CREATING INTERSECTIONS: MAPPING THE PARALLEL LIVES OF
HOMELESSNESS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

by

Alice Peck
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
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of
Master of Science
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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                                             George Mason University
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Creating Intersections: Mapping the Parallel Lives of Homelessness in Washington D.C.

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at George Mason University

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to the individuals who are at its centre, with whom I had the privilege and utter pleasure of spending the past ten months.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been a journey for me, both intellectual and emotional, and I give my wholehearted thanks to all those who have helped me along its way. I thank the staff and volunteers at House of Francis, who welcomed me into their community and inspired me; I am in awe of their constant passion and commitment. I thank my family and friends whose love, laughter, and encouragement kept me nourished. I thank the intellectual community of colleagues, staff, and professors at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, especially Dr. Leslie Dwyer, Dr. Tehama Lopez Bunyasi, and Dr. Susan Hirsch, whose trust and guidance empowered me to follow my heart in my research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention .... CDC
Conflict Analysis and Resolution .... CAR
District of Columbia .... D.C.
District of Columbia Housing Authority .... DCHA
Helping the Homeless .... HtH
House of Francis .... HoF
Institute for Children and Poverty .... ICP
Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness.. ICPH
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer .... LGBTQ
Martin Luther King .... MLK
National Alliance to End Homelessness .... NAEH
National Coalition for the Homeless.. NCH
National Health Care for the Homeless Council.. NCHCH
North East .... NE
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.. NLCHP
North of Massachusetts Avenue .... NoMa
North West .... NW
Point in Time.. PIT
Single Room Occupancies .... SRO
South of Houston Street .... SoHo
South of Market .... SoMa
Supplemental Security Income .... SSI
United Kingdom... UK
United Nations .... UN
United Nations Regional Information Centre .... UNRIC
United States .... USA
United States Department of Health and Human Services .... HHS
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development .... HUD

ABSTRACT

CREATING INTERSECTIONS: MAPPING THE PARALLEL LIVES OF
HOMELESSNESS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

Alice Peck, M.S.

George Mason University, 2015

Thesis Director: Dr. Leslie K. Dwyer

This thesis explores homelessness in Washington D.C. Drawing from eight

months of ethnographic fieldwork, I consider experiences of homelessness in the

changing urban space of Washington D.C., contextualizing these within the broader

forces of neoliberalism. Situating personal narratives within the social and physical

spaces in which daily life unravels, I critically analyse the denial of space and place to

people who are homeless, whose existence as homeless bodies represents stark

contradictions to normative ideals of neoliberal subjects. I draw on theories of symbolic,

structural, and everyday violence to argue that to be homeless is to exist within a category

of precarity and powerlessness in the parallel margins of society – the spaces in which

paradoxically different, concurrent lives are chartered.

CHAPTER ONE: HOMELESSNESS AS VIOLENCE

This thesis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork to consider the denial of place and space for people who are homeless within Washington D.C. Through data collected from interviews and participant observation, I analyse the ways in which several people experience the violence of homelessness within the context of the changing urban spaces of D.C., and the broader neoliberal political and economic structures of the United States of America. My research explores how people who are homeless in Washington D.C. navigate the places through which routine life unravels – the places of home, employment, leisure, travel, community, and culture that are the taken for granted social and physical spaces of life. I consider how access to these spaces is not guaranteed for all; for people who are homeless and existing on precarious margins of society, the right to these spaces involves a complex struggle for place and recognition in a context where admission corresponds with status and socio-economic position.

I argue that the continued denial of place to people who are homeless represents a form of violence that both constrains the physical settings in which the homeless can visibly be, and regulates the social and personal spaces in which the homeless can realise a sense of self, humanity, and dignity. Despite sharing a common humanness within the same city, people who are homeless are forced to inhabit a parallel world in which paradoxically different, concurrent lives are chartered.

My motivation to embark on this research was not, initially, rooted in an academic curiosity, but from a profound and recurring feeling of sorrow and outrage at each encounter with a person who is homeless in the Washington D.C. area. The frequency of these meetings at metro stations, street corners, parks, and libraries across the city prompted critical reflection on the disgrace of homelessness in Washington D.C., and across the USA. As a foreigner to this country I was, and remain, shocked at the contradictions within a nation in which constitutional rights are celebrated, where red, white and blue patriotism flies on every street and yet, simultaneously, some lives are considered less worthy than others. My emotive, personal response gave rise to this research, a voice that I do not seek to silence in this write-up; this thesis charts my journey through the spaces of Washington D.C. as I attempt to understand that of certain people who are homeless.

One particular conversation last autumn translated my personal feelings of despair into scholarship. I was on my way home as I came up from the cool dark spaces of an Arlington metro station, slowly breaking into sunshine as the escalator raised me out onto the clean Northern Virginia street. A woman sat directly in front of the metro entrance; she was sitting in a wheelchair, with two reinforced plastic bags to one side containing, what looked like, neatly folded colourful clothing and blankets. A third bag, this one containing groceries, was at her feet. The woman was African American in her early forties, I would guess. She was smiling while eating a pear, with a bag of cashews on her quilt-covered lap. I began my usual route away from the metro exit, and this woman, to

the bike shelter to reclaim my bike, trying to suppress the routine feelings of despair at the fact that this woman, and so many like her, likely had no place to call home.

I stopped, recalling a recent article that discussed engaging with people who are homeless, and I turned around. I walked over to the woman, smiled and asked her how she was. She looked up at me and smiled, making eye contact whilst saying "not that good." I replied that I was sorry to hear that, and she thanked me for coming over to check in, explaining that her struggle arose from her homelessness. I asked her her name. "My name is Laura" she said. I greeted her, "Laura, nice to meet you, I am Alice." We exchanged goodbyes, she thanked me for the dollar that I handed her, and I said, "I'll see you soon, Laura".

I cycled home, repeating to myself, "She has a name. Her name is Laura. Her name is Laura". Laura has a face and a bright smile and a name. Laura is a human being and yet Laura is often ignored, passed by with indifference. And Laura is not alone in the experience of insignificance – but is one of "them:" the homeless, an identity and label that is presumed ontological, one assigned to people whose varied situations of poverty and precarity render their lives visible to the public gaze.

While engaged with other research at the time, Laura remained on my mind; I often found myself thinking about her and her daily experiences, concerned for her welfare as winter arrived, and questioning the conditions in which her homelessness arose, a situation of hardship that is seemingly condoned by its persistence. Laura's visible vulnerability, and that of many others, alluded to a hierarchy of lives judged deserving, a social and spatial organization of people that I wanted to understand.

To begin this process of understanding, I embarked on an ethnographic study of experiences of homelessness, situating my fieldwork within Helping the Homeless (HtH) an interfaith, non-profit organisation in North-West Washington D.C., founded to help the poor and homeless in the capital of the USA. Volunteering to serve food in the dining hall, as well as working as a volunteer member of staff two to three days a week at House of Francis (HoF), a day centre that is part of HtH, I carved out a space for myself within the organisation, building relationships with clients, interviewing certain individuals, and conducting participant observation.

My findings capture the diverse experiences of several people who are homeless, a description that I find to be a homogenising label for a heterogeneous populace. Yet a number of commonalities thread through my findings and shaped my analysis. The first is that people who are homeless are not unusual; notwithstanding the uncertainty, visibility, and precarity of daily life, people who are homeless are unremarkable as humans. Born in the same society, and socialised into the same predominant set of beliefs, norms, and values, those I spoke with largely shared assumptions of citizenship, beliefs, and gender with domiciled citizens. And yet, secondly, every account shared with me alluded to a sense of exclusion from spaces of the city, accounts that describe the experience of daily subjection to prejudice, indifference, and discrimination.

I situate this marginalization within the neoliberal political, social, and economic structures of Washington D.C. to interrogate the structures of power and discourse that engender and maintain homelessness. I draw on the scholarship of Pierre Bourdieu (2000), Judith Butler (2006), David Harvey (2013), Michel Foucault (1979; 1982),

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Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg (2009), and Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992; 2004), to critically analyse homelessness as a form of violence that extends beyond the physical hardship of precarity, but is created and perpetuated through structural, symbolic, everyday, and interpersonal manifestations.

The physical existence of homelessness is life on the margins of society, exposed to hunger, poverty, social exclusion, and humiliation in cities where affordable housing is supplanted by new development, influx of capital, and the overriding logic of consumption (Harvey; 2013; Scheper-Hughes, 2004). Denied the same life chances, this structural violence is compounded by cultural stigma and stereotypes associated with homelessness, the everyday indifference of domiciled citizens, and the routine prejudice of bureaucratic settings (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). In the context of neoliberal United States, where a rugged American individualism inculcates societal dispositions, the inequality, social marginalisation, and poverty of homelessness can be misrecognised as the natural order of things, prompting some individuals to internalise blame for their situation as homeless. This is the symbolic violence of neoliberalism whereby individuals' "habitus", their preconscious likes, dislikes, preferences, and beliefs, exist in submission to the neoliberal logic of productivity, accountability and successful citizenship (Bourdieu, 2000). To diverge from this neoliberal subject is to break from recognizable frames of worthy life, and to exist as a precarious Other: a homeless body that becomes unnameable and ungrievable (Butler, 2006).

Laura has a name, a face, a body. She is a human, as are the thousands of people who, for myriad reasons, are homeless or precariously housed in Washington D.C.

Despite cohabiting in the same city and sharing a common humanity, people who are homeless exist on the margins; bereft of equal life chances, they are a swathe of society living a radically parallel life. This research hopes to relay the experiences of several people who are homeless as they navigate the social and physical spaces of the city. My goal is not to "reveal" or "uncover" the lives of these homeless individuals; such language suggests homelessness as a hidden or concealed existence in need of a benevolent researcher to expose - a claim that is visibly false. By sharing the stories and experiences of individuals with whom I spent time, I hope, rather, to complicate narratives that position the homeless as distinct "others," while arguing that the social and structural organisation of society maintains a demarcation between the homeless and the domiciled which creates a sense of parallel worlds within one shared city

I imagine that a master's thesis is a significant endeavour for everyone who pursues it, but I believe my experience doing ethnography to be entirely life changing. My academic journey to this point has never engendered the kind of relationships that I have built with individuals at House of Francis. To think of these people as my research subjects not only feels incongruous and sterile, but it fails to capture the bonds that I share with those with whom I spoke, or the place they hold in my daily routine and I in theirs.

In writing this thesis, I am conscious of the human lives at its centre and the challenge of analysing their experiences from a theoretical perspective; I am aware that I choose the stories to include, and the frames by which to analyse these – a fact of representation that I address in the following chapter on methods. I strive to write, as

much as possible in a way that resists objective and clinical language, or overly paraphrasing speech; I include many unedited dialogic quotations and fieldnotes that are longer than some scholarly norms, but I believe are important to accurately relate the complexity of lives shared, and to allow the reader space in which to assess the claims that I make. My experience working with populations labeled "homeless" has been a profoundly reflective journey, and I hope my writing conveys this insight. In this way, my writing is deeply personal, and my voice reveals much of who I am and how this shapes my research. To help the reader make sense of my voice, and its position within my research, chapter three provides some context.

First, and following this introduction, I discuss my methodology, explaining my rationale for an ethnographic study of homelessness and setting out the approach I employed. I examine the personal and ethical challenges that I experienced as both a volunteer member of staff at Helping the Homeless, and a researcher. The ethics of my research and my approach concludes the chapter, prompting thought on respect, confidentiality, and the politics of representation.

The review of the literature in chapter four sets out social and scholarly understandings of homelessness, from early twentieth century representations and stereotypes to the "new homelessness" literature at end of the century, which reveals the heterogeneous face of homelessness. In this chapter I consider definitions of homelessness, favouring those that understand homelessness as a continuum rather than a distinct experience. I provide an overview of prevailing scholarly explanations for homelessness, emphasising those literatures that situate homelessness within the political

and economic structures of society, before setting out the state of homelessness in the United States, and in Washington D.C. Finally, I introduce the theoretical approaches that I employ to analyse the social suffering and hardship of homelessness.

Chapter five introduces the context of Washington D.C. as the setting in which I conducted my ethnography as well as the city in which I live and navigate each day. I discuss the historical context of Washington D.C., and especially that which relates to race, poverty, and homelessness, exploring the roots of the racial and economic segregation apparent today.

Chapters six through ten present my findings, mapping the significance of the spaces through which daily life passes; I analyse the experiences of individuals who are homeless as they attempt to navigate the city of Washington D.C., inhabiting places created for the homeless, moving through public space, and struggling for legitimacy within the context of neoliberal USA. In chapter ten, I present the significance of memories, future dreams, and faith as creating space that is protected and untouchable.

My conclusions, in chapter 11, call for intersections between the parallel lives of the domiciled and the homeless, and the creation of space in which to apprehend the other as human and a worthy life. I call for a conceptual departure from presumptions of homelessness as an ontological category, a label that homogenises a heterogeneous populace and legitimises pejorative assumptions of difference between "us" and "them." I argue for methodological commitment to move from documenting the violence of homelessness to write as resistance to this violence, and to act to challenge the social and physical structures and beliefs that create and maintain it.

CHAPTER TWO: ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE

Ethnography

This research was prompted from a visceral sense of outrage at the visible homelessness of people in Washington D.C., a physical existence which suggested, to me, a broad indifference to the hardship of certain human lives. This hardship arises from the violence that is homelessness, the structural, everyday, and symbolic violence that confronts people who, for myriad reasons, do not live routine domiciled lives. Definitions of homelessness are contested and vary across the relating literature, organisations, and government – a debate to which I turn in chapter four. Here it merits stating that I define homelessness not as a fixed status, but as a continuum between physical homelessness and situations of precarious housing. To understand how people living within the identity of homeless experience this violence within Washington D.C., I pursued qualitative ethnographic research methods, influenced by Nancy Scheper-Hughes' (1993) "phenomenologically grounded anthropology" in the hillside favela above Bom Jesus de Mata in North-eastern Brazil.

Anthropological methods appealed because as a field of knowledge they enabled my understanding of experiences of homelessness, and as a field of action they create a space from which to resist and disrupt the processes that engender and maintain the violence of homelessness (Scheper-Hughes, 1993). Ethnography, as a method of

anthropology, allowed me to chart my gradual discovery and (mis)understanding of homelessness, and fostered a space for mutual relationships between me, as the researcher, and individuals at HoF, as the informants – an approach that departs from notions of privileged scientific neutrality towards the research subject "other". (Scheper-Hughes, 1993, p. 26). Inspired by Scheper-Hughes' "anthropology-with-one's-feet-on-the-ground, I immersed myself within a community of people living in homelessness, pursuing ethnography as a means by which to explore the stories, experiences, and tangential issues which they raised (Scheper-Hughes, 1993).

In January 2015 I began to volunteer at the dining hall of Helping the Homeless (HtH), where I served hot meals and coffee several days a week, became acquainted with issues of homelessness, and built rapport with staff and regular diners. These relationships led me to House of Francis (HoF), Helping the Homeless' day centre for people experiencing homelessness and, for some individuals, mental illness in Washington D.C. For eight months, I worked at HoF two to three days a week as a volunteer member of staff, a role which permitted me to build trust with individuals attending, creating relationships from which they shared their stories, daily routines, and understandings of their situation. Through informal conversations at HoF, as well as interviews conducted with several people, the stories shared with me constitute the data of my analysis, along with my fieldnotes from participant observation. In acknowledging that these "facts" were unavoidably elicited by my involvement as an ethnographer, I hope to counterbalance my role through the inclusion of fieldnotes and dialogic

interviews, allowing the reader space in which to assess the claims that I make (Scheper-Hughes, 1993).

As a feminist and scholar interested in issues of gender, my research was initially drawn to explore the ways in which gender shapes experiences of homelessness and, conversely, how homelessness influences conceptions, and performances, of gender. While gender was, inevitably, a factor intersecting with the lives of people who are homeless, as my ethnography progressed my research focus shifted to reflect the understandings, experiences, and salient issues that were shared with me in the context of my research setting. This shift results from my endeavour to uphold as experts those with whom I spoke and to employ ethnographic methods to pursue "experience near" rather than "experience far" understandings of homelessness (Geertz, quoted in Snow and Anderson, 1993; Tsing, 1996; see also Passaro 1996; Desjarlais, 1997; Luhrman, 2010; Golden, 1992; Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009; Watson & Austerberry, 1986; Duneier, 1999).

In creating "experience near" understandings, ethnography permits the researcher to move from the general to understand the particular, to elicit a closeness that connects the researcher, and subsequent readers, with the lives of others. In this way, ethnography has the capacity to reduce the distance between "us" and "them" which, in a study of homelessness, reduces the gap between "us" and "some of the most marginalized, stigmatized, dehumanized people in society" (Snow and Anderson, 1993, p. 34). Bridging this distance creates a capacity for action that appealed to me. People who are homeless are people first, yet the nature of their lives conducted in public positions them as an

ontological category of "homeless" and the "Other". A central goal of this research is to challenge the perceived distance between domiciled populations and those labelled as homeless, to deconstruct these pejorative assumptions of ontological difference, and to engender compassion, understanding and a desire to help. The first step, and one I follow here, is to reject the term "homeless person," and instead to consider each individual a person who is homeless, privileging their personhood rather than their homelessness.

Before turning to discuss my ethnographic approach of participant observation and interviews, one further point merits addressing; ethnography, in focusing on individual experience, description, and narrative, risks detachment from the social structural conditions which give rise to the experiences being studied (Wright, 1997). To avoid this disconnect, I situate my findings within analysis of broader structures of neoliberal American society. Influenced by Bourgois & Schonberg (2009), Watson & Austerberry (1986), and Joanne Passaro (1996), I contextualise my research within the social, political, and economic structures that give rise to homelessness, thus integrating larger structuralist concerns relating to politics, culture, and economy with the everyday experiences of homelessness.

Participant Observation

To explore the relationships between homelessness and the social and physical spaces of Washington D.C., I conducted participant observation at Helping the Homeless, and across the city in diverse sites that enabled "a variety of perspectives along a participant/observer continuum" (Passaro, 1996, p. 4). My participation as a volunteer

member of staff at House of Francis generated considerable observations that I would jot down or commit to memory while in the field, later translating these into detailed field notes when I had left HtH. I also spent numerous hours each week observing and documenting practice in the public and semi-public spaces of the city - Union Station, NoMa, McPherson Square, public libraries, coffee shops, bars, and museums. In engaging with broader city spaces, I joined rallies, demonstrations, and meetings that combined to create a broad lens through which to understand homelessness in Washington D.C. This lens became, and to an extent remains, my "mode of being-in-the-world," a lens of engaging and observing that I uphold each day in the city (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Passaro, 1996).

Over the course of eight months I spent two, sometimes three, days each week volunteering for five-hour spells at House of Francis. My volunteer position entrusted me with certain roles and responsibilities; through performing the tasks of serving meals, running the morning meeting, leading groups, or managing the shower and laundry list, I became a familiar and welcomed member of staff by clients and coworkers alike. This role positioned me at the hyphen of participating and observing; my regular, and dedicated, participation permitted me to take a step back to hang out, to observe interactions and listen to passing conversations. This integration allowed "nondirective conversational listening" and an exposure to information that is candid, natural, and free from the restraints that often are imposed in the spaces of formal interview (Snow and Anderson, 1993, p. 26). At the same time, my participation at HoF engendered relationships of trust with individuals who attend, with whom I spent time hanging out in

the day room and chatting over cards and meals. These informal interactions provide some of the material in my field observations.

Interviews

Following several months of participant observation, and in consultation with members of staff at HoF, I conducted taped, in-depth interviews with six individuals who are homeless, or formerly homeless, for periods of time ranging from six months to twenty years. After gaining written consent, I recorded the interviews on the audio recorder function of my cell phone, later transcribing these audio recordings into a word document. I interviewed two women, one of whom was African American and aged 45, while the other was 61 and Hispanic American. Two of the men I interviewed were white and aged 53 and 58, while the other two were aged 67 and 58 and African American. The interviews lasted between one hour to one hour and a half; with three of these individuals, I held follow up interviews lasting for similar amounts of time.

Interviews are a highly intersubjective process, and as the interviewer I was not an objective, removed recipient of knowledge but was fully involved in the interview, "deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that reside with respondents" (Gubrum and Holstein, 2003, p. 68). My role in this co-creation of meaning was further evident by my position of power in relation to those I interviewed, a relationship which I discuss further below. In response to this power imbalance, I engaged in "active" interviewing, a technique which departs from a predetermined agenda or fixed interpretations to create "an environment conducive to the production of the range and

complexity of meanings that address relevant issues" (Gubrum and Holstein, 2003, p. 75). To create this environment I pursued a semi-structured interview guide; I prepared a number of topics and questions that I sought to cover, without any strict order to these. The asking of one question would typically provoke spontaneous discussion and recollection, leading to natural dialogue and a space in which participants could digress to pertinent topics and, oftentimes, providing answers to my future questions organically.

While intentional in creating space for spontaneous digressions, my interaction, responses, and questions during interviews inevitably shaped the discussion. Through my questions, suggested positions or orientations towards issues, I played a role in prompting answers that related to my research agenda. To ensure that I was not too forceful in eliciting information from those I spoke with, I sought open rather than leading questions and encouraged participants to answer according to their interpretations.

Trust and Presentation of Self

Exploring individual experiences and subjective understandings of homelessness involves profoundly human relationships that brought me, as the researcher, into close connections with individuals I spent time with. My relationship with individuals differed from that of Snow and Anderson (1993), or Bourgois and Schonberg (2009), whose ethnographies drew on "buddy-researcher" roles through inserting themselves into the daily lives and environments of homeless communities in Austin and San Francisco respectfully. By contrast my access to the individuals who are the subject of this study arose through the institutional structure of Helping the Homeless, where my role

positioned me as a member of staff, and created a power relationship that I fully acknowledge influenced the information that individuals chose to share with me.

I was concerned that my status as a member of staff at House of Francis might create a relationship with individuals that would unduly influence them to speak with me. To address this I was explicit in revealing my research agenda, stating that I was not speaking with them as a staff member, nor as a therapist, case worker, or counsellor, but as a human with a personal interest in hearing stories about their lives and experiences, the sharing of which would not change their place at HoF or their relationship with me as a volunteer there. This approach is modelled on the ethnography of Kaaryn S Gustafson (2011), whose feminist methodology departs from the privilege of objectivity or strict distance of researcher from subject that is upheld by the majority of canonical social science methods.

Despite my efforts to present myself in a human, inter-subjective way, my status as a young, white, audibly non-American, economically and socially privileged woman, volunteer, and researcher pursuing graduate studies is unavoidably different from that of the individuals with whom I interacted and interviewed. The power imbalance between my researcher identity and that of my research subjects is critical to consider when reflecting on the level of trust and depth of relationship that I believed necessary to begin to grasp individuals' subjectivity and experiences of homelessness. Recognising these different subject positions prompted important questions about the reality of developing relationships with participants in which they felt sufficient trust and comfort to share deep, personal information about themselves. My experience, however, has shown my

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fears to be largely unfounded; like Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1993) and Joanne Passaro

(1996), most of the individuals with whom I interacted, both in interviews and in passing,

demonstrated an eagerness to talk with me, and welcomed the chance to share their

stories. I believe this to result from a need and desire for a listener, from a sense of pride

in feeling that their experiences were important for others, as well as from a trust that

arose from the energy, heart and soul which I poured into my work at House of Francis. I

was not a detached, objective researcher, but a member of the community striving to

build connections and mutual relationships in which I also shared aspects of my own life

and my interest in theirs.

Language, Voice, Tense, Representation

My research seeks to relay the heterogeneous experiences of homelessness in

Washington D.C., to present individual voices and stories while avoiding representation.

