The Rhetorical Circulation of the Housing First Model in the United States

By

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Abstract

This dissertation uses rhetorical circulation as a lens through which to investigate how messages about poverty – in particular, an approach to homelessness called Housing First – spread in advocacy and policymaking processes. I trace the rhetoric of Housing First across local and national levels, incorporating more than 20 interviews with people involved in different aspect of its spread. These interviews supplement close textual analysis of a wide variety of artifacts, including federal notices of funding availability, video of community meetings, newspaper coverage, advocates' training materials, scholarly research materials supporting Housing First, and more.

Each chapter examines a different nodal point in the model's circulation, from the local to the national, and back to the local. Likewise, each makes a different theoretical argument. The first chapter elucidates how rhetorics of consumer choice (even when rooted in mental health advocacy) cannot be separated from market-based discourse. The second looks at how money functions as both justification and inducement for the adoption of Housing First, arguing that material currency has a performative function in public deliberation. The third challenges full transparency as a democratic ideal in light of "Not-In-My-Backyard" responses to Housing First.

With this dissertation, I contribute to a growing body of rhetorical scholarship that demonstrates that studies concerned with power dynamics and the material impacts of rhetoric can also contribute to our understanding of how rhetoric itself works. Studying rhetorical circulation in policymaking contexts improves our understanding of public deliberation and of rhetoric as a dynamic force. This manuscript demonstrates how advocates of progressive policies can adopt dominant ideologies (even as they may also resist them) to push those policies through conservative institutions and persuade individuals. By identifying key developments and

transformations in the spread of Housing First, I also contribute to our understanding of how people gain and lose rhetorical agency, how imagined publics shift with changes in messaging, and how different types of texts garner or lose prominence in public policymaking processes.

Introduction – Making Policy Messages Move

"When your issue hits *The Daily Show*, you know your time has arrived." Eric Tars, a long-time homelessness advocate at the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, posted this, along with the comedy news show's clip of "The Homeless Homed" to his Facebook page in January 2015.[1] In the segment, *The Daily Show*'s Hasan Minhaj "reports on the disappearance of all the homeless people in Salt Lake City."[2] Minhaj walks the streets of the city searching for homeless people, only to find they've all been housed. Interviewing the director of Utah's Homeless Task Force, Minhaj finds this is because the city has just given them all homes. Aghast, he decides to visit one of these formerly homeless "moochers" in a new "moochatorium," only to find his stereotypes continually dispelled. The segment highlights Utah's use of the Housing First model for addressing homelessness. By December 2015, using Housing First, the state had reduced its population of chronically (repeatedly and/or persistently) homeless people by 91 percent.[3] In the year prior, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, and New Orleans all claimed to have ended chronic homelessness among military veterans in their cities via Housing First.

Established by Sam Tsemberis, a clinical psychiatrist, in the early 1990s, Housing First was originally developed to help chronically homeless and/or mentally ill homeless people by providing them housing without prerequisites. The concept is the reverse of traditional shelter models that ask homeless people to make life improvements before qualifying for housing assistance; in this model, homeless people are provided with housing *first*, then social workers/case managers work with them to help address the issues that may have contributed to their becoming homeless.[4]

That the model appeared on *The Daily Show* at all shows that Housing First has gained public attention beyond the cities where it is being implemented. That the clip seems to indicate to Tars (jokingly or not) that his "time had arrived" nods to a metaphorical journey for his issue, one we might productively think of as a matter of circulation. This is speculation, but I imagine part of this advocate's sentiment comes from knowing that people who otherwise pay little attention to homelessness would watch, and pass along, this clip. Here, we have a recognition that it is not just rhetoric that matters, but rhetoric in circulation.

Over the last 25 years, Housing First has become popular public policy, an approach recommended and implemented by federal, state, and municipal governments seeking to address homelessness around the world. Here, I take it as a case study in public policy rhetoric. In general, rhetorical studies of public policy aim to provide insight into processes of argumentation and deliberation, as well as an understanding of particular controversies or issues of social concern. Despite recognition among public policy scholars and rhetorical scholars that policymaking is a process, their consideration is often bounded by particular sets of interactions. Rhetoricians have largely examined public policy via individual speeches or texts, series of debates or hearings, strings of news coverage, court proceedings, and/or "final" laws or policies.[5] Such studies help to explain the nature of a given controversy, what and how arguments are being made, and how public deliberation functions. However, as Rebecca Dingo explains, "Policies are assemblages of 'interactions distributed elsewhere in time and space.'"[6] The interactions noted above are, indeed, interactions in policymaking, but even as scholars like Robert Asen recognize that "policymaking provides participants opportunities to constellate meaning, creating and recreating multiple associations and dissociations, in making policy,"

their focus on particular interactions or fora neglects to explain what happens between and among them in the policymaking process.[7]

Rhetoricians' insight into policy as assemblage has been impoverished, to date, by a lack of attention to rhetorical circulation. Dingo argues that if "part of the work of the rhetorical critic [studying public policy]…is to look beyond shared common places and illuminate the various ways arguments are collected, composed, *and* assembled," one must attend to "how arguments are networked, how and why rhetorics travel and circulate, and then how rhetorical occasions…shift."[8] I offer this project as an examination of the rhetorical circulation of Housing First, and more broadly, as one that examines the role of rhetorical circulation in policymaking. To do this, I attended to the rhetorics of advocates and policymakers across all levels of government in the United States. I also examined Housing First's circulation intertextually, not just as a constellation of arguments, but of varied text types (e.g., videos of public meetings, requests for grant proposals, scholarly journal articles, websites, etc.).

The motivating questions for this project were: How does rhetoric circulate – or *move* – in the U.S. public policymaking process? How do the national and local interact rhetorically in advocacy and policymaking processes? What kinds of rhetorical strategies successfully compel policy that benefits marginalized people -- and what obstacles slow it down? In short, I used rhetorical circulation as a lens through which to investigate how messages about homelessness spread in policymaking processes.

Regarding Housing First, specifically, the question that moved to the forefront for me was: how did a policy that challenges dominant norms (i.e., by giving housing to homeless people first, by empowering chronically homeless people to control their own mental health

treatment) spread so widely? Following Jenny Edbauer's injunction to analyze discourse in its "temporal, historical, and lived fluxes," I sought to answer this question by attending to the developments and transformations in the rhetorics of Housing First over time.[9] As I observed the changes in the discourse over time, I noticed that advocates appeared to be adopting dominant rhetorics, rather than challenging them. The arguments that facilitated Housing First's spread began to align with market-based logics, rather than the human rights frame with which advocates had started. Conversations became about money taxpayers would save, instead of the importance of giving homeless people personal autonomy. This project attends to these shifts, considering their connections to and implications for publicity, agency, ideology, and variations in text.

CIRCULATION

Michael Calvin McGee's fragmentation thesis challenged longstanding approaches to "the text" in rhetorical scholarship. Because discourse is always in production, constantly building on and shifting pre-existing discourse, McGee argued that there are no "finished texts," only "apparently finished texts," composed of fragments that comprise larger discourses. It is the job of the rhetorician, within such a conception, to assemble these fragments and compose objects for study that help us understand these larger discourses. For McGee, and the scholars who have taken up this orientation toward the text, rhetoric is processual, and ought to be studied as such.

While many critics remain preoccupied with the criticism of singular texts, or series of texts, rhetoricians are increasingly concerned with rhetoric as process, seeking to explain the

relationship of particular fragments to one another, and to wider discourses. Scholars producing rhetorical histories, for example, trace the development of particular rhetorics from fragments collected across time and space. Scholars of visual rhetoric have attended to the role circulation plays in discursive construction. Social movements scholars grapple with sometimes loosely connected groups of people and messages uniting behind a common struggle or identity, to better understand their calls for social change. These studies do more than narrate the development of the critic's chosen rhetoric. They are manifestations of rhetoric as process; they build theory about the very nature of rhetoric.

To deepen our understanding of rhetoric as process, I believe we must attend to how it moves. How, and why, do rhetorics spread? What kinds of obstacles restrict rhetorical movement? How can (if at all) these obstacles be overcome? In the literature, these kinds of questions tend to appear as matters of rhetorical "circulation." Catherine Chaput argues that rhetoric is fundamentally about movement. In her view, it "is not an isolated instance or even a series of instances but a circulation of exchanges, the whole of which govern our individual and collective decisions."[10] Stephen Heidt expresses circulation as a process of atomization, wherein utterances are fragments that break apart and bond with other fragments to produce something new.[11] But why do particular fragments "break off," and why do some "bond" with other fragments, while others are seemingly lost? If our individual and collective decision making processes are, indeed, governed by the discourses comprised of these assembled fragments, presumably examining the discourses and processes together will help us better understand both. Examining public policy rhetoric as it moves through various phases of

policymaking enables us to see how rhetoric is always intertwined in processes of circulation. It is constituted, sustained, altered, obscured in and by its movement.

Much of the rhetorical scholarship regarding circulation, to date, has focused on the circulation and re-circulation of images. Cara Finnegan's study of the circulation of FSA photographs during the Great Depression illustrated how "circulation itself is a decidedly *rhetorical* process, meaning that it is always contingent, partial, and utterly context-bound."[12] This process has ideological and material consequences. Janis Edwards and Carol Winkler turn to McGee's conception of the ideograph to assert that circulation is a process that builds ideology: "each use of the…image…contributes to the meaning of the images and to the way in which the image defines and constructs a political and ideological reality."[13] Further, Hariman and Lucaites's analyses of the circulation of iconic photographs leads them to argue that circulation ought not be thought of as a cause and effect process, but one which structures consciousness. As such, they believe circulation to have implications not just for policy, but for the wider formation of public culture.[14]

In public sphere theory, circulation has been most famously theorized by Michael Warner, who argues that the public sphere "comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation."[15] Because "a public is understood to be an ongoing space of encounter for discourse," Warner understands publics to be created not by texts themselves, but by "the concatenation of texts through time" via the process of circulation.[16] Moreover, circulation is temporal: "Public discourse is contemporary and it is oriented to the future; the contemporaneity and the futurity in question are those of its own circulation."[17] Texts, then, cannot have a public if they cease to circulate.

Warner's conception of the public sphere, and specifically, of circulation's role in it, has met with some resistance. Lester Olson challenges Warner's conception of agency, arguing that studying re-circulation demonstrates that it is not simply texts which constitute a public, but that publics are "actively engaged" in the shaping and reshaping of texts.[18] Asen asserts that Warner offers a "false choice…between dialogue and circulation," saying that publics manifest in conversations and through circulating texts, and in their combination.[19] Finnegan and Jiyeon Kang similarly take issue with Warner's emphasis on texts, worrying that this contributes to iconoclasm in studies of rhetoric and the public sphere.[20] They point instead to the work of Bruno Latour, whose concept of "mediation" resembles Warner's "circulation" without its text-centrism,[21] and Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma, who view "circulation as…a cultural process with its own forms of abstraction, evaluation, and constraint," arguing that "cultures of circulation" are "created by the interactions between specific types of circulating forms and the interpretive communities built around them."[22] Part of the impetus for this study is to complicate these existing conceptions of rhetorical circulation in the public sphere (both Warner's and his critics'), to think about what role circulation, and non-circulation, does play in the development, maintenance, spread, and change of the discourses that shape culture, politics, and policy in the public sphere.[23]

Beyond public sphere theory, rhetorical scholars have argued that embracing circulation as an analytic in rhetorical studies can "free us from the impulse to freeze-frame all types of discourse,"[24] and productively complicate our understanding of "the path of public discourse."[25] Chaput and Edbauer both argue that attending to circulation expands our conceptions of Lloyd Bitzer's "rhetorical situation," complicating how we think about rhetors,

audiences, and exigence by emphasizing processes and flows.[26] Edbauer explains, "We might…say that the rhetorical situation is better conceptualized as a mixture of processes and encounters; it should become a verb, rather than a fixed noun or *situs*."[27] Ronald Walter Greene believes circulation complicates the traditional sender/receiver, speaker/audience model of communication, instead calling critics to imagine and explain the ways in which delivery/circulation impacts relationships between them, and between texts.[28] Moreover, multiple scholars have argued that the study of rhetorical circulation productively complicates the ways we think about constitutive rhetoric, expanding what we believe can be constituted, who/what has the ability to constitute, and how norms are established.[29] In this dissertation, by examining Housing First rhetoric in circulation, I offer an improved understanding of how perceived obstacles to a policy's circulation shape rhetors' advocacy strategies, the relationship between money's materiality and discursivity, and expectations for transparency and truth-telling in policymaking processes.

HOUSING FIRST

Although various forms of housing instability have existed in the United States almost since its founding, contemporary "homelessness" emerged in the 1980s. This new homelessness was characterized by a number of demographic shifts. Previously, "vagrants" were largely middle aged white men. But as the recession of the late '70s and early '80s joined with the job and housing market shifts spurred by globalization, the homeless population grew exponentially and diversified. People of color became homeless at a disparate rate, families with children became one of the fastest growing homeless populations, and young and elderly

homeless people became increasingly common.[30] Because of these changes, homelessness was suddenly more visible than it had been previously, and rather than the skid rows that had characterized homelessness in the ‘60s and ‘70s, people were seeing homeless people sleeping on city grates, in subway stations, and in other places not meant for habitation. Activists responded by offering shelter, constructing media campaigns, and advocating for federal resources to stem this emerging “crisis.” Politicians slept outside on grates to push for legislative solutions, while celebrities made films about and raised money to support efforts to address homelessness.[31]

Many of the newly visible homeless people – approximately one third, by many estimates – were experiencing serious mental illnesses.[32] By the late 1970s, the deinstitutionalization of state mental hospitals had led many people who would have been institutionalized for conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or personality disorders to the streets. H. Richard Lamb refers to deinstitutionalization as the “mass exodus of mentally ill persons from living in hospitals to living in the community.”[33] A response to overcrowding, a series of abuses by service providers, and shifting conceptions of mental health treatment, deinstitutionalization massively reduced the number of people in inpatient treatment in the United States; state mental hospitals had nearly 560,000 patients in 1955, but only 47,000 by 2003.[34] This process was helped along by federal legislation that sought to build a community-based mental health safety net (e.g., the Community Mental Health Act of 1963) and slashed federal funding to state hospitals by exempting them from Medicaid.[35] Communities struggled to build effective community mental health services in the hospitals’ stead, and major cuts in federal spending on mental health in the early 1980s severely hampered their efforts.[36]

Without an effective community safety net, many formerly institutionalized people found themselves "reinstitutionalized" in homeless shelters and correctional facilities, living on the streets, or both.[37]

In 1987, public outcry and dogged advocacy efforts resulted in the passage of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, which allocated $1 billion in federal funding for research and programs related to homelessness and established the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), a group comprised of relevant cabinet secretaries and agency heads from across the federal government.[38] It also requested a study into the extent to which deinstitutionalization was contributing to increases in homelessness and created a Supportive Housing Demonstration Program that provided permanent supportive housing (PSH) for homeless people who had been deinstitutionalized or had physical disabilities.[39] PSH is any housing paired with supportive services like mental health or addiction treatment, money management counseling, and more, without a time limit on one's tenure in that housing. A variety of PSH approaches have been created in the intervening years to assist different homeless subpopulations.

The McKinney Act established homelessness as, at least in part, a federal responsibility, and attempted to address mental illness as one of its causes.[40] Its subsequent amendments and reauthorizations have significantly impacted the homeless services landscape in the United States. For example, while many programs and shelters developed locally on an ad hoc basis, the Clinton administration restructured McKinney funding to "establish and implement a continuum of care presented by the community to HUD for a single source of funding."[41] A continuum of care – defined by Clinton's 1993 "Federal Plan to Break the Cycle of

Homelessness" – begins with an outreach and intake process, then emergency shelters, transitional housing, and eventually (hopefully) leads to permanent and/or supportive housing.[42] Along the continuum, people often work through programs designed to address substance abuse, mental health concerns, joblessness, and other issues service providers believe may have contributed to their homelessness. Over time, these networks of service providers, and the funding systems (federal and otherwise) that prop them up, have created a "homelessness industry" or even, by some critics' estimation, a "homeless industrial complex" comprised of hundreds of shelters and housing and treatment programs across the country.[43]

As a clinical psychiatrist working on a street outreach team in the 1980s, Sam Tsemberis was particularly concerned with the difficulties this system posed for homeless people living with "psychiatric disabilities."[44] Instead of progressing through the programs, Tsemberis saw people cycling in and out of hospitals, where they would receive emergency psychiatric treatment then be released. "It was like over and over again the same thing…Something is wrong with this intervention," he thought. "Something is not working…We're not really getting people off the street…They're just back in worse shape than they were before…Something is broken systemically."[45] While some providers and policymakers see the continuum of care's steps as necessary for the long-term success of people experiencing homelessness, Tsemberis and other critics of the continuum system argue that it functions as a "housing readiness" model where people who enter the system must earn housing by demonstrate their ability to successfully navigate its programs.[46] But this does not work for everyone. Critics view the continuum as a series of hoops through which homeless people have to jump – often to their detriment.[47] Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen explain, "While the ultimate goal of [the continuum

of care] model is independent living, the environment fosters dependence. Residents have little choice or freedom concerning treatment or housing options and the move to independent housing may take years."[48] Weaknesses of the continuum of care approach can include stress caused by multiple moves, the sometimes long lengths of time it can take to complete the continuum, the restrictive nature of shelters and programs compared to the freedom of life on the streets, and the risk that some people may not ever successfully complete treatment programs -- leaving them homeless.[49]

Watching the prescriptive treatments and continuum of care programs repeatedly fail homeless people with mental illnesses, Tsemberis sought an alternative approach. His outreach team received grants from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Center for Mental Health Services to try psychiatric rehabilitation, an approach where "rather than assume you know what ails a person, you engage a person in a conversation about what they believe would be helpful to them."[50] Tsemberis and his colleagues began asking people what they wanted, what they needed, and the answer, consistently, was not mental health treatment or help with an addiction, but "a place to live."[51] So, in 1992, he decided to try giving the people he encountered just that: a home. He recounts:

> [W]e created this agency called Pathways to Housing so we could accept our own referrals. Then we could actually take people from the streets into an apartment of their own, just like they wanted. And that's how we did it. And I have to say we did it very, very out of a sense of desperation because you know, we couldn't get people into housing any other way. And with great trepidation and fear because we really had no idea how well it would turn out or how poorly it would turn out but we couldn't think of anything else to do other than to try that.[52]

Pathways to Housing operated as a kind of pilot project for the model Tsemberis originally referred to as "consumer preference supported housing."[53] Pathways is widely credited as the

inception of the model now widely known as “Housing First,” and Tsemberis as the model’s founder. Housing First responds to homeless people’s desire for housing, first, then engages them in a dialogue about treatment for mental health or addiction issues, as well as help with employment, money management, and other life skills.

Housing First is a form of permanent supportive housing in which housing and support are offered with no prerequisites; one does not have to complete any programs or demonstrate sobriety in order to be housed. In Pathways’ Housing First, support is offered by an Assertive Community Treatment team, a group of people dedicated to ensuring that the program’s residents stay housed and address their ongoing needs. Housing First tenants have leases and are required to pay 30 percent of their incomes in rent each month (if they have no income, they pay no rent), with the supporting agency paying the remainder. In this model, people are housed in a “scattered site” approach, meaning they live in houses and apartments across a community, in leases with private landlords.

The Pathways pilot was a small one, but “because this thing was such a, frankly, risky-seeming intervention,” Tsemberis explains, “we were very careful to document and do research every step of the way and count the people that would be housed and how many we would keep in housing. We were tenacious about the program evaluation component.”[54] This research not only demonstrated that Pathways to Housing was successfully keeping people housed, it captured the attention of homeless advocates beyond far beyond Tsemberis’s small corner of New York City. Over the last 25 years, the model has spread across the country and internationally, becoming one of the U.S. federal government’s five core strategies for addressing homelessness.[55] Pathways to Housing added three additional locations in

Washington, DC, Philadelphia, PA, and Burlington, VT, and as of 2010, the Pathways Housing First model had "been replicated in more than 100 cities throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe."[56]

As Housing First has spread, it has spawned a number of variants. In one common variation, communities may opt for a "single site" approach (or a combination of single and scattered sites), purchasing or leasing an apartment building to house their tenants all in one place. The changes in Housing First programs are not simply matters of implementation, however. They are rhetorical. Housing First spread as a message, a discourse, not just as a program. And as discourse surrounding the model circulates, the meaning of "Housing First" shifts, and its purview expands. Deborah K. Padgett, et al. write, Housing First "has recently been invoked by programs seeking to align themselves with the zeitgeist. As the term has come into vogue, so has its usage become stretched, at times beyond recognition."[57] Marcia Santoni, who was formerly at the helm of Pathways to Housing's communication efforts, shares this sentiment, and asserts that Housing First is now less a model than a "movement":

> When I first heard about it, it was an idea and a model that was being researched, and it was very narrowly defined…It's become a movement, and because of that and because of the scale of it…some of [Housing First's original] principles have been sort of filtered out or are not shouted as loudly as they once were. It's grown as a movement, but been diluted as a precise model.[58]

As Housing First spreads, as a rhetoric, as a model, as a movement, advocates view these changes alternately as opportunities for innovation, and as challenges to its efficacy. I am less interested in taking sides in such a debate than in gaining insight into how Housing First has spread, and in how it becomes adopted as policy in communities across the United States.

Pilot programs and new ideas for how to address social problems are developed regularly – many of them successfully – but many do not enjoy wide circulation. This one did, despite its heterodox approach to both homelessness and mental health treatment -- Housing First works by placing marginalized people in charge of its programs, empowering homeless people to guide their own treatment. How did Housing First go from, essentially, one man's idea in 1992, to being the way the U.S. federal government recommends all local communities address homelessness for chronic homelessness? How did this rhetoric move? And how did it manage to make it through a policymaking system that rarely attends to the interests voiced by homeless people? These kinds of questions cannot find answers in a momentary analysis of Housing First, or even a synchronic analysis. Instead, we must examine its movement across time, diachronically.

As Housing First circulates, the messages advocates use to move it through the policy process change, as do the ways it is recognized by the publics who encounter it. Proponents sometimes lament that some of the variations of the model that have emerged are not consistent with its original vision for chronically homeless people. They have even developed a Housing First fidelity survey to assess the extent to which local "Housing First" projects are implementing the model according to its original principles.[59] The reason for this, they argue, is that a community cannot obtain successful results without fidelity to the model. To keep people housed, a provider must center their desires and needs. As we will see, Housing First rhetorics do not always center homeless people's choice; part of what changes in the model's circulation are the publics to whom decision making power is rhetorically endowed.

This kind of program structure is a radical one, in contrast to traditional homeless and mental health service models that dictate particular kinds of behaviors as signs of progress toward (and readiness for) independence, Housing First "empowers" people experiencing homelessness with choice and autonomy. But there is a difference between the program structure and the arguments made in favor of its adoption. Over time, the arguments that appear to drive public conversations about the model shift away from messaging about empowerment and choice, and toward a language of cost-benefit analyses. In the process, members of housed publics are positioned as the decision makers that matter, while homeless people are relegated – as usual – to subjects about whom decisions are made. The adoption of this business language by advocates relies upon a decision calculus and lexicon familiar to publics living within the strictures of neoliberalism, while obscuring Housing First's move to place homeless people in charge of their own lives. In this way, Housing First is commonly deemed good policy because it saves taxpayers money and appears to successfully address homelessness.

While Housing First dons the dominant ideology to pass, it retains its essential character: in the end, it still requires that homeless people have control over their services. The policy retains that which makes it a radical policy, even as it appears consistent with sociopolitical norms. There are consequences for the adoption of these dominant ideologies, some of which reinforce the very problems the contribute to homelessness – but one of the consequences is that homeless people get housed.

METHOD

To understand how Housing First spread rhetorically, I traced the rhetorical circulation of the Housing First model from its origins at Pathways to Housing in New York City in 1992 to its present manifestations at the national and local levels. I began this work at the local level, examining the texts that three different communities – Boulder, Colorado; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Washington, DC – use to justify and publicize their Housing First programs. I obtained these materials primarily from the websites of prominent Housing First service providers in each city. I also examined newspaper coverage of Housing First efforts in these communities, along with video of government and community meetings related to the model. Static texts like these "freeze frame" rhetoric, limiting what we can see about its circulation. They leave the scholar to connect the dots between them.

Resisting that urge, I employed interviews as a form of rhetorical field methods. Building on the work of rhetoricians whose efforts to build "methodological approach[es]…for analyzing everyday rhetorical experience," or examining "rhetoric *in situ,*" I interviewed people who were part of the process of adopting (or resisting) Housing First at the national and local levels; in government, policy advocacy, and social service organizations; and in cities across the United States.[60] In addition to questions about national and local circulation, I asked each interviewee to define Housing First, tell me where they first heard about it, and identify key people and moments in the effort to bring Housing First to their community.

Although I offer only Boulder, Colorado as a case study in this dissertation, the research I conducted regarding the other two cities was essential to my understanding of the messages, organizations, and people that tend to facilitate the model's spread. Importantly, not all of

these appear in the present text, either. The Corporation for Supportive Housing, Community Solutions, Tanya Tull, and Roseanne Haggerty are a few of the names that appeared in both my research and interviews but do not appear (or appear minimally) in the narrative I offer here. This does not mean they are not important; I had to make strategic decisions for the sake of this project's scope and manageability.

From the local level texts and interviews, I proceeded to the national level, to both advocates and policymakers.[61] I conducted further interviews and, from them, identified common characteristics in the rhetorics they used to describe Housing First and texts upon which many of them drew. At this level, I analyzed the Department of Housing and Urban Development's annual notices of funding availability for homeless services funding (2000-2016), speeches made by federal officials related to homelessness, media coverage of federal efforts to spread Housing First, and materials created and circulated by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness – two organizations that were essential to the model's circulation. As I examined these and talked with policymakers and advocates who have helped spread Housing First, I attended to both how these rhetorics got to them, and how they moved them along. I looked for changes in messaging and, again, for key moments and people.

Most people, whether in media, policymaking, or service provision, tended to attribute Housing First (at least, the version of it that is the subject of this dissertation) to Sam Tsemberis. Even when they did not have a direct connection to or relationship with Tsemberis, they pointed to his pilot of the model, and the research he published on the pilot, as essential to Housing First's spread. Therefore, I conducted a close examination of the academic research

published regarding Housing First, from the earliest studies to the present day. Most of this research (though not all) is co-authored by Tsemberis. I conducted two extensive interviews with Tsemberis – one of them in person – and have retained contact with him. On a visit to Pathways to Housing's national office in New York City, I also created an archive of materials Pathways produced in the 1990s. My analysis is informed by these materials, as well as texts I obtained at Pathways to Housing DC and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

CHAPTER PREVIEW

If we may think about advocacy as the process of rhetors persuading more rhetors to persuade more rhetors (and so on) to advocate for the construction and adoption of a public policy, we may identify some possible directional trends. In the case of Housing First, even as advocacy has happened in many ways, in many places, via many different rhetors, my interviews and research revealed a general trajectory for its circulation. I have organized my three analytical chapters according to this trajectory: 1) local advocates aiming to persuade government policymakers, 2) the federal government working to persuade local service providers and local governments, and 3) local service providers trying to persuade local community members. Because rhetorical circulation is not a linear process, I do not intend to offer this as a timeline (although a history does emerge in these pages). I also do not intend for this to appear as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. From the trajectory I identify here, there have been offshoots, metamorphoses, outliers, and likely some arguments that failed to gain traction. Housing First is still circulating, and the messaging surrounding it will continue to shift, for reasons of culture, kairos, and more. I understand circulation as a kind of

lens through which to examine Housing First's rhetorics, and conceive of the chapters that follow as nodal points for that examination.

In Chapter 1, "Consumer Choice for Homeless People," I look first to the academic publications that helped to propel Housing First from a local pilot project to the national level. This research, which captured the attention of both advocates and policymakers relies heavily on a rhetoric of choice. Tsemberis and colleagues, rooting Housing First in the consumer movement in mental health advocacy, argued that it must be guided by the choices of homeless people living with mental illnesses. It must "empower" people by giving them autonomy over their treatment, and lives. As the message of Housing First moved beyond an audience of scholars and practitioners, however, the rhetoric of choice seems to disappear. I argue that advocates seeking to spread the model farther simplified their messaging and de-emphasized choice as means of circumventing narratives that posed a threat to its uptake. I elucidate a number of ideological obstacles a choice rhetoric faced, including partisanship, rhetorics of deservedness, and narratives of enablement. Then I explain how advocates simplified their message and minimized choice to overcome those obstacles, consistently framing Housing First as a policy that comports with dominant ideologies.

Advocates sought not only to avoid dominant narratives that would block adoption of Housing First, but to align themselves with those that would help the model find favor in the policymaking process. By utilizing the metrics neoliberal politics demand, advocates sought to avoid an ideological battle and push Housing First through the policy process. In Chapter 2, "Money Makes the Model Go 'Round," I examine the dominant rhetorics with which advocates replaced choice, consumer rhetorics that proliferate neoliberal ideologies – e.g., cost-benefit

analyses, performance metrics, etc. – in order to aid its circulation. In particular, I assess the central role that money played in the circulation of messages about Housing First between and among national-level rhetors and state and local communities. Cost-benefit analyses of the model became prominent in arguments people made to justify its adoption. At the same time, at the urging of these rhetors, the federal government was allocating and earmarking funds for Housing First, providing a financial inducement to its implementation. These money-based forms of persuasion function differently, but in what I call the justification-inducement pairing, they operate in a kind of rhetorical symbiosis. I examine each separately, then explain how they work in relationship to produce and perpetuate discourses that prop up a model of policymaking that privileges financial concerns. In so doing, I intervene in debates about the materiality of rhetoric, illustrating the folly of trying to distinguish the materiality of money from its rhetorical force.

In Chapter 3, "Expectations for Local Public Engagement," I ask how local publics respond when Housing First is implemented in their communities. I turn specifically to a case study in Boulder, Colorado, where the siting of a set of Housing First apartments provoked a major controversy involving the local public housing authority and homeless shelter, city council, and community members who organized in opposition. As in instances where people who discover a pass feel "duped," housed members of this Boulder community angrily contended that they deserved a full disclosure of details regarding the apartments' construction – they understood themselves as being deceived by the housing authority, victims of this Housing First project. Through an examination of this discourse, I argue that despite

rhetoricians' tendency to see publicity as a positive value, calls for publicity and disclosure can further marginalize oppressed people – and the policies that ensure their survival.

To conclude, I will offer a zoomed-out analysis that attends to the developments and transformations within and across Housing First's circulation. Looking at the long arc of the model's messaging, I will make observations about the changes in agency, publicity, ideology, and varieties of texts used to propel the model. I will also consider the implications of Housing First's messaging for broader representations of homelessness and the policy adopted to address it.

[1] Tars is currently the senior attorney at the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. Quoted with permission.

[2] Hasan Minhaj, "The Homeless Homed," *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*, 7 January 2015, available online at http://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/lntv3q/the-homeless-homed.

[3] Kelly McEvers, "Utah Reduced Chronic Homelessness By 91 Percent; Here's How," *NPR.org*, accessed October 24, 2016, http://www.npr.org/2015/12/10/459100751/utah-reduced-chronic-homelessness-by-91-percent-heres-how.

[4] For more, see Sam Tsemberis, *Housing First: The Pathways Model to End Homelessness for People with Mental Illness and Addiction* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2010); Sam Tsemberis, "Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Promoting Recovery, and Reducing Costs," in Ingrid Gould Ellen and Brendan O'Flaherty, eds., *How to Housing the Homeless* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010), 37-56; U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, "Housing First," available online at http://usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/explore/housing_first.

