different historical and social contexts (Muntaner *et al*., 2001). A similar concern lies with existing measures of social capital which were developed in different contexts to that of homelessness (Grootaert and van Bastelaer, 2002; De Silva *et al*., 2007). The existing literature overwhelmingly explores youth experiences of homelessness, with a dearth of information pertaining to adults. Last, much of the existing literature lacks critique of the limitations in adopting social capital as a lens to explore experiences of homelessness. Without clarity about what social capital means, how it may be assessed, and to whom it may be applied, it becomes difficult to see how this concept can contribute to the knowledge base and help us to understand the experiences of people affected by homelessness.

To address these concerns, this review has three aims. First, to identify how social capital has been conceptualised in adult homeless research. Second, to synthesise these various conceptualisations of social capital and provide a framework. Third, to discuss and critique the generated framework.

Methods

A systematic search was used in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Liberati *et al*., 2009). The review was registered on PROPSERO: CRD42019126152.

Eligibility criteria

Texts were deemed eligible if they met the following criteria:

a) Written in English.

b) Studies must include primary data.

c) Peer-reviewed – extending to doctoral theses, as they are reviewed by expert examiners.

d) The sample are 18 years old or above – this is because the majority of nations have 18 as the age of majority, many services (e.g. accommodation) have age restrictions, and the social capital of adults is likely different from that of children/youth.

e) Refers to social capital either in the title and/or the abstract – when finalising the search strategy, a preliminary scoping search (*n=50)* revealed that the vast majority of studies exploring social capital in the full text, will make reference to 'social capital' in the title and/or abstract.

f) Satisfy the Framework of Global Homelessness (Busch-Geertsema *et al*., 2015)[2].

Texts were excluded as per the following guidelines:

- Blogs, opinions pieces and social media posts
- Systematic reviews due to lack of primary data – reference lists for reviews were screened for potentially eligible texts.
- Forms of homelessness not included in the Framework of Global Homelessness *(*Busch-Geertsema *et al*., 2015).

Procedure

Literature search

Searches were conducted in February 2019 using the NICE Eyes on Evidence database covering: AMED (1998 to present) BNI (1992 to present), CINAHL (1981 to present), Embase (1974 to present), Medline (1946 to present), and PsychINFO (1806 to present). SCOPUS was also searched, along with TRIP, a grey literature database. Titles, abstracts and subject headings were searched using the following strategy[3]:

"social capital" AND "homeless*" OR "roofless*" OR "rough sleep*" OR "street*" "pavement dwell*" OR "shelter*" OR "hostel*" OR "temporary accomm*" "refuge*" "women* refuge*"

MeSH terms were used where permitted, these non-exhaustively included "social environment" "homeless persons" and "emergency shelter". The search strategy was updated February 2020.[4]

National and international governmental and charity websites were also searched. These included: St Mungo's, Crisis, Shelter, Centrepoint, Homeless Link, Centre for Homelessness Impact, Healthy London Partnership, Department of Communities and Local Government and Department of Health and Social Care, Homeless Action Scotland, ScotPHN, FEANTSA, European Observatory on Homelessness, Mental Health Commission of Canada, and the Institute of Global Homelessness.

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2 This is a relatively narrow definition of homelessness, only capturing those who are literally homeless or in designated shelters for those experiencing homelessness. In-depth justification of the Framework of Global Homelessness can be found in the original text as cited.

3 The full search strategy is provided in the supplementary material.

4 Figure 1 reflects the updated search strategy.

Hand searches were conducted on the following journals: European Journal of Homelessness and the Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness.

References were exported to Mendeley Desktop (V1.19.4) and duplicates were removed. All titles and abstracts were screened by the first author (NA), with 25% screened by a co-author (SA). There was 99.11% agreement and Cohen's k = 0.78 for titles/abstracts. Disagreements were discussed in detail between NA and SA, and where necessary with the wider review team. Following this, full-texts were examined by NA, with 20% reviewed by SA. There was 87.5% agreement and Cohen's kappa= 0.75 for full-texts.

For texts that were not accessible, authors were contacted to request the relevant text, and the British Library catalogue was searched.

Modification of eligibility criteria

Whilst the eligibility criteria were based upon scoping searches, a proportion of texts during the systematic search threw into question the rigidity of the eligibility criteria. For example, one text had only three participants under the age of 18 (Oliver and Cheff, 2014). Additionally, due to the frequent omission of sociodemographic information and homelessness status, and the lack of responses from authors for requested information, a significant proportion of studies were excluded due to insufficient information. It was increasingly felt by the research team that potentially insightful information was being excluded partly due to the frequent omission of data but also the rigidity of the eligibility criteria. Given the conceptual nature of this review, it was felt that relaxing the criteria would not have a marked impact on the results.

After discussion with the research team, we decided to address these limitations pragmatically by relaxing two components of the eligibility criteria. The age criterion was changed so that: 50% or more of the sample are over 18 OR the average age of the sample was 18 or above. The criterion regarding homelessness was changed so that: 50% or more of the sample meet the specific typology of homelessness outlined in the eligibility criteria. This led to the number of included texts increasing from (*n*=15), to (*n*=19) (McCarthy *et al*., 2002; Miller, 2011; Oliver and Cheff, 2014; Shantz, 2014).

Data extraction

Data was extracted from included studies into Microsoft Excel pertaining to the following information: author (s) name, author(s) contact details, title, year of publication, publication type (e.g. book chapter, journal article, thesis etc.), country of study, funding source, conflict of interest, aims/objectives, study design, sampling technique, sample size, sample age, gender, ethnicity, homeless status (as described by study), analysis, explicitly reported definition(s) of social capital, reference to other social capital research, author(s) conceptualisation of social capital adopted for the

study, measure(s) of social capital, item details of measure, scores of social capital if a measure, qualitative excerpts of social capital, associated outcome variables, summary of findings, strengths and weaknesses, conclusions.