This intention notwithstanding, my writing inevitably privileges my voice as dominant; it

is my voice that narrates, that frames the discussion, and that chooses quotations. To

balance the predominance of my voice, I include extended and unedited quotations,

unpolished field notes, and dialogic writing[1] which strive to foreground the voices of

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[1] Bourgois and Schonberg reflect on the challenge of transcribing street-based recordings, keen to preserve the original meaning, clarity and intensity of expressions of speech, yet aware that verbatim transcriptions of pronunciation, accents and grammatical distinctions can distance readers from "cultural others" (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009, p. 12-13). I chose to transcribe verbatim, and included incomplete sentences, repetition, redundancies and original speech patterns. Ellipses, in quoted speech, indicate the speaker is pausing to find the right word or make a point, rather than to show deleted words.

those I am speaking with and to capture the human beings at the centre of my research

(Gustafson, 2011; Snow and Anderson, 1993).

Inevitably, the question of truth of the stories shared with me arises. Addressing

this question in their photo-ethnographic study of the San Francisco Edgewater Homeless

community, Bourgois and Schonberg present "truth" as a concept that is "socially

constructed and experientially subjective" (2009, p. 12). Similarly, in her ethnography of

homeless women in Chicago, Tanya Luhrmann posits that the veracity of narratives is

less important than the reasons why such accounts are given; the significance of stories

lies in the reasons these representations arise, rather than their truth or untruth

(Luhrmann, 2010). While I sought to establish truth in the sense of clarity of

understanding, asking individuals to explain discrepancies in their accounts, like

Luhrman I was more concerned with understanding the purpose and significance of why

accounts were shared, rather than their accuracy as objective accounts.

My efforts to recount individual narratives in an unfiltered, natural fashion cannot

alter the fact that my writing, analysis, and the issues which I choose to frame and

examine does represent others. Two points merit attention here; the first is the question of

"speaking for others" and, inevitably, the second is the privileged position from which I

am speaking.

Drawing on Linda Alcoff and Gayatri Spivak, Talmadge Wright (1997)

problematizes the notion of speaking "for" the homeless in a way that does not

disempower or further oppress their already marginalised voices. Wright does not negate

the potential value of speaking "for" the homeless, but questions the relationship between

the researcher and the homeless – namely who is the researcher, from what position do they speak, and why? (Wright, 1997, p. 31).

Wright's questions about researcher objectivity and subject representation feed into an established scholarly debate of "boundary work" (see Klein, 1990). Situating my research within this debate emphasises my writing and analysis as second-order interpretation; my understanding is shaped by how those I speak with interpret their own experiences, and how these accounts, in turn, feed through my interpretive frame and the "social imaginary" I have constructed (Wright, 1997, p. 32; Geertz, 1973; Snow and Anderson, 1993). The meanings that I, and those I speak with, extract from these experiences may not be "unvarnished truth;" the homeless, along with the rest of society, are entangled in hierarchies of class, gender, and race, which shape the dominant social imaginary through which systems of interpretations are learned (Wright, 1997, p. 32).

Similarly, my own class, race, and gender position, and the privilege this bestows me, influences my interpretation and understanding. The interpretive lens through which I construct meaning from phenomena is culturally rooted (Black and Avruch, 1993) - a reality that I cannot change, but one that inevitably shapes this research as my frames of understanding intersect with that of those I am studying (Snow and Anderson, 1993). In the context of the hierarchical systems of social inequality in Washington D.C., and more broadly in the United States, I recognise that my frames and my voice, as a white, middle-class scholar, are inevitably more powerful (Wright, 1997).

This power carries responsibilities. I have developed relationships of trust with people who attend House of Francis - they have accepted me into their everyday lives,

and shared with me their histories, dreams, and fears. To protect the privacy of these individuals I have used pseudonyms throughout - both for individuals and for the organisation in which my research is situated. Since this thesis is about homelessness within the spaces of Washington D.C., I have not disguised place names other than those that might reveal an individual's personal information. My efforts notwithstanding, written accounts of these human relationships risks objectification and betrayal, especially with ethnographic accounts that explore the subject of drugs, sexuality, poverty, crime, drugs, race, and suffering (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009, p. 13). In every way possible I write to avoid objectifying or betraying members of HoF, and I do not sanitize or distort the stories they have shared with me.

To avoid misspeaking for, or about, the people with whom I engaged in passing conversations and more formal interviews, I endeavoured, where possible, to create dialogue:

> Through dialogue we come to understand how our research on, with, for, by, and to the homeless can become either a dangerous or a liberatory enterprise for those we work with. The basis for our obligation to engage in dialogue rests upon the fundamental assumption that those we work with or study should be respected as we respect ourselves. (Wright, 1997, p. 32).

As a researcher and a volunteer member of staff at House of Francis, I developed relationships and spaces for dialogue with those I worked and studied. One of my favourite things about volunteering regularly at House of Francis were the moments when I was just hanging out in the day room, chatting with members over the papers, playing

cards, talking about lives - spaces that I did not consider part of my "research" but were part of the joy of sharing humanity and building human relationships of mutuality, kindness, and respect. While socially enjoyable on a personal level, these relationships also emphasise the importance of social scientific research that interrogates constructions of people who are homeless and poor into the homogenous "Other", a term that can work to conceal issues of race, poverty, and social inequality.

I hope this written thesis reflects, as much as is possible through words on a page, the humans at the centre of my research, my voluntary position and, I hope, my future work. That this thesis speaks with people who are homeless is of critical importance, both on a personal and academic level. It barely needs saying that it is those who live the daily experiences of homeless who are the "experts" on homelessness and, in recognition of their voice, I draw from Anna Tsing's rehierarchizing of scholarship, considering myself the "co-commentator" beside the expertise of those with whom I spoke (Tsing, 1996, p. 316). The conversations I was part of, and party to, arose after time and energy gaining trust and building connections. To preserve these spaces of dialogue and relationships, I share my analysis with those interested, seeking to tell a story that does not attempt to speak for, but also to speak against the homogenising ways in which the homeless are popularly represented.

CHAPTER THREE: DOGS BEFORE HUMANS

"You know, in Montgomery country they got shelters for 2,000 dogs, but in Washington D.C. they can't even house 200 men" (Man in focus group on shelter conditions).

My voice prevails throughout this thesis; I am not a neutral narrator and I neither disguise my sympathies nor attempt to conceal my emotions or convictions. This chapter provides an explanation of who I am as a scholar and as a human, providing a background to help the reader make sense of my beliefs, and to understand why my personal voice within this thesis matters.

This morning I find myself at Union Station, seeking a space in which to write why this research carries so much importance for me. I sit at a table of one of the many chain cafes looking out over the busy 8am concourse where, over a cup of coffee, I pull out my computer and begin to write. I had not thought about the significance of Union Station in which to write this most personal, revealing chapter; but sitting here, fingers dancing over the keys on my shiny new MacBook, I am hit with the same unrelenting sorrow and unease that prompted this research and I realise that Union Station is one of the most visible places where the parallel lives of the homeless and the domiciled intersect.

To understand why homelessness engenders such raw emotions within me prompts me to question my position related to people who are homeless. Sitting at Union Station, the answer could not be more blatant. It is early morning; outside the station the nightly homeless camp around Columbus Circle is still visible, with quilts and pillows strewn amongst sundry possessions and bags. I observe the morning's bustle of activity as people dressed in smart clothes dart swiftly across the circle, walking towards or away from the station and passing those who, in contrast, are unmoving, weary in appearance, and flopped down amongst possessions on sidewalks or low stone walls. The spatial proximity of the two is fleeting and without visible acknowledgement of the other. I am always struck by the appearance of indifference of the well heeled, who seem to walk by the homeless without recognition or notice.

This scene, and its recurrence across the city, provokes a sense of acute sorrow and anger. I feel this immense ache in my heart as I try to imagine what it must be like to sleep outside Union Station, to bed down without shelter, or privacy, or a bathroom in which to wash or brush one's teeth. This sorrow deepens when I realise that my imagination, and best anthropological intentions, cannot come close to the reality of the experience, one which is unfathomable to me and the life which I, and the rest of the smartly dressed, domiciled, and employed, lead. Despite the common humanity within a shared urban locality, there is a spatial, social, and economic distance between inhabitants of the city, between those that sleep scattered across the city and those that have a home in which to live.

I observe this distance beyond the hubs of transport at Union Station, but everywhere I go across the city. Each time I observe the seeming parallel worlds of the homeless and the domiciled, I feel this growing anger at the ease with which the latter live their lives, seemingly unmoved at the inequity of homelessness as they sip on overpriced beer in formerly rundown areas, or look on aghast at unorthodox outbursts in trendy coffee shops. And then I catch myself wondering why I project dispassion onto them – perhaps they are similarly angered and perhaps walking past is merely a coping strategy for the helplessness that they feel? Yet my anger becomes intensified as I realise that my attempt at empathy, or my voluntary work with the homeless, or my endeavour to withhold judgement and recognise the dignity of every individual, does not lessen the reality that I too occupy the world that runs parallel to that of the homeless. In this world I have experienced incredible privilege, opportunity, and love and, in spite of my research and my outlook, I too benefit from the systems that give rise to homelessness. This realisation is profoundly difficult to recognise, and heightens my sadness into a sense of shame.

To understand this shame requires me to probe deeper into my life and upbringing. I was born in London and grew up in England with an American father and an upper middle-class mother, a position of privilege that was a constant source of discomfort for her – a feeling that I inherited. Despite a frugal upbringing, I left for university with a private education and a class status that, in a country fixated with social class, stood at odds with my increasingly leftist outlook. Finding a group of friends who

were similarly social justice and environmental oriented, as well as similarly middle class, I began to assuage my guilt at my privilege through throwing myself into activism.

I moved to Northern Virginia for graduate studies in Conflict Analysis and Resolution; a decision that I quickly realised represented more than a geographical move across the Atlantic, but also signified a departure from the communal, collaborative, participatory way of life in which I had lived. Without allowing enough time to find the communities I sought, I judged the homogeneity of Arlington as the baseline, one to which I adopted a sense of English difference. While shameful to admit, this difference is the lens through which I observe and make meaning as I navigate my life and my research in Washington D.C. Being English was never a salient feature of my identity until I moved to Virginia where, despite my U.S. passport, I oriented myself as something other than the defiant American pride that I believed surrounded me.

Revealing my background here is not to engage with "obsessive self-reflexive hermeneutics" (Scheper-Hughes, 1993, p. 28) but feels pertinent for a number of reasons. The first, and perhaps most obvious, is to provide a context in which a reader can make sense of the raw, evocative, and emotive reflections in my fieldnotes. This research became a journey through the spaces of homelessness in Washington D.C that was both scholarly and personal, and my writing captures my reactions as I move along.

Revealing my positionality has a second and critical dimension that goes beyond merely contextualising who I am. My research sought to understand homelessness as a form of violence, inflicted from the physical hardship of living in precarity and from the everyday prejudice and seeming indifference of the domiciled. It is this indifference that I

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believe serves to normalize homelessness and routinize its violence. My response, then, not only reflects my position but also endeavours to disrupt this broader silence and the suppressed reactions to the violence of homelessness.

I do not believe my response to homelessness is uncommon; I am certain that the sight of the homeless similarly affects domiciled individuals throughout the city and country. And yet the ubiquity of homelessness remains, prompting my supposition that its habitual sightings generate a sense of helplessness that suppresses broader reaction. While this suppression perhaps provides a mechanism to cope with feelings of helplessness, it entrenches the cyclical violence of homelessness. Inaction, or apparent indifference, renders homelessness an inevitable part of the cityscape to which the domiciled come to accept and normalize, just as they might the Starbucks on most street corners. It is this normalization that prevents a broader societal response to condemn and challenge the social, economic, and political structures that allow homelessness to arise, and it becomes sustained. My voice - my emotive positionality - is an intended act of consciousness to highlight the violence of homelessness, to embrace my sorrow, to recognise my anger as an indicator of injustice, and to attempt to translate helplessness into action.

The third reason for sharing my background relates to the nature of my research and my position to those with whom I spent time and interviewed. I asked deeply personal, probing questions that sought to understand experiences and histories of people who are homeless. While sharing my background departs from norms of scholarly objectivity, I do this intentionally - both here and with those I spoke - to demonstrate that

I was not a detached observer but fully engaged in profoundly human, intersubjective relationships with my "research subjects". I cannot change the power structures that crosscut these relationships, but placing myself in this research is one step towards bridging the gulf between ivory towers of academia and those that form the subject of their scholarship. By sharing my background, I fully acknowledge the cultural lens through which I approach my research, and of which I cannot be rid. To account for this bias, I follow Scheper-Hughes (1993) and settle for "good enough" ethnography, striving to do the best I can "to listen and observe carefully, empathically, and compassionately" (Scheper-Hughes, 1993, p. 28).

While I recognize my cultural lens and privilege, my condemnation of societal structures, and projection of indifference onto an uncaring populace within is an unfair judgement to which I am not immune – I too sit in expensive beer gardens and drink cappuccinos in trendy, gentrifying neighbourhoods. I too will walk past people who are homeless; how do I know that my feeling of sorrow and anguish is not shared? I do not believe that my reaction is uncommon; I believe that most people will feel some kind of discomfort, sadness, indignation, and perhaps they too are also acting on it.

Yet my anger at U.S. society and those within remains. I do not believe that I am any better than the swift moving, smartly dressed commuters at Union Station as I sit observing with my coffee and expensive computer. But I do feel different; I am a stranger to this country and I am shocked by the state of inequality and human suffering in its capital, and I am not walking by. As I finish writing this research I am working, thinking, speaking about homelessness. I am engaging in protests and demonstrations about

affordable housing in the city. I am committed, both now and in future fields of employment, research and human connections, to challenge the structures that give rise to the violence of homeless, and to deconstruct its narratives and dispositions that marginalise and dehumanise those most in need of recognition.

CHAPTER FOUR: MAPPING HOMELESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

This chapter maps the social and scholarly understandings and definitions of homelessness, setting out the changes in the way that homelessness has been conceptualised and studied over the course of the twentieth century, before introducing the theories that I believe to be analytically useful frames through which to understand the social and spatial experiences of homelessness in Washington D.C.

Overview of Homelessness in the USA

Academic and popular portrayals of the homeless altered throughout the 20th century. Early scholarship on homelessness defines the homeless by their relative position in society; the homeless were the single men working as short-term labourers, sleeping in inexpensive hotels, and drinking heavily. The homeless man was "the Hobo" drifting along metropolitan skid rows, following irregular work, living a nomadic existence on the periphery of society. These studies focus on the "hobohemia" of skid rows, depicting the homeless man as transient, attached to the bottle and whatever spot employment was available (see Anderson 1961; Bahr & Caplow, 1974; Sutherland & Locke 1971).

Sleeping in boarding houses and single room occupancies (SROs), the early 20th century homeless man was not technically without housing, but became identified as

homeless in his state of separation from "normal family life," a disaffiliation from normative ideals of societal life and the social structures within (Shlay and Rossi, 1992, p. 131; Lee, 1980)

The changing social and economic context of the Untied States following World War II lessened the demand for transient labour and, coupled with city redevelopment programs, construction of private and public housing, and the changing demographic composition of skid row, led to population decline and spatial shrinkage of skid rows as traditionally conceived (Bahr, 1967; Bogue, 1963; Lee, 1980). Fulfilling Howard Bahr's prediction, this dispersion of skid row hid the visible problem of homelessness, and lessened its appeal as a topic of scholarly research (Bahr, 1967).

The "new homelessness" literature of the mid 1980s returned homelessness to the social research agenda, a response to the increasing visibility of homeless people across urban centres (Shlay & Rossi, 1992). This visibility reflected the growing population of homeless during the late 1970s when high unemployment, a lack of low-skilled jobs, increasing house prices, gentrification, and the dwindling real value of benefits pushed certain individuals into homelessness (Hamburg & Hopper, 1985, p. 154). Homelessness continued to rise during Ronald Reagan's terms as president, correlating with his policies of "Reaganomics:" deinstitutionalisation of hospitalised mentally ill (which was accompanied with the intention to create mental health services in the community, a safety net that did not arise due to subsequent conservative cuts in federal money), deindustrialisation of jobs, cessation of federal subsidies to low income housing, and decriminalisation of public drunkenness and vagrancy (Shlay and Rossi, 1992; Passaro,

1996; Golden, 1992). The result was a homeless population that could no longer be contained by the diminishing skid rows, but became visible across metropolitan spaces and, with the emergence of women and children, could no more be understood by homogeneous depictions of hobos and tramps. The emergence of this "new homeless" with a very different composition attracted new attention from social scientists and policy makers in the early 1990s (see Shlay and Rossi, 1992).

Attention to the "new homeless" prompted a shift in the ways in which homelessness was conceptualised. Definitions moved away from presuppositions of a homogeneous population of, predominantly, old, white, and single men to understanding homelessness as a heterogeneous group that included women, children, and families of diverse race and ethnicities. Homelessness became defined not by disaffiliation but by housing hardship linked to extreme poverty: the homeless were those living in places "not meant for human habitation" (HUD in NAEH, 2014).

Definitions of Homelessness

The tensions and ambiguities behind definitions of homelessness are evident in the scholarly and policy literatures, with the "official" definition of homelessness differing according to government department. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) defines a homeless person as an individual without permanent housing, staying in supervised emergency or temporary housing, or those "doubled up"

and living with friends or families[2]. The broad scope of the HHS definition allows

recognition as homeless individuals who may not be physically homeless but are

precariously housed. This definition is useful for my research as it acknowledges

individuals at House of Francis who have a physical place to call home, yet often live in

unstable or tenuous circumstances.

The most commonly employed definition, however, is that given by the U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is more limited in scope.

The HUD defines homelessness by reference to the physical place in which an individual

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[2] An individual is homeless if they are 1) "without permanent housing who may live on the streets; stay in a shelter, mission, single room occupancy facilities, abandoned building or vehicle; or in any other unstable or non-permanent situation" [Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C., 254b)] (NHCHC, n.d.), and 2) "doubled up", living in circumstances "where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or extended family members," as well as a person released from a prison or hospital and without stable housing to which to return [HRSA/Bureau of Primary Health Care, Program Assistance Letter 99-12, Health Care for the Homeless Principles of Practice] (NHCHC, n.d.).

inhabits: to be homeless is to reside in a place not fit for human habitation.[3] The HUD

definition overlooks, therefore, individuals who may live in considerable instability - the

"precariously or marginally housed persons" such as individuals staying in domestic

violence facilities or residential treatment programs, those sleeping at the homes of

friends or families, and those with heavy rent to income burdens (Lee, Tyler & Wright,

2010, p. 3, original emphasis). This literal understanding of homelessness, upheld by

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[3] According to the HUD, a homeless person is 1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; 2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; 3) an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing); 4) an individual who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where he or she temporarily resided; 5) an individual or family who will imminently lose their housing [as evidenced by a court order resulting from an eviction action that notifies the individual or family that they must leave within 14 days, having a primary nighttime residence that is a room in a hotel or motel and where they lack the resources necessary to reside there for more than 14 days, or credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and any oral statement from an individual or family seeking homeless assistance that is found to be credible shall be considered credible evidence for purposes of this clause]; has no subsequent residence identified; and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing; and 6) unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who have experienced a long-term period without living independently in permanent housing, have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period, and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment [Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-22, Section 1003)].(NHCHC, n.d.).

programs sponsored by the HUD, is problematic in neglecting people whose physical place to stay does not guarantee stability of tenure (Lee et al., 2010).

Broadening the scope of the definition of homelessness moves from understandings of a fixed state to acknowledging the existence of a "continuum" between a house and homelessness (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, p.97). On one end of the continuum are those sleeping rough in "literal rooflessness," while at the other end is the absolute security of tenure. In the middle of this spectrum lies emergency shelters, transitional housing, "doubling up" with friends or family, overcrowded shared houses, hostels, licensed squats, (in)secure rentals, and mortgaged homes (Carlen, 1996, p. 27; Greve, Page & Greve, 1971).

Understanding homelessness as a continuum is important for my research. All of those with whom I spent time and spoke exist at different stages along this continuum. While some individuals are quite literally roofless, sleeping in emergency shelters or in parks across the city, others stay in subsidised apartments or transitional housing. Everyone I spoke with understood and defined their situation differently, and not necessarily according to the degree of precarity in which they outwardly appear to live. These definitions are crucial; rather than external presumptions of what defines homelessness, I recognise as legitimate the understandings shared by individuals living within the parameters of its instability (Tsing, 1996).

Scholarship that understands homelessness as a continuum marks a critical departure from conceptions of homelessness as an ontological category of being and a singular homogenous experience (Willse, 2015). In aligning my research with this

scholarship, I hope to further challenge the perceived legitimacy in the collation of people who are homeless by nature of their very visible difference from domiciled citizens. Despite its popularity in official statistics and mainstream accounts, the term 'homeless' does not capture an ontologically distinct population; homelessness arises from myriad reasons and is understood and experienced very differently by a diversity of individuals according to intersecting and subjective identities (Greve et al., 1971; Kennett, 1999).

While diverging on definitions of homelessness, there are similarities between the "new homelessness" scholarship and the disaffiliation literature with its focus on the "hobohemia" of skid rows. Homeless individuals within the latter were not necessarily without housing, but were homeless due to their state of detachment from a certain normative ideal of societal and familial life. In a similar way, the "new homeless" are not just those visibly sleeping in shelters or on the streets, but those whose lives are not following presupposed normal trajectories. This understanding of homelessness as deviance from presumptions of a certain idealised life is useful to my analysis; I situate experiences of homelessness within the social and economic structural organisation of society, exploring how legitimacy in social and physical spaces rest on conformance to norms of neoliberal citizenship.

Reasons for Homelessness

Conceiving homelessness as a deviance from expected, or routine, ways of being feeds into the scholarly debate over reasons for homelessness, one which falls along

individual or structural arguments[4] (Main, 1998; Morse 1992). The latter draw on

theories of social structuralism to situate homelessness in the context of changes in the

economy, law, political environment, and ideological cultures. Structural causes are those

that exist independently of an individual's control and recognition; in this argument,

homelessness is a result of extensive social policies, changes to technology and the

workforce, trends in unemployment, inequality, and poverty, globalization, the structure

of the economy and, particularly, the housing market. Decreasing availability of rental

units and the growing affordability gap between the price of housing and personal income

are structural factors believed to precipitate homelessness (Main, 1998; Carlen, 1996; see

also Passaro, 1986; Forest, 1999; Dehavenon, 1996; Marsh and Kennett, 1999).

In contrast to explanations of homelessness through reference to broader

structural forces of society, the individual argument arises from an empiricist focus on the

presumed personal defects of the homeless. Traits like alcoholism, substance abuse,

mental illness, or a lack of a work ethic, are highlighted as reasons why individuals

become homeless (Main, 1998; Carlen, 1996; Lee, Lewis, & Jones, 1992; see also

Bassuk, 1984; Dennis, Levine, & Osher, 1991; Eagle & Caton, 1990). The individual is

to blame for homelessness, deficient in the "internal cultural tools" necessary for

successful life in modern society (Main, 1998, p. 42). This argument upholds

homelessness as the antithesis to the American ethic of self-reliance, autonomy, and

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[4] Of course, as Lee, Lewis, & Jones (1992, p. 549, n.1) point out, certain studies also consider the complex interplay of structural and individual problems in leading to homelessness. Studies consider the ways in which an individual's characteristics may make one more vulnerable to structural changes that precipitate homelessness (see Rossi & Wright, 1989; Marsh & Kennett, 1999)

progress; the homeless become homeless because they are alcoholics, feckless, unbalanced, and lazy. They lack self-sufficiency, they became homeless "you might say, by choice," by a failure to uphold conventional life (Reagan, in Morse, 1992, p.3).

Those who champion the individual causes of homelessness critique the ways in which structural arguments absolve individuals from responsibility, rendering them "passive, hopeless, and resentful" and denying them any sense of personal agency and freedom to take control of their future (Magnet, 1993). In response, structural theories of homelessness contend that locating blame within the individual neglects to acknowledge the power of political, economic, and social structural and institutional forces over which individuals have no control (Main, 1998).

Alex Marsh and Patricia Kennett reject as futile and inadequate attempts to explain homelessness by looking only at individual or structural causes. While they emphasise the critical importance of situating homelessness within the broad structural forces - pro-market globalisation ideologies, fluctuating housing markets, local and national government fiscal spending and the subsequent availability of welfare - Marsh and Kennett argue that these macro-level changes must be refracted through individual positions of precarity in specific and situational contexts (Marsh and Kennett, 1999).