[5] There are certainly exceptions, some of which I will address later. For examples of the trend I identify here, see Robert Asen, *Invoking the Invisible Hand: Social Security and the Privatization Debates* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 2009); Robert Asen, *Visions of Poverty: Welfare Policy and Political Imagination* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002); G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Metapolitics of the 2002 Iraq Debate: Public Policy and the Network Imaginary," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 1 (2010): 65-94; David G. Levasseur and Diana B. Carlin, "Egocentric Argument and the Public Sphere: Citizen Deliberations on Public Policy and Policymakers," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 3 (2001): 407-431; John Oddo, *Intertextuality and the 24-Hour News Cycle: A Day in the Rhetorical Life of Colin Powell's U.N. Address* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014); Karen Tracy, *Challenges of Ordinary Democracy: A Case Study in Deliberation and Dissent* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

[6] Bruno Latour quoted in Rebecca Dingo, *Networking Arguments*: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism, and Public Policy Writing (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 23.

[7] Robert Asen, "Reflections on Rhetoric in Public Policy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13, no. 1 (2010): 121-143.

[8] Dingo, 21 & 7.

[9] Jenny Edbauer, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2005): 9.

[10] Catherine Chaput, "Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 43, no. 1 (2010): 8.

[11] Stephen Heidt, "The Presidency as Pastiche: Atomization, Circulation, and Rhetorical Instability," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 15, no. 4 (2012): 609-612.

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[12] FSA = Farm Security Administration; Cara A. Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 224.

[13] Edwards and Winkler claim McGee's conception of the ideograph is too logocentric. For him, ideographs are words like "freedom" or "rule of law" that serve as "building blocks of ideology" in their circulation. See Janis L. Edwards and Carol K. Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (1997): 296.

[14] Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, "Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 363-392.

[15] Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 66.

[16] Ibid, 90.

[17] Ibid, 94.

[18] Lester C. Olson, "Pictoral Representations of British Americans Resisting Rape: Rhetorical Re-Circulation of a Print Series Portraying the Boston Port Bill of 1774," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2009): 1-36.

[19] Robert Asen, "Ideology, Materiality, & Counterpublicity: William E. Simon and the Rise of a Conservative Counterintelligentsia," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 3 (2009): 269.

[20] Cara A. Finnegan & Jiyeon Kang, "'Sighting' the Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 4 (2004): 396.

[21] Bruno Latour, "How to be Iconophilic in Art, Science, and Religion?" in *Picturing Science Producing Art*, ed. by C.A. Jones and P. Galison (New York: Routledge, 1998), 418-433; and Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds., *Iconoclash* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

[22] Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma, "Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 192.

[23] For more on the non-circulation of texts, see Sean Patrick O'Rourke, "Circulation and Non-Circulation of Photographic Texts in the Civil Rights Movement: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Control," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 15, no. 4 (2012): 685-694; Christina M. Smith, "Theorizing Visual Rhetoric Through Dorothea Lange's Images of Japanese Internment," *Journal of Visual Literacy* 31, no. 2 (2012): 71-90.

[24] Finnegan and Kang, "'Sighting' the Public," 396.

[25] Ronald Walter Greene, "Rhetorical Pedagogy as a Postal System: Circulating Subjects Through Michael Warners's 'Publics and Counterpublics,'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 434-443.

[26] Jenny Edbauer, "Unframing Models"; Chaput, "Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism."

[27] Edbauer, 13.

[28] Greene, "Rhetorical Pedagogy."

[29] See, respectively, James Jasinski and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics: The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and the 'Principles of '98," in *The Handbook of Public Address,* ed. by Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 313-341; Olson, "Pictoral Representations"; Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "Technologies of Public Forms: Circulation, Transfiguration, Recognition," *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003): 385-398.

[30] Peter Rossi, *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Peter Rossi, *Without Shelter: Homelessness in the 1980s* (New York: Priority Press, 1989); Christopher Jencks, *The Homeless* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994); Kim Hopper, *Reckoning with Homelessness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[31] See Victoria Rader, *Signal Through the Flames: Mitch Snyder and America's Homeless* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1986); Cynthia J. Bongard, *Seasons Such as These: How Homelessness Took Shape in America* (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 2003); Hopper, *Reckoning with Homelessness*.

[32] See Peter Rossi, *Down and Out*, 154; E. Fuller Torrey, *American Psychosis: How the Federal Government Destroyed the Mental Illness Treatment System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 124. More contemporary estimates show that roughly one quarter of homeless people have serious mental illnesses. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Mental Illness and Homelessness," July 2009, http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/Mental_Illness.pdf.

[33] H. Richard Lamb, "Deinstitutionalization at the Beginning of the New Millennium," in *Deinstitutionalization: Promise and Problems*, ed. H. Richard Lamb and Linda E Weinberger (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 3.

[34] Lisa Davis et al., "Deinstitutionalization? Where Have All the People Gone?," *Current Psychiatry Report* 14 (2012): 259.

[35] Torrey, *American Psychosis*; Kathleen R. Arnold, *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity: The Uncanniness of Late Modernity* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 92.

[36] Michael J. Dear and Jennifer R. Wolch, *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Torrey, *American Psychosis*.

[37] Ellen L. Bassuk, Lenore Rubin, and Alison Lauriat, "Is Homelessness a Mental Health Problem?," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 141, no. 12 (1984): 1546–50; Rodger K. Farr, *The Homeless Mentally Ill Andthe Los Angeles Skid Row Mental Health Project* (Los Angeles: Department of Mental Health, 1985); Michael J. Dear and Jennifer R. Wolch, *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness*; H. Richard Lamb and Linda E Weinberger, *Deinstitutionalization: Promise and Problems* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001); Torrey, *American Psychosis*.

[38] Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, Pub. L. 100-77 (1987), https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/100/hr558/text. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness was originally just called the Interagency Council on Homelessness. I use the updated title (2004) for simplicity's sake. See United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, "United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Historical Overview," 2012, available online at

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http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/RPT_USICH_History_final__2012.pdf

[39] Ibid., HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, "Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Programs: Supportive Housing Demonstration Program," December 12, 1995, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/homeless/mckin/shdp.html.

[40] Among others. The Act was not about homelessness and mental illness, but homelessness broadly. I highlight its mental health programs particularly because Housing First seeks to address the subset of the homelessness population that experiences serious mental illness.

[41] Interagency Council on the Homeless, "Priority: Home! The Federal Plan to Break the Cycle of Homelessness," 1994, 73.

[42] Ibid.

[43] See, for example, Vincent Lyon-Callo, *Inequality, Poverty, and Neoliberal Governance: Activist Ethnography in the Homeless Sheltering Industry* (New York: Broadview Press, 2004); Heather MacDonald, "The Reclamation of Skid Row," *City Journal*, 2007, https://www.city-journal.org/html/reclamation-skid-row-13041.html; Deborah K. Padgett, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Sam J. Tsemberis, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Erin Dej, "Psychocentrism and Homelessness: The Pathologization/Responsibilization Paradox," *Studies in Social Justice* 10, no. 1 (2016), https://brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/SSJ/article/view/1349; Joseph Mailander, "Great Myths of L.A. Housing -- Myth 1: No Future," *L.A. Times*, April 13, 2007, http://www.latimes.com/la-op-dustup13apr13-story.html; Tony Sparks, "Broke Not Broken: Rights, Privacy, and Homelessness in Seattle," *Urban Geography* 31, no. 6 (2010): 842–62; William C. Taylor, *Simply Brilliant: How Great Organizations Do Ordinary Things in Extraordinary Ways* (New York: Penguin, 2016), 67.

[44] Sam Tsemberis, interview with Whitney Gent, December 14, 2014.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Critics also refer to this as the Linear Residential Treatment model. See, for example, Gwendolyn A. Dordick, "Recovering from Homelessness: Determining the 'Quality of Sobriety' in a Transitional Housing Program," *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 1 (2002): 7–32; Deborah K. Padgett, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Sam J. Tsemberis, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives*; Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "A Perspective on Voluntary and Involuntary Outreach Services for the Homeless Mentally Ill," *New Directions for Mental Health Services* 82 (1999): 9–19.

[47] See, for example, Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "Perspective on Voluntary," 12.

[48] Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes: The Pathways to Housing Consumer Preference Supported Housing Model," *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 17, no. 1–2 (1999): 115.

[49] Sam Tsemberis, "From Streets to Homes: An Innovative Approach to Supported Housing for Homeless Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities," *Journal of Community Psychology* 27, no. 2 (1999): 225–41.

[50] Sam Tsemberis, interview with Whitney Gent, December 14, 2014. These grants helped to fund a program called "Choices Unlimited" in which Tsemberis and his colleagues operated a drop-in center where they started asking people what they wanted and needed, rather than prescribing an approach. See David L. Shern et al., "Serving Street-Dwelling Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities: Outcomes of a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Clinical Trial," *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 12 (2000): 1873–78; Sam J. Tsemberis et al., "Consumer Preference Programs for Individuals Who Are Homeless and Have Psychiatric Disabilities: A Drop-In Center and a Supported Housing Program," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 32, no. 3/4 (2003): 305–17.

[51] Sam Tsemberis, interview with Whitney Gent, December 14, 2014.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Sam Tsemberis, "Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes."

[54] Sam Tsemberis, interview with Whitney Gent, December 14, 2014.

[55] U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness*, 2010, available online at http://www.epaperflip.com/aglaia/viewer.aspx?docid=1dc1e97f82884912a8932a3502c37c02

[56] Tsemberis, *Housing First*, 11.

[57] Deborah K. Padgett, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Sam J. Tsemberis, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives*, 3. See also p. 12.

[58] Marcia Santoni, interview with Whitney Gent, December 1, 2015.

[59] Todd P. Gilmer et al., "Development and Validation of a Housing First Fidelity Survey," *Psychiatric Services* 64, no. 9 (2013): 911–14.

[60] Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," Western Journal of Communication 75, no. 4 (2011): 386; See also Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, Robert Glenn Howard, *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2016); Michael Middleton, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric In Situ* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015); Phaedra Pezzullo*, Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007); Robin Patric Clair, "Reflexivity and Rhetorical Ethnography: From Family Farm to Orphanage and Back Again," *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 117–28; Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, no. 1 (1992): 80–123.

[61] This is not to suggest that all local communities learned about Housing First directly from national-level advocates and policymakers. In Boulder, service providers seem to have gathered much of their knowledge about the model from providers in Denver, who learned of the model from national advocates. Tracing this movement, however, allowed me to identify rhetorics and rhetors that facilitated Housing First's spread to these local communities.

Chapter 1 – Consumer Choice for Chronically Homeless People

At his last major address as HUD secretary, in 1997 Henry Cisneros told the National Press Club, "I am ashamed of what I saw last night. I came from the White House at dusk last evening, and one block from HUD…I saw a man who's sleeping on a grate. He is there every single day, every single night." Frustrated at his inability to effectively address homelessness during his tenure, Cisneros described it as "like bailing out a boat with a big leak in it. As fast as you bail, you know the water comes pouring back."[1] Homelessness was a national problem, experienced locally, and the federal government sought solutions that would patch the boat. Around this time, national level advocates began exploring Housing First as an approach to addressing homelessness.

On the west coast, Tanya Tull and her organization Beyond Shelter had been moving homeless families "as quickly as possible into permanent, affordable housing," and providing follow up case management, since 1988.[2] On the east coast, Sam Tsemberis had been running Pathways to Housing, an approach aimed at chronically homeless people living with mental illnesses, since 1992. Both have used the term "Housing First" to describe their approaches, but in the intervening years, Tull's model has come to be better known as "rapid re-housing," while Tsemberis's has retained the moniker of Housing First. It is for this reason that I focus this project on Housing First efforts addressing chronic homelessness – that appears to be the association that "stuck."[3]

Advocates in the homeless services industry became aware of Pathways' Housing First initially via word of mouth, in conversations and at national conferences on homelessness, but

Tsemberis argues that the research base he built, with others, was essential to the model's circulation:

> primarily the reason we got noticed is because from the very beginning because this thing was such a, frankly, risky seeming intervention… we were very careful to document and do research every step of the way and count the people that would be housed and how many we would keep hous[ed]. We were tenacious about the program evaluation component and began to publish outcome data...But what that research study did was it introduced the program and the results of the program to a national community of researchers and practitioners and policy people, you know. And I think very few nonprofits and very few programs have that kind of research evidence. So I think the research evidence was a huge factor in the dissemination.[4]

National-level advocates and key figures in the federal agencies responsible for homelessness policy confirm Tsemberis's sense of the importance of research to the model's spread. Key figures in Housing First's circulation regularly attribute its uptake to academic research.[5] Research helped overcome skepticism, in government and among service providers, and propelled the model within those federal agencies.

For example, Philip Mangano, executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) for the George W. Bush administration (starting in 2002), explains that he was initially "agnostic" about Tsemberis's model. To investigate, Mangano visited Pathways to Housing to see firsthand how it worked, "but most importantly, to look at the data and research that had been accumulated." In these visits, Mangano says, "the most convincing element of it was the research that indicated that it had a retention rate. I mean, you could do that and have terrible retention rates… but all of the data pointed toward retention rates at around 85%."[6]

In the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Mark Johnston, the deputy assistant secretary responsible for homeless programs, read the research on

Tsemberis's program when advocacy groups began approaching him about Housing First. Eventually, he commissioned a HUD-funded study of Housing First to verify Tsemberis's results, and ensure that the model's success was not linked to a single location or personality.[7] "I wanted to see research," he explains. "I wanted to see something that actually worked. I didn't just want to believe what somebody said about it."[8] The study confirmed Tsemberis's findings, and served as the foundation for the subsequent shift in funding and programs toward the Housing First model within HUD.

Similarly, in the Veterans Administration (VA), research played a fundamental role in the integration of Housing First into the agency's programming. Vincent Kane, former director of the HUD-VASH (HUD-Veterans Affairs Supported Housing) program and of the VA National Center on Homelessness, connected with Tsemberis -- and Johnston -- after doing a review of the academic literature on approaches to homelessness. In response, Kane obtained VA funding for a pilot project to try Housing First in the VA. He says, "We studied it. We looked at the data. We demonstrated that it worked… And with that evidence, with more community support, we were able to get the Interagency Council, HUD, and VA to really kind of come together as one entity and sort of support it as the policy. "[9]

The research published on Housing First is replete with a rhetoric of choice. Rooted in the consumer movement in mental health advocacy, the model is guided by the choices of homeless people living with mental illnesses. As the message of Housing First moved beyond an audience of scholars and practitioners, however, the rhetoric of choice seems to disappear. I argue that advocates seeking to spread the model farther simplified their messaging and de-emphasized choice as means of circumventing dominant narratives that posed a threat to its

uptake. By utilizing the metrics neoliberal politics demand, advocates sought to avoid an ideological battle and successfully pushed Housing First through the policy process. In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the consumer movement and its significance to Housing First. Then, I discuss the ideological complexities of rhetorics of choice, and the ways in which these manifest in Housing First rhetoric. Next, I examine the partisan and bipartisan obstacles to using choice as a persuasive strategy for spreading the model. Finally, I explain how advocates simplified their message, minimizing the role of choice, in order to successfully navigate these obstacles.

THE CONSUMER MOVEMENT

Before Tsemberis and Pathways to Housing talked about the model as Housing First, the literature refers to it as the "Pathways to Housing Consumer Preference Supported Housing Model" and positions it as an alternative approach to the existing "housing readiness model" or the "linear continuum of care model."[10] As this initial name indicates, consumer preference was central to the Pathways to Housing philosophy. Although the literature soon shifted to call this approach "Housing First," the emphasis on consumer choice was not diminished. Across all the subsequent scholarship that examines Housing First as implemented by Pathways, consumer "choice," "preference," "control," "mastery," "autonomy," and "satisfaction" figure prominently. These are positioned as among the primary goals of Housing First, and as necessary precursors to the successful treatment of chronically homeless people with mental illnesses. In this way, Housing First can be a bit of a misnomer. Housing is only provided first to

people who express a desire for it – it's just that most homeless people's first ask is for housing.[11]

"Consumer" may appear a strange choice as a label for people experiencing homelessness, but use of this term roots the model in part of a larger consumer movement in mental health. The literature these studies cite as the basis for their research holds that the ability to make decisions about one's own mental health treatment is necessary for improved psychiatric outcomes. In the institutionalized mental health system, patients had little autonomy – especially those who had been involuntarily committed. In the 1960s and 1970s, in reaction to the deinstitutionalization of mental health treatment in the United States, a grassroots social movement emerged that advocated both for the increased involvement of people living with mental illness in their own treatment and in policymaking surrounding mental health.[12] Known as the consumer/survivor/ex-patient movement, this effort continues today.

In the years immediately before Tsemberis established Pathways to Housing in New York, Joyce Brown ("Billie Boggs"), a homeless woman committed to a psychiatric facility against her will, became "something of a media star" as the courts debated homeless outreach teams' ability to involuntarily commit or medicate mentally ill homeless people.[13] In her very public court battle, New York City officials argued Brown's mental health concerns made her a danger to herself or others, but she – and the civil libertarians who supported her – fought the commitment.[14] Judith Lynn Failer describes Brown's resistance simply: "She did not want the city's help. She did not want its pity. She did not want its psychiatric care."[15] In a coup for homeless people living with mental illness, Brown was eventually victorious when Acting State

Supreme Court Justice Robert Lippman ruled for her release and argued "there must be some civilized alternatives other than involuntary hospitalization or the street."[16] Brown's case is emblematic of the struggles that motivated the consumer movement – a lack of control and autonomy in a system that deemed people living with mental illness incapable of making their own decisions.

Consumers/survivors/ex-patients describe themselves as having felt invisible, voiceless, stigmatized, and disempowered in the mental healthcare system.[17] One of the core values of the consumer movement was a response to this feeling of disenfranchisement: "empowerment." Howie the Harp, an ex-mental patient, ex-homeless person-turned advocate, calls the consumer movement "essentially a civil rights movement," and explains, "We're talking about having the freedom to make choices; to choose whom and what to be interdependent with; to choose when we need help, how it is to be provided, and by whom…in short, we're talking about empowerment."[18]

What "empowerment" means, exactly, can vary. The intellectual backdrop of this movement was the antipsychiatry movement. Beginning in the 1950s, the work of such thinkers as Michel Foucault, Thomas Szasz, and R.D. Laing, among others, challenged whether mental illness existed at all, condemned madness as a construct used to control the populace, and suggested that mental health treatment often did more harm than good.[19] In light of this thinking, empowerment means, for some, rejecting the concept of mental illness altogether and seeking support from others who had previously been part of the mental health system -- often via self-help and peer support models.[20] The people who take this approach generally refer to themselves as "survivors" or "ex-patients." People who label themselves as

"consumers" tend to take a more conservative position, holding on to the medical model of mental illness, but calling for the increased inclusion of consumers' voices in mental healthcare and pursuing policy advocacy in matters related to their interests.[21]

As Linda J. Morrison notes, "The use of words in this movement is highly contentious, as the power to name and define the experience of the self is at stake."[22] The term "consumer" is controversial, even within the movement, for its representations of the relationship of people with mental illnesses to the institutions that comprise the mental health care system. Some argue that the term implies choice when the options of treatment remain limited by mental health service providers and by the availability of financial resources to support alternatives. Others point out that "consumers" is a market term, where people generally pay for services that producers offer, but mental health "consumers" often receive services via publicly-funded services/institutions.[23] Yet, for people who choose to adopt the term for themselves, "consumer" is a label that empowers them to "take power in relation to their providers."[24]

While the consumer movement was informed by the intellectuals who developed the antipsychiatry movement, its participants "had no interest in being led by psychiatrist intellectuals who had done little during the antipsychiatry movement to 'reach out to struggling ex-patients.'"[25] The ideology of antipsychiatry persists, but it "evolved" from an intellectual movement into an [ex-] patient movement.[26] Consumers/survivors/ex-patients have since been joined by "dissident mental health professionals," family members, and other advocates who support the movement's goals.[27] By couching Pathways' approach as a matter of "consumer" choice, Tsemberis and his fellow researchers position themselves in this category, and they adopt the language conventions that come with the term. They regularly cite the work of

activist Howie the Harp, who called for permanent supportive housing as an independent living solution that empowers consumers.[28] "Independence is so important," he wrote in 1990, "that amongst the homeless are many who could be living in a board-and-care home or other 'residential facility,' where others make the rules and one's life is structured and controlled, but who instead have chosen the independence of the streets. Is that a real choice?"[29] For Tsemberis, et al., the answer to this question was a resounding no. Housing First offered empowerment through choice, autonomy, and control.

CHOICE AND IDEOLOGY

"Choice," like empowerment, is an ideograph frequently deployed in conversations about controversial social issues.[30] Scholarship regarding rhetorics of choice has covered a variety of issues spanning from feminist concerns (e.g., reproductive rights, menstrual suppression, and working mothers), to right-to-die controversies, to school voucher programs.[31] In any of these contexts, "choice" taps into longstanding cultural narratives of individualism and freedom – e.g., pioneerism, the American Dream – to serve as a rhetorical marker of independence and personal power. In some cases, "choice" has been a useful rhetorical strategy for activists seeking rights gains. Its cultural currency lends strength to the argument that choice is a right in a democratic society.

"Choice" has empowered some individuals with increased agency and autonomy, but part of what makes choice useful is its ability to support a broad range of ideological commitments. For example, being pro-choice is generally an indicator of a progressive and/or feminist ideological-leaning, but "school choice" is supported by a more conservative ideology

that values the privatization of social goods like education. Because of its ideographic nature, feminist rhetorical scholars have cautioned against the unconditional embrace of "choice."[32] Evaluating its deployments must be a matter of "look[ing] for rhetorical solutions that truly facilitate the exercise of choice for all."[33] From a critical rhetorical perspective, this means attending to the ways in which "choice" may marginalize or empower subaltern groups like people experiencing homelessness. In my estimation, Housing First does empower people whose very personhood is challenged by their socioeconomic status by placing their housing and mental health treatment under their control but, as always, it is more complicated than that.[34]

In many cases, the appeal of rhetorics of choice is their familiarity to people accustomed to having options in a capitalist market system.[35] In a neoliberal ideology, where personal responsibility is praised and the marketplace is viewed as the solution for all social ills, choice can also operate as a disciplinary mechanism.[36] Choice's close association with personal responsibility enables the demonization of groups of people who appear to have made poor choices, even when they have actually been denied the ability to choose otherwise. For instance, during the Reagan administration, media and political figures described welfare mothers as having made "the inexplicable choice to be poor," obscuring the systemic causes of the mothers' poverty by constructing them as reaping the fruits of their own decisions.[37] In this way, poverty appears as the fault of the people experiencing it and absolves government and other members of a community of responsibility for their contributions to the problem (as well as the responsibility to ameliorate it). Moreover, because choice is so strongly linked to individualism, it does not preclude decisions that limit the agency of others. As Carly S. Woods

avers, "any seemingly personal decision also entails a choice about whether to engage in a host of attendant concerns (sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism) within a wider web of collective relationships."[38] Part of the difficulty with choice as an advocacy strategy, thus, is that it can simultaneously make collective struggles seem like individual problems and empower individuals at the expense of the collective. Although Housing First deploys choice in a way that empowers chronically homeless people, its rhetoric cannot escape these connotations.

The contradictory logics of progressive activist and neoliberal ideologies can make for an uneasy coexistence (e.g., housing is a human right v. homelessness is a rightful consequence of bad decision making), but because choice is an ideograph, it can accommodate both. As Housing First circulates, both are present, although the ideology taking prominence shifts depending on context and audience. Tsemberis and colleagues, in their published research, refer to a choice that that centers the will and agency of people experiencing homelessness. Yet choice is always contested. The consumer choice rhetoric of Housing First, as advocates initially developed it, faced a number of obstacles in neoliberal beliefs about choice. In these obstacles, choice remains important, but either 1) ought not be awarded to everyone, and/or 2) requires that individuals accept responsibility for the consequences that ensue.

Advocates looking to spread Housing First found themselves facing an ideological battle. By the beginning of the 21st century, progressive politics had done little to change the plight of people experiencing homelessness, and neoliberal rhetoric had become dominant in policy making communities. Given this context, the chances of success for a progressive activist rhetoric of choice were slim. Instead of fighting against the dominant rhetoric, advocates played by its rules. Using performance metrics and cost studies, they appealed to the market

principles neoliberal ideology held sacred. In the public sphere and in public policymaking circles, choice *for homeless people* is significantly absent from rhetoric advocating for Housing First. It seems to drop out of the story advocates tell about why a community ought to adopt the model, even when they point to the choice-based research to make their case.

CONSUMER CHOICE AND HOUSING FIRST

Housing First began as a radical intervention. From its genesis to the present, the literature supporting the Pathways to Housing model of Housing First articulates its core values as facilitating consumer choice and realizing a human right to housing.[39] Consistent with the values of the consumer movement, Housing First "empowers" consumers by giving them more control, and reducing service providers' control, over both their housing and their treatment. Programs rooted in a Housing First philosophy upset the balance of power by providing "alternatives to the dominant system of care."[40] Its emphasis on consumer choice requires a reversal of traditional power structures in service provision. Ana Stefancic and Tsemberis explain, "Housing First challenges traditional provider-consumer relationships by requiring clinicians and other service providers to relinquish authority in prioritizing consumers' needs and goals."[41] In this model, people experiencing chronic homelessness are in charge.

One of the most significant ways in which Housing First does this is by separating psychiatric treatment from housing. In a traditional "linear residential treatment" model, people experiencing homelessness work their way through a continuum of care, generally beginning in a shelter, followed by programs intended to address their mental health, physical, financial, and other concerns, then transitional housing, and finally permanent housing. At each

step in this process, people seeking housing encounter new people, new programs, and new requirements. Often, participation in these programs requires sobriety or some other kind of pre-condition. Consumers commonly view treatment requirements in this continuum as "hoops" or "hurdles" to jump in order to get to housing, "their most coveted and essential need."[42] Pointing to the work of consumer activists, Tsemberis holds that a lack of choice "can actually accelerate homelessness" by making the streets appear as a preferable alternative to "restrictive congregate settings."[43] Therefore, in the Pathways to Housing model, "housing is not connected to compliance or treatment… Housing can be maintained as long as consumers meet the terms and conditions of their leases."[44] The only two requirements for participation in this program are 1) consumers must pay 30 percent of their income toward rent (usually Supplemental Security Income), and 2) consumers must agree to meet with a Housing First staff member at least twice a month.

Program staff are part of an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team that contains healthcare professionals, mental health professionals, social workers, job counselors, and substance abuse counselors to meet a wide array of needs that may arise for consumers.[45] While the ACT team is well equipped to provide support, restoring the autonomy consumers have lost to housing instability, hospitalization, and previous psychiatric and substance abuse treatment is one of the team's top priorities.[46] This requires allowing consumers to guide their own treatment. People in Housing First programs are not required to undergo substance abuse treatment, nor psychiatric care. The model allows them to "determine the type and intensity of services or refuse them entirely," all while keeping their housing.[47]

Although Housing First has been predominantly articulated in policy communities as a strategy for ending homelessness, Stefancic and Tsemberis insist, "The goals of Housing First are not only to end homelessness, but also to promote consumer choice, recovery, and consumer integration."[48] In the scholarly literature, measures of Housing First's success include consumers' satisfaction, perceived levels of choice, and "feelings of mastery."[49] Choice is also the explanation these studies offer for the model's effectiveness – their literature reviews engage with scholarship on the connections between housing, psychiatric wellbeing, and choice, and the studies assert that choice leads to more effective psychiatric treatment, fewer hospitalizations, reduced substance abuse, and high housing retention rates.[50]

By centering choice and allowing people to control their living spaces, bodies, and treatment plans, Housing First empowers formerly homeless people in the spirit of the consumer movement. But consumer is also, as I note above, a market term. As John Clarke, et al. aver, "the consumer is an *economic construct*: a key figure in the liberal social imaginary of Western capitalist democracies."[51] The concept of consumer choice, particularly in a neoliberal economics framework, is grounded in the assumption that individuals are and ought to be "rational decision-maker[s]" and "arbiter[s] of products," whether those products be goods for purchase or services to be obtained.[52] Ability to choose is the "supreme value" in this market-driven framework, where, Yiannis Gabriel and Tim Lang explain, "Choice means freedom… Choice is good for the economy [as the] driving force for efficiency, innovation, growth and diversity…A social and political system based on choices is a political system based on citizen freedom [democracy]…[and] consumer capitalism means more choice for everyone."[53] Markets, by this logic, are democratic; they are arenas in which individual choice reigns.

While the consumer movement does not particularly prioritize economic empowerment, reintegration into the market is one of the (by)products of the Housing First approach. People experiencing homelessness are often treated as non-citizens because of their inability or (perceived) unwillingness to participate in the economy; their social and political power, as well as their belongingness, is compromised by their economic status.[54] The absence of housing serves as a visual signal of an economic, and -- in line with a long history of notions of undeservedness -- moral failure to serve as "contributing" members of society.[55] Kathleen Arnold explains that the otherization of homeless people is due in no small part to "the idea that identity in a modern nation state such as the United States is inextricably linked to both nationalistic and economic concerns. One's labor and participation in the market constitute the primary contribution to society while being housed has become a clear symbol of economic independence and socially important labor."[56] Housing First removes the visual marker of one's social/economic exclusion when it places homeless people in housing, presumably thereby reducing the otherization that diminishes their citizenship. The transition from homelessness to housing can, in this way, be viewed as an empowering "passage from exclusion to inclusion."[57]

Additionally, Housing First literally returns people to the market as consumers – and helps ensure that they stay there. A portion of their income each month supports the private housing market as a rent payment when the housing is obtained via a scattered site voucher approach. Further, as Housing First consumers have the ability to make choices about where they live, both in terms of neighborhood and apartment, they arguably have a hand in shaping the market – if only in small ways – as they influence the demand side of the housing supply-demand curve. Vouchers permit homeless people, for example, to have standards and

preferences for their living spaces that they may not otherwise be in a position to exercise. In these ways, Housing First creates conditions for economic empowerment.

Housing First also, however, reinforces the system that excludes unhoused people in the first place by valuing and facilitating participation in the private housing market.[58] Housing First challenges the basis upon which people ought to be able to obtain housing, as when Tsemberis and Elfenbein write, "housing is considered a basic human right, not a commodity to be earned on the basis of sanctioned behaviors or some predetermined set of conditions…but based simply on need."[59] Despite this critique, what the model actually does is reduce social services obstacles to participation in the market. It does not change how the housing market itself functions. The choices a consumer may make are still limited by affordability and availability, among other factors.[60] In this approach, the market is the solution even as it is also the problem.

As I noted above, when Housing First circulated beyond the academic literature supporting it, the rhetoric of choice was largely absent from advocates' and policymakers' justifications for the model's adoption. The metric most frequently taken up from these studies in subsequent media and policy discourse was the housing retention rate. This metric served as proof that the model "works" – it places people in housing and keeps them there. While the researchers explain the program's effective retention in terms of consumer choice, the subsequent discourse primarily explains the model's success as a result of housing stabilization. Consumer choice – where homeless people are the consumers – does not appear as a prominent element of the public narrative.[61] The market, on the other hand, remained an important part of the story.

Cost studies dominated the public policy discourse surrounding Housing First. These studies, primarily conducted by researchers other than Tsemberis and his colleagues, supplanted their research's declarations that choice is important to housing and mental health outcomes with arguments that Housing First should be implemented because it saves communities money.[62] As "choice" drops out of the public narrative, so also does the identification of homeless people as consumers. Instead, as Housing First circulates into public policy discourse, members of housed publics become the consumers, and they make the choices about how to address homelessness on a rational-critical basis – budget comparisons. In chapter two, I offer an analysis of the role of economic rhetoric in promoting Housing First. In the coming sections of this chapter, I examine the conditions that made choice an untenable persuasive strategy for Housing First advocates seeking broader support for the model.

