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The Housing First Model:
Policy Evolution in Los Angeles
and Steps Toward Housing the Homeless

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By

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Table of Contents

Signature Page	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	vi
Section 1: Housing the Homeless	1
Unhoused in the City of Angels	1
Section 2: Homelessness Nationwide and the Housing First Model	4
Section 3: Power Over City Spaces	9
Coalitions Driving City Policies	13
Machine Power Over Space	16
Section 4: Overcoming NIMBYism	23
The New York City Policy Experience	23
Seattle’s Village Homes Spark Hope	26
Section 5: Power Over Space in Los Angeles	29
Service Providers and Legislatures	29
Unprecedented Approval for Tax-Funded Supportive Housing Measures	34
Housing First Failure	39
El Pueblo Housing: NIMBYs Become YIMBYs	43
Section 6: Back to Basics - Educate, Legislate, House	46
Educate	46
Legislate	47
House	48

Abstract

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The current qualitative policy analysis will examine city economics and group control of policy and spacial development at the local levels through inspection of Los Angeles's political evolution toward approving the Housing First (HF) Model. The paradigm shift in homeless policy toward the HF Model was not given proper dialogue before legislators passed funding measures for homeless housing. New York, Seattle and Los Angeles have assumed that simply housing the homeless will solve the crisis. Through better education of the HF Model, legislators can ensure the policies passed are successful and the homeless can be housed. The final recommendations for current and future policy endeavors will argue that the HF Model can be successful when stakeholders and legislators within each community are educated on the benefits of housing the homeless prior to treating needs, voters approve tax-funded permanent and temporary supportive housing, and actual implementation of those options are spread throughout the city.

Section 1: Housing the Homeless

Unhoused in the City of Angels

Los Angeles County has seen an incredible uptick in the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness as urban landscapes took on rapid changes. The Federal Census recorded 9.82 million LA County residents in 2010, and that number is estimated to have increased by at least 300,000 more in 2016. In Los Angeles City alone, the 2010 Census recorded 3.8 million residents¹. People have flocked to the City of Angels for many reasons - some arrived searching for fame, others for business ventures and others for diverse cultural experiences. Alongside the increase of housed Angelinos stand an often overlooked population - the homeless. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness also rose dramatically within a short time period. From 2009 to 2013, the LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), a joint partnership organization between LA County and City, recorded a rise of almost 10,000 homeless individuals (from 47,572 to 58,423) throughout LA County².

The following qualitative policy analysis of city economics and the ways in which groups control policy and spacial development at the local levels provide the literary foundation for analyzing Los Angeles's political evolution toward approving the HF Model. This first section outlines the structure of this study. The following paper will argue that the HF Model can be successful when stakeholders and legislators within each community are educated on the benefits of housing the homeless prior to treating needs,

¹ United States Census Bureau. 2010 and 2016. Population, Census, April 1, 2010. Retrieved November 26, 2017 from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescitycalifornia/PST045216>

² LAHSA. 2016. "Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count." Retrieved March 22, 2018 from https://documents.lahsa.org/Planning/homelesscount/2016/datasummaries/La_City.pdf

voters approve tax-funded permanent and temporary supportive housing, and actual implementation of those options are spread throughout the city.

The second section of policy analysis will examine the problem of homelessness nationwide. Growing cities have relied heavily upon federal funding to solve homelessness, but it would seem based on the increase of street homeless, cities could not continue to avoid redistributing local tax money to help the homeless. This section will also examine the Housing First (HF) Model, a revolutionary policy that encouraged the homeless receive housing prior to addressing any health or financial concerns.

The third section provides foundational understanding behind legislative prioritization toward projects that provide cities increased developments and job opportunities. Paul Peterson's (1980) analysis that cities rationally passed legislation to encourage growth, but his policy analysis cannot account for the current explosion of street homelessness. In addition, John Logan and Harvey Molotch's (1989) machine theory exemplifies the reasons behind prioritizing specific needs within cities, especially when particular elites or stakeholders are involved. These groups will include neighborhood councils, business improvement districts, and non-profit organizations focused on assisting the homeless. The power of elites determined how cities grew and how space was utilized.

The fourth section provides examples from New York and Seattle where the HF Model has found success and failure while attempting to overcome community push-back to supportive housing measures. Common mistakes and victories can be seen between these examples. Local funding for redistributive policies that assist moving the homeless

into housing can be successful, but only when elites are included in the implementation process.

The fifth section examines the evolution of homeless policies in Los Angeles, and the results of legislative neglect to include stakeholders in the process of HF redistributive policies. It would be unreasonable to suggest groups be included in every legislative decision at the city level; however, determining where the homeless will live directly impacts the communities surrounding those housing properties. Political elites can help legislators gain support in proposed housing locations, but only when they are included in small discussions of the benefits of the HF Model. Space for the homeless in LA has become less attainable, and while recent policies have ensure money is available for permanent and temporary supportive housing, elites throughout LA communities are unwilling to support large housing projects.

The final section outlines policy recommendations for legislators in LA, and throughout the United States. The HF Model is a recent paradigm shift in homeless policy, and was not given proper dialogue before legislators passed funding measures for homeless housing. New York, Seattle, Los Angeles and all redeveloping cities have assumed that simply housing the homeless will solve the crisis. Through better education, legislators can ensure the policies passed are successful and the homeless can be housed.

Section 2: Homelessness Nationwide and the Housing First Model

The Stewart B. McKinney-Vento Act was the first attempt by the national government to address homelessness through federal policy. The amount of actual funding allocated by Congress under this act was often limited and required states to complete a number of tedious applications³. In keeping with limited government control over social service programs, this act ensured actual disbursement of these funds depended upon local powers (Law 2000; Davis 1990). The original McKinney-Vento Act has been restructured four times since its original (1987) enactment to allow for a greater span of services to be covered by federal funding⁴, but the federal government continued to keep a wide distance from social welfare issues, and urban powers struggled to close the financial gap for under-funded redistributive resources.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the Continuum of Care (CoC), “a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system to address those needs, and a doubling of the HUD homeless assistance budget to provide communities with resources to carry out these tasks” (Fuchs and McAllister 1996, 1). Each state applying for HUD assistance created their own version of the CoC, showing need as well as state plans for efficiently combatting homelessness. In large counties and cities like Los Angeles, strategies can only go as far

³ U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development. 2009. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as Amended by S. 896 The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009. SEC. 103 [42 USC 11302]. Retrieved March 11, 2017 from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessAssistanceActAmendedbyHEARTH.pdf>

⁴ National Coalition for the Homeless. 2006. “McKinney-Vento Act.” <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/McKinney.pdf>

as voters allow. Actual implementation of HUD-funded planning has posed the greatest set back for solving homelessness across growing cities.

Major revitalization within large cities rapidly changed urban landscapes, especially during globalization efforts for local economies. Cities like Seattle, New York and Los Angeles focused on development and business expansions, which led to changes for the residents living among rising developments. Federal funding through the CoCs have been one way local governments have funded redistributive services for local homeless communities, but efforts were not found to make a dent in the estimated homeless numbers. New York had an estimated 80,590 total homeless in 2014⁵; Seattle had an estimated 9,294 total homeless⁶ that same year. Despite increased development and greater employment opportunities, the number of homeless continued to rise in these revitalized spaces.

Deborah Padgett, Benjamin Henwood and Sam Tsemberis (2016) outlined the evolution of homeless policy from a staircase approach to the HF Model. Oftentimes, redistributive policies of the past followed an exchange model, where completion of step one was required to move on to step two, until an individual was “cured” of homelessness (Padgett, Henwood and Tsemberis 2016, 6-8). The homeless were required to give time and willingness before they were able to gain permanent housing. Steps were required in exchange for shelter (ex. sobriety, active job search, proof of government

⁵ National Alliance to End Homelessness. 2018. “New York.” Retrieved November 27, 2018 from <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report/new-york/>.

⁶ Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. 2015. “One Night Count of People who are Homeless in King County.” Retrieved November 27, 2018 from http://homelessinfo.org/resources/one_night_count/2015_ONC_Poster-web.pdf

documentation). This previous linear approach to homelessness was successful for individuals able and willing to work through the requirements, but left a “greater concentration of severely disabled people living on the streets” (8). Living under a bridge for one week is a unique experience when compared to six months or longer of continuous shuffling from one public space to another. These ever-expanding cities watched as development and commerce brought more attractive neighborhoods for tourists, while residents saw the realities of revitalization.