While structural forces are inevitable, constantly evolving, and creating contexts of precariousness and risk for all populations, the repercussions of these forces affect social groups and individuals very differently. Some people are more vulnerable to homelessness than others; factors like race, ethnicity, age, gender, impairment, and socio-economic status shape an individual's ability to adjust to situations of risk. For certain

groups and individuals "it is the progressive exposure to risk and an accumulation of problems which eventually exhausts these resources and shifts some individuals into the sphere of homelessness" (Paugam, in Marsh and Kennett, 1999; Forest, 1999).

Marsh and Kennett's argument is key to my understanding of the experiences of homelessness shared with me throughout my research. It became clear that attaching causal explanations of homelessness to structural or individual factors alone neglects to recognise the complex ways in which different social groups and individuals are predisposed. Critical to explaining homelessness is to accept that macro and micro processes are thickly interwoven, the force of which will have different consequences amongst vastly different populations, within which a spectrum of unique resources and adaptability exists.

State of Homelessness in the United States

National homelessness in the United States is calculated through annual "point-in-time" (PIT) counts. Every year the HUD draws on volunteers in communities to conduct "sheltered counts" of people living in emergency shelter or transitional housing on one single night in January. Every other year the HUD also conducts "unsheltered counts" of people living in places "unfit for human habitation"– abandoned buildings, cars, and the streets. Compiled by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), these figures set out the national population of homelessness, and group the homeless into relevant subpopulations (NAEH, 2015).

The 2015 report claims to present the most recent data on homelessness in the USA based on the January 2014 PIT count. According to this count 578,424 people were experiencing homelessness in the USA, with the vast majority (401,051 people) living in some sort of shelter or transitional housing, while 31 percent (177,373 people) lived in a place not meant for human habitation. Within this, the largest subpopulation experiencing homelessness, comprising 63 percent (362,163 people) was individuals, 37 percent were people in families (216,262 people in 67,531 households), chronically homeless individuals constituted 15 percent (84,291 people)[5], chronically homeless families made up 3 percent (15,143 people), 9 percent of the homeless population was comprised by veterans (49,933), and unaccompanied youth and children constituted 7.8 percent (45,205 people) of the homeless population (NAEH, 2015, p. 7).

The NAEH reports serves as a "desktop reference for policymakers, journalists, and community and state leaders" (NAEH, 2015, p. 2), detailing overall trends in homelessness at a national and state level between 2012 and 2013. The report shows that homelessness, according to the HUD definition, has decreased in the United States by 2.3 percent, and decreased amongst every major subpopulation. The national rate of homelessness fell to 18.3 homeless people per 100,000 people in the general population, a rate that varies from state to state.

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[5] The NAEH defines an individual or family chronically homeless "if he or she or, in the case of a family, a head of a household, has a disabling condition and has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years. Prior to the 2013 pointin-time count, information on chronic homelessness was collected only for individuals. In 2013 and 2014, information on chronic homelessness was collected for both individuals and families" (NAEH, 2015).

Drawing on the HUD definition, the NAEH report does not include as homeless those individuals living in precarity, but does acknowledge that economic and housing factors influence vulnerability to homelessness. This reference to populations at risk of homelessness offers a critical overview of the staggering, and increasing, potentiality of homelessness in the United States due to poverty, unaffordable housing, unemployment, high housing cost burdens, and living "doubled up."

In spite of a falling unemployment rate from 8.1 percent to 7.4 percent between 2012-2013, the rate of poverty remained unchanged. Since 2007, there has been a 67 percent increase the number of people now living "doubled up" with friends or family, now standing at 7.7 million people, and a 25 percent increase in the number of poor renter households with high housing cost burdens: households in poverty paying over 50 percent of their income toward housing (NAEH, 2015, p. 37).

The rate of homelessness, and vulnerability to homelessness, differs from state to state. Nationally, 18.3 per 10,0000 people in the general population, and 25.5 per 10,000 veterans, are homeless. In Washington, D.C., these figures are radically higher; 120 people per 10,000 are homeless, with 146 homeless veterans per 10,000 veterans in the general population. During 2012-2013, the national change in people in poverty was just 0.1 percent; in Washington, D.C. there was a 6.3 percent increase, the fifth highest across the country. Similarly, D.C. witnessed an 8.4 percent increase in the number of poor renter households with severe housing cost burdens, at the same time as this decreased nationally by 2.8 percent, and a 7.7 percent increase in people living "doubled up" compared to the 3.7 percent national increase (NAEH, 2015, p. 37-51).

The NAEH acknowledges that the attempt to generate a comprehensive state of homelessness is not without challenge; to count the "unsheltered homeless" in the USA confronts the different ways in which "homeless subpopulations, like homeless youth and LGBTQ individuals, congregate in different areas than larger populations and may try to avoid being identified as homeless" (Doran, 2015). The NAEH believes this challenge surmountable through using experienced volunteers, providing training in techniques of communication, and participating with organisations that are already working with homeless subpopulations (Doran, 2015).

While the admission of the NAEH alludes to the differential ways in which homelessness is defined, it continues to uphold the presupposition that homelessness is an experience that can be clearly defined, and one which is uniformly experienced by precise subpopulations. Categorising the homeless into these different subpopulations – veterans, chronic or non-chronic individuals, chronic or non-chronic families - attempts to delineate the different groups of people that commonly experience homelessness. While this appears to offer a more nuanced understanding of homelessness in the U.S. than that of the disaffiliation literature, the amalgamation of the homeless into clearly defined identities as veteran, youth, LGBTQ, women, family, and so on neglects the multiple and intersectional ways in which homelessness is experienced. Focusing on the different demographics within homeless populations homogenises people into groups with presumed identical experience, and does not interrogate other levels of identity and personal history which shape the ways in which each individual makes meaning of homelessness.

The NAEH report provides an important statistical overview of homelessness in the United States according to clear parameters and categories. It presents a useful context in which to think about the scale of homelessness, yet it rests upon a presumption that homelessness is an ontological state of being, rather than a fluid experience that is understood and navigated differently by each individual who, while labelled as homeless, may define and explain their situation very differently. It is this subjective account that I sought through my ethnographic research of homelessness. Moving beyond a quantifiable analysis of how many and what kind of people experience homelessness, I sought to understand how individuals understand their situation, and how they make sense of their homelessness in the capital of the world's most powerful nation.

The stories and accounts shared with me capture the social, cultural, and spatial manifestations of the violence of homelessness. These accounts allude to homelessness as a distinct feeling that is encountered at diverse times and places, an identity which individuals do not seek out but one which is ascribed discriminately to them – those that seem, externally, to fit within established notions of homelessness. For me to understand the existence of homelessness within the USA, and make sense of these stories shared with me, I draw on theories through which to analyse the structural, symbolic, and everyday violence of homelessness.

Theoretical Approaches to Understanding Homelessness

Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality – force, assault, or the infliction of pain – alone. Violence also includes assaults on the

personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim. The social and cultural

dimensions of violence are what give violence its power and meaning. Focusing

exclusively on the physical aspects of torture/terror/violence misses the point and

transforms the project into a clinical, literary, or artistic exercise, which runs the

risk of degenerating into a theatre or pornography of violence in which the

voyeuristic impulse subverts the larger project of witnessing, critiquing, and

writing against violence, injustice, and suffering (Bourgois & Scheper-Hughes,

2004, p. 1).

Approaching research on homelessness from my background in Conflict Analysis and

Resolution (CAR) prompted several people to ask of the connection between conflict

resolution and homelessness, believing homelessness to be unrelated to CAR's tools of

dispute prevention and peace making. Yet I believe that the relevance of homelessness to

the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR), and vice versa, is critical; CAR

seeks to understand violence – to explore the myriad causes of violence with the hope of

prevention and resolution.

The concept of violence is not easily defined or quantified; it is broad, subjective,

fluid, and reproductive. Beyond physical manifestations of force, violence encompasses

the assaults on dignity, self-worth and personhood that arise from its everyday, structural,

symbolic, intimate, social, and cultural dimensions (Bourgois & Scheper-Hughes, 2004;

Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009).

To label something an act of violence is to make a subjective decision of the perceived legitimacy or illegitimacy of that which is in question. Homelessness, as an experience and state of being in which over half a million people in the United States of America are found on any given night, is a reality that I believe to be profoundly illegitimate. The physical hardship of living on the streets, in temporary houses, in abusive relationships, or in situations of precarity is an existence in which humans are denied a space in which to realise their basic human rights or needs.

Beyond the violence of this physical precarity, the social and physical spaces in which routine life plays out carry different significance for the homeless than the domiciled. For the former, daily life entails routine struggle for place, for acceptance, for recognition, and for respite from an existence without a place to go or be. This denial of physical and social spaces to homeless bodies represents violence which, drawing from Bourgois & Scheper-Hughes (2004) continuum, I identify as structural, symbolic, everyday, and social and cultural violence.

Structural violence is the violence inflicted by the political and economic organization of society, it is "the violence of poverty, hunger, social exclusion and humiliation" (Bourgois & Scheper-Hughes, 2004, p. 1). It is the "silent", invisible, and "embedded" violence that is as "natural as the air around us" yet overlooked by understandings of violence as something purely personal and physical (Galtung, 1969, p. 173). It is the violence that arises when some humans are denied the same life chances, the space to realise their potential as domiciled, "normal" citizens (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009; Galtung, 1969). Attention to the broader political and economic

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structures as a source of violence situates individual experiences of homelessness within the neoliberal organization of the United States. Poverty and social marginalisation are the dark side to neoliberalism, which privileges profit and the market over people and social realities.

Neoliberalism, as the ideology that predominates in the United States and across the world, provides a useful frame through which to make sense of experiences of homelessness. The fundamental logic of neoliberalism enhances the role of the private sector in the economy through privatization, free trade, deregulation, minimal government, and maximising profit (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism's success, however, lies in its grasp beyond the private sector to "saturate" government, health, education, and non-profit fields with a "neoliberal imaginary," one which removes responsibility from governments to provide for the welfare of its citizens and "each person becomes his or her own product." Positioning the homeless within this imaginary reveals the visible disconnect between homelessness and neoliberal tenets of productivity, skill acquisition, and entrepreneurial self-management (Urciuoli, 2010, p. 162). Attention to the forces of neoliberalism provides a frame through which to analyse individual narratives of homelessness, reflecting on the ways in which neoliberal values of personal responsibility and productivity become internalised through symbolic violence.

There is an additional significance of neoliberalism for my analysis of homelessness. In understanding that neoliberal capitalism generates a surplus that requires absorption, the homeless become reframed from worthless bodies to a population with a surplus value. Under this logic, the social ill of homelessness presents an

opportunity for capital growth in which new service and knowledge industries are developed. While these services, like those in which I was volunteering, offer critical assistance in providing for immediate needs of the homeless, their existence ensures the homeless remain a population in need of permanent management, and perpetuates the economic value of homelessness within a non-profit industrial complex (Willse, 2015; see also Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2007).

Within cities, the neoliberal logic is manifest through the increasing development of urban space and the commodification of urban lifestyles, those constituted through neat packages of upmarket living, surrounded by luxury housing, shopping facilities, and recreational centres (Harvey, 2013, p. 14). This lifestyle is available for those with sufficient capital to buy into its central tenets of consumerism and individualism. For those who cannot, the commodification of urban lifestyles represents the "spatial construction of poverty," in which the development of semipublic urban space acts as a tool of geographical and social segregation (Susser, 1996). My research explores how this segregation is experienced by those marginalised through neoliberal processes of urban development across Washington D.C.

The neoliberal logic is reproduced and perpetuated through society's misrecognition of its self-evidence. Such recognition is not a conscious choice of individuals, but a pre-reflexive acknowledgement that neoliberalism, and whatever social inequalities it engenders, are the natural order of things. This belief, or disposition, arises as a result of the symbolic domination of the state, submission to which requires no

physical constraint but is the tacit acceptance of preconscious bodies (Bourdieu, 2000). It is this docile obedience to the state that Bourdieu defines as symbolic violence:

> the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination) when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely the incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relation as natural; or, in other words, when the schemes they implement in order to perceive and evaluate themselves or to perceive and evaluate the dominators (high/low, male/female, white/black etc.) are the product of the incorporation of the (thus naturalized) classifications of which their social being is the product (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 170).

Following Bourdieu's logic of symbolic violence, the inequalities and hierarchies arising from the structural organisation of society are understood to be natural and commonsense, with accompanying social classifications received as normal. By preconsciously consenting to the logic of this social power, individuals, as bodies, are complicit in perpetuating and reproducing symbolic violence. I draw on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence as an analytically useful lens through which to understand experiences of homelessness, and a context in which to situate beliefs about reasons for homelessness. This lens reveals how the misrecognition of inequality, social marginalisation, and poverty as the natural order of things is a force of symbolic violence,

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which works to position blame for homelessness within the individual (Bourdieu, 2000; Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009).

The "doxic submission" of bodies to the dominant structures upholds a symbolic order (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 176), from which arises "everyday violence". Conceived by Nancy Scheper-Hughes, everyday violence is "the little routines and enactments of violence practised normatively on vulnerable bodies in families, schools, hospitals, medical clinics, in various bureaucratic settings" (Scheper-Hughes, 2004, p. 253). Drawing on Bourgois and Schonberg's expanded definition of everyday violence: the "effects of violence in interpersonal interactions and routine daily life" (Bougois and Schonberg, 2009, p. 17), the concept of everyday and interpersonal violence captures the daily indifference and disdain that greets many of those who are homeless. Everyday violence provides a frame through which to analyse accounts of differential treatment, stories that shocked me in the unjust, prejudicial ways with which the homeless are dealt.

My shock at this differential treatment was not always shared; amongst some individuals I spoke with there was little resentment or resistance to this everyday violence, but instead a sense of quiet acquiescence. Bourdieu explains this seeming obedience to the symbolic order through the "habitus" of each subject: the familiar, the routine practices, the knowledge of the world, dispositions, preferences, outlook. Through the illusio of exposure to the world and possession by the world, bodies are conditioned and socialised. Habitus exists in each body as a way of being, a way of acting – a set of dispositions that are developed in relationship with the surrounding environment:

Habitus is the basis of an implicit collusion among all the agents who are products

of similar conditions and conditionings, and also of practical experience of the

transcendence of the group, of its way of being and doing, each agent finding in

the conduct of all his peers the ratification and legitimation ('the done thing') of

his own conduct, which, in return, ratifies and, if need be, rectifies, the conduct of

the others" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 145).

Habitus determines the dispositions of bodies, the pre-learned behaviours that are adapted

to the positions in which bodies are situated in differentiated societies. Bodies are

distinguished and hierarchized in the social world by their relative position and capital, a

position which translates into the arrangement of bodies and properties in the physical

world (Bourdieu, 2000).

While habitus is the series of dispositions that will bring satisfaction and

fulfilment, each subject's habitus is distinctive and fluid, reflecting their relation to the

social world, their social position, and the likelihood that their dispositions will be

realised. Understanding the way in which a subject's relation to the social world and their

relative position shapes habitus – and desire for fulfilment – is a useful lens through

which to analyse the experiences and desires of people who are homeless. For individuals

living along the precarious continuum of homelessness, dispositions are directly shaped

by this environment. This was evident through my research; while individuals told me of

their dreams for life beyond homelessness, the most frequent dispositions were those

relating to daily survival and meeting basic needs, those that are more likely to be

realised based on the social position from which the habitus of homelessness arises.

Relating Bourdieu's theory of habitus to the context of the United States, I understand the ideology of neoliberalism to be the symbolic power by which subjects are socialised. Within this power, individuals are bestowed with habitus and dispositions that privilege an ethic of "intense possessive individualism" and the pursuit of neoliberal representations of citizenship, productivity, and accountability (Harvey, 2008, p. 32). As an everyday practice that reflects the social structuring of society, habitus perpetuates and reinforces existing social inequality and oppression. In the context of the United States, habitus can shape misrecognition as natural the predominant social classifications shaped by competence, sex, age, gender, ethnicity, and race.

To understand the way in which homeless bodies are seemingly marginalised and disregarded, I combine the structural, symbolic, and everyday violence of the US neoliberal environment with Judith Butler's (2006; 2009) analysis of precarity and vulnerability. Butler posits that some lives are considered more grievable, more worthy, than others:

> Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable life and a grievable death? (Butler, 2006, p. xiv).

Combining Butler's differentiation between grievable and ungrievable lives, with Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence provides a frame to understand the indifference and seeming acceptance of the inequality and injustice within US society. Situated in the

context of neoliberalism, where productivity, citizenship and accountability is privileged, homeless bodies represent the antithesis of the neoliberal subject. Despite inhabiting environments of poverty, instability and precarity, the symbolic power of the neoliberal logic inculcates all bodies – both those homeless and those domiciled, with the habitus that this is the natural way of things. Homeless subjects, as unproductive, inactive bodies, are not considered mournable lives, and the disposition of indifference to the inequity and intolerable suffering of homelessness becomes normalised. This segregation between the homeless and domiciled is not only normalised, but actively created and controlled through the construction of spatial poverty in cities.

Increasing commodification of urban spaces and the segregation of cities along economic lines renders social marginalization and spatial exclusion an inevitable byproduct of urban redevelopment. Spatial exclusion is guaranteed through the development of spaces that are gated, privatized, commodified, and under surveillance, spaces which deny access to populations, like the homeless, who do not possess sufficient economic capital to enter (Harvey, 2013). Drawing on David Harvey's theories of neoliberalism connects processes of urban redevelopment within Washington D.C. to individual experiences of homelessness, contextualising the daily marginalisation of the homeless at the micro level within macro processes of neoliberalism.

This spatial and social marginalisation is enforced through the surveillance, discipline, and criminalisation of homeless bodies in urban spaces, a form of power wielded over the homeless as a deliberate force to render them invisible and remove them from the public eye. Drawing on Michel Foucault (1979; 1982) highlights how

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surveillance of the homeless is a form of control that works to discipline bodies through dictating the legitimate actions within social and physical spaces. Control is enforced through criminalization, where bodies that deviate from fixed presuppositions, and regulations, of legitimate behaviour are punished. Manifest through surveillance, attitudes of suspicion, regulation, and criminalisation, this control of homeless bodies disproportionately targets people of colour – a bias that I consider in the next chapter on the racial and economic context of Washington D.C. and the United States.

CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF WASHINGTON D.C.

This chapter contextualises my study within the social and economic setting of Washington D.C. Through attention to the historical, structural, and racial politics of the capital I consider how poverty and homelessness are shaped along race lines.

I recall the first time that I arrived to serve lunch at Helping the Homeless on a grey and bitterly cold January day. I walked over from the metro station, leaving behind the throng of suited, well-dressed workers who peeled off into one or another of the many glass and chrome businesses that, along with the metro, form part of the rapidly developing area that neighbours HtH. Interspersed with familiar fast food restaurants and coffee chains, the area is unremarkable, sanitized, Americanized and imitated across the city and country. Yet blotting the grey of these towering modern developments and sea of business suits, I observed various people who were not intently walking into offices but who lingered outside despite the bitter cold, dressed in colourful or misfitting clothes, and with a semblance of weariness. These people were almost entirely male and African American. That first day serving lunch at the dining hall, as I bustled around pouring coffee, resetting tables, and plating up mashed potato, green beans, and meat balls, I noticed that of the three hundred diners who passed through during the hour and half of service, less than one dozen were white.

Helping the Homeless is not an anomaly in serving far more black Americans than white or Latino. In Washington D.C., as in the rest of the United States, the population of black Americans living in poverty or homelessness is vastly disproportionate to the general population. African Americans, who in 2009 constituted 60.2 percent of the general population of Washington D.C., account for 94.4 percent of the sheltered homeless population in the city. In the same year, white Americans constituted 28.7 percent of the general population in D.C., yet formed only 0.5 percent of the shelter population (ICPH, 2012). These figures refer only to populations staying in homeless shelters, but they reflect the disproportionate number of black Americans living in poverty in Washington D.C., and across the United States.

To understand why homelessness in Washington D.C. is experienced along such racial lines requires attention to the interrelated structural and social issues that confront African Americans. Institutionalised discrimination in the United States has created longstanding barriers to education, employment, and housing, which combine to deny African Americans the same economic and social capital as white Americans. Federal housing policies that prioritise urban renewal have reduced the affordable housing stock, which prompts the disproportionate displacement of black Americans to neighbourhoods that tend to be poor, unsafe, and without community resources. The result is increasing residential segregation, isolating black Americans in pockets of cities with high crime, high poverty, and inadequate employment opportunities, services, or education - a segregation that impacts black Americans more than other minorities through sustaining poverty patterns (ICPH, 2012). These social exclusions combine to mean that African

Americans are disproportionately more likely to be in poverty, with lower educational attainment, fewer employment opportunities, and a lack of financial reserves to sustain them in hard times.

The likelihood of homelessness is inextricably linked to poverty. Living in poverty renders the cost of health care, education, housing, food, and childcare particularly onerous and, when limited resources force a choice between these necessities, housing, as an expense that absorbs a high proportion of income, is often dropped. To live in poverty is to exist in daily precarity, "essentially an illness, an accident, or a paycheck away from living on the streets" (NCH, n.d.).

In Washington D.C. poverty and homelessness are experienced along race lines, a visibility that shocked me, and prompted this academic study. Homelessness is by no means unique to Washington D.C., and is apparent in some forms everywhere I have lived or visited, and yet I am acutely affected by homelessness in this city. Perhaps this heightened reaction arises from my status as a foreigner, but I am constantly struck by the image of leaving Union Station, the grandiose white pillars standing in contrast to the numbers of black Americans who sit beneath. There is this undeniable paradox of poverty and homeless in the capital city of the world's most powerful nation, in which people who are homeless live on the literal doorsteps of elected representatives, some of whom will make decisions in office that will shape the local and global arena.

Moving to the U.S. after an undergraduate degree in International Relations, in which I had taken classes in international development and U.S. foreign policy, I was startled by the disconnect between the lofty approaches of the U.S. to equality,

democracy, and justice abroad, and the violence, segregation, and inequality that reigned within. This disconnect was especially apparent in Washington D.C. where the small geographical space is seemingly shared by the most marginalised and the most politically powerful. Such cohabitation reflects lives so radically uneven as to call into question the notion of the word share and, what is more, presents a visible critique on the ideals of democracy and equality to which the U.S. attests.

The significance of Washington D.C. as the site of my research extends beyond my shock at the contradiction of poverty and power; D.C. is distinct from other American cities in its influence as the site of national administration and international relations, and, particularly relevant for my research, in its social and racial organisation. African Americans hold an important place in the capital, both in terms of population, and in D.C.'s significance as a hub of African American culture.

Washington D.C. was the first city to emancipate enslaved African Americans when Congress passed the District of Columbia Emancipation Act in April 1862 and, during the Civil War and Reconstruction, the population of African Americans grew considerably as people moved to the city, attracted by its support for civil rights. In 1900, D.C. had the largest percentage of African Americans of any city in the country, and the city flourished as an African American "cultural intellectual capital" of education, churches, historical societies, and businesses (McQuirter, 2003).

The twentieth century heralded a national context of tumultuous race relations and a burgeoning civil rights movement, of which Washington D.C. was central. Despite an international reputation as the world's capital and national moves to strike down Jim

Crow laws and discrimination, D.C. remained a segregated and unequal city. African Americans constituted the majority population of the city yet experienced the same racism, injustice, police brutality, and social and economic marginalisation that prevailed in the USA.

Notwithstanding the support that Washington D.C. generated in opposition to racial discrimination – the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom brought over a quarter of a million people to the city to demand civil rights (see McQuirter, 2003) – segregation was manifest through the increasing displacement and relocation of African American residents into concentrated pockets of poverty and isolation. This segregation arose from a process of "urban removal," in which the construction of streetcars and highways during the early twentieth century acted to quarantine poor people of colour into "cheap and shoddy" public housing, spatially enforcing racial prejudice. D.C. became a city constituted by segregated neighbourhoods of white and African American residents, with the latter stuffed into a "tiny black belt" north of the capitol and up to Florida Ave NW, and "crammed" into Anacostia (Williams, 2001, p.420-2).