PARTISAN OBSTACLES

The first academic articles on Pathways' Housing First approach appeared in 1999 in *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly, New Directions for Mental Health,* and *Journal of Community Psychology*.[63] These articles began to associate research with Tsemberis's project, just in time for a change of presidential administration. They introduced the model to a scholarly/clinical audience, placed it in the consumer movement and choice literature, and offered initial results. In *Journal of Community Psychology*, Tsemberis announced the first retention rate data, showing that over a three year period, Pathways' model had kept 84.2 percent of its chronically homeless consumers housed. The study's comparison (linear residential treatment) program

retained only 59.2 percent in housing over a two year period. By 2000, Tsemberis and colleagues were showing a five year retention rate of 88 percent.[64]

Around this time, advocates were planning for the arrival of a new crop of D.C. policymakers, seeking ways to elevate homelessness on the national agenda. As Steve Berg, vice president for programs and policy at the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), explains, "Frankly, when [we]'re dealing with federal decision makers…we need to take account of different assumptions that we think people in the different parties have about government anti-poverty policies."[65] Doing so meant accounting for the new political landscape and tailoring their messaging accordingly. After Election 2000, the chambers of the U.S. legislature were under split control, with only very narrow party leads in each. A controversial Supreme Court decision ushered in a Republican presidential administration led by George W. Bush. In these changes, advocates saw new challenges and opportunities for homelessness policy. Democrats had long been the party identified with public assistance, while "small government" Republicans preferred that assistance be provided by churches and other community-based organizations. These positions align closely with public opinion. A 2003 Pew Research Center poll revealed that 79% of Democrats believed it is "government's responsibility to 'take care of people who can't take care of themselves,'" compared to 54 percent of Republicans.[66] By 2014, the difference was even more drastic: "73% of Republicans [said] the government can't afford to do much more to help the needy, while just 32% of Democrats say this."[67] In order to make homelessness appear as a bipartisan issue, advocates had to first effectively frame it as friendly to the Republican administration.

Jeremy Rosen, former advocacy director at the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, argues that Housing First was well-suited for this political environment in part because it helps house the most visible, most undesirable homeless people. He says advocates, "tried to talk about the issue in ways that would make a new administration…over at HUD be more interested in the issue of homelessness," and framing homelessness policy for this administration was in no small part about its relationship to the business community. In a Republican administration, "You might want to do something about homelessness," Rosen explains, "as it related to people who the business community might often care about the most, whether you want to call them chronically homeless or long-term homeless…people who were living outside in public spaces and often people who businesses perceive as being a nuisance."[68] Indeed, business improvement districts are frequently at the helm of efforts to restrict homeless people's access to public spaces (particularly in commercial areas), and business owners are often the loudest voices advocating for laws against panhandling.[69] That the Bush administration focused on ending chronic homelessness over other less visible homelessness (e.g., family homelessness) suggests that it was interested in addressing the business community's concerns. And since Housing First had demonstrated impressive results in its work with this segment of the homeless population, it was an attractive policy proposition for a business-oriented administration.

The administration was also committed to making government operate more like a business. In President Bush's first year in office, he released "The President's Management Agenda," a 65-page document outlining "the President's vision for government reform."[70] The agenda's guiding principles were: "Government should be – Citizen-centered; not bureaucracy

centered; – Results-oriented; – Market-based, actively promoting rather than stifling innovation through competition."[71] Bush's commitment to business principles like "strategic management" and "budget and performance integration" made measurable outcomes critical for new initiatives seeking government support. Housing retention rates, supported by research, were attractive to an administration interested in results, while "choice" was a less easily quantified outcome. Although the Housing First research used Likert scales obtained during interviews with program participants to produce quantitative measures of choice, participants' perceptions of choice are less concrete than numbers of people housed, and length of tenure. This is especially true if the goal of government (motivated by the complaints of business) is to remove homeless people from the streets.

What's more, giving choice and control to people experiencing chronic homelessness could appear to violate the norms of a performance-based system. Choice may be a market-based principle, but in business – theoretically – responsibility is earned. Management is awarded to employees who show skills and competence. Housing First advocates needed to minimize the potential perception that Housing First amounted to more government waste in a party/administration interested in reducing government expenditures; it could look like spending public money to house people who had already shown themselves incapable of keeping a roof over their heads. Indeed, advocates had to compete with a publicly articulated Republican belief that homelessness was itself a choice. In a 1984 ABC News interview, for example, President Ronald Reagan answered accusations that his efforts to reduce government spending were harming people in poverty by saying: "What we have found in this country, and maybe we're more aware of it now, is one problem that we've had, even in the best of times,

and that is the people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless who are homeless, you might say, by choice."[72] Forefronting choice as justification for the model risked drawing attention to these inconsistencies between Housing First's ideological foundations and the Republican party's. Focusing instead on the concrete, measurable housing outcomes and the reduced costs associated with the model (over status quo spending) made Housing First a more persuasive model to the executive branch. And, as we will see in the next chapter, the U.S. Interagency Council even enlisted the help of business authors like Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great,* and Clayton M. Christensen, author of *The Innovator's Dilemma* and *The Innovator's Solution,* to help promote the model to state and local governments around the country.[73]

Split control in Congress and in these state and local governments, as well as a desire to see long-lasting change, made bipartisanship essential for advocates taking up Housing First. They needed to persuade people that partisan beliefs about the causes of homelessness were irrelevant to ending it. In the words of Philip Mangano, George W. Bush's "homelessness czar," advocates had to "market the idea of…a national partnership that was not bounded by partisanship, that was in fact no D, no R, just Americans committed to solving a national disgrace."[74] To get there, however, advocates needed to find a way to sidestep the ideological differences that fueled this partisanship. A 2002 *New York Times* editorial suggested that Housing First could do just that, because of the subset of the homeless population it addressed:

> A decade ago, homelessness was the focus of an ideological divide. The left said homeless people were just like everyone else except they didn't have a place to live, so the government should provide it. The right said chronic homelessness was the result of a personal pathology that couldn't be helped while the market would adjust and provide for all others…But a consensus has crystallized on the so-called chronically homeless… and this opportunity must not be wasted.[75]

In short, Republican agreement that government should address chronic homelessness, via a model that appeared to satisfy market principles, helped close the parties' ideological gaps on this issue and build bipartisanship.

BIPARTISAN OBSTACLES

Finding a "new spirit of partnership on this issue that transcends partisanship," however, did not remove all the rhetorical obstacles to the spread of Housing First.[76] In fact, despite partisan disagreement over how to address homelessness, one of the most challenging narratives with which advocates had to contend is shared across party lines: the idea that homelessness is the result of poor personal decisions. Teresa Gowan describes three prominent explanations people offer for homelessness: sin, sickness, and the system.[77] In two out of three of these schema, an individual cannot be trusted to effectively care for oneself. When a person appears to be homeless due to moral failure, he/she is experiencing the result of "bad" decisions made in the past. When one is "sick" with mental health concerns, as the consumer movement illustrates, his/her competence to make "good" decisions is frequently questioned. Only a systemic perspective on homelessness accepts a collective responsibility for the problem. However, while scholars and activists have moved toward a perspective that combines individual responsibility and structural factors, Americans still broadly believe that homelessness is due to personal failings.[78]

Deservedness

That this belief endures is unsurprising; in the United States, the notion that some people experiencing poverty deserve assistance, while others do not, has existed almost as long as the country itself.[79] Historian Michael Katz explains that the distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving poor" originated amongst public officials in the early 19th century as an attempt to identify the "able-bodied" poor, versus poor people who were unable to work. Within a few decades, moralism had seeped into these classificatory efforts, making public assistance about who was deemed worthy and unworthy, and ultimately, who was deserving or undeserving.[80] People experiencing poverty became linked to the idea of poverty relief and, as such, came to be regarded as debtors by the American taxpayer.[81] Thus, to be poor became not just undesirable, but immoral. This orientation remains in the American imagination even when difficult economic circumstances lead to significant increases in poverty. As Katz notes, "the moral classification of the poor survived even the Great Depression."[82]

Among people experiencing poverty, chronically homeless people are not an especially sympathetic group. Struggles with substance abuse, public perceptions of criminality, and mental health issues that provoke fear in passersby contribute to the notion that these homeless people are not deserving of assistance.[83] Ange-Marie Hancock argues that aversion to the "undeserving poor" can manifest as a "politics of disgust" where emotions like fear and disgust get translated into policy responses that limit the democratic participation of poor people.[84] To avoid such a response, advocates needed to avoid the perception of Housing First as a "hand out" to people who do not deserve one – especially among members of a political party that had railed against "welfare queens" and other forms of public assistance fraud during

the Reagan administration – but also to a broader population who have absorbed the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mythology of American individualism.[85]

Given this longstanding narrative, offering people housing without requiring them to relinquish the habits and/or conditions that appear to have caused their homelessness in the first place was a hard sell. It challenged dominant notions of equality and fairness in a democratic state. An article in a local North Carolina newspaper illustrates how these beliefs manifest in conversations about Housing First, specifically:

> What if we walked up to the sickest, loudest, falling-down drunkest and most belligerent homeless people we could find and simply gave them a place to live? They wouldn't have to stop using drugs or alcohol, and they wouldn't have to get a job. And we'd hire someone to keep an eye on them…Housing First is controversial because it helps people who don't seem to be trying to help themselves. And it seems undemocratic because instead of providing a little help to everyone, you give a lot of help to the worst off."[86]

By housing people who have repeatedly failed to stay housed, Housing First may look like it is giving away an expensive something for nothing. It can appear to privilege chronically homeless people over other housed people who have "earned" their shelter by assenting to social and cultural norms. Free housing for some – but not all – in a political climate that views the market as the solution to all social ills, can seem like an unfair or unequal distribution of resources.[87]

Housing First advocates, then, were faced with a quandary. How could they address the form of homelessness of greatest interest to the people in power when the model that houses chronically homeless people most effectively offends predominant notions of deservedness? The consumer movement's emphasis on empowerment would not be convincing if the audience did not believe homeless people to be worthy of that power. Choice would not be a compelling argument to publics who view homelessness as a matter of personal failure.

Enabling

Furthermore, allowing people to live in government-funded housing without changing their "destructive" behaviors seemed to some a recipe for failure – unethical, even. Resistance to Housing First has commonly appeared in the form of the argument that its programs enable people to make more self-destructive choices, e.g., abusing drugs or alcohol, by foregoing treatment requirements. For example, in 2006, a particularly attention-getting article in the *New York Times* profiled a single-site Housing First program in Seattle, operated by the Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC), by referring to a "brand-new, government-financed apartment where [homeless people] can drink as much as [they] want."[88] The article quotes John Carlson, a local conservative talk radio host who called the program, "Bunks for drunks…a living monument to failed social policy," and accused DESC of "aiding and abetting someone's self-destruction."[89] The article caused a stir among federal policymakers, HUD's homelessness programs director says, as it became "national news that HUD [was] funding a project that just seems to be…sheltering drunks with no responsibility, no expectations for them to seek work or to do anything responsible."[90] The negative publicity may even have slowed HUD's adoption of Housing First as a widespread policy approach.[91]

Policymakers aside, it was difficult enough to convince service providers that this approach was viable. For example, Linda Kauffman, who helped bring Pathways to Housing to Washington, DC, through her work at the Department of Mental Health, describes her original response to Housing First like this: "I said, 'I will never house people who are still drinking and smoking crack. That's just ridiculous.'…My initial contact with Housing First was like, 'It's not going to work and it's a stupid idea.'"[92] After becoming convinced that the approach did, in fact,

work, she encountered the same kind of resistance in others: "In the beginning I would go to conferences and talk about Housing First, and people would say to me, 'It doesn't work. You can't make me.' You know, 'Why are you so fucking stupid?'" Basing a service model on choice for a group that appeared to have made so many poor choices seemed ludicrous even to people inclined to help – it looked more like enabling bad decision making than encouraging good choices. How could people who had made such "bad" decisions in the past be expected to suddenly make "good" choices for their futures?

For Housing First advocates, the answer lies in the system, rather than in sin or sickness. Allowing consumers to make decisions about what they need, giving them autonomy, is a response to the problems that cause homelessness – a system that restricts some people's autonomy while empowering people who uphold social (and medical/psychiatric) norms. But shifting public beliefs about what causes homelessness is a greater challenge than convincing people to address it. For choice to be a compelling argument for Housing First to broader policymakers and publics, advocates would have to take on fundamental cultural narratives about individualism and personal responsibility.

Convincing housed publics to treat housing as the solution to homelessness at least partially circumvents these narratives by de-emphasizing choice as the primary reason for the model's success. A comment by Mark O'Connell, long-time president of United Way in Atlanta, illustrates well how this works: "We have to do something that's completely against our Calvinistic strain…[Housing First is] much more humane, it's much more cost-effective, and has the added benefit of helping solve the problem…Housing centers your life and enables you to accept public responsibility over time."[93] O'Connell acknowledges the difficulty Housing First

can pose to beliefs about personal responsibility, then emphasizes that the model is cheaper than the status quo, and effective. He then reinforces existing narratives about homelessness by arguing that Housing First gives people a platform from which to become productive members of the public. This articulation neither forefronts choice as a goal of the model, nor challenges the link between personal responsibility and poverty. In this way, O'Connell uses the dominant narratives to spread Housing First in his community, rather than asking people to reconfigure their concepts of poverty. Choice does not appear as part of the story he tells, except in reference to the decision local policymakers and housed community members must make to adopt Housing First.

SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE

For the researchers presenting data on Housing First, choice was a central part of the message. It was the very reason for the model, but in the face of these (bi)partisan obstacles, it had little chance of success as a rhetorical strategy. Instead, as one local service provider observes, Housing First circulates best when advocates are able to "reorient the conversation towards helping [chronically homeless people] as opposed to this debate about whether or not they should be helped."[94] Advocates believed that data would be the key to overcoming these obstacles, and that's exactly what the Pathways studies offered – evidence that the model "works." Their numbers would mean nothing, however, if the audience's ideological concerns obscured their views of Pathways' results, so advocates streamlined their message. Why Housing First works became peripheral to the message that it does.[95]

Instead of "choice empowers people to make decisions that will keep them housed and improve psychiatric outcomes," the Housing First message became, broadly, "housing ends homelessness," "housing first works," or "house people *first*, then address other issues in their lives." Berg explains that, in a partisan policy environment, "you don't want to turn people off by using sort of loaded rhetoric about stuff that's not really central to what we're talking about, which is we want funding for specific kinds of programs that get specific kinds of results that we think are results that most people want" – namely, a reduction in homelessness.[96] For NAEH, one of the most visible and influential national homeless advocacy groups, choice was "loaded rhetoric," that would impede its success in the policymaking process. Advocates believed gaining public support for the model required evidence for its efficacy, but not necessarily an in-depth understanding of its process.

As I noted above, housing retention rates have consistently shown the model's superiority to linear residential treatment approaches, with studies consistently showing Housing First retention rates at 77% or higher – even when the studies are conducted at sites not operated by Pathways to Housing.[97] These statistics, and other metrics used to recommend the model, translate easily into "housing ends homelessness." In local governments' uptake of Housing First messaging, we see the significance of "data" to assertions that "Housing First works." In response to the criticism that followed the "bunks for drunks" article, Seattle officials released data to support its claims that DESC and another Housing First program in the city were "helping save lives and money."[98] A press release from Mayor Gregory J. Nickels's office quotes him as saying, "These studies show that Housing First works. Instead of letting people fall through the cracks, this program helps to stabilize and rebuild lives while taking a costly

strain off our social safety net."[99] Consumer choice does not appear in the release; it avoids "loaded rhetoric" by supplying "concrete" evidence of the model's success.

In another example of local uptake, New Mexico's Housing First Task Force (created by request of the state senate in 2008) issued a report in which it recommended the adoption of Housing First across the state.[100] The report offers a mere three paragraphs of justification for this recommendation in a section titled "Housing First Works." The words choice, control, preference, and empowerment are entirely absent from this section – in fact, they are almost missing from the report entirely. Instead, the report says, "Data indicates that the majority of individuals and families who participate in Housing First programs achieve and maintain sobriety, attend work or school, successfully manage their budgets, permanently end relationships with abusers, and keep their housing long term."[101] The data sources are never specified, nor are the numbers. It is apparently enough to say that studies support these outcomes.

Housing First advocates contend that this process of simplification is a necessary part of making the model not just palatable, but digestible, for people who are not social services professionals. Christy Respress, executive director of Pathways to Housing DC believes that rhetoric appealing to broader publics ought not bog people down in the details: "I think the only thing that they need to know is a very simple straightforward one-liner is that housing ends homelessness and people need the housing before they need anything else… that's all the community needs to know, that Housing First works and this is what it is: housing without strings attached. Then let the wonky people like all of us figure out the rest."[102] Respress was not alone in this sentiment. Advocates, policymakers, and service providers to which I spoke

held that "the public" does not really need all the details in order to support Housing First. They do not even need to know that the model is called "Housing First." They just need to know that it ends homelessness.[103] The experts, then, should be responsible for working out the details.

While Respress was not specifically talking about choice when referring to "the rest," this catchall places choice under the provenance of the "wonky people." Putting choice in the realm of the experts is a tricky rhetorical move, given that a backlash against institutional expertise was the very basis for the consumer movement in which Housing First is rooted. The term "wonky people" here implies people who are implementing the model, the professionals treating the housing, health, and mental health issues associated with homelessness. These professionals' treatment approach may be informed by the choices of people experiencing homelessness, but without the accompanying message of consumer choice, audiences external to Housing First are not compelled to question the traditional hierarchical relationships that necessitate the model. Professional service providers are the experts who know best; homeless people are the clients who need to be guided. Sans a consumer choice narrative, many of the rhetorical obstacles to homeless people's autonomy and agency appear to remain in place. But this is only the beginning of the story.

CONCLUSION

Rhetorics of deservedness, enablement, performance, and personal responsibility are the very messages that made Housing First necessary insofar as they create the conditions that remove autonomy from chronically homeless people. Choice only becomes empowering if one has been denied it. Housing First research demonstrates that chronically homeless people living

with mental illness gain satisfaction, success, and stability when they are permitted control over their lives – the very control these (bi)partisan obstacles would deny them. The research arguably demonstrates the ideological superiority of the Housing First approach, but advocates opted not to emphasize this in their efforts to circulate the model beyond scholars and practitioners. Instead, they de-emphasized choice and simplified their messaging to minimize the ideological debates that might stall uptake of Housing First.

This decision is one that is fundamentally about circulation, and one which reveals the importance of audience to circulation. Rhetoric shifts and transforms in circulation, sometimes due to intentional decisions rhetors make, and sometimes because of the ways in which its messages jut up against other rhetorics and ideologies (and sometimes both). Rhetors often make strategic choices about their messaging by considering how they might extend their particular message's circulation. Rhetorical choices can limit, expand, or open up new audiences by making a message more or less palatable, more or less aligned with those audiences' worldviews. Housing First advocates' willingness to pivot their message, downplaying choice and empowerment, is likely part of why the model has enjoyed such broad circulation. A refusal to adapt Housing First rhetoric to dominant ideologies may have limited the audiences amenable to it, and restricted its circulation and, thus, its likelihood of being adopted as policy. But in pivoting their message, advocates also narrowed their vocabulary, constraining their own rhetorical possibilities.

Importantly, while advocates' downplaying of consumer choice led to its near disappearance in arguments justifying the model, the notion that consumer choice matters in decisions about homelessness lingered. As advocates introduced cost-benefit analyses to

convince policymakers and publics to adopt Housing First, the program continued to appear as a consumer decision – but the "consumers" (and thus the decision-makers) were no longer people experiencing homelessness. As we will see in the next chapter, advocates' efforts to widen their audiences shifted both who was addressed by Housing First rhetoric and who was empowered to make economic choices.

[1] Bill McAllister, "Cisneros Sums Up; Departing Housing Secretary Expresses Frustration Over Homelessness Amid Plenty," *Washington Post*, January 8, 1997.

[2] "Our Story," Partnering for Change, accessed 10 December 2016, http://www.partnering-for-change.org/about-pfc/history/

[3] Rapid re-housing, and an emphasis on housing homeless families, gained traction during the Obama administration, particularly via the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, a piece of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. See "Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program," HUD Exchange, accessed 10 December 2016, https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hprp/

[4] Sam Tsemberis, interview with Whitney Gent, November 15, 2014.

[5] Steve Berg, interview with Whitney Gent, November 13, 2015; Mark Johnston, interview with Whitney Gent, December 8, 2015; Vincent Kane, November 25, 2015; Philip Mangano, interview with Whitney Gent, January 19, 2016.

[6] Philip Mangano, interview with Whitney Gent, January 19, 2016.

[7] Carol Pearson, Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, and Gretchen Locke, "Housing Stability Among Homeless Individuals with Serious Mental Illness Participating in Housing First Programs," *Journal of Community Psychology* 37, no. 3 (2009): 404–17.

[8] Mark Johnston, interview with Whitney Gent, December 8, 2015.

[9] Vincent Kane, interview with Whitney Gent, November 25, 2015.

[10] "Housing readiness model" and "linear continuum of care model" refer to the same system. Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes: The Pathways to Housing Consumer Preference Supported Housing Model," *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly* 17, no. 1–2 (1999): 113–31; Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "A Perspective on Voluntary and Involuntary Outreach Services for the Homeless Mentally Ill," *New Directions for Mental Health Services* 82 (1999): 9–19.

[11] Ronni Michelle Greenwood, Ana Stefancic, and Sam Tsemberis, "Pathways Housing First for Homeless Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities: Program Innovation, Research, and Advocacy," *Journal of Social Issues* 69, no. 4 (2013): 648.

[12] Richard T. Pulice and Steven Miccio, "Patient, Client, Consumer, Survivor: The Mental Health Consumer Movement in the United States," in *Community Mental Health: Challenges for the 21st Century,* Jessica Rosenberg and Samuel J. Rosenberg, Eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 7–14. Judi Chamberlain, "The Ex-Patients Movement: Where We've Been and Where We're Going," *Journal of Mind and Behavior* 11 (1990): 323–36.

[13] Josh Barbanel, "Joyce Brown's Ascent From Anonymity," *New York Times*, February 15, 1988, sec. B.

[14] See Josh Barbanel, “Fate of Homeless Woman Is Debated in Court,” *New York Times*, November 28, 1987, sec. 1; WJ Weatherby, “The Sidewalk Superstar: The Dramatisation of the Homeless Problem,” *The Guardian*, February 19, 1988; Jeanie Kasindorf, “The Real Story of Billie Boggs: Was Koch Right -- Or the Civil Libertarians?,” *New York Magazine*, May 2, 1988; Richard Campbell and Jimmie L. Reeves, “Covering the Homeless: The Joyce Brown Story,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 21–42.

[15] Judith Lynn Failer, *Who Qualifies for Rights?: Homelessness, Mental Illness, and Civil Commitment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 17.

[16] Thomas Morgan, “The Poor a Major Concern Of Judge in Homeless Case,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1987, sec. N.Y. / Region, http://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/14/nyregion/the-poor-a-major-concern-of-judge-in-homeless-case.html.

[17] Paul J. Carling, *Return to Community: Building Support Systems for People with Psychiatric Disabilities* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), 77–84.

[18] Howie the Harp, “Preface,” in *Return to Community: Building Support Systems for People with Psychiatric Disabilities*, by Paul J. Carling (New York: Guilford Press, 1995), xiv.

[19] See, for example, Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Pantheon, 1965); Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* (New York: Hoeber-Harper, 1961); R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (Oxford: Penguin Books, 1965).

[20] Richard T. Pulice and Steven Miccio, “Patient, Client, Consumer, Survivor.”

[21] Athena McLean, “Empowerment and the Psychiatric Consumer/Ex-Patient Movement in the United States: Contradictions, Crisis and Change,” *Social Science & Medicine* 40, no. 8 (1995): 1053–71; Nancy Tomes, “The Patient as a Policy Factor: A Historical Case Study of the Consumer/Survivor Movement In Mental Health,” *Health Affairs* 25, no. 3 (2006): 720–29.

[22] Linda J. Morrison, *Taking Back Psychiatry: The Psychiatric Consumer/Survivor/Ex-Patient Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2005), xi.

[23] Athena McLean, “Empowerment and the Psychiatric Consumer/Ex-Patient Movement,” 1053.

[24] Linda J. Morrison, *Taking Back Psychiatry*, ix.

[25] David J. Rissmiller and Joshua H. Rissmiller, “Evolution of the Antipsychiatry Movement Into Mental Health Consumerism,” *Psychiatric Services* 57, no. 6 (2006): 865. Source quoted is Judi Chamberlain, “The Ex-Patients Movement: Where We’ve Been and Where We’re Going.”

[26] David J. Rissmiller and Joshua H. Rissmiller, “Evolution of the Antipsychiatry Movement.”

[27] Linda J. Morrison, *Taking Back Psychiatry*, ix.

[28] Howie the Harp also served as a member of the advisory board for the "Choices" drop-in program that served as a precursor to Pathways' Housing First. Deborah K. Padgett, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Sam J. Tsemberis, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5.

[29] Howie the Harp, "Independent Living with Support Services: The Goal and Future for Mental Health Consumers," *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal* 13, no. 4 (1990): 85.

[30] Virginia McCarver, "The Rhetoric of Choice and 21st-Century Feminism: Online Conversations About Work, Family, and Sarah Palin," *Women's Studies in Communication* 34, no. 1 (May 5, 2011): 20–41; Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 1–16; Michael Calvin McGee and Martha Anne Martin, "Public Knowledge and Ideological Argumentation," *Communication Monographs* 50 (1983): 47–65.

[31] See, for example Rickie Solinger, *Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Carly S. Woods, "Repunctuated Feminism: Marketing Menstrual Suppression Through the Rhetoric of Choice," *Women's Studies in Communication* 36 (2013): 267–87; McCarver, "The Rhetoric of Choice and 21st-Century Feminism"; Todd F. McDorman, "Controlling Death: Bio-Power and the Right-to-Die Controversy," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (September 2005): 257–79; Ansley T. Erickson, "The Rhetoric of Choice: Segregation, Desegregation, and Charter Schools," *Dissent* 58, no. 1 (2011): 41–46.

[32] Carolina Fernandez Branson, "'I Want to Be One Less': The Rhetoric of Choice in Gardasil Ads," *The Communication Review* 15, no. 2 (April 2012): 144–58; McCarver, "The Rhetoric of Choice and 21st-Century Feminism"; Vesta T. Silva, "Lost Choices and Eugenic Dreams: Wrongful Birth Lawsuits in Popular News Narratives," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2011): 22–40; Carly S. Woods, "Repunctuated Feminism"; Karen Weingarten, "Impossible Decisions: Abortion, Reproductive Technologies, and the Rhetoric of Choice," *Women's Studies* 41, no. 3 (April 2012): 263–81.

[33] Carly S. Woods, "Repunctuated Feminism," 281.

[34] Stephen E. Lankenau, "Panhandling Repertoires and Routines for Overcoming the Nonperson Treatment," *Deviant Behavior* 20, no. 2 (1999): 183–206.

[35] Rickie Solinger, *Beggars and Choosers*.

[36] David Harvey's definition of neoliberalism demonstrates the prominence of individual choice in this now prominent political theory. He holds that neoliberalism "proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free states." David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

[37] Rickie Solinger, *Beggars and Choosers*, 169.

[38] Carly S. Woods, "Repunctuated Feminism," 281.

[39] See, for example Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis, "From Streets to Homes: An Innovative Approach to Supported Housing for Homeless Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities," *Journal of Community Psychology* 27, no. 2 (1999): 225–41; Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "Perspective on Voluntary"; Sam J. Tsemberis et al., "Consumer Preference Programs for Individuals Who Are Homeless and Have Psychiatric Disabilities: A Drop-In Center and a Supported Housing Program," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 32, no. 3/4 (2003): 305–17; Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice, and Harm Reduction for Homeless Individuals with a Dual Diagnosis," *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 4 (2004): 651–56; Ana Stefancic and Sam Tsemberis, "Housing First for Long-Term Shelter Dwellers with Psychiatric Disabilities in a Suburban County: A Four-Year Study of Housing Access and Retention," *Journal of Primary Prevention* 28 (2007): 265–79; Ronni Michelle Greenwood, Ana Stefancic, and Sam Tsemberis, "Pathways Housing First."

[40] Sam J. Tsemberis et al., "Consumer Preference Programs," 306.

[41] Ana Stefancic and Sam Tsemberis, "Housing First for Long-Term," 274.

[42] Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "Perspective on Voluntary," 12; Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice," 651; Sam J. Tsemberis et al., "Consumer Preference Programs," 309.

[43] Sam Tsemberis, "Streets to Homes," 227.

[44] Sam J. Tsemberis et al., "Consumer Preference Programs," 310.

[45] Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice"; For more on ACTs, see Michelle P. Salyers and Sam Tsemberis, "ACT and Recovery: Integrating Evidence-Based Practice and Recovery Orientation on Assertive Community Treatment Teams," *Community Mental Health Journal* 43, no. 6 (2007): 619–41.

[46] See, for example Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis, "Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice."

[47] Sam Tsemberis and Ronda P. Eisenberg, "Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Sweet-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities," *Psychiatric Services* 51, no. 4 (2000): 489.

[48] Ana Stefancic and Sam Tsemberis, "Housing First for Long-Term," 267.

[49] Sam Tsemberis, "Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice"; Ronni Michelle Greenwood et al., "Decreasing Psychiatric Symptoms by Increasing Choice in Services for Adults with Histories of Homelessness," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 36, no. 3/4 (2005): 223–38; David L. Shern et al., "Serving Street-Dwelling Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities: Outcomes of a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Clinical Trial," *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 12 (2000): 1873–78.

[50] Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis, "Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "Perspective on Voluntary"; Sam Tsemberis and Ronda P. Eisenberg, "Pathways to Housing"; Sam J. Tsemberis et al., "Consumer Preference Programs"; Sam

Tsemberis et al., "Housing Satisfaction for Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities," *Journal of Community Psychology* 31, no. 6 (2003): 581–90; Leyla Gulcur et al., "Housing, Hospitalization, and Cost Outcomes for Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Participating in Continuum of Care and Housing First Programmes," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 13 (2003): 171–86; Sam Tsemberis, Leyla Gulcur, and Maria Nakae, "Housing First, Consumer Choice"; Ronni Michelle Greenwood et al., "Decreasing Psychiatric Symptoms"; Ana Stefancic and Sam Tsemberis, "Housing First for Long-Term"; Deborah K. Padgett et al., "Substance Use Outcomes Among Homeless Clients with Serious Mental Illness: Comparing Housing First with Treatment First Programs," *Community Mental Health Journal* 47 (2011): 227–32; Ronni Michelle Greenwood, Ana Stefancic, and Sam Tsemberis, "Pathways Housing First."

[51] John Clarke et al., *Creating Citizen-Consumers: Changing Publics and Changing Public Services* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 2.

[52] Yiannis Gabriel and Tim Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2015), 2.

[53] Yiannis Gabriel and Tim Lang, 25.

[54] Leonard C. Feldman, *Citizens Without Shelter: Homelessness, Democracy, and Political Exclusion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Patricia Kennett, "Homelessness, Citizenship, and Social Exclusion," in *Homelessness: Exploring the New Terrain*, ed. Patricia Kennett and Alex Marsh (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 1999), 37–60; Kathleen R. Arnold, *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity: The Uncanniness of Late Modernity* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004).

[55] There is a long history of notions of (un)deservedness, from the Elizabethan-era poor laws in England to work requirements for contemporary U.S. public assistance, e.g., those attached to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. A classic account of this history can be found in Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon, 1989).

