

Social Movement Communication:  
Language, Technology, and Social Organization in an Urban Homeless Movement

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**Abstract**

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This study examines three overlapping campaigns that occurred simultaneously in the local Seattle homeless movement in 2007-2009: the “*No New Jail*” campaign to stop the building of a proposed misdemeanor jail, a project aimed at creating a self-managed semi-permanent community to house up to 1,000 people called “*Nickelsville*,” and a campaign to “*Stop the Sweeps*” of homeless encampments in parks, under freeways and in wooded hillsides around the city. The study engages a multi-level, multi-methods approach to the analysis of social movement communication in each of the three issue campaigns. I argue that social movements only exist in the context of issue areas, and that issue areas offer affordances to participants that structure material and symbolic actions. I offer three key findings of interest to scholars in the fields of communication technologies, organizational communication, and discourse studies. First, I found that Internet enabled communication technologies were important for social movement communication, but that their use was highly structured by material inequality. While the emphasis on material poverty within homeless organizing processes may have highlighted inequalities in access and skill when it came to technology use, and encouraged participants towards particular strategies of use in this context, I suggest

that all efforts for social change take place within contexts of material inequality, and urge future research to consider technology use within the broader context of communication practices – be they technologically mediated or not. Second, I found that communication was at the heart of social movement organizing efforts, and took place within two areas of communicative activity: *issue contestation* and *participant mobilization*. Issue contestation was divided into two aspects: *materiality* and *subjectivity*; and participant mobilization involved three types of communication processes: *institutionalizing the movement*, *taking collective action*, and *community organizing*. I suggest that this typology may be usefully employed in other social movement contexts, even as the words and meanings that populate them would change. Third, I found that formal organizations continue to play an important role in social movement activity, even as technologies of communication augment organizational capacities, with traditional authority markers continuing to predict organizational prominence in hyperlink issue networks.

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## **DEDICATION**

To Alison, the love of my life.

## **Introduction: Communicating a Homeless Movement**

Pink and yellow streamers drift in the warm breeze of a sunny September afternoon. Tents are lined up next to each other on pallets, and the camp is circled by an orange plastic construction fence. *Nickelsville* is hosting its one-year anniversary, and the camp is teeming with visitors, music and “I ♥ Nickelsville” buttons. I heard about the event from the *Nickelsville* announcement email list and through my subscription to a Facebook group called “Friends of Nickelsville,” run by a former resident and local homeless activist. “Food’s up! Food’s ready!” The call goes out and people gather in a loose line, waiting to get into a ten by twenty foot food tent, where hot dogs, spaghetti with meatballs, and coleslaw are piled onto paper plates. Current and former Nickelodeons greet each other warmly among the tarp-covered tents that make up this 70-person homeless encampment on the banks of the Duwamish River at Terminal 107 Park.

Volunteers from two of the area churches who have hosted *Nickelsville* in the past serve cake and talk with organizers. One of the cakes is adorned with two little pink tents, sewn from the rain fly from one of the originals I helped set up in the pre-dawn light one year ago. A street minister who Nickelodeons refer to as the unofficial camp minister chats with an organizer from the Church Council of greater Seattle, Bill Curlin-Hackett. Bill tells him about the annual “Political will to end homelessness” event coming up in October that will include a panel of people experiencing homelessness and gives him his email address for more information. Their website has crashed and he is starting to re-build it using another platform, so email is still the only way to get the full schedule. Local candidates for city council, some of whom were involved in helping *Nickelsville* happen over the past year, talk with residents and allies, passing out literature on their campaigns and responding to

residents who tell them that they just need the city to provide a ‘permanent location’ for the camp. Michele Merchand, an organizer with WHEEL [Women’s Housing, Equality and Enhancement League] and longtime homeless activist, carries a sign-up sheet. I am the seventeenth person to sign-up to help drive SHARE/WHEEL [a joint organization between WHEEL and the Seattle Housing and Resource Effort] shelter residents on Monday night. They have had their funding from the city cut during the past fiscal year, have finally run out of money for bus tickets, and several hundred shelter residents will be camping out on the sidewalk outside Mayor Nickels’ house every night until they get the money they need to provide bus tickets to their residents for the rest of the year. She explains how each shelter decided for themselves how they were going to participate and describes one situation where a group of about ten elderly women in one shelter – many with disabilities – had decided to all sleep out together, even though many would not be personally effected by the shortage of bus ticket funds. I give her my phone number for a phone tree and my email as a backup.

Cidney Gilles, a staff reporter for *Real Change News*, talks with participants. She has her notebook out and is jotting down quotes from the person she is talking to. I also notice a journalist with local community radio station *KBCS* that I have seen at other events. An independent journalist that is just starting his own blog introduces himself to me and says that he is doing a story on *Nickelsville*. He wants information about the city’s sweeps policy. He says that Scott Morrow (the one *Nickelsville* staff organizer) gave him some information, but he wants to know if I know of anything that “might not be as biased.” Scott told him I might be able to help him and I describe the report that we published about the sweeps last Fall. He writes down the title so he can find it online. A group of five young Germans eat birthday cake and talk amongst themselves. A camp resident I am talking with tells me that

they are doing a documentary on *Nickelsville*. I introduce myself and ask them how they heard about *Nickelsville*. They were interested in tent cities, and they read about *Nickelsville* online on several German and English language websites. They want to do an interview with me and I encourage them to interview residents or other organizers instead, but give them my email as well.

I start chatting with some residents I had never met before. They just arrived a few days ago and are still getting used to the camp. One has lived on the streets in Seattle off and on for seven years, working in canneries in Alaska to make money during the fishing season and saving money for his two daughters who are now going to college in Illinois. I ask how they heard about the camp. “Well, I had read about it in the papers and stuff, you know, I even saw it on TV when I was in Alaska...But I had a friend who was talking about coming out here to check it out...I been staying downtown for years, and never left downtown. You know, I had my spots that I slept – tried to keep to myself. But this is something different...It really changes your, what you think about humanity, how nice people can be.” I asked him which papers he had read about *Nickelsville* in. He said that he usually reads discarded papers, and wasn’t sure which ones they were, but was pretty sure one of them was a free weekly (the *Seattle Weekly* or *The Stranger*).

I pick up copies of three photocopied hand-outs that are stacked on a table next to the cake and glance at them before I put them in my bag. One is a reproduction of an editorial from *Real Change News*, contrasted with a less flattering article from the *Seattle Times* with a question written in permanent marker on the side: “Who got it right – Eric’s Experts or Dr. Wes and Pearl?” A second flyer announces the impending sweep of *Nickelsville* by the Port of Seattle scheduled for Wednesday, and asks people to support them as they either “stand

their ground” and risk arrest, or make another pre-emptive move – this time hopefully to a permanent location. A third three-page hand-out is made up of statements written and signed by SHARE/WHEEL residents explaining their funding situation, and presents a letter from the city turning down their request for bus ticket funds alongside articles talking about wasteful government funding. As I leave, I say goodbye to several people. Michele gives me a smile. “See you on Monday,” she says. (Field note excerpt, 10/26/2009)

### **Language, Technology, and Social Organization in an Urban Homeless Movement**

Social movements are the stuff of legend and romance. From the bus boycotts of the civil rights movement to the street theater of the Seattle WTO protests, movements are imagined and re-imagined in our collective memory as moments of collective action that shape our society. But how do they work? How does the recognition of grievances turn into collective action? This study approaches this question from the perspective that communication is an important – if not the most important – key to understanding how people organize themselves to make social change. I contend that a social movement is a communicative process, whereby participants construct problems, solutions, allies, and opponents in their efforts to change social norms and material realities. In doing so I draw on research from studies of social movements, technology and society, organizational communication, and language and discourse. I present existing academic research as a springboard from which to launch my own contributions to the topic at hand, suggesting ways in which we may clarify our knowledge of complex social systems through the use of grounded multi-methods empirical research. In the end, my hope is that I have contributed not only to scholarship on social movements, technology, organizations, and communication,

but that I have presented this contribution in a way that will be useful to practitioners in the field.

This study is grounded in my own participation in social movements, along with nine months of formal participant observation in a local homeless movement in Seattle, Washington.<sup>1</sup> In approaching the study, I was interested in understanding how participants communicated about the work that they did, and how they tried to make mobilization happen. As I helped with organizing tasks and talked with activists, it became clear to me that issues were important vehicles for political mobilization. Organizations certainly played important roles as catalysts for action, but those actions were focused on issues, not organizations, and issue campaigns were what people talked about as foci for organizing activity. I saw that understanding how people engaged in mobilization would require centering issues at the heart of the analysis, and so I looked around to see what the most important issues were for people in the local Seattle homeless movement during my 2008-2009 fieldwork.

While many issues presented themselves, three were particularly salient for participants. The first issue was focused around the emergence of a city level policy of campsite removals in parks, green spaces and under freeways that was having a significant negative impact on homeless residents who called these spaces home. The Sweeps, as they were called by area activists and campers, were resulting in the disposal of “personal belongings” and “survival gear” like “tents” and “sleeping bags,” leaving people who had very little material stability with even less security in their survival. A campaign to “*Stop the Sweeps*” was developed in response to this policy of campsite removals, and as a way to talk about what homelessness meant, and what appropriate solutions were to the lack of adequate



low-income housing and shelter space in the city. Overnight “campouts” at City Hall became the primary tactical action associated with this campaign.

The second issue of prominence in the local Seattle homeless movement concerned a proposal to build a new jail that would “house” people arrested for misdemeanor offenses in the city. The proposal developed in the context of a growing police force in the city and notification that the city may lose its ability to house people in the county jail that had previously served this purpose. Two approaches emerged in response to the Proposed Jail. First, neighborhood groups organized to keep the jail out of their neighborhoods as they found out where the city was proposing to site the new facility. Second, area homeless and criminal justice activists organized a coalitional campaign around the slogan “*No New Jail*,” arguing that incarceration was an ineffective and unjust social practice, and that “up-stream” alternatives were more appropriate and effective at reducing crime. The I-100 Initiative to research alternatives to incarceration became the primary action strategy associated with this campaign, and it was accompanied by public testimony at hearings and forums on the Proposed Jail.

The third issue that emerged as a focus of organizing in the local Seattle homeless movement took the form of a direct action “tent city” that aspired to house up to 1,000 people in semi-permanent “shacks” or shelters. Calling the project *Nickelsville*, organizers signaled the Hooverilles that existed for roughly ten years in Seattle and were home to those hardest hit by the Great Depression. But they also signaled mayoral blame for the existing crisis in housing and shelter in the city by replacing Hoover with Nickels. Much like the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, *Nickelsville* was a response to the increased sweeping of urban campsites in Seattle – a policy for which Mayor Greg Nickels was directly responsible. But instead of

focusing on overnight “campouts” at City Hall, organizers pitched their tents on a piece of public land cited for the construction of the Proposed Jail in direct defiance of laws prohibiting camping within city limits. As a response, the mayor “swept” the camp citing the “encampment clearance protocols” as justification, a process that was repeated several times at different locations. In this way, Nickelsville became a bridge between the Proposed Jail and the Sweeps issue areas, providing a way for people to connect issues that might otherwise have seemed only tangentially related.

These three issue areas became a primary focus for my research, providing me with a way to think about and compare processes of social movement communication, as well as structuring elements for the collection and analysis of empirical data. This meant that I attended meetings and events related to the three campaigns, subscribed to advocacy and governmental email lists from people and organizations working on the issues, interviewed participants in the campaigns, and sought out public communication texts about the three issues at events, rallies, and online. By focusing on the issues in which each campaign sought to intervene, I was able to see how participants across the institutional spectrum contributed contesting definitions and valuations of each issue, and track the formats and technological affordances most closely associated with different organizational sectors and communicative functions.

I have taken an interpretivist approach to the current study as I sought to develop exploratory understandings of the social phenomenon under study that were true to the situations that I experienced as a participant observer, while also drawing from and contributing to existing research in each area examined. Taking this approach seriously required a sensitivity to the dynamic relationships established through the research process

between the researcher, other research participants (traditionally referred to as ‘subjects’), and the texts that made up my corpus, by valuing the inductive production of theory through the research process (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Tying the inductive production of theory to a research design derived from the existing literature was accomplished by using retroductive reasoning (Ragin, 1994) for coding and interpretation that privileged an iterative process for analysis and theoretical development over the deductive testing of existing theory. As I developed categories and mini-theories along the way, I employed deductive testing in a conversation with the data, allowing me to be responsive to the social phenomena and my emerging understandings of how they worked. The analysis here has moved from theory to data to theory and back again. As a result, the pages that follow address both the issues I examined and the major areas of research that have informed my analysis. A full description of my research methods can be found in Appendix A.

But before moving into the body of the study, I outline some of the major theoretical strands that I employed in making sense of the data, and suggest how we might think about social movement communication as drawing on, and contributing to, our general knowledge of how society works. It is to this task that I now turn.

### **Structure, Behavior, and Agency in Social Movement Communication**

Social movements are a foundational component to the modern neoliberal experience. In a political environment where popular participation in political life is heralded as the pinnacle of democratic freedom, the stories that we tell each other about how we organize ourselves to accomplish political ends are rooted in the ideal of agency. However, the contradictions between the idealized freedom to influence the political process and the experienced reality of professionalized government inspire both complacency and outrage.

Some of these contradictions can be explained by looking at how social structure functions in the social world.

Existing institutional structures are often the targets of social change efforts, be they government policies, business practices or media coverage patterns (Earl & Kimport, 2008; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). Attention to problem amelioration in social movement claims has highlighted the importance of organizations and institutions as targets of collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow, Baker, Anderson, & Martin, 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988). Alternately, a focus on the structuring properties of formal organization presents institutional opportunities and constraints as prominent explanatory variables in the analysis of social movement success (Cress & Snow, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005; Piven & Cloward, 1979; Tarrow, 1996; Wellstone, 1978). Part of the importance of organizations and institutions is their capacity to structure social behavior (Cook, 1999; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). But the study of the ways social institutions are maintained has suggested that the routinization of behavioral patterns is an important mechanism for social reproduction (Clemens, 1997; Giddens, 1984; Staggenborg & Lang, 2007). The importance of behavior in social reproduction moves the lens for analysis to the process of individual and organizational action: rather than institutional constraint, we can focus on agentive action and choice among behavioral options. I address *structure*, *behavior*, and *agency* in turn.

### **Structure.**

Structuralism and functionalism strongly emphasize the pre-eminence of the social whole over its individual parts, typically understood as actors. Social structure from this perspective is often seen as the predictable relationship between clearly definable sectors of society. For instance, Cook's (1999) theory of the news media as an institution is based on

the routinized behavior of individual journalists (and editors, photographers, broadcast announcers, producers) alongside the institutionalized behaviors of “newsmakers” (politicians, celebrities, heads of corporations) in reified sets of relations structured by organizationally defined roles. Institutional relationships like those between governments, corporations, and news media institutions are understood to function at the level of aggregate categories of people and the actions that they take while in the role of category participant. Thus, only some actions that each participating person takes are considered to be contributing to the formation of an organization. This is one of the ways that individuals and organizations overlap in their production of formal social organizations: an individual may author in multiple organizations and an organization may publish multiple authors (see chapter three). So, while individuals enact multiple identities as they contribute to the discursive production of an organization, the influence that the organization has in structuring the behavior of individual authors often receives preference in structuralist approaches.

### **Behavior.**

Structuration theory adds to most structuralist approaches an appreciation of the role of individuals in reproducing structure. Rather than only focusing on the role of organizations in shaping the behaviors of individuals, Giddens (1984) suggests that the patterned behavior of individuals are the primary mechanism for producing social structure.

The repetitiveness of activities which are undertaken in like manner day after day is the material grounding of what I call the recursive nature of social life. (By its recursive nature I mean that the structured properties of social activity – via the duality of structure – are constantly recreated out of the very resources which constitute them.) Routinization is vital to the psychological mechanisms whereby a sense of trust or ontological security is sustained in the daily activities of social life. Carried primarily in practical consciousness, routine drives a wedge between the potentially explosive content of the unconscious and the reflexive monitoring of action which agents display...the apparently minor conventions of daily social life are of essential significance in curbing the sources of unconscious tensions that would otherwise preoccupy most of our waking lives (p. xxiii-xxiv).

For Giddens, routinized behavior is at the heart of reproducing social structure. What this highlights is the contingent relationship between behavior and structure: a different set of routinized behaviors can change the nature of social structure by producing a very different organization, institution, or society. This has pointed researchers towards studies that appreciate the ways that institutions produce patterned behavior (as structuralists might do) as well as the ways that institutions are changed through patterned behavior. Attention to the structuring properties of patterned behavior can point to the ways that new kinds of organizations and social structural relationships are produced through actions taken either outside of organizations or in the spaces where organizations overlap. It is the identification of these new organizational elements – produced through patterned behavior – that are of concern to those interested in the study of emergent social organization.

Understanding the relationship between patterned behavior and social structure requires an understanding of how Giddens (1984) uses structure in his work. Specifically, Giddens describes his use of structure as implicating what he calls “rules” and “resources.”

In structuration theory ‘structure’ is regarded as rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction; institutionalized features of social systems have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space.

‘Structure’ can be conceptualized abstractly as two aspects of rules – normative elements and codes of signification. Resources are also of two kinds: authoritative resources, which derive from the co-ordination of the activity of human agents, and allocative resources, which stem from control of material products or of aspects of the material world” (p. xxxi).

Rules, then, are understood by Giddens as “techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices” (p. xxv). For instance, journalists abide by the rules of their profession, and activists in a particular area of organizing do the same in their own context. These rules operate at the level of “normative elements” – what is the expected behavior in this situation – as well as “codes of signification” – how do we

discursively produce what something means, and how does that shared meaning prescribe behavior? Resources, on the other hand, refer to the ability of a social structure to co-ordinate how people interact with each other, as well as how control of material resources is allocated. For instance, a newsroom structures the kinds of relationships that journalists and editors have with each other, and prescribes who has control over what resources (such as access to sources, archival information, or the ability to write headlines).

### **Agency.**

While structure and routinization are important aspects of how social structure is produced and maintained, agency also plays an important role. Giddens (1984) defines agency, saying that

“Agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place (which is why agency implies power: cf. the Oxford English Dictionary definition of an agent, as ‘one who exerts power or produces an effect’). Agency concerns events of which an individual is the proprietor, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently. Whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened.” (p. 9)

Put simply, “Agency refers to doing” (p. 10).

A focus on agency at this point highlights the power that individual actors exert in reproducing existing social structures by acting in routinized and predictable ways. Thus, individuals can be implicated in the reproduction of oppressive power dynamics in the course of routine behaviors if their actions *could have* been made differently, regardless of intentionality in taking the action. The recognition that there is in that instant the potential to act differently presupposes that what is must not necessarily be so, and that alternate outcomes are possible. So how can we understand how these kinds of changes might take place at the level of individual agentive actions? Harvey (1996) notes that “Some sort of agency, residing somewhere within the social process, must exist that can disrupt the

seemingly automatic reproduction of the repressive social orders typically depicted in social theory” (p. 96). In other words, agency must be there somewhere. But when responding to his own question “where is the locus of agency?” Harvey states simply “everywhere” (p. 105). So Harvey focuses his attention on those structuring properties that restrict change, highlighting the instances of agentive choice by exposing the “forces that hold down change and/or which give it a certain directionality” (p. 105) – a kind of negative space approach that highlights variance by seeking out stability.

When we think about agency in processes of communication, attention should be directed to the choices that people make regarding how they speak, what they say in the moment of communication, and how and why people might make the choices that they do. In this area, organizations that structure language practices are important because discourse “is the moment of communicative persuasion or discussion between persons regarding certain lines of action and beliefs” (Harvey, 1996, p. 82). But organizations are not the only elements that structure action, as Giddens (1984) points to in his attention to the importance of “codes of signification” in the process of action. Here, Harvey (1996) is particularly instructive for my purposes, as he highlights the ways that discourses structure communicative acts. He writes that, while “Human beings (both individually and collectively) are the bearers of discourses...discourses, though humanly produced, have the awkward habit of assuming a certain power over how individuals think and behave” (p. 83). Hence, both organizations and discourses structure what can and cannot be said, and how what is said is valued, understood and acted upon. Yet, attention to agentive action reminds us that the possibility for acting differently – for saying different things – has the potential to change both organizational and linguistic structure. This is what Giddens means by “the recursive nature of social life.”



Research that seeks to examine this interplay may help us to understand why society is structured in the ways that it is, and how people engage in attempting to change it.

### **Discourse and Social Change**

As Giddens suggests, and Harvey makes explicit, discourses are implicated as having structuring properties as well as organizations. As I move into the realm of discourse more directly, I am interested in these three related perspectives on language, namely structure, routine practices, and agency. Researchers in this vein have approached language by separating semiotic (deep) structure (as practiced by Lévi-Strauss, 1969 in linguistic anthropology) from social practice (defined as language in use by Saussure, 1959) and individual agency (emphasized in the work of Halliday, 1978, 1985) in conceptualizing linguistic production (Hodge & Kress, 1988). For instance, Steinberg (1999) urges a dialogic approach to discourse in his research on 19<sup>th</sup> century cotton spinners in England, emphasizing the relational nature of the social, semiotic, and strategic aspects involved in the production of discourse (p. 749), noting that actors make use of the discourses at their disposal, but that “contention is keyed both to material situations and structures of meanings and codes that bound it” (p. 771), limiting agency and the range of action. Similarly, Skillington’s (1997) analysis of participation in public forums argues for the importance of the social embeddedness of discursive practice in institutional settings within which actors employ a degree of agency in symbol use when challenging the definitions of objects and actions in dominant discourses. This work sets up a triadic relationship between structure, social action, and agency, similar to the way that structuration theory separates social structure from routinization and agency (Giddens, 1984; Orlikowski, 2000).

While similar conceptually, these theoretical strands differ linguistically, identifying “structure” differently in relation to other aspects of the theory. Giddens’s (1984) identifies three types of structure (signification, legitimation, and domination), and Orlikowski (2000) has asserted the potentially structuring aspects of technologies of communication when applied in use. However, Giddens makes it clear that his definition of structure is not material, but solely behavioral and cognitive, associating it with the agreed upon standards of social behavior that structures our actions. Discourse studies, on the other hand, has viewed structure in terms of Lévi-Strauss’ (1969) conception of “deep structure” or “*langue*,” and differentiated it from “*parole*” (Saussure, 1959), or language in use, with more recent work emphasizing the ways that language in use produces deep linguistic structure (Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Fairclough, 1992; Hodge & Kress, 1988). These two approaches might best be understood as complementary, with discourse studies offering a meso and micro level explication of the production and reproduction of structure through linguistic action, with signification comprising one of the key types of structure implicated by structuration theory. In combining these two approaches to the structure/agency issue in social theory, I have tried to derive the thrust of the two arguments, while taking liberties with linguistic conventions, siding with linguistics, and labeling the artifacts as “structure” (Lévi-Strauss, 1969), patterned social behavior in the production of artifacts as “routinization” (Giddens, 1984), and the empirical instances of agentive linguistic production as “action” (Halliday, 1978, 1985).

I have illustrated the relationships between the three elements of the theoretical frame below (Figure 0.1). Here we can see that action is constrained and enabled by structure and routinization, but it also contributes to their production and reproduction. Similarly, routines

are perpetuated and altered through action, and limited and enabled by structure, but they also play a significant role in the forms that structures take and the action options and choices that actors have. These three aspects of the social process – structure, routine behavior, and agency – work together to create the world that we live in. Any analysis of why the social world is the way it is, or how we might work to change it, must take each of these aspects into account if we are to understand both stability and change, both structure and agency, and both repression and resistance.

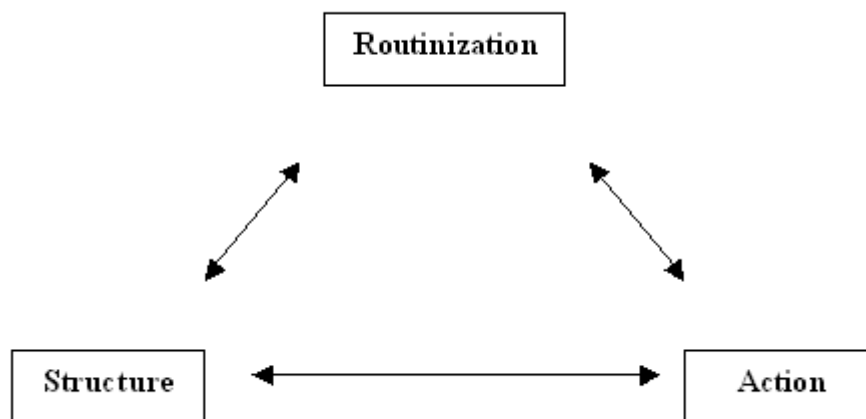


Figure 0.1. A processual model for the institutionalization of social practice.

### **Social Movement Communication**

The study of social movement communication necessarily crosses disciplinary and theoretical boundaries, but the importance of communication in social movement processes has led to a growth in the study of how language and discourse are implicated in social movement processes. Most of the work done in the area of social movement communication has been in the analysis of collective action frames (Evans, 1997; Hewitt & McCammon, 2004; Napstad, 1997; Snow, Baker et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988), but interesting developments in linguistic and discourse analysis offer new tools for understanding the ways

that activists construct movement ties through language. Specifically work in narrative analysis (Gülich & Quasthoff, 1986; Linde, 1986; Polletta, 1998, 2006), discourse analysis (Ellingson, 1995; Sandberg, 2006; Simone, 2006; Skillington, 1997; Steinberg, 1998, 1999; Stewart, 2004), and semantic network analysis (Bearman & Stovel, 2000; Petit, 2004) point to the importance of language in structuring collective action through patterned use.

Research on “new social movements” has emphasized the turn from material revolutions to symbolic ones (Chesters & Welsh, 2004; Garrido & Halavais, 2003; Swords, 2007), and from reformist tactics to the contestation of codes in highly mediated societies (Melucci, 1996a; Rambukkana, 2007). This body of research has drawn significantly on the postmodern turn towards a social constructionist perspective on social research, emphasizing the role that discursive processes play in producing our understandings of people, issues, and events (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Edelman, 1988). Thus, no way of defining an issue or of describing an event is neutral or somehow objectively “true.” Instead, competing interpretations exist simultaneously (Skillington, 1997) in a “regime of truth” structured by “the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). As Melucci (1996a) has reminded us, the struggle to define is central to the struggle for material change, and while language has always been a crucial convergence space where interpretations are created and contested, the changing economic and political contexts of information and cultural production in wealthier nations has elevated communication to a prominent location in movement organizing and research (Polletta, 2006; Snow, Baker et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988; Steinberg, 1999). These discursive constructions inform how we in turn describe issues and events to others. Viewed at the level of discourse-as-action, “Each sign-maker (never merely a sign-user) is therefore a [potential] transformer of the

historically shaped resources for representation available in their culture in the light of their interests” (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 37). The struggle over which signs are used and what signs mean has become an increasingly important field of resistance, with organizers expending great energy in activities that are, at their core, about changing the way people think about the social world (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991).

I have used structuration theory and discourse studies to provide a framework for understanding the production and reproduction of society generally, and social movement communication more specifically. Using this approach as a lens, social movements might productively be conceived of as drivers of structural change through agentive action by routinizing creative reconfigurations of patterned social behavior (Berry, 2004; Rao, Morrill, & Zald, 2000; Staggenborg, 1988; Staggenborg & Lang, 2007). Such an approach takes advantage of structuralist approaches to social movement studies like resource mobilization (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977), political opportunities structure (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005; Tarrow, 1996; Tilly, 1978), and network analysis (Garrido & Halavais, 2003; Jaeyeol, 2000; Phillips, 1991), while extending meaning-based approaches like new social movement theory (Buechler, 1995; McAdam, 1994; Melucci, 1994), collective action framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Boström, 2004; Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002; Sandberg, 2006; Snow, Baker et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988), and narrative studies (Bennett, Foot, & Xenos, Forthcoming; Guzik & Gorlier, 2004; Polletta, 1998, 2006) that emphasize identity and communication in constituting and tracking social movement activity. Further, this approach offers valuable insight into the “black box”<sup>2</sup> that has constituted the ties in network analysis studies of social movement activity, drawing on, and furthering, relational approaches to network analysis that

have explored the role of communication in mediating and constituting ties among social actors (Mische, 2008; Mische & Pattison, 2000; Mische & White, 1998).

### **Issue Areas, Issue Sectors, and Issue Campaigns**

I have placed issues at the heart of my analysis. This has led to a number of specialist terms that I use throughout the text. Table 0.1 lists these terms along with a brief definition of their relationships to each other. First, in taking a communication approach to social movements I have found it difficult to separate mobilization activities from the *issue areas* in which they take place. Here, an issue area is defined as all discursive production that mentions a central issue of interest. In this case, I am interested in three issue areas, and have demarcated them throughout the text by capitalizing them: the Sweeps, the Proposed Jail, and Nickelsville. Issue areas are the primary focus of the first half of chapter four (focusing on issue contestation in the areas of *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*). Second, organizational communication scholars have suggested that social movements take place in multi-organizational fields, while research on technologies of communication and social movements has pointed to the rise of individual contributions to the public sphere that are outside of the parameters of formal organizations. Here, I rely on a second concept that I refer to as *issue sectors*. I define an issue sector as the collection of communication resources (personal blogs, neighborhood blogs, radio stations, newspapers, discussion boards, email lists, etc.) that contribute to the discursive production of an issue area. Since issue sectors are the organizational counterparts to issue areas (i.e., those resources engaged in producing an issue area) they are demarcated again by capitalization. Issue sectors are the primary focus of chapter three, when I look at social organization and movement.

Finally, I suggest that campaigns only exist in relation to issues, carving out a particular constellation of discursive responses as participants contribute to an issue area, and become part of an issue sector. To this end I refer to *issue campaigns*, and define them as the organized efforts of movement participants to construct political projects that engage in an issue area through the production of collective action with the intention of changing social policies and norms. I demarcate them textually by capitalizing and italicizing each issue campaign: the campaign to *Stop the Sweeps*, the *No New Jail* campaign, and *Nickelsville*. Issue campaigns are the focus of much of this study, but I pay particular attention to them as analytic categories in chapter two and the second half of chapter four (in my analysis of semantic fields related to *participant mobilization*).

Table 0.1. Key terms in the study of social movement communication.

	Definition	Area of Analysis	Influences on Issue Campaigns
Issue Area	Discourse about an Issue	Language use	Structures communicative strategies
Issue Sector	Contributors to an Issue Area	Socio-technological organization	Structures inter-organizational dynamics
Issue Campaign	SM action in an Issue Area/Sector	Mobilization	Structures communication repertoires

As I suggest in Table 0.1, issue areas and issue sectors exist regardless of the presence of an issue campaign. While an issue campaign may influence the ways an issue area is discursively produced, or change the structural dynamics of an issue sector, they are also substantively influenced by the linguistic and organizational contexts within which they exist, structuring communicative strategies, structuring inter-organizational dynamics, and structuring communication repertoires.

## Chapter Outline

This study engages these areas of social theory and social research, building on them through a process of grounded empirical research. Chapter one presents a contextual look at homelessness nationally and locally, placing the local Seattle homeless movement within its material and political context. It then presents a brief ethnographic description of each of the issue areas and issue campaigns examined in the following chapters. Chapter two addresses the ways that communication technologies were and were not used in each issue campaign, and presents my analysis of what these choices meant for the local Seattle homeless movement, as well as what they may mean for the study of technology in mobilization more generally. I ask, *How were technologies used and not used by participants in the local Seattle homeless movement?* This chapter places the use of technologies of communication in a grounded ethnographic context, suggesting how we might think about digital communication in the context of local homeless organizing. This analysis points to the continued importance of face-to-face communication strategies in homeless organizing, and identify the ways that digital communication technologies were used to encourage (largely housed) participants to leave their computer screens and “turn out” for situations of co-presence. Chapter three looks at the ways that people organized themselves in the local Seattle homeless movement. The question motivating this chapter is, *How are participants organized through formal and emergent forms of social organization, and how do participants produce organization through their patterned behavior?* In answering this question, I outline a general theory of communication and organization, allowing for the continued importance of *formal* organizations, as well as the ways that people and groups are organized in *emergent* and often less visible ways through their communicative behavior. I then present my analysis of a



corpus of digital communication texts using network analysis of coded categories, hyperlink patterns, and issue mentions in the texts. I suggest that formal organizations continue to be important for social movements because they produce the majority of communication resources participants use to communicate with each other and the broader public, and they serve as associational credibility markers in the production, distribution, and consumption of public discourses.

Chapter four looks at the ways that language was used in the local Seattle homeless movement, and presents a model for understanding social movement communication more generally. I ask *What discourses were drawn upon by speakers in producing cultural understandings of homelessness, and what discourses were produced by organizers in the local Seattle homeless movement as they engaged in contesting meanings and materialities and in mobilizing participants?* I argue that social movement communication engages two basic areas of activity. First, participants engage in a process of *issue contestation*, whereby advocates, politicians, and journalists present competing definitions of issues, events, policies, and identities in ways that have very real material repercussions in the social world. It is in these areas where we can see language as most directly implicated in processes of resources mobilization, the identification of political opportunity structures, or the kinds of meaning making that is the focus of much of the work in new social movement theory and research. I suggest that the combination of linguistic analysis techniques that I present in this study may be of use to those practicing in each of these social movement traditions by making the connections between their work explicit. Second, participants engage language in the process of mobilization by identifying a movement or campaign as such, describing the actions that the movement takes, naming constituents and allies, and calling on people to

participate in those actions. Here, I endeavor to specify the linguistic mechanisms at work in processes of mobilization, a task rarely given direct attention by scholars. I operationalize these two basic areas of communication by creating semantic fields of meaning that can be quantified through the use of corpus linguistics.<sup>3</sup> The semantic fields are presented using corpus linguistics and semantic network analysis methods for identifying and describing corpus level patterns, after which I explain these patterns at the level of the clause or text by drawing on critical discourse analysis and my ethnographic knowledge of the field. This interplay offers both meta-level generalities and micro-level specificity in empirical research, something that I use to both generate and test social theory throughout. Chapter five brings technology, social organization, and language together in a comparative analysis of the three issue areas under study. I draw on my analysis from the preceding chapters to ask questions like *How do formal organizations influence textual production?* and *What kinds of socio-technological configurations are most commonly deployed in the production of mobilization talk?* I suggest that the three factors analyzed here (technology, social organization, and language) have important structuring properties that influence what it is possible to say and do, and how participants engage in mobilization processes around issue campaigns, as well as being shaped by routinized agentive action. Finally, I conclude by suggesting that issue areas are the primary vehicle through which movements are made possible. This assertion is placed in the context of the proceeding chapters, and implications for both scholars and practitioners are suggested.

## **Chapter 1: Homeless Organizing in Seattle: Context of the Present Study**

This study is concerned with the ways that homelessness was constructed as an area for the production of a social movement on a local level. As such, I am concerned with two major areas of context. First, I am interested in the ways that homelessness has occurred on both a national and local level. This involves both estimates of population size and population change, as well as trends in policy development. Second, I am interested in the ways that local participants produced social movements around homelessness during the period of time that this study is concerned with. To this end I engaged in a participant observation in the three campaigns of most prominent importance in 2008-2009. In what follows I outline each of these areas of interest as context to the remainder of the study.

### **Issue: Homelessness in Seattle**

The United States has the highest level of inequality of any country in the world (Massey, 2008), with almost 37 million people living in poverty, and between 2.3 million and 3.5 million people experiencing homelessness in a given year (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2008).<sup>4</sup> On one night in 2009 in Seattle 2,515 people slept in emergency shelters, 3,293 in transitional housing, and 2,826 people were counted sleeping outside or on busses in the greater metropolitan area – around 8,500 people (Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, 2009).<sup>5</sup> The enumeration of homeless people has been met with two policy trends: the reduction of funding for services and emergency shelters, and the proliferation of anti-vagrancy laws in urban centers. First, federal funding for low-income housing fell 56% from 1976 to 2007 (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2008), and the funds that are available have largely been directed towards long-term housing development projects. The primary vehicle for this change in funding policy has been city-

based “10-year plans to end homelessness” developed in over 300 US cities. Seattle implemented its 10-year plan in 2004, with a commitment to “ending homelessness by 2014” (Committee to End Homelessness in King County, 2005). Despite the role of housed and unhoused homeless advocates in ensuring that the plan addressed a commitment to “interim survival mechanism—services focused on keeping people alive...until time that affordable permanent housing is available to all” (Committee to End Homelessness in King County, 2005, pg. i), the city of Seattle consistently reduced funding for emergency shelter and social services, and critics charged that the few mixed-use condo projects that the city funded had resulted in a net loss of affordable housing. Second, in the management of homeless populations, city governments have enacted no-sit/no-lie ordinances, anti-loitering laws, and laws aimed at making arrests for “aggressive” panhandling (Mitchell, 1997), and Seattle is among the many major cities that chose to accompany these laws with an increase in the number of police on the street (Chan, 2008). As a result, those experiencing homelessness were less able to find adequate emergency shelter, and were confronted with the increasing criminalization of their survival behavior.

### **Campaigns: Sweeping Nickelsville into the New Seattle Jail**

Three distinct issue campaigns emerged as prominent foci of contentious activism around homelessness in Seattle. First, the city’s campsite clearance policy gave rise to a dynamic campaign to “*Stop the Sweeps*” of homeless campsites in urban spaces. Second, campers and homeless activists developed a pro-active response to the lack of adequate emergency shelter in the city by starting a direct action style self-managed tent city averaging 70-100 residents called “*Nickelsville*,” with the long-term goal of creating a permanent “shanty town” of up to 1,000 people within the city limits. Finally, the emergence of the

city's proposal to build a new misdemeanor jail was taken up as a homeless issue by area activists, and the "*No New Jail*" campaign became a space where homelessness, racial profiling, and school closures were used as vehicles for deepening the critique and bridging gaps between constituencies and issue groups. Together, these three issue campaigns served as anchors for action on homelessness, as well as important cultural referents within the urban communication space. I briefly introduce each of the cases in turn.

In the late summer of 2007, people sleeping on the streets of Seattle started talking about an increase in the number of homeless campsites being raided by city parks employees. These raids, a periodic reality for homeless campers in most urban areas, were referred to as "sweeps" by those experiencing them, and by friends and advocates in the city. By early fall the Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP) began hearing from those who sold the newspaper *Real Change News* (vendors) about an increase in the number of Sweeps happening around the city, and filed a Freedom of Information request for documents associated with campsite clearances (Meyers, interview with author, 11/25/2008).<sup>6</sup> By winter, journalists at *Real Change News* had obtained internal city communications that specified an unofficial policy of increased campsite clearances in urban greenspaces, and the paper went public with the story (Hyla, 2007). I became involved with the issue as a member of the newly formed Real Change Organizing Project (RCOP), which responded with a campaign to "*Stop the Sweeps*," promising quarterly overnight campouts on the steps of City Hall until the policy was halted.<sup>7</sup> Organizers used the temporary tent cities as emergency shelters and survival gear giveaways to replace the tents, coats, hats, and sleeping bags confiscated by the city, and to enact a semiotic reminder that over 2,600 people slept outside in Seattle every night.

In response to public pressure from activists, the city created an official “encampment clearance protocol” that formalized the practice, adding the posting of 72 hour notices at camps and the storage of items deemed to be “worth more than \$25” in a warehouse only accessible by car (City of Seattle, 2008; Nickels, 2008a, 2008b). This new policy was accompanied by a media strategy campaign that described the Sweeps policy as a “humane,” “compassionate,” and “consistent” response to homelessness (Takami, 2008), and invited area journalists to campsite clearances where people in white tyvek suits and bulldozers filled dumpsters with “tons” of “trash” and “debris.” In the summer of 2008, the third overnight campout and survival gear giveaway was accompanied by an act of civil disobedience in which several participants placed a tent in the middle of the street and were subsequently arrested by police for blocking the right of way. Organizers talked about how this event changed the tenor of media coverage of the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign and began to reflect a critical appraisal of the Sweeps policy. As of this writing, the “encampment clearance protocol” remains in effect, and people’s belongings continue to be “cleaned up” from parks, green spaces, and from under freeways, with no substantive changes to its implementation.

*Nickelsville* also arose in part as a response to the city’s stepped-up policy of campsite removals and the reality that thousands had nowhere else to sleep in Seattle every night. Rather than mount a political campaign to get the city to change its policy, unhoused and formerly unhoused activists started organizing a plan for a permanent encampment that would be able to provide shelter for up to 1,000 people in semi-permanent shacks – or “shanties.” As Scott Morrow (the one paid staff for *Nickelsville*) explained,

We realized that that model of opposing sweeps wasn't going, that we weren't going to be able to do it, and.....the way things were going for poor and particularly homeless people in Seattle, a lot of people realized that something new had to happen and that people who were being hurt in a new way were the ones who had to do it

because no one was looking out for them. So a lot of people saw that and decided that something like a permanent encampment, you know, a stationary place for a lot of folks, was the way to go because those people in smaller encampments, you know, were having their lives really harmed by the mayor's sweeps. And that was just, you know, that was the straw that broke the camel's back or frosting on the cake or whatever... (Morrow, interview with author, 10/14/2008)

Participants like Scott responded to “the mayor's sweeps” by creating a project led by people experiencing them first hand who “were being hurt in a new way.” The project was named after mayor Greg Nickels and took inspiration from the largest of the depression era Hooverville shantytowns that once provided shelter for 639 people on the Seattle waterfront in the form of hundreds of small “shacks” (Roy, 1935), with the population peaking at 1,250 during the winter months (Jackson, 1935). I first encountered *Nickelsville* as a housed ally after hearing about the plan to erect a permanent “shantytown” at an RCOP organizing meeting for the other two campaigns. I signed up for the email list and left a phone message saying that I had a full size van and would be willing to help in any way that I could. Shortly after, I received a phone call that the next day was “D-day,” and at 3:00 AM I helped to transport 153 pink tents from Tent City 3 to a vacant city-owned lot where they hoped to build a new misdemeanor jail. As we erected the brightly colored tents in the early pre-dawn light, TV vans began to show up and traffic helicopters hovered overhead, bringing *Nickelsville* to morning news viewers.

The City of Seattle responded to this direct action tent city by posting the area with the signs that it used for other encampment Sweeps, giving participants 72 hours notice that they needed to leave. Participants “stood their ground” as we continued to nail plywood to 2x4s for a new “administration building” at the entrance to the camp, and 25 people who refused to leave were arrested on charges that were ultimately dropped by the city. Within a year the camp had occupied seven different locations, some for little more than a week, and

had garnered significant media coverage in local, national, and some international outlets. Both the organizing meetings and camp governance at *Nickelsville* were run by camp residents – called “Nickelodeons” – and only people who were, or had formerly been, homeless were allowed to vote. This model of organizing was borrowed from the Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE) and the Women's Housing, Equality, and Enhancement League (WHEEL) who had been organizing “self-managed” tent cities and emergency shelters in Seattle since 1990 (Freeman, interview with author, 10/24/2008; Merchand, interview with author, 10/28/2008; Morrow, interview with author 10/14/2008). As of this writing, *Nickelsville* continues to function as an independent, self-managed encampment, holding organizing meetings once a week in an effort to find a permanent location and gain sanction from the city’s new mayor.

The third major issue area that homeless organizers tackled during my fieldwork was the proposal for a new misdemeanor jail in the City of Seattle. In 2008, the city proposed plans to build a 200 million dollar misdemeanor jail that would house arrestees for minor offenses. Neighborhood groups adjacent to the few proposed sites around the city began protesting that the Proposed Jail was not a good fit for their neighborhoods and that it should be built in another part of the city (Plants, interview with the author, 10/28/2008). The Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP) saw the jail issue as a homeless one, and they argued that rather than building an expensive new jail that would disproportionately house minority, poor, and homeless citizens, the money should be more effectively spent on “up-stream” community-based initiatives to reduce the arrest rate, and keep people out of the criminal justice system. Tim Harris, the executive director of RCEP, made the connections between



homelessness and the Proposed Jail in several weekly editorials in *Real Change News* like the one excerpted here.

The city's homeless sweeps, which label all homeless campers as criminals and addicts, have aggressively targeted those who resist Seattle's overcrowded shelter system...Along those same lines, Mayor Nickels wants a new jail for misdemeanants, at a cost of \$110 million to build and about \$19 million annually to operate. Never mind that upstream alternatives to incarceration have reduced the jail population by 30 percent. (Real Change News, 8/27/2008, CTA617)

RCEP began doing outreach to neighborhood groups like the Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) by urging them to work together to oppose the building of a new jail. As it developed, the *No New Jail* campaign attracted legal advocates, prison education groups, police oversight groups, and groups opposed to the closing of several Seattle area schools (with the accompanying call for “schools not jails”), forming a collaborative group called the Committee for Efficiency and Fairness in Public Safety. The campaign was organized mainly around governmental processes like budget schedules and opportunities for public testimony. As the efforts progressed, participants increasingly focused the bulk of their organizing energies on “Initiative-100” – a ballot initiative that would have required the city to “explore alternatives to building a city jail,” and “require a public vote to decide whether to build a city jail” (Committee for Efficiency and Fairness in Public Safety, 2008). After nearly a year of organizing work, the I-100 initiative fell short of the required number of signatures to get it on the ballot by roughly 5,000. However, their efforts coincided with those at the county level that urged “collaboration” in “working together” to expand alternatives to incarceration, and “partnership” in “housing” those convicted of misdemeanor crimes. As of this writing, plans to build the Proposed Jail have been indefinitely put on hold.

Each of these three issue campaigns existed alongside each other during the period of fieldwork. The events that populated the three issue campaigns occurred over time in an

overlapping manner (see Table 1.1), and agendas at organizing meetings held by groups like RCOP often bounced between issue campaigns depending on what events were most pressing. As Tables 1.2 and 1.3 illustrate, the types of events that each issue campaign made use of also varied. The campaign to *Stop the Sweeps* was primarily oriented around the use of tactics that might be described as “rallies,” even as they took on camping-like characteristics (i.e., “overnight campouts”). *Nickelsville*, on the other hand, also held rallies, but the tactics they employed were most closely associated with a form of camping as collective action. But the kind of camping actions varied based on whether participants were invited or not, resulting in camps that were either “direct actions” (on city, state, or port-owned land) or “hosted” actions (mostly on church-owned land). Finally, the *No New Jail* campaign again made use of the rally repertoire, with participants speaking at public hearings, providing public testimony, and holding public events. But the emphasis on I-100 meant that many of the actions participants organized were in the realm of signature gathering for the petition.

Table 1.1. Frequency of important public events in issue campaigns over time.

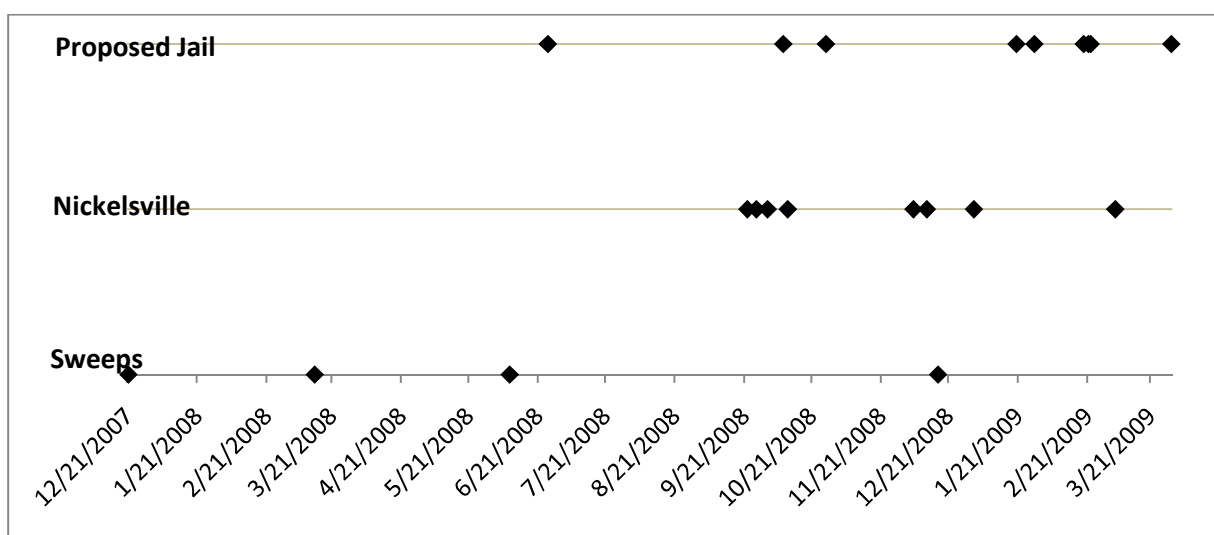


Table 1.2. Timeline of important public events in each issue campaign.

Date	Campaign	Action	Event
12/21/2007	Sweeps	Rally	First Stop the Sweeps Campout
3/13/2008	Sweeps	Rally	Second Stop the Sweeps Campout
6/8/2008	Sweeps	Rally	Third Stop the Sweeps Campout
6/25/2008	Jail	Petition	No New Jail I-Petition Launched
9/22/2008	Nickelsville	DA Camp	First Nickelsville camp on City-owned land
9/26/2008	Nickelsville	DA Camp	Nickelsville moves to State-owned land
10/1/2008	Nickelsville	Host Camp	Nickelsville moves to Daybreak Star
10/8/2008	Jail	Rally	Jail Testimony at City Council hearing
10/10/2008	Nickelsville	Host Camp	Nickelsville moves to church (UCC)
10/27/2008	Jail	Rally	Jail Testimony budget hearing
12/5/2008	Nickelsville	Host Camp	Nickelsville moves to church (UCUCC)
12/11/2008	Nickelsville	Rally	Pretrial hearing for “Nickelsville 25”
12/16/2008	Sweeps	Rally	Fourth Stop the Sweeps Campout
1/1/2009	Nickelsville	Rally	Housing Rights Rally and March in U-District
1/20/2009	Jail	Rally	RCOP benefit concert
1/28/2009	Jail	Rally	“Question Inevitability” forum at Seattle University
2/19/2009	Jail	Rally	Innitative-100 launch rally at City Hall
2/21/2009	Jail	Petition	I-100 petition drive around town
2/22/2009	Jail	Petition	I-100 petition drive around town
3/5/2009	Nickelsville	Host Camp	Nickelsville moves to church (BMUMC)
3/30/2009	Jail	Petition	I-100 petition drive at march for health care

Table 1.3. Distribution of action types in each issue campaign.

Action Type	Campaign			Total
	Sweep	Nickelsville	Jail	
Direct Action Camp	-	2	-	2
Hosted Camp	-	4	-	4
Petition	-	-	4	4
Rally	4	2	5	11
Total	4	8	9	21

The kinds of public events that each issue campaign hosted were one way that they differed from each other. But they also intervened in very different social spaces as well, and much of this was related to the issue sectors that they existed within. Each of these campaigns existed alongside each other during a particular period of time, and each occupied

a unique position in the public sphere, characterized by a different issue area and issue sector.

As I will argue in the pages that follow, the issues themselves offered important structuring elements that influenced the ways that people acted and the range of interpretations attached to each campaign.

## **Chapter 2: How Movement Participants Use Communication Technologies to Produce Resistance**

The importance of communication to social movement dynamics is a well established phenomenon in the social sciences. Such an observation has led scholars to conceive of social movements as “moments of collective action that provide societies with ideas, identities, and even ideals” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991, p. 4) or to identify their “principal activity” as the “production of cultural codes” (Melucci, 1996a, p. 6). But the post-modern turn in social movement studies has been accompanied by a growing body of scholarly work that explores the role of communication technologies as resources in the mobilization of movement constituents (Nielsen, 2009), and as vehicles for political speech (Owens & Palmer, 2003). What this work surfaces is that social movement communication is a contested political space, within which multiple organizational constituencies vie for narrative dominance, and through which the logistical machinations of participant mobilization take place. Exactly how the dynamics of communication happen within the context of social movement activity, however, remains an important yet elusive area for empirical research. This paper presents an analysis of a communication-oriented participant observation in a local homeless movement, addressing the need for research on the ways that technologies of communication are appropriated and experienced by participants in the context of organizing a social movement. Specifically, this chapter is guided by two overarching research questions: *What strategies do participants in the local Seattle homeless movement use to communicate within and between constituencies? And How do participants use technologies of communication in implementing these strategies?* As I will illustrate, an approach rooted in participant observation offers unique advantages in answering these

research questions by highlighting the lived experiences of participants, and the meanings that they attached to their practices.

### **Technologies and Social Structure**

The technological affordances that computer-based communication platforms offer can have significant impacts on the kinds of language people use when utilizing a particular platform (Kutz & Herring, 2005). Technology production is thus a field laced with power and control and political campaigns have been a popular arena for research on the interplay between technology production and political organizing. As Howard (1997) has written, “The code they [election campaign IT staff] write, the material schema that take shape as they make hardware and software decisions, give their political organization an important performative power” (p. 168). In some cases this performative power is realized in the form of an open and participatory multi-vocal communication environment, with the site’s producer choosing among a range of open publishing features like comments and discussion boards in constructing their website as a collection of affordances organized in a particular technological configuration. Foot and Schneider (2006) have proposed that choices about what features producers “turn on” and which ones they “turn off” can reflect differences in the level of control that a producer would like to have over the kinds of discourse that visitors encounter when they view the site, noting that some election sites have pared down the kinds of contributions visitors can make as a way of managing their public image.

Behind every computer mediated communication (CMC) platform is a network of social and technological *protocols*. Galloway (2004) describes protocols as the negotiation of norms that are necessary to enable the sharing of information between physical objects like computers. Protocols are negotiated in professional associations, major software companies,

and in collaborative software projects, and translate into frameworks within which computers and computer programs must operate. The negotiation of protocological standards and software platforms establish power relations that can serve to flatten communicative dynamics – as in the case of the GNU operating system (Stallman, 1985) or web-based open publishing projects like Indymedia (Kidd, 2003; Salter, 2006) – or to maintain existing communicative hierarchies of the sort popularized by print and television media (Raymond, 2009).

The protocological regimes that computer codes collectively create influence the affordances that computer platforms enable. *Affordances* (Gibson, 1977) specify the kinds of social tasks and functions that technological artifacts make possible or impossible (Norman, 1998). Given their central role in structuring affordances in CMC social movements have emerged that take as their primary focus the contestation of code within the protocological field (Berry, 2004), developing open source software solutions and open publishing platforms that are more accessible to producers and users. Much of the recent interest in web 2.0 technologies centers on the proliferation of the accessibility of communicative affordances that open source and open publishing have provided.

Protocols and affordances are most directly experienced by users in the form of *configurations*: the protocols and affordances enacted by a website or email list through the execution of particular strings of code. Schneider and Foot (2002) have written that website producers create configurations of affordances through site design and implementation that are experienced as opportunities and constraints for engaging in communicative action by site users.

Communication in a computer mediated issue field takes place through a network of individual communication platforms with differing assortments of communicative affordances. Multiple protocols are packaged together in the form of computer programs and interfaces, and choosing to use one platform over another can result in differences in the kind of communication that occurs (Emigh & Herring, 2005; Kutz & Herring, 2005). For example, an email discussion list (where any member can post) can vary significantly from an announcement list (in which only the owner can post), meaning that choices in the process of configuring a potentially multi-vocal platform like email can result in affordances that restrict multi-vocality. The affordances available to speakers in a particular discursive arena can be important indicators of the distribution of power through access and voice.

### **Communication Technologies and Social Movements**

In mediated societies like the United States, it is increasingly the case that contributions to the general knowledge on social issues require use of multiple heterogeneous communication technologies. For years the traditional mass media have occupied a privileged space as the brokers of “truth,” and social movement participants have often responded by structuring their actions and organizations in ways that fit within the norms of newsworthiness and source credibility (Gitlin, 1980). However, activists have encountered significant problems in their reliance on the traditional news media for communicating with various publics. Journalists routinely privilege the voices of elites in constructing political news narratives, and favor conflict, drama, and newness over substantive issue coverage (Campbell, Chidester, Royer, & Bell, 2004; Tuchman, 1978). In recognizing this deficiency, many have turned their attention to the production of their own communication infrastructure. Movement-focused newspapers, radio stations and newsletters have all



provided participants with the tools to speak directly to their community about the issues and events of importance to them (Downing, 1984). More recently, many scholars have noted that Internet technologies enable social movement participants to create their own mediated content in ways that were far more difficult before the widespread use of web tools like blogs, email lists, and online petitions (Bennett, 2003; Owens & Palmer, 2003).

Much of the research on technology use in social movements points to a new era of collective action within which the old rules no longer apply (Lupia & Sin, 2003), formal organizations are increasingly less relevant (Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2005), and where individual political action is elevated to a more prominent status within personalized electronic social networks (Bennett, 2003). An increasing reliance on Internet technologies for organizing activities is indeed changing the dynamics of mobilization in heavily networked societies, influencing the ways that activists find out about and coordinate participation in actions on the ground (Fisher, Stanley, Berman, & Neff, 2005), as well as enabling the emergence of online activist tactics that no longer rely on co-presence the way that traditional protests, strikes, or occupations do (Earl, 2006). But the reliance on Internet technologies for organizing has brought new challenges for practitioners, sometimes displacing low cost advantages with high cost barriers to their effective use (Nielsen, 2009). These organizational constraints are compounded by the stratification of internet use. Demographic indicators like income, education, race, and urban/rural residence are significant determinants to use of online technologies (Perrons, 2004), and the discrepancies are greatest when we look at who is most likely not only to consume content online, but to actually produce it (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2007). However, scholars such as Castells (2001) continue to emphasize the enormity of the social shifts that such technology

use entails, providing little recognition of the diversity of actual use that individuals and communities make of these emerging and transformative technologies. Instead, a growing demographic of Internet elites are assumed to function as representatives of the entirety of social activity, either obscuring the activities of “late adopters” or implying that people who do not yet participate in the informational vanguard will uncritically replicate the behavioral patterns of “early adopters.”

One area where research on diversity of use might be expected to be most prominent is in the field dedicated to studying the “digital divide,” most commonly found in development literature concentrating on developing countries. But, as Ganesh and Barber (2009) point out, research in this field continues to conceptualize inequality in technology use in utilitarian terms, believing that “all that is required is to reach out and provide access” (p. 857). Conceptualizing the digital divide in terms of technological inadequacies normalizes western development paradigms and positions those who do not fit within the dominant model of technology use as “lacking” and in need of “help” (Potter, 2006). Ganesh and Barber (2009) respond to Potter’s critique of the digital divide literature by re-positioning their analysis “from a focus on ‘What do people need?’ to one that asks ‘What are people saying, and where are they saying it?’” (p. 260). By recognizing the communication that *does* occur, and positioning analysis of how communication technologies are used within a grounded context that acknowledges “other socio-political influences, spaces, interactions and events; other sources of expertise, knowledge and resourcefulness” (p. 260), research on how social movement participants engage with communication technologies may better reflect actual use rather than the idealized generalities of a global information elite (Ganesh & Stohl, 2010). While these concerns are

important in any movement sector, they are of particular interest when dealing with social issues that so starkly differentiate participants based on material access, such as local homeless movements.

Expanding the analysis of technologies of communication beyond just Internet use allows a comparative analysis that can highlight how communicative functions are enacted using different communication tools. We can see, for instance, what kinds of communicative tasks participants engage in, and then identify the tools that are used for those tasks by different segments of the movement. Thus, by surveying the field of *communication*, we can begin to understand the ways that *technology is used* by an array of actors within the issue sector.

### **Analysis: Communication Technologies in Homeless Organizing**

In analyzing the role of Internet communication technologies in a regional homeless movement, I assessed the range of communicative tools that participants used in the process of organizing. In doing this I focused on the tools themselves – both old and new, mediated and face-to-face – as well as the ways that the tools were used in context. My intentions here were to present a contextualized analysis of technology use in the local Seattle homeless movement. In some cases this required an analysis of how technologies often associated with modern social movements were not used, and instead face-to-face meetings and informal street networks were used as primary mechanisms for communication among homeless participants.

Part of that analysis involved the collection of a digital archive of texts produced and distributed online and in a set of email list serves related to the three issue campaigns. While not inclusive of the ways that participants engaged in communicative activities, this corpus is

a significant collection of texts in which the three issue campaigns were produced online (see Appendix A). As this analysis will show, homelessness was not always organized online. In fact, face-to-face communication, along with photocopied flyers and handouts, were an important part of organizing, particularly among those experiencing homelessness. But use of the Internet was still an important factor in engaging the wider housed ally community, and in contesting the definition of homelessness in the public sphere.

I present this analysis of communication practices in the local Seattle homeless movement as a prelude and contextual reminder to the analysis that follows. Technology use is a practice that is highly structured by relations of power, not the least of which is the unequal distribution of material wealth. My role as a participant observer provide me with some insight into the demographic make-up of who participated in the production of homeless organizing online, and who did not. I return to this observation in the conclusion, but I leave you here with a series of thematic trends in the movement that help to contextualize the analysis of Internet enabled communication that follows in the remainder of the study. To this end, I present four themes of central importance to understanding how participants in homeless organizing used communication technologies. These themes draw on my role as a participant observer in the three issue campaigns presented here, and consist of *the importance of face-to-face communication, connecting with housed allies, moving from screen to street, and using existing communication infrastructures.*

### **The importance of face-to-face communication.**

Organizing around homelessness in Seattle was often talked about as something that was built on interpersonal connections and face-to-face relationships. While this is true of other issues, participants talked about how, when “organizing across class,” it was particularly important to personalize relationships between people who were and were not

housed. Participants called this approach “relational organizing,” and several organizations established communication infrastructures (events, meetings, selling *Real Change News*) that fostered skills in this area. This was especially true among people who were experiencing homelessness, and within organizations run by this portion of the movement.

One reason for this emphasis was on the perceived need to work across difference in order to break down stereotypes around class and homelessness, combined with the belief that technologically mediated forms of communication were inadequate to the task. Just as integrated schooling was believed to be a form of action against prejudice and racism as the civil rights movement developed in the United States, homeless organizers responded to the class segregation due to uneven development planning in urban areas with the creation of opportunities for people to talk “across class.” When interviewing campers at *Nickelsville* I would often ask what they would want to tell the mayor if they were given a chance to speak with him, and many would respond with calls for him to “Come on down! Come talk to us.” While the Mayor never took them up on their offer, the invitations for people to visit the camp were repeated to visitors, and in discussions about neighbors in the many communities that *Nickelsville* resided in. Often the ramifications of someone “visiting” the camp were implied: interacting with people experiencing homelessness and being in a camp that is “clean and safe” would lead to changes in a visitor’s perceptions about homelessness and what the possible solutions for the lack of adequate shelter might be. However, this dynamic was also explicitly articulated within the RCEP community. Richard White was a *Real Change News* vendor who lived in Woodland Park, and had worked on all three of the issue campaigns described in this article. He talked about his work as an organizer in terms of individual impact, and face-to-face connections. Sometimes those interactions happened

while selling someone a paper, but they also happened at events, in what Richard referred to as “chance encounters.” I asked him if he “talked to those people later on about getting involved?”

Actually, those conversations quickly turn to friendships. Quickly. When, when they had that personal interaction and the stereotypes that people have inside of their heads quickly fold away, quickly fall away, people's perceptions change quickly. That one-on-one contact is the most important thing – that individual contact. (White, interview with author, 11/12/2008)

In this interview excerpt Richard emphasized the importance of individual interactions with other people in the kind of work that he did: “that one-on-one contact is the most important thing.” This is perhaps not surprising given that Richard had limited access to communication technologies on a daily basis. As a *Real Change News* vendor, Richard did not work behind a desk, but rather he worked on the street, talking with the people who buy his paper or the campers he shared his corner of Woodland Park with. His work as a vendor and as an organizer among people in the informal street networks of Seattle had helped Richard develop his communication skills in the context of “chance encounters” with strangers and recurrent interactions with friends. But Richard was not unique in his use of one-on-one communication for organizing activities as the following excerpts from my field notes illustrate:

214 [this participant chose his tent number at *Nickelsville* as his pseudonym], a former [*Nickelsville*] camp resident and homeless organizer, had been gone for several months. Two Nickelodeons told me they had not heard from him since he had left and they were a little concerned. He tells me that he has been sleeping on the street in Portland, talking with people from the local homeless community about how the SHARE/WHEEL community is organized, and encouraging people to keep on trying. “They are just tired. They had kind of given up, down there...And I try to tell them, ‘look at what we have done in Seattle.’ You know? Tent City three and four, the SHARE/WHEEL shelters: they are organized by homeless people, you know? We didn’t give up.” 214 says he has come back to Seattle for a couple of days to bring a message to SHARE/WHEEL that there are people in Portland that want to have them come down and talk with them about their organizing model. He hopes they can take

some of the pressure off of him, referring to his bad health and need for a break. (Nickelsville, field notes, 10/26/2009)

Here, 214 talked about speaking with “lady police officers” and “homeless folks” alike, trying to change their individual perceptions of what living on the streets was like through face-to-face interactions, and spreading the word about how people might be able to borrow the SHARE/WHEEL model of “self-managed” shelter and advocacy in bettering their situation. Instead of emailing or phoning organizers, he also chose to make the 300 mile trip from Portland to Seattle to talk with them directly about his work in Portland.

In addition to the perceived value of face-to-face communication in breaking down stereotypes, organizers were well aware of the material constraints that people often experience when they live on the street, in a shelter, or in a tent city. A 2006 study of 265 shelter residents in California found that, while 55% of respondents had used a computer at least once, regular use was extremely low, with only 10% sending or receiving email, and 19% accessing information on the Internet in the previous 30 days (Redpath et al., 2006). As Redpath et al. conclude, and the homeless organizers I talked to corroborate, reaching people experiencing homelessness was not effectively done via the Internet. Indeed, when organizing people experiencing extreme poverty it was often best to meet them where they were at, and provide them with opportunities to contribute to political action in ways that were familiar to them and in which they were most confident. Both Richard and 214 were homeless activists that lived outside and primarily organized other people experiencing homelessness. They both had a moderate level of access to computers with Internet connections, although this required a special trip to the library or the RCEP office. Richard even had his own laptop for a while until it was “attacked by a virus” when he was on an “unsecured wireless network.” They both had email addresses, and subscribed to a few

activist email lists. However, their use of online communication tools was fairly minimal, and they could both go months without checking their email.

Richard and 214 were arguably more tech savvy than many of the people experiencing homelessness that I talked with, but they still focused their energies on organizing people in face-to-face settings. Observing the practices of homeless organizers in these campaigns suggests that being an effective organizer requires that activists adopt the means of communication most commonly used by the target population. This meant that when activists were organizing those people most directly affected by homelessness, they needed to meet them where they were at, and this typically meant using face-to-face communication when talking with them about their predicament and how they could help to change the situations faced by others experiencing homelessness.

### **Connecting with housed allies.**

The political marginality of poor people within the urban political city-scape requires that they collaborate with housed allies in building a strong base of political support for projects that are often standing on precarious material foundations. *Nickelsville*, for instance, was a project predicated on the ability of a relatively small group of people to occupy public or private property without legal sanction, and in violation of city land use ordinances that prohibited camping within the city limits (Nickels, 2008a). Because participants in this campaign were at once filling a material need for housing and engaging in an act of prolonged civil disobedience, they risked arrest and harassment from city police, park officials, and Port of Seattle police. Nickelodeons took it upon themselves to create a self-managed community where “staying together and safe” was the responsibility of residents, rather than the more common relationship of paternalistic charity that professionally managed shelters and food-banks typically establish (Cloke, Johnsen, & May, 2005).



However, Nickelodeons *did* rely on housed allies to donate supplies, help with moves, and to increase their numbers during the many raids or “sweeps” that the camp was subjected to as a result of their legal predicament. Just as organizing among people experiencing homelessness was best done using face-to-face communication tools, organizing housed allies relied far more on technologically mediated ones.

Scott Morrow was well aware of the need to meet people where they were at. Scott had been organizing people experiencing homelessness for 20 years in Seattle, and he still held office hours in a downtown park in the early mornings where he served coffee and conversation to people who had been turned out of shelters for the day, or were warming up after a night outside. As the one paid staff for *Nickelsville*, he played a bridging role between Nickelodeons and housed allies.

And, you know, my practice as an organizer has been to be the person responsible for sharing information with the wider community which at Nickelsville at this point is those nightly meetings. So I try to get information that they need to make good decisions and share it with them at the nightly meeting which is why I have a cell phone to do that. And then the other component of Nickelsville that I've never, you know, been around before, is people who aren't homeless, who have been really supportive and the communication with them. A lot of it has been through our website and internet alert system and I didn't have – I didn't know how to use the internet three or four weeks ago, and it's totally new to me how to communicate with people who want to help in the wider community through the internet. (Morrow, interview with author, 10/14/2008)

Scott spoke to a dynamic that is central to the way that internet communication technologies functioned in the homeless movement. While participants experiencing homelessness were far less likely to use internet communication tools in ways that facilitated mobilization activities in the movement, “the wider [housed] community” was more likely to rely on email and website use as a means for finding out what was going on and how they could participate in activities and actions.

Research on brokerage between organizations and communities in social movements has suggested that use of Internet communication tools enables individuals to act as brokers where organizations had previously been central to this process (Bimber et al., 2005; Graber, Bimber, Bennett, Davis, & Norris, 2004). In the context of homeless organizing, I found that individuals did indeed play an important role in brokering constituencies by cross membership in multiple activist communities. However, this brokerage was done in the context of organizational affiliation, and often by using organizationally produced and maintained resources like email lists. This finding is in line with Ganesh and Stohl's (2010) study on Internet use among anti-globalization activists in New Zealand, where they suggest that "new technologies enabled activists to be 'organizational entrepreneurs' insofar as they simultaneously represented established organizations even as their brokerage activities enabled them to *construct* newer, smaller, less formal organizing structures" (p. 17-18, emphasis in original). I found that the participation profiles of many homeless organizers allowed them to bridge multiple organized groups in spreading information and mobilizing support for homeless issues. Rather than the withering of formal organizations, the brokerage activities of individuals relied heavily on the communication infrastructures established by formal organizations in performing brokerage tasks, while using organizational affiliation as shorthand for describing themselves and others' positionality within the movement.

*Nickelsville* made more extensive use of websites and email than other self-managed projects in the area had previously done. Nickelsvilleseattle.org was up and running before the first tent was pitched, and went through several iterations over my time in the field. My own heavy use of online communication tools as a graduate student meant that email alerts and website updates were an important part of my staying connected to issue campaign

developments as a housed ally. Anton – also a housed ally – first heard about *Nickelsville* via an email message that he received as a member of Veterans for Peace. He wore a neon green Veterans for Peace vest as I talked with him during the first few heady days of *Nickelsville*. “I’ve been following the news and I also got an email through Veterans for Peace too, just saying you know what was going on...” (Anton, interview with author, 10/24/2008). Peggy Hotes, a *Nickelsville* resident and also a member of Veterans for Peace was active in connecting *Nickelsville* to (housed) ally groups.

...Um. So yeah, we use email alerts. And then our partner, the Nickelsville Committee's partner in organizing all of this was the Real Change Organizing Project...And Real Change has an email list of thousands – you know – several thousands. Two or three thousand people. So we reached people that way. And we also asked people at rallies and who were at meetings and so on. "Please! Send on to your list so we can multiply this." So I sent it out to...Veterans for Peace and my Evergreen Peace and Justice. So it got sent to lots of people that way. And people could sign up for individual email alerts... (Hotes, interview with author, 10/21/2008)

Peggy pointed to the use of email as a valuable outreach tool for the wider community, and mentioned the importance of housed ally organizations (“Veterans for Peace,” “Evergreen Peace and Justice,” “Real Change”) in facilitating the distribution of messages to their constituencies. Bridging the gulf between the communication tools used in self-managed homeless-led projects with those used by housed advocacy and ally groups was largely facilitated by individuals that were active in multiple groups. Peggy, a member of *Nickelsville*, was active in Veterans for Peace, and Evergreen Peace and Justice prior to her role at *Nickelsville*, and she used this involvement to bring her activities in *Nickelsville* to the other two organizations by forwarding messages from *Nickelsville* to their organizing lists, and by attending meetings and giving updates to other members about what was going on with the camp. Peggy effectively brokered ties between organizations through co-membership status, and as the demands of living at *Nickelsville* and maintaining a full time

job as a special education instructor reduced her ability to attend meetings with other groups, email served as a low-cost alternative to maintaining inter-group ties.

### **Moving from screen to street.**

The homeless organizers I spoke with suggested that Internet technologies could provide easy entry for those who made frequent use of the web, but clear differences were articulated between “armchair activists” and “committed soldiers for the cause.” As other research has shown, the kinds of participation that online communication tools enable tends to be characterized by short term, and relatively shallow levels of commitment (Earl, 2006; Flanagin, Stohl, & Bimber, 2006). Ganesh and Stohl (2010) found that organizers often think of online communication tools as less substantive, with one of their interview respondents commenting that “...if it is virtual, then maybe that commitment isn’t there...” (p. 24). Wall (2007) also points out the limitations of Internet communication technologies in her research on email lists of importance to the 1999 WTO protests, suggesting that “social movements require a level of participation, commitment and trust that internet communication does not always create” (p. 274). The homeless activists that I worked with had a similar assessment of Internet technologies, and responded by focusing their use of mediated technologies on getting people off the computer and into face-to-face settings where they could develop a deeper commitment to the issues and to each other, something that Fisher, Stanley, Berman, and Neff (2005) have found to be an important part of how activists use new media.

As the motto of the free email provider that hosts the RCOP email list suggests (see riseup.net: “Get off the internet, I’ll see you in the streets!”), many people were skeptical of the effectiveness of online activism, and instead talked about how effective email and websites were in getting people to come out to actions and show up at meetings. Anitra Freeman, a self-proclaimed “techie,” a member of the *Real Change News* editorial board, and

a homeless activist who spent many years in self-managed shelter reflected on how the internet was used in movement building.

Somebody...at...the Interfaith Taskforce [on Homelessness] Political Will [to End Homelessness] Conference, uh when I said that the face-to-face relationships are, are important they said "yeah but the Internet helps you get to the meeting point where you can have the, the face-to-face relationships." So...for both homeless and housed people the Internet put out the word that you know here's where we can meet, and you know we can have that face-to-face relationship, but the...face-to-face relationships are the movement building [aspect] and the physical presence on the ground is necessary for the action but the uh the Internet is a strong part of reaching new people to get them to the face-to-face meetings and of...the tactical end of, you know [show up] at 3am on such and such date... (Freeman, interview with author, 10/24/2008)

As a former computer programmer, Anitra struggled with wanting to do everything online, and learning that “a movement comes out of relationships with people over time” and that this was not something that could easily be done online. Tim Harris was an early adopter of the Internet, creating a website for *Real Change News* as early as 1996, but he also expressed doubts as to how effective “internet based activism” was for “movement building.”

...I mean, there is an upside to internet based activism in that, you know, it makes political mobilization very expedient and easy, you know, you press a button, you set up a democracy in action email, people, you know, click on a button and a form letter gets sent, um, but that doesn't build movements. I'm not even sure it accomplishes much of, of anything, and I think that, um, you know, to some extent it actually offers the illusion of, of organizing, and, and effectiveness, um, so, you know, my take is that, you know, to the extent that you can do things like, um, organize things like tent cities at city hall, you know, our overnight encampments that we've been doing quarterly, um, but those are enormous opportunities for movement building and creating commitment and understanding, and, sort of, gut level investment in the issue where, where people really become, sort of, committed soldiers to the cause... (Harris, interview with author, 11/4/2008)

While RCEP made extensive use of online communication tools in their organizing work, Tim expressed a common sentiment that such activities, while they may make political mobilization “very expedient,” they may also “offer the illusion...of organizing, and effectiveness,” and that “movement building” really only happened through events and direct actions “like tent cities at city hall.”

The idea that people needed to come out to actions to become “committed soldiers for the cause” meant that email was a medium that was used primarily for efforts to “get them to the face-to-face meetings.” Often a single message posted to the *Nickelsville* email announcement list would be replicated on the RCOP discussion list, on a privately managed “Support Nickelsville” facebook page, and depending on the importance of the action, it might also be sent out to the full RCEP contact list via their [democracyinaction.salsa.com](mailto:democracyinaction.salsa.com) email account. The following excerpt is from an email that was sent out via [democracyinaction.salsa.com](mailto:democracyinaction.salsa.com) in preparation for the fourth overnight campout to *Stop the Sweeps* in December of 2008.

Keep people safe this winter, Stop the Sweeps!

...Real Change Organizing Project's fourth protest encampment at City Hall is just a few days away. As we have seen, the weather has turned bitterly cold and icy. RCOP will be sleeping out all night, in the hope that we can provide homeless folks with a warm blanket, a hot drink, and a community to stay with for the night.

The rally on Tuesday, December 16th and the Survival Gear Giveaway the following morning will carry on as planned. However, we are suggesting that if folks have a place to stay at night, that they stay there. Temperatures will be well below freezing and safety is always first and foremost. For the people who choose to stay over, help with donation sorting will be appreciated, and warm drinks and extra socks will be provided.

Can't make it to the camp out? We are asking everyone to please call or email the Mayor and ask him, in the face of harsh winter weather, to Stop the Sweeps and leave people with the gear they need to make it through the night. Call (206) 684-4000 or [click here to send an email \[hyperlink to form letter\]](#). (Real Change organizer email, 12/14/2008, CTA790)

While the message urged people to attend the “fourth protest encampment at City Hall,” several options were provided for those who “Can’t make it to the camp out.” An interested party could call or email, and an automated form letter was also provided (“click here to send an email”). This was a conscious effort by organizers to, as Rachel Meyers has said, provide “different levels for how...people can be engaged.” Rachel was the lead organizer for Real Change during the early *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, and she elaborated on the relationship

between online communication tools and participation in events in an interview in her office at the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

...some people are gonna be the sort of arm chair activists and they're not gonna leave their home they they're gonna send emails to their, you know, elected officials or sign a petition or whatever. Um but some people when they get really passionate about something want to be more involved um and you know there's an aspect to organizing that's about community building too. I think you're more effective when people feel like they're part of a community that's...advocating together. So I think the role of events is sort of a combination of...opportunities for engagement for the people who are really outraged or passionate or whatever about the issue so that they can do something more than just type an email to a legislator or to a council member but also sort of building that community and building this sort of sense of camaraderie... (Meyers, interview with author, 11/25/2008)

Technology was seen as a way to get people involved at different “levels of engagement,” but also as a way to provide opportunities for those who were “really passionate about something” to engage in face-to-face interaction through political action, helping people to “feel like they're part of a community that's...advocating together.”

### **Using existing communication infrastructures.**

One of the things that quickly became apparent within the homeless movement in Seattle was the overall lack of adequate resources at individual and organizational levels. While it is often noted that activist projects seem to suffer from a perpetual shortage of material resources and an abundance of activities and events demanding their attention, this dynamic is only exacerbated within a community characterized by material poverty (Cress & Snow, 1996). As we saw in participant’s strategies for mobilizing housed ally support, existing organizations were important resources that were mobilized for a variety of movement needs. As *Nickelsville* developed its organizing structure and called for participants to join as campers it drew heavily on the institutional knowledge of the existing SHARE/WHEEL community, and spread word of the camp through the informal “street networks” that groups like SHARE/WHEEL and RCEP helped to foster. Similarly, the

mediated communication infrastructure that RCEP had developed over the years was mobilized for the distribution of information about all three campaigns, in mobilizing support, and in calling on supporters to step outside their homes and into the streets, halls, or camps that were the site of co-present action. Similarly, as mainstream news journalists descended on *Nickelsville*, established public figures from RCEP and the Church Council of Greater Seattle stepped up to speak in favor of *Nickelsville*, lending them institutional support and credibility. The reliance on existing organizations to distribute the load in mobilizing activities points to the continuing relevance of organizations and material resources to social movements. Work in this area has emphasized the role of communication resources (both internal and external to the movement) in structuring the opportunities for action that movements are presented with and in constraining the parameters of collaboration in resources poor contexts (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). However, rather than a shortage of resources resulting in competition within the field (Barman, 2002), mobilization within the homeless sector was more accurately reflective of a relationship of collaboration where organizations focused their work on areas where they held expertise, seeing their contributions as necessary but insufficient to the whole (Levitsky, 2007).

Social movement communication within the local Seattle homeless movement was characterized by diffused distribution patterns that made use of a range of existing communication infrastructures that were differently accessible to both current and potential participants. This trend was similar to what Nielsen (2009) calls “cloud activism,” where “activism is based on a structure that the user does not control or own...but which is put together from a wide menu of services” (p. 270). Often these communication resources reached relatively small segments of the overall population, and targeted an already active or



politicized demographic, as was the case with the Veterans for Peace email list serve. However, several of the tools that served to facilitate communication within and about the homeless movement in Seattle targeted a population that, while not necessarily politically engaged, were interested enough in their neighborhood to read and write about issues that affected them and their neighbors: namely, neighborhood blogs. Two of the campaigns discussed in this paper were of particular interest to people writing in neighborhood blogs. First, the debate about where to build a new misdemeanor jail in Seattle was something of great interest to citizen journalists in the neighborhoods where proposed sites were located. Highland Park, a predominantly minority and poor community bordering the Duwamish industrial area in South Seattle was particularly vocal about the impact that the Proposed Jail would have had on their neighborhood, and the *West Seattle Blog* became a place where participants in the *No New Jail* campaign could go to find listings of upcoming events and text or video reports of past events related to the Proposed Jail. Second, *Nickelsville* also became an object of interest to neighborhood bloggers. As a project that occupied physical space in a visible and controversial way, people from across the political spectrum wrote about the impact that *Nickelsville* had on their communities, providing updates for their readers on legal developments and on the campers themselves. As the camp moved from neighborhood to neighborhood, people writing in these blogs sometimes visited the camp to take photographs, shoot videos, and talk with participants. In one neighborhood where *Nickelsville* occupied four separate locations, the *West Seattle Blog* provided readers with updates on upcoming events and activities that they could participate in, sometimes with multiple updates during the events themselves.

“Nickelsville”: What’s next, and what the sweep was like... We haven’t been back yet tonight, but by all accounts, some of those who were camping on city land till police

swept the site this afternoon are now on adjacent state land - this is still all part of the potential city jail site at Highland Park Way/West Marginal - and have a few days grace period there... This afternoon, we reported on the sweep as it happened, and finally tonight have finished going through our video and photos to create a diary of sorts, in case you are interested in seeing more of what it was like:... (West Seattle Blog, 9/26/2008, CTA1535)

Here, this *West Seattle Blog* writer provided a “report back” to the neighborhood about the “sweep” of *Nickelsville* and the subsequent move, connected *Nickelsville* to the “potential jail site,” and provided a second update later in the day with a video and photo “diary” of the individual’s personal experiences during the day. Through this medium, readers not already involved in homelessness or activist activities became aware of the efforts of participants and were sometimes drawn into their efforts as participants in their own right, bringing food or clothing, participating in solidarity activities during camp raids and arrests, or simply stopping by to talk with campers.

In addition to tools focused on geographic proximity, the communication infrastructure of organizations sharing issue interests were an important part of how participants communicated with each other in the regional homeless movement. RCEP was one of the resources that many people talked about as being important for the work that they did. Building on their street newspaper readership, RCEP developed an online communication infrastructure that they used for organizing, and other participants in the field often referred to the organization as a “communication specialist.” As Tim Harris explained,

...we have that institutional capacity for organization, for, for mobilization because, um, we've used the newspaper as a means of, um, capturing the information of people who are interested in taking action on political issues and mobilizing those, and, and, and, you know, putting together a fairly large database... (Harris, interview with author, 11/4/2008)

In addition to the email database, RCEP had developed several other online communication tools, both replicating and supplementing the content produced for the weekly print version

of the newspaper, *Real Change News*. These included an online version of the newspaper (realchangenews.org), a weekly story summary email list (This Week in Real Change), a political action announce list (through democracyinaction.salsa.com) and an organizational wiki (realchange.wikispaces.com); as well as an RCOP website (r-cop.org), a blog (realchangeorganizingproject.blogspot.com), an organizing wiki (rcop.wikispaces.com), and a (riseup.net) discussion list. Several people associated with RCEP also produced their own personal blogs that focused on homelessness and social justice in Seattle (apesmaslament.blogspot.com was the most prominent).

RCEP deployed their communication resources for different purposes during the period of my fieldwork, depending on the focus of the homeless activist community at the time. For instance, after about nine months of work on the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, RCEP began to shift its focus towards the *No New Jail* campaign only to drop both projects for several weeks when *Nickelsville* started. Notes from RCOP meetings in the months just prior to *Nickelsville* suggested that they cancel a planned campout in favor of supporting *Nickelsville*.

Nickelsville will probably happen in late August/early September and from RCOP's perspective should replace our September campout. Their needs from us right now are not the logistics of planning Nickelsville, but contact lists for mobilization for turnout during the first week, lining up legal assistance, helping with financial aid, and arranging for press and other publicity. What we need to be doing immediately is getting the word out there through the paper, our allies, potential volunteer supporters, and RCOP. Doug will put together a few paragraphs of language on our support so that we have a consistent message.

Our proposal is to prioritize getting the word out that this is coming up and that we support it, and to stay in touch with Nickelsville about other needs. (RCOP wiki, 6/30/2008, CTA456)

RCEP published editorials about *Nickelsville*, printed off inserts for the paper, and supplied vendors with flyers to distribute to their readers with a map and a list of needed donations. As Taylor Cuffaro, an organizer with RCEP, told me in an interview, "were really lucky to have

the newspaper that is read by, what, 60 thousand people...so we can just go to the editorial staff and say hey, we want to put an ad in this week and their like "all right"..." (Cuffaro, interview with author, 10/17/2008). They sent out "email blasts" using their database of readers and supporters, wrote blog posts and produced short videos about *Nickelsville*. Finally, RCEP helped with press releases and media relations "literally directing the TV helicopters" towards *Nickelsville* as local television crews did live stories about the camp. Revel Smith, a volunteer with RCEP, worked extensively on "media relations" for *Nickelsville* over the period of my fieldwork. I talked with Revel about her role as a media spokes person for *Nickelsville* during their one-year anniversary.

