

Punitive Containment and Contesting Neoliberalism: The Roots and Implications of Homeless Camps in America



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Submitted to

Central European University, Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts/Sciences

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Budapest, Hungary

2010

Abstract

This paper seeks to resituate and explain the growing homeless camp phenomena that emerged in the late '90s in the US to the broader, more insidious, though incomplete neoliberalization processes occurring in its current role-out phase. The first part of the paper deconstructs the media flurry and presentation of tent cities during the spring of 2009 through an empirical survey of the variegated communities across the Pacific Coast. While these communities display an ad hoc collage of policy fixes and forms of homeless habitation, their concurrent rise and reactive similarities are clearly linked to specific mechanisms of localized neoliberalism; restructuring of the welfare state, mutations in local bureaucracies of economic development and an increasingly punitive approach towards managing the poor. I argue that we cannot simply conceptualize this form of informal urbanism as a natural response to an unmet housing demand, but rather that it must be explained in contrast to more traditional forms of homeless habitation such as shelters and isolated camping, as reactions to the shifts within welfare management and discourse, increasing symbolic and physical violence perpetuated against homeless people, and the pervasive criminalization of poverty. I conclude conceptualizing these settlements as the punitive containment of marginality, but at the same time as challenges to an increasingly vengeful form of social exclusion within American urbanization.

Acknowledgements

The present work draws upon investigations of homeless camps carried out over the past year; June 2009-June 2010. This stretch of research was made possible by the support of the Pokorny Trust as a Research Associate for the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, DC, a fellowship from the Central European University, a research grant from the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the same institution, and a travel grant provided by the University of California, Berkeley. A special thanks is owed to the Poverello House and the Community of Hope in Fresno California, who allowed me to camp as a resident during my pilot-fieldwork. Although, much of my findings from this stay are not included in this paper, the ethnographic research greatly informed my theoretic framework and confirmed my empirical findings. A full ethnography of the archipelago of Fresno's homeless encampments is forthcoming. This paper was written in conjunction with a policy report that I authored with the National Coalition for the Homeless with assistance from their staff; particularly Michael Stoops, Katherine Streit, and Lauren Tatro. I benefited greatly from oral comments and written exchanges of my supervisors Judit Bodnar and Alexandra Kowalski whose courses at CEU served as the intellectual workshop for this thesis. I am also greatly indebted to the homeless men and women I met and spoke with over the course of my travels in the Pacific Northwest and California.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Media and Mythification	1
Variegated Informality: A Brief History of Homeless Camps of the Pacific Coast	4
Neoliberal Restructuring	12
Rescaling the Analysis: Towards a Critical Geography of Homeless Encampments	30
Bum Bashing.....	34
Conclusion: Punitive Containment & Contesting Neoliberalism.....	37

Introduction: Media and Mythification

“By the wide stretch of the American River in Sacramento, history is repeating itself. Here, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, men and women who had lost everything and despaired of finding work built rough shelters and huddled around fires. Now the spiral of job losses and house repossessions has left another wave of Americans homeless, and a new tent city is growing rapidly on lumpy, derelict land between the river and the railway tracks here in the capital of California.”

“Return to the Thirties as poor, huddled masses once again gather in land of plenty”
-Mike Harvey, London Times

In March of 2009, Lisa Ling aired a special report on the Oprah Winfrey Show covering Sacramento’s homeless tent city to bring America closer to “the new faces of the recession.” In the same week, Justin Sullivan’s photo essay juxtaposing images of Sacramento’s recent tent city with one that existed on the same site during the Great Depression appeared in publications across the globe via Getty Images. In the weeks that followed every major US television network and newspaper, and many international media outlets, ran a story on America’s tent cities. With titles like “From Boom Times to Tent City” (MSNBC), “Tent Cities Arise and Spread in Recessions Grip” (NY Times), and “Economic Casualties Pile Into Tent Cities” (USA Today), the homeless camps became a powerful symbol reflecting the exceptional times. Most of the stories ran within series focused on the economic downturn, such as the Boston Globe’s “Scenes from the recession,” NBC’s “Depression Days,” and the Washington Post’s “Half-a-Tank” summer tour; “Along recession road finding images and stories of lives flattened by the economy” (Vargas & Williams, 2009). Almost every story drew lines of comparison between the Hoovervilles of the 1930’s and the current settlements as the camps of last resort for Americas’ rapidly increasing numbers of recession victims.

This recent media frenzy over America’s tent cities is one of the first times that homelessness, framed as a national issue, made headlines in the past decade. Images of shantytowns filled with hundreds of homeless people in Fresno, Reno, and Sacramento were vividly portrayed as creatures of the recession – re-born Hoovervilles for the laid off and

foreclosed. However, while the media's attention to the tent city phenomena had everything to do with the recession, the reality, origins, and most of the populations within the settlements were hardly affected by the economic downturn, except for the deployment of new municipal techniques of *invisibilisation* on America's homeless "problem" aimed at the camps following the negative PR. There is a need to demystify the "recessionary myth" which has become the dominating narrative surrounding these settlements, primarily serving the news agencies' quotas for 'economic crisis' columns and tickling the vulnerable fears of low-income Americans who may also be one mortgage payment from homelessness. While many of the settlements are growing and gaining people who have only recently become homeless, these are a clear minority – Sacramento had the most new homeless, some 30%, but even among these, many had been homeless before (Loaves & Fishes, 2009). While Fresno and Reno had similar levels of new homeless, most other camps in the region maintain populations with 90-100% that have been in and out of homelessness for more than a year (NCH, 2010). Not only does the myth intensify the bright line between the "working poor" and "chronically homeless," which is all too often associated with the "deserving poor" and an "undeserving class" of street homeless, it also obfuscates the deeper social and economic structures that have led to this acute form of social marginality over the past two decades. The second widespread misrepresentation was the media's insensitivity to the variations among the nation's several homeless camps. Most reporters tended to cover Fresno, Sacramento, or Reno – large, illegal, and unsanitary informal settlements – yet, would none-the-less go onto list in brief reference settlements in Nashville, St. Petersburg, Seattle, Portland, and Olympia without ever recognizing their legal statuses, modes of self-governance, and developed amenities and services.

The sheer numbers of these settlements that have formed primarily in the past 10 years often in complete isolation and with little knowledge of their counter-parts points to broader economic and social processes at work. At the same time, the local variations of their formation, governance, policy reactions, and community structure are vast. Therefore, to understand the

roots and implications of America's homeless camps one must explain local variation as embedded within broader economic and social processes through a multi-scalar analysis. In doing so, both myths constructed by the media quickly dissolve, and we are left to grapple with a far more complex and contradictory set of relations between formality and informality and the containment and resistance of America's most marginalized urban citizens.

Variegated Informality: A Brief History of Homeless Camps of the Pacific Coast

It is first necessary to ground the phenomena through comparative description. Doing so within the regional frame of the Pacific Coast is in a large part a pragmatic decision – I authored a report on the region for the National Coalition for the Homeless and the more expansive national report is still under research. But it is also strategic, since the region has the longest and most coherent history of these settlements, with the widest range of differentiation in terms of legal recognition, management, governance, community models, spatial locations, and architectural structures. The range of formality is especially wide. On one end of the spectrum is Dignity Village, a community of homeless people with their own 501-c3 non-profit that funds and governs themselves on a contracted piece of public property. The community considers itself an eco-village, although it began as a tent city under a bridge. With its collection of wooden cottages, raised community gardens, and common spaces that include computers, books, and television; it is far from a tent city. Dignity Village also has services including weekly doctor visits, a shower, electricity, a communal kitchen, and several other amenities. On the opposite side of the spectrum was Sacramento's American River Settlement – illegally located on a public brownfield, without porta-potties, running water, or electricity, and with only pockets of self-governance. A glance at the table on the following page, displays the numerous combinations of these attributes (see table 1).

While homeless camping has long been a reality of American urbanism, camp communities, which recognize themselves as such and are comprised of larger numbers of homeless in each settlement (25+), did not re-emerge on a significant scale until the year 2000.

Camp	Location	# of Residents	Year Est.	Stable/ Mobile	Legal Status	Type of Sponsorship	Types of Structures
Dignity Village	Portland, OR	60	2000	Permanent Site	City Ordinance	Self-Sponsored Nonprofit	Wooden Structures
Tent City 3	Seattle, WA	100	2000	Mobile	City Ordinance	Nonprofit Faith Network	Tents
Tent City 4	Seattle Metro Area	100	2006	Mobile	Local Ordinances	Nonprofit Faith Network	Tents
Nickelsville	Seattle, WA	55	2008	Mobile	Not sanctioned	Self-Sponsored	Tents
Camp Quixote	Thurston County, WA	25-30	2007	Mobile	Local Ordinances	Nonprofit Faith Network	Tents
Safe Ground	Sacramento, CA	150-200	1930s-2009	Stable until Dismantled	Not sanctioned Dismantled	No formal sponsorship	Tents
Village of Hope	Fresno, CA	66	2004	Permanent Site	Zoned for Camping	Nonprofit	Wooden Sheds
Community of Hope	Fresno, CA	60	2007	Permanent Site	Zoned for Camping	Nonprofit	Wooden Sheds
New Jack City & Little Tijuana	Fresno, CA	150-200	2002-2009	Stable until Dismantled	Not sanctioned Dismantled	No formal sponsorship	Tents, Tarps Wooden Structures
Temporary Homeless Service Area	Ontario, CA	70	2007	Permanent Site	Temporary City Approval	City and County Government	Tents
River Haven Community	Ventura, CA	21	2005	Permanent Site	City Conditional Use Permit	City of Ventura	U-Domes

Table 1: Overview of Pacific Coast Tent Cities

Source: Tent Cities in America: Pacific Coast, National Coalition for the Homeless, 2010.