[56] Kathleen R. Arnold, *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity*, 87–88.

[57] Michael Rowe et al., "Homelessness, Mental Illness, and Citizenship," *Social Policy & Administration* 35, no. 1 (2001): 14.

[58] See Craig Willse, "Neo-Liberal Biopolitics and the Invention of Chronic Homelessness," *Economy and Society* 39, no. 2 (2010): 155–84.

[59] Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "Perspective on Voluntary," 16.

[60] Sam Tsemberis, *Housing First: The Pathways Model to Ending Homelessness for People with Mental Illness and Addiction* (Center City, MN: Hazelden Press, 2010); Cecilia Hansen Löfstrand and Kirsi Juhlia, "The Discourse of Consumer Choice in the Pathways Housing First Model," *European Journal of Homelessness* 6, no. 2 (2012): 47–68.

[61] It is possible that choice played a more prominent role in the training and technical assistance narratives involving government and service providers. If it does, we would likely have evidence of

choice as important to the "how to." The public discourse I analyze in this project shows us that choice drops out of the question of why housing first ought to be adopted.

[62] An exception to this may be found in Leyla Gulcur et al., "Housing, Hospitalization, & Cost". In this case, authored with Tsemberis, choice remains a central element. The authors offer it as the explanation for the reduction in costs.

[63] Sam Tsemberis and Sara Asmussen, "From Streets to Homes"; Sam Tsemberis and Cherie Elfenbein, "Perspective on Voluntary"; Sam Tsemberis, "Streets to Homes."

[64] Sam Tsemberis and Ronda P. Eisenberg, "Pathways to Housing."

[65] Steve Berg, interview with Whitney Gent, November 13, 2015.

[66] Pew Research Center, "The 2004 Political Landscape -- Part 4: Success, Poverty, and Government Responsibility," November 5, 2003, http://www.people-press.org/2003/11/05/part-4-success-poverty-and-government-responsibility/.

[67] Jens Manuel Krogstad and Kim Parker, "Public Is Sharply Divided in Views of Americans in Poverty" (Pew Research Center, September 16, 2014), http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/16/public-is-sharply-divided-in-views-of-americans-in-poverty/.

[68] Jeremy Rosen, interview with Whitney Gent, December 11, 2014. Businesses have long played a significant role in the management of public spaces, and in efforts to oust homeless people from those spaces.

[69] Randall Amster, *Lost In Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2008); Leonard C. Feldman, *Citizens Without Shelter*; Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).

[70] George W. Bush, "The President's Management Agenda" (Executive Office of the President, September 2001), http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA394421.

[71] George W. Bush, 4.

[72] "Interview with David Hartman of ABC News on the 1984 U.S. Presidential Election" (Reagan Library Archives, January 30, 1984), https://www.reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/speeches/1984/13084c.htm.

[73] Philip Mangano, interview with Whitney Gent, January 19, 2016. See Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001); Clayton M. Christensen, *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1997); Clayton M. Christensen and Michael E. Raynor, *The Innovator's Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2003).

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[74] Ibid. See also CSPAN, *U.S Conference of Mayors Annual Winter Meeting* (Washington, D.C., 2003), https://www.c-span.org/video/?174732-1/urban-issues.

[75] "Ending Chronic Homelessness," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2002.

[76] Philip Mangano, speaking at CSPAN, *U.S. Conference of Mayors*.

[77] Teresa Gowan, *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[78] Courtney Cronley, "Unraveling the Social Construction of Homelessness," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 20, no. 2 (March 9, 2010): 319–33; Sheldon Danzinger and Sandra K. Danzinger, "Poverty, Race, and Antipoverty Policy Before and After Hurricane Katrina," *Du Bois Review* 3, no. 1 (2006): 23–36.

[79] Robert Asen, *Visions of Poverty: Welfare Policy and the Political Imagination* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002); Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*.

[80] Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*; Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

[81] Kathleen Arnold also makes this assertion in Kathleen R. Arnold, *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity*, 88.

[82] Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor*, 15.

[83] For more on connection between the "threat" posed by poor people and notions of deservedness, see Herbert J. Gans, *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[84] Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*.

[85] Rickie Solinger, *Beggars and Choosers*; Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust*, 51.

[86] Si Cantwell, "Common Sense: Housing Plan Might Help End Chronic Homelessness," *Star News*, March 30, 2006.

[87] Much ink has been spilled over the neoliberal tendency to view the market as a panacea. For a few excellent examples, see Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*; Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).
[88] Jessica Kowal, "Homeless Alcoholics Receive a Permanent Place to Live, and Drink" (New York Times, July 5, 2006), http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/05/us/05homeless.html.

[89] Jessica Kowal.

[90] Mark Johnston, interview with Whitney Gent, December 8, 2015.

[91] Jamie Taylor, interview with Whitney Gent, December 4, 2015.

[92] Linda Kauffman, interview with Whitney Gent, December 2, 2015.

[93] Maria Saporta, “Organization Provides Homeless a Room -- and Hope,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 23, 2006, sec. F.

[94] Forrest Gillmore, interview with Whitney Gent, December 10, 2014.

[95] Again, this is not to say that choice wasn’t an important part of their internal conversations. Rather, their messaging to policymakers, media, and broader publics was streamlined.

[96] Steve Berg, interview with Whitney Gent, November 13, 2015.

[97] Jennifer Perlman and John Parvensky, “Denver Housing First Collaborative: Cost Benefit Analysis and Program Outcomes Report” (Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, December 11, 2006), https://shnny.org/uploads/Supportive_Housing_in_Denver.pdf; Susan E. Collins, Daniel K. Malone, and Seema L. Clifasefi, “Housing Retention in Single-Site Housing First for Chronically Homeless Individuals With Severe Alcohol Problems,” *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. S2 (December 2013): S269–74; Deborah K. Padgett, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Sam J. Tsemberis, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives*, 57.

[98] City of Seattle -- Office of the Mayor, “‘Housing First’ Approach to Homelessness Brings Hope to Hard Lives,” January 9, 2008, https://homelessalliance.files.wordpress.com/2008/01/housing-first-approach-to-homelessness-brings-hope-to-hard.pdf.

[99] City of Seattle -- Office of the Mayor.

[100] Housing First Task Force, “Report of the 2008 Housing First Task Force” (State of New Mexico, October 2008), http://www.drugpolicy.org/docUploads/nm_housing09.pdf.

[101] Housing First Task Force, 4.

[102] Christy Respress, interview with Whitney Gent, November 12, 2015.

[103] Forrest Gillmore, interview with Whitney Gent, December 10, 2014; Vincent Kane, interview with Whitney Gent, November 25, 2015; Lloyd Pendleton, interview with Whitney Gent, December 2, 2015; Jeremy Rosen, interview with Whitney Gent, December 11, 2014.

Chapter 2 – Money Makes the Model Go 'Round

"I think that [Housing First] started getting some inroads into the late majority, where they were like, well, you know, this is the way the winds are blowing, this is the way the money's flowing – I love that that rhymes – and maybe we should try it, you know?" – Becky Kanis Margiotta[1]

Research evidence convinced the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), and others that Housing First was an effective way to address homelessness, yet in 2000, Housing First was still being implemented in only a small handful of cities. By 2010, Sam Tsemberis's model had "been replicated in more than 100 cities throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe."[2] What facilitated this rapid spread of a model that upends traditional approaches to homelessness? How were local communities persuaded to take up the model? It's clear that this was neither a top-down process of persuasion nor a linear one; instead, national-level rhetors functioned as nodal points in a network of communication, as conduits of messaging around Housing First. In this chapter, I look to the circulation of messages about Housing First between and among national-level rhetors and state and local communities. For the purposes of this analysis, "national-level rhetors" refers primarily to NAEH, USICH, and their representatives.[3]

NAEH and USICH were building a message from the fragments of local communities' stories, shaping them into a particular and consistent story about Housing First that they told to whomever would listen: governors, mayors, county executives, news media, planning committees, etc. Philip Mangano, executive director of USICH during the Bush administration, describes this as a process of "marketing" a "solution" to chronic homelessness.[4] Marketing, of course, is about promoting and selling products/services. It is persuasion motivated by capital.

And, indeed, many of the primary tactics used to "sell" Housing First were about money. In my interviews with people involved with the spread of Housing First at every level – federal, state, and local – money was continually cited as an important reason to adopt the model. Linda Kauffman, who worked for both the Washington, DC, government and Pathways DC before becoming a national-level advocate, explains that "the power of the purse strings" persuades people to adopt Housing First, even when arguments about its effectiveness failed.[5] Mangano holds that it is a "re-framing of homelessness in economic terms that's been generating an unprecedented amount of political will all across our country."[6]

Money appears in this messaging to make a case for Housing First and, in recent years, the federal government has increasingly allocated dollars to Housing First programs over other kinds of homelessness interventions. In these ways, money serves as both justification and inducement for the model. It is the argument for adopting housing first, and the incentive to do so. In this chapter, I focus on the symbiotic relationship between these functions, arguing that they offer us insight into the rhetorical force of money in the policymaking process. Together, money as justification and money's capacity to compel illuminate the simultaneity of its materiality and rhetoricity. I begin the chapter by providing context for national-level advocacy for Housing First, focusing particularly on NAEH and USICH's push for 10 year plans to end chronic homelessness. Next, I explain what I mean when I refer to justification-inducement as a symbiotic pairing, and outline the contributions of scarcity to this pairing. Then, I offer an analysis of the cost-based arguments advocates used to justify Housing First, showing how the wellbeing of "taxpayers," rather than chronically homeless people, becomes the reason for adopting the model. I follow this with an examination of the ways funding functions to induce

communities to take up the model, arguing that it has a performative function in policymaking processes. Finally, I explore the relationships of materiality and discursivity in this symbiotic relationship, and its implications for both housing advocates and rhetorical scholars.

PLANNING TO END “CHRONIC” HOMELESSNESS

At the start of the George W. Bush administration, the federal government had been funding homelessness programs via the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act for 13 years, and local communities had established programs to help address the needs of homeless people across the country. [7] Still, the number of people experiencing homelessness in the United States had not seen any decline. In a report released in 2000, “A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years,” the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) argued that the problem was that the federal government and most local communities were planning “how to manage homelessness, not how to end it.” [8]

The solution, they proposed, could be found in a four-part strategy. First, communities should “Plan for Outcomes,” by improving data collection on homelessness and focusing on *ending* it. Second, communities should work to “Close the Front Door,” by investing in homelessness prevention and rewarding safety net programs that improve their outcomes. Third, they should “Open the Back Door,” by quickly re-housing people who become homeless. Fourth, there needs to be an investment in “Building the Infrastructure,” by making affordable housing more widely available, increasing incomes, and improving services available to homeless and poor people. If all of these strategies were implemented simultaneously, NAEH believed homelessness could be ended across the country within ten years. It began

encouraging local communities to prepare such plans. NAEH's core strategy for "open[ing] the back door" was a Housing First approach. "For the chronically homeless," they said, "this means permanent supportive housing (housing with services) -- a solution that will save money as it reduces the use of other public systems. For families and less disabled single adults it means getting people very quickly into permanent housing and linking them with services."[9]

Less than a year after the report's release, HUD Secretary Mel Martinez gave the keynote address at NAEH's National Conference on Ending Homelessness and formally endorsed the organization's ten-year plan efforts. Admitting that homelessness is a "national problem," Martinez committed HUD as a partner with advocates working to end it, and promised to reactivate the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).[10] The council, authorized by the McKinney Act, was created as an "'independent establishment' within the executive branch…charged with…coordinating the federal response to homelessness" across agencies like HUD, the Department of Labor, the Veterans Administration, the Department of Education, and more, and with "creating a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation."[11] USICH had become dormant during the Clinton administration due to a lack of funding.

Rather than committing to ending all homelessness, Martinez emphasized ending homelessness for *chronically* homeless people, and George W. Bush "echoed that endorsement, making ending chronic homelessness an administration-side goal."[12] A 1998 study of administrative data on homeless shelter usage in New York City and Philadelphia served as justification for this focus. Its authors, Randall Kuhn and Dennis P. Culhane, argued that the people who were staying in homeless shelters for the longest periods of time were a

relatively small percentage of shelter users -- roughly 10 percent -- but were consuming one half to two thirds of the cities' shelter resources.[13] These were "chronically" homeless people in a typology that identified chronic, episodic, and transitional "clusters" of homeless people.[14] "From a policy and program-planning perspective," they held, "this study suggests that efforts designed to reduce homelessness would be more efficient and potentially more effective if they were tailored and targeted by cluster."[15] NAEH defined chronically homeless people as people who "live in the shelter system," the most difficult cases who "will require long term subsidization of both housing and services because of their disabilities."[16] NAEH's recommendations for 10 year plans attended to all three clusters in the typology, but the federal government's focus, for the next seven years, would become ending chronic homelessness.

Not all advocates were on board with the label of "chronic homelessness." The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), for example, argued that this terminology pathologizes homelessness, "distort[ing] the history, causes, and nature of homelessness" and "enabl[ing] policy makers to disconnect the issue of homelessness from the acute lack of affordable housing and poverty that underlie it." The federal government's focus on chronic homelessness, NCH argued, would "pit vulnerable populations against each other in competition for scarce federal resources."[17]

Nevertheless, starting in 2002, USICH's new executive director, Philip Mangano, built its primary policy objective around ending chronic homelessness, and paired this goal with Housing First as its core implementation strategy. Because the Bush administration was

committed to local action and local planning, Mangano had to "sell" the Housing First approach around the country. He explains it this way:

> Sam [Tsemberis]'s innovative idea [Housing First] with the research and data and the fact that he was doing it in a couple of places at that time, that offered an opportunity to market a solution to the mayors and county executives and governors we were asking to end chronic homelessness…[W]e went out into the country and my regional coordinators set up meetings and I would go in and basically they were, in some ways, a sales force, and I would go in and close the deal as the representative of the federal government, as the representative of the president. And integral to that marketing, to those conversations with mayors and county executives, integral to that was the research and this innovative idea, and the idea of cost effectiveness. [18]

Mangano recognized that to convince communities to adopt Housing First, he needed more than an innovative idea. The model's reversal of the housing readiness approach met with some resistance, striking many as counterintuitive -- even Mangano described himself initially as "agnostic" about Housing First.[19]

As Mangano's language of a "sales force" and "closing the deal" suggests, USICH turned to business rhetoric to do this persuasive work. He explains, "We were trying to make it as simple and adaptable and good for dissemination as possible…based on business principles and practices…[W]e were replacing a social service vernacular with a business and economic vernacular."[20] USICH framed its approach in terms of the President's Management Agenda, mobilized business authors to write and speak in favor of Housing First, and referred heavily to cost-benefit studies in media interviews and meetings with local leaders.[21] NAEH similarly relied on cost studies and arguments about cost-effectiveness to promote 10 year plans and solutions to chronic homelessness.

Before I present my analysis of these arguments and their interplay with federal funding, it is important to note that the rhetoric used to spread Housing First was not always

explicitly tied to it. As I explained in the introduction, Housing First is a form of permanent supportive housing (PSH), but not the exclusive form. NAEH, USICH, news media, and others do not always name Housing First in the materials I analyzed, sometimes using the more generic umbrella term instead. In part, this is because there is not always clear agreement as to what Housing First refers. Steve Berg, vice president for programs and policy at NAEH, explains:

> [T]he phrasing 'Housing First' to me, it's a very sort of general concept, but I know some people use that as the name for a more specific model… we tend to talk here about permanent supportive housing as a model of housing combined with supportive services targeted to people with the most severe kind of disabilities who are homeless…and for us, Housing First is maybe a little more of a slogan for a general approach to dealing with homelessness, rather than the name for a specific model.[22]

In part, this was because the phrase can easily be misunderstood. The federal government now explicitly uses "Housing First" in its notices of funding availability (NOFAs), but Mangano was sometimes reticent to use the term because people in government had a "misapprehension" about just "plac[ing] people in housing, wish[ing] them well, and that's the end of it" – the model's supportive services are not apparent in the phrase. "So not utilizing that particular term," Mangano says, "though utilizing all the principles of Housing First, became one way of marketing the idea without marketing the name, lest people react to it and we not get those initiatives, those NOFAs, out to the public."[23] Thus, the rhetoric used to spread the model of Housing First often referred to its defining characteristics, or emerged from a discussion of "chronic" homelessness, even when the term itself was absent.

MATERIALITY AND SYMBIOSIS

"Money," Richard Seaford says, "is, puzzlingly, both a thing and a relation."[24] Put another way, money is at once material and rhetorical. Whether it circulates as coinage or bills,

or passes through machines as numerals and decimal points, it does not simply facilitate the production of goods. Money communicates more than exchange-value. "Money is attached to a variety of social relations," Viviana A. Zelizer explains.[25] That people regard money differently in different contexts is evidence of its social construction. There is, for example, "dirty money" and "clean money," "charity" and "wealth." Zelizer continues, "What *kind* of money it is and *whose* money…matter[s] greatly." When money is "public," members of publics, as taxpayers feel entitled to input into its allocation. This is, in part, due to rhetorics that center "taxpayer money" as justification for policymaking decisions – an idea to which we will return.

Debates about budgeting are a fundamental part of U.S. public policymaking. Budgets are deeply rhetorical, as are debates about them. Deliberation about money is rarely merely about money, though. Debates about budget allocations regularly give rise to public conversations about the merits of proposed and existing policy. Donald F. Kettl asserts that budgets are "the one place in American government where almost everything of importance comes together."[26] David Levasseur explains that "In the rhetorical struggle for scarce resources, budget debates become the contested space where policy makers [sic] define what they stand for and what they stand against."[27] While finances are rarely the only argument offered in a public policy debate, money plays a potent rhetorical and material role. Money can serve as a reason a policy should be adopted, (i.e., it's cheaper), it can be what enables a policy, (i.e., we can't do this without funding), or it can be a reason to reject a policy (i.e., we're in a budget crisis, or that's too expensive). Inclusion in a budget symbolizes a policy's worth – to a public and/or to the policymakers who successfully argued for its inclusion. In such a case, the

policy is viewed as *valuable* enough to deserve funding (though opinions on this matter, of course, will vary).

The persuasive power of money and its associated metaphors is not new as an object of rhetorical study. Scholars have used economic metaphors to explain how rhetoric works. Pierre Bourdieu, for example, says, “Utterances receive their value…only in their relation to a market…The value of the utterance depends on the relation of power.”[28] And Deirdre McCloskey calls rhetoric “an economics of language.”[29] In the inverse, scholars have described how economics, accounting, and even money itself are rhetorical.[30] Debates about Marxism, class, and materialism have made significant contributions to our understanding of the nature of rhetoric, and new work continues to emerge on rhetoric and economics.[31] Robert Asen’s study of “market talk” illuminated the prevalence of economic metaphor in policymaking, and a bevy of work decries the rhetorical influence of neoliberalism in U.S. politics and society.[32]

I build upon this body of scholarship by exploring the relationship between money’s materiality and rhetoricity. Discussions about the relationship between rhetoric and materiality, broadly, have appeared in rhetorical scholarship since the early 1980s. Michael Calvin McGee asserts that all rhetoric is material in its impact on people’s lives, that it can be reconstructed out of fragments of its historical “residue.”[33] Critical rhetoric then offered a framework in which all discourse, and thus, all power, could be viewed as material.[34] Scholars have since challenged this conception with cautions against reducing all material experience to the discursive, and against restricting our understanding of materiality to representation.[35] It is my position that rhetoric has material effects, and the material can have rhetorical effects, but rhetoric is not itself necessarily material. In this debate, the discussion of rhetoric’s materiality has largely

centered on power, particularly as it relates to Marxist and capitalist ideologies; yet, the conversation rarely turns to the rhetoricity and materiality of money itself, an oversight I aim to ameliorate here.

Policy debates are a good site for exploring rhetoric and materiality because they, through budgeting processes, explicitly pair discourse and funding *in circulation*. Amanda Nell Edgar explains that rhetoric has material impact by operating as a "force" that "forges paths between individual people and entities, pressing against other discourses in both support and resistance, and forming networked connections in its path."[36] In this case, I examine what I view as a prominent pairing in policymaking: money as justification and money as inducement, where justification is primarily discursive, and inducement is both material and discursive (money is made meaningful by discourse). As we will see, when money and discourse circulate, they reinforce particular messages and ideologies, building connections and perpetuating particular rhetorics.

In the case of Housing First, national-level rhetors used cost arguments to persuade local communities to adopt the model. These arguments supplied the justification for adopting Housing First as a replacement for housing readiness-based models. The reasons these rhetors provided justify their own attention to Housing First (and to chronic homelessness) while also seeking to convince governments and service providers at the state and local levels to adopt the model for themselves. At the same time, at the urging of these rhetors, the federal government was allocating and earmarking funds for Housing First, providing a financial inducement to its implementation. These money-based forms of persuasion function differently, but they operate in tandem. Together, they perform a kind of rhetorical symbiosis.

Symbiosis, in biological terms, describes a relationship wherein two or more organisms live in close proximity to one another – even attached to one another – and "contribute to one another's support."[37] The term has also found application in psychiatry as a means to describe human relationships of interdependence and mutual reinforcement (or detriment). In the justification-inducement pairing, money serves as both the reason and the means for adopting the policy. The elements of the pairing can exist singularly – one could make an argument based in cost without allocating money as an inducement, and one could budget for a particular policy approach without offering a financial justification for it. Yet, in relationship, justification and inducement are made stronger. Each reinforces the other.

SCARCITY

Central to the symbiosis of the justification-inducement pairing is the notion of scarcity. It underlies the arguments provided by advocates to justify their policy choice, and it is what makes financial inducements so powerful. Scarcity, the idea that there are limited resources with which to meet insatiable human desires and needs, serves as a core assumption of contemporary western economic theory. Economists have frequently defined their very discipline in terms of the problem of scarcity. Costas Panayotakis, for example, points to economists who "declare economics to be 'about scarcity'" or refer to it as "the science of scarcity." "This is especially true," he argues, "for the college textbooks that play a critical role in shaping the general public's understanding of economic phenomena."[38] Defending scarcity's centrality to the discipline, economist Steven Horwitz asserted, "Scarcity is like gravity: it is omnipresent, and much of our lives is a struggle to find ways to overcome it."[39]

A number of heterodox economists have critiqued both the notion of scarcity and its centrality to the discipline. The *perception* of scarcity has not always been ubiquitous, these scholars note, pointing to hunter-gatherer societies for their evidence of scarcity as socially constructed.[40] Nicholas Xenos views this social construction as a construction of modernity, a response to the increased availability of goods amplified desires for material goods after the Industrial Revolution.[41] The consequences of the dominant construction of scarcity are widespread, critics argue. Panayotakis, for example, says that "the treatment [scarcity] receives by neoclassical economists serves to legitimize the capitalist socio-economic system."[42] More specifically, and more germane to a discussion of rhetoric surrounding Housing First, Lyla Mehta asserts that "by framing scarcity as an inherent characteristic of resources…scarcity narratives naturalize the failure of societies to provide for the needs of the poor."[43]

Key to the arguments I make in this chapter is a recognition that scarcity is rhetorically constructed. This is not to say there cannot be an actual material shortage of goods or resources. Rather, monetary scarcity, of the sort that motivates both the justification for and inducement toward particular policies, is primarily rhetorical. Currency is material, but both its quantities and its value are determined by the makers of fiscal policy. As proponents of Modern Monetary Theory argue, because currency is no longer backed by any commodity (i.e., gold) in sovereign economies, its value is established by fiat and governments can never "run out of money."[44] New cash can always be printed, and the value of currency and debt can always be adjusted. This is not to say that there are no implications for changing the fiat value of money, particularly in a globalized economy. Debt means something in relation to other national economies, as do currency values. But all of this is imbued with meaning by rhetoric, even if

there are actual material symbols, like dollar bills, to which these meanings attach. As Arjun Appadurai explains, the contemporary U.S. economy is "essentially linguistic," based on promises to pay and promises regarding the (future) value of assets.[45]

The widespread conception that money is scarce (in particular, public money) matters because of the prominent role economics plays in public policy analysis and deliberation. Economic "assumptions, methods, and essential principles, which were originally developed for the analysis of markets," explain John Gillroy and Maurice Wade, "have come to dominate the formulation, evaluation, recommendation, and implementation of public policy."[46] Cost-benefit analysis and cost-efficiency analysis are two such methods that, since the 1930s, have been widely used policy "decision-making tools."[47] President Ronald Reagan, for example, used executive orders to create a system that required all major rules and regulations in the executive branch to pass a cost-benefit analysis test before they could be implemented.[48] During the Clinton administration, the Government Performance and Management Act required a number of cost-benefit analyses and the creation of agency-specific strategic plans.[49]

These analyses operate under assumptions of scarcity; in fact, their very goal is to determine what is the best use of scarce resources in a given policy scenario. In cost-based public policy analyses, social problems are assessed primarily as economic problems with economic solutions. Cost-benefit and cost effectiveness studies are attractive bases for policymaking in part because they bear the illusion of objectivity, but the notion that quantitative measures are more rational than other standards for decision making obfuscates their ideological underpinnings. Lawrence Tribe says, "the myth endures that [these analyses]… provide nothing beyond value-free devices for organizing thought in rational ways."[50] Yet, Tribe

explains, cost analyses collapse process into result, neglect to account for variables that do not appear to be objective, risk "anesthetizing moral feeling," and make a distinctly ideological choice in valuing "total net benefits" over "individual satisfaction." Other critics argue that cost-benefit analyses leave out questions of justice, and tend to be biased against the preferences of people experiencing poverty.[51] Nevertheless, cost-benefit analysis serves as the basis for one of national-level advocates' most prominent arguments for Housing First. As these arguments are circulated in processes of justification and inducement, they strengthen the notion that scarcity ought to fuel policy decisions.

JUSTIFICATION

Cost-based studies are foundational to the arguments national-level advocates make for the widespread adoption of Housing First. The economic argument for Housing First essentially amounts to this: 1) chronic homelessness is expensive, and 2) housing people is the most cost-efficient method of addressing chronic homelessness. NAEH and USICH do not, to my knowledge, conduct any cost studies of their own. However, they have served as aggregators and disseminators of cost-benefit studies over the years, making them a central piece of their messaging to local communities. Their rhetoric is informed by the local even as it is directed to the local. National-level messaging around the aggregated cost studies appears consistently in local media coverage of Housing First. Thus, it is not merely my contention that national-level advocates persuaded local communities to adopt Housing First; it has not been a unidirectional process. Rather, looking to national-level rhetors offer us a key nodal point for observing the

circulation of financial arguments for the model as they collect and redistribute cost studies from and to local groups.

On their websites, in speeches, and in key documents like their toolkits, national-level advocates offer cost comparisons as reasons for communities to create plans to end homelessness, or to simply implement permanent supportive housing. NAEH's "A Plan, Not a Dream," moves directly from a presentation of U.S. homeless demographics to "The Cost of Homelessness," before it offers its strategies for "ending" it. This section breaks the costs of homelessness down into hospitalization and medical treatment, prisons and jails, emergency shelter, and lost opportunity – which laments the "loss of future productivity" – via cost studies from communities around the country. These serve as one of the primary arguments for the planning approach NAEH advocates. "Because they have no regular place to stay, people who are homeless use a variety of public systems in an inefficient and costly way," the report says. "Preventing a homeless episode, or ensuring a speedy transition into stable permanent housing can result in significant cost savings."[52] For USICH, Mangano explains that these cost comparisons were the core of its message to communities working on homelessness: "In the basic business principle of doing cost studies and cost-benefit analysis, we were providing the raison d'etre for communities to invest in Housing First."[53] Money became *the* reason to house chronically homeless people.

The argument often begins with the same statistic: 10 percent of homeless people consume 50 percent of the resources available to address homelessness. These numbers, which emerge from the Kuhn and Culhane study cited above, appear in rhetorical justifications for Housing First at all levels. They are cited in NAEH's "A Plan, Not a Dream" and "Toolkit for

Ending Homelessness," and in the USICH guide to creating 10 year plans.[54] Mangano repeats them in public speeches regularly, including at the 2003 U.S. Conference of Mayors, where he announced the federal government's desire that cities form 10 year plans to end homelessness.[55] Journalists used these numbers to explain how "society gets a much better payoff" when it addresses chronic homelessness with housing, and local government and service providers shared this statistic to justify their approach.[56] For example, Kerry Bate, executive director of the Salt Lake County Housing Authority in Utah appeared in a 2004 newspaper article about a set of Housing First apartments. The article says, one "target is the 10 percent of the homeless population that is considered 'chronically homeless' and seems to revolve constantly between street and shelter. While making up only 10 percent of the homeless population, this group eats up 50 percent of homeless resources, Bate said, meaning if that group were off the street homeless resources could be refocused."[57]

This 10 percent/50 percent statistical comparison offers an illustration of disproportionality in an environment of scarcity. It is used to justify a focus on a small subset of the overall U.S. homeless population. Mangano, for example, told the U.S. Conference of Mayors, "That 10% consumes more than half of all homeless resources. That's why the President and Secretary have made this population a priority."[58] At the 2002 NAEH National Conference, Secretary Martinez himself said, "I share your deep concern for every segment of the homeless population. But I cannot ignore the research, which tells us that 10 percent of individuals who experience chronic homelessness consume more than half of all homeless services. *Because they use so many resources, they need to be a priority in our strategy.*"[59] In this way, chronically homeless people are defined by their consumption.

By describing a category of homelessness as "chronic," advocates and policymakers were distinguishing those who met the definition as a particular kind of person, drawing on a language of pathology – something chronic simply cannot seem to get better. Political scientist Kathleen Arnold explains, "Federal definitions of homelessness [e.g., "chronic"] are created within a certain budget and draw distinctions between deserving and undeserving poor, as not every homeless person can be provided for within the budget allotted."[60] Dominant representations of chronically homeless people as alcoholics, drug addicts, and generally unsympathetic figures support longstanding conceptions of the "undeserving poor," people whose needs appear to be due to their own faults.[61] Likewise, accusations of over-consumption feed the notion that homeless people are overly dependent, a drain on public resources, and in need of accountability and regulation.[62] The linking of chronic homelessness to the consumption of public resources also rhetorically positions them as chronically costly. However, financial arguments for Housing First may shift the bases for assessing deservedness. In the 10 percent/50 percent comparison, chronically homeless people become a priority not because of their level of need, but because of their resource use. Instead of deserving assistance because of one's personal merits or morality, one becomes worthy of help via the harm he/she causes to others – by reducing the amount of funding available to help other more sympathetic groups of homeless people, like homeless families with children.

But the problem is not just that chronically homeless people consume a disproportionate amount of the resources allocated to address homelessness; they also use up a "disproportionate" amount of the broader public's resources. The editorial board of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* put it this way: "people who are homeless and have a chronic

mental illness or drug addiction – or both… consume a disproportionate share of public tax dollars when they're shackled to a gurney in a hospital emergency room or locked up in jail."[63] NAEH's Toolkit for Ending Homelessness also describes the benefits of permanent supportive housing in terms of burden-alleviation for public resources: "This model relieves taxpayers of the expensive round of emergency services [chronically homeless people] now require."[64] The toolkit also quantifies cost savings for a number of public services.

These arguments make Housing First and plans to end chronic homelessness relevant to people who may not otherwise be interested in or committed to addressing homelessness by interpellating them into the conversation as "taxpayers." In this way, articulations of disproportionate consumption are made to feel personal to their audiences: *my* money is supporting chronically homeless people's over-consumption of resources; therefore, I am directly affected by the behaviors of homeless people. These arguments also tap into notions of deservedness. They imply that chronically homeless people do not deserve any more resources than *anyone* else – not just other homeless people. Rather, chronically homeless people may actually deserve fewer resources. Notice how the editorial board refers to shackles and jail to illustrate disproportionality, leaning on stereotypes of homeless criminality to make the case for a redirection of funds to supportive housing approaches. Here, again, we see traditional notions of undeservedness reinforced as resource consumption becomes an argument for assistance.