Tim Harris...plays guitar and sings on a bench with another man. I sit and listen with [an activist] from RCOP and Revel. Revel does a lot of the press releases and media relations for Real Change. I tell her that I had read several articles recently that cite her as "the Nickelsville spokesperson," and ask her what she thinks about that. She responds that Nickelsville has many of "its own spokespeople," and that she is just someone who is "reachable and up for an interview at five in the morning on no notice." "Real Change is a sponsor of Nickelsville," she explains, "and one of the things that we do as a sponsor is media relations." (Nickelsville, field notes, 10/26/2009)

Here, Revel described the distinctions between RCEP, saying that *Nickelsville* had "its own spokespeople" and positioned her role as someone supplementing their own media relations work because she was "reachable and up for an interview at five in the morning on no notice." This analysis suggests that the local Seattle homeless movement as a whole was able to respond to resource deficiencies in times of political opportunity by focusing collective action within organizationally defined areas of expertise.

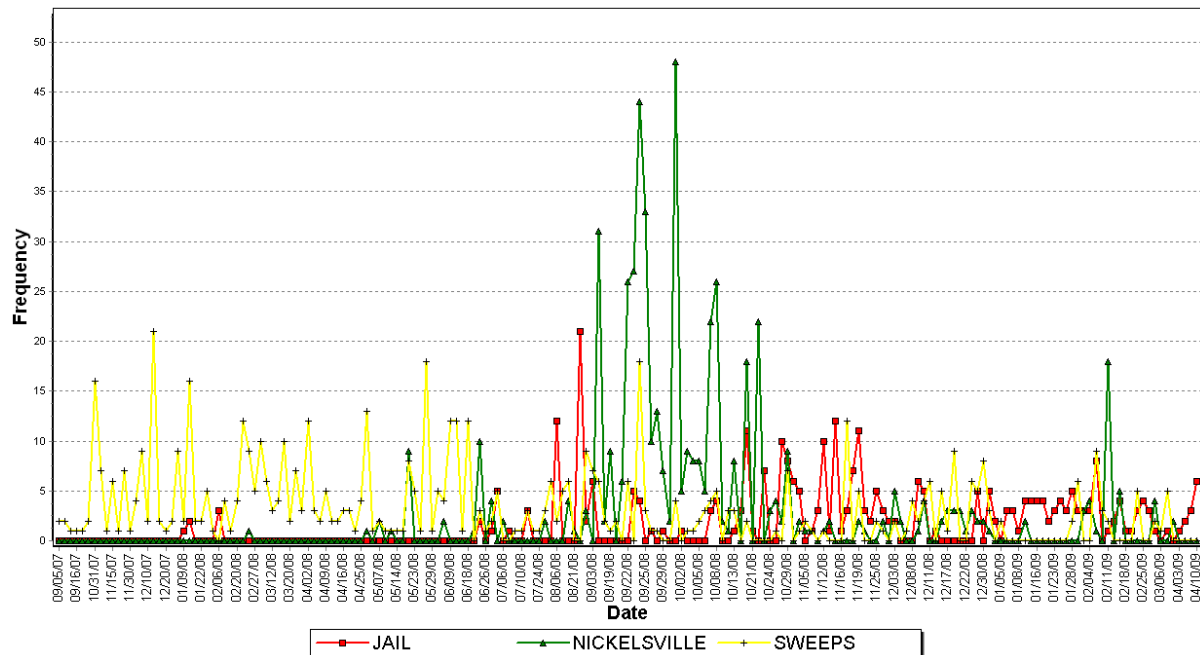


Figure 2.1. Frequency of issue mentions in texts published in communication resources affiliated with RCEP over time. N = 397 texts.

Figure 2.1 shows the distribution of the number of issue area mentions occurring in resources published by texts affiliated with RCEP as they changed over time. What this figure highlights is the prevalence of talk about the Sweeps prior to August of 2008, after which RCEP began focusing more energy on the Proposed Jail. RCEP then dropped the Proposed Jail issue almost entirely starting in late September when Nickelsville became the focus of their communicative energy through the end of October when Nickelsville began a series of hosted stays at area churches. Once the media spectacle of direct action camping subsided, and the stability of *Nickelsville* was under less of a direct threat from the city, RCEP began to refocus their energies on the Proposed Jail, with mentions of Nickelsville and the Sweeps occurring more frequently during moves when participants were called upon to help take down and set up the camp.

### Discussion: Technologies of Communication and Social Movements in Context

Internet technologies are an increasingly important part of the communication repertoire of organizers in North American social movements. However, rather than present the role of internet technologies as the harbinger of a new era in collective action (Castells, 2001), this analysis highlights the contingent relationship that many organizers have with communication technologies by specifying some of the ways that activists used communication tools in doing social change work. By respecting the contexts in which Internet technologies are used – and not used – we are able to understand more fully the relationships that organizers and activists have to Internet communication technologies specifically, and communication tools more broadly (Ganesh & Stohl, 2010).

This chapter presents several key findings that should be of interest to practitioners and scholars in the field of social movement communication. First, even in the context of an increasingly mediated society like the United States, face-to-face interaction remains invaluable to organizers seeking to establish ties between dissociated social groups – in this case, categories around class and housing status. This analysis suggests that the “old” strategies of building relationships across difference are of central importance to effective organizing, and have not been replaced by “new” forms of organizing that rely exclusively on Internet technologies. Face-to-face communication tools (in the form of meetings, protests, and one-on-one interactions) are perhaps most valuable in contexts where significant differences among participants threaten individual and organizational identification with an issue area. Second, a range of mediated communication technologies can be used in reaching ally populations, with the key here being the flexible use of communication tools in reaching people in the formats that they use in their daily lives. The appropriation of technologically mediated communication tools allowed participants to act as

brokers between dissociated constituencies (Bennett, 2003), connecting the face-to-face self-managed community to the housed ally community who often relied more heavily on Internet technologies in their political lives. Third, while scholars have pointed to how Internet technologies are being used to develop new low-cost forms of action (Earl, 2006), getting people to turn out to face-to-face interactive settings like meetings, protests, or public hearings was seen as fostering the kinds of deeper commitment that could sustain participation and build a successful movement. This suggests that, even while activists made extensive use of online organizing tools, their understandings of what made a movement happen were closely tied to “relational” organizing and co-presence. As Anitra Freeman put it, “a movement comes out of relationships between people...” (Freeman, interview with author, 10/24/2008) and those relationships were seen as created through face-to-face interactions. Finally, specialization within a movement can reduce the resources necessary to mobilize campaigns and projects by responding to political opportunities in flexible ways. While Internet technologies can often be deployed by individuals to broker ties between disparate constituencies (Bimber et al., 2005), the tools most commonly used in these three campaigns were ones developed and maintained by formal organizations of the sort resource mobilization scholars have attributed so much importance to (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Thus, organizations were of central importance in developing and maintaining political communication infrastructures even as individuals appropriated them in the course of organizing activities (a theme I return to in the next chapter).

As this chapter has shown, research on technology use in social movements can benefit from a broadening of the lens beyond just the use of Internet technologies by the technological activist elite. By focusing first on communication strategies within a movement

sector, and second on how a range of activists use Internet technologies alongside other communication tools in implementing these strategies, we can more fully understand how and why technologies are and are not used in the process of organizing a movement.

Similarly, the grounded approach of participant observation illuminates the meanings of such technologies to participants and the reasons why organizers make the communication choices that they do in the context of social change activities.

In the following chapters I present my analysis of how internet enabled technologies of communication were used in a local homeless movement. As I do, I focus my attention on how strategies of use changed within the local Seattle homeless movement as participants engaged in three overlapping issue campaigns, each of which existed in a different issue area, engaged a different set of communication resources and enabled a different configuration of meanings associated with homelessness and homeless organizing.



### Chapter 3: Social Organization and Movement: Organizing Homelessness

People need to organize to accomplish things. In many cases this involves people taking the initiative to produce formal organizations, with names, lists of participants, and clearly defined roles. In other cases, organization is less directly linked to agentive action, as when people become organized through information architectures or participation in particular discursive contestations. Both ends of the spectrum would be considered forms of social organization, but they would be identified and analyzed in slightly different ways. On one end of the spectrum, people produce various *formal social organizations*. In these cases, participants can typically name the organization, and they might talk about it in ways that present the role of the organization, the practices that are involved in its reproduction, and the level of legitimacy that different portions of the population might attach to it. Every society defines particular ways of doing things as more legitimate than others, forming social institutions like government, mainstream news media, alternative media, and advocacy sectors. These sectors each have their own claims to “truth” (Foucault, 1980), and actions by people speaking as part of these institutionalized sectors are made meaningful based on their ability to perform the appropriate behavioral scripts (Goffman, 1974).

On the other end of the spectrum, forms of organization that are not necessarily easily identifiable to participants can be referred to as *emergent social organization*. In these cases, groups of actors will cluster together around behavioral patterns. Formal organizations are emic to participants (something that they can name and describe) and can assume significant social power as structuring forces on social behavior (Pike, 1954). However, emergent organization is often etic, and participation can cross organizations or sectors and cluster together around a central issue, activity, or referential network often not readily recognizable

to those participating. Emergence points to a chronological relationship between how an organization starts to emerge and the long-term implications of what these continued relationships might mean in terms of the creation of organization if these patterns persist over time. It also points to the ability of patterned behavior across a group of participants to create structuring properties that further influence behavior. When this behavior is emic it can signal an intentional effort to define some social pattern (racism, classism, shelter funding, the sweeps policy), and when it is etic it can signal underlying definitional patterns that may not be consciously recognized by those that produce them (as evidenced in statements like “I’m not racists, I just don’t like black people”).

This chapter draws on a corpus of communication texts related to three overlapping issue areas to understand how social organizations influenced the ways that people produced language, as well as how that linguistic production shaped emergent forms of social organization. A focus on both formal and emergent organizational structures allows us to identify instances where textual production follows predictable patterns based on organizational or sectoral norms of behavior, as well as instances where patterned behavior has led to cross sectoral organizational categories that conflict with formal organizational norms, resulting in emergent organizing properties. I begin by outlining my theoretical approach to social organization, as it is informed by structuration theory, discourse theory, and organizational communication scholarship, specifying my research questions as I do. I then present an analysis of the ways that formal organizations help to construct the discursive production of each of the three issue areas (the Proposed Jail, Nickelsville and the Sweeps), followed by an analysis of the ways that each of these issue areas produced emergent forms of social organization around issue specialization sectors and issue brokerage sectors. In

doing so, I draw on network analysis, and descriptive statistical analysis to present each of these areas, and interpret the results in light of a participant observation in each of the issue campaigns.

### **Network Analysis and the Study of Social Structure: Individuals, Organizations, and Campaigns**

The analysis presented here is based on the relationship between three aspects of social production: social structure, social organization and social action. In analyzing structure, I draw on Giddens (1984) by defining structure as the stability of practices across space-time. Social organization functions as structuring properties in the regulation of behavior, and is of two kinds: emic and etic (Pike, 1954). *Emic* social organizations are those forms of social organization that are known and named by participants: things like organizations, institutions or clubs. In contrast, Pike describes *etic* social organization as those forms of social organization that are not readily named or known by participants on a conscious level. Often etic forms of social organization are emergent, in so much as they may be groups of people and actions that have only recently begun to take on patterned attributes. Emergent social organization may become stable over time, and in other instances it may change or die out all together. Network analysis is useful in analysis of both emic and etic forms of social organization – in the analysis of how formal organizations structure relations and in how relations produce emergent organization.

Network theory is particularly useful in the examination of social structure, because it can take into account both formal and emergent forms of organization when analyzing the contours of the social world. However, many network scholars have privileged one over the other in their work, in part because emergent social organization is an area particularly well

suited to analysis using network methods. For many network analysts, social structure consists of “regularities in patterns of relations among concrete entities; it is not a harmony among abstract norms and values or a classification of concrete entities by their attributes” (White, Boorman, & Brieger, 1976, p. 733-34). As Emirbayer & Goodwin (1994) have suggested, “network analysis...direct[s] attention exclusively to the overall structure of network ties while suppressing consideration of their substantive content,” what they call an “anti-categorical imperative” (p. 1415).

Yet, network analysts often make use of emic forms of social organization in the production of attribute labels. In some cases these labels produce the very “classification of concrete entities” that White, Boorman and Brieger (1976) argue against, labeling actors based on the names of organizations, types of organizations, or organizational sectors. In doing so, researchers can simplify complex systems when research questions are rooted in categorically based theories. For instance, Saunders’ (2007) coding of environmental groups in the UK into the “ideological blocks” of “conservationist, reformist and radical” (p. 234) rather than positionally derived blocks (blocks developed inductively based on block modeling of actor’s positions within the network) allowed her to conclude that “conservationists tend to have very different, specialist concerns, evidenced by their lack of information sharing with the rest of the movement” (p. 240). In these cases, employing theoretically or ethnographically derived categorical labels allows one to construct data sets that are actually capable of answering the question at hand.

A second way that network analysis frequently employs categorical labeling is in the analysis of 2-mode networks of affiliation data (Borgatti & Everett, 1997). The most common application of affiliation data as relationally constitutive is in the study of co-

presence at events or co-membership in groups or organizations. In these cases researchers use categorical labels as representative of social relations, suggesting for instance that co-presence at an event constitutes a substantive form of social relationship (Neff, 2005).

I would argue that both relational data and affiliation data are important for understanding the multiple relationships that actors have in complex social networks. That said, we need to be careful that we construct data sets that are appropriate to our research questions. This means measuring relational and categorical data in ways that are as closely representative of the variable we intend to measure as possible. In the current study, I have relied on social theory, ethnographic participant observation, hyperlink patterns, discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics in identifying and measuring the variables under question. This multi-pronged approach offers significant leverage in identifying multiple forms of social relationships as well as providing quantifiable strategies for measuring those variables using network analysis or other statistical techniques.

Organizations are one of the most prevalent social forms that structure our society. As such, organizations can be understood as a bridge between structure and behavior, creating opportunities for rules of behavior to be normalized within the organizational context and encouraging their reproduction through participant behavior (Firth, 2004). But no individual is wholly constitutive of a single group, meaning that within any given issue network one author might publish in multiple venues, thus participating in multiple organizations. Taking a network level approach to social organization and social groups, Leaf (2004) has written that “Organizations are not groups. Groups are recognized sets of actual individuals. While organizations are usually formed by groups, groups rarely form just one organization. Virtually all important groups in a community are multiply organized” (p. 303). This points

to the ways that individuals may have multiple organizational identities, taking on the behavior associated with one organization at one point in time, and then responding to changes in organizational expectations by producing behavior in an entirely different organizational setting. *Positional* approaches to structural analysis privilege this aspect of social production, focusing on the structuring properties of organizations (Monge & Contractor, 2003). Organizations are seen as constituted by a collection of roles and relationships. These roles are seen as more durable and consistent than the behaviors of the people that ultimately fill them. This kind of analysis has proven useful in predicting social patterns in institutionalized settings (i.e., news norms). We can also draw on positional approaches to understand the ways that organizations interact with other organizations to produce inter-organizational network structures. This is the approach assumed with most structuralist work.

However, *relational* approaches to structural analysis have fore-grounded the individual as constituting the primary locus of agentive action. Here, the aggregate activities of individuals in a network are seen as constitutive of positions, and thus of emergent social organization. In some cases, individual action merely replicates existing organizationally produced positions, but in others, individuals are acting in ways that position them differently in relation to others, allowing new structural configurations to emerge. When these configurations are stable over time, they are considered to form cliques: groups of positions defined by their relations to each other that form a cohesive subset of a larger network. For instance, it has been suggested that the campaign against Nike sweatshop practices emerged without any clear coordinating structure and has developed into a subset of participants acting towards a common goal (Bennett, 2003). In this instance, a subset of participants

formed an emergent organization through their aggregate communicative behavior. As Monge and Eisenberg (1987) write, “communicative action produces structural forms” (p. 308).

Work in the *cultural* tradition has recognized both the structuring properties that formal organizations produce and the agentive action of individuals in producing or reproducing social organization. Studies of the “surface structures” of society have focused on the cultural practices that people engage in – the patterned interactions that they produce over time – suggesting that these are the visible manifestations of the more general structuring principles that underlie social actions (Lévi-Strauss, 1969). These surface structures are then the visible manifestation of deep structure, and serve as points of reproduction as people recreate cultural practices. Recognizing this iterative dynamic, Ortner (1984) suggests that “society is a system, that the system is powerfully constraining, and yet that the system, can be made and unmade through human action and interaction” (p. 159).

Ranson, Hinings, and Greenwood (1980) have tried to integrate these three approaches, suggesting that there are three organizational processes at work: provinces of meaning, dependencies of power, and contextual constraints. Structure is thus “a complex medium of control which is continually produced and recreated in interaction and yet shapes that interaction: structures are constituted and constitutive” (p. 3). Theorists like Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1999) also recognize this interplay and attempt to detail its working, and research on language and social action has explored the structure-action-agency dynamic (E.g., Skillington, 1997). Unfortunately, the recognition of such self-reinforcing systems limit the identification of causality, bringing into question causal claims based on samples from a single point in time (Ranson et al., 1980). It is still possible, however, to identify

correlational relationships between variables, and suggest multiple causal connections, although assertions of universal directionality become both theoretically and methodologically suspect (something I return to in chapter five).

In what follows, I outline the theoretical constructs that provide a framework for the analysis presented here: *formal organization*, and *emergent organization*. I start by outlining what I mean by formal organizations, specifying the different levels of formal organization used in this study: individual communicative action, communication resources, organizational types, and organizational sectors. I then outline the ways in which I am measuring emergent forms of social organization by looking at the textual contribution of public discourse in three overlapping issue sectors: issue mentions and hyperlinking practices.

### **Formal Social Organization in SMC**

Formal organizations are important institutional settings within which communicative resources can be developed and maintained. Social movement organizations are a hallmark within social movement studies (Fisher et al., 2005; Staggenborg, 1986), and they have long published flyers, newsletters, newspapers, and magazines (Ostertag, 2006; Streitmatter, 2001). Activists operating in societies where personal computers have become more prevalent have continued to create communication spaces through the use of websites, and email lists (Atton, 2003; Simone, 2006). In these contexts, organizations play important roles in the development of digital resources, using them as tools for broadcast as well as for soliciting collective authorship in the creation of distributed communication environments (Stein, 2007; Surman & Reilly, 2003). However, social movement organizations are not the only participants in the discursive field within which a movement takes place. Rather,



movement organizations exist alongside alternative or independent media outlets, mainstream media outlets, neighborhood blogs, and governmental bodies, among others. While social movement organizations might produce mobilization texts, calling on their constituents to participate in organizing activities, independent media outlets might produce texts that report on their activities to a broader (often sympathetic) audience. Governments, on the other hand, might publish press releases or file meeting minutes that log their activities on the public record, and mainstream media outlets might report on the activities of participants whom they take as newsworthy on the issue to a general (and not necessarily sympathetic) audience. These organizationally produced resources exist alongside each other, collectively constructing what Rogers (2002) has called “issue networks,” where authors present competing interpretations of issues and events in a multi-organizational field (Evans, 1997).

Three levels of social organization are presented in the sections that follow. First, I describe the most basic level of communicative action: the production of individual *texts* by named *authors*. Communication is recognizable as such because people produce texts, and in Internet enabled contexts those texts take the form of emails, web-pages, and audio or video files with authorial labels (either individually or collectively labeled). Next, I present *communication resources* as a way to talk about websites, email lists, or video hosting sites that facilitate the publication of texts. In some cases these resources are produced by formal organizations: the *Seattle Times*, the Real Change Organizing Project or Trinity United Methodist Church, for instance. Occasionally a single organization might produce multiple resources, as is the case with the Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP), and in other instances an organization might host only a single communication resource. Both texts,

authors, and resources are labels so explicitly tied to the data that they require little or no theoretical or ethnographic basis for their coding. Simply noting the authors name or the name of the communication resource is enough to justify the “classification of concrete entities by their attributes” (White et al., 1976, p. 733). However, texts are published by organizations that have ethnographically and theoretically justifiable differences. I present two levels of organizational categorization that would be expected to structure behavioral patterns among participants at the level of “abstract norms and values” (White et al., 1976, p. 734). First, I group communication resources by their organizational type: *advocacy, regional government, Committee to End Homelessness, public forums/meetings, local daily papers, local weekly papers, local TV news, local radio, local regional blogs, other area news, non-local news, and video host sites*. Then, I group these categories further, constructing a four part categorization scheme at the institutional level, suggesting that the categories of *advocacy, alternative media, mainstream media, and government* have enough theoretical significance as to be predictive of the communicative practices of those who publish within them. At each level of categorization I have created mutually exclusive variables that can be used as clustering mechanisms for the testing of observed communicative behavior, as well as attribute level relations for the production of 2-mode relational networks.

### **Individual communicative action.**

Individual collective actions are the individual actions taken by people in a network of relations. These actions are done intentionally and unintentionally, and have results that are intended and unintended. In the absence of formal organizations, people act with each other in informal arrangements that can either solidify over time or change as the affordances change. However, identifying individual contributions to the public sphere is structured

through two levels of identification: *texts* and *authorship*. First, the primary way that people are understood to be contributing to the public debate on an issue is by the publication of *texts* on that topic. Texts are the objects that we produce in order to act in the world. We create texts so that we can be seen and heard, and texts are understood as an important resource in our experience of the social world. Particularly in heavily mediated societies, media texts provide an important source of cultural and political information. For instance, homelessness is often experienced primarily through media texts: films, books, news stories, etc. Some people may publish many texts on a topic, and others may publish only one. In the following analysis, I rely exclusively on texts freely available on the internet, or sent via email.

The second way that we generally understand communicative action is through the lens of *authorship*. Authorship is the labeling of an individual identity as responsible for the production of a text. Texts can be individually or collectively authored. In news organizations, individual journalists typically author texts in an organizationally labeled publication, station, or program (the *Seattle Times*, *Real Change News*, *KIRO*, *KBCS*, etc.). Individuals are also published in the letters to the editor section. In some cases these texts are co-authored and two or more authors may be named. But some stories are signed “staff” (*Seattle Times* Staff, *KIRO* Staff), in-house editorials are typically attributed to the “editorial board,” and organizationally sponsored texts like minutes or laws will often provide no named author, implying collective organizational authorship (City of Seattle, Consumer Advisory Council meeting minutes, comment cards). In some cases like personal blogs, the organizational title and the individual author are synonymous, as is the case with the local blog JavaColleen. These authorship labels identify the producer of a text with the text, and

both producers and consumers of texts use authorship labels as credibility markers for the text and the author (Simone, 2006).

My first set of research questions address the prominence and distribution of authorship in the sample. Analysis of authorship profiles within an issue sector can tell us a great deal about who the most prominent speakers/writers are and how evenly distributed a discursive field is. If authorship equals influence, then the most prolific authors would wield the greatest amount of power within an issue sector to set the terms of debate or frame the general understanding of an issue. Hence, my first research question is, *What are the most prominent authors publishing on each of the three issues?* However, authorial prominence is also a product of the distribution of authorship among the pool of authors contributing to an issue. In highly centralized discursive fields, a single author or group of authors will publish a disproportionate number of texts. In more distributed discursive fields authorship will be more distributed with more authors and fewer texts per author. In order to both characterize each issue sector, and weight authorial prominence relative to the issue sector, my second research question asks, *How do the three issue sectors vary in terms of the distribution of authorship?*

A second set of questions is concerned with the relationship between authors and formal organizations. On the one hand, authors contribute to the structural production of organizations and institutions. Since no single individual is wholly constituted through their participation in any single organization, we would expect that some authors would publish in multiple resources, or organizational sectors. However, by authoring in multiple organizations, those individuals function as brokers between communication resources, organizational types or organizational sectors, bridging organizational norms of linguistic

behavior through their cross-publication. *What are the most prominent authorial brokers at the level of communication resource, organizational type, and organizational sector?* If brokerage in one area is correlated with brokerage in another, identifying these authorial brokers can point to individuals who may be important to the production of network cohesion.

### **Communication resources.**

Communication resources are the material objects that allow people to produce texts. Sometimes these resources are the products of formal organizations, as is often the case with the websites of news organizations or advocacy groups, or with organizationally sponsored email lists or WIKIs. Positional approaches would suggest that organizations structure many of the opportunities and constraints that we experience when taking communicative action. In many cases, an organization will sponsor only a single communicative resource (*West Seattle Blog*, for instance, provided a blog as its only sponsored resource:

<http://westseattleblog.com>). In other cases, organizations provide multiple communication resources, often facilitating different kinds of communication. For instance, RCEP hosts a newspaper, three blogs, and three email lists. Each of the resources provides a space for different kinds of communication to take place: the newspaper provides a univocal structure for content written for a print format and re-distributed through a website; the email announce list provides another univocal resource for the distribution of content intended to mobilize readers; and the RCOP discussion list provides a multi-vocal resource for all list members to discuss organizing processes. But not all communication resources are sponsored by organizations. The proliferation of web 2.0 functionalities like plug and play blogs or video host sites have made publication of texts via the Internet more accessible than it has previously been, leading to suggestions that we may be entering a new era of collective

action that is less reliant on formal organizations (Bennett, 2003; Castells, 2001). Thus, my first research question addresses the prominence of formal organizations in facilitating textual production by asking, *How many of the texts in the sample are sponsored by a formal organization of two or more people?*

Just as textual production can indicate authorial prominence, the number of texts or authors a communication resource publishes on an issue can be a compelling measure of resource prominence. If a single organization publishes more texts or more authors than any other resource, that resource can be said to have a greater degree of control over the issue.

*What are the most prominent resources publishing in each of the three issue sectors?*

However, publication profiles exist only in the context of other communication resources, requiring further investigation of the context within which the resources publish. *How do the three issue sectors vary in terms of the distribution of communication resources?* Identifying issue sector variation can point to important differences between the three issue areas, with one issue displaying a more evenly distributed publication profile than another.

Relational approaches suggest that organizations are constituted by the people that contribute to them, producing and reproducing organizational norms and expectations through patterned behavior. The publication of an author who published in other resources, organizational types or sectors would be expected to influence organizational norms through the brokerage of norms from other organizational contexts, thus contributing to changes in the character of the organization. We would also expect such organizations to be more heterogeneous in their published content, given that authors may bring communicative styles from other contexts. Further, we can understand such resources to function as brokers between authors, providing a shared space for them to influence each other's behavior. *What*

*kinds of positional roles does the publication of multiple authors produce in a network of authors?* But this question is a two way street, with authors functioning as brokers between communication resources. *What kinds of positional roles do authors publishing in multiple communication resources produce in a network of communication resources?* Answering these two questions can highlight emergent clusters of authors and resources that may or may not align with expected organizational affiliations.

### **Organizational types and organizational sectors.**

While separating individual communication resources allows a more detailed analysis of the texts, authors, and sources involved in the production of discourse, looking at more abstract levels of organization can also be helpful in highlighting broad structural patterns in a discursive field. Two levels of distinction are helpful here, and I draw on Bourdieu's (1999) theory of social fields to suggest that there are groups of organizations that operate in much the same manner, constructing ways of behaving in a social field at the level of *organizational types* and *organizational sectors*. Bourdieu (1999) describes a social field as a field of social action where standards of behavior regulate what is considered credible within the field, thus limiting the forms of action actors engage in within the social field. The standardization of action within a social field is produced through the routinized empowerment of individuals who follow the appropriate conventions (i.e., rituals, routines, norms, or cultural practices), granting "agents...power in proportion to their symbolic capital, i.e. in proportion to the recognition they receive from a group" (p. 106). Thus, we might expect some standardization of behavior within a social field, or at least a standardization of behavioral value within which individuals may deviate occasionally through isolated resistive acts. For instance, people working within a local daily newspaper company are likely to act in significantly similar ways to those working at another local daily

newspaper. We would further expect that, the more specific the categories, the more homogeneous the behavior.

The most specific organizational categories might be conceptualized as *organizational types*: local TV stations, community radio stations, neighborhood blogs, city government level committees, etc. The most broad categories might be considered *organizational sectors*, within which the many sub categories of organizational types would be subsumed within major sociologically defined categories like government, mainstream media alternative media and advocacy organizations. However, attributing categorical values to groups of communication resources is not always a straightforward process. In this case, I make extensive use of my ethnographic participation in the local media environment for the production of organizational categories, relying both on the extant literature on organizations and communicative practices and my own conversations with participants. Thus, my question here is, *What are the organizational types and the organizational sectors involved in producing each of the three issue areas?* Identifying these categories, while theoretically interesting in its own right, will also allow me to compare behavioral patterns with what might be expected given what we know from previous research on organizations in each area, and from emic expectations of organizational roles in the field.

Categorical coding of this sort can also help to illustrate publication relations between resources and groups of organizations. We would expect, for instance, that authors who published in advocacy-sponsored resources would be more likely to also publish in alternative media outlets than in government-sponsored communication resources. Drawing on both positional and relational approaches, I am interested in asking, *What kinds of positional roles does the publication of multiple authors within an organizational type or*



*sector produce in a network of authors?; and What kinds of positional roles do authors publishing in multiple communication resources produce at the level of organizational types and sectors?* Answering these two questions can highlight structural characteristics of textual publication in issue sectors that may or may not align with expected sectoral affiliations.

### **Emergent Social Organization in SMC**

Emergent social organization is the result of collective patterns of action taken by individuals who may or may not be intending to act towards the collective ends. These kinds of social organization can develop out of intentional cross-publication in a resource or sector (as I addressed in the previous section), but they can also emerge out of co-participation in a shared issue space. In local political contestations, the production of discourse in the public sphere is a product of multiple texts, authors, communication resources, and organizational categories. Questions about boundary distinctions can often be answered by a simple question: did this actor produce texts that talked about the issue area? Thus we are interested not so much in personal relationships between actors, and more in how information is produced and meaning is contested in ways that create emergent forms of social organization.

Modern North American social movements often make extensive use of electronic communication tools. Social organization is an important aspect in how these technologies are used and how they function within a particular socio-cultural milieu. Organizations are often sponsors of communication technology resources, constructing websites or email lists that participants use in the process of collective action. However, communication scholars have recently suggested that the collective agglomeration of multiple communication technology products through hyperlink networks and search tools has resulted in technologies themselves functioning as social organization in the form of *communal goods*,

bringing with it often quite different dynamics of authorship, agency, and connection than might otherwise be facilitated in offline organizing environments (Bimber et al., 2005; Flanagin et al., 2006). Similarly, the power dynamics involved in the production of tools that contribute to online communal goods through digital networks are significantly less collective than collective action often is, with individual web-developers typically acting alone or in isolation from movement participants who later use the tools they produce (Earl & Schussman, 2003).

The production of communal goods through the use of online digital tools like email and websites is increasingly important in the changing dynamics of social movement organizing in technologically advanced countries like the United States. Several concepts are important in understanding how technologies interact with collective action and forms of social organization. Marwell & Oliver define *collective action* as “actions taken by two or more people in pursuit of the same collective good” (1993, p. 4). *Collective goods* refer to any material or symbolic resource that can be produced through collective effort: anything from a building or park to wording on a public document or broad changes in labeling patterns (i.e., the move from the use of “Miss” or “Mrs.” to “Ms.”) (Bimber et al., 2005; Flanagin et al., 2006). Early research on collective action placed formal *organizations* at the center of how groups of people achieved the provision of collective goods, and Olson (1965) argued that “most (though by no means all) of the action taken by or on behalf of groups of individuals is taken through organizations” (p. 5).

The increasingly widespread use of technologies of communication (often facilitated by the Internet) in the production of collective goods has instigated some work that questions the central role of formal organizations, suggesting instead that the architecture of how these

digital tools are used allows individuals to participate outside of formal organizations (Bimber et al., 2005). One way that this is possible is through the aggregation of contributions that are dissociated from their original intended purpose through a process of *communality* (Fulk, Flanagin, Kalman, Monge, & Ryan, 1996). Bimber Flanagin, and Stohl (2005) suggest that “Communality is powerful: It effectively eliminates the need to predict in advance who may benefit from one’s knowledge; it provides information and expertise gained by others, thus eliminating the need to experience phenomenon firsthand; and it highlights the advantages of aggregated information resources, whose value can greatly exceed the sum of its parts” (p. 371). While many contributions to collective goods are made with full knowledge of the role the individual action plays in producing an end result (*first-order communality*), some forms of action are not made with full knowledge of the ways that a contribution might help to produce a collective good. This second form is referred to as *second-order communality*, and can include actions like “posting information on a web-page or weblog, contributing to discussion on an electronic bulletin board, participating in online ‘credentialing’ activities of various forms, revealing the identities of networks of friends and common interests in social networking environments, and even passing forward a list of useful e-mail addresses in the header of a message” (p. 372). Once contributions are made, their aggregation is facilitated by hyper linking practices and search technologies that allow isolated contributions to group together in ways not originally intended by the author, producing benefits for individuals not known of when the actions were taken. The distinction, as Bimber, Flanagin, and Stohl (2005) describe it, “is that the communal information good now results from largely *uncoordinated* efforts, even though the collective action remains widespread and dependent on individual contributions” (p. 372).

A focus on the activities of participants at the level of textual production allows us to see emerging patterns of social organization in the form of communal goods that may or may not be restricted to the boundaries of organizations or organizational sectors.

### **Issue campaigns and issue sectors.**

Issue campaigns are defined here as an organizing effort to change the rules and behavior associated with an issue of focus. In this case, the “*No New Jail*” campaign was focused on plans to build a new jail in Seattle, the campaign to “*Stop the Sweeps*” was focused on the policy of campsite clearances (or “sweeps”), and “*Nickelsville*” on the ability to run a permanent village for up to 1,000 people in Seattle – sometimes referred to as a “tent city,” “eco-village,” “modern Hooverville,” or “shantytown.” Issue areas exist regardless of an issue campaign, but social movements often highlight issue areas as problematic and in need of change by organizing issue campaigns, and there are many cases where issue campaigns have resulted in structural changes to rules and behavior in an issue area. This move from issue campaigns to the issue areas they occupy can be understood in organizational terms in part by the use of the concept of *issue sectors*. But first I need to position this concept in relation to two other concepts: *issue industries* and *organizational sectors*.

Earl (2009) has recently urged the broadening of the organizational lens beyond only those organizations considered to be directly contributing to a social movement (social movement organizations) to include all organizations contributing to the issue, including governmental agencies, news organizations or service agencies. Building on McCarthy and Zald’s (1973, 1977) issue oriented concept of a social movement industry (SMI), Earl suggests the concept of an *issue industry* as a way to think beyond traditional social movement organizations. I would argue that the issue industry concept is an important

contribution to how we understand the relationship between political action and discursive production of core issues like race, poverty, globalization, and gender. But Earl is not alone in her interest in broadening the way we think about how social change happens. Those studying social movements from the organizational communication tradition have suggested a multi-organizational understanding of movement organizing through the identification of an *organizational field* (McAdam & Scott, 2005). The concept of “field” has been a useful one across the academy, but its use is highly differentiated, so some definition is in order to ensure the usefulness of the concept in this context. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 148) define an organizational field as

...those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services and products.

While here defined in terms of a network of organizations involved in the production, regulation and consumption of material goods, the concept of organizational field is useful in the description of social movement activity as well. As McAdam and Scott (2005) suggest, by focusing on “a system of actors, actions, and relations...Rather than...a single organization or movement, or even a single type of organization or movement (population), it allows us to view these actors in context” (p. 10). The local Seattle homeless movement, like other issue movements, is perhaps most fruitfully understood as existing across organizational sectors. Movements are certainly a product of social movement organizations, but social actions take place within and between organizational types associated with movements, governments, media organizations, and service providers.

Building on the work of Earl (2009) and McAdam and Scott (2005), I propose yet another concept for bounding our sample that relies less on formal organizations. While the strength of both issue industries and organizational fields is that they do not constrain the

sample based on a relatively arbitrary definition of what is or is not a social movement organization, what both concepts miss is a recognition of contributors to an issue that may not be affiliated with a formal organization. Particularly in the context of increasing use of web 2.0 technologies, and assertions by social movement scholars that organizations are less important in movement organizing than they have been in the past, I suggest that the related concept of *issue sector* may be more appropriate for defining the boundaries of discursive contributions to an issue area. While issue sector maintains a focus on issues as mutually constituted by a heterogeneous set of organizational contributors, it includes all textual productions of an issue area, regardless of their affiliation with a formal organization of two or more people. I believe that this concept is more reflective of the ways that issues are currently constructed and contested in online spaces, where personal blogs exist alongside news sites or advocacy WIKIs in search results and as hyperlink destinations.

This conception may, in fact, be more reflective of the way that Earl (2009) has operationalized issue industries in her most recent work as the collection of texts (in her case, web-based texts) that mention one of a set of lexical search terms (manually developed and tested) to identify texts that talk about a concept (issue area). Rather than measure a movement by the list of organizations signing on to a coalition or issue campaign, Earl has opened the door to an inclusive sampling measure that includes all textual discourse on an issue regardless of the way authors present the issue area (i.e., for or against the sweeps). Since it is impossible to sample the universe of possible communicative actions, this sampling procedure is a useful boundary marker for identifying participants in the contestation of an issue area for analysis. My own sampling method follows similar guidelines to Earls, but rather than sampling all Internet texts on homelessness, I am

interested in texts referring to three very local campaigns. In the case of local homeless organizing activities, texts were collected that referred to a series of lexical items associated with the issue areas of the Sweeps, Nickelsville, and the Proposed Jail (see Appendix A for a full description of sampling methods). These texts constitute the reachable digital public dialog on the issues, and can be used to look at relationships between various aspects of the sample (who linked to whom, who published whom, who talked like who, or how words co-located with each other).

Sampling based on issue sectors results in a set of texts that actively engage in the linguistic construction of three overlapping issue areas based on the presence of one or more linguistic markers (words, phrases, or rules). As a result, we are left with an emergent network of participants, consisting of those texts produced by authors and organizations that likely had little intention of creating a collectively authored and organized set of ideas, words, and actions. And, since these issues frequently overlap in the ways that they are produced through language, the contours of the network are multifaceted. This leads to my primary research question in this area, namely *What emergent forms of social organization can be defined by actors' textual contributions to each of the issue sectors?* Answering this question can point to both issue relationships and participant roles in ways that may not otherwise be noticeable to participants without the use of network analysis methods.

### **Hyperlinks and power within issue sectors.**

By sampling all texts contributing to each of the three issue areas we are able to look at the organizational context within which an issue sector exists. However, such a basic definition obscures the very real power dynamics at play in any discursive arena. Each organizational category has access to different levels of authority within sociopolitical space. The dominant mode of political discourse in our society is one based on the

professionalization of representation through governments, corporations and other social institutions, regularizing the recognition of such forms as legitimate and given, and imbuing their practices and discourses with a certain power – constructing what Foucault (1972) calls a “regime of truth.”

Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned...the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980, page 131).

The regime of truth structures the field of power relations, determining the resources available for resistance, and constraining the legitimacy of actions according to their adherence to norms. Thus, a claim made by a professional journalist in a local daily newspaper might be imbued with a greater claim to truth than one made in a neighborhood blog.

Power in digital networks is largely structured through the aggregate use of hyperlinks as references from one resource to another. Hyperlinks are the primary method of network visibility, and even though search technologies are increasingly important for individual user’s navigation of the internet, search engine databases are gathered through a process of hyperlink crawling, and search result algorithms take hyperlinking relationships as important measures of a resource’s prominence in relation to a given search string. While people create hyperlinks for a range of reasons, some research suggests that the primary reason for hyperlinking is to refer readers to a resource or set of information, and that hyperlinking practices are rarely done for negative reasons (Chu, 2005). As such, linking patterns can function as measures of authority among web-resources, privileging some resources over others. For instance, those actors with a greater claim to truth will often receive more hyperlink references from texts authored by other less prominent actors as a



way to signal the parameters of the field: who are the voices that you should hear from on this issue? The work that Rogers (2002, 2004) has done with hyperlink mapping has suggested that hyper-linking practices have social meaning, and recent research on social movement networks has made similar claims regarding the importance of hyperlinks as a measure of network dynamics (Bennett et al., Forthcoming; Garrido & Halavais, 2003).

Network analysis procedures can illuminate network level differences between issue sectors as well as positional dynamics within networks. First, I am interested in how relational properties between communication resources produce varying network level properties among the three issue sectors. *How do network level metrics vary between the three issue sectors?* For instance, higher levels of centralization within a network can signal that an issue sector is more centrally controlled, while lower levels of centralization can signal that an issue sector is more decentralized. Second, I am interested in how communication resources are positioned within an issue sector through relational linking patterns. *How are communication resources differentially positioned within each issue sector based on hyperlinking patterns?* For instance, we would expect that in highly centralized issue sectors, one or more communication resources would enjoy a greater number of in-links (high indegree score), and that those resources are more likely to be associated with traditional credibility markers like government or mainstream media sectoral affiliation. Similarly, we would expect that advocacy organizations (or other communication resources like personal blogs) would be positioned more peripherally in the network, with fewer in-links from organizations with more traditional credibility markers, making them more difficult to reach and thus less influential in the issue sector.

These research questions begin to examine the relationships between social structure, patterned behavior, and agency by specifying relationships between categorical and relational variables among actors in three overlapping issue sectors. By looking at the relationship between formal social organization and patterned behavior we can start to see both emic and etic forms of social organization. As groups of actors cluster together around issues and formal organizations, the identification of emergent groups can lend insight into the ways that social change communication happens. Since attention to both emic and etic forms of social organization are important in the analysis of complex social processes like social movement communication, this approach is promising from both a theoretical and methodological perspective.

### **Analysis: Formal and Emergent Social Organization in Social Movement**

#### **Communication**

The analysis is broken into two separate areas. The first area focuses on *formal organization*. Here, I was interested in describing the texts, authors, communication resources organizational types, and organizational sectors that contributed to the discursive production of each of the three issue areas. These levels of categorization can be said to have emic properties: that is, these categories are named by the actors that construct them and might readily be recognized by participants themselves as existing in the social world. The second area of analysis was concerned with the identification of *emergent social organization*. This area was concerned with the identification of the ways in which actors (authors, communication resources, and organizational types and sectors) self-organized through their textual production in the online public sphere. The collection of texts talking about each of the issue areas constructed what can be understood as an issue sector: the

collection of texts, authors, and communication resources that collectively construct an issue in the public sphere, regardless of the presence of collective planning or conscious contribution to its existence, and without regard to the particular positions advocated in the texts that comprise it. First, patterns of similarity were constructed by measuring the ways that actors contributed to one or more of the issue sectors. These patterns of similarity were analyzed as 2-mode socio-matrices, identifying levels of *prominence* regarding a particular set of network metrics, as well as important *roles* that key actors played as issue specialists or issue brokers. Second, patterns of hyperlinks between communication resources were measured to identify structural properties of each of the issue networks that could be used to compare one issue sector with another, further define roles within issue sectors, and measure how issue sectors changed over time. These categories and their resulting structural properties can be understood as largely *etic*, in that their characteristics might not be readily identifiable to the actors who participate in their production, constituting emergent patterns of social organization.

**Formal organization: Authorship, communication resources and organizational sectors.**

Formal organization is the level of affiliation that is most commonly associated with agentive action. Texts are commonly described as the products of authors, are published through the use of a communication resource, and are organized into genres relating to the organizational types and sectors within which they are produced. The contours of how many authors write about a set of issues, how prolific those authors are, and what communication resources they publish in can help us to understand what the field of authorship is like in the issue sector. Similarly, the number of communication resources publishing on a set of issues, how many texts they publish, how many authors publish in them and what organizational

types or sector they belong to can help to illustrate the roles that communication resources play in the process of textual production in the public sphere. And the number of texts, authors and communication resources published by a given organizational type – or in a particular organizational sector – can help to tell us things about who the loudest voices are, and how they are organized through formal organizations in the public sphere.

### ***Authorship.***

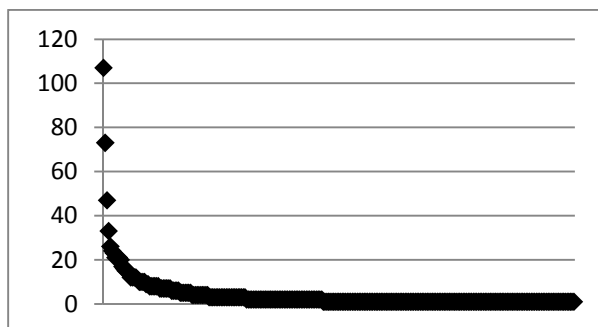
Authorship is the most finite level of agency commonly identified in mediated communication environments. In traditional journalistic formats, authors are held responsible for what they write, even if the editor suggested the particular angle or a copyeditor changed the phrasing of the text. In these cases, those quoted by a journalist in the article text are not given authorship status, even if it is their words that may shape the way the text is presented. In less traditional journalistic environments like blogs, or open publishing sites like *Youtube*, authorship is a way to track the identity of a contributor by looking at other things that they have authored. In some cases this is the only information readers are presented with when establishing the credibility of an author. Scholars concerned with the distribution of power in deliberative spaces have looked to the distribution of texts by authors as a way of gauging the importance of particular authors over others (Schneider, 1996, 1997). In any communicative environment there will typically be a few authors who speak more than everyone else, and a large number of authors who speak only once or twice, leading to a power law distribution pattern (Burt, 2005). The distribution of texts among authors points to the first level of power distribution in a discursive field, the assumption being that more prolific authors yield more power to dictate the terms of the debate than do less prolific ones.

In asking the question, *What are the most prominent authors publishing on each of the three issues?* I found a severely lopsided authorial distribution pattern across the sample. The distribution of authorship on the three issues of interest in this study reflects a highly unequal power relationship. A total of 278 authors contributed to discourse on at least one of the three issue areas, authoring a total of 1116 texts. The curve is quite steep however, with the most prolific author (Tim Harris) contributing 107 texts. In comparison, just over half (148) of the authors contributed only one text, creating a long tail of one-off contributions (see Table 3.2). Table 3.1 lists the top 20 contributing authors, based on the number of texts that they authored in the sample that mentioned at least one of the three issue areas.

Table 3.1. Top 20 authors based on how many texts they wrote that mentioned one of the three issue sectors.

Rank	Author	Texts	
		N	%
1	Timothy Harris	107	9.6%
2	<i>West Seattle Blog</i>	73	6.5%
3	Adam Hyla	47	4.2%
4	Natalie Novak	33	3.0%
5	Scott Morrow	26	2.3%
6	Real Change organizer email	24	2.2%
7	RCOP wiki	23	2.1%
8	Aimee Curl	21	1.9%
9	Cydney Gillis	21	1.9%
10	<i>Magnolia Voice</i>	21	1.9%
11	<i>KIRO</i>	20	1.8%
12	<i>KOMO</i>	17	1.5%
13	Dr. Wes Browning	16	1.4%
14	Committee to End Homelessness	15	1.3%
15	Danina Garcia	15	1.3%
16	Tracy	14	1.3%
17	City of Seattle	12	1.1%
18	<i>Libertadkorps</i>	12	1.1%
19	Moises Mendoza	12	1.1%
20	Real Change Organizing Project	12	1.1%

Table 3.2. Distribution of authorship, listing the number of texts authored that mentioned one of the three issue sectors per author.

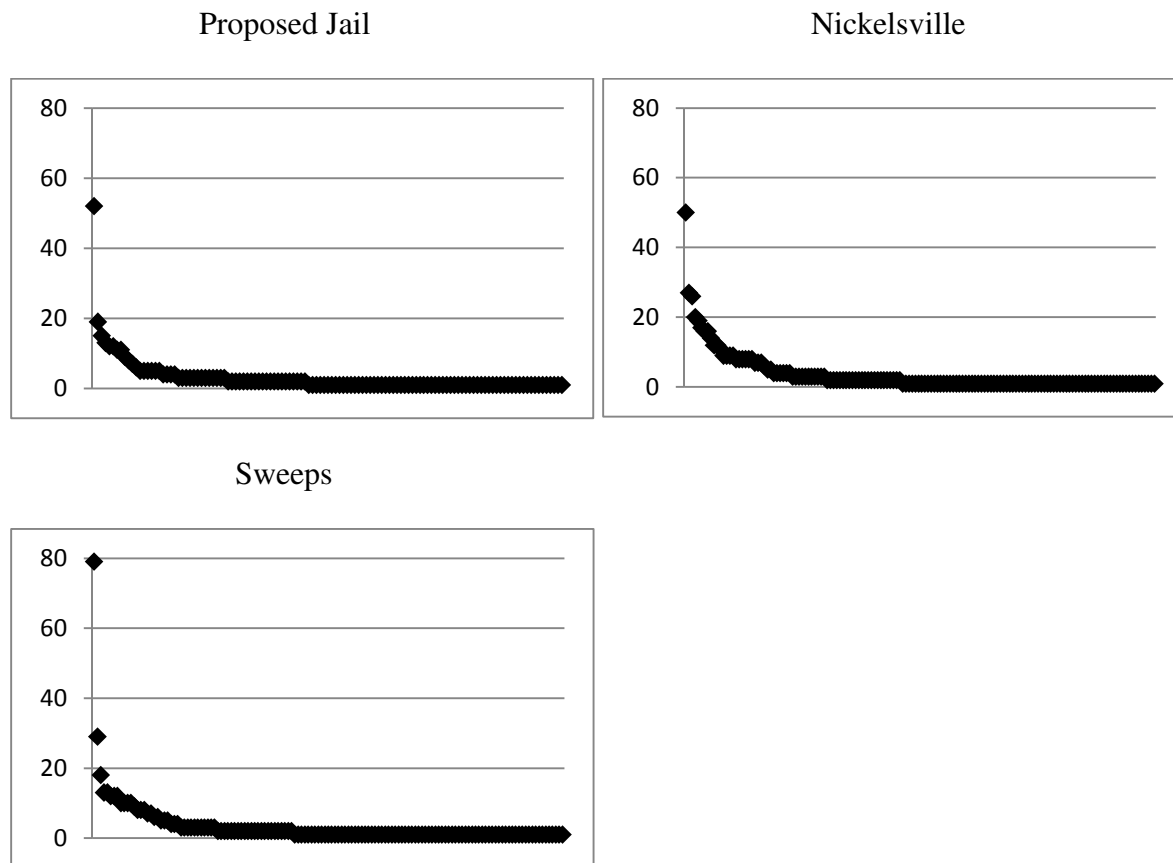


While the most prolific author is a named individual, 29.1% (325) of the texts in the sample did not provide an author label, in which case the name of the communication resource was used instead. 10 of these cases show up in the top 20 list of authors listed in Table 3.2 (*West Seattle Blog*, Real Change organizer email, RCOP wiki, *Magnolia Voice*, *KIRO*, *KOMO*, Committee to End Homelessness, City of Seattle, *Libertadkorps* and the Real Change Organizing Project), making up fully half of the top 20 contributors. This is not surprising, given that organizationally authored texts are often an agglomeration of texts written by several different people. This was the case with most of the organizationally authored texts in the top 20 list, with the exception of one. In the case of *Libertadkorps*, a single author had produced a communication resource in the form of a geocities.com website, and although s/he had written all of the posts on the site (it appeared to be a single author site), s/he chose not to identify her/himself by listing an author label after each post.

However, authorial prominence also varied between the three issues. *How do the three issue sectors vary in terms of the distribution of authorship?* As Table 3.3 shows, all three issues had examples of a single author who was significantly more prolific than the norm for the issue. In both the Sweeps and the Nickelsville issue sector this was still Tim Harris. However, in the Proposed Jail issue sector the *West Seattle Blog* was by far the most

prolific author, authoring 14% (n:52) of the all texts in the issue sector – almost three times as many as the next most prolific author (again, Timothy Harris).

Table 3.3. Authorship distribution in the Proposed Jail, Nickelsville, and the Sweeps issue sectors.



Finally, I ask, *What are the most prominent authorial brokers at the level of communication resource and organizational sector?* In the majority of cases I found that authors published texts on one or more of the issues through only one resource, with the mean number of communication resources that author's published in at 1.15. So, while 87.5% of authors contributed through only one resource, the remainder published in multiple resources, with only 4/278 authors publishing in more than two (see Table 3.4). Authorship in multiple organizational sectors showed a similar pattern. Only 12 people published in multiple sectors and no one published in more than two, meaning that the mean number of

sectors published in by a single author was 1.04.<sup>8</sup> Of note is the presence of two authors from RCEP in the list of authors publishing in more than two communication resources *and* two organizational sectors. These two authors were also listed in the top 20 list of most prolific authors: Tim Harris (#1) and Natalie Novak (#4). RCEP produced the largest number of communication resources in the sample (RC Volunteer, RCOP email, RCOP wiki, *Real Change News*, Real Change organizer email, and the RCOP blog), and Tim Harris produced his own personal blog (*Apesma's Lament*). This meant that Tim Harris authored 37.2% (415) of all texts in the corpus.

Table 3.4. Authors publishing in more than two communication resources (CRs).

Author	Number of CRs Published in
Timothy Harris	5
Natalie Novak	4
Jim Forman	3
Taylor Cuffaro	3

### ***Communication resources.***

Organizations provide important resources for the production of communication texts. When asking *How many of the texts in the sample are sponsored by a formal organization of two or more people?* I found that 77% of the communication resources were sponsored by an organization, and they published 86.6% (966) of texts in the sample. This means that the vast majority of what was said on these issues was said through resources provided by an organization. This would suggest that, despite claims to the contrary (Bennett, 2003), organizations continue to be important for the production of communication resources even in the context of Internet technologies. Yet, even though the majority of resources and texts were associated with a formal organization, that did not mean that organizations were always the most prolific publishers of texts. *What are the most prominent resources publishing in*



each of the three issue sectors? Figure 2 shows the distribution of texts based on how many texts each communication resource published. *Real Change News* was by far the most prolific text producer, accounting for 15.5% (n:173) of all texts in the sample – more than twice as many texts as any of the other communication resources (see Table 3.6). Five of the communication resources sponsored by RCEP also made it into the top 20, as well as a personal blog (*Apesma's Lament*) written by the organization's executive director (Tim Harris). Mainstream media outlets like daily newspapers (the *Seattle PI* and the *Seattle Times*) were prominent contributors, as well as local TV (*KOMO*, *KIRO*, and *King 5*), and free weekly papers (*The Stranger* and the *Seattle Weekly*). Neighborhood blogs were also in the list of the top 20 producers of texts. Likely because of the local level of impact that Nickelsville and the Proposed Jail issue areas had (see analysis below), neighborhood blogs like *West Seattle Blog* (#4), *Magnolia Voice* (#12) and *White Center Now* (#18) became important sources of information on the issues (all reported on issues pertaining to neighborhoods where *Nickelsville* stayed and/or where Proposed Jail sites were located). Aside from *Apesma's Lament*, all of the top 20 producers of texts were published in a resource sponsored by an organization.

Table 3.5. Distribution of texts mentioning at least one of the three issue areas based on how many texts each communication resource published.

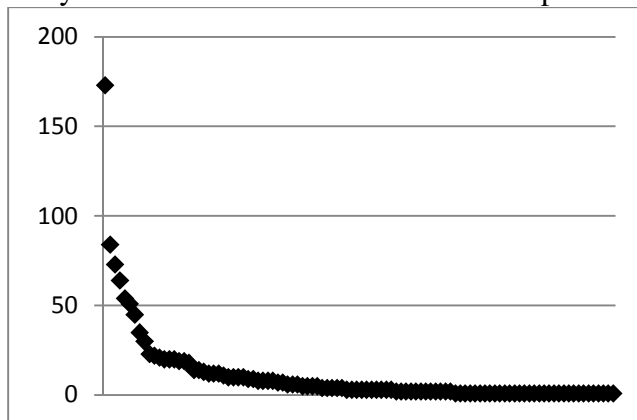


Table 3.6. Top 20 communication resources listed by how many texts they published on at least one of the three issue areas.

Rank	Organizational Resource	Texts	
		N	%
1	<i>Real Change News</i>	173	15.5%
2	RCOP email	84	7.5%
3	<i>West Seattle Blog</i>	73	6.5%
4	<i>Apesma's Lament</i>	64	5.7%
5	<i>Seattle PI</i>	54	4.8%
6	Real Change organizer email	51	4.6%
7	<i>Seattle Times</i>	45	4.0%
8	Nickelsville email	35	3.1%
9	<i>Seattle Weekly Blog</i>	30	2.7%
10	RCOP wiki	23	2.1%
11	<i>KOMO</i>	22	2.0%
12	<i>Magnolia Voice</i>	21	1.9%
13	<i>The Stranger Blog</i>	20	1.8%
14	<i>West Seattle Herald</i>	20	1.8%
15	<i>KIRO</i>	20	1.8%
16	<i>King 5</i>	19	1.7%
17	RCOP blog	19	1.7%
18	<i>White Center Now</i>	18	1.6%
19	<i>Seattle Weekly</i>	14	1.3%
20	City of Seattle	14	1.3%

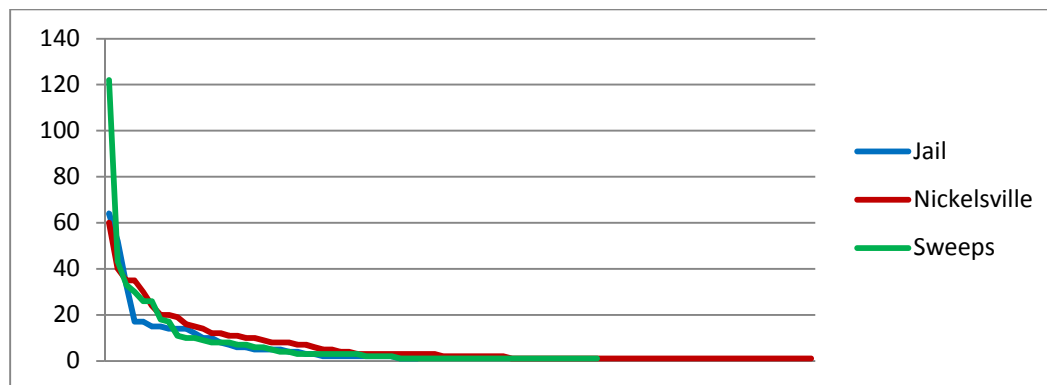
Looking at publication profiles of communication resources as they differed between the three samples highlighted some of the differences between who contributed to the linguistic production of each issue. Here, I asked, *How do the three issue sectors vary in terms of the distribution of communication resources?* At the aggregate level, the Proposed Jail was the most unevenly distributed issue sector, with an average of 10 texts published per communication resource, Nickelsville was the most evenly distributed with 6.6 texts per resources, and the Sweeps was in the middle with 8.2 texts per resource (see Table 3.8). At the level of individual resources, we can see that the Sweeps issue sector was an area that RCEP was highly involved in, with *Real Change News* publishing nearly three times as many

texts on the Sweeps (n:122) than the next most prolific author (n:43). It is also worth noting that five out of the top ten publishers on the Sweeps were associated with RCEP. This was less the case with Nickelsville, and even less the case with the Proposed Jail. However, RCEP had resources that were prominently placed in all three issues (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7. Top 10 publishers of texts, listed by rank based on number of texts published by communication resources in each issue sector.

Rank	Proposed Jail	Nickelsville	Sweeps
1	RCOP email	<i>Real Change News</i>	<i>Real Change News</i>
2	<i>West Seattle Blog</i>	<i>Apesma's Lament</i>	<i>Apesma's Lament</i>
3	<i>Real Change News</i>	Nickelsville email	Real Change organizer email
4	<i>Seattle PI</i>	<i>Seattle PI</i>	<i>Seattle Times</i>
5	<i>West Seattle Herald</i>	<i>Seattle Weekly</i>	<i>Seattle Weekly</i>
6	<i>White Center Now</i>	<i>Seattle Times</i>	<i>Seattle PI</i>
7	<i>The Stranger</i>	<i>Magnolia Voice</i>	RCOP wiki
8	City of Seattle	<i>KOMO</i>	RCOP email
9	Real Change organizer email	RCOP email	<i>KOMO</i>
10	<i>Seattle Times</i>	<i>KIRO</i>	<i>Magnolia Voice</i>

Table 3.8. Distribution of the number of texts published per communication resource within each issue sector.



The relationship between authors and communication resources can also be understood in network terms. If an author publishes in multiple resources, those resources can be said to share an author with each other, establishing a type of social relationship between the two resources. *What kinds of positional roles do authors publishing in multiple communication resources produce in a network of communication resources?* Similarly, if

multiple authors publish in a single communication resource, than the authors can be said to share a resource with each other. *What kinds of positional roles does the publication of multiple authors produce in a network of authors?* This kind of relationship functions as a type of co-membership, where one set of actors (authors) shares attributes with each other based on publication in the same communication resource, and another set of actors (communication resources) are said to share attributes with each other based on publishing the same authors. These co-publication attributes can be presented in a 2-mode sociomatrix, with authors listed in the rows, and resources in the columns. Network analysis procedures can represent these relationships visually and by using network metrics. Figure 1 shows a visual representation of the co-publication relationships between authors and resources, with authors represented as red circles, and resources represented as blue squares. This 2-mode sociomatrix was further analyzed for the roles that each of the actors (egos) played in relation to the others by calculating the number of actors that rely on each ego as the primary path of connection to other actors. This process produced what is called a Freeman's normalized betweenness score (Freeman, 1977), and it is represented here with the size of the actor node and label, with larger sizes representing higher betweenness scores – in other words, a more central role in the network.

By looking at both authors and communication resources together in the same visual representation, we can see what authors are responsible for connecting communication resources, as well as what resources are responsible for connecting authors. However, splitting the two modes into two 1-mode networks can further help us understand the relationships that are created for both authors and resources. After removing isolates (actors not connected to any other actor), a set of dyadic relationships remained as well as three

clusters consisting of more than two communication resources. The dyadic components were the result of either one article being re-posted in another resource, or at least one author publishing in both resources, and they were removed from the current analysis because they did not represent significant organizational clusters.<sup>9</sup> Figure 3.2 shows the three major components (isolated sets of actors within a larger network) which are immediately recognizable based on the organizational sectors that they are affiliated with. First, *Real Change News* played a significant brokerage role (as measured by betweenness in the network) within a component comprised of alternative media and other RCEP sponsored resources. The second component consists of communication resources sponsored by mainstream media organizations, within which *Crosscut* (a regional blog) and the *Seattle*

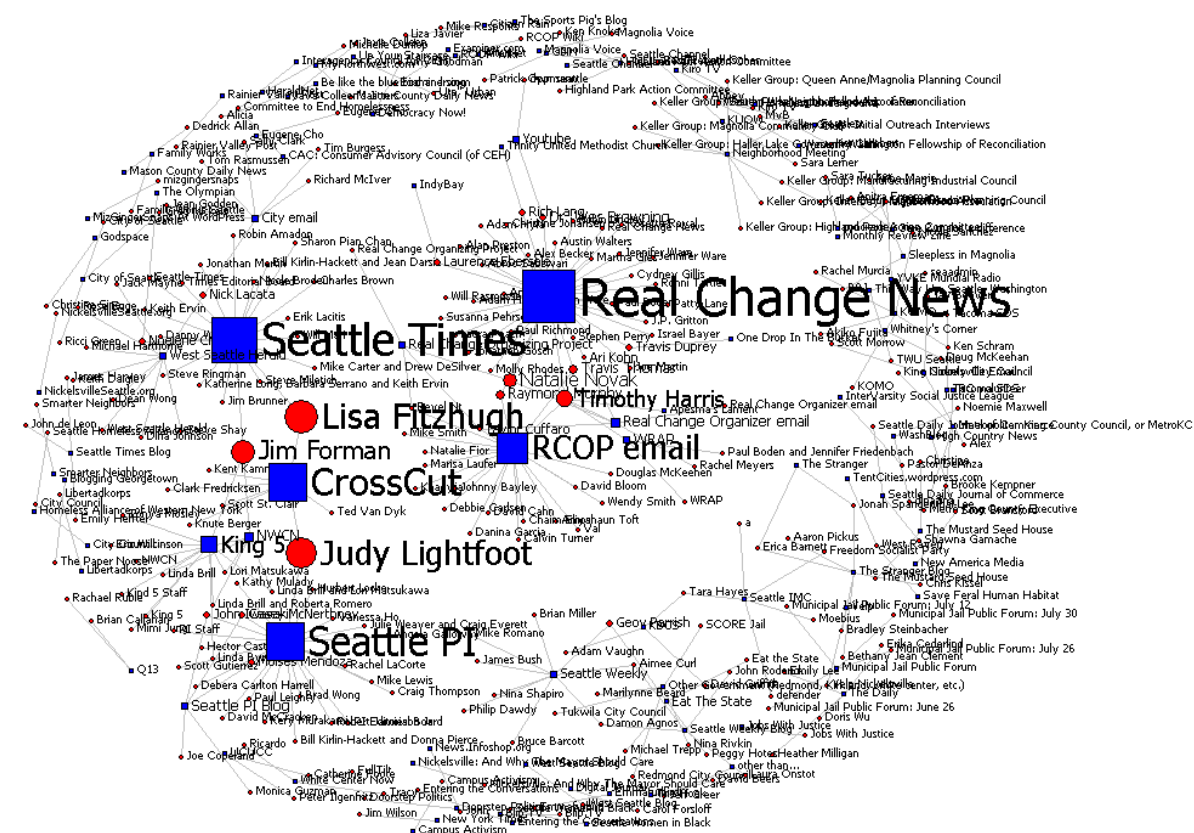


Figure 3.1. 2-mode network representation of authors and communication resources. Edge = publication of an author in a communication resource. Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness. Color = red (author) and blue (communication resource).

*Times* (a local daily paper) played important roles. And finally, the third component consisted of communication resources publishing the work of Geov Parish (The *Seattle Weekly*, The *Seattle Weekly Blog* and *Eat the State*). While the ways that these last three communication resources are connected is not apparent by only looking at the resources in isolation (as a 1-mode network), the authors that connect them are made visible by looking at the other side of the 2-mode network: an author by author cross-publication network.

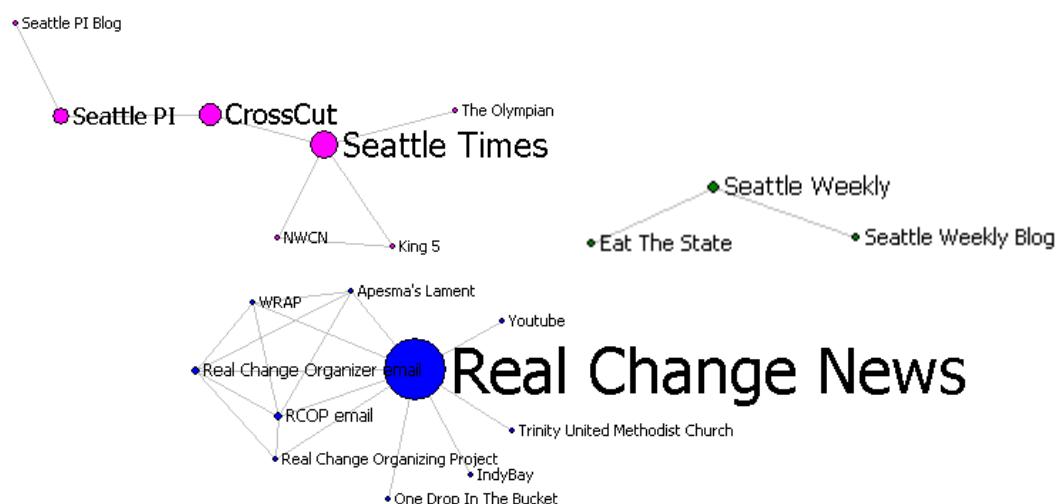
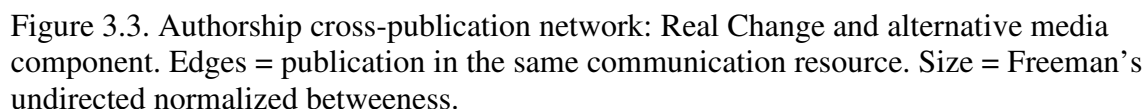


Figure 3.2. Relationships between communication resources based on sharing authors. Edges = publication of the same author. Color = components. Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness.

When we look at how authors are connected through their publication in the same communication resources, many more components result than the same analysis looking at resources. This is largely because there are simply more authors than resources and many groups of authors cluster together around a single resource. However, by looking at only those components with significant levels of separation (the presence of structural holes, or a small number of nodes with high betweenness scores), we are left with the authorship side of the three components that we analyzed before. First, the RCEP and alternative media component is broken into three basic areas, consisting of Real Change organizer emails



The second component consists of authors publishing in a series of mainstream media outlets and *Crosscut* (a regional blog) (see Figure 3.4). The first cluster of authors (at the top) publish in local TV outlets (*NWCN* and *King 5*), the second cluster (second from the top) consists of authors publishing in the *Seattle Times*, the third cluster (third from the bottom) consists of authors publishing in *Crosscut*, and the last component (at the bottom) consists of authors publishing in the *Seattle PI* and the *Seattle PI Blog*. At each of the points of contact, only a single author publishing in both communication resources ties the clusters together (Jim Forman, Lisa Fitzhugh, and Judy Lightfoot), while at the ends connections are more evenly distributed (between *NWCN* and *King 5*, and between the *Seattle PI* and the *Seattle PI Blog*). This is not too surprising, given that *NWCN* often shares content with *King 5*, and the

*Seattle PI Blog* relies almost exclusively on journalists that also publish in the print edition of the paper (*Seattle PI*).

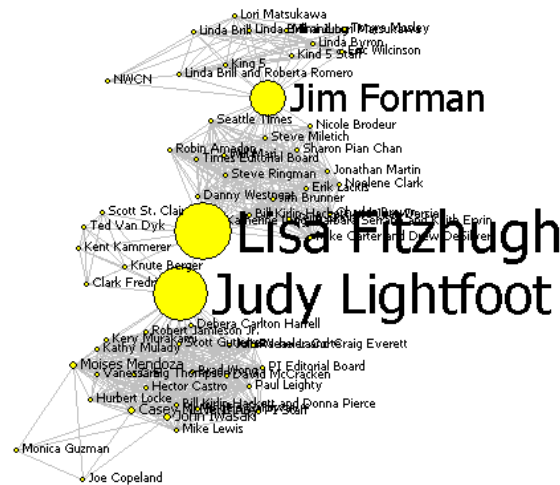


Figure 3.4. Authorship cross-publication network: Mainstream media and *Crosscut* component. Edges = publication in the same communication resource. Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness.

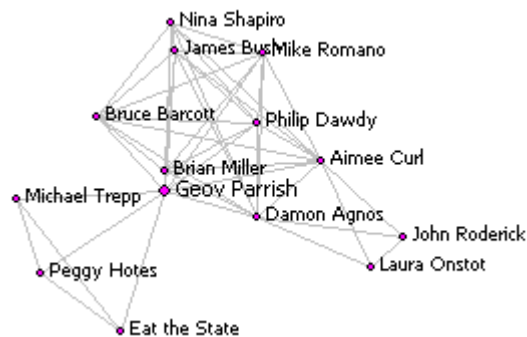


Figure 3.5. Authorship cross-publication network: *Eat the State* and *Seattle Weekly* component. Edges = publication in the same communication resource. Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness.

The third component consists of authors publishing in the *Seattle Weekly*, the *Seattle Weekly Blog*, and *Eat the State* (see Figure 3.5). While the relationship between the *Seattle Weekly* and the *Seattle Weekly Blog* is fairly evenly distributed among authors (upper right), the tie with *Eat the State* (lower left) is brokered exclusively by Geov Parish – the editor of *Eat the State* and a regular columnist in the *Seattle Weekly*.



The analysis of organizations, the texts that they publish and the authors that write them, can help us to understand some of the formal institutions that facilitate the production of discourse on the three issue areas covered in this study. But while each communication resource displays characteristics that may be unlike other resources, they can be understood as of several different types, and as sharing sectoral affinity. In analyzing the relationships that cross-authorships and cross-publications produce, I found that observed behavioral patterns of publishing tended to reproduce the kinds of sectoral relationships that we would expect, with alternative media and advocacy organizations publishing many of the same authors and mainstream media organizations doing the same (with the exception of *Crosscut*). We may also expect that sectoral affiliation will mean that texts published in communication resources categorized as of the same organizational type or organizational sector will be more likely to share similarities in the kinds of language that they use, and the kinds of issues that they cover, something I return to in chapter five.

***Organizational types and organizational sectors.***

Communication resources (CRs) were organized into categories using two levels of distinction: organizational types (OT) and organizational sectors (OS). First, organizations are commonly referred to in relation to the *organizational types* to which they belong. While the designation of *King 5* as a local TV news station may not be prominently displayed on the stations website, local media consumers – and those that publish in the CR – would refer to it as such and place it alongside other local TV stations (*KIRO*, *Q 13*, *NWCN* and the *Seattle Channel*). While organizational cultures likely vary between organizations, the conventions of TV broadcast journalism are common enough to suggest that authors publishing in any of these resources may approach the topic in a manner similar among

organizations of the same type. Earlier, I asked *What are the organizational types and the organizational sectors involved in producing each of the three issue areas?* Based both on the extent literature in media studies on news norms and organizational cultures (Cook, 1999; Gitlin, 1980), as well as my own ethnographic understanding of participating groups, I constructed the following categories of organizational types: *advocacy, regional government, Committee to End Homelessness, public forums/meetings, local daily papers, local weekly papers, local TV news, local radio, local regional blogs, other area news, non-local news, and video host sites*. Table 3.9 lists the communication resources that populate each organizational type category.

My next research question asked, *What kinds of positional roles do authors publishing in multiple communication resources produce at the level of organizational types and sectors?* A graphical representation of authorship profiles in relation to the organizational type attributes can help us to see the relationships between authors, resources and organizational types. Figure 3.6 shows a visualization of a 2-mode network, where authors are the rows and organizational types are the columns. The first thing that this type of representation can illustrate are the connections between organizational types via the authors that publish in communication resources within each category. Here, we can see that local regional blogs play an important bridging role, connecting daily papers, local TV and regional government to local weekly papers, advocacy and non-local news. This relationship is brokered by only three people publishing in local regional blogs. On one side, we have Judy Lightfoot and Lisa Fitzhugh, and on the other Tim Harris. We can also see that three organizational types are isolates: The Committee to End Homelessness, public forums/meetings and other area news (lower right and upper left respectively). In the case of

Table 3.9. Communication resources and organizational types.

Organizational Type	Communication Resource
Advocacy:	RCOP email; Real Change organizer email; Nickelsville email; RCOP wiki; Real Change Organizing Project; Highland Park Action Committee; WRAP; Jobs With Justice; NickelsvilleSeattle.org; The Mustard Seed House; UCUC; Homeless Underground; Trinity United Methodist Church; Campus Activism; Care 2 make a difference; Family Works; Homeless Alliance of Western New York; InterVarsity Social Justice League; RC volunteer; Seattle Women in Black; Tacoma SDS; Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation.
Regional Government:	City of Seattle; City email; Other Government (Redmond, Kirkland, White center, etc.); Metropolitan King County Council, or MetroKC; City Council.
Committee to End Homelessness:	Interagency Council (of CEH); CAC: Consumer Advisory Council (of CEH).
Public Forums/Meetings:	Municipal Jail Public Forum; Neighborhood Meeting.
Local Weekly Papers:	<i>Real Change News</i> ; <i>Seattle Weekly Blog</i> ; <i>The Stranger Blog</i> ; <i>Seattle Weekly</i> ; <i>Eat the State</i> ; <i>The Stranger</i> .
Local Daily Papers:	<i>Seattle PI</i> ; <i>Seattle Times</i> ; <i>West Seattle Herald</i> ; <i>Seattle PI Blog</i> ; <i>The Daily</i> ; <i>Seattle Times Blog</i> ; <i>The Olympian</i> .
Local Radio:	KBCS; KUOW; <i>Mason County Daily News</i> .
Local Regional Blogs:	<i>Apesma's Lament</i> ; <i>West Seattle Blog</i> ; <i>Magnolia Voice</i> ; <i>White Center Now</i> ; <i>Libertadkorps</i> ; <i>Crosscut</i> ; <i>Blogging Georgetown</i> ; <i>This Way Up, Seattle, Washington</i> ; <i>Nickelsville: And Why The Mayor Should Care</i> ; <i>Seattlest</i> ; <i>Seattle IMC</i> ; <i>TentCities.wordpress.com</i> ; <i>One Drop In The Bucket</i> ; <i>Smarter Neighbors</i> ; <i>Java Colleen's Jitters</i> ; <i>WashBlog</i> ; <i>Eugene Cho</i> ; <i>Examiner.com</i> ; <i>Godspace</i> ; <i>Save Feral Human Habitat</i> ; <i>other than...</i> ; <i>Rainier Valley Post</i> ; <i>Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce</i> ; <i>Sleepless in Magnolia</i> ; <i>Up Your Staircase</i> ; <i>Whitney's Corner</i> ; <i>Be like the blue bird and sing</i> ; <i>Citizen Rain</i> ; <i>Doorstep Politics</i> ; <i>Emmafurbird</i> ; <i>Entering the Conversations</i> ; <i>MizGingerSnaps At WordPress</i> ; <i>The Sports Pig's Blog</i> ; <i>Yelp</i> .
Local TV:	KOMO; KIRO; King 5; NWCN; <i>Seattle Channel</i> ; Q 13.
Other Area News:	<i>HeraldNet</i> ; <i>MyNorthwest.com</i> .
Non-Local News:	<i>Democracy Now!</i> ; CNN; <i>AlterNet</i> ; <i>IndyBay</i> ; <i>Monthly Review Zine</i> ; <i>New America Media</i> ; <i>News.Infoshop.org</i> ; <i>concierge.com</i> ; <i>Digital Journal</i> ; <i>High Country News</i> ; <i>New York Times</i> ; <i>The Hook</i> ; <i>YVKE Mundial Radio</i> .
Video Host Site:	<i>Blip.TV</i> ; <i>Youtube</i> .

the first two, this is due in part to the lack of authorship identification of communication texts beyond sub-committee labels (Interagency Council or Consumer Advisory Committee) or particular event labels. Figure 3.7 simplifies how organizational types are related to each other through co-publication by reducing the 2-mode network to a 1-mode network, whereby ties (or edges) consist of publication of the same author in both organizational types.

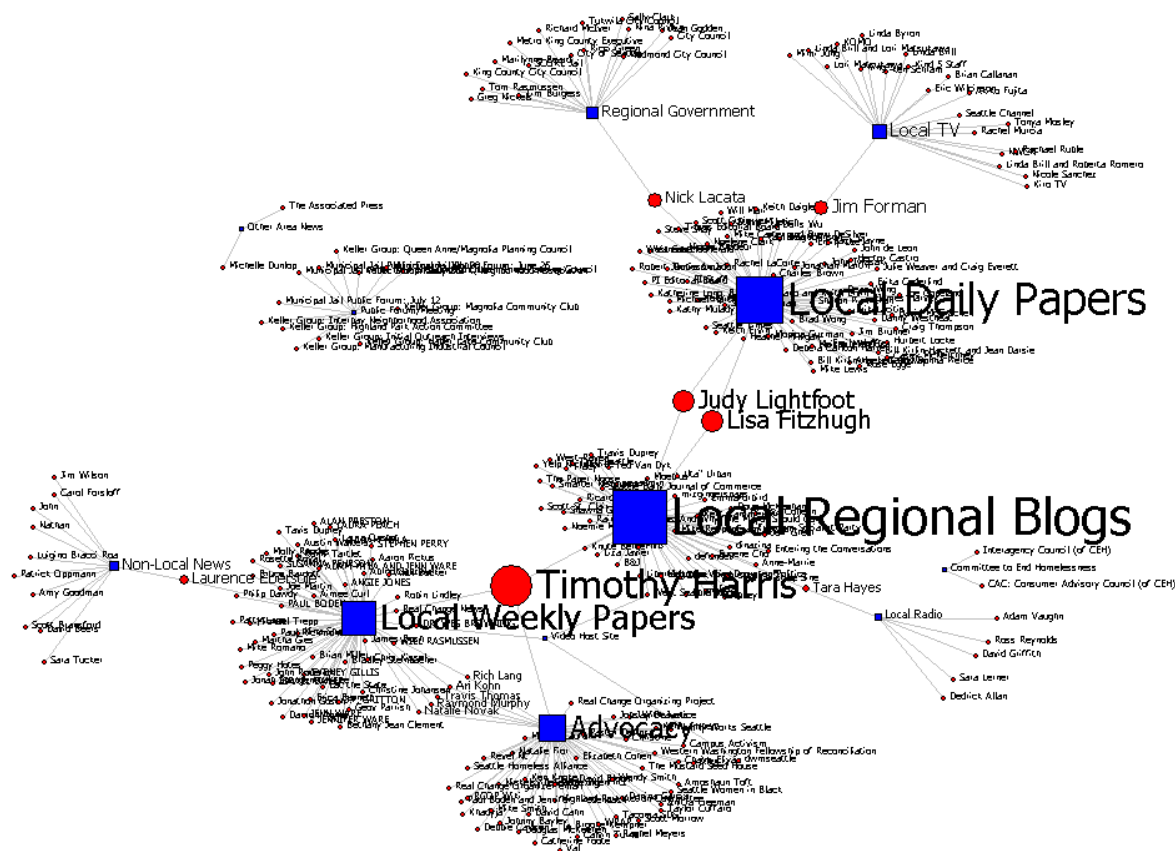


Figure 3.6. Cross-publication network: 2-mode network of authors and organizational types. Color = blue (organizational types) and red (authors). Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness. Edges = publication of an author in an organizational type.

Beyond the categorization of communication resources into types, communication resources can also be understood as affiliated with even broader institutionally defined categories. I build on McCarthy and Zald's (1973, 1977) concept of social movement sectors (consisting of all advocacy oriented organizations contributing to the production of all social

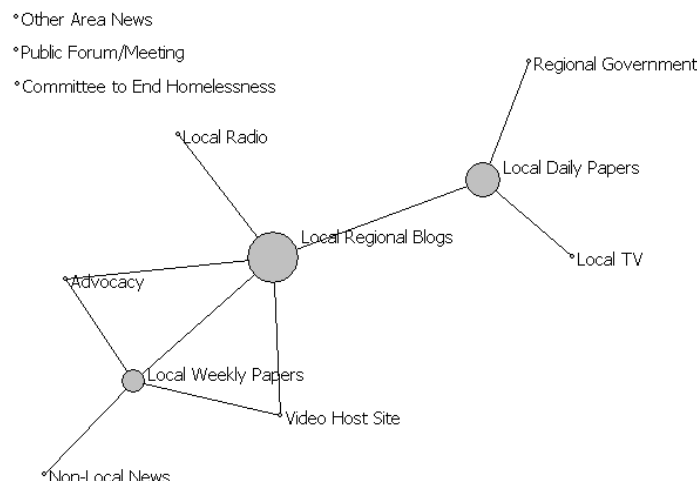


Figure 3.7. Cross-publication network: 1-mode network of relationships between OTs. Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness. Edges = publication of the same author.

movements in a given geopolitical space) by calling these categories *organizational sectors*.

Organizational sectors define large and relatively diverse collections of communication

resources that fit within four institutional categories: *advocacy*, *alternative media*,

*mainstream media*, and *government*.<sup>10</sup> Each of these categories are comprised of

organizations that have been shown to share enough with others in the same category that

they can be said to form social institutions. Advocacy organizations are focused primarily on

advocating for substantive changes to existing social institutions (aligning quite closely to

popular definitions of social movement organizations, or SMOs; cf., Jenkins, 1983;

McCarthy, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977), alternative media often exist to both

advocate for the goals established by advocacy organizations and to counter trends in

coverage that they see in mainstream media organizations (Atton, 2002; Downing, 1984;

Downing, Ford, Gil, & Stein, 2000; Howley, 2009), mainstream media organizations have

been shown to function in ways that reinforce existing power dynamics and perpetuate

frames presented by government (Cook, 1999; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978),

and government texts have been found to focus primarily on institutional process and the

strategic framing of issues in ways that support proposed or existing social programs (Praet, 2010; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). While some organizational types map cleanly onto organizational sectors, others contain groups of communication resources that may be identified with one organizational type (for instance, local weekly papers), but are identified with different organizational sectors (alternative media and mainstream media). While potentially less specific than organizational types, the organizational sector labels are perhaps more accurately reflective of meta-level cultural patterns that are in fact more likely to influence behavior than the differences between a daily newspaper and a TV news program. Table 3.10 lists the overlap between OTs and OSs.

Table 3.10. Number of texts occurring in both organizational types and organizational sectors.

Organizational Type	Organizational Sector				Total
	Advocacy	AltMedia	MainMedia	Government	
Advocacy	258				258
Local Regional Blogs		287			287
Local Weeklies Papers		179	68		247
Local Daily Papers			140		140
Local Radio		5	4		9
Local TV News			74		74
Other Area News			2		2
Non-Local News		9	7		16
Video Host Site		14			14
Area Government				32	32
Committee to End Homelessness				15	15
Public Forum/Meeting				22	22
Total	258	494	295	69	1116

In responding to my research question regarding the ways that sectoral affiliation categories are related to each other through cross-authorship profiles, I examined a 2-mode network of organizational sectors and their authorship publication profiles. Figure 3.8

illustrates how this relationship is highly centralized. In other words, there is no direct authorship relationship between advocacy or alternative media and government, or between government and mainstream media and advocacy. There is only a single path that can be taken to reach each of these organizational sectors, even if that path is brokered by more than one author (as is the case between advocacy, alternative media and mainstream media categories). This finding re-enforces expectations about cross authorship among organizational sectors, with the ends of the chain populated by people in widely different social positions in relation to the OSs that they publish in. Those authors publishing in two organizational sectors can be understood as crossing sectoral boundaries, and higher levels of boundary crossing (in the form of multiple authors occupying brokerage roles) might indicate a lower level of sectoral differentiation. For instance, the relationship between government and mainstream media is brokered by a single author (Nick Lacata, a local city council member), suggesting a greater institutional separation between the two sectors than that observed between the other three sectors, since their relationship is brokered by five or six different authors.