Dignity Village, Portland, Oregon



Temporary Homeless Service Area, Ontario, California



Nickelsville, Seattle



Little Tijuana, Fresno



Village Of Hope, Fresno , California



River Haven, Ventura, California

All, but one of the communities covered in the report emerged after the fall of Lehman and the unraveling of the subprime crisis. It is also important to note that some of the establishment dates in the chart are also generalized from earlier punctuated histories that further highlight the effects of the late '90s roll-out phase of neoliberalism. For instance the Sacramento tent city emerged in the late nineties, but did not start to grow significantly and continually until 2002 after an important court decision, and the King County settlement, now called Tent City 3, formed and dissipated numerous times since 1994 before finally congealing into its current form.

This rise correlates more to the chronology of the economic boom and the intensified gentrification of city centers than the tale of recession. In a sense, the origins of all homeless camps' could be considered reactionary symptoms to neoliberalization undergirded by the ascending economy, which not only entails the widening liberal credo of economic freedom upstream of the social current, but also the intensifying paternalism downstream, particularly the criminalization of homelessness. However, some camps were formed in direct opposition or support of criminalization. Seattle's Tent City 3 and Olympia's Camp Quixote were formed in protest to anti-homeless laws passed by the city councils, Nickelsville was a planned response to sweeps waged against rough sleepers, and Portland's Dignity Village emerged directly after a state court ruling nullified the city's anti-camping law.

Each of these camp formations included organizing, protests, media outreach, and could be considered forms of social movements. Sacramento's homeless realized that they could skirt enforcement of the anti-camping law through strength in numbers after the city lost an expensive lawsuit for destroying homeless people's property. After its establishment, a small group of homeless people formed a "Safe Ground Task Force" seeking government sanction and services. Yet, other tent cities had entirely unique origins, such as Fresno's Community of Hope, which formed outside of the city's primary service provider in a city with a lack of shelter, and Ontario's Temporary Homeless Services Area, which was created by the local government itself to consolidate services and address "spreading homeless problems" (NCH, 2010). Still

other communities, such as Tent City 4 and River Haven, emerged primarily from individuals wishing to avoid restrictive shelter systems and seeking a sense of community. These diverse narratives display the heterogeneity of local movements, but their temporal proximity and spatial distance indicates their enfoldment into broader trends occurring at national and regional scales.

Another important difference between the camps is their varying legal statuses. Many of the settlements have some form of legal recognition at the local level by way of zoning, temporary use permits, or through city or local ordinances. What is most important about these sanctions is not their particular position in the legal code, but their conditionality, claims to public and private space, and the struggles or negotiations that gained them legal recognition. Of those with legal status, about half have permanent sites. The Village of Hope is located on privately owned land by a non-profit service provider, while Ventura, Ontario, and Portland's communities are sited on government owned land. While Ventura and Portland's land are contracted out to the nonprofit managers of the sites, which only in the case of Portland's Dignity Village are the homeless people themselves, Ontario's Temporary Service Area and Fresno's Community of Hope are owned, run, and managed by the city government. The mobile tent-city communities in the Northwest are required by their local ordinances to change location every 90 days, primarily staying on the private land of church parking lots and lawns. The 90 day condition included in the ordinance is largely due to pervasive NIMBYISM, but is also a period of time preferred by the congregations that host the camp to make it a "workable model." From this legal collage overlaid on gradients of public/private distinctions, one sees that there is no clear unifying path to recognition. Wrought with overlapping jurisdictions and a counterpoint of inter-scalar conflicts, most 'safe havens' have been formed as local ad-hoc fixes to growing and organized homeless communities. By forming larger camps, these settlements have been able to ally with non-profits, activists, and church groups in new political forms, while garnering public attention through their magnified visibility, which was formerly impossible as dispersed populations.

Among the communities exist various organizational mixes of city government, non-profit, and homeless members in terms of funding, management, and relative autonomy. Several have democratic modes of self-governance, wherein members collectively agree to community standards of behavior (although some rules are mandated in the city and local ordinances), approve new members, dismiss those who violate the rules, and assign community responsibilities such as fulfilling security shifts. Most of the settlements with forms of self-governance are financially supported through direct donations that flow through a non-profit service provider that acts as a fiscal agent, and in some cases provides direct services. For instance, in the mobile-church models of the Northwest, each community makes their own decisions and manages themselves with very little involvement by the non-profit sponsor. The non-profit, acting as the fiscal agent, raises, manages, and funds the basic operations of the camp, while the primary donors both of land, materials, and money are the church congregations. Dignity Village of Portland, Oregon on the other hand has an incorporated 501-c3 nonprofit of its own, managed and directed by its homeless board members, which both raises funds through fees paid by the homeless, collective enterprises such as firewood sales and yard sales, and fundraising, while also making collective spending decisions. In all of these models there is no public government funding, a fact that many of its advocates stress, as they are well versed in the logic of neoliberalism to which their camps often run-against.

On the other hand, there are also communities that are managed, by the state or NGO partners. These include the Village of Hope in Fresno and River Haven of Ventura, which are managed and governed by the non-profit sponsors, no differently than a shelter would. Lastly is the peculiar state-sponsored Temporary Housing Services Area of Ontario; a highly securitized, institutionalized, and managed form of containment, spurred by bourgeois complaints of 'homeless problems' rather than emerging from the local homeless population itself. This particular case is reviewed at length towards the end of this paper, but should be noted that its

model is one that urban managers are considering adopting as an innovative model to deal with their city's dispossessed (personal correspondences, 2010).

While the Sacramento and Fresno settlements of New Jack City and Tijuana Flats did not have formal structures of governance and on-site amenities, each comprised forms of supportive cohabitation, organization, and support from outside advocates and service groups. Within Fresno's communities were "philanthropists" who provided tents for free to newcomers and "landlords" that rented them out. Self-segregation formed on distinct lines; African Americans settled in New Jack City and Latinos in Little Tijuana with a ring of poor whites that tended toward the outside margins. Little Tijuana had a central eating area known as the Cantina that served donated food indiscriminately to the entire community, primarily provided by friends and family of the homeless or the homeless themselves. New Jack City, named after a dark drug-filled film of the early '90s had more issues with substances and prostitution, and less social organization. Little T, as it was called by its residents, had a recognized Mayor that settled disputes not unlike South American slum communities. While both of these encampments were dispersed from their original sites by the city government and the private landowner, a new archipelago of homeless camps, some with over 100 inhabitants, line the city's highway overpasses and rail yards.

These variegated landscapes of social, legal, and historical communities highlight the local diversity that became steamrolled into a uni-dimensional image of poverty and squalor amidst America's "Great Recession" by the media. The differences reflect only a handful of the variations expanded in the National Coalition for the Homeless' report, but display the range of local articulations expressed through combinations of numerous institutional and governmental mediations of which I will go on to argue are acute responses to waves of localized neoliberalization processes (Brenner & Theodore, 2002), marking a recalibration within the bureaucratic field (Bourdieu, 1994), and raising the question of whether this latest phase of urban

marginality represents a new form of social exclusion under the an emerging governmentality of social insecurity (Wacquant, 2009).

Neoliberal Restructuring

The formation of homeless camps in a number of American cities should be seen as a tightly intertwined coalescence of localized neoliberalization processes. Urban scholars have recognized that cities are increasingly becoming both institutional laboratories and geographical targets for neoliberal policy experiments (Brenner & Theodore et al., 2002; Leitner & Sheppard et al. 2007, Hackworth 2007). Neoliberalism is not a unified political or economic theory, therefore, like globalization, *neoliberalization* should be understood as a process and not an end-state (Peck & Tickell, 2002). While neoliberalization processes are always multi-scalar, focusing on their localized unfolding adds precision to a rascally concept. These processes do not simply require a grasp of their politico-ideological foundations, as many scholars merely deploy ‘neoliberalism’ as a descriptive label onto anything to do with contemporary capitalism. Just as importantly is a systematic inquiry into their multifarious institutional forms, their developmental tendencies, their diverse sociopolitical effects, and their multiple contradictions (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Brenner and Theodore have described this process as a dialectical one, composed of the conflicting tendencies toward destruction and creation. Neoliberal destruction consists of the removal of Keynesian artifacts (public housing, public space), policies (redistributive welfare, food stamps), institutions (labor unions, HUD), and agreements (Fordist labor arrangements, federal government redistribution to states and cities), while neoliberal creation consists of the establishment of new, or cooptation of extant, institutions and practices to reproduce neoliberalism in the future (government-business consortia, workfare policies, entrepreneurial governance). This paper continues to follow Brenner and Theodore’s attempt to move the critical literature beyond the rather generalized accounts that have up until now dominated the field, by illustrating how three interlinked processes have led to the emergence of homeless camps: the resurgence of the penal state, restructuring of the welfare state, and the rise of entrepreneurial governance.