Similarly, the first two answers to "What Results Can Your Community Expect?" in USICH's step-by-step guide to creating 10 year plans are about cost savings in public resources.[65] And, in its "Good to Better to Great" Power Point presentation, inspired by the

work of business author Jim Collins, USICH describes the "Budget Implications" of addressing chronic homelessness this way: "Ending chronic homelessness often results in reductions in: emergency room visits, ambulance fees, EMT costs, hospital admissions, arrests, incarcerations, court costs, treatment costs in acute behavioral health programs."[66] This was the only slide in the presentation, used by USICH to share best practices for plans to end chronic homelessness with local communities, that offers any justification or "implications" for the plans.

Pointing to an over-consumption of *public* resources helps to avoid the appearance of "taxpayer" selfishness. Claims of disproportionality are rooted in a belief that resources ought to be allocated proportionally, or "equally." When a subset of the public accesses more resources than others, this appears as a violation of equality, and notions of scarcity compound this effect by fueling trade-off thinking.[67] In an environment where people perceive public resources to be limited, the misuse of *my* taxes ostensibly makes fewer resources available to all non-chronically homeless members of the community. In this way, a lack of proportionality in service consumption seems to treat unfairly members of the public writ large, even though other community members' comparative usage of these resources indicates less need for them. The focus of these claims is not on the problems and inequalities that lead to some homeless people's greater need for public resources, but on the proportion of public monies spent to address those needs. Homeless people become not the victims of inequality but the perpetrators of it, while "taxpayers" appear as unselfishly interested in preserving public resources for all.

All of this leads to an assertion that homeless people are very "expensive" people. Mangano regularly says things like, "Contrary to public perception, these are the most

expensive people to the public wallet."[68] In newspaper and magazine articles that discuss chronic homelessness and its solutions, individual people are often named as costly. For example, a 2007 article in the *Modesto Bee* started with this line: "Mick Matthews and his girlfriend, Marlene, Terry and Linda Cool, Steve Harris and Mad Dog – they're not just homeless, they're the chronic homeless, and they're very, very expensive. So expensive, in fact, they've caught the attention of the Bush administration."[69] A *New Yorker* article by Malcolm Gladwell describes "Million-Dollar Murray," a "chronic inebriate" in Reno, Nevada who, over ten years of homelessness, accumulated hospital bills…substance-abuse-treatment costs, doctors' fees, and other expenses" in excess of one million dollars.[70] The article was widely distributed, and cited by other news outlets – NPR interviewed Gladwell about the article shortly after it was printed.[71] USICH distributed Gladwell's article to every sitting member of Congress and to all of the mayors and county executives with whom it had a relationship.[72] Murray became famous for being "expensive," as Housing First – conceptually, if not in name – became increasingly recognized as the most effective way to address expensive people like him. [73] In this construction, it is not homelessness that is expensive, nor the way that governments, service providers, and communities manage it, but the people themselves who cost "the public" lots of money.

The "expense" of these people appears as a matter of mere arithmetic. They cost communities lots of money, therefore, they appear to be objectively "expensive." But perceptions of expense are directly related to perceptions of worth, and assignations of worth are not value-free. A $4 apple would feel extraordinarily expensive to the average grocery shopper in the United States, but a $4 coffee at Starbucks may feel like a very reasonable

purchase to the same consumer. The value of the coffee cannot be explained solely by scarcity or any other objective factor. Starbucks has become a ubiquitous presence in most U.S. cities. It is, these days, nearly as American as apple pie. Yet its cultural capital makes it “cool,” making people more willing to spend more money to consume it. Similarly, subjectivities are differently valued according to their perceived worth in a society. It may feel less expensive and more reasonable to spend $1 million of public funds on the healthcare costs of a politician, for example, than a “chronic inebriate.” These valuations are ideological – the perceived relative worth of a person (or group of people) is based in beliefs about how the world *ought* to work, and what people are *supposed* to do. Homeless people are “expensive” because the stereotypes that call up notions of undeservedness lead people to believe they are worth less.

The practice of anonymizing people can make these cost-benefit analyses appear even more objective (and make moral judgments on the character of homeless people appear more justified) by reducing them to numbers. In many cases, homeless people remain unnamed in presentations of these analyses -- their “cost” to the “public wallet” stands in for them. This happens particularly often in news coverage of plans to address homelessness. Here are a few examples: In 2003, the *Denver Post* editorial board wrote, “According to a study by the University of Pennsylvania, the chronic homeless cost cities about $54,000 a year per person in services.”[74] The *Christian Science* Monitor offered, “Dayton Ohio…has found that on the street, one group of mentally ill homeless individuals cost taxpayers $203 a day” – which is more than $74,000 in a year.[75] The *Spokesman Review* (Spokane, WA) points to a study in King County, Washington, to say, “When they were on the streets, [‘the city’s worst homeless drunks’] cost taxpayers at least $50,000 annually as they made the circuit from ER to sobering center to jail

to street."[76] These descriptions (and studies) quantify individuals in terms of their burden to taxpayers without any back story. They offer generalized categories of people like "the chronic homeless," "mentally ill homeless" or "homeless drunks" and attribute a dollar amount to people readers identify with these categories, defining their value (or lack thereof) in terms of cost.

Each of these costs is offered in contrast to the cost of housing the "expensive" people who comprise the chronically homeless. In King County, people who used to cost taxpayers $50,000 can receive housing and services for only $13,000 a year.[77] With Housing First, the cost of a mentally ill homeless person dropped from $203 per day to $85 per day.[78] And compared to a cost of $54,000, Housing First in Denver "will cost about $11,000 a year per client – a fifth of the cost of ignoring the problem."[79] In every one of the at least 70 such cost studies like this (as of January 2016), the differences in cost before and after Housing First are striking.[80] These cost-benefit studies demonstrate the monetary benefits of Housing First to the state or locality implementing it, and allows their circulation to others who may be considering the model. The comparisons make Housing First appear not only as an objective matter, but as the obvious choice, because they have reduced the complexities of homelessness to arithmetic. As Mangano says, "when you look at the costs associated with the random ricocheting [through services in the system] versus the costs of the housing, I can assure you, you don't need to be Warren Buffet or even Suze Orman to understand which is the better investment in those two."[81] It's simple math.

In aggregation, these cost studies counter perceptions that Housing First might be too expensive to implement with data that suggests a community can't afford not to implement it.

Inaction amounts to fiscal irresponsibility, even to waste. A University of California – San Diego cost study of 15 chronically homeless people showed that over 18 months, "the costs of those people incurred by the city and county government came to $3 million or $200,000 per person."[82] Mangano frequently points to this cost study to make the following comparison: "For the same amount of money, they could have rented them oceanside condos and provided services. But after the expenditure, all of these people were in the same situation as they were in the beginning."[83] The comparison operates under the assumption that giving a homeless person an oceanside condo appears unreasonable -- but spending the equivalent amount of money on a homeless person without actually improving their lot appears unreasonable *and* wasteful. This sense of wastefulness also appears in Tsemberis's messaging about Housing First: "'Your tax money is already spent on police, homeless outreach services, and emergency medical care to a much greater degree than when you put a person in housing'…With a home, 'you have a shot at helping this person get his life together…Why is it better to leave [him] on the street, suffering and paying endlessly for him?"[84] "Paying endlessly" without results evokes a sense of both failure and misuse of funds, especially in an environment of perceived scarcity. While funding to address homelessness is limited largely by political will rather than a lack of possible funds, the perception that it could run out makes it appear too valuable to "waste." As one grant-maker remarked in an opinion column in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, "Public and private funding is just too precious to spend on ineffective systems."[85] Housing First, then, becomes the effective system that ameliorates the problem of waste.

Importantly, these economic arguments are paired with a sentimentality that taps into the compassionate conservatism characteristic of George W. Bush's political rhetoric, a pairing

of a "rhetoric of business efficiency" with "fundamental moral and religious values."[86] Mangano believes that arguments from compassion alone simply fail to motivate people to act on homelessness:

> We had long hoped in this country that the moral, spiritual, and humanitarian arguments that we've mustered over the years… We had long hoped that they would result in sufficient political will to bring a remedy to this moral, spiritual, and humanitarian disgrace. Not in one place in our country. Not in one place I've ever been in the world have just those arguments resulted in the remedying, not even the reduction of homelessness.

Rather than replacing arguments from compassion with "economic logic," national-level advocates framed cost studies as a boon to compassion. Cost-effectiveness is never the only reason NAEH or USICH offer for Housing First, or for addressing chronic homelessness, but it is often the primary reason. Compassion, however, is rarely offered as a justification for the model without a complementary financial argument.

The successful uptake of this messaging is evident in local uptake of the combination. In 2004, San Francisco's director of housing and homeless programs told the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* that supportive housing is "fiscally sound and it's compassionate."[87] The chair of the Massachusetts Senate Committee on Ways and Means said of Housing First in 2006, "We don't invest enough in homelessness. It looks like a lot of money up front, but there are long-term savings. I think it makes fiscal sense and it makes human sense."[88] A 2007 newspaper editorial written by the director of the Santa Clara (California) County Office of Affordable Housing and a local service provider advocated for Housing First this way: "It is smarter, more cost-efficient and kinder to come together to alleviate this most basic human suffering - not only for the homeless, but for ourselves as well."[89]

When compassion and costs are regularly paired, they become rhetorically linked in a way that risks their conflation, as in Mangano's assertion that cost-benefit studies are "the new vernacular of compassion."[90] As this happens, compassion becomes a financial act and financial acts become compassionate. Not only does this limit the potential for more variegated manifestations of compassion; it also permits the proliferation of economic logics as solutions to political and social problems. This rhetoric calls supporters of Housing First to see themselves as compassionate, even when their support is based on economics. Hence, this pairing reinforces the notion that "taxpayers" are acting selflessly, despite the messages' insistence that the financial needs of the housed public come first.

INDUCEMENT

As national advocates were using financial arguments to promote Housing First, they were also working to build the pot of federal money available to assist local communities in implementing the model. In media interviews, Mangano regularly pointed to increased federal homelessness assistance funding as evidence of the George W. Bush administration's commitment to ending chronic homelessness.[91] This funding, however, is more than just help for organizations and agencies interested in Housing First. It serves as an inducement to adopt the advocates' (now the federal government's) preferred homeless services model. Money pushes the model forward. Forrest Gillmore, executive director of a local Housing First provider in Bloomington, Indiana, explained: "I feel like…the federal government…[has] done a lot to move [Housing First] forward…they've talked a lot about 'let's end chronic homelessness,' and their funding programs are, you know, oriented in a way to do that."[92]

The 10th Amendment to the United States Constitution limits the powers of the federal government only to those explicitly guaranteed it by the constitution, leaving the rest of the powers of government "to the States…or to the people."[93] What this means for the precise details of federalism remains a matter of judicial interpretation. Little considered by the court for many years, in the late 1980s and during the 1990s, the Supreme Court "breathed new life into" the Amendment with a series of rulings clarifying the federal government's capacity to regulate, control, or compel state action.[94] The court ruled that the federal government cannot "[tell] states what policies they must adopt, *New York v. United States* (1992), [nor force] states or local officials to implement federal laws, *Printz v. United States* (1997)."[95] Neither of these rulings, however, prevent the federal government from *persuading* states to adopt federal policy or recommendations. In this way, the policy relationship between the federal and state and local governments is a rhetorical one.

An oft-employed avenue for this kind of persuasion is federal funding. Amidst its renewed considerations of the 10th amendment, in *South Dakota v. Dole* (1987), the Supreme Court held that "Congress may attach conditions to the receipt of federal funds," so long as the conditions are "in pursuit of 'the general welfare'" and the financial incentives are "not so coercive as to pass the point at which pressure turns into compulsion."[96] Federal money, then, can legally come with strings attached, and be used "to induce the states to enact particular legislation or to regulate in a particular manner, even though Congress could not directly mandate that the states do so."[97]

As it administers federal programs and grants, the executive branch also plays a key role in this process of persuasion. Federal executives have rule making abilities, the power to

interpret the law in its administration, control over federal agency grant making, and the capacity to issue waivers that enable selective enforcement of laws.[98] In these ways, they are able to exert influence over the policies funded by the federal government, and to whom that funding is awarded. The primary administrator of federal funding for homelessness programs is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with some funding coming from other member agencies of USICH, i.e. Health and Human Services, the Veterans Administration, etc.

Although the Supreme Court has declared both that money counts as speech (*Buckley v. Valeo*, 1976) and that corporations count as people who may speak through money (*Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 2010), and, as I noted previously, despite an interest in the relationship between the rhetorical and the material, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the money/speech relationship in rhetorical studies literature. An exception, Ronald Walter Greene identifies money/speech, or the "fus[ion] of money and speech under the norm of free speech," as a concept through which we might explore the "political economy of rhetoric."[99] In *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Court ruled 7-2 that "a restriction on the amount of money a person or group can spend on political communication during a campaign necessarily reduces the quantity of expression…This is because virtually every means of communicating ideas in today's mass society requires the expenditure of money."[100] Money is speech because one cannot effectively speak politically without it. One of the implications of this conception of the money/speech relationship, of course, is that people with limited access to money (e.g., people experiencing homelessness and poverty) have a limited capacity for political participation.

This contention is debatable, but what it undoubtedly does is point to the power money has in political processes. One does not need to agree that money "speaks" in order to acknowledge that it persuades. People will do things for money, or avoid doing things for money. They will change their plans for money, or make new plans in order to get it. Money, in its material form, is persuasive. Indeed, I argue here that it is a *performative*.[101]

Judith Butler, building on J.L. Austin's notion of the performative speech act, argues that discourse performatively constitutes materiality. Through repetition and citationality, performative discourse "appears to produce that which it names, to enact its own referent, to name and to do, to name and to make."[102] Money shows us that the reverse can also be true: the material can performatively constitute discourse. Money, as a material good, has the power to name, to make, to produce. Money's rhetorical force finds its locus in its ability to, via repetitive spending and allocation, produce and sustain discourse. This does not mean that money is ever outside of meaning; it is always also made meaningful through discourse. In this case, the repeated allocation of funding for permanent supportive housing and Housing First programs is at once a citation of the discourses that support cost-benefit analysis as a decision-making calculus in public policy and part of the production of a discourse supporting Housing First.

Each year, HUD releases a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to advertise funding available for local continuums of care (CoC). The NOFA outlines eligibility requirements, HUD's "homeless policy and program priorities," and other details regarding this grant "competition." In 2016, the funds announced via the NOFA amounted to "approximately $1.9 billion."[103] Communities that wish to obtain a portion of this funding for homeless services or housing

submit applications which are ranked according to a points system explained within the NOFA. Points are awarded in a variety of categories according to how well an application reflects HUD's policy goals and preferred approaches. For example, on the 2016 scale of 200 possible points, up to 3 points were awarded for "Addressing the Needs of Victims of Domestic Violence," or up to 5 points for "Inclusive Structure and Participation."[104] Thus, only projects that do things HUD's way (at least nominally) may receive access to these funds.

These categories, and their weights, shift along with HUD's priorities. In the last two decades, HUD's ratio of funding of homeless services to housing shows a dramatic shift in the agency's funding priorities. In 1998, 57% of its funding went to services, with the remaining 43% allocated to housing. By 2014, nearly 73% of HUD's funding was awarded to housing programs.[105] In 2002, HUD introduced into the NOFA an emphasis on chronic homelessness, and announced that "to promote permanent housing, a special incentive is being provided to [applicants] that place an eligible, new permanent housing project in the number one slot on the priority list."[106] In subsequent years, in a slow progression toward Housing First, permanent supportive housing became an important part of the grant criteria. Housing First began appearing in HUD's yearly NOFAs in just 2013, worth 3 points out of a possible 150.[107] By 2016, the NOFA category with the highest number of points available was "Housing First and Reducing Barriers," for which up to 12 of 200 points could be awarded to "CoCs that demonstrate at least 75 percent of all housing project applications…submitted to this NOFA are using the Housing First approach by providing low barrier projects that do not have service participation requirements or preconditions to entry…" No other category in the application exceeds 10 possible points.[108]

More communities adopt Housing First as more money is allocated for its implementation. This funding bears a persuasive force in part because of perceptions of scarcity. The non-profit industry, generally, and homeless services in particular, exists in what feels like a perpetual environment of scarcity. It is an industry in which need seems to perpetually exceed the resources available to address it. Service providers cannot easily house people without money, and they cannot house *enough* people because they do not have *enough* money. This feeling of scarcity does not derive from an objective lack of available funding; instead, it is based in a politics of allocation. As I explained above, monetary scarcity is a rhetorical construction. It is made materially real, or closer to real, in processes of allocation as particular policies or programs are deemed (un)worthy of financial support. Funds are scarce in housing and homelessness services because the costs of housing and services are high (which is also a matter of prioritization), and because the amount of money allocated by funders to housing and homelessness programs are inadequate to their needs. Funders and policymakers are unwilling to provide the resources necessary (given the values attached to money in the current system) to adequately support these programs.

In such an environment of scarcity, the availability and allocation of money is an inducement to adopt a particular policy approach, and it compels a discursive shift. Jeremy Rosen, former advocacy director at the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, explains, “Everybody in the field who wants money, otherwise known as everybody in the field, period, will naturally adapt [the] language [of Housing First] because nobody gets funded for anything if you can’t talk the language of the funder. *You’ve got to be able to say that your*

thing is the thing that the funder wants to fund."[109] In other words, money spurs discourse – but it also constrains it.

Restricted funding like HUD's homeless services funds, and most other funding from institutional sources, constrains discursive possibilities; one can only talk about homelessness and housing in particular ways and still receive the institutions' money. "Performative acts are forms of authoritative speech," Butler explains. "[M]ost performatives…are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power. [They are] implicated in a network of authorization and punishment."[110] The awarding of funds authorizes particular ways of talking about homelessness, and particular means of addressing it. If an organization wants HUD money, it must describe its programs in terms of permanent supportive housing. It must also (typically) adjust its approach to reflect this rhetoric, by adding housing components or aligning them more closely with the model for which funding is being awarded. As the *New York Times* editorial board astutely observed in 2002, "The Bush administration's plan [was] to use federal money as an inducement – both stick and carrot" to enact its chronic homelessness agenda.[111] Talking about one's supportive housing program as low-barrier is financially incentivized (the carrot) – it earns an applicant points in the HUD process – while talking about a program as a traditional shelter model, as "three hots and a cot," can prevent a community from accessing money (the stick). A case in point, as reported by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: "In 2006, Philadelphia lost 40 percent of its HUD funding for homeless programs because its bid – made collectively for all social-service agencies – sought too much for services and not enough for permanent housing for the chronically homeless."[112] This cut compelled a reorganization; all

of Philadelphia's HUD funding was restored the next year, when its service agencies redirected their emphasis to supportive housing.

Even when people resist the model on principle, federal funding has persuaded service providers to shift their approach. Linda Kauffman, advocacy director at Community Solutions, an organization responsible for a successful campaign to house 100,000 chronically homeless people nationwide via Housing First, tells a story of one group who called her for help with Housing First:

> [Some] folks from…Texas called me and said, "Our continuum of care wants to be a" – I don't remember what the word is that they used, but – "a high achieving continuum of care." Because you get more money if you do certain things. And they said, "We all agree that we have to do Housing First." And they said, "We have, however, also agreed that we all think it's a stupid idea. So could you come down and teach us what it is, convince us what it is, and then show us how to do it?" So the federal government making it, you know, a priority as the continuum of care applications came in was huge.[113]

In order to access the money, this group had to assent to a discourse about Housing First, to learn how to talk about and implement it, then frame their work in its terms to HUD's satisfaction. Once an agency receives funding, and in order to keep receiving it, they must implement a Housing First program. This further produces and sustains a Housing First discourse, as these entities persuade members of their community and/or local government of the benefits and successes of Housing First – and overcome community resistance to it.

The power to induce – we might think of this as the agency of inducement – lies in both the people who allocate funding, as they decide what deserves funding and in what quantities, and in money itself. Money, independently of the people who make decisions about it, compels people to shift, to act, to speak, because of the way it has been situated culturally. Via its desirability in an environment of perceived scarcity, money possesses a persuasive force *in its*

materiality. The kinds of discourse it produces are dependent, however, on its allocation. They rely upon context; they are citations of already existing discourse. Hence, the arguments used for the allocation of funds are rhetorically reinforced and reproduced in people's efforts to obtain that funding. In this way, the rhetorical and the material are tightly imbricated with one another.

Communities are not without agency in these processes. They may contribute to decisions about funding allocation by providing testimony or other feedback. They may also resist – communities do not have to apply for federal homelessness funding. They may seek funding from private individuals or foundations to support their work instead, and such funding is available. Hence, money is persuading (rather than coercing) states and localities to adopt a federal policy approach, even as it relies on perceptions of scarcity to do so. As Housing First continues to proliferate as a "best practice" in funding circles, however, the options for funding for non-Housing First programs may decrease, and communities'/agencies' may perceive their agency to be threatened.

Money's capacity to induce, of course, is not limited to federal funding for Housing First programs. As states and localities add funding for Housing First projects and remove it from programs addressing homelessness otherwise, the number of Housing First programs in their communities grow. For example, Keri Farrell, Housing First division director at Washington, DC's Friendship Place, says, "if we don't have the supports of the government and the mayor and the city council, we certainly don't see the growth [of Housing First] like this. Like right now, Mayor [Muriel] Bowser is definitely an advocate of trying to end homelessness and so the dollars have been coming our way."[114]Similarly, Kiersten Quinsland, director of Housing at DC's Miriam's

Kitchen, points to “big pot[s] of money” from DC mayors Bowser and Adrian Fenty as key moments in the spread of the model across the District.[115] Money does, indeed, make the model go ‘round.

A MATERIAL-DISCURSIVE CIRCUIT

Justification and inducement can operate independently. One could make cost-based arguments for Housing First without providing funding for the model. In fact, Housing First cost studies do just that; the researchers who produce these studies are not decision makers who can authorize and allocate funding for the programs (although these studies are sometimes commissioned by those decision makers). The studies are ostensibly merely objective studies that make cost-comparisons. A major goal of these studies, though, is to promote the allocation of more funding to Housing First by demonstrating that doing so will save a community money. For advocates who aggregate and disseminate these studies, obtaining funding may even be the primary goal. In this case, financial justifications for Housing First are used to promote financial inducements for its programs – and, thus, the model’s spread.

Likewise, money’s rhetorical force is not necessarily tied to justification. Money can compel people to act without a supporting argument. It is itself an argument. For example, someone could say, “I’ll give you $25 if you go lick that pole,” without offering any reasons for that allocation – and it is likely that at least some people would do it. Still, most of the time, in policymaking, at least, financial inducements are accompanied by some sort of justification because of public expectations for government accountability in a democracy. But the reasons offered for funding do not, themselves, have to be financial. An agency or foundation could

provide funding for Housing First programs on a number of alternative justificatory bases. For example, Housing First could be funded out of a commitment to housing as a human right. It could be funded on arguments from community, e.g., homelessness is a failure of community, so we ought to supportively house people. It could, alternately, be funded on the basis of democracy, e.g., people are better able to participate in civic life if they are stably housed, so we should fund programs that house them.

This case shows us that justification and inducement, when operating together, form a kind of circuit: Advocates use cost studies to argue that Housing First should be adopted. Decision makers, persuaded by these arguments, allocate funding for Housing First programs. This funding perpetuates existing Housing First discourses and produces further evidence of the programs' cost savings, which serve as further justification for funding, and so on. This does not necessarily lead to material increases in money available. Budgeting is a matter of prioritizing and allocating. Justificatory arguments may increase the allocation of money that may serve as an inducement, but these arguments are made in a larger context; they are always in competition with others in budget deliberations.

Understanding money as performative, as produced by and productive of discourse, suggests that allocation is not just a matter of addressing needs with scarce resources. It is not just a matter of economics. Rather, the allocation of funds can both constitute and perpetuate narratives of scarcity and (re)produce the logics and discourse of the arguments used to justify that allocation. This happens in circulation. The justification-inducement circuit makes scarcity a viable argumentative resource in policy deliberation by repeating and reifying it as a driving force in political decision making. The frequency with which scarcity is used to persuade publics

of policy approaches (via justification *and* inducement) and the wide variation in the forums in which they are aired – in media, public lectures, NOFAs, community conversations, meetings of policymakers, and more – perpetuates scarcity as a cultural and economic logic. It makes scarcity a powerful rhetorical force. Allocation supports this rhetorical force by manifesting it materially (one either receives money, or does not – receives *enough* or does not), and by responding to arguments made from scarcity (this program deserves more money; this one does not). Allocation, then, is at once a material and discursive process, just as money is simultaneously material and rhetorical.

Because justification and inducement operate symbiotically, where the discursive (re)produces the material (re)produces the discursive, etc., the justification used in the politics of allocation matters tremendously. In the rhetorical circulation of Housing First, money serves as both the reason and the fuel for the program's adoption. Compassion, Mangano says, was an insufficient motivator for public action on homelessness. Cost-based arguments appear as ideologically neutral reasons to support Housing First by tapping into an economic rhetoric that casts Housing First as an ideologically-neutral choice. As I noted above, cost-based justifications do nothing to change perceptions about the causes of homelessness or the people experiencing it. They do not challenge notions of responsibility or deservedness, leaving homeless people to blame for their circumstances. This may be why cost arguments are so effective; they do not require any major shifts in perspective. It looks like a matter of simple arithmetic.

For advocates, the economic argument can appear as a means to a moral end, but the circuit I identify here illuminates the problems with such an approach. When paired with cost-benefit analyses as justification, inducement sustains and perpetuates the economic logics

underlying those arguments. The trouble is, these logics are the same as those which lead to homelessness in the first place. Cost comparisons show developers that it is more profitable to build luxury apartments than affordable housing. As a result, many communities suffer a severe lack of affordable housing for people living in lower income brackets – one of the primary causes of homelessness. Cost-benefit analysis conducted by a landlord, even informally, will likely never help one conclude that it is worth the potential costs to rent to someone with a record of evictions. In communities without adequate public housing (a widespread problem), this makes eviction a gateway to homelessness. The provision of cost as the reason to adopt Housing First, perpetuated by the inducement of funds for Housing First, reifies cost-benefit analysis as an effective framework for decision making about housing and fails to advance non-economic standards to challenge these evaluations.

CONCLUSION

Housing First was not conceived as a financial solution to chronic homelessness. In fact, Tsemberis describes his organization's founding credo this way: "[I]t was all about, you know, housing as a basic human right and…you know…'We believe that people with mental illness and addiction should not have to prove that they're worthy for housing and we believe that people should have the right to—' The last line was 'We believe in love, respect, and creating possibilities.' That was, like, very, you know, from the heart.'"[116] Over time, however, cost-based arguments have come to predominate in policy conversations about Housing First, and the rights discourse has largely disappeared. "How have we fallen so far away from our original

belief system?" Tsemberis asks. Because funding shapes policy "enormously. Enormously. More than [written] policy, funding influences policy."[117]

National-level advocates like NAEH and USICH deployed aggregated cost studies and cost-based arguments to persuade states and localities to adopt a Housing First approach to chronic homelessness. They also used these to obtain funding targeted for Housing First programs, to compel states and localities to shift their approaches and their discourse to the model. In combination, these strategies form what I call a symbiotic persuasive pairing of justification and inducement. More persuasive in combination than separately, these strategies illuminate the relationship of discourse and materiality in financial arguments.

The justification-inducement pairing appears to have served as an effective rhetorical strategy for the spread of Housing First, insofar as it has garnered increased political and community support for the model and provided more resources for Housing First programs nationwide. This success speaks to the persuasive force of the justification-inducement pairing. However, financial justification and inducement both draw their force from perceptions of scarcity. The former does so by facilitating arguments that Housing First will save communities money, the latter by providing restricted funding to agencies and service providers who have been allocated scarce resources to meet their communities' needs.

Notions of scarcity, perpetuated by the justification-inducement pairing, guide processes of allocation, and public deliberation regarding the value of particular policies and programs drive decisions regarding that allocation. Funding for housing does not have to be scarce, but policymakers make budget choices that have made this the case historically. I have argued that the reasons provided for the (non-)allocation of funding are reified and

perpetuated discursively by the provision of that funding. Neither challenges scarcity as a controlling economic logic in decisions about budget allocations; rather, they rely upon the very logics that contribute to the existence of homelessness. In a cost-benefit comparison of the risks of this rhetorical strategy against its potential gains, I would argue there is no clear conclusion. Instead, in such an evaluation, advocates and policymakers must consider the ideological implications of these rhetorical choices. Understanding cost-based arguments for policy as more than mere arithmetic is an important first step.

Furthermore, this assessment of the symbiotic relationship of financial inducements and justification contributes to our understanding of the connection between rhetoricity and materiality in money, that which underlies so many of rhetoricians' debates about the nature of rhetoric's relationship to materiality. Regardless of one's position on the question of whether money is speech, this study illustrates that money does communicate, and that this communication is a matter of a relationship between the discursive and the material. Examining this symbiotic relationship illustrates the folly of trying to distinguish the materiality of money from its rhetorical force and suggests that this may be true elsewhere, as well.

[1] Becky Kanis Margiotta, interview by Whitney Gent, December 15, 2015.

[2] Sam Tsemberis, *Housing First: The Pathways Model to End Homelessness for People with Mental Illness and Addiction* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2010), 11.

[3] This is not to say these are the only national-level organizations who were important to the spread of Housing First. 100K Homes and the Corporation for Supportive Housing, for example, were regularly mentioned in my interviews with service providers, and they appeared in media coverage of Housing First. I restrict my scope here for the sake of manageability.

[4] Philip Mangano, Interview by Whitney Gent, January 19, 2016.

[5] Linda Kauffman, Interview by Whitney Gent, December 2, 2016.

[6] InteragencyCouncil, "Philip Mangano: Cost Studies Generating Political Will to End Homelessness," November 22, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfHd6rk_TX0.

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[15] Randall Kuhn and Dennis P. Culhane, "Applying a Cluster Analysis."

[16] See National Alliance to End Homelessness, "A Plan, Not a Dream," 15-17. The definition of chronic homelessness has become more specific in subsequent years. Now, "A chronically homeless person is someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years (must be a cumulative of 12 months) and has a disability." National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Fact Sheet: Chronic Homelessness," May 13, 2015, http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/fact-sheet-chronic-homelessness1.

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Chapter 3 – Expectations for Local Public Engagement

When Housing First moves to local communities, how do policymakers and service providers communicate with broader publics about the model? And how do those publics respond? My efforts to answer these questions revealed that the amount of public engagement involved in siting Housing First homes varies across communities. The biggest Housing First success story in the U.S. so far, Utah, essentially eliminated chronic homelessness without any concentrated public engagement efforts. When asked why they did not reach out to the public, the state's director of homelessness programs, Lloyd Pendleton, responded, "Why?... Why should we? I mean, we were educated about what we were doing. We didn't need their permission to do it… So we didn't see a big need for a big PR thing to go out and convince them…It [would have been] a waste of time."[1] In contrast, advocates in Washington, DC have built a coalition of more than 80 organizations/businesses and 4,000 individuals as a "public base of support" to push the local government to expand its Housing First efforts and raise local awareness of the approach.[2] In this chapter, I zoom in on the work of Boulder, Colorado's housing authority to gain public support for a single-site Housing First project – and the controversy this provoked.

