MEDIA ANALYSIS OF HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT "SWEEPS"

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(a printer-ready .pdf version is available here)

In the late summer, the Homeless Coverage Study Group began collecting a corpus of data in order to conduct a media and public policy analysis of the recent City of Seattle practice of "sweeping" encampments of homeless people on city-owned property. We are a group of scholars in a variety of specialties: some of us are based in rhetoric, some in writing studies, some in linguistics and discourse analysis, some in visual rhetoric, and some in communications. Collectively, we represent an array of analyses and we employed those analyses to examine how local media portray the issues associated with the encampment "sweeps."

FINDINGS

- The City of Seattle designed a public relations campaign to dominate coverage of the sweeps as necessary for public health and safety;
- The City of Seattle memorialized the discourses of filth and contagion in procedural documents and a new administrative rule on encampment "sweeps";
- Fear-based discourses dominate the media coverage, both print and visual media;
- The "progressive" goals of Ten-Year Plans (i.e., permanent housing) enables a rhetorical space that can be used (and has in Seattle) to justify the destruction of temporary housing;
- Visual media, especially television, emphasize the perspectives of nearby home-owners;
- Perspectives of advocates for the homeless are portrayed as reacting defensively to the City's claims;
- Language of filth and contagion are over-represented in both the media coverage and public policy documents;
- Media and city sources rarely present the perspective or voices of the homeless;
- The reasons for the encampments—unsafe one-night shelters and the lack of affordable housing—are rarely present in media or city sources;

- Discussion of the reasons for homelessness and the voices of the homeless are muted in the Committee to End Homelessness, a quasi-governmental planning agency;
- Photographic portrayals of the homeless in non-media outlets focus on misery and not on the humanity of those photographed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our study is divided into seven parts, each by separate researchers. The divisions are as follows:

- [Rai] National context and background rhetorical context
- [Bawarshi,] Argument analysis of City's public relations campaign development
- [Stygall,] Discourse analysis of City policy amendment and Committee to End Homelessness meeting minutes
- [Silberstein], Discourse analysis of television coverage
- [Kelly,] Discourse analysis of print media
- [Toft], and English and Thomas, Quantitative analysis of all coverage
- [Dillon], Visual rhetorical analysis of photographs of the homeless.

Our study begins with an overview of the national context of the homeless and Ten-Year Plans by Candice Rai. Rai analyzes how the Ten-Year Plans can be used as justifications for destroying temporary housing for the homeless (encampments) and to de-emphasize the gap between the plans and the actual available housing. Rai also notes the use of "architecture" of the encampments as an additional rationale for the "sweeps." She also provides the background on the affordability of housing in the Seattle area.

Rai's report is followed by Bawarshi's section tracing the origination and development of the City's public relations campaign on the encampment "sweeps." He examines the development of the City's new rule through revisions to documents created by the City to promote the policy. Bawarshi is able to track changes to the media presentation and identifies the creation of a two-part argument that the City proceeds to use: 1) encampments are dangerous to public health and safety; and 2) encampments are in the way of the City's plans to end homelessness; so, the sweeps are justified. He describes how details are collected and deployed to support that argument.

Bawarshi's report is followed by that of Gail Stygall, a section using the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis, to examine the official Administrative Rule promulgated by the City, a rule that memorializes the language of filth and contagion into City law. Stygall also analyzes the minutes of two of the three bodies making up the Committee to End Homelessness. She finds that discussion of the City's new administrative rule is limited and that it is City employees who describe the policy rather than those experiencing the new policy. Speaking roles for members of the homeless community are narrow. She concludes with an analysis of a City news release on the new administrative rule.

Sandra Silberstein's analysis of the television coverage of the homeless camps is next. She describes the placing of the viewer into the position of homeowners rather than imagining that of a person who is homeless and who is being displaced. Silberstein addresses the metaphors of filth and contagion through the City's use of haz-mat suits to "clean" the areas of the encampments. She also examines how the City's position is presented in television coverage, while the advocates for the homeless are less prominent and reactive. She notes that some of the television coverage was modified when the Nickelsville tent city was erected.

The analysis of television coverage is followed by a qualitative analysis of print media by Megan Kelly. Using the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis she traces how information from the city makes its way into print news sources. Even when reporters include some details that

describe parts of the camps more positively, there is typically a shift back to the City's perspective. Kelly notes how the City employees are presented doing dangerous work and how personal belongings mix with debris, soggy mattresses, rotting food and the like. Kelly also analyzes the use of the word "sweeps," and its association with trash. Kelly also describes the missing analysis of the economic causes of homeless.

The analysis of the print coverage is followed by the quantitative analysis of all media coverage of the encampment sweeps by Amoshaun Toft and his colleagues Travis English and Barb Thomas. The group finds six groupings of discourse that the media emphasizes. Journalists use *dirty*, *drugs*, and *danger* to describe the homeless camps. These negative discourses appear first, but a second set of discourses, which they call structural discourses, are formed around *economic* reasons for homeless, the lack of sufficient *services*, and *human rights* and dignity. They also compare word frequencies for each of the two sets. Although the fear-based discourses dominate the media coverage, they note that the Nickelsville coverage increased discussion of the structural discourses.

Toft et al.'s section is followed by a Dillon's final section that addresses the visual representation of the homeless in a local (West Seattle) outlet and in the photographs of amateurs and concerned citizens in the area. He notes a connection made between the health of the environment and encampments. The balance of his section describes the problems with photographs doing the work of misery-fication, or miserification, that is, photographing the homeless as passive, damaged objects. He presents (as thumbnails here and a slide show on Flickr) 27 street portraits culled from 1422 recent postings on Flickr that rise above the typical portrayals of homeless persons as abject and supplicating bodies so often found in the media and even on Flickr.

What we found throughout the documents and visual representations we examined was a kind of demonization of the homeless and their living conditions. We locate much of the original discussion of filth and disease, ever-present in the media descriptions, in the City's public relations campaign and changes in administrative rule. The City of Seattle participates in the demonization by including these descriptions of filth and disease in news releases, procedural guides, an administrative rule, and drafts of their public relations plan. The voices of the homeless themselves and occasional advocates receive some media time, but their time does not match the attention given to filth and disease. We as readers and watchers are not presented with the reasons for homelessness, nor are we presented with fair descriptions of what one-night stays in shelters are like. We encourage those reporting on encampments and homelessness to remember that the causes of homelessness are profoundly economic and not moral and that, in fairness, reporting on what shelter life is like would help readers and watchers understand why the homeless would choose encampments over shelters. Our report does note that local media can and do notice these concerns when the voices of the homeless and their advocates are heard. We close by reminding our readers that the process of demonization is dangerous for all—both those who are demonized and those who conduct the demonization.

An Overture

Candace Rai

In July 2008, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released the *2007 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*. According to the report, based on a one-night count in January 2007, there were 671,888 homeless persons nationwide (63 percent were individuals and 37 percent were in families)[1]. Over a twelve-month period, HUD reported that approximately 1,589,000 individuals lived in emergency shelters or transitional housing[2].

On January 24, 2008, the 28th annual One Night Count sponsored by the Seattle/King County Coalition of the Homeless and Operation Nightwatch, estimated that at least 8.439 individuals were homeless on any given night in King County. Approximately 2,631 (1,976 in Seattle proper) of these individuals were unsheltered—counted on park benches, under roadways, bus stops, alleys, and so on, which reflects a 15 percent increase from 2007. The remaining 5,808 resided in transitory housing or emergency shelter beds.[3]

In 2000, the National Alliance to End Homelessness launched *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*, which was endorsed by HUD and the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness. To date, the blueprint set forth in this document has catalyzed over 300 cities nationwide to jump onboard with their own ten-year plans to end homelessness. The Ten Year Plans are, in part, a response to decades worth of ineffective plans to eradicate homelessness that were not responsive to local needs and that kept people cycling in and out of the sometimes dehumanizing emergency shelter and social service circuits. In the 1980s, federally funded homeless programs treated the scale of homelessness as a temporary phenomenon that emerged as a result of deindustrialization, recession, and the deinstitutionalization of mentally ill individuals in the 1970s and 1980s. Accordingly, the government funded stopgap emergency measures (shelters, temporary housing, and survival social services) that were not designed to address the long-term, nationwide affordable housing shortage that compounds the current problem. At the heart of the ten-year plans, then, is the mandate to shift resources from the failed temporary, shelter model that burgeoned in the 1980s to the creation of permanent housing with supportive services.

In 2004, Seattle launched its plan to "end homelessness, not manage it" by 2014, which is articulated in *A Roof Over Every Bed in King County: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness*. With this plan, Seattle joined the wave of urban centers that have already initiated similar initiatives, such as Chicago, which purports to end homelessness by 2010, San Francisco by 2013, Portland by 2015, and Denver by 2015. Seattle's plan calls for an investment in "permanent housing alternatives and supportive services," and for creation of "interim survival mechanisms—services focused on keeping people alive—that respect the rights of all community members and neighborhoods . . . until such time that affordable permanent housing is available to all[4]"

1   U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released the *2007 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*, July 2008, ii, http://www.hudhre.info/documents/3rdHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf

2   U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released the *2007 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*, July 2008, iv, http://www.hudhre.info/documents/3rdHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf

3   http://www.homelessinfo.org/onc.html

4   *A Roof Over Every Bed In King County: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness,* The Committee

While the focus on creating the literal bricks and mortar solutions required to combat homelessness is promising and progressive, the core criticisms of these plans is the subsequent reduction of resources for temporary housing; the sometimes severe sweeping of homeless from public spaces before permanent housing is available; and the dehumanizing rhetoric used to describe the homeless in city documents, which often draws from centuries old discourses that equate the homeless to filth, trash, and disease.

While a local outcome-driven plan to end homelessness that focuses on building permanent housing and addresses the systemic causes of homelessness is promising, in Seattle, the "progressive" language and practices of the plan have been used by the city and media to draw attention away from the gap between the plan's ideal and the material circumstances that prevent the plan from being executed as intended. Importantly, this gap allows room for the city to form arguments against the encampments, for example, that make strategic use of the plan's progressive discourse to justify sweeps before supplying adequate housing resources that might allow sweeps to be more than just keeping the bodies of the homeless moving and out of sight.

For example, one strand (among others that we discuss) of the city's rationale for the sweeps focuses on the "architecture" of the encampments as not only a public threat and eyesore, but also a danger to the homeless and a step in the wrong direction in the city's proposed "pathway out of homelessness." Because the plan stresses permanent housing as a step in the right direction, and expansion of shelters and temporary housing as a step in the wrong direction, the encampment sweeps are justified as necessary steps towards ending homelessness (this same logic, however, is not applied by the city when it boasts as one of its core accomplishments that it invests $6 million in 16 shelters and increased funding for shelters and temporary housing by 46 percent between 2000-2009)[5]. Further, when the encampments are not being portrayed by the city as health threats, they are dismissed with moral arguments (seemingly waged on behalf of the homeless that ask why anyone would support dangerous, shoddy living conditions when there are safer, cleaner housing alternatives. This rhetoric reflects a double-whammy move that justifies the sweeps while making it more difficult for homeless advocates to make their case that encampments are necessary, despite a serious lack of temporary and permanent affordable housing alternatives.