The analysis of levels of formal organization among texts published in the public sphere can highlight institutional dynamics and the relationships between authors, communication resources, organizational types, and organizational sectors. As we have seen at the level of cross-authorship profiles, the four organizational sectors reflected patterns of differentiation that were aligned with what we might expect given the existing research on media and political mobilization. However, these levels of formal organization may or may not map onto the observed forms of emergent social organization that we might expect when it comes to the measurement of issue coverage and hyperlinking patterns among authors and

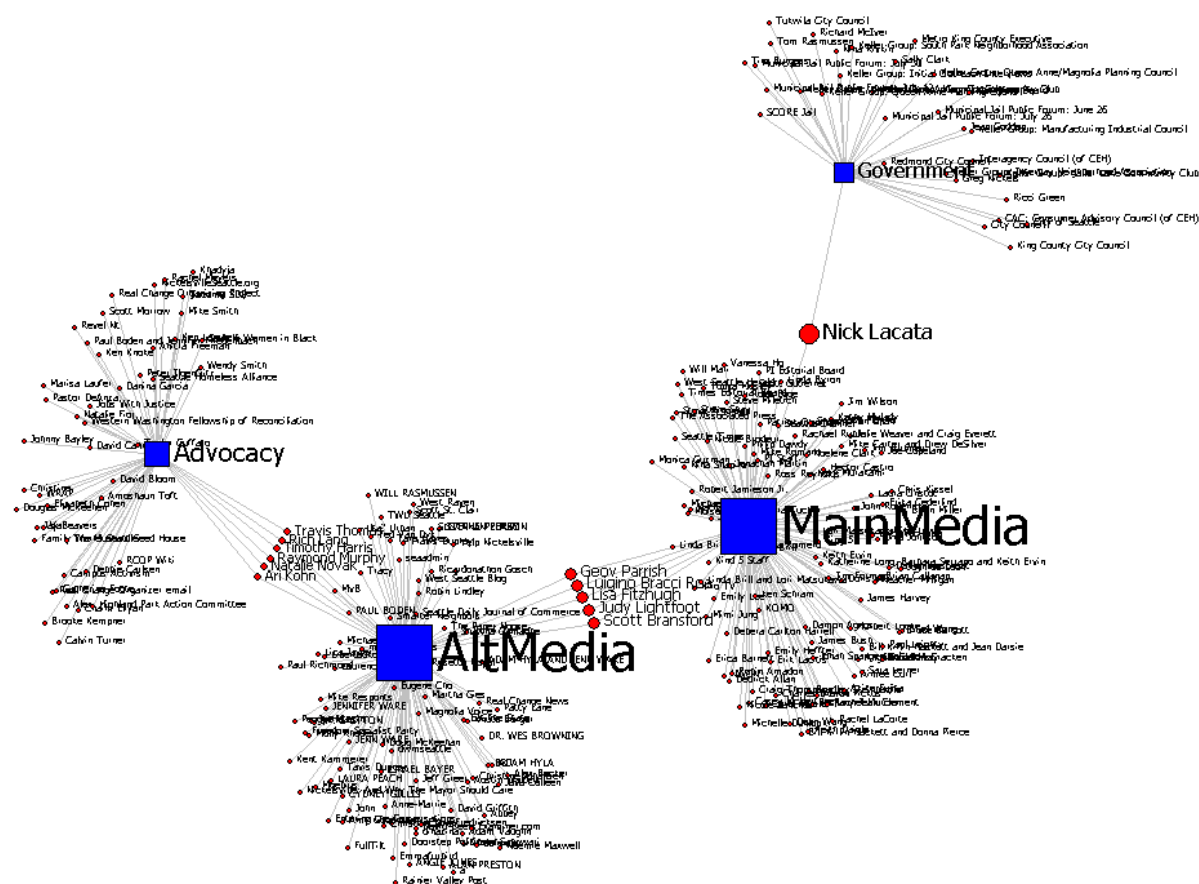


Figure 3.8. Cross-publication network: 2-mode network of authors and organizational sectors. Color = blue (organizational types) and red (authors). Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness. Edges = publication of an author in an organizational sector.

communication resources. Focusing primarily on observed rather than expected behavior for a moment, may highlight additional areas of boundary crossing, as well as otherwise obscured collections of authors or communication resources. It is to these questions that I now turn.

### Emergent organization: Campaigns and issue networks.

Emergent networks can be identified using any number of measures to locate behavior and track structural patterns among a group of actors. I am interested in the ways that actors (authors, communication resources, and categories of organizations) are structured around three issue areas, producing three issue sectors: the Sweeps, Nickelsville and the



Proposed Jail. Identifying who is part of an issue sector is a nebulous activity, but two strategies can help us to define the parameters for analysis. First, in creating the sample of communication texts analyzed in this chapter, a series of search words and phrases were used. This uses the mechanism of *language use* to identify when a text talks about an *issue area*. When a text talks about an issue area, we can define it as contributing to the *issue sector*. Some texts talk about multiple issue areas, so we can say that they contribute to multiple issue sectors. The first level of analysis of issue sectors looks at the structural properties of the network by measuring the ways that actors (authors, communication resources, and categories of organizations) are similar or dissimilar to each other based on their propensity to talk about one or more of the three issues areas (described here as participation in issue sectors). The second level of analysis looks at the *hyperlinking* patterns between texts as a measure of the importance of different actors in an issue sector, and as a measurement of the structural properties of the three issue sectors. Building on the data set of hyperlinking patterns among communication resources in the three issue sectors, *attributes* were then attached to the communication resources that identified if the communication resource contributed to each of the *issue sectors*, and what *organizational sectors* each resource belonged to. This was used to split the hyperlink-based sociomatrix into three distinct *issue sector hyperlink networks*, consisting of those communication resources that contributed to the issue sector in question: the Sweeps, Nickelsville and the Proposed Jail. These hyperlink issue networks allowed me to measure the structural properties of the discursive field for each area – including comparison between issue sector hyperlink networks – and re-sampling them over time allowed me to look at how those hyperlink issue

networks changed or did not change over time. These two approaches (issues mentions and hyperlinks) are addressed in turn in the following sections.

***Talking about issues: The sweeps, Nickelsville and the proposed jail.***

Issue sectors are functionally emergent clusters of participating authors and resources that co-construct public discourse on an issue area or set of issue areas. In most cases, participants contribute to this collective good through a process of second-order communality (Bimber et al., 2005) – that is, they contribute without full knowledge of the larger project to which they are contributing. Since this particular study sampled three overlapping issue sectors, an analysis of issue mentions can help us to see how production of issue areas can create multiple emergent clusters of participants that are due, at least in part, to the way the issue areas are structured through language. *What emergent forms of social organization can be defined by actors' textual contributions to each of the issue sectors?* Clustering regarding the discursive production of the three overlapping issues can be understood from two different perspectives: *issue specialization* and *issue brokerage*. *Issue specialization* is when an actor focuses only on a single issue. The identification of the most important actors engaged in issue specialization might involve the listing of those actors in rank based on the number of texts that they produce on the issue (how prolific are they on this issue?). *Issue brokerage* is when an actor produces texts that focus on two or more issues – either within the same text or in different texts with the same actor identification (author, communication resource, organizational category). Since brokers occupy a discursive space between those actors who are concerned with issue specialization, brokers can cluster into multiple groups. In this case we can identify four different groups of issue brokers: brokers that focus on both the Sweeps and Nickelsville (SN); those that focus on both the Sweeps and the Proposed Jail

(SJ); those that focus on both the Proposed Jail and Nickelsville (JN); or those that focus on all three (JNS). Thus, if we recognize both issue specialization and issue brokerage as important ways of identifying clusters of actors, we may potentially identify seven different clusters in a setting in which three issues are being produced.

Figure 3.9 shows a 2-mode network representation of authors and communication resources and the clusters that they comprise based on these seven categories of issue specialization and issue brokerage. Table 3.11 and 3.12 list the distribution of authors and resources in the issue specialization and issue brokerage clusters described above. By far the largest specialization cluster of authors pertains to the Proposed Jail issue area, and the largest specialization cluster of resources is concerned with talk about the Nickelsville issue area. Also of note is the discrepancy between the proportional size of the J/N/S brokerage cluster for authors (11.2% of all authors) and resources (23% of all CRs). In both the author network and the communication resource network, the Sweeps/Nickelsville brokerage cluster is much larger than either of the two-issue brokerage clusters associated with the Proposed Jail. At the level of the entire network, the relatively weak connection between the Proposed Jail issue sector and the Sweeps suggests that, at the level of communication resources at least, the two issue areas are associated with a weaker level of narrative cohesion than that presented in the brokerage space occupied by the other two issues. This means that the Nickelsville issue area ended up playing a brokerage role between the Proposed Jail and the Sweeps, likely due in part to the strategic choice by Nickelodeons to initiate their camp on a Proposed Jail site, and the subsequent “sweep” of the camp by the city.

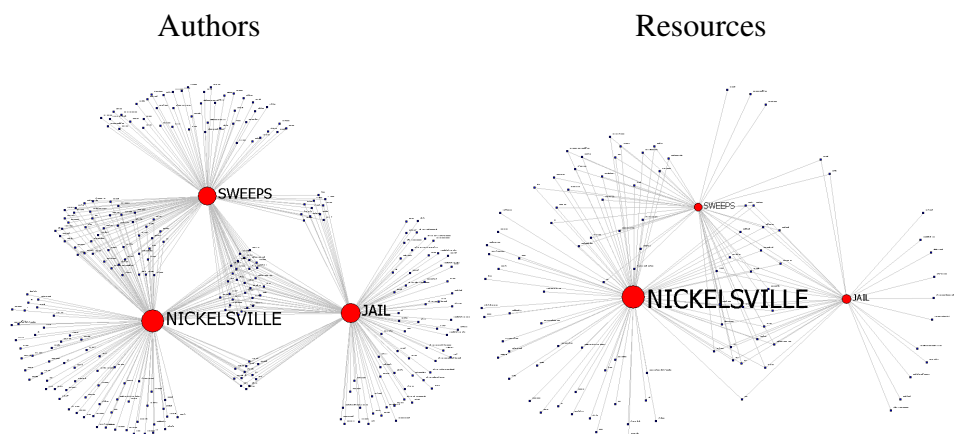


Figure 3.9. 2-mode network representation of issue specialization and issue brokerage clusters: authors and communication resources. Edges = mention of the issue area. Size = Freeman's undirected normalized betweenness. Red circles = issues, Blue squares = actors.

Table 3.11. Distribution of texts and authors in the seven issue specialization and brokerage clusters.

	Texts*		Authors		Text per Author
	N	%	N	%	N
S	78	15.1%	47	16.9%	1.66
N	86	16.7%	56	20.1%	1.54
J	137	26.6%	68	24.5%	2.01
S/N	87	16.9%	52	18.7%	1.67
N/J	15	2.9%	12	4.3%	1.25
J/S	14	2.7%	12	4.3%	1.17
J/N/S	99	19.2%	31	11.2%	3.19
Total	516	100.0%	278	100.0%	12.49

\* Texts that do not conform to the cluster specifications are not included, resulting in a total below the sample total of texts in the corpus.

Table 3.12. Distribution of texts and communication resources in the seven clusters.

	Texts*		CRs		Text per CR
	N	%	N	%	N
S	15	4.6%	4	4.0%	3.75
N	50	15.4%	31	31.0%	1.61
J	57	17.5%	10	10.0%	5.70
SN	46	14.2%	28	28.0%	1.64
NJ	1	0.3%	1	1.0%	1.00
JS	3	0.9%	3	3.0%	1.00
JNS	153	47.1%	23	23.0%	6.65
Total	325	100.0%	100	100.0%	21.36

\* Texts that do not conform to the cluster specifications are not included, resulting in a total below the sample total of texts in the corpus.

This analysis has highlighted seven clusters of participants that emerged based on their linguistic behavior. Clustering actors based on their production of issue sectors highlights the particular roles that authors and resources play in discursive space, and may suggest other patterns of behavior associated with the ways that issues are or are not connected through language. For instance, issue specialization texts may privilege a particular way of relating to an issue over others, while issue brokerage may rely on particular areas of meaning as bridges between issues. Questions regarding the relationship between forms of formal organization, communication technologies and language use – and how these factors contribute to emergent organizational clusters – is addressed in chapter five. For now, I turn to the second area of emergent organization of interest in this chapter: hyperlink patterns among communication resources.

***Hyperlinks, discursive roles, and actor prominence.***

The analysis of issue specialization and issue brokerage between the three issues can highlight issue mention patterns within each actor's texts, but much of the strength of association may be a simple result of the number of words in the text or the number of texts produced by each actor. However, the importance of each text as established in the public sphere is not evenly distributed, with significant differences occurring in virtually all discursive environments (Bennett et al., Forthcoming). In Internet texts, the primary means of establishing source prominence is through the analysis of patterns of hyperlinking between communication resources. Hyperlinks point to patterns of information flow in online digital networks, as well as issue reference prominence by surfacing a particular set of communication resources as important locusts of meaning making in an issue field, regardless of the particular opinion of the author or resource vis-à-vis the issue (i.e., in favor

of, or against, the Proposed Jail). Information flow in online information networks is facilitated through hyperlinks between web-pages, with hyperlinks allowing someone to move from one information source to another.

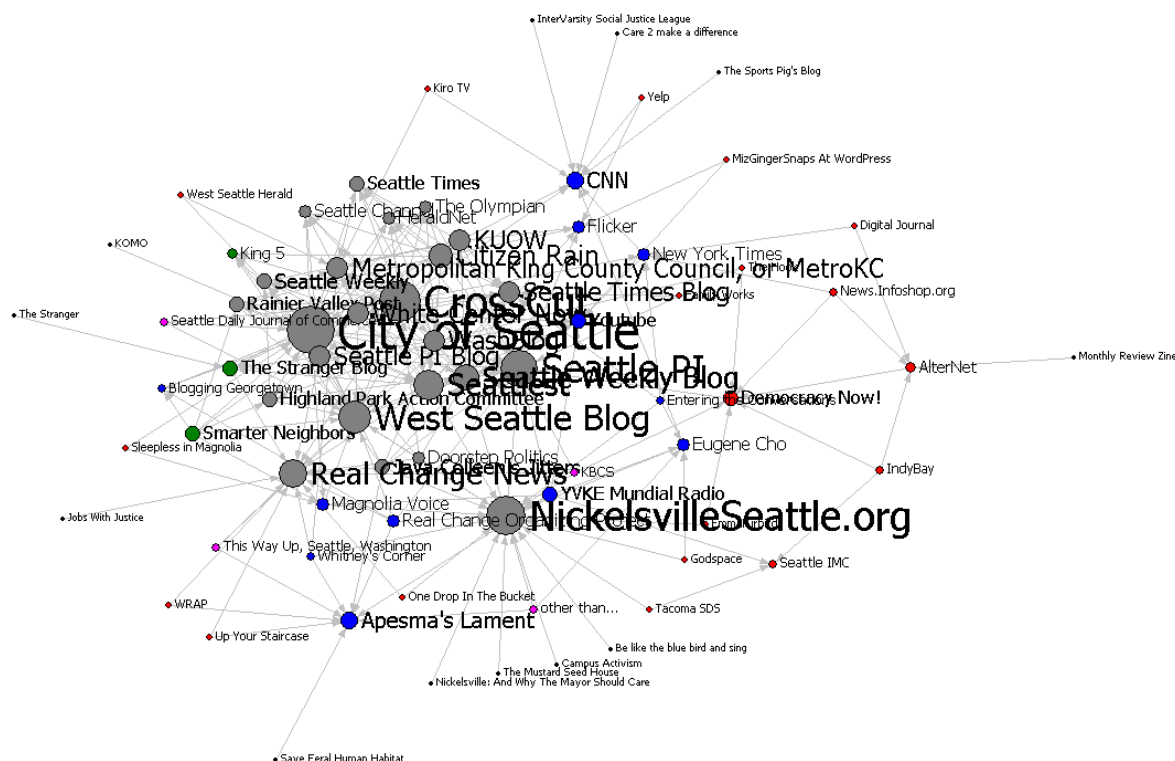


Figure 3.10. Network representation of hyperlinks between communication resources contributing to at least one of the three issue sectors. Collected in May 2009 using Interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Color = k-core. Size = indegree. N = 74 nodes.

In order to analyze linking patterns between communication resources within each of the three overlapping issue sectors, the original sociomatrix of 74 resources and their interlinking patterns (see Figure 3.10) was broken into three separate data files consisting of those resources publishing at least one text that contributed to the issue sector: the Sweeps, Nickelsville, and the Proposed Jail.<sup>11</sup> This allowed me to measure the composition of issue sectors based on the relationships between communication resources as measured by the frequency of hyperlinks. It also allowed comparative analysis based on measures of centralization for each issue network. Table 3.13 shows that, while the Sweeps and

Nickelsville hyperlink issue networks had fairly comparable levels of network level centralization, the Jails hyperlink issue network had a Freeman's normalized directed betweenness score nearly three times that of the other two networks, and a density of nearly twice the other two networks. In the sections that follow, I describe each of the characteristics of the three hyperlink issue networks.

Table 3.13. Centrality metrics for the three issue sector hyperlink networks. Edges = binary ties of > 0.

Issue	N of Nodes	Betweenness	Outdegree	Indegree	P* Density
Sweeps	37	.06	.29	.32	.05
Nickelsville	62	.07	.21	.28	.04
Jail	30	.28	.42	.35	.11

#### *Sweeps.*

The first measure of resource importance within the Sweeps hyperlink issue network can be measured by the number of inlinks (indegree) for each communication resource. A resource's indegree score represents the number of hyperlinks that the resource receives from other resources in the network. In the context of hyperlink networks, indegree can be read as the level of prominence on the issue as determined by others in the issue sector. In this case, *Real Change News* received the most inlinks within the network, along with the *West Seattle Blog* and the *Seattle PI*, suggesting that they were a common reference within the issue network as opinion leaders on the issue area (see Table 3.14). This finding aligns with the measure of issue prominence based on publication profiles described above as well (with the exception of *West Seattle Blog*), with *Real Change News* publishing nearly three times as many texts on the Sweeps (n:122) than the next most prolific author (n:43). A k-core analysis suggests that all three communication resources are within the core hyperlink issue network (see Figure 3.11; color = black). Another interesting pattern here is that advocacy organizations (RCOP, WRAP and Jobs With Justice) are not linked-to by any node (inlinks <

1). This suggests that they are not important contributors to the issue sector as measured by who participating communication resources link-to. This also suggests that people interested in learning about the issue area who enter the network from another location will not be able to reach an advocacy source by traversing hyperlinks alone.

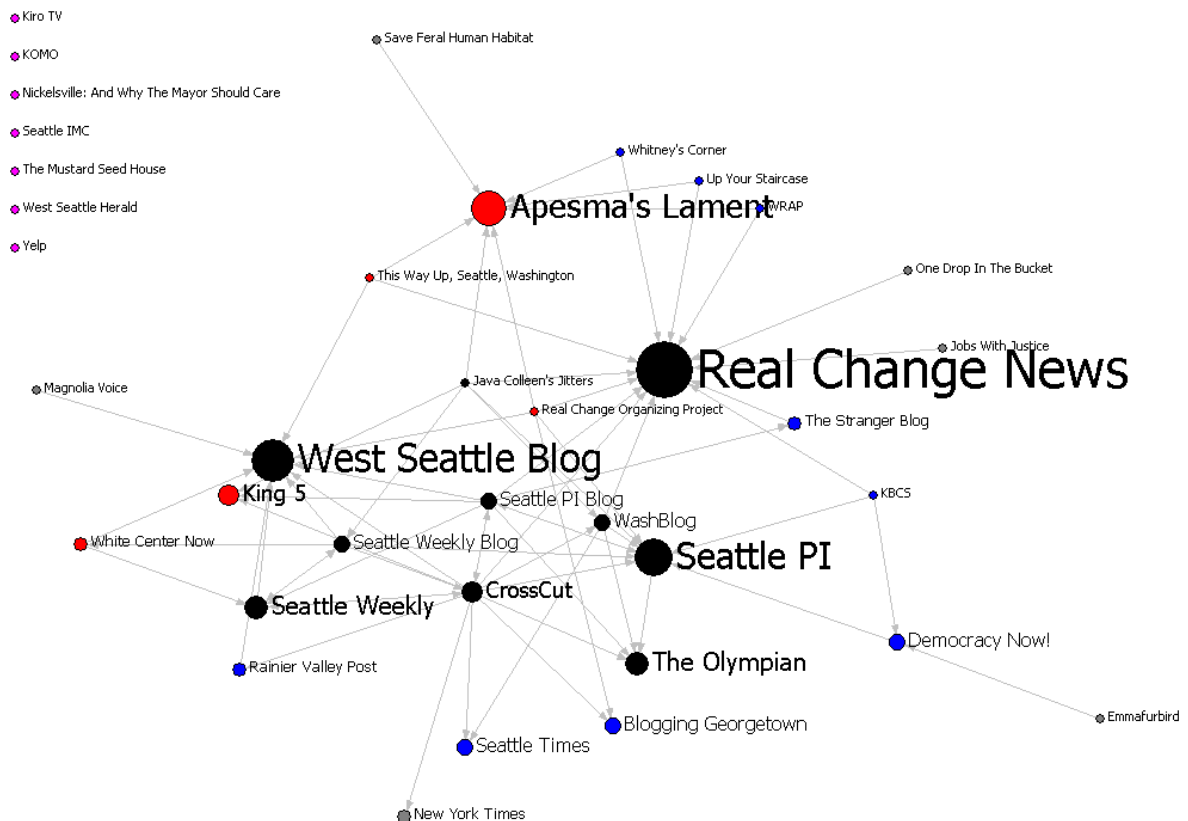


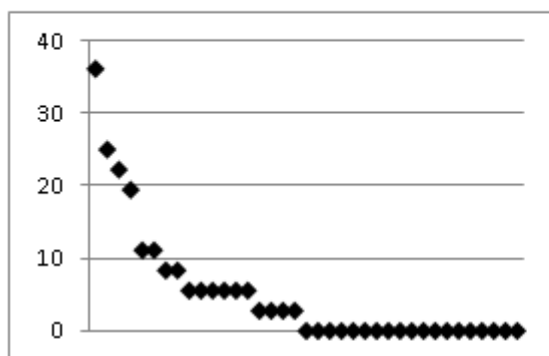
Figure 3.11. Network representation of hyperlinks between communication resources in the Sweeps issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Color = k-core. Size = indegree. Isolates included. N = 37.

The converse metric for inlinks is outlinks (outdegree). Here, outdegree can be understood as the level to which an actor contributes to the reachability of other actors. If someone enters an issue sector on one website, they are able to travel through the network only so far as there are hyperlinks directed towards other actors in the network. The more actors within the issue sector that this initial website links to, the greater the reader's ability to reach other contributors to the issue area. It is noteworthy that all of the top-tier



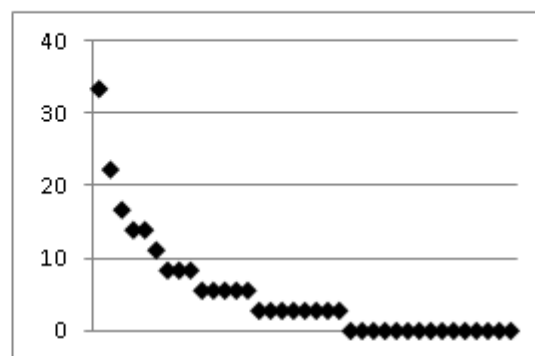
Table 3.14. Normalized indegree and outdegree of hyperlinks between communication resources in the Sweeps issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Distribution and list of top-tier communication resources in each measure (score > 10). Isolates included. N = 37.

Normalized Indegree



Communication Resource	InDeg
<i>Real Change News</i>	36.1
<i>West Seattle Blog</i>	25.0
<i>Seattle PI</i>	22.2
<i>Apesma's Lament</i>	19.4
<i>Seattle Weekly</i>	11.1
<i>The Olympian</i>	11.1

Normalized Outdegree



Communication Resource	OutDeg
<i>CrossCut</i>	33.3
<i>Seattle PI Blog</i>	22.2
<i>Java Colleen's Jitters</i>	16.7
<i>Seattle Weekly Blog</i>	13.9
<i>Real Change Organizing Project</i>	13.9
<i>WashBlog</i>	11.1

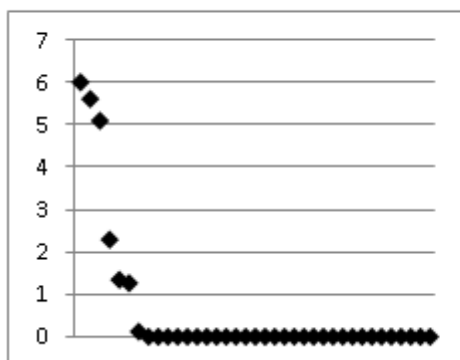
communication resources based on normalized outlink scores are blog-format resources, while only two of the top-tier resources based on normalized inlink scores were blogs. In the case of the *Seattle PI*, the online version of the paper (*Seattle PI*) was a major source of inlinks from other communication resources in the network (#3), while the organization's blog (*Seattle PI Blog*) was a major source of outlinks in the network (#2). This pattern suggests that blogs may be more prone to facilitating reachability in a network, while formal news organizations may serve as foci for opinion leadership.<sup>12</sup>

A third metric provides a measure of actor positionality similar to a combined measure of indegree and outdegree, by ranking actors according to the number of actors for which they serve as the shortest path to all other actors in the network: Freeman's normalized

betweenness (see Table 3.15; Freeman, 1977). When we look at betweenness scores, *Real Change News* is no longer as prominent within the network, suggesting that the *Seattle PI* and the *Seattle PI Blog* played the most important bridging roles within the network, allowing people to navigate between the two major branches of the network (alternative media and advocacy organizations in the upper right and mainstream media and elite blogs in the bottom left). Notably, the *Seattle PI* and the *Seattle Weekly* are the only two resources in this list that also made it into the top 10 most prolific publishers of texts on the Sweeps issue area (see analysis of publication profiles above).

Table 3.15. Normalized betweenness scores using hyperlinks between communication resources in the Sweeps issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Distribution and list of communication resources with betweenness > 0. Isolates included. N = 37.

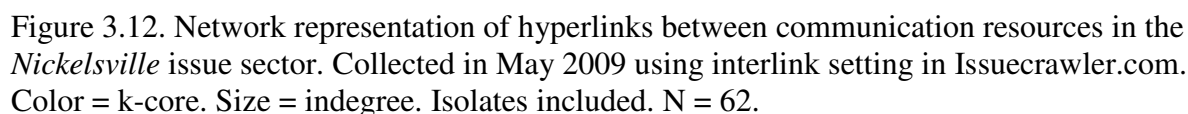
Normalized betweenness: Sweeps



Communication Resource	nBetweenness
<i>Seattle PI</i> Blog	6.0
<i>Seattle PI</i>	5.6
<i>CrossCut</i>	5.1
<i>Seattle Weekly</i>	2.3
<i>Seattle Weekly</i> Blog	1.4
<i>Democracy Now!</i>	1.3
<i>WashBlog</i>	0.1

#### *Nickelsville.*

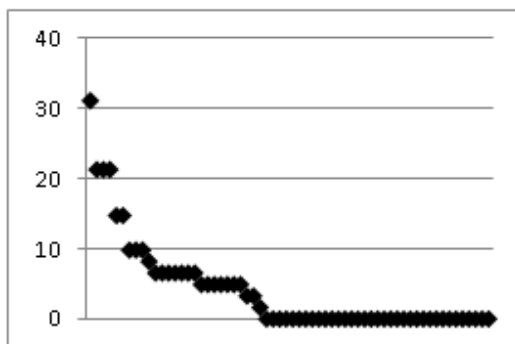
Nickelsville had the largest number of participating communication resources among the three issue sectors, and the lowest network level indegree (.28), outdegree (.21) and density (.04) scores (see Table 3.13 above). These comparative metrics confirm the findings presented earlier on decentralization based on publication distribution, and suggest that the Nickelsville issue sector was the most evenly distributed of the three issue sectors, with the lowest levels of concentration among the fewest number of actors. A graphical representation



list of the top ten producers of texts on the Nickelsville issue area, as was also the case in the Sweeps issue area. Similarly, many of the same communication resources were listed as top-tier resources based on indegree as were evident in the Sweeps issue sector, with similar patterns regarding the importance of formal news organizations (*Real Change News*, the *Seattle PI*, *CNN*). We also see a similar pattern in the importance of blog format resources when we look at outdegree scores, with all but one communication resource in the top-tier list making use of a blog format site design (*YVKE* is a radio station in Argentina that covered the first raid on *Nickelsville* with only a single article).

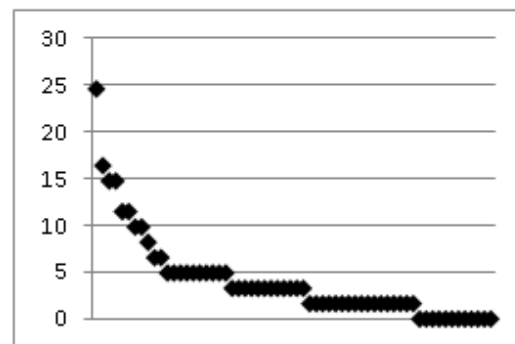
Table 3.16. Normalized indegree and outdegree based on hyperlinks between communication resources in the *Nickelsville* issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Distribution and list of top-tier communication resources in each measure (score > 10). Label = organizational resource. Isolates included. N = 62.

Normalized Indegree



Communication Resource	InDeg
NickelsvilleSeattle.org	31.2
<i>Real Change News</i>	21.3
<i>Seattle PI</i>	21.3
<i>West Seattle Blog</i>	21.3
<i>Apesma's Lament</i>	14.8
<i>CNN</i>	14.8

Normalized Outdegree



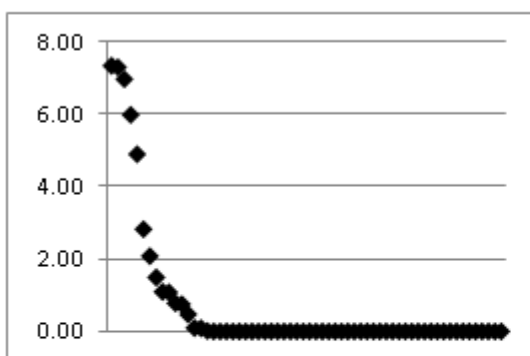
Communication Resource	OutDeg
<i>CrossCut</i>	24.6
<i>Seattle PI Blog</i>	16.4
<i>Seattlest</i>	14.8
<i>Citizen Rain</i>	14.8
<i>Seattle Weekly Blog</i>	11.5
<i>YVKE Mundial Radio</i>	11.5

Analysis of the betweenness scores of actors in the issue sector again reflects a more distributed network structure than the other two issue networks (as mentioned above) with a

greater number of communication resources with betweenness scores greater than 0, and the most prominent resources displaying fairly comparable scores to each other (see Table 3.17).

Table 3.17. Normalized betweenness scores using hyperlinks between communication resources in the *Nickelsville* issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Distribution and list of communication resources with betweenness > 0. Isolates included. N = 62.

Normalized betweenness: Nickelsville



Communication Resource	nBetweenness
<i>Seattle Weekly Blog</i>	7.33
<i>NickelsvilleSeattle.org</i>	7.29
<i>Seattle PI</i>	6.96
<i>CrossCut</i>	5.98
<i>Seattle PI Blog</i>	4.89
<i>Democracy Now!</i>	2.82
<i>YouTube</i>	2.08
<i>Seattlest</i>	1.49
<i>KUOW</i>	1.09
<i>Seattle Weekly</i>	1.08
<i>AlterNet</i>	0.78
<i>New York Times</i>	0.75
<i>The Stranger Blog</i>	0.47
<i>Eugene Cho</i>	0.10
<i>White Center Now</i>	0.09
<i>Magnolia Voice</i>	0.01

### *Proposed Jail.*

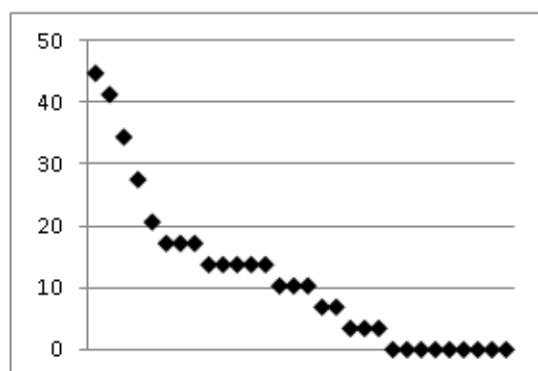
The Proposed Jail issue sector was by far the most centralized of the three hyperlink issue networks. Network level measurements for indegree (.42) and outdegree (.35) were both larger in the Proposed Jail issue sector than the Sweeps and Nickelsville, the betweenness score was four times higher (.28), and the density score was over twice as high (.11). When we look at the distribution of indegree scores within the network, there are also several differences of note (see Table 3.18). The role of governmentally sponsored communication resources is striking. The City of Seattle has the highest normalized indegree score, and other area government sites are also in the list of top-tier resources (those with scores above 20).



with the highest outdegree score among all other actors. A few other communication resources are new in the list of top-tier actors: *Smarter Neighbors* (an architecture and development group) and *KUOW* (the local public radio station). Again, blogs are the most common communication resources in outdegree counts, with only the City of Seattle and *KUOW* not making use of the blog format (see Figure 3.13 for a graphical representation of the Proposed Jail hyperlink issue network).

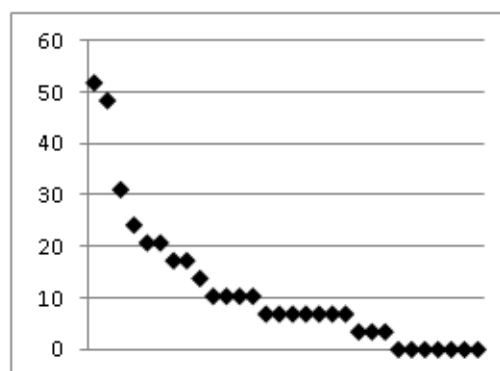
Table 3.18. Normalized indegree and outdegree based on hyperlinks between communication resources in the Proposed Jail issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Distribution and list of top-tier communication resources in each measure (score > 20). No isolates. N = 30.

Normalized Indegree



Communication Resource	InDeg
City of Seattle	44.8
<i>West Seattle Blog</i>	41.4
Metropolitan King County Council, or Metro King County	34.5
<i>Seattle PI</i>	27.6
<i>Seattle Weekly</i>	20.7

Norm Outdegree

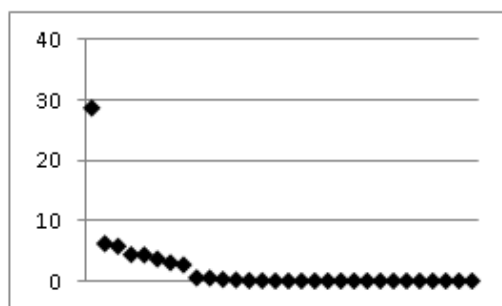


Communication Resource	OutDeg
City of Seattle	51.7
<i>CrossCut</i>	48.3
<i>Seattle Weekly Blog</i>	31.0
<i>Smarter Neighbors</i>	24.1
<i>KUOW</i>	20.7
<i>White Center Now</i>	20.7

The prominence of the City of Seattle in the Proposed Jail issue sector is most stark when we look at betweenness scores (see Table 3.19). Here, the City of Seattle has a score nearly five times that of the actor with the next highest score (*Crosscut*). This points to the

Table 3.19. Normalized betweenness scores using hyperlinks between communication resources in the Proposed Jail issue sector. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.com. Distribution and list of communication resources with betweenness > 0. No isolates. N = 30.

Normalized betweenness: Proposed Jail



Communication Resource	nBetweenness
City of Seattle	28.78
CrossCut	6.21
White Center Now	5.76
Seattle PI	4.38
KUOW	4.32
Seattle Weekly	3.65
The Stranger Blog	3.04
Seattle Times Blog	2.69
Highland Park Action Committee	0.51
Seattle Weekly Blog	0.49
WashBlog	0.25
Seattle Times	0.16
Magnolia Voice	0.06
Rainier Valley Post	0.04

most striking difference between the three issues. Governmentally sponsored communication resources were only present in the Proposed Jail issue network, and this was the only issue to contain more mainstream media sources than alternative media sources (see Table 3.20).

While this made only a small change to the overall make-up of those contributing to the issue space, the structural properties of the Proposed Jail issue network revolved heavily around a single governmentally sponsored communication resource. This suggests that, although small in number, governmental resources (the City of Seattle, Metropolitan King County Council, or Metro King County) occupied important structural network positions as the communication resources with the highest betweenness scores, and the greatest indegree and outdegree scores. The presence of these communication resources may account for the significant differences in network properties when comparing the three hyperlink issue networks.



Table 3.20. Distribution of communication resources in four organizational sectors in the three issue sector hyperlink networks. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.net.

Type	Jail		Nick		Sweeps	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Advocacy	3	0.10	8	0.13	4	0.11
Alternative Media	12	0.40	37	0.60	21	0.57
Government	2	0.07	-	-	-	-
Mainstream Media	13	0.43	17	0.27	12	0.32
Total	30	1.0	62	1.0	37	1.0

The differences in participation rates of resources sponsored by different organizational sectors can also lead to changes in linking patterns at the network level. Homophily scores measure the propensity for resources within one organizational sector to link to other actors in the same organizational sector. Table 3.21 shows that communication resources within the same organizational sector were less likely to link within their organizational sector, with the exception of the Proposed Jail network, signaling that the Proposed Jail was the only issue sector where communication resources were less likely to create links to texts published by communication resources outside of their sector, thus inhibiting a reader's movement from one organizational sector to another.

Table 3.21. Whole network homophily measures for each of the hyperlink issue networks based on organizational sectors. Collected in May 2009 using interlink setting in Issuecrawler.net.

Issue	E-I Ind	PBS	Corr
Sweeps	-0.163	-0.070	-0.243
Nickelsville	-0.184	-0.069	-0.207
Jail	0.300	0.039	-0.124

It is clear that the three issues differed significantly in terms of the degree to which the issue networks relied on a few resources to tie the network together. So, in answer to the question *How do network level metrics vary between the three issue networks?* we can see

that the level of centralization as measured by betweenness and density varied significantly. The Proposed Jail displayed the highest level of centralization, followed by the Sweeps, with Nickelsville positioned as the most evenly distributed issue sector. This finding echoes what I found when measuring issue centralization based on the number of contributing communication resources and their relative frequency of publication on the issues (see analysis above). In answering the question, *How are communication resources differentially positioned within each issue network based on hyperlinking patterns?* the results are not as well aligned with the findings on publication distribution. While I found that more prolific publishers of texts were likely to receive high indegree scores in all three networks, this measure alone was insufficient to account for linking behavior and the network positionality that linking produced. Instead, we saw two trends that also appear to influence the ways that resources were positioned in the three issue networks. First, the use of a blog format appeared to significantly increase the likelihood of a communication resource receiving a high outdegree score, meaning that blogs served a reachability function, tying resources together that might otherwise not be connected. This may be due to the ways that blogs have incorporated hyperlinks into the blog writing genre as an expectation that is not at all the same as traditional media formats that might otherwise be printed in a newspaper or broadcast on television. By embedding hyperlinks in the body of the text, authors writing in blog formats create texts that make explicit ties with other texts and facilitate the reader's access to other resources publishing on the issue online. Second, traditional institutional credibility markers like mainstream media or governmental affiliation appear to have continuing relevance in online environments. This is most starkly evident in the Proposed Jail issue, where governmentally sponsored resources, while publishing relatively few texts on

the issue, enjoyed significant levels of authority and occupied central roles by linking to and being linked from the largest number of other resources in the network.

The higher level of centralization in regards to textual production of the Proposed Jail as an issue may be due to the issue itself: the Proposed Jail revolved more heavily around government processes, government reports, and government decisions than did either of the other two issues. However, it may also have to do with the relative “newness” of the issue, in that the Proposed Jail may not have been so broadly discussed within the public sphere that other sources of information began to rival the city as important referents in discursive production on the issue. The newness explanation assumes that, over the life of an issue sector network properties would trend towards decentralization, something that we turn to in the next section on change over time. If this were the case, we would expect to see all three issue sectors trend towards lower levels of centralization over time. This last section tests the age = decentralization theory.

#### *Change over time.*

As we saw in the previous section, the Proposed Jail issue sector was the most centralized among the three issue sectors. This was largely due to the high betweenness scores of the City of Seattle, with the resource occupying the most central location in the issue sector as measured by the number of actors for whom the City of Seattle was the most direct path to all other actors. One explanation for this discrepancy is that the Proposed Jail was a highly bureaucratic issue, in which the government played a disproportionately large role in deciding what the fate of the issue was to be. This may very well be the case, but it may also be due to the relative “newness” of the issue area in the public sphere. As a new issue area, discourse on the Proposed Jail still revolved around government processes in May of 2009 (when the first round of hyperlink data was collected), and articles about the issue area

referenced the city as the organization that had the power to decide the fate of a Proposed Jail. However, if we look at change over time, we can see that the Proposed Jail issue sector became increasingly less centralized between May of 2009 and December of 2009. Table 3.22 shows network level normalized betweenness scores for the three issue sectors at four points in time during 2009. While all three issue sectors became increasingly less centralized over time (as measured by betweenness scores), the Proposed Jail issue sector reflected a more substantial decline in centralization compared to the declines seen in the other two issue sectors. This pattern is similar when we look at changes in network density. The Proposed Jail issue sector showed a significant rise in density in August, a drop in October and a significant drop to the levels observed in the other two issue sectors in December, while the density scores for Nickelsville and the Sweeps stayed fairly constant over time.

Table 3.22. Change over time for normalized betweenness scores of issue sectors using hyperlinks between communication resources in the three issue sectors. Collected in May, August, October, and December of 2009 using the interlink setting in Issuecrawler.net. No isolates.

Month	Freeman Betweenness (binary)		
	Sweeps	Nickelsville	Jail
May	5.6	6.7	27.7
Aug	6.6	6.8	20.7
Oct	3.8	3.3	17.9
Dec	3.2	2.7	11.0

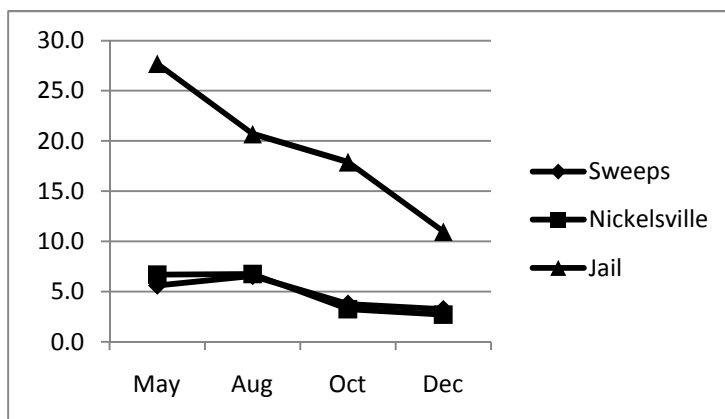
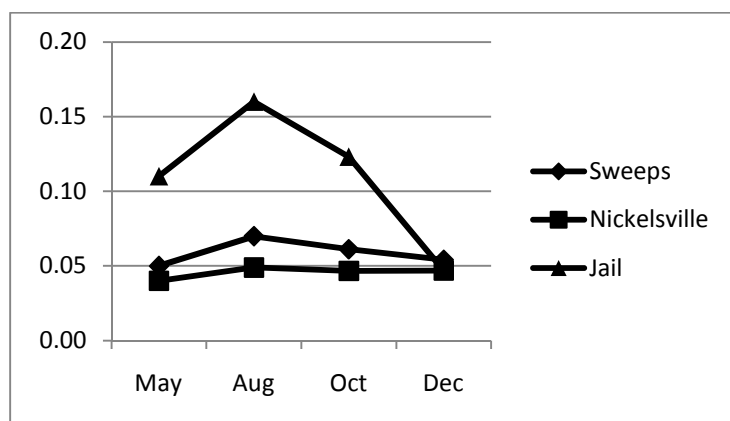


Table 3.23. Change over time for density scores of issue sectors using hyperlinks between communication resources in the three issue sectors. Collected in May, August, October and December of 2009 using the Interlink setting in Issuecrawler.net. Label = organizational resource. No isolates.

Month	Density compared to P*		
	Sweeps	Nickelsville	Jail
May	0.05	0.04	0.11
Aug	0.07	0.05	0.16
Oct	0.06	0.05	0.12
Dec	0.05	0.05	0.05
Avg	0.06	0.05	0.11



These findings suggests that, while all issue sectors may see a more even distribution of network centrality over time, the dynamics around the change in the Proposed Jail issue during this period may have been more significant than that presented by the other two issue sectors. Indeed, the Proposed Jail received more public attention during this time, and the certainty that it would be built seemed to fade – even in the face of a failed initiative campaign (I-100) – with announcements by regional governments that they were interested in working on an extension to the existing jail contract and in working on a collaborative agreement between regional judicial systems in the surrounding metropolitan area. The Sweeps and Nickelsville issue sectors, however, seemed to stabilize somewhat, with another

(Nickelsville) direct action camp in June possibly giving rise to a brief increase in centralization in the issue networks.

### **Discussion: Power, Participation, and Representation**

This chapter has analyzed the ways that individual actors have produced both formal and emergent forms of social organization through the process of textual and hyperlink production. I set out to respond to four question areas. First, I was interested in how the three issue sectors varied from each other in the degree to which the issue was produced by a more or less centralized group of authors and communication resources. Second, I was interested in how important formal organizations were in the production of the three issue sectors. Third, I was interested in how publication profiles based on authorship in a set of communication resources created social structure at the level of resources, as well as categories of organizations. Fourth, I was interested in how emergent organizational structures developed based on how issues were or were not related to each other, as well as how hyperlinking patterns between communication resources established structures of prominence and power in the issue sectors. I will address each of these question areas in turn.

#### **Issue sectors and textual distribution.**

The distributed characteristics of the internet, and the relatively low costs of participation, have allowed a broader level of participation than what might have been expected in an era dominated by traditional formats like TV, radio, and newspapers. But the ability to publish does not equal equality of voice. Some authors were more prevalent in the database. For instance, the most prolific author (Tim Harris) contributed just under 10% of all texts in the corpus (107/1116). In comparison, just over half (148) of the authors contributed only one text, creating a long tail of one-off contributions and reinforcing the importance of the most prolific authors. Likewise, the publication of texts on the three issues

was not evenly distributed among communication resources, and *Real Change News* published 15.5% (n:173) of all texts in the sample – more than twice as many texts as any of the other communication resources.

When I looked at how publication profiles varied between the three issues, I found that each issue had a similar distribution of texts published per author, but that the author label associated with the most texts varied between issues. In both the Sweeps and the Nickelsville issue sectors this was still Tim Harris. However, in the Proposed Jail issue sector the *West Seattle Blog* was by far the most prolific author, authoring 14% (n:52) of all texts in the issue sector – almost three times as many as the next most prolific author (Timothy Harris). At the level of communication resources, the Proposed Jail was the most unevenly distributed issue sector, with an average of 10 texts published per communication resource, Nickelsville was the most evenly distributed with 6.6 texts per resources, and the Sweeps was in the middle with 8.2 texts per resource. This suggests that, at the level of communication resources, the issues did differ in terms of the level of balance among contributors to each issue sector, a finding that is corroborated in my analysis of hyperlinking patterns within issue sectors (see below).

### **Formal organizations.**

I found that formal organizations provided important resources for authors who sought to contribute to the public discourse on one of the three issue areas studied here: the Sweeps, Nickelsville, and the Proposed Jail. I found that 77.7% (n:216) of authors published in an organizationally sponsored resource and 86.6% (n:966) of the texts in the sample were published in an organizationally sponsored resource. This means that less than a quarter of authors did not rely on a website or email list associated with a named group of at least 2 people, and instead created their own personal blog or website. While most of these resources

contributed very few texts to any of the issue sectors, *Apesma's Lament* (authored by Tim Harris) was highly prolific, ranking as the second largest contributor of texts in both the Sweeps and Nickelsville issue sectors.

I also found that participation in the linguistic construction of the issues was distributed across a range of organizational types and sectors. After categorizing communication resources into 12 distinct organizational types, I then constructed an organizational categorization scheme based on a resources' affiliation with one of four organizational sectors that functioned at the level of institutional norms and practices. These categorical affiliation profiles were useful in characterizing the structure of the field of communicative production (as I review below), but they were also useful in the further analysis of multiple forms of relational data (the homophily measures reviewed below, as well as my analysis of the differential use of semantic fields and technological configurations in chapter five).

#### **Authorial brokerage via cross-publication profiles.**

Analysis of authors and their publication in communication resources and categories has illustrated the network dynamics created by formal organizations and institutions. People like Tim Harris or Geov Parish published in multiple communication resources and categories, and acted as brokers and boundary crossers through their organizational affiliation profiles. At the level of organizational sectors, these authorial publication profiles resulted in a highly differentiated network. I found that advocacy organizations and government bodies were the most distant from each other, and that their relationship was mediated by a few authors publishing in journalistic venues (specifically regional blogs and daily papers). In network terms, the four organizational sectors were reachable through only a single path, even if that path was brokered by more than one author (as was the case between advocacy,



alternative media, and mainstream media categories). This finding re-enforces expectations about cross authorship among organizational sectors, with the ends of the chain populated by authors in widely different social positions in relation to the organizational sectors that they published in. Those authors publishing in two organizational sectors can be understood as crossing sectoral boundaries, and higher levels of boundary crossing (in the form of multiple authors occupying brokerage roles) might indicate a lower level of sectoral differentiation. For instance, the relationship between government and mainstream media is brokered by a single author (Nick Lacata, a local city council member), suggesting a greater institutional separation between the two sectors than that observed between the other three sectors, since their relationship was brokered by five or six different authors. While reflecting actual social relations in the form of cross-publication profiles, this finding served to illustrate one way that organizational sectors re-enforced sectoral boundaries through the isolation of institutional cultures and norms.

### **Emergent social organization.**

I analyzed two additional types of relations: issue area mentions and hyperlinks between communication resources. First, by measuring the occurrence of issue area mentions within a text or group of texts sharing an author or resource, I identified several mutually exclusive clusters. I suggested that these clusters might signal meaningful differences in how the issue areas were produced through language, as well as how participants might be structured through their specialization in an issue, or brokerage of multiple issue sectors. By far the largest specialization cluster of communication resources was concerned with talk about the Nickelsville issue area, mirroring the characterization of the issue sector as more democratically distributed among participants. I also found that the Sweeps/Nickelsville brokerage cluster was much larger than either of the two-issue brokerage clusters associated

with the Proposed Jail. At the level of the entire network then, the relatively weak connection between the Proposed Jail issue area and the Sweeps suggests that the two issue areas were associated with a weaker level of narrative cohesion than that presented in the brokerage space occupied by the other two issues areas. This means that the Nickelsville issue area ended up playing a brokerage role between the Proposed Jail and the Sweeps, likely due in part to the strategic choice by Nickelodeons to initiate their camp on a Proposed Jail site, and the subsequent “sweep” of the camp by the city.

Second, I examined the hyperlinking patterns between communication resources in each of the issue sectors. I found that each issue sector enjoyed varying levels of network centralization. The Proposed Jail issue sector displayed the highest level of centralization, followed by the Sweeps, with Nickelsville positioned as the most evenly distributed issue sector. This finding echoes what I found when measuring issue centralization based on the number of contributing communication resources and their relative frequency of publication on the issue areas. Two possible explanations for these differences were examined. First, I found that the Proposed Jail issue sector was the only one that had a positive homophily score, meaning that communication resources were more likely to link to resources in their own organizational sector. Second, I found that the Proposed Jail issue sector, while displaying higher centralization when compared to the other two issue sectors, showed a markedly larger decrease in network level centralization when measured over time.

When looking at positional characteristics of each network, I found that not all organizations were regarded as equally important in each of the three issue sectors. While I found that more prolific publishers of texts were likely to receive high indegree scores in all three networks, this measure alone was insufficient to account for linking behavior and the

network positionality that linking produced. Instead, we saw two trends that also appear to influence the ways that resources were positioned in the three issue networks. First, blogs served a reachability function, tying resources together that might otherwise not be connected by displaying high outdegree scores. Second, traditional institutional credibility markers like mainstream media or governmental affiliation appear to have continuing relevance in online environments. This finding re-enforces the earlier finding regarding the continued importance of organizations as sponsors of communication resources, and suggests that the institutional affiliation of the organization can also play an important function by imbuing the texts they publish with a claim to power and truth (Foucault, 1980).

Issue campaigns are particularly interesting sites for the study of social change. As points of contestation, where existing patterns of behavior are contested by working through new and possibly divergent ways of acting. This analysis of forms of social organization and textual production of the three issue areas has suggested that issue campaigns – and the issue sectors in which they are contested – offer structuring properties to social behavior as well as reflecting the existing dynamics that we would expect to see in a highly differentiated set of institutional relationships. But merely talking about an issue or not does not reflect the ways that language can be used to produce meanings by referencing particular arguments and relationships between categories of meaning. For instance, how was *Nickelsville* presented? What arguments were made regarding what the campaign means and who participated in it? It is to these questions that I now turn. I will look at the ways that language was used across the sample to produce aspects of each issue area, and argue their relationship to each other. Then, after establishing the semantic fields of importance for each issue area, I go on to analyze the relationships that language use produced among a group of participating authors

or organizational categories. How are discourses constructed in each issue area, and what was the role of emergent organization in contesting discourses?

## **Chapter 4: Language and Movement: Contesting Homelessness and Mobilizing Participation**

Social movements are more about communication than any other activity. I start with this claim, not as a means of justification for my own approach to social research, but as an empirical observation and a framework for the chapter. But beyond the simple importance of communication, I present here an integrated methodological approach that foregrounds the importance of issue areas in providing affordances for the production of social movements. For if we are to start with a claim as to the importance of communication, it follows that the issue areas in which movements exist, and in which participants engage, function as structuring elements on action – both material and symbolic.

Participants enter into an existing organizational and linguistic space, structured over time to privilege some interpretations and discourage others. As we saw in chapter three, these issue spaces are structured by the organizational dynamics within which some speakers are afforded more of a claim to truth than others, often due merely to their association with a set of organizational affiliations and credibility markers (mainstream media or governmental organizations). As this chapter illustrates, the spaces within which participants engage are also structured by the narrative meanings that they have hosted over time. Homelessness is not an empty token. Rather, it carries with it a sordid history of meanings, told and retold in popular culture. These meanings structure what can and cannot be said when attaching meaning to the token, and privilege some interpretations over others. In each of the three campaigns presented in this study homelessness was contested in the context of multiple areas of meaning that were both common and divergent, emphasizing some associations and

discouraging others. It is in this context that I examine the ways that those meanings were contested, and collective action was called into being through language.

### **Communicative Functions in Social Movements**

The study of situated language use necessitates analysis of multiple fields of discourse if we are to understand the ways that language functions in a particular social context (Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Issue movements like homelessness engage in the contestation of *symbolic meanings* (how we define what we do) as well as the *social processes* that they describe (how and what we do). Language is central to both.

The *symbolic meaning* of homelessness has a long history in US popular culture, with media portrayals and academic theory reinforcing the binary divides of deserving and undeserving, normal and deviant. As Wright (1997) has noted, “This socially shared image contains other images that convey social distinctions about housed and unhoused people, and judgments about who is deserving of receiving benefits and who is undeserving” (p. 17). Tropes like “welfare mom,” “lazy bum,” or even “transient” can reference shared cultural narratives about homeless people as filthy carriers of disease with mental instability and substance abuse problems who engage in criminal behaviors that threaten the general social safety (Wagner, 1993). These stereotypes are grounded in real social phenomenon that have been created and re-created over time through professionalized media texts and informal communicative settings. The de-institutionalization of the mentally ill in the US in the mid 1970s, combined with the psychological stress associated with living on the street and the medicalization of homelessness has meant that around 30% of those defined as homeless are socially understood to suffer from some kind of mental illness (Koegel & Burnham, 1992;

Snow, Baker et al., 1986). The exorbitant cost of health care has meant that medical emergencies and chronic health problems are a common pathway to homelessness and routine medical treatment is largely out of reach for those with little to no conventional income (Buckner, 2004; Susser, Moore, & Link, 1993). The criminalization of survival behavior like sleeping, urinating, or loitering has resulted in the disproportionate arrest of people experiencing homelessness for misdemeanors and the stigma attached to the criminal justice system means that having a conviction threatens your ability to find a job or secure stable housing after an arrest (Kleinig, 1993; Mitchell, 1997; National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 1999). The dominant social practices that we have developed as a culture for dealing with homelessness reproduce the social stigmas – the *symbolic meanings* – associated with those experiencing a lack of adequate housing. Thus, my first research question asks *What discourses were drawn upon by speakers in the Seattle urban communication space in the production of homelessness?* We might expect, for instance, that a range of materially-based discourses would be important in any homeless movement – things like “housing,” “shelter,” or “services.” Based on the extant literature on media coverage of homelessness, we might also expect discourses around “drug use” or “alcoholism” to be important, or descriptions of homeless persons as “filthy” or “mentally ill.”

Recognizing the importance of language in social change, homeless activists and academics have attempted to redefine popular understandings of what homelessness means (Blau, 1992; Hopper & Baumohl, 1994; Radar, 1986; Wright, 1997). Scholars examining the dominant linguistic production of homelessness have shown a decided trend in mainstream media accounts towards stigmatization and dehumanization (Bawarshi et al., 2008), be they

in print (Klodawsky, Farrell, & D'Aubry, 2002) or television (Lind & Danowski, 1999; Whang & Min, 1999a, 1999b). Activists have also highlighted the ways that politicians and journalists stigmatize homelessness through language. By refocusing the description of what homelessness is towards the institutional structures and practices that produce and reproduce homelessness, activists have sought to change the discourse of homelessness as they seek to change the social practices that surround it. Street papers – newspapers sold, and sometimes written by, people experiencing homelessness (Lier, 1999) – have perhaps been the most prominent venue for this popular critique (Howley, 2003, 2005). However, even in discursive platforms established for the betterment of those experiencing extreme poverty and homelessness, linguistic behavior can still reinforce the negative social ethos associated with mainstream media accounts (Torck, 2001). Thus, my second research question asks *What discourses were contested by participants in producing the local Seattle homeless movement? What discourses were introduced by movement participants to shift the focus of debate?* We might expect that those areas of meaning of most interest to homeless activists would be focused on the provision of shelter or services as they argue for policy changes at the local or national level. This may mean refocusing the debate from deviant stigmas attached to homeless persons and towards policy issues.

These questions focus on how homelessness was constructed through language and what areas of meaning were of importance in the local communication environment. By answering these two questions we can start to understand some of the descriptive dynamics at play, forming categories of meaning – what I will call *semantic fields* – and tracking their differential use in public debate. Such broad descriptive work is of crucial importance if we



are to understand the terrain within which organizing around homelessness took place in the public sphere.

But language also has a far more pragmatic role in its ability to encourage and coordinate mobilization activities in social movements (Mische, 2003; Mische & White, 1998). Event announcements, calls to action, and meeting minutes provide participants with informational resources from which to plan individual and collective actions. These practical communicative resources enable action and facilitate the redefinition of *social processes*. The activities communicated by homeless activists often challenge the bureaucratization of the homeless experience by acting collectively in coalition towards common goals, and by showing solidarity between housed and unhoused participants in taking political action and organizing short term solutions like “tent cities” and “self-managed shelters.”

One area where this kind of communication is often most interesting is in the area of *action repertoires*. Studies of social movements have often defined the existence of a social movement based on the presence of a series of prototypical action forms. Terms like “protest movement,” “divestment movement,” or “direct action movement” go so far as to identify a movement with the use of particular tactics. But less iconic forms are often more prevalent, when collections of people gather in meetings, using consensus or Robert’s rules of order to decide collectively on understandings, goals, and the tactics that can achieve them (Polletta, 2002). The ways that tactics are labeled can be important for a movement, providing a level of credibility or condemnation. For instance, the use of strategic dramaturgy in the civil rights movement has been thought to have played a significant role in the level of positive framing in coverage of the movement (McAdam, 2000). Similarly, tactics that are deemed as “violent” and overly “deviant” are often used as arguments against a movement’s goals

(Campbell et al., 2004; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002). Decisions about what action forms to use or what to call them are as much a reflection of cultural understandings of collective action as they are rational processes for the production of social change (Polletta, 1997, 2004; Swindler, 1986). In some instances, tactical forms are as much a goal of collective action as the changing of social policies external to the immediate collectivity. This has often been the case in feminist organizing and in other forms of prefigurative politics where the goal is conceived of as the production of new forms of social relationships through the organizing process (Boggs, 1977-1978; Breines, 1980; Fuller, 1989). Over time, the enactment of action forms can create institutionalized formal organizations that offer new kinds of social relations through their daily reproduction. In this context, it becomes interesting to ask *What tactical repertoires were used in the local Seattle homeless movement?* and *What kinds of affordances do action repertoire labels have for participants in the ways that they are debated in the public sphere?* Answering these questions can provide insight into the kinds of actions practitioners might use in different contexts, and in the ways that academics think through their repercussions in the study of action repertoires.

The second area of interest in an analysis of social processes in social movements is concerned with the area of *community organizing*: identifying participants and getting them to take action. These coalitional and motivational tasks are highly understudied, and form a kind of “black box” of social movement research. One of the few people who has signaled this as an important area of research is Mische (2003) in her call for studies of relational social movement networks, and on the identificational processes at work in the signaling of talk on behalf of, or in outreach to, particular groups or constituencies (Mische, 2008; Mische & Pattison, 2000; Mische & White, 1998). Work on collective action framing processes also

hints at this dynamic, but this work is often carried out in ways that obscure the micro-level mobilization functions of particular linguistic moves at the level of individual texts, and focus instead on overarching movement narratives or meta-frames (Benford & Snow, 2000). This kind of focus gives rise to the following set of questions: *What organizing processes are linguistically produced in the local Seattle homeless movement?* and *How are participants identified and called to action?* Understanding how opportunities and constraints in collective action are shaped by participant's use of language (i.e., socially constructed) might help to explain some of the dynamics that have often been the focus of many positivistic approaches to social movement study like that which we often see in the field of resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977), or political opportunity structures (Tilly, 1978).

These questions can help us start to see how the meanings and policies surrounding homelessness were contested in a local homeless movement. But each of the issue campaigns analyzed here existed in a distinct issue space, what I have called an *issue area*, that is produced by a particular set of participants in the *issue sector* (see chapter three). Since social movements contest meaning and engage in collective actions within the context of an issue area, we can expect significant variation in the discourses of importance, and the ways that those discourses might be contested in the public sphere. We would also expect that each issue campaign would use language differently in the production of collective action, drawing on a different set of action repertoires and a different set of labeling practices. In a sense, then, issue areas offer narrative *affordances* to issue campaigns (Gibson, 1977), highlighting some ways of talking and back grounding others. I am interested here in asking *What narrative affordances do the three issue areas provide, and how do these affordances*

*influence campaign dynamics?* We would expect, for instance, that a project focused on opposing a Proposed Jail would give rise to a disproportionate amount of talk surrounding criminality, policing or violence, since these discourses are so thoroughly intertwined with the object of focus in the popular imagination. We might also expect that a project focused on direct action camping as a means of providing emergency shelter (i.e., *Nickelsville*) would give rise to a disproportionate amount of talk about “camps,” “camping,” and “tent cities.”

By focusing on the inductive description of those discourses of importance in the local Seattle homeless movement and specifying our analysis on those areas of narrative contest within the public sphere we can start to understand how the meaning of homelessness was actively constructed and contested. This venture is noteworthy in itself, contributing to both the academic understandings of how movements function as well as the development of movement strategy by practitioners. Yet I am also interested in the ways that language is used for mobilization processes. Here my focus is on the labeling and social production of action strategies, as well as tasks associated with the identification of participants and their mobilization into collective action. But underlying each of these question areas is my central focus on the relationship between issue areas and communicative practices. I argue that issue areas present affordance for social movement activity, providing opportunities for participants to engage in coherent and focused collective action around a definable social problem or goal, privileging some areas of associated meaning over others. In the sections that follow, I present my analysis of each of these question areas, foregrounding the importance of issue areas throughout and moving between meta-level observations and micro-level implications in the communication of a local homeless movement.

### **Analysis: Issue Contestation and Mobilization Discourses**

The production of homeless in the public sphere was a contested process. In conducting this analysis, I drew on my grounding in the robust literature on language and social movements, as well as my grounding as a participant observer and discourse analyst in the three overlapping issue campaigns analyzed here: the *No New Jail* campaign, *Nickelsville*, and the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign (see Appendix A for a discussion of methods). In doing so I was able to construct a theoretically and empirically grounded account of how participants engaged in the production of homelessness in the context of a local homeless movement. While grounded in a local homeless movement, this analysis promises some utility for scholars and practitioners of other areas of movement activity, as well as those interested in homelessness as a socially constructed phenomenon.

In what follows, I outline the contours of two basic areas of meaning production that I suggest are common to all movement contexts: *issue contestation* and *participant mobilization*. First, authors writing about homelessness engaged in the contestation of what each issue area meant through the communication of *symbolic meanings*. Symbolic meanings were contested in two basic areas: the materiality of the issue in question and how the issue and its participants were valued. In the local Seattle homeless movement, this involved the contestation of things like “housing,” “shelter,” and “services,” as well as “drugs,” “violence,” and “filth.” Second, organizers, journalists, and politicians alike, used communication in ways that mobilized participants by naming activities as “movements,” naming action strategies like “protests” or “marches,” and engaging in community organizing through the identification of “allies” and calls for “participation.” This area of meaning focused on the *social processes* involved in social change activity.

In each section that follows, I first present a meta-level analysis of the affordances that the Proposed Jail, Nickelsville, and the Sweeps offered as issue areas, characterizing how they enabled and constrained particular manifestations of meaning. I do this by making use of a combination of corpus linguistic and network analysis that is commonly referred to as semantic network analysis (Doerfel & Barnett, 1999). As a mathematically grounded methodological tool, both corpus linguistics and network analysis allow us to identify broad characteristics of an issue sector (levels of distribution or centralization), as well as positional relationships between areas of meaning (semantic clusters or semantic prominence). However the particular approach that I offer is rooted in an ethnographic emersion in the issue sectors analyzed, and a detailed qualitative discourse analysis of the corpus. This approach resulted in a set of semantic categories that “make sense” from a lay perspective. That is, rather than constructing a set of semantic categories or words through an inductive statistical clustering process (Doerfel & Barnett, 1999; Doerfel & Connaughton, 2009; Doerfel & Marsh, 2003; Maynard, 1997; Rice & Danowski, 1993), I have created categories of meaning that are of analytical importance to the sociopolitical contexts within which each of these issue areas existed. This kind of highly contextualized knowledge is rarely seen in semantic network analysis studies, and offers unique advantages that I believe are important to the study of complex social phenomenon like mobilization processes. Thus, after outlining characteristics of each major area of meaning production (*materiality*, *subjectivity*, and *participant mobilization*) and looking at how they are differently manifested in the three issue areas, I proceed with a grounded description of how each of the semantic fields that populated these areas of meaning production were actualized in the corpus at the level of the text, sentence, and clause. This combination of meta-level description and micro-level

analysis builds credibility for my arguments and provides rich illustrations of their manifestations.

Finally, a note to readers on formatting. I have placed quotation marks around direct quotes from the corpus and labeled the communication resource that published the text in parenthesis. I have also underlined all of the lexical items in excerpts from the corpus that serve to populate the group of semantic fields under question (within *materiality*, *subjectivity*, or *participant mobilization*) as a way of highlighting the connections between close textual analysis and meta-level measurement. Following Stubbs (2001) all LEMMAS are presented in small caps. All *semantic field categories* are italicized when they are mentioned in the body of the text to indicate that they represent a group of words rather than a single word, phrase, rule, or lemma. A full description of the methods used for sampling and analysis can be found in Appendix A.

### **Issue contestation: Material poverty and deviant subjectivities in a local homeless movement.**

The production of social movement activity always involves at least two areas of issue contestation: *materiality* and *subjectivity*. In the three issue campaigns examined here, this was actualized in ways particular to the socio-political context of homelessness and the local movement that had developed around it: *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*. These categories, while theoretically convenient, are not as clearly separated as one might like. However, I have maintained their separation as a tool for the organization of the chapter, even as the boundaries between subjectivities and materialities break down in the detailed analysis of their manifestations in the corpus.

In order to understand how these two aspects of issue contestation played out in the three issue areas, I developed a series of nested semantic fields that could be organized

hierarchically. First, the *materiality* of home and shelter was produced by the deployment and contestation of semantic fields categorized as *housing*, *shelter*, *services*, *development*, the *economy*, *alternatives to jail*, and *human rights*. Each of these semantic fields represented approaches to describing material problems and policy solutions where considerable disagreement existed. The ways that they were deployed signaled a contestation in what homelessness meant and what solutions to problems related to homelessness required. Second, the production of *subjectivities* related to homelessness revolved around the labeling of people, spaces and activities as deviant, and was contested by drawing on the semantic fields of *danger*, *dirty*, and *drugs*. These areas of meaning were most directly implicated in the production and reproduction of identities and subjectivities. Social actors were produced through language in ways that played on and extended existing stereotypes associated with homelessness, poverty, and public safety. Subjectivities were produced by attaching behaviors, attributes, and identities to people and spaces through processes of self- and other-presentation. Each of the semantic fields that populated these areas of meaning were further populated by words, groups of words (smaller semantic fields), phrases, rules, and lemmas.

In each of the two major areas of meaning described in this section (*material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*) activists, governments, citizens, and journalists all competed for the ability to define how each was used and understood, and what their relationships were to each other by engaging in issue contestation in a regional homeless movement. Each semantic field that populated the corpus was used to produce a different aspect of our understanding of material poverty and deviant subjectivities. But these struggles to define always take place within the context of issue areas that provide varying linguistic affordances, influencing the kinds of things that can be said, and how they are situated in the



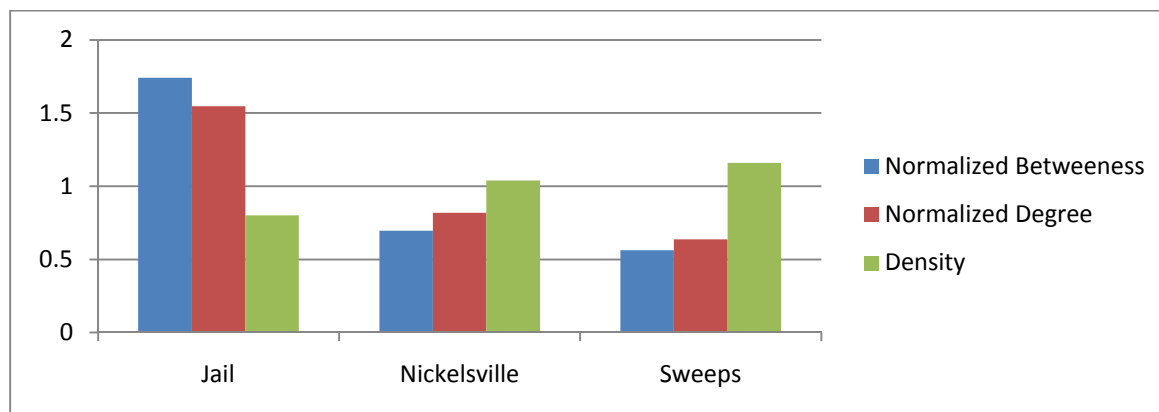
text in relation to other meanings. If the story of homelessness in Seattle is to be told in a robust manner, accounting for the range of meanings associated with the phenomenon in this localized context, than the ways that issue areas facilitate the connection of semantic fields can be used to measure their level of narrative cohesion in relation to each other. Analysis of the distribution of lexical items (words, phrases, rules, and lemmas) within the area of issue contestation shows that the three issue areas did not display the same level of narrative cohesion, as measured by network level centrality metrics (see Table 4.1 and 4.2).<sup>13</sup>

Specifically, the Proposed Jail was an issue area within which the range of semantic fields deployed in relation to homelessness were tied together through a smaller number of central semantic fields than in the other two issue areas (see Table 4.4 for a compared distribution of

Table 4.1. Measures of semantic centralization in the three issue areas. Edge = collocation of semantic fields > 1 in a window of 6:6.

Metric	Jail	Nickelsville	Sweeps
Normalized Betweenness	4.80	1.92	1.55
Normalized Degree	0.34	0.18	0.14
Density	0.48	0.62	0.69
N of Semantic Fields	86	90	90

Table 4.2. Normalized variance of measures for semantic centralization in the three issue areas (1 = mean for all three issue sectors). Edge = collocation of semantic fields > 1 in a window of 6:6.



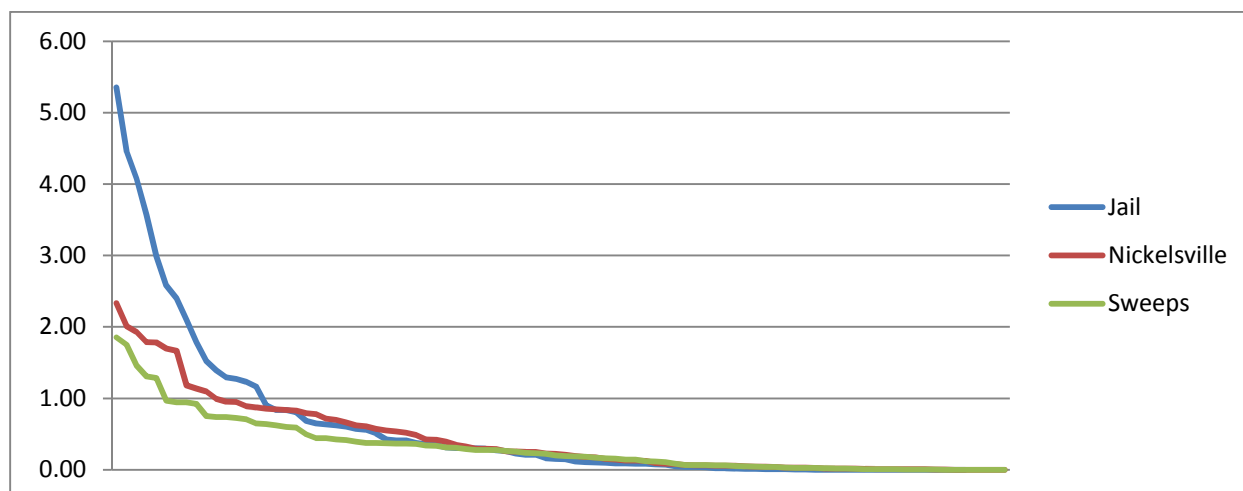
normalized betweenness scores in each issue sector). This finding reflects the narrative distance that the Proposed Jail presented as an issue area that was not as easily connected to dominant discussions around homelessness as were the Sweeps and Nickelsville issue areas. Table 4.3 shows the top ten semantic fields in each issue sector, based on normalized betweenness scores, highlighting those particular areas of meaning that bore the most responsibility for network cohesion. We can see that the Proposed Jail issue area was tied together most strongly by discussions about *policing*, *violence*, and *criminality*, along with the cost of *paying* for the Proposed Jail to *house* and provide *services* for inmates in the current *economy*. These are also important semantic fields for Nickelsville and the Sweeps, but the work that they do in fostering narrative coherence in these two issue areas is more evenly distributed.

Table 4.3. Top ten semantic fields, words, phrases, rules, or lemmas for each issue area based on normalized betweenness scores. Edge = collocation of semantic fields > 1 in a window of 6:6.

Jail		Nickelsville		Sweeps	
Lexical Item	nBetweenness	Lexical Item	nBetweenness	Lexical Item	nBetweenness
POLICING	5.35	HOUSE	2.33	HOME	1.85
VIOLENCE	4.46	JOB*	2.01	HOUSE	1.75
SHELTER	4.08	CRIMINALITY	1.93	VIOLENCE	1.46
CRIMINALITY	3.57	VIOLENCE	1.79	LEGALITY	1.31
HOUSE	2.99	SHELTER	1.78	AFFORD*	1.28
SERVICES	2.58	HOME	1.70	POLICING	0.97
COST	2.40	POLICING	1.66	SERVICES	0.94
PAY	2.10	BUDGET	1.18	SHELTER	0.94
ECONOM*	1.79	FOOD	1.14	JOB*	0.92
RENT	1.52	ECONOM*	1.09	SURVIVE	0.75

Also of interest is the rank of semantic fields associated with deviant subjectivities in the Proposed Jail issue area. While the list of the top ten semantic fields for all three issue areas contained three instances of a semantic field associated with *deviant subjectivities* (the

Table 4.4. Distribution of normalized betweenness scores for each issue area. Edge = collocation of semantic fields > 1 in a window of 6:6.



remainder being associated with *material poverty*), the Proposed Jail issue area is the only one where *deviant subjectivity* fields occupied the most central location in the network.

While in the Sweeps and the Nickelsville issue areas *housing* and *home* both have the highest betweenness scores, the Proposed Jail relies on *policing* and *violence* more than any other semantic field. This would suggest that the Proposed Jail is an issue area that might be more easily prone to attaching deviant subjectivities to participants, and less likely to highlight the material constraints that produce poverty and homelessness.

In what follows, I present a detailed linguistic analysis of texts in the corpus, presenting the use of each semantic field within the social, political and material contexts in which they were deployed and contested. I will illustrate how, in each of the semantic fields of interest, participants responded to the discourses proliferating in the public sphere, built on discourses that had been developed over time – often through work in other issue campaigns – and introduced new ways of thinking about homelessness in relation to these three issue areas.

### **Contesting the meaning of material poverty.**

This study focuses on three issue areas concerned with a central “nodal point” (Sandberg, 2006): “homelessness.” As such, it requires the recognition that definitions of homelessness vary. The most popular understanding of homelessness is when a person is considered to have “no home.” However particularizing the definition of homelessness is something that is of great political import, as the development and funding of social programs hinge on the enumeration and tracking of homeless bodies in socio-physical space. Social scientists and policy makers often prefer something that Rossi (1989) has called “literal homelessness” over more inclusive definitions that count those who are “precariously housed.” He defines the more common restrictive concept as accounting for “those who sleep in shelters provided for homeless persons or in places, public or private, not intended as dwellings,” and the more inclusive concept as “those who live in conventional dwellings but run a high risk of becoming literally homeless for shorter or longer periods” (p. 48). The difficulty of counting the “hidden homeless” has been credited with the popularity of the “literal homeless” definition in the development of social policies for alleviating the experience of homelessness. However, Wagner and Cohen (1991) asked those experiencing homelessness to define the category and found a far more inclusive definition, described as “‘lacking a permanent and customary home’ which includes those who are institutionalized or ‘doubled up’” (p. 549).

Definitions of homelessness are further limited when you begin to question what “home” means to those who are labeled, categorized, and counted as “homeless.” Kaplan’s (2008) ethnographic work with people living outside found that they actively redefined their shelters as “home,” regardless of the differences that their camps, cars, and trailers had from dominant interpretations of home and homeownership. Wright’s (1997) work with homeless

organizing and urban camping points out that collective camps actively re-colonized “waste space” as “home space” by creating small communities of tents or shacks. However those experiencing homelessness are systematically excluded from participation in the definitional spaces most influential in producing our common understandings of homelessness: things like newspapers, films, or laws.

Much of this definitional work has taken place at the level of social policies understood as solutions to the problem of homelessness. The approach most common in the United States has been to develop systems of managed “shelters” where people without indoor shelter can find a warm place to sleep at night. The institutionalization of poor people into publicly or privately run facilities was first practiced in the United States through a system of county or state-run “poor houses” that sheltered and fed “paupers” as they were taught to overcome their “laziness” through labor in industry or agriculture. The reliance on “poor houses” as social policy for poor elderly persons has largely been replaced by individualized social welfare programs like Medicare, and overnight shelter systems have proliferated in urban areas, where people considered to be “literally homeless” (Rossi, 1989) are allowed to sleep indoors on a first come first served basis for a few hours of warmth and sleep. In Seattle several public and privately run shelters operate throughout the city, the majority of which are concentrated in the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood. Pioneer Square is claimed as the original location of “skid road” due to the seasonal unemployment that labor exploitation in early area logging camps produced (Morgan, 1951). In a system that became infamous up and down the coast, loggers would come down from the logging camps after being fired just prior to pay day and pay a labor broker on “skid road” to give them a

new job. The neighborhood later became home to the largest number of shelters, soup kitchens, and single occupancy dwellings in Seattle.

Most recently, city level governments throughout the country have developed what are called “10-year plans to end homelessness.” A study of regional 10-year plans by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2009) found that “over 200 communities [had initiated] 10-year plans at the state, regional, and local levels” (p. 1). Seattle created one of 185 city level 10-year plans, and the production of permanent housing surfaced as the most common emphasis, present in 88% of the 234 plans analyzed. While the language of the 10-year plans emphasized the ending of homelessness, only 8% of all plans included a funding source. As a result, cities like Seattle have had a hard time making good on their promises, and the few new housing units that have been built are far too few to meet the demand. In addition, debates over how best to prevent people from becoming homeless, how best to deal with the issues that keep them homeless, and how best to develop increased capacity to shelter and house people experiencing homelessness have become significant points of discord within the many urban city spaces where the 10-year plans have emerged.

The debate over how to best deal with the alleviation of homelessness is thus a highly contested area, with city officials, social service providers, shelter agencies, advocates, organizers, and enforcement agencies all competing for the right to define how the problem of, and solution to, homelessness should be understood. In Seattle, this debate drew on a range of discourses, deployed at the intersections of *housing*, *shelter*, *services*, *development*, the *economy*, *human rights*, and *alternatives to jail*. Table 4.5 lists the frequency of lexical items in each of these semantic fields in the corpus.

Table 4.5. Frequency of semantic fields related to materiality.

	Words		Texts	
	N	%	N	%
Economy	3791	0.63	650	58.24
Housing	2007	0.33	523	46.86
Human rights	1307	0.22	449	40.23
Shelter	1102	0.18	337	30.2
Services	943	0.16	352	31.54
Development	729	0.12	289	25.9
Alternatives to jail	86	0.01	58	5.2
Total	9965	1.66	2658	238.17

Each of these semantic fields can be understood as areas of meaning that are signaled by the use of words and phrases that function as “floating signifiers” (Levi-Strauss, 1987; Mehlman, 1972). These floating signifiers are deployed in concert with each other in combinations that produce meaning by association (often referred to as “semantic prosody” in corpus linguistics), as well as through their grammatical arrangements in the text (constituting the area of pragmatics), with individual words and phrases producing divergent associations depending on how they are used in the context of the clause, the text, or the discursive field. The general contours of these semantic relations were described in the preceding section. In what follows, I position these relationships in the texts themselves by identifying trends, trajectories, and disputes surrounding the social production of each issue area through language. I start with *housing*.

### ***Housing.***

Housing was an important area of meaning in the contestation of homelessness, and it occupied a central location in all three issue sectors, playing a significant role in their levels of narrative cohesion. Given the close relationship between “home” and “homelessness,” as well as the 10-year plan’s emphasis on “housing first,” the ways that housing was produced

through language played an important role in constructing homelessness as a phenomenon, as well as outlining appropriate solutions. The city presented a systematic construction of homelessness that was most effectively remedied through the development of new affordable housing projects. For their part, *Nickelsville* created a space where home and housing could be seen as something that was achievable through collective homeless-led actions, of the sort popularized by tent cities. But housing was also something that was attached to the production of what the Proposed Jail would have done for the city by “housing” inmates, and neighborhood groups opposed to the jail used class status and low housing costs as a mechanism for arguing against building the Proposed Jail.

The production of housing in city-sponsored texts was overwhelmingly positive, and closely associated with a high level of availability and funding. The Interagency Council (IC) of the Committee to End Homelessness (CEH) emphasized the “...increased availability of housing stabilization services to connect people to community-based services” (IC, 6/2/2008, CTA1032). In press releases and meeting minutes the Committee to End Homelessness emphasized their high level of funding for housing as the solution to homelessness.

Responding to the urgent need for affordable housing and stronger supports for fragile individuals and families, King County Executive Ron Sims announced \$15.2 million in grants and loans to fund twenty-nine housing and supportive service projects across King County. (Press release, CEH, 12/28/2007, CTA976)

The emphasis that the CEH had on housing meant that other areas (like shelter or services) were subsumed under housing, with policy statements announcing “...innovative new projects such as new housing stabilization services for victims of domestic violence and their children who are moving into permanent housing, and low-barrier case management services that follow formerly homeless households into permanent housing...” (Press Release, CEH, 7/11/2005 CTA970).



The emphasis on creating housing was accompanied by a planned decrease in shelter space, with an eventual reduction target of 250 beds at the end of the 10-year plan. However, belief in the way that the CEH characterized their actions on housing was questioned by people experiencing homelessness who had access to discursive spaces within the CEH. Meeting minutes from the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC; an advisory body within the CEH made up of service providers, homeless, and formerly homeless persons) voiced disbelief in the housing first promise, noting that “...it doesn’t seem plausible that we will create enough housing to allow for the reduction of shelter – especially to the final count that is currently proposed (250 emergency shelter beds) at the end of 10 Years” (CAC, 8/30/2006, CTA1042). Instead of echoing the language of the 10-year plan, CAC members highlighted the ways that the plan was talked about, noting the continued need for shelter, and questioned whether the plan was actually working.

The construction of *Nickelsville* changed some of the discourse around home and housing. As a camp, *Nickelsville* moved repeatedly. Emails and blog posts repeated how “They needed to find a new home” (Eugene Cho, 10/2/2008, CTA1378) in an effort to solicit suggestions from allies, and mainstream media reports described how “the parking lot of the University Congregational United Church of Christ (UCUCC) has been home to the camp” (King 5, 3/5/2009, CTA1558; NWCN, 3/4/2009, CTA1623). Local blogs – like one that was created specifically to tell the story of *Nickelsville* while it was in the neighborhood – described how “I talked to a woman named Sandy, who said that Nickelsville was the best home that she ever knew” (Nickelsville: And Why The Mayor Should Care, 11/7/2008, CTA1393), and a guest column in the local paper by a member of one of the host churches talked about how “Each night, which included one of the coldest winters in decades, almost

100 people had a place to call "home" (David McCracken, guest column in the Seattle PI, 3/15/2009, CTA1241).