We have seen how Housing First, by upending the traditional approach to homeless services, has faced resistance in government and among service providers, and how advocates' messaging has shifted to overcome it. Resistance also appears among people who otherwise have little involvement with homeless services when Housing First is introduced to local communities. At the local level, community members often embrace arguments commonly

referred to as NIMBYism ("Not In My Back Yard"- ism).[3] Benjamin Davy explains, "The backyard is a metaphor for safety, purity, and privacy."[4] People experiencing homelessness, in the presence of NIMBYism, are viewed as disruptions to these values. They are dangerous, impure threats to the neighborhood. This is a common response to the local siting of homeless services, a phenomenon we must address if we are to understand the circulation of rhetorics about homelessness and/or the spread of Housing First. Furthermore, NIMBYism provides us with a helpful framework for complicating the ways rhetoricians think about and theorize publicity.

In Boulder, neighbors who opposed the construction of Housing First apartments – known only by their address, 1175 Lee Hill Drive -- combined traditional NIMBY arguments with assertions that their housing authority violated norms of public deliberation. The authority had acted in "secrecy," they said, and refused to provide neighbors with all the information they needed to participate in a public debate about the apartments. This is a reasonable interpretation of the events; the agency did avoid questions and restrict access to information about the project. By voicing these concerns, neighbors positioned themselves as having been marginalized and excluded from the democratic process. They argued that the housing authority ought to be fully transparent in the siting process, that the public had a right to know.

Thus, calls for transparency appear here both as NIMBYist and as an invocation of democratic ideals. The co-presence of these arguments signals a dilemma for rhetoricians and advocates who champion publicity as the ur value for democratic deliberation. It illustrates the ability of publics to deploy publicity to claim marginalization, even as their rhetoric is itself marginalizing. In what follows, I seek to complicate our expectations for transparency and

truth-telling in processes of public engagement. I argue that, under some conditions, calls for transparency in public agencies can actually constrain public participation, while concealment may protect the interests and voices of vulnerable people. Taking as a case study the controversy in Boulder, I consider the implications for expecting public agencies to serve as truth-tellers.

To do so, I employ the classical concept of *parrhēsia* as a heuristic for understanding and critiquing these expectations and argue that full disclosure is not always an appropriate standard for democratic discourse. I begin by explaining the context for the controversy and how it unfolded. Then, I elucidate the rhetorical constraints NIMBYism poses for siting housing for homeless people as it manifests in arguments about concentration and public safety. Next, I focus on the North Boulder Alliance's concern for their inclusion in public decision making processes, as a form of NIMBYism. Finally, I examine the North Boulder Alliance's calls for transparency using *parrhēsia* as an analytic and provide a discussion of the broader implications for public deliberation.

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING FIRST IN BOULDER

Boulder is one of the least affordable rental markets in the state of Colorado. In 2010, when the city's housing authority purchased the land for 1175 Lee Hill Drive, vacancy rates were dropping, and rent prices were rising. In just the first quarter of that year, median monthly rents rose from $901 to $961.[5] This spike in prices was no fluke; the trend continued such that in 2015, Boulder was named the most expensive rental city in Colorado. By then, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was $1800, and a one-bedroom was $1380.[6]

North Boulder is relatively affluent, with a median income of $89,100 per household compared to Boulder County's overall median of $68,000.[7] It is also relatively racially/ethnically diverse. The neighborhood is home to a high percentage of both Black and Hispanic residents compared to Boulder's overall population, although 81% of North Boulder residents still identify as white.[8] Yet, racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness in the area were still quite great: At the time of the controversy I examine in this chapter, more than 1700 Boulder County residents were homeless on any given night, and only 53% of these people were white.[9]

North Boulder houses both the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless and the city's housing authority, Boulder Housing Partners (BHP), two organizations dedicated to alleviating homelessness in the city. Together, these organizations have operated a scattered site Housing First program since 2007. Through these efforts 25 people had been housed as of November 2015.[10] BHP has developed numerous forms of affordable housing across Boulder. It is responsible for one-third of the city's affordable housing stock.[11] Seeking to expand their Housing First efforts, in 2010 BHP purchased a plot of land in North Boulder -- next door to Boulder Shelter and across the street from BHP's offices. The plan was to construct the city's first single-site Housing First project on this land. Known only by its address, 1175 Lee Hill Drive, the proposed building was slated to house 31 chronically homeless adults in affordable apartments, with on-site support services provided by Boulder Shelter.

Boulder Shelter for the Homeless is a private non-profit organization but, as the city's housing authority, BHP is a pseudo-public entity. While it was created by resolution of the Boulder City Council in 1966, and is supervised by a board of commissioners appointed by the city's mayor, BHP is a "distinct and legal independent corporation."[12] The partly public/partly

private nature of the housing authority is a complicated one; it at once reduces government oversight and creates a sense of obligation for public engagement in its decision making.

The housing authority did not need the public's, nor the government's, approval to build 1175 Lee Hill Drive. In the 1990s, controversy over siting a homeless shelter led to a community discussion about zoning regulations for such facilities in Boulder. Out of these discussions came regulations that declared particular land uses in particular zones exempt from the government approval process. These are uses "by right."[13] As Charles Ferro, of Boulder Planning and Development, explained, "The property is appropriately zoned for such a use… It's not subject to call up by the city council. It's not subject to call up by the planning board or any neighbors. It's an administrative process."[14]

Still, for BHP, having a strategy for public engagement was anything but a "waste of time." Betsey Martens, BHP's executive director, told North Boulder neighbors, "neighborhood engagement is a standard operating procedure for Boulder Housing Partners…We have an obligation to talk to you. We take that very seriously."[15] Shannon Cox Baker, BHP's development manager for 1175 Lee Hill Drive, says that for this project, they engaged in "probably one of the most robust…if not the most robust outreach strategy BHP has ever implemented on any project."[16]

North Boulder neighbors got wind of the proposed apartments before BHP began implementing this outreach plan. Although BHP had planned a community meeting for September 29, 2011, in the three to four weeks prior to it, neighbors had organized in opposition to the building, calling themselves the North Boulder Alliance. They met to strategize, set up a website, and distributed flyers throughout their neighborhoods about the

project.[17] In response, BHP voluntarily postponed their application for a conditional use permit for the facility in order to "take the rest of the year to really engage with [neighbors] in this process."[18]

At the community open house, BHP and Boulder Shelter officially announced the construction of 1175 Lee Hill Drive, explained Housing First, and sought to answer neighbors' questions about the project. Three representatives from the agencies delivered short, prepared presentations to a packed room in the National Guard armory, just down the street from the proposed apartments. Additional public representatives were on hand to help facilitate the meeting but, as Cox Baker explained, neighbors' efforts in the weeks prior put BHP in a "defensive position when that meeting occurred, rather than being on an offensive position."[19] Audience members were encouraged to write questions on comment cards for the subsequent Q & A period. As soon as the speeches concluded, it became clear that attendees were not satisfied with this approach.

Representatives from both Boulder Shelter and BHP described the community meeting as a "disaster," and one of the neighbors who attended referred to it as a "horror show."[20] Video of the meeting shows neighbors yelling, talking over one another, and interrupting speakers even as they tried to answer questions. Cox Baker says "it was like a tidal wave of frustration, anger, and vitriol against not just the project itself but perceptions about BHP and the city trying to… basically push this project under the radar and out of the public eye."[21] Greg Harms, Boulder Shelter's executive director, feared for his safety, and the meeting's organizers terminated it earlier than planned.[22] A week later, Martens wrote an op-ed in the city's

newspaper of record promising further community engagement and politely saying, "We regret this approach was unsatisfactory for many."[23]

Over the next year, BHP and Boulder Shelter attended more than 100 meetings with individuals and community groups. [24] They also hired a public relations firm to help with outreach, created a listserv, distributed fact sheets and F.A.Q.s, and made themselves available to media and the city council. And, indeed, despite its lack of authority on this zoning matter, the city council quickly became involved in the controversy. The North Boulder Alliance pressed the city council to hear their testimony, and compiled research to back up their claims.[25] In December 2011, Boulder City Council held a study session on 1175 Lee Hill Drive. Then, in March 2012 they heard two hours of testimony from neighbors opposed to the building.[26] In the end, however, while the city council admonished BHP for having poorly engaged neighbors in the planning process for the apartments, they voted 8 to 1 in favor of supporting the project.[27] BHP assembled an advisory group that included members of the North Boulder Alliance and a formerly homeless person to develop a "Good Neighbor Statement of Operations" for the building, and proceeded with construction.[28] 1175 Lee Hill Drive opened in November 2014.[29]

I draw from a wide variety of texts to analyze the controversy surrounding this Boulder Housing First project. I focus particular attention on the September 2011 community open house and testimony delivered by North Boulder neighbors before the Boulder City Council in March 2012. Additionally, I examine letters to the editor and other newspaper coverage of the events that unfolded between the open house and the building's grand opening. I supplement these texts with three interviews I conducted with people close to the controversy: Shannon

Cox Baker, formerly of BHP; Bruce Goldstein, of the North Boulder Alliance; and Greg Harms, of Boulder Shelter.

NIMBYism

The community controversy over the siting of Housing First apartments at 1175 Lee Hill Drive was, at its core, a debate about land use. Who should be able to live in the neighborhood? What kinds of services contribute to its vitality? In what density should particular populations and services be permitted? Such debates are not uncommon; indeed, an entire vocabulary has emerged to describe these kinds of locational disputes. Two terms are particularly helpful here: LULUs and NIMBY. LULUs are Locally Unwanted (or Undesirable) Land Uses, and include a wide array of land uses from highways to hospitals, incinerators to nuclear power plants, homeless shelters to affordable housing developments. The people who oppose these land uses are often referred to as NIMBYs or as engaging in NIMBYism, an acronym for "Not in My Back Yard." [30] Generally speaking, this refers to a public's agreement that a LULU is important or desirable for their community, but not in its proposed location.

When advocates argue for a homeless services facility on the basis of human compassion or social justice, their efforts are often thwarted by land-use law, one of the few tools available to municipalities seeking to address homelessness. But zoning is not fundamentally about equality or social justice. [31] Instead, as Prashan Ranasinghe and Mariana Valverde explain, "land-use law, since its inception, has worked primarily to protect property values, relegate certain 'undesirable' uses of land, and generally, to constitute an urban space that is highly differentiated not only by class, but also along other lines."[32] Debates about

space, then, are always also about power. Geographer Don Mitchell, who views homelessness as "the bellwether for urban justice," explains that control of public space, and the space itself, is "produced through a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, order and disorder, rationality and irrationality, violence and peaceful dissent."[33]

In North Boulder, housed neighbors regularly asserted that the construction of 1175 Lee Hill Drive would be harmful to them. They argued that the project created an "unfair" concentration of homeless services in their neighborhood, threatened public safety, and excluded them from public decision making processes. Concern for these values is not illegitimate; an equal distribution of services, security, and democratic inclusion easily appear as common public goods. However, there is a tension between the ideals these rhetors invoke and the privilege evidenced in their complaints. It requires privilege to make particular kinds of claims to marginality, to assert that certain people groups do not belong in a community. It also requires power to expect the state to do something about those claims.

NIMBYism, by nature, puts the state in a double-bind. It amounts to a public always calling for action (i.e., "Do something about homelessness!") but also always responding to the state's proposed action with "…but not here." As a result, people experiencing homelessness are perpetually displaced, materially and discursively. To satisfy the call for action, municipalities create laws that make it illegal for homeless people to sleep, stand, sit, eat, or speak in particular places.[34] In Boulder, local ordinances restrict panhandling in particular locations and in particular ways and ban camping on public land – which prevents homeless people from legally sleeping outdoors, even when shelter beds are full.[35] These laws move people around without creating space for them, ensuring that they will become "concentrated"

in particular locations and provoking anew the cry that government should do something about homelessness…but not here. There is, then, no space for people without homes and nothing they, nor the state, can say which will satisfy NIMBY's demands.

Most homeless services are viewed by communities as LULUs. Recognizing the likelihood of such controversies, both HUD and the American Bar Association's (ABA) Commission on Homelessness and Poverty have developed guides to help developers and service providers prepare for the disputes.[36] These guides identify common types of NIMBY responses to proposed homeless services sites, including economic arguments (e.g., it will affect my property value), concerns about safety and density, and arguments about neighborhood appearance and cohesion.[37] They also provide advice on how to address these concerns. Namely, they invite service providers to create public engagement plans in advance of their siting efforts.

Neighbors' responses to the construction of BHP's Housing First apartments was steeped in NIMBYism. Greg Harms, executive director of the Boulder Shelter, explained, "We haven't come across too many people who are against the concept; they are against the location."[38] And in a show of hands, the vast majority of the people who attended BHP's community open house indicated that they were in favor of the project, just not in their neighborhood.[39] This was nothing new in Boulder. In 2000, Boulder Shelter's attempt to relocate was squelched by neighbors' concerns that it might endanger local middle school students. Its location in North Boulder was also contested. In 2011, when a homeless day shelter attempted to relocate to a larger facility, "intense neighborhood opposition" blocked the move.[40] In this context, BHP's Martens remarked, "There isn't any neighborhood that will welcome this project [1175 Lee Hill Drive] with open arms."[41]

Opponents of the apartment building were aware that their position could be perceived as NIMBYist, and their letters to the editor of the local newspaper, the *Daily Camera,* indicate that they had weathered accusations of bigotry. Neighbors denied that this was NIMBYism, arguing that "nothing could be further from the truth," calling these "ignorant statements and labels," and saying, "the name calling should stop unless you, too, live/work in a neighborhood that supports a 160-bed shelter and provides low-income housing at a disproportional rate."[42] A more appropriate label, some argued, would be NIMBYA, "Not In My Back Yard Again."[43] This differs from NIMBYism in that it makes the argument that something "undesirable" already exists in the neighborhood, and there ought not be more.

Many of arguments HUD and the ABA identify as common to homeless services NIMBYism were present in the Boulder controversy, but the two most dominant were claims that concentrating homeless services was neither good for the neighborhood nor homeless people (density, neighborhood appearance), and that this location would pose hazards to public safety. These arguments are, of course, related, for a concentration of homeless people is only undesirable if it somehow feels like a threat (to resources, safety, aesthetics, etc.).[44] Here, I will explore concentration and public safety as they appeared in the neighbors' arguments to evidence their NIMBYism, then I will explain how they combine with calls for transparency and truth-telling to make claims to marginalization.

Concentration

The prevalence of arguments regarding "concentration" amidst the opposition to 1175 Lee Hill Drive suggests that NIMBYA sentiment, specifically, was widespread. During BHP's

community open house voices from the crowd shouted, “Please address concentration,” and “I’m against concentration,” even as BHP attempted to address their other concerns.[45] Over time, concentration became the primary argument North Boulder neighbors used to oppose construction of the Lee Hill Drive apartments. It manifested in two primary ways: assertions of unfairness to North Boulder, and of a disservice to people experiencing homelessness.

Questions of fairness were portrayed by opponents as a matter of distribution. “We don’t want to become homeless central,” explained John Moore, a homeowner’s association president in North Boulder.[46] Bill Hussey asserted, “our community is beginning to resent being the go-to neighborhood for services that others find objectionable.”[47] Neighbors cited varying statistics to demonstrate both that the neighborhood bore a high proportion of the county’s homeless shelter beds and a disproportionately high level of affordable housing.[48] They used these numbers to argue that North Boulder was unfairly “burdened” and “overwhelmed” by this concentration of homeless services.[49] Neighbors also referred to 1175 Lee Hill Drive as a “tipping point” for the neighborhood, one which presumably would push the neighborhood beyond what it could handle.[50] Members of the North Boulder Alliance saw the community as a “dumping ground” for services the rest of the city did not want to host.[51] Indeed, one of the group’s repeated slogans was, “No good deed goes unpunished.”[52]

As Sara McKinnon reminds us, “marginalized people’s calls for recognition and rights are often perceived, in some way, as threatening to the audience."[53] 1175 Lee Hill Drive required a recognition of homeless people’s identities, interests, and needs, and opponents’ arguments suggest they believed both that they were harmed by the current level of homeless services in their neighborhood, and that the harm may become unbearable with these new apartments. It

is not the buildings or the services that create this opposition, though. It is homeless people themselves. NIMBYism excludes people experiencing homelessness from the community by rhetorically constructing them as undesirable burdens. There is no more room in the neighborhood for this kind of people; they degrade the community, even threaten to cause its "demise."[54] In this process, the suffering and struggles of homelessness are re-cast as problems for housed neighbors, rather than for people experiencing homelessness first-hand.

Moreover, NIMBYA allows neighbors to position themselves as already suffering *because of* their compassion. Neighbor Karie KP Koplar's letter to the editor demonstrates this well:

> We live with the homeless camping in our back yards, passing out on our porches, and vomiting on our sidewalks. We say good morning to them, we give them cash, and we defend them to our out-of-town guests who question that we let our children ride the [bus] to high school with this unfortunate population. We have explained more than once that they have a right to live somewhere and in this case it is our back yard. So much is already happening in our back yard that to impose [the Lee Hill Drive apartments] may turn this entire area of Boulder into a slum.[55]

Here we see the housed neighbors represented as compassionate people who have defended homeless people's rights. However, homeless people are not portrayed as suffering, but as problematic, as causing injury to people via their proximity, or their bodily functions. Positioning themselves as having become a "benevolent magnet" for homeless people allows neighbors to simultaneously emphasize their goodness and their victimhood.[56] The neighbors' privilege enables this complaint; they must have back yards in order to complain about what

happens in them. These arguments rely on the housed neighbors' good social standing to claim that their "good deeds" are being punished by co-existence with undesirable people.

Importantly, this undesirability is embodied. NIMBYist discourse rarely includes explicit discussions of race, class, or ethnicity, yet it functions as a discursive tool of white supremacy. It allows rhetors to block the inclusion of undesirable neighbors by calling upon dominant (meaning white and middle to upper class) community norms. The bodies of poor people of color, in particular, threaten neighborhood ideals, e.g., concerns about what will be "good for business" and about neighborhood appearance and cohesion. Yet, none of the neighbors make overt references to race or ethnicity in their complaints about the concentration of homelessness in their neighborhoods. In this way, their NIMBYist discourse amounts to talking about race without talking about race. "We are already diverse enough," the neighbors argue. "We cannot handle any more."

In a second manifestation of concentration arguments, North Boulder neighbors asserted that 1175 Lee Hill Drive would fail the very people it intends to help. Neighbor Kathy Boyes wrote, "It is our duty to embrace the homeless in our community and help them in any way we can, and to support projects that try to help the chronically homeless in our community," but held that concentrating homeless services would "mak[e] it difficult to promote the integration of those individuals back into the Boulder community."[57] Similarly, in testimony before the city council, Kathryn McGuirk, a therapist and North Boulder neighbor, said, "By increasing the density of services in North Boulder, I believe this could create an institutionalized ghetto of sorts which would further isolate this population from our community and increase public stigmas."[58] Neighbors also compiled research on best practices

for siting Housing First, and submitted it to the city council. In this document, neighbors argue that the Lee Hill site provided less transportation, fewer employment possibilities, and low access to healthcare and retail facilities than alternative sites.[59]

Statements like these demonstrate that NIMBYism, and the North Boulder Alliance's manifestation of it, is not necessarily malicious or irrational. There may be good reasons to be cautious of a concentration of services. As the North Boulder Alliance's research into best practices for Housing First demonstrated, the model's original scattered site design can help facilitate the creation of mixed-income neighborhoods and avoid ghettoization. Yet, the language of burden, threat, and risk that accompanies these arguments belies their apparent compassion. The use of the term "ghetto" evidences the presence of race and ethnicity in neighbors' thinking, even as it speaks of institutions – rather than identities. And the aforementioned research report juxtaposes concerns for the project's effectiveness for homeless people with a litany of discomforts caused by their presence in the neighborhood. Because of the bind NIMBYism creates with its "yes, but not here, not like this" style of argumentation, concern for people experiencing homelessness cannot supersede concern for the NIMBYs themselves.

Moreover, the neighbors' access to this kind of research, and their very presence at the city council meeting, offers further evidence of their power amidst claims to marginalization. The people BHP sought to house were often black and poor, or Latinx and poor. And, as is often the case, despite being the people who would be most directly impacted by BHP's plan, they were largely silenced and invisible in public deliberation about this land use. The neighbors who spoke out against the construction of the apartments – who were featured in media, testified at

city council meetings, and comprised the audiences at BHP's public engagement meetings -- were almost exclusively white and relatively affluent. They expected the state to respond to their concerns, so it did; the city council listened to neighbors' testimony even though BHP did not need their approval. No homeless people testified at the meeting, however. Instead, housed neighbors imagined themselves suited to speak for the interests of all; a privilege not permitted to the powerless.

Public Safety

In what the North Boulder Alliance refers to as a "graphic" account of the impact of Boulder Shelter for the Homeless on the community, neighbors described their resistance to the Lee Hill apartments as a matter of survival: "We are certain that North Boulder cannot thrive if these impact levels are raised. It is not a matter of toleration at this point: It is a matter of survival as a viable residential and business sub-community that contributes positively to the greater Boulder community."[60] The group reported high crime rates, "yelling, use of inappropriate language around children, fistfights, drinking, and masturbating," panhandling, loitering, and more, as the neighborhood's *status quo* because of their homeless neighbors.[61] Increasing the concentration of homeless services would exacerbate these problems, they argued, rather than relieve them.

Cursing (even in front of children), fighting, drinking, masturbating, hanging out, asking for money, are not unique to people experiencing homelessness. These kinds of behaviors are common, though they often take place in private spaces. A number of the practices decried by North Boulder neighbors are matters of coping and survival for people living without homes –

theft, panhandling, urinating or defecating in public, doing laundry in creeks and hanging clothes to dry on the trees are behaviors borne of necessity. But to housed neighbors, these behaviors are a nuisance and a threat. Here, the neighbors reveal a conviction that not everything should be public; some things ought to remain hidden. They also demonstrate their belief that they ought to be the arbiters of this distinction – that their norms ought to prevail.

Public safety figured prominently in the North Boulder Alliance's discussions of why having "more" homeless people in the neighborhood would be undesirable.[62] One neighbor suggested that the project would be "moving 30 hard-core criminal record homeless into the area," despite BHP's assurances that residents would undergo background checks and that no sex offenders would be permitted to live in the Lee Hill apartments.[63] Another claimed you already had to "have eyes on the back of your head" to live in the neighborhood, in order to protect yourself from possible harm.[64] Concerns about possible theft and the safety of children were also aired.[65] Neighbors asked who would be held responsible for problems that arose with residents away from the apartment building, saying, "We need better answers to really believe our community will be protected."[66] In other words, the state's responsibility is the protection of *housed* people from their perceived threats.

As these statements demonstrate, it is clear that neighbors view themselves, and their families, as vulnerable. They spoke as victims, people whose children and livelihoods are at risk, whose neighborhood's survival is at stake. In one of the neighbors' most candid articulations of these concerns, John Moore said, "We are more concerned with protecting [neighborhood children] than the homeless, to be frank."[67] This declaration reveals the neighbors' perceptions of their own vulnerability and the hierarchy inherent in their NIMBYism – the safety and

survival of people experiencing homelessness matters less than the comfort and safety of their housed neighbors. Clearly, not everyone in North Boulder is perceived as part of the public in "public safety"; they do not all have the "shared subjective experience" Lloyd Bitzer tells us is so important in a public's constitution.[68]

NIMBY arguments can obfuscate differences in vulnerability and privilege by shifting the focus from homeless people (whose lives are daily threatened by the trials of life without shelter) to the housed public. Lois Takahashi writes, "In the case of the NIMBY syndrome, more and more diverse communities are identifying themselves as marginalized and excluded (even suburban home-owning residents), so that even the notions of difference and exclusion are becoming relative terms strategically used to further specific agendas."[69] When the North Boulder Alliance argues that they are harmed by the inclusion of homeless people in their community, they again position themselves as marginalized, despite their relative privilege.

Adding apartments for homeless people adds to the neighbors' perceptions of injury, rather than repairing it. In theory, housing homeless people ought to remove the threat. But as we see in neighbors' assertions of NIMBY(A), these efforts to help are viewed negatively. Instead of seeing 31 people who will no longer be homeless, and thus, no longer a threat, members of the North Boulder Alliance perceive these people as fundamentally bad for their community. This is because the "problem" is not that homeless people do not have homes; rather, homeless people are themselves the "problem." Talmadge Wright explains that people experiencing homelessness "exhibit appearances at odds with middle class comportment, evoke fears of 'contamination' and disgust, a reminder of the power of abjection."[70] These fears are placed upon the bodies of homeless persons. They are marked as dirty, dangerous, flawed

people rather than as individuals living in dirty, dangerous, flawed conditions.[71] In this way, homeless people become discursively excluded from the publics who condemn them, and materially excluded from spaces that would improve their circumstances. Additionally, the predominance of black and brown bodies does not disappear when they are housed; thus, the fear and disgust they elicit in white neighbors remains. NIMBYism allows neighbors to resist their permanent presence by pretending that behavioral problems are their concern, rather than class or race.

PROBLEMS WITH PROCESS

As we have seen, privilege is both the motivation for NIMBYist complaints and what compels publics' expectations for state involvement. NIMBYism can also manifest as concern for the policymaking/decision making process. This can look like objections to a particular agency's authority in zoning matters, complaints that neighbors haven't been involved in decision making, and/or accusations that information is being withheld from the public. When this occurs, the emphasis is again on the marginalization of housed neighbors – this time in decision making processes – rather than on that of the people who are experiencing homelessness. In North Boulder, neighbors continually expressed frustration with the process and their lack of inclusion in BHP's decisions to site a Housing First project in their back yard.

Bruce Goldstein, the North Boulder neighbor who discovered the plan to construct 1175 Lee Hill Drive "quite by chance" argues that this controversy "wasn't inevitable and it's not just a question of NIMBY opposition." A community planner, Goldstein felt that the plan to build

1175 Lee Hill Drive violated good planning principles by excluding neighbors from decision making:

> I'm just an advocate of transparency and community voice and feel like, you know, that all planning should be done out in the open and in a way that, you know, reflects – not only reflects, but also engages – communities at very early stages of the deliberative process … so there can be, you know, full sort of involvement and also buy-in, which, you know, has to do with maintaining informed and empowered community.[72]

Goldstein was not alone in this sentiment. Much of the response to this proposed Housing First project reflected a sense that residents of North Boulder had not only been excluded from decisions about their neighborhood, but that BHP had been secretive, even deceptive, and that this violated norms of public engagement.

Much of the groundwork for these Housing First apartments was conducted behind the scenes, out of public view. In a statement titled, "Why We Oppose the 1175 Lee Hill Homeless Facility," the North Boulder Alliance explained:

> BHP's strategy was to advance facility planning quietly, announce a finished plan to the community, quickly apply for a conditional use permit – which is not subject to planning board or council review – and then commence building immediately. The purpose of this stealth approach, [a neighbor] was told, was to avoid the time-consuming and contentious delays that usually accompany siting homeless shelters.[73]

Indeed, plans for 1175 Lee Hill Drive were not made public until the wheels were already in motion. The property had been purchased, plans had been drawn up by an architect, soil testing and other research had been completed. Research into the land use code led BHP to

conclude that construction of the facility would be difficult to contest given current zoning laws. BHP articulated these efforts as “due diligence” and assured neighbors that it was still very early in the process, much more public engagement was to come.[74]

In this way, BHP appears to view themselves as the decision makers, and the neighbors as obstacles to implementation of their plan. At the community meeting, and up to the city council’s April 2012 affirmation of support for the Lee Hill project, BHP’s idea of “public engagement” appears to have been more about persuading North Boulder neighbors (or, “educating” them) of the benefits of Housing First, and promising to listen to their concerns, rather than involving neighbors in the decision making process. Both the speeches and responses delivered to audience questions at BHP’s community open house reflect these purposes. The moderator at the community meeting offered assurances that the Lee Hill project’s planners were listening: “If you don’t like the location, please put that in a comment [card]. We want to hear it. We’re not trying to suppress anything.”[75] Listening, however, is not the same as responding. BHP consistently showed an unwillingness to consider alternate locations for the shelter or to change its Housing First approach.

However, suppression was one of the primary accusations made by neighbors toward BHP and Boulder Shelter. In this controversy, neighbors expended much energy to argue that the process for making decisions about the apartments’ locations was unfair. Their comments suggest a standard for public engagement that would permit them decision making power in the siting process. For example, Goldstein described the plan this way: “they were holding it as secret as possible until the point at which it would become a *fait accompli* and be impossible to reverse the decision.”[76]

At the community open house, audience members demanded that questions about process be given primacy. Reacting to the moderator's suggestion that they would begin with questions about safety and neighborhood impacts – concerns their subsequent rhetoric shows they did have -- neighbors rejected his approach, yelling "no," and shouting out questions like "How was the site selected? What other sites have been considered?" To applause, one woman exclaimed, "We don't care about safety!" Neighbors pushed for an answer to the question, "Can this project be stopped?" and "How can we stop it?" Later someone in the crowd shouted, "Where's the due process?"

In the months following this meeting, neighbors expressed a desire to have "meaningful" input into the apartments' location, who could live in them, and how the building would be managed/operated. They expected not only to be included in deliberations about the apartments, but to have the power to impact/change BHP's plans. This very expectation is a mark of privilege. Poor people do not expect to be engaged in public decision making processes, let alone be able to change them, for they are already so discursively marginalized, they are rarely even participants the discussion. In this controversy, in fact, homeless people did not have any voice in letters to the editor, testimony before the city council, or at the open house. While BHP apparently represented their interests, they had been effectively silenced by the existing power structures in their community.

The housed members of the community argued that BHP displayed a lack of transparency and accountability, that they had engaged in bad faith behavior, and that they were a "taxpayer supported agency gone rogue."[77] Neighbors said they had been denied any "meaningful" input, had no opportunity for a voice, and that they were harmed by BHP's

"ability to avoid public review."[78] In their view, they had been "blindsided" by the "secrecy and deception" despite "Boulder's open, participatory culture."[79] They disapproved of this "secretive strategy" and "cloak and dagger" approach to this Housing First site.[80]

PUBLICITY AND SECRECY

North Boulder neighbors' accusations of secrecy drew the focus away from homeless people and toward themselves. They relied on basic principles of democratic deliberation to make claims to marginality, as is common in white racial politics. Asking BHP to reveal what was hidden, to make visible their processes and information, is consistent with contemporary U.S. ideals for government and publicity. These days, calls for transparency appear as efforts to improve public agencies' accountability to publics – to prevent sketchy dealings, promote responsibility, and ensure inclusivity. "It is hard to argue against more transparency in government," Clare Birchall explains. "[I]t is presented as a universal, commonsensical good. As such, to question transparency in the 'west' today is to be opposed to progress…; corrupt…; or anti-democratic (the link between transparency and liberal democracy has become unassailable)."[81] Seeking publicity for one's cause is likewise viewed as essential to achieving social justice.[82]

Accusations of state secrecy, in fact, motivated the very conception of the notion of publicity. An Enlightenment response to authoritarian power, publicity called for government to reveal itself to the people. Publicity was rooted in "a critical impulse for injustice," an effort to secure the right of the citizenry to engage in free public discussion and protect against the abuses of government.[83] Jürgen Habermas writes that the idea that the state ought to execute

the will of the people, rather than the will of a sovereign, developed “in conjunction with the critical public debate among private people, against the reliance of princely authority on secrets of state.”[84] A critical public cannot not tolerate secrecy; it seeks the revelation of those secrets. So conceived, secrecy appears as publicity’s opposite – or as “publicity’s other.”[85]

When secrecy symbolizes potential abuse, having all the information appears as a prerequisite for both good government and public judgment. Even in the face of questions about a public’s fitness to judge, publicity appears as the answer. John Dewey argues, “Until secrecy, prejudice, bias, misrepresentation and propaganda as well as sheer ignorance are replaced by inquiry and publicity, we have no way of telling how apt for judgment of social policies the existing intelligence of the masses may be.”[86] Without *all* the information, it seems, a public cannot *know* anything. When publicity is treated as a matter of absolutes, knowledge is always eclipsed by the secret.