Part of the problem in implementing the ten-year plan is that while Seattle has made efforts towards expanding affordable housing for the homeless and for working families, the number of available units remains critically low in relation to demand. Seattle faces a growing affordable housing crisis that underscores and exacerbates the issues of homelessness in the city and region. For example, in 2008, the average two-bedroom apartment in Seattle rented at $1,250[6], which would require an hourly wage of $23.44 for a full-time worker (40 hours per week). At Seattle's 2008 minimum wage of $8.07, a worker would need to put in 116 hours (nearly three full-time jobs) to afford a two-bedroom apartment. (These calculations are based on HUD's definition of affordability as no more than 30% of a household's income devoted to rent/mortgage and utilities.) In 2008, median condo value in Seattle was $342,000 and the

to End Homelessness in King County *pg. i, 2005, http://www.cehkc.org/plan10/plan.aspx.*

5 "What Seattle is doing to end homelessness," City of Seattle, 2007,

http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/homelessness/docs/071219endingHomelessness.pdf.

6 "Median Rent Comparison by Metro Area," Rentometer, 2008, http://www.rentomatic.com/pdf/Rentometer_q1-2008.pdf.

median single family home was $470,000—clearly out of reach for thousands of working households[7].

Seattle's Mayor Gregory Nickels issued the executive order to clear out the city's homeless encampments on April 7, 2008. The order outlined procedures for removing "unauthorized encampments" defined as "three or more unauthorized structures in an identifiable area which appear to be being used for unauthorized camping[8]." (For further description of the order, see the Stygall section.) The order, which is articulated under the auspices of the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, requires the city to post a three-day warning prior to the removal of the encampment and to document the sweeps by recording and photographing the amount and type of confiscated personal property and debris found[9].

It is on the practices and discourse around these encampment sweeps that this report focuses.
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Analysis of Documents from the City of Seattle Regarding Encampment Sweeps

Anis Bawarshi

The city of Seattle documents I analyzed include: e-mails between city staff, especially from the Mayor's office, memos, "Speaking Points," "Frequently Asked Questions" documents produced by the City, news advisories, and news releases, all produced between November 2007 and June 2008. In some cases, I was able to analyze various iterations of the same document in draft form, which provided insight into the City's strategy in process and revealed a trajectory for how the City was developing its arguments for conducting homeless encampment sweeps.

And indeed, what the analysis reveals is a strategic process by the City to build an argument, one that began with the City's initial announcement in late November 2007 to update its "encampment abatement protocol" and then took public shape through various documents produced by the city over the next few months, leading to the encampment sweeps. In what follows, I will describe the features of this argument, what it includes and what it does not include, and the evidence and assumptions upon which it seems to rest. In addition, I will describe the city's effort to make its argument public, through "Speaking Points," "FAQs," "Fact Sheets," and media tours of encampments.

In a memo dated Nov. 27, 2007 to senior staff regarding encampments, the headline in bold reads: "Defining the problem and educating opinion leaders and the media." In this memo, we can identify two key elements of the City's eventual argument and its line of reasoning: 1) to establish that encampments are dangerous and pose public health and safety threats and 2) to establish that encampments are inhumane and create obstacles to the city's efforts to create "pathways out of homelessness." Essentially, the City's argument can be summarized as follows: because encampments pose a threat to public health and safety and because encampments are an impediment to the City's plan to end homelessness, encampment sweeps are justified. The documents I analyzed reveal the City's efforts to establish, support, and publicize these two

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7 "Real Estate in Seattle, WA," 2008, http://rates.banks.com/realestate/washington/seattle.

8 Executive Order 06-08: Encampments, City of Seattle, 2008, pg. 2, http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/news/encampments_exec_order.pdf

9 Executive Order 06-08: Encampments, City of Seattle, 2008, pg. 5-8. http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/news/encampments_exec_order.pdf

premises on which its argument for encampment clean up is built. The documents suggest a highly developed and effective public relations program.

If the aforementioned memo is an indication, we can see a glimpse into how the two main premises were strategically developed. The first premise, that encampments pose a public health and safety threat, was written as part of the memo: "Develop one pager with list of examples of public health/public safety problems. Information will be gathered from Fire and SPD (Doug), Public Health, Parks, and HDS (Marilyn)." The second premise seems to have emerged a bit later, as it appears in a handwritten marginal annotation on the memo: "human way for people to live." The documents that follow illustrate the City's attempts to develop these two central premises.

In the case of the first premise, we can see City staff trying to find evidence in the BOH for whether human waste can qualify as sewage (after an exchange, it was determined that it does). But the more crucial evidence comes from what appears to be a solicited memo from the Department of Parks and Recreation, with the subject: "Encampment Problem Statement and Public Health Issues." In this memo, we see the main set of public health and safety issues identified, all of which, except one, would appear in later City documents as evidence in support of the first premise. The list of concerns regarding encampments, developed by Parks and Recreation purportedly based on common concerns expressed by citizens are as follows: the presence of garbage and litter, including needles and other drug paraphernalia; sanitation concerns and human waste; rodents; illegal behavior such as drug use, noise, and drinking; intimidation of park users; the threat of camp fires and mudslides and burglary. All but the last item (burglary) make their way into subsequent City documents, especially public documents such as Speaking Points. Presumably, although there is no way to know for sure, the burglary threat and its "some have 'blamed campers' for business thefts" was deemed too much as hearsay and could have undermined the credibility of the other accusations. Aside from this Parks and Recreation memo, the only other document in my corpus that tried to provide evidence of the encampments' threat to public health and safety came in a June 5, 2008 news release from the Mayor, reporting the Queen Anne Encampment post-Clean-up Review, which explains that clean-up crew members "were immunized against Hepatitis A and B" and that two police officers were present to "address safety concerns." The release also describes the collection of 21 tons of "debris including used hypodermic needles, rotting cans of food, bottles of urine, and human waste" (43). In this same release, it is noted that outreach workers were available to assist individuals, but "Only one of the campers accepted an offer for shelter" (June 5 news release).

This last point seems strategic, as it seems to serve as evidence that encampments are not only public health and safety threats, but also obstacles to pathways out of homelessness. One cannot help but get the intended impression that since only one camper accepted an offer for shelter, the other campers are not interested in pursuing pathways out of homelessness that City shelters ostensibly provide. And this is one of the main assumptions embedded in the City's argument: that shelters offer a pathway out of homelessness and into permanent housing while encampments do not. For the most part, this is a contestable claim that is instead treated in the documents as obvious.

The "Pathways out of homelessness to permanent housing" is both a phrase in and the title of a number of documents and drafts I examined. I analyzed two drafts of the document titled "Pathways out of homelessness to permanent housing." This document presents the City's second premise (that encampments are inhumane and create obstacles to the city's efforts to create "pathways out of homelessness") in an early elaborated form, iterations of which later reappear in other documents such as Speaking Points. The document begins: "People need safe,

permanent housing. It is a basic human need. No one should have to be homeless." This set of opening sentences works to establish the City's credibility and serves to provide a set of principles no one would want to oppose (it is interesting, though, that in an earlier draft dated November 28, 2007, "basic human *need*" had been "basic human *right*" but was deleted. Rights are things that can be protected; needs less so. A need is something one "has" whereas a right is something granted, more social, collective.) Beginning with these general principles, the City then builds its argument as follows: a) Safe, permanent housing is a basic human need; b) the city is working hard to end homelessness (ten-year plan, investment of $40 million a year to prevent and end homelessness, $28 million since 2005 in new permanent housing; c) while the city works to end homelessness, it also provides temporary support and funds a number of services and programs (investments in shelter beds, transitional housing, hygiene facilities and day centers and meal programs, other regional investments); d) shelters, while not a permanent solution, are a better alternative to encampments.

In developing its "Speaking Points on Encampment Issues" a few days later, the City repeats the above set of moves, but does so even more deliberately (adding more statistics than appeared in the "Pathways" document) and adding emphasis ("Since January 2007 *alone*," where in the previous document it was "Since January 2007,"). The Speaking Points document also more directly engages the encampment issue by moving it to a more prominent position at the beginning of the document, as the second bullet point, and elaborating on it: "Allowing people to live in squalid, unsafe conditions is not a solution—it is part of the problem. Such conditions are not humane, not acceptable, and they do not help those people get the services they need to rebuild their lives" ("Speaking Points"). The third bullet then reads: "Homelessness is not a condition we should simply accept as a society. We should try to end it." This is then followed by the moves described in "b" and "c" above, starting with "Here's what we are doing to help homeless people." The suggestion and implication in this set of opening moves is that encampments do not only work against helping the homeless, but they represent an acceptance of homelessness. Shelters, on the other hand, provide stability and pathways out of homelessness. Beyond the acknowledgement that shelters are not a permanent solution, there is no other mention in the corpus I looked at of problems with shelters or to why individuals would prefer to live in encampments rather than in shelters. And there is no mention of the realities of the lack of affordable housing.

Based on the City's line of reasoning, it could then proclaim in a document titled "Unauthorized Encampments on City Property: Frequently Asked Questions" (April 3, 2008) that its soon-to-be-updated policies and procedures will assure that its "response to unauthorized encampments is consistent, coordinated, and compassionate."
The corpus also reveals the City's strategic effort to make its argument and line of reasoning public through Speaking Points; FAQs, Facts Sheets; "Behind the Facts" human interest stories designed to appeal to the media; news releases; and media tours of encampments. In the case of the latter, one can sense the urgency in making sure the media gets to do these tours. In one e-mail exchange from December 4, 2007 regarding Seattle Times editorial writer Bruce Ramsey, an e-mail states: "Editorial writer Bruce Ramsey from the Times is going to write on the encampment issues. He is interested in taking the tour, but need to check if he can hold off the editorial for a day. I'm betting he can. Can we arrange a tour for him tomorrow mid morning? I think he will understand the city's position on this and it is very important to get our point of view presented to him" ("Re: Times Editorial on Encampments"). Likewise, in the ramp-up to the Queen Anne encampment clean-up on May 28, 2008, e-mails reveal the Mayor's office's efforts to orchestrate media tours. Staff from the Mayor's office are asked to be at the clean-up to

"help media" and in one response, a staff member writes: "I'm planning to be there. Linda Brill from KING-5 is hot on the trail of this [c]leanup" ("Re: Queen Anne encampment clean-up").

There are also strategic efforts to promote human interest stories, as in the case of a homeless "deaf couple" who had returned after a sweep to retrieve, successfully, their belongings from a storage facility. Along the same lines, the City produced a document titled "Behind the Facts: Pathways Out of Homelessness," meant to go on the flip side of the fact sheet titled "What the City is doing to end homelessness"). "Behind the Facts" includes brief narratives of three "success stories": a Somalian family, an African American mother of three, and "Pete." Each follows a narrative pattern and begins with an orientation: "One night," "Early in 2007," "'Pete was a frequent visitor to the Lazarus Day Center in Seattle." The revisions to this document reveal the City's strategy at work, where the staff writers were asked in an e-mail to revise an earlier version, which had included four narratives, and to replace two of the stories "with other success stories related to city-funded services helping people move into permanent housing from shelter or transitional housing or maintain permanent housing"—the two deleted stories did not represent such trajectories. That the staff writers could only replace the deleted two stories (which had not met the requested criteria) with one might be telling.