The Proposed Jail introduced a third way to talk about housing that changed the category of subjects to be housed. Instead of “housing” the poor or homeless, the Proposed Jail was conceived as a mechanism for “housing” misdemeanor offenders, or in texts that described the Proposed Jail as being “housed” in poor neighborhoods. Advocacy organizations like the Real Change Organizing Project (RCOP) responded in ways that identified this strategy as problematic and encouraged opposition to the Proposed Jail: “In other words, this \$200 million dollar jail will house the people the City fails when it cuts programs. It's absurd” (RCOP blog, 10/23/2008, CTA820). But relatively progressive responses to “housing” the jail in poor neighborhoods like Highland Park were accompanied by more reactionary positions. The Proposed Jail played host to discussions about housing that juxtaposed poor housed people against poor unhoused people, noting that “These neighborhoods are considered the “last stand” of affordable houses left in Seattle,” and Othering criminal “strangers” that might seek social services in an area where “Young families are moving in and starting to breathe fresh life into the houses” (HPAC, 4/3/2008, CTA143). The following excerpt is particularly illustrative:

I fear that we will see an increase in strangers looking for such services in our neighborhood... If a jail goes into this site, those properties zoned appropriately for such services will start catering to that need - and personally, I don't want my child growing up around the corner from jail bond stores, half way houses, or shelters. These types of services belong downtown. (HPAC, 4/3/2008, CTA143)

In these cases, the presence of a jail in the neighborhood was seen as introducing a new and dangerous element that conflated poverty with criminality, an issue that was also seen in the relationship between class, development, and efforts to keep the Proposed Jail out of people’s neighborhoods.

### *Shelter.*

The central focus of much of the organizing around homelessness in Seattle was on procuring adequate emergency shelter for the roughly 2,600 people that slept outside every night in 2008. As the city diverted funds towards long-term housing development projects and charted the closure of shelter facilities, people concerned with immediate survival focused their energies on shelter. One place where the shelter argument was quite clear was in the minutes from the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC). As the only institutionalized space within the 10-year plan that allowed people experiencing homelessness to contribute to the development of social policy at the city level, the members of the CAC served as a reality check for those who administered the plan. Participants in the committee repeatedly called for the adequate provision of “emergency shelter” and services until time that permanent housing was available. Minutes from a March 2007 meeting of the Interagency Council (IC) shows a report back from the CAC meeting on “Shelter Capacity,” urging the importance of “recognizing that it will be many years before we have enough permanent housing” and urging the CEH to “increase shelter capacity to get people immediately off the street” (IC, 3/5/2007, CTA1017). The calls by the CAC for more of an emphasis on emergency shelter resulted in minor changes to the wording of part of the 10-year plan, stating the importance of “interim survival mechanism—services focused on keeping people alive...until time that affordable permanent housing is available to all” (Committee to End Homelessness in King County, 2005, p. i). However critics of the plan and its implementation noted that the CAC was allowed little agency in influencing the development and implementation of city policy, and Stygall’s (2008) discourse analysis of CEH meeting minutes concluded that “the City’s voice is heard here and not the voices of those being displaced” (non paginated).

Rather than respond to the need for adequate emergency shelter, the mayor's office repeatedly stated that there was adequate shelter space, and that visible homelessness was a result of personal choice. Spokespeople for the Mayor made claims that there was adequate shelter space, saying that "There's a bed for anyone who wants on[e] tonight and we have people who can help them" (Robert Mak, spokesman for Mayor Nickels, appearing on King 5, 9/29/2008, CTA1550). In an interview on *KUOW*, Mayor Nickels stated that "...when we go out and enforce on these encampments, we offer everyone shelter. We guarantee them shelter... We have more beds that are available..." (Mayor Greg Nickels, appearing on *KUOW*, reposted on Apesma's Lament, 10/13/2008, CTA108). When pressed by the interviewer, Nickels moved responsibility from inadequate shelter space to the deviant behavior of individuals, saying that "...there are people who don't want to live in homes, in structures."

Nickelodeons contested this claim, stating that "City Attorney Carr's Office makes clear they suffer under the delusion that there is sufficient and suitable shelter for all in Seattle" (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA176). *Nickelsville* was fairly successful in popularizing their interpretation of shelter as something that is in short supply in part by structuring the rationale for their very existence on the lack of adequate shelter.

Nickelsville's long-term goal remains the same: A home for up to 1,000 homeless men, women, and children in Seattle that will stay in one place – with sturdy structures and services – until there is suitable shelter and housing for all. (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA180)

This language made its way into mainstream media accounts through interviews with camp residents, where people involved in the homeless community would talk about how "We're trying to get off the streets, the shelters are full, the tent cities are full, you know, all those are full, there's not enough affordable housing, we're just trying to survive" (Nickelsville resident

Leo Rhodes, appearing on KIRO, 10/2/2008, CTA1562). The “offer” of shelter from the city was largely regarded as ridiculous by those who experienced the sweeps. “If they get a referral, someone has to get kicked out of that bed to make room for them,” says Real Change vendor and Nickelodeon Richard White. “There are no shelter beds” (Real Change News, 10/1/2008, CTA640).

Reports on the tactical maneuvers of the city in their many sweeps of *Nickelsville* provided an opening for competing interpretations of the definition of shelter, with some journalists presenting the argument on both sides in a form of objective journalism that is the hallmark of professional news reporting (Tuchmen, 1972).

The showdown over Nickelsville heated up Thursday, with the city asserting that shelter beds were available for any homeless camper, while homeless advocates contending that the city was “lying”...

But advocates said it was about survival. Two dozen homeless people -- 12 men and 12 women -- couldn't get a bed in shelters Monday, the day Nickelsville was erected, said Revel Smith, a spokeswoman for Real Change, a newspaper and homeless advocacy organization.

Black [a spokesperson for the mayor's office] said shelters [sic] beds were “available for everyone or anyone.”

“We've never had to turn anyone away” from a shelter after removing him or her from a camp, she said. As of Wednesday, six people from Nickelsville had accepted the city's offer of a shelter bed, Black said. (Seattle PI, 9/25/2008, CTA1206)

The standard presentation of competing opinions here moved the issue from a contestation over truth to a contestation over interpretation (“advocates said,” “Black said”). As work on journalistic news norms has shown, traditional journalistic practices trend towards a personalization of conflict, and towards interpretations that favor elite sources (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). In this excerpt, advocates are presented as “contending that the city was “lying,”” presenting their interpretation as one based on a disagreement of opinion, and degrading that interpretation by the use of scare quotes around the claim (“lying”). The mayor's office is allowed to open the narrative of conflict, an “advocate” responds, and the

mayor's office (here represented by Black) is allowed to close the argument with a direct quote, "We've never had to turn anyone away." The use of the narrative form here (Polletta, 2006) in journalistic story telling prefers the city as having agency in deciding what the terms of debate are and in having the power to resolve the disagreement (Whang & Min, 1999b). The reader is left to conclude that people experiencing homelessness are personally responsible for not staying in a shelter, with the city presented as "offering" shelter to people who may or may not choose to "accept" the offer.

Alternative media outlets often made arguments specifically about the ways that journalists constructed the issue as one of deviant behavior rather than lack of adequate shelter.

At no point in any of these editorials did the Times board come to grips with basic fact. 2,631 people were counted outside of a packed shelter system on a freezing January night this year. Operation Nightwatch, the shelter referral point of last resort is turning people away in record numbers. There isn't enough shelter. Where are people supposed to go? (Apesma's Lament, 9/24/2008, CTA91)

Lacitis [a Times journalist] also took pains to cover the Mayor's other talking points: Seattle does more to help the homeless than anyone, and anyone who wants shelter can get it.

This is, of course, a lie. John Iwasaki's PI article mentions that 12 men and 12 women were turned away from Nightwatch the night Nickelsville went up. That means the shelters were full enough that 24 people who were trying to get in could not. This is the case more often than not, which is why lots of people stop trying to get into shelter and sleep out instead. (Apesma's Lament, 9/25/2008, CTA92)

Here, the executive director of the Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP) presents a detailed response to coverage of shelter in the *Seattle Times* in his blog, *Apesma's Lament*. Journalists are presented as pandering to the Mayor ("took pains to cover the Mayor's other talking points"), and he presents a competing interpretation as to why more people are not turned away (they "stop trying to get into shelter and sleep out instead").

### *Services.*

The production of what services meant in relation to homelessness revolved around a few key areas. Similar to the discord on housing and shelter, services were presented as either the beneficiary of significant funding sources (see sections on the semantic fields of *housing* and the *economy* for more on “funding”), or under threat due to a lack of adequate funding. But services were also the subject of a second discord based on claims by the city that the inadequacy in the city’s shelter and service system rested on the need for more outreach to inform people sleeping outside of the shelters and services that they could access. The story hinged on the lack of information rather than the lack of funding for shelter or services. Finally, services were also attached to the Proposed Jail in interesting ways that brought homelessness and incarceration together by conflating the people subjected to homelessness with those subjected to jail (a trend we also saw within the semantic field of *housing*), and by the cross-over of programs described as resolving both problems.

Early opposition to the removal of urban campsites questioned what the city was doing to provide shelter for people as they threw out their survival gear and personal possessions. RCOP hosted a series of campouts in front of city hall and said that “the Mayor's Office continues to pursue a policy of demolishing homeless people's encampments and throwing away their property without providing any alternative shelter” (Real Change News, 2/20/2008, CTA542). Coverage of the sweeps reflected an emerging media strategy whereby the city said that it would provide outreach services to inform campers as to the many services that were available to them.

For now, city officials say they will continue taking down tents, but will also begin providing outreach services in the New Year, as they develop a city-wide policy on how best to handle homeless camps. (King 5, 12/19/2007, CTA1541)

In making the sweeps protocol official policy, the mayor's office created a process whereby people sleeping outside would be subject to outreach workers who would inform them of the services and shelter available to them. "What the city "really wants to do is get people into services" with case management, mental health and other help" (Director of the Seattle Human Services Department Patricia McInturff, quoted in the Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173). The provision of outreach services provided journalists, and the public, with an explanation of what the city was doing to replace the shelter that they had removed by sweeping camps.

Now members of an outreach program have been out here at least twice in the last week telling people living here about shelter space available and substance abuse help if they need it. About 20 to 30 people lived out here in this wooded area. (Anchor, KOMO, 5/28/2008, CTA1577)

On four days from May 16 to May 28, the city contracted with Evergreen Outreach Services to visit homeless encampments in the Queen Anne greenbelt.

The protocol calls for the city to provide displaced homeless people with access to social services.

The outreach workers visited 14 people in the camps, referring one to drug and alcohol treatment. One person accepted an offer for shelter. (Seattle PI, 6/5/2008, CTA1188)

By moving the discussion away from the adequacy of shelter within the city, the focus moved towards a lack of information about the services that were already available by "telling people living here about shelter space available." The city is presented as making every effort to help people who cannot help themselves, with "members of an outreach program" "out here at least twice in the last week" "referring" people to "substance abuse" or "drug and alcohol treatment." The issue of whether existing shelters or services were adequate or appropriate to the needs of the community was obfuscated, deterring discussion away from the services themselves, and leaving people experiencing homelessness as



responsible for their own lack of awareness of what the city already “offers,” or as being unwilling to “accept” such offers.

When the adequacy of social services was present in mainstream journalistic accounts, it was presented in the form of direct quotes and attributions from “homeless advocates,” and rarely in the journalists own voice.

Homeless advocates are upset about Mayor Greg Nickels' policy of tearing down homeless encampments and they want more city services for people with nowhere to go. (Seattle PI, 9/25/2008, CTA1203)

Rather than providing a substantive account of the availability of services, the journalistic tendency to personalize conflict between opposing parties (“Homeless advocates,” “Mayor Greg Nickels”) provided a largely pathos-based conflict where advocates were presented as “upset” with a policy that they were not happy with, and as unsatisfied with the level of “help” the city already was providing: “they want more.”

Some of the coverage shifted over the sample period, with journalists increasingly willing to highlight the inadequacy of outreach services, saying that “...at least some of those folks need more than just “connecting with services” to get off the streets” (The Stranger, 1/14/2008, CTA1150). Critiques also emerged in letters to the editor, with people writing in to say that “There simply is not enough shelter space or services in Seattle to meet the demand” and that “The promise by the city to provide shelter and services to any homeless person who wants it is an empty promise” (Jean Darsie, letter to the editor, Seattle Times, 1/22/2008, CTA1246).

The discussion of services was also tied to the building and running of the Proposed Jail, creating a semantic connection between homelessness and incarceration in public discourse. One of the ways that this happened was in the frequent collocation of “jail” with

“services,” as in its use as a phrase, or bi-gram, (“jail services”) characterizing the role that jails play.

Although many county leaders now would clearly like to continue providing jail services for the cities' misdemeanor offenders, and collect the revenue that goes with that, many city leaders hesitate to trust the county over the long haul, and some have simply put in too much work into alternative plans to change course at this point. (Seattle PI, 6/30/2008, CTA1195)

Besides King County and Yakima, jail services are provided at Issaquah (62 beds), Renton (50 beds), Auburn (51 beds), Kirkland (12 beds) and other contract beds outside of King County (55 beds). (City of Redmond, 10/16/2007, CTA962)

In a political environment where the city argued for a growing need for “jail beds,” the provision of “jail services” worked through semantic prosody to create a space where public policy could focus more on incarceration than shelter for the region’s poor.

### ***Development.***

The ways that urban space was changing in Seattle was a major source of debate when it came to how people of different economic brackets benefitted from development. Who decides what development should look like, and where it should take place? The ways that people talked about development illustrated a difference of definition (development as problematic, and development as the solution), and the positionalities of the speakers changed depending on what was being developed, with the emergence of *Nickelsville* serving to reverse some of the ways that development was discussed.

Advocates and homeless organizers often talked about development as a problematic process, noting the “loss of affordable housing,” often tied to the boom in “condo conversions” and new condo construction that had happened during the previous five to ten years in Seattle. *Real Change News* reported on things like the parks levy fund allocation “being spent on development,” citing sources that called it a “Trojan horse.” Real Change organizer emails questioned zoning laws that “will allow developers to build taller and bigger

buildings in our communities, which could displace families, low-income tenants, low-wage workers, and local businesses” (Real Change organizer email, 11/17/2008, CTA784), and called on their constituency to take part in events aimed at changing city development policies.

Join SAGE and members of The Seattle City Council for a Brown Bag Forum on "making development work for all families" with national experts Leslie Moody and John Goldstein from the national Partnership for Working Families. Under the heavy weight of the current escalation of growth, how do we make development work not only for the rich, but for all families? (Real Change organizer email, 4/24/2007, CTA710)

Here, development is presented as something that should “work for all families,” “not only for the rich, but for all families.” By making statements about what *should* be, the reader is asked to make assumptions about what already *is*: development is for the “rich.” This development policy was occasionally used as a source of injustice, and as a causal agent in structuring the experience of being poor or homeless. One *Real Change News* editorial stated that “The incredibly rapid gentrification of downtown Seattle has brought greatly increased harassment of the visibly poor” (Real Change News, 4/30/2008, CTA572).

The interpretation of development as problematic was also visible within the CAC, where “Members expressed concern over the continued loss of affordable housing due to development and condo conversions, and wondered what we could do to ensure that some of these properties are available for use as homeless housing” (CAC, 2/28/2007, CTA1048). People within the CAC urged the CEH to “Continue to push for a moratorium on condo conversions or otherwise slow the pace of development of high cost housing and the loss of affordable housing” (CAC, 2/19/2008, CTA1059). The CEH, however, did not share the interpretation of development as a problem. Instead the CEH talked about development as a solution to homelessness and poverty by supporting “low-income and workforce housing

development...” (CEH, not dated, CTA982). News releases listed the CEH’s commitments to, and accomplishments in, the development of housing. Development was tied to the funding priorities of the 10-year plan, focusing on “the development of housing,” the “Development of new housing” and the “development of approximately 4,500 new units over the next ten years” (Press release, CEH, 3/9/2005, CTA967).

The building of the Proposed Jail was also closely associated with development discourses. In public comments, people expressed concern that jail development was detrimental to other types of “community” development that they saw as more desirable.

The Interbay property has such great potential for new commercial, residential or industrial development. Locating a jail on that site seems like such a waste of that potential...

Jail discourages community friendly development...

Despite Kent’s purported success (a dubious economic model, at best) with development surrounding a jail, it is highly likely that the building of an Interbay jail will have an extreme chilling effect on this very real potential for economic growth. (Public comment cards from the Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/30/2008, CTA935)

The binary opposition established in these comments is one between “community”/“commercial”/“industrial” development vs. the “waste”/“chilling effect” that a new jail would bring, connecting the jail to the degradation of neighborhoods.

The “construction” of a new jail, however, was associated with timelines, and coverage of the proposal for a new jail was described in terms of how long the project would take: “Construction is expected to start in September” (Seattle PI, 2/26/2009, CTA1240); “it takes about two and a half years to build one, construction should ideally start in the summer of 2010” (Seattle PI, 7/13/2008, CTA1199); “which would at least buy them more time to finish construction” (Seattle PI, 4/15/2009, CTA1244). Thus, discussions about “construction” focused on how soon the jail could be built, and obscured arguments about where or if the city should start construction at all.

*Nickelsville* confronted development in the form of direct action land use.

Descriptions of the camp were often couched in terms of construction and building, with headlines like “The Construction of Nickelsville” that talked about how “truckloads of construction materials started trickling in and soon a large structure was being built not far from the camp's entrance” (Seattle Weekly Blog, 9/25/2008, CTA1106), and provided updates about progress at the camp: “2:00pm construction begins of more permanent items built from wooden pallets and other recyclable materials” (Seattle Weekly Blog, 9/25/2008, CTA1164). The city initially placed *Nickelsville* within a structure of land use regulation that forbade urban camping within city limits, and the *Nickelsville* website talked about how the “NOV [notice of violation] issued on Friday says that 'the encampment' (Nickelsville) is a violation of the Land Use Code. It states that if said encampment is not removed by 5:00 PM Monday, October 6th, penalties of \$150.00 a day may commence” (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA176). As the project progressed and was hosted by a series of churches, media coverage talked of “Notice of Land Use Violations,” “land use permits” and associated the sanctioned use of land to host *Nickelsville* with the “Department of Planning and Development.” Participants responsible for the violations changed from individual Nickelodeons to organizations that were purported to have helped the group and to any churches that hosted it: “...the church was violating a land use code by allowing the homeless to set up camp on its property” (KOMO, as quoted in This Way Up, Seattle, Washington, 10/18/2008, CTA1387). The city consistently spoke about churches and non-profits as responsible for *Nickelsville*, issued “notices of violation” to them, and “fined” them for the camp’s continued existence (see section on the semantic fields of *legality* under *deviant subjectivities*). This strategy removed agency from Nickelodeons and looked to other

groups to regulate them rather than approaching *Nickelsville* head-on in an effort to resolve the dilemma. Further, the ability of churches to eventually apply for and receive a temporary land use “permit” meant that – although it provided the camp with more security once they could stay in one location for more than 72 hours – the camp was increasingly pigeonholed into the discursive arena of Tent City 3 and 4. Tent City 3 and 4 were regulated through “consent decrees” with the city and county government respectively that mandated that they could stay only on church property and only for a maximum of three months – something that *Nickelsville* was intended to change.

### ***Economic.***

The emergence of the recession as a major political issue in the summer of 2008 was a significant strategic resource for organizers interested in attributing structural causes to homelessness and poverty. The temporal overlap of a significant recession, particularly in the case of the Nickelsville issue area, provided an opening for talking about larger economic issues alongside how such issues might be experienced by individuals in the form of low wages and high housing costs. But this was not the only way that economic discourses were invoked in the three issue areas. Governmental bodies deployed “income” as a categorization mechanism, requiring individuals to subject themselves to classed identities in order to gain access to resources. And development discourses also collocated alongside economic discussions, focusing on the cost of housing projects and the impacts that jail construction might have on communities of lesser economic means.

The timing of *Nickelsville* was particularly well suited for discussions that tied larger economic issues to the very real material position of its 100 or so residents. By the summer of 2008, there was widespread agreement in most media sources that the United States was in

a significant recession. Wall Street bailouts were a frequent topic in mainstream news media and during the first week of *Nickelsville*'s series of direct action camps the locally headquartered Washington Mutual was called "the biggest bank to fail in U.S. history" (Daily Mail Reporter, 2008). As Tim Harris put it, "The convergence of an economy on the skids and a tent city full of people who are experiencing hard times, I think, makes us a little more likely to consider homelessness through the lens of our own economic vulnerability. In other words, I think the timing makes people more sympathetic, not less" (Apesma's Lament, 9/25/2008, CTA92). Regional blog posts talked about how "the problem of homelessness in King County" had "worsened with the deepening recession" (Save Feral Human Habitat, 3/4/2009, CTA202), and suggested that "There's going to be the rich in their condos and gated communities, with a vanishing middle class, and the rest of us living in shanty slums" (Java Colleen's Jitters, 8/27/2008, CTA1356). These discussions of the broader economy, the recession, and more general social phenomena like poverty and class provided a social context to discussions of homelessness that may not have been possible in the absence of a recession.

Factors more closely associated with people's direct experiences also provided a tie-in to larger structural issue, with mentions of "income"/"wage"/"salary" level inequality, high "rent"/"housing" costs or "property value," or difficulty paying "mortgages."

The wages from many Seattle jobs just don't pay enough for housing. Lieutenant Gracy should thank his lucky stars that -thanks to taxpayers -he's got a job with a fair wage. It isn't just mental illness or drug addiction that causes layoffs and loan defaults -as the good Lieutenant could confirm if he checked around his Precinct Station sometime. (Letter to the P.I. editor from Nickelsville, posted in Nickelsville email, 12/20/2008, CTA188)

The production of the experience of homelessness as an economic situation placed "wages"/"jobs" and "layoffs"/"loan defaults" as active participants in clauses (Fairclough,

2003), removing personal responsibility or “mental illness”/“drug addiction” as the primary causes of homelessness.

Economic discourses within the city’s publications, while often discussing economic hardships, trended more towards a focus on income subsidies in the form of social services or housing, as identity markers for those who might receive benefits, and on the affordability of those benefits in relation to the allocation of funds.

These projects will help low-income and homeless households throughout the county gain an affordable roof over their heads and the support services they need to sustain their housing. The housing will be affordable to a range of households with incomes below 80 percent of the area’s median income (AMI), with the majority of the awards supporting households below 50 percent of median income. (News release, CEH, 2/8/2007, CTA973)

Economic factors became qualifiers to categorize people as “low-income and homeless households,” “moderate income renters,” or “those with moderate incomes such as teachers, nurses, and service industry workers.” The categorization of typologies of people in lower income brackets was accompanied by a series of programs labeled as suited to those categories of people, like “low income housing,” “cheaper rents,” or projects that will provide “an affordable roof over their heads.” Those whose subjectivities were presented as lacking in material wealth – a process that Reisigl and Wodak (2001) call “(de-)possessivisation” – were constructed as in “need” of “help” from government programs that required their subjugation to classed categories in order to acquire such “help.”

The cost of the programs themselves existed alongside the categorization of people and the projects that they were associated with as beneficiaries.

The changes are supported by low income housing providers, who believe that these proposals will help them to develop financial packages that will increase the availability of low income housing in Seattle....Unfortunately, the current high costs of land and development have made it unlikely that new projects being developed will take advantage of this opportunity to provide housing to this market. (Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin email newsletter, 7/10/2008, CTA880)



The focus on the cost of developing “low income housing” mirrored the priorities of the 10-year plan, directing attention towards long-term housing projects and away from the provision of emergency shelter. Emphasizing the bureaucratic categorization of people, projects and budgets obscured both larger economic contexts and the ways that individuals experiencing homelessness or poverty dealt with the expense and affordability of “home” on a daily basis.

While categorizations into middle or lower income removed economic discussions from material realities, they also served as powerful tropes that could be wielded by individuals in their own discursive claims. Several of the Proposed Jail sites were in neighborhoods with lower housing costs, and as a result, lower household incomes, and several neighborhood groups formed in opposition to the Proposed Jail. The Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) existed in one such neighborhood and they drew on narratives based in economic justice and populist understandings of a ruling class in arguing against the jail being sighted in their neighborhood.

[Highland Park is] demographically less white and economically less well off...Our neighborhood doesn't have the economic benefit of being able to hire lawyers to fight this or time to devote to intense community protests to help our case, or the techno-savvy population needed to rally everyone - please don't let that determine the outcome- please don't let this be a case of the richest and loudest neighborhood wins, again. (HPAC, 4/3/2008, CTA143)

Highland Park is classified as “economically less well off” and without “economic benefit,” leading to the Proposed Jail being placed in their neighborhood because “the richest and loudest neighborhood wins, again.” Comments and discussion questions at a series of Municipal Forums suggest that one of the main arguments against the placement of a jail in a community was “Decreased property value” and the reversal of “Neighborhood...improvement” (Discussion questions, Municipal Jail Public Forum,

6/26/2008, CTA916). One set of comments are particularly illustrative of the dynamic that developed within neighborhoods opposed to citing the Proposed Jail in their area.

- Release into environment that gives access to immediate re-offense
  - o Drugs, crime, motels, prostitution
- Limited security police resource, Washelli doesn't have security...
- Impact on 358 bus security – commuter hours
- Neighborhood – area already at tipping point for improvement
- Non-neighborhood friendly business move in bail bonds, etc.
- Economic loss, UPS Store, Aurora Village merchants have voiced concern
- Decreased property value (Table #9, comments recorded on flip charts, Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/12/2008, CTA928)

The fear of decreasing property values plays on well established patterns in the American cultural imagination. The practice of “redlining” non-white neighborhoods was combined with racially restrictive covenants as a legal mechanism for racial segregation in Seattle well into the 1960s, and these practices were structured on arguments that the exposure of the neighborhood to particular types of people would degrade property values. Such arguments were particularly popular in working class neighborhoods at a time when home ownership for white men had been subsidized on a mass scale through the GI Bill (Massey, 2008). But rather than race, the socially imagined criminal is presented here as geographically threatening, and whose “Release into the environment” is assumed to lead to “re-offense,” “impacts” on “security,” “economic loss,” and “decreased property values.”

### ***Alternatives to jail.***

In the face of a Proposed Jail, many of the community groups that opposed the building of a jail in their neighborhoods did so on the grounds that it was not a good location, and the jail should be built somewhere else. However, as the *No New Jail* campaign developed, organizers articulated a response to the Proposed Jail that questioned the logic of the criminal justice system, and instead highlighted existing and possible future programs that had been shown to reduce the incarceration rate. These “alternatives to jail” became the

backbone of the *No New Jail* campaign, and texts that promoted the campaign frequently cited examples of how they might work. Meeting minutes from RCOP described their position that the city should “Invest in social and human services and already successful diversion programs that keep people out of jail,” noting that “It is \$50,000 less (per person?) to put them in a diversion program than in jail” (RCOP wiki, 11/14/2008, CTA459). The touting of “diversion programs” as alternatives to a new jail were often placed alongside calls for people to participate, as was done in a This Week in Real Change email:

TAKE ACTION: Advocate to increase funds for social and human services as a way to lower our incarceration rates. Seattle and King County diversion programs already keep these numbers low, tell City Council that a new municipal jail is unnecessary and to continue funding these successful programs! Click here to take action. (This Week in Real Change email, 6/8/2008, CTA648)

But activists were not alone in their call for alternatives. Several local politicians and the county level agencies that had currently provided jail facilities to the city also touted the importance of options other than incarceration.

For many non-violent offenders with drug and alcohol addictions, treatment instead of punishment is less expensive and also more effective and compassionate. (Councilmember Kathy Lambert, cited in West Seattle Blog, 7/7/2008, CTA1508)

One of the results of the discourse on “treatment” programs instead of incarceration is the emphasis that this gave to areas of meaning related to drugs and drug use. When placed in the context of a campaign that sought to connect those being incarcerated as poor and homeless, the presentation of treatment programs may have served to offer alternatives to jail, but it also perpetuated the semantic association between homelessness and deviant drug use (see the section on the semantic field of *drugs*).

### ***Human rights.***

The raids on encampments represent a violation of homeless people’s most fundamental human rights—the right to have a place to sleep, to not be subject to

unjustified search and seizure of your property, to not be told to “move along” when you have no place else to go. (The Stranger Blog, 6/6/2008, CTA1155)

Any time you remove my personal property from my campsite you have condemned me to at least one night of cold and wet misery. (Guest column, Seattle PI, 12/20/2007, CTA1174)

The production of homelessness was significantly impacted by a semantic field consisting of words and phrases associated with *human rights*. The production of human rights discourses were premised on associations with the semantic fields of *humanity*, *dignity*, *morality*, *death*, *safety*, *survival*, and *rights*. Each of these semantic fields were important for identifying what homelessness meant in the context of the three issue areas. Advocates and alternative media journalists used the human rights discourse more than other groups of speakers, but the mayor’s office also deployed the semantic field of *humanity* in their production of the Sweeps policy in an effort to claim the moral high ground in the contestation of what the Sweeps and the Nickelsville issue areas meant.

Prior to the development of a sweeps policy, the mayor’s office was already developing representational strategies, saying that “The policy will be consistent,” and that “It needs to be humane. There needs to be notification. There needs to be outreach workers” (Patricia McInturff, office of the mayor, quoted in the Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173) (cf. Bawarshi, 2008 for an analysis of internal documents that show how the city developed its media strategy along these lines). Once they unveiled the policy, their message was reiterated by mainstream journalists.

"What's new here is that we've developed a coordinated, humane, predictable approach that really sets the exact way that you're going to go out and do this," said Marty McOmber, a spokesman for Mayor Greg Nickels. (Seattle PI, 4/11/2008, CTA1181)

The Mayor's Office said the approach was coordinated, humane and predictable.

"Every year, the city spends about \$40 million to end homelessness and we take it very seriously," said Alex Fryer, a Nickels spokesman. "We want to be sensitive and it's one of the mayor's top agendas." (Seattle PI, 6/9/2008, CTA1190)

By characterizing the Sweeps policy as “humane,” the mayor’s office drew on the semantic associations that the word brought with it, as concerned with the humanity of the persons it impacted.

The labeling of the Sweeps policy as “coordinated, humane and predictable” also echoes an evaluation of encampment clearances as early as 1998, when the Seattle Displacement Coalition's John Fox said that “You can't argue [against encampments out of] safety or security or health reasons when the alternative for the people affected is much worse and much more inhumane” (John Fox, quoted in the Seattle Weekly, 7/1/1998, CTA1069; brackets in original). Direct responses to the “humane” characterization of the Sweeps policy continued in 2007-2009, and opponents of the policy highlighted the destruction of personal property along with the lack of adequate shelter for those whose camps were swept. Some mainstream journalists responded to these claims citing “critics,” “advocates,” and “homeless people” as saying that the policy was “inhumane” and “immoral.”

A stepped-up campaign by the city of Seattle to rid the city's greenbelts and parks of homeless encampments is being called “inhumane” and “immoral” by homeless people and their advocates after reports that police have destroyed or dumped their personal belongings. (The Seattle Times, 11/27/2007, CTA1245)

After three City Council members submitted a letter requesting information about the policy to the mayor’s office, council member Peter Steinbrueck said that “My concern is for the humane treatment of homeless people who are being impacted by these sweeps” (The Seattle Times, 11/27/2007, CTA1245). State legislators also expressed concern over the city’s

Sweeps policy after *Nickelsville* moved from city to state land and the city threatened to sweep the camp there as well.

Dear Mayor Nickels,

As legislators representing districts in the Seattle area, we are calling on you today to enter into discussions with the Church Council of Greater Seattle, Real Change, Veterans for Peace Chapter 92 and other interested parties in order to craft a humane and productive path forward in regards to the real and urgent needs of the homeless and destitute people of Seattle... (Reposted in the Seattle Weekly Blog, 9/26/2008, CTA1113)

The letter granted *Nickelsville* a brief reprieve from a city sweep, but the mayor's office refused to talk with *Nickelsville* for the duration of Nickel's tenure as mayor.

Even as public pressure mounted in support of *Nickelsville*, Nickels continued to speak about a "humane" policy. After juxtaposing the humanity of the Sweeps policy as "much more humane than what had been going on prior to that," with the inhumanity of non-action ("I just don't think that it is humane to allow people camping out") in an interview on a local radio station, Nickels asserted that his administration had the best interests of campers in mind because "permanent housing is the humane approach" (Mayor Greg Nickels, on *KUOW*, reposted on Apesma's Lament, 10/13/2008, CTA108).

Homeless activists made a concerted effort to control the definition of the Sweeps policy as "immoral and inhumane." RCEP replicated the phrase in many of its communications, stating that "It is inhumane and immoral to punish people for living outside when there is not enough shelter or affordable housing to meet the need" (Real Change organizer email, 2/21/2008, CTA742; 3/6/2008, 744; 3/14/2008, 745). *Nickelsville* adopted similar phrasing, saying that "It is immoral and inhumane to destroy people's only shelter and drive them into the elements" (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA180).

One of the stories that contributed to the Sweeps being defined as "inhumane and immoral" was the discussion of how "personal property," "personal items," "possessions,"

and “belongings” were dealt with during sweeps and then disposed of or stored for retrieval afterwards. A March 2006 article in *Real Change News* titled “Weather coincides with city “cleanup” of campers’ possessions” highlighted the impact that the sweep had on the campers.

Valentine’s Day dawned with a light snowfall dusting the greater Seattle area. While others warded off the chill by exchanging tokens of affection, a handful of people sheltering in a greenbelt received a very different message. All their belongings were thrown away.

“I have nothing left — some valentine,” says Barry Williams. His canned goods, clothes, the tent he slept in, a quilt, and three sleeping bags — along with the possessions of two other nearby campers — were taken and discarded by a Department of Corrections work crew. Williams had been camping in an overgrown area on Queen Anne Hill’s southwest flank for about six months. (*Real Change News*, 3/2/2006, CTA467)

The *Real Change News* article that uncovered the city’s increase in campsite clearances in October of 2007 was titled “City’s Sweeps Remove Campers’ Belongings, Leave Trash,” and noted an August sweep where “police present during the sweep threatened to arrest people trying to retrieve their belongings” (*Real Change News*, 10/31/2007, CTA513). By November, CAC members “shared stories of people having their possessions destroyed in these sweeps. People have lost irreplaceable things such as pictures of their children (with whom they no longer have contact and so this is their last link to that child), family heirlooms and mementos, legal documents, medicines, and other survival gear” (CAC, 11/14/2007, CTA1056). The *Seattle Times* reported that “A stepped-up campaign by the city of Seattle to rid the city’s greenbelts and parks of homeless encampments is being called “inhumane” and “immoral” by homeless people and their advocates after reports that police have destroyed or dumped their personal belongings” (The *Seattle Times*, 11/27/2007, CTA1245). Finally, the CEH passed a motion in December that the Sweeps should include an “opportunity for them [campers] to remove their belongings” (IC, 12/3/2007, CTA1026).

The ways that the disposal or storage of belongings was produced in local media coverage was a focus of energy for activists and alternative media journalists. One such incident occurred when an editorial in the *Seattle PI* responded to the temporary halt to the Sweeps by calling for them to continue, stating that “People should know you're coming -- unless they're criminals. The sweeps should go on” (Seattle PI, 12/7/2007, CTA1171). The editorial was subject to a critical analysis in “Adventures in Irony,” the weekly *Real Change News* satirical column.

But it's in the fourth paragraph that Thompson's genius for twisted hate speech really drives forward. He acknowledges that at a Queen Anne site, “Camp residents weren't notified before a cleanup and lost personal items,” and says “people should know [sweepers] are coming — unless they're criminals.” And then, with just that justification and no more, he adds, “The sweeps should go on.”

Let's see how that works in other contexts. How about: “People shouldn't be sent to concentration camps — unless they're criminals. The roundups should go on.” How about: “People shouldn't be lynched — unless they're criminals. The hangings should go on.” Oh yeah, works great. (Real Change News, 12/12/2007, CTA520)

The exchange around “personal items” highlighted the inhumanity of the Sweeps policy as tantamount to “criminals” being “lynched” and “sent to concentration camps,” and the temporary halt ultimately led to the development of an official protocol for their regulation.

Once the protocol had regulated the storage of “seized property” mainstream media coverage emphasized the change in the Sweeps that the policy ushered in, and the *Seattle PI* reported that “When dismantling such camps, officials said, the city will:...

Store seized property for 60 days. That includes any clearly personal items, such as photos, plus anything estimated to be worth \$25 or more. Such items will be stored at a Seattle Parks and Recreation facility in West Seattle. After 60 days, city workers may dispose of the property. (Seattle PI, 4/11/2008, CTA1181)

The emphasis on the experience of “property” loss remained an important discursive tool for opponents to the Sweeps, with one *Real Change News* headline reading “City "responding as usual" to complaints against homeless: As city releases broad rules to justify the removal of



people and belongings, records reveal that sweeps have continued unchecked” (Real Change News, 1/16/2008, CTA534).

The confiscation and disposal of personal belongings was tied in some cases to the confiscation of “survival gear,” as it was in the CAC excerpt above. A November 2007 email from RCEP called on people to sign a petition against the Sweeps stating that “In greenbelts, under bridges, and in parks across Seattle, homeless people's campsites are being systematically destroyed, and their basic survival gear and personal effects are being taken away and discarded.” The email concluded that “The City of Seattle can't solve homelessness alone, but the City can stop inhumane treatment of people simply trying to survive” (Real Change organizer email, 11/15/2007, CTA729). A *Seattle Times* article quoted Alison Eisinger of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness as saying that “People who were camped out in several different locations who had everything they needed for survival, their tents, their sleeping bags, cooking equipment removed and destroyed,” and that “It is immoral to evict people from where they are struggling to survive without providing meaningful alternatives” (Alison Eisinger, quoted in The Seattle Times, 11/27/2007, CTA1245). A December, 2007 “Call to Action” asked people to “Come Rally for the Right to Survive” (This Week in Real Change email, 12/12/2007, CTA524).

Talking about being homeless in terms of survival was further reinforced by periodic memorials that a group called Women in Black held to remember those who die homeless “outside or by violence.” A guest editorial in the *Seattle PI* written by “Julie Weaver, Craig Everett and 10 other members of SHARE/WHEEL” highlighted what they called “The most visible and horrible manifestation of the city of Seattle's encampment sweeps policy,” namely “the death of Isaac Palmer” who “was run over by a brush mower as he slept.”

Together with the Church of Mary Magdalene, we stand Women in Black vigils every time a homeless person dies outside or by violence; at least 44 people last year. According to the King County Medical Examiner's Office, the average age of death of homeless people here is just 48 years old. (Seattle PI guest editorial, 2/20/2008, CTA1180)

The practice of bearing witness to the deaths of people experiencing homelessness provided a news hook for journalists covering the Sweeps policy, creating a semantic relationship between the policy and death, and connecting encampments like *Nickelsville* with “survival” (see the section on the semantic field of *death* as well).

In 2007 forty-six homeless deaths occurred outside or through violence in King County, and so far this year there have been eleven. The creation of Nickelsville is a matter of survival. (Eat the State, 5/1/2008, CTA130)

The focus on *Nickelsville* as a “survival mechanism” was articulated in emails and website posts from people in the homeless community that characterized the community as a project that was intended to keep people “together and safe.” Action calls prior to the camps first location called for “People who are willing to take direct action to help us stay together and safe” (Nickelsville email, 9/12/2008, CTA158), emails thanked people for “being part of our efforts to stay together and safe!” (Nickelsville email, 9/12/2008, CTA174), and email alerts asked for people to attend the arraignment of the “Nickelsville 22” to “support your brothers and sisters who struggled to stay together and safe for Nickelsville” (Nickelsville email, 11/5/2008, CTA182). The use of this concept was prominent enough to make it into media coverage of *Nickelsville* when Aaron Collyer spoke with *KOMO* TV, saying that “All we're trying to do is provide safety in numbers and provide some sense of normalcy so people can work and carry on about their lives” (Aaron Collyer, appearing on *KOMO*, 10/10/2008, CTA1589).

Talk of survival and safety in relation to urban camping was developed into a rights-based discourse within the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign. Calls to action talked of a “right to

survive” and placards at the first campout at city hall declared that “Survival is a human right” (Sign at rally, quoted in the Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173). Shortly after the campout an aid to city councilmember Nick Licata “asked the city’s Human Rights Commission to review current policy related to the treatment of seized belongings” (Real Change News, 1/9/2008, CTA530). *Nickelsville* also inspired several evaluations of the situation as one that should be presented in the context of human rights, with an Independent Media Center (IMC) post claiming that “Shelter Is a Basic Human Right” (IMC, 11/6/2008, CTA840). The guest editorial on the Sweeps cited above also deployed a rights-based discourse, saying that,

There is nothing more important than providing shelter for all so homeless people stop dying outside. No human being should die like Isaac Palmer did. Every human being deserves to live and die with dignity. Every person has a right to a safe, sanitary place to call his own, even if it's only a tent. (Guest editorial, Seattle PI, 2/20/2008, CTA1180)

While drawing on a rights-based discourse, the editorial connects the “right to” safety to “dignity.” The concept of a “right to survival” placed shelter provision within a decidedly different legal arena than the “offer” of shelter to people in “need” that the city developed around their “humane” Sweeps policy media strategy.

The concept of “dignity” was often associated with the experience of homelessness. Requests for participation in the second *Stop the Sweeps* campout asked people to “Come stand for human dignity, compassion, and public accountability” (Real Change News, 3/5/2008, CTA549), and Bill Kirlin-Hackett of the Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness said of the city’s new sweeps protocol that “They’re forgetting this is about basic human dignity” (Seattle PI, 4/11/2008, CTA1181). *Nickelsville* was identified by organizers like Anitra Freeman as providing dignity through the implementation of a self-managed community, saying that “Independence within the parameters of agreed-upon rules will ensure the safety

and dignity of all participants” (Real Change News, 9/17/2008, CTA628), and that “You can actually have a community and things that you can do to contribute. It’s a greater amount of human dignity for people” (Anitra Freeman, on Democracy Now!, 3/30/2009, CTA1668).

Opposition to the Proposed Jail also drew on the humanity discourse. A comment card written by an RCOP organizer said that “This is a short-sighted, counter-intuitive, and inhumane response...” (Da[n]ina Garcia, Comment Card, Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/30/2008, CTA935), and an RCOP email called the jail “an expensive, unnecessary, counterproductive and inhumane investment for Seattle to make” (RCOP email, 11/4/2008, CTA339). The identification of the new jail as “inhumane” drew on the development of the discourse that organizers had built during the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, lending credibility to their opposition to a new jail.

Social justice – yes, the jail is a touchy – but the majority of the sites you proposed are in

South Seattle. We know we are poorer, more ethnically and racially diverse – but it’s time to share the burden of the ugly necessities of cities to other neighborhoods not just the south. (Municipal Jail Public Forum, 6/26/2008, CTA916)

Social justice offered a more progressive response to arguments against the jail when the majority of statements in this vein relied on attaching negative attributes to those who would be housed in the Proposed Jail, and the detrimental effects that they would have on the neighborhoods where it was proposed to be sighted.

—

Homelessness, like many other social issues, is a deeply material experience. This section has illustrated how those who contributed to the social production of the Proposed Jail, Nickelsville, and the Sweeps as issue areas all engaged in the classification of these issues as material struggles. The deployment of the semantic fields of *housing*, *shelter*, *services*, *development*, the *economy*, *alternatives to jail*, and *human rights* all provided

unique opportunities for political action around homelessness. Within each of these semantic fields there was significant discord as to the role that each played in the production of homelessness and the role they might play in its alleviation. This led to public contests over the meaning of homelessness that drew upon power in the deployment of words and phrases, as well as in the critique of them. All of this discursive work resulted in very real material actions, be they the decision to build or not to build a Proposed Jail, the production of an official Sweeps policy, or of *Nickelsville* as a method for providing immediate emergency shelter along with a degree of human dignity. But some of the most contentious struggle was over the meaning of homelessness as deviant behavior. It is to this that I now turn.

### **Contesting the meaning of deviant subjectivities.**

Homelessness has historically been defined as a deviant form of behavior and the subjectivity of “homeless” has functioned as a social stigma alongside other forms of deviant behavior. This semantic connection was highly prevalent in the three cases examined here, often becoming the central focus of attention for contributors to the public sphere. These associations fell into three major areas of meaning: *dirtiness*, *drugs*, and *danger*. First, homelessness is something that has been strongly associated with *dirtiness*, with the accompanying associations with the semantic fields of *garbage*, *filth*, *human waste*, lack of *cleanliness*, and poor *health/disease*. Second, *drug* use is a deviant behavior that has commonly been associated with homelessness, leading to characterizations of people as *addicts* associated with the presence of illicit *substances*, and the resultant expectations of *treatment*. Third, people experiencing homelessness are often considered *dangerous* people, producing *fear* of a lack of *safety* due to their *violent*, *criminal* nature, and resulting in a justification of their being *policed*. Each of these semantic fields were important for

understanding how homelessness, homeless persons, and the spaces they occupied were defined in the three issue areas examined here.

Often the use of words in many of these areas were attached to persons and places through a process of “referential identification...tropologically described as synecdochisation,” whereby “a specific feature, trait or characteristic is selectively pushed to the fore as a ‘part for the whole’, as a representative depicter” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 46). It is in the use of such synecdochisation that stereotypes are often expressed, the most common of which rely on references to skin color or gender as shorthand for large groups of people. By focusing on only part of the whole, these parts are attached to other meanings (i.e., skin color to intelligence, gender to emotionality), and in some instances, it is these other attributes that begin to replace the original label altogether. In this section, we will pay particular attention to ways in which social actors were portrayed using the predicative strategies of *criminonyms* (i.e., felons, criminals), negative *habitoonyms* (i.e., alcoholics, drug users), forms of *spacialization* (i.e., representations of spaces as associated with people – bushes, woods) and *anthroponyms* denoting states of mental or physical health, states of inebriation and states of cleanliness (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; van Leeuwen, 1996).

In the context of issue areas where the majority power-holding group rarely has direct experience with the population being defined (as is often the case with homelessness), synecdochisation is a particularly important referential practice for the social production of a population, what leads to its growth, and what social policies would be appropriate responses to the phenomenon. However, people experiencing homelessness or acting on behalf of homeless persons worked to confront the stereotypes of homeless people as dangerous, dirty, drug addicts, and co-opted these discourses as linguistic resources in the production of city

policies and journalistic practices. In resisting those definitions of homelessness that dominated the public sphere, participants engaged in an area of meaning that already had importance (salience) and attempted to either redirect the actors associated with deviant labels (shelters are dirty; the city is violent), or they reversed the labeling binaries by arguing for instance that *Nickelsville* was “clean,” that they were a “sober” camp, or that they had strict rules against the use of “violence” in the camp. As I will illustrate, these contrasting uses of deviant subjectivity labels did begin to change the dominant narratives of what homeless people were like. However, in continuing to argue within the area of deviance without the introduction of more positive areas of meaning to associate homelessness with, such re-definitions often failed to move outside of deviant subjectivities as a definitional paradigm. This resulted in the general acceptance of exceptional homeless persons or homeless groups, whereby *Nickelsville*, for example, was seen as different from the continuing norm of homelessness as deviance.

As we will see, each issue area offered a particular set of affordances. As the semantic network analysis of issue sector centralization measures illustrated at the beginning of the issue contestation section, this meant that the Proposed Jail was an issue sector that was more heavily reliant on semantic fields associated with *deviant subjectivities* in tying different areas of meaning together. It also meant that each issue sector hosted some semantic fields more than others. A norm file comparison of the frequency of semantic fields within the categories of *danger*, *dirty*, and *drugs* showed significant difference between the three issues areas (see Appendix C for descriptive statistics of semantic category frequencies based on issue specialization clusters). The frequency of these semantic fields in each issue sector relative to the other issue sectors is represented graphically using MDS scaling below (see

Figure 4.1). As we can see, when comparing frequencies between the three issue sectors, the Proposed Jail issue area saw a significantly higher occurrence of lexical items associated with the semantic fields of *criminality*, *safety*, *treatment*, and *drunks* (all with positive correlations of  $p < .05$  using log likelihood), the Sweeps with the semantic fields of *clean*, *trash*, *health*, *violence*, *substances*, and *drugs* (all with positive correlations of  $p < .05$  using log likelihood), and Nickelsville with the semantic fields of *bathrooms*, *dumpster*, *healthcare*, and *legality* (also with positive correlations of  $p < .05$  using log likelihood). Thus, the Proposed Jail issue area was most positively correlated with *danger* and *drug* discourses, Nickelsville with *danger* and *dirty*, and the Sweeps with semantic fields associated with all three of these major categories of meaning.

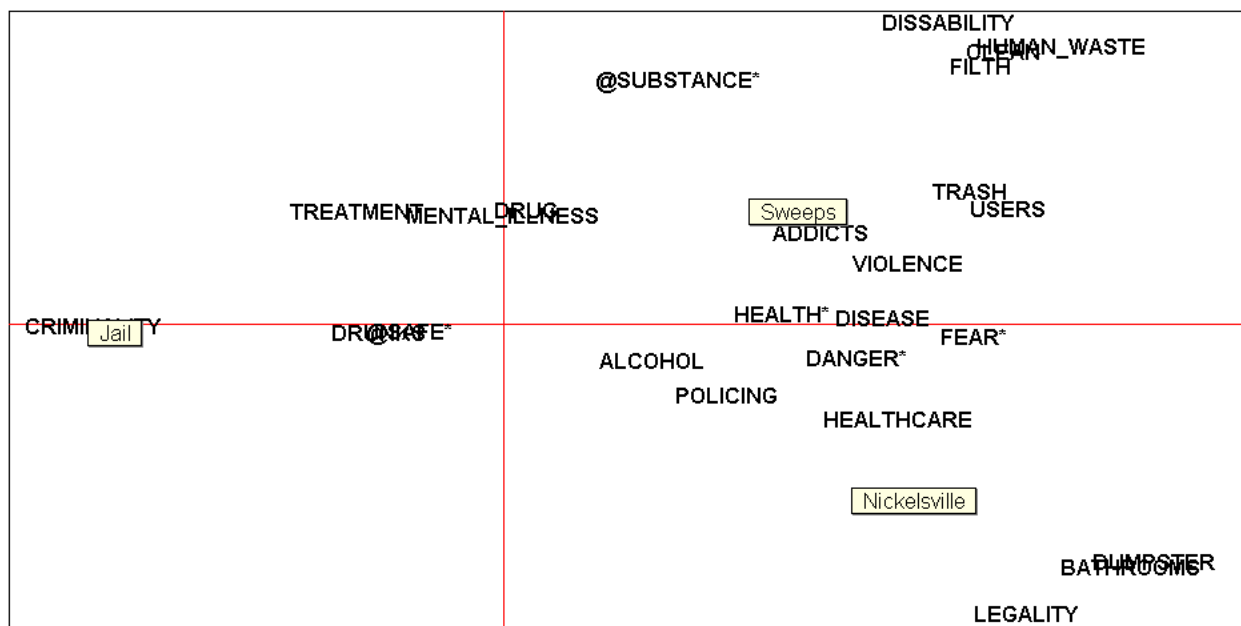


Figure 4.1. MDS scaling of the relationship between the frequency of semantic fields associated with deviant subjectivities and issue specialist texts within each issue area.

The associations that each issue area had with different kinds of deviant behavior structured the affordances that activists were presented with in the contestation of what homelessness meant. In what follows, I present each of the three major areas of meaning –



*danger*, *dirty*, and *drugs* – specifying how the semantic fields within each of these clusters were contested in the context of the three overlapping issue areas (the Proposed Jail, Nickelsville, and the Sweeps), and how the issue areas themselves structured that contestation. This analysis contextualizes the descriptive measurements presented above, situating each semantic field within the social context of issue contestation, and suggests some of the social repercussions that such uses had.

### ***Danger.***

Homelessness was frequently identified with various aspects of danger. The production of the semantic field of *danger* relied on specific discourses, often oriented around particular words or phrases. People talked about how *dangerous* camps were, but they also talked about *safety*, *fear*, *violence*, *criminality*, and *policing* in ways that produced the more general semantic category of *danger*. In order to understand how these discourses were deployed by different populations and for different ends in the context of each campaign, I explore each of them in turn, and follow with a summary of their use.

### ***Dangerous.***

The DANGER lemma was used only minimally in descriptions of homeless camps, and was deployed more commonly in rebuttals of descriptions that relied on a range of danger fields (*safety*, *violence*, *criminality*, *policing*, etc.). More importantly, though, DANGER was an important mechanism for the description of the experience of homelessness, used in descriptions of shelters and Sweeps, and as the binary opposite for what *Nickelsville* was able to provide. Finally, DANGER was used in descriptions of how a Proposed Jail might impact different communities, requiring city officials to present the danger that a jail was assumed to create as something that could be mediated through proper planning.

Homeless camps were often considered to be “dangerous” to the (housed) community. Prior to the arrival of Tent City 3 or 4 in a neighborhood, there were often concerns expressed by community members that Tent City residents might pose a danger to their children or the safety of their community. These concerns were typically mitigated through a lengthy community relations process, usually facilitated by the church proposing to host the tent city. Occasionally this involved legal wrangling based on claims that “the camp would be a nuisance and a danger” (The Seattle Times, 7/29/2008, CTA1265). Other connections between camps and DANGER were more nuanced, as in the association of the “jungle” (where many people camp) with both heroin and homelessness, where the author quoted then City Council member Jim Compton as saying that “If China white heroin is being sold [in the jungle], it's a dangerous development for Seattle” (Jim Compton, quoted in the Seattle PI, 12/7/2007, CTA1171).

But the explicit textual production of DANGER in association with homeless encampments was in fact most heavily deployed by those within the homeless community, highlighting the injustice of fears about how dangerous a homeless encampment might be. Advocates and activists talked about “constantly reading about the potential dangers those scary, crazy homeless people impose on the rest of us” (Real Change News, 3/19/2008, CTA556) and how “The mayor’s public relations team has vilified homeless campers as lazy and irresponsible, diseased and dangerous” (Real Change News, 3/5/2008, CTA549). It should be noted that, while the production of homeless people and homeless camps may have been interpreted by the homeless community as “danger,” this characterization in mainstream media texts rarely made use of explicit presentations of the DANGER lemma.

The most prominent use of the term was in the production of homelessness as a dangerous experience. The sweeps were presented as placing people in danger from the elements by confiscating their “survival gear,” describing how “Some evicted wind up sleeping on sidewalks with no tent or sleeping bag, in danger of freezing to death on icy winter nights” (Eugene Cho, 10/2/2008, CTA1378). *Nickelsville* routinely described how the lack of adequate shelter beds “means more than 4,000 people sleep in danger every night – which is why at least 35 homeless people have died by violence or in the elements already this year” (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA180). This connection between the lack of adequate shelter and dangerous conditions for people experiencing homelessness was a staple strategy for activists within the homeless movement as a way to justify increased funding for emergency shelter and the need for projects like *Nickelsville* (see section on the semantic field of *human rights*). In a series of regional blog posts providing updates on the status of a man who became known as *Nickelsville*’s minister, fellow Christians who lived in the group house with him repeated simple phrasing that was based on *Nickelsville*’s own press releases.

#### WHY NICKELSVILLE?...

Sleeping outside is dangerous; unfortunately there are not enough indoor shelters. There is safety in numbers, there is power in being organized. (The Mustard Seed House, 10/1/2008, CTA1377; Eugene Cho, 10/2/2008, CTA1378; other than..., 10/7/2008, CTA1383)

These texts constructed a causal connection, suggesting that “Sleeping outside” was “dangerous,” sweeps increase the danger, and self-managed communities like *Nickelsville* provided “safety in numbers.”

Shelters were also constructed as dangerous places. The causal narrative chain described above (outside/sweeps = danger, *Nickelsville* = safety) was often questioned by critics of tent cities and journalists. The city made much of their efforts to include outreach workers as a component of their repeated Sweeps of *Nickelsville*, emphasizing that shelter

space was available, and specifying how many Nickelodeons had or had not “accepted” their “offers” of shelter. People experiencing homelessness responded by emphasizing the dangers faced when staying in managed shelters as an explanation of why *Nickelsville* was necessary.

Though representatives of homeless shelters roamed the encampment, many of the homeless complained that shelters are dirty and dangerous.

"That's why we came here [Nickelsville]," said 24-year-old Michael Mooneyhan.

"For the most part it's been safe here." (Seattle PI, 10/1/2008, CTA1211)

Local blogs described people's experiences “in downtown shelters” as “so humiliating and dangerous, many vowed to never again use those nasty shelters...”

Since everyone in the sleeping room is a stranger, theft and fights are constant dangers. You must share communal rooms with dangerous schizoid psychotics, professional thieves, end-stage drunks and drug addicts, lost souls who eat out of dumpsters, and those who snore so loud you never get any sleep. (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440)

Through depictions of shelters and those who stay in them as “dangerous” and *Nickelsville* as “safe,” Nickelodeons were able to maintain the causal relationship between danger and self-managed tent cities (“That's why we came here”).

DANGER was also used as a metaphor for maintaining existing services and programs when advocates or homeless organizers perceived that broad opposition was needed in order to assure continued funding. Frequent claims were made that “Services are in danger” (Real Change organizer email, 10/2/2008, CTA772), “SHARE is in danger” (Real Change organizer email, 10/2/2008, CTA783), and that “important programs are in danger,” and these claims were tied to descriptions of how budget cuts were “short-sighted and dangerous public policy” that “puts homeless people, shelter workers, and the general public at grave risk” (Real Change organizer email, 11/10/2008, CTA780). Much as was seen with the description of homelessness as a dangerous experience, the “dangerous public policy” claim was aimed at alarming readers, and providing potential adherents with a description of the

situation as problematic and in need of collective action (Snow, Baker et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988).

Danger was also something that was closely associated with the “not in my back yard” (NIMBY) responses that people expressed about the placement of Proposed Jail sites in their neighborhoods. Concerns were frequently voiced in public forums that a new jail would be a “dangerous facility near our schools and homes” (Municipal Jail Public Forum Comments, 6/26/2008, CTA915). News reports of developments in the jail project reported that the city responded by assuring residents that a “regional justice center in Kent...[was] a jail housing much more dangerous prisoners peacefully co-exists side by side with the ball fields and a new shopping center,” concluding with a quote from the city stating that “I think it's a model for how a jail can be a good neighbor” (Katherine Cornwall, City of Seattle policy analyst, King 5, 5/25/2008, CTA1543). This exchange never addressed the accuracy of describing people arrested for misdemeanants as “dangerous,” but instead emphasized that “The City is looking at ways to safeguard the area around a jail, including services and transportation for released inmates, as well as other ways to ensure public safety” (City of Seattle, not dated, CTA942).

### *Safety.*

The move between the DANGER and SAFE lemmas was a common one in the corpus. SAFE was used extensively to describe the desired outcome of a range of activities, actions and public policies and as the implied and explicit binary opposite to DANGER. City officials emphasized “health and safety concerns” that they had with homeless camps, and presented solutions in the form of “safe housing.” Homeless activists, on the other hand, emphasized the need for safe spaces to sleep and the importance of self-managed solutions in providing safety to homeless people.

Talk about safety and homelessness published by city agencies focused on the development of “safe housing” and “safe neighborhoods.” In news releases to area media, the CEH said that “Every citizen of King County deserves a safe place to call home” (Ron Sims, quoted in news release, CEH, 2/8/2007, CTA973) and talked about how “Each of us has a role to play in achieving the goal of a safe and affordable home for all who need one” (Dan Brettle, quoted in news release, CEH, 7/11/2005, CTA970). Mayor Greg Nickels concluded that this approach would “bring an end to homelessness in this community” and he said that he looked “forward to a day when every citizen has access to safe, decent housing” (Mayor Greg Nickels, quoted in news release, CEH, 7/11/2005, CTA970).

City council members talked of development that would “enhance public safety and create an environment where people are safe throughout the downtown district and waterfront,” and projects that would create “safe public places” (City Council member Tim Burgess’ City View email, 1/12/2009, CTA902). This connection between safety and the public, however, was strongest in the repeated use of the “health and public safety” phrase that city officials deployed in their discussions of the Sweeps policy and this was replicated in mainstream media accounts. Patricia McInturff used these terms in an update she gave on the Sweeps policy to the Interagency Council (IC) of the CEH, saying that “The City has been removing encampments on city land for several years-primarily in response to community complaints and health and public safety issues” (Patricia McInturff, paraphrased in IC, 12/3/2007, CTA1026). This phrase was then repeated in mainstream media coverage of the issue and quoted in critiques of the city’s language use on the Sweeps policy (also, see section on the semantic field of *health*).

The CAC expressed concern that adequate shelter be provided to assure the safety of people experiencing homelessness. In response to a discussion about a redesign of a regional park CAC members told the CEH that “People sleeping in the park is indicative of the lack of safe places where people can go during the day,” and emphasized “The need for a safe place to sleep during the day,” tying the need to “people who work [the] graveyard shift” and “an increasing number of hate crimes committed against homeless people” (CAC, 8/30/2006, CTA1042).

The argument for “safe places” was echoed in talk about *Nickelsville*. Once requests by members of SHARE/WHEEL and the CAC to “make available porta-potties and dumpsters [in areas where encampments were located] to help address the health and safety concerns” (CAC, 12/19/2007, CTA1057) were ignored by the CEH, energies moved to developing an organized encampment that could provide those services for its residents. The emergence of *Nickelsville* was instrumental in changing the way that safety was discussed in public discourse.

For the last five months we have been planning a safe, sanitary, permanent shelter for up to 1000 of the homeless people living on the streets and the green belts of Seattle. (Excerpt from a Nickelsville email, quoted in Blogging Georgetown, 9/22/2008, CTA1307)

Emails to supporters in the first few days of the camp called for “People who are willing to take direct action to help us stay together and safe” (Nickelsville email, 9/12/2008, CTA158) and supporters echoed this language, saying that “What they want is a safe place to stay, and a supportive community where they have a voice” (Apesma’s Lament, 9/25/2008, CTA92) (see section on the semantic field of *human rights* for more on the use of “together and safe”).

*Fear.*

Discussions of danger were often accompanied by the use of the FEAR lemma – usually in association with a particular person or group that was “fearful” of another. FEAR was most commonly described in two ways: homeless fear of the city and social service programs, or the city and the general (housed) public’s fear of the homeless. The definition of who is to be feared ultimately had political repercussions for the production of social policies of protection.

Homeless campers were often feared by housed neighbors, but structures within tent cities were cited as evidence that they need not be feared the way other encampments might. One *Q 13* TV spot starts with an image of a homeless encampment in Seattle’s expensive Queen Anne neighborhood along with a voice-over saying that, “people are fearful to come in here” (Q 13, 5/28/2008, CTA1599). This presentation of fear as something experienced by “people” assumes a housed audience and negates an unhoused one, but other reports were more explicit in their dealing with fear of homeless camps. One article in the *Seattle Weekly* specifically lists the many fears that (housed) neighbors might have about having a tent city in their neighborhood, noting that “Eastside residents protested the move, claiming that they feared for everything from the safety of schoolchildren to their own property values,” but went on to say that “At each site, the group has largely disproved the worst fears of timid citizens,” providing a list of attributes intended to show how the camp had done this.

The encampments are clean and orderly. SHARE/WHEEL bans drunks and druggies from its tent cities and shelters. It runs warrant checks on potential clients. Twenty-five percent of SHARE/WHEEL clients are employed, according to the group, with many working day labor jobs in Seattle and elsewhere. The group claims that 46 percent of its clients leave the SHARE/WHEEL system within a year and find permanent housing. (Seattle Weekly, 3/22/2006, CTA1084)



The presentation of the myriad “security” measures that tent cities operate with was a frequent explanation for why people should not be fearful, with statements that “Typically, those fears don’t pan out, in part because of the tight reins the camp organizers keep on those who live in the camps” (Renton Reporter, re-posted in Save Feral Human Habitat, 3/4/2009, CTA202).

But while the Nickelsville issue area gave rise to expressions of fear regarding the daily behavior of its residents, the direct action camping strategy that they employed also resulted in expressions of fear over a community not having access to the same kind of process of public education that neighborhoods who host Tent City 3 and 4 would normally involve. Television coverage of *Nickelsville* talked about a neighbor “Dan Mullins, who lives in Highland Park within a mile of the tents, [and] said some in the neighborhood may be angry or fearful after being caught by surprise” (KOMO, 9/25/2008, CTA1580), or how “Blair and Dina Johnson have seen the area around their Highland Park neighborhood improve dramatically over the years. But now they fear [an] unwanted new neighbor could change all that” (King 5, 5/25/2008, CTA1543). This loss of control (“being caught by surprise”) and fear that their neighborhood would revert to a time before it “improve[d] dramatically” due to the arrival of *Nickelsville* called on assumptions about the behavior of homeless people and the degradation of poor neighborhoods that went unmentioned in these reports.

Homeless organizers responded to discussions of fear in more explicit ways. *Real Change News* editorials said that the “Rhetoric that legitimates fear and hatred of the poor under a threadbare cover of compassion needs to be questioned” (Real Change News, 9/5/2007, CTA507), and letters to the editor responded to coverage of the sweeps policy,

saying that “Rather than indulge in fear mongering, the P-I needs to get a grip and some perspective” (Letter to the editor, Seattle PI, 12/14/2007, CTA1172). After quoting a housed resident of the wealthy Magnolia neighborhood who talked of her opposition to a plan to build low-income housing in the area, a *Seattle Times* reporter noted that “Advocates for homeless housing say residents' fears are overblown.” It continued,

"What is it that makes homeless people different enough that they don't 'fit' in that neighborhood?" asks Bill Block, project director of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, a coalition of agencies, businesses and churches. "Affluent people become homeless." (The Seattle Times, 4/26/2008, CTA1252)

While not explicitly about homeless encampments, this exchange illustrates how public discourse about homelessness – regardless of the particular issue at hand – was couched in discourses of fear, and activists went to great effort to re-iterate it as they illustrated its prejudicial character (“Affluent people become homeless”).

In addition to the exposition of fear of homeless people, homeless organizers produced the homeless experience as marked with fear. Descriptions of shelter experiences talked about how “Youth fear being reported as runaways and forced to go back home” (IC, 7/2/2007, CTA1021), immigrants “fear...being reported to immigration” when they stay at shelters (CAC, 3/8/2006, CTA1038), and that “as a homeless person, it’s very difficult and intimidating to stand up for one’s rights. There is fear that services or other resources will be withheld if one makes waves, and that the power imbalance between service providers and clients is, in itself, a barrier to housing and progress towards housing” (CAC, 3/19/2008, CTA1060). The sweeps were also described as producing situations of fear in the lives of people experiencing homelessness. One camper told *Real Change News* that “He fears that more homeless people will be faced with sweeps this winter: “I’ve been warning every tramp I know that lives in Kinnear to hide your stuff, dude, because they’re coming”” (Barry

Williams, quoted in Real Change News, 3/2/2006, CTA467), and a couple that camp outside expressed a similar sentiment.

Alger and her husband Steven Baldwin say they now worry about putting their belongings down anywhere for fear they'll be taken. (Real Change News, 6/11/2008, CTA588)

By focusing on the emotional experiences of campers rather than housed residents, homeless activists attempted to move the object to be feared from the homeless to shelters, and from camps to sweeps.

Finally, the FEAR lemma was deployed in descriptions of safety by noting the lack of fear that residents of *Nickelsville* felt while living in the community. As one camp resident told a local blogger "I have no fear, so my dog has no fear...I don't fear anyone here" (Nickelodeon, interviewed in HPAC, 4/3/2008, CTA143).

### *Violence.*

Violence was a key referent in relation to homelessness. However, there were clear differences in the ways that this semantic field was deployed. "Domestic violence" was described as leading to homelessness and substantiating the need for a new misdemeanor jail. Violence was used to describe what life in an urban campsite was like, what the experience of being homeless was like, and as leading to "death" through weather or violence. The city was presented as "threatening" and "harassing" campers, camps and hosts. Self-managed tent cities were presented as restricting "violence," and any deviations from their rules against violence were emphasized. And finally, violence was used as a metaphor for economic "suffering" and "hurt."

One of the main ways that violence was used in language was the description of violence as a way that people might begin to experience homelessness. Women were described as "on the run from domestic violence" (Seattle PI, 12/10/2008, CTA1235) and

“fleeing domestic violence” (IC, 8/7/2006, CTA1010). Policy discussions also reflected violence related causes for homelessness, encouraging that “all initiatives and polic[ies]” be “responsive to / allow for population specific considerations (e.g.,...victims of domestic violence)” (IC, 3/5/2007, CTA1017). People experiencing domestic violence were thus treated as a special population in the provision of shelter, housing, and social services, labeled alongside “sex offenders” (IC, 8/7/2006, CTA1010).

The encampments in the greenbelt on the side of Beacon Hill (often referred to as the “jungle”) were subject to the strongest language of violence, and one editorial in the *Seattle PI* drew on gangs, guns, and heroin to describe what life in the “jungle” was like.

A violent, well-organized, Asian heroin gang took over the forest on the west side of Beacon Hill. They beat up most homeless people they found, especially women, and set up shop. Their command and control center was a camouflaged bunker made of concrete blocks, a wooden frame and a door that could have stopped a round from a service revolver. It was a hobbit hole for junkies, with a killer view of the mouth of the Duwamish...If sweeps end, camps will be as violent as they were in the Jungle in 2003, but on Queen Anne, the slopes of West Seattle and Magnolia, in Ballard and Ravenna Park. (Seattle PI, 12/7/2007, CTA1171)

By connecting homeless encampments to “A violent, well-organized, Asian heroin gang,” the Sweeps policy was justified as necessary for maintaining a situation that was in danger of returning to being “as violent as [it was] in the Jungle in 2003.” However, the editorial also portrayed homeless campers as victims of violence assumed to be prevalent in the park stating that “If Seattle doesn’t find a strategy soon, homeless people will be brutalized by a drug-based underground gone particularly bad” (Seattle PI, 12/7/2007, CTA1171). This double bind established people experiencing homelessness as both the perpetrators *and* the victims of violence. Notably, violence was explicitly accounted for in the sweeps policy, which area newspapers reported included exceptions for the 72 hour notice for “camps where

there is "reasonable suspicion" of the presence of violent crimes, felony drug activities or weapons" (Seattle PI, 4/11/2008, CTA1181).

Those opposing the city's homeless policies constructed narratives where the city was responsible for the endangerment of people experiencing homelessness through "threats," "intimidation," and "harassment." Articles in alternative and activist media outlets proclaimed that "The city says that it still plans to clear the area, but the people living in Nickelsville refuse to be intimidated" (IMC, 9/25/2008, CTA832). Activist websites noted how "the police intimidated many homeless workers from speaking" (Jobs With Justice, 5/1/2008, CTA149) and talked of how the mayor's office was "crushing Nickelsville through a strategy of intimidation," describing how "Karen Zaugg Black, the latest in a series of Mayoral henchmen, darkly threatened a visitation of building inspectors when Nickelsville moved last week to a state-owned parking lot adjacent to their original site" (Apesma's Lament, 10/7/2008, CTA103). People experiencing homelessness were presented as victims of the mayor's policies – people "who are being harassed and intimidated" and "who have been victimized by the aggressive sweeps" (Whitney's Corner, 7/11/2008, CTA1346). The mayor's treatment of *Nickelsville* was similarly characterized, saying that "Rather than gathering together for solutions, the mayor implements a policy of removal and intimidation. The heart of this mayor has grown cold" (Real Change News, 10/29/2008, CTA663). Finally, those who offered to host *Nickelsville* were presented as subject to similar treatment.

University Congregational Church doesn't need to be told that Nickelsville beats alleys, bushes, and being chased away by one of Mayor Nickels' encampment sweeps. If they choose to host us, though, the Mayor will threaten them, like he has threatened everyone who has tried to help Nickelsville. (Nickelsville email, 11/26/2008, CTA184)

The language of "threats" and "intimidation" was deployed in ways that presented clear narrative connections between unjust social policies and their undeserving recipients.

Similar to the presentation of self-managed camps as free of drugs and drug use (see section on the semantic field of *drugs*), *Nickelsville* and the two sanctioned tent cities created rules that banned violence and news media accounts of the camps highlighted this aspect of community governance as salient in descriptions of the camps. Neighborhood blogs noted how “camps run background checks using public records at the public library, to screen out and deny sex offenders and other violent felons” (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440), and an area community radio station reported how “the encampment does background checks on all new residents to wean out sexual predators” (KBCS, 1/8/2009, CTA154). Once those formerly convicted of violent offenses were systematically excluded from residence in the camps, additional rules were described as structuring the behavior of residents, noting that “residents must follow a list of 17 rules that include: no weapons, no aggressive behavior or language, and quiet time must be obeyed” (KBCS, 1/8/2009, CTA154), “no violence, no begging, and no visitors between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.” (Seattle Weekly, 10/5/2008, CTA1216), and “a Survivor-like rule which states that if you don't pull your weight, or if you violate the village's no drugs/alcohol/violence policy, you "get kicked off the island"” (Joe Palinkas, quoted in the Seattle Weekly, 8/19/2008, CTA1094). As one article concluded, “Tent city folk are good neighbors because it is their home, which they also want to be safe, clean and violence free” (Guest column by David McCracken in the Seattle PI, 3/15/2009, CTA1241; reposted in This Way Up Seattle Washington, 3/16/2009, CTA1429). The emphasis on the restrictions against sex-offender residence and violent behavior in camp provided semantic justification for the existence of tent cities in residential neighborhoods, but it also highlighted the assumed normalcy of violent behavior in homeless populations by emphasizing the close regulation of resident’s behavior.

Deviations from the rules highlighted by housed neighbors and journalists justified coverage of the few times when violence was threatened or actualized by a camp resident. Reports talked about one incident where “a 42-year-old male was booked for unlawful use of weapons after he pulled nunchucks on a fellow Nickelodeon last month” (Seattle Weekly, 11/5/2008, CTA1123), and another talked about how “A 17-year-old who had been ordered to leave Nickelsville became hostile when police arrived Sunday, assaulting and threatening officers, police said” (Seattle PI, 12/1/2008, CTA1234). While such incidents were extremely unusual, their noteworthiness to reporters suggests that the rules that self-managed camps had established for ensuring respectful behavior were not effective in changing public perceptions of camp residents as prone to violence and in need of monitoring by journalists and police.

Death was one level of violence that was almost exclusively used to refer to deaths of people experiencing homelessness. Mike Smith, an RCOP activist, was quoted in one *Seattle PI* article as saying of urban campers that “They're lucky to have a tent and a place to put it to survive. When you take away their means to survive, you're going to kill a percentage of them -- guaranteed. So as far as I'm concerned, the Sweeps policy is about killing people” (Mike Smith, quoted in Seattle PI, 6/9/2008, CTA1191). The “death by machine” of Isaac Palmer under “a brushcutter” was followed by reports in *Real Change News* of how “Ralph Edward Vantine, 61, of Snohomish, was crushed under a 60-foot manlift. Dead, said the Snohomish County Medical Examiner, of head injuries. Another homeless man killed this year by WSDOT negligence” (Real Change News, 2/27/2008, CTA547). Construction projects were described as dangerous to homeless residents in anticipation of “WSDOT negligence,” and one journalist predicted that a highway construction project “will not only

scatter people who have no extra shelter to go to in Seattle, but pose construction hazards that can be deadly to the homeless” (Real Change News, 8/6/2008, CTA611).

The recognition of those who had died was formalized through groups like Women in Black who bore public whiteness to homeless deaths. While such actions were covered in *Real Change News* with headlines like “Nickelsville is coming; you can tell by the dead people,” (Real Change News, 8/27/2008, CTA619), they also provided news hooks for coverage in daily papers, free weeklies and on local TV news programs.

A vigil was held in downtown Seattle Wednesday to call attention to the 42 homeless people who have died from the weather or violence this year alone. That's up from just five, seven years ago. (King 5, 12/19/2007, CTA1541)

Sometimes coverage mentioned a Women in Black “vigil” as justification for inclusion, but other times the enumeration of deaths was enough to warrant mention as context to the violence of life on the streets (see section on the semantic field of *human rights* for more on “weather or violence”). Enumeration can often serve to depersonalize people and categories of people – a process called ‘aggregation’ (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; van Leeuwen, 1996) – but in this case numbers may provide an easily quantifiable measure to warrant journalistic attention to an experience in life and in death that can be profoundly isolating. Still, such mentions were almost never accompanied by further biographical information. This may be due in part to the anonymity of extreme poverty. Exceptions to this norm only occurred in alternative media and advocacy texts, as was the case with the death of former Nickelodeon Aaron Stephan Beaucage (“known as “Beau” to friends”), an out of work truck driver and poet who died shortly after leaving *Nickelsville* in the winter of 2009.

Death of homeless persons is not something that is either unique to Seattle, or inconsequential to the daily lives of people experiencing homelessness. The National Coalition for the Homeless has found that “From 1999 through 2008, in 263 cities and in 46



states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC, there have been 880 acts of violence committed by housed individuals, resulting in 244 deaths of homeless people and 636 victims of non-lethal violence” (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Vigils and obituaries like the ones that followed the death of Beau were powerful mechanisms for publicly humanizing the lives of people so often depersonalized through prejudice, as well as opportunities for grieving and healing for people who were well connected enough with people in the homeless community that they routinely experienced the death of friends experiencing homelessness.

The experience of homelessness was described as marked by threats of violence and self-managed shelter as providing safety from violence. Sometimes violence was attributed to weather, with calls to support self-managed shelter, describing how “For the past eight years, WHEEL has operated a well-regarded Severe Weather Shelter for Women on nights of life-threatening weather. This summer, lack of shelter is also life-threatening” (Real Change organizer email, 8/5/2008, CTA761). Self-managed shelter was described by residents as a space where they could be safe from “life-threatening weather.” Nick Hoffner – a Nickelodeon – was quoted in a *Seattle Weekly Blog* post as saying that “I’ve slept on the doorsteps of churches and under bridges. I’ve slept in a lot of places. Here you don’t have to worry about people coming to kill you” (Nick Hoffner, quoted in the *Seattle Weekly*, 11/5/2008, CTA1123). Outreach to the Highland Park neighbors at the first *Nickelsville* site also made connections to the violence of living on the street, as minutes from a meeting where two Nickelodeons represented their camp to the Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) show. “They talked about how homeless people are in potentially deadly danger when there’s no safe shelter” (West Seattle Blog, 9/22/2008, CTA1528), and some records show the overwhelming support that the HPAC gave *Nickelsville* in the wake of the meeting.

The play on “deadly danger” may have been effective in reaching the HPAC because of how their opposition to the sighting of the Proposed Jail in their neighborhood was based in part on arguments against violence. Neighborhood blog posts talked about how “The sudden city revelation of two nearby potential jail sites for misdemeanor offenders - which include some cases of domestic violence, prostitution, even DUI - has galvanized neighbors in the past week or so” (West Seattle Blog, 5/20/2008, CTA1484), and paraphrased then chairman of the HPAC, Dorsal Plants, as saying that “his understanding is that 1 in 5 of those misdemeanors will have been a violence-related crime” (West Seattle Blog, 6/12/2008, CTA1494). Opposition to the Proposed Jail based on fears of increased violence were fairly widespread, with people at many of the public forums on the Proposed Jail saying that “By adding a jail to the area, it will only increase the violence and further degrade the area” (Caucus discussion questions, Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/12/2008, CTA927).

The city, while trying to assure people that violence could be managed, presented the need for the Proposed Jail as based in part on laws that mandated arrest for some violent offenses, saying that “Domestic violence is a mandatory booking in jail. So state law [sic] you know really require that for some offenses, there has to be some jail time” (Katherine Cornwall, appearing on KUOW, 1/29/2009, CTA1675). Advocates like those at RCEP responded to this justification by re-iterating the city’s reasoning and discrediting it, presenting a sarcastic summary of their interpretation:

So, without a new jail, the city implies, we’ll have to release domestic violence perpetrators, drunk drivers, and homeless people charged under the city’s newly tightened public property trespass laws to the street. We’re looking at chaos here. (Real Change News, 8/6/2008, CTA610)

Opponents of the Proposed Jail instead called for the decriminalization of non-violent offenses, citing how “states across the country are closing prisons and releasing non-violent offenders in response to gaping holes in revenue” (HPAC, 4/3/2008, CTA143).

*Criminality.*

In addition to straightforward violence, criminality was also used as a way to describe homeless people and spaces. Places where people camped were described as filled with “crime” and as in need of the implementation of background checks to exclude “criminals.” Direct action camping was placed within the context of the sweeps policy, meaning that camps, tents and campers were labeled as “illegal” and “criminal.” Critiques of these policies focused on the “criminalization” of homelessness. Residents in neighborhoods where a jail site was proposed often expressed concern based on the introduction of “inmates” and “criminals” into their neighborhoods, an increase in incidents of “crime,” “theft,” and “breakins,” and cited the degradation of their communities if “criminal activity/homeless” were allowed to “wander” out of jail and into parks and green spaces. Finally, the use of the HOUSE lemma conflated the housing of “inmates” with the housing of “homeless people,” furthering the semantic connection between “criminal activity/homeless” in public discourse about the Proposed Jail.

Debates around the criminality of people experiencing homelessness centered on the criminal behavior of homeless people, and the prevalence of crime in spaces that they occupied. An editorial about encampments in the “jungle” talked about how “Crime boiled into neighborhoods,” saying that “It took almost a year to nab dozens of criminals and reclaim the woods, but we did” (Seattle PI, 12/7/2007, CTA1171). Articles like this one connected the presence of crime to spaces where people camped outdoors, reinforcing semantic connections between homelessness and crime. Often public sentiments expressed

concern over the criminal characteristics of tent city residents, and news reports cited housed residents as saying that prospective tent city residents should be subjected to “criminal background checks, [drug] testing and proof that campers are from this community (i.e. proof of an address from Ballard before becoming homeless)?” (Real Change News, 10/15/2008, CTA650).

However, far more prevalent were rebuttals to concerns like these, citing how “Nearby residents and businesses often worry about their safety and the potential for an increase in crime” when a tent city moves to a neighborhood and crediting the lack of crime in these spaces to “the tight reins the camp organizers keep on those who live in the camps” (Save Feral Human Habitat, 3/4/2009, CTA202). Restatements that focused on the idea that “encampments encourage crime” (KBCS, 9/18/2008, CTA153) or “misinformation and prejudice about homeless people bringing crime and danger to neighborhoods” were highlighted by journalists critical of this connection, concluding that “There has been enough experience in King County with tent cities to know that the opposite is true” (Guest column by David McCracken in the Seattle PI, 3/15/2009, CTA1241).

The act of direct action camping was described as “illegal” by city officials who regulated their activity through “arrests” and “fines,” leading to the production of campers as “criminal” for their occupation of public property. Mainstream journalistic coverage of the camp and their many moves paraphrased spokespeople for Seattle Parks and Recreation as stating that “Camping in city-owned parks is illegal” (Seattle Times, 10/3/2008, CTA1286), and noted that “The city warned them they were trespassing and would be evicted or arrested if they didn't leave within 72 hours, a standard deadline for the city when dealing with the homeless” (King 5, 9/27/2008, CTA1548). Presentations of Nickels as “cracking down on

illegal homeless encampments” (NWCN, 10/1/2008, CTA1618) allowed journalists to characterize *Nickelsville* as an “illegal homeless camp” (King 5, 9/29/2008, CTA1550), and they talked about how police came to “sweep away Nickelsville, its 150 illegal fuchsia tents and its 100 or so residents” (Seattle Times, 9/26/2008, CTA1276). Positioning *Nickelsville* as within the realm of the city’s Sweeps policy meant that the “homeless camp” and its “fuchsia tents” could be presented as “illegal” and created a situation where individuals were criminalized, with area blogs noting that “As of 12:35 p.m., the homeless residents of Nickelsville were officially considered criminal trespassers and subject to arrest” (Seattlest, 9/26/2008, CTA1470). The referential identification of homeless campers as “criminal trespassers” illustrates how the Sweeps policy encouraged depersonalizing characterizations of people experiencing homelessness through the use of “criminonyms” in journalistic accounts (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 52).

Critiques of the characterization of camping as “criminal” behavior portrayed the policy as unjust in interviews and blog posts and presented the city’s policy as akin to “criminalizing homelessness.” One post exclaimed that “He [the mayor] has made it illegal to sleep in any public area!” (The Mustard Seed House, 9/25/2008, CTA1367), and one Nickelodeon told a local blogger that “it’s really sad that homeless people in order to survive it has to be illegal” (Leo Rhodes, quoted on KBCS, 7/24/2008, CTA152). These evaluations of the predicament of homeless campers as engaging in “illegal” activity “in order to survive” provided the substance behind claims that homelessness was becoming criminalized in Seattle. Articles in *Real Change News* talked about “the repression and criminalization of those on the street” (Real Change News, 7/23/2008, CTA606), the actions of the city in “the criminalization of outdoor survival” (Real Change News, 4/30/2008, CTA572), and predicted

that “The trend toward the criminalization of the poor will continue” (Real Change News, 11/19/2008, CTA670). Real Change organizer emails “invited” people to “share your personal story of surviving outside or your commitment to preventing the criminalization of homelessness” (Real Change organizer email, 1/24/2008, CTA739), and called on people to “start your week off by taking a stand against the criminalization of poverty!” (Real Change organizer email, 11/12/2008, CTA781). The use of a process over an identity in descriptions of the homeless Sweeps focused on the ways that the city’s policy choices had pushed “criminal” identities on persons experiencing homelessness and used it as a way to highlight injustice and call for ameliorative action (“share your personal story,” “start your week off by taking a stand”). This strategy moved criminal stigma from homeless bodies to city officials and provided a justification for individual action. As one letter to the editor noted, “Every advocate agrees the status of homeless encampments is criminal, but not because of the residents there but because we (with roofs overhead) have all turned our backs on remedies” (Letter to the editor, Seattle PI, 12/14/2007, CTA1172).

Discussions about the Proposed Jail were one of the most intensive areas for the use of words associated with *criminality*. Residents in neighborhoods where a jail site was proposed often expressed concern based on the introduction of “inmates” and “criminals” into their neighborhood, and increasing incidents of “crime,” “theft,” and “breakins.” Public comments about the Proposed Jail complained of “Crime activity on Aurora with drugs and prostitution,” expressed concern that “Open space around site would encourage crime (e.g. cemetery, Interurban trail),” and that the “Aurora area already suffers from higher crime rate, area has gotten better, keep going in the right direction” (Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/12/2008, CTA928). People expressed concern that locating a jail in their neighborhoods

would increase crime rates, stating simply that “Crime breeds crime” (Municipal Jail Public Forum comments, 7/26/2008, CTA933) and asking “Why can’t the jail go where the crime is happening most often, like downtown and central district?” (Kelly Welker, Quoted in Municipal Jail Public Forum comments, 6/26/2008, CTA915). Statements about how neighborhoods had been “working hard to reduce crime and increase economic opportunities” (HPAC, 4/3/2008, CTA143) were placed alongside concerns that “A jail...could also draw the wrong crowd, boosting the local crime rate and threatening the area's status as an urban village” (Wilson Stevenson, paraphrased in Seattle PI, 6/13/2008, CTA1194). City officials responded to concerns about increased crime rates in areas surrounding the Proposed Jail by citing “A U.S. Department of Justice study [that] examined seven different jail sites in four states and found that there weren't any significant differences in crime rates between neighborhoods with jails and comparable neighborhoods without jails (and, in some cases, the crime rates were lower)” (City of Seattle, not dated, CTA942).