This schematic that focuses on localized neoliberalization processes makes three theoretical interventions in thinking not only about homeless camps, but urban marginality more generally. First, while many authors have highlighted the ways these three neoliberalization processes have led to perpetuating homelessness, they frequently fail to distinguish the highly unequal effects within the increasingly heterogeneous homeless population itself, or what I call “homeless inter-distinction.” The distinction between familial and working homeless vs. chronically homeless individuals has splintered the social stratification of the homeless populations, their venues of habitation, and the symbolic resources available in their struggles. Second, Most scholars tend to treat the changes in the housing market, welfare services, and penal policy in a type of multi-variable causal analysis, failing to grasp their functional inter-linkages and reinforcing tendencies¹. Rather than explaining each of these processes in isolation, the transformations creating and perpetuating the homeless camps must be conceptualized as necessarily intertwined. For this reason, my argument unfolds around three nexus’ of neoliberalization processes within the bureaucratic field focusing on their dialectical interconnections. Third, this paper attempts to integrate the most recent thinking of neoliberal governmentality among critical geographers (eg Harvey, Smith, Theodore, Peck, etc.) and critical sociologists (eg Bourdieu, Wacquant, Garland, Tonroy etc.) of the welfare and penal state. First, the tripartite conception (penal, welfare, and economic development processes) complicates the dualistic portrayals of welfare to penal strategies in poverty management, highlighted by sociologists, and the portrayal of an eclipsing of entrepreneurial governance over welfarist priorities, highlighted by critical geographers. Second, while critical criminologists and welfare scholars have recognized the effects of global restructuring on intergovernmental relations, flexible labor regimes, and de-industrialization of advanced capitalist nations on penal and welfare policies, practices, and clients, they often conceptualize their symptoms of urban social

¹ For an extended discussion and lit review on this trend in the penal, welfare, and social policy literature see Loic Wacquant’s *Punishing the Poor* pp. 17-19. While Garland, Tonroy, and Wacquant stand as exceptions to this myopic approach they only focus on the interlinkings between the welfare and penal state.

marginality as local crystallizations of national trends, ignoring or at least lacking precision in identifying key underlying inter-scalar dynamics that have pushed cities to roll-back services and enhance policing forces and their legal reach, which are both interlinked with the rise of urban entrepreneurialism. At the same time, critical geographers have relied too heavily on an economic deterministic vision of inter-urban competition to explain these changes, without recognizing the political and cultural sea-change that has reconfigured the symbolic and discursive frames by which these transformations are underwritten and legitimized. There is a vital need to bridge these analytic divides in order to fully account for the rise of homeless encampments and neoliberalization more generally.

Lastly is an important methodological note. The case of America's homeless camps, as specific as it may be also serves as a case study by which neoliberal and geo-political economic theory can be worked *through* to understand broader urban processes. As David Harvey notes in his recent work *Notes on Uneven Geographic Development*, the conventional approach is to insist that case studies be "theoretically informed." The issue of how a theoretical work might in turn be informed and advanced by case study work is rarely if ever addressed. What sometimes happens instead is that theory is judged inadequate, when the real questions should be how to advance the theory. Rather than holding "theory" as a bundle of stationary, already fully specified arguments, ready-made to be applied to and tested against the "real" world, "theory should be understood instead as an evolving structure of argument sensitive to encounters with complex ways in which social processes are materially integrated in the web of life" (Harvey, 2006). The case of America's homeless camps forces us to rethink the way we conceptualize interconnected processes that transform our cities besides the shifting class relations and cultural attitudes that condensate around them.

Entrepreneurial Governance/Welfare Nexus

While all of these processes are inextricably connected in fertilizing the grounds of America's homeless camps, the essential social element is housing, and the restructuring of the housing market stands most starkly in transformations between the welfare state and the rise of entrepreneurial governance. The emergence of this new form of governance aligns both with the increasing volatility of capital and labor flows of the 1973 round of global restructuring and the significant reduction in the flow of federal redistributions and local tax revenues after 1972 (the year in which President Nixon declared the urban crisis to be over, signaling that the federal government no longer had the fiscal resources to contribute to their solution). Duckworth, McNulty and Simmons proclaimed in the mid-80s:

“The history of the United States is entering a new era of public entrepreneurship. This profound change in the way cities operate may best be termed ‘urban entrepreneurialism.’ Cities are acting as risk-takers and active competitors in the urban economic game, and the key to each city’s success is its ability to invest wisely and to market shrewdly. Urban entrepreneurship entails a new breed of municipal official, transcending the traditional local government roles of delivering services and enforcing regulations. The city entrepreneurial role includes characteristics traditionally viewed as distinctive to the private sector, such as risk-taking, inventiveness, self reliance, profit motivation, and promotion. The bottom line for the public balance sheet is the enhanced competitiveness of the city which is critical to urban rebuilding and economic revitalization.”

Entrepreneurialism has both increased and mutated significantly since the late 80's when it first gained critical attention: technology has advanced, trade barriers have fallen, and migration has rapidly intensified. Corporations increasingly have greater mobility in their locational choices

and strategies in city management are increasingly focused on capturing their business. Perhaps even more significant is the increased mobility of high-paid workers and the heightened flexibility of their specialized labor, which the economist and urban guru Richard Florida has famously termed the creative class (2002). This has led urban managers to increase local governments' involvement in investments towards gentrification, subsidizing sites of consumption, sponsoring festivals or spectacles, and large-scale cultural projects. These tools are being deployed through a new array of institutions including city-owned economic development corporations, offices of business services, and revamped departments of tourism. Besides this bureaucratic bloom of new governmental technologies and investment towards gentrification, the sphere of urban economic development has also co-opted Keynesian artifacts such as public housing authorities, offices of community development, and departments of cultural affairs, that used to fall under the human service column of the municipal org chart, but now increasingly are funded by, and report to, Deputy Mayors' of economic development. Not only do these activities and funding measures cater to the interests of a specific class, but they are also designed to serve and attract non-residents such as tourists and potential investors from other localities. During this same era of expanding bureaucracies of urban economic development, the increased spending on urban marketing, and gifts to private corporations, has been increasing cuts to welfare and public services – often portrayed by critical geographers as a hydraulic shift. When push comes to shove, fiscal limitations are the prime reason for cutting services, yet budgets towards economic development and tax breaks cease to expand.

While the welfare state is multifaceted, one of the arenas of central importance to homelessness and in greatest decline is the preservation and creation of affordable housing. Government supported programs of urban “regeneration” both devour affordable rental units, creating more homeless in need of welfare services, but also destroy and constrain governmental housing initiatives and solutions. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies, about 200,000 rental housing units are destroyed annually, with the vast majority being affordable units

(2006), and estimates indicate that there are twice as many low-income families searching for homes as there are affordable units available (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2009). This has occurred at the same time of local and federal cuts to housing assistance. Federal support for low-income housing has fallen an extraordinary 49% from 1980 to 2003 (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2005).

Besides funding cuts, institutional changes have further reduced the welfare provision of housing, and also fed-back into supporting the gentrified restructuring of urban housing markets. HUD has laid out billions of dollars to destroy the high rises managed and owned by local housing authorities in order to replace them with scattered site, low-rise, privately owned, mixed-income developments through its HOPE VI program. While this may deconcentrate poverty on these specific sites, it does so by destroying more affordable rentals than it creates, both within the development itself and beyond (Hackworth, 2007). First, only a minority of displaced public housing residents get re-housed in the newly remodeled houses (Feemster, 2003). Second, the development increases surrounding rents, which are most often in low-income areas. Third, the redevelopments pushes up housing demand and prices in other low-income areas as former residents move in with section 8 vouchers. At the same time, broader tax incentives and municipal subsidies that encourage downtown development actually encourage the destruction rather than the creation of more affordable housing; as gentrification reaches the zones of public housing, the incentives to destroy their blight increase. In fact, more often than not, HOPE VI projects are explicitly designed and marketed first and foremost to accelerate gentrification of the surrounding housing stock, rather than to alleviate the increasing rental pressures for the city's low-income residents (Herring, 2008). In this way, public housing authorities and neighborhood development offices that were once squarely in the business of urban welfare now are seen as offices of economic development through the deployment of new governmental technologies involving zoning laws, subsidies, and tax cuts that direct, constrain, or perhaps more concisely co-opt welfare programs such as public housing. This is not simply a uni-directional shift of

welfarism to entrepreneurialism, but an enmeshing or even cannibalization of a Keynesian artifact into a neoliberal institution.

For instance, the HOPE VI transformation of America's largest housing project, the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago that began in 2005, had less to do with new needs of the project's residents as it did with the expanding boundary of gentrification that ran up against the site; increasing support among developers, local homeowners, and city officials seeking increased tax revenues to ensure potential for further development surrounding public housing. At the same time, the contemporary financial architecture for creating new affordable housing is buttressed by a tight public-private partnership; projects sponsored by private developers and financed through a combination of municipal bonds, federal subsidies, and private loans. These profit-seeking actors have made the potential for development highly dependent on the private housing market at large. As land prices rise, and the opportunity cost of building market rentable space increases, it becomes more costly to build affordable housing, and site selection becomes increasingly constrained. A common trade-off is to allow developers to build more market-priced units, raising the rents to make the apartments available to people with higher, but still under-average incomes. This often results in getting rid of the most affordable housing tier that would be available for the currently working homeless or those soon to be.

In order to tie these changes to the emergence of homeless camps it is necessary to consider their effects on the segmentation within the homeless population. These waves of gentrified restructuring in the housing market, driven by a fallout of public housing on the welfare end, and a roll-out of rent-increasing strategies on the entrepreneurial end, have significantly increased inter-distinction amongst homeless persons, primarily through the rising numbers of families and working homeless. In 2007, a survey performed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that 17.4% of homeless adults in families were employed while 13% of homeless single adults or unaccompanied youth were employed. Familial homeless (those with children) became the fastest growing segment of the homeless population in the late 1990s, and

its marginal rate of growth has continued to outpace those of single homeless persons. This has increasingly become the case since the recession. For instance In New York, the number of families with children seeking shelter has increased 32% since 2007 (Swarns, 2008). During this same time period the numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness temporarily has remained more-or-less stable, but stubbornly high, however there are indications that this is now changing for the worse in the recession's wake. Yet, what is most significant is the recent reduction in the population of the "chronically homeless". The federal definition of a chronically homeless person is "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years" (HUD working definition of chronically homeless, 2010). Representing only 10% of the homeless population overall, this segment both utilizes the majority of services and is the most likely group to live and sleep in public spaces. Yet while homeless family numbers continue to increase, over the last 10 years there has been a 30% overall reduction among the chronically homeless nationwide, comprised primarily by an annual 15% reduction since 2005 (HUD, 2008).