Hence, as Jeremy Bentham described it, publicity is a “system of distrust.”[87] Because publicity requires a disavowal of secrecy, members of publics must remain ever vigilant in their pursuit of the truth. Publics are constituted in part by this compulsion to expose. “At the same time that it promises the realization of democracy once nothing is hidden,” Jodi Dean tells us, “secrecy generates the very sense of a public that it presupposes. The secret…presupposes a subject that desires, discovers, and knows, a subject from whom nothing should be withheld. The public as that subject with a right to know is thus an effect of the injunction to reveal.”[88] But the “injunction to reveal” cannot ever be fully satisfied, for it has become a precondition of publicity.

Transparency, then, appears as both a right of the people and as a foundation for trust between publics and government. In the United States, transparency has been enshrined in law as a fundamental democratic value. Laws like the 1966 Freedom of Information Act and other "sunshine laws" that require access to government documents, open meetings, public announcements of meetings operate under the assumption that, as Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis declared, "Publicity is justly commended as a remedy for social and industrial diseases. Sunlight is…the best of disinfectants."[89] Advocates argue that open access to government information is essential to guaranteeing other rights, like freedom of speech and access to justice.[90] Politicians also use rhetorics of transparency to build trust with constituents. On the first day of his presidency, for example, Barack Obama promised to "creat[e] an unprecedented level of openness in Government," and to "work…to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration."[91] Of course, despite these kinds of rhetoric, states do keep a lot of secrets.

BHP is not the state. It is not formally an arm of the local government. Nevertheless, its status as a pseudo-public entity does not exempt it from the powerful pull of publicity. Habermas explains that in a social-welfare state, "The mandate of publicity is extended from the organs of the state to all organizations acting in state-related fashion."[92] As Boulder's public housing authority, BHP was operating in this way. By demanding more information, the North Boulder Alliance sought to protect against the abuses of "the state" in their community. They were standing up for their rights as democratic citizens.

It is not difficult, then, to understand why a public meeting where decisions had already been made about their community might look like "sham" to the neighbors who attended it, or

to comprehend why neighbors might want more information about budget, alternative sites, etc.[93] The North Boulder Alliance's Bill Hussey compellingly argued before the Boulder City Council that "Not demanding transparency and accountability for [BHP's] unanswered questions creates an inequality [that] leaves citizens rightly suspicious that the system has been rigged against them, that our elected representatives are not looking out for the interests of all our residents and their families."[94] Hussey is merely invoking basic democratic ideals.

But "all our residents" here refers to the interests of a particular public, one from which homeless people were excluded. As I noted earlier, the neighbors who organized against 1175 Lee Hill Drive spoke from a place of relative privilege – mostly white, all housed, affluent – who were used to having more influence in what they called Boulder's "open, participatory culture." The North Boulder Alliance's concern with process reveals its members' sense that they were being marginalized because they were not provided with all the information they wanted, nor permitted any decision-making power. This, in fact, is evidence of their privilege. Poor people – especially poor people of color -- live in constant deprivation of public decision-making power. Because they had the political power to do so, the North Boulder Alliance called for publicity, transparency, and the disclosure of BHP's "secrets."

TRUTH AND TRANSPARENCY

Publicity is good not only for the governed, but for the governors, according to Jeremy Bentham. In "Of Publicity," Bentham acknowledges the benefits of publicity for constraining government, informing it of the people's will, and for ensuring that voters can make informed choices concerning their elected representatives. But, he says, informing the public allows the

government to benefit from the public's knowledge, and it can "secure the confidence of the people."[95] Bentham explains, "Suspicion always attaches to mystery. It thinks it sees a crime when it beholds an affectation of secresy [sic]; and it is rarely deceived…The best project prepared in darkness, would excite more alarm than the worst, undertaken under the auspices of publicity."[96]

When the North Boulder Alliance convinced the city council to hear testimony regarding 1175 Lee Hill Drive (despite its lack of authority, given the land use code) in March 2012, many neighbors displayed not only disagreement with the plan, but also a concern that BHP had not been forthright with them.[97] The mystery of BHP's planning process did incite suspicion that the neighbors were being deceived. So they called for publicity, transparency, the disclosure of BHP's "secrets." For these neighbors, there was a strong connection between transparency and truth. Because the planning of 1175 Lee Hill Drive had initially taken place outside of the public eye, it appeared to neighbors to have been concealed. There were processes they had not been privy to, things that had gone on behind closed doors. This secrecy prevented them from seeing what was true; thus, their solution was to make the truth visible, to demand transparency. As Hussey explained, "We welcome the City Council getting to the truth about this project and for creating a public process for the residents of North Boulder."[98] Truth, it seems, was the foundation of the neighbors' expectations for BHP's engagement with the public.

Rhetorical scholars are well equipped to consider tensions between truth and concealment, having spent centuries defending the discipline. In Plato's *Gorgias*, for instance, rhetoricians are verbose, circumlocutory, and inconsistent. They mislead and deceive but, Socrates tells us, "Truth, you see, can never be refuted."[99] Despite a tremendous evolution of

scholarly notions of rhetoric, this denigration of rhetoricians as flatterers ill-concerned with truth has retained sway in the public sphere and in other branches of academe. Taking this classical conception of rhetoric as foundational to Western understandings of deception and concealment in deliberation, I turn here also to a classical notion of truth, *parrhēsia*, as a means for illuminating what it means for "truth" to be considered a standard for public engagement.[100]

Seeking to "deal with…the problem of the truth-teller, or truth telling as an activity," Michel Foucault delivered a series of lectures in the last two years of his life in which he examined the appearance and treatment of *parrhēsia* in Greek and Roman texts appearing between the 5th century A.D. and 5th century B.C.[101] Foucault describes *parrhēsia* as freely (voluntarily) telling what one knows is true, completely and exactly. This kind of speech involves risk or danger because it offers criticism – either of the interlocutor or the self.[102] The person speaking this truth, the *parrhēsiastes*, is always in a position of inferiority to the person(s) they are addressing.[103] Foucault reads *parrhēsia* as oppositional to rhetoric. He writes, "In *parrhēsia*, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy."[104] Here, Foucault's Platonic conception of rhetoric is apparent: this kind of frank truth-telling cannot be rhetorical because it contains no artifice.

In recent years, scholars have critiqued the supposed "non-rhetorical" notion of *parrhēsia*. Raymie E. McKerrow argues that *parrhēsia* "need not be regarded as 'non-rhetorical' by definition…[because] rhetoric exists in the presence of artifice whether the role is one of

speaking as a *parrhēsiastes* in Foucault's sense, or as a liar."[105] Susan C. Jarratt holds that we should think of *parrhēsia* as a "variegated form of rhetorical engagement," rather than as something opposed to or distinct from rhetoric.[106] Because I understand rhetoric as a process of symbolic construction regarding matters of shared concern, and because of the complicated nature of "truth," I do not see rhetoric and *parrhēsia* as incompatible – but defending such a position is not my purpose here.

Some rhetorical scholars argue that it abuses the concept of *parrhēsia* to read more contemporary notions of rhetoric back upon this classical idea. Pat Gehrke, for example, holds that "[n]either *parrhēsia* nor rhetoric have a substance or definition outside of their historical moment of emergence and practice."[107] Foucault himself notes that some elements of *parrhēsia* (i.e., its understanding of how one knows the truth) are incompatible with modern epistemological frameworks.[108] For me, this does not negate the value of these terms for contemporary analysis. As our conceptions of rhetoric have adapted to changes in epistemology, we may also find *parrhēsia* a useful contemporary analytic for assessing expectations for truth-telling. Here, I employ *parrhēsia* as a heuristic to discuss the implications of such expectations for matters of public engagement.

Some scholars have explored *parrhēsia* as a "fruitful new terrain for a critical rhetoric" that opens up possibilities for resistance and transformation, while others have examined its political role and possibilities in democratic deliberation.[109] It is in the latter discussion that I offer my intervention. By bringing the Foucauldian notion of *parrhēsia* to bear on conversations about processes of public engagement, I aim to complicate notions that unrestrained truth-telling is a desirable democratic standard.

THE RISKS OF TRUTH-TELLING

Given the relationship of publicity to secrecy, whether transparency is actually possible in a democracy is a matter of some debate.[110] Foucault points to Isocrates to demonstrate that "real *parrhēsia*…does not exist where democracy exists" because only the voices of those who "parrot the *demos'* will" can be heard.[111] Lending support to this claim, Hamilton Bean avers that *parrhēsia* can create an "illusion of public accountability," but institutional rhetoric persistently functions to exclude, contain, and suppress the *parrhēsiastes.*[112] In contrast, David Novak argues that *parrhēsia* is not only possible in a democracy, but that it "can be expected of public figures; that is truth-telling is a practice we should demand from those who desire to (re)create public discourse."[113] Importantly, however, the public figure Novak relies upon to make this point is Malcolm X, a decidedly non-institutional figure. Foucault makes it clear that in classical conceptions of *parrhēsia,* the *parrhēsiastes* must always speak from "below."

This requisite might suggest that an institutional figure cannot serve as a *parrhēsiastes*, yet in the case of the 1175 Lee Hill controversy, it appears that the neighbors comprising the North Boulder Alliance were demanding something akin to *parrhēsia* from BHP. Thus, even if we agree that *parrhēsia* is not possible in a democracy, we must acknowledge the demand for it (or something like it). By attending to this public's expectations for truth-telling by an institutional public entity, we may better assess whether, as Novak asserts, "*Parrhēsia* ought to be the standard for democratic discourses."[114]

What distinguishes *parrhēsia* as a form of truth-telling is frankness, giving a complete and exact account. It is a telling all. As Foucault explains, "the *parrhēsiastes* is the person who

says everything…without holding back at anything, without concealing anything," and this is what the North Boulder Alliance expected of BHP.[115] In testimony before the city council, one North Boulder neighbor called BHP "not truthful," and accused them of "making up…deadlines" and "disingenuous claims" -- but accusations of falsehood were actually quite rare. [116] Far more commonly, neighbors cited a lack of transparency, avoidance of their questions, and the withholding of information as evidence that BHP was not telling the truth. Neighbors asked for a "commitment to getting all the facts out," for the release of the project's budget information via a Colorado Open Records Act request, for more "honest and transparent" language, and for "the many unanswered questions that we have" to be addressed.[117] None of these requests suggest that BHP was lying; rather, they suggest that BHP's form of deception was an *incomplete* telling of the truth, or an avoidance of telling it at all. In my assessment, the North Boulder neighbors do have some grounds for this claim. BHP did, arguably, delay public notification on the project, refuse to provide some information, and avoid particular types of questions.[118] Even if there was nothing malicious about this concealment, it is hard to deny that BHP did not tell all.

Scholars have theorized transparency as potentially detrimental to publics, arguing that some secrets are in the public interest, that transparency does not necessarily improve understanding or prevent the spread of falsehoods/misinformation, and that calls for government openness may re-inscribe damaging neoliberal ideologies.[119] But recall that one of the defining characteristics of *parrhēsia* is risk or danger to the speaker, who, in this case, is a pseudo-public entity, arguably an extension of government.[120] For BHP, the risks posed by telling all were similar to those posed by NIMBY arguments. They included, among others, a

potential loss of funding, city council override of the local zoning law, slowed progress on addressing homelessness, or even a prohibition altogether on the construction of Housing First apartments. In all of these potentialities, the danger posed was not just to the speaker, BHP, but to some of the most vulnerable people living in North Boulder: people experiencing chronic homelessness. For the future tenants of 1175 Lee Hill Drive, who had already been rhetorically excluded from the public opposing the building, BHP's approach to truth-telling was literally a matter of life or death.

Because the danger of *parrhēsia* always comes from the fact that the truth could hurt or anger the interlocutor, the person(s) addressed by the *parrhēsiastes* must have more power.[121] However, in the case of the North Boulder Alliance and Boulder Housing Partners, it is not apparent who is speaking from "above," and who from "below." The public of neighbors who organized against 1175 Lee Hill Drive spoke from a place of relative privilege – mostly white, all housed, relatively affluent. Nevertheless, the North Boulder Alliance's concern with process reveals its members' sense that they were being marginalized via exclusion from public decision making processes.

BHP in many ways possessed institutional power via its association with city government. Yet, while people experiencing homelessness were rhetorically excluded by the NIMBY discourse of North Boulder neighbors, BHP's efforts to construct this Housing First project arguably retained homeless people as participants in the decision making process. The 1175 Lee Hill Drive project aimed to make homeless people into housed neighbors, and did so by listening to what they said they wanted – housing.[122] The inclusion of more marginalized members of the community in BHP's advocacy and planning complicates any assessments of

who is speaking from "above" and "below." In classical terms, this makes it difficult to assert for whom *parrhēsia* is possible, but more importantly for my purposes, it complicates calls for transparency as universally beneficial for public deliberation.

In addition to frankness, truth, criticism, and risk, Foucault holds that *parrhēsia* is characterized by duty. *Parrhēsia*, then, is "a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to the truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)."[123] Here lies the crux of the difficulty of the North Boulder Alliance's calls for complete transparency. For BHP, revealing all risks harm not just to self, but to the other people whose lots they seek to improve. When parrhēsiastic truth-telling is regarded as the only acceptable standard for "meaningful" public engagement, the rhetor is forced to choose between a risk to self and the public it represents, and risking the "exclusion" of the public making this demand. A refusal to tell all, even by publicly funded entities, can protect the interests and voices of vulnerable and marginalized people who are excluded from both public space and the public sphere. NIMBYism creates a bind that makes it difficult for a municipality to site even desirable solutions to social problems because they are "locally unwanted." When *parrhēsia* is the standard for democratic discourse, these expectations produce another deliberative bind: consent to the dominant public's marginalization of vulnerable people, or to marginalizing that public via concealment.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

While rhetoricians are frequently concerned with the ways people are discursively marginalized, our literature contains very little that references NIMBYism, specifically. Instead,

this research appears largely in the social sciences, geography, or urban planning. Yet, this chapter demonstrates that NIMBYism at once gives us a vocabulary for talking about discursive marginalization in a context of deliberation about space, and provides us with a framework for reconsidering our valuations of publicity. Juxtaposing NIMBYist arguments about concentration and public safety against claims that neighbors' democratic rights (to participation, to transparency, to *knowing*) are being violated, we learn how democratic ideals can be wielded to perpetuate inequality.

Calls for publicity/transparency are very much about trust – trust in government and trust in the people. In one examination of trust in public deliberation, Robert Asen argues that when it is reciprocal, forthrightness can build trust and facilitate persuasion. When forthrightness is absent, or unequally exercised, he says, "deliberation may appear as a potentially dangerous encounter where a participant makes oneself vulnerable…without a mutual commitment to the potentially transformative power of deliberation."[124] What this Boulder case study shows us, however, is that the opposite can also be true: forthrightness may, in some cases, be more dangerous than concealment.

Moreover, I would argue that publicity itself is an obstacle to trust. Calls for full transparency, for a *parrhēsia*stic truth telling, may appear as the fulfillment of the democratic ideals of openness and inclusion, but the nature of publicity produces a perpetually suspicious citizenry. No amount of forthrightness by the state may satisfy the "injunction to reveal." As Dean avers, "The striking paradox we encounter today, then, is that the more information we have, the less we think we have…The secret can't be told. It cannot be filled in…No inclusion, whether of groups or information, people or issues, will provide enough legitimacy to justify

what is claimed in the name of the public."[125] This suspicion can be channeled into resistance fueled by claims of marginality. Sometimes, this distrust of government is warranted and can bring about change that improves the lives of vulnerable people. But not all claims to marginality are equal.

Disclosure cannot satisfy the North Boulder neighbors; having more information about how BHP selected 1175 Lee Hill Drive as the site for Housing First apartments cannot ameliorate the threat neighbors manifest in their NIMBY arguments. My examination of the neighbors' arguments illuminates a dilemma for rhetorical critics invested in inclusion as an ideal for the public sphere. When disclosure cannot satisfy the public and risks harming some of its most vulnerable members, we ought to question our presumptive valuations of publicity. Regarding transparency as a universally democratic value neglects to consider the forms of exclusion it can perpetuate. On one hand, the North Boulder Alliance's NIMBYist rhetoric marginalized homeless people, excluding them from the citizenry; on the other hand, BHP deployed exclusionary practices in their efforts to bypass neighbors' objections. Both of these appear as violations of norms of democratic engagement, and neither can be resolved without perpetuating the other.

If the ideal of inclusion cannot be satisfied for everyone in a deliberative situation, how then might the critic assess invocations of publicity? I would like to suggest a standard that weighs relative privilege and vulnerability in assessing claims of harm and marginalization. In Boulder, this means considering the housing needs of people who struggle with mental illness, substance addiction, and physical ailments and disabilities to such an extent that they have lived their lives on the streets – most of them for years – against the *full* inclusion of their

housed, relatively affluent neighbors in public decision making processes. Neighbors in Boulder engaged in a robust display of public participation, showing up by the hundreds to express their displeasure at a community meeting hosted by the housing authority, testifying for two hours before the city council, and authoring at least a dozen opinion pieces and letters to the editor in the local newspaper. They knew both what the housing authority planned to do and what the public process looked like for them. There was certainly information about the siting process for these apartments that the housing authority refused to give to its opponents – questions it would not answer -- but these opponents' voices were nevertheless heard, loud and clear. Eventually, even, BHP formed an advisory committee that included neighbors and a formerly homeless man to develop a Good Neighbor Statement of Operations for the apartment building. Weighing these potential consequences, it is clear that the potential for the marginalization of one group was much greater than for the other.

It is already clear that secrecy and concealment can be important for counterpublics, as a tool of resistance and/or a means of refuge. A good example of this is the practice of enclaving, where concealment can help to protect and make space for vulnerable and marginalized groups.[126] But both scholars and citizens have been cautious about embracing secrecy when the rhetor is some extension of the state. As Birchall explains, "Secrecy and its productive possibilities have been obscured both by the fear that that secrecy is always a gateway to micro-fascism and [by] a moral attachment to disclosure. Recognizing this could open up a new way of understanding the political and moral alignments of concealment and disclosure."[127] This case study takes up that challenge, and in so doing, demonstrates that

claims to secrecy and deception may not necessarily indicate harm, and transparency does not necessarily promote more inclusive public engagement.

Moreover, this case ought to invite rhetorical scholars interested in the intersections of race, ethnicity, and class, as well as other constellations of power and oppression, to think in more nuanced ways about publicity. That publicity can be wielded as a NIMBYist strategy that maintains white supremacy demonstrates the need for a more balanced theorization of publicity in rhetorical studies, one which better explores its ethical complexities. Knowing more does not mean that publics are any more likely to include people of color or people living in poverty in meaningful public deliberation – even about issues that directly impact their lives.

To be sure, secrecy is not always a virtue, and there are risks to trusting government to decide when and what disclosure is appropriate for a public. There's no denying that a significant portion of public policymaking is anything but public. Closed door meetings between policymakers and interested parties – or even just among policymakers themselves – regularly dictate what policy will be and how it will be executed. By the time a potential policy is introduced to a broader public, it is often done so as a formality; testimony and discussion may have very little impact because the decisions have already been made. Such exclusionary practices can render critical public deliberation ineffectual, severing the link between opinion-formation in the public sphere and the decision-making powers of the state.[128] The response of scholars, media, and citizens to this kind of concealment has largely been to demand transparency from the state as a check on its power.

Yet, even Bentham acknowledged there are conditions under which publicity ought to be suspended, saying, "It is not proper to make the law of publicity absolute, because it is

impossible to foresee all the circumstances in which an assembly might find itself placed." One of the three conditions he offers as an exception is when publicity risks "unnecessarily to injure innocent persons." Determining when this might be the case is complicated, but that is exactly my point. Maintaining an uncritical embrace of publicity as a standard for democratic theory, or for public sphere theory as we take it up in rhetorical studies is an oversimplification that has the potential to perpetuate or create marginalization. Instead of our seemingly myopic embrace of publicity, I urge rhetorical scholars to take up questions concerned with its other: secrecy.

When Housing First reaches the local level, advocates must choose how they will engage with the wider community. Housing First does "end homelessness" insofar as it places homeless people in housing and helps them stay there. But, on its own, Housing First does nothing rhetorically to shift fundamental public perspectives about what causes homelessness or who experiences it. As a result, NIMBYism remains a probable response when government and/or advocates seek to site Housing First apartments. This risk is likely higher for single site housing, because it invites arguments regarding concentration, and because these projects are more visible in a community. The lesson of 1175 Lee Hill Drive may be that, in the face of NIMBYism, advocates must balance transparency and disclosure with the needs of the vulnerable populations whose lots they seek to improve -- and be prepared for the backlash that will inevitably result. This case study also suggests that Housing First efforts may need to be accompanied by a broader campaign to change perceptions of people experiencing homelessness, not just of its solutions.

[1] Lloyd Pendleton, interview by Whitney Gent, December 2, 2015.

[2] Jesse Rabinowitz, interview by Whitney Gent, November 16, 2015; The Way Home, http://thewayhomedc.org.

[3] As we will see, questions of efficacy also arise among the NIMBY arguments.

[4] Benjamin Davy, *Essential Injustice: When Legal Institutions Cannot Resolve Environmental and Land Use Disputes* (New York: Springer, 1997)., vii.

[5] Alicia Wallace, "Regional Rental Market Tightens, Rents Rise," *Daily Camera*, April 28, 2011, http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/lnacui2api/api/version1/getDocCui?lni=52RP-NV31-JCW9-X43M&csi=270944,270077,11059,8411&hl=t&hv=t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc=00240&perma=true.

[6] Shay Castle, "Fast-rising Colorado Rents Outpace National Gains," *Daily Camera,* August 5, 2015, http://www.coloradodaily.com/business/ci_28587405/fastrising-colorado-rents-outpace-national-gains.

[7] This estimate is based on information from the 2010 census and 2009-2013 American Community Survey. See Statistical Atlas, "Household Income in North Boulder, Boulder, CO," accessed March 8, 2016, http://statisticalatlas.com/neighborhood/Colorado/Boulder/North-Boulder/Household-Income; Statistical Atlas, "Household Income in Boulder, CO," accessed March 8, 2016, http://statisticalatlas.com/place/Colorado/Boulder/Household-Income.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, "Homelessness in the Denver Metropolitan Area: 2011 Homeless Point in Time Study," 2011, http://mdhi.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/2011-PIT-Report-including-Appendices.pdf.

[10] Greg Harms, interview by Whitney Gent, November 2, 2015.

[11] Boulder Housing Partners, "About Us," accessed 12 April 2015, https://boulderhousing.org/about-us

[12] Boulder Housing Partners was originally known as the Housing Authority of the City of Boulder. See Boulder Housing Partners, "Our History," accessed 8 March 2016, https://www.boulderhousing.org/our-history; NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)," November 3, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW4ra5d6Oe4.

[13] City of Boulder City Council Agenda Item, "Proposed Housing First Project at 1175 Lee Hill Road," March 20, 2012, https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/1175_Lee_Hill_Public_Hearing_20_March_2012-1-201405081428.pdf; Heath Urie, "Boulder Leaders Get Earful on Homeless Project," *Daily Camera*, April 3, 2012, http://www.dailycamera.com/boulder-county-news/ci_20218974/north-boulder-leaders-homeless-project-lee-hill; "Historical Perspective," *North Boulder Alliance*, accessed March 9, 2016, http://www.northboulderalliance.com/historical-perspective.html.; Greg Harms, interview by Whitney

Gent, November 2, 2015; North Boulder Alliance, "Community Open House.

[14] See NorthBoulderAlliance, "Community Open House."

[15] Ibid.

[16] According to the Boulder County Land Use Code, conditional uses "are those uses which are appropriate in a given zoning district if the applicable criteria have been satisfied." BHP argued that it met the conditions for "transitional housing" under the code. For more details, see City of Boulder City Council Agenda Item, "Proposed Housing First Project at 1175 Lee Hill Road." The postponement of the conditional use permit application was announced by BHP's Betsey Martens at the September 29, 2011 community meeting. See NorthBoulderAlliance, "Community Open House Meeting."

[17] Shannon Cox Baker, interview with Whitney Gent, November 16, 2015; Bruce Goldstein, interview with Whitney Gent, March 18, 2016; North Boulder Alliance, http://northboulderaliance.org.

[18] NorthBoulderAlliance, "Community Open House."

[19] Present: Suzy Ageton – BHP Board and city council, Karen Rahn – City's Housing and Human Services Dept., Charles Ferro – Planning and Development, Robin Bohannan – County Community Services, Cmdr Johnson – Boulder Police, Members of 10 Year Plan Committee. See NorthBoulderAlliance, "Community Open House"; Shannon Cox Baker, interview with Whitney Gent, November 16, 2015.

[20] Ibid.; Greg Harms, interview by Whitney Gent, November 2, 2015; Bruce Goldstein, interview by Whitney Gent, March 18, 2016. Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion: The Other Side of the Story: Housing at 1175 Lee Hill," *Daily Camera (Boulder, Colorado)*, March 21, 2012, http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/lnacui2api/api/version1/getDocCui?lni=55B6-K131-F0BC-M3SM&csi=270944,270077,11059,8411&hl=t&hv=t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc=00240&perma=true.

[21] Shannon Cox Baker, interview with Whitney Gent, November 16, 2015.

[22] Greg Harms, interview by Whitney Gent, November 2, 2015.

[23] Betsey Martens, "Ending Chronic Homelessness in Boulder," *Daily Camera*, October 9, 2011, http://www.dailycamera.com/guestopinion/ci_19065179.

[24] Shannon Cox Baker, interview by Whitney Gent, November 16, 2015;

[25] North Boulder Alliance, "Attachment to Packet, December 13, 2011 Study Session - City Council," December 1, 2011, http://www.northboulderalliance.com/uploads/9/5/6/4/9564218/north_boulder_alliance_attachment_to_city_council_study_session_packet_on_1175_lee_hill.pdf.

[26] Heath Urie, "Boulder Leaders Get Earful on Homeless Project."

[27] While, conceivably, the city council could have complicated BHP's way forward on this project, this vote was largely a formality because of the project's "by right" nature. Erica Meltzer, "City Supports

Apartments for Homeless," *Daily Camera*, April 18, 2012, http://www.dailycamera.com/boulder-county-news/ci_20420996/boulder-supports-homeless-apartments-lee-hill; Erica Meltzer, "Boulder Housing Partners Vows to Seek Community Input on Homeless Project," *Daily Camera*, April 18, 2012.

[28] Erica Meltzer, "Operations Plan for Boulder's 'Housing First' Project Released," *Daily Camera*, December 20, 2012.

[29] Boulder Housing Partners, "Lee Hill: A Housing First Community," accessed April 13, 2016, https://boulderhousing.org/property/lee-hill-housing-first-community

[30] Benjamin Davy offers a helpful rundown and history of these terms in Davy, *Essential Injustice*. For examples of some of these kinds of controversies, see Thomas H. Rasmussen, "Not In My Backyard: The Politics of Siting Prisons, Landfills, and Incinerators," *State & Local Government Review* 23, no. 4 (1992): 128-134; Peter A. Groothuis & Gail Miller, "Locating Hazardous Waste Facilities: The Influence of NIMBY beliefs," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 53, no. 3 (1994): 335-346; Belinda Creel Davis & Valentina A. Bali, "Examining the Role of Race, NIMBY, and Local Politics in FEMA Trailer Park Placement," *Social Science Quarterly* 89, no. 5 (2008): 1175-1194.

[31] Prashan Ranasinghe and Mariana Valverde, "Governing Homelessness through Land-Use: A Sociolegal Study of the Toronto Shelter Zoning By-Law," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie* 31, no. 3 (2006): 325–349.

[32] Ibid, 327.

[33] Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 9, 51.

[34] These kinds of laws have faced numerous court challenges as violations of civil rights. In August 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a statement that laws that punish homeless people for sleeping in public places are unconstitutional. U.S. Department of Justice, "Justice Department Files Brief to Address the Criminalization of Homelessness," August 6, 2015, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-files-brief-address-criminalization-homelessness. For more on these kinds of laws, see National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, "No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities," 2014, https://www.nlchp.org/documents/No_Safe_Place.

[35] This camping ban was a part of the context for the Lee Hill controversy. Advocates' legal challenges to Boulder's anti-camping law were rejected by the Colorado Supreme Court in September 2011, the same month as the BHP community meeting about Lee Hill Drive. See Pamela White, "There's No Easy Fix for Homelessness," *Boulder Weekly*, January 21, 2010; Barbara Cotter, "ACLU Challenges Boulder's No Camping Ordinance," *The Gazette* (Colorado Springs, CO), June 29, 2010; Associated Press, "Boulder Given Go-Ahead to Ticket Homeless," *Daily Camera*, September 12, 2011.

[36] A number of other advocacy groups have developed such tools, as well. I cite these two to illustrate a national recognition of NIMBYism's prevalence. See "Nimby Assessment - HUD Exchange," accessed March 24, 2016, https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/nimbyassessment/; ABA Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children and American Bar Association, eds., *NIMBY: A Primer for Lawyers and Advocates* (Chicago, IL: American Bar Association, 1999).

[37] This breakdown appears in ABA Steering Committee, *NIMBY*, 8-12.

[38] Mitchell Byars, "Boulder: Heaven for the Homeless, or a Town That's Short on Services?," *Daily Camera*, March 24, 2012, http://www.dailycamera.com/boulder-county-news/ci_20249235/boulder-heaven-homeless-north-boulder-housing-project?source=mostviewed

[39] NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)."

[40] Byars, "Heaven for the Homeless." See also, Heath Urie, "Boulder Carriage House Day Shelter Searching for New Home," *Daily Camera*, April 18, 2011, http://www.dailycamera.com/ci_17875621.

[41] Heath Urie, "Boulder Reaffirms Support for Homeless 'Housing First' Program," *Daily Camera*, December 13, 2011.

[42] Hugh Walton, "Guest Opinion: Don't Concentrate the Chronically Homeless in One Neighborhood," *Daily Camera*, November 9, 2011; Lynne Bentley, "Homeless Housing -- A Distortion of Economic Demographics," *Daily Camera*, February 27, 2012; Karie KP Koplar, "Homeless Housing -- Find Another Area for Proposed Unit," *Daily Camera*, September 9, 2011.

[43] Also referred to as NAIMBY, Not Again In My Back Yard. See Kurt Schrammel, "Homeless -- Time for Other Neighborhoods to Shoulder Some Responsibility," *Daily Camera*, March 23, 2012; Karie KP Koplar, "Homeless Housing -- Find Another Area for Proposed Unit."

[44] It is important to note that not all North Boulder neighbors agreed with the North Boulder Alliance. At the community, some raised hands showed support for both BHP's project and the site. Additionally, some letters to the editor during the controversy directly opposed the North Boulder Alliance. See, for example, Alice Smiley, "North Boulder Alliance – An Alliance of Fear," *Daily Camera*, March 23, 2012; Kyle McDaniel, "Homeless Housing: What Is the Real Objection?," *Daily Camera*, November 15, 2011; Jill McIntyre and Mark McIntyre, "Homeless Housing: Population Is Not a Burden," *Daily Camera*, December 15, 2011.

[45] NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)."

[46] Mitchell Byars, "North Boulder 'Chronically Homeless' Housing Project Delayed," *Daily Camera*, November 18, 2011.

[47] Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion."