The staircase approach could not answer for those unable to manage even the most basic steps. Padgett, Henwood and Tsemberis (2016) discovered that service providers and legislators needed to shift approaches if they hoped to see any increase in the number of successful participants. Jason Wasserman and Jeffrey Clair (2010) saw the homeless experience first hand by documenting specific individuals in Birmingham, Alabama over a four year period. The medicalized staircase approach from service providers was the typical American “bootstrap” logic, and they found even the homeless could get behind an individualistic response out of homelessness (Wasserman and Clair 2010, 7). It was up to the homeless to take the necessary steps to get out of their situations, and if they were unable, there must have been some medical abnormality behind their state of unhoused affairs. Mental illness, physical debilitations or drug addiction were the most prescribed diagnoses and “the disease conception of homelessness has promoted a rather exclusive service model, whereby those who do not need or want treatment have few other options” (172). Wasserman and Clair discovered service providers had long treated homelessness as a disease itself with a basic

medicalized set of prescriptions, but their methods did not account for any case outside of those known diseases. For the young man who lost his part-time job at Home Depot and was unable to pay next month's rent, his solution out of homelessness was not easily prescribed by service providers.

A paradigm shift in the homeless service methodology was found in the Housing First (HF) Model. The most unique aspect of this approach toward homelessness was the collaborative efforts between service providers and clients. Instead of requiring completion of a prescribed set of steps, consumers of the Housing First Model were provided shelter before service providers introduced suggestions of treatment and "every effort was made to reduce power differentials and operate as collaboratively as possible" (Padgett, Henwood and Tsemberis 2016, 5). The HF Model was meant to bring consumers and service providers together under a concept of friendship, rather than a client-patient relationship (Wasserman and Clair 2010, 223). The shift in conceptualizing homelessness brought compassion and collaboration into the service provider equation. The difficulty has been the implementation of the controversial program within cities experiencing rapid rise of homelessness.

The Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department conducted an investigation of various housing models with 2,300 families over a three year period and found HF (through temporary and permanent supportive housing measures) was the most successful for long-term stability and for cost-efficiency (less government spending on incarcerations, municipal code citations, and emergency medical services)⁷. Few cities

⁷ Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2016. "Family Options Study: 3-Year Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families." Retrieved August 28, 2018 from https://www.huduser.gov/portal/family_options_study.html

(New York, Seattle, Utah) had utilized the HF Model on small scales prior to this federal study. HUD's three year investigation proved the HF Model was the most successful method toward solving homelessness when compared to prior exchange models, and has become the preferred model for housing the growing homeless populations. Under any paradigm shift, there are always remnants of policies of the past, and the HF Model is not a cure for all homeless groups across the United States. For some clients, the staircase method of treatment may have been their only successful path out of homelessness. This previous method was often most beneficial for those just recently experiencing homelessness. For those who lived outside of societal boundaries for years, the experience of homelessness brought more trauma and shame which needed more support than the exchange model provided. The HF Model encouraged the chronically homeless, who had a more difficult time following standard steps, to be active participants in their own journeys.

Section 2: Power Over City Spaces

Cities within the modern global market strive to invest in profitable business and competitive strategies to attract a wide range of populations. Paul Peterson's (1981) *City Limits* provided insight of the fiscal challenges suburban and urban cities face when structuring policy priorities. City budgets in relation to power dynamics center around city experiences, especially as limited tax payer funds shape the design of expenditures (Peterson 1981, 49). The three policy areas Peterson identified as a general procedure for city budgeting were allocational, developmental and redistributive. Allocational tend to be those policies with the least likelihood of losing city funding, as these include measures to keep communities safe (fire, police, etc) and developmental policies provide cities with income necessary to fund infrastructure (private investments, expansions of properties, entertainment arenas) (44-46). Both policy areas take a large majority of city budgets, as constituents tend to favor strong fire and police departments, as well as wide opportunities for job growth and increased property values.

Peterson understood redistributive policy as last priority for city budgets, which include social welfare programs that can detract from the immediate economic benefits brought by the previous policy types (43). All changes to city budgets must be voter-approved, as cities use taxpayer dollars to fund all three policy types. Funding for redistributive policies at the local levels can be difficult to gain popular voter support because of the return benefits to the tax payers. Budgets for new stadiums and shopping malls can be rationalized for the immediate increases in employment opportunities and tax revenue. Voter approval for redistribution of tax dollars to assist the poor or the

homeless is less attractive to taxpayers because those programs return zero benefits to the housed taxpayers.

The federal government often foots the bill for redistributive policies, but some political scientists underline the need for local legislators to take back local control of funding for these programs. Micheal Crow (2010) analyzed the 1992 and 2002 Census of Governments to determine the amount of independence local governments hold when refocusing city funds toward social welfare services and policies. While previous studies analyzing policy privatization highlighted the fiscal limitations local governments experienced (Peterson 1981, Wilse 2015), Crow found “urban municipalities have significantly greater degree of autonomy over decisions on provision and finance of social welfare functions than they do over expenditure decisions” (Crow 2010, 909). Local policy agendas have often refrained from gearing a significant amount of local tax payer dollars to serving the poor or homeless, despite Crow’s discovery that urban municipalities have creative freedom when shaping these policies. The success or failure of redistributive policies was often due to the amount of support by local government and voter approval of those policies. While Crow’s findings may have initially competed with Peterson’s logic of policy prioritization, Crow would agree that elected representatives will not prioritize redistribution of tax payer dollars to programs with zero economic return for their voters. However, under Crow’s logic, if stakeholders can find value in redistributive policies, homeless initiatives can be approved in city budgets.

As an economic body, globally competitive cities can be equated to any business with a focus on profit. Craig Wilse found in his study of homelessness throughout the

U.S. that when “social welfare programs become economic enterprises part of rather than challenges to the post-industrial service economies,” the elected legislators and their constituents are more in favor of redistributive policies (Wilse 2015, 20). For example, the Homeboy organization in downtown Los Angeles began helping released inmates through job training and rehabilitation. In 2015, Homeboy Industries began selling baked goods and services throughout the city, and established their once controversial name into a branded business model⁸. The City of Seattle partnered with United Way of King County, Downtown Seattle Association and various local non-profits to create Jobs Connect, which employed homeless men and women to complete a range of labor jobs around the city. In 2017, this program successfully employed 2,224 people⁹. The face of homelessness changed when Seattle legislators created a business model out of the humanitarian crisis, and constituents supported the program. Economic benefits from redistributive policies may be slow in bearing fruit, but the long term benefits can be realized when groups like the homeless are finally able to find purpose and place within revitalized cities.

Peterson’s policy analysis drove home the logic behind cities valuing developmental policies over redistribution. Taxpayer funding can prevent local governments from supporting redistributive policies, despite Craw’s exposure of the freedom legislators have over social welfare programming. The human element has often

⁸ Mejia, Brittny. 2015. “Homeboy Industries hopes more space will better serve gang community.” Los Angeles Times. Retrieved on April 26, 2017 from <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-adv-homeboy-expansion-20150308-story.html>

⁹ United Way of King County. 2018. “Jobs Connect.” Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://www.uwkc.org/ending-homelessness/jobs-connect/>

been lost among the dollars and cents of prioritizing development, leaving the most vulnerable populations with few resources in the ever-changing urban landscapes.

The many bureaucratic restrictions that hold local municipalities from funding redistributive policies do not apply to non-profits or religious organizations. Those local groups have taken the lead in responding to social issues like homelessness because their organizations are not responsible to an entire voting community. Martha Burt and Barbara Cohen examined the response of non-profit organizations to find those groups were the most fiscally advanced organizations to handle the needs of the homeless because of their knowledge of the specific needs within their neighborhoods (Burt and Cohen 1989, 112). For example, in Utah, homeless populations skyrocketed in the early 2000s. Lloyd Pendleton, one of Salt Lake City's leaders for the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints (LDS), took his knowledge of the HF Model and experimented with one homeless supportive housing program. He did not need prior approval from local government because his church was using non-profit money to fund a new program model, not establishing new spaces. The LDS Church already had a housing project (Pathways) and willing participants; therefore, they did not have to push for community support of the program, as some homeless individuals were already utilizing the shelter services.

Lloyd Pendleton simply changed the structure of homeless service programming from an exchange model to a HF Model. Pendleton was elected Director of the Homeless Task Force for Utah in 2006, and legislators were provided clear benefits of sheltering the unhoused. The entire state then adopted the HF Model as its driving redistributive policy for homelessness (Carrier 2015; Padgett, Henwood and Tsemberis 2016, 118-121). Not

all cities in Utah have fully adopted the HF Model, but results showed from 2012 to 2014, the number of people experiencing homelessness went from 16,522 to 13,621 statewide¹⁰. The Mormon Church did not have to answer to a taxpaying voter base; therefore, the program leaders had more freedom than legislators to experiment with a highly controversial program. The LDS Church was also already housing the homeless in various projects throughout Salt Lake City. The model for approaching housing was the only change to their program.