Encampment Sweeps Policy and the Committee to End Homelessness

Gail Stygall

One means of analysis for examining public policy is to examine who is able to speak in public meetings associated with the issue. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) looks to speaking roles as a way of measuring whose voices are heard and whose are not. This section of our report examines the connection between the City of Seattle's sweeps policy on City property and the Committee to End Homelessness (CEH). We'll first look at one iteration of the policy itself, when the City itself "speaks," and then turn to the meetings of the City-sponsored committee most clearly associated with homelessness and close with an analysis of a City news release on the new policy.

Because the City chose to develop a new policy through administrative rules, public discussion was limited. As Angela Galloway, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter noted, the City Council may have some concerns about the policy, although, "Still, the council has limited authority on this matter. The protocol was enacted by an executive order of the mayor and is not subject to council approval. Even if the council moves to separately enact an ordinance to change the standards, Nickels could veto it" (4/15/2008). The policy in question is "City of Seattle, Executive Order 06-08, Encampments" and "No. MDAR 08-01, Operating Hours for City Properties; Unauthorized Camping on City Properties; Enforcement Procedures; and Removal of Unauthorized Property" found here:
http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/news/public_comment.htm

These documents contain the alarming vocabulary referenced elsewhere in this report. Contagion, filth, feces, hypodermic needles, rats all make their way into the City's administrative rule as the rationale for the policy. The 1.1 section of the administrative rule, No. MDAR 08-01, "Introduction and Findings," asserts that the policy "the rules are designed to reduce":

1. **Unsanitary hygiene** conditions, including the accumulation of **garbage, human and animal feces**, and **other hazardous materials** that **threaten the health and safety** of *campers*, other **members of the public**, and **City employees**;

2. **Unsanitary hygiene** conditions, including the **accumulation of garbage, human and animal feces**, and **other hazardous materials** that increase **the presence of rodents and other vermin**;

3. **Criminal activity**, including **incidents of violent crime and felony drug tracking**, that **threaten the health and safety** of *campers*, other **members of the public**, and **City employees**;

4. The **presence of used hypodermic needles** that **threaten the health and safety** of *campers*, other **members of the public**, and **City employees**;

5. The **presence of unlawful weapons** and **other contraband** that threaten **the health and safety** of *campers*, other **members of the public**, and **City employees**;

6. **Destruction or vandalism** of public property;

7. **Damage to trees, plants, and other vegetation**;

8. **Fires** that **threaten the health and safety** of *campers*, other **members of the public**, and **City employees**, and have **damaged public infrastructure and improvements**, including **overpasses and public rights of way**;

9. A **public perception that it is unsafe** to enter certain public properties, **thereby discouraging the public uses for which the property is intended and maintained**;

10. **Structures, garbage accumulation, camping equipment and other obstructions** that interfere with the intended uses of the property or with maintenance, repair, or improvements to the property, **thereby discouraging the public uses for which the property is intended and maintained**. (2-3)

Similar to the "Unauthorized Encampment Response Procedures," the "Unauthorized Encampments on City Property: Frequently Asked Questions," and two news advisories, one dated June 5, 2008, and one dated September 25, 2008, these documents use the contagion and filth metaphors to assert that the City is required to use encampment sweeps to preserve public health and safety. The list is grim: garbage, human and animal feces, rodents and vermin, used hypodermic needles, unlawful weapons, contraband, destruction and vandalism, fires. The administrative rule describes the homeless as "campers" who are endangered by living in camps, along with the public and city employees. The "campers" themselves are always listed first. Item #9 seems to apply more to certain sections of downtown than it does to members of the public entering encampment areas. It is hard to know what public use the City had in mind for areas in which the vertical slope is 20% or more, as the land was on one of the Queen Anne encampments.

Rather than posing the issues of most interest to the homeless—safe, secure areas to sleep, staying with trusted friends and companions, acting as independent adults—the "campers" are described as a serious threat to public safety. The line of argument developed in the Bawarshi section here—that the city justifies the sweeps under threats to public health and safety—is clear in these documents. From news advisories that make this argument explicitly, readers/listeners are given information such as "Over two days the truck hauled out 21 tons of debris including used hypodermic needles, rotting cans of food, bottles of urine and human waste" (News Advisory, 6/5/08). The voices of the homeless themselves are simply not present in the City's documents.

A venue in which the voices of the homeless might be expected to be heard is on the Committee to End Homelessness. The Committee to End Homelessness was appointed in 2005 in response to recognition of the seriousness and extent of homelessness in King County and the City of Seattle and the development of one of the "Ten-Year Plans" described in the Rai section of this report. King County's ten-year plan developed from meetings initiated at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, the site of one of the tent cities at the time the meetings began. Participants in the initial group included members of the homeless community, business owners and executives, philanthropic donors, various faith community members, and service providers. The

federal government had already suggested that ten-year plans would be in order for those communities receiving federal funds for long-term homeless.

Three sub-committees compose the Committee to End Homelessness. The first is a Governing Board whose membership draws from office holders, executives of non-governmental agencies or executives working for office holders, and local corporations. The Governing Board members are charged to conduct high-level planning, coordinate funding and seek new funding. The second subcommittee, the Interagency Council, is composed of members who are city and county departmental executives charged with responsibility for homelessness and also composed of social service organization executives in the community. The third council, the "Consumer" Advisory Council, is composed of members from the homeless community. It is not clear if the title "consumer" was a choice of the members of the advisory council themselves in the minutes of the meetings. At the start of the Committee on Homelessness, there was little cross-talk from the Consumer Advisory Council and the two other Councils. By the time of the City of Seattle's encampment sweeps, there were CAC members on both the Governing Board and the Interagency Council. But presence does not equal voice.

The minutes of the three councils present the usual genre conventions of meeting minutes. They list those present and absent and the organizations they represent. They organize the meeting into a linear narrative order. Speakers are noted when a topic is important or generates a lengthier discussion. Reports play a role in the minutes. Everyone who speaks is referred to in the third person and by name. Some actions are presented in the passive voice, reducing the focus on agency in those actions.

The Interagency Council took up the issue of the encampment sweeps on December 3, 2007, only when an IAC member noticed that the CAC minutes included a discussion of the encampments. This member, Bill Hallerman of the Archdiocesan Housing Authority, asked CAC member Randy Pellam to address the issue. But the person who speaks on the topic is not Mr. Pellam, but Ms. Patricia McInturff, the City's director of Human Services. She mentions that the City has invited some "key stakeholders" to comment, although no CAC members are noted. The IAC members decided to respond collectively, endorsing a position that before encampment sweeps there should be notice, outreach, opportunity and care for the belongings collected and "due consideration for the individuals being displaced." Ms. McInturff abstained from voting on the motion, as did several others. So the City's voice is heard here and not the voices of those being displaced. In the Public Comment period, at least two others spoke against the City's encampment policies.

Similarly, the Governing Board was also unaware of the City's emerging policy on encampment sweeps. In the meeting held on January 23, 2008, once again a member of the CAC spoke in the Public Comment period and noted the group's concern about the encampment clearings. Michael Garcia, the speaker, was also a member of the Governing Board at this time, but his speaking takes place in the only time on the agenda in which CAC can be heard, the Public Comment period. The Governing Board asked for more information and once again the response came from Ms. Patricia McInturff, who presented the City's position on the encampment sweeps. In her presentation, Ms. McInturff indicates that the "City is currently seeking input" on the draft of the new procedures on sweeps of encampments. However, a public hearing on the draft, which the Governing Board is only hearing about for the first time, was being held in only five days. After these two discussions, one in the Interagency Advisory Council and one in the Governing Board, only brief mentions were made in other meetings of the issue of encampments, usually made by a CAC member in the Public Comment period. Once

again, presence does not mean that the voices of the homeless are actually heard on the floor of these meetings.

The City issued a news release (April 11, 2008) titled "New measure provide consistent, humane approach to removing encampments on city-owned land." In this release, the City links its policies with "implementing the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness," to the new administrative rule, almost as if it is part of that plan. One quantitative means to exam the emphasis in this news release is to run the news release through the wordl program. Wordl, http://www.wordle.net, allows users to paste a text into the program and receive back a word cloud. The physical size of the words in the word cloud is an indicator of the frequency with which the word is used in the passage used in the program. Here below is the wordl for the City's April 11, 2008, news release.

The wordl indicates that *city* is the most frequently appearing word, with *procedures* and *encampments*. *Rule*, *provides*, *staff*, *public* are the next largest, with *unauthorized*, *removal*, and *encampment* follow. Rather than "humane" and "consistent," we see in frequency count what is

most important to the City of Seattle: the administrative procedures for the removal of unauthorized encampments. Finally, as a last assessment of the sincerity of these new procedures, we look to how the homeless displaced by the sweeps may secure their personal property, including photographs, letters, prescriptions and glasses among other items. As the April 11, 2008, news release indicates, a "key element" of the administrative rule is that it "provides opportunity for retrieval of personal items" and "provides storage of personal items for up to 60 days." Residents of the encampments are told by sign at encampment locations that they can retrieve their belongings by calling a City phone number and then making their way to Westbridge. The Department of Human Services has a website entitled, "Where in the World is Westbridge?" a reasonable question for a person trying to retrieve personal belongings.(The web address is http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/news/encampments_westbridge.pdf.) But this website requires that a person have web access. Even worse, the website consists of **driving** directions to the West Seattle site. We can't help but wonder who this website is designed to address. We don't think the audience is likely to be the homeless people who have been displaced from the encampments. Without bus directions, it seems unlikely that the homeless people could ever retrieve their belongings. [Back]

How Would You Feel? TV Coverage of the Homeless Camps in Seattle[10]

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10 Discussion focuses on network coverage of homeless encampment sweeps between December 2007 and the establishment of "Nickelsville" in September 2008.

Sandra Silberstein

Positioning the Viewer

> *How would you feel if 30 homeless people, 10 – 15 camps, were living 200 yards from your home? . . . . The Queen Anne Community Council has seen the camps—the piles of rotting garbage and human waste.* (Q13 Fox, May 28, 2008)

"Imagine you were homeless"—not a phrase heard on mainstream television. Instead viewers are asked to imagine how they would feel if homeless people brought filth to their neighborhood. Until recently the homeless were most often seen as a trace—more notable for the garbage they left behind, then for who they are. And the viewer was invited to identify with the injustice visited upon wealthy people who were forced to confront homelessness. On the day of the Queen Anne sweeps [the site always described as a violated "greenbelt"], KOMO reported, "*The greenbelt has been gathering trash for years, right next to multi-million dollar homes. A lot of these people were happy to see it go.*" Shifting to a sympathetic neighbor, the quote begins, "*I just feel bad for like the people that live right there*"—not those who had lost the few belongings they had and the home they had created in the camp, but the wealthy: "*It's literally, you know, 20 feet away from their house, and that's not what they paid for.*"

In what has become Fox's signature at the national level, the network sold fear. On the day of the Queen Anne sweeps, it broadcast a disembodied voice testifying, "*people are fearful to come in here.*" The coverage manages to position the homeless as neither people, nor part of the public: "*[The neighbor] says his neighborhood needs its public land for* public *use:*" "*And I think you have to ask yourself 'well can I just walk through here', and I think it's wrong that* people *can't use this incredible space.*"

Ironically, when the middle class confronts the homeless they are quoted as envying the clout of the wealthy. In March 2008, KING covered a man unable to get the city to remove illegally parked RVs and campers under the West Seattle Bridge: "*If this was in Luther Burbank Park in Mercer Island, you would not see this,*" he assured the viewing audience. "*There would be SWAT helicopters overhead.*" If viewers aren't positioned with the wealthy, they are positioned to wish they were.
In all of this coverage, particularly in the May Queen Anne sweeps, viewers learned of the desperation of fellow citizens confronting the dangers and detritus posed by a largely faceless homeless community.