Data analysis

Narrative synthesis was used to identify how social capital is conceptualised across adult homelessness research. Grounded upon the guidelines developed by Popay *et al.* (2006), the narrative synthesis comprised two iterative stages: developing a preliminary synthesis and exploring relationships in the data.

Developing a preliminary synthesis

With particular focus on the data extracted pertaining to social capital, information was repeatedly read to familiarise ourselves with the data. Tabulations were made in Microsoft Excel regarding recurring conceptualisations of social capital in the included texts. This was done systematically, exploring every text independently; tabulating as exhaustively as possible. Texts were grouped and clustered accordingly. Notes were also made regarding whether the study used a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach to exploring social capital in the primary data. These preliminary themes and groupings were discussed with the review team.

Exploring relationships in the data

Themes were revisited and commonalities were identified across texts. This helped to reduce the volume of themes and identify the more common and salient themes. The relationships and overlaps between these key themes were explored both across texts and within texts. Attention was given to the heterogeneity of included texts, identifying the context in which social capital was being conceptualised.

Ideas webbing was undertaken (Clinkenbeard, 1991) to better comprehend the connections between included texts and their conceptualisations of social capital. The ideas webbing was used closely in the development of the proposed framework.

Finalising the framework

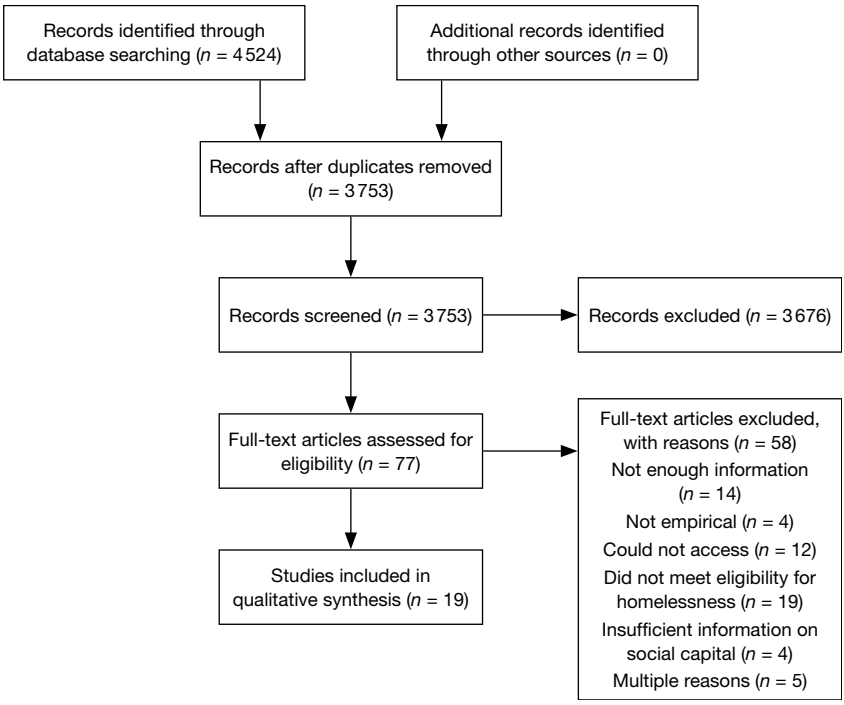
Analysis was inductive, involving frequent referencing back to the original texts and extracted data. This iterative process allowed a framework to be developed that linked closely with information in the original texts. The proposed framework was then discussed in depth with the entire review team, alongside a presentation to the larger multidisciplinary research team. Any feedback was incorporated iteratively into the framework.

Results

Screening and selection

The search yielded 4524 texts. This was reduced to 3753 when duplicates were removed. No additional texts were identified using hand searches. Of the 3753 texts identified, 3676 were removed after titles and abstracts were examined. The remaining 77 full-texts were then read and assessed for eligibility. It should be noted that texts frequently omitted reporting sample characteristics. Several texts did not report average or range of age (*n*=9). Where possible, means were calculated based on the information provided. Several texts provided insufficient detail about the type of homelessness experienced by participants (*n=10)*. Authors were emailed to obtain the missing information. However, there remain a high number of texts (*n=19)* excluded due to insufficient information or for multiple reasons (of which insufficient information may be a constituting factor). A total of 19 texts were included after having met the eligibility criteria for inclusion.

Figure 1: PRISMA diagram



Study characteristics

All included texts (Table 1) were journal articles, apart from two doctoral theses (15; 17). In referencing social capital, included texts tended to take one of two approaches: texts attempted to measure/quantify social capital (2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 16) or adopted social capital as a lens to frame and interpret data (1; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 17; 18; 19).

Table 1: Characteristics of included texts.

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publi-cation	Country of study	Study design	Sample size	Sample age range (years)	Sample mean age (years)	Sample gender	Sample ethnicity	Homeless status
1	Curran et al.	2016	England	Intervention comprising a 12 week football programme adopting ethno-graphic and observational methods	n = 34	18-45	N/A	Male = 100%	N/A	"The majority of participants were… living in homeless shelters…"
2	Fitzpatrick et al.	2007	U.S	Census and interview (question-naire format)	n = 161	20-80	N/A	Female = 36% Male = 64%	"Non-white" = 63.4%	"… street and sheltered homelesss people" "… residents of, and visitors to, the 35 shelters and soup kitchens... as well as persons without residence sleeping in public places..."
3	Fitzpatrick et al.	2015	U.S	Interview (question-naire format)	n = 264 (Birmingham, n = 161 and Northwest Arkansas, n = 103)	20-80	N/A	N/A	N/A	"Visible homeless" - those who are counted in the point-in-time census
4	Irwin et al.	2008	U.S	In-depth interviews	n = 155	"above the age of 19"	41.30 (SD= 10.17)	Female = 34% Male = 66%	African American = 67.6% White = 32.4%.	Street homeless and shelter users