While the 1990s witnessed the continual decline of affordable and public housing, the McKinney-Vento Act paved the way for an increase for homeless service providers such as shelters and soup-kitchens in the same period. In the last decade a number of cities (over 300 worldwide) have taken on ambitious 10 year commitments to end chronic homelessness and in a recent survey 16 of 21 cities saw reductions or stabilization of their populations of chronically homeless (US Conference of Mayors, 2008). As nearly every other form of welfare support has dwindled, congressional appropriations bills have increased funding for HUD's homeless assistance programs since the late '90s. This isn't simply an aberration or an anomaly of neoliberalization, but is part and parcel of its logic. While it may be too cynical to claim that these initiatives, aimed at rough sleepers, are purely based on economic development interests to clean the streets of disturbing images of poverty, it would be equally inadequate not to recognize

these interests role in motivating, legitimizing, and supporting such initiatives. The recent rise of such governmental task forces must be seen both as a reaction *and* supporting policy to the unparalleled rise in rents and speculation that had ascended to formerly unimagined peaks before the crash of 2008. According to HUD, there has been an increase of 41% from 2000 to 2009 in the fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2009c). Again, through the municipal campaigns to ‘end chronic homelessness,’ we see a welfare strategy influencing paths and the acceleration of gentrification and speculation, while further increasing the number of homeless families and workers.

With these combined processes, municipalities end up warehousing their poor and redundant populations, as stays in shelters become longer. In a survey of 24 cities, people remain homeless an average of seven months, and 87% of cities reported that the length of time people are homeless has increased in recent years (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). While many of the 10-year plans are based on “Housing First” models that favor placing homeless persons into permanent housing, most of the chronically homeless still rely on shelters or live outdoors. Longer stays in homeless shelters result in less shelter space available for other homeless people, who must find shelter elsewhere or live on the streets. More importantly in relation to the camps though is that the primary reason homeless people choose to camp is that they cannot access shelter, find the shelter system inhumane, and believe that even if they did go into shelter that it would not likely lead to a viable alternative housing option (NCH, 2010).

How the remaining street homeless have become herded into larger collective settlements must be explained in relation to changes in policing tactics and new municipal ordinances, but this emboldened line between family or working homeless and chronically homeless; the so called deserving and undeserving poor, temporary and long-term homeless populous, hinges on changes in the housing market undergirded by the comingling of entrepreneurial strategies and welfare reforms. Perhaps most important to the camps’ emergence is that as cities spend more money and policy capital on “ending chronic homelessness,” the

public perception of success is just as important as statistics. While there may be less homeless on the street today than 10 years ago, those that remain in public view, become further stigmatized and labeled as uncooperative, unwilling to be helped, and undeserving, despite the increasing lengths of shelter stays and unequal treatment within the welfare system (US Conference of Mayors, 2008). They stand out within the urban landscape and face increased harassment by both the police and general public, and many of the camps occur on the periphery through this harassment or are formalized simply to be moved out of sight.

This double movement, through which entrepreneurial governance leads to the destruction of affordable rentals, while making their creation ever more difficult, has been compounded and connected to HOPE VI and strategies aimed at getting rough sleepers off the streets. While they may be considered innovative social provisions by urban managers, they are also tools of the bourgeoisie to mainstream the “ghetto” and zones of blight, and when they work successfully, set the stage for the next round of gentrifying expansion, further exiling the families and working citizens that these agencies seek to house. While the entrepreneurial governance/welfare nexus is certainly the most structural driver of homelessness in general, it is perhaps the least important in regards to the specificity of the emergence of larger camps, which the following nexus’ are more closely related. Nonetheless, its role in enhancing distinctions between familial or working homeless against the rest plays an important symbolic role in legitimating and supporting the vengeful penal reactions explored in the next sections.

Welfare/Penal Nexus

Recent scholarship among critical sociologists and political scientists has pointed to an epochal sea change within the American bureaucratic field between a receding welfare state and irrupting penal state (Wacquant, 2009; Garland 2001; Tonry 1995). As state welfare rolls and federal support wither penal budgets are exploding, public housing units continue to decline as prison construction booms, and prison guards and police personnel grow amidst reductions of

social workers and teachers. In sum, over the last twenty years the eroding welfare state has been gradually replaced with a punitive form of social policy towards the unsheltered. Discourses and technologies of surveillance and control have eclipsed those of assistance and entitlements and the dispossessed populations of America's cities become presumed perpetrators in the city, subjected to new scrutiny in the political and journalistic fields. This new social contract of the post-Keynesian era represents a new regulatory balance toward the working and underclasses wherein what Pierre Bourdieu calls "the Left hand" of the state, which protects and expands life chances through labor law, education, and social assistance, becomes supplanted by regulation through its "Right hand," comprised of the police, justice, and correctional administrations (Wacquant, 2009). As affordable and permanent housing options have been rolled back as previously discussed, localities have simultaneously developed an ensemble of ordinances to combat 'anti-social' behavior against those that have fallen through the welfare safety-net (NCH, 2010). Among these laws include:

- Legislation that makes it illegal to sleep, sit, or store personal belongings in public spaces in cities where people are forced to live in public spaces;
- Selective enforcement of more neutral laws, such as loitering or open container laws, against homeless persons;
- Sweeps of city areas where homeless persons are living to drive them out of the area, frequently resulting in the destruction of those persons' personal property, including important personal documents and medication; and
- Laws that punish people for begging or panhandling to move poor or homeless persons out of a city or downtown area.

These policies can be seen as disciplining the sociospatial contradictions arising from the neoliberalization processes already discussed (Macleod, 2002). Don Mitchell has described this legal remedy that seeks to cleanse the streets of those left behind by globalization and other changes in the economy as the "annihilation of space by law" (1997), a process by which police are given new roles and responsibilities through legal ordinances to 'protect' particular spaces from the underclass enemies. This legal regime is outlawing just those behaviors that poor people and especially homeless have to do in public spaces of the city. Since Mitchell's seminal

piece, written over 10 years ago, these laws have spread across the country and continue to increase. This is demonstrated in the two statistical tables below from the 2009 report on the criminalization of homelessness by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty:

“City ordinances frequently serve as a prominent tool to criminalize homelessness. Of the 235 cities surveyed for our report”:

- 33% prohibit “camping” in particular public places in the city and 17% have city-wide prohibitions on “camping.”
- 30% prohibit sitting/lying in certain public places.
- 47% prohibit loitering in particular public areas and 19% prohibit loitering citywide.
- 47% prohibit begging in particular public places; 49% prohibit aggressive panhandling and 23% have citywide prohibitions on begging.

“Of the 224 cities surveyed in both NCH and NLCHP’s last joint report in 2006 and in this report”:

- There has been a 7% increase in laws prohibiting “camping” in particular public places.
- There has been an 11% increase in laws prohibiting loitering in particular public places.
- There has been a 6% increase in laws prohibiting begging in particular public places and a 5% increase in laws prohibiting aggressive panhandling.

The forms of these anti-homeless laws are at the same time becoming increasingly vengeful and their enforcement and policing methods more intense. One of the most troubling trends is the increased efforts by cities to target homeless persons indirectly by placing restrictions on providers serving food to the poor and homeless persons in public spaces (NCH, 2009a). This is especially perverse in the localities that do not have adequate shelter to meet need; in the 23 cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 12 cities noted they had to turn people away because of lack of capacity often or always (2007). While funding for housing and sheltering for the ‘chronically homeless’ has increased there has been a simultaneous surge in policing and penal tactics to temporarily house the remainders in jail or push them into camps. One of the crudest examples was reported in a study by UCLA, noting that Los Angeles was spending \$6 million a year to pay for fifty extra police officers as part of its Safe City Initiative to crackdown on crime in the Skid Row area at a time when the city budgeted only \$5.7 million for

homeless services (2007). Advocates found that during an 11-month period 24 people were arrested 201 times, with an estimated cost of \$3.6 million for use of police, the jail system, prosecutors, public defenders and the courts. Advocates asserted that the money could have instead provided supportive housing for 225 people. Many of the citations issued to homeless persons in the Skid Row area were for jaywalking and loitering -- “crimes” that rarely produce written citations in other parts of Los Angeles (cited in Wacquant, 2009). This also has the rippling effect of reducing the chances of these most vulnerable and “problematic” homeless persons to receive housing and services in the future since a criminal record makes it more difficult to obtain the employment and/or housing that could help them become self sufficient (NCH, 2009a).

However, the tipping of the bureaucratic field is not simply through the downsizing of the welfare arm of the state and the upsizing of the penal arm to “mop” up its ensuing public troubles. Benefits for the poor and programs for the homeless have also become instruments of surveillance and control. Waves of reform from 1988 to 1995 through the Family Support Act adopted by three dozen states restrict access to public aid by making it conditional upon upholding certain behavioral norms (economic, sexual, familial, educational, etc.) and upon performing onerous and humiliating bureaucratic obligations. New public assistance law, for instance, squarely excludes from the welfare rolls, including medical assistance, persons convicted of narcotics offenses under federal law; a ‘second sentencing’ after serving time afflicted through direct welfare deprivation by the penal fist (Wacquant, 2009). Such behavioral requirements are also commonly tied to city and county shelters, and the privatized or religious counterparts that fill the state shelter gap. Shelters in America have long been more closely tied to religious and civic notions of ‘helping the poorest’ than as a platform towards housing and work. Rather than a temporary residence of last resort integrated into a broader welfare system, most shelters consider their service a privilege and see no reason to complain about tight scheduling hours, mandated church services, long lines, early curfews, and restrictions on

personal belongings, pets, couples, and various other behavioral choices no matter how much they conflict with homeless persons' work schedules, job searches, and basic autonomy. One of the metaphors repeated time and again among homeless campers across the coast is that "the shelter is like a prison."