Filth and Public Safety

> *At first glance you might think this guy works for NASA. Instead he's just walking into the west Queen Anne greenbelt to clean up homeless camps.*
> (Epigraph and stills from KIRO, May 28, 2008.)

VIDEO: Crews Clean Up Garbage, Debris From Camp

▶ | ⊪ | ◀× FULL SCREEN

VIDEO: Crews Clean Up Garbage, Debris From Camp

Until recently, television coverage of homeless sweeps portrayed them as saving homeless people from themselves: "*Trash, rats, filthy conditions. It is what dozens of homeless people used to live in until this morning*" (KIRO, May 28, 2008). Thanks to the sweeps, as of that morning, residents of the encampment were no longer living in these conditions, in fact, they had nowhere to live. They, like their belongings, had been "cleaned up." In December 2007, KING reported: "*The city has been cleaning up homeless camps—removing tents after complaints about fires, garbage, and vermin.*"

Television coverage from December through the May Queen Anne sweeps focused on lurid descriptions of filth. In fact, those involved in the Queen Anne sweeps looked less like astronauts than they did health workers confronting an Ebola outbreak. Here's how a neighbor appearing on KIRO described the setting: "*They're absolutely filthy. I mean they're full of human waste, and drugs, and I mean, and alcohol bottles and rotting waste… you, you just have to see it.*" These characterizations of the homeless and the threat they pose ventriloquize the perspective that city offices had been promoting. (See the Bawarshi section for further description of the City's public relations campaign.)

Speaking for the Mayor

> *Seattle city officials are going on a PR offensive to make their case against illegal homeless camps in Seattle.* (KING, December 19, 2007)

Part of that offensive was clearly effective, as local television networks systematically covered the mayor's message, eventually presenting the city's perspective as their own. Early on, KING, at least, was careful to provide the context: "*Hit with bad publicity in recent weeks over its continuing policy to tear down illegal homeless camps across Seattle, city officials take reporters on a tour of this hillside site. The purpose: to show the conditions in which these people live.*" Throughout this coverage, city officials have stressed health issues as the reason why homeless encampments must be so thoroughly destroyed. KING quoted Patricia McInturff (Seattle Human Services Department): "*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.*" Once again, KING did note whose perspective they reported: "*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.*"

By the time of May's Queen Anne sweep, news outlets could be seen acting as virtual spokespeople for the Mayor. KIRO's Michelle Millman presents the city's position: "*Well this has been a controversial subject for years. Homeless advocates saying the city really needs to be more humane in the way it goes about this. Well the city listened, and today was the first day they put into action the Mayor's plan.*"

Q13 Fox's Brian Callahan goes so far as to seemingly speak for the Mayor's office, then allows a city official to co-report the story. Referring to the sweep, Callahan asks about the "work" that is going on. The Parks Department's Dewey Potter begins by explaining that the city is removing people's belongings. In a surprising breach of reportorial convention, Callahan answers a question he might have asked, "*And they're doing that because you received some complaints, let me know what's happening around here.*" Potter reprises the city's oft-heard concern about health and, as a result, introduces "*the city's obligation*" to remove the encampment. In the excerpt that follows, it is Callahan who recites the city's position (so many camps/the City is compassionate), then literally asks the city official to co-report ("*help me with that part of the story*"):

> Callahan: *Right, as many as 15-20 camps I've heard from some of the workers down there. And I wanted to ask you: I know the bulldozers are rolling and whatever else. The city is trying to do this in a compassionate way. Help me with that part of the story,*
> Potter: *We are. In the past the city was doing this with not quite so much organization. Under the new mayor's executive order and the new rule that's been signed off on by eight city department heads, the city departments are working very well together now to make sure that every resident of an encampment has been notified that the camp is going to be removed and has been also advised of, with a personal visit, what services, including shelter beds, are available.*
> Callahan. *And that's happening at least 72 hours in advance, I know that. . . .*
> Potter: *. . . .A lot of work ahead. Again, about 15-20 camp sites to be cleaned up here. As many as 30-40 people have been living here for as long as seven years in some cases. So a big concern for this Queen Anne neighborhood. With any luck it will be cleaned up today. We'll have to see where it goes from here.*

The city is "compassionate," newly "organized," and providing services to the homeless. With any "luck," the homeless will stay away.

One piece of the city's story, repeated by all networks is the availability of services and beds. Coverage of outreach programs systematically suggests an unexplained nonresponsiveness by the homeless. During the Queen Anne sweep, Q13 quotes one social worker: "*We make contact and you know, try and line them up with services and shelter and <u>hopefully they'll accept that</u>…*"

On the same day, KIRO quotes an "outreach worker" who reports, "*a lot of people seem to be willing to accept information. . . . I can't guarantee every person we talk is going to accept shelter, but we're hopeful that most of the people we do talk to will accept it*"

Through the May Queen Anne sweeps, television coverage portrays filthy people in filthy surroundings who are unwilling to accept help from a compassionate city government. The hints that this might not be the whole story are few, and often presented through the voices of other citizens. In contrast to the Queen Anne resident who felt sorry for the nearby property owners, KOMO also presents someone who thinks the sweep is "*terrible*": "*They are fine neighbors...*" Through "Dot," the network can hint at a deeper problem. "*She sees this as a temporary fix: 'I don't think people choose to live down there, but try getting an apartment in Queen Anne, you know. I think it's very expensive to live'.*" Even an agitated neighbor who'd told KIRO news the greenbelt dwellers were "absolutely filthy" had to admit, "*Once you've sunk down this far, it takes a lot. People think it's easy to break this cycle of poverty and living and, and it's not.*" And by May, even Fox was willing to admit, "*while many neighbors are glad to see a start to the clean up here, they're very aware that homelessness can't be bulldozed away.*"

Views of Homeless Advocates

To be clear, as early as December 2007, views of "homeless advocates" could be heard on television. These appeared most often in response to the city's claims of health hazards and the availability of shelters if the residents of the encampments would only take advantage of them.

On December 19, 2007, KING's Eric Wilkinson gives voice to these responses:

> *Advocates for the homeless criticize the city as inhumane. The city is continuing to tear down camps like this even though there still aren't enough beds for all the homeless in the city.*
>
> *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.*
>
> [Alison Eisinger (Seatte-King County Coalition on Homelessness):] *We know that there is a public health crisis. That health crisis in homelessness.*

All of these discourses, however, respond to the city's claims, and the television images of filthy encampments work in the service of the Mayor's agenda. Arguments about whether or not there are enough beds are a far cry from discussions about affordable housing. Taking control of the coverage is a very different thing.

Taking Control of the Images

> *In the darkness of the night, volunteers and homeless moved from four locations, including two tent cities, to this new location. The pink tents you see here were donated by the Girl Scouts and will eventually be replaced with permanent structures. Those behind me tell us there will be rules here with an emphasis on safe and sanitary conditions. The plan is to eventually house as many as 1000 people here. Now this was all done in the cover of darkness because they tell me they didn't want the police to get tipped off. They hoped, their plan was to get so many people moved in there that once police really found them out, there'd be too many people in there to move out. We will hear more from the advocates here this morning helping them out and also from the homeless....* (KIRO, September 22, 2008)

By this fall, the homeless community had begun to take control of the images. The hazmat suits were replaced by the pink tents of what the community called "Nickelsville." An American flag was attached to its sign. For the first time, the focus was actually on the homeless. The website "updates" included the same Nickels rhetoric of safety concerns and commitments to end homelessness, then the responses by homeless advocates. But the pink tents were about people. And the pushback by the homeless community seems to have gained them new consideration. KING 5's Elisa Hahn was typical: "*Out of respect for the residents of this homeless camp, we won't shine our lights and cameras on them at this late hour. They're sleeping just over this embankment right behind me.*"

And there was another change. In the wake of Nickelsville, KING itself began to speak (briefly) in the voice of the homeless. The homeless were no longer inevitably described as "evicted" from "illegal" camps. On September 22, Elisa Hahn reported: "*The city set aside 50 beds for people kicked out of homeless camps, but when a bed is taken, the previous occupant is forced out, and it's usually a homeless woman.*" Then she put the evidence on camera:

> [Kathy Sather, Compass Center:] *The women who would have been here at the shelter, won't have those beds available to them.*

KING 5's website termed the setting up of Nickelsville a "precision protest." One sees here a developing respect for a seemingly unrelenting campaign aimed at gaining real solutions to homelessness. Even this improved television coverage, however, remains business as usual, significant as much for its omissions than what it puts on screen.

What's Missing

> *By the end of the day, the homeless camp on 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 website, September 27, 2008)

Nowhere in all of this are there serious discussions of why people are homeless, why they might prefer the safety and security of an encampment to single nights in shelters, and what structural solutions might be. Nowhere are there discussions of why the encampments are "dirty," why the city doesn't supply Porta Potties and dumpsters, and why it refuses to allow Honey Buckets to be serviced on public land. And nowhere does one hear extended voices of the homeless, themselves. For this, one has to go to You Tube, where you can "broadcast yourself." One posting is *[Nickelsville Talks Back To Mayor Nickels](#)*. I've named the homeless voices quoted below:

> Burien: *My house is repossessed. So I wish I could- I wish I coulda had my house now. . . I bought my house in 2003 in Burien, nice house. But like I said, things happen.… I think that anybody that sees a homeless person trying to make it, strive up, to get off the street and to find a warm place, and you have somebody that actually wants to kick 'em out of a stable community and put 'em back on the street, have a problem.*
>
> Trucker: *I'm homeless because of the trucking situation, because of the fuel situation, because I'm competing with every ex-fisherman for fisherman jobs that they didn't want before the fuel prices went up. Do you think I actually want to sleep with the idea of getting arrested, or pulled over by a van saying I'm causing the city trouble? You can't loiter downtown, you'll get arrested. You can't walk around anywhere, you can't be*

anywhere, and the shelters are full up. I've sat at the Josephinium [Share/Wheel's screening site] with 50 people one night, waiting for one bed. You see I'm not out here to be a pain in the Mayor, but the Mayor's decisions are a pain to me.
Tex: *I lost everything in a house fire. How am I supposed to, you know- I barely make a living on social security. I can't afford income, you know, for a house.*
Man in purple: *Where are all the job training programs?*
Man in brown: *[It's hard] to get a start from where you can't even find the starting line.*
Burien: *Mayor! Could you bring somebody down to give us affordable housing, that we can afford. . . and that way we can see what you're saying is really true.*

This is the elephant in the room. It has fallen to the homeless, themselves, to do what months of television coverage has not: call for a serious discussion of affordable housing.