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publi-cation	Country of study	Study design	Sample size	Sample age range (years)	Sample mean age (years)	Sample gender	Sample ethnicity	Homeless status
5	Johnstone et al.	2016	Australia	Interviews and questionnaires (two data colleciton time points)	Time 1, n = 119 Time 2, n = 76	19-59 (time 1)	35.39 (SD = 9.34) (time 1)	Female = 53% Male = 47% (time 1)	N/A	"Participants were individuals residing in one of six temporary or transitional homeless-ness accommodation services run by The Salvation Army in Australia."
6	Marr	2012	U.S and Japan	Secondary data and in-depth compara-tive case studies	n = 34 (Los Angeles, n = 17 and Tokyo, n = 17)	All participants were over 18 years old. 24% of Los Angeles sample ≤ 51 and 59% in Tokyo ≤ 50	N/A	Female = 47%, male = 53% (Los Angeles) Male = 100% (Tokyo)	Black = 53%, White = 12%, White, Latino = 18%, Asian = 18% (Los Angeles) Japenese = 88%, Korean = 12% (Tokyo)	All participants were in transitional housing programme for those experiencing homelessness. "To enter transitional housing, these single individuals must have lost their housing and sought relief from a public or nonprofit relief agency."
7	McCarthy et al.	2002	Canada	Questionnaire and interview (three data collection waves)	n = 369	≤ 16 - 24	19.88 (SD = 2.44)	Ratio female 1 : male 3	N/A	Insecure shelter (couch surfing combined with shelter stay and rough sleeping)

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publi-cation	Country of study	Study design	Sample size	Sample age range (years)	Sample mean age (years)	Sample gender	Sample ethnicity	Homeless status
8	Miller	2011	U.S	Focus groups, questionnaires and secondary data from countrywide homeless manage-ment information system	n = 51 (12 focus groups averaging 4-5 participants)	At least 50% ≥ 18 and most fell between 22-40 years[1]	N/A	Female = 100%	N/A	Agency-based shelter users
9	Mostowska	2013	Norway	Participant observation and interviews	n = ~40	23-62	N/A	Male = 100%	All participants were Polish but not further details provided	Rough sleepers
10	Neale and Stevenson	2014	England	Semi-structured interviews (two data collection time points)	n = 30	23-62	43,00	Female = 17% Male = 83%	White British = 43.4%, White European = 23.3% , Mixed race = 20%, Black British = 10%, Black Caribbean = 3%	Homeless hostel residents
11	Neale and Brown	2016	England	Semi-structured interviews (two data collection time points)	Time 1, n = 30 Follow-up, n = 22	21-54 (time 1)	38,00	Female = 30% male = 70% (time 1) Female = 27% male = 73% (follow-up)	White British = 86.6%, Black West Indian = 6.6%, Mixed race = 3.3%, White Irish traveller = 3.3%	Homeless hostel residents

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publi-cation	Country of study	Study design	Sample size	Sample age range (years)	Sample mean age (years)	Sample gender	Sample ethnicity	Homeless status
12	Neale and Stevenson	2015	England	Semi-structured interviews (two data collection time points)	n = 30	21-54	38,00	Female = 30% Male = 70%	N/A	Homeless hostel residents
13	Oliver and Cheff	2014	Canada	Life history narratives using in-depth semistruc-tured interviews, triangulated with participant observations and document analysis	n = 8	15-21	18,38	Female = 100%	N/A	Shelter users
14	Settem-brino	2017	U.S	Interviews	n = 11	“Twenties” - “middle aged”	N/A	Male = 100%	White = 91% and Black = 9%	Street homeless for 10+ years n = 3, emergency shelter n = 2, temporarily staying at acquan-taince’s n = 1, sometimes lives with mum but most nights sleeps under a bridge n = 1, living in tents in wooded areas n = 4, sleeps in car n = 1 [2]

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publi-cation	Country of study	Study design	Sample size	Sample age range (years)	Sample mean age (years)	Sample gender	Sample ethnicity	Homeless status
15	Shantz	2014	Canada	Institutional ethnography with interviews	n = 43 (older marginalised women, n = 27 and professionals working with the women, n = 16)	50-65 (older marginalised women)	N/A	Female = 100%	First Nations, Inuit or Métis = 26%, Black or biracial = 7%, not reported = 67%	67% (n = 18) were in a shelter, 33% (n = 9) had housing in the community, with 19% of this group (n = 5) living in subsidised housing
16	Shinn et al.	2007	U.S	Interviews	n = 140 (homeless sample, n = 79 and housed sample n = 61)	Entire sample = ≥ 55	Homeless group = 63.60 (SD = 7.60) Housed group = 70.50 (SD= 7.40)	Female = 19% Male = 81% (homeless group)	Black = 41%, Latino = 13%, White 33% and Other 14% (homeless group)	Shelter users and rough sleepers. “Some participants go to informal night shelters in churches and return to the drop-in center during the day; others remain on chairs in the drop-in center at night or return intermittently to the street.”
17	Smith	2017	U.S	Semi-structured interviews	n = 8	45-63	54,63	Male = 100%	“While the majority was African American, one individual was Caucasian”	Unsheltered - sleeping outdoors, in cars, under bridges, in tent communities, or abandoned buildings

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publi-cation	Country of study	Study design	Sample size	Sample age range (years)	Sample mean age (years)	Sample gender	Sample ethnicity	Homeless status
18	Stevenson	2014	England	Semi-structured interviews	n = 40	21-54	37,00	Female = 28% Male = 72%	White British = 82.5%, Black British = 5%, Black African = 5%, Black Caribbean = 2.5%, White European = 2.5%, Asian Vietnamese = 2.5%	Homeless hostel residents
19	Stevenson and Neale	2012	England	Semi-structured interviews	n = 40	21-54	35,97	Female = 28% Male = 72%	White British = 82.5%, Black British = 5%, Black African = 5%, Black Caribbean = 2.5%, White European = 2.5%, Asian Vietnamese = 2.5%	Homeless hostel residents

1 As confirmed by the author via email

[2] One participant is counted both in street homeless and living in a tent

Table 2: Narrative synthesis of included texts.