The 1970s saw increasing African American political and cultural power in the city, with Walter Washington elected the first black mayor of the 20th century. African Americans constituted 70 percent of D.C.'s population, and businesses, music and cultural and civic associations thrived (McQuirter, 2003). At the same time, however, Washington D.C. became further segregated as middle-class African Americans and whites moved out of the city and into the suburbs, with businesses relocating from the city to suburban malls in pursuit of this residential flight. The pockets of African

Americans left behind, living in substandard housing and with limited access to services and schools, intensified D.C.'s segregation along race and socio-economic lines. Under Ronald Reagan's presidency in the 1980s, conservative cuts to social welfare programs translated this racialised poverty into a legacy of permanent homelessness in the capitol (Ridgeway, 2011).

Washington D.C. was not an anomaly in the increasing segregation between white and black Americans; 20th century United States witnessed "sharp and sweeping" segregation in rural and urban areas alike. Yet while recent reports attest to the decline of racial segregation in large metropolitan areas nationwide, Washington D.C. is an exception, a city in which a "stark, persistent, white-black racial divide" remains (Butler & Grabinsky, 2015), and where urban development across the city heralds further gentrification and displacement of a "newly placeless, undeserving poor" (Williams, 2001, p. 426). Today Washington D.C. is a city divided into "racially concentrated areas of affluence" and "racially concentrated areas of poverty" (Semuels, 2015), a reality that foretells "diverging destinies" for white and black residents, where there is a strong negative correlation between income, educational, economic, and racial segregation and social mobility (Butler & Grabinsky, 2015).

I provide this background, while abridged, to set the context of the city to which I moved and situate my study. Washington D.C.'s racial and economic segregation is spatially and socially experienced by all those with whom I spoke as individuals navigate the marginal and prime places of the city. I too experience this segregation but by nature of my socio economic status and race it works to benefit me. This thesis is an inquiry into

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experiences of homelessness within the social and physical spaces of Washington D.C., as well as a space for reflection on what it means to live within the same setting as the subjects of that inquiry and, what is more, to participate, willingly or unconsciously, in the structures that give rise to the inequality that forms the basis of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: SPACES OF THE CITY: EXCLUSION AND CONTAINMENT

> "This is my neighbourhood. I have always lived here. I like Washington D.C. but
> I am sad because the owners want to tear my building down and build home for
> the riches." – Young Chinese American Girl

This chapter situates experiences of homelessness within the changing physical space of Washington D.C. I draw on my participation in the fight for affordable housing in the District to analyse the role of private capital and forces of gentrification in precipitating the violence of homelessness. I reflect on accounts of surveillance, regulation, and suspicion that were shared with me, and position these alongside D.C.'s rapid redevelopment. I argue that the privilege of capital in urban spaces acts to segregate the homeless from the domiciled. This economic segregation becomes spatially enforced through the control and containment of homeless bodies, an assault that is misrecognised as normal through the symbolic violence of neoliberal habitus.

Right to the City

In July 2015, Busboys and Poets, a social justice oriented restaurant and bookshop, on 5th and K hosted a party for the tenants of Museum Square, a large apartment building in Mount Vernon Triangle that has been the home of first and second

generation Chinese American and African American families for many years. Despite the cake and huge spread of food, this was no ordinary party but one organised by community organisers, local activists, and the tenants association as an occasion to recognise the Chinese and African American tenants of Museum Square as valued members of the community, and to rally against their possible eviction by the property owner Bush Companies.

There are 291 households in Museum Square, the majority of whom are Chinese Americans or Chinese American families, as well as African Americans, some who have lived in the building ever since its completion 36 years ago. Constituting half of the remaining Chinese population of Chinatown, residents of Museum Square are entirely low-income and receive vouchers from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to subsidize their rent, under the Section 8 contract between Bush Companies and the government.

In June 2014 Bush Companies informed tenants of Museum Square that they planned to demolish the 36-year-old building to make way for a luxury apartment and condominium development. Protection for tenants exists through the District's 'Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act' – a law under which property owners are mandated to offer tenants the right of first refusal to buy the building in question, usually at a price matching that which is offered by a prospective buyer. In the case of Museum Square where the property owners plan to demolish, rather than sell, the building, the law is less transparent. While D.C. code requires that before evicting tenants and razing a building, "the owner shall give the tenant an opportunity to purchase the accommodation at a price

and terms which represent a bona fide offer of sale," no stipulation is made on what

constitutes or justifies a "bona fide" price (Wiener, 2014). Bush Companies' price of

$250 million, or $828,000 per unit, did not seem "bona fide" in the context of the city's

valuing of the property at just $36 million, neighbouring property prices (which, while

ever increasing in the Mt Vernon Triangle neighbourhood are not that elevated), as well

as the low income of the tenants. In seeking to demolish and redevelop no prospective

sale existed, so Bush Companies set a price for the building's potential, rather than the

actual, value.

Panicked by this astronomical price, tenants organised a coalition of African

Americans, Chinese immigrants, and local Washingtonians and filed a lawsuit against

Bush Companies. The district judge ruled that the $250 million price tag was excessive

and unreasonable. Undeterred, Bush companies informed the District that in October

2015 they would not renew the Section 8 contract, and would no longer accept

government subsidies to house low-income residents. While the city would continue to

issue tenants with Section 8 subsidies, these would have to be used elsewhere.

As I write, the situation at Museum Square is changing fast, reflecting the real

time precarity of tenants. The latest news is that tenants were able to apply for, and

receive, individual Section 8 Vouchers from HUD to continue after the October 1st cut off

date set by Bush Companies. Following a successful and well-attended rally on

September 30, and much external pressure, Bush Companies conceded and are accepting

the vouchers, allowing tenants to remain at Museum Square – at least while the building

still stands. The court decision on Bush's offer of sale before a potential demolition

looms in the coming year, a fact that demonstrates the continuing vulnerability of tenants' living situation.

For the Chinese residents who are predominantly first generation Chinese immigrants, elderly, and with little English, Museum Square is the only home that they know in the United States. Eviction from the building not only means physical displacement, but also disruption to their lives in this country which centre around the community of friends, translators, schools, and family doctors that struggles to survive in Chinatown, an area that has changed radically throughout the past 20 years. Now catering to affluent residents through upmarket restaurants and luxury condos, Mount Vernon Square and Chinatown is no longer the "ethnic enclave" of neighbourhood shops of times past. The population of Chinese Americans in Chinatown has shrunk from 3,000 to 300, while Chinatown is now largely constituted by chain stores and fast food restaurants – whose gesture at preserving the area's Chinese heritage extends to the Chinese characters used to spell out their corporate brand (Wang, 2015).

The party at Busboys and Poets convened tenants with local councillors and activists to demand that "Museum Square Stays." Attending the party, I observed one of the most diverse groups that I have ever encountered in this country, with such a range of age, race, gender, ethnicity and professions. It felt powerful to stand amongst the crowd and listen to the short, rousing speeches made by a young Chinese American girl and elderly Chinese immigrants, often helped by translators, as well as councillors, activists, and lawyers. The speeches were moving, emphasising that this fight was not just for Museum Square but for Washington D.C., for a city that is moral and for everyone,

regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, income, and race. Speakers called for resistance to the presumed "inevitable" verdict, demanding recognition of the human right to a home, the human right to a space in the city.

In the neighbourhood surrounding Museum Square, and across Washington D.C., people of low income and colour are increasingly struggling to realise this human right as redevelopment continues to change the urban landscape, both its physical and its demographic composition. These changes could not be more apparent than in Chinatown and Mount Vernon Triangle, where Museum Square stands as an anomaly amidst the chrome and glass cookie-cutter, mixed-use buildings that line the streets, with promise of further builds heralded by the cranes that loom over the cityscape.

The luxury housing options, restaurants, and shops attracts new residents, those with sufficient income to benefit from the housing options and amenities, and eager to live closer to the city centre.[6] A new market is created, incentivising developers, like Bush Company, to replace government subsidised tenants on rent control, with those who can pay much more. For the tenants of Museum Square, all of whom are low-income and of colour, and half of whom have little or no English language, Bush Companies' plan to evict and demolish threatens their homes, community, and livelihoods. While tenants are guaranteed continued housing vouchers, there is considerable misunderstanding and

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[6] It is worth noting that the replacement of subsidized housing like Museum Square with luxury, high-income options actually serves to disadvantage everyone living there. Without low-income housing to ground a baseline cost of rent, the market is without a comparative low price and rents can rise.

misinformation over where and when these can be used – a deficiency that local community groups and activists are striving to address.

Tenants of Museum Square are (relatively) fortunate to have the assurance of continued housing vouchers, a guarantee upon which not everyone can rely. For individuals without this certainty, the processes of urban redevelopment induce real vulnerability. Illustrating this precarity is an encounter that occurred on the September 30th rally to Save Museum Square, the eve before the Section 8 Vouchers were due to expire. I was involved with organizing and building support for the rally and was one of many tenants and activists marching through Chinatown and calling for affordable housing in the city. During the rally we paused outside Wah Luck House, a subsidized apartment building that is home to the other half of Chinatown's remaining population, when two African American men, no older than thirty, came running out from the small park that is triangled between 6th, I St, and Mass Ave NW. They ran towards us, bouncing in agitation and screaming, "this is fucking bullshit! This is bullshit! These people already have vouchers. They have guaranteed places to stay. We're fucking homeless, sleeping in the park, eating out of trashcans. What are you doing to help us?" A number of community organizers leading the rally spoke to the men, attempting to explain that we are on the same side and that we *are* fighting for more affordable housing in the city. These men were not to be placated and bounded on ahead of us as we processed into the heart of Chinatown, shouting their message to observers stopping to watch them, and us.

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This encounter profoundly affected me, prompting me to question what *are* we doing – as activists organizing to demand affordable housing in the city – to help those who are already homeless? While volunteering at non-profit organizations that provide services for the homeless meets immediate needs for food, shelter, and a space to be, I question whether this 'action' sufficiently addresses the structures that give rise to homelessness, a question on which I reflect in chapter 7.

The encounter at the rally visibly highlighted the relative security of Museum Square tenants, whose guaranteed housing vouchers stand in contrast to the two homeless men's distinct lack thereof. Yet this encounter also demonstrated the radical power imbalance between property owners and tenants, with the latter powerless to the decisions of the former. The vulnerability created by this power imbalance was evident amongst individuals at House of Francis, some of whom became homeless as a result of the influx of capital and physical changes in the city.

In the first interview that I held with Evelyn, a 45 year old African American woman born and raised in Washington D.C., she described how she initially became homeless. Having grown up in public housing Evelyn told me that she was familiar with the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) rules of public housing - regulations that are critical to follow in order to maintain tenancy. Despite this knowledge, Evelyn's account captures the confusion and lack of information that individuals confront when navigating the complex bureaucratic mishmash of government and private property owners:

Evelyn: yeah. I was in an apartment, um not too far from the house where I grew up in. and I think I had been there for about five years and um, all of a sudden I got a notice telling me it was some complications with the voucher? And I wasn't really working a steady job so you know I really don't know and I called and inquired about it and I kept calling and trying to find out what can I do to figure this whole thing out. And when I recertified I even went to housing and I tried to explain to them you know "what's going on? Why is there a problem with the voucher?" because they don't really tell us anything, it's like they only let us in, they only tell us what they want us to know and I don't really know how these programs run but I know that there's different programs, everybody don't qualify for the same thing. I was under a program that was zero income and when I work, you know, I have to report to them and then whatever, however much money I earned, that they go according to my rent. Its like a percentage, yeah you know? And um. I think food stamps is something else, it is, because then I have to report that to them. So its kinda complicated but I wasn't working at the time so my rent was zero income and all of a sudden they are telling me that my voucher is no good, you know they want either more money for rent or I was going to have to be terminated and that just didn't make any sense. But housing was not willing to pay more money because you know they know, they know about these places, they know what they're worth and all that is worked out, it's subsidized housing and they know all this before they let us in, they give us the voucher, you know we qualify for it and its already standard, the rent money and everything. And they did it anyway, Alice, they just put me out. And I went to court for it after I got settled in the shelter but umm I was kinda shocked by it, because I didn't think they would handle it that way after I kept going to them trying to find out what could be done about this, but the George apartments I think they call them, they have a name for it, the landlord umm, the property landlord or whatever, they would not agree with housing, with the subsidised rent, you know it's like 'we want this or that's it", you know.

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Evelyn's experience of displacement occurred on more than one occasion, having first faced eviction from a previous apartment in which she had lived for thirteen years. Evelyn's account of this initial displacement reveals similarities to the situation confronting tenants of Museum Square, and while Evelyn was assisted in moving elsewhere, her account depicts the helplessness of tenants to the decisions of property owners:

> Evelyn: that place I told you about, that I stayed at for thirteen years, that was under housing and it was the same thing. But I was working a bit more, you know? And um we had a notice all of us had to leave, and that's only because they were tearing the property down, so that's how I got this place, that I was terminated from, they gave us a choice, you know, had us look at some places, they gave us a listing and we checked into it and they would do all the arrangements as far as getting our vouchers prepared and moving us forward, but we had to leave the property and we had to leave that area and they gave us a certain time and they were prompt, they were serious because when that time came around, they were getting everybody out those buildings, out their units and all, so yeah.

> Alice: what did they do to the property?

> Evelyn: they tore it down. It's gone now.

Alice: and built?

Evelyn: no they just put anything up yet. You know when I look over there its like, unbelievable, it's just like space. So its gone, and I cant believe they did it but they did it and they said they would and now we stayed, I stayed there for so many years and I still, when I'm over there, its gone and I… but this place that I went to after I left there, I'm not sure if they're gone and they weren't threatening to tear that down or anything, but I heard that I wasn't the only person that had to leave, I don't know why I'm thinking because housing wouldn't give the property managers more money and then I found out that they're not obligated, the landlords and all who own these properties, they're not obligated to work with housing, if they don't want to work with housing because they bring people in and you know, I guess…

Alice: by housing you mean government subsidised housing?

Evelyn: right. The government. And I don't know, these owners of these apartment buildings. I thought they had to work with the government but I guess they don't and if they do, well it was some sort of thing going on between the landlord, the property owners and they kept me out of it

Evelyn's experience foretells that of the tenants of Museum Square, where the property owner's decision to change the use of the building propels tenants into an uncertain

future. Continued assistance from the government in the form of housing vouchers does not preclude future unsettlement; the more that property owners, like Bush Companies, succeed in evicting low-income tenants and replacing them with high-income residents in profit-generating luxury builds, the more precedent is set for fellow landowners to follow suit. This process is manifest across Washington D.C., a city in which the struggle for Museum Square is a microcosm of the battle waging between people and private capital over the right to the city, a fight in which I find myself reluctantly and inadvertently embroiled.

Polarizing Forces

Fieldnotes – Month 7

Tonight I feel the true paradox of the city. I am meeting a friend at the NoMa beer garden – his suggestion. I have mixed feelings about this location, feeling so highly troubled by NoMa with all its swanky, modern, expensive apartment buildings and shiny businesses – a stark contrast to the old weathered houses and muted corner stores that line neighbouring New York Avenue. As I cross North Capital and cycle along M street, the abandoned lots and boarded up buildings suddenly gave way to Starbucks, Harris Teeter, and luxury condos advertising their rooftop pools. Along the pavement beneath these corporate signs, are pedestrians who are predominantly white and well dressed, young professionals strolling into the supermarket, clocking in their city bikes.

I stop at the traffic light on M and North Capital NW; directly across from where I wait is the austere structure of the DC Housing Authority, standing in the shadows of new developments: condos, supermarkets, hotels. It is hard to put to words the very discomfort that I feel. The paradox, the contradiction of this placement is startling. It seems almost like placing a box of Band-Aids next to a

knife, with the full knowledge that the knife was going to wound. Pre-empting the consequences but doing nothing to prevent the cut, the violence.

And it is violence. I felt this sick feeling in my stomach as I cycle toward the beer garden. I lock my bike up outside NoMa metro station, and I instantly see the beer garden: in-between the structures of the metro station bridge and the Harris Teeter / Hilton garden complex is an unused lot. It is unremarkable to a passer by - useless space surrounded by crooked railings and filled with weeds, scattered cement blocks – nothingness. Yet the erection of a large white tent, the insertion of a "pop-up" bar, the scattering of beach pebbles topped with picnic tables and umbrellas has redefined this space as a "Wunder Garten". I struggle to feel transported to a German beer garden as I look around at my "garden" environment of grey modern development and portaloos. Loud 90s music blasts from speakers and despite the skies threatening storms, the place is crowded with predominantly white men and women in their twenties and thirties. Most wear suits and business clothes, clearly stopping by after leaving work for the day. I trudge through the gravel "beach", trudge being the appropriate verb to reflect the physical challenge of walking through deep beach pebbles, as well as the emotional weight and anger I carry, the disappointment and frustration with myself for being there.

I expressed this to my friend, trying to explain my discomfort. He says "yeah but its nice". Nice? Nice for whom? I think, "yeah.. if you can afford it" I reply, deciding that this is probably not the most appropriate time to get drawn into this argument. And I cannot be angry with this guy, or perhaps the others who sit drinking their $9 beers. It feels easy to blame them, to scream "don't you realise the consequences of this for so many people?" But they are not at fault – they are enveloped in a system which is "nice" with the money, houses, jobs, and routine that it entails. They have moved to a new area with all the amenities and hey, a great little beer garden has just opened at the foot of their apartment building. Despite being in constant proximity to people who are homeless, they

live in worlds which, while geographically the same, are materially, habitually, and psychologically miles apart. Can I blame individuals for this? Or can I blame the structures that have moulded these people into good human subjects, unquestioning and uncritical. And, what is more, am I any different?

Working, volunteering, cycling, living in Washington D.C. propels me into the processes of change occurring across the city. Regardless of my intent, as a young, white, and relatively wealthy resident, my movements are not without trace, and I am painfully aware of my part in the physical and demographic transformation of D.C. The field notes above, written during the penultimate month of my fieldwork while in the midst of conducting interviews, capture my visceral anger at the ways in which we are all implicated in the processes of homelessness. It is anger directed at others, who I am perhaps unjustified in judging as unaware and uncaring, and anger at myself; notwithstanding my consciousness at the injustice of inequality, I too participate in structures that engender homelessness and contribute to the processes of redevelopment within Washington D.C.

The emergence of Wunder Gartens and similar trendy establishments, new apartment buildings, and businesses in neighbourhoods that were formerly rundown and poor represent more than physical change: this movement of private capital is accompanied by an influx of people who tend to be young, white, well-educated, salaried and professional, who are attracted to the new urban lifestyle promised. For those without sufficient capital to afford this lifestyle – the long-term residents who are disproportionately low-income and of colour, like Evelyn or the tenants of Museum

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Square – urban redevelopment equates to social, economic, and cultural displacement and the forced relocation from homes and communities.

This influx of capital and demographic transformation of neighbourhoods amounts to the well-known and much discussed process of gentrification. Billed by developers as "revitalisation," proponents argue that gentrification is not inherently bad - bringing money, business, employment, necessary infrastructure, and essential services to areas where much has been withheld (Badger, 2015a; 2015c; Byrne, 2003). While there is no doubt truth to this, the process of gentrification is not evenly beneficial; rising house prices and dwindling supplies of low income housing generates residential, as well as economic, social, and educational, instability that precipitates mass displacement, precarity, and a spike in homelessness (ICP, 2009).

Gentrification is by no means unique to Washington D.C., but is a routine feature of the hegemonic neoliberal market logic that prevails in the global social and economic context. Drawing on the theory of David Harvey (2013) provides a frame to understand the processes of change, power, and capital at work in the fight for Museum Square, and across the city and country. Harvey describes how capitalism, as the prevailing order, generates surplus that necessitates absorption which urbanisation, as a process requiring capital, can perpetually facilitate. While social-democratic states tax, and thus control, much of the surplus, the success of neoliberalism is the increasing privatization and control over the surplus through new forms of governance that integrate state and corporate interests. Under neoliberalism, state structures that determine urban processes and the disbursement of surplus privilege the interests of corporate capital and upper

classes (Harvey, 2013). As demonstrated by Evelyn's experience of displacement at the hands of her property owner, and by the threat of eviction looming over tenants at Museum Square, private capital is prioritised over people's rights. Urban redevelopment, as the arm of private capital, shapes local and national landscapes as well as people's lives and communities. Cities become increasingly polarized and fragmented along race and socio economic lines, a segregation that is "indelibly etched into the spatial forms of our cities" (Harvey, 2013, p. 15).

This spatial segregation is nowhere more obvious than in Washington D.C.'s NoMa. NoMa, an acronym for the area 'North of Massachusetts Avenue' - north and east of Union Station, was conceived by developers hoping to imitate San Francisco's SoMa and New York's SoHo. Formerly a post-industrial area, the past ten years have witnessed abandoned plots of land turn into $10 a day parking lots, and run down buildings transform into $150 a night Hyatt hotels, alongside shiny new mixed-use commercial and office space, luxury apartments, and condominiums. Accompanying this redevelopment is the influx of middle to high-income individuals, those able to afford the new luxury housing, and the subsequent exodus – or displacement - of low-income African-American residents (Cook, 2013; Owens, 2015). Understanding the process of land reappropriation provides a context in which to situate the experiences of people who are homeless as they navigate the spaces of the city.

In *Down on Their Luck: A Study of Homeless Street People* Snow & Anderson draw on Duncan's (1978) analysis of the functional value of urban space to show how space in cities can be labelled as prime or marginal. Marginal space is the abandoned

buildings, the parking lots, and the unused land under metro stations. It is the space that

has no use for the wealthy, housed populations, and becomes inhabited by the homeless,

making a habitat from these presumed wasted urban spaces. Prime space is the opposite –

it is the space in which the "normal" populations live, work, eat, relax, it is the space of

shops, restaurants, and apartments. "Prime space can be defined as space that is either

being used routinely by domiciled citizens for residential, commercial, recreational, or

navigational purposes or has symbolic significance"; prime space represents "order rather

than disorder, civility rather than incivility". By contrast, marginal space holds little value

for domiciled citizens – it is the spaces of abandoned buildings, weed patches, alleys,

spaces under bridges, impoverished run down residential areas, warehouse districts, skid

rows (Snow and Anderson, 1993, p. 103).

Spaces become marginal when they are unwittingly ceded to the powerless and

propertyless, when those with property pay it little attention. The space can also be ceded

intentionally as a force of control and containment; skid row represents the intentional

creation of marginal spaces in which to contain the destitute and the homeless, and seal

the accompanying problems therein (Rymer, 2001; Snow & Anderson, 1993).

Conversely, spatial definition can be quickly refocused and marginal space can become

prime – as evident by the "spatial redefinition and reappropriation" of NoMa and across

Washington D.C; the "gentrification overdrive" along 14th Street NW and H Street NE

are further examples of the transformation of formerly deprived and poor neighbourhoods

into new corridors of high-level, luxury housing and glittery businesses (Shin, 2013).

The human costs of urban transformation through the absorption of capital are disproportionately felt by people who are poor, marginalized, and minority, who do not possess the capital to defend themselves against the violence inflicted by urban development. Priced out of their homes and communities, the displacement polarizes and segregates cities, further eroding any sense of urban identity and citizenship, while simultaneously bolstering the individualistic neoliberal ethic (Harvey, 2013, p. 15). Underrepresented in political processes, the displaced are powerless to developers, backed up by corporate capital and an "increasingly entrepreneurially minded local state apparatus" (Harvey, 2013, p. 16).

In Washington D.C. some protection does, theoretically, exist for long-term residents living in newly desirable areas experiencing development. The D.C. Inclusionary Zoning Implementation Amendment Act requires that any new development must preserve a certain number of units as affordable, with the goal "to create mixed income neighbourhoods; produce affordable housing for a diverse labor force; seek equitable growth of new residents; and increase homeownership opportunities for low and moderate income levels" (DC.gov, n.d.). The creation and preservation of affordable housing is fundamentally important to prevent further homelessness (NCH, n.d.). However, the preservation of affordable housing is not necessarily enough when that housing is situated in the middle of high-income neighbourhoods with expensive retail shops and high-end restaurants. Affordable housing in "regenerated" neighbourhoods, where Whole Foods and Wine Bars replace mom-and-pop-shops, Laundromats, and Barbershops changes the character and, essentially, the liveability of the neighbourhood.