Who's a citizen?

To return to our initial question: How would you feel if you were homeless? What if media coverage positioned the homeless and the viewer as one, separated by a simple, random act of fate? Unfortunately, this may become more likely in an economic crisis that is the worst since the Great Depression—likely to create more and more telegenic poor: e.g., recently middle class families in contrast to the single men more often seen on television. Dueling images of the American flag epitomize the decision that the news media are facing. In December 2007, KING showed an American flag left in a tree after a sweep of a homeless camp. In fall 2008, the "Nickelsville" sign boasts a proud flag flying above it. Will the homeless be portrayed as the anti-citizen—leaving the flag in tatters? Or will we see Nickelsville flags, announcing a citizen-produced safety and dignity. Perhaps any flag associated with homelessness should be seen as an alarm, reminding us that no citizen should be homeless. The media will continue to play a role in how the homeless are seen. [back]

Not Cruel but Thoughtless[11]
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Homeless Sweeps in the Seattle's Newspapers

Megan Kelly
Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the study of how language is used to create and perpetuate structures of power and injustice in society. CDA provides an approach for understanding the conditions of marginalized communities—in other words, those who are dominated by more powerful institutions. The goal of CDA is to reveal how language is both a tool of oppression and resistance, as it is employed and circulated in everyday texts. The texts most frequently analyzed in CDA are from the mass media, particularly newspapers. (See Silberstein and Toft et al. for additional media analysis.) In addition to exposing how the language of the media—like all language—is partial and biased, CDA allows for the implication of the media in unjust social practices and ideologies. Ultimately, CDA aims to promote critical awareness of social inequalities, thereby motivating social action and change.

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11 This title is taken from Paul Leighty's article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Leighty, a homeless resident of Seattle, was a guest columnist for the *P-I* on December 21, 2007.

This CDA focuses on how the major newspapers of Seattle, particularly the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, have reported on the homeless sweeps for the year November 2007 through 2008. Although the perspectives of the homeless and their advocates, who claim the sweeps are inhumane and represent the failure of the city to address the root causes of homelessness, are featured, the newspaper coverage predominantly serves to reinforce the city's perspective on homelessness—that is, that the homeless encampments threaten public safety and are "an inhumane pathway out of homelessness." (See the Rai and Bawarshi sections for further descriptions of the arguments made by the City.) By reiterating the language of the city's policy, the newspapers have the ability to sway public opinion towards supporting the sweeps, while also diverting attention away from imagining more humane alternatives and solutions.

The newspapers most commonly portray the homeless encampments as a threat to public safety through their coverage of the items found in—or "swept" out of—these campsites. In a post on the *Stranger's* blog, Erica Barnett critiques the city's revised policy regarding the sweeps, quoting some of the policy language directly: "The new rules also enable the city to confiscate personal property and to destroy any property deemed 'hazardous'—a definition that could mean almost anything, as it 'may include blankets, clothing, sleeping bags, tents, and other soft goods that may be contaminated by unknown substances'" (June 6, 2008). Barnett's use of the word "confiscate" to describe the sweeps reveals her opposition to the sweeps—which, according to reports, have resulted in the loss of personal property such as photographs, wallets, and tools. Although the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle P-I* also report that people's personal items —and indeed, as Sharon Pian Chan observes in the *Seattle Times*, their "survival gear" (March 14, 2008)—are taken in the sweeps, the coverage overwhelmingly justifies the sweeps by highlighting the city's characterization of the encampments, as not containing personal property but dangerous and unsanitary "debris."

For example, in one article, *Seattle P-I* staff reporter John Iwasaki profiles a homeless man staying at an encampment—which Iwasaki refers to as an "abode"—who keeps "a deck of cards, box of candles and stack of murder mysteries" in his tent (December 20, 2007). Three sentences later, however, Iwasaki describes the encampments quite differently, as "sites marked by Icehouse beer cans, American flags, soggy newspapers, weathered tarps and scattered debris." In another article, Iwasaki notes that a recent sweep uncovered "mattresses, broken furniture, rotting food, used hypodermic needles and human waste" (June 5, 2008). This language is repeated almost verbatim in the *Seattle Times* by Charles Brown, who reports that city employees removed "old mattresses and tarps, open cans of rotting food, bottles of urine and countless used syringe needles" from a homeless encampment in a Queen Anne greenbelt (May 29, 2008). (See also City documents in the sections by Bawarshi and Stygall.)

Brown also emphasizes the hazardous nature of the sweeps for city employees, as he describes them outfitted in "white puncture-resistant coveralls, eye goggles and thick gloves" to protect themselves from contracting a disease in the encampments. (See the Siliberstein section for a frame of the haz-mat gear.) Russ Zabel paints a similar toxic scene of the sweeps in his article from the neighborhood newspaper *Queen Anne News*: "Accompanied by police, the maintenance workers wore protective Tyvek suits, gloves and in some cases dust masks. [...] They need the gear. Among the things cleaned up were feces, bottles of urine, hypodermic needles, beer cans, trash, sodden sleeping bags and rotting food" (June 4, 2008). Both Brown and Zabel rely on Parks Department spokeswoman Dewey Potter for information about the sweeps. Notably, Dewey portrays the sweeps not as the inhumane eviction of people from their homes— as the homeless advocates protest—but rather as the dirty and dangerous labor of city employees as they clean up the city. Brown, whose title refers to the sweeps as a "big job," includes the

following quotation from Dewey, in which she uses language to valorize those responsible for the sweeps: "It's very demanding work. They're picking up stuff and putting it into plastic bags, which are very heavy. It's sad and it's gross, and it's not fun for anyone." In Zabel's article, Dewey says simply, "It was ugly."

By portraying the sweeps in this way, the newspapers in effect associate homeless people with the garbage in the encampment. This association is also made with the very word "sweep," which reinforces the characterization of the homeless as trash to be removed from the city. Observes *Seattle P-I* columnist Robert Jamieson: "The homeless shouldn't be treated like garbage" (June 7, 2008). Further, a number of articles in both the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle P-I* use the word "scatter" to describe the homeless vacating the encampments before the sweeps. This word recalls the action of cockroaches, rather than of human beings.

Those against the city's policy use other words in place of "sweep" to reveal their opposition, such as Barnett's use of "raid" (June 6, 2008) or Jamieson's sarcastic "civic exfoliation and enhancements" (June 11, 2008). In a *Seattle Times* article, Chan quotes Allison Eisinger from the Coalition on Homelessness, who claims that the sweeps "evict" the homeless (November 27, 2008). One of Iwasaki's articles from the *Seattle P-I* contains perhaps the most extreme characterization of the sweeps from Mike Smith, a protestor arrested at City Hall: "the sweeps policy is about killing people" (June 10, 2008).

This negative characterization of the sweeps is balanced, however, with the more positive spin from the city. For example, although Iwasaki begins one of his articles with the voices of advocates for the homeless, arguing that the city's policy is inhumane, he ends with a statement from City Councilman Tim Burgess, claiming the policies are "definitely headed in the right direction" (January 28, 2008). In addition, the phrase "coordinated, humane, predictable"— language provided by Marty McOmber, a spokesperson for the mayor's office—is repeated in two separate articles from the *Seattle P-I* to characterize the sweeps (Galloway: April 11, 2008; McNerthney: June 9, 2008).

Over the past year, the editorial board of the *Seattle Times* has written three times in defense of the city. In one editorial, the board says of the city's policy for the sweeps. "Seattle's new policy on illegal encampments is a way to clean out garbage-strewn and unsanitary squatter camps, while also offering shelter beds and social services to the homeless. It is a big step forward. [...] Seattle is not obligated to offer a Huckleberry Finn option. These encampments are unsafe, unsanitary and unsightly" (January 16, 2008). Here, the editorial board repeats the city's characterization of the encampments as trash. And, not only does it support the actions of the city over the rights of the homeless, the editorial board also paradoxically romanticizes the plight of the homeless, in effect to critique the city for not implementing stricter policies. In another editorial, the *Seattle Times* editorial board places blame on the city for the "squatter encampments," but for the opposite reason homeless advocates hold the city accountable: "The colonizing of the greenbelts in not caused by a lack of shelter beds. It has been caused by a leniency of enforcement and sentimental attitudes toward vagrancy" (June 2, 2008). The perception given is that city's problem of homelessness—the large number of homeless on the streets each night—is the result of policy that is lax, not ineffective or unjust.

In contrast, the editorial board of the *Seattle P-I* does call attention to the inhumane treatment of the homeless, as only slightly better than that of wild animals: "Well, at least no one is considering shooting them, as is the case with the unwanted coyote living in Discovery Park" (January 29, 2008). Nonetheless, it also perpetuates the city' characterization of the encampments while criticizing the sweeps policy, stating: "No one likes to be faced with the misery of others. Hygiene and public safety issues with the living conditions of the homeless are

certainly credible. But there's got to be a better way to address those concerns without making already-suffering human being (sic) feel like refuse." In another editorial, the *Seattle P-I* editorial board is as sympathetic to the city as it is to the homeless: "Dealing with homeless encampments is a tricky business, one that requires that the city weigh the needs of the homeless with safety issues. [...] The ultimate goal is to alleviate suffering through compassion, not via (unintentionally) punitive measures" (April 16, 2008). Setting off "unintentionally" in parenthesis suggests the city should not be blamed for the negative impact its policy has on the lives of the homeless. In this way, the city retains an appearance of compassion. Only once in any of the articles is the city's outreach efforts portrayed as anything other than compassionate. In the *Seattle P-I*, Moises Mendoza observes during a Nickelsville sweep: "Though representatives of homeless shelters roamed the encampment, many of the homeless complained that shelters are dirty and dangerous" (October 1, 2008).

The other tenet of the city's sweeps policy is that an encampment is an undesirable solution to the problem of homelessness because it is an unacceptable substitute for shelter—be it permanent or temporary. This perspective is also reinforced in the newspaper coverage, through coverage emphasizing the location of the encampments on public—or rather, city— property. Although the *Seattle P-I* published an article written by members of SHARE/WHEEL, a homeless advocacy organization, called "home is sacred, even if it's a tent" (February 20, 2008), it also ran stories that failed to view the encampments as people's homes, thereby perpetuating negative stereotypes about the homeless. For example, self-proclaimed professional writer Craig Thompson defends the sweeps in his article by characterizing the encampments as dangerous: "Nearly all homeless camps I've stood in have signs of drug use—crack pipes, syringes. They contain weapons, usually knives" (December 13, 2007). Thompson's language, like the language of the city, in effect criminalizes the behavior of the homeless. In a letter to the editor criticizing Thompson's article, Bill Kirlin-Hackett, Director of Interfaith/Task Force on Homelessness, argues: "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 back on remedies" (December 16, 2007). As another response to Thompson, the *Seattle P-I* also published an editorial by Paul Leighty, who himself is homeless. Leighty writes, "I had a knife that I had boosted from a local restaurant to use as a tool. I used it for the same reasons that all of us have knives in our homes. Try going without a knife for a few days where you live and see how it goes" (December 21, 2007). Outside the framework of private space, to which the homeless do not have access, the encampments turn a tool into a weapon. Leighty continues, "These piles look pretty messy and make for good photos but distort facts. If someone swept through your home it would look pretty messed up as well." Here, Leighty uses the second person pronoun "you" to talk directly to his audience—readers with homes—and asks of them/us to consider the sweeps from his perspective: as an invasion of his private space.