The penal and welfare dimensions have also become increasingly enmeshed within the bureaucratic field through governmental technologies, practices, and expertise. For instance in New York City, the Department of Homeless Services and Department of Corrections have increasingly coordinated their information and activities through an integrated database that creates and stores files from various points in the welfare-penal network, including homeless intake-shelters, Ryker's Island (the city's jail), and health and human services benefits offices. The intensive overlap between the most frequent clients illustrates the penal-welfare merry-go-round that so many homeless find hard to escape. Again, the issue of homeless inter-distinction interjects in this process – the homeless in this circular stream are both deprived of benefits and have trouble getting shelter due to their criminal status. As anti-homeless laws grow, the distinction is no longer between 'criminal' homeless, who commit crimes with victims, and law-abiding homeless, who keep to themselves. Instead it is now between that of working and familial homeless who can obtain shelter and singles and couples who may not and become 'illegal'; de facto by existence.

Here we see the coalescence of public agitation over criminal "security" and the neoliberal anti-welfare ideology, where criminalization of marginality and the punitive containment of the dispossessed serve as social policy at the lower end of the class and ethnic order. The related changes between homeless welfare and penal policies affirm Loic Wacquant's portrayal of this tightly attached double movement: "the downsizing of the social-welfare sector of the state and the concurrent upsizing of its penal arm are functionally linked, forming as it were, the two sides of the same coin of state restructuring in the nether regions of social and urban space" (2009: 43).

Entrepreneurial Governance/Penal Nexus

As reviewed earlier, the changes in the housing market were not simply driven by market forces and economic restructuring, but also, particularly in the urban setting, mediated by state actors including municipal housing associations, departments of housing development, and offices of neighborhood revitalization. It was shown that city governments were not simply getting out of the business of providing affordable housing, but were simultaneously inciting gentrification and smoothing over sites of blight to make way for new development. Of course city governments and elites have long, if not always, been complicit in the principles of the city as growth machine, particularly in relation to housing development, but what is novel about this round is the ways that former artifacts of the Keynesian welfare state – institutions of public and affordable housing – became co-opted into the arena of urban economic development within the bureaucratic field. In a similar way, the penal arm has also been pulled into this powerful vector by taking on new roles in the locational management of homeless bodies within the city.

While there may be less chronically homeless on the streets, the accelerated gentrification over the last ten years has increased their visibility by concentrating their numbers in particular urban zones. This increased visibility has been produced by two interlocking pressures; (1) the resurgence of formerly abandoned neighborhoods from white flight managed by entrepreneurial city governments and (2) the increased policing and legal strictures aimed at homeless people. Since the late 1980s many cities that had been losing population from suburbanization experienced new growth. Most of the US metropolitan areas with homeless camps have followed this trend. At the same time, police were granted new laws to enforce and in turn given new roles within the civic landscape, through local lawmaking bodies. Neither of these pressures alone could have successfully concentrated poverty and herded homeless populations without the other, but collectively they have proved a powerful force, wherein new forms of surveillance and control increasingly condensate at the borders of gentrifying frontiers.

The penal targeting of the homeless demographic-typecasts explained in the previous section also has a locational corollary, as policing is increasingly spatially targeted: aimed at downtown central business districts, and gentrifying borders (Coleman, 2003). The law enforcement has an explicit corollary with economic development that cannot simply be explained through changes in welfare/penal policies alone, or by broader economic restructuring. As homeless people are forced out of the city center by targeted surveillance tactics and an increasing number of privatized security forces due to rising real estate prices, they migrate and concentrate in outlying business districts, prompting a new round of complaints by home- and shop-owners, which often results in organized sweeps (Smith, 1996). As more spaces become legally off-limits and the homeless with their advocates become increasingly frustrated with police harassment, communities of resistance emerge. These safe havens are sometimes public or private spaces where there exists an unspoken agreement between law enforcement and the homeless communities, as was the case in Sacramento and Fresno, where costly lawsuits pressed against the cities for dispossessing homeless people of their personal property gave way to concentrated sanctuaries of the dispossessed in the form of tent cities (NCH, 2010). Other communities, like those in the Northwest formed as movements in response to specific legislation surrounding homeless criminalization. Homeless people consistently report being bothered and harassed in some places and not others. Many are told to migrate to specific areas of town or to the group camps.

In this way, the penal arm, with its new legal mandate to manage homeless populations throughout the city now serves a direct function towards economic development, keeping particular streets clean for wealthier condo owners, shoppers, and tourists while being sure to increase the safety profile of ‘up and coming’ neighborhoods ripe for investment. This is not just the old adage that economic growth can only occur with a base level of security, this is more akin to a contracted security force within a private shopping mall, only its workers are employed by the state and the spaces it manages are public. Besides contributing to the social fall-out to be

caught by the ascending penal net, new state institutions and discourses of urban economic development are increasingly shaping penal practices in the civic landscape. The legal construction of anti-social behavior laws aimed at homeless people emerged primarily out of the increasing demands within the bureaucratic sphere of urban economic development. While these new legal powers were legitimated by public support, they were passed by city councils. These petty ordinances against panhandling, sitting on sidewalks, and sleeping on benches are not political moves made to appear “tough on crime,” or even necessarily “zero-tolerance” legislation aimed at interrogating potential thugs, but rather to improve public order, with an eye towards cleansing public space and improving the image of the city center for tourists and potential investors to match the increasing amounts of investment on PR and advertisement.

Besides the bureaucratic logic and service behind this new policing, whereby personnel of the penal system no longer simply protect persons and property, but become custodians of particular public spaces often denoted by specific classes or consumer activity, the right hand of the state has become further emboldened by the sprouting of state supported BIDs (Business Improvement Districts). These quasi-governmental entities are supported with state assistance and legal recognition. They are registered with municipal departments of business services or economic development, but are financed through membership dues paid by business owners and residents. They provide services, such as cleaning streets, making capital improvements, marketing the area, and frequently providing security – particularly of the public order genre – through private security forces or community watch groups. Now numbering over 1,000 in the country, these entities play a strong role in the penal pestering of homeless people that has driven them to camp communities, mainly by threatening to call the cops if they don’t move on. Just as importantly BIDs have been some of the most organized and outspoken lobbyists in support of the anti-homeless ordinances themselves.

Examining the confluence of transition processes in three arena's of the bureaucratic field from a relational perspective explodes the recessionary myth and argues that homeless camps are symptomatic responses to interconnected political processes. They are safe havens for homeless people to simply exist in the "revanchist" city, which seeks and necessarily fails to detain its homeless in more institutionalized forms due to the inherent contradictions of urban development. Recognizing the increasing pull of the bureaucratic technologies, practices, and discourses surrounding urban economic development raises the important analytic question of placing this sphere in relation to the dualistic two-hand conception put forward by Bourdieu, and most recently by Loic Wacquant (2009). The homeless camps in the US demonstrate that penal and welfare processes are molded, enhanced, and legitimized by bureaucracies of urban economic development. Since the 1970's this sphere has expanded within the bureaucratic field, devouring resources and co-opting personnel from the sphere of municipal welfare services. The rise of urban entrepreneurialism and the institutions, discourses, and tactics it has produced has increased the gravitational force of urban economic development within the bureaucratic field, modulating both the Right and Left hands of the state in new ways for its interest; not simply in managing its contradictions, but directly serving and supporting its own projects. The language and logic of urban entrepreneurialism also increasingly colonizes other areas of the field. This tripartite theoretical construction does not undermine the dialectical transformations between the 'right' and 'left' hands of the state, but insists that governmental practices, tactics, and institutions guided by imperatives of 'urban growth and improvement' mediate the transformation of each sphere, both materially and symbolically in important ways that have been undergrounded by a dualistic focus. To continue to work through this theoretical problematique, while moving towards the deeper roots and implications of America's homeless camps it is necessary to "rescale the analysis" focusing on the vertical rescaling and horizontal reconfiguration of state space.

Rescaling the Analysis: Towards a Critical Geography of Homeless Encampments

In analyzing these three processes as an intertwined configuration, homeless camps and the forms of governmentality that shape them, must be seen in relation to vertical state rescaling marked by the intergovernmental transfer of responsibilities and burdens from national and state governments to localities as well as the horizontal scalar reconfiguration between cities marked by increasing inter-urban competition. These localized processes have not simply occurred due to endogenous factors within each municipality, nor are cities simply containers of the nation's most acute forms of social suffering. To explain the emergence and persistence of these settlements we must look beyond merely identifying features at the varying scales of government (local, regional, state, national, global) as already reviewed, but recognize their reinforcing interactions that carry important implications for the roots and future possibilities of homeless camps and their members.

While broad welfare cuts at the federal level have swept over city budgets since Nixon, the dissolving structural coherence of America's regions and cities gave way to a new geopolitical rules regime dictated by *inter-urban competition* (Harvey, 1989). Harvey portrays the emergence of inter-urban competition as both cause and effect of the new entrepreneurialism which is a disciplining and coercive force. Confronted by an extremely limited repertoire of politically feasible options due to withering federal support, cities now throw themselves into a series of zero-sum competitions for mobile public and private investments and to attract specific "creative" classes of residents against one another (Leitner et al., 2007, Florida 2002). However, persistent efforts and sporadic successes in the end only serve to further accelerate (actual and potential) mobility of capital employment, and public investment. In selling themselves, cities are therefore actively facilitating and subsidizing the very geographic mobility that first rendered them vulnerable, while also validating and reproducing the extra-local rule systems to which they

are (increasingly) subjected (Cochrane, Peck and Tickell, 1996). In this climate of beggar-thy-neighbor competition, cities turn to a restrictive suite of supply-side and promotional strategies, which are serially reproduced and emulated in the scramble for mobile investment, jobs and discretionary spending. None of this, of course, increases the aggregate amount of available investment, though it certainly contributes to its increasing rate of circulation, and as previously described, the rate and intensity of urban instability.