The degradation of the neighborhoods that these comments make salient was also combined with the conflation of homelessness and criminality. Public forum comments stated that “Criminal activity/homeless have had a perceptive increase” and worried that “a jail close to this area would negatively increase this problem” (Municipal Jail Public Forum notes, 7/12/2008, CTA927).

We have heard from the City that 30% of the Jail’s inmates are homeless people that have typically been arrested for drugs and alcohol, trespassing and other property crimes. Then they are released from a jail facility they tend to stay in the neighborhood and find a new place to flop. Our worry is that when they are released from the South End facility they will wander into the immediate neighborhood of industrial buildings, vacant lots and the huge green belt that adjoins many of our back yards where our children play. This greenbelt already houses many “campers” and adjacent homeowners consistently [sic] are plagued by breakins and property theft. Are we expected to put up with people living in our greenbelt and finding needles and bottles on our recently restored trails? (HPAC, 6/25/2008, CTA137)

These comments and the excerpt from talking points on the Highland Park Action Committee's website illustrates how "criminal activity/homeless" were tied together and individuals in this conflated classificatory category were predicted to "wander into the immediate neighborhood" where they might "find a new place to flop" "where our children play" and "adjacent homeowners consistantly [sic] are plagued by breakins and property theft."

The Proposed Jail was often described as "housing inmates," connecting the city's low-income housing programs to their incarceration programs. Discussions of why the Proposed Jail was necessary noted how "housing inmates in King County" was cheaper than "housing" "misdemeanor offenders" in the "Yakima County Jail" (West Seattle Herald, 10/20/2008, CTA1646), and that "By 2012, these cities will no longer be able to house such inmates in the King County Jail" (Seattle PI, 1/6/2009, CTA1239). The deployment of the act of housing was placed in the context of incarceration, illustrating how "inmates" and "homeless" functioned as burdens that needed to be "housed" in facilities that required the allocation of public funds (see section on the semantic field of *housing* as well as *services* for more on this semantic connection).

#### *Policing.*

The role of "police" and "policing" was an interesting subset of the *danger* discourse. Coverage of the Nickelsville issue area was most intense around camp moves, when journalists often relied on tactical representations of conflict between police and campers. Alternative media journalists were frequently critical of the actions of police and routinely attributed their actions to the mayor. Finally, *Nickelsville* implemented its own policing practices, and coverage of the camp noted relative success in that regard even as they described transgressions.



Mainstream media journalists often fell into the “protest paradigm” (Chan & Lee, 1984) in coverage of *Nickelsville*, focusing on the logistics of eviction and arrest. Coverage of *Nickelsville* was most intensive during the first few moves, and journalistic accounts were thick with descriptions of how “Seattle police arrested 22 people for trespassing,” specifying that “those arrested would be interviewed and released unless they had outstanding warrants” (MyNorthwest.com, 9/27/2008, CTA1641). People were cited as “arrested for criminal trespassing” (Seattlest, 9/26/2008, CTA1470; King 5, 9/27/2008, CTA1548) and “arrested for illegally camping on public property” (Seattle Times, 10/3/2008, CTA1286), and “Four days after more than 100 homeless people established a camp on city property in West Seattle, police cleared the site Friday afternoon, arresting 22 men and women who refused to leave” (Seattle PI, 9/26/2008, CTA1207). The following excerpt typifies the narrative style that many journalistic accounts took, focusing on the tactical implementation of “police” actions.

"I would take this over a shelter any day of the week," said Aaron Colyer, 28, as he hammered a blue tarp to the top of a 7-foot-square shanty he built before police arrived... Two early-afternoon deadlines for residents to leave or be arrested for trespassing passed before police made their first arrest at about 1:20 p.m. Meanwhile, city staff and police passed out fliers that told residents where their belonging would be stored...The arrests, which involved two dozen officers and a handful of city staff, took place without incident in just over an hour. Police took residents to the Southwest Precinct, where they were processed and released if they had no warrants. (Seattle PI, 9/26/2008, CTA1207)

This excerpt shows how Nickelodeons like Aaron Colyer were portrayed as choosing to camp rather than reside in a shelter (“I would take this over a shelter”), and his actions in constructing his home were presented tactically under the shadow of the police (“before police arrived”). Police were presented as patient (“two afternoon deadlines...passed”), considerate of people’s needs (“passed out flyers,” “belongings would be stored”) and lenient (“they were processed and released”).

Often the portrayal of political protest as tactical struggles between conflicting parties is criticized for providing an understanding of only the surface dynamics of social change, preferring that which is “easily and regularly gathered, that is timely, terse, simply described, concrete, dramatic, colorful, and visualizable” (Cook, 1999, p. 91) over the social issues that protests are aimed at confronting. This was evident in the phrasing of headlines like “Police sweep “Nickelsville” residents from site” (West Seattle Herald, 9/26/2008, CTA1640) and “‘Nickelsville’ camp empties after police raid” (KOMO, 9/26/2008, CTA1581). But mainstream news headlines were not the only places where this was present, and neighborhood blog posts also focused on police conflict.

Police Moving in on Nickelsville (Seattle IMC, 9/26/2008, CTA834)

Police Raiding Nickelsville (White Center Now, 9/26/2008, CTA1370)

Nickelsville: The Police Are Moving In (Nickelsville email, 9/26/2008, CTA169)

As the preceding headlines suggest, the most prominent portrayal of *Nickelsville* during moves was that of a tactical frame, where police were presented as “moving in on” or “raiding” *Nickelsville*. But while the protest paradigm seems to have played out in much of the coverage of the moves, there should have been some space for journalists to focus on the issues behind the actions due to the close connection between actions and issues in the case of *Nickelsville*. The use of direct action camping made use of what McAdam (2000) calls “strategic dramaturgy” by creating public media events that illustrated the preferred framing of the issue, providing metaphoric examples that could serve as visual cues in directing the journalistic framing of the event through action (see section on the semantic field of *camping actions*). This was sometimes the case when journalists mentioned things like the economic difficulties that people might face, the danger many experienced when living on the street

and the lack of adequate emergency shelter in the city (see sections on the semantic fields of *economy*, *shelter*, *violence* and *human rights* above).

Alternative media journalists routinely identified “cops” and “police” as perpetrators of unjust policing practices, although usually under the order of city officials like the mayor. *Real Change News* highlighted “Stories of cops entering encampments with guns and nightsticks drawn” (Real Change News, 11/7/2007, CTA514), and articles about how “personal items of homeless people are simply left at the place of arrest or disposed of by police or others” (Real Change News, 1/9/2008, CTA530). After criticism of how Seattle “cops led away 22 Nickelodeons” (Real Change News, 10/15/2008, CTA649), area blogs concluded that “the Nickels’ administration’s only interest in the situation seems to be punitive - send police, levy fines, and move the homeless off city land” (Java Colleen's Jitters, 10/5/2008, CTA1382). Police action was often attributed to the mayor. One outraged comment on a discussion board asked, “the mayor sends the cops out to throw the tents away? Just where do the mayor and the cops expect these people to live?” (Yelp Nickelsville, 9/23/2008, CTA1315), and neighborhood bloggers were left to conclude that “We allow this mayor and his police to act without protest at our own peril” (Blogging Georgetown, 9/25/2008, CTA1308).

*Nickelsville* also had its own policing policies, with volunteers doing round the clock security details as a requirement for living at the camp. Reports of the camp talked about how “Residents take turns at chores, happy to serve as security, coordinators, cooks and cleanup crew... The only entrance is a security post constantly staffed by volunteer security” (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440). Other reports noted how “The camp is encased by chain-linked fence and the only entrance is through a security tent that closely monitors who

enters” (KBCS, 1/8/2009, CTA154), and an interview with a Nickelodeon described how they dealt with criminal behavior in the vicinity of the camp, saying that “My security will narc ‘em out, call the cops, get ‘em arrested fast....” (Nickelodeon, quoted in Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440). Police were often allowed to frame digressions in camp, as an article in the *Seattle PI* did when it described how someone “who called police, told the responding officer” what had happened (Seattle PI Blog, 10/8/2007, CTA1169). Nickelodeons were enmeshed in discussions of policing behavior – both in their regulation by police and in their self-regulation within camp – and evaluations of their interactions with police as a salient feature of the camp created a situation where public discussions about the Nickelsville issue area often occurred in the context of *policing* talk.

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The semantic field of *danger* was a significant area of contestation for homeless activists. *Danger* served as a mechanism for the stigmatization of homeless individuals and groups, as they were described as deviant individuals, criminalized through the use of criminonyms in their representation as social actors (“thieves,” “criminals,” “felons”), and as recipient participants in “illegal” activities alongside “police.” These were discourses that were present in all three issue areas, but most closely tied to the Proposed Jail issue sector. As homeless activists tried to build bridges with community groups and criminal justice activists, definitions of homelessness became more closely tied to criminal identities. But descriptions of homelessness also made use of *danger* in the representation of the homeless experience as one filled with danger “through weather or violence,” as characterized by a large probability of “death,” and where “survival activities” were “criminalized” through the implementation of the “mayor’s sweeps” policy. In this context of *fear* and *danger*, self-

managed tent cities like *Nickelsville* were presented as places where people had “no fear,” creating an environment where people experiencing homelessness could stay “together and safe.” This discursive turn marks a significant level of success for participants interested in changing the public discourse around homelessness. But other areas were even more challenging for activists in the homeless community, namely the proliferation of *drug* discourses and the prevalent deployment of words and phrases describing how *dirty* homeless camps and homeless persons were.

### ***Dirty.***

Homelessness has long been associated with dirtiness. People with few material resources have been portrayed in popular media as wearing filthy cloths, looking through garbage cans for food, peeing in public, as carriers of disease, and as requiring cleaning up. The production of homelessness as *dirty* in Seattle was placed within the semantic fields of *trash*, *human waste*, *cleanliness*, and *health*. The definition of homelessness as something other than *dirty* is no simple task, but people associated with the homeless movement in Seattle tackled the language of filth and refuse with a clear strategy of highlighting injustice and renegotiating the meaning of homeless camps as “clean,” orderly spaces. The use by advocates of the “sweeps” label for the city’s policy of urban campsite removal highlighted the use of a semantic relationship between dirtiness and homelessness, and people associated with projects like *Nickelsville* went to great efforts to portray themselves and their community as a clean and healthy place to live. As a result, the Sweeps issue area saw a significantly higher occurrence of words associated with the semantic fields of *clean*, *trash*, and *health* (all with positive correlations of  $p < .05$  using log likelihood), and *Nickelsville* with words associated with the semantic fields of *bathrooms*, *dumpsters*, and *healthcare* (also

with positive correlations of  $p < .05$  using log likelihood). While the Proposed Jail issue area was not positively correlated with an increased occurrence of any of the semantic fields within the *dirty* cluster, those semantic fields most common to the Proposed Jail were *health*, *clean*, and *mental illness*.

### *Health.*

The semantic field of *health* was one that was deployed by a range of speakers for widely different ends. The presentation of homeless people as “mentally ill” functioned as anthroponymic devices by representing one aspect of a person or group of people through a metonym whereby a part stood for the whole. Similarly, this was also done through the presentation of homeless spaces as unhealthy – a discursive strategy that backgrounded (or completely suppressed) people who lived in them (Fairclough, 2003). While this had the same effect as the presentation of people experiencing homelessness as unhealthy (“mentally ill”), it was carried out through a process of “spacialization,” whereby toponyms (homeless camps as “not a good health place”) were used as metonymic personifications of a group of people classified as “homeless” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 48). Homeless people were also excluded as a marked Other with the identification of homeless camps as an issue of “public health.” But homeless activists confronted these and other stereotypes by characterizing homelessness as producing ill health, *Nickelsville* as relieving ill health, and by criticizing local government as threatening the health of homeless campers through implementation of the Sweeps policy and inadequate funding for health programs.

Urban camping has long been described by the city of Seattle as an issue of “public health.” As early as the 1998 sweeps of the “jungle,” the mayor’s office presented their actions as in the interest of “public health and safety” (Deputy Mayor Tom Byers, quoted in the Seattle Weekly, 7/1/1998, CTA1069). As Tent City 4 worked through the initial

permitting process in 2005, the city of Bellevue drafted an ordinance that “spelled out safeguards to ensure that safety and health requirements were consistent with community standards” (Tim Waters, city of Bellevue, quoted in the *Seattle Weekly*, 12/1/2005, CTA1082). The characterization of encampments as unhealthy places continued when the city came under scrutiny in 2007. An update “on the current City of Seattle protocol development” to the Interagency Council (IC) of the CEH stated that “The City has been removing encampments on city land for several years-primarily in response to community complaints and health and public safety issues” (Patricia McInturff, paraphrased in, IC, 12/3/2007, CTA1026). The phrasing was repeated a few weeks later in a *King 5* interview when McInturff told journalists that “This is not a safe place for people, it's not a good health place. And obviously some public safety issues come up, as well” (Patricia McInturff, Seattle Human Services Department, appearing on *King 5*, 12/19/2007, CTA1541).

Journalistic accounts of urban camping in Seattle repeated the “health and safety” discourse, citing “city officials” as saying that “the camps are a threat to everyone's health and safety, and will continue to be cleared as they have been for the past 15 years” (*Seattle Times*, 4/11/2008, CTA1251). An editorial in support of the sweeps said that “Parks Department employees are performing a fundamental duty of cities everywhere, which is to protect public safety, health and the parks that make the city livable” (*Seattle Times*, 6/2/2008, CTA1256). This connection was not unique to Seattle, and articles in other national outlets that mentioned the Nickelsville issue area talked about encampment clearances like that of “Taco Flats” in Fresno, California in similar ways, saying that “the California Department of Transportation conducted these sweeps in the name of public health, citing citizen complaints about open-air defecation” (*High Country News*, 3/16/2009, CTA1662).

The connection of health and safety in the justification of the Sweeps was so consistent within the city that news reports in multiple venues often had identical or nearly identical phrasing.

Nickels supports finding permanent housing for the homeless but says they can't be allowed to camp in the city, for health and safety reasons. (Seattle Times, 6/9/2008, CTA1257; KOMO, 9/26/2008, CTA1581)

Nickels favors moving the homeless into permanent housing and says they can't camp out in the city for health and safety reasons. (KIRO, 9/26/2008, CTA1566)

*The Stranger* pointed out the proliferation of often the exact same language in media coverage, in this case the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle PI*, noting with sarcasm “Thank God we have two daily newspapers covering the local stories that matter!”

[Times] The city removes transient camps from greenbelts and underpasses to prevent health and safety problems. Residents are given advance warning and offered social services...

[*Seattle PI*] The city removes transient camps from greenbelts and underpasses to prevent health and safety problems. Residents are given advance warning and offered social services. (Seattle Times and the Seattle PI, quoted in The Stranger Blog, 6/9/2008, CTA1157)

The proliferation of the tri-grams of “health and safety” or “safety and health” associated homeless encampments with ill health and provoked images of “public health” hazards. The connection of health to safety meant that camps began to be understood as existing alongside discourses of *danger* (see the section on *danger* above) and provided a justification for ameliorative action. The solution that these reports presented to the “health and safety” issues of the camps was to “offer” “social services” and to invest in “permanent housing.” Camping outside until such housing was available simply “can't be allowed.”

The regulation of homelessness was placed in part in the hands of public health officials by tasking the department of “Health and Human Services” with organizing policy proposals and sending out press releases.



According to the fact sheet put together by the city's department of Health and Human Services, the new policies are all part of the city's 10-year campaign to end homelessness.

... The city also has the responsibility to protect the health and safety of the general public and residents—including the homeless people in unauthorized encampments—and enforce city laws...

The health and human services department will hold a public hearing on the new rules on January 28, at 6 p.m. in the Rainier Room at Seattle Center. (The Stranger Blog, 1/14/2008, CTA1150)

This use of the department of Health and Human Services in shaping and speaking on the encampment sweeps protocol placed homelessness within the field of medical problems, and its management in the field of medical response. This association was even stronger when medical problems were associated with why people might be living outside.

Seattle officials pointed out the type of safety and health hazards that led to a campaign this year to clear certain camps after public complaints...

What the city "really wants to do is get people into services" with case management, mental health and other help, McInturff [Seattle Health and Human Services director] said. (Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173)

The logic of personalized "case management" and "mental health" services placed the responsibility for homelessness within the individual and removed the material conditions that contribute to poverty and lack of adequate shelter. The combination of "health hazards" as a cause for the Sweeps and the coercive regulation of homeless bodies ("get people into services") as a solution created a situation where campsites were presented as physically unhealthy places created and maintained by mentally unhealthy people.

The "health hazards" that urban campsites presented were particularized using specific language that referenced the semantic field of *disease* or "contamination." The new sweeps protocols that the city adopted in the spring of 2008 stated that material deemed to be "contaminated, illegal or hazardous" could be removed and discarded" (City of Seattle Administrative rule on urban camping, quoted in Real Change News, 6/18/2008, CTA591). News reports on the city's actions showed city workers dressed in white tyvek suites,

wearing goggles and gloves, and picking up items with trash grabber tools. Newspaper articles about the sweeps noted that “40 grounds-crew members from Seattle Parks and Recreation received immunizations against hepatitis A and B” (Seattle PI, 6/5/2008, CTA1188). Homeless organizers were quick to condemn the use of *disease*-based discourses, and followed a pattern of highlighting their use in order to emphasize how unjust the homelessness-as-disease frame was. However, by focusing on the semantic field of *disease* advocates ended up deploying the terms more frequently than the mainstream media accounts that they were criticizing (see the section on the semantic field of *danger* for a similar pattern). *Real Change News* reported that “The mayor’s public relations team has vilified homeless campers as lazy and irresponsible, diseased and dangerous” (Real Change News, 3/5/2008, CTA549), and “To them, it’s a matter of trash, disease, and shady characters camping out, not of personal property and humane treatment” (Real Change News, 12/5/2007, CTA518). The counter narrative presented by *Real Change News* was replicated in several news media accounts such as this one, where a *Stranger* journalist quoted from the new protocol rules and then allowed Tim Harris to explain them to the reader.

Even more alarming, the new rules would allow the city to confiscate and destroy any property deemed “hazardous”—a definition that “may include blankets, clothing, sleeping bags, tents, or other soft goods that may be contaminated by unknown substances that may pose a risk of harm to members of the public or to cleanup personnel who come in contact with the material.” As Tim Harris of Real Change puts it on his blog, “What, exactly, would that definition leave out?” (The Stranger, 1/14/2008, CTA1150)

This excerpt illustrates the impact that the textual production by advocates like Tim Harris had on shaping the public discourse around the sweeps policy. The city’s description of people’s belongings as “hazardous” and “contaminated with unknown substances” was re-interpreted as problematic in its own right, with this journalist emphasizing the leniency that

the rules would provide in allowing the disposal of “blankets, clothing, sleeping bags, tents, or other soft goods.”

In confronting the labeling of homeless people and homeless camps as unhealthy, many turned the tables, suggesting instead that it was the shelter system or the Sweeps themselves that were unhealthy. Critiques of the existing shelter system described how “You are forced to lay next to some guy with hepatitis, TB, who knows what” (Nickelodeon, quoted in Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1437). Descriptions of the Sweeps noted that “Any kind of stress increases mental health symptoms” (Real Change News, 1/9/2008, CTA530), and talked of “a ‘cleaning’ crew” that had “been through twice a week earlier to oust a group of campers. Among the bunch were two Real Change vendors, both of whom wound up hospitalized for health problems related to exposure” (Real Change News, 2/27/2008, CTA547). Talk of shelters and sweeps leading to illness were coupled with descriptions of homelessness as an experience that was likely to lead to ill health. One (housed) woman who slept outside overnight as part of a *Stop the Sweeps* campout wrote an editorial titled “Things I learned sleeping on concrete,” where she noted that “Concrete is not only hard but it is cold: a cold that seeps into your bones and makes you feel tired and old, even if you are young; a cold that means you won’t stay healthy for long” (Real Change News, 2/26/2008, CTA545). Instead of presenting homeless bodies as a danger to public health, the experience of homelessness was presented as something that challenged an individual’s efforts to “stay healthy.”

Descriptions of homelessness and poverty as a threat to one’s health were tied to a critique of the cost of privately run health care, suggesting that “low-wages” would lead to a lack of access to “health care” as “the decline of wages and the increase of housing costs”

create a situation where “the costs of housing, food, childcare, health care, and education compete against each other” (Real Change News, 9/16/2004, CTA466). One housed neighbor’s visit to *Nickelsville* prompted him/her to connect his/her observations of poor health to a lack of access to health care.

Many men and women here have terrible teeth, gum disease, crooked teeth, some missing entire rows of teeth. I saw many brushing, but no one flossing. Many never once in their lives had dental insurance or cash for the dentist, and it shows in their smile. I enjoy perfect teeth and floss every day. Frankly I was shocked by their teeth on my first visit to this camp: Is this 21st Century America or Georgian England? (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440)

While s/he was “shocked by their teeth,” causal blame for people’s “terrible teeth” was a lack of access to medical care: “Many never once in their lives had dental insurance or cash for the dentist.” Cuts to publicly subsidized medical programs were also presented as the perpetrators of bad health.

Recent federal cuts to Medicare mean that many disabled people on fixed incomes now pay \$200 or more each month for their health care out of their meager social security checks. For these, the choice between health care and bare survival is no choice at all. For some, this will mean the end. Their precarious hold on some sort of life with dignity will break. And these are the “deserving” poor. (Real Change News, 12/10/2008, CTA682)

Here, the connection between poor health and homelessness is positioned as something caused by “cuts to Medicare” with grave consequences for “the ‘deserving’ poor.”

Arguments for the rights of people experiencing homelessness to situations that enabled good health were supported by the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The event was used as an opportunity to call for the end of the Sweeps and the sanctioning of *Nickelsville*, quoting the declaration as stating that “Everyone has a right to a standard of living for themselves, adequate for health and well-being including: food, clothing, housing, medical care, and social services, as well as security in the event of loss of livelihood, whether because of unemployment, sickness, disability, old age, or any other

reason” (Real Change News, 3/20/2007, CTA861). Nickelodeons presented themselves as a space where these rights could be achieved. Nickelodeons talked about how “We’re all family here” and described how the “comradeship” of camp life “lowers stress and improves mental health,” and “eases depression” (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440). Shelters in Seattle would rarely take families, and would almost never accept pets, adding to the stress of poverty. *Nickelsville* explicitly allowed both families and pets to stay in the camp, and many credited the inclusive and supportive atmosphere with the improved physical and mental health of its residents.

THIS COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE MAY BENEFIT OUR KIDS. AND OUR KIDS BENEFIT PEOPLE LIVING HERE. Sometimes all it takes is one act of kindness to reduce stress and help someone stay stable and healthy. (Cory Brubaker, quoted in Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1438; capitalization in original for emphasis)

Communal housing could be a solution, but I won’t rent any room that won’t accept my kitties. They keep me healthy. . . . (Paulette Bade, quoted in Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1442)

The kinds of social dynamics that self-managed communities like *Nickelsville* provided were credited with significant reductions in “stress,” and in keeping people “healthy” by providing “comradeship,” “kindness,” and “kitties.” The self-descriptions of Nickelodeons to visitors presented the camp as a solution to the problems presented by poverty and homelessness, and those who spent time at *Nickelsville* described residents as “Clear-eyed and healthy” (Seattle PI, 12/10/2008, CTA1235) people who were supporting each other’s health. “This is obvious as you watch a bearded old man tell stories to his neighbors’ kids as he pets their big chocolate dog, the perfect camp dog who seems to be everyone’s best friend” (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440).

The focus on “mental health” was also present in discussions about the Proposed Jail, citing the importance of “mental health services” and “mental health...diversion court[s]” for

dealing with “the real problem which is what is driving the need for a jail facility” (Unknown author, comment cards, Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/26/2008, CTA931). Often these concerns were attached to discussions about funding priorities, saying that “We the people must insist on public budgets that fully fund mental health, food banks, and shelters as a minimal human right” (WashBlog, 6/5/2008, CTA1343). By setting up a causal relationship between mental health and “the need for a jail facility,” opponents of the Proposed Jail advocated for “programs like mental health and drug diversion court and housing vouchers for released prisoners, which have reduced recidivism by 30 to 40 percent” (Real Change News, 8/6/2008, CTA610).

### *Trash.*

Homeless camps were linguistically constructed through the extensive use of words and phrases associated with the semantic field of *trash*. Camps were described as filled with “tons” of “debris,” often as a metonym for campers themselves. However homeless activists confronted this stereotype by talking about the activities of Nickelodeons in picking up garbage, and calling on the city to provide dumpsters in areas where people camped.

The description of camps as filled with garbage was sometimes done by packaging the activities that parks employees engaged in as “dismantling structures and clearing trash” (Seattle Weekly, 7/1/1998, CTA1069). Media reports talked about how, “Crews Clean Up Garbage, Debris From Camp” (KIRO, 5/28/2008, CTA1563), “crews came to remove garbage in the area” (Seattle PI, 11/27/2007, CTA1170), and “Seattle Parks and Recreation workers remove debris Wednesday from homeless encampments” (Seattle Times, 5/29/2008, CTA1254). Headlines focused on the *trash* over other aspects of the sweeps, proclaiming that “All of it was surrounded by heaps of trash” (KOMO, 5/28/2008, CTA1577). The heavy use of words associated with garbage created a visceral image of homelessness for people who

were unlikely to ever visit a homeless camp. Terms like “debris,” “cans,” and “bottles” were used so frequently that they seemed to have become obligatory when describing why a campsite clearance would occur.

City press releases focused on the immense amount of garbage collected, and journalists reported that “crews filled a garbage truck with 4 ½ tons of debris” from a Queen Anne encampment “before starting on a second truck” (Seattle Times, 5/29/2008, CTA1254). The figure later grew, with journalists noting that “21 tons of debris was removed from a 44-person [Queen Anne] camp” (Seattle Times, 9/23/2008, CTA1267). The enumeration of even larger quantities of garbage seemed to escalate as other interpretations of the Sweeps policy began to surface, and articles published in the days immediately after *Nickelsville* set up camp listed the current grand total as reported by “the city.”

Since April, the city said it has cleaned up about 30 homeless encampments and disposed of more than 50 tons of garbage, “including human waste and hundreds of syringes.” Over that period, 76 displaced people have gone to shelters, with eight of them moving on to transitional housing, the city said. (Seattle PI, 9/25/2008, CTA1206)

The use of the numerical quantification of “garbage” and “debris” produced a running tally of the progress that the Sweeps policy had made, pairing this with the accomplishments that the city made in moving “76 displaced people” into “shelters,” “eight of them moving on to transitional housing.” Journalists at *Real Change News* tied this coverage to the city issued press releases saying that “After the fact, the mayor issued a press release stating that 21 tons of “debris” was removed, including “used hypodermic needles, rotting cans of food, bottles of urine, and human waste”” (Real Change News, 12/23/2008, CTA687).

Beyond the association of homeless camps with garbage, camps were also described as “dirty” and “filthy” places where “vermin” ran through “mounds of” “rotten food” that lay in the “muck.” One article talked of a “3 foot deep, 8 foot wide midden of rotten food, mud,

worms and human debris” (Seattle PI, 12/7/2007, CTA1171), and area residents said of the camps that “They’re absolutely filthy” (KIRO, 5/28/2008, CTA1563). Said Parks Department spokeswoman Dewey Potter: “It’s sad and it’s gross, and it’s not fun for anyone” (Seattle Times, 5/29/2008, CTA1254). One TV anchor opened their story with “Trash. Rats. Filthy conditions. It is what dozens of homeless people used to live in until this morning” (KOMO, 5/28/2008, CTA1577). These characterizations presented homeless encampments as *filthy* places and the “gross” work of cleaning them up as somehow benefiting those who called the camps their homes (“It is what dozens of homeless people used to live in until this morning”).

The semantic proximity of homelessness to *trash* was sometimes made explicit. One editorial used parallel phrasing to draw the connection, saying that “You cannot camp in the park. You cannot make a private garbage dump in the park. It is not allowed. Period” (Seattle Times, 6/2/2008, CTA1256). Others used garbage as a metaphor to describe people experiencing homelessness, saying that “The base of the Space Needle was littered with men in sleeping bags” (The Daily, 10/1/2008, CTA1644), or tied an increase in homelessness to an increase in garbage:

There are many names for this fledgling city, where Old Glory flies from improvised flagpoles and trash heaps rise and fall with the wavering population. (High Country News, 3/16/2009, CTA1662)

The direct association between a “camp” and a “garbage dump,” between “trash heaps” and a “wavering population” contributes to the general understanding of homeless bodies as something that can be “littered” around the base of the Space Needle, and to requests by housed neighbors to “clear those people out” (Matthew Hardesty, quoted in the Seattle PI, 1/28/2008, CTA1176).



People within the homeless community were quick to respond to the use of words associated with the semantic field of *trash*. Some texts highlighted the connections that reporters and politicians made, claiming that “They say that outdoor meals programs, which serve some of the toughest cases, attract litter, dysfunction, and blight” (WRAP, 9/4/2007, CTA851). The campaign to *Stop the Sweeps* made the connection a rallying cry, saying that “We're bringing this out of the Mayor's backrooms and into public view, and we need you to add your voice to the call to stop treating people like trash” (Real Change organizer email, 11/15/2007, CTA729). Media coverage of the event echoed this call, reporting that “They're camping out this weekend at City Hall Plaza at Fourth and James to make a statement: The homeless shouldn't be treated like garbage” (Seattle PI Blog, 1/25/2008, CTA1189).

In addition to the presentation of opposition to people-as-trash, people at SHARE/WHEEL requested that the city provide resources for campers to maintain trash-free spaces by providing “portable toilets and trash bins at homeless camps” (Bruce Thomas, paraphrased in the Seattle PI, 11/27/2007, CTA1170). Responses to *Nickelsville* made similar claims, asking “Would it bankrupt the city to provide garbage cans or porta-potties?” (CrossCut, 11/27/2008, CTA1399). The city did not respond directly to the request for “trash bins” and “garbage cans.” Instead, Nickelodeons provided (and paid for) their own waste disposal and created rules that prohibited behavior that might perpetuate stereotypes of homeless people as associated with *trash*. These rules were noteworthy to housed visitors, and blogs specified that Nickelodeons faced “Instant eviction for fighting, theft or littering” (Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1440). News outlets took note of their efforts to confront the people-as-trash stereotype, with one *Seattle PI* journalist writing that “Dozens of pink tents filled the encampment Friday where residents were busy picking up trash and cooking food”

(Seattle PI, 10/17/2008, CTA1223). A local blog post written on only the third day of the camp's public life wrote:

There was not a single piece of garbage on the ground, not so much as a gum wrapper, which I imagine is better then how they found the tiny parcel of land amongst that spaghetti like road scheme around West Marginal, SR509, and Highland Park Way. (Bloggng Georgetown, 9/25/2008, CTA1309)

These mentions of “not a single piece of garbage on the ground” served to provide evidence that, rather than the city's productions of homeless campers as surrounded by trash, *Nickelsville* was a community of people “picking up trash and cooking food.”

Disposing of trash at *Nickelsville* proved to be a logistical problem for the community, and emails to supporters asked for people to help them dispose of garbage, saying that “If you have a trash can at your home with some extra space please take a bag of trash away with you – we can't yet afford garbage service” (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA180). The requests for help with garbage removal was re-iterated by housed activists within the homeless community, with calls to “Bring garbage bags” (Apesma's Lament, 10/9/2008, CTA106), and statements that *Nickelsville* was “seeking” “help in removing trash. If you head over to the site, come prepared to take away a bag of garbage!” (Real Change organizer email, 10/5/2008, CTA773). Neighborhood blogs told their readers that “they need 33-gallon trash bags to use for cleaning up the area” (Magnolia Voice, 10/9/2008, CTA1333) (see the section on the semantic field of *participation* under *community organizing* for more on “bring a” and “take away”). Within a month after the first tent was pitched *Nickelsville* was able to afford a dumpster but Waste Management soon said that they “lost” their account leaving a growing pile of trash in the middle of the parking lot that the camp called home. A snow storm soon shut down garbage collection and *Nickelsville* went without trash collection for nearly a month. An email after garbage collection had resumed declared that “The trash is

gone!” commenting that “For all its bad points, at least the cold kept down the smell of the trash” (Nickelsville email, 12/31/2008, CTA189).

*Human waste.*

Mentions of filth in the form of *human waste* was less common than garbage, but served to present a characterization of the homes of homeless people as disgusting and horrid spaces. The city deployed mentions of *human waste* in press releases and interviews with journalists, and mainstream media news coverage of the Sweeps policy replicated these statements. However, homeless activists confronted these descriptions by highlighting the injustice of the language used, by calling on the city to provide “porta-potties” in places where people camped, and in presenting *Nickelsville* as providing a solution to the city’s complaints of camps as “unsanitary.”

The first mentions of human waste came from a city of Seattle press release, where they stated that they had removed “21 tons of debris including used hypodermic needles, rotting cans of food, bottles of urine, and human waste” (City of Seattle, news release, quoted in Seattle Weekly, 8/19/2008, CTA1094). Area journalists picked up this language and referred to it alternately as a direct quote (“Since April, the city said it has cleaned up about 30 homeless encampments and disposed of more than 50 tons of garbage, “including human waste and hundreds of syringes.”” [Seattle PI, 9/25/2008, CTA1205]), by paraphrasing city officials (“city workers have found human waste, syringes, other drug paraphernalia and tons of waste, Fryer said” [Seattle PI, 6/9/2008, CTA1190]), or used it in the journalist’s own voice (“The refuse from 44 campsites included mattresses, broken furniture, rotting food, used hypodermic needles and human waste” [Seattle PI, 6/5/2008, CTA1188]). But explicit mentions of “human waste” were also accompanied by slightly more oblique language that

referred to how “the encampments...lack sanitary conditions” (Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173).

The proliferation of human waste discourse was presented by the city and many mainstream journalists as evidence that homeless camps were a “public health hazard,” and the audience was asked to align with the workers who were “cleaning” it up over the campers themselves.

Dewey Potter, a spokeswoman for the Seattle Parks Department, said city crews had trouble determining what was salvageable among items soaked with rain, dirt or urine....

But a crew chief in charge of determining what was salvageable “found they were so contaminated with urine she had to back away, and the bags were tossed,” said Potter. (Seattle Times, 6/14/2008, CTA1259)

Some mentions also came from surrounding community members as in the case of Don Harper, a Queen Anne homeowner that spoke on *KIRO*, characterizing the camps as “full of human waste, and drugs, and I mean, and alcohol bottles and rotting waste, uhh... you, you just have to see it” (Don Harper, on KIRO, 5/28/2008, CTA1563). Presentations like these constructed a vile, putrid caricature of spaces so repulsive that “she had to back away,” “you, you just have to see it.” While descriptive of geographic spaces, it is important to remember that these are characterizations of people’s homes, and that those who live in such squalid conditions are presented as so profoundly deviant that they require ameliorative actions – no matter how unpleasant they may be to carry out.

Advocates highlighted the use of the human waste lexicon as evidence of injustice and dehumanization. Editorials at *Real Change News* paraphrased the use of words and phrases associated with human waste with statements like “hypodermic needles, human feces, bottles of urine and tons of trash” (Real Change News, 11/19/2008, CTA670), and “trash, feces, drug use, and criminality” (Real Change News, 1/2/2008, CTA528). While

critiques of mainstream journalism were employed in these texts, direct quotes from Mayor Greg Nickels were used to highlight his agency in the proliferation of human waste and sanitation discourses:

“For too long, society has viewed homelessness as a problem that can only be managed, not solved. I disagree. ... Allowing people to live in tents and under tarps in greenbelts without water, sanitation, and hidden from police is neither a safe nor humane approach. We can do better... Working with local partners, we have created the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness...” (Mayor Greg Nickels, quoted in Real Change News, 7/23/2008, CTA606)

Nickels sets up a dichotomy here that presents one option as “managed” homelessness, where people are allowed to live “hidden from police” and without “sanitation,” while presenting the “Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness” as a second option where the “problem” of homelessness can be “solved.”

A second response to the use of *human waste* as a rationalization for campsite clearances was the observation that there are very few public toilets in the downtown core, and recommendations that the city provide “porta-potties” as a way of maintaining “sanitation,” or to allow social service and advocacy groups to provide them instead. This first required the production of the experience of not having adequate access to *bathroom* facilities, and the horrifying embarrassment that it created.

Linda Kenny didn’t plan to be homeless...  
 ...The worst part of it, she told participants of Seattle’s Homeless Women’s Forum on Nov. 19, were the times she couldn’t get to a bathroom in time.  
 “Many days I would stand on the corner just trying to hold all my muscles together waiting for the light to change as I felt the urine going down my leg and making a puddle in the street,” Kenny recounted. “I had made a stain on my pants. People were looking at me. This is not what I was raised for.” (Real Change News, 12/3/2008, CTA677)

Shortly after the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign began, CAC meeting notes made note of how “Leo specifically recommended that Porta-Potties be made available at encampments to help address sanitation and health concerns,” and mentioned that “SHARE voiced their continued

concern over the destruction of encampments and urged that the city make available porta-potties and dumpsters to help address the health and safety concerns” (CAC, 12/19/2007, CTA1057). SHARE/WHEEL had recommended something similar nearly ten years earlier, suggesting that “the city adopt an Emergency Encampment Civility Policy,” described in a 1998 *Seattle Weekly* article as “basically a tolerance policy for well-managed encampments on city greenbelts. Residents of these encampments would be required to follow a civility code, including requirements of sobriety and non-violence for residents. Organizers of the encampments would provide proper sanitation, trash removal, and security. The proposal was rejected” (Seattle Weekly, 7/15/1998, CTA1070). SHARE/WHEEL – a community organization run by people experiencing homelessness – responded to characterizations of homeless encampments as unsanitary and as “health and safety concerns” by looking to the lack of adequate public *bathrooms* and suggesting that a simple measure like providing “Porta-Potties” might constitute a more dignified and effective response.

Sanitation was seen as crucial if *Nickelsville*, or any other homeless encampment, was to be tolerated by city officials and a public scared of “dirty” homeless people. Members of *Nickelsville* took inspiration from a Depression-era “shantytown” named “Hooverville” that housed between 650 and 1200 people in small shacks at an abandoned shipyard for nearly ten years. The small community made do with two outhouses at the end of small piers for bathroom facilities (Roy, 1935), and after concluding that the community was “ultimately bulldozed in the name of public health,” one Nickelodeon suggested that “maybe we’ll be able to circumvent that with nurses and sanitation” (Corey, quoted in the Seattle Weekly Blog, 8/22/2008, CTA1097). *Nickelsville* billed itself as “sanitary,” sometimes explicitly in

response to the city's critique of urban campsites. A *Nickelsville* press release published the day they pitched the first tent was re-posted on a local neighborhood blog:

For the last five months we have been planning a safe, sanitary, permanent shelter for up to 1000 of the homeless people living on the streets and the green belts of Seattle. (Nickelsville press release, quoted in Blogging Georgetown, 9/22/2008, CTA1307)

Speaking in the third person, a *Nickelsville* email stated that “They are taking the initiative to organize so they can provide for themselves a basic level of safety and sanitation when their government steadfastly refuses to do so for them” (NickelsvilleSeattle.org, not dated, CTA193). An article published in the local free radical paper *Eat the State* described *Nickelsville* in relation to the city.

According to the announcement, it [Nickelsville] will have simple homes, not tents, and healthy solutions to the sanitation and safety issues the city had criticized in what it called "unsanctioned" homeless encampments. (Eat the State, 5/1/2008, CTA130)

The claim that *Nickelsville* would provide for its own “sanitation” confronted the claims made by the city that camps were characterized by human waste and that the only way that homelessness would be “solved” was to invest in long-term housing through the Ten-Year Plan.

### *Cleaning.*

The semantic field of *cleaning* was an important area of contestation for the local Seattle homeless movement. Camps and people were described as in need of “cleaning,” “sweeping,” and “clearing.” Activists confronted parts of this discourse, preferring the term “sweeps” due to the socio-cultural associations that it had with sweeping things under the rug. In other areas, though, encampments like *Nickelsville* presented themselves as clean, and as engaged in processes of cleaning the spaces they occupied before and after a move. People also re-framed homelessness as an experience that made staying clean difficult, highlighting the ways that Nickelodeons and their allies created situations where cleanliness could be

achieved. Finally, this semantic field was closely implicated in the area of drug use and addiction, owing to descriptions of non-drug use as “cleaning up” and “staying clean” – an area where the Proposed Jail was most closely implicated.

The encampment clearances/sweeps policy was presented as a program of “cleaning,” whereby the city engaged in “clearing” the spaces of “debris” in “clean sweeps” of urban campsites. The official language of the policy specified “clearances,” but the CLEAN lemma was employed more frequently. News reports focused on the practice of cleaning, saying of city parks employees that “Once they clean the camp, any items left behind will be taken to a city facility where the owners can pick them up” (KIRO, 9/26/2008, CTA1566). After describing the items left by a camper on Queen Anne, the news anchor in one story concluded that “that’s why these guys are here. To clean out everything left behind” (Anchor, KOMO, 5/28/2008, CTA1577). Headlines proclaimed that “Crews Clean Up Garbage, Debris From Camp” (KIRO, 5/28/2008, CTA1563), and reminded viewers that there were “Again, about 15-20 camp sites to clean up here” (Q 13, 6/5/2008, CTA1600). The repeated production of the activities of city parks employees as they “clean up” and “clean out” “garbage” that was “left behind” re-enforced the image of camps as dirty spaces and justified editorial headlines that proclaimed “City right to clean up squatter encampments” (Headline, Seattle Times, 6/2/2008, CTA1256).

The language of cleaning and sweeping homeless encampments was used as early as the removal of campsites in the “Jungle” in 1998. A *Seattle Weekly* article talked about how “The city has swept the Jungle on a roughly annual basis, dismantling structures and clearing trash” (Seattle Weekly, 7/1/1998, CTA1069). Coverage of the incidents talked of how “residents...appealing to the City Council...not to clear their homeless encampment” found



“the tent city “clean-up” had ensued regardless,” and noted that laws initiated by then mayor Mark Sidran gave “police broad authority to sweep public spaces clean of drunks and vagrants” (Seattle Weekly, 7/15/1998, CTA1070). Despite the efforts of organizers in 1998 to confront the policy of campsite removals, it remained and was renewed at opportune times, as in the “street sweeps of the homeless” that occurred in preparation for the 1999 WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle (Seattle Weekly, 11/10/1999, CTA1074).

Responses to evidence that the Nickels administration had begun to increase their emphasis on the “cleaning up” of urban green spaces and the people that live in them, *Real Change News* used the language of cleaning, headlining the article that broke the story in October, 2007 “City’s Sweeps Remove Campers’ Belongings, Leave Trash: “Proactive” approach to clearing out visibly homeless people” (Real Change News, 10/31/2007, CTA513). The use of cleanliness in talking about the Sweeps policy was difficult to avoid: both the city’s preferred language of “clearances” and the movements preferred language of “sweeps” called on the semantic category of cleaning to understand the practice. However, the use of the language of “sweeps” was considered more advantageous for arguments against the policy, as the following excerpt illustrates.

Just as sweeping dirt under the rug doesn’t really clean the floor, sweeping disabled and homeless people from public view or into jail doesn’t really address homelessness. They are still disabled and homeless when they are released. It is ineffective as hell, but local governments keep sweeping and we keep letting them. (Real Change News, 3/19/2008, CTA556)

The metaphor of “sweeping dirt under a rug” provided narrative parallel for those organizing to end the city’s practice of “sweeping homeless people from public view or into jail.” As the campaign progressed, opponents of the Sweeps policy used both terms, occasionally noting the discrepancies and voicing their lexical preferences.

We anticipate that the mayor's office will release their final protocols on "unauthorized campsite clearances" this week, although we still prefer the term "homeless sweeps" for pure descriptive accuracy. (Real Change News, 10/22/2008, CTA656)

Attention to lexical choice was not universal. Many journalistic accounts used cleaning language without citing its source, simply stating that "the camps...will continue to be cleared," that "public property is cleared" (Seattle Times, 4/11/2008, CTA1251), or that "Seattle city workers expected to have a greenbelt on the west slope of Queen Anne Hill cleared of homeless encampments within a day" (Seattle Times, 5/29/2008, CTA1254). This continued with *Nickelsville*, but instead of campsites being cleared, there was greater attention to the people inhabiting them due to the combination of arrests with the removal of people's homes.

Four days after more than 100 homeless people established a camp on city property in West Seattle, police cleared the site Friday afternoon, arresting 22 men and women who refused to leave. (Seattle PI, 9/26/2008, CTA1207)

The parallel wording that this excerpt illustrates creates a situation whereby the language that was used to describe how "public property is cleared" was re-purposed in the context of *Nickelsville* to describe the "22 men and women" who were "cleared" by police. The emergence of the "men and women who refused to leave" as newsworthy objects required that journalists think about the effects that the "clean up [of] squatter encampments" had on those who called these spaces home, and presented an opportunity for journalists to think about their lexical choices.

Some homeless people and activists began construction of wood shanties to replace their fuschia tents. The city, meanwhile, vowed to "go in and clean up" after the 72-hour eviction notice expires at 5 p.m. Thursday. (Seattle PI Blog, 9/25/2008, CTA1204)

Excerpts like the one above illustrate how some news reports and blog posts about *Nickelsville* presented the language of the city in close quotations, highlighting their use of

terms that the journalist found newsworthy to take note of. Other texts made note of the “proposed effort to “clean up” Seattle” (The Daily, 11/25/2008, CTA1648), talked of “the city's sweep (or “clean up” as the mayor prefers to call it),” and cited organizers as they took on a critical approach to the city’s language use: “People need a place to go, argue organizers, and City Hall needs to realize that the current “clean-up” system isn't working” (Seattle Weekly Blog, 6/18/2008, CTA1091).

Homelessness was an experience that was closely associated with a difficulty in keeping clean. Those within the homeless community often talked about the obstacles that people faced in keeping clean, noting that “It is difficult if not impossible to get or keep a job when you have nowhere to rest or be safe, let alone shower, clean your clothes, or keep your things: things like your tent or sleeping bag, things that can mean the difference between surviving and dying on the streets” (Real Change News, 2/26/2008, CTA545). Minutes from CAC meetings noted that those experiencing homelessness needed services like “Clean clothes for day-to-day, clothes for interviews” (CAC, 12/19/2007, CTA1057). Shelters were identified as contributing to the difficulties of keeping “clean,” and CAC members noted that “many don’t go to shelters because of the lack of freedom and cleanliness...” (Report back from CAC, IC, 12/3/2007, CTA1026). Sometimes the lack of “cleanliness” in shelters was attributed to the large burden that shelters faced with a situation where inadequate funding was available for providing the space and services that were required, and this narrative was accompanied by statements that “it is imperative that safe, secure, and clean shelter be made available” (Real Change News, 9/17/2008, CTA628).

Significant effort was made to produce a public perception of *Nickelsville* as a “clean” place. One member of a Portland-based camp called Dignity Village (a camp with a

permanent location that many at *Nickelsville* talked of as a model to be emulated) offered advice to those at *Nickelsville*, saying that they should “Keep it clean and sanitary. That's one of the biggest concerns people bitch about” (Joe Palinkas, quoted in the *Seattle Weekly*, 8/19/2008, CTA1094). Camp residents emphasized cleanliness in discussions with visitors, saying that “We want to be a clean society. We’re part of this society. We’re part of Seattle. We don’t want to be a nuisance” (Rico Miles, “head of security,” quoted in *Doorstep Politics*, 3/3/2009, CTA1423).

The provision of cleaning facilities like showers and laundry were not something that *Nickelsville* was set up to provide on-site, as they rarely had access to running water or electricity. This meant that hosts and housed supporters were often the sole provider of bathing facilities. One woman wrote about her experience offering showers to residents of *Nickelsville* in a blog post that was noteworthy enough to be reproduced in a second local blog.

On my first day as "the shower lady," as I quickly came to be known, George welcomed the chance to clean up. He'd arrived only the day before, but already he'd landed a job interview downtown. His face in my rear-view mirror was vivid with shy, hopeful eagerness. When I asked if one of my passengers would grab the bag of towels out of the back of my car, he practically dived into the space. He didn't walk between car and community center; he loped. As I dropped him back at the encampment he asked, "Does the church need somebody to sweep up? Can I give something back?" (Crosscut, 3/31/2009, CTA1432)

This distinctly personal and humanizing recollection of one woman’s experiences providing showers to residents of *Nickelsville* presented people in the camp as eager to be clean (“He didn't walk between car and community center; he loped”), and active in the process of cleaning (“Does the church need somebody to sweep up? Can I give something back?”) – a decidedly different perspective than that presented in portrayals of the city’s efforts to “clean up” homeless encampments.

Cleaning was an activity closely associated with the production of livable space. *Nickelsville* moved nine times in its first year, and significant energy was expended moving in and moving out of spaces. Nickelodeons talked about the cleaning process that went into setting up camp in emails sent out prior to moves, noting that some locations “will take several days to whack out the blackberry bushes and clean out the crud on” (Nickelsville email, 11/26/2008, CTA184). Neighborhood bloggers took note of the cleaning processes that camp residents engaged in as they left their neighborhood, with posts about “Moving day at Nickelsville,” that acknowledged residents ability to “clear” themselves, saying that “They are loading their tents and gear into a large truck and have pretty much cleared all the tents out of the area” (Magnolia Voice, 10/10/2008, CTA1335). The city, however, continued to present a need to “clean up” after *Nickelsville*, and reports about the moves replicated their language.

Potter [parks spokeswoman Dewey Potter] says once the homeless pack up and leave the camp, park workers will “schedule a cleanup,” throwing trash away and holding any belongings for the owners to pick up later. (Magnolia Voice, 10/2/2008, CTA1318)

By the end of the day, the homeless camp on the city property was cleared and cleaned up by city crews. The new tent camp on state land will also be cleared out and cleaned up when the campers' time is up. (King 5, 9/27/2008, CTA1548; redistributed by NWCN, 9/29/2008, CTA1617)

The repeated use of *cleaning* language presented *Nickelsville* as just another illegal encampment to be “cleared out and cleaned up,” suggesting that despite the explicit claims by Nickelodeons that they ran a “clean” camp, they were expected to leave a trail of “trash” and “belongings” behind.

Cleanliness was also associated with being drug free, characterizing non-drug use as being “clean” and the removal of drug activity from a neighborhood was characterized with pleas to “Clean up my community—please” (King County Executive Ron Sims, quoted in

Seattle Weekly, 7/15/1998, CTA1070). An area blog post described how one person living under an overpass “would be sober for several months then drink himself into oblivion for a couple of weeks then clean up and start work again” (CrossCut, 11/27/2008, CTA1399). One particular program called “Clean Dreams” was presented as an alternative to the Proposed Jail. Questions raised at many of the public forums on the Proposed Jail connected the perceived impact of incarcerated people to a reversal of changes to their neighborhoods.

Safety of citizens in neighborhood – would undo efforts of Hub Urban Center to clean up neighborhood...

Goes against recent neighborhood efforts to clean up area for resident safety  
(Municipal Jail Public Forum caucus discussion questions, 7/12/2008, CTA927)

The close association of drug use, homeless people, and neighborhood decay with efforts to “clean up” provided a semantic relationship that strengthened the concerns of housed community members and supported arguments that were based on keeping homeless criminals out of the area.

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*Dirty* proved to be an important semantic field for homeless activists, presenting stereotypes of participants and spaces as dirty, unhealthy, and in need of cleaning. Contestation within each of these linguistic spaces was mixed. In some instances activists were able to change the characterization of participants and camps from “dirty” to “clean,” but in other cases concerns lingered and any successes in reframing self-managed communities rested on the re-iteration of negative associations with homeless persons, defining cases like *Nickelsville* as exceptions to the rule. The Proposed Jail was an issue sector not nearly as restricted by contests over the use of *dirty* discourses, although it was deployed in descriptions of poor communities where residents were concerned that the work they had done to “clean up [the] neighborhood” would be set back by the building of the

Proposed Jail. The strongest connection, though was in the area of health, specifically in the provision of “mental health services” and “mental health...diversion court[s]” as alternatives to jail. However, as the close association between “cleaning up” and “drug use” indicates, a third semantic field associated with *deviant subjectivities* presented challenges for homeless organizers as well.

### ***Drugs.***

Homelessness was often accompanied by discussions of drugs and alcohol. This semantic field included mentions of *substances*, *addicts*, and *treatment* programs. While *substances* were the most common category of *drug* discourse – often acting as stand-ins for “drug use” or “drug users” in descriptions of camps, green spaces, or community parks – the semantic field of *addicts* (“drunks,” “druggies,” and “addicts”) was also deployed fairly frequently in public discourse about homelessness or the Proposed Jail, tying public perceptions of homeless persons to socially outcast deviant behaviors at odds with “safe” communities and “improving” neighborhoods. The semantic field of *treatment* also appeared frequently in the corpus, commonly cited as alternatives to the Proposed Jail and as outreach programs employed by city parks officials alongside the Sweeps policy. While necessary contests, these discourses were extremely difficult to engage in for participants, playing on deeply held assumptions about personal choice, drug and alcohol use, and the experience of poverty and homelessness.

### ***Substances.***

The first semantic field associated with drugs consisted of the *substances* themselves. City press releases and mainstream media accounts of homeless camps often listed off drugs and alcohol (or the remnants of drugs and alcohol) as typical in these spaces and closely associated with violence and criminality. Often the drugs themselves served as metonymic

stand-ins for consumption, with the assumption that their presence equaled deviant behavior in their use (see the semantic field of *addicts* below). Self-managed communities established rules banning the presence of drugs and alcohol from camps, and area media reports found such rules newsworthy based on the implied assumption that the absence of substances was abnormal and due only to the imposition of strict rules forbidding their presence (something we have seen across my analysis of *deviant subjectivity* discourses). This served to legitimate *Nickelsville* at the expense of re-iterating existing stereotypes of the homeless experience as surrounded by deviant substances.

Homeless encampments were presented as littered with drug paraphernalia. Newspaper articles and television stories about homeless Sweeps described how “city workers have found human waste, syringes, other drug paraphernalia” (Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173), “syringes, mounds of alcoholic beverage containers” (Seattle Times, 6/29/2008, CTA1262), “used syringes and mounds of high-alcohol beer cans” (Seattle Times, 6/2/2008, CTA1256), “and countless used syringe needles” (Seattle Times, 5/29/2008, CTA1254). The listing of drug paraphernalia often co-occurred with lists of “trash” and “human waste,” presenting a vivid image of outdoor spaces filled with dangerous substances and inhabited by people doing dangerous things. While these terms often appeared in hard news, one editorial titled “Homeless camp sweeps needed” explicitly connected the presence of drugs to urban campsites and then to crime and violence, saying that “The camp attracts drugs. It may start out a non-violent place but it will not stay one...” (Seattle PI, 12/19/2007, CTA1173). Another editorial, this one titled, “City right to clean up squatter encampments,” drew the connections between individual deviant behavior and spaces where drugs were prevalent.



The colonizing of greenbelts is not caused by a lack of shelter beds. It has been caused by a leniency of enforcement and sentimental attitudes toward vagrancy. The homeless who camp in the woods do it because they prefer it to a shelter. In the woods, you can sleep in. You can ignore the law that says no fires, no alcohol, no drugs.

Parks Department employees began their cleanup Wednesday by removing platforms, tarps, old clammy mattresses, open cans of food, bottles of urine, used syringes and mounds of high-alcohol beer cans. (Seattle Times, 6/2/2008, CTA1256)

The proliferation of drug and alcohol items in reports and editorials about urban camps were listed in succession in ways that often mirrored each other. Key words like “used syringes,” “beer cans,” and “other drug paraphernalia” were so widespread that, much like the listing of *trash* as noted above, their inclusion in news reports and editorials seemed almost obligatory. These images were constructed as even more troubling by reports that focused on the discomfort that they caused Parks employees, who “even with the special suits they were provided for the spring sweep of Kinnear Park, said they weren't too hot on cleaning up syringes and moldy cans of food” (Seattle Weekly Blog, 9/11/2008, CTA1098).

*Nickelsville* worked to confront the stereotypes that the proliferation of drug discourse caused. Journalists responded by highlighting how *Nickelsville* was different.

Nickelsville has evolved from its early days, when there were no rules or leadership structure. That changed about a week after its inception, when alcohol increasingly became a problem and a man was seriously injured after setting his tent on fire one night while burning candles. Open flames or smoking in tents were subsequently banned, as were liquor, drugs, and weapons. Other rules followed, including no violence, no begging, and no visitors between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. (Seattle Weekly, 11/5/2008, CTA1123)

A focus on what was not there as news worthy was premised on the assumption that “alcohol,” “liquor,” and “drugs” were an expected component of a homeless encampment, but that *Nickelsville* had overcome this problem by creating a list of “rules” aimed at curtailing homeless people’s normally deviant behavior. News reports talked about how “ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND FIGHTING ARE PROHIBITED FOR CAMP RESIDENTS”

(KUOW, reposted in This Way Up, Seattle, Washington, 12/3/2008, CTA1400; capitalization in original to indicate anchor's speech), "Drugs, alcohol, weapons and abusive language aren't tolerated" (Renton Reporter, reproduced in Save Feral Human Habitat, 3/4/2009, CTA202), and one blog post connected these rules to other types of behavior, saying that "No alcohol or drugs are allowed, and each person has jobs to keep Nickelsville ticking. Every day, they confront questions of how to keep the food donations coming in and the criminals out" (Doorstep Politics, 3/3/2009, CTA1423). This process of legitimation through binary categories constructed *Nickelsville* as exceptional, and the rules that the camp established as a reluctant necessity responsible for the creation of a space that was capable of keeping "alcohol," "liquor," and "drugs" out.

Drugs were also closely tied to arguments against the Proposed Jail. Neighborhood groups expressed their concern that "drug paraphernalia has been found at the park" (HPAC, 7/21/2008, CTA139), asking "Are we expected to put up with people living in our greenbelt and finding needles and bottles on our recently restored trails?" (HPAC, 6/25/2008, CTA137). By connecting "drug paraphernalia" like "needles and bottles" to "people living in our greenbelt," residents in places like Highland Park tied deviant drug use to homelessness and suggested that these were the type of people the Proposed Jail would bring to the area. Other communities had similar concerns, as the following excerpts from comments at a "Public Forum" on the jail illustrate.

Don't accelerate existing drug and prostitution problems...  
 Aurora already has a drug and prostitution problem! As well as flea infested motels!  
 This will only add to the problem...  
 We already have problems with drugs and prostitution ...  
 Criminal setting-up business for drugs and sex in neighborhood and hanging out on  
 Urban Trail and cemetery. If homeless setting up camp in neighborhood on Urban  
 Trail or in cemetery... (Caucus discussion questions, Municipal Jail Public Forum,  
 7/12/2008, CTA927)

People asked “What kind of visitors will this attract and how will that affect community safety? Gang members? Drugs? Prostitution?” (Report on Initial Outreach Interviews, Keller Group, 5/29/2008, CTA910). Comments like these presented an increase in “drugs,” “prostitution,” and “homeless setting up camp” as a logical result of a jail being cited in their neighborhoods, reproducing homelessness as deviant, criminal, and morally abhorrent, and attracting the wrong “kind of visitors.” King County Sheriff’s Deputy Jeff Hancock concluded that “if Seattle chooses the nearby Myers Way jail site, and releases people there, they would immediately head toward White Center to “get a beer”” (White Center Now, 10/2/2008, CTA1379).

Two of the Proposed Jail sites, suggested by many to be the only ones actually being considered, were in fairly poor neighborhoods. These communities expressed concern that the presence of a jail would be accompanied by the presence of “drugs” and lead to the reversal of the work that they had done to rid their neighborhood of things associated with “drugs.”

“No jail...Changes for the better in Highland Park: before there were drugs and shootings, 3 to 15 years, more young families moving in, Riverview Park (softball, children), more homeowners coming, rental properties. The jail is too close to schools, property values will go down, for sale house signs are popping up along Holden Street. No Jail!” (“Unknown,” comment card from Municipal Jail Public Forum, 7/26/2008, CTA931)

"Even without a jail, we have enough problems with drugs and crime here; we don't want any more," said Riza Ryser, the mother of four kids. (Seattle PI, 6/13/2008, CTA1194)

The repeated association of the presence of a substance (“drugs”) with an increase in violent crime (“shootings”) created a climate of fear, whereby people in these communities feared a loss of the meager saving that had allowed them to purchase a home in this poorer part of the

city due to “property values” going “down” and “for sale house signs...popping up” (see section on the semantic field of *development* for more on property values).

*Addicts.*

Behind a fear of drugs themselves is often a fear of those who consume them. Drug and alcohol use was routinely defined as deviant behavior, and associated with the experience of homelessness. Homeless people’s consumption of alcohol and drugs were cited as evidence of their criminality and as reasons for why they were homeless, with definitions of addiction-as-sin justifying their personal responsibility for deviance as *addicts*. These practices constituted a process of “somatisation,” whereby “anthroponmys denoting an artificially produced alteration of bodily, sensual or mental capacities” (i.e. drunks), or “negative habitonmys” (i.e., drug users, addicts) were used as abstractions that represented social actors “by means of a quality assigned to them” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 54; van Leeuwen, 1996). These representational practices served as depersonalization strategies, Othering “druggies,” “drunks,” and “addicts” as people not like “us.” Othering practices were also adopted by homeless activists as a way to differentiate self-managed communities and those who live in them from other homeless people, setting up hierarchies within the homeless identity typology (Kaplan, 2008) of deserving and undeserving poor. By identifying as non-deviant in the area of substance use, Nickelodeons were able to draw on cultural values related to addiction to establish similarities with their housed neighbors. But this strategy was predicated on the reproduction of the homeless norm as deviant drunk and druggie, making broader public opinion change difficult in the context of continued encampment Sweeps.

Representational practices deploying anthroponmys were deployed in discussions about why the Sweeps policy was being implemented, and served to explain the existence of

more general claims by the city of “safety and health problems,” isolating deviant behavior as its cause. News articles talked about how “the jungle” was “a haven for transients and drug users who ignore “No Trespassing” signs and clamber over a fence to get in” (Seattle PI, 2/26/2009, CTA1240). One article made the effort to profile a man who camped outdoors, but noted that a criminal background check that the author did resulted in “a screenful of Seattle Municipal Court cases bearing his name, three of them open. One was for disobeying police, and two others were for public drinking. Petty stuff, but they added up to a life where lessons weren't learned” (Seattle Times, 5/30/2008, CTA1255). These articles present “drinking” and “drug use” as individual choices (“lessons weren't learned”) that were associated with criminal activity (“a screenful of Seattle Municipal Court cases bearing his name”) and a disregard for the rules (“ignore “No Trespassing” signs,” “disobeying police”).

Conrad and Schneider (1992) describe this approach to the valuing of alcohol use as arising during prohibition, when “drunkenness was considered a sin” (National Temperance Society, quoted in Levine, 1978, p. 157). Drug use has also been subject to evaluations based on individual responsibility. In the late 1800s – at a time when opiates were heavily prescribed for a range of medical ailments – “Physicians believed that “enslavement” to opiates was caused more by the user’s weak character than the drug itself and considered the lower classes to be particularly vulnerable to it” (Conrad & Schneider, 1992, p. 114). Drawing on the intoxication-as-sin approach, drinkers/drug users were considered morally corrupt and responsibility for their deviant behavior was placed on the individual. When behavior is labeled as deviant (“drinking, drug use”) and attributed to the individuals moral failing (“lessons weren't learned”), people can easily be categorized as deserving of their own criminalization. Activists within the homeless community were well aware of this dynamic,

citing “Federal funding priorities [that] place our focus on the chronic homeless: the mentally ill, addicted, and alcoholic homeless who, in less enlightened times, were known as “bums.” In other words, it’s not the system that’s seen as screwed up. It’s the people” (Real Change News, 7/25/2007, CTA502).

A second definition of alcohol consumption and drug use was assumed in other texts. Understandings of addiction that presented the “drug” as the perpetrator of the problem and the “drug user” as subject to its control also structured discourses of addiction (Conrad & Schneider, 1992). This understanding began to emerge in the 1930s and 1940s, and the National Committee on Alcoholism popularized the idea that “Alcoholism is a disease and the alcoholic a sick person” in the 1960s (Cafetz & Demone, 1962). This definition was highly influential in the development of Alcoholics Anonymous, the first step of which was to admit that “we are powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1939, p. 71-72). The addiction-as-disease approach to alcohol and drug use was particularly effective in externalizing responsibility for deviant behavior from the individual, and thus arguing for the decriminalization of individuals who consume drugs or alcohol.

Drugs, which offer oblivion and economic opportunity in one convenient package, become very tempting. Drug felons — who have fed the prison boom that began in 1980 and are disproportionately people of color — are subject to a lifetime bar from public housing, education assistance, welfare, food stamps, and veteran’s benefits. Is it any wonder that people become homeless? (Real Change News, 8/6/2008, CTA610)

Use of this perspective on addiction positions “drugs” as the reason why “people become homeless,” resulting in “a lifetime bar from public housing, education assistance, welfare, food stamps, and veteran’s benefits.” By placing the agency on addiction it is possible to argue that “There are those whose addictions lead them to make self-destructive choices”

(Real Change News, 4/2/2008, CTA562). This understanding of addiction is often placed alongside other illnesses, creating mechanisms of equivalence with disability and mental illness. In an article about Parks Superintendent Tim Gallagher accompanying two campers to the warehouse where their belongings had been held after confiscation in a Sweep, *Real Change News* editor Adam Hyla concluded that “Neither could have gotten to the warehouse alone. Mental illness and alcoholism means “they’re not physically and mentally capable”” (Tim Gallagher, quoted in Real Change News, 6/18/2008, CTA591).

Descriptions of *Nickelsville* were influenced by the use of language that specified the level of drug and alcohol use. Drug and alcohol use were treated similarly to drugs and alcohol themselves, focusing on the extent to which Nickelodeons were able to police each other in the maintenance of non-deviant behavior.

Though camp leaders admit that there have been a few reports of drunkenness and drug use in the camp, they say they've put measures in place to control troublemakers. An ad hoc security force has patrolled the premises, and there's a formal mechanism in place to evict those that break the rules. (Seattle PI, 10/1/2008, CTA1211)

*Nickelsville* is assumed to be populated by people prone to deviant behavior (“drunkenness and drug use”) and it is only because “camp leaders” have “put measures in place to control troublemakers,” with a “security force” and “a formal mechanism in place to evict those that break the rules” that *Nickelsville* can maintain order. Even posts that were otherwise sympathetic found it important to note the contrast to what they had expected of the camp, with one neighborhood blog post stating that “What struck me immediately was the level of organization...No boozing, drug dealing, or other assorted “crime”. Just a group of people weighing their options” (West Seattle Blog, 9/25/2008, CTA1309). The presentation of *Nickelsville* as different from the norm was often encouraged by residents, as in the following

quote from “Evan Balverde...a plumber who came to Nickelsville after an accident forced him to stop working.

"We don't just take in everybody," Balverde says. "We'd like to, but the thing is just a lot of these people out here are mentally incapable or they're drug addicts or alcoholics and stuff, and that's why they are on the streets. We don't put up with that..." (CNN, 3/19/2009, CTA1663)

These characterizations of *Nickelsville* go to great effort to illustrate how residents did not fit the expected stereotype of homeless drunks and addicts, “powerless” over alcohol or drugs. But in so doing they reiterated the general stereotype of people experiencing homelessness, setting *Nickelsville* up as a unique exception to what might be expected at the many urban campsites routinely subjected to clearance by the city.

As Nickelodeons began to be perceived as successful in their implementation of a ban on drug and alcohol use they were evaluated on that measure, sometimes leading to critiques of the city for portraying them otherwise.

Now that the homeless and their advocates have dealt with the successful management of trash, the disposal of human waste, and do not tolerate drug use, we see what it's really all about: Seattle elects people that hate poor people, and said politicians are more than willing to gleefully and bluntly state their intentions. (Blogging Georgetown, 9/25/2008, CTA1308)

The successful implementation of rules at *Nickelsville* created an opening for allies to present them as exceptional and condemn “said politicians” for their unjust characterization.

However, attention to the success of Nickelodeons in restricting the behavior of residents of the camp meant that any deviation from the rules was noteworthy of mention. The following blog post was from the *Magnolia Voice*, a neighborhood blog that was local to the area where *Nickelsville* was located at the time of writing.

That man, who called police, told the responding officer he had been one of the coordinators of Nickelsville, but quit his position on Friday because “residents are smoking crack cocaine and marijuana,” according to the report...



When the officer arrived at Nickelsville, where he interviewed members of the security team, he could “smell the odor of marijuana in the air,” he wrote in his report. (Magnolia Voice, 10/4/2008, CTA1327)

Reports like this one emphasized the inability of *Nickelsville* to keep their residents from “smoking crack cocaine and marijuana” and highlighted tensions within the community (“quit his position”). In the context of stereotypes promulgated by the city and area journalists, *Nickelsville* could occupy no middle ground: either the camp was an exceptional space characterized by strict rules that kept residents in check, or it was a reaffirmation that homeless people are drunks and druggies, unable to control themselves or others.

Nickelodeons often directly confronted the stereotypes that they experienced with both collective and individual statements. In a collectively authored letter to the editor of the *Seattle PI* Nickelodeons responded to claims made by “Lieutenant Gracy” in a *Seattle PI* article in which he had told reporters that “You know these people would be better staying in a warm shelter tonight.” In their letter to the editor Nickelodeons specified how “Seattle jobs just don't pay enough for housing,” and that “It isn't just mental illness or drug addiction that causes layoffs and loan defaults -as the good Lieutenant could confirm if he checked around his Precinct Station sometime” (Nickelsville email, 12/20/2008, CTA188). Aaron Beaucage, a poet and out of work truck driver who lived at *Nickelsville* through several moves told a local blogger that “I’m not a drunk. I don’t do drugs...THIS IS A HOUSING ISSUE AND AN ECONOMIC ISSUE” (Aaron Beaucage, quoted in Libertadkorps, not dated, CTA1437; capitalization in original for emphasis). These stories were a common theme in the ways that people at *Nickelsville* presented themselves to the public, highlighting structural economic factors as salient (“Seattle jobs just don't pay enough for housing”) and rebutting stereotypes that saw addiction as the primary reason for homelessness (“I’m not a drunk. I don’t do drugs”).

Journalists and activists critical of the city's policies pointed to the city as the originator of the associations of campsites with drug and alcohol use. One article noted how the city presented their actions in a "15-minute briefing...saying the "abatement" of camps on Parks-owned property is prompted by complaints about "drinking, drug use, and noise" and "the increased presence of rodents" as well as "excessive damage" from campfires" (Patricia McInturff, quoted in *Real Change News*, 12/5/2007, CTA518). A call for participation in a December 2009 "rally and one-night protest encampment on the steps of City Hall" told *Real Change News* readers that "As activists have tried to hold the mayor accountable, the city response has been to deny, stonewall, and attack homeless campers through the media as drug-crazed criminals. This is as wrong as wrong can be" (*Real Change News*, 12/12/2007, CTA519). Consistently highlighting the injustice of characterizing "homeless campers" as "drug-crazed criminals," and camps as plagued by "drinking, drug use, and noise," homeless activists were able to question the legitimacy of the Sweeps policy itself ("This is as wrong as wrong can be").

Drug use was also closely associated with shelters. This was almost exclusively done by people who had firsthand experiences being homeless. As one person who had spent time in shelters explained, "The shelters? They're infested with bugs and magnets for drugs and violence. We're disabled, not animals. We shouldn't have to live that way" (Yelp Nickelsville, 9/23/2008, CTA1315). Some news coverage reflected this opinion of many area shelters. One man who "camped in Woodland Park for a few weeks" told a *Seattle Times* journalist that "He stayed in a shelter one night...: "Bedbugs up the wall, crack addicts in the bathroom at 2 in the morning — I said, 'That's not me, man' '" (*Seattle Times*, 6/9/2008, CTA1257). These vivid impressions of life in homeless shelters served to explain why

someone might sleep outside, separating themselves from “crack addicts in the bathroom at 2 in the morning” by concluding that “That's not me, man.”

The policing of people for the consumption of drugs or alcohol were described as tied to poverty and race in ways that questioned the “justice” of the criminal justice system. Police were described as “herding people around town,” with “blocking-the-sidewalk, drinking-in-public, trespassing really heavily enforced as a means to put people out of sight of the tourists” (Real Change News, 6/18/2008, CTA592). The criminalization of public consumption through “drinking-in-public” laws were seen as responsible for why “jails are overflowing,” suggesting that “Drug courts, mental health courts, and homeless or community courts are all, at their core, manifestations of a criminal justice system overwhelmed by a society that attempts to rid itself of poor people rather than attempting to rid itself of poverty” (Real Change News, 3/19/2008, CTA556). This relationship created the primary connection between homeless organizing efforts and efforts to stop the Proposed Jail.

#### *Treatment.*

While far less prominent than the semantic fields of *drugs* or *addictions*, talk of drug *treatment* was most commonly associated with the Proposed Jail and was occasionally associated with self-managed communities. A journalist that often reported on homelessness at a local community radio station talked about meeting “a former heroin addict named Billy who was able to kick the drug cold turkey during his first week at Nickelsville” (KBCS, 1/8/2009, CTA154), and an editorial written by a local pastor at a Methodist church talked about the relationship between self-managed communities and “sober space.”

SHARE embodies the idealism that those who are homeless can manage their own lives...In my own church we provide space for a SHARE shelter. It works. Folks are given basic human decency, and they are offered safe, sober space so that they can be

strengthened to move from homelessness to housing and from survival to hope. (Real Change News, 11/19/2008, CTA671)

In presenting self-managed communities like SHARE shelters and *Nickelsville* as spaces where “Folks are given basic human decency,” these reports connect opportunities for “those who are homeless” to “manage their own lives” in a “sober space,” moving people from “survival to hope.”

Occasionally criticism of the Sweeps policy would call for changes in funding priorities, saying that the city should have “more money put into shelters and affordable drug-treatment centers” instead of spending money on campsite removals (The Stranger Blog, 6/9/2008, CTA1156). In response to criticism of the policy, the city announced changes to the process that would include outreach along with campsite clearances. The city was reported to have “contracted with Evergreen Treatment Services to provide outreach workers to track down the homeless in the encampments and offer them temporary shelter and help connecting with social services, such as mental-health or drug-and-alcohol treatment” (The Seattle Times, 4/26/2008, CTA1252). Minutes from RCOP reflect a negative appraisal of the policy change, saying that “The outreach that they’ve taken and adopted is bad; it’s not relationship-based and it offers services with a threat attached” (RCOP wiki, 4/22/2008, CTA448).

The argument against the Proposed Jail was largely one that promoted the funding of existing social programs that could prevent misdemeanor offenses from placing people in jail (see section on the semantic field of *alternatives to jail*). Things like “The Clean Dreams program” (KBCS, 2/19/2009, CTA155) and “substance abuse programs” (Report on Initial Outreach Interviews, Keller Group, 5/29/2008, CTA910) were presented as “more treatment-focused” approaches “toward the enforcement of certain lower level drug offenses” (Nick

Lacata's Urban Politics newsletter, reproduced in West Seattle Herald, 4/1/2009, CTA1657). Calls for participation in the *No New Jails* campaign asked people to oppose arrests for "low-level drug offenses" in order to "change the way we enforce and carry out our laws and put people into diversion and rehab programs instead of jail!" (RCOP email, 11/12/2008, CTA343).

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The semantic field of drugs was a difficult area for homeless activists. Many talked of the difficulties that they had organizing people under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and camps made clear guidelines around drug use in part as a mechanism for maintaining a space where people were likely to act with respect to one another. These actions lent credibility to projects like *Nickelsville*, but the ways that they were talked about often established camps as exceptional to the norm of drug use in urban campsites. This is a difficult dynamic for movements that actively work to confront prejudice in their organizing, and it may very well be something that cannot be addressed through a single campaign or project (or three in this case). Rather, it may be something that requires a sustained organizing effort over time to change the background assumptions around drug and alcohol use by people experiencing homelessness. However, we have also seen that deploying such stereotypes to your advantage can be a powerful tool in the characterization of one group as different from the norm, as the Othering of drunks and druggies along with the public declaration of strict rules of behavior were able to do in the establishment of *Nickelsville* as an exceptional homeless camp.

### **Contesting issues in material poverty and deviant subjectivities.**

The process of issue contestation is crucially important for social movements. As many European scholars have argued, modern social movements are thoroughly implicated

in the struggle to define (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991), engaging in political actions in ways that are increasingly structured around the contestation of cognitive codes (Melucci, 1996a). In many ways this activity is strongly connected to material realities as they are experienced by those who might benefit from a movement's achievements. It is in this area that the focus of new social movement studies on the struggle to define (Buechler, 1995) is most closely implicated in the definition and appropriation of resources and political opportunity structures, which is the focus of much traditional North American social movement research (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978). But in other ways, issue contestation is an activity that contests the very nature of identity and identification (Barnes, Newman, & Sullivan, 2006; Butler, 1990, 1997; Valocchi, 2007). Social movements are important vehicles for conflicting definitions of people and behavior to be articulated in the public sphere. When this happens, it happens in the context of multi-organizational fields, as others have already argued (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002). But it also happens in the context of multiple areas of meaning – semantic fields – and contests are often closely tied to the use of a set of contested discourses, represented by words, or phrases. These “nodal points” (Sandberg, 2006) serve as references for larger concepts, and the ways that they are collocated in public discourse can influence the semantic associations that they bring to a text, issue, or movement (Sinclair, 1991, 2004; Stubbs, 2001).

My analysis of issue contestation in a local homeless movement has highlighted the ways that issue areas differ in their facilitation or suppression of particular areas of meaning. I have argued that issue areas provide narrative affordances that highlight particular resources and identities while back-grounding others. I have used a semantic network analysis of collocations among semantic fields related to *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities* to

show how the Proposed Jail was a more centralized issue area, with fewer semantic fields bearing the burden of tying each area of meaning together. Further, those semantic fields with the highest betweenness scores (most central to the network) were fields associated with the semantic fields of *danger*, specifically *policing* and *violence* (things like “police,” “arrest,” “precinct” and “security”). This means that discussions about the Proposed Jail were more reliant on *danger* to tie other areas of homeless discourse together. For their part, the Nickelsville and Sweeps issue areas both had fairly comparable levels of narrative centralization, with more semantic fields bearing the weight of narrative cohesion in these semantic networks, and *materiality* fields like *housing*, *home*, and *jobs* occupied more central locations. But while the use of network measurements can help us see the structure of the semantic relationships in each network from the perspective of narrative centralization and cohesion, the measurement of these metrics requires that collocations are binarized, thus obscuring the *frequency* of occurrence of each semantic field.

Comparing semantic frequency to norm files from the entire sample accounts for some of this weakness, allowing us to see what areas of meaning occurred more frequently in each issue network. When I compared those texts that specialized in each issue area, clear preference can be seen for particular areas of meaning within each sub sample. Again, the Proposed Jail issue specialization area showed a significant preference for *deviant subjectivity* fields related to *danger*, while the Sweeps was more likely to facilitate semantic fields related to *dirty* (*clean*, *trash* and *health*). The Nickelsville issue specialization area also directed attention to *danger* and *dirty*, but the fields most commonly deployed here were far more positive, focusing on the need for *bathrooms*, *dumpsters* and *healthcare*.

These discrepancies could also be seen in the detailed discourse analysis that I presented on each semantic field related to *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*. I illustrated how each area of meaning was deployed in the context of the text or the clause, and how collocation between discursive nodes facilitated particular semantic connections through processes of semantic prosody. I found that participants engaged in the contestation of words and phrases that were often used as debilitating labels, delegitimizing groups of people as “drunks and druggies” or as “dirty,” “scary homeless people.” These labels of *deviant subjectivities* were sometimes highlighted as evidence of injustice, and sometimes deployed in their binary forms, arguing the “sobriety,” “cleanliness,” and “non-violence” of homeless campers like Nickelodeons. But in arguing the *deviance* or normalcy of homeless persons, these approaches could only go so far, as the discursive terrain remained imbedded in dominant forms of meaning that have strong socio-historical roots in public perceptions of poor and homeless persons (Wright, 1997). Instead, those texts that focused on the semantic fields of *material poverty* – and particularly those concerned with *human rights* – were the most capable of moving away from *deviant subjectivities* and towards structural causes and solutions.

Yet, issue contestation is only part of the story when it comes to social movement communication. Movements also engaged in a far more pragmatic form of communicative action focused on the mobilization of participants to join the movement and organize to take action towards the building of a social movement. This is the area of language use that I turn to next.



## Participant Mobilization

Mobilization is an intensely discursive process. In addition to the contestation of issues in the public sphere, activists and advocates engage in calls to action, the identification of collectivities, the production of communities of resistance, and alternatives to injustice. This discursive activity is often responsible for the connection of previously disconnected populations, or the reframing of injustice as inevitable into a context of collective resistance. Without the production of *participant mobilization* discourses, the contestation of issues in the public sphere would not move beyond the discursive arena and into the physicality of direct action and political participation.

The production of *participant mobilization* through language in the local Seattle homeless movement involved three major communication processes: *institutionalizing the movement*, *taking collective action*, and *community organizing*. Each of these communication processes were further populated by a set of semantic fields, words, phrases, rules, and lemmas. First, participants characterized their activities as something beyond isolated actions by *institutionalizing the movement* through labeling practices, employing the CAMPAIGN, ALLIANCE, and COALITION lemmas and by naming their actions as a part of something larger in space and time by using the MOVEMENT lemma. Use of words and phrases in this area of mobilization communication bolstered the importance of collective action and tied those actions to historical exemplars that had succeeded in changing social policies and norms. Second, participants engaged in an area of mobilization communication associated with *taking collective action*. In constituting this communicative process, participants drew on three semantic fields: *traditional protest actions*, *camping actions*, and *petitioning government*. Participants drew on the semantic field of *traditional protest action* repertoires

like “protests,” “marches,” or “rallies,” and engaged in common forms associated with *petitioning governments* like gathering “signatures” for “petitions” or attending “public hearings.” But homeless organizers also deployed a style of collective action specific to homelessness, engaging the semantic field of *camping actions* through the use of “tent cities” or overnight “campouts.” Each semantic field of collective action engaged a different set of participants and signaled a different set of associations, often differing based on the issue area the action took place in (see chapter one for a discussion of collective action repertoires). Third, participants engaged in a series of semantic fields that constituted an area of communication processes called *community organizing*. These included the semantic fields of *participation*, *allies*, *donations*, and *friendship*. These semantic fields functioned to create a set of participants through their identification as “friends” and “allies,” and engaged them in collective action through their solicitation to “come down,” “show up,” or “contact us.”

The production of mobilization communication always exists in the context of issue areas, structuring the ways that different objects and actions are connected through language. These three areas of mobilization communication processes (*institutionalizing the movement*, *taking collective action*, and *community organizing*) are general enough to be of use in other movement contexts, although the semantic fields that populate them would likely change somewhat from those presented here. Similarly, each of the three issue campaigns of importance to the local Seattle homeless movement between 2007 and 2009 engaged a different set of words and phrases in each of the semantic fields presented here. By measuring the collocation of those words, phrases, rules, and lemmas that populated each semantic field, we can see how each issue area varied in terms of its reliance on a relatively

small number of meanings for tying the range of discourses present in the corpus together. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 list three network level metrics that indicate the level of narrative cohesion in each issue area. We can see that, similar to what I found in my analysis of *materiality* discourses, the Proposed Jail was the most centralized issue area, relying on a relatively few number of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas for tying the range of meanings involved in the production of a homeless movement together. In contrast, the level of density was highest for the Sweeps issue area, meaning that there were a greater number of ties between a greater number of nodes in the semantic network, effectively distributing responsibility for network cohesion (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.6. Measures of narrative centralization in the three issue areas.

Metric	Jail	Nickelsville	Sweeps
Normalized Betweenness	7.07	6.61	3.48
Normalized Degree	0.52	0.41	0.30
Density	0.33	0.39	0.48
N	81	87	89

Table 4.7. Normalized variance of measures for narrative centralization in the three issue areas (1 = mean for all three issue areas). Edge = collocation between words, phrases, rules, and lemmas > 1 in a window of 6:6.

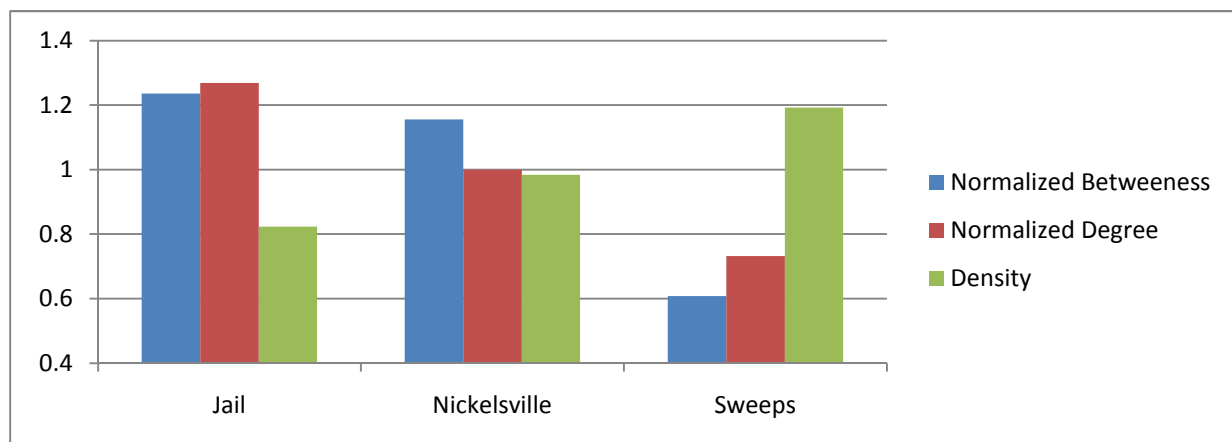


Table 4.8. Distribution of normalized betweenness scores for each issue area. Edge = collocation of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas > 1 in a window of 6:6.