Missing from much of the reporting on the sweeps is what causes homelessness, specifically the lack of access to and opportunities for affordable private spaces. When it does appear in the coverage, the information is usually provided by activists, not reporters. For example, in an editorial in the neighborhood newspaper *Capitol Hill Times*, John Fox and Carolee Colter, of the Seattle Displacement Coalition, argue the increasing number of homeless people in Seattle is "a direct result of this dramatic and accelerating loss of low-income housing" (March 27, 2008). Homeless advocates Julie Weaver and Craig Everett of SHARE/WHEEL, writing as guest columnists for the *Seattle P-I*, also call attention to the city's lack of affordable housing (February 20, 2008). And in another article in the Seattle P-I, staff reporter Casey McNerthney quotes Susan Ford, who is homeless: "The city needs to make sure there is (sic)

more shelters and low-income housing. [...] People don't have enough places to go" (June 9, 2008). Unfortunately, McNerthney never explores this topic further; Ford's comment ends the article.

Responding to the *Seattle Times* editorial board, Kirlin-Hackett challenges the newspaper to cover the lack of housing provided by the city: "Perhaps The Times can report on how there is adequate shelter for all those who are homeless in Seattle and King County, and in so doing, realize, as many know, how far short we are in putting a roof over every bed" (January 22, 2008). In a rare example, *Seattle Times* columnist Danny Westneat also speaks out against the editorial board, arguing that the shelters are in fact filled to capacity (June 15, 2008). As of yet, this issue has not been reported in the newspaper.

When city officials do mention lack of affordable housing, the issue is framed in economic terms. For example, in one of her articles in the *Seattle Times*, Chan includes the following argument from Tim Harris of *Real Change*: "Unless the city can provide real services for these people and real alternatives to living outside, then they should leave people alone unless they are causing a problem" (March 14, 2008). As a response to Harris, Chan provides an indirect quote from City Councilmember Jean Godden, acknowledging a lack of housing alternatives but offering no solution: "the council would budget more for low-income housing if economic conditions allow." In another article, Chan ends her reporting on the sweeps with a quote from City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen: "The major disappointment of this approach is that it's still only shelter. The missing element is the permanent, supported housing" (April 12, 2008). However, in a subsequent article on affordable housing, Chan fails to mention homelessness at all (July 1, 2008). Thus, although the *Seattle Times*—and indeed this particular reporter—are covering both issues, no connection is made between a lack of affordable housing and homelessness. Before retiring as director of the Human Services Department, Partricia McInturff continually justified the sweeps by referencing the city's ten-year plan to end homelessness. In a Seattle P-I article by Angela Galloway, McInturff also frames the sweeps in economic terms: "I don't think any one of us ever said in one year or in two years we would have enough housing. [...] The city doesn't have unlimited funding. [...] It's always a matter of choices, and they're really hard choices" (April 15, 2008).

As the newspapers turn from covering the sweeps to Nickelsville, the conversation has been reframed from one of survival to one of politics. In an article in the *Seattle Times*, for instance, Erik Lacitis refers to Nickelsville as a "public relations stunt" (September 25, 2008). And then, in subsequent articles, Lacitis characterizes the encampments as a failed protest, reporting almost regrettably that the recent arrests were "no WTO Battle in Seattle" (September 27, 2008). The *Seattle P-I* editorial board goes so far as to criticize Nickelsville as a distraction: "But the protestors' posturing also threatens to distract from the larger issues about the homeless, housing strains and pro-wealthy economic policies. Treating a remarkably generous City Hall as the enemy can go only so far in solving homeless problems" (October 5, 2008). What is not mentioned is that Nickelsville is a very real alternative for the many homeless who are waiting for the end of the ten-year plan. [back]

Local Mainstream Media Emphasize Fear-Based Discourses in News Coverage of Urban Camping

Amoshaun Toft
with Travis English and

Barb Thomas

The way that we talk about social issues matters. Particularly in a highly mediated society, the mainstream media play a significant role in influencing the ways that important social issues are thought about and talked about by the public at large. By watching and reading news stories about urban camping in Seattle, we begin to understand the issue as one thing and not the other; as something based in personal responsibility and fear, rather than collective responsibility and structural causes. One way to analyze how mainstream media journalists in Seattle have constructed a public understanding of the city's 'sweeps' policy is to simply count the number of times certain types of words are used. This study shows how journalists have routinely favored the use of *fear*-based discourses over *structural* interpretations in their coverage of the City's 'sweeps' policy over the past year, and ties changes in journalistic representations to *public events* enacted by citizen groups.

Starting in late 2007, the City of Seattle began constructing a media campaign to manage public opinion on the actions they had taken to step-up campsite removals and the development of protocols to regulate those actions (see Bawarshi for more on more on the City's media campaign). In doing this, the City drew on existing discourses of fear that have long been associated with homelessness and poverty in the United States. Journalists responded, and mainstream media coverage of the sweeps deployed three discourses in describing homeless camps in Seattle's greenbelts and green spaces. Journalists used descriptive language that presented homeless campsites as *dirty*, ridden with *drugs* and sources of *danger* for the communities where they were located (see Kelly and Silberstein for more on those themes in news coverage). These discourses position readers and viewers as housed, and encourage them to think of homeless camps in terms of their danger to public health, and the campers as criminals and drug addicts that need to be pushed out of the city or housed in shelters. *Fear*-based discourses on homelessness put the responsibility of homelessness on the individual rather than on social institutions and discourage structural solutions by obfuscating *structural* causes.

As the City engaged in the 'sweeping' of homeless campers from their homes, a campaign to 'Stop the Sweeps' began to present competing descriptions of the issue and those involved. In response to the discourses of fear described above, homeless campers and activists instead talked about *structural* causes, focusing on *economic* reasons for homelessness, the lack of sufficient social *services*, and an appeal to *human rights* and dignity.

In assessing the character of public discourse on the City's encampment sweeps policy, we have collected 188 news texts published over a 1-year period, totaling 75,096 words. This corpus includes articles and blog entries from the *Seattle Times*, the *Post-Intelligencer*, the *Seattle Weekly*, the *Stranger*, KING 5, KIRO, and KOMO TV. Next, we created lists of words and phrases that can confidently be understood to represent one of the following six discourses: *dirty*, *drugs, danger, economy, services* and *human rights*. Each one of these lists represents a semantic field – a collection of words that convey a general meaning to a reader – functioning to characterizing the issue in a particular way. These lists were further tested for validity, and some changes were made to assure their accuracy (see the appendix/website for a full list of keywords). Finally, analysis of news content was conducted using the WordStat statistical software package to track word usage in texts.

Trends in news media coverage

The first way that we analyzed journalistic representation of the sweeps issue in our corpus was to simply count the number of times that words associated with a particular semantic
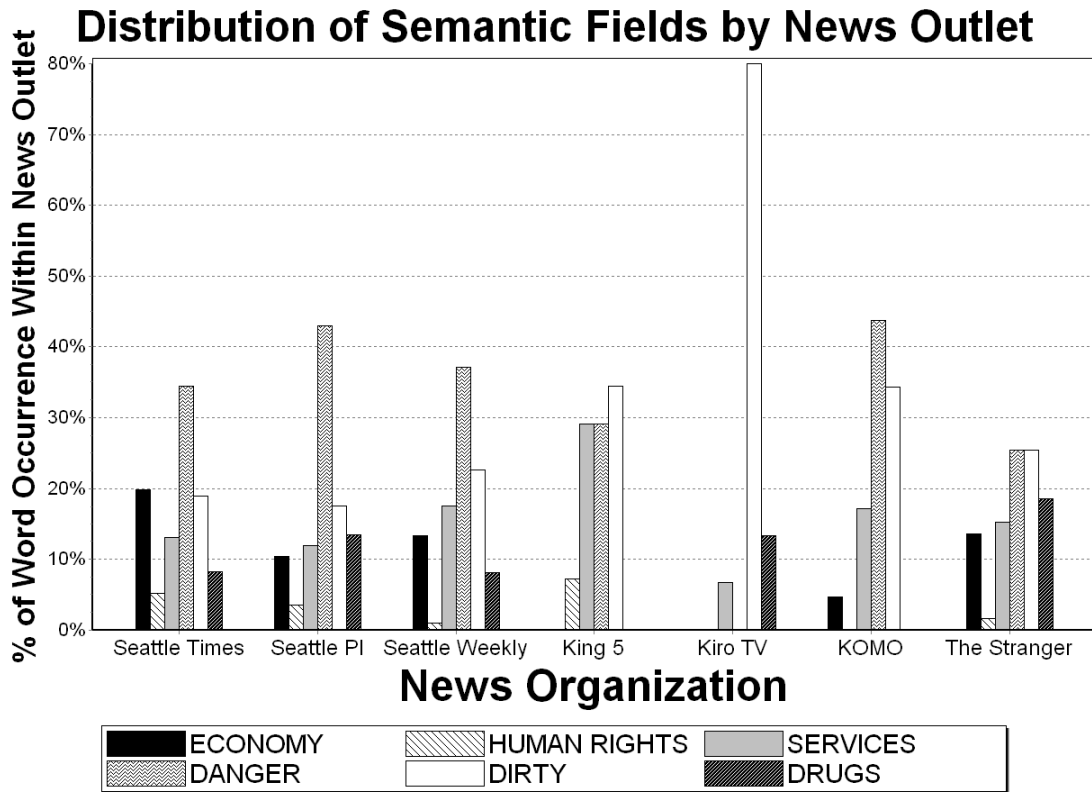
field occurred in the sample. This gives us a global view of the overall representation of the issue in mainstream media outlets over the last year. We found that words associated with *fear*-based discourses were just over twice as common than those associated with *structural* discourses. By far the most common group of words were the *danger* and *dirty* discourses.