Preserving affordable housing does not ensure affordable living for long-time residents without attention to the ways in which gentrification changes the liveable character of neighbourhoods (Badger, 2015b). This is already evident for tenants of Museum Square and long-time residents of Chinatown; to purchase ethnic staples it used to require just a walk down the street, but today it involves a journey of 14 miles to the nearest Chinese supermarket in Falls Church, Virginia (Nakamura, 2011; Wang, 2011).

Spatial Identities

My fieldwork working and speaking with individuals at House of Francis revealed how the redefinition of urban space precipitates experiences that extend beyond mere adaptions to physical and structural change. Indeed, individuals told me about the different spaces in the city in which they became aware of their identity as homeless, one which was seemingly applied to them based on a presupposition of their anomalous presence in a specific urban space. This section considers the ways in which identities of homelessness become salient, and a source of prejudice, within certain spaces of Washington D.C.

The accounts shared with me reinforce the sense that urban redevelopment is more than a process of constructing buildings, but represents the construction of a certain kind of lifestyle, one shaped by the neoliberal ethic of consumerism and individualism. To deviate from this template is to risk social and spatial marginalisation, based on an assumption of difference that separates the domiciled from the rest. This marginalisation

was a feeling to which everyone with whom I spoke attested, giving accounts which describe the psychological and physical experience of the exclusion of the homeless.

The physical segregation of Washington D.C. was evident in all accounts, narratives which alluded to a shared city in which two worlds are unravelling concurrently yet rarely crossing paths. In one world live the normal, domiciled citizens, whose lives follow reliable paths that revolve around their homes, employment, relationships, and consumerism. In the other world are those human beings who are without such a centripetal focus, who live each day as a preparation for the next. Both worlds are inhabited by people with a common humanity, and yet this humanity is not equally valued. Despite physical existence within the same geographical space, the gap between these worlds is immense and carries vastly different significance for those who cannot perform according to the neoliberal tenets of commodified urban lifestyles. Andrea, a 61-year-old Hispanic American woman described her experience of this parallel world:

> Andrea: people… people… people like you… you go to the… there's a 7-Eleven right by… that opened up. Sarah and I would go in there, yeah, we would go in there… I would go in there and buy something to drink. We would be standing there at the corner, I mean.. I mean near the register, talking about what we were going down at the Rachel's Place, and what we're gonna… we were talking among ourselves about the Rachel's Place. They would look.. they would look at you and they say how much it is, and then you give them the money and they give it to you back but they say it in a.. a louder way. So you know, so if… if they

think you're in there to steal something because you don't have any place to live, they're gonna keep an eye on you. I don't… I don't… I haven't been to that 7-Eleven in over 2 or 3 months but that's a brand newly opened 7-Eleven, and they didn't look at everybody! Because it's a grocery store, there was a store right there before the 7-Eleven, but it was a momma and pop liquor store when I first came to the area, it was a momma and pop liquor store. And and people from madison would go in there and buy some like soda, coke, soda, cookies, candy bar.. stuff like that. But now that the 7-Eleven's there the prices are higher and they have different stuff to buy. You can get a burrito there, at 7-Eleven. They carry burritos. I know that because I'm Mexican and I been in there and bought the burrito.

Andrea's account attests both to the physical changes of gentrification in her neighbourhood, with the arrival of a costlier 7-Eleven replacing the mom and pop liquor store, and to the social consequences that this change has for her as an individual with a perceptible status as homeless. She describes the suspicion and surveillance directed towards people who appear homeless, or those behaving unconventionally. Andrea's experience is not uncommon; in October the *Washington Post* exposed the widespread "secret surveillance of suspicious blacks" and routine scrutiny of the homeless in Georgetown, one of D.C.'s "poshest neighbourhoods" (McCoy, 2015).

This surveillance can be understood through a Foucauldian lens as an exercise of power: a means of control that dictates legitimate possible actions within a given space

(Foucault, 1982). Andrea's obedience to this control is evident when I ask her how it feels to be subjected to surveillance in 7-Eleven, to which she replies:

Andrea: I sure as heck better not do it! Laughs. I sure as heck better not do it and give them a reason to give somebody away from the front door.

Alice: but would you?

Andrea: I wouldn't. I have money in here (gestures at fanny pack). If.. if I don't have money, I wouldn't go into the store because I have nothing to do in there. So I don't go into the store.

Alice: so what does it feel like, in terms of who you are as a person, to have someone suspecting that?

Andrea: uhh umm… you have to …. I've been behind a counter before at a grocery… at a.. at a second hand store.. so I umm… they.. they would tell us as.. as workers at the second hand store to keep an eye on people that were there, and they didn't look like they had any money, they just came in there to look around or steal something… ya be on your guard. But I uhh… like I say, I wont go into the store, I wont go into the store if I don't have any money.

Far from resenting the prejudicial way in which she is treated, Andrea's answer normalises her surveillance through distinguishing between two types of people – those with money and those without it, where suspicion of the latter is justified by the presumption of their flawed character. Andrea's explanation of her surveillance by reference to hierarchies of people along economic lines suggests compliance to prevailing social order, with surveillance a means of power by which to maintain this order through control over bodies and spaces. Andrea's answer "I sure as heck better not do it" demonstrates how surveillance exercises non-physical power that acts as a disciplinary force, determining the scope of subsequent legitimate actions. Andrea's conformance and obedience normalises this power, reinforcing its legitimacy as a disciplinary force with continuous control (Foucault, 1979; 1982).

Andrea's simple distinction of people who appear to have no money compared to "people like you" highlights a visual way in which judgements are made about people, emphasising the appearance of a person as an indicator of their likelihood of poor character and, in this case, potential for thieving. The categorisation of people which Andrea describes, whereby worth is determined by physical and economic status alludes to powerful frames that prevail about people who are homeless. I asked Andrea whether she thinks people who are homeless get treated differently:

> Andrea: yes. Yes because a man on the street or a woman on the street who can't take a bath or wash or their clothes – they'll be dirty. And they'll go into the establishments dirty. And they will throw them out. But if you ain't got a place to sleep at night and you can't wash your clothes and you can't take a bath – you're

going to smell and your clothes are going to smell and… and you… and of course they're going to throw you out! Because if people there.. have have homes and they don't smell bad and their clothes are clean and they have money to buy stuff and stuff like that. Yeah yeah we get treated differently.. yeah especially if we're like that. If we're in that predicament.

I find Andrea's account and proclamation "of course they're going to throw you out" deeply sad, seemingly justifying the differential treatment of people who are homeless based on external traits of poor hygiene and cleanliness. While understanding these traits through contextualising them within the hardship of homelessness, Andrea nonetheless appears to internalise superficial presuppositions of worth and normality that work to further entrench the homeless as ostensibly dissimilar, the conspicuous other.

The sense of being a "conspicuous other" is very tangibly experienced by others at HoF. For Evelyn, the feeling of suspicion and surveillance is one that began when she became homeless, a feeling which made her cognizant of the new identity which had been assigned to her.

Alice: Do you think the way that people respond to you has changed now that you are no longer living in your apartment?

Evelyn: Yes it has. I'm glad you asked that because it' a big difference, something as small as when I go to my doctors appointments and I had to let them know, Alice, that I was staying in a shelter because it's a change of address, you know I had to let that information out there. I do get treated differently now that I'm in a

shelter, at first I can hang around the doctors office and they take their time, and now its like they want me out of there. You know It's kinda weird, maybe I'm not explaining it right but yeah I used to go there, I can sit around and get comfortable, sometimes I'd be in there all day, and not now. Since I've been in the shelter its like rush rush rush, its like they don't want to be bothered so yeah, strange stuff.

Alice: do you have an idea what you think that is?

Evelyn: I don't know why they treat homeless people like that once they become homeless. Because I had to tell them. I didn't want them to think that I was still living at the same address… they mail me something, its just, you know, information I have to tell them in order to continue to get my benefits, see my doctor but they kinda act like something's wrong, which actually I cant blame them because it is, but its not like I'm contagious or anything, you know I'm still the same person I was when I had my apartment so yeah you get that?

Alice: that's horrible

Evelyn: it is. And I don't know why people do that. Even people that I've known from around my neighbourhood. I saw a lady and she's known me for years, ever since we were kids and when I told her I was living in a shelter she kinda like

"What?!" she kinda like faded away. Do you know, like, her whole attitude just

changed. So… of course when I saw her again she kinda like picked it back up,

but once I saw it, once I saw it, once I get that vibe from her, I kinda like just hide

and I said… you know it was nothing to me, I stayed at one before but never this

long, but you know something good came out of it, but right now I'm at a

standstill, so I don't know why people behave that way

Evelyn's claim that "I'm still the same person I was when I had my apartment" reflects

the obvious fact that people who are homeless are still people, and yet their status as

homeless alters the ways in which they are perceived and treated.

To understand this differential treatment experienced by Evelyn, and by Andrea in

7-Eleven, I draw on Judith Butler's theory of grievable lives. From Butler, I understand

how the homeless become bodies, unrecognisable as subjects who, lacking a home,

deviate from the norms of lifestyle that uphold the frames through which life is

apprehended (Butler, 2009). Judith Butler posits that "the epistemological capacity to

apprehend a life is partially dependent on that life being produced according to norms

that qualify it as a life, or, indeed, as part of life" (Butler, 2009, p. 3). Despite remaining

the same person Evelyn, and people who are homeless, shift beyond the purview of

prevailing frames that differentiate lives that can be apprehended from those that cannot.

These frames are shaped by a "historically contingent ontology, such that our very

capacity to discern and name the 'being' of the subject is dependent on norms that

facilitate that recognition" (Butler, 2009, p. 4). People who are homeless, whose lives are

played out so publicly and, in some cases with such indignity, cannot be apprehended as

subjects because they do not uphold the norms that produce and facilitate recognition as subjects. Evelyn, and others, are relegated and re-identified as quasi humans: bodies that are not recognised as subjects and are thus subjected to suspicion and surveillance, treatment which prompts her awareness of the pejorative identity as homeless assigned to her.

Evelyn was not alone in the experience of prejudicial treatment because of her status as homeless. Anthony's encounter with the Washington D.C. Police Department also attests to the disparate, and detrimental, treatment of people who are homeless:

Alice: do people treat you differently now that you are homeless?

Anthony: oh most definitely. Most definitely. I mean I remember when I reported that my wallet was stolen, that was February 20th of 2014. Uhhh. The police officer came by. And I was saying "look, I got credit card in there. I got my my…" and he said "no no no. how much did the wallet cost?" and I said "the wallet cost? No I had a lot of things in… there's a card and there's a starbucks card which has money on it". "No how much does the wallet cost?" and I kept thinkin 'what is he talking about?!' and I said "uhhh look the guy took my wallet. Three left upper bunk – that's the guy who took my wallet"

Alice: this was at New York Avenue shelter?

Anthony: uh yeah. And the cop just said "look we do our own investigation. How

much does the wallet cost?" and just excuse my language, I apologise, ignorant

nigger! And you know - don't you know that if… if that's the only thing that

you're interested in, that's the only thing your report is gonna say. And I said "I

dunno, it had to be like 20-30 dollars." "That's it! That's all I need" and he left.

But they treat, consistently treat, homeless people like that.

Anthony's perception of institutional discrimination was grounded in multiple such

experiences; on a separate occasion Anthony told me about the time when, seeking

assistance with evidence for his trial, he entered a police station in D.C. He describes how

police officers, in searching his bags, "went through everything as if we were terrorists

and I'm thinkin' like, we're not suicide bombers!" As an African American male,

Anthony's experience with the police cannot be separated from the historical context of

racial segregation in the United States, or the current climate of police brutality towards

African Americans, and mass incarceration of African Americans (see NAACP, n.d.;

Joseph, 2015; Moore, 2015; Bradley, 2015; Loury, 2008). However, the disparate ways in

which the police viewed and responded to Anthony is a reality captured in existing

research on homelessness, literature which documents how cities across the country turn

to the criminal justice system to respond to people who live in public spaces,

criminalizing people who are homeless simply for being in public, even when the

shortage of affordable housing or emergency shelter space leaves little alternative (see

Luscombe, 2015; Mather, Winton, and Holland, 2015; NCH and NLCHP, 2006; NLCHP,

2014; Foscarinis, Cunningham-Bowers, & Brown, 1999). Despite this spatial scarcity,

people who are homeless are discriminately targeted through laws that criminalize sitting, begging, sleeping, loitering, camping, or food sharing in public spaces (NLCHP, 2014). Take the example of Fort Lauderdale Florida where the city, along with 71 other cities across the country, has passed an ordinance making it illegal to give food to people who are homeless in public places (Levintova, 2014).

Not only the specific target of such legislation, but individuals who are homeless also endure the arbitrary ways in which the police enforce anti-homeless statutes through indiscriminate seizure and destruction of their personal property, and brutal, unjustified and, at times, fatal treatment; in May of 2015, a homeless man was shot dead seemingly "without justification" by a police officer in Los Angeles (Mather, Winton, and Holland, 2015); a month later in a Miami city park, a homeless man, familiar to local residents, was similarly killed by Miami police (Luscombe, 2015; see also NCH and NLCHP, 2006).

Human beings who are homeless are reduced to bodies, controlled through complex webs of power that extend psychologically, through differentiation and surveillance, and physically, through force and exclusion from public space – a topic to which I turn in the following chapter. This power further segregates people who are homeless as distinct others, bodies who, by nature of their outward difference and deviance, are excluded from the spaces in which the domiciled have free reign.[7]

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[7] Recognition must go, however, to the restrictions that do confront certain domiciled individuals. The *Washington Post* article on the "secret surveillance of suspicious blacks" highlights the restrictions that confront young black man, domiciled or homeless alike (see McCoy, 2015)

Through internalising the logic of pejorative identities and subsequent marginalisation, people who are homeless normalise and entrench their status as different. Andrea's proclamation that "of course they're going to throw you out" was not an anomaly; many of those I spoke with accepted and justified the differential treatment they received based on the belief that they are, in fact, different. Far from indigence or resentment, the ways in which individuals normalise this mistreatment reveals the power of neoliberal habitus. Often justified through self-deprecation and blame, this misrecognition of prejudicial treatment as natural demonstrates the symbolic violence of homelessness. This symbolic violence has an added dimension of containment in the context of changing urban space, a theme to which the next chapter turns.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SPATIAL CONTAINMENT AND REGULATION OF TIME

The surveillance and criminalisation discussed in the previous chapter position the homeless as different. This status as deviant is reinforced through the conspicuous presence of the homeless in urban centres, where they embody a stark contrast to the consumer and individualistic lifestyles on offer. In response to the existence of homelessness in cities, deliberate spaces are created which both address the immediate needs of the homeless and remove their anomalous presence from commodified urban zones; House of Francis is one such space. This chapter explores these spaces for the homeless; I reflect on the critical importance of dining halls and day centres to provide essential relief, yet I consider how the temporal and spatial regulation and control within acts as a further force of power and containment, a force which renders homeless bodies a population to be routinely managed.

Fieldnotes – Month 2

My first day volunteering at House of Francis falls on a cold Monday at the end of February. I walk along the street on which HoF is located, passing individuals waiting in scattered lines for the medical clinic to open. They are dressed for the cold, layered up in eclectic mixes of clothes which are a peculiar blend of fashionable cast offs with more eccentric finds – clothes chosen from donation

store because they fit and are warm, a stark contrast to the intent and effort of fashion.

I get to HoF as the metal shutters in front are being rolled up and, as the front door opens, a plethora of activity begins. Everyone rushes inside – likely having been outside since 6 or 7 when the shelter kicks them out which, on a cold morning, can be a long time. Welcomed by the greetings of staff, there is a race to get to the front desk, to sign one's name against the printed name on the daily sign in sheet and to sign up for a chore, before filing through into the day room to claim one's seat at a table – the specific location of which I soon realise is very fixed and an important daily ritual.

The activities of the day begin. At the table nearest the closet sit several people who, sometimes joined by others play cards everyday without fail, from first thing in the morning until close, putting cards down only when required during groups. Diametrically opposite to the card players, there is an established table of three who read the free Washington papers, colour, and chat. These places are quite firmly established – I notice that these individuals sit there everyday, with discernible discomfort if someone disrupts the custom by sitting at the wrong tables.

Despite these routines, mornings are a rather chaotic time. Everyone seems to have very specific requests that they need attended to immediately – whether it is about doing laundry that day, or using the phone, or the computer. At this time coffee is available – and the dynamic around the coffee machine is

interesting. Coffee is central to the morning – when the pot runs out there is

distress, and if none is made, there is uproar.

On Thursday Samuel wheels himself in and parks his wheelchair in front

of the three plastic chairs to the left of the main door to HoF. These chairs are the

habitual spots of Evelyn and Laurence, and I shall here call them Evelyn and

Laurence's chairs. They arrive and their annoyance at Samuel's presence is

clear. They are very polite and say "excuse me" several times, while maneuvering

themselves behind his chair and into their seats. Samuel wheels forward a bit, but

remains in front of the far right chair forcing Laurence and Evelyn to occupy the

two lefthand ones in a crowded manner. By positioning himself in front of these

chairs, Samuel has disrupted the routine and space of Evelyn and Laurence.

These chairs are nothing more than cheap plastic stackable chairs – easy to

clean, light to lift. But it symbolizes the significance of space and place, and

Laurence and Evelyn are not prepared to take alternate chairs, or sit elsewhere.

For the pair, these chairs represent one's place, on which to set down belongings

before going about one's daily routine of drinking the morning coffee, eating a

snack, beginning a chore. The chairs are a place – associated with Evelyn and

Laurence, a place in which they identify at House of Francis

The routine of a set place is something I have noticed in most members at

HoF. Everyone seems to have a chair and table at which they sit, and there is a

definite order and hierarchy apparent. When I first sit with Richard at the reading

table, he comments that "I'm not used to having someone sit there." I ask "Why?

Doesn't anyone ever sit on your chair?" to which he replies "no one sits here. It's my place and everyone knows it. I mean they can sit here but they see me come in and they move". Richard's comment isn't said in an authoritative, self-important way, but is merely a reflection of the way it is.

Each morning at HoF has the same format, yet is always wildly different; it is unpredictable how the day will unfold and usually there is some degree of chaos. After opening at 8 and the rush to sign in, grab chairs and coffee has settled, at 8.30 a member of HoF staff seeks volunteers to read for the meeting. There are 5 sheets of paper to read out; the first is the daily opener which informs the group of the date, the weather, and a thought for the day – a positive affirmation which staff scrabble around to find online or drawn from a pack of small 'HOPE' cards. Sometimes this results in a collective "ah that's nice", sometimes it goes on deaf ears. Second comes a reading of the daily schedule - different each day but every week the same. The day always starts with breakfast in the day room, morning chores, a group session or activity, lunch in the day room, another activity, afternoon chores and then mopping before HoF closes at 2.30. Third is the 'participant advocate', inquiring if there are any participant concerns – a time where members can raise issues about people using the laundry too much, or not doing chores, or wanting more sugar, for example. Next comes staff concerns – leading staff to ask who wants to go on the laundry or shower rota for the day. Some days the rapid raising of hands gives a staff member the task to diplomatically juggle between 6 people who want to shower for the four

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available time slots with just enough hot water for them. Laundry is a similar story and more chaotic, requiring staff monitoring to ensure that laundry is moved from washer to dryer in a timely manner - it inevitably goes over. Fourth is the 'Community Goals, requesting participants to share their goals – and usually incite responses like "take care of my business" or "be a better person today than I was yesterday." The final volunteer will read the "daily closer" with "just a few reminders" – at which point there is a routine and comic echo "just a few".

Every day this meeting takes place and, like the Lord's prayer, becomes instilled, memorized. Some days participants pay attention, sometimes they look bored, trying to shh the inevitable disturbance and get on with the day – a day of groups, activities, and meals, or scheduled nothingness – however individuals choose to pass it. At first I wondered why this same meeting takes place every morning, when simply asking who wants to do laundry or take a shower would suffice. Yet there is something about the routine of the meeting; it acts to center all participants and commence the day with a sense of calm, a space of community. There is an expectation that, apart from coffee, the meeting is the beginning of the day; were it not to happen, the balance would be off kilter. It is something very ritualized about the meeting – from the way that "just a few" is always shouted, to the inevitable answer when the reader of the schedule asks "what's for lunch", to which everyone replies "free food" and laughs. The joke doesn't get old.

Spaces for the Homeless

The irony that is homelessness in Washington D.C., the nation's capital, generates considerable government, non-profit, and private resources to attend to the homeless, a reality that draws people who are homeless to D.C. from across the country. Within the city, there are numerous services for the homeless, spaces which offer meals, showers, medical and dental care, legal services, laundry facilities, or a place to sleep. These services represent rare space in which people who are homeless are welcomed and accepted, and they become a "place to go" in the daily routines of the homeless.

House of Francis is such a space. Constituted by a kitchen, several staff offices, a large day room with round tables and chairs, and two multi purpose rooms for art and creativity, discussion groups, meditation and yoga, film screenings, and games, HoF is the daily destination for some individuals experiencing homelessness and mental illness in D.C. There are roughly 200 participants, or members, at House of Francis, with 40-50 attending each day - some for its duration while others drop by for a meal or group. Attendance fluctuates according to the stage of month and receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), with the day room most packed towards the end of month when resources are strained. For individuals who are members, HoF denotes a significant place of peer support and positive involvement in which to spend daily, weekly, yearly life. In the context of exclusion and rejection from spaces in the city, HoF symbolises a stable place to which to arrive after the precarity of the night. Beyond a place to go, HoF is a place to be, a space of "home-habitus" in which to think, relax, and establish a sense of self, identity, and role (Robinson, 2002, p.27).

The schedule structuring every day and each week provide a routine to which to align one's own, and the familiar faces of other members at HoF, some of whom have been there several years, creates a sense of community. HoF is a space in which individuals can fulfil their needs – whether that is napping head down on a table in the day room, attending anger management or meditation groups, eating a hot meal, or vigorously performing chores of cleaning. HoF is a place of affirmation and safety – a space of acceptance in which individuals can escape the public gaze, and create place, routine, and control over their daily lives.

In the eight months that I have been at House of Francis, its utmost importance for the individuals who attend is irrefutable. The relationships, kindness, and community existing within its walls renders HoF a magical space of safety for individuals who have faced considerable social and physical exclusion and hardship at the hands of structures and fellow humans. Individuals have told me that HoF is like a family, a place of acceptance, and one of stability. As a human, I am not immune to this community, and the relationships of trust that have developed with individuals have profoundly impacted me, and shaped the direction in which I would like my life to go. I emphasise this to preface that the next section is not a critique on HoF itself; I do not doubt the paramount importance and value of HoF for people who are there. However, analysing the role of HoF through a critical lens draws attention to its normalizing function; as a space specifically created to assist the homeless, HoF also serves to control, contain, and manage people who are homeless.

Under the logic of neoliberalism, this management of the homeless fulfils an economic purpose; homelessness, symbolizing risk and disorder, is reframed as an opportunity for capital growth through investment and development of new service and knowledge industries. Perceiving surplus value in homelessness, a non-profit industry is developed which sustains the existence of homelessness through its perpetual management. The "social abandonment" and reality of inequality is thus translated into "neoliberal industries of population management," which provide immediate assistance and uphold an economic logic, diverting attention from the economic and structural roots that precipitate inequality and homelessness (Willse, 2015, p. 51).

Heterotopias of Homelessness

House of Francis, and other day centres across the city, provides a space in which to be from 8am until 2.30pm. In this way, HoF parallels a space of employment, occupying individuals who attend for seven and a half hours, Monday through Friday, removing them from the city space, and concealing their lack of occupation otherwise. Individuals often told me that HoF, as a space in which to feel occupied, was invaluable for them to grasp a sense of structure and control over the chaos of their situation. Yet, at the same time, they spoke of the ways in which this routine was so tightly governed by regulations and rules as to offset any sense of personal control.