Therefore the firm-like behavior of cities previously discussed, along with the interconnected penal and welfare transformations, cannot be conceptualized from the standpoint of individual cities and rational choice theory upon which its prescriptive theory rests. Instead these entrepreneurial transformations must be understood as pressured positions that municipalities have been forced to take from federal withdrawal and actions by other cities. Inter-urban competition has fertilized the soil for the growing tent cities; first in encouraging gentrifying strategies that destroys affordable housing, second in constraining municipal governments in taking on more costly programs of comprehensive care for its socially vulnerable, and third encouraging the promulgation of short-term warehousing and invisibilizing policies against its homeless citizens. In rescaling the analysis, we see the constraints of cities' relative autonomy within the system of inter-urban competition, suggesting that the roots of the homeless tent cities can only be traced to a certain depth of locality and in fact branch into a national and global urban ecology. The pressure of competition (i.e. the fear that in an environment where other cities are aggressively pursuing investors and promoting local firms, any city failing to do this is bound to be disadvantaged) leads other cities to adopt similar strategies. This is why entrepreneurial practices persist despite the political suasion of municipalities that are forced into the game for mere survival. Empirical studies show that as the number of cities engage in entrepreneurialism increases, the potential effectiveness of any one city's efforts declines (le Gales, 1992), but at the same time the disadvantages mount for any city which does not follow suit. Thus cities attempt to compensate for the falling marginal benefits

by offering subsidies of increased size and scope, and by devoting more effort to support the development of local firms, while at the same time increasingly make cuts to social services to balance budgets.

Another constraining factor that is weaved into this inter-urban web is the so-called “magnet effect.” As homeless populations become increasingly migratory, city officials have raised concerns that if their policies become too liberal then they will attract and end up being responsible for the entire region’s homeless; an “unfair burden” that not only increases their welfare expenditures, but increases the economic comparative advantage of their neighbors in attracting new investment, tourists, and residents. This was in fact what happened when Ontario’s government sponsored Temporary Housing Services Area opened its gates, quickly becoming a sponge of the Inland Empire’s neglected homeless population. After topping over 400 campers, the municipality disassembled the settlement, allowing only those who could prove Ontario residency or connections to stay, which turned out to be about 130. In this way the pressure of inter-urban competition works both from above, demanding ever more fuel of investment and tax cuts in attracting private capital at the expense of social services, and from below, incentivizing harsher policies against homeless persons and limiting services in relation to nearby localities to avoid a potential homeless bulge. This essentially amounts to a race to the bottom on the economic and social services ladders, as municipalities continually undercut each other in terms of economic incentives and liberal welfare services, without increasing overall economic development or reducing homelessness in the national space, but merely increasing their circulation.

Along with this important analytic implication of an inter-scalar perspective is an equally important political one. While this research has shown the variegated reality of the homeless camps and insists that local institutional ecologies of government agencies, nonprofits, and homeless organizers are the primary contributors to this diversity; the broader improvement or dissolution of the need for such camps must be addressed beyond the individual municipality.

The rescaling of the analysis reveals that homelessness must be addressed at broader regional, state, and national levels to overcome the regressive trends spurred through inter-urban competition and its dictates of urban entrepreneurialism.

Bum Bashing

Undergirding the legal and institutional transitions that envision homeless persons as non-citizens are disturbing cultural corollaries witnessed through the rising hate crimes against homeless persons and an increasingly vengeful attitude among the public towards them. As cities have increasingly cast the street homeless as a public nuisance, their physical vulnerability has increased while their social sympathies have waned. In King's County, home of three of the tent cities mentioned in this paper, had fifty people die outside or through violence in 2008, and an even greater number in 2009. The homeless in Fresno have built a homeless memorial with dozens of scrap wood grave markers remembering those that have died in the camps or on the streets over the last decade. Besides the deaths attributed to the conditions of the street sharpened by new punitive tactics and inter-homeless violence, are hate crimes and increasing acceptance of sub-human attitudes towards rough sleepers. In 2008, a 16 year-old boy beat a homeless man to death with a baseball bat, a homeless veteran was killed in the middle of a marketplace during the day, another was doused with gasoline and burned to death, and passerbys slowed to watch a group of teenagers beat a homeless man to death, catching the scene on videotape (NCH 2009a). From 1999 through 2008, in 263 cities and in 46 states there have been 880 reported acts of violence committed by household individuals, resulting in 244 deaths of homeless people (NCH 2009b). Most perpetrators are "thrill seekers" - kids in their teens or early twenties partaking in a new form of juvenile entertainment. These reported numbers of attacks are surely grossly underestimated since most crimes are only counted when homeless persons are hospitalized, because most have little faith in the police or legal recourse.

Beyond the actual violence is the symbolic violence and normalization of these attitudes towards the homeless. One stunning and widespread crystallization of this has been the emergence of cult videos featuring young adults and teens harassing homeless persons. Within the first year of sales "Bumfights: A Cause for Concern" became highest grossing video relying

solely on internet distribution in history at the time, selling over 6.8million DVDs to date, and was shortly followed by three successful sequels. Banned in the UK and several other countries (though not in the US despite receiving a hearing on the House floor), the movie captures homeless people, many who are mentally ill and under the influence, fighting until serious injury and performing humiliating acts. Rufus Hannah, the homeless protagonist is filmed pulling out a tooth with pliers and getting “Bum” tattooed to his forehead. In another sequence, parodying the famous Crocodile Hunter TV series, a Steve Irwin look-alike pins down homeless in their sleep, tapes their hands and mouths, and drives them away in a van. Since the film’s release, there has been a viral spiral of spin-offs, both professional and amateur. A quick search on YouTube shows 5,690 videos with the title “bum fight.” The sheer audience to such crude antics may not reflect a symbolic shift in the normalization of a dehumanized characterization of America’s homeless people, but certainly indicates a new intensity. Concerns of safety sleeping alone from increasing real and perceived violence was almost always cited among homeless campers as a reason for joining a camp, and is no doubt contributing to the growth of homeless tent cities (NCH, 2010). “Safety in numbers” was often the first response and always a common adage among the homeless I spoke with when asked why they decided to camp in groups.

While the national media may have garnered sympathies for the homeless with their generalist coverage of the camps at large, the local media outlets must grapple with their actualities. In turn they tend to buttress these negative attitudes, portraying the ‘homeless problem’ not as a poverty problem to be ameliorated, but rather an image problem for its localized brand or a quality of life problem for its housed classes. This was recently made apparent in Hawaii upon the “discovery” of thousands of homeless campers in national parks and beaches, including one large encampment stretching a mile on an Oahu beach, after evacuation exercises in February for an expected Tsunami. One newscasts poll included the question of “Homeless’ impact on the local economy,” without ever raising the more pressing counterpoint of the local economies impact on homelessness. Another local news report from

the big island covered a “trash problem,” at the Kea’au Beach. While homeless tents colonized almost every camera shot the newscaster never once mentioned the site’s obvious social ecology. The following night, the same channel ran a report on the Kea’au Beach “homeless problem,” without making any connection to the environmental story from the night before except for the fact that while their crew was covering the story they found that the area around “Keauu had also become a haven for the homeless” (KITV News, 2010).

While the narratives of entrepreneurial governance may highlight business and class interests of the capitalist and bourgeois gentrifiers, just as importantly are the attitudes among the increasingly fearful economically vulnerable class of citizens who define their ability to work and self-sustain against the homeless other. What is perhaps most troubling is the risk that the current recession will increase the vengeful attitudes toward the unsheltered homeless populations, further legitimating and expanding the penal policies against them. The criminalization of homelessness cannot simply be located in the direct politico-economic processes that lead to the emergence of tent-cities, or the specific class interests of the bourgeoisie, but is rooted in the increasing financial and social insecurity of the working class. As Loic Wacquant argues in his most recent book: “These castaway categories – unemployed youth left adrift, the beggars and the homeless, aimless nomads and drug addicts, postcolonial immigrants without documents or support – have become salient in public space, their presence undesirable and their doings intolerable, because they are the living and threatening incarnation of generalized social insecurity produced by the erosion of stable and homogenous wage work” (2009: 4). In the wake of the contemporary crisis of capitalism there runs the virulent threat of increasing tensions between homeless and housed Americans and reducing collective solutions to the financial and social insecurities faced by both groups.

Conclusion: Punitive Containment & Contesting Neoliberalism

“The splintering postmetropolitan landscape has become filled with many different kinds of protected and fortified spaces, islands of enclosure and anticipated protection against the real and imagined dangers of daily life. Borrowing from Foucault, (this) postmetropolis is represented as a collection of carceral cities, an archipelago of “normalized enclosures” and fortified spaces that both voluntarily and involuntarily barricade individuals and communities in visible and not-so-visible urban islands, overseen by restructured forms of public and private power and authority.”