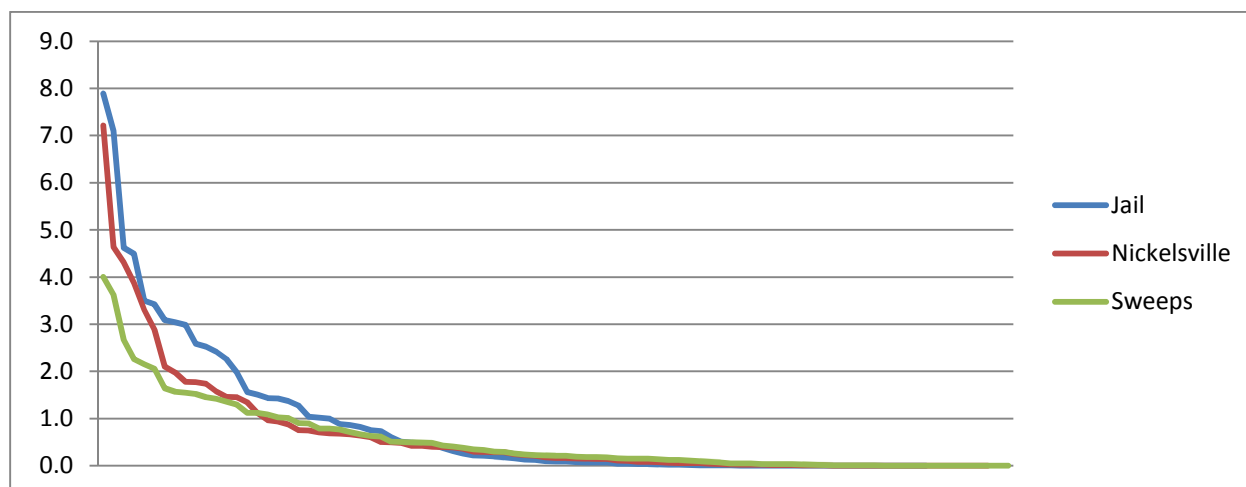


Table 4.9. Top ten semantic fields for each issue area based on normalized betweenness scores. Edge = collocation of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas > 1 in a window of 6:6.

Jail	nBetweenness	Nickelsville	nBetweenness	Sweeps	nBetweenness
MEETING	7.9	TENT*	7.2	CAMP	4.0
FORUM	7.1	DONATIONS	4.6	MEETING	3.6
CAMP	4.6	MEETING	4.3	DONATIONS	2.7
CAMPAIGN*	4.5	TENT CITIES	3.9	CAMPOUT	2.3
ORGANIZE	3.5	CAMP	3.3	TENT*	2.1
COALITION*	3.4	PROTEST*	2.9	ORGANIZE	2.1
PETITION	3.1	FAITH	2.1	FORUM	1.6
DONATIONS	3.0	SPEND THE NIGHT	2.0	COALITION*	1.6
TENT*	3.0	@VOLUNTEER	1.8	PROTEST*	1.5
EVENT	2.6	ORGANIZE	1.8	CAMPAIGN*	1.5

When we look at the groups of words, phrases, and rules (*italics*) and lemmas (SMALL CAPS) that bore the majority of the burden of tying each area of meaning together, we can also see that, while they share several areas, each issue area had a different set of words and phrases at the center of their semantic network (see Table 4.9). MEETINGS were more important in the Proposed Jail issue area than in the other two issues (although they still relied on the MEETING lemma), signaling the importance of public MEETINGS like the series of FORUMS that the city held, as well as those MEETINGS signaled by organizers as they

encouraged people to join the CAMPAIGN or COALITION, and VOLUNTEER to gather signatures for the I-100 *petition*. The Nickelsville issue area, on the other hand, relied most heavily on talk about TENTS, *tent cities*, and CAMPS, and VOLUNTEERS or *faith*-based groups to bring *donations* or *spend the night* in PROTEST. The Sweeps issue area relied most heavily on talk about the clearing of homeless CAMPS, calls for people to attend MEETINGS to ORGANIZE a COALITION and CAMPAIGN to oppose the Sweeps, *donate* TENTS, and come to *campout* PROTESTS.

However, the measurement of network metrics obscures lexical frequencies in each issue area. To complement semantic network analysis, we can look at frequency counts of the words, phrases, rules, and lemmas of importance to *participant mobilization* around homelessness in these three issue campaigns (see Appendix C for frequency counts). Norm comparisons across issue areas can point to areas of meaning that occurred more frequently in one issue area than another (see Table 4.10). In doing this, I have measured occurrence in those texts that only mention one of the three issue areas, thus particularizing the relationship between a single set of issue specialization texts (see chapter three) and a set of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas. This kind of analysis gets at the differentiation that each issue brings to activities related to *participant mobilization*. Figure 4.2 shows a graphical representation of these relationships of frequency using MDS scaling. We can see that the emphasis that the semantic network analysis surfaced above was reinforced by the norm file comparisons in many cases. Texts specializing in the Proposed Jail were more likely to talk about MEETINGS, FORUMS, and *petition* related activities, while they were less likely to talk about CAMPS or ORGANIZING (both areas of meaning that showed up as having high betweenness scores in the semantic network analysis). Texts specializing in the Nickelsville

Table 4.10. Words, phrases, rules, and lemmas that were more and less likely to occur in issue specialist texts with  $p < .05$ .

	Jail	Nickelsville	Sweep
Positive Z score with $p < .05$	MEETING FORUM PETITION CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE STREET_TEAM	FAITH CAMPS MOVE TENT CITIES FRIENDS HOST PALLETS VIGIL SELF-MANAGED DONATE	CAMPOUT PROTEST ADVOCACY COALITION
Negative Z score with $p < .05$	TAKEACTION RALLY MOVEMENT DEMONSTRATION ORGANIZE HOST ADVOCACY CAMPOUT FAITH MOVE DONATE PROTEST FRIENDS TENT-CITIES CAMPS	COALITION EVENT MOVEMENT PROTEST CAMPOUT CAMPAIGN FORUM PETITION MEETING	HOST PALLETS CAMPS FAITH MEETING MOVE FORUM TENT CITIES

issue area also preferenced a different set of semantic fields and lemmas, largely focused around *self-managed* CAMPS or *tent cities* and efforts to involve *friends* and those in the *faith* community to *donate* items, *host* the camp, or help with *moves* (only a few of which showed up with high betweenness scores above: CAMPS, *tent cities*, and *donations*). Finally, texts specializing in the Sweeps issue area were more likely to make mentions of overnight *campouts*, or PROTESTS in COALITION with others (all areas that had high betweenness scores in the semantic network analysis above). In what follows, I outline each area of participant

mobilization communication and specify the ways that they were deployed in language in the context of the three issue areas.

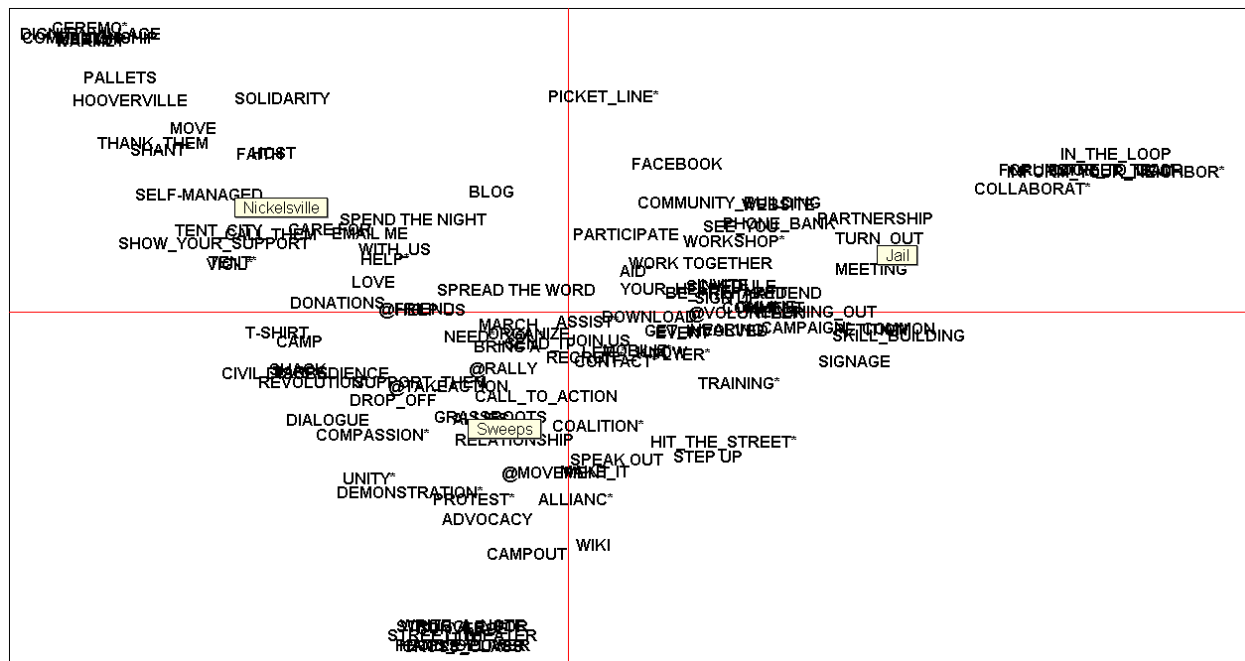


Figure 4.2. MDS scaling of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas in relations to texts specializing in the three issue sectors.

### **Institutionalizing the movement.**

"In the absence of proper shelter, it is the basic right of any living being to construct a temporary one." - posted at Nickelsville

This isn't just a demonstration.

This is something new.

This is a Movement. (RCOP Blog, 9/27/2008, CTA812)

Social movements do not emerge out of nowhere: they have to be called into being through language by naming a situation a MOVEMENT, or a group of people a COALITION, an ALLIANCE, or CAMPAIGN. In the local Seattle homeless movement, people called for a “broad movement for economic justice,” made connections with the “prison industrial complex movement,” with the “movement to oppose the jail,” reflected on “mass movements of people,” and envisioned “a unified movement across class, race, and gender to oppose local and national priorities that undermine the common good.”

The identification of a MOVEMENT of some kind, while not terribly prevalent, was most frequently present in texts mentioning multiple issues (i.e., issue brokerage texts, with  $p < .005$  in a norm file comparison). Tim Harris, the executive director of RCEP, was particularly prominent in his use of the MOVEMENT lemma, often using it as a way to legitimate the activities of participants and of RCEP in particular. “Our work on the homeless sweeps and the new jail is building a movement for social justice that can draw a new map for the future” (Real Change News, 11/19/2008, CTA670). In fundraising appeals that he wrote in *Real Change News*, Harris connected “building a movement” with RCEP and the need for funds to allow that to happen. “We are building a movement for justice across class and issue. We are building power. We are taking strong action. We need your help” (Real Change News, 6/11/2008, CTA587). He repeated fundraising appeals in his blog, saying that “...Real Change is out to raise the dough it takes to build a movement, so, give us some. Please” (Apesma’s Lament, 10/29/2008, CTA115). These naming acts called attention to the power and potential of social change activities, encouraging participation and action by readers.

The elevation of collective action to MOVEMENT status also allowed people to see their actions as akin to historical examples of social change that were often venerated in American culture.

Over the past century, we have seen movements for economic justice win gains for both the poor and the broad middle class. None of this came easily. The labor movement and the civil rights movement paid for their gains in blood. Progress was made against poverty over the ’60s and ’70s when the demand was forcefully made. Without protest politics, there are no real gains. (Real Change News, 12/10/2008, CTA682).

The historical presentation of the current campaigns in the context of other examples of well known social change efforts made people’s actions somehow more important, and their



success entirely possible, even if “None of this came easily” or participants “paid for their gains in blood.”

The identification of a MOVEMENT often accompanied explicit calls for people to take action. One email called for participation in “a planning meeting” that was described as “a time for leaders from the service providers, advocacy groups, and neighborhood organizations opposed to or concerned by a new jail to come together and strategize.” Danina Garcia, one of the organizers at RCEP ended her description of the meeting by pleading, “Please come” and “invite anyone you think should be there...Let's keep this movement growing!” (RCOP email, 11/3/2008, CTA336).

The deployment of the CAMPAIGN lemma, however, was the most prominent movement related label, and was most prevalent in the Proposed Jail issue area ( $p < .005$ ). The terms served to name particular efforts, such as the “Initiative 100 campaign against a new municipal jail” (Seattle Times Blog, 4/14/2009, CTA1304), “Anti-Jail Campaign” (RCOP email, 10/7/2008, CTA320), “No New Jail campaign” (Real Change News, 9/24/2008, CTA632), “campaign against the two potential city jail sites in southeast West Seattle” (West Seattle Blog, 7/20/2008, CTA1513), or “The Sweeps Campaign...a campaign to oppose and reverse the city’s zero-tolerance policy of public camping” (Apesma’s Lament, 12/30/2008, CTA126). Notably, *Nickelsville* was not described as a CAMPAIGN in the ways that the Sweeps and the Proposed Jail projects were (- z score with  $p < .000$ ), and was instead labeled a *tent city* (see section on the semantic field of *camping actions*). Smaller efforts were also framed as CAMPAIGNS, like a “public awareness campaign around Stop the Sweeps,” or a proposed “Campaign around shelter awareness” (RCOP email, 2/23/2009, CTA424), and the particular type of activity that a campaign involved would sometimes

function as a modifier for the label, as in “initiative campaign,” “signature gathering campaign,” or “Email campaign.”

Sometimes formal advocacy organizations labeled themselves as CAMPAIGNS, COALITIONS, or ALLIANCES, signaling a type of activity associated with broad participation and targeted action. These included the “Backbone Campaign,” “Washington Public Campaigns,” “Lutheran Alliance to Create Housing,” “King County Alliance for Human Services,” “Low Income Housing Alliance,” “University District Service Providers Alliance,” “Sound Alliance,” “U District Ecumenical Campus Coalition,” “Seattle Human Services Coalition,” “Seattle Displacement Coalition,” “Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites,” “Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition,” “Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition Neighborhood,” “Transforming Justice Coalition,” “Outdoor Meals Coalition,” “National Low Income Housing Coalition,” and the “National Coalition for the Homeless.” Business groups also borrowed this language, with groups like the “Seattle Business Coalition.” Roughly half of the instances of the ALLIANCE and COALITION lemmas were capitalized, indicating the prevalence of their use as both nouns and proper nouns.

COALITIONS were seen as a desirable organizing strategy, and aside from its use as a proper noun (the majority of which account for the high frequency in the Sweeps issue area), the COALITION lemma was used in naming things like the “No New Jail coalition meeting” in ways that signaled a particular quality. The importance of COALITIONS as organizing strategies were noted in meeting minutes by making statements about the importance of forming “a business coalition in the surrounding area [near the Proposed Jail site]” (RCOP wiki, 11/14/2008, CTA459). Affirmations of people’s accomplishments in organizing talked about how “We are organizing a broad-based and powerful coalition to take action on this

issue [Proposed Jail]” (Real Change News, 12/31/2008, CTA688). Meeting notes talked about “Coalition building potential” and asked “is this an issue that lends itself to strategic alliances with other organizations?” (Real Change wiki, 6/25/2008, CTA454).

But CAMPAIGNS were not a category exclusively associated with activists and advocates, as was the case with “a campaign by the city of Seattle to shut it [Nickelsville] down” (*The Stranger Blog*, 10/31/2008, CTA1166), and claims that “the mayor’s office has coordinated a campaign of harassment and intimidation against homeless campers” (Real Change News, 3/5/2008, CTA549). The city’s “campaign of “proactive” sweeps to remove homeless people and their belongings from underpasses and greenbelts” (Real Change News, 1/16/2008, CTA534) and their anti-panhandling ““Have a Heart” campaign to discourage direct giving” (Real Change News, 9/5/2007, CTA507) were cited as problems rather than solutions. Finally, people running for official office also engaged in CAMPAIGNS, as was the case for Dow Constantine’s “campaign for King County Executive” (White Center Now, 2/16/2009, CTA1420) or State Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson’s “re-election campaign” (White Center Now, 8/12/2008, CTA1353).

The MOVEMENT, CAMPAIGN, COALITION, and ALLIANCE lemmas were used to *institutionalize the movement* and produce claims to power, as attributes of collectivities of people, and as labels for projects and organizations. However, their use was not nearly as prevalent as types of collective action, something that was widely reported in mainstream media coverage of the three issue campaigns.

### **Taking collective action.**

Political actions are often the most visible aspects of a social movement. Many of the semantic fields associated with *taking political action* in the local homeless movement in Seattle were borrowed from other areas of protest activity, and the words people used to

communicate about these actions drew on existing linguistic repertoires. First, participants produced language associated with the semantic field of *traditional protest actions*, writing about PROTESTS, *marches*, DEMONSTRATIONS, and RALLIES; “street theater” and VIGILS; “direct action(s)” and “civil disobedience.” Second, participants produced their activities as associated with the semantic field of *petitioning government*, writing about *lobbying*, PETITIONS, and *hearings*; or about MEETINGS and “phone tree(s).” But homeless organizers also engaged an entirely different set of tactical devices focused on taking direct action in the creation of urban camps that could provide for emergency survival needs. Participants produced their activities as associated with the semantic field of *camping actions* by talking about overnight *campouts*, and about homeless CAMPS, TENTS, SHACKS, HUTS, and SHANTIES. These action forms were organized, reported on, and evaluated in emails, websites, and online documents.

The importance of each word, phrase, rule, and lemma was, in part, a matter of positionality within the broader semantic field of *taking political action*. The words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with *taking political action* could be understood as aligning with three emic sub groups: those associated with *traditional protest actions*, *petitioning government*, and *camping actions*. A faction analysis on a collocational network with a normalized Jaccard’s coefficient score  $> .037$  (minimum for no isolates) confirmed these distinctions and highlighted a fourth cluster of terms that acted as brokers between the other three. What this analysis surfaced was a network that contained four subgroups (see Figure 4.3 below). The first sub group on the far left (blue) is concerned with gathering signatures for Initiative 100 to get it on the ballot. We might call this the *petitioning government* repertoire field. The second area on the bottom right (grey) is concerned with taking direct

action and marching in order to lobby the city. We might call this the *traditional protest action* repertoire field. The third area of meaning on the upper right (black) is concerned with camping as a form of protest and vigil, as well as the physical manifestation of that action: camps, tents, shanties, shacks. We might call this the *camping action* repertoire field. The fourth – and most central – cluster of meaning is in the center of the graph (red) and functions to tie the other three clusters of meaning together through hearings, petitions, rallies, demonstrations, campouts, and campsites. The central role that this area of meaning occupies in the semantic network of political actions suggests that these words, phrases, rules, and lemmas function as a group of meta-signifiers – or *repertoire brokers* – rather than a group of specialist terms (as the other three groups do). These terms were collocated in the texts in ways that tied each area of action together semantically, creating a semantic structure underlying the linguistic production of actions related to homeless organizing in Seattle.

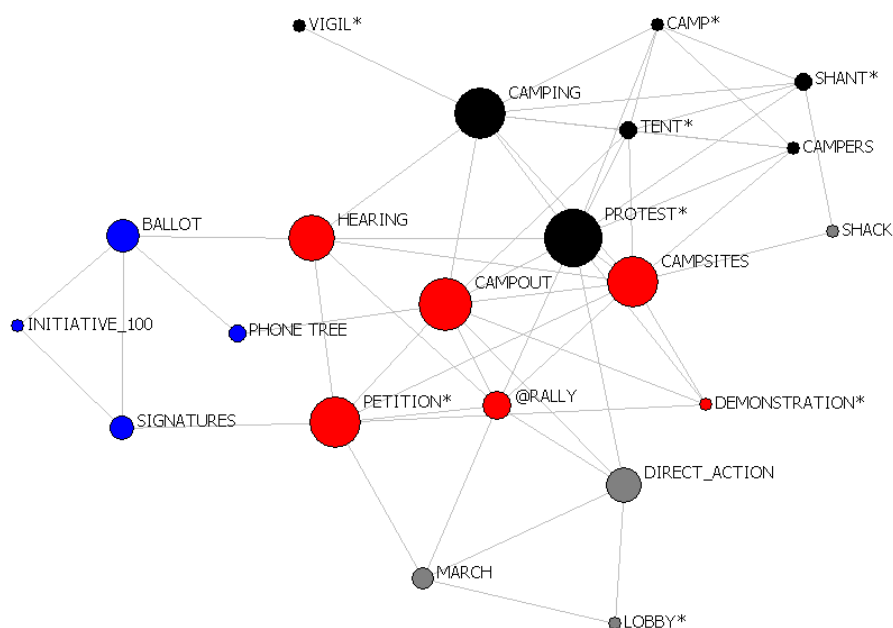


Figure 4.3. Collocational network of semantic prosody between words, phrases, rules, and lemmas within the communication process of *taking collective action*. Minimum for no isolates at Jaccards > .037. Semantic fields with occurrence under 5 and Meeting\* removed. Color = 4 factions. Size = betweenness.

In this section, I describe the ways that three action repertoire discourses were used in the context of political mobilization activities and journalistic accounts of homeless actions. In doing this, I draw on the faction analysis of the *taking collective action* semantic network as described above as confirmation that the emic categories described here have etic properties in the corpus. These three action repertoire semantic fields are also of interest because they may be readily portable to other movement contexts, and consist of *traditional protest actions*, *camping actions*, and *petitioning actions*. As we will see, the three issue campaigns aligned closely with these three distinct approaches to taking collective action, with texts about the Proposed Jail issue area making use of *petitioning actions*, those about the Sweeps issue area making use of *traditional protest actions*, and texts about the Nickelsville issue area deploying the most significant constellation of *camping actions* (with the exception of “campouts” – an area most closely aligned with the Sweeps).

***Traditional protest actions.***

*Traditional protest action* labels were an important part of how the local Seattle homeless movement was described, and they were most closely associated with the Sweeps issue area. PROTESTS, *marches*, RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS, VIGILS, and other forms of “civil disobedience” all figured prominently as descriptors of the actions that people took, and the PROTEST lemma was the most common of the traditional social movement action labels, accounting for over half the occurrence of traditional protest words, phrases, rules, or lemmas in the corpus. The *Stop the Sweeps* campaign and the “Camp4Unity protest[s]” were described by participants in ways that attached positive value to the term, and the PROTEST lemma was more likely to occur in the Sweeps issue area than in other issue areas (p. < .000). Organizers envisioned “Continuous marching around city hall” (RCOP wiki, 3/25/2008,

CTA442), local blogs warned that “We allow this mayor and his police to act without protest at our own peril” (Bloggng Georgetown, 9/25/2008, CTA1308), and Tim Harris claimed that “Without protest politics, there are no real gains” (Apesma’s Lament, 12/9/2008, CTA120).

Over the past year, Real Change has focused on mobilizing our base, growing a range of traditional and nontraditional allies, and building a spirited protest politics around issues of housing affordability, growing inequality, and civil rights.

Protest politics broadens the space for political action, makes issues visible, and changes the lens through which they are understood. (Real Change News, 11/19/2008, CTA670)

Emails about the Sweeps campouts talked about “a full day of demonstrations around downtown to turn up the heat on this issue” (Real Change organizer email, 3/14/2008, CTA745), and called on people to “Join the Real Change Organizing Project next Wednesday, December 19th for a rally and overnight tent city at City Hall” (Real Change organizer email, 12/10/2007, CTA733). Reflections on the events described how “The act of civil disobedience is street theater” (WashBlog, 6/5/2008, CTA1343).

The practice of holding VIGILS for those who had died “outside or through violence” was an important part of the action repertoire in the local Seattle homeless movement. Community blogs were among those resources mobilized for announcing VIGILS held by “Women in Black.”

Women in Black is standing Vigil Wednesday October 1st at 12 PM in front of the Seattle Justice Center across from City Hall...for the 7 most recently discovered deaths of homeless people- outside or by violence - this year in King County. After the Vigil Nickelodeons, Women in Black and others will go up to the Mayors Office to schedule a meeting with the Mayor” (Bloggng Georgetown, 10/1/2008, CTA1313).

Anitra Freeman, a homeless activist, was interviewed on *Democracy Now!* and noted that “We started in 2000, and we’ve stood vigil for 330 people since then” (Democracy Now!, 3/30/2009, CTA1668) (see section in the semantic fields of *death* and *human rights*).

Mainstream media coverage of the *Nickelsville* actions also drew on the PROTEST lemma, writing about “a protest against the city's sweeps of homeless encampments” (Seattle Times, 6/29/2008, CTA1262). National coverage also talked of homeless organizing as PROTEST. Amy Goodman said that “The encampment is made up of over 100 fuchsia tents and is named to protest Mayor Greg Nickels’s policies toward the homeless” (Democracy Now!, 3/30/2009, CTA1668), and the *High Country News* talked about how Seattle was a place where “tent cities have galvanized a social protest movement calling for more affordable housing and better services for the homeless” (High Country News, 3/16/2009, CTA1662; reposted on New American Media, 3/29/2009, CTA1667).

The use of the PROTEST lemma, however, carried baggage about the role that PROTEST plays in our culture, moving its use more into the area of meanings contestation. Local television news reported that “The camp has become a moving protest and a moving target” (King 5, 10/31/2008, CTA1553, 11/11/2008, CTA1554; NWCN, 10/10/2008, CTA1620, 10/31/2008, CTA1621), emphasizing the confrontational intention that protest was seen as involving.

These homeless men and women may not have envisioned Nickelsville being built from hot-pink tents but it seemed to suit them just fine— and it fell in line with what has become more about the protest than the practical. “They want us to hide behind the shrubs, but we’re not going to,” Leo Rhodes, a resident of Tent City 4, said as the tents were unloaded. (Seattle Weekly Blog, 8/22/2008, CTA1096)

Here, the journalists juxtaposed “protest” with “practical,” suggesting that the two are mutually exclusive, and that *Nickelsville* was more interested in the former than the latter.

Mayor Greg Nickels was among those deploying the PROTEST lemma as de-legitimation.

Nickels responded to the naming of the project “Nickelsville” by calling it a

“protest/demonstration,” re-affirming “protesters” right to “protest,” but calling on them to stop “protesting.” In an interview on local NPR affiliate *KUOW*, Nickels said that “the



protests here are about what we have done in terms of the illegal encampments in greenbelts and in parks that we have been cleaning up...and I just don't think that it is humane to allow people camping out, ah, in that fashion” (Greg Nickels, quoted in Apesma’s Lament, 10/13/2008, CTA108). Mainstream media echoed this characterization, calling it “a precision protest by homeless advocates” (King 5, 9/29/2008, CTA1549).

The city realizes it is a political demonstration, Black said, but the city hopes protestors will make their public statement and then will leave the property. (KIRO, 9/25/2008, CTA1560)

A city representative said earlier Thursday that she is aware that the camp is a political protest. But if the homeless don't leave and carry out an act of civil disobedience, they will be arrested, she said. (KOMO, 9/25/2008, CTA1580)

A *Seattle PI* editorial commented on *Nickelsville* saying that “the protesters’ posturing also threatens to distract from the larger issues about the homeless, housing strains and pro-wealthy economic policies” (Seattle PI, 10/5/2008, CTA1216). Many discussion boards adopted this interpretation as well. “As far as I'm concerned, this is a poor excuse for a protest and the ones that are being hurt most are the homeless that were moved out of current tent cities to a location that the organizers KNEW would be shut down. Shame on them.” Others complained that “If this is a political protest aimed at the mayor, why are they camped outside my house instead of his?” (Yelp Nickelsville, 9/23/2008, CTA1315).

Activists reacted to Nickels’ claim of *Nickelsville* as a “protest” by clearly contradicting it. “A person who is living in Nickelsville had this to say, “Please understand that this isn't a "protest." It's a survival strategy for the hundreds of homeless people who have nowhere else to go. This year's one night homeless count found 2,631 homeless people surviving outside after the shelters were full...”” (Bloggins Georgetown, 9/22/2008, CTA1307; Emmafurbird, 1/12/2009, CTA1604). The distinction between *Nickelsville* and PROTEST is presented as a difference in choice: protesting is inferred to involve choice (you

could just go home), yet Nickelodeons describe themselves as not having the luxury of choice (their actions are a “survival strategy”).

The contest over the labeling of *Nickelsville* using the PROTEST, DEMONSTRATION, or SURVIVAL lemmas highlights the importance of labeling practices in the production of action repertoires. The use of traditional protest tactics draws on long-held traditions in the United States, attaching an action to a tradition of political protest and demonstration that has a certain level of credibility in examples from the past: the civil rights movement, for instance. But the purpose of such actions are also heavily prescribed, and naming strategies can be used by political leaders and journalists alike to signal the appropriateness of an action or the appropriateness of police response. In the case of homeless activists, the deployment of a different set of naming strategies more directly attached to the SURVIVAL lemma offered less baggage in relation to traditional protest politics, but brought another set of affordances that tied collective action to normalized and regulated activity: namely, the use of *camping actions* that were firmly in the area of “homeless camps” and “tent cities.”

### ***Camping actions.***

The most common words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with the *taking political action* communication process were those related to the semantic field of *camping actions*, accounting for seven out of the top eight as ranked by lexical frequency, and over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total *taking political action* lexical occurrences. Camping was the primary means of action in the local Seattle homeless movement. The lack of adequate shelter and the diversion of funds from emergency shelter to low-income housing as part of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness meant that the primary focus for homeless organizers was the provision of safe emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness. Forms of the CAMP lemma

(“camp[s],” “camper[s],” “camping,” “camped,” and “campsite[s]”) were all used in discussions about the Sweeps issue area, *Nickelsville*, and other tent cities. Since the focus of the city’s Sweeps policies was also the object of action (camping in protest of the sweeping of camps), journalists, activists, and government authors all focused a great deal of attention on this semantic field.

References to “homeless camp(s),” “tent camp(s),” “car camp(s),” “vehicle camp(s),” “outdoor camp(s),” “transient camp(s),” “illegal camp(s),” or “camp site(s),” were deployed alongside descriptions of people “setting up camp,” “camp evictions,” “camp clean out/up,” “camp clearances,” “camp move(s),” “camps that spring up,” “camp emerges,” as well as identity labels like “camp resident(s),” “camp organizer(s),” “camp leader(s),” or “camp occupants” and functioned as signifiers for spaces, actions, and people related to the concept of CAMPS. While advocates and alternative media outlets did talk about CAMPS as political actions and survival strategies (*Real Change News* published 20.6% of the occurrences of the CAMP lemma), CAMPS became a major focus in mainstream media coverage of homelessness, accounting for .416% of all words published by mainstream media outlets and appearing in 55% of all mainstream media texts. This was likely due to the attention to the physical environment that journalists paid in the tactical emphasis of their reporting, both in describing camps that were swept by parks employees, and in portraying *Nickelsville* as a news item given the illegality of their camping within city limits.

In addition to talk about CAMPS, people writing about the Nickelsville issue area also talked about TENTS, SHANTIES, SHACKS, and HUTS. These descriptors focused on the material construction of camps, and signaled examples of such camps in other parts of the world or in other periods of time. Homeless organizers made parallels to the Hoovervilles that were

common in urban areas during the Great Depression in the naming of “Nickelsville,” and this was a theme that was occasionally picked up by mainstream media journalists, as one report from *CNN* illustrates:

Residents call it Nickelsville. The name takes a page from the infamous “Hooverville” shantytowns of the Great Depression that were named for a president many thought did not care about their economic hardships. (CNN, 3/19/2009, CTA1663)

These references to “Hooverville” made strong signals to larger economic discourses that were more likely to look at structural factors over individual attributions (see the section on the *economic* semantic field).

Part of the hook for structural coverage was the national rise in attention to *tent cities*, with media reports citing how “tent cities are increasingly showing up across the country due to the foreclosure and economic crisis” (Democracy Now!, 9/29/2008, CTA1659) in “California...Oregon...Washington...Tenn., San Diego, and Columbus, Ohio” (Apesma’s Lament, 9/18/2008, CTA86). *Nickelsville* was routinely described as a *tent city* with phrases like “The pink tent city known as “Nickelsville”” (KOMO, 10/10/2008, CTA1589), “Seattle’s newest tent city, Nickelsville” (Democracy Now!, 9/29/2008, CTA1659), or “a tent city called “Nickelsville”” (Real Change News, 12/23/2008, CTA687). The familiarity of *tent cities* as an action form was used as a way to vision new actions and as ways to understand what they meant. Seattle already hosted two “tent cities” – Tent City 3 (within the Seattle city limits) and Tent City 4 (outside the city limits but within the broader Seattle metro area). A guest column in the *Seattle PI* claimed that “Self-governing tent cities are fiscally the least expensive way to temporarily bridge the growing gap between those living on the streets and indoor agency-sponsored overnight shelters” (Guest column by David

McCracken in the Seattle PI, 3/15/2009, CTA1241; reposted in This Way Up Seattle Washington, 3/16/2009, CTA1429).

But the correlations to *tent cities* were also questioned as a means of distinguishing how *Nickelsville* was different. “Unlike Seattle area Tent Cities, Nickelsville would be made of permanent structures to house up to 1000 people people [sic] who wouldn’t be asking permission to be there” (Seattle IMC, 6/28/2008, CTA830). Once *Nickelsville* moved to church land, mainstream media coverage focused on how *Nickelsville* was able to fit the mold of *tent cities* in the city, noting that “It’s unclear how city officials will react. Other churches that host tent cities are required to get special permits” (King 5, 10/31/2008, CTA1553; NWCN, 10/10/2008, CTA1620). The likeness of *Nickelsville* to other *tent cities* in public discourse became an argumentation point for the city. One local blog reported that, “The city has issued an ultimatum to the organizers of the homeless encampment known as “Nickelsville”: consolidate it with another tent city in Seattle or face legal consequences” (This Way Up, Seattle, Washington, 10/18/2008, CTA1387).

Dignity Village, a permanent encampment in Portland Oregon, inspired many in Seattle to replicate the model. A local blog drew connections for readers at the end of an article about *Nickelsville*, writing that “Portland has built a Dignity Village for their homeless. Short of providing actual housing, why not have one in Seattle?” (Java Colleen’s Jitters, 10/11/2008, CTA1385). The connections between *Nickelsville* and other existing projects was made explicit in the following post on a Yelp.com discussion board.

Encampments like Tent City and Dignity Village prove to work because they provide dignity; they’re self-governed; they provide a permanent place for belongings and a home that works with work schedules and necessities like appointments with social workers (Yelp Nickelsville, 9/23/2008, CTA1315).

Participants in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign decided early on that an action that brought the act of camping onto the steps of city hall would serve as a visual signal for media coverage that the Sweeps needed to stop: what they called a *campout*. Organizers called it a “Camp Out Civil Disobedience to Stop the Sweeps” (Jobs With Justice, 3/1/2008, CTA147), “Camp out for change” (Jobs With Justice, 1/21/2010, CTA146), a “Camp out For Survival” (Real Change organizer email, 12/8/2008, CTA787), a “Camp Out Event” (RCOP wiki, 2/26/2008, CTA439) and a “Camp4Unity” (WRAP, 5/27/2008, CTA853). Media coverage of the “campout at City Hall” (The Stranger Blog, 2/22/2008, CTA1153) categorized the action as a type of tent city and tied it to the *traditional protest action* repertoire, saying that “Homeless people and their advocates have organized three tent cities at City Hall in recent months to call attention to the homeless and protest the sweeps” (Un-named national media source, quoted on RCOP blog, 9/20/2008, CTA806).

The use of camping action repertoires drew on existing action strategies that had proven effective in providing immediate shelter for people experiencing homelessness, and in which homeless participants were already skilled and knowledgeable. The semantic field of *camping actions* also provided a close semantic connection to homelessness, something that the semantic field of *traditional protest action* was not as readily able to do. This was visible in hybrid forms like the overnight “campouts” at city hall, where the balance was more on the side of protest than on survival camping. But even within the semantic field of *camping actions* the city was able to place longer term actions like *Nickelsville* first within the encampment clearance protocols that forbade camping within the city, and then within existing legal frameworks that the city used to regulate tent cities. This pushed the more radical intentions of Nickelodeons (permanent location, not on church property, with semi-

permanent structures for up to 1,000 people) into the regulatory framework of Tent City 3 and 4 that mandated a maximum 3 month stay for up to 100 people, allowed only on church property.

***Petitioning government.***

As is often the case with social movements, the local Seattle homeless movement also engaged in conventional tactics involving institutionalized channels to change existing policies. This area of action was linguistically produced through the deployment of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with the semantic field of *petitioning government*. Organizers in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign called on people to “Join me in signing a petition telling the Mayor to help, not harass, homeless people” (WRAP, 2/29/2008, CTA852), and wrote to potential participants, asking them to “Please add your name to the petition calling for an immediate cease of campsite clearances. Take action now” (Real Change organizer email, 11/15/2007, CTA729). These efforts even made it into meeting minutes for the CAC.

A representative of SHARE called for a halt to the destruction of encampments. There is a petition to the City of Seattle to halt the encampment cleanings, and he urged people to sign it. (CAC, 11/14/2007, CTA1056)

The petition was eventually delivered to Mayor Nickels office as part of a rally at City Hall, and the following weekly *Real Change News* email digest alerted people so that they might be able to attend.

Thursday, campers will be at the City Hall Plaza, at 4th and Cherry, until noon, when they'll deliver approximately 1,500 petition signatures to Mayor Nickels, calling for an immediate cease to the sweeps of homeless people camping outside. Stop by to say hi or join us at 11:45 to help deliver the petitions. (Real Change News, 12/20/2007, CTA525)

Again, the petition was mentioned in CEH documents, with one set of minutes noting that “Bill Kirlin-Hackett reported that on December 19th, advocates submitted more than 1,500

signatures to officials within the City of Seattle to protest the recent encampment clearings, and more than 40 people slept out overnight at Seattle City Hall” (IC, 1/7/2008, CTA1027).

But emails after the submission of the signatures criticized the Mayor, saying that “Even with 2,000 + petition signatures...the Mayor still doesn't get that people in Seattle expect city government to respect the rights of homeless people and want the city to provide help, not harassment” (Real Change organizer email, 4/25/2008, CTA748).

The *No New Jail* campaign also made use of *petitions* as change tactics, and the Proposed Jail issue area hosted more frequent use of the semantic field of *petitioning government* than the other two issue areas (p. < .000). The HPAC started an online petition against the Proposed Jail early on, and meeting minutes celebrated its success, saying that “We've collected about 1800 signatures on the petition so far” (HPAC, 7/21/2008, CTA139), and urged people to “Learn more and sign the No Jail Petition on our website” (HPAC, 6/25/2008, CTA137). As the campaign became more broadly organized, participants started to shape the campaign around the *petition* form more formally. The Committee for Efficiency and Fairness in Public Safety (the coalition group that formed to oppose the Proposed Jail) filed “Initiative 100” with the city and started gathering signatures to get it on the ballot. Efforts by organizers at “jump starting the petition campaign with 90 signatures to stop the jail!” (RCOP email, 2/2/2009, CTA415) were celebrated in outreach emails, and as the campaign progressed, calls for participation became more urgent.

“With only 86 days to collect 23,000 signatures, it is time to hit the streets! The most important thing you can do to support I-100 is to work the crowds and gather signatures at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show this weekend.” (Real Change organizer email, 2/20/2009, CTA802)

Local coverage of the campaign noted that “Jail opponents may prevail even without signatures,” citing how “Behind the scenes” conflict between the city and county might “put



off or even scrap plans for a new jail without a citizen initiative” (Seattle Times Blog, 4/14/2009, CTA1304), and the local morning radio news program, Eat the Airwaves, urged listeners to vote “yes on Initiative 100” (Eat the Airwaves, 5/16/2009, CTA1672).

In addition to the formal use of words and phrases associated with the semantic field of *petitions*, formal opportunities to lobby the government in person via the semantic field of *hearings* were a big part of activities around homelessness. Organizers urged people to attend “the City's big Budget Hearing” with specifics about why they should oppose the Jail, where and when the hearing would be, and a rationale for why people should attend: “It's our last chance to give them the word that we don't want another new jail” (Real Change Organizing Project, 10/23/2008, CTA820). Reflections on actions around *hearings* celebrated their effectiveness, saying that “We dominated about 20 minutes of the Budget Hearing - our No New Jail campaign is officially under way - thank you to everyone who helped us make a strong first showing!” (RCOP email, 10/28/2008, CTA328).

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Participants engaged in the labeling of collective action using commonly understood resources. As I have shown, each of these labels brought particular advantages and disadvantages. The use of actions associated with the semantic field of *petitioning the government* were used most commonly in the *No New Jail* campaign, especially as the campaign became increasingly structured around the gathering of signatures in order to get the I-100 initiative on the ballot. While these tactics did not draw criticism from government or mainstream media journalists, they were also marginalized due to their non-contentious character. Mainstream media coverage of the *No New Jail* campaign was thin compared to the other two issues, and the majority of texts in the corpus about the Proposed Jail were

sponsored by advocacy, alternative media, or government sources. The deployment of words and phrases associated with the semantic field of *traditional protest actions* was most closely associated with the campaign to *Stop the Sweeps*, and helped participants to place their actions within the tradition of political protest in the United States. But it also opened the door for criticism of protest tactics that limited the kinds of activities participants could engage in and still fit within the sanctioned parameters of political “demonstration.” This finding acknowledges that the widespread use and legitimation of political protest has changed the parameters of sanctioned political action in a “protest society” (McCarthy & McPhail, 1998; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998), but indicates that this acceptance only serves to legitimate certain types of actions, leaving newer forms of collective action in a space of deviance. The semantic field of *camping actions* also walked the line of acceptable behavior. When used in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, the overnight campouts were described as more “protest” than “survival strategy.” But when *Nickelsville* set up a camp that did not go away the next day, government officials responded by dealing with the action first as if it were another camp to be “swept,” and second as akin to the other two tent-cities in the area. The failure of *Nickelsville* to fit the mould of either a “protest” or a “tent city” resulted in criticism by the city of Seattle that called on them to fit or face arrest/sweeping.

Each campaign made use of a slightly different configuration of semantic fields associated with *taking collective action*, and the ways that they were constructed as political projects varied in part due to those differences. But they also varied in terms of the ways that they engaged in processes of *community organizing*, to which I now turn.

### **Community organizing.**

Community organizing is at the heart of building social movements, and language is the primary mechanism through which organizing takes place. The *community organizing*

communication process was constituted in the local Seattle homeless movement by four major semantic fields: *participation*, *allies*, *donations*, and *friendship*. Each of these semantic fields illustrated the differences in affordances that each issue area contended with as they responded to constraints and created opportunities through their communicative behavior. But before exploring these differences, I will first outline the ways that the ORGANIZE lemma itself was dispersed across the three issue areas, and was used to signal particular approaches to social change, as well as a logistical challenge to overcome.

The Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP) made heavy use of the ORGANIZE lemma, especially in texts sponsored by the “Real Change Organizing Project” (RCOP). Notes from RCOP meetings illustrate how the space was used for facilitating ORGANIZING activities by talking through “areas to organize in,” or how to “organize with other groups in that area.” One RCOP meeting noted several possible organizing activities: “Anitra Freeman brought a message from her community asking us to organize around the need for more respite beds, perhaps in partnership with Harborview [a local hospital],” and one participant suggested that they could “organize a 1-day how-to conference to help churches navigate the logistics of setting up a shelter” (RCOP wiki, 6/30/2008, CTA456). Sometimes organizing referred more to a general approach to social change than to a particular event or activity: “Seattle’s Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness is failing, and the most desperate are under attack. Don’t believe the lies. Organize” (Real Change News, 7/23/2008, CTA606).

These uses of the ORGANIZE lemma served to signal an object of injustice and incite readers towards action by referencing general meanings associated with the word form. This was a task that was often done in the context of the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, and served to construct a historical narrative that presented RCEP as effective in their organizing activities,

while signaling the need for continued action. “While our organizing can probably be credited for slowing the pace of the Mayor’s sweeps of homeless encampments, they nonetheless continue” (Real Change News, 5/7/2008, CTA576). Tim Harris, the executive director of RCEP, was particularly prolific in his production of these kinds of texts, describing how “We are organizing a broad-based and powerful coalition” (Real Change News, 12/10/2008, CTA682), and “Organizing across class for economic justice” (Real Change News, 2/26/2008, CTA546). These discursive moments served to legitimize the organization by attaching the positive semantic value associated with organizing to the way they approached their work of “relentless organizing” “involving poor and homeless people” in the context of continued Sweeps.

Those who helped to organize *Nickelsville* talked about their inclusive approach to organizing by signaling the semantic field of *self-management* (see the section on the semantic field of *camping actions*). In an interview on the national news program *Democracy Now!*, one organizer described how “The tent cities and Nickelsville allow people to come together and support each other, and they’re much safer in a group, and they can organize more resources” (Democracy Now!, 3/30/2009, CTA1668; reposted on AlterNet, 4/1/2009, CTA1658). Housed allies wrote about how “SHARE shelters are organized and run by the homeless themselves” (Real Change News, 11/19/2008, CTA671) and noted that “They are taking the initiative to organize so they can provide for themselves a basic level of safety and sanitation when their government steadfastly refuses to do so for them” (Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2/21/2009, CTA201). *Self-managed* homeless camps were seen as a direct response to the perils of sleeping alone outside, and many recognized that “There is safety in numbers, there is power in being organized” (...other

than, 10/7/2008, CTA1383; Mustard Seed House, 10/1/2008, CTA1377). Yet, mainstream media coverage focused more on who had “helped organize the protest” (Seattle PI, 10/1/2008, CTA1211), who had “helped organize the relocation” (Seattle Times, 10/2/2008, CTA1283), or on fears around “how it's going to be organized before we decide if we're for or against them” (Dan Mullins, as quoted in King 5, 9/23/2008, CTA1545). This ORGANIZING activity was viewed as dangerous, and local blog coverage published an email from a lawyer for *Nickelsville* that cited an “offer” by the city’s lawyer that gave “the organizers until noon on Friday if they agree they will not organize or participate in any other unpermitted encampment in the City of Seattle” (KOMO, excerpted in the Magnolia Voice, 10/7/2008, CTA1329).

While the RCEP also participated in organizing against the Proposed Jail, this issue brought a slightly different set of actors into the ORGANIZING process. Neighborhood blogs talked about efforts by area residents like “Dan Mullins,” who was cited as “trying to organize more Duwamish-corridor business owners to get involved with opposition to the WS sites and said a meeting with at least two City Council members is planned later this fall” (West Seattle Blog, 9/22/2008, CTA1528). The city also was attached to ORGANIZING, but in their case actual activity was hired out to a private company: “City officials are anticipating strong community reaction and hired a public relations firm to gather comments and organize a series of forums” (Seattle PI, 5/7/2008, CTA1185).

But while the general use of the ORGANIZE lemma was fairly evenly distributed, there were significant differences in the particularities of how community organizing was carried out in the three issue campaigns. Each issue campaign varied in terms of the ways that they facilitated the use of semantic fields related to how people were called to *participate*, how

*allies* were identified and asked to *donate* material and social resources, and the use of the semantic field of *friendship* for building solidarity. By comparing norm files of those texts that only mentioned a single issue area (issue specialist texts) compared to the entire corpus we can see what words, phrases, rules, and lemmas were more prevalent in one issue area or another. Table 4.11 lists those words, phrases, rules, and lemmas that were more prevalent in each issue area with statistical significance of  $p. < .05$ . We can see that when it comes to the deployment of the semantic field of *allies*, for instance, Nickelsville is an issue area more likely to host the use of the SOLIDARITY lemma, signaling the orientation that *Nickelsville* had to housed participants acting in SOLIDARITY with Nickelodeons. Texts specializing in the Sweeps issue area, on the other hand, were more likely to host calls for *cross-class* unity in events like the overnight campouts where housed and unhoused people could come together to spend a night in front of city hall in a temporary tent city. Texts mentioning only the Proposed Jail, however, were more likely to host discussions that focused on PARTNERSHIP

Table 4.11. Distribution of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas within each semantic field associated with the *community organizing* communication process that occurred more frequently in issue specialist texts in each issue area with  $p. < .05$ .

	Jail	Nickelsville	Sweeps
Participate	ATTEND SEE YOU	SPEND THE NIGHT HELP US	SPEAK OUT CALL TO ACTION
Allies	PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATE	SOLIDARITY	CROSS CLASS
Donate		DONATIONS	
Friendship		CARE FOR LOVE @FRIEND COMPANIONSHIP	RELATIONSHIP COMPASSION*
Other	SCHEDULE	FAITH	

and COLLABORATION lemmas in describing the desired relationship between city and county governments vis-à-vis the Proposed Jail and possible alternatives to incarceration. In what follows, I outline each of these semantic fields, and specify the ways that their production varied between the three issue areas. As we will see, these differences both reflected the affordance of the issue areas in which each campaign existed, and produced affordances for the kinds of activity that people could reasonably engage in.

***Participation.***

Movements rely on the ability to reach out to potential participants and allies and to get them involved in a project or campaign: to “join us” in the struggle. This area of communicative action requires that participants make use of the semantic field of *participation*. This semantic field is focused on calls for people to take time out of their lives, to “sign on,” “volunteer,” “participate,” and “step up,” and to move people off of the computer screen by asking them to “come down,” “attend” events, and “brings friends” because we “need you.”

Organizers asked people to participate in the *No New Jail* campaign in a variety of ways, the most common of which were focused on requests for co-presence. Email was a common way for this to occur, and emails on the RCOP discussion list combined calls for communication with requests for co-presence: “please let me know if you would like to attend any of these important community meetings” (RCOP email, 2/2/2009, CTA415). As we saw above, meetings were an important part of the No New Jail repertoire (see section on the communication process of *taking collective action*), and neighborhood blogs were one of the spaces where people were notified about them, and where notes were distributed after they occurred.

...we received a copy of a bright yellow flyer neighbors are circulating, with text exhorting those concerned to “attend what may be the most important meeting for our revitalized neighborhood” ...There will be multiple opportunities for people to attend meetings and they’ll be held June/July. (West Seattle Blog, 5/17/2008, CTA1481)

Here, people talked about forms of communication offline where they got information that they brought online, calling on people to “attend meetings” away from their computer screens.

This pattern of calling on people to get out and be present in the movement continued as the campaign moved from a NIMBY response to the Proposed Jail to a coalition opposed to the building of any new jail facility, with messages saying that they “Hope to see you at the meeting!” (RCOP email, 10/13/2008, CTA322). The following email was characteristic of the kind of messages that proliferated during the petition drive that came to dominate the *No New Jail* campaign.

Dear Amoshaun,  
 A new jail and closed schools. Is this what we want our future to look like?  
 We have the opportunity to shape our future and create something new. I-100, the No New Jail Initiative, needs you to help gather 23,000 signatures starting today.  
 We'll make it easy and fun. Bring friends. Collect signatures in your neighborhood, join a team, or be a leader. Attend one of three trainings to lead a Street Team, or come down to Real Change's office in Belltown for a 10-minute training. Both will give you all the tools you need to hit the streets where supportive voters can join the cause.  
Join us to make history.  
Email or call 206.441.3247 X206 to become a volunteer.  
 Attend a Street Team training  
 Wed., Feb. 25th, 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
 Wed., March 4th, 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
 Sat., March 7th, 11:00 a.m. - noon  
 All trainings held at Real Change (2129 2nd Ave.)  
 The time is now, and we need you.  
 nonewjail.org (Real Change organizer email, 2/23/2009, CTA803)

Here, I am told that the “I-100” “needs me” to “gather...signatures” and that I should “bring friends,” “attend...trainings,” and “come down” and “join us” as a “volunteer” with a “street team” that will “hit the streets.” The combination of calls to participate with specific events



(“training”) and action forms (“gather...signatures”) made it easy for participants to feel that their actions were important and that there were clear paths through which they could get involved.

The *Stop the Sweeps* campaign made use of many of the same linguistic devices, with messages declaring that they “invite you to attend our Camp4Unity June 8-9” (Apesma’s Lament, 5/21/2008, CTA65). Articles in *Real Change News* spoke to readers, saying that “If you can spend the night at City Hall Plaza, we need you. Come stand for human dignity, compassion, and public accountability” (Real Change News, 3/5/2008, CTA549). But there were a significantly greater number of calls for people to “speak out” and “Speak up” in texts focused on the Sweeps issue area. Emails made specific requests for people to “Please call the mayor,” and after providing a phone number, continued, urging recipients to,

Tell him to halt all non-emergency sweeps immediately, and tell him to negotiate with Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless for a policy that really protects the rights of those on the streets. Add your voice to the community's, and stop the sweeps! (Real Change organizer email, 6/9/2008, CTA754)

These calls for vocality on the sweeps were the kinds of actions that could take place both online, on the phone, and in person at the “Camp4Unity” event, providing participants with options in how they could contribute (see chapter two for more on this dynamic).

The Nickelsville issue area also played host to discourses associated with the semantic field of *participation*, inviting people to “participate in a community” (NickelsvilleSeattle.org, not dated, CTA194; reposted in Mustard Seed House, 10/1/2008, CTA1377) and email alerts proclaimed “This is the time. Join us today. Join us tomorrow. Spend the night if you can. And tell your friends!” (Real Change organizer email, 9/25/2008, CTA770). There were repeated calls for people to “swing by,” “come by,” “Please come visit!,” and “Head over to Nickelsville anytime! Before or after work, during your break - we

hope to see you there” (Real Change organizer email, 9/22/2008, CTA767). These calls for people to “drop on by” and “come to the site” were an integral part of the *Nickelsville* strategy of community outreach and public participation. Unlike the other two tent cities in Seattle, *Nickelsville* worked closely with many housed allies that came to camp to help build, stand witness during camp raids, or voluntarily subject themselves to arrest.

The interactions that were a routine part of *Nickelsville* included a significant level of “help” with a range of tactical and material needs. Emails to supporters asked for “help with transportation,” “help with title searching,” and “help with the move.” These requests were often reposted in neighborhood blogs, as was done in the *Magnolia Voice*.

“He is also asking supporters for help with moving the camp on Friday, requesting that volunteers with vehicles come to the camp to help pack and move the tent city residents.” (Magnolia Voice, 10/7/2008, CTA1331)

Help in these instances was highly prescribed. *Nickelsville* was a self-managed community, so housed allies did not get a say in what the camp decided to do. Instead, people were asked to do little things like “help us with trash removal by taking away a bag of trash” (Nickelsville email, 10/2/2008, CTA157) or “help with our Budget” (Nickelsville email, 10/29/2008, CTA181), and occasionally in ways that required a greater level of personal risk, as in requests for “People who are willing to take direct action to help us stay together and safe” (Nickelsville email, 9/12/2008, CTA158).

### *Allies.*

The linguistic production of the semantic field of *allies* is a crucial aspect of community organizing in any movement context, deeply implicated in processes of collaboration and coalition building. In the local Seattle homeless movement, two general areas of meaning were deployed, populated by groups of words, phrases, and rules (*italics*) or lemmas (SMALL CAPS) (see Figure 4.4). The first area of meaning centered around calls for government

bodies to PARTNER with each other, to *work together* and to COLLABORATE around finding solutions to the need for a Proposed Jail project. In the other area, activists talked more about GRASSROOTS, *cross-class* ALLIES in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, or UNITY and SOLIDARITY in relation to *Nickelsville*. The two areas of meaning converged over the need for DIALOG, and competing definitions of whether or not the Mayor had allowed a space for dialog with area “advocates” and “homeless people,” or if he “refused to talk.” I present how these meta-level semantic patterns are actualized in texts that mention each issue area in turn.

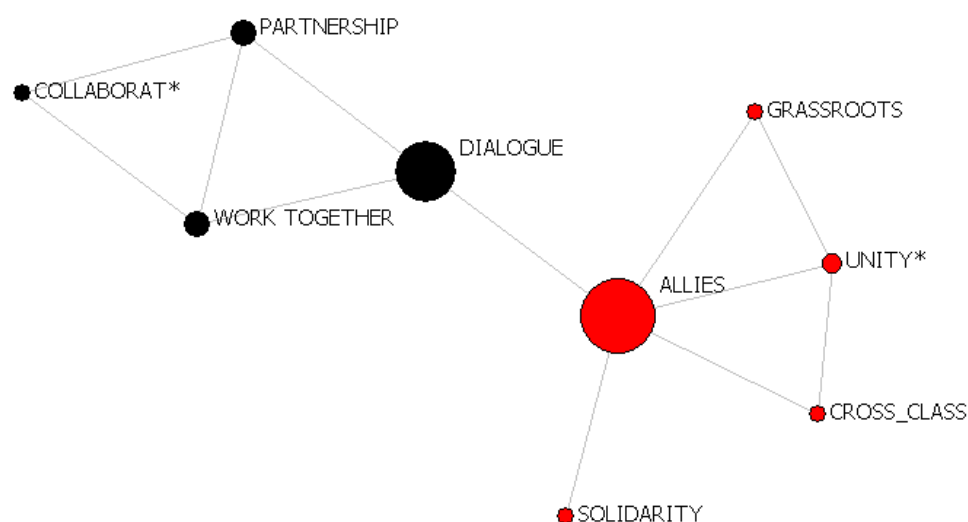


Figure 4.4. Network representation of collocations between groups of words, phrases, rules and lemmas within the semantic field of *allies*. Edges = collocation within a window of 6:6 with a Jaccards similarity coefficient > .037 (minimum for one component). Size = betweenness. Color = 2 factions. Semantic fields with under 10 occurrences removed from matrix.

The campaign to *Stop the Sweeps* employed language in ways that identified those who they sought to work with as ALLIES in GRASSROOTS, *cross-class* UNITY. Meeting minutes from RCOP talked about how “Cross-class unity is important,” how they could “build cross-class relationships,” and how they needed to “Think about how to get the cross-class sections inter-connected, without people taking it over” (RCOP wiki, 3/25/2008, CTA442). Language used in these strategy sessions made it into action alerts, with calls for people to “Come for

food, music, community, and cross-class organizing” at the fourth “Campout For Survival” and “Survival Gear Giveaway to provide folks who stay outside with the gear they need to survive the winter” (Real Change organizer email, 12/8/2008, CTA787).

While the deployment of *cross-class* as a group of bi-grams within the *allies* semantic field was most significantly associated with the Sweeps issue sector ( $p. < .000$ ), participants also made significant use of the ALLY lemma in the identification of groups they could work with on the issue campaign. Meeting minutes talked about how “We need to build power, polarize our stance, and build more allies” and “Actively engage organizations that could be allies” (RCOP wiki, 1/22/2008, CTA437). “[L]abor allies” were particularly important for Sweeps organizers, and “workers,” “vendors,” and “advocates” all featured prominently in organizing texts specializing in the Sweeps ( $p. < .05$ ). Outreach to Jobs With Justice, a coalition focused on worker’s issues, became an active ALLY in the campaign and calls for participation listed the multiple constituencies that would be present at the “3<sup>rd</sup> campout at City Hall” as “advocates and activists, labor allies, students, clergy, and homeless People” (Real Change organizer email, 5/30/2008, CTA752). After attending a rally in support of legalizing gay and lesbian marriage, one RCOP member reported that the connections he made with organizers and attendees was “a step forward for the queer community's ability to act as allies to the struggle of homeless folks and their advocates” (RCOP email, 11/17/2008, CTA346).

Texts about the Nickelsville issue area also played host to the ALLY and UNITY lemmas. Reports posted online after the initial *Nickelsville* camp described how “Several hundred homeless and allies were present to demand their right to safe temporary housing while media outlets from a half dozen outlets flocked around police spokespeople” (Tacoma

SDS, 9/26/2008, CTA197). But after the first couple of moves, the city threatened fines for a list of people and organizations whom they claimed were providing support for *Nickelsville* (see sections on the semantic fields of *violence* and *legality* for more on “fines”). Email alerts described how they expected that “the Mayor will keep trying to attack our allies,” concluding that “He (wrongly) thinks they run Nickelsville” (Nickelsville email, 10/4/2008, CTA180). *Real Change News* described it as “an intimidation strategy designed to scare away allies and potential hosts” (Real Change News, 10/8/2008, CTA646), and turned the tables of who could be an ally to whom, writing that “The Mayor needs to put his bully bat away and approach this organization as an ally with resources and expertise. They are not the enemy, and neither are homeless advocates” (Real Change News, 10/22/2008, CTA657).

The role of a group of words associated with *faith* (“faith,” “Jesus,” “Christ,” and “god”) was of significant importance for *Nickelsville* ( $p. < .000$ ), in part because of how a series of “churches” played host to the camp, in a manner similar to their relationship with the other two tent cities in Seattle. A guest editorial by an active church member where *Nickelsville* was being hosted called “upon faith communities and people of good will to let the mayor, City Council and leaders of other municipalities know that we could be working together to help solve the problem” (Guest column by David McCracken in the Seattle PI, 3/15/2009, CTA1241; reposted in This Way Up Seattle Washington, 3/16/2009, CTA1429). Organizing meetings recognized that “The faith community is a key element in moving forward” (RCOP wiki, 5/7/2008, CTA450), and groups like the Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness attempted to speak on behalf of *Nickelsville* when the Mayor refused to speak to *Nickelsville* directly.

This dynamic led to calls for DIALOGUE between the parties involved. Local media coverage noted in interviews with area faith leaders that “We've been trying to engage the city in dialogue. The mayor will not talk” (David Bloom, interviewed on KOMO, 10/7/2008, CTA1587), and local activist bloggers concluded that “Outside of one recent meeting between City officials and faith leaders, which ended in impasse, the City has consistently refused dialogue” (Apesma’s Lament, 12/30/2008, CTA126).

But the approach to building *allies* that was most closely associated with the Nickelsville issue area was the use of the SOLIDARITY lemma (p. < .05). In the days that followed the first *Nickelsville* camp local blogs reported that “Over a hundred tents now stand. We need your help! Come show your support and stand in solidarity with those who have no choice but to sleep outside” (Bloggng Georgetown, 9/22/2008, CTA1307). Email alerts called on people to “Come prepared to sleep out in solidarity if necessary!” (Real Change organizer email, 9/23/2008, CTA768), and thanked people for “coming down to build shacks, dropping off food, camping out all night, and many other acts of solidarity” (RCOP email, 10/2/2008, CTA317). Similar to the calls for housed allies to “help us” and “spend the night,” the provision of “solidarity” was of crucial importance for *Nickelsville*, since they had very little political clout with the city and relied on people willing to engage in acts of solidarity like “build[ing] shacks, dropping off food, [and] camping out all night” for their success.

Texts that mentioned the Proposed Jail issue area showed significant differences from those mentioning the Sweeps or Nickelsville issue areas, and were focused more on the COLLABORATION, and PARTNERSHIP lemmas. Rather than talking about ALLIES or GRASSROOTS organizing efforts, participants in the *No New Jail* campaign focused their

energies on the aspects of “Initiative 100” that would “instruct the city to fully explore collaboration with King County” (Apesma’s Lament, 2/12/2009, CTA800) and work “collaboratively with King County for a creative, regional solution” (Real Change News, 4/8/2009, CTA829).

For their part, the county echoed these sentiments, stating that their interest was in a “strong and fair partnership” with the city (King County Council, 7/7/2008, CTA957), and publicizing these statements in press releases that were reposted in neighborhood blogs.

“King County and its cities need to work together on a comprehensive, countywide corrections plan to expand our jail capacity wisely and identify efficiencies,” said Councilmember Dow Constantine. “The planning process will benefit from King County’s pioneering work in using alternatives to incarceration to limit jail population.” (King County Council, 7/7/2008, CTA957; re-posted in West Seattle Blog, 7/7/2008, CTA1508)

The city responded by recognizing that the county wanted to “collaborate on planning for additional jail beds” (City of Seattle, not dated, CTA942; re-posted in West Seattle Herald, 7/9/2008, CTA1631), but reiterated their position that “A New Jail Must Be Built. Regardless of whether the cities partner with King County or proceed on their own, a new jail facility will need to be sited and built somewhere in King County” (City of Seattle, 6/30/2008, CTA920).

### ***Donations.***

Donations were an area of community organizing that was most clearly associated with the Nickelsville issue area, and the prevalence of the *donation* semantic field in texts that specialized in Nickelsville was evident in norm file comparisons ( $p. < .05$ ). As I described above, this was in large part due to the roles that housed ALLIES were asked to play in the organizing process, namely in the provision of material and social support in SOLIDARITY with Nickelodeons in their efforts at creating and maintain a “self-managed”

community. *Nickelsville* email alerts called on people to “Please come support your brothers and sisters who struggled to stay together and safe for Nickelsville” (Nickelsville email, 11/5/2008, CTA182). The call for support, while largely distributed via email messages from Nickelodeons, was often replicated in neighborhood blogs where the camp was located.

Please come visit! If you are coming by car, please park in the North Parking Lot of Discovery Park rather than at Daybreak Star. Also, if you are able to help us with trash removal by taking away a bag of trash, we would appreciate it. Blankets, tents, tarps and food would be welcome donations. (Nickelsville email, 10/2/2008, CTA157; reposted on Magnolia Voice, 10/2/2008, CTA1323)

In this post, people were asked to “Please come visit!” (see section on the semantic field of *participation*), and to engage in specific supportive tasks when they did so, bringing “donations” and taking away a “bag of trash.” These emails functioned as an update on the specific needs of the camp at any time, the contents of which was often elaborated during camp meetings before a subset of the group, or the one paid organizer, would write emails to supporters asking for “donations.” Requests were made for people to “bring a sheet of plywood or a couple of 2x4's when they come to camp” (Nickelsville email, 9/24/2008, CTA167) or specified how people could “bring your donations to the Nickelsville entryway in the alley behind the church” (Nickelsville email, 12/17/2008, CTA186). Mainstream media reports picked up on this dynamic, noting the “150 bright pink tents donated by the Girl Scouts” (King 5, 9/29/2008, CTA1550), “donated fuchsia-colored tents” (Seattle PI, 11/24/2008, CTA1230), “donated pink paint” (Seattle Times, 9/26/2008, CTA1276), and “donated sheets of plywood and two-by-fours” (Seattle PI, 9/25/2008, CTA1205).

In addition to ongoing support of the kind described above, a significant area of support that housed allies provided was in the process of “moving” from one location to another. This was recognized in emails from *Nickelsville* that noted how “Assistance and support were an important part of how Nickelsville was able to function” and went on to say



that “Help with the move would be greatly appreciated. Anyone with two hands and willingness to assist is welcome” (Nickelsville email, 12/3/2008, CTA185). Messages asked readers to “Please email if you are able to assist with vehicles” (Nickelsville email, 9/21/2008, CTA162), and retrospectives written by housed allies talked about how “volunteers- from our church and from all kinds of other places, were everywhere, ready to be put to work helping” (UCUCC, 3/5/2009, CTA1478).

While less likely to occur than mentions in texts about *Nickelsville*, calls for participation in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign asked people to “bring a tent and a friend and spend the night at City Hall,” and called on them to “Sign up to help, or sign a petition calling for an end to the sweeps “HERE”” (WRAP, 2/29/2008, CTA852). The focus in many of the campouts on the distribution of survival gear, and the logistics of an overnight camp on concrete meant that organizers asked people to “Bring a tent that can stand up without stakes and a sleeping bag to stay warm. If you have an extra tent that you'd be willing to share, bring that too” (Real Change organizer email, 3/6/2008, CTA744).

Donate: what the city takes, we will replace! In the morning of December 17th we are holding a Survival Gear Giveaway to provide folks who stay outside with the gear they need to survive the winter. Drop off tents, sleeping bags, tarps, blankets, and winter clothing at Real Change (2129 2nd Ave.), or swing by the camp out to deliver your donations. (Real Change organizer email, 12/8/2008, CTA787)

These calls for “donations” were seen as a form of participation, with emails noting that “If you can’t make it out to City Hall, you can still join us by donating” (Real Change News, 3/5/2008, CTA550).

### ***Friendship.***

*Friendship* was an important semantic field in the local Seattle homeless movement. I found that the friend and RELATIONSHIP lemmas were a central focus of organizing discourses, forming a philosophy of organizing that served to build bridges between

communities and across class. This was true for both the campaign to *Stop the Sweep* and for *Nickelsville*, but the *No New Jail* campaign was distinctly *not* focused on this approach to organizing, and did not make use of the FRIEND, LOVE, or COMPANION lemmas (- z score with  $p. < .000$ ).

As a movement, many in Seattle had long worked on a “relational” organizing model that focused on opportunities for people to build friendships across class through public events and ongoing activities. RCEP talked about their work in “Relationship building as [an] organizing model” (RCOP wiki, 4/8/2008, CTA444), and focused on opportunities where they were “cultivating allies, and building relationships based upon our mutual self-interest” (Real Change News, 10/29/2008, CTA661).

The campaign to *Stop the Sweeps* was one area where this was stated explicitly. Planning for the overnight campouts talked about the need to create opportunities for “relationship building” (RCOP wiki, 4/8/2008, CTA444), and organizers talked about how the “understanding that gets created when organizing is grounded in relationships is truly transformational” (Real Change News, 4/30/2008, CTA572). Reflections after the campouts highlighted this aspect of the experience.

Participants were housed and homeless alike. New relationships were forged and existing ones were strengthened. After camping out myself, I feel a renewed sense of being together in the struggle for justice. Most notably, I feel a deeper connection with John, Deb, Michael, Richard, Margaret, Calvin and the many other Real Change vendors who attended and helped plan this event. We talk a lot at Real Change about the relationships that are built between people who are homeless and those who are not, and the importance of these relationships has never been more meaningful to me. They're my colleagues and my friends, and they're the people the Mayor is trying to sweep out of our city. (Real Change organizer email, 3/20/2008, CTA746)

This emphasis on “cross class” “relationship” building – often referred to as “relational organizing” – was seen as an important strategy for building collective identity for participants that may not have seen themselves in terms of class lines, or seen poverty related

activism as in their direct interest. Beyond seeing themselves as homeless or housed, the “working poor” typically do not readily identify with their class status, making the establishment of class-based collective identity more challenging than organizing around other types of identify markers like gender or race (O'Brien, 2008). Organizers in the local Seattle homeless movement saw opportunities like “cross class sleeping” as important for the creation of commitments to the cause that were based in “relationships” (see chapter two for more on relational organizing).

The other area of interest in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign was the use of the COMPASSION lemma. As I described in the section on the semantic fields associated with *material poverty*, the city engaged in a media strategy campaign that characterized their policy as “consistent,” “compassionate,” and “humane,” and called the Sweeps protocol a “compassionate response” to urban poverty. In interviews with area media, the Mayor talked about how “I think that permanent housing is the humane approach, and Seattle has been incredibly compassionate in that regard” (Nickels on KUOW, transcribed in Apesma’s Lament, 10/13/2008, CTA108). In some cases, journalists played active roles in perpetuating the compassionate frame, as when a *Q 13* anchor asked a city spokesperson, “The city is trying to do this in a compassionate way, help me with that part of the story” (Q 13, 6/5/2008, CTA1600). But the deployment of compassion as a way to understand both problems and solutions was also widespread in the activist community. Meeting minutes from the CAC noted that “There is simply a lack of compassion for people who are homeless – lack of compassion from the community, from case managers” (CAC, 12/19/2007, CTA1057) and calls for participation in the overnight “campouts” asked readers to “Come stand for human dignity, compassion, and public accountability” (Real Change News,

3/5/2008, CTA549). Accounts of personal experiences after the overnight campouts also made use of the COMPASSION lemma.

I woke up Friday morning physically cold and tired, but buoyed by the feelings of connection I had experienced during the long night protesting in community. Jack, Calvin, Deb, Richard, and others defied the monolithic stereotypes that are often naively imposed on the homeless...For me, this understanding bred compassion and humility, piercing the many layers that have callused my heart and soul. (Guest editorial, published in Real Change News, 4/9/2008, CTA566)

This account was not uncommon, citing how the experience of sleeping outside alongside “Jack, Calvin, Deb, Richard, and others” “bred compassion and humility” for this housed ally, “piercing the many layers that have callused my heart and soul.”

*Nickelsville* also made use of relational approaches to organizing, but the sustained nature of an ongoing camp that called for housed people to “visit” and “help us” meant that the opportunities for building relationships were greater than had been available in a single night of sleeping outside city hall together. Instead of “relationships” and “compassion” people writing about the Nickelsville issue area talked about how they “cared for/about” or LOVED their FRIENDS at *Nickelsville*, and in this they found COMPANIONSHIP.

Early reports about *Nickelsville* described how “Friends car-pooled from all over King County to support Nickelsville” (Real Change organizer email, 9/22/2008, CTA767), and emails from *Nickelsville* often were addressed “Dear Friends” (Nickelsville email, 10/2/2008, CTA157). The FRIEND lemma was used to describe support networks of housed allies (“tell your friends”), to describe those within the *Nickelsville* community (“we are all friends here”), and to describe the connection between allies and residents (“FRIENDS OF NICKELSVILLE”). But one of the most striking areas was in the use of words and phrases associated with “love” and “caring.” The proliferation of these discourses may have had something to do with the strong relationship that *Nickelsville* had with its church-based hosts,

and for the presence of a “camp pastor,” that helped to focus attention on the close personal connections that were felt by participants. This is indicated in part by the strong association between this way of speaking and religiously sponsored or inspired texts. The University Christian Church of Christ (UCUCC) was the second church to host *Nickelsville*, and while the experience was challenging for the congregation, many spoke of the important opportunity that hosting the camp presented for them and their community of worship. One blog post wrote about how “one thing that I have found so moving and strengthening in this process of discernment has been care. Everyone has cared. People that have been in support of Nickelsville moving here care. People raising objections and concerns about risk care. The point is that everyone cares. And that is what unites us as church – we all care” (UCUCC, 12/1/2008, CTA850).

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The production of community organizing in the local Seattle homeless movement was an important area of activity, and communication and language were at the heart of how this work happened. When it came to those tasks that Internet technologies like websites and email were used for, we saw a significant difference in the ways that community organizers deployed language. The semantic fields of meaning associated with *community organizing* – *participation*, *allies*, *donations* and *friendships* – all showed significant differences in the words, phrases, rules, and lemmas that each issue campaign privileged. In this way, each issue campaign brought narrative affordances unique to the issue area, facilitating some discourse and discouraging others. In the campaign to *Stop the Sweeps* organizer’s energies were on encouraging participants to “speak out” against the “mayor’s sweeps,” and focused on building “relationships” “across class” in ways that fostered “compassion” for people in

differing material circumstances. The *Stop the Sweeps* campaign approach was one that tried to provide opportunities for people to identify with class and poverty through “relational organizing” strategies that empowered people of all classes to get involved and “Stop the Sweeps!” Those working on *Nickelsville* encouraged co-presence in calls for people to “swing by,” “come by,” “Please come visit!,” and “Head over to Nickelsville anytime!” If people could not “spend the night” they were asked to “help us” by “donating” specific material and social resources. The approach with *Nickelsville* was to ask housed participants to act in “solidarity” with Nickelodeons, a call that was answered in part by the many area churches who hosted the camp. The relationships that *Nickelsville* allowed fostered even stronger connections than were possible with the overnight *Stop the Sweeps* campouts, with Nickelodeons and housed allies both talking a great deal about “friendship,” “love,” “caring,” and “companionship,” often in the context of “faith,” “god,” or “church.”

The *No New Jail* campaign was focused on efforts to get people to “attend” events in situations of co-presence by providing “schedules” of events and making statements that they hoped to “see you” there. These patterns accompanied an approach to the *allies* semantic field that was focused less on building allies in the movement and more on efforts to get city and county governments to “work together” in “partnership” and “collaboration” on alternatives to the Proposed Jail. Notably, while the semantic fields of *donations* and *friendship* were important mechanisms for calls to action and identification in the other two campaigns, the *No New Jail* campaign did not deploy these strategies in the majority of texts, marking a significant change from other homeless organizing efforts.

### **Participant mobilization in a local homeless movement**

Participant mobilization is a highly communicative activity, and the local Seattle homeless movement was no exception. This section outlined three communicative processes

associated with participant mobilization: *institutionalizing the movement*, *taking collective action*, and *community organizing*. These three communicative processes are areas that are likely to appear in any movement context, and may be useful as theoretical constructs in the study of other issue movements. I further illustrated these processes by describing the semantic fields that populated them. I then presented a comparative analysis of the narrative affordances that were observable in each issue area. I found significant variation in the words, phrases, rules, and lemmas deployed within each semantic field based on the issue area of concern in the text. These differences specified the linguistic constraints that each issue area provided, as well as the linguistic opportunities that participants created through collective language use.

First, the MOVEMENT, CAMPAIGN, COALITION, and ALLIANCE lemmas were used to *institutionalize the movement* and produce claims to power, as attributes of collectivities of people, and as labels for projects and organizations. The deployment of the CAMPAIGN lemma was the most prominent movement related label, and was most prevalent in the Proposed Jail issue area ( $p < .005$ ), although it was also present in the Sweeps issue area. Notably, *Nickelsville* was not described as a CAMPAIGN in the ways that the Sweeps and the Proposed Jail projects were (- z score with  $p < .000$ ), and was instead labeled a *tent city*. Finally, roughly half of the instances of the ALLIANCE and COALITION lemmas were capitalized, indicating the prevalence of their use as both nouns and proper nouns.

Second, the communicative process of *taking collective action* was an important area of signification, both for organizers, journalists, and government officials. Each campaign drew on a slightly different action repertoire, and labeled their actions differently. The use of action labels associated with the semantic field of *petitioning the government* were used most

commonly in the *No New Jail* campaign, especially as the campaign became increasingly structured around the gathering of signatures in order to get the I-100 initiative on the ballot. The deployment of words and phrases associated with the semantic field of *traditional protest actions* was most heavily concentrated in texts concerned with the Sweeps issue area and the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign. These action labels helped participants to place their actions within the tradition of political protest in the United States, but were also subject to critique based on differing interpretations of what “protests” and “demonstrations” meant – particularly in the case of *Nickelsville*. The semantic field of *camping actions* was most heavily deployed in texts concerned with *Nickelsville*, although they were also common in relation to the Sweeps issue area. When used in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign, the overnight “campouts” were described as more “protest” than “survival strategy.” But when *Nickelsville* set up a “camp” that did not go away the next day, government officials responded by dealing with the action first as if it were another camp to be “swept,” and second as akin to the other two tent cities in the area by constraining their camping actions within a prescribed set of acceptable and sanctioned activities.

Third, words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with the communicative processes of *community organizing* also differed among the three issue areas. In the campaign to *Stop the Sweeps* organizer’s energies were on encouraging participants to “speak out” against the “mayor’s sweeps,” and focused on building “relationships” “across class” in ways that fostered “compassion” for people in differing material circumstances. Those working on *Nickelsville* encouraged co-presence in calls for people to “swing by,” “come by,” “Please come visit!,” and “Head over to Nickelsville anytime!” If people could not “spend the night” they were asked to “help us” by “donating” specific material and social



resources in acts of “solidarity” with Nickelodeons, leading to talk of “friendship,” “love,” “caring,” and “companionship,” often in the context of “faith,” “god,” or “church.” The *No New Jail* campaign was also focused on efforts to get people to “attend” events in situations of co-presence, but these texts focused less on building “allies” in the movement and more on efforts to get city and county governments to “work together” in “partnership” and “collaboration” on alternatives to the Proposed Jail. Finally, texts that specialized in the Proposed Jail did not make any significant use of the semantic fields of *donations* and *friendship*, signaling a divergence from the communicative strategies employed in the other two issue campaigns.

This level of close linguistic analysis highlights the differences in the ways that participants constructed the process of participant mobilization through language use, and provides substance to more general typologies of the three mobilization communication processes presented here.

### **Discussion: Language Use in Homeless Organizing**

Language and communication are of central importance to the work of creating social movements and should be at the heart of social movement research. In this chapter I have argued that social movement communication engages in two general areas of communicative activity. First, participants engage in *issue contestation* over the meaning of an issue and the kinds of associations that should be attached to a term or set of terms. This occurred in two basic areas of issue contestation: *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*. Second, organizers engaged in *participant mobilization* as they labeled their activities as a movement, took collective action and engaged in community organizing. While these areas of communicative activity are rooted in a local homeless movement – and in three specific issue

campaigns at that – I suggest that all social movement activity employs each of them in the process of social movement communication. As such, this should serve as a useful framework for other studies of social movements that are interested in the ways that participants engage in communicative behavior. In addition to outlining these areas of communicative activity I have also suggested that the issue areas that issue campaigns exist within provide narrative affordances for communicative behavior, structuring what can and cannot be said, along with parameters of interpretation regarding how statements are attached to differing meanings in their contexts of use. I briefly review these claims in the context of the present study.

### **Issue contestation and social movement communication**

The study of social movements has followed two seemingly divergent paths in the academy. First, North American scholars have developed an approach to the analysis of social movement behavior that responded to the irrationality thesis of the 1950s and 1960s and the move towards cognitive understandings of collective behavior (Blumer, 1951) with an emphasis on rationality and structural opportunities and constraints (McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977; Tilly, Tilly, & Tilly, 1975). In the move to de-emphasize the irrationality of mob psychology early academics in this vein downplayed psychological factors in the identification and mobilization of participants, and instead focused on material resources and organizational membership as a means of explaining movement “success” (Hall, 1995). Second, European scholars have trended towards psychological analysis of identificational processes that might explain why participants join in taking collective action with others (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). Often labeled as “new social movement theory,” this approach has fore-grounded the contestation of meaning in the public sphere, and the influences that such meaning making processes might have on individuals and collectivities

(Melucci, 1989, 1996a, 1996b), while back-grounding the material opportunities and constraints faced by many participants. In recent years, these two traditions have been increasingly reconciled, as many have realized the necessity for both the meaning-oriented and material-oriented aspects of movement dynamics (della Porta & Diani, 2007). Communication practices provide a privileged arena for examining how these two approached might converge in mobilization processes.

This chapter has drawn on both the material and symbolic approaches to social movement research in building a theory of social movement communication practices. First, I contend that material contexts are highly important for understanding how and why movement participants choose to act in the ways that they do. However, postmodern theories of social construction have emphasized that the social world is linguistically constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). If we are to take this claim seriously, as I suggest that we should, this means that material opportunities and constraints are understood by participants through the act of constituting them through language – through the production of their *symbolic meanings*. I suggest that this activity takes place in two primary domains: in the area of *materiality*, and in the area of *subjectivity*. In the local Seattle homeless movement, this was illustrated in the ways that particular material experiences – housing, shelter, services, development, or the economy – were contested in the public sphere by attaching their linguistic referents to a range of other meanings: housing, funding, services, or shelter as adequate or inadequate; development as the solution or the problem. It was also illustrated in the contestation over the attachment of deviant subjectivities – danger, dirty, and drugs – to people experiencing homelessness: conflating homelessness with criminality, drunkenness, or violence, or by describing *Nickelsville* as clean, safe, and sober. While I suggest that these

categories of communicative activity (*materiality* and *subjectivity*) are fairly universal for social movements, the ways that these struggles over meaning and interpretation take place are highly context dependent. Homelessness is an experience that focuses on particular aspects of *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*. Movements focused on other issues – even those typically described as post-material or identity-based (the environmental movement, the GLBTQ movement, or the women’s movement to name a few) – would be subjected to a different set of discursive tropes in the identification of material inequality, material change, and deviant subjectivities. A robust analysis of how these movements interact in their material and social contexts would benefit from a detailed understanding of the ways that they engage in issue contestations through processes of social movement communication.

### **Participant mobilization and social movement communication**

Social movement participants respond to, and contest the meaning of, the material and subjective definitions of their contextual situations. But they also engage in the production of *social processes* that constitute a movement’s activities as collective action. The materialist perspective practiced by scholars of social movements relying on resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977) or political opportunities structures (McAdam, 1982) largely view collective action as a series of positivistic actions, participants, and outcomes. On the other hand, symbolic approaches by scholars relying on new social movement theory recognize that meanings are socially constructed, but largely ignore the material production of collective action for an emphasis on symbolic struggle (Melucci, 1996a). I argue that social movement participants do engage in material struggles through processes of *participant mobilization*, and that these processes only exist in the context of communicative action. The recognition of communication practices as an integral part of the

participant mobilization process is an important addendum to positivistic treatments of protest actions that often “black box” the linguistic efforts involved. This is similarly the case with most studies of communication networks, where categories like “information exchange” take the place of a detailed analysis of what is said (Monge & Contractor, 2003; Saunders, 2007), although some researchers have taken up this task (Mische, 2008; Mische & White, 1998).

The retroductive analysis of linguistic patterns presented in this chapter produced three general areas of mobilization communication processes: *institutionalizing the movement*, *taking collective action*, and *community organizing*. First, participants name their collective activities as a “movement,” “coalition,” “campaign,” or “alliance” by engaging in labeling practices that *institutionalize the movement*, elevating their actions to movement status and tying them to other efforts in space and time. Second, participants engage in *taking collective actions* that they understand as meaningful based on the ways that they are labeled by themselves and others. These labels offer opportunities and credibility to participant’s actions, but they also limit activity by suggesting a “script” to be followed (Goffman, 1974), and provide openings for criticism when a set of actions are interpreted as existing outside of the confines of the script. Finally, participants engage in processes of *community organizing*. In the local Seattle homeless movement, this communicative process involved the identification of allies, encouraging participation, suggesting methods of action around the contribution and distribution of donations, and in the production of friendship, love and companionship. This is the area that may be subject to the most variation across contexts, and this could certainly be seen in the three issue campaigns examined here.

While this analysis is based on specific mobilization contexts, it is likely that these communication processes would be transferable to other movement contexts, even while the semantic fields – or the words, phrases, rules, and lemmas that populate them – might change. Future analysis of social movement participant mobilization processes would benefit from an examination of the “black box” of communicative activity by providing detailed typologies of communicative processes and content of the sort presented here.

### **Narrative affordances in issue campaigns**

Both the contestation of materiality and subjectivity as well as processes of participant mobilization exist within specific issue contexts. I contend that social movements always exist in the context of issue areas, and that the issue sectors that linguistically construct a movement provide affordances that are unique to that issue, and so should be of interest to practitioners and researchers alike. In each area of analysis I found significant variance in how authors constructed material opportunities and constraints, attached deviant or conforming subjectivities to people, spaces, and activities, and mobilized participants in the process of building a local homeless movement. By focusing on the affordances that participants experience within each issue area, I have highlighted the structuring properties of discourse. But in engaging in a detailed analysis of participant’s engagement in issue contestation and participant mobilization, I have also highlighted the ways that agentive communicative actions can serve to structure language over time, shifting popular understandings of what homelessness is and what forms collective action can take. In this way I have detailed some of the iterative dynamics involved in the production of social structure over time as it is manifested in the area of language and language use.