Salt Lake City, Utah is a unique example of the HF success, as the population size is not comparable to New York or Los Angeles. However, the success and background of non-profits toward housing the homeless can help larger municipalities find value in collaborating with small organizations while attempting to gain community support for temporary and permanent supportive housing locations throughout redeveloped cities.

Coalitions Driving City Policies

As competitive bodies within a global market-place, it is not surprising cities strive to invest in lucrative businesses and implement strategies to attract international attention. Political scientists have found cities with a higher density experience high levels of competition between these groups to expand cities for their groups' needs. John Logan and Harvey Molotch (1989) investigated the “growth machine” that developed within cities, especially as business and community elites gain power. As these groups gain control over city space, they determine special-use values for certain spaces that become of particular use for cities, and these spaces create unique identities over time

¹⁰ State of Utah. 2014. “Comprehensive Report on Homelessness.” Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://jobs.utah.gov/housing/scso/documents/homelessness2014.pdf>

(Logan and Molotch 1989, 18-19). A husband and wife may have purchased a home outside of their price range because it was within walking distance of several reputable schools and many beautiful parks. They paid more for the feeling of suburbia and family, rather than purchase a home in a less valuable neighborhood within their financial means. Businesses within the North Hollywood Arts District paid more to be located on Lankershim Boulevard, including general maintenance of trash bins and under a business improvement district model¹¹. Each space created unique experiences for those working and living within them.

Attempting to alter the identity of any space can affect the values promoted and the relationships built between stakeholders. Logan and Molotch's analogy of a city as a machine implies an image of a working city, where some groups will take more control over space than others. The gears within any machine are likely to grind over time or need readjustments; or, the machine itself may need to be entirely reconfigured, much like a real city hoping to reinvest in alternative values and markets to compete with redeveloping cities internationally.

There are a number of gears and bolts holding any well-made machine together, and they are designed to encourage product efficiency. Each piece plays a role in the mechanical function, much like a city with many groups interacting over time as they safeguard city functions to prioritize certain needs or values. Business elites or international influences can carry strong weight over city machines, but residential groups can provide local sway toward suburban needs. Daniel Wu explained this discord

¹¹ North Hollywood Business Improvement District. 2018. "About the NoHoBID." Retrieved on March 11, 2018 from <http://www.nohobid.com/aboutus>

as “non-capital uses of land versus capital uses,” whereas Logan and Molotch termed the conflict between residential and commercial groups as “use value versus exchange value” (Wu 2012, 245; Logan and Molotch 1989, 35). Both studies promoted similar conceptions of the value differences between these city groups. These citizen-based groups compromised when cities began to change or dealt with controversy when conflicts rose. Clarence Stone (1989) and Daniel Wu (2012) incorporated Logan and Molotch’s growth machine concept into their unique analyses of coalition-building. They focused on key groups within cities (i.e. neighborhood councils, non-profits) and their struggles to encourage community development as differing views entered the mix. Business elites centered on market developments and lucrative business deals to capitalize on land use and residents’ pocketbooks. The projects expanding upon cultural and practical land use were more critical to residents, seen as irreplaceable cogs to their city machine. Challenges made to the concentrated elite powers can dramatically change the growth machine, and can revitalize a cityscape.

The clash of urban ideals were frequent occurrences in highly dense cities. City growth was seen to move at a faster rate when cooperation between coalitions was made priority for key players, as seen through Clarence Stone’s (1989) analysis of local coalitions in Atlanta. Development of the “social production model” reviewed both lucrative and concentrated global cities -- groups within these international hubs accomplished more in the city when they were willing to work toward mutual goals, rather than vying for top political or urban powers (Stone 1989, 8). The interlocked mechanisms of a productive machine were required to function in harmony if the city was

to meet expected levels of global competitiveness. When any one part was unable or unwilling to compromise to opposing views, the entire structure remained unresponsive toward the needs of residents. Conflict was an inescapable reality in thriving cities, but stakeholders would do well to bend when strong opposition to elite developments were brought by local coalitions. Two questions come to mind during analysis of these coalition theories: What happens to the homeless population when group conflict manifests through new development or revitalization? Do loose bolts or faulty wires in a city get thrown into the bin, or pushed under a floor board to be neglected and underutilized?

Machine Power Over City Spaces

Urban economies and the distribution of financial powers are important factors to consider during urban redevelopment, but consideration of the various geographical impacts upon neighborhoods are critical to a full policy analysis of the current homelessness crisis across the United States. Revitalization has been driven by business and local governments, but ignorance toward the geographic impacts has caused the definition of public space to be scrutinized by academia. Urban political theories recently recognized geography and place as a useful tool for legislators to express power over the poor and the homeless.

The ability to take refuge in a private dwelling or at a table in a coffee shop are often overlooked luxuries. Sudden rearrangement of city spaces can easily displace those without economic means to afford revitalized neighborhoods. Lyn Lofland (2009) understood cities through two geographic terms -- public space versus public realm.

Public space is the physical area describing accessibility, and through legislation, policy-makers designated space as public or private. The public realm included “those urban settlements in which individuals in co-presence tend[ed] to be personally unknown or only categorically known to one another” (Lofland 2009, 8-9). The space included technical jurisdictions and zoning clarifications, while the realm focused on the interactions that occurred between residents within these spaces. The public realm afforded various groups with opportunities to physically separate until need persuaded them to return or until conflicts rose in public and private spaces. Cities with physical boundaries create “variously sized settlements that are woven together into the urban blankets” (7). Lofland’s terms can be better understood in urban versus suburban parts of a city. For example, the SFV in Los Angeles has a range of private spaces (gated communities, business centers) and public spaces (neighborhood parks, libraries), which make up one large public realm. Communities like Hidden Hills utilized gated borders and security guards, paid for through higher property taxes, to ensure safety from perceived dangers lurking within the public realm¹². Through conceptualization of space, it becomes easier to see potential challenges to policy determinations of public and private spaces, and the luxury residents experience when they can choose to remove themselves from the public realm.

Designation of public versus private spaces through legislation encouraged power dynamics to sprout throughout cities. Charles Moore, David Sink and Patricia Hoben-Moore (1988) recounted one of the more blatant examples of power expressed by city

¹² Hidden Hills City. 2017. “Welcome to the City of Hidden Hills.” Retrieved on November 20, 2017 from <https://hiddenhillscity.org/>

residents through “Not In My Backyard,” or NIMBYism. On the surface, citizens and businesses had been in favor of homeless shelters or food pantries were strongly opposed to establishing any of those services (or their clientele) near their private spaces. Their study examined the benefits cities incurred when development was prioritized for redeveloping landscapes, and one of the results was extinction of “single-room occupancy hotels in their wake,” or safe spaces for lower income and homeless residents to call home (Moore, Sink and Hoban-Moore 1988, 59). NIMBY theory examined not only the way residents conceptualized space, but also shed light on constituents’ conceptions of the populations allowed to enter those spaces. Wasserman and Clair (2010) determined historical reasoning could help explain the power conception NIMBYs felt over the poor and homeless. Following WWII, Americans were “afforded more freedom and privacy,” which led to an increased isolation within suburban life (Wasserman and Clair 2010, 101). The ability to choose a neighborhood suited to specific wants was expanded to encourage residents to believe they also had power over who could or could not live in those neighborhoods. When interviewing NIMBYs and local governments, Wasserman and Clair found “complaints about people who are homeless have skyrocketed, and the propertied residents readily admit that they simply do not like to see people who are homeless when they look out their windows” (101). Much like a bed of mushrooms multiplying across a well-manicured lawn, NIMBYs found the unwanted in cities should be easily removed from spaces where they do not belong. The unfortunate detail is that the homeless are not mushrooms, but human beings with connections and families and livelihoods often in the same neighborhoods where they are

homeless. Unlike a weed that can be plucked and destroyed, the homeless are obvious reminders to NIMBYs of the lack of power they once imagined they have over who can or cannot invade their pieces of the public realm.