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publication	Social relationships	Social group membership	Interpersonal relationships	Bonding and bridging	Services	Support	Example theme	Theme exemplified (non-exhaustive and non-saturated)
1	Curran et al.	2016	✔		✔				Interpersonal relationships	"Positive developments in social capital were evidenced within the programme as the participants appeared to develop friendships, trust, support networks and aspects of social bonding both within and outside of the group."
2	Fitzpatrick et al.	2007	✔	✔	✔	✔			Bonding and bridging	"The bonding form, which promotes homogeneity and group exclusivity, is examined using four social affiliation measurements: religious social capital; group participation social capital; trust; and strength of social ties." "The second capital variable assesses bridging social capital—the kind of social capital that promotes heterogeneity and group inclusivity. The variable is operationalized using a four-item scale that asks respondents whether or not they have closefriends who are different from them in terms of their race, educational background, if the person ownstheir own business and whether or not they are seen as a community leader."
3	Fitzpatrick et al.	2015	✔	✔	✔	✔			Group membership	"The principal independent variables of interest are the social capital variables. Religious social capital...Another social capital variable included in this analysis is social trust...A composite group participation measure is used as a proxy for group social capital...Finally, the strength of social ties is assessed using the Strong Tie Support scale."
4	Irwin et al.	2008	✔	✔	✔	✔			Bonding and bridging	"Social capital takes two distinct forms – bonding and bridging... bonding social capital variables included in the model are trust, religious social capital, and group participation. Bridging social capital includes the connections individuals have with persons different from themselves. It indicates group heterogeneity and inclusivity. The variable is operationalized using a four-item scale that asks respondents whether or not they have close friends who are different from them in terms of their race, educational background, if the person owns their own business, and whether or not they are seen as a community leader."

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publication	Social relationships	Social group membership	Interpersonal relationships	Bonding and bridging	Services	Support	Example theme	Theme exemplified (non-exhaustive and non-saturated)
5	Johnstone et al.	2016	✔	✔					Group membership	"We operationalize social capital as the ability of an individual to take on new group memberships and/or their ability to maintain their memberships in important groups throughout a period of transition."
6	Marr	2012	✔		✔			✔	Interpersonal relationships	"Social capital perspective… At the micro-social level, access to social ties or networks plays a role in an individual's fall into homelessness, and in turn that individual's efforts to exit the condition."
7	McCarthy et al.	2002	✔		✔			✔	Support	"Social capital and valued outcomes... Homeless youth recognize that street families help them in many ways, and several described how their friends assisted them in their search for shelter, food, and income."
8	Miller	2011	✔			✔	✔	✔	Services	"Lin's discussion of relationship networks as they relate to embedded resources, accessibility, and mobilization provided specific guidance to my analysis of data and presentation of findings... I examined how agency-based homeless families in Centerville gained access to and mobilized resources and relationships in the region's larger homeless education network."
9	Mostowska	2013	✔		✔	✔		✔	Support	"This bridging capital (learning the language, obtaining certificates for highly skilled work - as an electrician, or setting up their own business) may be built up in the course of migration."
10	Neale and Stevenson	2014	✔		✔		✔	✔	Interpersonal relationships	"… recovery capital comprises four key components. These are... 'social capital' (relationships, including family, friends, and broader social networks)."
11	Neale and Brown	2016	✔		✔			✔	Support	"Recovery capital... assess the resources that an individual can draw upon to initiate and sustain processes of recovery from substance dependence... Social capital (in the form of relationships) comprises one of four key components of recovery capital..."

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publication	Social relationships	Social group membership	Interpersonal relationships	Bonding and bridging	Services	Support	Example theme	Theme exemplified (non-exhaustive and non-saturated)
12	Neale and Stevenson	2015	✔		✔		✔	✔	Services	“However, our participants’ reports revealed that caring staff attitudes and a service ethos of explaining rules, regulations and policies to residents were having a positive impact on relationships, suggesting that individual hostels can, to a greater or lesser extent, influence the social capital of their residents.”
13	Oliver and Cheff	2014	✔			✔	✔	✔	Interpersonal relationships	“For many of the young homeless women in this study, nuclear families of origin had not provided traditional bonding social capital, but rather relationships characterized by instability, abuse, or neglect.”
14	Settembrino	2017	✔		✔			✔	Support	“Social capital refers to one’s ability to convert social relationships into needed resources...for example, evacuating to a friend’s or family member’s home in advance of a hurricane.”
15	Shantz	2014	✔		✔			✔	Support	“Friendships with fellow shelter residents or drop-in participants not only fulfill one’s need for human interaction, they also provide concrete support, helping the women to learn about homelessness and the resources available.”
16	Shinn et al.	2007	✔	✔	✔			✔	Support	“Measures of social capital included a count of six disruptive events in youth... and three adult measures: child housing resource indicated that the respondent had at least one child who would allow the respondent to stay with him or her.”
17	Smith	2017	✔		✔			✔	Support	“I used the theory of social capital instead to understand the social networks and social capital of unsheltered men” “Mr. K stated, he finds out information ‘on the streets and being around other homeless people. People talk. You would never believe. As far as food, it’s like who is feeding tonight? Oh Safehouse. That’s how the conversations go.’”