Individuals varied in the degree that they articulated regulations and rules as disempowering. Andrea, who now stays in safe housing, recounts her routine with indifference:

> Andrea: Oh I .… it depends on.. at night... I get up, I uh I get up, I have the the… clock radio ring at a certain hour, I get up, get dressed, get my meds, see who else is going out the door, then go out the door and come to this program. From this program I go home, I watch TV, I clean up, and then I get dressed and I go to bed and wait for the next day".

For Andrea, daily life is lived in preparation for the next, the routine of which does not change - a stability for which she is thankful. Andrea told me that she feels like she has a home and that "I hope I stay there. Because its.. its.. its done a lot for me." Andrea's routine, shaped by the provisions and places of homeless services, demonstrates Robinson's notion of "home-habitus", and the ways in which structure and sense of self can be created in diverse environments, even those not traditionally conceived of as home (Robinson, 2002; Veness, 1993).

Considering Andrea's daily, weekly, yearly life through a Foucauldian lens provides an image of homelessness as navigating spaces of "heterotopias." Foucault differentiates between "heterotopias of crisis" with "heterotopias of deviation." While there is increasing overlap, Foucault describes the latter as spaces "in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25). Foucault sets out the principles of heterotopias as spaces with precise, determined functions – such as the cemetery, spaces that are linked

to slices in times and thus begin to function at capacity when people arrive – such as a psychiatric hospital, and spaces that "always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. The heterotopic site is not generally freely accessible like a public space; either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications" (Foucault, 1986, p. 26). Finally, Foucault posits that heterotopias "have a function in relation to all the space that remains," and gives the example of Jesuit colonies founded in South America as spaces "in which existence was regulated at every turn", both through the geographical and spatial construction of the physical space of colonies, and through the daily life of individuals: "everyone was awakened at the same time, everyone began work at the same time; meals were at noon and five o'clock; then came bedtime, and at midnight came what was called the marital wake-up, that is, at the chime of the churchbell, each person carried out her/his duty," – a structure that strikes me in its similarity to Andrea's account.

I find Foucault's theory of heterotopias to be a chilling depiction of homelessness – as a space that is constructed for people who deviate from norms of neoliberal subjectivity, a space in which regulation governs daily life both through the routine structures provided by homeless services, and through the spatial organisation of the city in which homeless can(not) be. The scarce and precarious city spaces in which the homeless can exist –the specific centres for the homeless and the marginal urban spaces– leads to a sense of belonging, "placemaking," and permanence in these scarce spaces which exist as blurred intersections between private and public (Ruddick, 1990).

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However, not everyone I spoke with always shared Andrea's quiet acceptance of the regulated existence of homelessness, giving accounts which contest, as Ruddick also argues, presumptions of the homeless as lacking agency or activity (Ruddick, 1990). Evelyn's description of her daily life is highly critical of the ways in which control is wielded over her, and captures a sense of feeling trapped within the system of homeless services – a feeling that can also fluctuate cyclically:

Evelyn: Its like I do the same thing. I have the same routine, I leave HoF, I go to the library, I go back to the shelter, I leave the shelter……. being in the shelter, you know, that's a lot. You don't get much rest, you're in the streets most of the time unless you have places to go, but even if you work you gotta keep working things out with the people at the shelter because it's not your home, so you can kinda feel where i'm coming from? It's like there's no privacy, or.. nothing.

Alice: yeah. You feel kinda regulated by it all?

Evelyn: yeah! Everything has to be by rules or regulations you know. You don't have any kind of too much freedom. If you did, if you had your own place and you had to leave out and work, you don't have to work around their schedule, you know? So I don't have a full time job right now, so I don't really know how that works out but I have seen people come in and out and it doesn't look good, you know? So that gets really hard to work around the schedule like that, cos then you might lose your bed, you know you have to explain everything. Do you even

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know if something was to happen to me, and I pray to God that it doesn't, but if I have to go to the emergency room, and if they have to keep me, I will have to call them and let them know, but they cannot guarantee that I – you know once things get well or better – that I can still have a bed when I get back there. And I'm still homeless mind you, just because I have an emergency, they can't promise me that I can make it back in that particular shelter. You know I would have to start over, look for somewhere else to stay. I mean that is horrible. Cos you know anything can happen! And because I'm not going to be there by 7pm I can forget it!

Alice: what would you like to do? What kind of work?

Evelyn: that's the thing. Something that would be very easy. You know if I get out the shelter, and I really don't want to do it If I'm in the shelter because, I don't know, it doesn't seem like I could speed up fast enough, it seem like it will hold me back, but I was thinking of starting part time, doing something that wont wear me out. You know, when I was in South East the other day, a couple of days ago, my grandmother mentioned to me something about housekeeping, something like that because I clean up. At maybe a hotel or something, and I'm like I probably can but believe it or not, I may seem young, you know still have a lot of energy, but I get tired, you know, being in this shelter I don't think she realise the hours that we spend out in the streets and then you got to get back in there, and waking up at 5 o clock in the morning every morning from Monday to Sunday, I mean

you either wake up at 5 or at 6 o clock, but you gotta be off the property, out the building by 7, I cant do everything I need to do waking up at 6 o clock, and I don't think she realises that it's a drain, you know, it's not like im living in an apartment and I can always come home from work and take a nap, you know, and on the weekends I don't have to work, and I can make up that rest. I can't do that now, because everyday I have to leave out…"

Alice: it's incredible to hear you telling me this because I have no idea, so I really appreciate you sharing this. Because its hard.

Evelym: it is. Especially when you're so used to living one way and then you get in a position like this and you don't really have a choice but to live the way you're supposed to. You have to follow the rules, I mean you don't have to, but people end up in the streets, they end up… you don't know what happened to them,...

Alice: do you feel you're in control of your life?

Evelyn: not at all, I think that's what it is. I think you lose control. I think that's the whole thing of it, when you know people lose control. I know when I feel as though I'm not in control, you panic a little, you know? So it took some getting used to, im still trying to get used to it, but no I don't feel as though I'm in control at all…. I don't get unemployment. You know you work for so many years and

you don't see the money and it's already set up a certain way in order to get anything so you don't feel like you're in control at all.

Alice: Looking forward, you mentioned that you wanted to get out of the shelter. What are your dreams?

Evelyn: well, I know I want my own place. I mean who wouldn't if they're homeless. But working. That's the hard thing for me because, Alice, being in here, you know getting up at 5am in the morning and leaving out by 7 and this is Monday through Sunday, so I don't get any rest like I used to. And it's kinda hard to stay focused on the job when you're not getting much rest. So I'm trying to figure out how I'm gonna weigh that, how I'm gonna be able to get a place, and I cant work full time or even part time. I gotta be able to work, and stay alert, focused and not be so drained out. So I'm kinda stuck with that. You know I cant get any rest from out the shelter, and I cant go somewhere and get rest, you know…

Evelyn's description alludes to the ways in which homeless services control every aspect of her daily life. While no force is exerted, Evelyn's actions and movements are shaped by a seeming timetable of homeless life. This concept of the timetable, described by Michel Foucault as an established tool of control by which to "establish methods, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition," is an analytically useful way to understand the temporal regulation and routine to which Evelyn refers. This timetable

contains an added spatial dimension whereby the places in which the homeless can be at scheduled times is also highly regulated.

For Evelyn, daily life is entirely shaped by the shelter, its hours of operation control when she can be inside, sleep, eat, wake, use the bathroom, and wash. The control of the shelter extends even when it is closed; lack of sleep – both the insufficient hours and poor quality arising as a result of sleeping in uncomfortable and crowded shelter conditions, renders constant exhaustion, a state to which Evelyn attests as hindering her physical ability to work and function during the day. In addition, the need to be at the shelter before 7pm in order to guarantee a bed further regulates Evelyn's activities, precluding employment or appointments that last beyond 7pm.

Evelyn's account captures the incongruity of homeless services that exist to help people who are homeless; the quotidian shortage of adequate sleep and rest results in the struggle to find, and then maintain, employment. Without a job, Evelyn has little chance of securing housing that is guaranteed in the long term, rendering her continued presence in shelters inevitable. It is a vicious cycle – shelters exist to catch people when they become homeless or in desperate need of a place to sleep. Yet their very existence – the timetable, the environment, the regulations, and the fellow inhabitants – can preclude escape and the shelter becomes, in a distorted sense, home. Evelyn has been staying in the shelter for four years.

Theft of Dignity, Denial of Community

During my research with individuals living, if such a term can be used, within homeless shelters, I became aware of additional ways in which shelters exert control over people who are homeless. During one interview, Laurence described one particular shelter in Silver Spring:

Laurence: "it's really nice up there though. You know they treat you like a person. They don't treat you like the shelters do. You know Shelters steal from you. And when they donate clothes, food, the staff takes what they want first. And it ain't for you, it's for the shelter! For people in the shelter! You take it, somebody's missing it. You understand? But up there Silver Spring, they got nice things to give us. Food! Like we're cooking it ourselves! Of course the shelter cooks food for us, but it ain't what we want!"

The word "steal" resonates for me beyond the mere theft of material belongings. To be homeless and stay in the shelter is to have aspects of one's life and humanity stolen. This theft arises by the degrading conditions of the shelters in which inedible food, aggressive staff, heat, rodents, and bugs were commonly cited. I understand this inhumane environment to represent a theft of human dignity to people who are homeless, a theft in which their lives are not deemed worthy of habitable spaces or, as one man told me "you know, in Montgomery county they got shelters for 2,000 dogs, but in Washington D.C. they can't even house 200 men".

Beyond the theft of dignity, shelters steal the space in which to realise a sense of self or community. To sleep in a shelter is predominantly an act of desperation – myriad reasons mean individuals who choose this path have no alternative; friends or family with

whom to crash do not exist or have been exhausted, it is the shelter or it is outside.

Individuals with whom I spoke described the loneliness of choosing this path, of lining

up each evening amongst the smell of sewage in hopes of a bed. And yet despite being

lumped into a collective identity, and sharing the most intimate of sleeping hours with

each other, the status of homeless does not represent a community but rather a

homogenising of strangers. Despite sharing situations of precarity, Evelyn described how

the nature of homeless life precludes friendship:

> Evelyn: now that I'm homeless it's sad that it's that way, but when you're doing
>
> well you seem to meet people and people become your associates or your friends
>
> so easily. You never think about being in a situation like this, it's not like that, it's
>
> like all an illusion, you know that's not really what it is..being homeless because
>
> im not that sociable now, im not meeting people like I was when, you know, you
>
> have your own place, and you had a car and you were working and no, not at all.
>
> Its like I do the same thing. I have the same routine, I leave HoF, I go to the
>
> library, I go back to the shelter, I leave the shelter, even though it's traffic in the
>
> shelter, you got people, you know ladies come in and out but no one really talks
>
> like that, they don't really get acquainted, it's like everyone has a guard up. Its
>
> like they're living in a scary situation, they don't want to let anyone in, they don't
>
> want to say the wrong thing, people come off on you kinda wrong, it shouldn't be
>
> that way.

It is the environment in which homeless are forced to exist that I believe steals from them the space to be sociable human beings, an environment in which vigilance and competition supersedes trust and collaboration.

While this notion of a space for sociability may not appear as obviously restricting as temporal regulations, I believe that the hostile environment of shelters, and consequent preclusion of friendship, further contains homeless bodies, limiting their chances of an easy return to domiciled life. Laurence said to me "you would need to have a friend to go through this lonely, um, homeless life." For Laurence, and the other individuals at House of Francis, HoF provides this space in which friendships are created and maintained. Yet for those who do not have a day program to which to go, whose human interactions depend upon the rare, yet appreciated, kindness of strangers, homelessness represents more than a lack of dwelling but also an absence of bonds of friendship, connections, solidarity, and trust.

During one conversation with Andrew, he reflected on his former "lifestyle" as homeless; he described the routine of homeless life with each day structured by a timetable of mealtimes, shower times, bedtimes. Andrew told me that he did not draw this timetable, yet his dependence on these services obliged him to adhere to its structure and he quickly fell into this repetitive daily routine. Andrew told me "you get - the lifestyle the lifestyle becomes your life and you get used to the lifestyle, you know, and even other homeless people that I've noticed – it's a lifestyle and you can get very comfortable in that life."

Andrew's reflection is incisive and reveals the real bind of homelessness; the dependence on services provided for the homeless regulates them into a spatial and temporal routine, one which then succeeds in reinforcing and maintaining their homeless status. This regulation has an added element of control. In the context of urban redevelopment and private investment, city space becomes redesigned to cater for a certain type of subject, one who adheres to neoliberal tenets of individualistic consumerism. The homeless, by nature of their departure from presupposed norms of this domiciled, consumer life, are not welcome in these spaces. While providing critical services to people who are homeless, shelters and day centres also act as forces of containment, removing the homeless from glossy city spaces and concealing this "shameful" reality form public view.

And so parallel worlds unfold, with the homeless fixed in a routine that involves little advancement, with each day lived in preparation for the next. Some at House of Francis, like Andrea, are resigned to this lifestyle; years in shelters and at HoF have created and sustained their parallel existence in the heterotopic spaces of homelessness in Washington D.C. For others, there is a sense that they are in a waiting room, resisting this lifestyle, yearning for something more. One Monday morning, when I asked Laurence how he was doing he said, "I'm OK. I'm waiting to dance with life." The power and poignancy of his words struck me, rendering the question of how long the wait will be?

The sense of inhabiting separate spaces and a parallel world was discernible in many of the accounts of individuals with whom I spent time during my fieldwork. It would be misleading to assume, however, that these worlds never intersect. Cohabiting

the spaces of Washington D.C. renders proximity between the lives of domiciled citizens and the shadow existences of the homeless inevitable. Yet despite this unavoidable closeness, the routine contestation for place within presumed public spaces of the city further delineates the physical and social segregation between the homeless and the domiciled.

**CHAPTER EIGHT: CONTESTATION FOR PLACE WITHIN "PUBLIC SPACE"
OF WASHINGTON D.C.**

People who are homeless – without private homes and therefore by definition
residents of public space – are precariously positioned in the ongoing battle over
who belongs to the public, who has access to public space, and who has the right
to decide what uses of space are within the public interest. The increasingly
violent forms of exclusion of the homeless from public spaces correspond to a
rigorously normative definition of the public that views the propertylessness and
displacement experienced by the homeless as a threat to the property and place
possessed and controlled in the name of the public (Kawash, 1998, p. 320).

Public spaces carry different meaning for individuals who are homeless than for those
who are domiciled. While the latter can clearly differentiate between public spaces of
cities from the private spaces in which they conduct their lives, people who are homeless
do not have this option: space presumed public *is* their recourse. This chapter explores
meanings of these public spaces amongst individuals who are homeless in Washington
D.C., situating these experiences in the context of the changing urban cityscape.

The Right to the Toilet

Fieldnotes – Month 6

This morning heralds the first of the scorching summer days in D.C. in which humidity levels and temperatures reach over 100 degrees. My co-worker Abigail and I prepare for the morning meeting, discussing what we should choose for today's 'thought for the day.' Referring to the oppressive heat outside, Abigail suggests that instead of the usual affirmation of hope or encouragement, we write "remember to drink lots of water!" Eleanor, overhearing this discussion, joins in, telling us that such advice is actually really unhelpful as people who are homeless do not have easy access to bathrooms; needing the loo is thus, in reality, really problematic. As an alternative, Eleanor suggests saying "stay hydrated." I am suddenly struck by this contradiction; "drink lots of water" is an adage often bandied around as a panacea central to staying healthy and happy. Yet for populations who do not have easy access to bathrooms - living in cities without public toilets, with those within private businesses restricted to paying customers – to follow the 'wise' advice to drink lots of water risks future discomfort and possible humiliation.

The need to urinate or defecate is a routine bodily function to remove waste products from the human body. It is a process that, in contemporary Western societies, is facilitated by flushing toilets in private bathrooms and, perhaps in my case a hangover from Victorian England, discussing one's toiletry habits is generally kept private– it is considered crude and an unnecessary disclosure. Even the words "defecation" or "excretion" have a cringing effect on people, while the synonyms of "taking a dump" or "pooping" seem vulgar or comic. "Using the bathroom" has become the de facto, socially

acceptable and sanitized expression through which to fulfil one of the most basic human needs.

The ease of using the bathroom in one's own home is something taken for granted, the comfort of which becomes startlingly evident when encountering unsanitary toilets. The need for a clean, safe, and private place to go to the toilet is considered a human right; in 2010 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that recognises sanitation, "access to, and use of, excreta and wastewater facilities and services," as a human right (UNRIC, n.d.), and one which is denied to "half of humanity" who live in "medieval conditions." According to the U.N. a lack of sanitation denies basic human rights: increased risk of transmission of infectious diseases hamper the right to life and health; the right to education is thwarted by inadequate school sanitation facilities; and the right to dignity is denied when sanitation provisions are unavailable (UNRIC, n.d.).

Attention to the importance of access to sanitation, and the 2.5 billion people who live without a toilet, focuses on the poorest countries in the world in which lack of sanitation is proffered as a larger killer than warfare (Revkin, 2008). This is no doubt a critically important issue; the lack of access to basic toilet facilities correlates with high child mortality and elevated loss of life from diarrhoeal disease (CDC, 2015; Hackley, 2014). Yet in the USA, a country in which flushing toilets and central plumbing are ubiquitous, access to them is not equally universal.

Often, as I walk or bike around the city, the need to use the bathroom brings me to look for a public restroom. Finding none, as Washington D.C. does not have public bathrooms, other than those within museums or attached to monuments on the mall, I

usually seek out a coffee shop, targeting Starbucks or similar large chains where I feel no guilt at using their bathroom without buying their overpriced corporate coffee. There is a careful act to this routine: I enter, smiling at the people behind the counter, pause to glance and feign interest at the menu, before slipping into the bathroom. Coming out I will sometimes return to my act, or I'll quietly dart out the door.

The lack of public bathrooms across cities in the USA means that I am not the only one who considers Starbucks the "de facto public toilets" (Barnard, 2011). Some coffee shops, aware of this exploitation/utilisation, uphold the well established practice of restricting bathroom access, posting "only for use of paying customers" signs onto bathroom doors, or installing locks that require an access code or a key – both of which are available from staff. Finding the bathroom door locked sometimes poses a challenge to my stealth, but if I approach a member of staff with a big smile and an overly-polite question: "is there anyway I can possibly use the bathroom?" success usually ensues. At least it does for me as a White, young woman, with a strong British accent and clean, fashionable clothes. I fit the type of customer welcomed by coffee shops, a privilege that not everyone shares.

Fieldnotes – Month 5

I'm sitting in a coffee shop in Adams Morgan when a woman, White, in her fifties with a wrinkled and worn face, bright coloured orange hair, and mismatched patterned, colourful clothes sitting at a table to my right screams out "What have you got to do to get service around here?" The café quietens and heads turn. The

woman seems faintly familiar – I think I may have seen her at the HtH dining hall.

She has two bags with her, and a Poland spring bottle filled with an orange liquid

sits on the table. The servers and various customers exchange eye contact,

awkward smiles, palpable embarrassment. A server walks over to her with a

menu. I return to my reading. Suddenly the woman is walking out, accompanied

by a man – perhaps the manager. She has a cigarette butt in her mouth and

clutches the orange filled bottle. She stops, "oh I need my lighter" she says and

comes over to the communal table by the door, at which I sit. She dumps her

handbag down on the table and begins to throw its contents out: a thick wad of

dollar bills, a bible, a packet of cigarettes, a McDonalds paper bag, various

receipts and rubbish. The manager comes back "ma'am you have to go" to which

she replies "I know I know", but continues to rummage around. He waits. She

makes no sign of exiting. "Ma'am I'm calling the police". "I'm leaving!" she

says. He waits. She mutters "you can't make me go" to which he shows her his

cell phone, presumably with 911 dialed on the screen. She starts to shout "what

are you a heretic? An atheist? A Jehovah's witness?" She grows in volume as she

begins to sing, or bellow, "oh come all you faithful". By this stage the manager is

physically picking up the woman's belongings and walking with them to the door.

She is simultaneously grabbing these back while moving towards the door. As she

leaves she shouts "Bethlehem!" In another context the whole spectacle might

have been funny; to sing a Christmas carol on this 90 degree summer's day, in the

public setting of a coffee shop. But in the context of reading about the

criminalization and subjection of homeless bodies, and the increasing division

and segregation of public spaces, it is a very visible reminder of the acute

inequality of this city.

     Looking around the coffee shop in Adam's Morgan - a trendy, gentrified

area - and the customers are predominantly white, well dressed, affluent. This

woman, while white, is none of these things. She is bizarrely dressed, appears

unwashed, and carries multiple bags. While she is not without money – the dollar

bills chucked onto the table display this – she is denied service because she

deviates from the rest of the customers sitting at this coffee shop. She does not

conform to the trendy, young, laptop-working, iced chai drinking clientele, for

whom her public outburst is embarrassing and uncomfortable.

     I sit there and watch as the manager forcibly escorts her out. I don't do

anything to help or talk to her; I sit there pretending to focus on something on my

computer and I feel entirely complicit in her treatment. By not speaking out, by

not advocating for this woman – I am just as much part of the broader structures

that discriminate and marginalize women who are homeless. By not speaking out,

nor recognizing her humanity, dignity, and need of kindness and assistance, I am

complicit in the publicly degrading, humiliating treatment to which the manager

exposes her. As she leaves I am left feeling this sense of disgrace at my passivity.

Observing this woman's forcible ejection left me feeling this acute sense of shame, a

feeling of guilt arising from my inaction in the face of her humiliation. Despite my

position of privilege ensuring that the judgement accompanying her out the door would not deflect onto me, I did not move nor speak to help her.

This incident returns to my mind every time I enter a coffee shop and, with a polite smile, ask to use the bathroom, to which the answer is always affirmative. My ease in accessing these private facilities increases my sorrow, fully cognizant that the answer might be different for those who do not fit within the parameters of acceptable customers, those who do not align with conceptions of normal citizens.

My observations of the city have revealed that restricted access to bathrooms is noticeably more common in areas where populations of homeless are also found. In the coffee shops bordering Franklin Square and the NoMa metro station, the bathrooms within all require a key or code to enter. I asked why this is the case in one chain coffee shop at McPherson Square; the man behind the register explained that the café's close proximity to the square means that many homeless people come to use the bathroom, and "they lock the door and drink, you know." I asked him whether he knew where the homeless could use the bathroom, and he gestured towards the metro, speculating vaguely about toilets within. He explained that they had first started noticing homeless people coming in to use the bathroom some years back, and had at first tried to work with them. Quickly, however, the bottles and mess left behind prompted the locking of the door. As the man told me this, he was writing down the combination for the bathroom; I hadn't even asked to use it.

This exclusionary guarding of bathrooms disproportionately harms those who need them most, those who do not have the luxury of toilets in their private homes.

Without public bathrooms, and with restricted access to those in private businesses, individuals who are homeless face an impossible bind. There is no changing the basic and inescapable need to go to the toilet, rendering little alternative but to find somewhere, anywhere to go.

During my fieldwork I heard numerous stories from people at Helping the Homeless who fell victim to privatised bathrooms. In one case a woman rang the doorbell at a house in NW Washington and requested to use the bathroom, informing the resident that she was desperate. The woman's request was denied and she was told to leave the property, at which point she proceeded to squat down on the front lawn of the house and defecate. The resident called the police and the woman was arrested, apparently incredibly distressed and humiliated at being forced to so publicly relieve herself.

Hearing this story made me question why the resident had denied the woman, clearly in need, use of her bathroom. I imagine the resident's response drew from prevailing stereotypes of the homeless, those that attest to their poor hygiene, unsanitary practices, and uncivilised nature, beliefs that become internalised amongst domiciled populations as broad truths.

The existence of this generalized belief was further demonstrated by another case; residents of a house neighbouring Helping the Homeless modified a "No Dog Fouling" sign to read "No Human Fouling" and displayed it outside their house. In jest or in seriousness, this move acts as a crude reminder of the divide between the homeless and the housed, with the assumptions held by the latter serving to further marginalise the former. This insult was met with resistance, however; the following day the residents

discovered a human turd on their front porch – a move, which almost comic, only reinforces negative stereotypes of the homeless.