Revitalizing cities have attempted to eliminate the homeless from tourist and residential spaces, though scholars noted their impossibility of truly purifying any space in the public realm (Lofland 2009; Wasserman and Clair 2010). The frustration and fatigue of residents could be traced to their unfulfilled demands for elimination of homelessness. June Kress (1994) studied this NIMBY idealism in her case study of Washington, D.C. where an increase of businesses and development coincided with an increase of homelessness. Physical and geographical changes led to increases of “perceived threats to property values, personal security (crime), and neighborhood amenities (quality of life issues)” felt by housed residents (Kress 1994, 96). Kress was clear to use “perceived” rather than “confirmed” because actual increase in those crime statistics were not evident in police records. The perception of crime was persuasive enough for legislators to enact policy that prevented homeless services from gaining community support (99). Homelessness became an indicator of inevitable crime and disarray in the city, despite the lack of credible data to prove any correlation.

When placed in a criminal light, NIMBY idealism became a rational reaction for residents and businesses to deter their elected representatives from implementing social services within revitalized neighborhoods. Whether in New York City or Washington, D.C., the poor and homeless have been the easiest group to remove from revitalizing city

spaces. Unless their presence is more than an inconvenience, response has been aligned with NIMBY ideals of elimination and incarceration.

Leaders within changing cities prioritize business and development over quality of life improvements. Controlling spaces is one of the strongest political moves for legislators and stakeholders to ensure developments are prioritized and attract new taxpayers, despite any crisis of homelessness that may have been evident. The “annihilation of space by law” has been seen across cities struggling to maintain the homeless (Mitchell 1997, 305). Along with developmental policy, legislators in these cities created policy that would charge an individual caught loitering, littering and/or defecating in public can be charged with varying legal citations or even jail time for extended periods. While these proved successful for removing the visibly homeless from plain view, they are by no means successful in lowering the number of un-housed populations. These laws were helpful for city departments that were clearing encampments or for law enforcement that removed these people from sight, but these same cities forbidding the homeless from public spaces also neglected to implement public restrooms and other prevention methods for the homeless to use when living in tents or on sidewalks (307). Those without means to afford basic living expenses now faced legal charges for attempting to survive in revitalized spaces. The spiral of homelessness was only made worse through those laws that disproportionately affected this population, as they could only enter public spaces.

Criminalization through policies been the first step for legislators toward gaining control over the most vulnerable citizens. Jurgen Von Machs (2013) referred to this as

“sociospacial exclusion” in his study comparing Los Angeles and Berlin, Germany. Economics, welfare programs and cultural standards could not be further from similar between these cities, but policy toward homelessness mimicked one another by designating public and private spaces. When one population was targeted by legislation, both through social services and the capitalist market place, Von Machs found the two cities struggled to keep their reported homeless numbers low, “even when more welfare provisions [were] provided and more social rights exist[ed]” (Von Machs 2013, 3). Massive incarceration became inevitable once legal takeover of space became the preferred response toward homelessness and the unhoused populations were “constrained to exist in public places, [and] the homeless [were] constant targets of regulation, criminalization, expulsion and erasure” (Amster 2003, 214). These short-sighted laws did not eliminate this population from the streets; however, these laws may have deterred them from congregating in city spaces. City leaders had evidence to point to when answering to constituents by focusing on removing encampments from visible pieces of the public without taking action to get the homeless into housing.

Downtown areas across the nation have become centers of globalization and tourism while the un-housed populations are often made invisible during the process of revitalization. When retail centers are covered in signage criminalizing loitering, bathroom facilities or pan-handling, it becomes the reasonable response that “those who are poor or homeless, who are not counted among those consumers, are effectively forbidden from entire areas of the city” (Wasserman and Clair 2015, 157). Revitalized cities have not only encouraged new business for financial benefits; they have legislators

to enact policy to distract from lack of rapid rehousing efforts for the growing homeless populations.

Section 4: Overcoming NIMBYism

The New York City Policy Experience

New York City political history with homeless policy has stretched throughout its many dense neighborhoods and boroughs. Legislators placed developmental policies on higher priority than redistributive services for the homeless because of the economic benefits, but the results proved to eliminate safe spaces for those without means to escape the public realm. Gentrified spaces neglected the poor and unhoused, as Kathe Newman and Elvin Wyly (2006) saw in their policy analysis of 1990s NYC. Spaces that prevented visible homelessness on the streets and sidewalks (whether through verbal or physical threats of removal) came on the heels of city litigation which required the city to provide shelter to all homeless populations¹³. Along with the increased cost of living from 1990-2010 came the increased number of homeless individuals on the streets of New York. Residents and businesses thrived in a booming economy and a competitive housing market, while legislators hid behind the promise of shelter availability, rather than provide long-term supportive housing for the homeless (Newman and Wyly 2006, 27). However, lack of willingness on the part of legislators to work with homeless coalitions and community stakeholders led policy toward reactionary measures. Shelters became NYC's response toward street homelessness, rather than housing the homeless in supportive housing.

Thomas Main's in depth analysis of NYC's homeless policy evolution found that "homeless people have undoubtedly been visible over the last 30 years in NYC, and that

¹³ Dizard, Wilson. 2016. "New York to order homeless off streets in freezing weather." Aljazeera. Retrieved on October 10, 2018. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2016/1/5/new-york-to-order-homeless-off-streets-in-freezing-weather.html>

visibility was most likely part of the reason why the city devoted more resources to the homeless” (Main 2016, 201). Following a wave of litigation suits against the city by advocacy groups like Coalition for the Homeless for denying housing accessibility to the most vulnerable homeless populations, city council members passed an agenda that guaranteed shelter to all in need, which proved successful at reducing the visibility of street homeless throughout the city (6). However, successful long-term housing remained low, especially for the chronically homeless. Legislators and stakeholders were not familiar with the elements required for ensuring the HF Model could ensure long-term success for the range of NYC homeless populations. The chronically homeless would need more than guaranteed shelter measures; permanent supportive assistance alongside housing was key to reducing the number of chronic homeless.

The failure of the shelter-first option led to the second wave of policy measures, which Main classified as paternalistic. The temporarily homeless populations would be left to the shelter systems, while more advanced supportive housing with social service availability would be prioritized for the chronically homeless. Main found these policies did a “better job at managing homelessness, but had failed as a strategy for solving homelessness” (7). By implementing required shelter service to every homeless person, city representatives and non-profit organizations like Pathways to Housing could point to a greater number of housed homeless populations without changing the permanently housed client numbers. According to HF research, Pathways found “88% of the HF consumers remained housed as compared to 47% of consumers in the traditional

programs,” but the number of shelter participants also significantly rose¹⁴. Housing through motel vouchers and temporary shelters have been easier to approve through city policy measures than permanent supportive housing. Unfortunately, without an increase in permanent housing methods with supportive services, the HF Model that NYC has in place will fail to push their most difficult homeless populations out of their unhoused realities. Evolution toward successful HF programming has been a long road for NYC, but the city still struggles to find long-term solution under highly dense conditions.

The HF Model can only be successful when permanent supportive housing are made more available than shelter relief sites. Representatives from Mayor Koch to Mayor de Blasio failed to fund those services in favor of removing the homeless for the short run. The most recent report from the Department of Homeless Services found a plateau of 60,000 homeless in shelters in 2018, which the federal government determined was a success for NYC¹⁵. The HF Model as outlined by Padgett, Henwood and Tsemberis (2016) would not consider this large number of the homeless population in emergency housing as successful. In that same study by DHS and Mayor de Blasio, there were promises of increased permanent supportive housing measures and rapid rehousing for the chronically homeless, but the current status of homeless policy simply increased police and homeless service provider enforcement of shelters availability citywide, which assisted in NIMBY and legislator’s ideal of removing the visibly homeless from sight. NYC’s political

¹⁴ Associated Press. 2017. “Only 1 in 20 Homeless People In NYC Sleep on the Streets.” New York City Patch. Retrieved on October 10, 2018. <https://patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/only-1-20-homeless-people-nyc-sleep-streets>

¹⁵ The City of New York: Mayor Bill de Blasio. 2018. “Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City.” Retrieved on October 10, 2018. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/turning-the-tide-on-homelessness.pdf>

mistake of prioritizing shelter availability misinterpreted the HF Model. The homeless must be housed prior to addressing their needs, but services must then be provided and the housing must be guaranteed for more than one night. In the Los Angeles City case study, similar policy missteps will show legislative trend toward short-term solutions for homelessness. Los Angeles will need to resist NIMBY pressures to solve street homelessness if city representatives wish to ensure their homeless populations experience long-term success.

Seattle's Village Homes Spark Hope

The City of Seattle has struggled with addressing homelessness in both permanent and temporary supportive housing measures. All Home, the county's agency charged with disbursing CoC funding and conducting the annual homeless count, found the increase in the number of unhoused homeless began to slow, but 2018 showed the number of unsheltered homeless outnumbered sheltered homeless for the first time¹⁶. However, the city's model for housing is one of the more creative on the west coast.