Allocated number	Author(s)	Year of publication	Social relationships	Social group membership	Interpersonal relationships	Bonding and bridging	Services	Support	Example theme	Theme exemplified (non-exhaustive and non-saturated)
18	Stevenson	2014	✔		✔		✔	✔	Services	"For PHUD who live in hostels, a significant amount of social interaction occurs within shelters, with the staff and other residents. Given Hagan and McCarthy's definition, these social interactions are an appropriate forum for building social capital and working towards social inclusion."
19	Stevenson and Neale	2012	✔		✔			✔	Interpersonal relationships	"To this end, the retrieved relationships data were reviewed line by line and mapped to identify emergent themes and concepts which were then linked to the existing literature and broader theories of social exclusion and social capital." "Partners were thus an important supportive resource. Furthermore, they could help individuals manage, control and reduce their drug use."

Social capital framework

In synthesising the included texts (Table 2), we found that social capital was conceptualised along three dimensions: social relationships, support and services. Below we detail and provide examples for each dimension.

Social relationships

All of the included texts used social capital to describe some form of social relationship. Although consistent in this sense, the texts varied significantly in who these relationships were between, and the context in which they existed. In disentangling this multifaceted use, three recurring sub-dimensions were identified: 1) social group memberships 2) interpersonal relationships, and 3) bonding and bridging.

Social group membership

Social capital was often operationalised as the relationships between individuals and groups/organisations (2; 3; 4; 5; 16). An example of this can be seen in the following extract: 'we operationalize social capital as the ability of an individual to take on new group memberships and/or their ability to maintain their memberships in important groups throughout a period of transition' (5).

Social group memberships were assessed in a variety of ways including asking individuals to indicate whether they participated in one or more pre-defined groups: veteran's, political, trade, support, homeless and other (2; 3; 4). Additionally, attendance at a place of worship, community or senior centre, or other club/regular meeting was also qualified as social group membership (16).

In some instances, group memberships were not specified. Instead participants rated their perceived relationships with individuals from multiple groups: 'After living at Salvation Army homeless accommodation, I have friends who are in lots of different groups', 'Before coming to Salvation Army homeless accommodation, I was a member of lots of different social groups', and 'Before coming to Salvation Army homeless accommodation, I had friends who are in lots of different groups (5).

Interpersonal relationships

Texts also used the concept of social capital to describe interpersonal relationships (1; 2; 3; 4; 6; 7; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 16; 17; 18; 19). Descriptions included relationships with family members: both "traditional" families such as parents and grandparents (6; 10; 12; 13; 14; 16) and "fictive street families" – the groups of individuals who provide support and look out for one another on the streets (7; 13). Interpersonal relationships also included friendships (11). These were studied across various settings such as friendships formed at sports clubs, on the street, and in hostels/accommodation (1; 7; 10; 11; 12; 13). Some texts honed in to subgroups in residen-

tial accommodation, such as residents who use drugs and alcohol (11) and have intimate partner relationships (19) as well as marginalised older women (15). Staff-resident relationships were also explored (13; 18).

Measurements pertaining to interpersonal relationships include: The Strong Tie Support Scale, which establishes the extent to which an individual has access to a network of friends and companions that they can rely on for support (3). Two studies included measures assessing whether the participant had contact with housed friends or family (6), who would let them stay with them (16). A four-item scale measuring the participant's relationship with persons dissimilar from themselves was also used (2; 4).

Bonding and bridging

Echoing one of the most pervasive theoretical distinctions in social capital research, included texts made reference to bonding and bridging (2; 3; 4; 8; 9; 13). Bonding is understood as the ties among socially similar individuals – otherwise referred to as homogenous ties – and bridging, as the ties among socially dissimilar individuals – heterogeneous ties.

This difference between bonding and bridging translated into quantitative studies that had separate measures of each. For example, bonding was measured by *strength of social ties* (2), the sum of responses pertaining to how often respondents felt bothered by a) not having a close companion b) not having enough friendships and c) not getting to see the people they are close to over the last six months. Bonding also comprised *religious social capital* (2; 3; 4), the sum of six responses identifying an individual's level of religious participation, an example being a) how often do you attend church? Additionally, bonding was measured through *group participation* (2; 3; 4), such as trade and support groups. Last, bonding was measured through *trust* (2; 3; 4), in others generally, other homeless individuals, community leaders and service providers. (2; 3; 4).

Bridging was measured using a four-item scale asking respondents whether they had close friends who were different from them in terms of their a) race, b) education background and if the person c) owns their own business, or d) is seen as a community leader (2; 4).

Included texts were inconsistent in the way they operationalised bonding. For example, bonding referred to individuals who participated in the same groups (2; 3; 4) or individuals who had shared experience of living in the same service (8). However, these relationships were considered as bonding even if the experience was previous and not current (13). This highlights some inconsistencies regarding what criteria is used to infer bonding capital.

Services

The second dimension relates to studies that conceptualise social capital as pertaining to services (8; 10; 12; 13; 18). Here, services relate to available and accessible facilities. For example, IT facilities provided in hostels may foster social capital through helping people to stay connected with others or providing access to information and resources (10). Whilst some individuals experiencing homelessness were able to access and use technology through family, friends and broader social networks, many faced barriers and were digitally excluded. As such, there is space for hostels and services to address this inequity through providing access to IT facilities, which in turn allows individuals to foster social capital (10). The importance of technology as a conduit to social capital and ways in which services may tailor facilities according to clients was noted in other texts (8; 13). For example, considering the necessity of education services for families experiencing homelessness that have school-aged children (8) is an important factor that not all residential services provide.

