

Response to reviewer-1

We appreciate the reviewer's valuable feedback on this point. We acknowledge that several themes emerging from our synthesis, including political influences, the role of trusted intermediaries, and resource constraints align with findings in the broader research utilization literature. However, our analysis was constrained by the available qualitative research identified during our search period (January–May 2025). Among the seven studies meeting our inclusion criteria, six were U.S.- based and one was international, with none specifically examining U.S. homelessness policy. We have updated the Discussion section to clearly recognize this limitation while arguing that our synthesis still offers meaningful interpretive insights through the application of QIMS methodology to homelessness policy contexts. This approach positions our work as valuable for emerging researchers as well as practitioners and policymakers who encounter these dynamics in their daily practice. We thank the reviewer for this valuable feedback about title specificity. Although homelessness provided the initial impetus for this research, our comprehensive search from January–May 2025 revealed no published qualitative studies that directly examined homelessness within municipal coordination frameworks. Consequently, as detailed in our Sampling and Study Selection section, we expanded our inclusion parameters to encompass qualitative research on evidence use and decision-making across municipal and policy settings more broadly. Given this expanded scope, modifying the title to emphasize "homelessness policy" would misrepresent the actual content of our synthesized studies. To accurately reflect our dataset, we have maintained the broader title framing: "Filtering Evidence: Politics, Communication, and Resource Pressures in Policy Contexts." In response to the reviewer's observation, we have enhanced the Discussion to clarify that while homelessness concerns originally motivated this work, the limited available literature necessitated a broader analytical approach. We now explicitly recognize that our findings primarily illuminate evidence utilization within municipal policy environments generally, while identifying the lack of homelessness-focused qualitative research as an important area for future investigation. We appreciate the reviewer's valuable suggestion. We recognize that researcher credibility and the alignment between research funding and policy priorities constitute significant additional factors in evidence-policy interactions. In response, we have updated the Discussion section to emphasize how researcher identity influences evidence trustworthiness and utilization, and how funding mechanisms may promote research that aligns with existing policy priorities. These enhancements support our three primary themes by demonstrating how both representational and institutional factors influence evidence use within municipal policy environments.

Response to reviewer-2

We are grateful for the reviewer's positive assessment of the methodological rigor and policy relevance of our study, as well as for the constructive guidance on how to strengthen the manuscript. In response, we have made the following revisions:

Strengthened theoretical framing: We revised the Discussion to situate our findings explicitly within established models of research utilization, particularly Weiss's (1979) instrumental, symbolic, and conceptual uses of evidence, as well as more recent frameworks on evidenceinformed policymaking (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007; Contandriopoulos et al., 2010). This positions the QIMS findings in dialogue with broader theoretical literature.

Streamlined presentation: We revised the Results and Discussion sections by reducing redundancy, trimming long block quotations, and incorporating shorter embedded quotes. We also strengthened our analytic voice by ensuring that each theme ends with authorial interpretation rather than with participant quotations. These changes retain the richness of QIMS while improving clarity and readability.

Clarified scope and transferability: We revised both the Discussion and Limitations sections to state explicitly that our search did not yield peerreviewed qualitative studies directly examining homelessness within municipal coordination systems. As a result, the synthesis broadened to include studies of evidence utilization and municipal decisionmaking more generally. We now emphasize that the findings are not generalizable but offer transferable insights into how evidence is filtered through political, relational, and financial dynamics in municipal policy contexts. This gap also highlights the need for future qualitative research that focuses explicitly on homelessness policy in municipal coordination systems. We believe these revisions have strengthened the manuscript and directly address the reviewer's concerns about theoretical framing, presentation, and scope/transferability. We thank the reviewer for this important observation and agree that additional clarification strengthens the ethical transparency of the manuscript. To address this, we revised the Instrumentation section to specify that because the study synthesized only secondary data from published qualitative research and one policy report, no new human subjects were recruited and IRB approval was not required. Additionally, we expanded our reflexivity statement to acknowledge the dual role of the lead author as both course instructor (with grading responsibilities) and co-author. To mitigate potential positionality bias, we emphasized the safeguards incorporated into the project, including structured student roles, collaborative decisionmaking, weekly reflexivity exercises, and peer review across student teams. By explicitly acknowledging these dynamics, we strengthen the ethical validity of the study and increase transparency about how instructor oversight was managed. We appreciate this observation and agree that the reliance on published studies places boundaries on the interpretive depth of the synthesis. Because the inclusion criteria required peer-reviewed qualitative studies (and one policy report), the analysis necessarily reflected what was available in the published literature. This limitation is consistent with QIMS methodology, but we recognize that the absence of grey literature, practitioner reports, and communitybased perspectives constrained the diversity of voices represented. We have revised the Limitations

section to acknowledge this explicitly and to suggest that future research could incorporate these additional sources to broaden representation and enrich interpretive findings.