Street homelessness can be considered a public health nightmare for cities like Seattle, where departments have collectively cleaned approximately 27,800 pounds per month in 2017, about 6.41 million pounds of total encampment remnants¹⁷. The city has sanctioned seven permitted villages in an effort to avoid health crises. Instead of continually pushing the homeless from one location to another and using sanitation resources during every clean up effort, "the villages provide more than 220 people a

¹⁶ Colman, Vernal. 2018. "Annual homeless count reveals more people sleeping outside than ever." *Seattle Times*. Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/new-homeless-count-in-king-county-shows-spike-in-number-of-people-sleeping-outside/>

¹⁷ City of Seattle. 2018. "Addressing the Crisis." Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/addressing-the-crisis>

secure tiny house structure, access to restrooms and showers, case management, a kitchen and a managed community”¹⁸. The city has given public space to the one population utilizing this space for basic shelter needs, but this may be the reason for the increased number of technically unsheltered homeless. City-sanctioned villages like Springs Village are not considered housing for the homeless, under HUD’s definition of permanent or temporary supportive housing, and the city has only just begun implementing measures to address NIMBY concerns of crime surrounding these communities. Springs Village was operating with minimal assistance from 2013-2015, but in summer 2018, collaboration between Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE), Women’s Housing Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL), Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) and the City Council ensured increased security around the village, improved disposal of hazardous waste and scheduled sanitation clean-ups for the entire neighborhood¹⁹.

Previous city council representatives sanctioned this tiny village, under the presumption that as long as the homeless were off the streets, the city could claim it was a successful HF Model. Unfortunately for neighbors of this village and the homeless themselves, simply housing the unhoused missed the next requirement for solving homelessness - provide the unhoused with resources to keep their housing. City inclusion of non-profit assistance from SHARE, WHEEL and LIHI can improve success rates for the homeless living in Springs Village, and curbed NIMBY concerns of unaddressed crime.

¹⁸ City of Seattle. 2018. “Addressing the Crisis.” Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/addressing-the-crisis>

¹⁹ Swaby, Natalie. 2018. “Seattle to improve security near tiny house village after complaints.” *King5 News*. Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle-to-improve-security-near-tiny-house-village-after-complaints/281-579239115>

Not all villages are created equal in Seattle. Drug use on and off Licton Springs, a second sanctioned village, became the biggest concern for surrounding NIMBYs, and the village had little way of politically addressing the issue with a lack of non-profit or government assistance. Mayor Jenny Dunkan has only recently implemented requirements for all village dwellers to work closely with on site case managers, beginning in 2019, but those policy changes arrived too late for Licton Springs in Seattle. Due to the unmonitored activities within this village, including alcohol and drug use on site, “calls for police service on the block where Licton Springs sits spike[d] 62 percent in a year”²⁰. The village will be shut down in the coming year. However, the project should not be seen as a failure; rather, a learning curve for Seattle’s homeless. Misunderstanding of the HF Model led representatives to delay collaboration between local coalitions, which ultimately led to the downfall of this village effort. The most difficult homeless individuals were able to be sheltered, and it was a failure on the part of the city to ensure maintenance both in and out of the village was implemented. In the following analysis of policy evolution in Los Angeles, failures and successes will be examined. The lessons learned from Seattle, NYC and LA will determine the need for better education of properly implementing HF in dense cities, required policy measures to ensure local funding is available for city-operated solutions, and necessary equality of opportunities for permanent supportive housing across the city.

²⁰ Davila, Vianna and Scott Greenstone. 2018. “A Tiny House Village for the Homeless to Close Its Doors in Seattle.” *Tribune News Service*. Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/tns-seattle-tiny-house-home-homeless.html>

Section 5: Power Over Space in Los Angeles

Service Providers and Legislatures

The downtown neighborhoods within Los Angeles have long histories with homelessness, similar to New York and Seattle (Davis 1990), but it is only within the past five years public policy has experienced a shift toward facing the problem head on. After years of trying to contain homelessness within Skid Row, the LA County Department of Public Health and the Environmental Health Division found in 2012 these areas in downtown Los Angeles contained immediate threats to public health in the form of exposed human excrement, hypodermic needles, rodent infestations, large amounts of improperly disposed debris, communicable diseases amongst the individuals and excessive overcrowding of encampments (Fielding et al 2-4, 2012). Revitalization through the newly developed Staples Center and surrounding shopping complexes increased property values and revenue for the entire city, but neglected the reality of homelessness along the same streets²¹. Attempts by the city to contain the “diseased” homeless population were found as blatant neglect toward the human condition. Policy measures had to answer to the mess of previous generations of neglect in the form of sanitation policies and guidelines.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) was given control of distributing CoC funding for homeless services during this same time period, including approval for sanitation of homeless encampments. The City of Los Angeles alone spans 15 council districts (about 500 square miles) and is (arguably) too large of an area for one

²¹ County of Los Angeles Public Health. 2012. “Subject: Report of Findings - Request from City of Los Angeles to address public health issues in the Skid Row area of Downtown Los Angeles.” Retrieved April 16, 2017.

organization to handle in a detailed fashion²². LAHSA had the final word over all homeless related policies throughout Los Angeles County and City because it determined where federal CoC homeless services funding for the entire County was distributed. Under Peterson's logic of city limitations, it made fiscal sense for the city to give redistributive power over to such an organization like LAHSA. However, under Burt and Cohen's logic of valuing local organizations, power over redistributive policies should be dispersed over many organizations to ensure a wider population of unhoused communities can be better served.

Then Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa was nearing his final term at the time of the public health crisis in downtown Los Angeles. Mayor Villaraigosa joined with the Department of Public Works, the Los Angeles Police Department and Fire Department and LAHSA in 2012 to enact "Operation Healthy Streets" (OHS), a sanitation and enforcement program focused on two types of street cleaning and encampment regulations. Skid Row and surrounding streets (10-block radius) would be spot cleaned, followed by comprehensive cleaning (7 days) which "involve[d] temporarily removing the homeless and their property from the sidewalks so that the street and sidewalks [could] be thoroughly cleaned" (OHS 2017). Wasserman and Clair (2010) saw this same policy initiative in Birmingham, Alabama. Unhoused populations would shuffle to an area not scheduled for posted city clean up, hold tight to the few possessions on their persons, wait until the sweeps finished before moving back to their small corner the homeless could call home (Wasserman and Clair 2010, 102-03). Political attempts to

²² Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. 2018. "Overview of LAHSA." Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://www.lahsa.org/about>

contain the homeless humanitarian crisis led cities like Los Angeles and Birmingham to historically view the problem as one that could be cleaned up or medicalized. These policies addressed the public health concerns for constituents, but they became an expensive temporary fix to sidestepping this unhoused population.

The major problem with OHS policy was the lack of consideration for the homeless and their property. A shopping cart filled with trash bags, empty bottles and loose papers may seem like garbage to the housed residents driving past, but these few items are everything to those with few possessions. Trash bags provide safe disposal of human waste. Empty bottles are both forms of cash at recycling centers and containers for water. Loose sheets among the rubbish include necessary paperwork when being stopped by policy, such as birth certificates or court date reminders. While the OHS website and public officials claimed the homeless on Skid Row were given ample notice before crews entered designated areas, homeless advocacy groups and outreach teams like the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) and LAHSA found sanitation crews often neglected to send sufficient notice to encampments and forcefully removed their property without permission (LA CAN 2016). The hyper-focused effort to sanitize public space neglected to protect this same group from being taken advantage of by the Department of Sanitation and LAPD. This sanitation policy emphasized the disease stigmas and encouraged the homeless to take on “a fatalistic attitude” by continually moving these groups from one block to another (Wasserman and Clair 2010, 103). Even when advocacy groups attempted outreach and services, chances were the same encampments they visited would be moved the following week, service providers

would have little to provide in the way of assistance, and there was little guarantee regular follow up could occur if housing or health resources ever became available.

The downtown area initiated anti-homeless laws in 2015, to which LA CAN and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) assisted in overturning based on the unconstitutionality of such laws; however, less group power between elected officials and advocacy groups has been seen in promoting the rights of homeless residents to affordable housing (Clarke 2015, 90). The Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) organized a “Right to Rest” campaign in three states, including California, to attempt to give power back to this defenseless fringe of society, but the larger business improvement districts (BIDs) were quick to prevent the campaigns from gaining political headway (92). Some businesses promoted unwarranted claims that once the homeless were given rights, homeless people may have begun advocating for the right to bear arms through future legislation (Kress 1994; Troutman, Jackson and Eklelund Jr. 1999). These claims hold as much truth as a correlation between black families and crime in suburban neighborhoods. The fear of “others” being allowed to share space in society were based on ignorance toward social welfare policies and the need to assist the vulnerable populations. When coalitions were not properly built within communities, group antagonisms formed. Homeless legislation in Los Angeles has lacked collaborative efforts between BIDS, legislators and homeless advocacy coalitions.