The *service* dimension overlaps with the *social relationships* dimension when exploring the importance of staff-client relationships. Supportive staff-client relationships – which promote social inclusion, through support, listening and assistance – appear to serve as a vital basis in which social capital is built upon. (12; 18). For instance, one participant said "I've been lucky with the key workers I've had, because they've listened and helped, I've had (staff name) on the phone all day, just working with me… and went out of her way to help." (18). Having positive relationships with staff also helped individuals access wide-ranging opportunities that otherwise may not be available. For example, staff signposting clients to psychological support: 'They helped me find counselling and therapy for my kids to help us through all the madness that we've been through' (8). However, staff-client relationships were also fraught with difficulty; in turn diminishing social capital. Here relationships entailed unsupportive and unfair treatment by staff where clients felt unheard, infantilised and failed to receive signposting to relevant services (8; 12; 13; 18). Evidently, staff-client relationships can impact the social capital provided by a service.

This dimension also extends to wider service factors, which may foster or hinder social capital. For example, room or person checks in hostels and fear of eviction due to possession of drugs or relapse, can cause a sense of intrusion and instability which can undermine social capital (18). This tension between service factors and resident satisfaction is demonstrated in the following excerpt (18):

Interviewer: "So he searched you every time you went in?"

Resident: "Yeah, and because of that, that really got me angry, do you know what I mean, I was like I felt, I also went back to the hostel and found him searching the room."

More widely, many services encountered by people experiencing homelessness are transitory by nature. For example, whilst many stay in hostels far beyond what these services were originally envisaged for, many people move in and out of these temporary services. As such, this ongoing turnover may serve as a barrier to individuals forming relationships, particularly between staff-resident (12). Additionally, there is a lack of continuity of care across health and social services (13) which can undermine the building of long-term, trusting relationships. These factors make it difficult for individuals to access stable sources of social capital.

It is, however, possible for services to adopt policies that promote social capital (8). For example, longer stays in residential services promotes a sense of safety and stability. Having a reliable home base enables mothers experiencing homelessness to make additional resourceful connections and manage "even those bad days" (8). Providing spaces, such as regular peer-support meetings, encourages bonding relationships to be formed, fostering mutual understanding (8).

Support

The third dimension in the framework speaks to the support embedded in and afforded by relationships with others and/or services (6; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 19). "Social capital describes the value and benefits which individuals derive from having, and being part of, social relationships and networks" (19). This dimension helps to disentangle why "… there is more to social capital than the existence of a relationship alone, and not all relationships result in social capital" (12).

Naturally, as this dimension is contingent upon the existence of relationships (either between people or with services) there is much overlap with the other two dimensions, *social relationships* and *services.* However, it can be viewed as qualitatively distinct. The other two dimensions identified the existence of social relationships between people and groups, and the availability and accessibility of services. This dimension builds upon these concepts through honing in on what is occurring in such interactions that provides social capital.

There are significant overlaps in this dimension and the wider literature on social support, with many texts referencing the various subcomponents of social support. Informational support can be seen through individuals signposting each other through word of mouth, to food and basic necessities. This may involve directing an individual experiencing homelessness to outreach teams that distribute food (17).

Practical support can be seen where individuals receive support with learning a language, obtaining certificates for work, or setting up one's own business (9). Additionally, having a friend/tie who can teach you to become competent with IT devices can be considered practical support (10).

Emotional support can manifest in the forming of attachment bonds to supportive people and a sense of belonging (13). For example, amongst small groups of peers there can be profound amounts of trust, intimacy and support, where peers are regarded as 'street families' or 'fictive kin'. Additionally, in the context of shelters, people who have lived in the same place are able to uniquely understand and offer solidarity: "I do have some friends, they just don't live here [at the shelter]. But they used to live here and that makes a difference. They know what it's like to live here, they know what people go through who live here and they've made it out of here, so I can relate to them better…" (13).

To widen our understanding beyond the three established categories of support (emotional, practical and informational), we look more generally at the benefits and resources afforded by relationships (8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14; 15; 17; 19). "Social capital refers to networks among people than can provide resources or tangible benefits" (15). Social capital – understood as the ability to convert social relationships into need resources may play an essential role in mitigating risk (14). For example, during severe weather, having social capital may enable an individual to remain safe (14). This may manifest as turning to friends and family for temporary refuge during particularly wet or cold weather and 'evacuating to a friend's or family member's home in advance of a hurricane' (14).

Within the context of homeless hostels, relationship among residents can serve as social capital through "reciprocal, practical and emotional support, encompassing protection, companionship and love" (12). Family-like-friends, which were perceived as unconditional and unbreakable ties, appear to provide substantial practical and emotional support (11). Additionally, having a partner whilst residing in a hostel, can serve as an "important supportive resource" providing individuals with a sense of safety, in an otherwise insecure and threatening environment (19); "He's very supportive… I don't think I'd be able to do this [stay away from drugs and alcohol] without him… I think if it weren't for him I'd have been back on it every day now. So he sort of keeps me strong" (12). Having a positive relationship with hostel staff may also serve as a source of social capital by contributing to greater flexibility with hostel rules and extending hostel tenancies (12).

Hostel relationships were explored also in another text, but with a focus on families experiencing homelessness (8). Relationships amongst residents were commonly characterized by sharing social time together, supporting one another and showing compassion (8). Specifically, between mothers and staff, there was ongoing practical and emotional support with some regarding the daily involvement and support as "lifesaving". "She [her agency-based family specialist] is just, there's no words for her. She's just astounding…Their hope gives me hope… This is what I need. I need a strong foundation. If it wasn't for this place, I don't know where I'd

be. They've done wonders for me and my daughter" (8). This study looked beyond what resources are embedded within certain relationships and explored resource accessibility and use, identifying barriers such as the duress of homelessness, ineffective information flow and lack of productive relationships (8).

