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**Review of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.
Mathew Desmond. Reviewed by Yeqing Yuan.**

Yeqing Yuan
New York University

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These applications aside, however, it must be said that the book would have benefitted greatly from more consistent application of core concepts in urban studies/ethnography, the study of institutional inequality, or reflexive methodological musings. Greater inclusion of these elements would have significantly increased the potential audience for this book (for example, in undergraduate courses). Nonetheless, the work serves as a testament to the value, continued relevance, and vital results of the application of the sociological imagination in efforts to better understand in context the diverse array of human lives that keep a metropolis humming, as well as a reminder of the costs to those who are pushed to the side as cities pursue economic development and experience rapid change.

Danielle Docka-Filipek, Christopher Newport University

Mathew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Crown Publishers (2016), 432 pages, \$28.00 (hardcover).

Using an ethnographic approach, Desmond gives readers a comprehensive and vivid description of the everyday struggles of eight families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. While each family has its own unique circumstances, each has suffered from being marginally housed. They either move from place to place with minimum housing stability or reside in trailer parks, where the quality of life is hugely compromised. Using novelistic language, this book is by no means an obscure reading, yet it provokes tremendous empathy toward those in our society who try everything to survive their lives. By the end of the book, readers may start to wonder why it is that these things are happening.

While the answer to this question may not have been explicitly pointed out in the book, readers will find themselves struck by the wide range of problems interfering with homelessness throughout the stories: poverty, substance abuse, mental illness, lack of education, domestic violence, discrimination, and legal issues, to name a few. In fact, there have been vigorous debates around the causes of homelessness in the United States. A traditional perspective ascribes homelessness

to personal and clinical characteristics such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and/or psychiatric disability. In line with this belief, housing is awarded to homeless people after they have completed mental health and substance abuse treatments and prove that they are mentally stable and abstinent from substances. A relatively new perspective is that housing is a basic human need regardless of disability; a stable housing environment is needed to meet other additional needs. Guided by this perspective, an increasing number of scholars and activists are advocating for the Housing First model, in which homeless people are provided with direct or nearly direct access to housing without requirements for treatment. Regardless of whether the problem is viewed as one of individual pathology or as a systemic problem, people with the aforementioned needs become the most vulnerable group. As this book makes clear, people in these families are striving to make ends meet and to keep a roof over their heads, but are unfortunately going through cycles of unstable housing. The message is conveyed that more affordable housing is needed in order for the poorest people to survive and to work on their other needs.

A great value of the book is credited to the exposure of this most invisible population: homeless families, children, and single parents who are at the margin of homelessness. As research and practice in the field of homelessness has focused mainly on providing housing services to people with mental illnesses, especially severe mental illnesses, those who are not considered as traditionally vulnerable too often have been overlooked. With the success of the book, we may hope that more attention will be given to this larger special population.

Yeqing Yuan, New York University