We appreciate this important clarification. As noted in the Sampling and Study Selection section, our original goal was to synthesize qualitative studies on homelessness within municipal coordination systems. However, our search (January–May 2025) did not identify any peer-reviewed qualitative research meeting that specific criterion. To address this gap, we broadened the inclusion criteria to encompass studies of evidence utilization and municipal policy decision-making more generally. We agree that this limits the direct applicability of findings to municipal homelessness coordination, and we have revised the Discussion and Limitations sections to emphasize that the findings should be understood as transferable insights into evidence use in municipal contexts rather than direct conclusions about homelessness-specific coordination. We also highlight the absence of such studies as a critical gap for future qualitative research.

We thank the reviewer for raising this important point. Our inclusion criteria were intentionally limited to peer-reviewed qualitative studies (and one policy report) to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. We recognize, however, that this decision also limited the richness of interpretation, as the analysis depended on what was reported by the original authors. We agree that the absence of grey literature, practitioner reports, and community-based perspectives constrained the diversity of voices represented in the synthesis. In response, we revised the Limitations section to explicitly acknowledge this overreliance on secondary sources and to recommend that future research expand the evidence base by including community-conducted evaluations, practitioner perspectives, and unpublished reports to enrich the interpretive scope.

We thank the reviewer for this constructive suggestion. In revising the manuscript, we carefully streamlined the Results and Discussion sections to reduce redundancy and improve readability. Specifically, we shortened or removed several long block quotations, retained only the most illustrative participant excerpts, and converted others into shorter embedded quotations. We also ensured that each theme concludes with 1-2 sentences of analytic synthesis written in the authors' voice, rather than ending on a participant quote. These 8 changes preserve the richness of the QIMS method while enhancing clarity and ensuring that interpretation remains foregrounded.

We appreciate this recommendation and agree that sharpening the focus strengthens the manuscript. In response, we revised the Results section to reduce redundancy, condense overlapping material, and balance participant quotations with greater comparative synthesis. Specifically, we reduced the number of block quotes within each theme, retained only the most illustrative examples, and converted additional material into embedded quotations. We also added more explicit comparative synthesis to highlight how findings converged across the seven studies. These changes provide a clearer and more concise narrative while maintaining the interpretive depth of the QIMS method.

We thank the reviewer for this insightful recommendation. In response, we revised the Discussion to explicitly situate our QIMS findings within established frameworks on research utilization. Specifically, we reference Weiss's (1979) typology of instrumental, conceptual, and symbolic uses of research, as well as more recent models of evidence-informed policymaking (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007; Contandriopoulos et al., 2010). We highlight how the three themes identified in our synthesis: political filtering, reliance on trusted brokers, and financial pressures, mirror these frameworks. For example, evidence was used instrumentally when it advanced policy implementation, symbolically when invoked to support pre-existing agendas, and conceptually when shaping broader understandings of problems. These additions clarify the theoretical grounding of the study and demonstrate how our synthesis contributes to and extends existing scholarship.

We appreciate this important suggestion. To address it, we revised the Discussion and Limitations to emphasize that the findings of this QIMS are not generalizable in the statistical sense but instead offer transferable insights. Specifically, we clarified that because no peer-reviewed qualitative studies were found that directly examined homelessness within municipal coordination systems, the synthesis drew on studies of evidence utilization and municipal policy decision-making more broadly. The findings therefore apply most directly to municipal policy contexts where evidence is filtered through political, relational, and financial pressures, while highlighting a gap for future research on homelessness-specific municipal coordination.

We appreciate this constructive feedback. In revising the manuscript, we reduced details that emphasized the classroom context (such as assignment timelines and course logistics) and reframed these elements to highlight their role in strengthening methodological rigor. For example, we retained references to student collaboration and reflexivity only where they directly contributed to transparency, credibility, or interpretive depth. We also revised the Instrumentation and Methods sections to emphasize the scholarly contribution of adapting the QIMS methodology to a municipal policy context, while minimizing references that positioned the study primarily as a classroom project. These changes ensure the manuscript maintains transparency about its pedagogical origins but frames the work as a scholarly contribution to the literature on evidence-informed policymaking.

We thank the reviewer for highlighting this important issue. Because our inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed qualitative studies (and one policy report), the analysis primarily reflected the perspectives of policymakers, administrators, and organizational leaders. As a result, the synthesis did not directly capture the voices of community members, practitioners, or clients. We agree this is an important limitation and have revised the Limitations section to explicitly acknowledge this absence. We also highlight the need for future QIMS studies to integrate grey literature, practitioner reports, and community-led evaluations to ensure that a broader range of perspectives informs policy-relevant knowledge.