The existence of support was identified across various groups; from street youth to older marginalised women. For street youth, relationships provided a willingness to protect, search for shelter, looking for food, helping panhandle, giving money (7). For older marginalised women, their communities – including fellow homeless and marginalised people – can and often do provide concrete support and assistance, familial bonds, an overall sense of connection and commonality, or simply a way to pass the day. This is demonstrated in the excerpt relating to two roommates, one of whom offers practical handy skills and the other serving as an informal translator with staff (15). "One of my roommates is – she has a lot of trouble with English. But she's been very nice to me; she's been very helpful with some of the things… So it's mutual; I'm helping her but I can see – she's helping me…Because otherwise I think she'd feel pretty lonely in this place." (15)

Discussion

This review aimed to 1) identify how social capital has been conceptualised in homelessness research and 2) synthesise these various conceptualisations of social capital to provide a framework. Overall, texts tend to take one of two approaches: measuring social capital (or a component of social capital) or using social capital as a relational lens to interpret data. In addition to these approaches, the developed framework proposes three dimensions regarding how social capital is conceptualised as: social relationships, services and support.

Social capital can be conceptualised as an umbrella term referring to relationships between individuals. This includes relationships between individuals in groups, interpersonal relationships and among those who may be considered similar to one another (bonding) as well as those dissimilar (bridging).

Social capital can be conceptualised as the formalised services available to individuals, thus providing a more structuralist perspective. This includes the facilities that are available within services and accessibility to individuals. Additionally, this dimension touches upon how services, through policy, can construct environments which encourage or diminish social capital.

Social capital can be conceptualised as the support received or given by individuals. This includes the resources or benefits afforded by certain relationships which create social capital. This dimension is closely related to the literature on social support: often referencing the different subtypes: emotional, practical and informational support.

This framework helps to disentangle various uses of social capital in homelessness research, in turn aiding our understanding of the differences between and overlaps among these. Critically, the framework can be used to structure and orient future conversations regarding social capital, promoting a greater sense of clarity and providing a basis for joint discussion. The framework is comprehensive and flexible, and thus can be built upon iteratively in light of future discussions and accumulation of knowledge.

Critique of the proposed framework

The third aim of the review was 3) to discuss and critique the proposed framework. This discussion will be had within the context of homelessness research whilst also drawing upon the wider literature relating to criticisms of social capital. Across the various stages of this review, it became evident that there were ongoing difficulties across yielded texts in operationalizing social capital. This is partly echoed in the four texts which were excluded at the full-screening stage due to insufficient detail regarding how social capital was conceptualised in the context of homelessness; despite explicitly using the term 'social capital' (McCarthy and Hagan, 1995; Hwang *et al*., 2009; Ferguson, 2012; Burns and Sussman, 2019). These texts either did not provide any detail on how social capital was conceptualised or offered insubstantial description. This speaks to concerns over using 'buzz words' without substantiation. This critique has been made regarding how social capital has been used in public health research; "… the term has slipped effortlessly into the public health lexicon as if there was a clear, shared understanding of its meaning and its relevance for improving public health…" (Muntaner *et al*., 2001). The same can evidently be said for the use of social capital in homelessness research. Concerns over the proliferation of 'buzz words' without substantiation should be contextualised in the wider current research environment (Grove, 2017). With the increase in research precarity, many are reliant upon successful grant applications. This to some extent, places pressure on the development of 'new ideas' or 'buzz words'. Of course, innovation should be welcomed, but it must be clear whether this is indeed innovation or the introduction of nebulous concepts or even perhaps, the rebranding of existing concepts.

Whilst the framework synthesises varying conceptualisations of social capital, there are valid critiques of the proposed dimensions. The dimension pertaining to *social relationships* reflects the issue of whether social capital, when used in the context

of homelessness research but also more generally, "risks trying to explain too much with too little (Woolcock, 1998; Muntaner *et al*., 2001). As highlighted in the results, texts pertaining to this dimension were notably varied; exploring different social relationships with little consistency. And so, using social capital in such a way does not indicate precisely or accurately what is being studied. By serving as such an umbrella term social capital risks being too broad a concept with little focus.

Having subthemes such as *interpersonal relationships*, *group membership* and *bonding and bridging* helps to provide clarity about the aspect of social capital that is being examined. Yet at the same time, these subthemes may give rise to further concerns. For example, questions remain over the clarity of bonding as a concept. As with the wider literature on social capital, it remains unclear what constitutes a homogenous tie. Often this is understood as relating to individuals in similar situations. So, in the context of homelessness this may constitute peer friendships, with individuals also experiencing homelessness (Oliver and Cheff, 2014). However, in some included texts bonding was measured for example, through trust in others generally, other homeless individuals, community leaders and homeless service providers (Fitzpatrick *et al*., 2007; Irwin *et al*., 2008; Fitzpatrick *et al*., 2015). This latter use throws into question the notion of bonding as many of these groups are not experiencing homelessness, and thus it is unclear on what grounds they are judged as homogenous.

Conceptualising social capital simply as *social relationships* also runs the risk of reproducing existing research. Through simply identifying whom an individual has a relationship with or what groups they participate in, this arguably, replicates the work done by the existing and vast literature on social networks. Such proliferation of social capital – when conceptualised like this – creates superficial distinctions across bodies of literature. Such chasms in discourses are problematic, as in reality, both are studying the same phenomenon. Thus, thought needs to be given to how to integrate such works in order to maximise insight gained.