Evelyn told me that "something as simple as using a bathroom, you know I really took that for granted," a comment which underscores the acute injustice that in one of the richest, most advanced countries in the world access to a bathroom – to perform fundamental, necessary and basic bodily functions - is not a freedom that all possess equally.

For people who are homeless, the routine denial of dignity arising from the dearth of restrooms operates cyclically. The lack of public bathrooms in cities force homeless populations to use the resources available at museums, libraries, and shelters. When these are closed, access is restricted, or conditions are intolerable, relief is to be found elsewhere and carried out under the public gaze, rendering visible a process that is considered deeply personal and private. Forced to conduct one's toilet needs so blatantly reinforces existing perceptions of the homeless as unhygienic and uncivilized, a populace presumably unable to conduct their toilet functions in a socially acceptable, sanitary manner. The result is more locks are added to café toilets, pay-to-pee self-cleaning toilets are closed, and increasingly prejudiced, unsympathetic attitudes prompt actions like that of the "no human fouling" sign.

A non-profit in San Francisco has come up with a seeming solution to this recognised sanitation problem through refurbishing a city bus; equipped with showers and toilets, the bus drives around the city providing free access to facilities and "offer[ing] dignity" to people who are homeless (Alter, 2014; Palmer, 2015). This

concept of mobile sanitation has been hailed as a fundable and innovative solution to the

hygiene needs of the homeless - yet I find it obscene that a sanitation bus is prioritised as

the answer and is successfully attracting generous corporate donations. As a result,

broader governmental responsibility to provide for its citizens is removed, and the urgent

need for housing and structural change is overlooked. More immediately the bus, or even

a fleet of busses, is still inadequate to meet the sanitation needs of all individuals who are

homeless.

Notwithstanding the increased risk of transmission of infectious diseases, recall

the UN's assertion that the right to dignity is denied when sanitation provisions are

unavailable (UNRIC, n.d.). Given that the lack of public restrooms is a consequence of

the way in which the city is structured, I argue that cities deny dignity to populations

who, for myriad reasons, do not have a place to call home, and by so doing perpetuates

their existence as a marginalised population with little opportunity to escape this daily

reality. By attaching bathrooms to coffee shops, or shopping malls, or museums, or

libraries, the act of going to the toilet becomes something second to that of consuming –

be it material goods, knowledge, coffee, food. This coupling renders people without

social, economic, cultural, or political capital to consume, such as the homeless, unable to

access the places in which to fulfil a fundamental human need in a socially acceptable

way. The homeless are thus forced to conduct their toiletry habits in public, experiencing

humiliation and shame and reinforcing domiciled presuppositions of their degrading

existence, attitudes which act to police and control the places in the city in which the

homeless can, or cannot, be. The result is that "public space" in the city holds vastly

different significance for the homeless than for the domiciled.

Museums

Fieldnotes – Month 6

It is Monday morning and I am making a cup of tea in the kitchen, when Laurence

comes in to use the microwave. Exchanging large smiles, I ask Laurence how his

weekend was. "It was good," he tells me, "On Saturday I went to the park, and

then I went to Church on Sunday, and then I went down the museums." I ask him

which museum he went to. Laurence thinks for a second, and recalls "it was the

American Museum of History with all the presidents and on the first floor they got

all the cars and the industry and I love that." Laurence's face lights up as he tells

me this; he has this infectious enthusiasm, amazing positivity, and joy that is

impossible to resist.

Throughout my research, everyone I spoke with described museums as a place to go and

a place to be; each Monday morning several different people would tell me about their

weekend visits to various Smithsonian museums. For people who are homeless, the few

places to which they can go are even more limited on a weekend, with museums being

the exception. The Smithsonian museums carry spatial significance for the homeless in

that they represent a space that is free to enter and open almost every day of the year, as

well as significance on a symbolic level; the space of museums denote inclusivity in

which age, gender, race, disability, or social status are unimportant. Moreover, museums symbolize spaces of embodied cultural capital, spaces within which aspiration for knowledge, status, and personal evolution can be realised (Bourdieu, 1986). For Laurence, as well as others with whom I spoke, museums are a space in which identity as homeless does not matter; museums symbolize a place in which Laurence can hide from pejorative assumptions and blend in amongst the crowds of tourists, school groups, and visitors.

Not everyone I spoke with shared Laurence's perception of museums as a place equally inclusive, as a place in which one's homeless status becomes unnoticeable or insignificant. Evelyn described her feeling of being observed in museums, and her sense of being unwelcome, an account that aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) findings of museums as spaces of privilege and status:

Alice: do you think there are other spaces in DC where you can go?

Evelyn: we have… believe it or not, I've been in there for almost 4 years and I haven't found out yet.

Alice: any public spaces?

Evelyn: I go to the library but them there's officers in there. And you know you have to be involved with something, you can't just go in there and just sit around and do nothing. You know? Or they will put you out. They.. they'll say that

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you're homeless, you know, they don't…. It's really nowhere that we can go. Even the museums are like "mm mm"

Alice: that's so shocking

Evelyn: it is, it's like you can't hang out in there too much. You don't wanna be seen too much. And I have my bags with me…

Alice: but you look like anybody else.

Evelyn: I know! That's what I said how do they know this? Maybe they see us down in this area too much. And they… but see.. the way they do it at the museums, I don't know how to say this, they're more discreet about it. You know they don't make a big scene out of it. They just get really particular, you know like "the museum is closed", you know they started shutting down, they changed the hours. Um when we in there, you know, they're constantly watching you. You know, depending on what museum you go in, like we can't really check our bags like we used to, there's always something going on with the baggage part, the lockers… And when you have a lot of bags, or even if you have one bag, and you have to walk around the museum, it's too crowded. You don't wanna be knocking up against people so they.. they just not that understanding. They don't really wanna assist you like that, you know…. It's just small things. Maybe because I'm

homeless that I pick up on these things but its just… I guess they.. they recognise

us after we've been coming there so often, you know. They always see us in there

so I guess they can detect. They know the shelters in the area. And, I don't know,

you know.

Evelyn's experience of suspicion while visiting museums alludes to the ways in which

physical space can shape identities of homelessness. Evelyn, who does not appear visibly

homeless in a stereotypical sense, describes how spaces of museums trigger her

realisation that she is perceived and treated as different. The differential treatment she,

and others, experience suggests that Museums, while avowed as public institutions, rely

on negative presuppositions about homeless bodies.

Differentiation between domiciled and the homeless serves to immediately

reinforce the existing assumptions of the homeless as deviant and, in the long term, acts

to further segregate them from the domiciled; the denial of equal rights to be in museums

through prejudicial treatment spatially excludes the homeless from public spaces, and

also restricts their ability to access cultural capital – further reinforcing their divergent

status. The spatial and cultural restrictions that Evelyn described were not limited to

museums, but similarly experienced in other presumed public spaces of the city.

Libraries

D.C. Public Libraries are spaces which many people who are homeless cherish as

a "place to go." For individuals at HoF, libraries are a favoured destination each day at

close time, and their broader popularity is documented in the literature on homelessness

(see Snow and Anderson, 1993). Like Museums, libraries are significant spaces of cultural capital in which the pursuit of knowledge is facilitated through books and computers. Beyond spaces of learning, libraries serve as "unofficial day shelters," providing a safe space in which the homeless, as well as the domiciled, can sit-down indoors, escape the elements, and access bathrooms (Jenness, n.d.).

Public libraries as a place that people who are homeless frequent for purposes other than their literal intent is visibly obvious across D.C. public libraries, and was also directly described to me. For Evelyn, the library is simply the place to go after HoF closes each day at 2.30pm, yet its place in her daily routine is not always one of enjoyment. Evelyn described her sense of being observed by "officers" in the library, and of feeling a need to "be involved with something" to avoid suspicion and ejection.

Evelyn's feeling of surveillance alludes to the exclusionary policing of public libraries, a strategy that Snow and Anderson describe in their study of homeless street people in Texas. In Austin, Public Libraries employed security guards to control the homeless persons use of library facilities; the guards handed out lists of untolerated behaviours to homeless patrons: no bathing or washing clothes in the restroom, no sleeping in the library, no bedrolls (Snow and Anderson, 1993; p.238 n.4).

Despite these regulations and the presence of security guards, Snow and Anderson detail how

> "the homeless continued to use the library, of course, as many still saw it
>
> primarily as a refuge from the elements and a place to catch up on their sleep. But
>
> pursuit of such ends was made more difficult by the regulations. So it is not

surprising that more street people ran afoul of the rules: and that the police were

occasionally called to attend to the rule violators, as in the case of one informant

who was arrested nearly a dozen times because of his penchant for using the

library as a place to sleep rather than read" (Snow and Anderson, 1993; p.238

n.4).

It is understandable that libraries should wish to limit behaviour that is considered

inappropriate in the space therein – behaviour that might detract from the intended use of

the libraries. This intended use is broadly defined; libraries uphold core values that

extend beyond spaces in which to read, but exist as places of information, the

preservation of history, creation of community, and places which inspire self-enrichment,

discovery, and imagination. Changing technology, and particularly the Internet, has

prompted the evolution of library spaces, adapting to new ways of gathering increasingly

available information (Doyle, 2012).

D.C. Public Libraries are committed to providing spaces of inclusivity, diversity,

a force for community, and a thriving city (DC Public Library, n.d.). Despite this pledge

to public engagement, interpretations of appropriate behaviour within public libraries

disproportionately affect people who are homeless, a reality which, while unintentional,

highlights the sheer lack of alternative places for people who are homeless to go each day

in the city.

In Washington D.C., the use of public libraries by people who are homeless has

increased in relation to the decreasing availability of affordable city housing (Jenness,

n.d.). For individuals who are homeless or without a place to go each day, the library fills

this void; the main branch of the DC public library system, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, is a popular drop off point for homeless individuals riding the United Planning Organization's shuttle service, with some staying at the library until they return to the shelter each night (Jenness, n.d.). The MLK Memorial Library in D.C.'s city centre is adapting in recognition of the needs of the growing numbers of homeless patrons. As well as offering literacy and computer classes, the library has hired a trained social worker who recognises the "important lifeline" that libraries represent to people who are homeless; the role of the social worker is to train librarians to understand homelessness, equipping staff with the knowledge and resources to provide information on services and referrals to homeless patrons (Badalamenti, in Sheir, 2015).

These efforts notwithstanding, the library's use as a de facto homeless day shelter does, inevitably, affect other, non-homeless, patrons for whom the library serves a different purpose. To prevent inconveniences arising, the D.C. public library system, like Austin Public Library, have introduced policies that ban the improper use of restrooms, the carrying of large personal belongings or placing them in obstructive areas, sleeping, or having a detectable odour. Enforced by librarians and security guards, these policies are not intended to discriminate against homeless patrons, but serve to remind them that the library is not, in fact, a day shelter (DC Library, n.d; Jenness, n.d.).

D.C. libraries are committed to providing homeless patrons with information on more suitable places to shower, rest, and get a meal in the city – efforts which represent an important counterweight to assumptions of the homeless as completely unworthy. Despite these efforts, Evelyn's experience attests to the everyday violence arising in

public spaces of libraries; her identifiable status as homeless suppresses Evelyn into a homogenous population - the object of existing prejudice and assumptions, with a reputation for misconduct in the library. The resulting suspicion and scrutiny is a violence that shapes the way in which Evelyn is received in the library (Scheper-Hughes, 2005).

D.C. public libraries, as symbolic spaces in the city, represent an everyday violence to which homeless populations are subject. The popularity of libraries amongst the homeless makes visibly evident the desperate lack of alternate place to go, or rather places to which entry does not require a certain level of social or economic capital. The significance of libraries has an added symbolic dimension in that they are a physical space in which the parallel lives of the homeless and domiciled spatially intersect; yet, as demonstrated by Evelyn's case, the significance that the space holds for each, and the experience within, is worlds apart. Spatial intersection notwithstanding, the social segregation between the domiciled and the homeless is unmistakable, the surveillance of the latter serving as a reminder of the control wielded over homeless bodies across the city.

Union Station

Fieldnotes – Month 6

Union Station. Saturday late morning. I am sitting outside Starbucks in the vast station atrium, where the noise of myriad people talking, walking, laughing, echoes from the grandeur of the ceiling. In the middle of the atrium, the linen covered tables of the restaurant are slowly beginning to fill with lunch diners in

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small groups and couples. This restaurant, also hosting a bar at the top of a spiral staircase, strikes me as this strange blurring of inside and outside, a bizarre environment in which to be eating from pristine, table-service amidst the hustle of the Saturday morning train station.

I imagine I am observing a scene radically different from that of a weekday morning when the station is a blur of fast walking, suited, commuters arriving on the Amtrak from New York, or from their homes out of the city. Today the pace is slow, relaxed, with tourists pausing to take photos of the gold inlaid heptagon carved ceiling, or the statues of roman warriors that stand over the station, arms strongly clasping shields, heads adorned with helmets.

The cavernous white and gold celling, propped up by magnificent pillars, creates a sanitary cleanness and purity that is largely untainted by the mass of people and colour inside. Yet these imposing white pillars and impressive statues stand in stark contrast to the exterior of the station, where the glory of the station, and its proud symbolism of America, is blemished by people sleeping on the benches and on the ground with sundry bags at their feet, and blankets strewn over their belongings.

I walk out of the station on First Street, turning towards Mass Ave, and leaving the shade of the station eaves. The heat strikes me and it is overwhelming in its force. All thoughts of sitting outside and observing passers-by are disbanded by the sheer strength of the sun, and I become so aware of the power of the elements over our lives. An obvious remark, yet the heat of the sun is not so awful

when one can escape it by retreating inside a coffee shop or the sanctity of home. But if you have no place to go, the sun must be unbearable.

Standing at the front of the station, I look towards the Capitol. Directly in front of the station is Columbus Circle, in which a white, marble statue stands, as well as a large bell. At the foot of the statue, and part of the same smooth white façade, is a bench on which three people are stretched out. A man, dressed in cargo shorts and a black t-shirt, is lying with his head on a blue bag; his hands clutch his head, attempting to cast some shade over his face as he is otherwise without it. He lies in the glaring heat, unmoving. To his right, and at the left corner of the statue, is a large, black, stuffed trash bag, underneath which peeks the handles of a supermarket shopping cart. A woman in a pink baseball hat stands to the right, with her hands on her hips and her eyes fixed on the ground at her feet, where there is a bulging, white trash bag. To the right of this woman, and symmetrical to the place where the man stretches out, sits an African American woman, dressed in black and with dark grey-black hair, and looking down at her lap. Between her and the pink-hatted White woman, there are several big bags, suitcases, trash bags stuffed with who knows what – but probably all the possessions that a person has or can carry around with them.

I turn back towards the station to see Nora, a former client of HoF, striding towards the pillared front. She meets my glance and I nod. She nods back before recognition hits her, "Hiiiii!" she says, "it's so good to see you" and she proceeds to throw her arms around me, dripping sweat onto me. It is a strange

embrace and while I do not mind, I can feel her sweat lingering on my neck. "Do

you come here often?" she asks me. I answer that I am meeting a friend on the

train – an answer that, for me, seems to tie into the purpose of the train station.

We exchange small talk before she strides on.

Nora's question lingers in my mind, and prompts my curiosity. For Nora,

Union station is not about journeying somewhere or receiving a train – but it is a

place in its own right, its own destination. I recall a recent reading which

describes how going away/out/adventuring doesn't mean anything if you don't

have a home to leave, or a home to which to return. My excitement at being at

Union Station ties into the possibility of adventure and travel, of boarding the

train to Charleston or New York and escaping, pursuing a romanticised notion of

the open road. But my fantasy reflects my incredibly privileged position in which

escape is an option; for those who do not share this fortune, Union station is not a

conduit to adventure, but a place to go each day, symbolic as a public space in

which people who are homeless can pass the time.

The popularity of Union Station as a spot for people who are homeless is both physically

manifest through the visibility of homelessness at the station, as well as documented in

reports of homelessness around the city (see Davis & Zauzmer, 2015). Many people I

spoke with also described the centrality of Union Station as a key coordinate on their

personal maps of the city; for Laurence, the station is the destination on his daily morning

walk from the shelter; for Anthony, the station was one of the first places he "stayed" on initially becoming homeless.

The popularity of Union station amongst the homeless might suggest its inclusivity as a public space, yet my observations revealed that there are few discernibly homeless people inside the station. While this might be a matter of preference, with individuals liking to be outside, the extremes of summer heat and winter cold render this inclination unlikely, and prompted my belief that some sort of regulation must exist to control who can be inside the station – a belief corroborated by many with whom I spoke.

Anthony's first experience as homeless centres around Union Station, inside which he believed he was allowed. His entry to the station, however, rested on certain conditions; if he sat for too long or fell asleep, a likely consequence when in a state of constant exhaustion, he would awake to find security guards telling him to leave. Some of these guards might allow him half an hour to "get [him]self together" after he woke in disorientation, but others would quite forcefully and immediately eject him.

Evelyn told me of a similar experience at Union Station, an account which echoes Anthony's testament of the policing of public spaces, and alludes to this criminalization of homelessness:

> Evelyn: You know I've been locked up before, when I first became homeless, for sitting at Union Station. Oh this was terrible. And they were like "are you homeless because we see you up here in the mornings!" And I said "yeah I am actually. I stay in the shelter not far from here and, you know, we don't have

anywhere to go… a lot during the day time and you know I just became homeless so I sit up here for a while.

Alice: Inside the station?

Evelyn: yeah. You know a lot of people will go on up there to sit around until you know a certain time and then they leave and do something else and that's what I was doing you know if I had some business to take care of I would go. But early in the morning being put out – being asked to leave, we had to leave at 7am because the shelter closes. I didn't want to be sitting out in the streets so I would go to Union station and sit. So the security guys tell me "well you know we see you up here a lot and you're not going to be able to keep coming up here and sitting around like this, you know, you can't come up here – this is not a place for homeless people to come. And I got so upset (voice raises in anger/emotion) and I said "well, this is not a private, this is not private property, you know this belongs to the government. And we were told that it's ok for us to sit up here." I didn't give them all the information as to where I got that from. I kept the shelter out of it, I just said "it's ok, I'm more than sure it's ok for us to sit up here, you know this isn't personal property like that. You can't just throw people out. I'm not doing anything. You know I leave and come and go I'm not really violating anything." So then he calls the other security guards and he wants me out, he tells them "you know I asked her to leave and she won't go. And she's homeless, and

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she's up here all the time, hanging out. If she doesn't leave then she's breaking and entry, you know, we don't, I don't, we don't want them, we don't think y'all can hang out up here." Or so forth. So I still wouldn't leave. So then they asked for some ID. And I gave it to them, you know. And then they go "well which shelter are you in?" and I tell them. And I fill out the paperwork because they want me to sign something. And come to find out they want to bar me, they're like "well you're not gonna be able to come up here. We'll just bar you from Union station if we see you out here we have the right to lock you up and keep you, you know". And I said "no, I'm not gonna agree to that, you know, I don't have to leave, I'm not doing anything wrong." So then they get, you know, rough!: "Ok we're gonna have to lock you up then, since you don't wanna cooperate". (voice gets louder, angry) So they grabbing on me, putting handcuffs on me and I'm fighting them, you know. It's, it… you know the situation really got out of hand, but I ended up getting locked up for a couple of hours, and then umm I had to go to court. And I was gonna pursue it, and I did – I said you know "I want this in court. I have been violated. I have not done anything wrong."…..

…. There were lots of people that were in shelters that can go up there and sit, but I guess a few of them made it bad for the rest of us, they had all these complaints, you know, we get a lot of complaints from them, you know. With homeless people hanging out in the bathrooms, and stilling. And you know getting into all these discrepancies with people, you know. And people gotta still leave – they

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leave to go out of town, you know. They use the services in Union station and

then they gotta deal with the homeless people that's hanging out out there so….

Alice: Do you think the situation would have been different if you'd have had a

home?

Evelyn: Just.. oh yeah if I had had a home? Oh yeahhhh Alice, I do. Cos you

know, I didn't tell this person that I was homeless. He just came out with it

without me even saying anything. I'm like "how could he know that?"

Union Station, public libraries, public museums appeal to people who are homeless

because they represent a place to which they, in theory, can go and simply be. There is no

monetary cost to entering these spaces, and the provision of bathrooms and shelter from

the elements is rare in a city that is increasingly privatised. And yet the act of being in

these spaces for purposes other than the intended use – to read books, visit exhibitions,

board or greet trains – renders homeless bodies visible to the public's gaze and identifies

the former's presence as noteworthy because they deviate from normative, and

predetermined, notions about correct activities within these spaces.

Such spaces are, as argued by Talmadge Wright (1997), physical terrain as well as

spaces bestowed with interpretive and emotional meanings; they are "social-physical

spaces" that cannot be separated from one's identity but are "intimately bound up with

constitution of identities, homeless or otherwise" (1997, p.4). Prevailing dominant social

imaginaries create normative assumptions about particular behaviours and practices that

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are acceptable within these spaces: "the relationship that one defines with surrounding spaces is a relationship predicated upon the acceptance or refusal of the defining of that space by others, either in authority or not in authority" (Wright, 1997, p. 4). Evelyn's daily appearance in Union Station demonstrated a deviation from the defined normative use of the station; Evelyn failed to align to presupposed legitimate identities for that space. This divergence renders her identity as "other" discernible, and Evelyn becomes homogenised as a homeless body, judgement about whom is shaped by existing stereotypes of homeless, by the "few" who "made it bad for the rest of us". The label as homeless, discriminately applied to Evelyn, renders her place incongruous within public spaces because she cannot, physically or economically, uphold the predetermined expectations within these spaces.

Similarly, the woman ejected from the Adam's Morgan coffee shop highlights how certain privileged identities exist within social and physical spaces; the woman was removed because her behaviour did not align with the consistent and sanctioned expectations within. Her ejection, and that of Evelyn's from Union Station, demonstrates how the homeless identity is constructed as the "other," a body which deviates from the legitimate behaviour of certain spaces. For both Evelyn and this woman, their experiences navigating urban spaces, denied service, forcibly ejected, the object of sideways glances and raised eyebrows, and positioned at a distance from the privileged "clearly communicate[s] the informal meanings of such spaces and the worth of the homeless compelled to move them" (Wright, 1997, p. 5).

Union Station, the Smithsonian Museums, Public Libraries, coffee shops are not neutral, public backdrops to the city but "socially produced disciplinary spaces within which one is expected to act according to a status defined by others, a status communicated by specific appearances and locations, by the visual comportment of bodies" (Wright, 1997, p. 6, original emphasis).

Homelessness is a vicious cycle; denied access to public spaces, lacking bathrooms and a space in which to clean and present oneself, people who are homeless are physically unable to perform normalised and socially acceptable identities. The result is that negative stereotypes of homeless bodies are reinforced and their status as segregated others becomes increasingly evident, a segregation that is heightened through the parallel spaces of Washington D.C.

One morning in the day room of HoF, Anthony said to me "you know Alice, I always wonder what foreigners must think when they arrive to Washington D.C. to see all the sights of the nation's capital and the first thing they see as they leave Union station is all the homeless." Anthony's comment alludes to the real paradox of homelessness in the USA, the visible indignity in a country which pledges commitment to equality and liberty. In a way, his comment captures my position as I conducted my research; it is through the eyes of a foreigner that I observe homelessness in the USA.

CHAPTER NINE: SPACES OF THE USA: INTERSECTIONS OF NEOLIBERALISM

This chapter considers the enduring patriotism in the United States that prevailed amongst homeless individuals with whom I spoke, a pride that astonished me when paired with the considerable historic and contemporaneous hardship experienced within America's borders. In this chapter I endeavour to make sense of the enduring, and seemingly unreciprocated, loyalty and nationalism, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence to understand patriotism as a disposition and form of obedience to the state.

My surprise at this pride no doubt emerges from my position as a foreigner to Washington D.C., and the USA. The lens with which I observe and understand homelessness within is a lens shaped by my external upbringing in the UK, a country that is similar in many ways, including in prevalence of homelessness. It differs, however, in that I have neither experienced, nor observed, the UK as a country so constituted by a definite or articulated sense of nationhood and citizenship. While nationalism exists, it remains ensconced in random pockets and does not predominate across the country in the way that I have observed in the USA.