-Edward Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*

The uneven patchwork of microspaces dramatized by Soja that are physically proximate but increasingly estranged in terms of class, demographics, and institutions has been captured in debates around a “dual,” “quartered,” “walled,” or “fortress” city (cf Davis, 1990, Judd 1995, Marcuse 1993, Moolenkopf and Castells 1991 – cited in Macleod 2002). Among these normalized enclosures include the evermore ostentatious shopping malls of high-rent urban districts, festival marketplaces, waterfront developments, and publicly subsidized corporate plazas. These “interdictory spaces” have been explicitly designed to exclude those considered unsuitable, or people whose class and cultural positions diverge from the builders and their target markets (Flusty, 2001). How banal and normal these spaces seem is telling and demonstrate the success of municipalities’ legal fiction of simply erasing the spaces in which homeless people must live – “in which the rights of the wealthy, of the successful in the global economy are sufficient for the rest” (Mitchell, 1997: 7). While these earlier theories explain the rise of bourgeois privatopias they fail to integrate the later reactionary and closely related emergence of islands or containments of marginality in such forms as the homeless tent cities. No longer are homeless people simply relegated to the outskirts, periphery, or the in-betweenness of interdictory spaces. Municipal projects of “urban regeneration” have carved so widely into the urban fabric that the homeless have now sought refuge in organized sanctuaries. These camps form a new constellation within the modern archipelago of microspaces, as the anti-thesis and inverted symptom of these poverty-cleansed zones of gentrification. Standing against the exclusionary enclosures of privatopias, the camps are rather the enclosures of the excluded.

How should we conceptualize these new spaces, and what are the political consequences of this conceptualization? Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, explains that “Each new form of state, each new form of political power, introduces its own particular way of partitioning space, its own particular administrative classification of discourses about space and about things and people in space. Each form commands space, as it were to serve its purposes”(1991). The expansion of the types of normalized enclosures mentioned above, often underwritten and supported by municipal agencies of economic development alongside a new repertoire of policing roles aimed against the poor, demonstrates the way in which space is “politically instrumental” (1991). The emergence of organized homeless camps should be seen as acute sociospatial symptoms of a new form of neoliberal statecraft exemplified by the processes in urban penal, welfare, and economic bureaucracies reviewed earlier. With this shift the camps are the punitive containers, de facto waiting areas for the poor, and geographic manifestations of what scholars have begun to recognize as the neoliberal governmentality of social insecurity (Wacquant, 2009).

The new repertoire of explicitly spatial penal, welfare, and entrepreneurial strategies being deployed through this form of governmentality is clearly situated in what Peck and Tickell have characterized as the roll-out phase of neoliberalism. Attempting to draw a more developed chronology of neoliberalization, Peck and Tickell have drawn attention to the shift from roll-back to roll-out neoliberalism; the former focusing on economic restructuring and the drawback of the welfare state and under the latter the emergence of new discourses of ‘welfare reform’ and institutional arrangements designed to discipline and manage “those marginalized or dispossessed by the roll-back neoliberalism of the 1980s” (Peck & Tickell, 2002). While this notion of the crisis management of neoliberalization’s own contradictions generally fits to the case of the homeless tent cities, this paper suggests that there is a need to complement this broad brush analysis with a closer reading of the different ways the state has sought to intervene within this period and the important response and contestation among its targeted populous.

While all the camps may be seen as exclusionary enclosures formed through the tripartite collusion of localized neoliberalization most of them are also perceived by advocates and homeless members as protests against a neoliberal urban order. Challenging private and state monopolies of land, the homeless claim a right to the city in setting up camps. They visibilize their presence through their numbers and in many cases form self-governing associations giving a voice to the city's homeless to challenge inadequate shelters. In converting underutilized lands, often holding only speculative value, homeless campers reconvert and de-commodify the abstract space whose exchange value dominates for their own uses. To interrogate this dual nature and contradictory spatial overlay between containment and resistance, it is necessary to return to the variegated landscape of the tent city phenomena in their local formations. One of the most significant contrasts is that the camps are now organized both *within* and *against* the increasingly totalized attack against America's homeless populous. This is apparent both in the communities' founding logics - some communities began as protest movements against criminalization or shelter conditions, while others were created by state and non-profit actors to contain homeless problems - as well as in their operational realities, wherein camps are organized by varying degrees of governmental control and self-governance. On the opposite edges of the graduated scale of containment/resistance and control/self-governance are Ontario's Temporary Homeless Service Area and Seattle's Nickelsville. In examining these two cases we see the ways camps can serve both as sites of contestation and punitive containment.

Ontario's Temporary Homeless Service Area

Flying into Ontario's International Airport, in the heart of California's inland empire, one can spot less than a mile from the tarmac what could easily be mistaken as a military refugee or disaster relief camp. Enclosed by a perimeter security chain-link fence, a settlement of some 70 identical army tents in ordered rows, sticks out of the never-ending suburban landscape of the Valley. Situated within an old neighborhood marked by aging buildings and abandoned orchards,

what used to be one of California's largest squatting settlements commonly referred to as "Camp Hope" has now turned into a securitized holding ground for the region's homeless who have been evicted from all other public places. Renamed the Temporary Housing Services Area or THSA by city officials, homeless campers now find themselves supervised by a private security force around the clock, required to carry state-issued ids, and are no longer allowed to bring visitors within the camp's gates. The homeless residents have no hand in the tent city's governance, nor any responsibility in contributing to the community outside of following the most rigid rules-regime of any homeless camp in the region, solidifying a humiliating and disciplining provider-client relationship.

While the government's initiative was reflected in the media and bureaucratic discourse as a public improvements program - bringing running water, sanitation, security, and consolidating social services - it was in the first instance a solution to a double-edged public nuisance. First, the camp was seen as an unseemly site at the aero-entrance of a city attempting to project an image as the regional economic dynamo. Second, was the city's broader "homeless problem." In a conversation I had with Brent Schulze, the city's Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Director, he first began explaining that the camp was a response to shop- and home-owners complaints of "homeless going through trash, sleeping in trash enclosures, loitering in the civic center and parks, defecating and urinating in public areas and the parks, and panhandling in highways and street rights-of-way" (NCH, 2010). He then went on to note the government's concern of the safety and vulnerability of homeless who faced dangers sleeping in the open and in some cases next to railroads, streets, and highways. Lastly, Mr. Schulze mentioned the camps social service dimension, largely framing the improvement as a bureaucratic innovation in economic terms of "consolidating services" rather than creating a supportive space wherein individuals might increase their job skills, rebuild their lives, and regain a sense of autonomy and community, which were all common if not first responses to the founding logics of the other camps.

This discourse reveals the shifting attitudes of the penalization of welfare and the shift from assistential to the penal treatment of more disruptive correlates of poverty within the bureaucratic field. Emile Durkheim taught us that punishment is a communicative device, a “language” delivering messages not so much to homeless or offenders as to the witnessing public – in this case the *propertied* citizenry (1964: 108). From Mr. Schulze’s description it is clear that the camp’s impetus and design is not to address the increasing challenges and problems faced by the homeless, but rather the “homeless problems” of the propertied class, in pointing to the shop-owners and homeowners complaints as the initiatives prime mover. With the expansion of “interdictory spaces” the city needed a new spatial solution for their problem.

His second reason, referring to the safety of the homeless, also embodies an implicit reference to the costs of law enforcement and ‘public order.’ In containing people in a single location, the police forces no longer have to spend time and resources addressing not only or primarily homeless safety, but the new litany of anti-homeless ordinances. This point which Mr. Schulze stressed himself in our conversation has been equally adopted in the discourse among non-profit advocates of the camp. In a recent briefing prepared for Mayor Johnson of Sacramento to support a safe-haven in that city, I-care America, places enforcement front and center in its memo before mentioning a single benefit for the homeless or issues of civil rights:

“Enforcement manpower expenditures have decreased by 75%. . . .From an *Enforcement* standpoint, Ontario Officials gained control of their homeless population by “bringing order to chaos” (Farris, 2009).

Whether or not the non-profit prioritizes this factor or whether it simply understands the audience of neoliberal governmentality to which it is addressing, the fact remains that the primacy of policing and control is a central legitimating function in supporting a state sponsored safe haven.

However, the penal/welfare nexus is not only visible in the discursive realms and legitimating functions of the camp, but is also physically inscribed through its praxis of governance and space. The homology between the technologies of governmentality deployed in this “service area” under the welfare state’s arm and those of the modern prison within the penal state’s fist is striking. State issued ID cards, a designated visiting area on the premises, and the privatized security force all mirror modes of penal containment. Almost half of the camps operating costs go towards contracting security services (\$11,000/month), significantly more than that spent on social services for the camp’s residents (NCH, 2010). The similarity is made perversely clear by the simultaneous development of tent-city imprisonment which recently occurred in Phoenix. Sherriff Joe Arpaio, set up an outdoor camp of army tents and bunk beds (from the Korean war) in the middle of the Arizona desert surrounded by chain link fences and rounded up some 2000 inmates in it to avoid fines from a court ruling against the State’s overcrowded prisons (Arpaio & Sherman, 2008). He has been praised by prison managers, criminologist, and right wing pundits across the nation for this innovation, not to mention millions of Americans who have purchased his book, and the model is now being seriously considered as a cost-saving alternative for cash-strapped states in the era of hyper-incarceration and increasing budget cuts. At the same time, THSA’s residents’ behaviors and progress are monitored and each is required to demonstrate marked improvement with a plan towards self-sufficiency in order to remain in the camp which has a time-limit for its residents.

Yet to focus solely on the dualistic mechanisms of the right and left hand of the state once again ignores the important modulating factor of urban economic development. Rather than a hydraulic shift between the penal and welfare sectors, Ontario’s THSA displays the enmeshing vortex of the penal, welfare, and economic development arenas within the bureaucratic field conceptualized in the previous section. Here we have Mr. Shulze, the director of the city’s housing and neighborhood revitalization department; a neoliberal hydra combining the growing bureaucratic space of economic development under the guise of ‘revitalization’ with

the decapitated and devolving sphere of affordable housing that had formerly been firmly situated in the line of welfare provision in the Keynesian city, who is now the policy lead on homeless management for the city with its penal edge of punitive containment and policing. While the complaints that incited the camp may have flowed through the penal network, its source of power derived from urban managerialism, and as seen in Ontario, flows back into the field of economic development via Mr. Schulze's office. Hiring-out the private security firm, approving permits for the non-profit service providers, and funneling federal and state development grants and welfare funding, Shulze's office mediates and coordinates this penal/welfare shift. Just as the discourse of urban regeneration in its economistic dialect increasingly cannibalizes the discourses of welfare and penalty, the bureaucratic powers of municipalities' economic development offices display a growing gravitational force, pulling personnel, resources, and managing powers of both policing and human services.