Whilst the framework proposes three distinct dimensions, with significant overlap, these should not be viewed with equal weight. We would argue that in order to maximise the insight gained from social capital, *support* should be incorporated into any conceptualisation. In doing so, social capital will explore beyond the objective structures of relationships and focus more on disentangling what resources/benefits are afforded by certain relationships. As highlighted across the included texts, informational, practical and emotional support were often imbued in the social relationships of people affected by homelessness. This allowed individuals to navigate their day-to-day lives and access needed services and spaces. Additionally, this dimension supports the notion that social capital cannot simply be *having* relationships but rather having *meaningful* relationships. This nuance will

help to explain why some social relationships provide social capital and others do not. '… there is more to social capital than the existence of a relationship alone, and not all relationships result in social capital' (Neale and Stevenson, 2015). Literature pertaining to this dimension also contributes to a more strength-based narrative around homelessness, highlighting the existing resources embedded in meaningful relationships of those affected by homelessness; contributing to a more holistic picture of their experiences and journeys.

However, significant issues exist with the discussion around support and homelessness. As highlighted in the introduction, adopting a relational lens has the potential to better elucidate pathways into homelessness, improve service provisions and interventions for exiting homelessness. However, it appeared that identifying support, and different forms of it, was the ultimate endpoint of many texts. By this we mean that studies explored social relationships and connections with services, then used this to identify which resources and/or benefits were available to an individual. Few texts explored how this may relate to outcome measures or how resources may be leveraged to assist an individual out of their precarious situation. One of the few texts which briefly explored how social support may leverage an individual, outlines "By social capital we refer to the collective resources… that individuals and groups can rely upon to achieve desired outcomes—such as mitigating the psychological and emotional traumas experienced with homelessness" (Fitzpatrick *et al*., 2015). This extract notes that social capital can help to mitigate psychological and emotional trauma. When considering social capital's application to homelessness research, it should be identified that no texts explored how support may relate to an individual exiting homelessness. This echoes concerns that as a discourse, homelessness research often overlooks the most fundamental point; ending homelessness (Downie *et al*., 2018; Parsell, 2020).

Strengths and limitations

There are several notable strengths of this review. First, to our knowledge, this is the first review that synthesises how social capital has been conceptualised across adult homelessness research. Second, it is comprehensive in scope, having used a systematic search, covering numerous and varied sources; including underutilised grey literature and charity/governmental sources. Third, the review demonstrates the need for greater clarity in conceptualising social capital. Fourth, the three dimensions proposed in the framework were pertinent across various settings, research designs and methodologies. Fifth, the narrative synthesis benefited from in-depth, iterative discussions with a multidisciplinary team.

However, this review has several limitations. First, whilst we adopted the established Framework of Global Homelessness, there are limitations in doing so. Specifying a cut-off point regarding which typologies of homelessness are eligible for the review and which are not is largely arbitrary. Particularly when considering that many individuals simultaneously straddle different typologies (Barker, 2013). For example, many people rough sleep a few times a week, sofa surf when they can and use hostels when available and accessible. Additionally, when considering homelessness longitudinally, many individuals experience changes in their status. It is important to remember that homelessness is a state, not a trait. As such there is a significant flow whereby many individuals move in and out of this state (Bramley, 2017). This review did not capture the dynamism and fluid nature of peoples living situations and thus is limited in this regard.

Second, through excluding some forms of homelessness such as sofa surfing and temporary accommodation, this review risks being bias towards certain groups. For example, in the UK, there is evidence to suggest that the majority of visible rough sleepers are male (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2019). As such, it is likely that the findings from this review are skewed towards the male experience of homelessness, and does not sufficiently capture the experiences of women (Bretherton, 2017). Additionally, it may be argued that some of the groups excluded (e.g. sofa surfing) have greater social capital, if they were able to secure accommodation through their social relationships. However, relying upon social relationships to access accommodation, has been evidenced to, at times, place strain on relationships (Tănăsescu and Smart, 2010), which in turn may diminish social capital. Thus, through excluding certain groups, we did not capture the variance of social capital across the spectrum of homelessness, nor the way in which social capital may be diminished through changing relationships. Findings from this review should be contextualised noting this limitation.

Third, due to practical reasons, only texts in English were eligible. As such, the proposed framework and dimensions are derived from a subsection of available research. It may well be the case that had additional languages been eligible, different dimensions may have been established. As such, the generalisability of the dimensions/framework beyond research conducted in English may be limited.

Fourth, all included studies were conducted in only six countries, with 74% being conducted either in the U.S. or England. This may partly be a reflection of texts being restricted to those written in English. However, there is a substantial body of literature on homelessness from various countries, written in English, which are not represented in this review. As such, it is worth noting that homelessness research published in English, that specifically focuses on social capital, appears

to be less representative than wider homelessness research published in English. Thus, caution must be had when trying to generalise findings of this review beyond such contexts.

Fifth, as outlined in the review aims, we set out to identify how *social capital* was conceptualised in homelessness research. Nonetheless, it is likely that many relevant texts discuss issues pertaining to social capital without explicitly referring to it as "social capital". Due to practical limitations, it was not possible to conduct a review on all social relationships and connections, as this vast body of literature is far beyond the remit of this review. Yet, it should be noted that social capital is simply a lens into exploring the wider topic of social relationships. In order to comprehensively understand the role and importance of social relationships among those affected by homelessness we must use insights gained from across different literatures.

Conclusion

The proposed framework provides a basis on which future discussions and research regarding social capital in the context of homelessness may be structured. It provides greater clarity and nuance which in turn should facilitate more constructive and meaningful conversations. There have been numerous attempts to apply social capital to the context of homelessness. The most successful notably conceptualise social capital as a form of support. In doing so, these texts explore and identify the resources afforded by relationships and connections with people and/or services. Despite its potential, as it stands, this research has limited translatable and meaningful findings that can be used to guide policy. Therefore, it would be of benefit for future research to explore the relationships between social capital and relevant outcome measures such as housing and exiting homelessness. Without such a focus, this body of research remains theoretical and falls short on the ever-increasing task of redressing homelessness.

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