As my analysis has suggested throughout, there were significant differences in the ways that language was produced in different contexts. While I have highlighted the

difference evident between issue areas and issue campaigns, other factors may also be significant contributors in structuring how and what participants say. For instance, I have suggested that organizational sectors might influence communicative behavior, encouraging particular interpretations or emphasizing certain ways of speaking about an issue area. Likewise, we might expect that some communicative tools would be more readily deployed by participants for particular communicative tasks, resulting in differences in tool use when discussing the issue vs. calling for participation. Given the interplay that I have maintained between grounded participant observation, discourse analysis, and quantification of organizational, technological, and linguistic aspects of the data set, we can make use of statistical tools in looking at the relationship between variables – developing and testing hypothesis about how social movement communication takes place in a local homeless movement. This is what I move to next, in chapter five.

## Chapter 5: Multi-level Analysis of Social Movement Communication

Technology use, social organization, and language each played an important role in how the three issue sectors examined here were produced. However, each issue sector differed in terms of the technologies that were used, the organizations that used them, and the language that was produced. This chapter focuses on comparative analysis across the three issue sectors to show how the issue areas in which each issue campaign existed were important resources and determinants for the technologies, organizations, and discourses that were deployed in their production. Four question areas are examined here, dealing with discourse and narrative affordances, issue specialization and issue brokerage, organizational importance, and the relationship between socio-technological configurations and language use. I briefly outline each of these questions in turn, and then proceed to address them through a multi-level analysis.

First, I demonstrated in the preceding chapters that issue areas and issue sectors are important structuring elements in social change work, providing particular affordances for what can and cannot be said, and what those statements mean in the context of an issue area. Research on the ways that movements engage in framing activities (Snow & Benford, 1988, 1992; Snow, Rochford, Warden, & Benford, 1986) and public debates (Skillington, 1997) has pointed to the importance that meaning has in movement activity. Building on this work, I begin with the following: *What kinds of meanings did each issue sector afford in the production of homeless activism?* Answering this question can point to the specific relationships that different areas of meaning have to each other as well as the repercussions that engaging in an issue campaign in a particular issue area has on the production of homelessness in public discourse.



Second, brokerage has been an interesting area of research in recent years. Work in the area of social network analysis has shown that brokers occupy a privileged space, often facilitating the production of social capital by connecting disconnected participants with something in common that they could benefit from sharing (Burt, 2005). Research on social movements has followed this interest, looking at how dissociated groups are connected through individuals, groups and technologies (Ganesh & Stohl, 2010; Tarrow & McAdam, 2005). But there is value in both closure and brokerage. As Burt has asserted, “Brokerage creates value by exposing people to variation in information. Closures value comes from driving variation out of the closed network” (Burt, 2005, p. 263). In local social movements, this suggests interesting questions about both aspects of this dichotomy. Namely, *What organizational sectors facilitate issue brokerage, and what organizational sectors facilitate issue specialization?* Answering this question can help build general theory around positional roles based on institutional sectors that might be useful in the analysis of homeless organizing as well as other social movement contexts.

Third, there have been a slew of claims as to the death of civil society organizations in the United States (Putnam, 2000) and the replacement of formal organizations in social movements with Internet enabled informational systems that function as self-organizing networks in social change activity (Bennett, 2003). While this is undoubtedly the case, my analysis suggests that this may not be as all-encompassing as some have claimed. I am interested specifically in asking *What roles do formal organizations have in structuring the dynamics of the three issue sectors?* Answering this question can help inform a comparative study of three overlapping campaigns, as well as provide insight into the ways that modern social movements make use of organizations in local contexts.

Finally, I have argued that the process of mobilization is one that is highly dependent on the production of communication texts, and that language is an important part of getting people to participate in an organizing campaign. But there have been divergent claims as to where this communicative activity takes place (Streitmatter, 1995, 2001), and some evidence that it may vary depending on the context (Juris, 2005; Stohl & Stohl, 2007; Wall, 2007). Given the multi-organizational nature of my data set, and the divergent roles that multiple organizational sectors have played, I am interested in asking *What kinds of socio-technological configurations were deployed for the production of participant mobilization discourse in each issue campaign?* Answering this question may suggest patterns of regularity or difference in the three issue campaigns, and contribute to both academic and practical applications of participant mobilization communication strategies.

In the sections that follow, I present answers to these four questions, and end the chapter with a discussion of their implications for the study and practice of social movement organizing.

### **Issue Sectors and Discursive Affordances**

Each of the three issue campaigns presented opportunities and challenges that were unique to the issue areas that they were situated in. Statistical analysis of semantic fields in each issue area can illustrate what discourses were more prevalent in each issue area, pointing to the dynamics of narrative affordances that participants experienced in the production of each issue campaign. Figure 5.1 is a network representation of semantic preference based on a comparison between seven subsets of the database. Each subset represents a mutually exclusive group of texts that were defined based on their mention of one or more of the three issue areas. For instance, ‘S’ included those 243 texts that only

mentioned the Sweeps issue area, while 'NS' contained the 194 texts that mentioned both the Sweeps and the Nickelsville issue areas (see chapter three for a description of the sample sizes in issue specialization and brokerage roles). Semantic preference is determined by measuring the occurrence of each semantic field, and comparing their occurrence in each sub-sample to their occurrence in the full corpus (a norm file comparison). The resulting comparison allows us to see what semantic fields, words, phrases, rules, and lemmas were more and less common in each subsample compared to the norm file. Edges in Figure 5.1 represent semantic fields that are more likely to occur in the subsample at a  $p$  value  $< .05$ . Table 5.1 provides the same information in table form (broken up based on the two areas of issue contestation, participant mobilization and subjectivities of importance in the corpus), and Figure 5.2 represents it in MDS form.

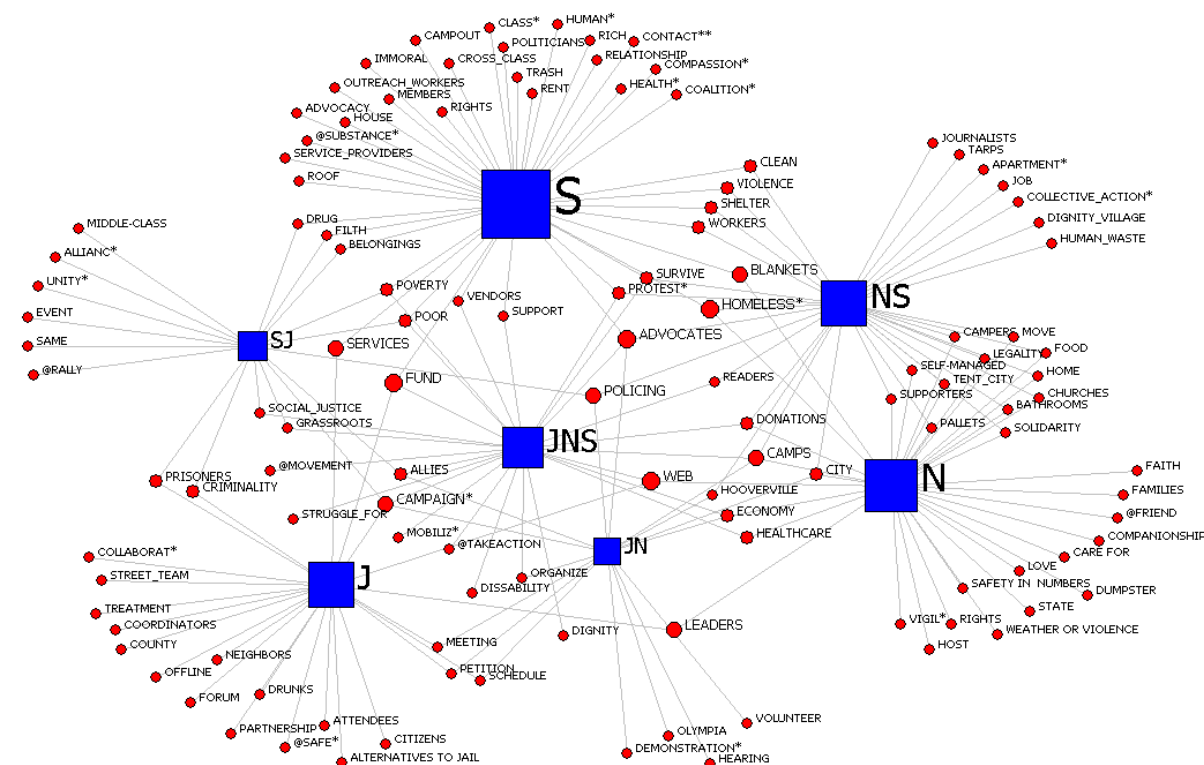


Figure 5.1. Semantic fields more likely to occur in texts based on the issues mentioned in the text. Tie = more likely in sub sample compared to norm file at > .05 significance. Size = betweenness.

This analysis shows that each campaign existed in an issue area where some areas of meaning were more commonly drawn upon than others. If we look at the use of semantic fields associated with *material poverty* in those texts that only mention one of the three issue areas (issue specialists texts), we can see that texts mentioning only the Sweeps were more likely to make use of the HOUSE, SHELTER, RENT, and ROOF lemmas; the semantic field of *class*, and the POOR and RICH lemmas; and the semantic fields of *rights* and *belongings*, and the SURVIVE, INHUMANE/HUMANE, and IMMORAL lemmas. Texts mentioning only the Nickelsville issue area, on the other hand, were more likely to broaden the dialog, showing a greater frequency of the semantic field of the *economy* and the HOME lemma, as well as a slightly different approach to the semantic field of *human rights* that relied on the *safety in numbers* and (death by) *weather or violence* semantic fields. Finally texts mentioning only the Proposed Jail, shared a greater emphasis on the semantic fields of *services* and *funding* with the Sweeps issue specialist texts, but also focused a great deal of attention on the semantic field of *alternatives to jail*.

Similarly, a significant discrepancy is apparent between the three groups of issue specialization texts when we look at those semantic fields and lemmas associated with *deviant subjectivities*. Texts mentioning only the Proposed Jail had a higher frequency of the semantic fields of *criminality*, *drunks*, and *treatment*, as well as the SAFE lemma. Nickelsville issue specialization texts showed a greater frequency of the semantic fields of *legality*, *bathrooms*, and *dumpsters*. Sweeps specialization texts, on the other hand, saw a greater frequency of the semantic fields of *filthy*, *trash*, *drugs*, and *violence*, as well as the CLEAN, HEALTH, and SUBSTANCE lemmas. Hence, the three campaigns varied in terms of the ways

that authors talked about deviant people (the Proposed Jail), deviant spaces (the Sweeps), and deviant activities (Nickelsville).

In the area of Mobilization discourses, each issue area differed in terms of the kinds of meanings that they encouraged. Those texts that only mentioned the Proposed Jail issue area had a higher frequency of the *forums* semantic field and the MEETING lemma, the PARTNER and COLLABORATE lemmas, and the semantic fields of *petition* and *street team*, as well as the CAMPAIGN lemma. Texts that talked only of the Nickelsville issue area displayed a more frequent use of the semantic fields of *self-managed*, *tent city*, and the CAMPS lemma, the semantic fields of *faith*, *hosts*, *care*, and the LOVE, FRIEND, COMPANION, and SOLIDARITY lemmas, as well as the semantic fields of *donations* and *pallets*. It is also of note that discourses with far more positive proactive associations were more prevalent in texts mentioning only the Nickelsville issue area, with a higher frequency of the semantic fields of *blankets*, *food*, *bathrooms*, and *dumpsters* alongside *donations*. Texts only mentioning the Sweeps, on the other hand, were more likely to see higher frequency of the semantic fields of *campout* and *cross class* alongside the PROTEST, RELATIONSHIP, ADVOCACY, COALITION, and COMPASSION lemmas.

Table 5.1. Semantic fields that were significantly more likely to occur more frequently in each issue area ( $p < .05$ ), sorted by semantic category.

	Materiality	Subjectivity	Mobilization	Participants
Jail	ALTERNATIVES TO JAIL FUND SERVICES	CRIMINALITY @SAFE* TREATMENT DRUNKS	MEETING FORUM PETITION PARTNERSHIP COLLABORAT* CAMPAIGN* SCHEDULE STREET_TEAM	COUNTY PRISONERS NEIGHBORS LEADERS COORDINATORS ATTENDEES CITIZENS
Nickelsville	FOOD RIGHTS BLANKETS HOME ECONOMY SAFETY IN NUMBERS WEATHER OR VIOLENCE	LEGALITY BATHROOMS DUMPSTER HEALTHCARE	FAITH CAMPS TENT_CITY MOVE HOST CARE FOR LOVE PALLETES @FRIEND VIGIL* SELF-MANAGED DONATIONS SOLIDARITY COMPANIONSHIP	CHURCHES CITY FAMILIES SUPPORTERS CAMPER HOMELESS* STATE LEADERS
Sweeps	HOUSE BELONGINGS SERVICES SURVIVE CLASS* SUPPORT SHELTER HUMAN* IMMORAL POVERTY FUND BLANKETS RENT ROOF RICH RIGHTS POOR	CLEAN TRASH @SUBSTANCE* VIOLENCE HEALTH* DRUG FILTH	CAMPOUT CROSS_CLASS PROTEST* ADVOCACY RELATIONSHIP COALITION* COMPASSION*	HOMELESS* MEMBERS WORKERS VENDORS ADVOCATES OUTREACH_WORKERS SERVICE_PROVIDERS POLITICIANS

Table 5.1.Continued.

	Materiality	Subjectivity	Mobilization	Participants
Jail/Nickelsville	ECONOMY	POLICING	HOOVERVILLE MEETING PETITION CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEER ORGANIZE SCHEDULE CAMPS DEMONSTRATION ALLIES HEARING	CITY ADVOCATES OLYMPIA
Nickelsville/Sweeps	SHELTER HOME JOB FOOD APARTMENT SURVIVE	LEGALITY POLICING BATHROOMS VIOLENCE HUMAN_WASTE CLEAN	CAMPS TENT_CITY HOOVERVILLE DIGNITY_VILLAGE DONATIONS PALLETS SOLIDARITY TARPS MOVE COLLECTIVE_ACTION SELF-MANAGED PROTEST	HOMELESS CITY CAMPERS ADVOCATES CHURCHES WORKERS READERS SUPPORTERS JOURNALISTS
Sweeps/Jail	SOCIAL_JUSTICE BELONGINGS POOR POVERTY MIDDLE-CLASS	DRUG CRIMINALITY FILTH POLICING	EVENT GRASSROOTS @RALLY ALLIES SAME CAMPAIGN ALLIANC UNITY	PRISONERS
Jail/Nickelsville/Sweeps	POVERTY POOR SUPPORT SOCIAL_JUSTICE SURVIVE FUND ECONOMY DIGNITY	DISSABILITY HEALTHCARE	GRASSROOTS ORGANIZE MOBILIZ @MOVEMENT @TAKEACTION CAMPAIGN DONATIONS CAMPS STRUGGLE_FOR ALLIES PROTEST	VENDORS READERS ADVOCATES

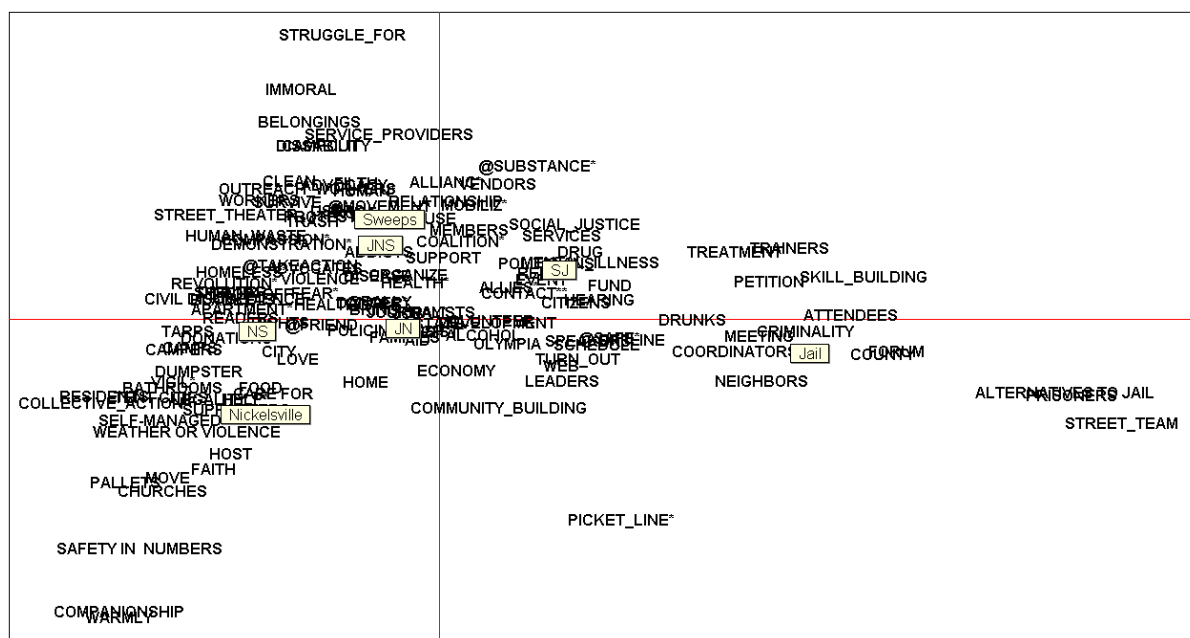


Figure 5.2. Semantic fields and issue areas represented in MDS based on semantic field frequency.

These discrepancies in the kinds of language that each issue area facilitated meant that each campaign existed in a discursive arena that emphasized different aspects of homeless organizing. This trend is evident when we look at the prevalence of the three major areas of communicative activity (materiality, subjectivity, and mobilization) across the issue areas. The Nickelsville issue area was most closely associated with *mobilization* discourses, the Sweeps issue area with *materiality*, and the Proposed Jail issue area with *subjectivity* (see Figure 5.3). A norm file comparison for keyword frequencies in the three issue specialization sub-samples shows that these correlations are highly significant, resulting in category occurrence frequencies of 18.4%, 31.7%, and 16.7% more than expected respectively – all with a  $p$  value  $< .000$  (see Table 5.2). It also shows a significant association between multiple issue mentions in the text and a higher frequency of *mobilization* discourses, at least among those mentioning the Nickelsville issue area. The relative focus of talk about *Nickelsville* on



“camps,” “moving,” and “pallets/plywood” was likely a significant contributor to the prevalence of mobilization fields in those texts, an issue that I address in the next section.

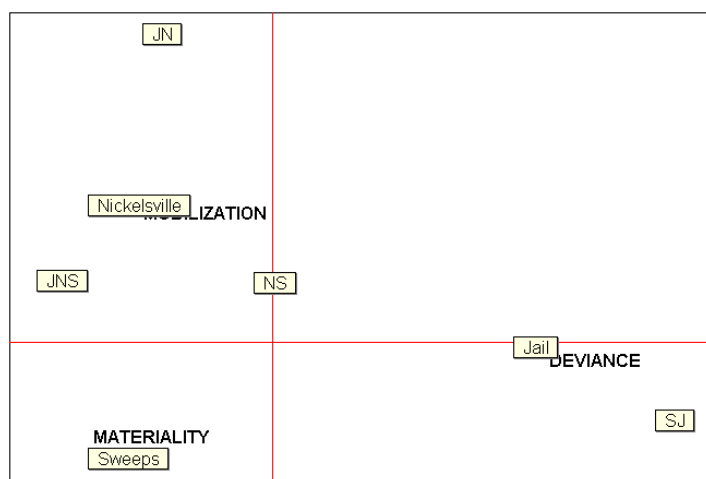


Figure 5.3. MDS scaling of proximity of issue area based sub samples to the three major communication functions.

Table 5.2. Norm file comparison between issue area sub samples based on the frequency of the three major communication functions with log-linear p values.

Category	Jail Z score	Nickelsville Z score	Sweeps Z score	Mult. Issues Z score
MATERIALITY	-14.00***	-6.08***	18.00***	0.85
SUBJECTIVITY	7.16***	-8.48***	-3.92***	3.47**
MOBILIZATION	-11.97***	7.83***	-4.22***	10.47***

### Issue Specialization and Issue Brokerage

Authors who function as organizational and sectoral brokers may be more likely to also function as issue brokers, authoring texts that tie issues together. To test the organizational broker = issue broker hypothesis I ran correlations between those variables of interest, comparing publication attributes with issue mentions at the level of the communication text. I found that texts with more words that were written by people who published more texts in multiple communication resources and multiple organizational sectors were more likely to include mentions of more issues (see Table 5.3). However, after

controlling for covariance among independent variables, I found that only the number of words in the text and the number of communication resources the author published in had a significant influence on the number of issues mentioned in the text (see Table 5.4). The relationship between the number of communication resources an author publishes in and the number of issue mentions confirms the organizational broker = issue broker hypothesis, and the relationship between the number of words in the text and the number of issues mentioned seems intuitive: more words = more chances of multiple issue mentions.

Table 5.3. Correlations between issue areas and authorial profiles. Words = number of words in the text; texts = number of texts by that author; CR = number of communication resources the author published in; OS = number of organizational sectors the author published in.

	Words	Texts	CR	OS
J	0.012	-0.109***	-0.182***	-0.092**
N	-0.223***	-0.109***	-0.066*	-0.081**
S	0.147***	0.172***	0.182***	0.137***
JN	-0.022	0.077*	0.055#	0.047
NS	0.064*	-0.018	0.021	-0.005
SJ	0.031	0.031	0.070*	0.053#
JNS	0.068*	0.137***	0.086**	0.069*
Total Issues	0.092**	0.095**	0.100**	0.063*
<i>N</i>	<i>1116</i>	<i>1116</i>	<i>1116</i>	<i>1116</i>

Notes: Pearson's correlation reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

Table 5.4. Linear regression of organizational and sectoral brokerage on issue brokerage.

	Total Issues
Words	.102***
Texts	.061
OR	.164*
OS	-.119
R Square	.024

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

While cross publication in multiple organizational sectors did not show significance in influencing the number of issues mentioned in a text, the publication of a text in one

organizational sector over another may still play an important role in influencing the number of issues mentioned in the text, thus facilitating issue brokerage. After running a correlation between the three organizational sectors and issue mentions, I found that on each end of the sectoral spectrum (advocacy organizations on one side and governmental agencies on the other) texts were more likely to mention a single issue, influencing the production of texts that functioned as issue specialist texts. This means that, at a sectoral level, advocacy organizations and government agencies both function as issue specialists. Moving towards the middle of the organizational spectrum, media institutions (alternative media and mainstream media organizations) were more likely to publish texts that mentioned multiple issues, and thus function as issue brokerage texts. This means that at a sectoral level alternative media and mainstream media organizations both function as issue brokers, tying otherwise unrelated issues together (see Table 5.5). The only exceptions to this rule is in the publication of Sweeps/Jail brokerage texts by advocates, and the publication of Nickelsville

Table 5.5. Correlations between organizational sectors and issue mentions in the text.

	Advocacy	AltMedia	MainMedia	Government
Words	-0.174***	-0.045	0.009	0.381***
Texts	-0.129***	0.447***	-0.305***	-0.140***
OR	-0.058#	0.216***	-0.142***	-0.085**
OS	0.021	0.222***	-0.216***	-0.099***
J	0.068*	-0.154***	-0.036	0.264***
N	-0.013	0.076*	0.014	-0.159***
S	0.03	0.028	-0.065*	0.009
JN	0.014	0.003	0.003	-0.036
NS	-0.111***	0.043	0.117***	-0.108
SJ	0.059*	-0.016	-0.038	0.000
JNS	-0.029	0.063*	-0.023	-0.036
Total Issues	-0.087**	0.068*	0.071*	-0.118***
<i>N</i>	1116	1116	1116	1116

Notes: Pearson's correlation reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

specialization texts in alternative media outlets. This trend was confirmed with a linear regression that tested the influence of publication attributes on the number of issue mentions (see Table 5.6), showing that texts published in a media outlet were more likely to result in multiple issue mentions ( $p. < .000$ ).

Table 5.6. Linear regression of contributing factors to multiple issue mentions in single texts.

	Multiple Issues
Words	0.104***
Texts	-0.024
OR	0.150*
OS	-0.086
Media	0.131***
R Square	0.037
<i>N</i>	1116

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p. < .05 = *$ ,  $p. < .01 = **$ ,  $p. < .001 = ***$ .

### Organizational Importance in Issue Networks

Not all texts are created equally, and some texts in the corpus were of greater relative importance than others. In order to measure the relative importance of some texts in comparison to others, I drew on a second dataset of hyperlink ties between communication resources in the corpus, from which I had produced centrality measures for each issue network (see chapter three). In merging this database with the linguistic corpus, I removed all email texts and texts from websites that were not included in the issuecrawler.net data file (typically password protected sites like the RCOP wiki, for instance). The resulting database consisted of 883 texts. This database accounted for 79.1% of the 1116 texts in the full corpus of texts mentioning at least one issue area.

In testing the influence of formal organizations on the relative importance of communication texts in the corpus, I first ran correlations between organizational level attributes and node level metrics derived from the analysis of hyperlinking patterns between

communication resources reported in chapter three. Those communication resources that were sponsored by a formal organization of two or more people had significantly higher directed normalized betweenness scores in all three issue networks (see Table 5.7). Individual level authorship labels also had a negative correlation to high betweenness scores, suggesting that those organizations that made use of organizational level authorship labels occupied more central roles in each issue sector. This was not the case with Nickelsville, however, suggesting that the issue sector relied more heavily on communication resources with individual authorship labels.

Table 5.7. Correlations between the level of organizational sponsorship and higher directed normalized betweenness scores in hyperlinking patterns between communication resources in the three issue sectors.

	Normalized Betweenness Score		
	Jail	Nickelsville	Sweeps
Individual Author	-.650***	.319***	-.317***
Organizational Sponsorship	.177*	.340***	.217**
Advocacy	-.202*	.093	-.05945
Alt Media	-.287***	-.364***	-.266***
Main Media	-.518***	.336***	-.118
Government	.986***	-	.948***
Total Issues Mentioned	-.242**	-.120*	-.274***
N	140	283	204

Notes: Pearson's correlation reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

High directed normalized betweenness scores were also significantly correlated with institutions that traditionally hold powerful legitimacy markers. In the case of the Proposed Jail and the Sweeps issue sectors, government-sponsored texts had higher directed normalized betweenness scores, likely due to the central role that the city played as a target for collective action, and as the sole body that was capable of sanctioning solutions or change. In the case of the Nickelsville issue sectors, however, the organizational sector with the greatest degree of centrality was mainstream media. This was likely due to the high level of drama

and conflict that *Nickelsville* offered for journalists (leading to significant levels of coverage), combined with the removal of the city as the primary focus of the narrative, short of their activity in policing the camp.

Multiple issue mentions had a negative correlation to high betweenness scores in both the Proposed Jail and Nickelsville issue sectors (see Table 5.8). This suggests that those communication resources that occupied more central locations in these issue sectors were more likely to author issue specialist texts than to tie issues together, a task that was left to those communication resources occupying more peripheral positions in the network. This may be due to the prominence the city of Seattle in the Proposed Jail issue sector, and the prominence of *nickelsvilleseattle.org* in the Nickelsville issue sector – both belonging to organizational sectors more likely to publish issue specialization texts.

Table 5.8. Linear regression of contributing factor to high betweenness scores in the three hyperlink issue networks.

	Normalized Betweenness scores		
	Jail	Nick	Sweeps
Authored	.109***	.365***	.090***
Organization	.051***	.287***	.077*
Mainstream Media	-.036*	.185**	.059
Government	1.032***	-	.981***
Total Issues	-.029*	-.159**	-.037
R Square	.982	.295	.921
N	1116	1116	1116

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p. < .05 = *$ ,  $p. < .01 = **$ ,  $p. < .001 = ***$ .

### Communicating Mobilization in Socio-technological Configurations

The kinds of technological affordances that each organizational sector offered differed in several ways (see Table 5.9). First, some texts were only available online, while others were reproductions of texts that would otherwise also be available in print or broadcast formats. Alternative media outlets were the only organizational sector without a significant

Table 5.9. Correlations between organizational sectors and technological affordances.

	Advocacy	Alt Media	Main Media	Government
Online Only	.391***	.055	.536***	.299***
Email	.593***	-.198***	-.315***	-.054
Blog	-.185***	.338***	-.110***	-.174***
Multi-vocal	.600***	-.293***	-.197***	-.090**
Comments	-.333***	.119***	.318***	-.245***
Uni-vocal	-.024	.055	-.203***	.299***
N	1116	1116	1116	1116

Notes: Pearson's correlation reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

correlation with online only texts, likely due in large part to the many texts published in *Real Change News* (categorized as an alternative media outlet). The second format issue looked at whether the texts were emails or web texts, and here we can see that advocacy organizations were the only organizational sector with a significant number of email texts. This was due in large part to my own role as a participant observer in the three issue campaigns where I subscribed to organizing email lists, although I did also subscribe to email lists from alternative media outlets and local politicians. Blogs were the last format consideration, and we can see that alternative media were the only organizational sector with a significant percentage of blog texts, consisting largely of both personal blogs and regional neighborhood blogs. The other area of interest concerned the communicative affordances that the format made possible, and texts were coded as either allowing multi-vocality, as allowing comments or as only allowing univocal communication (typically in the form of a web-page without a comments function, or an announcement email list). Advocacy organizations were the only organizational sector with a significant portion of multi-vocal texts, most of which consisted of the RCOP email discussion list and the RCOP wiki. Media organizations were the two organizational sectors that made use of comment functions on their web pages, something that was common in blog formats, but was also quite common in news texts like the *Seattle*

*Times* or the *Seattle PI*. Finally, the only organizational sector with a significant likelihood of producing univocal texts were governmental organizations, which consisted of emails from politicians, and the posting of minutes from meetings or local ordinances on the city's website.

These technological affordances can also be seen in relation to the kinds of language use that each technological affordance facilitated. Table 5.10 shows correlations between the technological affordances of each text and the density of major semantic fields or communication processes. We can see that only the communication processes associated with *participant mobilization* (with the exception of *taking collective action*) were more likely to be published in online only texts, while those semantic fields associated with *material poverty* (*development* and *shelter* only) and *deviant subjectivities* (all fields) were both more likely in texts also available offline. This suggests that texts focused on characterizing the problem and valuing it were published in communication resources where they also made their content available offline (as well as those texts talking about *taking collective action* – mostly related to the semantic field of *camping actions*), while those texts focused on *institutionalizing the movement*, and *community organizing* were only published in texts available online. That is not to say that no mobilization focused texts were made available offline – in fact my ethnographic work suggests otherwise (see chapter two) – but that within the sample of digital texts under analysis here, those that focused on participant mobilization were less likely to also be made available offline in newspapers, TV programs, and on area radio stations. Similarly, email was less likely to be used as a format for the distribution of those semantic fields associated with *material poverty* (*development*, *shelter*, and *housing*) and *deviant subjectivities* (*danger* and *drugs*), and more likely to be used for the



Table 5.10. Correlations between technological affordances and semantic field density, measured by the percentage of words in the texts associated with each semantic field or communicative process.

	Format				Affordance	
	OnlineOnly	Email	Blog	Multivocal	Comments	Univocal
<i>Materiality</i>	-.141***	-.065*	-.190***	-.087**	-.195***	.250***
Economy	-.088**	-.032	-.142***	-.060*	-.168***	.206***
Development	-.031	-.065*	-.045	-.038	-.052	.076*
Human Rights	-.039	.034	-.069*	-.029	-.098**	.116***
Services	-.046	-.012	-.142***	.108***	-.119***	.055
Shelter	-.182***	-.146***	-.042	-.092**	-.005	.060*
Housing	-.042	-.095**	-.028	-.096**	-.007	.065*
Alternatives to Jail	.030	.043	-.063*	.028	-.086**	.070*
<i>Subjectivity</i>	-.125***	-.173***	.037	-.158***	.101***	-.007
Danger	-.074*	-.161***	.067*	-.134***	.118***	-.039
Dirty	-.155***	-.047	-.088**	-.095**	-.061*	.119***
Drugs	-.124***	-.065*	-.045	-.067*	.022	.018
<i>Mobilization</i>	.166***	.272***	-.012	.264***	-.105***	-.052
Inst. the Movement	.071*	.159***	-.058	.247***	-.092**	-.056
Community Organizing	.304***	.378***	-.005	.190***	-.138***	.025
Taking Collective Action	-.107***	-.041	.005	.002	.023	-.024
Meetings/Scheduling	.210***	.228***	-.007	.449***	-.103***	-.166***
N	1116	1116	1116	1116	1116	1116

Notes: Pearson's correlation reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

publication of communication processes associated with *participant mobilization* (all but *taking political action*). Both of these trends may be due to the heavy reliance of advocacy organizations on online only and email formats, given the disproportionate contribution that texts produced in this organizational sector made to the production and distribution of communication processes associated with *participant mobilization*. Qualities like the rapidity of publication, ease of broad distribution, personalized contact with recipients, and opportunities for multi-vocality in communication that email offers (see below) may have provided a favorable format for short texts focused on *participant mobilization*. The last format area of interest here is blogs, and we can see that the semantic field of *danger* was the

only area of meaning more likely in texts published using blogs, while non-blog formats were more likely to publish texts with high percentages of words and phrases associated with the semantic fields of the *economy*, *human rights*, *services*, and *dirty*.

The second area of interest in looking at the relationship between technological affordances and semantic field density is in the area focused on the openness of the communicative possibilities of the format. Here we can see that formats allowing multiple voices to contribute (discussion lists, wikis, etc.) were less likely to have high concentrations of those fields associated with *material poverty* (all but *services*) and *deviant subjectivities* (all fields), and more likely to have high levels of communication processes associated with *participant mobilization* (all but *taking collective action*). Conversely, texts facilitating only a single (univocal) voice were more likely to focus on *material poverty* (all but *services*) and the semantic field of *dirty*, and less likely to have high concentrations of the MEETING or SCHEDULE lemmas. Similar to texts utilizing the blog format, those that enabled comments were less likely to have high concentrations of semantic fields associated with *material poverty* (the *economy*, *human rights*, *services*, and *alternatives to jail*), the semantic field of *dirty*, and communication processes associated with *participant mobilization* (all but *taking political action*), and more likely to have high concentrations of the semantic field of *danger*.

Correlational analysis suggests that advocacy organizations, online only texts, email texts, and multi-vocality all correlate significantly with high concentrations of communication processes associated with *participant mobilization* (other than *taking collective action*). Since these variables also all correlate with each other a linear regression was run to control for covariance in the four contributing variables. The dependent variable was created by removing the communication process of *taking collective action* from the

combined *participant mobilization* category.<sup>14</sup> As Table 5.11 shows, after removing *taking collective action* out of the combined *participant mobilization* category, all four independent variables were highly significant contributors to a text having a high concentration of *participant mobilization* words across the sample.

Table 5.11. Linear regression of socio-technological influences on the concentration of participant mobilization talk across the sample.

	Mobilization†
Advocacy organization	0.233***
Online Only	0.161***
Email	0.168***
Multi-vocal	0.156***
R Square	0.307
N	1116

† Mobilization field = the combined values of Movement building, Organizing Activities and Meetings/Scheduling

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p. < .05 = *$ ,  $p. < .01 = **$ ,  $p. < .001 = ***$ .

The three issue areas differed slightly in the kinds of communication technologies that people used to communicate about them. First, texts mentioning only the Proposed Jail were more likely to be available online only, in multi-vocal and email formats (see Table 5.12). This finding may be caused by the significant correlations between texts mentioning the Proposed Jail issue area only and advocacy texts (see the section on issue areas and organizational sectors above), which were also more likely to use online only and multi-vocal email formats. Texts only mentioning the Nickelsville issue area, on the other hand, were more likely to be available only online, in blog formats with comment functionality, and less likely to have multi-vocal and univocal capabilities. This finding may also be related to the organizational sector most closely associated with the production of texts mentioning only the Nickelsville issue area – alternative media outlets – which were also more likely to make use of blog formats with comment functionality. Finally, texts mentioning only the Sweeps

issue area were more likely to be available offline as well and in email formats with univocal capacities. While the Sweeps issue area was not positively associated with any one organizational sector, it was negatively associated with mainstream media coverage, which may account for the high correlation to email texts. The more issues a text mentioned, the more likely it was to be available also in offline formats, on web-pages rather than emails, and in non-univocal texts with comment functionality. This finding seems to correspond with the greater propensity for news organizations to mention more issues in their texts, as well as being more likely to publish non-email texts with comment functionality (see analysis above).

Table 5.12. Correlations between technological affordances and issue specialist/issue brokerage texts.

	Format				Affordances	
	Online Only	Email	Blog	Multi-vocal	Comments	Univocal
J only	0.154***	0.067*	0.010	0.180***	-0.016	-0.092**
N only	0.082**	-0.054	0.216***	-0.123***	0.196***	-0.124***
S only	-0.161***	0.096**	-0.246	-0.042	-0.283***	0.311***
Total Issues	-0.095**	-0.108***	-0.006	-0.018	0.077*	-0.067*
<i>N</i>	1116	1116	1116	1116	1116	1116

Notes: Pearson's correlation reporting standardized coefficients with  $p < .05 = *$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .001 = ***$ .

What kinds of technological configurations were used in organizing each issue campaign? Based on the correlations described above, we would expect that authors producing words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with the communication processes of *institutionalizing the movement* and *participant mobilization* would make use of a different configuration of communication technologies in each issue area. Figure 5.4 lists the predicted relationships for each issue campaign. In the *No New Jail* issue campaign, I predicted that advocacy organizations would use high concentrations of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with *participant mobilization* (after removing *taking political action*) in online

only email formats with multi-vocal affordances. In the *Stop the Sweeps* issue campaign I expected advocacy organizations to use high concentrations of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with *participant mobilization* (after removing *taking political action*) in online only email formats with univocal affordances. Finally, in the *Nickelsville* issue campaign I expected alternative media communication resources to use high concentrations of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with *participant mobilization* (after removing *taking political action*) in online only blog formats that allowed for readers to comment on the posts. These hypotheses are presented in graphical form below.

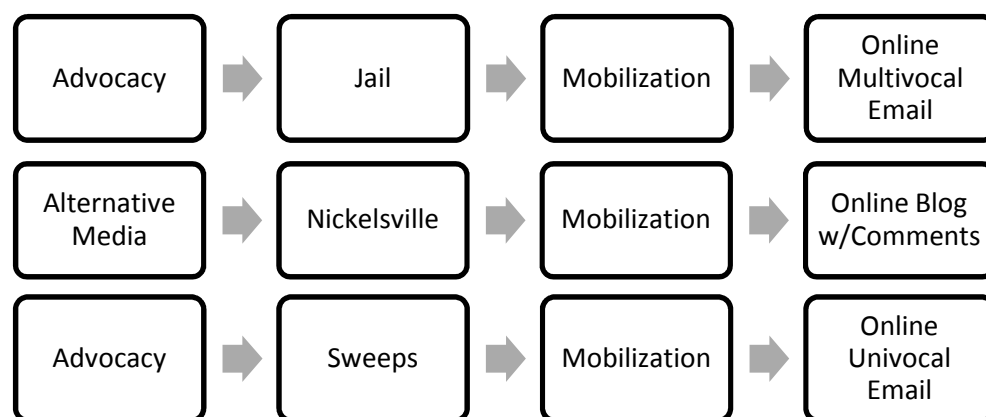


Figure 5.4. Hypothesized contributing factors to choices in technological configuration use for the publication of words, phrases, rules, and lemmas associated with *participant mobilization* (after removing *taking political action*).

In order to test these hypotheses, I first created three combined ordinal variables that summed the occurrences of each technological affordance that were predicted to be used for mobilization by the organizational sector in each campaign. I then ran linear regressions based on each model, and found that all three models were highly significant predictors of technology use (see Tables 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15).

Table 5.13. Linear regression predicting technology use in Mobilization activities in the No New Jail campaign.

Online Multi-vocal Email	
Advocacy	.557***
Jail Only	.099***
Mobilization†	.234***
R Square	.517
N	1116

† Mobilization field = the combined values of Movement building, Organizing Activities and Meetings/Scheduling, without Taking Action.

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p. < .05 = *$ ,  $p. < .01 = **$ ,  $p. < .001 = ***$ .

Table 5.14. Linear regression predicting technology use in Mobilization activities in the Nickelsville campaign.

Online Blog w/Comments	
Alternative Media	.210***
Nickelsville	.198***
Mobilization†	.089***
R Square	.093
N	1116

† Mobilization field = the combined values of Movement building, Organizing Activities and Meetings/Scheduling, without Taking Action.

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p. < .05 = *$ ,  $p. < .01 = **$ ,  $p. < .001 = ***$ .

Table 5.15. Linear regression predicting technology use in Mobilization activities in the Sweeps campaign.

Online Univocal Email	
Advocacy	.392***
Sweeps	.126***
Mobilization†	.168***
R Square	.264
N	1116

† Mobilization field = the combined values of Movement building, Organizing Activities and Meetings/Scheduling, without Taking Action.

Notes: Linear regression reporting standardized coefficients with  $p. < .05 = *$ ,  $p. < .01 = **$ ,  $p. < .001 = ***$ .

## Discussion: Communicating Homeless Issue Campaigns

This analysis of the use of digital texts in organizing around homelessness in Seattle has illustrated how socio-technological affordances influence the kinds of digital resources employed for different kinds of talk. By analyzing trends in the use of several key semantic fields across a broad spectrum of digital communication resources, I have demonstrated that not all resources are used for the same kinds of talk. I started this chapter by presenting four meta-level questions about the ways that issue areas provide affordances for the production of language, the relationship between organizational and issue brokerage roles, the level of importance of organizational sponsorship in textual production, and the kinds of communication technologies and organizational sponsorship involved in the production of participant mobilization talk in each issue area.

First, I was interested in examining the narrative affordances provided by each issue area. I found that the three issue areas facilitated different types of discourses in the areas of *material poverty*, *deviant subjectivities*, and *participant mobilization*. In the area of *material poverty*, authors who wrote about the Proposed Jail issue area focused more on the “funding” of “alternatives to jail” and jail “services”; the Sweeps on categories of “class,” “shelter,” “housing,” “belongings,” “survival,” and “immorality”; and Nickelsville on the “economy,” “food,” and “blankets” and on the number of people who have died outside through “weather or violence” or the importance of “safety in numbers.” In the area of *deviant subjectivities*, authors that wrote about the Proposed Jail issue area focused on deviant people, the Sweeps on deviant spaces, and Nickelsville on deviant activities. And in the area of *participant mobilization*, texts about the Proposed Jail focused on “meetings” and “forums,” the “petition” “campaign,” and the need for the city to work in “partnership” in a “collaborative”

effort with other area governments; the Sweeps on “cross class” “campouts” and other types of “protest” actions aimed at building “relationships” through “coalitions”; and Nickelsville on “self-managed” “camps,” “donations” from “friends” in “solidarity” with the “tent city,” and on the many “moves” from one “faith” based “host” to another. At the meta-level of semantic categories, this resulted in the Sweeps issue area being more closely associated with *material poverty*, the Proposed Jail issue area with *deviant subjectivities*, and the Nickelsville issue area with *participant mobilization* (largely due to the proliferation of the CAMP lemma).

Second, I was interested in which organizational sectors facilitated issue brokerage, and which organizational sectors facilitated issue specialization. I found that authors who published in multiple organizations (organizational brokers) were significantly more likely to author texts that mentioned multiple issues (issue brokers), confirming the organizational broker = issue broker hypothesis. I also found that communication resources sponsored by media organization (alternative media and mainstream media) were more likely to publish texts that mentioned multiple issues, while advocacy and government-sponsored texts were more likely to be issue specialists.

Third, I was interested in the roles that formal organizations had in structuring the dynamics of the three issue sectors. I found that formal organizations were important resources in the production of language and communication strategies. Individual organizational attributes were influential factors when it came to whether or not to participate at all. Some organizations were more likely to foster discourse on an issue than others, based on geographic proximity and alignment of the issue to the stated goals of the organization. However, each organization was modeled after other organizational forms, and to the extent that a particular communication resource was embedded in a larger community of practice



(organizational sector), social norms regarding what should be said and how participants should say it played an important role in structuring language use. We have seen that advocacy and alternative media organizations were far more likely to engage in the production of participant mobilization discourses than other kinds of organizations. Yet, we also saw that the affordances of particular issue sectors encouraged one organizational sector to focus more on participant mobilization talk than another, and to do so in communication texts with different technological configurations. This had the effect of distributing the responsibility of participant mobilization within the Nickelsville issue area, broadening the number of organizations and authors contributing to getting people out to events, donating material necessities, and naming their actions as part of a social movement. The Proposed Jail issue area, however, was the most centralized issue area, with fewer people authoring more texts. In all three issue sectors, those texts sponsored by an organization of two or more people had higher centrality scores based on hyperlinking patterns – particularly those with traditional credibility markers (governments and mainstream media outlets) – while advocacy organizations and alternative media outlets had lower centrality scores (as measured by Freeman’s directed normalized betweenness).

Finally, I was interested in the kinds of socio-technological configurations that were deployed for the production of participant mobilization discourse in each issue campaign. The use of technologies of communication made possible via the Internet is seemingly an important part of the mobilization communication repertoire. While my ethnographic participation in the three issue campaigns suggests that organizers continually talked about face-to-face interaction and relational organizing as important principles in building effective movements, within the corpus of digital texts, those communication texts that were only

available online were most heavily used for the communication of *participant mobilization* talk. Particularly in the *No New Jail* and *Stop the Sweeps* campaigns, email was an important communication tool for getting people out to events or calling on them to sign a petition or contact a representative. While the dataset obscures the many flyers, handbills, or photocopied informational packets that were used by organizers (particularly among homeless participants), of those texts that were available online, texts also available offline (traditional media formats like TV, radio, or newspapers) were less important for *participant mobilization* talk and more important for the contestation of *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*. These online only texts were perhaps most important for the mobilization of housed allies who may not have otherwise had access to the flesh and blood materials distributed during events like protests, campouts, or meetings.

Still, there were fewer un-housed participants that made extensive use of digital communication technologies than who did not, and to the best of my knowledge, the majority of the texts included in this corpus were not authored by people who were homeless during or prior to the sample period. This trend has the effect of further mediating interactions between the majority of housed and un-housed persons by relying on housed intermediaries like homeless advocates or alternative media journalists to speak for those experiencing homelessness. Homeless-led groups like SHARE and WHEEL have worked hard to privilege the underprivileged in structuring the ways that they organize in face-to-face settings. Yet they continue to rely on digitally savvy allies like RCEP in producing their digital presence.<sup>15</sup> *Nickelsville*, while developed out of the SHARE/WHEEL community, made a somewhat more sophisticated attempt at using digital tools than SHARE/WHEEL, but such activities were undervalued in comparison to the face-to-face strategies that made up their everyday

repertoire. As I interviewed participants in self-managed organizations I heard seasoned organizers say that they only started using email a few months ago, and self-reported “techies” talked about how they do not rely on digital tools as much anymore because they had learned that “real organizing” happened in face-to-face settings (see chapter two).

One is left to wonder, then, what role digital communication resources played in homeless mobilization processes. We have seen here that, once digital tools were adopted by participants, the kinds of language used in these resources varied significantly depending on the communication resource sponsoring the tool, the kind of tool being used (email or website), and the level of multi-vocality enabled by the particular socio-technological configuration of the tool. This finding also varied depending on the issue sector in question. I found that each issue area differed in terms of the organizational sponsorship and technological affordances used to produce participant mobilization discourses. Advocacy organizations were important producers of *participant mobilization* discourses in both the *No New Jail* and the *Stop the Sweeps* campaigns, relying on multi-vocal and uni-vocal email texts respectively. But organizing *Nickelsville* was more likely to happen through alternative media outlets in the form of blogs with comment functions.

These differences between the technological, organizational, and communicative affordances of each issue area were important structuring factors in the issue campaigns that existed within them, facilitating some kinds of actions and discouraging others. Further, the ways that participants acted within these issue areas shaped the ways that the issue campaigns were perceived and the opportunities that they had. In chapter six, I conclude this study by outlining how this analysis of homeless organizing in Seattle, Washington might be

able to inform further research on social movements and homelessness, as well as practical implications for organizers.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion: Social Movement Communication in Social Movement Research**

As I write this final chapter in the Spring of 2010, the unemployment rate in many parts of the United States has risen to over 10% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010), food banks in the Seattle area are seeing record demand for their services (Javier & Chittim, 2010), and the gap between the rich and the poor is the highest that it has been since the 1920s (Massey, 2008). These trends have compounded with the rising cost of housing and food, meaning that more and more people are struggling to keep a roof over their heads. Yet these structural dynamics of monetary insecurity have not gone unchallenged in one local urban environment.

Building on a homeless movement that can easily be traced to the early 1990s, a dynamic movement existed in Seattle between 2007 and 2009 around the central concept of homelessness that challenged the city's policies, questioned regional approaches to incarceration, and increased the amount of immediate emergency shelter available by creating a self-managed tent city. These efforts developed in the context of a homeless social movement, and they were organized in the context of specific areas of meaning. Organizers focused on particular policies and projects that highlighted injustice and catalyzed participation in three issue areas: opposition to a Proposed Jail project, a campaign to "*Stop the Sweeps*" of urban homeless campers, and *Nickelsville* - a project that provided emergency shelter for up to 100 people at a time, and aimed to provide shelter for up to 1,000.

In this study I have examined these three issue campaigns in their issue contexts, and looked at the ways that technologies of communication, social organization, and language use have responded to and shaped them. In doing so, I have made several general claims

about how social movements are organized, the affordances that issue areas, technologies, and communication resources provide them with, and the power dynamics that result. In a changing media environment, communication is still a central organizing aspect of movement activity, and how people engage in communication around key issues and events can illuminate dynamics important to the study of social movements, technology, organizations and language. To conclude this study, I review my main claims, point towards future research in these areas, and make suggestions for practitioners of social movements.

### **Movements are Organized Around Issues**

Social change is a complex and highly contextual process. However, there are foci for action that participants utilize for encouraging change, and most often the focus is on a particular issue, project, or policy. Concentrating on the issue areas that focus activity in social change work highlights the *who* and *what* of movements: who participates and what do they say? By focusing our attention on the collection of participants involved in the production of an issue area we can see issue campaigns as dynamic contests for meaning by people within and through multiple organizations. These multi-organizational fields, when organized around a single issue area, take the form of issue sectors. Since social change is organized around issue areas, issue sectors become a useful method for identify the boundaries of participation in contestation – in this case, around issue campaigns. This kind of boundary work allows us to look at relationships between organizations within issue sectors, as well as relationships between issue sectors themselves.

Issue sectors are also useful when we look at what is said and how an issue area is made to mean something through communicative action. No issue area exists in isolation from other areas of meaning, and in fact, I would suggest that issue areas exist *only* in

relation to a series of topical and site specific discourses. What those discourses are, and how they are deployed in the public sphere can be seen as efforts at meaning contestation in an issue sector, the results of which can largely determine the kinds of social policies that are developed in the future (i.e., to build a Proposed Jail or not, to allow *Nickelsville* to have a permanent location, or to continue the Sweeps policy). Thus, adopting an issue-focused approach builds a methodological practice for studying communication and movement organizing, as well as offering the ability to “read” a movement and the relationships that constitute it.

This assertion has implications for the study of social movements. First, research on social movements should take seriously the issue contexts within which movement activity takes place. Failing to do so removes from analysis a significant area of movement activity, as well as important structuring aspects to the political opportunity structures that participants experience in conceiving of and implementing collective action. Second, the emphasis on issue sectors in sampling procedures that such an approach would suggest highlights the multiple participants in the discursive arena that are and are not traditional social movement organizations. This makes the research more demanding, given that it expands the sample beyond a single organization or group of organizations. But it is also a procedure that takes us closer to movement activity as it is lived by participants who often pay more attention to their adversaries and those who have the “public ear” (i.e., mainstream media organizations) than potential or existing allies.

### **Campaign Context Matters**

Since issue areas function as foci for social change activity, movements often organize themselves around issue campaigns, consisting of efforts at changing a particular

policy, practice, or proposal. The relationships between issue areas, issue sectors, and issue campaigns influence the choices that participants make in organizing: changing outreach activities, action repertoires, and framing strategies. This is to say, organizing does not take place in a vacuum. Campaigns have their own dynamics, facilitating some discourses and not others, or highlighting particular aspects of an issue over another. Organizing around the Proposed Jail highlighted a particular combination of discourses (homelessness alongside criminality, punishment, or exclusion of the deviant Other in assuring safe communities) that had the capacity to establish stronger semantic connections between deviant social qualities, personal responsibility attributions, and homeless persons. The cognitive connections that campaigns facilitate between concepts, categories and people sometimes have to do with the way the issue area already exists in discourse: i.e., what areas of meaning are already attached to the issue area? This was often the case with media coverage of homelessness, for instance, when journalists focused on homeless persons and their living spaces as dirty, dangerous, and drug ridden. But they also result from how participants define issue areas in light of the issue campaign: i.e., what areas of meaning are attached to an issue campaign by different participants (activists, government employees, journalists, etc.)? We saw, for instance, how the way that the city defined homeless persons and camps (as dirty, dangerous, and drug ridden) was contested by organizers and participants by repurposing their language as evidence of injustice and by taking their binary opposites as characterizations of their own activities (i.e., we are clean, safe, and sober). Given the strong contextually specific affordances that issue campaigns display, movement activists are well advised to be smart about the issue areas that they seek to intervene in and how their words fit within a larger cultural space and organizational power dynamic.



One area of issue context that was an important factor in the kinds of discursive production that became possible around homelessness was the economy. The economic recession that began to grip the national imaginary in the summer of 2008 was an important ally for anyone organizing around class or poverty in the United States at that time. While coverage of poverty or homelessness generally tends to obscure structural pathways to homelessness and focuses instead on the personal responsibility of the poor for their own poverty, the recession provided an important news hook for journalists who were able to provide some structural context to why people were poor by referencing problematic financial practices at the institutional level. The many stories of middle class Americans losing their jobs and having their houses foreclosed on also provided an opportunity for readers to draw connections between their own lives and the lives of those camping outside or living at *Nickelsville*. This social connection encouraged participation in the movement by housed allies as people now saw that their economic situation was precarious. The perception that housed allies were “one paycheck away from homelessness” was encouraged by key writers like Tim Harris, who actively worked to create similarities between housed and unhoused participants through his columns and blog posts about “cross-class unity” in the *Stop the Sweeps* campaign. But this narrative was also promulgated by innumerable church members, activists, and citizen bloggers, who found a level of cultural relevance in this story in the context of *Nickelsville*, and called on their readers to see the connections between their own lives and the lives of those they were writing about.

Another area that benefited from cultural resonance was the production of the poor as oppressed by the city, and of organizing around poverty and homelessness as righteous work. This is a powerful narrative in our culture and participation was often framed in terms of

standing up for the downtrodden. However, the three issue campaigns offered two different opportunities for people to see themselves as working for social justice. The most common approach in left liberal political activism to advocate for political change involves a privileged participation base organizing on behalf of an oppressed group. This kind of organizing often happens for legitimate reasons: those experiencing oppression have fewer resources and less institutional credibility than do those with more privilege. However, a second approach moves from “speaking for” to “speaking with” by asking privileged allies to support those experiencing oppression in their self-organized efforts at helping themselves. While all three issue campaigns relied somewhat on both models of organizing, Nickelodeons differed in their ability to self-organize themselves politically, and in a way that was easily recognizable and respected by housed allies. This was not so evident in the other two campaigns. The *Stop the Sweeps* campaign engaged *Real Change News* vendors in the organizing process and in holding public events, and allied with the SHARE/WHEEL community in those efforts. But the bulk of the work was taken on by paid RCEP staff and by housed ally RCOP activists. The *No New Jail* campaign could be read in two ways, depending on who the victims were in the narrative. If we understood the Proposed Jail to be oppressing poor neighborhoods (as was the narrative that neighborhood groups and blogs presented), then the campaign to stop it was certainly organized and run in large part by those experiencing the oppression (namely, the HPAC). But if we understood the *No New Jail* campaign to be about changing the system of incarceration that imprisons poor and minority citizens, then the campaign was run more by allies than by those experiencing the oppression (i.e., convicted citizens, jailed citizens, etc.). While each issue campaign offered compelling narratives of working for social justice, *Nickelsville* differed in its call, simultaneously

opening the door to seeing homeless persons as capable of changing their own lives and the city's policy, and in making calls for housed allies primarily as support for specific needs during the campaign (pallets, plywood, drivers, food, etc.).

Journalists and city-sponsored texts made extensive use of the meanings often associated with homelessness and criminality in their presentation of the Sweeps, Nickelsville, and the Proposed Jail issue areas. The strong cultural narratives that associated personal responsibility and drug abuse/criminality with homelessness and jails worked against more libratory narratives, refocusing attention on a disciplinary and protectionist narrative that was picked up in media accounts and in online discussion boards. Yet each issue area functioned differently in this balance. The Sweeps issue area was most closely associated with drugs, filth and danger, in part due to the successful media strategy employed by the city, but also due to the focus on isolated camps and the "cleaning up" actions of city officials. The Proposed Jail issue area was focused more on stereotypes about criminals and criminal behavior as somehow intrinsic to individuals (a few bad apples that must be contained and punished), and less on the social context within which groups of people are economically and politically constrained, or within which some activities are criminalized and others are not. The Nickelsville issue area, on the other hand, highlighted the role of city agencies in policing appropriate behavior, through coverage of camp raids and arrests. The direct action tactics most appealing to popular discourse about *Nickelsville* brought to the fore the long-held patterns of news coverage in the "protest paradigm," through which the logistics of permitting and arrest were the focus rather than structural constraints or city level policy. And while *Nickelsville*'s self-organized structure placed agency in the hands of Nickelodeons, many reports emphasized the strict rules that the camp employed, and focused

attention on those instances where a resident was violent or consumed drugs or alcohol within the camp as evidence that their claims of a safe, clean camp were precarious.

*Nickelsville* was thus in a double bind: by responding to stereotypes of homeless persons directly (“we are clean and sober” because we have “strict rules”), Nickelodeons were less able to offer alternative measures of appropriate behavior, and instead created a situation of exceptionalism, whereby *Nickelsville* was different from the norm of homeless behavior.

The assertion that campaign context matters has implications for academic research. Issue campaigns are one of the most common organizing vehicles for making social change happen, and research on social movements often explores activity within a particular issue campaign, looking at participant demographics, identity processes, or change over time (Drury, Reicher, & Stott, 2003). This work is important for identifying the micro-mobilization processes at work in social movement activity, and I would encourage this approach to sampling. However, without a multi-campaign comparison, it becomes hard to see the forest for the trees. Some work at the level of issue movements has attempted to take a much broader approach to highlight these meta level dynamics (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Kitschelt, 1986), but without the specificity that a campaign level analysis provides, we are more able to see the forest, but less able to see the trees. The three cases here present three overlapping issue campaigns that shared many but not all participants. Sampling three issue campaigns oriented around the same area of movement activity (homelessness), and engaging many of the same participants, allowed comparisons that highlighted differences based on organizational participation, technology use, and linguistic patterns. Had I sampled only a single campaign, or an entire movement, this comparison would not have been possible.

## **Communication Is at the Heart of Organizing**

Social movement research has followed two fairly divergent paths that have separated materiality from meaning in processes of social production. The materialist perspectives practiced by scholars of social movements relying primarily on resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977) or political opportunities structures (McAdam, 1982) largely view collective action as a series of positivistic actions, participants, and outcomes. In the move to de-emphasize the irrationality of mob psychology early academics in this vein refocused on cognitive understandings of collective behavior as having positive qualities (Blumer, 1951), and the North American school of social movement research began to downplay psychological factors in the identification and mobilization of participants, and instead focused on material resources and organizational membership as a means of explaining movement “success” (Hall, 1995; McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly et al., 1975). On the other hand, European scholars have trended towards psychological analysis of identificational processes that might explain why participants join in taking collective action with others (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). Often labeled as new “social movement theory,” this approach has recognized that meanings are socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), fore-grounding the contestation of meaning in the public sphere, and focusing on the influences that such meaning making processes might have on individuals and collectivities (Melucci, 1989, 1996a, 1996b), while back-grounding the material opportunities and constraints faced by many participants. New social movement theory brings communication and language to the fore in a way that traditional North American approaches do not, and the recognition of communication practices as an integral part of mobilization process is an important corrective to positivistic treatments of protest actions that often “black box” the

linguistic efforts involved. This is similarly the case with most studies of communication networks, where categories like “information exchange” take the place of a detailed analysis of what is said (Monge & Contractor, 2003; Saunders, 2007), although some researchers have taken up this task (c.f., Mische, 2008; Mische & White, 1998). In recent years, these two traditions have been increasingly reconciled in the social movement literature, as many have realized the necessity for both the meaning-oriented and material-oriented aspects of movement dynamics (della Porta & Diani, 2007), although communication and communication processes are still largely relegated to a subset of movement dynamics often associated with collective action framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988; Snow, Rochford et al., 1986).

The approach to social movement research that I propose in this study takes communication as the heart of social movement dynamics, focusing on processes of social movement communication. While recognizing the significant work that both materialist/structuralist and meaning-oriented approaches to social movement research have offered, I suggest that focusing on communication dynamics in social movements can illuminate the connections between materiality, subjectivity, and participant mobilization processes. I say this because communication is the medium through which all political activity takes place, and it is the way in which those activities are observed and understood by participants and bystanders. When applied to a materialist/structuralist approach, communication is the means through which participants express their understandings of opportunities and constraints, relying on communication resources as they negotiate the publication and distribution of communication texts. Similarly, participants produce collective action as meaningful through the ways that those actions are labeled and

interpreted through language in the public sphere. When applied to a meaning-oriented approach, social movement communication can be understood as mobilizing particular constellations of semantic meanings through participant's contributions to issue specific discourses. However, meaning is not a de-materialized experience. Rather, the communication resources that participants use in the process of producing communication texts – be they focused on issue contestation or participant mobilization – are crucially important to who is able to speak, what kinds of meanings are encouraged and how the resulting texts are valued in the public sphere.

I have suggested here that organizers engage in communicative activity in two basic areas. First, they use communication to mobilize participants by naming their activities as movements, naming their action strategies, and engaging in community organizing through the identification of allies and calls for participation. Second, organizers contest what an issue means. This contestation happens in two areas of meaning: the materiality of the issue in question and how the issue and its participants are valued through the production of subjectivities – often involving their associations with deviant behavior. In the local Seattle homeless movement, this involved the contestation of things like housing, shelter, and services, as well as drugs, violence, and filth.

**Participant mobilization: Movements rely on communication to organize social change.**

Social movement communication is a central aspect of making movements happen. This is why communication is such an interesting thing to study. But how does it work? How do people use language to construct movements, take action, and solicit participation? I suggest that organizers engage in three basic communication processes in their efforts at producing social movements through *participant mobilization*. First, organizers construct

movements as things by naming them as “movements,” “campaigns,” “coalitions,” and “alliances.” This allows people to identify their actions with a historical trajectory of movement building as well as identifying achievements along the way. Without the naming practices involved in the communication process of *institutionalizing the movement*, social movements would not exist as emic entities with social power and purpose in our culture that could be discussed by participants and observers, and atomized efforts at creating social change would not be tied together through their socio-historical categorization in language.

Second, organizers talk about *taking collective action* as they plan actions, promote them and reflect on them. In the local Seattle homeless movement, three semantic fields were deployed in the communicative process of *taking collective action*: 1) *camping actions* were produced through the construction of overnight “campouts” and direct action camps in the genre of “tent cities,” 2) *traditional protest actions* were deployed by labeling participants activities as “marches,” “protests,” or “rallies,” and 3) *petitioning government* became an area of activity of importance as participants talked about testifying at public “hearings” and gathering signatures for a series of “petitions.” These three semantic fields associated with the communication process of *taking collective action* labeled action repertoires as meaningful in the local context, drawing on historical examples from traditional protest movements and efforts at political reform through institutionally sanctioned channels, as well as survival activities (like “camping”) that were indigenous to the homeless experience. Each of these areas carried their own cultural baggage and were treated differently by activists and journalists alike. Action strategies served as micro-level discursive objects around which people could organize themselves: by naming an action it became possible to value that action, tie it to larger movements, and call on others to participate. Further, the identification



of action strategies (particularly those related to “camps” and “camping”) was by far the most common area of meaning produced in media texts, providing a point of entry for discussions about homelessness that privileged resistive action in the context of material poverty.

Third, *community organizing* is an important component of any social change organizing effort, and the ways that people produce these activities through language matter when it comes to “mobilizing” participants and “organizing” people to “turn-out” for events. This communication process was actualized in the local Seattle homeless movement through the production of four semantic fields of meaning: 1) encouraging *participation*, 2) identifying *allies* by calling on area governments to “partner” and “work together,” and by talking about the need for movement participants to come together in “unity” and “solidarity” “across class,” 3) structuring “volunteer” activities through the solicitation and distribution of *donations* in the form of calls for people to “drop off” plywood, or “bring by” 2x4s, and 4) the linguistic constitution of *friendship*, in talk about “friends,” “relationships,” “love,” and “caring.”

While the retroductive production of these three communication processes – *institutionalizing the movement*, *taking collective action*, and *community organizing* – were grounded in a local homeless movement, I suggest that they are communication processes that are universal across social movement contexts. Researchers and practitioners alike would benefit from a recognition that each of these communication processes contribute to the production of *participant mobilization*. While the semantic fields that populate each process – and the words, phrases, rules, and lemmas that are deployed within each semantic field – will likely vary in different issue contexts, the communication processes themselves can help to signal structures of meaning and mobilization activity across contexts, and the

identification of differences can help us to understand the affordances that each issue area, issue sector, and issue campaign offer in our efforts at producing social change. It is the area of linguistic analysis of calls to action and collaboration that may be the most interesting for future research. There has been very little done in this area, and as this analysis has shown, the identification of particular words and phrases in a body of texts can highlight mobilization strategies, as well as difference between cases. There has yet to emerge a general theory of mobilization language, but such a task would be a welcome addition to the literature.

**Issue contestation: Movements contest meaning through communication.**

In addition to communication processes associated with participant mobilization, social movement activity is deeply enmeshed in communication processes associated with issue contestation. I contend that the process of issue contestation happens in two areas: in contests over the meaning of *materiality*, and over the production of *subjectivities* attached to people, groups, spaces, and activities. That is to say that those who engage in social movement activity are always involved in struggles over access to, and control over, material resources, as well as struggles over what things, groups, events, and places mean. This was certainly the case with the local homeless movement examined here, but I suggest that it is also the case in other contexts. I draw here on work in the area of new social movements – work that focuses on meaning, symbolic struggle, and collective identity formation (Melucci, 1989, 1996a, 1996b). Indeed, social movements are responsible for major changes in the meanings that we attach to people, places, groups, and events: they are largely credited with shifts in the ways that any number of racial categories have been re-valued in popular culture; and they have contributed to significant changes in the roles that are deemed acceptable for people to play based on gender, age, or ability. This kind of meaning work is

often associated with what are considered to be identity-based social movements like women's rights, or the LGBTQ rights movement. These movements are typically considered to be based solely on efforts to change how people think about an issue, and that work is understood to exist primarily in the area of meaning and language (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). Yet, in all of these cases, very real material realities were also in play. Sexual orientation and gender, for instance, has – and continues to be – a significant factor in wage discrimination, violence, and access to public social benefits. Such considerations push up against the field of political opportunities research (Kitschelt, 1986; McAdam, 1982) or resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1973, 1977), approaches that are often juxtaposed to new social movement theory (Melucci, 1994). I would argue, however, that the study of language and meaning is firmly intertwined with the study of material opportunities and constraints. On the one hand, identifying something as a material or political opportunity is only done through language, as people name something and characterize how it relates to the movement. On the other hand, the material context that surrounds movement activities structure what is and is not produced as meaning: the identification of the economic recession required that foreclosure and unemployment rates went up, thus making it something that people could name and talk about. Further, the kinds of organizational, political, or economic resources that are often the focus of resource mobilization research are of continued importance to mobilization activity. While many in the new social movement tradition have argued that identity-based movements are less constrained by material considerations, I would argue that all issue movements are contests over the access to, and control of, material resources, and that the recognition of material constraints as important factors in mobilization

activity would help to contextualize the ways that participants do and do not engage with others in collective action.

My research on homeless organizing found that the local Seattle homeless movement engaged in issue contestation in two general areas: *material poverty* and *deviant subjectivities*. First, organizers engaged in contests over *material poverty*. This involved the negotiation of material opportunities and constraints inherent in the semantic fields of *housing, shelter, services, development, the economy, alternatives to jail, and human rights*. In each of these semantic fields activists, journalists, and governments presented competing interpretations of materiality: what “housing” or “development” meant, for instance, or whether existing policies were adequate or appropriate. In many cases, the success or failure of a policy depended on the communication strategies of competing groups of people, often leading to “counterframing” activities (Benford, 1987, p. 75) between participants over what was “humane,” or “inhumane,” or what constituted a “safe” or “healthy” way to live. These “adversarial framing” contests (Gamson, 1995) had very real material implications regarding the kinds of social policies that were developed and implemented, as well as the kinds of emergency survival mechanisms that were sanctioned or outlawed.

The second area of issue contestation in the local Seattle homeless movement focused on the stigmatization of persons by attaching them with *deviant subjectivities*. Given the social exclusion of homelessness from the general public experience, what homelessness means and who homeless persons are is defined in large part through the production of discourse in the public sphere. Unfortunately, one of the most common areas of meaning that is attached to homelessness is that which is related to social deviance. Descriptions of homeless persons and homeless camps in Seattle relied heavily on social stigmas relating to

the semantic fields of *drugs*, *danger*, and *dirty*. These three semantic fields were deployed in descriptions of people as “drunks” or “addicts,” and in the extensive presentation of homeless camps as “dangerous” and “filthy” places, “littered” with “human waste,” “jugs of urine,” and “vermin.” Deviance was used as a justification for the city’s policy of campsite clearances (called “sweeps”) and the channeling of social policy into government bureaucracies like the “Board of Health” rather than those tasked with the provision of “shelter.” Activists responded to these discourses in two ways. On the one hand, their use was highlighted as an injustice in their own right, and they were replicated in blogs and editorials as evidence of the injustice of how people living outside were demonized by housed society. On the other hand, activists and camp residents at places like *Nickelsville* constructed definitions of themselves and their homes that directly countered these stereotypes, relying on binary oppositions to claim that the camp was “clean” and “sober,” and that they had strict rules about “no violence” that assured a “safe” environment. While both of these strategies may have shifted the ways that social stigmas were described in journalistic accounts of *Nickelsville*, they still left the attention on whether or not people experiencing homelessness were or were not “drunks” or “criminal,” rather than shifting the focus away from the appropriateness of poor people and their perceived behaviors and instead on the actions of city government or the economic policies that lead to poverty.

The kinds of meanings that were attached to homelessness diverged most in the deployment of the semantic field of *human rights* as an ethical appeal, and in the presentation of “alternatives” to incarceration or “managed” shelters that activists used. These areas of meaning offered readers, listeners and viewers alternative ways of thinking about how to respond to extreme poverty in the form of social policy and collective actions like “self-

managed” shelters, and diverted people’s attention away from the kinds of individual-level responsibility attribution that so easily blames the victims and fails to create substantive change.

Practitioners would be well advised to take the areas of meaning associated with a particular issue area seriously, and think strategically about the words and phrases employed in furthering an organizing effort. As we have seen, some areas of meaning may be extremely difficult to shake, and when they are overcome they may be merely transferred to those not directly associated with the issue campaign (as was the case with *Nickelsville*). Researchers may also benefit from these typologies, and future work on social movement communication should pay close attention to both aspects of issue contestation, as well as the specific linguistic strategies that participants use to engage others in collective action. Such an approach could complement the analysis of the material structures that provide affordances to collective action, as well as the meaning making processes that are of so much importance to modern social movement activity.

### **Technologies Matter**

The kinds of communication technologies that organizers use reflect cultural understandings of who those technologies reach and what those technologies can do, as well as material constraints associated with those populations. A great deal of research on communication technologies has emphasized the networked forms that computer mediated communication can take (Bennett, 2003), effectively flattening communication hierarchies and providing universal access to contribute to the public sphere (Castells, 2001). My research here suggests that, while this may be the case for some participants, it is far from so universal a shift as has been suggested. In this regard, I am supporting claims by others in the

study of social movement communication and technology use who have pointed to the communicative limitations of computer mediated communication (Wall, 2007), as well as the material constraints that structure who can and cannot participate in this new digital public sphere (Ganesh & Barber, 2009). Issue movements like homelessness that are so clearly based around material poverty may be particularly helpful in highlighting this dynamic, since differences in access and skill are so starkly marked for both researchers and participants. But this is a lesson that those in the academy have been slow in learning.

I found that organizers in the local Seattle homeless movement engaged communication technologies differently depending on the housing status of their intended audience, as well as the intended purpose of communicative behavior. When communicating with homeless participants, organizers relied primarily on face-to-face communication platforms like meetings, rallies, flyers, and informal conversations. These practices were motivated both by an understanding of homeless participant's reduced level of access to Internet technologies as well as a recognition of the existing organizational processes that served to build face-to-face communication skills among participants. When communicating with housed participants, organizers relied primarily on Internet enabled technologies like websites, email, and online petitions, as well as phone calls and phone trees to get out the word and call people to action. But even as organizers utilized Internet communication technologies in their outreach efforts with housed allies, they still focused their attention on using those technologies to get people to "turn out" to face-to-face interactive settings, calling on people to "stop by," and to "bring by" "food" or "plywood." These face-to-face settings were seen as important for facilitating the kinds of "cross class" "relationships" that foster deeper commitments, sustain participation, and build successful movements. As Anitra

Freeman put it, “a movement comes out of relationships between people...” (Freeman, interview with author, 10/24/2008) and those relationships were seen as created through face-to-face interactions.

In addition to mobilization activities, organizers, journalists, and government employees all made extensive use of Internet technologies in communicating about the three issue areas. This was due in part to the growing trend of replicating broadcast or print content online, but it was accompanied by a range of Internet-only formats where those without membership in an organization with broadcast or print capacities could contribute to the discursive production of homelessness in the public sphere. Neighborhood blogs, personal blogs, and video hosting sites diversified each issue sector in ways that served to de-center the level of discursive control that traditional institutional power holders like governments and mainstream media organizations have commonly held. This was most striking in the Nickelsville issue sector, where a significantly larger number of organizations and individuals contributed smaller numbers of texts, resulting in a less centralized hyperlink network among contributing communication resources. Authorial distribution may have been more pronounced in Seattle than it would have been in another urban area not so closely enamored with the Internet, or in more rural areas where Internet use is statistically less prevalent (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2007). But even within this context, the three issue sectors varied significantly. This can be seen in the Proposed Jail issue sector, where the city of Seattle occupied a highly centralized location, resulting in a more centralized network than either the Sweeps or Nickelsville issue sectors. It is also worth noting that across issue sectors, those with the greatest degree of network level status continued to be communication resources sponsored by organizations, and traditional



credibility markers like governmental affiliation or being a mainstream media organization were even more significant contributors to high levels of network centrality from a positional perspective, as measured by high levels of in-links and high normalized directed betweenness scores.

My analysis of technology use might suggest a revision of some of the assumptions academics have made about how technology is and is not used for social movement organizing. I would argue that few studies have analyzed technology use in the context of other communication practices, and that such an approach is important if we are to understand how different socio-technological configurations are and are not used. Practitioners may also take heed in the ways they think about technology use in the mobilization process. Rather than relying only on Internet enabled communication tools, this study has highlighted the ways that email and web-based tools can be used in concert with co-present communication contexts in ways that encourage people to identify with the issue and the movement and become “soldiers for the cause” (Harris, interview with author, 11/4/2008).

### **Organizations Matter**

As I have suggested in my characterization of technology use, organizations matter. This seems like a simple assertion, but in the current climate of technology and social movement studies such assertions are increasingly suspect. In part, this is due to how many people in wealthier countries are turning to online technologies in the organizing process, leading to research that focuses on the ways that technologies organize people, and how those technologies take on agentive roles in organizing processes (Bennett, 2003; Latour, 1994). This is indeed an interesting phenomenon, and I have found that technologies do in

fact play an important role in structuring access to production and consumption of communication texts in ways that provide more opportunities to traditionally disempowered groups, and in structuring the relationships between different areas of meaning through the medium of the Internet as an informational database (c.f., Poster, 1990). Yet, part of this architecture still relies on organizations as facilitators of communicative production and as credibility markers for those navigating the web of information now made possible by the internet. This means that organizations matter for two basic reasons: they provide spaces for cultural development, and they provide resources for the production and valuing of texts.

First, organizations provide the spaces within which people can come together around similar interests to identify who they are, what they believe, and what they will do about those beliefs (McAdam & Scott, 2005; Mische, 2008; Scollon, 1998). Three organizations were particularly important for organizing people experiencing homelessness in the Seattle area: the Seattle Housing and Resource Effort/Women's Housing Equality and Enhancement League (SHARE/WHEEL), the Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP), and – as it developed – *Nickelsville*. Each of these organizations provided physical spaces and organizational processes through which participants could learn about what it meant to be a homeless activist, as well as opportunities for becoming politically involved. They also were important spaces where participants in the movement constructed communication strategies: how to present themselves and their activities and how to respond to problematic framings from city officials or mainstream media journalists. These organizational cultures developed distinctive approaches to homelessness that were then brought into the public sphere through communication texts that they themselves produced and through journalistic coverage of direct actions that they took. It is within the SHARE/WHEEL community, for instance, that

discourses around self-management and homelessness as a dangerous predicament were popularized by memorializing those that had died “outside or through violence.” The SHARE/WHEEL community also developed ways of talking about tent cities as attempts at helping people experiencing homelessness “stay together and safe” – a narrative that became a significant organizing principle for how Nickelodeons talked about their project to each other and to area journalists. And RCEP was an important organizational sponsor for the development of “cross-class” narratives that focused on “relational” organizing and coalitional political projects like the *No New Jail* campaign.

Part of the difference that we see at the organizational level can be fruitfully explained at the institutional level. Research on organizational cultures suggests that organizations within the same organizational sector (advocacy, alternative media, mainstream media, or government) share similar enough approaches to their work that they develop institutionalized cultures and practices (McAdam & Scott, 2005). This is the basic argument that Cook (1999) has made in his assertions that mainstream media journalists behave in a similar enough manner that their collective activities have produced institutional attributes. When it came to institutional affiliation, I found that advocacy organizations and alternative media organizations were far more likely to produce texts with a high concentration of semantic fields associated with *participant mobilization*, while mainstream media organizations and governmentally sponsored texts were more likely to focus on *deviant subjectivities* and *material poverty* respectively. Additionally, since participation in organizations is the primary way through which organizational cultures are learned and developed, looking at the organizational sectors that authors publish in could act as a measure of cross sectoral influence and cultural overlap between organizations. When

applied to the three issue sectors analyzed here, I found that advocacy organizations and government bodies were the most distant from each other, and that their relationship was mediated by journalistic venues (specifically regional blogs and daily papers). When I analyzed who the authors were who published in multiple organizational sectors, I found that people's institutional biographies flowed from either advocacy organizations or government bodies towards mainstream media organizations (advocacy → alternative media → mainstream media ← government). If the organizational biographical histories of participants influenced the organizational cultures of those organizations populating each organizational sector, then we would expect that those areas with authorial crossover would be most similar in language use. And indeed, correlational analysis of language use and institutional affiliation showed that this was often the case, with one exception: advocacy organizations and governmental bodies shared more in terms of their linguistic emphasis than might have been expected. This was most visible in their focus on the coordination of activities like meetings and scheduling, where we can see that their primary activities were more in the area of *doing* things than *valuing* them, as was often the case with media organizations.

The second area where organizations mattered was in the production and maintenance of communication resources. It is increasingly possible for individuals to create online spaces for publishing their views and perspectives on issues, and we might expect that this capacity would be mobilized quite significantly in Seattle – a place often associated with technology development and use. Indeed, one individual (Tim Harris) did contribute a significant number of texts to the sample, many of which were published on his personal blog. However, Harris was far from an atomized individual participant: he was the Executive Director of RCEP and many of his blog posts were little more than reproductions of the editorials he

published in *Real Change News*. All told, organizations hosted over 3/4 of the texts published in the sample, suggesting that organizationally sponsored resources were a vitally important part of textual production in the three issue sectors.

But more than simply facilitating the publication of communication texts, organizations were important credibility markers for the texts that were produced. Not all texts on the Internet are valued equally, and just because you publish a post on your personal blog does not mean that a) anyone will read it, or b) if they do read it that they will attribute any importance to what you have to say. As mentioned above, I found that analysis of hyperlinking patterns among communication resources in the sample illustrated how the city of Seattle commanded the greatest authority within the network, resulting in higher network level normalized directed betweenness scores for issue sectors to which they contributed. Indeed, government sources commanded a great deal of attention along with mainstream media sources, but activist websites were able to change some of this balance given the right conditions. This was the case with the Nickelsville issue sector, where the [nickelsvilleseattle.org](http://nickelsvilleseattle.org) website was an important reference for those writing on the issue, resulting in a higher indegree score for the communication resource within the network than any other advocacy source in the sample. It was also an issue sector where more communication resources were able to participate in the textual production of the issue area, resulting in an overall issue sector hyperlink network that was more decentralized than the other two campaigns.

I have suggested that organizations matter in the production of social movement communication because they provide spaces for the production of cultural norms and values, and because they provide mechanisms for valuing texts. The assertion that organizations

matter, then, leads to a third area of importance – namely, what positional roles do organizations play in issue sectors? When we look at the intersections of the three issue sectors examined here, those organizations that talk about multiple issues in relation to each other can play important roles in tying issues together. These texts, and their authors or organizational sponsors, can be considered to be *issue brokers* – that is, they broker issues through their communicative practice. It is through reading texts published in these communication resources or written by these authors that a reader may encounter language that explains how the Proposed Jail relates to the Nickelsville issue area, or how Nickelsville relates to the encampment Sweeps issue area. Without these brokers, each of the issue areas analyzed here would exist in isolation, lacking the cognitive ties that facilitate participation and sense-making within a broader homeless movement. I found that media organizations were significantly more likely to publish texts that mentioned multiple issues. This was due in part to the greater number of total words in media texts, meaning that multiple issue mentions were statistically more likely in longer texts. But I would suggest that this is also a function of organizational norms and genre expectations. In the case of the Nickelsville issue area, journalists were most interested in those moments when the camp's direct action tactics were confronted with policy enforcement actions, resulting in articles about *Nickelsville* that mentioned the Sweeps policy as an explanation for why their activities were illegal and would result in arrests by police or Port of Seattle officers. Alternative media texts also showed a propensity to connect issue areas, particularly in the connections between Nickelsville and the Proposed Jail. Here, neighborhood blogs connected their coverage of *Nickelsville* to their existing coverage of the Proposed Jail by noting that *Nickelsville* had chosen to occupy land that the city had cited as a likely jail site.

This was not as much the case with advocacy or government texts, which were more focused on single issues. But these (often shorter) issue specialization texts also played important roles in each of the three campaigns by facilitating what Burt (2005) has called “closure.” I found that issue specialization was a significant contributing factor to high concentrations of semantic fields associated with the communication processes of *institutionalizing the movement* and *community organizing*, suggesting that *participant mobilization* processes were most likely to focus on a specific issue when calling on participants to come to an action, join in a campaign or donate materials to a project. These contrasting findings suggest that, while advocacy organizations play important roles in helping organize participants to take action in specific issue campaigns, media organizations are important issue brokers, tying issue areas together through the ways that they make sense of collective actions. For media analysts, this means that we need to pay close attention to how those connections are made, who is given agency to influence the issues at hand, and how those issue areas are valued. In the context of the local Seattle homeless movement, alternative media and mainstream media organizations often made these connections in significantly different ways. For instance, in those texts that mentioned both Nickelsville and the Sweeps issue areas, mainstream media organizations were more likely to talk about the “legality” and “policing” of “tent city” “camps” composed of “plywood” and “pallets,” in the context of camp “moves.” However, alternative media outlets were more likely to label “self-managed” homeless projects like *Nickelsville* as “movements” around “class” and talked about the importance of “love” in helping the movement to grow. In the context of movement practitioners and community organizers, these findings question the common infatuation that we have with garnering mainstream media attention, suggesting that, even when we gain the

attention of mainstream media journalists, our activities are likely to be portrayed in ways that are not conducive to *participant mobilization*. We would, instead, be well advised to take seriously the opportunities that alternative media outlets provide for the distribution of movement ideas and the connection of issue areas.

When it comes to organizations, this analysis suggests the continued relevance of organizations as objects of study and as legitimate foci of organizing activity. Organizations continue to shape participant behavior, provide important communication resources and signal credibility for participants as they enter the public discourse. As such, there is a continued need for research that examines how organizations come about, how they are sustained, and how they act in political contestations. At the same time, I would encourage practitioners to value the existing organizations that are active in the movement sectors of importance to you, and work to maintain and to strengthen those organizations. Organizations act as important incubators for movements to develop as well as resources to draw on in times of intensive collective action.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The analysis presented here is limited in three ways. First, this study is only concerned with a single issue movement, and in a single urban environment at that. It may very well be that the strategies used by organizers in working for social change would be significantly different in movements concerned with another issue (women's rights, immigration, human trafficking, etc.), especially an issue less concerned with organizing people of little material security. However, I have argued that materiality is an aspect of social change efforts that has been severely undervalued in recent years, and this study may serve to highlight the ways in which movements typically associated with a post-material



experience are in fact highly materially prescribed. Continued failure to recognize this as a structuring element will only result in research that re-inscribes assumptions about participation demographics and participant positionalities. Similarly, Seattle may be subject to a unique set of sociocultural factors, making the findings from this case less portable to other geographic spaces. The use of the Internet is certainly not evenly distributed, and the increased use of Internet technologies experienced in urban environments is only amplified by the cultural importance of Internet companies like Microsoft in the Seattle metropolitan area. Second, the focus of my analysis here is on understanding the experiences of those who organized participants in the local Seattle homeless movement. This influenced the spaces in which I was a participant and the participants that I spoke with. I did not make a concerted effort to observe and speak with journalists and politicians, although I did speak with a few when they showed up to public events.