Seattle's Nickelsville

On the other end of the spectrum of governmental control/resistance is Nickelsville in Seattle. In the summer of 2008 Mayor Greg Nickels issued orders to the police, without consultation of the city council, to crackdown on homeless encampments and the unsheltered despite the lack of shelter available to the county's nearly 3,000 street homeless (Seattle/King's County Coalition for the Homeless, 2010). Targeting primarily camping groups, police would move-in with little warning and dismantle encampments, often confiscating and destroying homeless people's belongings. With inadequate shelters and two tent cities already filled to capacity, the homeless joined together, congregating in South Seattle along Marginal Way, an ironically appropriate address. The encampment came about after months of planning, weekly organizing meetings, two rallies, a die-in, and a car wash. The site they settled on was city-owned

land and is currently under Land Use Review to become a jail - yet another layer of sardonic irony and a metaphoric socio-spatial translation of the penal/welfare nexus.

The homeless community was evicted from the site that fall and many were arrested for trespassing after refusing to leave. Nickelsville soon followed its two other sister settlements in downtown and the surrounding suburbs in adopting the church network model, relocating every 90 days to different church parking lots or unused land. At a community meeting, the camp made the deliberate decision through a vote to abandon this mobile model based on their initial and current goal to gain a permanent site with permanent structures. The camp moved directly adjacent to their old city-owned lot that was instead under State control through the department of transportation. This leap in state space strategically played the incumbent governor against the unpopular mayor. After three months under threat the camp was pressured to relocate. Again hop-scotching jurisdictional zones onto Pier Terminal 107, under the control of the Seattle Port Authority, Nickelsville bought time due to the multiple legal requirements for bureaucratic moves, but remains constantly under threat of eviction. Like the struggles of King County's two other encampments, and Portland's Dignity Village, this resistance looks to be resulting in success, as the camp is currently considering two contracts between its financial sponsor, a local non-profit, and the Port Authority for settlement rights.

Perhaps more importantly than the socio-spatial struggle of the camp against the neoliberal order of property is the resistance towards the institutions of shelter of the restructured welfare state. Most of the Nickelodians I spoke with, a term coined by the community members, claimed that they would go into permanent supportive housing if they were offered it, and some would consider going into shelter if they were assured to enter such housing. Recognizing the break in the shelter to permanent housing connection many refuse to enter a broken and rule-bound system. Perhaps, most importantly in refusing to enter shelter is the increasingly restrictive sheltering requirements and limited space makes community camping a preferred alternative. Having to line up and wait for hours each day for a bed, bans on pets and

large amounts of personal belongings, curfews, segregation of couples, and a general loss of autonomy were the most often cited reasons people preferred living in the camp. Rather than becoming trapped in a repressive shelter system, out of sight and out of mind of the public, Nickelodeons talk of maintaining their dignity and autonomy through their self-governed community.

Both Ontario with its culture of control and Nickelsville in its struggle against the state are islands of exclusionary citizenship and microspaces of political societies. In Ontario, the camp is considered a cutting edge policy innovation and shelter alternative. However, its justification, regulation, and management displays that the camp is by no means an ‘entitlement’ to shelter for Ontario’s homeless, but instead an effort of public order with an emphasis on controlling the lifestyle of the adult campers in making coercion, behavioral supervision, and deterrence central elements of public aid. Nickelsville, and many of the other camps, reflect the excluded status of their members, not only in their historical struggles, but in their actual political form. While many of the self-governed camps that are recognized by the state create their own political society, it is hard to claim that they are recognized by the wider civil society. With the exception of Portland’s Dignity Village, all of the camps rely on nonprofits, NGOs, and churches for their legal and fiduciary rights. These entities are mediators between those who govern and the governed. The distinction between the political and civil society is also a relevant signifier of exclusionary citizenship in the cases of the illegal homeless camps in Fresno, Sacramento, and elsewhere. Not unlike the squatters of Calcutta, studied by Partha Chatterjee, the homeless movements for safe havens are not associations of civil society (2004). Their community springs from a collective violation of property laws and civic regulations. The state cannot recognize them as having the same legitimacy as other civic associations pursuing more legitimate objectives. The homeless campers, on their part, admit that their occupation of public land is both illegal and contrary to a good civic life. But they make a claim to habitation and

livelihood as a matter of right, and use their association as the principal collective instrument to pursue that claim.

From the contrasting vignettes of Ontario's THSA and Seattle's Nickelsville it may seem that the question of conceptualizing homeless camps as forms of contestation to neoliberalism or new modes of punitive containment is entirely context specific, and to an extent it certainly is. While it is hard to see Ontario's THSA as anything but the latest advancement in neoliberal technology in homeless management, I would argue that Nickelsville and most of the homeless camps of the Pacific Coast for that matter must be conceived as both, where containment and contestation are but two sides to the same coin. Most camps organically formed among homeless communities and were incited by protest and were organized around community principles with degrees of self-governance. They are however none-the-less socio-spatial crystallizations of de facto containment and concentration through the "annihilation of space by law," where legal restrictions fortify the bourgeois privatopias and police are given new roles of socio-spatial management. Police often have tacit and even written agreements with homeless populations to remain on one side of a highway or railroad track, and in many instances on specific sites. Homeless are no longer simply told to leave a sidewalk, but are suggested to go to a camp by authorities. Their concentrations are symptomatic containers for capitalism's social waste and reflect the extent of the neoliberal order of social insecurity among the middle class. Yet, many residents see their communities as supportive and dignified alternatives to governmental and private shelters. Therefore, we might think of the camps existing along a graduated scale; some much more free in their daily activities and management from punitive conditions, though nevertheless tied to penal histories of struggle, while others are institutionalized to a greater extent by either non-profit or state actors, with Ontario being the limiting case. Furthermore, many of the cases examined have witnessed dramatic changes along this scale within their own short history, pointing to the unstable and experimental nature of these urban settlements. As camps multiply, there runs a greater risk of state co-optation and it will largely fall to the

advocates and homeless community members to preserve and fight for their continued autonomy.

The dual conception has important political implications as well. Failing to recognize the structural sources of the camps runs the political risk of advocating such settlements as a ‘final solution’ for America’s homeless. However, failing to recognize the settlements as a mode of resistance and the homeless persons’ right to camp when no other shelter is available runs the political risk of fuelling further criminalization of homeless populations and the growing vengeful sentiments surrounding them. What is at stake in the homeless camps are two “rights to the city” to once again return to Lefebvre (1996). First, are the issues of spatial rights, land use, and the right for homeless citizens to simply exist in the city. Second, are broader social rights of our cities’ citizens; rights to housing, health provision, economic opportunity, and equal access to services. While advocates and activists fighting for the rights of the homeless have done well at focusing on the most immediate and basic right to space, they have failed to recognize the camps’ relations to these deeper set of rights. This also raises questions conceptualizing the camper’s struggles as one for individual rights or collective rights. The right to simply exist in the city is by and large one centered in the neoliberal frame of the individual. While this individualism may have a greater chance of gaining state recognition, it runs the risk of eschewing the collective rights and demands to public services from which these settlements first emerged. As David Harvey reminds us in his essay “The Right to the City”:

“The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization” (2008: 23).

More problematic is that simply allowing homeless people to camp in organized communities may in fact defer or even undermine the attainment of broader social rights. While some camps, like the one in Ontario began as a self-governed homeless community that became co-opted by a state apparatus, others have been similarly brought under non-profit and governmental

supervision. Were the camps to become mainstreamed as some advocates suggest, the public may feel less of a need to increase supportive housing. Policymakers and politicians might claim that they have solved chronic homelessness through an innovative low-cost solution. Therefore, the homeless camps must always point towards a double critique, and an uneven critique: first at the pitiful arm of America's welfare and housing services and second the penal arms tightening criminalization that intensifies the outcast status of homeless citizens.

The rise and responses to homeless tent cities is a powerful barometer to measure the dynamics of 'actually existing neoliberalism.' These camps are in continual flux, several having gone through serious restructuring, dismantlement, and re-emergence during the course of writing this paper, and they are a highly contested ground of social struggle in the civic landscape. The topic requires new research towards ethnographic specificity as well as a broader national perspectives as well as international comparisons. This exploratory work is a first-cut in the literature; exposing an uncovered phenomenon among social scientists, while connecting it with thinking on contemporary urbanization, neoliberalism, and state restructuring. This paper has shown that homeless camps are reactionary symptoms of localized neoliberalization processes, embedded in a network of inter-urban competition, and perpetuated by an increasingly vengeful attitude towards America's unsheltered. Instead of focusing on the spectacular slum-like conditions of Sacramento, Fresno, and Reno's homeless settlements in the wake of economic crisis, the media would have best captured the recession's true effects on the camps from their subsequent dismantlement, re-emergence, and continual police sweeps. The sweeps of camps should be recognized as gross attacks on individual and collective rights, but the camps' mere existence should be recognized as an indication of the inadequacies of our city's social services and contemporary capitalism's increasingly spiteful inequalities. The camps' variations both in types of settlements and levels of autonomy show that local policy, advocacy groups, and social struggles play critical roles. While homeless camps have to some degree successfully challenged government and private monopolies on public space, homeless

management strategies, and urban development as usual, they also stand as acute reflections of a failed welfare state, an inherently unstable mode of housing development, a contradictory legal regime, and a violent form of social exclusion.

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