Policy initiatives have been used by cities like Los Angeles over several decades to combat homelessness. Following the 1990’s wave of homeless specific legislation in Los Angeles City, departments were sued by homeless advocacy organizations like the

ACLU and LA CAN for criminalizing their constitutional right to life²³. Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 56.11 was enacted in reaction to the removal of public space from particular uses and the OHS policy for sanitizing public space. This code provided guidance for city departments when addressing storage of an unhoused person's property on city land (streets, sidewalks, parks, etc) (LAMC 56.11 2016). When an encampment is reported to the city, LAHSA is now required to attempt to provide services a minimum of three separate times before LA Sanitation can sanitize the area. LAMC 56.11 outlined the legal steps the city must take prior to removing any items that may qualify as personal possessions (clothing, identification cards, etc.) from homeless encampments. Designated and authorized areas then are posted 72 hours in advance of sanitation, and if personal items are found, they are bagged and stored for 90 days. Similar to OHS policy, this city code gave power over public space back to city departments.

LAMC 56.11 has ensured there are legal protections for the un-housed populations in the city, but has kept overall control within the city's bureaucratic hands. The LAPD gained the authority to cite the homeless in violation of the code (items attached to private property, tents left erect between 6am and 9pm, large items obstructing the right of way) (LAMC 56.11 2016, 4). It did not address the problem of homelessness itself. This attempt to control the homeless in public space provided legislators with another example of their response to growing frustrations from constituencies without attempting to prevent people from becoming homeless in the ever-changing landscape. OHS and LAMC 56.11 began to seem like band-aids over a growing

²³ *Mitchell v. City of Los Angeles*, 2:16-cv-01750 (C.D. Cal.2016).

sore on the city body. Elected officials have only increased the visibility of homelessness by shifting the unhoused from one public space to another through simple public space maintenance policies.

Changes have been made to OHS policy since its 2012 enactment and LAMC 56.11. The mayor and city council members in 2014 negotiated an expansion of the downtown clean ups to cover a 52-block radius, and enacted a broader city-wide policy through Clean Streets of Los Angeles (CSLA) efforts. However, they neglected to see any benefit toward including additional restrooms or trash cans where encampments are found (some recommendations made by the DPH in the 2012 citation) (Orlov 2014; Fielding et al 2012). Los Angeles is not unique in its attempts to combat homelessness under the guise of a health crisis, and more recent policies have only continued the trend of medicalizing homelessness.

Unprecedented Approval for Tax-Funded Supportive Housing Measures

Cities and counties like Los Angeles are expected to focus on development for the purpose of economic prosperity to its residents and of international competition. These tactics are reasonable and useful for the entire city. However, the increase in unhoused populations proved anything but community-wide prosperity. As residents complained of more visible encampments and as businesses pointed to increased crime along industrial areas, the voters in the City of Los Angeles took an unprecedented policy step toward change. Through a remarkable super-majority “on November 8, 2016, voters approved Prop HHH...[which] provides the city the authority to issue up to \$1.2 billion in [General Obligation] GO bonds to finance the development of permanent supportive housing

(PSH), affordable housing and facilities” for the homeless (Prop HHH 2017, 1). Never before had Angelinos taken to the polls and made such a bold statement about the need for locally funded and immediate solutions. Taxpayers were fed up with homelessness and were willing to accept fiscal responsibility for solving the crisis.

Clear determination of the problems with this legislation must be made for this proposition. While the plan stated that 80% of the GO bond process were targeted for PSH units and “no more than 20% of the bond proceeds must be used for affordable housing,” there is no requirement for these projects to be spread throughout the city and no deadline set anywhere in the policy (Prop HHH 2017, 1). Also, a major problem with the policy is the lack of requirement to prioritize the chronically homeless population, which are the most difficult homeless to house (and are often the population most visible in public spaces). Families and veterans are made priority overall, but there is no protection for the chronically homeless who may find adjustment to stable housing a difficult transition. As Wasserman and Clair (2010) uncovered through personal interviews and policy analysis, to assume an unhoused population will refrain from pushing against normal housing regulations is unreasonable. Sleeping on a bed with clean sheets and pillows in a room with a door that locks on the inside may be a foreign experience for the woman who has only known the feeling of concrete below her sleeping body. These individuals need more intensive care and Prop HHH does not distinguish prioritization of the chronically homeless versus the recently homeless.

The proposition has outlined requirements for housing proposal applications and building requirements, but failed to require community integration in the project, despite

payment through publicly funded GO bonds. This lack of equity consideration by legislators exemplified the misguided paradigm shift toward the HF model for Los Angeles City, continuing the idea of homelessness as a disease residents felt they should not have been subjected to witness in public. Issues with the lack of Los Angeles policy requirement for neighborhood equity in services were found in Wasserman and Clair's (2010) observation of concentrated services in downtown Birmingham, Alabama:

A variety of institutions that serve people who are homeless also have come under fire. Opposition to shelter programs and soup kitchens were equally strong from neighborhood associations of communities peppering the north and west sides of the city, where older, poorer neighborhoods experienced increases in homelessness and the influx of homeless services in the wake of suburban sprawl. One downtown mission was closed to make room for lofts and moved into one such area, while the expansion of the shelter programs by another was blocked by a local neighborhood association (161).

Prop HHH was voter approved in 2016, and the deadline for project applications was March 2018 (Prop HHH 2018, 1). As of the date of submission for this policy analysis, no new housing has been approved or added to the San Fernando Valley, one of the largest geographical areas in LA City, but also the largest space where residents and businesses are seeing more homeless in residential areas and public spaces.

By neglecting to ensure chronically homeless individuals are also guaranteed permanent supportive housing, the valley has not noticed a decrease in their homeless populations. Residents and businesses remained frustrated with the representatives they employed to take care of the rampant “disease” of homelessness. On the other hand, city council members neglected to inform stakeholders of the pros and cons with this supportive housing measure. Theoretically, housing the homeless seemed more reasonable to voters than ignoring them on the streets and sidewalks. In practice, the threat of crime and debris without assurance of increased enforcement deterred actual implementation for NIMBYs.

Los Angeles City and County representatives found the problem of homelessness did not disappear following efforts to simply sanitize encampments. In fact, what was once perceived a centralized crisis in downtown neighborhoods increased across the entire city, according to LAHSA’s annual counts of the homeless since 2005²⁴. When LAHSA was first approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Mayor of Los Angeles and the 15 city council members, the organization's role was to take charge of federal and local funds for homeless services and distribute them based on each area’s need (The County of Los Angeles 2017, 5). LAHSA’S role in homeless services has only rapidly expanded since its slow beginning. The Los Angeles Regional Homelessness Advisory Council (RHAC) for LA County has advanced LAHSA’s role to “perform additional coordination duties as determined necessary by the RHAC for the efficient and effective operation of homeless service throughout the County of Los

²⁴ LA Family Housing. 2015. “Los Angeles Family Housing Corporation and Affiliated organizations.” Retrieved on March 15 2018.

Angeles” (LAHSA 2017). The definition remained broad and allowed the Board of Supervisors and RHAC to hold strong jurisdiction over any and all actions by LAHSA.

The Board of Supervisors for LA County decided to place the success of homeless policy in the hands of the voters after reaching a dead end with viable county wide solutions under a limited budget. In March 2017, LA County voters passed Measure H (69.24% approval), an increase of one quarter of a cent on their county taxes to fund the Homeless Initiative Strategies²⁵. Many of the implementation plans outlined by Measure H were not new tactics for assisting the unhoused; however, the plan fit with HF’s medicalized process for solving the homeless crisis. The plan had six foundational strategies to be taxpayer funded -- prevent homelessness; subsidize housing; increase income; provide case management and services; create a coordinated entry system; initiate affordable housing for the homeless (The County of Los Angeles 2017, 3). The strategy met most of the requirements for successful HF policy implementation. The initiative (somewhat) addressed prevention tactics, outlined improvement plans for client tracking programs, and supplemented the housing initiatives with support toward employment services.