Third, my analysis of linguistic features was heavily weighted towards semantics at the expense of pragmatic markers and grammatical analysis. Corpus linguistics often relies heavily on lexical word occurrence as a basis for analysis. Words are treated as units of meaning that are counted and compared within and between texts or groups of texts. This provides a powerful statistical tool for analyzing large bodies of texts, or corpora. However, as scholars of sociolinguistics have shown, words *mean* because of their context (Cameron, 2001; Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Gee, 1999; Halliday, 1978, 1985; Hodge & Kress, 1988) – a level of understanding that requires both semantic and pragmatic analysis of texts. Although tools have been developed for parsing texts using grammatical tagging, their utility is still limited, and reliability can be low in some applications requiring intensive hand-coding (Baker, 2006). The methodological constraints presented by the quantitative study of lexical

fields in texts should ideally be accompanied by two complimentary approaches to the analysis of *context* in discourse analysis: external and internal context (Halliday, 1985). This study makes use of the first area of context by bringing context in from outside the text through ethnographic participation in the processes of production, distribution, and interpretation of language in its social context, and in the identification of important discourse historical contexts that influence the kinds of language that is used to produce meaning and the various influences on its interpretation (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). While I did make use of some pragmatic techniques in the close analysis of communication texts, further research should also include a more systematic analysis of context from *within* the text by making use of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, an approach that allows one to derive contexts of production through a close analysis of lexico-semantic language structure (Halliday, 1985).

In spite of these limitations, this study offers an in-depth, multi-level, multi-methods approach to the analysis of social movement communication in the context of three overlapping issue campaigns. This approach recognizes the context dependent relationships between technology use, social organization, and discursive practice, and situates these three aspects of communicative practice within the issue sectors that they produced and responded to. As such, this study has helped to further our understanding of homeless organizing in Seattle and in other urban contexts, as well as the processes of issue contestation and participant mobilization in issue campaign contexts more generally. It is my hope that this will be useful to practitioners as they strategize issue campaigns and mobilize participants in areas like homelessness and poverty, as well as other areas of social concern. In addition, I believe that this research project has contributed to the general body of academic knowledge.

I have focused my work here on the phenomenon of social movement mobilization, but I have done so through the lens of structuration theory in order to clarify the relationship between structure, routinization, and agentive action in processes of social production. I have also organized this study around three primary areas of social research: technology, organization, and language. By doing so I hope that this work will be seen as useful to scholars in the study of technologies of communication, organizational communication, and discourse and language, as well as social movement studies more generally.

### **Future Research**

The methodological and theoretical assertions that I have made in the preceding chapters signal a trajectory of further research. First, the replication of some of the more foundational claims that I have made here would help to verify their legitimacy in other movement contexts, or in contexts not associated with social movement activity. This research track might consider the following conclusions: that issue sectors are influential structuring elements in the production of narrative affordances for issue campaigns; that issue specialization and issue brokerage are important positional roles for authors, communication resources, and organizational sectors; that formal organizations continue to be valid mechanisms for facilitating social change activities; and that the socio-technological configurations of communication tools differently facilitate participant mobilization communication processes. Each of these claims could be tested using different cases or different methods of investigation, furthering their validity or suggesting clarifications.

One such area of validation immediately of interest would be the use of quadratic assignment procedures (QAP) in testing the relationship between different types of network relations. I have observed that there appears to be a linear relationship between

organizational brokerage roles and issue brokerage roles, and I tested this relationship using traditional ordinary least squares (OLS) regression techniques. Scholars of network studies, however, have suggested that it is inappropriate to rely on traditional ordinary least squares tests in measuring the significance of correlations in network relations being that such tests assume the independence of the variables – something that is not assumed in most types of network data. Instead, Krackardt (1987) has suggested that QAP “is a nonparametric, permutation-based test that preserves the integrity of the observed structures (i.e., explicitly retains the interdependency among the dyads)” (p. 174). In this study, I have presented three types of network data (authorship affiliations, issue mentions, and hyperlinking patterns), and looked at relationships between them. Further research might make use of QAP to test the correlations between these three types of relational ties, ultimately testing for directed influence using QAP regression tests.

Second, the four major claims that I have made here open up further areas of research that might build on, or complement, the work done here. The first area of research that might be of interest with the current data set would be the use of Halliday’s (1978, 1985) systemic functional linguistics in the analysis of context internal to the texts, and in the more systematic examination of the role of pragmatics at the level of the clause, sentence, text, or corpus. The second area of research that would complement the current study would be the collection of self-reported interactional ties as an augment to the existing use of affiliation data employed here to test their relationship to each other in the context of communicative behavior. A third study of significant interest would be the analysis of comments in the texts collected here. While they were systematically excluded from the current study because they did not directly reflect the authorial agency of the named author or the communication

resource, online comment functions were widespread in the sample and peripheral analysis suggests that they presented an interesting source of data for the ways that homelessness is socially constructed by participants with lower levels of access to publication resources. One such study would examine the relationship between the linguistic patterns in the original text, and construct a comparison with the comment text. Such analysis might point to a causal relationship between the way a journalist constructs a news story (or a blogger constructs a blog post) and the kinds of responses that it elicits. The same study might also make use of text attributes like authorship, communication resource label, or organizational sector to examine the relationship that these variables might have to comment features beyond the individual text. Finally, the addition of non-digital communication texts to the current corpus would allow comparison between online and offline communication patterns. As my analysis in chapter two suggested, much of the organizing activity that occurred among those experiencing homelessness made use of non-digital tools: flyers, hand-outs, and hand painted signs to name a few. The addition of these texts to the corpus of digital texts would allow comparisons between communication technology tools that were not possible with a corpus made up exclusively of texts distributed via the Internet. Each of these projects is a possible direction for future research, and would hold significant promise for the development of our general knowledge about social movement communication processes, and the relationship between technology use, social organization, and discursive production.

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## **Appendix A: Methods**

### **Participant Observation**

My entry into the homeless communities with which I became involved was initially through a volunteer position at the Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP) in 2006, where I engaged in participant observation by working with vendors at the front desk, doing minor website maintenance tasks, and attending organizational meetings and events. As I became more involved in the community, I began participating in meetings and events initiated by other groups. I was exposed to many issues of interest during my three-years as a participant in homeless organizing. From this immersion in the field, I began to gain an understanding of the constituencies and political trends in the homeless sector. Campaigns and self-organized urban encampments emerged as important mobilization resources for movement participants, providing organizational and symbolic anchors for contentious political activity.

In 2008-2009 I conducted nine months of formal fieldwork, negotiating “the boundary between ‘field’ and ‘fieldworker’” as a participant observer (Emerson & Pollner, 2001, p. 241) with a particular interest in communication processes and practices. Communication oriented participant observation in homeless organizing was a necessary method for establishing what the key issues were for organizers, and for understanding how they used communication technologies to contest policies and practices associated with homelessness. Plows (2008) has argued that a case-based approach to participant observation is particularly important with social movement research, because it encourages interaction and immersion in the political project and it can help researchers understand the experiences of other participants.

One of the central questions in case-based research is how researchers define the boundaries of a case in ways that are sensitive to social theory and theory development (Lichterman, 2002; Yin, 1984). As Atkinson (1992) notes, “[t]he boundaries of the field are not given,” and are something that is negotiated both by the fieldworker and the community of interest (p. 9). I chose to use political campaigns as a lens for understanding how people communicate social change in an urban environment. However, political movements rarely have a single focus, and during my time in the field three campaigns existed alongside each other that had significant overlaps in participation. Using a sampling procedure that was responsive to the social context (Gustavsen, 2003), I participated in two overlapping campaigns and one direct action tent city project.<sup>16</sup> Within each campaign I was further interested in the ways that participants used communication tools in doing social change work. This focus required a multi-methods approach for data collection and analysis, combining mediated online archival research with face-to-face participant observation.

Participant observation in the three campaigns involved participation in organizing and attending events and meetings, informal discussions with participants, jotting and writing up field notes, and semi-structured one-on-one and small group interviews. All meetings and events were open to public participation where I made my role as a researcher known. To the best of my knowledge, my presence as an activist and a researcher was generally accepted and appreciated. Informal conversations took place using a convenience sample of visibly engaged and willing participants present during organizing meetings, at rallies or living at the tent city. 35 in-depth interviews were carried out with 32 interview participants, representing a diverse sample of backgrounds, housing status and issue campaign activity level (see Appendix D for interviewee demographics).<sup>17</sup> Participants were treated as experts in their

field and interviews followed a semi-structured format (Mishler, 1986) focused on questions related to communication and collaboration processes.

I also engaged as a participant in mediated communication of importance to each campaign, but rather than starting with mediated artifacts and moving towards offline interaction (Howard, 2002), I based my sampling procedures for online communication on offline participation. Mediated texts were identified and collected both in the field (at demonstrations, meetings, public hearings, in conversation), online using keyword searches of regional news media, government sites, and advocacy organizations, and through the news.google.com search site. Search terms used for identifying texts for inclusion were ‘sweeps’ AND ‘homeless’; ‘Nickelsville’; ‘new’ AND ‘jail’ AND ‘Seattle’. Materials collected through these methods included flyers, newsletters, newspaper articles, radio stories or programs, email and mail correspondence, meeting minutes, web pages, testimony to city council, laws or resolutions, petitions, photos, and videos. Field notes, interviews, and communication texts were then read and analyzed using a process of inductive thematic analysis (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) to identify themes that were important to the ways that participants used and understood different communication tools.

In analyzing this data I first engaged in open, or thematic, coding (using QDA Miner) as a method for tagging and sorting through texts (Fielding, 2007). The open coding process was guided by the three research questions outlined above, and the theoretical basis that structured them, but coding categories were not limited by existing theory, allowing the opportunity for new theoretical findings to emerge from the data (Becker, 2001; Emerson et al., 1995; Weiss, 1994). This process allowed me to structure the data in a number of ways

across the corpus, and organize it around thematic samples for detailed analysis. Second, a range of tools were used in analyzing samples of the corpus. Field notes and interviews were aggregated around theoretically driven, as well as inductively produced, themes, and memos were produced that outlined the workings of particular social dynamics. These memos were then used as environmental context for communication instances when analyzing texts in the corpus using language-based approaches.

### **Analysis of Communication Texts**

As part of the communication oriented participant observation described above, I produced a corpus of digital communication texts consisting of 1116 texts (596,545 words) drawn from a broader archive of 1669 communication texts constructed in the process of engaging in a nine-month participant observation of homeless organizing in Seattle (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). The digital communication texts archive (CTA) from which the current corpus was drawn was created based on an iterative process through which texts and media communication spaces were identified through my participation in three issue campaigns, and through my identification of texts through keyword searches using online tools (described above). The present corpus represents a sub-sample of this text archive, constructed by filtering out all texts that did not mention any of the three issue areas: the Sweeps, Nickelsville and the Proposed Jail (see Appendix B for a full list of words, phrases, and rules associated as identifying each of these three issue areas). All citations of texts from the communication texts archive are identified by the CTA abbreviation. Citations for CTA texts consist of the communication resources that published the text, the date of publication, the CTA label (distinguishing it from an interview or field notes) and the unit number of the text. For example, citing a text from the Real Change Organizing Project wiki published on



March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, with unit number 442 would be listed in parenthesis as follows: (RCOP wiki, 3/25/2008, CTA442).

Table 7.1. Comparison of lexical fields to token/type ratio.

Sample	Types		Tokens		Token/Type Ratio
	N	%	N	%	
In Corpus	22680	100.00	596545	100.00	26.3
In Lexical Fields	643	2.84	33662	5.64	52.4

Table 7.2. Descriptive statistics of the corpus based on issue mentions (specialists and brokerage texts).

	Jail	Nickelsville	Sweeps	JN	NS	SJ	JNS
Lexical fields	7466	6057	9575	657	8135	735	1037
Tokens	170546	103570	169273	9897	120150	11014	17157
Types	9704	9103	13228	2005	9421	2431	2787
Texts	310	310	243	22	194	16	21
Token/Type	17.6	11.4	12.8	4.9	12.8	4.5	6.2
Words/Texts	550.1	334.1	696.6	449.9	619.3	688.4	817.0
Lexical Fields/Types	76.9%	66.5%	72.4%	32.8%	86.3%	30.2%	37.2%

Once the corpus was collected, a series of additional actions were taken to enable several approaches to analysis.

### **Coding the Corpus**

While corpus level analysis is helpful in illustrating a range of language patterns present in all the texts, comparing lexical patterns between groups of texts identified as varying in some theoretically important way can further particularize analysis of corpus data. Given the role of social movement organizations in producing the digital resources in the corpus, basic attribute coding using traditional content analysis methods was used to categorize the texts (McMillan, 2000; Neuendorf, 2002). To facilitate this, each text in the

corpus was assigned a unit number, and attributes were added to the unit number and its associated texts (typically one newspaper article, or the body and subject line of an email). Several levels of coding were carried out for each text in the corpus, creating multiple coded variables. Each text was coded for multiple levels of social organization, for technological variables, and for the occurrence of a series of lexical items and semantic fields.

First I coded for multiple levels of social organizations. *Authors* were established by recording the byline (in news genre texts), the “from” line in email messages, or the “posted by” authorship label in blog formatted sites. Some texts did not list a specific author and either provided no author (in which site level authorship was assumed: i.e., *West Seattle Blog*) or listed a group as author (in which this author was cited: i.e., PI Editorial Board, Times Staff). In these cases the communication resources or the collective label was used rather than an author label. Next, *communication resources* were coded based on the title given to the website or email list. In some cases a single organization sponsored a single resource but in other cases an organization sponsored multiple resources (i.e., RCEP). When an organization sponsored multiple resources a separate communication resource label was given to each resource. Third, communication resources were coded as belonging to an organizational type (local TV news, local daily papers, neighborhood blogs, etc.). Finally, communication resources were coded as belonging to an *organizational sector* (advocacy, alternative media, mainstream media, or government). Organizational types and sectors were defined as constituting a group of communication resources that shared an organizational or institutional identity. Sectoral categories were produced based on the existing literature on news norms and genre constraints, and each communication resource was coded as belonging to only one organizational type and one organizational sector (categories in each variable

were mutually exclusive). A simplified authorship category also coded texts as authored by an individual themselves (a blog, a “city search” post for *Nickelsville*) or authored by someone sponsored by an organization (defined as two or more authors intentionally creating a communication resource: i.e., *Seattle Times*, *Real Change News*, *West Seattle Blog*).

Next, I coded each text for a series of technological attributes. First, I coded texts based on the availability of the text in other forms of distribution (i.e., also printed in a newspaper, broadcast on the radio or on TV). Next I coded texts as distributed either via a website or via an email message. Finally, I coded texts based on their communicative capacity, noting if they allowed multi-vocal discussion (typically in the form of email discussion lists or wikis), enabled comments to the page (as blog formats often do), or allowed only uni-vocality in their use (i.e., an email announcement list or a web page that did not allow comments).

Next, each text was coded for the presence of a list of lexical items determined to reference each of the three issue areas. If a text included at least one of the lexical items from an issue area, it was said to contribute to the issue sector. To accomplish this, corpus linguistic techniques were used to produce a series of dictionaries that functioned as semantic fields (see chapter four) – identifying the presence of discussion on a topic, or the mention of a series of keywords associated with a particular field of meaning. The occurrence of semantic fields was measured a) as a binary code of presence or absence, b) as a frequency count in each text, and c) as a percentage of the words in each text. This created both binary variables and variables that represented the weight of dictionary items relative to the number of other words in the text. For instance, a mention of the Nickelsville issue area two times in a three sentence blog post would receive a higher Nickelsville score than a lengthy news

article that only mentioned the Nickelsville issue area once as a reference in an article about another related topic (see Appendix B for a full list of semantic fields and the lexical items that populated them).

Each of these levels of coding produced variables that were listed in an attributes file, consisting of unit numbers (texts) and their scores on organizational, technological, and lexically based variables. This file was used for running statistical procedures in SPSS (for traditional statistical procedures) and UCINet (for network analysis tasks). In conducting network analysis on the corpus, the attribute file (2-mode) was analyzed both as a 2-mode network, as well as a 1-mode network by converting the attributes file to a series of similarity matrices (1-mode). The similarity matrices measured the similarity profile between texts based on the occurrence of semantic fields and produced normalized distribution scores as relations among texts. Similarity matrices were also produced at each level of organization (author, organizational resource, organizational type, and organizational sector).

### **Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis was used in the detailed analysis of aggregated samples of texts, identifying discourses and linguistic patterns at the micro level (Gee, 1999). This method allowed me to identify what stories were being told about homelessness in the texts (Polletta, 1998, 2006), and to identify the linguistic referents that served as definitional constructs in these stories (or "discursive nodes," Sandberg, 2006). Understanding how these narratives functioned in the local communicative environment involved the analysis of power in the production and reproduction of discourses (Bourdieu, 1999; Foucault, 1978, 1980), as both repressive (or constraining) and constructive (or enabling) of different participant groups through subjugation (Butler, 1990, 1997) and identification (Giddens, 1999; Gilroy, 1996).

The study of power was undertaken using methods informed by critical discourse analysis studies that enable a researcher to specify the linguistic mechanisms through which people and social phenomenon are categorized and valued (Cameron, 2001; Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2006; van Leeuwen, 1995, 1996, 2007). Through this detailed analysis, lexical lists were produced that were used for further aggregation of the data through keyword in context and collocation searches using methods developed in corpus linguistics.

### **Corpus Linguistics and Semantic Field Analysis**

Corpus linguistics was used in concert with the other methods employed in the study for the analysis of language use by (1) identifying important themes in the texts (thematic coding); (2) analyzing how these themes were actualized in the text and noting the words and phrases (lexical items) that were deployed in their production (discourse analysis); (3) using frequency counts, semantic prosodies, and concordance lines (corpus linguistics) for analyzing their patterned use and in further identifying the words and phrases used in constructing the *semantic fields* that each theme was composed of; and (4) finally returning to refine the themes and analyze how they were actualization in the texts. The resulting analysis was organized around several qualitatively constructed *semantic fields* (fields of meaning) that were operationalized by groups of lexical items collected from the corpus (words, phrases, lemmas, and rules), forming dictionaries (groups of words that combine to create an area of meaning).

As widely circulated discursive resources, words, phrases, lemmas, and groups of words interact with each other to produce semantic fields around key social concepts, with some research suggesting that this clustering process helps us to store and retrieve

information in the brain (Collins & Quillian, 1972; Federmeier & Kutas, 1999). Words can cluster together because they share a morpheme (home | home-less) (Halliday, 1985), because they form lexical bundles as in phrases like “Stop the Sweeps” (called a tri-gram) or “tent city” (called a bi-gram), or as a function of collocation due to semantic-preference or semantic-prosody (camp | tent | self-managed | community) (Sinclair, 1991; Stubbs, 2001).

### **Semantic Network Analysis**

Several common corpus tools can be used for developing and analyzing the lexical groupings that form around semantic fields. In addition to the more common strategies of word counts, semantic prosodies, and concordance analysis, I made use of a strategy called *semantic network analysis*. Semantic network analysis offers a strategy for understanding the relationship between words and discourses in a particular corpus of texts by employing statistical measures of similarity and co-presence (Danowski, 1993; Rosen, 2003; Woelfel, 1993). Research into news texts (Lind & Danowski, 1999) and government debate (Charteris-Black, 2006) has shown the utility of this approach in charting the constellations of words that produce and incite particular discourses (in these cases, “homelessness” and “immigration” respectively). Using this technique, we can reduce the most frequent words in a body of texts into several groups of words based on statistical proximity to each other and on variance from other texts. The most common approach identifies latent semantic fields by using statistical procedures, thus circumventing qualitative analysis in identifying and populating the areas of meaning deployed in a given field of discourse (Doerfel & Barnett, 1999; Doerfel & Marsh, 2003; Rice & Danowski, 1993). Qualitative interpretation is thus postponed until after the measures have been created, where significant work is done in making sense of the clustered words as semantic fields. A second (and far less common)

approach relies heavily on qualitative analysis for the identification of semantic fields in the beginning of the measurement process. Semantic fields are produced using discourse analytic methods for qualitative analysis of the texts, identifying important themes around a research question or questions by identifying the “nodal points” that are mobilized by speakers in representing a theme (Sandberg, 2006). By privileging qualitative analysis at an early stage contextual information important to the issue, event, or social processes of interest are brought to the fore in the identification of important discursive resources that are produced through lexico-grammatical choice (Halliday, 1985).

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the construction of semantic fields can play an important role in helping uncover meaning and power, and it should be emphasized that they are not, in fact, mutually exclusive. In the present study, I used the inductive exploratory benefits of multidimensional scaling (MDS), collocational clustering, and collocational network visualization tools as a spring board for qualitative analysis and category construction alongside more qualitative discourse analytic techniques rooted in my role as a participant observer. Combining discourse analysis and corpus linguistics is a strategy that has recently received some attention (Baker et al., 2008; Van De Mierop, 2005), but there have been fewer instances of researchers combining these two techniques with participant observation. Once semantic fields were identified and their corresponding dictionaries were populated with words, phrases, and collocations (rules) the fields were then used as variable measurements in running statistical analysis on the corpus, identifying relationships between semantic fields, and constructing larger clusters of meaning. The use of statistical tools, while driven by the interaction of theory and micro-level discourse analysis, produces a macro-level understanding that can lead to further micro-level analysis of the

corpus. The use of such methods can form an important part of case-based research by shedding light on previously submerged social dynamics that were not apparent in qualitative analysis of the texts or ethnographic participation in the issue.<sup>18</sup>

### **Hyperlink Network Analysis**

Hyperlinks have been used to study the relationship between online resources in a wide range of applications. Hyperlink analysis is a method for harvesting and analyzing web-links between websites, a strategy that is useful in defining an online network's boundaries as well as its structural characteristics (Chu, 2005; Farrall, 2004; Foot, Schneider, Dougherty, Xenos, & Larsen, 2003; Garrido & Halavais, 2003; Hine, Montiel, Cooksey, & Lewko, 2005; Park & Thelwall, 2005). Network analysis allows the researcher to map connections and relationships between actors, technologies, and discourses useful in understanding large configurations of data as well as more localized collaborative relationships (Dodge, 2005; Marsden & Lin, 1982). As Howard (2002) has noted, network analysis "exposes routes of communication and the width of the road, but data on the content of communication or relationships is highly reduced and often unsuitable for the comprehensive study of organizational culture" (p. 559). Combining network analysis with participant observation, qualitative interviews, critical discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics is thus important in this study for understanding both the structural dynamics of relations between actors as well as the qualitative content of their ties.

In the present study, hyperlink network analysis was conducted using the *issuecrawler.net* software package and crawler server tool to construct matrices of hyperlink relationships between communication resources in the corpus. Connections were mapped regarding the relationship between organizational participants in the issue campaign, as well



as other local and national issue based organizations. Lists of URLs were cataloged using qualitative interview data regarding participation in the campaign, as well as archived textual data like participant's blogs and news articles. The resulting dataset consisted of a subset of communication resources present in the digital communication texts corpus, due to the unavailability of some sites during harvesting, and the removal of all email texts because they did not have URL addresses.

For this study, the URLs for all of the communication resources available online throughout the sample were cataloged and then the number of directed hyperlinks between the communication resources were harvested using the "inter-actor" setting on the *issuecrawler.net* web-crawler once the database of texts was completed in May of 2009. This collection reflected the relationship between nodes at a particular period in time. Subsequent crawls were then carried out in August, October, and December of 2009, allowing diachronic analysis of network and node-level metrics as the three issue areas became less prominent in the public imagination. While this time-series sampling occurred after the formal field-work and text sample period, it can still shed some light on how issue centralization can change over time.

### **Network Analysis**

Social movements are often thought of as collections of individuals and groups around collective identities and/or common grievances or goals (Melucci, 1989, 1996a). The ability of diverse constituents to collaborate across difference can play a significant role in securing broad support and in legitimating new social formations. The application of network analysis to social movements has sought to explain connections across issues or geography as well as the separation of constituents within issue movements. *Structural* perspectives have

seen network analysis as a tool for mapping relational ties among groups in order to understand the structural characteristics of a movement: what are the special interest segments within an umbrella grouping (Phillips, 1991); do particular groups or organizations bridge these segments in ways that help constitute a whole (Garrido & Halavais, 2003); is the movement relatively centralized or fairly decentralized in the relationships that groups and individuals have with each other (Diani, 2003); do some groups focus on grassroots organizing and others interface with government (Gerlach, 2001; Keck & Sikkink, 1998); or, how do existing structural network characteristics influence social movement formation (Morris, 1981; Staggenborg & Lang, 2007)? Recently, scholars of digital computer networks have gone so far as to suggest that the structural characteristics of digital networks may have their own self-organizing capacities, identifying the structures themselves as potential agents in collective action (Rogers, 2004, 2005). This work is valuable in that it highlights the structural characteristics that movements create through interactions, and how these structures provide affordances and limitations to movement actions, but does little to explain the reasons how or why some structures emerge in a particular context and others do not.

Recent work focusing on *relational* network dynamics has highlighted the nature and function of different types of “ties” among “nodes” in a network, differentiating between informational ties and solidarity in material or political actions. On a structural level this work brings a finer grained analysis to network theory, emphasizing that not all ties are alike, and that networks may have differing characteristics based on the types of ties between nodes (Granovetter, 1973; Saunders, 2007). On a constitutive level, this work has begun to explore the communicative practices that produce different kinds of ties, pointing to particular mechanisms or behavior that activists engage in through the process of building collaboration

across difference (Barnes et al., 2006; Mische, 1996; Mische, 2008; Mische & White, 1998).

This research project seeks to bridge these traditions (Beaulieu, 2003) by moving from the structural to the relational and back again as a way of understanding the process of network production through collaboration in social movements.

Several types of relations are analyzed using network analysis techniques. Network analysis was used as a way to analyze collocational profiles of words, phrases, rules and lexical fields (see semantic network analysis above), suggesting network level properties and positional roles. Network analysis was used to analyze 2-mode attribute files based on organizational or lexical attributes, pointing to network level properties as well as positional roles and paths (see coding the corpus above). Finally, network analysis was used to look at patterns of hyperlinking among communication resources, identifying differences between issue sectors, as well as positional roles occupied by organizations and organizational sectors.

Analysis of semantic fields, authorship, and formal organization data focused on the relationship between formal and emergent social organization by employing descriptive statistics and network analysis methods. Since this dataset consisted of only attribute level data, these measures represented *exogenous* attributes and not social ties as they are often defined in network theory (Monge & Contractor, 2003). However, network analysis of node-level attributes can form an important part of network analysis methods (Wasserman & Faust, 1994), and this study seeks to expand our understanding of how these levels of similarity and difference can highlight important dynamics in the production of issue sectors.

Analysis of attributes in this study is built on the use of 2-mode data files, and their conversion to 1-mode similarity matrices. In some cases these attributes indicate that two authors publish in the same communication resource or in the same organizational type or

sector. However, this relationship might also be reversed, pointing to the relationship between communication resources, types, or sectors as sharing particular authors. In other cases these attributes indicate that two actors share a level of similarity to other actors based on their patterned discussion of one or more issue areas. Doerfel & Connaughton (2009) outline these two approaches to semantic network analysis as “networks of meaning and networks where the strength of the links between actors is based on shared meaning or overlapping use of words or symbols” (p. 204). While network analysis of language use looks only at the relationships between lexical items or categories of meaning in the texts (see chapter four), this analysis focuses on the relationships that *actors* display based on similarity profiles.

Analysis of similarity profiles was employed to identify emergent groups or organizational properties among a set of actors. One mechanism that holds groups together can be used to identify what Moody and White (1993) call, “unnamed groups”: structural cohesion, defined as the identification of patterns of relations that in turn define clearly delineated emergent groups. This allows us to define groups based on labels not popularly understood either to the researcher or perhaps the population itself. This can also be used to identify emergent groups – groups that are in the process of formation and may not have been recognized quite yet through the self identification processes of participants. “As the network property of cohesion emerges in a network, the individuals in the cohesive set are taking on, through concrete social relationships, the form of an organization” (White et al., 1976, p. 41). Groups of relations can be understood to be shaped by, as well as exert influence on, behavioral phenomenon in a network population.

Traditional network theory defines a clique as “a maximally complete subgraph of three or more nodes,” and “consists of a subset of nodes, all of which are adjacent to each other, and there are no other nodes that are also adjacent to all of the members of the clique” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 254). White & Johansen (2005) define cliques as embedded and overlapping, saying that a clique should be considered “maximally dense communicative or interactive contexts that are embedded within larger cohesive groups that have more definable boundaries” (p. 43). This allows us to see cliques that are not isolated from a network population, but are minimally embedded in the network. The concept of multi-connectivity describes nodes as connected through multiple ties, or level  $k$ -ties (the minimum number of ties that each node shares in the network). Increasingly high levels of connectivity (higher levels of  $k$ -connectivity) within a network can produce cohesive groups – groups who are more densely connected with each other than the rest of the network. The process of  $k$ -core (in NetDraw, or  $k$ -plex in UCInet) analysis allows these clear boundaries between cliques to be measured.

## Appendix B: Semantic Field Dictionaries

MATERIALITY  
     ECONOMIC  
         RENT  
             RENT\* (1)  
             SUBLET (1)  
         ECONOMY  
             MORTGAGE (1)  
             LOAN\* (1)  
             WALL\_STREET (1)  
             RECESSION (1)  
             HOOVER (1)  
             DEPRESSION  
                 @DEPRESSION [DEPRESSION NOT  
 LANDSCAPE\_DEPRESSION & DEPRESSION NOT DEPRESSION\_LANDED /D] (1)  
                 @DEPRESSED-ECONOMY [DEPRESSED NOT  
 LITTLE\_DEPRESSED /D] (1)  
             FINANC\* (1)  
             ECONOM\*  
                 ECONOMIC (1)  
                 ECONOMY (1)  
             DEFAULT\* (1)  
             BAILOUT  
                 BAILOUT (1)  
                 BAIL-OUT (1)  
                 BAIL\_OUT (1)  
             CREDIT\* (1)  
             CUT\_BACK  
                 CUT\_BACK\* (1)  
                 CUTBACK\* (1)  
         JOB  
             JOB\*  
                 JOBS (1)  
                 JOB\_LOSS (1)  
                 JOB (1)  
                 A\_JOB (1)  
             LAYOFF\* (1)  
             HIRE  
                 HIRE\_US (1)  
                 HIRE\_POOR (1)  
                 HIRE\_ME (1)  
                 HIRE\_HOMELESS (1)  
                 HIRE\_HIM (1)  
                 HIRE\_HER (1)  
         WORK

CAN'T\_WORK (1)  
 BACK\_INTO\_WORK (1)  
 LAND\_WORK (1)  
 GET\_TO\_WORK (1)  
 OUT-OF-WORK (1)  
 FIND\_WORK (1)  
 EMPLOY\* (1)  
 PAY\*  
 PAY  
 PAY (1)  
 PAY\_FOR\_FOOD (1)  
 PAY\_FOR\_RENT (1)  
 PAY\_RENT (1)  
 SALARY (1)  
 WAGE\*  
 WAGE (1)  
 WAGES (1)  
 STIPEND (1)  
 INCOME (1)  
 @PROFIT [PROFIT NOT NON-PROFIT & PROFIT NOT  
 NON\_PROFIT /S] (1)  
 CASH (1)  
 CLASS  
 POVERTY (1)  
 CLASS\* (1)  
 POOR  
 @POOR [POOR\* NOT POORLY /D] (1)  
 DESTITUTE (1)  
 IMPOVERISHED (1)  
 PENNILESS (1)  
 UNDERPRIVILEGED (1)  
 RICH  
 AFFLUENT (1)  
 RICH  
 RICHER (1)  
 RICHEST (1)  
 THE\_RICH (1)  
 THIS\_RICH (1)  
 @RICH [RICH NOT BEFORE LANG /S 3] (1)  
 WEALTH  
 WEALTHY (1)  
 WEALTH (1)  
 PRO-WEALTHY (1)  
 MIDDLE-CLASS  
 WORKING\_CLASS  
 WORKING\_CLASS (1)

WORKING-CLASS (1)  
 MIDDLE\_CLASS  
 MIDDLE\_CLASS (1)  
 MIDDLE-CLASS (1)  
 FUND  
 COST  
 COST (1)  
 COSTLY (1)  
 COSTS (1)  
 LOW-COST (1)  
 EXPENSIVE (1)  
 DOLLARS (1)  
 CHEAP\* (1)  
 BUDGET (1)  
 AFFORD\* (1)  
 @VALUE [VALUE NOT AFTER SHOCK & VALUE NOT  
 AFTER OF /S 2] (1)  
 @FUND [FUND\* NOT FUNDAMENTAL\* /D] (1)  
 DEVELOPMENT  
 @CONSTRUCTION [CONSTRUCTION NOT NEAR JAIL /D 6] (1)  
 CONDO\* (1)  
 DEVELOPER\* (1)  
 \*DEVELOPMENT (1)  
 GENTRIF\* (1)  
 LAND\_USE (1)  
 PERMIT\* (1)  
 TEAR\_DOWN  
 @TEARDOWN3 [TEAR\*\_DOWN NEAR UNIT\* |  
 TEAR\*\_DOWN NEAR BUILD\* /D 6] (1)  
 @TEARDOWN2 [TEAR\_DOWN NEAR ROOM\* |  
 TEAR\_DOWN NEAR BED\* /D 6] (1)  
 @TEARDOWN [TEAR\*\_DOWN NEAR HOUS\* |  
 TEAR\*\_DOWN NEAR APARTMENT\* /D 6] (1)  
 URBAN\_PLANNER\* (1)  
 URBAN\_PLANNING (1)  
 \*ZONING (1)  
 HUMAN RIGHTS  
 WEATHER OR VIOLENCE  
 WEATHER\_OR\_VIOLENCE (1)  
 OUTSIDE\_OR\_BY\_VIOLENCE (1)  
 OUTSIDE\_OR\_THROUGH\_VIOLENCE (1)  
 HUMAN\*  
 INHUMANE (1)  
 HUMANE (1)  
 SURVIVE  
 SURVIVING (1)



SURVIVE (1)  
 SURVIVAL (1)  
 IMMORAL  
 IMMORAL (1)  
 SAFETY IN NUMBERS  
 TOGETHER\_AND\_SAFE (1)  
 SAFETY\_IN\_NUMBERS (1)  
 DIGNITY  
 WITH\_DIGNITY (1)  
 HUMAN\_DIGNITY (1)  
 DIGNITY\_OF (1)  
 RIGHTS  
 RIGHT\*\_TO (1)  
 HUMAN\_RIGHT\* (1)  
 BELONGINGS  
 PERSONAL\_ITEM\* (1)  
 POSSESSIONS (1)  
 POSESSIONS (1)  
 PERSONAL\_PROPERTY (1)  
 BELONGINGS (1)  
 SOCIAL\_JUSTICE  
 DEVELOPMENT\_WITH\_JUSTICE (1)  
 RACIAL\_JUSTICE (1)  
 SOCIAL\_JUSTICE (1)  
 ECONOMIC\_JUSTICE (1)  
 BLANKETS  
 @SOCKS [SOCKS NOT STEAMS\_MY SOCKS /D] (1)  
 AND\_GLOVES (1)  
 BLANKETS (1)  
 CLOTHES (1)  
 CLOTHING (1)  
 COAT (1)  
 COATS (1)  
 FIRE\_EXTINGUISHER\* (1)  
 HAND\_SANITIZER (1)  
 JACKETS (1)  
 SLEEPING\_BAG\* (1)  
 TOILETRY\_ITEMS (1)  
 WARM\_CLOTH\* (1)  
 TENT\*\_GLOVES (1)  
 FOOD  
 @FOOD [FOOD NOT FOOD\_& & FOOD NOT  
 FOOD\_AND\_YARD\_WASTE /D] (1)  
 FOOD\_BANKS (1)  
 HOT\_FOOD (1)  
 FOOD\_BANK (1)

## SERVICES

CASE\_MANAGEMENT (1)  
 CHILD\_CARE (1)  
 DAY\_CARE (1)  
 DOES\_NOT\_GO\_FAR\_ENOUGH (1)  
 EMERGENCY\_REFFERAL\* (1)  
 FOSTER\_CARE (1)  
 HOMELESS\_SERVICES (1)  
 JOB\_TRAINING (1)  
 NIGHT\_WATCH  
     NIGHT\_WATCH (1)  
     NIGHTWATCH (1)  
 OTHERSERVICES (1)  
 REFUSE\_THE\_HOMELESS (1)  
 SERVICES (1)  
 SPEND\_THE\_NIGHT (1)  
 TOLERABLY (1)  
 TURN\*\_AWAY (1)

## SHELTER

SHELTER (1)  
 SHELTERED (1)  
 SHELTERS (1)

## HOUSING

APARTMENT\* (1)  
 ROOF (1)  
 HOME  
     HOME (1)  
     HOMES (1)  
 HOUSE  
     HOUSING\_SHORTAGE (1)  
     SHORTAGE\_OF\_HOUSING (1)  
 HOUS\*  
     HOUSE (1)  
     HOUSED (1)  
     HOUSES (1)  
     HOUSING (1)

## ALTERNATIVES TO JAIL

@ALTERNATIVE [ALTERNATIVE\* NEAR PROGRAM\* |  
 ALTERNATIVE\* NEAR JAIL /D 6] (1)  
 COMMUNITY\_BASED\_PROGRAM\*  
     COMMUNITY-BASED\_PROGRAM\* (1)  
     COMMUNITY\_BASED\_PROGRAM\* (1)  
 DE-CRIMINALIZ\* (1)  
 DIVERSION\_PROGRAM\* (1)  
 INSTEAD\_OF\_INCARCERATION (1)  
 INSTEAD\_OF\_PUNISHMENT (1)

KEEP\_PEOPLE\_OUT\_OF (1)  
 KEEP\_THEM\_OUT\_OF (1)  
 PREVENTION\_PROGRAM\* (1)  
 UP-STREAM  
     UP\_STREAM (1)  
     UP-STREAM (1)  
 SUPPORT  
     CHARITY  
         CHARITY (1)  
         CHARITABLE (1)  
     ASSISTANCE (1)  
     OFFER (1)  
     PROVIDE (1)  
     SUPPORT\* (1)  
     OUTREACH (1)  
 DEVIANCE  
     DANGER  
         CRIMINALITY  
             @LAW [LAW NOT AFTER IN /D 5] (1)  
             BREAK-IN  
                 BREAKIN (1)  
                 BREAKINS (1)  
                 BREAK-IN (1)  
             BURGLAR\* (1)  
             COURT (1)  
             CRIME (1)  
             CRIMINAL\*  
                 CRIMINAL (1)  
                 CRIMINALITY (1)  
                 CRIMINALIZ\* (1)  
                 CRIMINALS (1)  
             CRIMINAL\_JUSTICE (1)  
             DEALERS (1)  
             DOMESTIC\_VIOLENCE  
                 DOMESTIC\_VIOLENCE (1)  
                 DOMESTIC\_ABUSE (1)  
             DRUNK\_DRIVING (1)  
             DUI (1)  
             FELON\* (1)  
             ILLEGAL\* (1)  
             INMATE\* (1)  
             LOCK\_UP  
                 LOCK\_UP (1)  
                 LOCKED\_UP (1)  
             MISDEMEAN\*  
                 MISDEMEANANT\* (1)

MISDEMEANOR\* (1)  
 OFFEND\*  
     OFFENSES (1)  
     OFFENDER\* (1)  
 PERPETRATOR\* (1)  
 PRISONER\* (1)  
 CRIMINAL\_RECORD (1)  
 THEFT (1)  
 PROSTITUT\* (1)  
 DANGER\* (1)  
 POLICING  
     @COP [COP NOT R-COP /S] (1)  
     ARREST\* (1)  
     COPS (1)  
     OFFICER (1)  
     POLICE (1)  
     PRECINCT\* (1)  
     @SECURITY [SECURITY NOT AFTER SOCIAL /D 2] (1)  
 VIOLENCE  
     @HURT [HURT NOT HURTLE\* /D] (1)  
     AGGRESSIVE\* (1)  
     BRUTALIZ\* (1)  
     DIED (1)  
     HARRASS\* (1)  
     INTIMIDAT\* (1)  
     KILL (1)  
     KNIFE\* (1)  
     MENACE (1)  
     REVOLVER (1)  
     SHARPS (1)  
     THREATEN\* (1)  
     TORTURE\* (1)  
     VICTIM\* (1)  
     WEAPON\* (1)  
     VIOLEN\* (1)  
 FEAR\* (1)  
 LEGALITY  
     EVICT\* (1)  
     FIL\*\_CHARGES (1)  
     FINE\*  
         FINED (1)  
         FINES (1)  
         FINING (1)  
     INVESTIGATED (1)  
     LAWFUL (1)  
     PUNITIVE (1)

TRESSPASS\*  
     TRESPASS\* (1)  
     TRESSPASS\* (1)  
 UNLAWFUL (1)  
 WARRANTS (1)  
 @SAFE\* [SAFE\* NOT SAFEWAY & SAFE\* NOT  
 SAFE\_HARBOR\* /C] (1)  
     DIRTY  
     CLEAN  
         CLEAN\*  
             CLEAN (1)  
             CLEAN-UP (1)  
             CLEANLINESS (1)  
             CLEAN\_OUT (1)  
             CLEAN\_UP (1)  
         CLEANSE (1)  
         CLEAR\*  
             CLEARANCE (1)  
             CLEARANCES (1)  
             CLEARED (1)  
             CLEARING (1)  
             @CLEAR [CLEAR NEAR HOMELESS\* | CLEAR  
 NEAR \*CAMP\* /D 5] (1)  
         PURIFY (1)  
         SANIT\*  
             SANITIZE (1)  
             SANITARY (1)  
 FILTH  
     DECAY (1)  
     DIRTY (1)  
     DISGUSTING (1)  
     FILTH\*  
         FILTH (1)  
         FILTHY (1)  
     GRIMY (1)  
     GROSS (1)  
     MOUNDS\_OF (1)  
     PILES OF (1)  
     PUTRID (1)  
     ROT\*  
         ROT (1)  
         ROTS (1)  
         ROTTING (1)  
         @ROTTEN [ROTTEN NOT ROTTEN\_SYSTEM /D]  
 (1)  
     SPOIL (1)

SULLY (1)  
 TAIN (1)  
 UNTIDY (1)  
 VERMIN (1)  
 TRASH  
   BOTTLES (1)  
   CANS (1)  
   DEBRIS (1)  
   GARBAGE (1)  
   JUNK (1)  
   LITTER\* (1)  
   RUBBISH (1)  
   TRASH (1)  
   WRAPPERS (1)  
   TON\*  
     TONS (1)  
     TON (1)  
 HEALTH  
   MENTAL\_ILLNESS  
     @DEPRESSED-HEALTH [DEPRESSED NOT  
 ECONOMICALLY\_DEPRESSED & DEPRESSED NOT COMING\_DEPRESSION /D] (1)  
     MENTAL\*\_ILL\*  
       MENTAL\_ILLNESS (1)  
       MENTALLY\_ILL (1)  
     METAL\*\_\*STABLE  
       MENTAL\_INSTABILITY (1)  
       MENTALLY\_UNSTABLE (1)  
     SCHIZOPHRENIA (1)  
     SUICIDAL (1)  
 DISEASE  
   CONTAMINAT\* (1)  
   DISEASE\* (1)  
   EBOLA\_OUTBREAK (1)  
   HEPATITIS (1)  
   INFECTIOUS (1)  
   SYMPTOMS (1)  
   TB (1)  
   SYMPTOMS (1)  
   THE\_FLEW (1)  
 DISSABILITY  
   HANDICAPPED (1)  
   DISABL\* (1)  
 HEALTHCARE  
   DENTAL (1)  
   DENTIST (1)  
   DOCTOR\* (1)

HOSPITALIZE\* (1)  
 MEDICAL\_CARE (1)  
 MEDICARE (1)  
 PRESCRIPTION\* (1)  
 INSURANCE (1)  
 REDUCE\_STRESS (1)  
 REPRODUCTIVE\_CARE (1)  
 WELL\_BEING (1)  
 SOCIAL\_SECURITY (1)  
 HEALTH\*  
     HEALTH (1)  
     HEALTHY (1)  
 HUMAN\_WASTE  
     DECAYING (1)  
     DEFECAT\* (1)  
     EXCREMENT (1)  
     FECES (1)  
     HUMAN\_WASTE (1)  
     PEE\*  
         PEE (1)  
         PEEING (1)  
     SANITATION (1)  
     SOILED (1)  
     URIN\*  
         URINATE (1)  
         URINE (1)  
 BATHROOMS  
     @PORTABLE\_TOILETS [PORTABLE\_TOILETS NOT  
 NEAR TRACTORS /S 2] (1)  
     BATHING\_FACILIT\* (1)  
     BATHROOM\* (1)  
     HONEY-BUCKET (1)  
     LAUNDRY (1)  
     PORTA-POTTIE (1)  
     SHOWER\* (1)  
     TOILET (1)  
 DUMPSTER  
     @DUMPSTER [DUMPSTER\* AND NICKELSVILLE /D] (1)  
     TRASH\_CAN\* (1)  
     TRASH\_BINS (1)  
 DRUGS  
     ADDICT  
         DRUNKS  
             DRUNK\* (1)  
             DRINKER (1)  
             ALCOHOLISM (1)

USERS  
     METH\_HEAD  
         METH\_HEAD (1)  
         METH-HEAD (1)  
     DRUG\_USE (1)  
     DRUG-CRAZED (1)  
     DO\_DRUGS (1)  
     DOPER (1)  
     \*TWEAKER\* (1)  
     USERS (1)  
 ADDICTS  
     SUBSTANCE ABUSE (1)  
     INTOXICA\* (1)  
     FIEND (1)  
     CHEMICAL\_DEPENDENC\* (1)  
     @ADDICT\* [ADDICT\* NOT OIL\_ADDICT\* /D] (1)  
 SUBSTANCE  
     @SUBSTANCE\* [SUBSTANCE\* NOT  
 SUBSTANCE\_TO\_IT & SUBSTANCE\* NOT SUBSTANCE\_AND\_FORESIGHT /D] (1)  
 DRUG  
     NEEDLE\*  
         NEEDLES (1)  
         @NEEDLE [NEEDLE NOT SPACE\_NEEDLE  
 /S] (1)  
     OPIATE (1)  
     METH (1)  
     MARIJUANA (1)  
     HEROIN (1)  
     COCAINE (1)  
     @DRUG\* [DRUG\* NOT BARTEL\*\_DRUG\* &  
 DRUG\* NOT DRUG\_USE /S] (1)  
     @CRACK [CRACK NOT CRACK\_AT & CRACK  
 NOT CRACK\_DOWN /S] (1)  
     \*SYRINGE\* (1)  
     PARAPHERNALIA (1)  
 ALCOHOL  
     LIQUOR\* (1)  
     BEVERAGE (1)  
     ALCOHOL (1)  
     @DRINKING [DRINKING NOT  
 DRINKING\_WATER /D] (1)  
     BEER  
         @BEERS [BEERS NOT DAVID\_BEERS /D]  
 (1)  
         BEER (1)  
 TREATMENT



5] (1) @INTERVENTION [INTERVENTION\* NEAR #DRUG /D

@REHAB [REHAB\* NEAR #DRUG /S 5] (1)

CLEAN\_DREAMS (1)

COLD\_TURKEY (1)

DETOX (1)

SOBER\* (1)

TREATMENT\*

TREATMENT\_SERVICE\* (1)

TREATMENT\_PROVIDER\* (1)

TREATMENT\_PROGRAM\* (1)

TREATMENT\_FACILIT\* (1)

TREATMENT\_COURT\* (1)

TREATMENT\_CENTER\* (1)

ISSUE

JAIL

@JAIL\_FTR-CONST [JAIL NEAR FUTURE | JAIL NEAR

CONSTRUCT\* /C 5] (1)

@JAIL\_NEW\_PROP [JAIL NEAR NEW | JAIL NEAR PROPOS\*

/C 5] (1)

@JAIL\_PROJ-BUILD [JAIL NEAR PROJECT | JAIL NEAR BUILD

/D 5] (1)

@JAIL\_SITING [JAIL NEAR SITING | JAIL NEAR SITE\* /C 5] (1)

JAIL\_PLAN (1)

JAIL\_SITE (1)

MUNICIPAL\_JAIL (1)

OLDJAIL

@JAIL\_APPOSE [JAIL NEAR APPOS\* | JAIL NEAR

OPPOS\* /D 5] (1)

@JAIL\_CAMPAIGN [JAIL NEAR CAMPAIGN\* /D 5] (1)

@JAIL\_CAPACITY [JAIL NEAR CAPACITY /D 5] (1)

@JAIL\_FORUM [JAIL NEAR FORUM /D 5] (1)

@JAIL\_LOCATION [JAIL NEAR LOCAT\* /D 5] (1)

AGAINST\_THE\_JAIL (1)

AGRY\_ABOUT\_THE\_JAIL (1)

ANTI\_JAIL (1)

ANTI-JAIL (1)

BUILD\_A\_JAIL (1)

BUILD\_A\_NEW\_JAIL (1)

BUILD\_JAIL (1)

FIGHT\_AGAINST\_A\_CITY\_JAIL (1)

FUTURE\_JAIL (1)

JAIL\_HA\*\_TO\_GO\_SOMEWHERE (1)

JAIL\_PROJECT (1)

JAIL\_PUBLIC\_FORUM\_COMMENT\_RECORD (1)

MUNICIPAL\_JAIL\_PUBLIC\_FORUM\_COMMENT (1)

NEED\_ANOTHER\_JAIL (1)  
 NEED\_FOR\_A\_JAIL (1)  
 NEW\_CITY\_JAIL (1)  
 NEW\_JAIL (1)  
 NEW\_JAIL\_FACILITY (1)  
 NEW\_MUNICIPAL\_JAIL (1)  
 NO\_JAIL (1)  
 POSSIBLE\_AREA\_JAIL (1)  
 POTENTIAL\_JAIL\_SITE (1)  
 PROPOSE\_JAIL\_SITE (1)  
 REGIONAL\_JAIL (1)  
 SEATTLE\_JAIL (1)  
 SEATTLE\_MUNICIPAL\_JAIL\_PROJECT (1)  
 STOP\_THE\_JAIL (1)  
 THE\_JAIL\_ISSUE (1)  
 WON'T\_SHUT\_UP\_ABOUT\_THE\_JAIL (1)  
 WEST\_SEATTLE\_JAIL (1)

#### NICKELSVILLE

NICHOLSVILLE (1)  
 NICKELLSVILLE (1)  
 NICKELODEANS (1)  
 NICKELODEON (1)  
 NICKELODIANS (1)  
 NICKELSVILE (1)  
 NICKELSVILL (1)  
 NICKELSVILLE (1)  
 NICKELSVILLES (1)  
 NICKELSVILLESEATTLE (1)  
 NICKELSVILLETHE (1)  
 NICKESLVILLE (1)  
 NICKESVILLE (1)  
 NICKKELSVILLESEATTLE (1)  
 NICKLESVILLE (1)  
 NICKOLODEONS (1)

#### SWEEPS

@CAMP [CAMP\* NEAR CLEAR\* | CAMP\* NEAR CLEAN\*\_UP  
 /C 10] (1)  
 @CLEARGREEN [#GREENB NEAR #HOMEPLACE /D 10] (1)  
 @DOWN [DOWN NEAR TEAR\* | DOWN NEAR TAK\* /C 10] (1)  
 @ENCAMPMENT [REMOV\* NEAR ENCAMPMENT\* | REMOV\*  
 NEAR CAMP\* /C 10] (1)  
 @ILLIGAL [ILLIGAL\* NEAR CAMP\* & ILLIGAL\* NEAR  
 ENCAMPMENT\* /C 10] (1)  
 @OUT [OUT NEAR CLEAR\* | OUT NEAR CLEAN\* /C 10] (1)  
 @POLICY [POLICY NEAR CAMP\* | POLICY NEAR  
 ENCAMPMENT\* /C 10] (1)

RAID (1)

SWEEP (1)

SWEEPING (1)

SWEEPS (1)

SWEPT (1)

PARTICIPANTS

NEIGHBORS

@HOUSED\_RESIDENT [RESIDENT NOT NEAR CAMP |

RESIDENT NOT NEAR NICKELSVILLE /C 5] (1)

NEIGHBOR\* (1)

FAMILIES

CHILDREN

KIDS (1)

DUAGHTER\* (1)

CHILD\* (1)

PET

PETS (1)

PET (1)

SPOUSE

WIFE\* (1)

SPOUSE\* (1)

HUSBAND\* (1)

GIRLFRIEND\* (1)

COMPANION\* (1)

BOYFRIEND (1)

FAMILY\*

FAMILIES (1)

FAMILY (1)

HOMELESS\*

BUM

BUM (1)

BUMS (1)

HOBO

HOBO (1)

HOBOS (1)

HOMELESS (1)

HOMELESSNESS (1)

HOUSELESS (1)

ROUGH\_SLEEPER (1)

TRAMP

TRAMP (1)

TRAMPS (1)

TRANSIENT\* (1)

UNHOUSED (1)

CITY

MAYOR\* (1)

NICKELS (1)  
 CITY\_OFFICIAL\* (1)  
 ZAUGG-BLACK (1)  
 ZAUGG\_BLACK (1)  
 ADVOCATES  
 @HOMELESSADVOCATE [HOMELESS NEAR  
 ADVOCATE\* /S 5] (1)  
 @POVERTYADVOCATE [POVERTY NEAR ADVOCATE  
 /S 5] (1)  
 ACTIVIST\* (1)  
 ADVOCATE\* (1)  
 HOMELESS\_ADVOCATE\* (1)  
 PROTESTER\* (1)  
 ORGANIZER\* (1)  
 RESIDENTS  
 @CAMPRESIDENTS [RESIDENTS NEAR CAMP &  
 RESIDENTS NEAR NICKELSVILLE /S 4] (1)  
 PRISONERS  
 BURGLER (1)  
 BURGLERS (1)  
 CROOK (1)  
 CROOKS (1)  
 FELONS (1)  
 INMATE (1)  
 INMATES (1)  
 MOLESTER (1)  
 PRISONER\* (1)  
 FELON (1)  
 RAPIST (1)  
 ROBBER\* (1)  
 THEIF (1)  
 THEIVES (1)  
 JOURNALISTS  
 BLOGGER\* (1)  
 JOURNALIST\* (1)  
 REPORTER\* (1)  
 CITIZENS  
 CITIZEN\* (1)  
 GENERAL\_PUBLIC (1)  
 PUBLIC\_INTEREST (1)  
 LEADERS  
 LEADER (1)  
 LEADERS (1)  
 COORDINATORS  
 COORDINATOR\* (1)  
 CHURCHES

CHRISTIAN\* (1)  
 CONGREGATION\* (1)  
 FAITH\_COMMUNIT\* (1)  
 CHURCH\* (1)  
 METHODIST\* (1)  
 TEMPLE\* (1)  
 ATTENDEES  
   ATTENDEE\* (1)  
 MEMBERS  
   MEMBER\* (1)  
 VENDORS  
   VENDOR\* (1)  
 READERS  
   LISTENER\* (1)  
   READER\* (1)  
   VIEWER\* (1)  
 WORKERS  
   WORKER\* (1)  
   @TEMPLE [TEMPLE\* NOT LABOR\_TEMPLE /D] (1)  
 CAMPERS  
   CAMPER (1)  
   CAMPERS (1)  
 OUTREACH\_WORKERS  
   OUTREACH-WORKER\* (1)  
   OUTREACH\_WORKER\* (1)  
 POLITICIANS  
   LEGISLATOR\* (1)  
   LEGISLATURE (1)  
   POLITICIAN\* (1)  
   SENETOR\* (1)  
 SUPPORTERS  
   SUPPORTER\* (1)  
 SERVICE\_PROVIDERS  
   SERVICE\_PROVIDER\* (1)  
 STATE  
   STATE (1)  
   WASHINGTON (1)  
 SPEAKERS  
   SPEAKER (1)  
   SPEAKERS (1)  
 TRAINERS  
   TRAINER (1)  
   TRAINERS (1)  
 OLYMPIA (1)  
 COUNTY (1)  
 SPACE

CITY\_LAND  
     CITY\_LAND (1)  
     CITY\_LOT (1)  
 GREEN\_BELT  
     GREEN\_BELT (1)  
     GREEN\_SPACE (1)  
     GREENBELT (1)  
 PARK  
     PARKS (1)  
     @PARK [PARK NOT HIGHLAND\_PARK /D] (1)  
 PRIVATE\_PROPERTY (1)  
 PUBLIC\_PROPERTY (1)  
 STREET  
     STREET (1)  
     STREETS (1)  
 UNAUTHORIZED\_ENCAMPMENT\* (1)  
 WOODS\*  
     WOODS (1)  
     UNDERBRUSH  
         UNDER-BRUSH (1)  
         UNDER\_BRUSH (1)  
         UNDERBRUSH (1)  
     HILLSIDE  
         HILLSIDE (1)  
         HILLSIDES (1)  
     BUSHES (1)  
 VACANT  
     VACANT (1)  
     EMPTY (1)  
     ABANDONED (1)  
 LOT  
     PARKING\_LOT (1)  
     @LOT [LOT NOT A\_LOT & LOT NOT WHOLE\_LOT /D]  
 (1)  
 AREA  
     SPACE\*  
         SPACE (1)  
         SPACES (1)  
     LOCATION (1)  
     @PLACE [PLACE NOT IN\_PLACE & PLACE NOT  
 TAK\*\_PLACE /D] (1)  
         AREA (1)  
 MOBILIZATION  
     MOVEMENT BUILDING  
         @MOVEMENT [MOVEMENT\* NOT MOVEMENT\_OF &  
 MOVEMENT\* NOT GENERATE\_MOVEMENT /S] (1)

CAMPAIGN\* (1)  
 REVOLUTION\* (1)  
 ALLIANC\* (1)  
 COALITION\* (1)  
 TAKING ACTION  
 PROTESTING  
 COLLECTIVE\_ACTION\* (1)  
 PROTEST\* (1)  
 DEMONSTRATION\* (1)  
 @RALLY [RALLY OR RALLIED /D] (1)  
 VIGIL\*  
 VIGIL (1)  
 VIGILS (1)  
 STREET\_THEATER  
 DIE-IN (1)  
 STREET\_THEATER (1)  
 MARCH  
 MARCHING\_AROUND (1)  
 MARCH\_THROUGH (1)  
 MARCH\_TOGETHER (1)  
 MARCH\_TO (1)  
 MARCH\_START\* (1)  
 MARCH\_PEACE (1)  
 MARCH\_ON (1)  
 MARCH\_IN (1)  
 MARCH\_FROM (1)  
 MARCH\_BEGIN\* (1)  
 MARCH\_AND (1)  
 MARCHES (1)  
 DAY\_MARCH (1)  
 A\_MARCH (1)  
 DOWNTOWN\_MARCH (1)  
 CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE  
 CIVIL-DISOBEDIENCE (1)  
 CIVIL\_DISOBEDIENCE (1)  
 OCCUPYING (1)  
 DIRECT\_ACTION\* (1)  
 PICKET\_LINE\* (1)  
 CAMPING  
 CAMPS  
 CAMP  
 CAMP\*  
 CAMP (1)  
 CAMPS (1)  
 CAMPED (1)  
 CAMPING (1)

CAMPSITES  
     CAMPSITES (1)  
     CAMPSITE (1)  
 HUT  
     HUTS (1)  
 SHACK  
     SHACK (1)  
     SHACKS (1)  
 SHANT\* (1)  
 TENT\*  
     TENTS (1)  
     @TENT [TENT NOT BEFORE CITY & TENT  
 NOT BEFORE CITIES /C 5] (1)  
     CAMPOUT  
         @CAMPOUT [CAMP\_OUT NOT CAMP\_OUTSIDE  
 & CAMP\_OUT NOT CAMP\_OUT\_IN /C] (1)  
         CAMP4UNITY (1)  
         CAMP\_4\_UNITY (1)  
         CAMP\_FOR\_UNITY (1)  
         CAMPOUT\* (1)  
         CAMP-IN (1)  
 TENT CITIES  
     TENT\_CITY  
         TENT-CIT\* (1)  
         TENT\_CIT\* (1)  
     DIGNITY\_VILLAGE  
         DIGNITY-VILLAGE\* (1)  
         DIGNITY\_VILLAGE\* (1)  
     HOOVERVILLE  
         HOOVERVILLE\* (1)  
         HOOVER-VILLE\* (1)  
 SELF-MANAGED  
     SELF\*MANAGE  
         SELF-MANAGE\* (1)  
         SELF\_MANAGE\* (1)  
     PEER\*SUPERVISED  
         PEER-SUPERVIS\* (1)  
         PEER\_SUPERVIS\* (1)  
     HOMELESS\_LED  
         RUN\_BY\_HOMELESS (1)  
         LED\_BY\_HOMELESS (1)  
     SELF\_GOVERNING  
         SELF-GOVERN\* (1)  
         SELF\_GOVERN\* (1)  
     PERSONAL\_SPACE (1)  
     HELPING\_EACH\_OTHER (1)



HELPING\_\*SELVES (1)  
 PROVIDE\_FOR\_\*SELVES (1)  
 SELF-SUFFICIEN\* (1)  
 AND\_SUPPORT\*\_EACH\_OTHER\* (1)

MOVE  
 @MOVETO [MOVE\_TO NOT MOVE\_TO\_BRING  
 & MOVE\_TO NOT MOVE\_TO\_PRESSURE /D] (1)  
 MOVED\_TO (1)  
 @MOVINGTO [MOVING\_TO NOT  
 MOVING\_TO\_WORK /D] (1)

MOVES\_TO\_BRYN (1)  
 MOVES\_TO\_DISCOVERY (1)  
 MOVES\_TO\_MY (1)  
 MOVES\_TO\_U (1)  
 NEXT\_MOVE (1)

HOST  
 HOSTED (1)  
 @HOST [HOST NOT HOST\_OF /D] (1)

TARPS  
 TARPS (1)  
 TARP (1)  
 PLASTIC\_SHEETING (1)  
 SHEETS\_OF\_PLASTIC (1)  
 PLASTIC\_SHEETS (1)

PALLETS  
 PALLET (1)  
 PALLETS (1)  
 2X4\* (1)  
 PLYWOOD (1)

PETITIONING  
 HEARING  
 THIS\_HEARING (1)  
 THE\_HEARING (1)  
 THAT\_HEARING (1)  
 STATUS\_HEARING (1)  
 ROACH'S\_HEARING (1)  
 PUBLIC\_HEARING (1)  
 PRE-TRIAL\_HEARING (1)  
 PRETRIAL\_HEARING (1)  
 PACKED\_HEARING (1)  
 MONDAY'S\_HEARING (1)  
 NEIGHBORHOOD\_HEARING (1)  
 JAIL\_HEARING (1)  
 LAWTON\_HEARING (1)  
 INJUNCTION\_HEARING (1)  
 HEARING\_PROCESS (1)

HEARING\_ON (1)  
 HEARING\_FOR (1)  
 COURT\_HEARING (1)  
 COUNCIL\_HEARING (1)  
 COMMITTEE\_HEARING (1)  
 CITIZEN-LED\_HEARING (1)  
 BUDGET\_HEARING (1)  
 A\_HEARING (1)  
 ZONING\*\_HEARING (1)  
 PETITION  
 BALLOT (1)  
 CITIZEN-INITIATIVE\* (1)  
 CITIZEN\_INITIATIVE\* (1)  
 I-100 (1)  
 I100 (1)  
 INITIATIVE\_100 (1)  
 I\_100 (1)  
 PETITION\* (1)  
 SIGNATURES (1)  
 STREET\_TEAM  
 STREET-TEAM (1)  
 STREET\_TEAM (1)  
 STREETTEAM (1)  
 @TAKEACTION [TAKE NEAR ACTION /S 6] (1)  
 EVENT  
 @EVENTS [EVENTS NOT CURRENT\_EVENTS /D] (1)  
 @EVENT [EVENT NOT IN\_THE\_EVENT & EVENT NOT  
 CURRENT\_EVENT /D] (1)  
 FORUM  
 FORUM\* (1)  
 WORKSHOP\* (1)  
 TRAINING\* (1)  
 JOB\_FAIR (1)  
 CEREMO\* (1)  
 ORGANIZING  
 ORGANIZE  
 @ORGANIZE [ORGANIZE NOT ORGANIZE@ /D] (1)  
 @ORGANIZING [ORGANIZING NOT  
 ORGANIZING\_PROJECT /D] (1)  
 ORGANIZED (1)  
 MOBILIZ\* (1)  
 VOLUNTEER  
 @VOLUNTEER [VOLUNTEER\* NOT  
 VOLUNTEER\_PARK & VOLUNTEER\* NOT VOLUNTEER@ /D] (1)  
 ATTEND (1)  
 BE\_PREPARED (1)

CALL\_TO\_ACTION (1)  
 SPEND THE NIGHT  
     COME\_DOWN\_TO (1)  
     COME\_OUT (1)  
     COME\_PREPARED (1)  
     COME\_TO (1)  
     COME\_AND\_VISIT (1)  
     HEAD\_OVER\_TO (1)  
     PLEASE\_COME (1)  
     COME\_VISIT (1)  
     SWING\_BY (1)  
     PLEASE\_COME (1)  
     SPEND\*\_THE\_NIGHT (1)  
     VISIT\_US (1)  
     DROP\*\_\*\_BY (1)  
     MEETUP  
         MEET-UP (1)  
         MEET\_UP (1)  
 GET\_INVOLVED (1)  
 JOIN US  
     JOIN\*\_US (1)  
     JOINED (1)  
     JOIN\_OTHERS (1)  
     JOIN\_THE\_CAUSE (1)  
     JOIN\_THE\_VILLAGE (1)  
     JOIN\_TOGETHER (1)  
     JOIN\_WITH (1)  
     JOIN\_OUR (1)  
     JOIN\_ME (1)  
 PITCH\_IN (1)  
 SUPPORT\_THEM  
     COME\_SUPPORT (1)  
     SUPPORT\_OUT (1)  
     SUPPORT\_THEM (1)  
     SUPPORT\_YOUR (1)  
     YOUR\_SUPPORT (1)  
     SUPPORT\_US (1)  
 SEE\_YOU (1)  
 TAKE\_THE\_LEED (1)  
 INVITE  
     INVITE\_YOU (1)  
     INVITE\* (1)  
     INVITE\_\*\_FRIEND\* (1)  
 SPEAK OUT  
     ADD\_YOUR\_VOICE (1)  
     SPEAK\*-OUT (1)

SPEAK\_AT (1)  
 SPEAK\_OUT (1)  
 SPEAK\_UP (1)  
 SPEAK\_TO (1)  
 TELL\_HIM\_TO (1)  
 HELP US  
     HELP\_US (1)  
     HELP\_WITH (1)  
 SIGN UP  
     SIGN\_ON (1)  
     SIGN\_UP (1)  
 STEP UP  
     STAND\_UP (1)  
     COME\_STAND (1)  
     STEP\_UP (1)  
 REACHING\_OUT  
     REACHING\_OUT (1)  
     REACHES\_OUT (1)  
 PARTICIPATE (1)  
 MAKE\_IT  
     ABLE\_TO\_MAKE\_IT (1)  
     I\_\*\_MAKE\_IT (1)  
     MAKE\_IT\_DOWN (1)  
     MAKE\_IT\_IN (1)  
     MAKE\_IT\_THROUGH (1)  
     MAKE\_IT\_TO (1)  
     YOU\_CAN\_MAKE\_IT (1)  
     MAKE\_IT\_HAPPEN (1)  
 HIT\_THE\_STREET\* (1)  
 WITH\_US (1)  
 YOUR\_HELP (1)  
 RECRUIT\* (1)  
 NEED\*\_YOU\* (1)  
 BRING\_FRIENDS  
     BRING\_FREINDS (1)  
     BRING\_\*\_FRIEND\* (1)  
     BRING\_A\_FRIEND (1)  
     BRING\_YOUR\_FREIND\* (1)  
 ALLIES\*  
     BUILD\_EACH\_OTHER\_UP (1)  
     CONVERGE (1)  
     DIALOGUE (1)  
 CROSS\_CLASS  
     ACROSS\_CLASS (1)  
     CROSS\_CLASS (1)  
     CROSS-CLASS (1)

## SOLIDARITY

STAND\_IN\_SOLIDARITY (1)

JOIN\_IN\_SOLIDARITY (1)

SOLIDARITY (1)

## PARTNERSHIP

PARTNERING\_WITH (1)

PARTNERSHIP\* (1)

PARTNER\_WITH (1)

## SHOW\_YOUR\_SUPPORT (1)

## GRASSROOTS (1)

## PEOPLE\_POWER

PEOPLE\_POWER (1)

POWER\_\*\_THE\_PEOPLE (1)

## WORK TOGETHER

CAME\_TOGETHER (1)

COME\_TOGETHER (1)

WORK\_TOGETHER (1)

GET\*\_TOGETHER (1)

BRING\_PEOPLE\_TOGETHER (1)

## COLLABORAT\*

COLLABORAT\* (1)

COLLABORATIVE\* (1)

## UNITY\*

UNIFY (1)

UNITE (1)

UNITED\_FRONT (1)

UNITED\_MOVEMENT (1)

UNITES (1)

UNITE\_AROUND (1)

UNITY (1)

UNITE\_WITH (1)

## \*PARTICIPAT\*

PARTICIPATORY (1)

BROAD\_PARTICIPATION (1)

## INCLUSIVE\*

INCLUSIVE (1)

INCLUSIVELY (1)

## ALL\_RELATED (1)

## ALLIES

ALLIES (1)

ALLIED (1)

ALLY (1)

## BIG\_TENT (1)

## COMMON

COMMON\_CAUSE (1)

COMMON\_INTERESTS (1)

IN\_COMMON (1)  
 SAME  
     SAME\_ISSUE (1)  
     SAME\_OPPRESSION (1)  
     ISSUES\_ARE\_THE\_SAME (1)  
     SISTER\_ORGANIZATION\* (1)  
 DONATE\*  
     AID\*  
         @AID [AID NOT VISUAL\_AID & AID NOT  
 FIRST\_AID /D] (1)  
         AIDING (1)  
         AIDED (1)  
 ASSIST\*  
     ASSIST (1)  
     ASSISTED (1)  
 HELP\*  
     HELPING\_EACH\_OTHER (1)  
     HELPING\_HAND (1)  
     HELPING\_THEM\_OUT (1)  
     HELPING\_US (1)  
     HELPING\_OUT (1)  
 DONATIONS  
     DONATE\* (1)  
     DONATION\* (1)  
     DONATING (1)  
 DROP\_OFF  
     DROP\*-OFF (1)  
     DROP\* \*\_OFF (1)  
     DROP\*\_OFF (1)  
     DELIVER\*\_YOUR (1)  
 BRING A  
     BRING\_A (1)  
     BRING\_YOUR (1)  
 FRIENDS  
     @FRIEND [FRIEND\* NOT SEND\_TO\_A\_FRIEND /D] (1)  
     COMPANIONSHIP (1)  
     COMPASSION\* (1)  
     CARE FOR  
         CARE\*\_ABOUT (1)  
         CARE\*\_FOR (1)  
         CARE\_IN (1)  
         CARE\_IS (1)  
         CARE\_OF (1)  
         CARE\_THAT (1)  
         CARE\_TO (1)  
         CARING (1)

PEOPLE\_CARE (1)  
 LOVE  
     LOVES (1)  
     LOVED (1)  
     LOVE (1)  
     LOVING (1)  
 RELATIONSHIP  
     RELATIONSHIP\* (1)  
     RELATIONAL (1)  
 WARMLY  
     WARMLY (1)  
 COMMUNITY\_BUILDING (1)  
 STRUGGLE\_FOR (1)  
 TURN\_OUT  
     @TURNOUT [TURN\_OUT NOT TURN\_OUT\_TO &  
 TURN\_OUT NOT GOING\_TO\_TURN\_OUT /D] (1)  
     TURN-OUT (1)  
     TURNOUT (1)  
 FAITH  
     @FAITH [FAITH NOT GOOD\_FAITH /D] (1)  
     @JESUS [JESUS NOT JESUS\_RODRIGUEZ /D] (1)  
     CHRIST (1)  
     COMMUNION (1)  
     GOD (1)  
 ADVOCACY (1)  
 SKILL\_BUILDING (1)  
 COORDINATING  
     SCHEDULE  
         SCHEDUL\* (1)  
 MEETING  
     MEETING\* (1)

### Appendix C: Frequencies of Semantic Fields

Table 7.3. Semantic field frequencies associated with deviant subjectivities within specialist texts producing each issue sector.

	Jail		Nickelsville		Sweeps		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
<i>Danger</i>	1.091	1858	0.573	594	0.564	955	2.228	3407
CRIMINALITY	0.799	1361	0.089	92	0.176	298	1.064	1751
DANGER*	0.005	9	0.014	15	0.012	21	0.031	45
POLICING	0.130	221	0.219	227	0.168	284	0.517	732
VIOLENCE	0.022	37	0.066	68	0.086	146	0.174	251
FEAR*	0.004	7	0.022	23	0.021	35	0.047	65
LEGALITY	0.011	19	0.102	106	0.034	58	0.147	183
@SAFE*	0.120	204	0.061	63	0.067	113	0.248	380
<i>Dirty</i>	0.063	107	0.178	184	0.291	490	0.532	781
CLEAN	0.005	9	0.024	25	0.098	166	0.127	200
FILTH	0.001	2	0.004	4	0.015	25	0.020	31
TRASH	0.007	12	0.029	30	0.055	93	0.091	135
MENTAL_ILLNESS	0.011	18	0.004	4	0.011	18	0.026	40
DISEASE	0.002	4	0.007	7	0.007	12	0.016	23
DISSABILITY	0.001	1	0.001	1	0.006	10	0.008	12
HEALTHCARE	0.005	9	0.019	20	0.013	22	0.037	51
HEALTH*	0.030	51	0.051	53	0.060	101	0.141	205
HUMAN_WASTE	-	-	0.003	3	0.011	18	0.014	21
BATHROOMS	0.001	1	0.029	30	0.012	20	0.042	51
DUMPSTER	-	-	0.007	7	0.003	5	0.010	12
<i>Drugs</i>	0.100	171	0.056	58	0.121	203	0.277	432
DRUNKS	0.011	19	0.005	5	0.006	10	0.022	34
USERS	0.001	1	0.004	4	0.007	11	0.012	16
ADDICTS	0.006	10	0.010	10	0.017	28	0.033	48
@SUBSTANCE*	0.005	8	0.001	1	0.011	18	0.017	27
DRUG	0.052	89	0.019	20	0.058	98	0.129	207
ALCOHOL	0.012	21	0.015	16	0.013	22	0.040	59
TREATMENT	0.013	23	0.002	2	0.009	16	0.024	41
<i>Total</i>	1.254	2136	0.807	836	0.976	1648	3.037	4620



Table 7.4. Semantic field frequencies associated with participant mobilization within specialist texts producing each issue sector.

	Jail		Nickelsville		Sweeps		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Institutionalizing the</i>								
<i>Movement</i>	133	.078	39	.038	181	.107	353	.223
@MOVEMENT	9	.005	5	.005	29	.017	43	.027
CAMPAIGN*	83	.049	9	.009	56	.033	148	.091
REVOLUTION*	-	-	6	.006	9	.005	15	.011
ALLIANC*	3	.002	1	.001	10	.006	14	.009
COALITION*	38	.022	18	.017	77	.046	133	.085
<i>Taking Action</i>	1208	.709	1187	1.156	1427	.848	3822	2.713
MEETING	646	.380	72	.070	247	.147	965	.597
EVENT	65	.038	24	.023	63	.037	152	.098
FORUM	264	.155	24	.023	55	.033	343	.211
<i>Traditional Protest Actions</i>	36	.021	78	.077	194	.115	308	.213
PROTEST*	16	.009	23	.022	116	.069	155	.100
DEMONSTRATION*	1	.001	5	.005	17	.010	23	.016
@RALLY	11	.006	14	.014	24	.014	49	.034
VIGIL*	-	-	15	.015	9	.005	24	.020
STREET_THEATER	-	-	-	-	2	.001	2	.001
MARCH	7	.004	9	.009	11	.007	27	.020
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE	-	-	11	.011	15	.009	26	.020
PICKET_LINE*	1	.001	1	.001	-	-	2	.002
<i>Camping Actions</i>	42	.025	973	.947	772	.459	1787	1.431
CAMPS	11	.006	576	.560	503	.299	1090	.865
CAMPOUT	18	.011	7	.007	117	.069	142	.087
TENT CITIES	2	.001	215	.209	97	.058	314	.268
SELF-MANAGED	-	-	17	.017	7	.004	24	.021
MOVE	5	.003	79	.077	13	.008	97	.088
HOST	6	.004	39	.038	11	.007	56	.049
TARPS	-	-	17	.017	22	.013	39	.030
PALLETS	-	-	23	.022	2	.001	25	.023
<i>Lobbying Actions</i>	1130	.663	136	.132	461	.274	1727	1.069
HEARING	31	.018	9	.009	24	.014	64	.041
PETITION	118	.069	3	.003	65	.039	186	.111
STREET_TEAM	4	.002	-	-	-	-	4	.002
@TAKEACTION	2	.001	4	.004	7	.004	13	.009
<i>Community Organizing</i>	1070	.630	909	.883	1196	.711	3175	2.224
ORGANIZE	39	.023	43	.042	60	.036	142	.101
MOBILIZ*	6	.004	3	.003	7	.004	16	.011
VOLUNTEER	333	.196	216	.210	336	.199	885	.605
ALLIES*	116	.068	58	.056	107	.064	281	.188

Table 7.4. Continued.

	Jail		Nickelsville		Sweeps		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
DONATE*	20	.012	60	.058	65	.039	145	.109
FRIENDS	58	.034	177	.172	181	.107	416	.313
COMMUNITY_BUILDING	4	.002	2	.002	1	.001	7	.005
STRUGGLE_FOR	-	-	-	-	4	.002	4	.002
TURN_OUT	12	.007	2	.002	3	.002	17	.011
FAITH	15	.009	109	.106	28	.017	152	.132
ADVOCACY	7	.004	8	.008	49	.029	64	.041
SKILL_BUILDING	2	.001	-	-	1	.001	3	.002
SCHEDULE	49	.029	18	.017	27	.016	94	.062
Total	2002	1.176	1922	1.870	2477	1.472	6401	4.518

## Appendix D: Interviewee Demographics

Table 7.5. Interviewee demographics and interview dates.

Interviewee	Primary Organizational Affiliation(s)	Ever Homeless?	Campaign Participation			Interview Date
			No New Jail	Nickelsville	Stop the Sweeps	
Aaron Colyer 1	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	9/27/08
Aaron Colyer 2	Out of the Box Ministries	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	12/16/08
Agustan Lee	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	-	9/30/08
Anitra Freeman 1	WHEEL, RCEP	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	10/24/08
Anitra Freeman 2	WHEEL, RCEP	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	10/28/08
Anonymous	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	-	11/6/08
Anton	Veterans for Peace	Yes	-	Yes	-	9/24/08
Ari Kohn	Post Prison Education Project	Yes	Yes	-	-	12/4/08
Briant Toliver	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	9/28/09
Cecile Hanson	Duwamish Nation	-	-	Yes	-	10/23/08
David Bloom	Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/14/08
Debbie Carlson	Jobs With Justice	-	Yes	-	Yes	11/13/08
Dorsal Plants	Highland Park Action Committee	-	Yes	Yes	-	10/28/08
Elana Dicks	Puget Sound SAGE	-	-	-	Yes	10/30/08
Jannetta Cravens-Boyd	University Christian Church	-	-	Yes	-	2/11/09
John Clark	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	-	9/28/08
Linda Kenny	WHEEL	Yes	-	-	-	10/28/08
Michelle Merchand	WHEEL	-	-	Yes	Yes	10/28/08
Mike Smith	RCOP	-	Yes	-	Yes	11/4/08
Mr. Super Man	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	-	5/31/09
Natalie Novak	RCEP	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/17/08
Natalie Pinkerton	ROOTS Youth Shelter	-	-	Yes	-	12/12/08
Peggy Hotes 1	Nickelodeon, Veterans for Peace	-	-	Yes	-	10/21/08
Peggy Hotes 2	Nickelodeon, Veterans for Peace	-	-	Yes	-	2/7/09
Rachel Myers	WA Low-Income Housing Alliance	-	-	-	Yes	11/25/08
Revel Smith	RCOP	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	12/11/08
Rich Lang	Trinity United Methodist Church	-	-	-	Yes	10/23/08
Richard White	RCEP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/12/08
Scott Morrow	Nickelsville staff, SHARE	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	10/14/08
Stan		Yes	-	-	Yes	12/16/08
Super woman	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	-	5/31/09
Taylor Cuffaro	RCEP	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/17/08
Theresa Rollins	Nickelodeon	Yes	-	Yes	-	9/28/08
Tim Harris	RCEP	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/4/08
214	Nickelodeon, SHARE	-	-	Yes	Yes	9/30/08
Total	16 Organizations Affiliated	15	10	27	20	

## **Appendix E: Acronyms**

### **Organizations:**

Committee to End Homelessness (CEH)  
Consumer Advisory Council of the Committee to End Homelessness (CAC)  
Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC)  
Interagency Council of the Committee to End Homelessness (IC)  
Real Change Empowerment Project (RCEP)  
Real Change Organizing Project (RCOP)  
Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE)  
University Congregational United Church of Christ (UCUCC)  
Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL)

### **Concepts:**

Communication resource (CM)  
Computer mediated communication (CMC)  
New social movements (NSM)  
Organizational sector (OS)  
Organizational type (OT)  
Resource mobilization (RM)  
Social movement (SM)  
Social movement communication (SMC)

### **Data:**

Communication texts archive (CTA)

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This study presents data that was developed through a research proposal that was approved by the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (# 34550).

<sup>2</sup> Callon and Latourelle (1981) write that “A black box contains that which no longer needs to be considered, those things whose contents have become a matter of indifference” (p.285). The term is derived from cybernetics, where it is described as an “as yet unanalyzed non-linear system” (Wiener, 1948, p. x). I use the term “black box” here to signal how communication and information exchange is often dealt with as something that is either present or absent. This study takes this presence or absence and unpacks what presence might mean in a more complicated manner, with the underlying assumption that all communication is not the same, and may signal very different types of social activity or social relations.

<sup>3</sup> A semantic field is a group of words, phrases, rules, and/or lemmas that share a common area of meaning conceptually. A full description of semantic fields can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that there is much disagreement on how best to count a population that often relies on invisibility as a mechanism for survival, as the counting of populations has significant political implications (Wagner, 1993). Rather than a conclusive count, these numbers are intended to provide readers with a reference for the general size of the population.

<sup>5</sup> The Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH) relied on over 800 volunteers to count people sleeping outside or on busses in Seattle in January of 2009. While the number of people on the streets in the city of Seattle rose less in 2009 than in 2008, south King County saw a 68% increase – a change some attribute to Mayor Nickels’ homeless encampment “sweeps” policy driving people out of locations closer to food and services for low-income citizens.

<sup>6</sup> RCEP started the street newspaper, *Real Change News*, in 1994, and now publishes weekly with a circulation of 18,000. The paper can only be purchased on the street by a *Real Change News* vendor, providing a source of flexible income to over 400 vendors a month.

<sup>7</sup> RCOP is the political action wing of RCEP.

<sup>8</sup> Authors publishing in multiple organizational sectors included Timothy Harris, Natalie Novak, Rich Lang, Travis Thomas, Nick Lacata, Raymond Murphy, Ari Kohn, Geov Parrish, Judy Lightfoot, Lisa Fitzhugh, Luigino Bracci Roa, and Scott Bransford.

<sup>9</sup> The dyadic pairs of ties were: *KBCS* and *Seattle IMC*; *TentCities.wordpress.com* and *Save Feral Human Habitat*; *Monthly Review Zine* and *YVKE Mundial Radio*; *The Stranger Blog* and *The Stranger*; *New American Media* and *High Country News*; CAC and the Interagency Council of the CEH; City Email and *West Seattle Herald*; *Democracy Now!* and *AlterNet*.

<sup>10</sup> Advocacy organizations were defined as organizations whose purpose was described as the mobilization of participants to change social policy, and whose primary activities did not revolve solely around the production of communication texts. Alternative media outlets were defined as those communication resources whose primary activity was the production of communication texts in the public sphere, but whom did not exist primarily for the production of commercial profit (i.e., were non-profits or existed for socially related reasons like community development, activism, or personal expression). Mainstream media organizations were defined as those communication resources whose primary activity was the production of communication texts in the public sphere, the purpose of which centered around the production of profit. Governmentally sponsored texts were those texts published in communication resources established and maintained by a governmental entity, or whom were contracted by a governmental entity to produce the resource and/or texts.

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<sup>11</sup> 81 out of 111 seed URLs were included in the original issue crawl sociomatrix due to the expiration of a website or the unavailability of the site at the time of harvesting. This population reflects a crawl in May, 2009. Subsequent crawls had slightly different populations, resulting in fewer URLs per crawl.

<sup>12</sup> See Monge & Contractor (2003, p. 41) for a discussion of reachability in network analysis.

<sup>13</sup> Issue area semantic networks were constructed by measuring the occurrence of collocations between lexical items within the semantic fields of *materiality* and *deviance*. Centralization measures of betweenness, degree, and density all rely on binary relations between nodes, so frequencies above one were counted as present, and those of one or zero as absent. This measure of relational ties reflects Sinclair's (2004) assertion that collocations occurring only once do not constitute an instance of semantic prosody, but do not reflect the strength of association – a weakness of the method that I complement with norm file comparisons.

<sup>14</sup> The most common semantic fields associated with the *taking collective action* communication process was *camping actions*, and this semantic field was more common in reports on people's actions than on the planning and organizing of those actions.

<sup>15</sup> Notably, SHARE/WHEEL did recently launch their own website after over 15 years of helping homeless people organize themselves: <http://www.sharewheel.org/>.

<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I refer to the direct action tent city project as a campaign as it bears many but not all of the attributes often associated with political campaigns.

<sup>17</sup> All interview participants were given the option of being fully identified, choosing a pseudonym, or being anonymous (R. Campbell & Wasco, 2000). One participant chose to be anonymous, two asked that only their first names be used, and the remainder chose to have their full names used. Many participants felt socially marginalized and appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences. I am humbled by the many people I worked alongside during my fieldwork and present their names here as a way to recognize their substantive contributions to this paper as "movement intellectuals" (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix B for a full listing of lexical fields developed for this study