Word Occurrence Across Media Outlets by Semantic Field

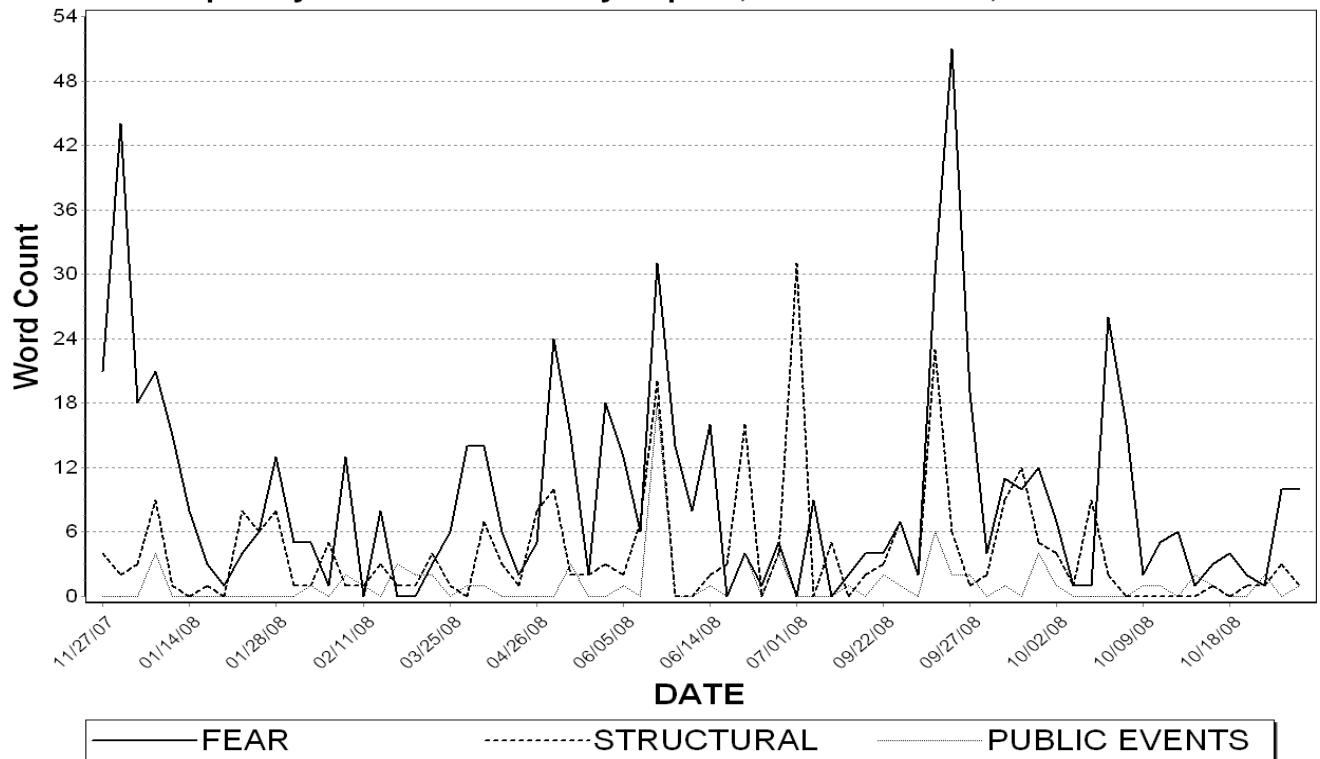| Semantic Field	Words		Cases	
	N	%	N	%
Fear	*653*	*69.8*	*197*	*129.6*
DANGER	351	37.5	90	59.2
DIRTY	207	22.1	76	50
DRUGS	95	10.2	31	20.4
Structural	*282*	*30.1*	*131*	*86.2*
SERVICES	134	14.3	60	39.5
ECONOMY	115	12.3	47	30.9
HUMAN RIGHTS	33	3.5	24	15.8
Total	*935*	*99.9*	*328*	*215.8*

Trends in coverage within news outlets

The second way that we looked at the sample was to track the distribution of semantic fields within each news outlet in our sample. While there is a general trend towards *fear*-based ways of constructing the issue across the outlets, some news outlets offered a more complex understanding of the issue than others when their coverage is viewed in its entirety. For instance, television coverage (particularly KIRO TV) was far more prone to talk about the camps in terms of their level of cleanliness (*dirty*), while local newspapers like the Seattle Times, the PI and the Weekly were more interested in talking about the issue in terms of the *danger* to the surrounding community, and the campers themselves.

Distribution of Semantic Fields by News Outlet

Trends in coverage over time

The third way that we analyzed journalistic coverage of the 'sweeps' issue was by looking at how the two meta-discourses of *fear* and *structural* causes changed over the last year. As is typical of journalistic coverage of governmental policies, news releases and media spectacles orchestrated by the Mayor's office were a significant driver in the quantity and quality of media coverage over time. Specifically, the City's initial November 27 memo laid the discursive terrain on which the issue was covered, and the April 3 encampment FAQ as well as the media campaign surrounding the May 28 Queen Anne encampment 'clean-up' succeeded in re-iterating and re-enforcing those terms (see Bawarshi's discussion for a detailed analysis of the City's media relations campaign). However, public events put on by citizen groups also played a role in changing the quantity and emphasis of news coverage over time. To help illustrate this dynamic we created a semantic grouping of words that describe *public events*. The table below illustrates the relationship between these three discourses over time.

Word Frequency Over Time in Daily Papers, Free Weeklies, and Local TV News

Legend: FEAR ·········· STRUCTURAL ········ PUBLIC EVENTS

The first period of coverage happened in the midst of the City's initial media campaign, and this period of time represents the strongest discrepancy between *fear* and *structural* descriptions, focusing almost exclusively on *fear*. However, the first of four major public events that have happened over the last year started to turn the tide in reducing this significant discrepancy in coverage. On December 21, people gathered on the doorstep of City Hall in the first of three overnight campouts called 'Camp for Unity,' or 'Camp for Survival,' as a way to bring attention to the impact that the City's policy has on the thousands of people who sleep outside every night in Seattle. This is marked in the table by a few mentions of *public event* words, a small rise in the occurrence of *structural* explanations, and a significant drop in the dominance of *fear*-based descriptions of the issue. A second camp-out occurred at City Hall on March 13, and we again see a small rise in *public event* words marking this event. While the March 13 campout did not garner a significant amount of coverage, the days surrounding the event were one of the few times when coverage focused more on *structural* causes than on *fear*. The third campout happened on June 8, involving a larger group of campers and ending with the arrest of 15 people in a street occupation the following day. While this last campout resulted in the largest number of instances of *structural* discourse words to date, *fear*-based discourses continued to dominate news coverage. This was likely due to the timing of the City's June 5 news release just three days prior that emphasized the removal of 21 tons of "debris including used hypodermic needles, rotting cans of food, bottles of urine, and human waste" as part of a well publicized Queen Anne 'clean-up' (June 5 news release).

On September 22, another action entered the public discussion on the sweeps policy. Since citizens set up 150 pink (or 'fascia') tents on City property, Nickelsville has attracted a significant amount of news coverage, mostly focused around the 4 moves that the camp has made over the past 2 ½ months. First, it should be noted that, although the same trends have continued regarding the prevalence of fear-based discourses in news coverage, the qualitative

character of that coverage has changed (see Silberstein's discussion of this change in TV coverage of Nickelsville, for instance). During this time, a different characterization began to occasionally appear that positioned camps as clean and orderly, with mentions of collective policies regarding the intolerance of substance use and the proper use of flames, such as lit candles, in the camp. Similarly, the kinds of danger that the campers posed shifted from the presence of knives and needles, to the role of the police in arresting and managing unruly campers involved in civil disobedience.

The ability of citizen groups to get their own interpretations of these discourses into public news accounts of the issue should be taken as a significant accomplishment. However the continued subordination of structural causes to fear-based coverage continues to obfuscate the underlying social causes to homelessness, returning public debate to measures of how clean or dirty homeless persons or camps are, how they do or do not consume intoxicating substances, or who in-fact is in danger or being kept safe by the City's policies. By focusing the debate on the collective fear of personalized attributes, this pattern of news coverage removes the possibility for a public dialog on constructive measures that ensure the safety and well being of those in Seattle who experience homelessness. What a quantitative linguistic analysis such as the one just offered does, is allow us to look across news texts at the parameters for debate. What we find is that journalists have followed the City's lead by drawing on long-held prejudices and stereotypes of those who live outside in the city, placing personal responsibility for homelessness on those who experience it, and shifting public debate away from social policies that offer substantive short and long-term solutions. [Back]

Seeing Homeless People

George Dillon

If an individual or organization decides to portray homelessness as urban blight and contagion—as the dump come to your door—a common tactic is to shoot garbage-scapes with a few closer shots of excrement and syringes, possibly (if you're lucky) with a sanitation worker in a haz-mat suit standing next to a pile. We have seen examples in previous pages. Sometimes the mayor's office invites "friendly" news teams to help produce and disseminate City Hall's view.

But that is the press and TV; surely the blogosphere is more independent of property owners, developers and City Hall? The triptych at the left appeared (in color) in the West Seattle Blog, a new media blog which sells ads and offers to speak for West Seattle. It was one of a series of spreads by Matt Durham on a homeless encampment at the end of Camp Long in West Seattle that was swept on May 1 of this year. Matt's pictures and accompanying articles set loose hundreds of comments, most of them hateful, perhaps invited by the twist of the robin and its caption ("Robins and other wildlife sift along the garbage to gather food as winter breaks"). The result is that *homeless* becomes *homelessness*, the cause of all the garbage and ugliness, and both homeless and homelessness can be bulldozed like a patch of Himalayan blackberry, but more noxious.

Can we hope for anything better from non-commercial volunteers, the citizen photographers who exhibit their work on Flickr? There are, after all, over 1400 depictions of the homeless indexed in Flickr, just for Seattle. The answer is yes and no. Some apparently think it is their duty to raise awareness of a grave and intractable social problem; they may even think they are arousing compassion for the misery of being unable to secure a safe place to sleep and stow one's possessions. So they shoot prone bodies covered with blankets, clothes, or tarps, dozed out, passive, abject figures holding a begging cup or a sign. These are easy shots, allowing the photographer to keep a comfortable distance from the object of depiction and requiring no possibly messy haggling over rights and permissions. "D G H", for example, has a Flickr Set called "Down and Out." The set has one semi-portrait ("Origami Lady") taken at maximum focal length, which would not require a personal encounter. Very nicely composed shot, however.

Even when they move in closer and provide some personal information, they tend to "miserify," using black and white—and dark, under-exposed BW at that —with heavy shadows, close cropping, tilted horizons, and partial or missing faces. Unfortunately, it is hard to feel compassion for people who are as unlike us and as far gone as we can see them to be. The more likely response is revulsion. The result is not a concerted effort to find them places to live; it is a general call to the mayor to clean up the streets and parks. And so back to the bulldozers. Sometimes the mayor's office invites "friendly" news teams to help produce and disseminate City Hall's view.

The picture of the railroad crossing was taken by Detective Steve in the SODO in Seattle on September 19, 2008 and posted November 13 on Flickr, where it can be viewed large. In the Comments Cleo_NZ says "these are just so sad" and Steve replies "I know. But at the same time I'm just compelled to take them. If I had more courage I'd just ask them if I could take a portrait shot."

Here are two more illustrations:

This is one of a suite of 26 photos of homeless people in Seattle and some of the shelters that accommodate them. They are captioned with some personal information gathered presumably from the subject. The caption for this is: "Michelle, on the streets after being kicked out of her apartment with her husband after complaining about unsafe conditions, investigates an abandoned paper bag for "food or money", explaining that in her circumstance, she cannot afford to let go of even the slightest chance that someone left something valuable behind." The photographer is Matt Lutton and the suite can be viewed here, where an artist's statement makes it clear his intentions are good. But his photos are grimly dark.