According to Peterson’s (1981) theory of city rationale, the idea of reallocating taxpayer dollars to city plans for shelters and homeless storage units should have turned Angelinos’ blood hot with disgust and discomfort. Pick up your bootstraps, start knocking on businesses and get to work! The Peterson developmental ideal has been shattered in Los Angeles, as it has in Seattle and New York. Previous paradigm of valuing

²⁵ Chiland, Elijah. 2017. “LA County voters approve Measure H - here’s how higher taxes will help the homeless.” Curbed Los Angeles. Retrieved on October 10, 2018. <https://la.curbed.com/2017/3/8/14855430/los-angeles-election-results-ballot-measure-h>

development over humanitarian efforts seems unreasonable when skyscrapers and business centers are surrounded by poverty and tent cities. The critical piece Measure H lacks is the community integration piece. For much of Los Angeles's history on homelessness and for cities across the country, this population has been ignored or hidden within forgotten public spaces. Redevelopment has reintroduced housed residents to the shocking reality of how close they are to losing their most basic necessities, including shelter. Neither Prop HHH nor Measure H ensure equality of service across the city. The homeless are humans who will one day be expected to reintegrate into these same communities that have shunned them from public space. While these redistributive policies are strong steps toward funding homeless initiatives, it will be the responsibility of representative offices to ensure they do not leave tax-payer dollars unused.

Housing First Failure

Los Angeles, both at the city and county levels, have made dramatic political steps toward addressing homelessness by approving the HF model. Legislators initiated Measure H and Prop HHH, to which voters approved with overwhelming support. For the first time since the beginning of this humanitarian crisis, taxpayers approved to be taxed more in an effort to hopefully see changes in their neighborhoods. Unfortunately, simple votes have not provided solutions out of the current humanitarian mess.

Angelinos cast their ballots for two major redistributive policies; unfortunately, the realities of these policies have proven ill-planned and unfavorable to those same voters. Initial voter approval of policies geared toward more housing may have proven Peterson's economic theory is no longer the paradigm of city economics. The housed

were choosing to ensure the city and county would no longer be limited by CoC funding for redistributive measures. Despite containment through OHS and LAMC 56.11, the streets of Los Angeles continued to see the numbers of people experiencing homelessness grow every year. Skid Row, Hollywood, and even the San Fernando Valley saw more and more men, women and families line the sidewalks and streets at a rapid rate, and voters hoped their votes might mean an end to the blight. Representatives failed to underline the need for coalition-building between homeless advocacy groups and residents to have these strategies made available in their own backyards, and to ensure the HF Model could succeed in Los Angeles.

The NIMBY ideals of the past would need to end if Measure H and Prop HHH were to find success, especially in areas that had never before seen street homelessness. Downtown areas have seen and understood the mentally ill, the derelicts and the unwanted poor since the beginning of city life, and this plays true in redeveloped cities across the United States. Los Angeles was able to maintain these groups in the tight grid of Skid Row for decades, but redevelopment and global competition has increased the number of homeless across all parts of the city. Suburbs show tents in vacant alleys, recycling centers are surrounded by loaded shopping carts, and families try to avoid glances with the sign-holding vagrants as they find solace in their frozen yogurt tubs. Residents were told their votes would eliminate street homeless; what they were never told was they would need to have supportive housing on those same blocks to solve homelessness. Wasserman and Clair (2010) described this relationship between the homeless and the city with their logic of friendship:

Society wants those who are homeless to ‘pull it together,’ to get off the streets and reintegrate into the mainstream. However, like punching someone in the face and asking the victim to be your friend at the same time, we stigmatize and ostracize those on the street and then chastise them for withdrawing (118).

Voters were never reminded that, in order for the HF Model to find success, they would need to reevaluate and change the power dynamic that has come naturally upon implementing redistributive policies. As seen in the changes made by service providers, housed constituents must be willing to view the homeless as a group similarly affected by redevelopment efforts, instead of unmotivated transients.

The proposed locations for housing have been met with typical backlash by Los Angeles NIMBYs. Despite the need for homeless resources in Koreatown and Venice, the city councilmembers for each proposed site have seen such push back that they have stepped away from looking into the sites any further²⁶. The SFV councilmembers have seen similar (if not more hostile) push back from residents. In Sherman Oaks, Councilmember David Ryu engaged with vocal NIMBYs, some even recommended shipping the homeless anywhere outside of Los Angeles²⁷. The reactions of residents is typical NIMBY behavior, and should have been met by representatives with

²⁶ Chilad, Elijah. 2018. “New sites proposed for embattled Koreatown homeless shelter.” *Curbed Los Angeles*. Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://la.curbed.com/2018/6/29/17519076/koreatown-homeless-shelter-location-wilshire-vermont>

²⁷ Chou, Elizabeth. 2018. “Sherman Oaks residents rip plans for homeless housing at LA City Councilman David Ryu’s open house.” *Los Angeles Daily News*. Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://www.dailynews.com/2018/09/21/sherman-oaks-residents-rip-plans-for-homeless-housing-at-la-city-councilman-david-ryus-open-house/>

understanding and realistic responses to address their concerns. City councilmembers have yet to learn only strong stakeholders (neighborhood councils, BIDS, etc.) should be included in location discussions and outreach attempts. Attempting to engage the entire council district becomes a clear set up for failure of a proposed housing location.

While some of the NIMBY statements from SFV residents are a result of fear of the unknown with these proposed locations, this fear is reasonable if not quelled by increased measures from representatives and police to address safety. For example, Los Angeles Family Housing (LAFH), a local non-profit for the homeless in the SFV, has owned and operated a temporary housing facility in North Hollywood since 2012 in the heart of a residential area on Lankershim Boulevard, which recently expanded to include permanent supportive housing units in summer 2018²⁸. Typical NIMBY concerns of public space surrounding supportive housing sites include fear of crime and blight. The Palo Verde housing location itself has been maintained well since 2012; however, the neighborhood surrounding is unimproved and is in need of many basic services (street improvements, sidewalk repairs, parking accommodations). According to LAPD's crime statistics, from May 2018 to July 2018, there were 7 reported major crimes (assault, burglary, robbery), 5 of which occurred on the same block as the LAFH facility²⁹. These numbers only increased when the map's grid was set to 700 feet from the location, including increased burglaries, car thefts and assaults with deadly weapons. LAFH has been able to maintain success with assisting to rehouse the homeless through this

²⁸ LA Family Housing. 2018. "The Campus." Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://lafh.org/thecampus>

²⁹ Los Angeles Police Department. 2018. "Crime Mapping and COMPSTAT." Retrieved on October 10, 2018. <https://www.crimemapping.com/map/ca/losangeles>

temporary housing location, but residents have seen the correlation of crime around this area. Unattended locations like the Palo Verde housing site fuel NIMBY fires against supportive housing site practices.

Peterson's theory of cities as limited when it comes to redistributive policies is challenged by LA voter approval for Prop HHH and Measure H. Legislators are no longer limited by available funding for temporary and permanent supportive housing, but the NIMBY control over spatial designation restricts the legislature's ability to rapidly house the homeless. While the county has promoted the HF Model as the new saving grace for the current homeless crisis, the lack of education for what HF actually means has left approving voters wondering why their streets continue to be lined with encampments. It is critical for this theory to be adjusted by economic theorists if large redeveloped cities like Los Angeles are to find relief for their most vulnerable populations.

El Pueblo Housing: NIMBYs Become YIMBYs

Los Angeles has seen very few HF Model successes because of the lack of education and collaboration from both city council representative offices and local non-profit organizations. However, there has been one glimmer of hope for success. The most recent supportive housing site at El Pueblo in downtown Los Angeles was pushed forward by Mayor Garcetti, with help from Councilmember Jose Huizar, and city architects with the planning department who worked closely with the homeless non-profit advocacy group People Concern to determine the number of beds that should be implemented for the greatest success rate. Under recommendation from this non-profit

that is now operating the facility, there are 45 beds filled at El Pueblo³⁰. Initial town halls were held for this location in late 2017 when it was first planned as a safe parking lot for people living in their vehicles. The lack of opposition gave way to a successful location for vehicle dwellers to park overnight, but it also allowed the city to then utilize this public space as a supportive housing location without requirement for general public input.