[48] Neighbors do not generally cite their sources, and their numbers differ even when they appear to be talking about the same thing. See, for example, North Boulder Alliance, "Attachment to Packet, December 13, 2011 Study Session - City Council"; Hugh Walton, "Guest Opinion: Don't Concentrate the Chronically Homeless in One Neighborhood"; Mitchell Byars, "North Boulder 'Chronically Homeless' Housing Project Delayed."

[49] Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion"; Jill McIntyre and Mark McIntyre, "Homeless Housing: Population Is Not a Burden"; Heath Urie, "Heated Debate Expected Over Boulder Homeless Project," *Daily Camera*, March

17, 2012; Rob Gordon, "Overwhelmed by the Homeless Population," *Daily Camera*, February 26, 2012.

[50] Heath Urie, "Boulder Leaders Get Earful on Homeless Project"; *City of Boulder Regular City Council Meeting*, 2012, https://bouldercolorado.gov/boulder8/city-council-video-player-and-archive.

[51] Byars, "Heaven for the Homeless?"; Gail Promboin, "Hit the Pause Button on Homeless Housing In North Boulder," *Daily Camera*, April 17, 2012.

[52] Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion."; NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)."; "Historical Perspective."

[53] Sara McKinnon, "Essentialism, Intersectionality and Recognition: A Feminist Rhetorical Approach to the Audience," in *Standing in the Intersection: Feminist Voices, Feminist Practices in Communication Studies*, ed. Karma R. Chávez and Cindy L. Griffin (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), 203.

[54] Lynne Bentley, "Homeless Housing -- A Distortion of Economic Demographics."

[55] Karie KP Koplar, "Homeless Housing -- Find Another Area for Proposed Unit."

[56] The term "benevolent magnet" appears in a comment by a neighbor made in Mitchell Byars, "Boulder: Heaven for the Homeless, or a Town That's Short on Services?"

[57] Kathy Boyes, "Homelessness - Don't Concentrate Homeless People," *Daily Camera*, January 24, 2012.
[58] *City of Boulder Regular City Council Meeting*.

[59] North Boulder Alliance, "Attachment to Packet, December 13, 2011 Study Session - City Council."

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] There's no real sense in which the building of 1175 Lee Hill Drive would increase the number of homeless people in the neighborhood. The building gives apartments to people experiencing homelessness – rendering them no longer homeless. Moreover, there's no particular evidence that the people living in the building would be coming in from outside the neighborhood.

[63] Erica Meltzer, "City Supports Apartments for Homeless."

[64] Rob Gordon, "Overwhelmed by the Homeless Population."

[65] David Accomazzo, "Writing a New Ending for Boulder's Chronically Homeless," *Boulder Weekly*, December 22, 2011, http://www.boulderweekly.com/print-article-7205-print.html; Erica Meltzer, "Boulder Homeless Shelter Reconvenes Neighborhood Group," *Daily Camera*, November 8, 2012.

[66] Heath Urie, "Boulder Leaders Get Earful on Homeless Project."

[67] Mitchell Byars, "North Boulder 'Chronically Homeless' Housing Project Delayed."

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[68] Lloyd Bitzer, "Rhetoric and Public Knowledge," in *Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Literature: An Exploration*, ed. Don M. Burks (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1978), 67–93.

[69] Lois Takahashi, *Homelessness, AIDS, and Stigmatization: The NIMBY Syndrome in the United States at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Oxford Geographical and Environmental Studies (Oxford : New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 63.

[70] Talmadge Wright, "New Urban Spaces and Cultural Representations: Social Imaginaries, Social-Physical Space, and Homelessness," *Research in Urban Sociology* 5 (2000): 23.

[71] See Randall Amster, *Lost In Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2008); Teresa Gowan, "Excavating 'Globalization' from Street Level: Homeless Men Recycle Their Pasts," in *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, ed. Michael Burawoy et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 74–105; Samira Kawash, "The Homeless Body," *Public Culture* 10, no. 2 (1998): 319–39.

[72] Ibid.

[73] The neighbor mentioned here is Bruce Goldstein, quoted later. See North Boulder Alliance, "Historical Perspective"; Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion."

[74] NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)."

[75] Ibid.

[76] Bruce Goldstein, Interview by Whitney Gent, March 18, 2016.

[77] Gail Promboin, "After the Affirmation of Lee Hill Housing," *Daily Camera*, May 2, 2012; Gail Promboin, "Hit the Pause Button on Homeless Housing In North Boulder."

[78] Todd Bryan, "Homeless Housing -- Land Purchase Is a Win-Win," *Daily Camera*, February 27, 2012; Erica Meltzer, "Boulder Housing Partners Vows to Seek Community Input on Homeless Project"; Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion."

[79] Erica Meltzer, "Survey: Continued Opposition to Lee Hill Project from North Boulder," *Daily Camera*, August 26, 2012; Gail Promboin, "Hit the Pause Button on Homeless Housing In North Boulder."

[80] Bill Hussey, "Guest Opinion."; Bruce Goldstein, Interview with Whitney Gent, March 18, 2016.

[81] Clare Birchall, "Transparency, Interrupted Secrets of the Left," *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 7–8 (December 1, 2011): 62.

[82] Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 94.

[83] Slavko Splichal, "Why Be Critical?," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 1, no. 1 (2008): 25.

[84] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 53.

[85] Jack Bratich, "Public Secrecy and Immanent Security," *Cultural Studies* 20, no. 4/5 (September 7, 2006): 502.

[86] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1991), 209.

[87] Jeremy Bentham, "Of Publicity," *Public Culture* 6 (1994): 589.

[88] Jodi Dean, *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 10–11.

[89] Louis D. Brandeis, "What Publicity Can Do," *Harper's Weekly*, December 20, 1913, 10.

[90] See, for example, Patrick Birkinshaw, "Transparency as a Human Right," in *Transparency: The Key to Better Governance?*, ed. Christopher Hood and David Heald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 47–57.

[91] Barack Obama, "Memorandum -- Transparency and Open Government" (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, January 21, 2009), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/16/memorandum-transparency-and-open-government.

[92] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 232.

[93] *City of Boulder Regular City Council Meeting*.

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] Jeremy Bentham, "Of Publicity," 582.

[96] Ibid.

[97] *City of Boulder Regular City Council Meeting*.

[98] Heath Urie, "Boulder Reaffirms Support for Homeless 'Housing First' Program."

[99] Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. W.C. Hembold (Prentice Hall, 1997), 37.

[100] *Parrhēsia* is variously spelled in English as *parrhesia* and *parrēsia*. To simplify, for the sake of readability, I have opted to use *parrhēsia* throughout, even when quoting sources that spell the word alternately. This does not alter the meaning of the term. Additionally, it is important to note that Foucault focuses primarily on what he calls "good *parrhēsia,*" which dominates the literature. He acknowledges the presence also of a "bad *parrhēsia*," meant to refer to a kind of "chattering" where one says "any- or everything one has in mind without qualification." I focus here only on this "good *parrhēsia."* For the distinction, see Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 13–14.

[101] These lectures were delivered at University of California – Berkeley and at the Collège de France. They have been collected in Foucault, *Fearless Speech*; Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lecture at the Collège de France 1982-1983*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983-1984*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[102] For instance, "'This is what you do and this is what you think; but that is what you should not do or should not think.' 'This is the way you behave, but that is the way you ought to behave.'" Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 17.

[103] Because it involves risk in the context of this hierarchy, Foucault also refers to *parrhēsia* as courageous speech, or fearless speech.

[104] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 19–20.

[105] Raymie E. McKerrow, "Foucault's Relationship to Rhetoric," *Review of Communication* 11, no. 4 (October 2011): 261.

[106] Pat J. Gehrke et al., "Forum on Arthur Walzer's 'Parrhēsia, Foucault, and the Classical Rhetorical Tradition,'" *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2013): 355–81.

[107] Gehrke and Bradford Vivian argue this similarly in Ibid.

[108] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 14.

[109] Gae Lyn Henderson, "The 'Parrhesiastic Game': Textual Self-Justification in Spiritual Narratives of Early Modern Women," *RSQ: Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 429; See also Kelly E. Happe, "Parrhēsia, Biopolitics, and Occupy," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 48, no. 2 (May 2015): 211–23; Jonathan P. Rossing, "Critical Race Humor in a Postracial Moment: Richard Pryor's Contemporary Parrhesia," *Howard Journal of Communications* 25, no. 1 (January 2014): 16–33; Hamilton Bean, "'A Complicated and Frustrating Dance': National Security Reform, the Limits of Parrhesia, and the Case of the 9/11 Families," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 429–59; Christopher J. Gilbert, "In Dubiis Libertas : A Diogenic Attitude for a Politics of Distrust," *RSQ: Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (January 2012): 1–25; David R. Novak, "Engaging Parrhesia in a Democracy: Malcolm X as a Truth-Teller," *Southern Communication Journal* 71, no. 1 (March 2006): 25–43.

[110] There are a number of perspectives on this question, including Birchall's excellent rumination on psychoanalysis and poetry, which argues that secrecy is a condition of being: "There will always be something secret…Secrecy is always already at work in transparency." This work might suggest that *parrhēsia* is not possible at all. Here I am less concerned with whether *parrhēsia* can occur, than with the implications for calling for this kind of truth-telling. See Birchall, "Transparency, Interrupted Secrets of the Left," 71.

[111] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 82. For an extended explanation of the difficulties of *parrhēsia* in democracy, see Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 35–52.

[112] Bean, "A Complicated and Frustrating Dance."

[113] Novak, "Engaging Parrhesia in a Democracy," 21.

[114] Ibid., 41.

[115] Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 9.

[116] *City of Boulder Regular City Council Meeting*.

[117] See Ibid.; Heath Urie, "Boulder to Debate 'Housing First' Model for Homeless," *Daily Camera*, December 12, 2011; NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)."

[118] NorthBoulderAlliance, "North Boulder Alliance: 1175 Lee Hill Community Open House Meeting (September 29, 2011)"; *City of Boulder Regular City Council Meeting*.

[119] See, for example, Gabriel Schoenfeld, *Necessary Secrets: National Security, The Media, and Rule of Law* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010); Christopher Hood and David Heald, eds., *Transparency: The Key to Better Governance?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Kristin M. Lord, *The Perils and Promise of Global Transparency* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006); Archon Fung, Mary Graham, and David Weil, *Full Disclosure: The Perils and Promise of Transparency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Christina Garsten and Monica Lindh de Montoya, "Introduction: Examining the Politics of Transparency," in *Transparency in the New Global Order: Unveiling Organizational Visions*, ed. Christina Garsten and Monica Lindh de Montoya (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008).

[120] Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 11–12; Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 16–17.

[121] Foucault characterizes this requirement for *parrhēsia* as a matter of criticism.

[122] I refer here to the basic tenet of choice that undergirds the Housing First model, not to any specific conversations BHP or Boulder Shelter had with people experiencing homelessness in this neighborhood. While there were people who had experienced homelessness on the community advisory committee that created a "Good Neighbor Statement of Operations" for the Lee Hill building, it is unclear to what extent homeless people were able to represent their own interests in this controversy. See Erica Meltzer, "Operations Plan for Boulder's 'Housing First' Project Released."

[123] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 19.

[124] Robert Asen, *Democracy, Deliberation, and Education* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2015), 165.

[125] Jodi Dean, *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy*, 43.

[126] See Bratich, "Public Secrecy and Immanent Security"; Daniel C. Brouwer, "ACT-Ing UP in Congressional Hearings," in *Counterpublics and the State*, ed. Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer (SUNY Press, 2001), 87–109; Karma Chávez, "Counter-Public Enclaves and Understanding the Function of Rhetoric in Social Movement Building," *Communication Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2011): 1–18; Catherine

Squires, “Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres,” *Communication Theory* 12, no. 4 (2002): 446–68.

[127] Birchall, “Transparency, Interrupted Secrets of the Left,” 64.

[128] See Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

Conclusion – Development and Transformations in Housing First Rhetoric

People experiencing homelessness are constantly on the move. In the winter, some people walk all night long to keep from freezing. In all seasons, they must travel from place to place to obtain services and meet their basic needs – from water fountain to park bench to the oft-elusive public restroom. Some shelter models operate on a rotating basis, where homeless families, for example, stay in churches for one week at a time until they can be moved into transitional housing. Even permanent supportive housing models like Housing First are based on movement, moving people out of homelessness and into homes. Indeed, doing nothing about homelessness in a community – assenting to inaction – is rarely considered socially acceptable. To some people, inaction appears to violate the dignity of those living without shelter. To others, it is an affront to the social and economic rights of everyone else. As I noted in chapter three, public messages about homelessness are frequently, “Do something about homelessness – but not here.”

This material movement is inextricably bound up in rhetorical movement. The messages that circulate about homelessness and its causes shape the rhetoric that calls for policy regarding it, and the discussions about how best to address it. That policy often literally moves homeless people from place to place, banning them from public spaces or relocating the services they seek. The making of homelessness policy is deeply rhetorical, and ever shifting – as political climates change, geography varies, new research emerges, media events move public attention, and more. To examine homelessness policy rhetoric – really, any kind of policy

rhetoric – without attending to its movement, risks an impoverished understanding of policymaking as *process*.

In this dissertation, I have explored the circulation of rhetoric surrounding the Housing First approach to addressing homelessness. My primary scholarly contribution is an expanded understanding of rhetorical circulation in public policy. As it is specifically about how rhetoric concerning homelessness circulates, this study also provides insight into how advocates and policymakers attempt to persuade others on issues related to homelessness. This case study bolsters rhetoricians' understanding of circulation (and circulation in public policy), provides scholars of public policy with insight into how rhetorical circulation impacts the policymaking process, and offers poverty scholars an understanding of how discourses surrounding homelessness, specifically, move. My hope is that this study will also provide practical insights for advocates and policymakers by helping to identify gaps in communication that prevent their messages from reaching wider publics and/or from effectively ameliorating problems of homelessness. Further, recognizing that the circulation of rhetoric is often also a matter of the circulation of ideology, this study contributes to our understanding of how ideology spreads; my hope is that any scholar interested in how ideas move might find value in it.

As is any study of rhetoric, this is necessarily partial and incomplete. A comprehensive study of the circulation of any message is wholly impossible, due to the fragmentary nature of rhetoric itself. The origins of Housing First rhetoric reach farther back than Sam Tsemberis, the model's founder, and its spread can hardly be contained within a document such as this. Nevertheless, I offer here an analysis of some of the ways in which Housing First rhetoric has

moved over the past 25 years (1992-2017). In its developments and transformations, we find the contributions I note above.

DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Housing First is not today what it was in the "beginning." It is more diffuse. There is greater variety in practice. Its original iteration, in fact, no longer exists. Pathways to Housing in New York closed in December 2014 due to financial difficulties and management struggles, transferring all its housing and staff contracts to Services for the Underserved, a large non-profit service provider in the city.[1] Tsemberis now focuses largely on training and public speaking, helping agencies around the world implement the model. Other organizations, like the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Community Solutions, have taken leadership roles in the circulation of Housing First, each with different perspectives on what the model can and should look like. Housing First programs have been designed to serve a variety of subpopulations, each with distinct messaging. Built for Zero (formerly Zero: 2016), for example, focuses on housing chronically homeless veterans by getting local communities to sign on to its campaign and providing logistical support.[2] A move toward the "rapid rehousing" of homeless families is regarded by some advocates as a "subset" of Housing First.[3] Rapid rehousing has grown in popularity since the Obama administration's Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, a response to the housing crisis of 2008, allocated federal funding for this purpose. Unlike with Housing First, rapid rehousing rent subsidies are temporary; thus, even as it borrows elements of Housing First rhetoric, the language used to

describe and promote the approach is quite different. The messaging surrounding Housing First is adapted over time to suit varying programs, contexts, and people.

Taking a movement-oriented approach to public policy rhetoric enables us to see not just how a rhetoric has developed over time, but also in what ways it shifts and transforms. Examining these shifts provides insight into how advocates' messaging interacts with longstanding cultural rhetorics and the political rhetoric of a given moment, and to what policy effect. For advocates, attending to the complexity of these interactions may illuminate rhetorical obstacles to achieving their communication and political goals, and suggest new strategies for future campaigns. For rhetorical scholars, it provokes important questions about the relationship between materiality and rhetoricity, secrecy and publicity, and more. In this dissertation, I have identified four kinds of shifts in the rhetorical circulation of Housing First: shifts in messaging/ideology, agency, publicity, and text.

Messaging/Ideology

In chapter one, I detail how Tsemberis and his colleagues initially rooted a Housing First rhetoric in a message of choice and empowerment, where housing is provided because it is desired by people experiencing chronic homelessness, and subsequent services are determined by the decisions of those "consumers." This radical approach has its ideological basis in the mental health consumer movement, which challenges top down, institutional approaches to mental health care. While the notion that homeless people are well equipped to make these kinds of decisions challenges the norms of the homeless shelter and services system, the language of "consumer choice" tapped into a concern for the economics of homelessness that

would soon transform the reasons rhetors offered for the adoption of a Housing First model. As neoliberal ideologies – particularly a belief that social problems are best solved by markets – were gaining increasing prominence in the United States and abroad, cost-benefit analyses drove new messaging about Housing First. Housing was not only the solution to homelessness, it was the solution to a number of economic problems that homelessness appeared to create – higher healthcare costs, emergency services costs, and more.

This shift in messaging transformed a person-centered, human rights-based rhetoric into one where even compassion is a matter of economics. For rhetorical scholars, I believe it beneficial to consider this as a kind of rhetorical survival strategy advocates deploy(ed) to see Housing First policy pass. Facing obstacles like partisanship, rhetorics of deservedness, and narratives of enablement, choice was not well suited to the political environment in which Housing First advocates were/are operating. In order to persuade policymakers to support Housing First efforts, advocates felt they needed to adopt some of the language of the dominant ideology. This made their policy proposals appear less ideologically threatening and appealed to familiar tropes. Policymaking systems are not designed to encourage radical approaches; embracing an economic frame helped Housing First survive this normative system. It also, however, influenced the ways members of housed publics understand Housing First, while neglecting to change the ways people understand homelessness – an idea to which I will return shortly.

Agency

Early texts produced by Tsemberis and his colleagues, as well as current efforts to ensure fidelity to the original Pathways Housing First model, emphasize that the control of Housing First interventions lies in the hands of the "consumers" it houses. These consumers are empowered to make decisions for themselves about addiction and mental health treatment, finances, job training, and more. The model seeks to bolster the rhetorical agency of people experiencing homelessness by creating space for them to speak, and listening to and acting upon the desires they articulate. Yet, agency is, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell tells us, "communal, social, cooperative, and participatory."[4] Circulation is bound to impact rhetorical agency – shifts in messaging/ideology, texts, and publicity all influence relationships between and among people.

As the Housing First model circulates, the limits of "consumer" empowerment become clearer. In a market-based rhetoric, "consumer" may have suited Housing First advocates well as a way to discuss giving homeless people housing choice – viewed as a means of economic empowerment. But the term cannot be easily separated from its surrounding ideology. "Consumer" is tied to purchasing power, to one's position in a market. People experiencing homelessness, even when they become housed, are not generally viewed as valuable consumers. Hence, as Housing First spreads, homeless people retain very little rhetorical agency outside the programs themselves. Decisions about whether and how to proliferate the model are made at various levels of government, among service providers, and by housed community members with higher market status. The "consumers" who are empowered to speak about Housing First and its local iterations are the people who are more easily

understood as such; as is typical, the more purchasing power one has, the more amplified his/her/their voice.

The controversy I examine in chapter three, in North Boulder, Colorado, illustrates this shift well. Homeless people were mostly invisible in public deliberation about Housing First, despite the direct impact it has upon their lives. Housed community members who have much more economic security were at the center of the community conversation and media coverage of it; they even successfully involved the local city council despite its lack of jurisdiction in the matter. Looking to circulation, we see how the agents who are empowered by Housing First programs lose rhetorical agency to those who are empowered in the policy making process.

Publicity

Relatedly, the publics constituted by the circulation of Housing First rhetoric shift over time (and in time). Early rhetoric by Tsemberis and others sought to include people experiencing homelessness in broader publics by promulgating images of them as capable of speaking for themselves and as worthy of participation in decision making processes. Additionally, in Pathways' vision for Housing First programs, homeless people are addressed directly – never via an institutional proxy. Michael Warner tells us, however, "a public is … an ongoing space of encounter for discourse. Not texts themselves create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time."[5] As the texts and messaging for Housing First shift – as they are concatenated – so also do publics. Some members of publics become excluded, while others are privileged. This is more than a matter of audience; the rhetoric of Housing First not only constitutes a public via address, it also constructs a particular kind of imagined public.

The imagined public of Housing First appears most clearly when we consider the question, “Who benefits?” in arguments about why the model ought to be adopted. Tsemberis and colleagues’ scholarly work places homeless people at the center as the reason for the programs. Over time, however, as Housing First enters the policy realm (rather than simply a programmatic realm), homeless people are neither addressed by the rhetoric calling for the model, nor do they remain the central reason for its adoption. The shift toward cost-benefit analysis among advocates and policymakers spreading Housing First instead centers “taxpayers” as the reason the model should be adopted. Although many homeless people work, and pay taxes, the “taxpayer” here is a *housed* taxpayer who should not be expected to bear the high costs associated with homelessness. Homeless people are “expensive,” and the imagined taxpaying public does not include homeless people. Adopting Housing First is the responsible choice because it saves “taxpayer” money.

In media coverage of Housing First, “taxpayers” are the presumed audience. In texts produced to persuade communities – or policy makers -- to take up the model, the public benefit of Housing First is described in terms of taxpayer savings and quality of life. This rhetoric positions policy makers as responsible primarily to the supposed financial needs of taxpayers, making the desires and wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness, at best, secondary. Of course Housing First benefits homeless people, but the argument used to “sell” the model is instead that Housing First benefits the public (one which does not include homeless people) by saving it money. Attending to shifts in publics – and in how publics are imagined – allows the critical rhetorician to observe how power changes across contexts and time. (As we see in chapter three, publicity can itself become a tool of marginalization.) It also opens up

possibilities for re-imagining modes of circulation that may avoid the exclusion of marginalized people from those publics.

Texts

I noted in the introduction that most studies of public policy rhetoric tend to limit the kinds of texts they analyze to a particular genre – hearing transcripts, media coverage, video of public meetings, and so on. But focusing on the circulation of rhetoric necessitates a broader, more inclusive approach. By following the kinds of texts used to spread a message across time (diachronically and synchronically), we learn not just about the types of texts that are involved in the circulation of a given message, but when and how they shift to become (less) important parts of that circulation. Notices of funding availability (NOFAs), for example, did not used to be an important way to communicate about Housing First or to spread its message; their rhetoric supported other kinds of homelessness interventions. They are, however, now one of the most significant ways that the federal government communicates about Housing First in the United States.

Moreover, exploring the circulation of texts helps us understand relationships between them. In this study, we see how scholarly research articles contributed to word of mouth conversations (recounted via interview) that shaped media outreach strategies that influence the ways policymakers and community members talk about Housing First, and how they make decisions about whether to institute it. We also see how that research influenced conversations that produced government NOFAs and ten year plans to end homelessness, all of which shape the ways local service providers represent their programs, which in turn influences public

perception about Housing First. These shifts in predominating texts are not linear; they are created in process, in flows, in circuits, in relationships we cannot easily see without attending to circulation. Examining these brings us insight into how the rhetorical assemblage that is public policymaking is composed of its rhetorical fragments.[6]

As chapter two's examination of the relationship between the rhetoricity and materiality of money demonstrates, attending to circulation can also tell us about the ways that the rhetorical force of some texts are bound up in others (i.e. NOFAs, media featuring cost-benefit analysis, and money). For advocates, learning about these shifts in texts may prove instructive insofar as it suggests which kinds of texts may be the most promising means of persuasion in a given context, and as it contributes to their increased awareness (and understanding) of the intertextuality of the public sphere.

RHETORICAL PROBLEMS, RHETORICAL OPPORTUNITIES

One of the primary goals of Housing First is to end homelessness. By many measures, it does this successfully; one need only look to the retention rate data to find support for such a claim. Yet the model still faces some resistance. In addition to some of the ideological constraints I detailed in chapter one, Housing First faces a number of economic critiques. For example, critics argue the model is not "scalable"; to permanently house all homeless people would be cost prohibitive. Advocates are working to counter these arguments and build larger, more successful programs. The most recent Housing First Partners Conference (a biennial gathering of advocates and service providers, last held in Los Angeles in 2016) centered on the theme "Taking Housing First to Scale."[7] A major difficulty for Housing First scalability is that the

model is not preventative. It houses people who have become homeless, but it does nothing to stem the tide of homelessness. Without policy solutions that address larger, related problems like poverty, lack of healthcare access, racial disparities in public services, and a lack of affordable housing, people will continue to become homeless. And they will continue to need major, sometimes permanent, rental subsidies in order to escape homelessness. Housing First does not explicitly address these larger issues and this is, in my view, a rhetorical problem.

Framing homelessness as a problem solved by housing is reductive. This simplification can have some persuasive value – it is compelling to adopt an approach that is easy and effective. In fact, a number of my interviewees suggested that it matters little that members of the "general public" understand Housing First, as long as they acknowledge that homelessness is a problem they should act on and they support housing as the solution. Jeremy Rosen, former policy director for the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, explained, "I don't know how important it is that the public call it [Housing First]. I think [it's] important that the public care, that they understand in a very broad way what the best way to help people is, and that they support people who can take these actions."[8] Steve Berg of the National Alliance to End Homelessness remarked that media coverage of Housing First seems to focus on the model as the "simple" approach of providing housing, and "they think of it as more simple than it actually is because it's housing first, but…what comes second and third and fourth and fifth is some very complex stuff… But, you know, that's a lot more detail that people don't really need to know about unless they're actually trying to run one of the programs."[9] When homelessness is reduced to a housing problem, the solution may seem clearer, but the complexity of its causes – not just the strategies used to address it – becomes obscured.

Drawing attention away from the causes of homelessness and toward housing as a solution, Housing First rhetoric (generally) does little to deconstruct the predominant ideologies shaping what housed publics think about people experiencing it. Homeless people can still be lazy, or drug addicted, or poor decision makers, or entitled. They can still be "expensive" and "undeserving" of assistance. Housing First remains a good idea because it removes "those people" from the streets and reduces the social and economic costs of homelessness to "taxpayers." Moreover, despite the disparate impacts of homelessness on people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities, Housing First appears as a strategy that is blind to these characteristics. Even when homelessness is divided by advocates into subcategories like "unaccompanied homeless youth," veterans, or families, race – in particular – is notably absent from the policy rhetoric surrounding it. The structural racism that contributes to high poverty rates among people of color (e.g., discriminatory lending and rental practices, income inequality, and disparities in incarceration and sentencing) is significant, but Housing First's de-emphasis on the causes of homelessness breeds silence around these issues. It also enables policymakers and publics to deny their impact. If housing is the solution, then a lack of housing must be the problem – not racism, or LGBTQ discrimination, or ableism.

Tsemberis acknowledges that Housing First's focus on solutions does not necessarily call people to think in complex ways about homelessness's causes, saying, "to the extent that people think about [Housing First], I think they think about it as a way of ending homelessness, rather than really taking a moment to understand that because you can end homelessness this way, it actually challenges all the assumptions about what causes homelessness. But I don't think we're successful in getting that point across."[10] I would agree. Importantly, these

longstanding beliefs about homelessness, who experiences it and why, are contributors to its persistence. As we have seen across U.S. history, policymakers and influential “consumers” are less likely to support increased wages, affordable housing development, and robust public assistance programs for people they understand to be undeserving, whether because of their poverty, their race, sexual orientation, or the combination of these characteristics. Without such ameliorations, people will continue to become homeless, and Housing First will continue to face problems with scalability.

Additionally, while one may view advocates’ shift toward (perhaps cooptation of) dominant ideology and assent to dominant power structures as a survival strategy – as I do – we must recognize the ways in which this reifies those ideologies and structures. Using the language of the market (i.e., “consumer”) may help radical policies move through a system that is not built for them, but it does not alter that system. Rather than challenging the dominant narratives, it builds upon them, arguably making it more difficult for advocates who wish to deconstruct those narratives to do so – whether from within policymaking institutions or without.

Because these are rhetorical problems, we may find in rhetoric some alternatives. First, I would suggest that advocates develop outreach materials and messaging that adds complexity to the rhetoric of Housing First, focusing not just on the efficacy of the model, but also the reasons it becomes necessary. While there have been some efforts to pair Housing First rhetoric with an emphasis on homelessness prevention, as in the National Alliance to End Homelessness’s guide to 10 year plans to end homelessness, it would behoove advocates to find ways to expand and further circulate that messaging. Such an effort would require a shift

away from the idea that community members need not understand Housing First in order to support it, or homelessness to address it. Secondly, I recommend that advocates strive to move away from a colorblind Housing First rhetoric, toward one that openly acknowledges the racial (and other kinds of) disparities that necessitate the approach. This kind of rhetoric ought not only be outward-facing; as Housing First programming spreads, service providers should be conscious of the ways race, sexuality, and ability impact not only the "consumers" with which they are working, but the ways in which community members will respond to them – and to the model. Third, now that Housing First has established some cachet in housing policy circles, advocates may consider a return to the human rights frame that initially guided this work. In particular, distancing Housing First from messaging that touts its economic benefits may help prevent (or reduce) a continued reification of the ideologies that drive homelessness. Each of these strategies, of course, is also a matter of rhetorical circulation.

I offer these recommendations as a critical rhetorician committed to producing scholarship that has clear application for advocates and activists working toward social justice. In this way, I contribute to a growing body of rhetorical studies that demonstrate that studies concerned with power dynamics and the material impacts of rhetoric can also contribute to our understanding of how rhetoric itself works. Studying rhetorical circulation in policymaking contexts improves our understanding of both policymaking and circulation. It shows us how advocates of radical policies can adopt dominant ideologies (even as they may also resist them) to push those policies through conservative institutions and persuade individuals. It helps us understand how people gain and lose rhetorical agency, how imagined publics shift with changes in messaging, and how different types of texts garner or lose prominence in this

process, among other lessons. Policy is never made without rhetoric, and rhetoric is never static – it is always moving, always circulating. As scholars, we must move with it.

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[1] Sam Tsemberis, Interview with Whitney Gent, November 10, 2015; Deborah K. Padgett, Benjamin F. Henwood, and Sam J. Tsemberis, *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 189; Greg B. Smith, "Mentally Disabled New Yorkers Face Eviction as Pathways to Housing Program Fails to Pay Landlords" (New York Daily News, September 7, 2014), http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/exclusive-mentally-disabled-new-yorkers-face-eviction-pathways-housing-remains-debt-article-1.1930728.

[2] Community Solutions, "Built for Zero," accessed August 8, 2017, https://www.community.solutions/what-we-do/built-for-zero.

[3] Mary Cunningham, Sarah Gillespie, and Jacqueline Anderson, "Rapid Rehousing: What the Research Says" (Urban Institute, June 2015), http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/54201/2000265-Rapid-Re-housing-What-the-Research-Says.pdf; Partnering for Change, "Family Housing First," accessed August 8, 2017, http://www.partnering-for-change.org/housing-first-strategies-for-families/.

[4] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Agency: Promiscuous and Protean* (Evanston, IL: Alliance of Rhetoric Societies, 2003), 5.

[5] Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 90.

[6] The notion of policies as "assemblage" appears in Rebecca Dingo, *Networking Arguments*, 23.

[7] Housing First Partners Conference, “Taking Housing First to Scale,” 2016, http://www.fiopsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/HFPCProgram2016FINAL.pdf.

[8] Jeremy Rosen, Interview with Whitney Gent, December 11, 2014.

[9] Steve Berg, Interview with Whitney Gent, November 13, 2015.

[10] Sam Tsemberis, Interview with Whitney Gent, December 15, 2014.

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