This photo has become something of a meme or icon of Seattle homelessness on the blogs. It seems to epitomize the miserable wetness distinctive of a Seattle late Fall, when the rain has washed all the colors away. But it has been miserified: the original is in color and was posted to Flickr at the beginning of 2007 by romiphoto (Romi Chiorean). Interestingly, it is the BW modification (always used without attribution) that is being passed around the blogs.

More Courage for Detective Steve

An alternative approach may be more productive, one that moves from long or even medium distance shots of misery in closer to posed portraits. Writing of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas's core concept of seeing the face of another, Bernhard Waldenfels says,

> The otherness or strangeness of the other manifests itself as the extraordinary par excellence; not as something given or intended, but as a certain disquietude, as a *dérangement* which puts us out of our common tracks. The human face is just the foyer of such bewilderments, lurking at the borderlines which separate the normal from the anomalous. [12]

We know this. We know to reserve our gaze with strangers. To be sure, Waldenfels (and Levinas) are talking about looking at another person face to face, not looking at a portrait. Portraits do not recognize us as persons, nor we them, except to the extent that the portrait may stimulate imagining looking at its subject face to face. A portrait can be a pointer to the foyer, and to the responsibility that comes from knowing someone. The photographer is our surrogate in the personal encounter, though of course the encounter can end fairly quickly with a thanks, or a fee or donation, and a goodbye. But still, the shield of distance has been lowered.

So we are looking for portraits of homeless people. We can further stipulate that we want the portraits to be taken outdoors, and we can also look for portraits that are taken fairly close in (with minimal use of telephoto focal length), preferably with the subject looking at the camera. We are not looking for "candids"—we are looking for encounters, or records of encounters, preferably with a caption naming the subject and some information about them. We can find them, along with almost anything else, in Flickr. The **street**+**portrait**+**homeless** search string brings up about 1800 photos. Starting just with Seattle, there are 1422 photos of homeless people, from which I have culled 92; these are displayed in a slide show on line. More than two-thirds of them are in color and all were taken since 2007. They are displayed from newest to

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12 Bernhard Waldenfels, "Levinas and the face of the other,"in *The Cambridge companion to Levinas*, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, eds. CUP, 2002, p. 63

oldest, thus cycling through the seasons almost twice. I have omitted some marginal cases (e.g., buskers). A good half of them come with some commentary attached, and almost all of it is respectful. But there is no guarantee: one photographer ("itiz"), who specializes in urban tags, ends up making fun of one of his portrait subjects. (http://www.flickr.com/photos/itiz3/4450551458/) "Seeing their faces" does not necessarily break down all walls and ignite a lasting flame of compassion: *You Have Seen Their Faces*, Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell's best-selling Depression album of Southern sharecroppers, is now regarded as cloyingly condescending in its 'compassion.' It is worth your time to look at the whole slideshow (http://www.flickr.com/photos/12968878@N04/favorites/show/) and to read the information for each portrait available under the Show Info tab. If you look carefully enough at the full-screen pictures, you will recognize some of these people: they are your neighbors.

In these recent years, the encampment that called itself Nickelsville (after the then-mayor who kept forcing the encampment to relocate) came under the protection of local churches and received a great deal of Flickr coverage. Seven of the most recent portraits in the slide show are centered on Nickelsville and are the work of (Pamela Kliment ("pamelakliment") in Flickr. She is a Parks Project Manager working for the Seattle Park Department. Though her photos are not an official part of her work, they are very much an unofficial part of it and show that she "gets it." Nickelsville is also the subject of photo sets or slideshows by Djordje Zlatanovic ("exp." in Flickr) and Mary Witter ("MaryWit" in Flickr). Their work enhances our community and our humanity. [Back]

Endnotes

Sources, Documents, and Appendix

Local Mainstream Media Emphasize Fear-Based Discourses in News Coverage of Urban Camping
Amoshaun Toft with Travis English and Barb Thomas
APPENDIX A: Semantic Field Word List and Frequency for Toft, English and Thomas
FEAR (TOTAL WORDS = 653). *DANGER* (total word occurrence in the category = 351): SAFETY (42), SAFE (22), BRUTALIZE* (1), BURGLARY (1), COP (1), COPS (22), CRIME (16), CRIMINAL (8), CRIMINALS (5), DANGER (1), DANGEROUS (2), DANGERS (1), FIRE (15), GUN (7), HANDGUN (1), KILL (6), KNIFE (4), KNIVES (4), NOISE (1), POLICE (126), REVOLVER (1), ROB (1), SAFER (2), SAFETY (42), THREATEN (2), VIOLENT (7), WEAPON* (10). *DIRTY* (total word occurrence in the category = 207): BOTTLES (4), CANS (8), CLEAN (27), CLEANLINESS (1), CLEAR (22), CONTAMINATED (3), DEBRIS (15), DIRTY (3), FILTHY (3), GARBAGE (22), GROSS (1), HEALTH (41), HEPATITIS (1), JUNK (3), LITTER (1), PEE* (5), RATS (2), REFUSE (4), REMOVAL (3), ROT (1), ROTTEN (1), ROTTING (3), RUBBISH (2), SANITARY (2), SANITATION (1), SOIL (1), SOILED (1), SUIT (3), TRASH (8), URINE (4), VERMIN (1), WASTE (9), WORMS (1), WRAPPERS (1). *DRUGS* (total word occurrence in the category = 95): ADDICT (3), ADDICTED (1), ADDICTION (1), ALCOHOL (10), BEER (3), BEERS (1), BEVERAGE (2), COCAINE (1), CRACK (11), DRINK (4), DRUG (23), DRUGS (11), DRUNKENNESS (2), DRUNKS (1),

HEROIN (8), LIQUOR (1), MARIJUANA (2), NEEDLES (3), OPIATE (1), PARAPHERNALIA (2), SUBSTANCES (2), USEDSYRINGES (1), WEED (1). *STRUCTURAL* (TOTAL WORDS = 282). *ECONOMIC* (total word occurrence in the category = 115): AFFLUENT (4), DESTITUTE (2), ECONOMIC (14), ECONOMY (6), EXPENSIVE (3), FINANCIAL (7), HOOVER (7), INCOME (40), LEND (4), MORTGAGE (2), POOR_FAMILIES (1), POOR_PEOPLE (2), PROFITS (1), RECESSION (2), RENT (15), WAGE (2), WEALTHY (3). *HUMAN RIGHTS* (total word occurrence in the category = 33): DIGNITY_OF (2), HUMAN_DIGNITY (1), INHUMANE (10), SURVIVAL (11), SURVIVE (9). *SERVICES* (total word occurrence in the category = 134): FULL [SERVICES, BEDS, HOUSING OR SHELTER] (4), ADEQUATE [EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, HOUSING OR SHELTER] (5), BED* (26), CUT (18), SHELTER* (77), SHORTAGE (4). *PUBLIC EVENTS* (TOTAL WORDS = 115): DEMONSTRATION (8), MARCH (8), MOVEMENT (2), NEGOTIATE (5), OCCUPY (1), PROTEST (45), RALLY (4), SHANTY* (39), VIGIL (3).

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Kelly

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Barnett	Erica	Camp-in against city's camping crackdown
Hsu	Huan	Not all the peddlers of Seattle's homeless paper are ho
Curl	Aimee	Hatching a plan for Nickelsville
Curl	Aimee	Welcome to Nickelsville
Zabel	Russ	City fine-tuning homeless encampment policies
Thompson	Craig	The languishing rights of Seattle's homeless
Fox & Colter	John & Carolee	A crime to be poor and homeless
Zabel	Russ	Encampment control
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Murakami	Kery	City halts action on homeless clearing of inhabited ca
Thompson	Craig	Homeless camp sweeps needed, nab criminals linked to
Kirlin-Hackett	Bill	Homeless camp: Article indulges in fear mongering (ed
Iwasaki	John	City defends sweeps of homeless camps, protestors op
Leighty	Paul	Most Seattleites are not cruel, but many are though
	Staff	$2.35 million in grants to help the homeless
Iwasaki	John	City of Seattle's plan for clearing homeless encampm
	Editorial Board	Homelessness: 48 hours to scatter
Iwasaki	John	Housing not only hurdle for homeless, leaders discu
McNerthney	Casey	Panhandlers facing restrictions around the region, but S
Weaver & Everett	Julie & Craig	Home is sacred, even if it's a tent
Galloway	Angela	A new plan for homeless camp sweeps

Galloway	Angela	Seattle homeless camp policy under fire
	Editorial Board	Homelessness: Achieving balance
Iwasaki	John	Homeless advocates fault camp cleanup
Jamieson	Robert	Homeless struggle to be heard at city hall
McNerthney	Casey	Homeless camp out at City Hall, protest camp swe
Iwasaki	John	Advocates for the homeless arrested at City Hall.
Jamieson	Robert	Megalomaniac mayor shooting from the hip
Iwasaki	John	Lots of rules, little help, homeless youths say
	Staff	Mercer Island residents' groups fails to halt homeless
Iwasaki	John	Homeless start setttling in fuschia 'Nickelsville'
Iwasaki	John	Deadline passes for 'Nickelsville'
Iwasaki	John	Nickelsville' moves onto state land
Mendoza	Moises	Nickelsville' homeless move incampment to Discovery
Mendoza	Moises	Nickelsville' homeless camp might have to move ag
	Editorial Board	Ending homelessness: A broader effort
Chan	Sharon Pian	Homeless advocates decry city's tactics
	Editorial Board	Out of the woods
Kirlin-Hackett	Bill	I feel powerless, overlooked and underserved (opin
Lacitis & Tuinstra	Erik & Rachel	One Night Count' finds 15 percent increase in stree
Chan	Sharon Pian	Tents pitched at City Hall to take stand for homel
Chan	Sharon Pian	Seattle eases rules on clearing homeless encampme
Chan	Sharon Pian	Rules eased on clearing homeless camps
Bhatt	Sanjay	Hosting homeless: Magnolia objects
Brown	Charles	Clearing Queen Anne Hill homeless encampments is
Brodeur	Nicole	Homeless just part of scenery?
	Editorial Board	City right to clean up squatter encampments
Carter & DeSilver	Mike & Drew	Dozens protest homeless sweeps with City Hall camp
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		15 homeless advocates arrested at Seattle City Ha
Martin	Jonathan	Seattle dumps seized items; Sweep of camp...

Westneat	Danny	Homeless to build own Nickelsville
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Lacitis	Erik	150 tents for homeless spring up on industrial lan...
Lacitis	Erik	With nation in the red, will pink tents of homeless camp...
Lacitis	Erik	Homeless play waiting game in Nickelsville
Lacitis	Erik	22 arrested in police sweep of Nickelsville homeless ...
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Clark	Noelene	UW students come clean with 'traveling shower' for ho...
Clark	Noelene	Nickelsville moves to Discovery Park
Clark	Noelene	Nickelsville will have to leave Discovery Park
Clark	Noelene	Homeless camp to move again
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