El Pueblo Bridge Housing opened its doors September 2018, so success with this bridge housing location remains to be seen. However, this model falls in line with HF Model recommendations for addressing local concerns to ensure housing sites are supported by communities (Padgett, Henwood and Tsemberis 2016; Wasserman and Clair 2010). Collaboration with supportive local coalitions like People Concern and LAPD senior lead officers ensured capacity limits were set for the safe parking and bridge housing proposals and perimeters of safety maintenance were set. There is regular patrol of the area, both day and night, and strict enforcement of LAMC 56.11 is conducted by these same officers³¹. Along with safety come the health concerns of excessive debris, and LA Sanitation has added an additional CSLA team to clear the same perimeter once per week. The successful implementation of this bridge housing site, with help from several local coalitions, should ensure a safer and more successful temporary supportive housing scenario than the LAFH location. However, this site has only just begun its HF operation; time will tell whether or not this theoretically seamless HF Model can succeed

³⁰ Smith, Dakota. 2018. "First of Garcetti-backed homeless shelters nears opening, with a \$700,000 deck." *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-garcetti-shelters-20180717-story.html>

³¹ City of Los Angeles. 2018. "A Bridge Home." Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://www.lamayor.org/ABridgeHome>

in Los Angeles. The following policy recommendations and guides provide basic requirements that HF Model representatives and coalition advocates should follow when attempting to implement HF within redeveloped and growing cities in the United States.

Section 6: Back to Basics - Educate, Legislate, House

Educate

The City of Los Angeles must follow simple steps to those taken by large revitalized cities in order to ensure the Housing First Model succeeds in reducing the number of street homeless. A growth machine with powerful coalitions must first educate the stakeholders within communities across the city. In North Hollywood, neighborhood councils have created homeless committees led by community members with strong social ties to various organizations, and they promote education of the HF Model benefits³². Organizations like EveryoneInLA, funded by Measure H to conduct outreach across LA County, have started making presentations to city council offices and neighborhoods surrounding proposed housing locations, but they must be more proactive with community stakeholders and business improvement districts³³. These outreach efforts will be guided by city councilmembers and non-profits, but it will take political initiative to ensure these efforts for outreach are focused narrowly on only surrounding neighborhoods. For example, residents in the SFV are not directly impacted by a Target location off of the Venice beach boardwalk, and would not need to be included in site discussions with city planners. Entire council district residents do not and should not be included in every proposed housing location.

Education is not limited to legislatures and constituencies; political theorists would do well to reevaluate current understandings of urban economic theory. Now that

³² NoHo Neighborhood Council. 2018. "Homeless Committee." Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <https://www.midtownnoho.org/homeless-committee.php>

³³ EveryoneInLA. 2018. "Progress." *United Way*. Retrieved October 10, 2018 from <http://everyoneinla.org/progress/>

redevelopment has rearranged the geography of American neighborhoods, adjustments to understanding of redistributive policies must be made priority. Development has brought jobs and revenue to cities. The time has come for urban economic theorists to reassess Peterson's theory and logic behind placing more value in redistributing the wealth toward the poor and the homeless. While this may lead to a paradigm shift of urban economic theory, it is clear from the failures of the HF Model in Los Angeles that cities are not ready to shift the theory entirely away from development. Redistribution has taken a greater role in redeveloping cities. It is time that voters are given better understanding of what voting for these policies will mean in their neighborhoods.

Legislate

Mayor Garcetti, city councilmembers and the Board of Supervisors have successfully passed legislation ensuring local money will be available to support housing solutions across the city, but due to the lack of education of the HF Model that these measures support, constituents have little to no understanding of the true consequences of these measures. Legislators at the city and county levels must take this education of the HF Model and calm the reasonable concerns of their constituencies. While NIMBY ideals against homelessness prevent full support of supportive housing in residential neighborhoods, it is critical for elected representatives to supplement Prop H and Measure HHH measures with safety measures (increased police patrol around proposed sites, available supportive services for the chronically homeless, ongoing support in surrounding communities through sanitation and policy measures). Los Angeles began those crucial moves to house the homeless through Measure H and Prop HHH, but

additional policy in the form of housing protections for those most vulnerable to prevent adding to the number of people experiencing homelessness. Taxes for supportive housing can only be justified when the city representatives enact policy to prevent more people from becoming homeless. Los Angeles had the opportunity to do this for the first time since 1974 through rent stabilization under Prop 10³⁴. This 2018 ballot measure would have removed past policy that ensured tenants living in rent stabilized buildings could expect a cap on allowable rent increases. By removing this limitation on rent stabilized unit availability in the city, legislators would have had freedom to enact new policy for rent stabilization, which would ensure newer buildings were included in the rent stabilization ordinance. Unfortunately, Prop 10 was rejected by voters, leaving rent stabilization stagnant and affordable housing at a standstill. Measure H and Prop HHH are the legislative measures necessary toward the final step in successfully housing the homeless.

House

When stakeholders and legislators are educated on the benefits and consequences of the HF Model, and legislators create policy focused on housing the homeless before treating their symptoms, the voters must approve of this need for supportive and affordable housing throughout all parts of the city. The theoretical willingness to house the homeless is overwhelmingly evident in Los Angeles as seen through the supermajority approval of Measure H and Prop HHH. The final step (and the most difficult step for all revitalized cities) is actual implementation of these voter-approved

³⁴ Chandler, Jenna and Elijah Chiland. 2018. "Proposition 10: California's proposal to strengthen rent control defeated at the polls." *Curbed LA*. Retrieved November 10, 2018 from <https://la.curbed.com/2018/11/6/18070782/proposition-10-california-results-defeat>

measures. Los Angeles city councilmembers have faced enormous push-back from constituents because of their failure to complete the crucial step of educating stakeholders prior to passing legislation. Simply telling constituencies that housing the homeless will remove the “blight” they have seen build in their neighborhoods does not get to the more reasonable reasons for the success behind the HF Model. This model is significantly cheaper for taxpayers when compared to the emergency room costs, the sanitation costs when cleaning encampment after encampments and incarceration costs for jailed homeless populations³⁵. However, when these benefits of HF are not made clear to communities, any suggestion of implementing supportive housing will be met with NIMBY backlash, to which legislatures will have to face at the polls.

The City of Los Angeles, like the homeless populations, has not taken the required set of steps in the order necessary to be successful in housing the ever-growing homeless population. Stakeholders and city councilmembers are having to return to step one. They are utilizing town halls and neighborhood council meetings to begin the conversation of homelessness, the necessity for community action, and placing housing availability throughout the city. The only available permanent and supportive housing was once centralized in downtown Los Angeles. Street homelessness has now spread to every council district and to every residential neighborhood. Supportive measures must be made available in North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Woodland Hills, Venice, and every neighborhood across the city. While some neighborhoods will need more supportive measures due to the difference in needs of communities, equality of opportunity will be

³⁵ Yglesias, Matthew. 2015. “Giving housing to the homeless is three times cheaper than leaving them on the streets.” *Vox*. Retrieved on October 10, 2018 from <https://www.vox.com/2014/5/30/5764096/its-three-times-cheaper-to-give-housing-to-the-homeless-than-to-keep>

critical to solving widespread homelessness. Unfortunately for a large city and county like Los Angeles, the crisis of homelessness will not be solved overnight. The process of educating stakeholders takes time and patience. However, once communities are better versed in the benefits of this program and the safety measures proposed for calming crime concerns, actual implementation of supportive housing will be swift because policy has already been successful at the polls to fund these redistributive policies.

Section 7: The Long Road Home

Los Angeles can successfully house the homeless under the HF Model once important stakeholders and legislators curb the NIMBY misconceptions and financial concerns behind implementing voter-approved housing policies and encourage support of this model throughout the city. Future scholars will need to investigate the consequences of Measure H and Prop HHH. Following the current housing and homeless crisis, it will be interesting to see whether this large revitalized city has created more affordable housing measures for the low-income and poverty-stricken communities. Proposition 10 failed at the 2018 polls, but future legislation may provide different results. In addition, greater analysis behind the power of organizations leading the way of education for stakeholders will guide developing cities across the nation. If a large city like Los Angeles can successfully educate the movers and shakers of communities, other cities experiencing similar crises can hope to avoid experiencing a massive housing and humanitarian crisis.

Finally, scholars will do well to investigate the areas more successful in promoting supportive housing in their neighborhoods. It could be predicted that lower income communities with fewer strong coalitions will take the brunt of homeless services, but it may be found that better education of the HF Model encourages higher economic areas to share in the supportive housing measures. It is unlikely and unreasonable to imagine full equality of these measures in every community, but in order for this model to work, communities must work together to help their homeless neighbors. Educating strong coalitions will take time, but once the HF Model is understood by stakeholders and

legislators, supportive housing will be successful. The failure of these solutions to gain support can be turned around when homelessness is seen as a curable disease instead of as a life-long burden. The homeless populations are neighbors without space, and it is time they are given the dignity to find a home in Los Angeles.

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