This chapter, then, arises from my perception of this American patriotism, my desire to understand how individuals who are homeless interpret being American and how, in turn, these identities intersect with ideologies of neoliberalism. While patriotism

does not equate to an embrace of neoliberal ideology, I draw on Bonnie Urciuoli (2010) to suggest that there is a robust intersection between neoliberal tenets of productivity and entrepreneurial self-management with older, American cultural beliefs which value the individual, rationality and private enterprise. This chapter considers how patriotic beliefs of America combine with neoliberal principles in shaping the daily habitus of the homeless.

Symbolic Violence and Enduring Allegiance

Fieldnotes – Month 7

I wake up at 5.30 and cycle through the sleeping city to Helping the Homeless where I am volunteering to serve breakfast. The streets are quiet; I pass just a few cars and a handful of runners en route. As I turn onto the street on which HtH is located, I see many people milling around, mostly men standing alone or in small groups. Everyone is black. Despite my purpose at the dining hall I feel conspicuous, out of place, and oddly voyeuristic as I lock my bike to a lamppost. It is 6.15 and a line is already forming outside the dining hall, 45 minutes before the first serving of breakfast at 7.

It feels good to be back in the dining hall, to be so enthusiastically welcomed by members of staff, and to get to work prepping the 8 long tables, each of which seats 16 people, for breakfast. The dining hall is always brightly decorated; today it boasts a July 4th theme, with American flags propped on each

table, and red, white, and blue balloons pinned to the walls and floating from the ceiling.

The doors open at 7, and the dining hall quickly fills. As I observe people filing in, predominantly men, almost entirely African American, dressed in sundry clothes, and displaying various degrees of exhaustion, fatigue, illness, addiction, I am struck by the irony of the patriotism adorning the walls of the room. A country proudly celebrating its independence is the same country in which 372 people, in just one city, pass through one dining hall in need of breakfast in the space of just one and a half hours. As I look around me, I begin to question what kind of America is being celebrated? What does independence mean for these men, sat next to strangers, eating their egg, grits, and sausage, and raising their red plastic cups to be filled with coffee?

The hall empties and refills; these men look tired, some appear visibly unwashed and clearly slept outside last night, others are exhausted from a lack of adequate sleep. I wonder what it feels like to arrive to a dining hall full of strangers first thing in the morning, following a night of sharing a room with them? What does that feel like as a human? What does it do to personal identity and sense of self? What does it mean to be amalgamated into one population, undistinguishable according to individual skills, personality, or identity, but perceived as one population, one homeless person presumed the same as the next?

There is a piano in the corner of the dining hall, at which one of the diners sits and, for over an hour, plays powerful, emotive music that reverberates across the hall. The man is young, no older than me, and clearly a talented pianist. I don't recognise the music but its beauty makes the hairs on my neck raise and I feel this ache of sorrow, of deepest sickness, grief at the unfairness of life.

As the last diners dawdle over their coffee, my grief turns to anger at the America that drapes the walls, anger at a country that declares itself to be one of morality and equality, while the falsity of such a claim is so manifestly obvious before me.

Throughout my volunteering and fieldwork at Helping the Homeless, I repeatedly remarked on the widespread pride in the USA and sense of citizenship amongst individuals with whom I spent time. Perhaps noteworthy to me as a foreigner with a distinct sense of being non-American, I found myself questioning the basis of this pride when confronting the visible, pervasive, stark inequality of the USA – to which the anger captured in my fieldnotes above refers.

Reflecting here on this pride I do not intend to essentialize the homeless as a population of unquestioning patriotic denizens. Criticism was forthcoming. Describing the "terrible situation" of homelessness, Evelyn attributes blame to "the system" and it's lack of 139rganization, expressing her disappointment at the government in allowing homelessness to occur. She told me:

Evelyn: it seems irresponsible to me… I mean you're messing around with

people's lives and everybody cannot just hop up and be positive, they really get

depressed. This is enough to really cause someone to fall apart.

In response, I asked Evelyn whether she feels she has rights as a US citizen, to which she

replied affirmatively "Yeah. I do. But I still feel as though we've been violated

somehow." Evelyn's critique was similarly voiced by Anthony when I asked him about

his hopes and dreams:

Laurence: Well. My real hope is that I can somehow regain, you know.. I .. I even

fantasise "maybe Cuba! Maybe I can go to Cuba" I mean it wouldn't be more

totalitarian than this country has been to me! I mean that's the reality. I know

that's not the reality for everybody. I know people that are quite happy living in

the country and I have.. was quite happy living in the country and I actually love

this country! But it's an unrequited love, it's like I… I did everything right"

Just like Evelyn's dual sense of violation and citizenship, Anthony's declaration of love

for the United States and simultaneous belief in it as "totalitarian," surprised me. I

expected to discover that Anthony, Evelyn, and everyone experiencing homelessness,

would resent and despise the USA, the country which creates and perpetuates the

inequality of their situation. By contrast, Evelyn told me: "I don't blame.. you know.. I

mean, and I, you know, America, it's still home, you know. So I don't blame any... hate

being hateful towards this country because of my situation." Similarly, Anthony

proclaims "I'm so Americanised; I'm an American to my marrow." I asked him:

Alice: As an American can you vote?

Anthony: yes! Oh yes! Yes! Oh yes!

Alice: and if there was an election tomorrow, would you go and vote?

Anthony: well, one thing that I do not like about Washington D.C. is the representative… not.. she's good, she's very good… you know Eleanor Holmes Gardener I think is the name? yeah she's representative of Washington DC but she has no vote in the congress! It gives me a feeling of 'you know I vote, but Im gonna vote for the woman because sure, I have all this faith in her, but she cant vote. You know her vote doesn't count! Its like people in the American territory… its not a democracy. This country is not a democracy until they give us the right to vote to everybody. To everybody that is an American citizen.

Anthony's critique of democracy in the USA does not arise from a sense of disenfranchisement as a man who is homeless, but rather from the common frustration at the lack of representation in Congress for residents of Washington D.C. It is interesting that Anthony highlights the inequality of voting rights in the USA, yet does not position himself within this marginality, perhaps reflecting the fact that people who are homeless can physically register to vote, even if their fixed address is an emergency shelter or an outdoor setting. However, the homeless remain disenfranchised through other reasons; the requirement of photo ID or proof of residence in many states hinders individuals who do not possess adequate ID or, as is often the case, it has been stolen or is out of date,

with replacements taking time and are potentially costly (Honeycutt, 2011). This inequality notwithstanding, Anthony still firmly aligns himself to the United States:

Alice: and you identify as an American citizen?

Anthony: Oh most definitely. Je suis American. (Laughs.)

Alice: has that changed at all since you've been living in DC and in the shelter?

Anthony: you know I feel like… I'm no longer have responsibilities, you know. They say that 'if you see something, say something'. I saw a system where there was systematic … I had - more than my case – there was systematic tax evasion and the awarding of entire estates to one party, the party.. Usually a party that was, and I don't know if it's the case to say usually.. but I… as far as I could tell, the party that showed up to the hearings that they don't notify you of. You know? And.. and… and it got to be… I felt like I lost my rights as an American citizen. Because umm… my first amendment, second amendment, fourth amendment, fifth amendment, sixth amendment and all three parts of the eight amendment were violated, and the 13th amendment: involuntary servitude – I've been convicted of a crime. Give me a break! I spent so much time (laughs) in jail! At this point I can actually say, I spent a couple of years! You know without being.. uhhh… uhh without even getting into a court room… so you know know… not

get… that's the wrong thing to say. Without even having my .. my case adjudicated.

Anthony has told me his story many times, relaying, in a non-linear fashion, the complex family relationships that gave rise to his, believed false, imprisonment. When Anthony's mother became unwell, his sister, with whom he had a distant, hostile relationship, arranged her intake in a hospice – a move which Anthony believes did not provide adequate or correct care to their mother. Anthony explained that when their mother died, his sister and her lawyer tricked him to sign a document which awarded her the entire inheritance of their mother, including many beautiful and symbolic artefacts acquired on various travels. According to Anthony this document was not legal, "they're not signed by the judge, they don't have case numbers, they don't have dates on them, I know my pre-law professor would go off!" prompting him to confront his sister. This confrontation precipitated Anthony's sister to press charges over the apparent threat that he posed her by his possession of prohibited weapons. Anthony explained to me that this was not a threat; the weapons in question were antique silver knives that his mother had brought back from a religious pilgrimage. Anthony ended up serving 16 months in jail and now harbours a shocked belief in the injustice of the American judicial system:

Anthony: And I just didn't think it could happen, not in the United States of America! You know.

Alice: So that's an interesting point. When you think of the USA, what do you think of the country?

Anthony: I think I was functioning under a delusion. Under the delusion you know the judge...

Alice: What was the delusion?

Anthony: the delusion was that this was a country that believed in justice for all. I believed.. and I truly do believe and it's almost a paraphrase from what Thomas Jefferson said, all human beings are created equal. Equally.

Alice: you did believe that?

Anthony: yes. At then I do believe that! And I.. uhh… I with the creator, with rights, inalienable rights: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, to ensure these rights are instituted by citizens divided their just power from their consent of the government.

Anthony's experience of (in)justice in the courts and injustice as homeless does not detract from his belief in America as a country of inalienable rights - an enduring patriotism, shared by many others at HtH, which baffled me. To understand the seeming double consciousness of allegiance to, and critique of, the United States, I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence.

The patriotism and American pride that I witnessed amongst individuals who are homeless is not unusual in the United States. My observations of this country through a non-American lens have noticed a strong sense of nationalism, an allegiance into which many Americans are born and socialised. This is not to suggest a homogenous American populace with unquestioning loyalty; extensive criticism of the United States exists – of its domestic inequality, foreign policy, and general political and social organisation. But what I notice is a sense of hope, a belief that America is, or can be, great: a shared conviction in the country as a place of possibility. Raised within this context, it is not unusual that people who are homeless adopt the same American consciousness and logic as people who are domiciled. For Bourdieu, this internalising of a set of (American) values and beliefs can be understood through the symbolic domination of the state, to which individuals preconciously and tacitly defer. Patriotism can thus be understood as a disposition, an obedience that arises naturally from symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2000).

Bourdieu's theory provides logic by which to understand the apparent contradiction between unfaltering love and damning criticism of the United States that was simultaneously expressed by so many individuals. This contradiction, perhaps a more startling inconsistency to me as a non-American, alludes to a double consciousness (Du Bois, 2007) – from which individuals who are homeless both embrace and reject the United States.

I wanted to understand this double consciousness; I repeatedly wondered why the injustice and hardship experienced by people living in homelessness does not amount to more enmity, subversion, or opposition to the societal arrangements in which

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homelessness is created and maintained. The conscious criticism that is voiced, like Evelyn and Anthony's denouncement of the USA as a place of injustice and inequality, arose because I asked directly and was incidental. But even if this criticism were a predominant narrative it would not, according to Bourdieu's logic, pose a real threat to the established order of society. Bourdieu writes that:

> It is quite illusory to think that symbolic violence can be overcome solely with the weapons of consciousness and will. The conditions of its efficacy are durably inscribed in bodies in the form of dispositions which, especially in the case of kinship relations and social relations conceived on this model, are expressed and experienced in the logic of feeling or duty, often merged in the experience of respect, affective devotion or love, and which can survive long after the disappearance of their social conditions of production (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 180).

I draw on Bourdieu's theory here as a frame with which to understand the love, duty, respect, and devotion for the United States that was evident amongst individuals I spoke with. These dispositions, "inscribed in bodies" of the homeless, work to prevent the personal experiences of hardship, suffering, and neglect translating into legitimate resistance, be it discursive or organised, to the neoliberal structural system of the United States to which I believe patriotism is tied. Moreover, the logic of habitus - its preconscious legitimacy and "durable solidarity" - ensures the tacit acceptance of social positions, even in differentiated societies. The habitus within each body, homeless or domiciled alike, determines the schemes of construction and expectations with which bodies understand, and defer to, their social environment.

Applying Bourdieu's theory to the stories of citizenship and patriotism shared with me provides a response to my surprise at the contradiction of enduring affection for a country, where its neoliberal organisation denies the homeless the same life chances of the domiciled citizens. Yet advancing this theory one step further merits recognition that my critique of the violence of the neoliberal structures of the United States arises from my position of privilege, education, and economic, social, and psychological security. This position facilitates space in which I can adopt a critical analysis of the seeming preconscious acceptance of neoliberal ideology, to which I believe patriotism defers. The privilege of my perspective engenders a responsibility, which I discuss in my conclusion, and enables me to grasp a macro view of the uneven ways in which neoliberalism is experienced.

Bourdieu emphasises that acceptance of the symbolic order of society is tacit, doxic, and preconscious; the habitus imprinted in each body is orchestrated to situate bodies vis-à-vis the objective conditions in which they are positioned, thereby satisfying teleology and precluding conscious deliberate acts or functionalism (Bourdieu, 2000). It thus follows that without the luxury of space from which to analyse and push back against preconscious submission to the neoliberal order, bodies remain oblivious to the larger system that influences their daily lives. What is more, the system of neoliberalism compounds this incognizance through "methodological destructive of collectives:" the conditions through which neoliberal utopia can be realised by eliminating any collective structures which may hinder the logic of a pure and perfect market (Bourdieu, 1998, original emphasis). The received wisdom that arises is that of atomisation and

individualism, preventing individuals collaborating on shared issues, and framing these problems through the language of liberalism as personal struggles and failures. Homelessness, therefore, is explained by reference to the fault of the individual, rather than structural problems of housing, inequality, and poverty. Individuals who are homeless internalise and invoke this neoliberal discourse, apparent through their sense of blame and personal accountability for their homelessness – a subject which I discussed in chapter 6.

Within the symbolic order of the neoliberal United States, a further force restricts the space from which people who are homeless can voice criticism. Prevailing assumptions of a normal American citizen, a patriotic subject that is shaped by the neoliberal privilege of individualism, productivity, and accountability, act as a silencing force – a censorship that is voluntary and follows the logic of neoliberal accountability. Withholding criticism thus represents a form of self-defence; socialised with the same belief of normative citizenship, to refrain from protest acts to conceal the reality of one's deviance from this championed subject, to accept responsibility for failing to fulfil this neoliberal American subjectivity, to appear normal.

Unequal Beginnings and Habitus Formation

The desire to seem "normal" was evident in many of the accounts shared with me, a wish that marks a stark contrast to their physical and social alienation from this presupposed norm. All those attending House of Francis do so in place of regular employment, each night returning 'home' not to family, but to sleep in a shelter or shared

house. They are not following 'normal' trajectories of life in which high school leads to university, employment, marriage, a household, a family, but embody distance from this path – a detachment that Andrew regrets:

> Andrew: "I always wanted to have a family, have a wife you know? Umm, have a house, you know, the normal things everybody thinks about having, you know? Ummm, yeah and just being looked upon as someone who was, you know, a respectful guy and you know, a good guy. You know? And now I wasn't anything like that. You know. I mean I was a good person but not living the right kinda life for sure, you know."

This idea that there is a "right kinda life," one constituted by respect from others, a family, and a house, reinforces the belief in a normative American subject; to diverge from such an ideal marks one as living an antithetical "wrong" kind of life and, by definition, unworthy and a failure. Internalising this logic contributes to a sense of alienation experienced by people who are homeless, and reinforces their belief in their status as different. Awareness of the stark contrast between current homelessness and fantasies of success translates into self-deprecation and blame. Andrew's account attests to the sense of physical and social alienation he felt from "normal" society during his years of homelessness:

> Andrew: I did feel like a failure. For sure, you know. Because I was always the type of guy, you know I never had a problem getting a job or a like, I mean, I have the gift of gab you know. And many times in New York I would.. I would put on a suit and go down to Manhattan and get a job, you know? I had the ability

to talk my way into stuff. Umm you know, so I mean yeah, I mean, and then to go the other way being completely down and out in life, and a failure in my own eyes, too. Umm. You know, and that keeps you in that cycle too. Because you just feel so low about yourself. You know it's like you kinda give up in a way. Like you lose hope? You can lose hope. Umm. You know it's such a long road back to society. You know you walk so deep in the forest, well you gotta walk the same way out right? And it just seems like I'll never be able to be normal again….. . And I think that really does a number on you, does a number on your self esteem, and confidence in yourself and everything else. Totally does you know. And even now after all these years later, I'm still paying for those mistakes, for that life because, you know, I don't have a lot of things that people need to get a really good job, you know. All I have is my life experience, you know, which to me is huge, right? But unfortunately it's not, when you know on the interview process or what companies or whatever are looking for, you know. Which it shouldn't be. So yeah I'm still coming, I'm still fighting, you know? I feel like that a lot of times too. Like Im still fighting for my place in the world. You know. So uhh...

Born into the United States, people who are homeless are socialised into the same norms, values, and prevailing assumptions, sharing the desire for a life of predefined success and normality. I listened to individuals telling me their dreams of this life in the same

narrative breath as recounting stories of, at times, rough, poor, and violent childhoods.[8] While living in the same country, individuals born into familial and economic hardship confront a structural violence that predisposes their vulnerability to homelessness, and predetermines their path into the parallel spaces of the USA.

Commonalities between the stories of upbringing shared with me were striking, and reflect the intersections between socio economic status, family background, and homelessness. Many accounts capture the instability of their family life and absent childhoods; raised by his grandmother, Laurence became primary carer for his eight siblings when she died, forcing him to drop out of high school to take care of them; Andrew's childhood was played out in the shadows of a mother with mental illness, addicted to alcohol and prescription medicine, and an absent father who worked long hours as a train driver and was rarely at home. For Andrea, abandoned by her biological mother and raised by a foster mother on welfare, her eighteenth birthday was the day she had to move out.

The rough environments in which life began was a common theme across accounts of childhood; Andrew described the "really terrible things" that occurred across his neighbourhood, a poor, racialized borough in a north-eastern American city, and the stomping grounds of various street gangs, where drugs and alcohol were readily available

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[8] Andrew's story particularly demonstrates the violence of childhood. I first interviewed Andrew one hot summer's day, sitting for two hours in the gardens of the Basilica as he recounted his remarkable experience. His story is not secret; a former heroin addict and homeless for over twenty years, Andrew has shared his story of recovery in public talks and radio shows. While not directly relevant to this chapter, I have included parts of his account in Appendix A.

in the street.[9] Evelyn, too, described her upbringing in a rough, violent area of D.C., and her common experience of "little scraps and fights," a reality she dismisses as nothing serious compared to the shootings and stabbings occurring around her.[10]

The availability of, and susceptibility to, drugs, was also explicit amongst those I spoke with. Andrew's exposure to marijuana at the age of ten spiralled into other drugs and, eventually, addiction to heroin. Similarly, Laurence began drinking and smoking marijuana with "the neighbourhood guys" when he was 16, a habit that led to other highs and became sustained by crack cocaine.

Andrew, Evelyn, and Laurence grew up poor in families that departed in varying degrees from nuclear models, with absent or addicted parents shaping their childhoods. The deprived neighbourhoods in which early life occurred rendered socialisation into drugs and adolescent street gangs inevitable. For Andrew, who describes his sense of low self esteem, low self worth, and lack of affirmation, drugs were "like throwing a blanket over you, the comfort, and all my problems went away, and I felt really really good;" Laurence, similarly, described drugs as filling a void - a sense of not caring about anything – which was intensified following the break up with a girlfriend, and the mother of their daughter.

These childhoods were played out in Washington D.C. and across north-eastern cities in 1970s and 1980s United States, a context in which segregated youth gangs, availability of drugs, and violent crime proliferated. President Nixon's 1971 declaration of the "War on Drugs" redirected funding from education, job training, and social

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[9] See Appendix A
[10] See Appendix B

services onto law enforcement, criminalizing and stigmatizing individuals whose entanglement in drugs was not an act of choice, but arose from cycles of poverty and neglect (Wallace, 2014; Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009). In Washington D.C. and across the northeast, the "epidemic" of crack cocaine in the 1980s and 1990s was accompanied by high rates of homicide and crime, earning the city the title of "murder capital" of the country (Urbina, 2006).

Situating stories of upbringing within the historical context of drugs, violence, and law enforcement of the USA helps reveal the ways in which institutional and historical forces "channel vulnerable cohorts of youth into crime, violence, and drugs" (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009, p. 133). Bourgois and Schonberg argue that involvement with drugs and illegal activities does not, as commonly misrecognised, arise from personal choice and personal defects, but rather is the result of structural-economic forces that operate "'invisibly' at a more subtle, long-term, and incremental level of habitus formation" (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009, p. 133). Following the logic of symbolic violence, individuals do not have a critical awareness of the historical institutional forces that shaped the trajectory of their lives, internalising a belief that their personal shortcomings led them along a path to homelessness.

This belief is reinforced through the vision of possibility that prevails in the United States, a country in which a sense of rugged American individualism proliferates the narrative that anyone can succeed if they try. The promise of moving from "rags to riches," one exemplified by President Lyndon Johnson, Oprah Winfrey, Howard Schultz and numerous others, is embedded in the psyche of the United States. While this belief

discursively lessens the salience of poverty in determining lifechances, the fact of poverty and inequality remain an undeniable feature of the organisation of U.S. society. To be born in poverty, raised in a rough neighbourhood, without a supportive family network, and with limited access to education is to begin a trajectory of life radically different than someone born into a middle class, privileged position. While the latter cannot change the situation in which they are born, the life paths determined by socio-economic beginnings segregate the United States into a country composed of parallel worlds. This analysis does not seek to deny individuals agency in their daily lives, but to draw attention to the structural, institutional, and historical forces over which individuals do not have control, forces which manifest as the violence of poverty, inequality, and self-blame. These forces, however, do not prevent individuals from creating and maintaining spaces of resistance.

CHAPTER TEN: UNTOUCHABLE SPACES

Laurence: I'm not really homeless in the mind. See that's another thing about homeliness. You can be homeless, but you don't have to be homeless in the mind! See if you let your mind accept where you, what you see and where you at, that's gonna take a toll on you. Your whole life attitude is gonna be homeless. And you can't do that! You got to stay strong, even though you're in this predicament. You got to stay strong. Remember where you come from, so you can move on.

Over the course of my research I listened to untold numbers of stories that attested to feeling unwelcome, monitored, and controlled by the surveillance and exclusions of urban spaces across D.C. These stories allude to the sense of powerlessness that shapes the trajectory of daily life and influences how some of those with whom I spoke perceive themselves. At the same time, individuals recounted in vivid detail their happy childhoods and memories of the past, or relayed the strength that unwavering faith in God provides, or described their dreams of a different and carefree future.

This chapter explores these accounts as symbolic beyond mere recollections, instead representing space that serves to buffer against the powerlessness of homelessness. I examine how these stories are significant as spaces of resistance, spaces that are untouchable, protected from the prevailing forces of social and physical control.

Stories of the past and future are narrative spaces that embody a rare place in which individuals can draw a distinction between themselves and their situation as homeless. These are the critical spaces, protected from external force, in which individuals can reaffirm their personhood, both present and future, beyond the label of homeless.

Resisting Cognitive Homelessness

Laurence's separation between physical, bodily homelessness from psychological "homeless in the mind" challenges the presumption of homelessness as a singular existence. Laurence describes the cognitive state of homelessness, defence against which he regards as necessary to maintain a positive outlook in the face of very real somatic and social hardship. For Laurence, preventing his physical homelessness from entering his mind is a strategy of survival that enables him to maintain control of his mental wellbeing. Through hope and positivity, Laurence remains cheerful: "I have to focus and give positive energy. Can't let the negativity run me. Can't let that."

As an individual who is homeless, sleeping in an emergency shelter and attending HoF every day, Laurence is subject to the rules that govern these spaces, as well as the regulations extending over urban spaces. Yet while physically acquiescent, through seeking a bed in which to sleep and food to eat, Laurence retains control of his psyche through hope, patience, and determination – an outlook which I believe to represent a space of resistance, pushing back against the physical power wielded over homeless bodies and the neoliberal logic of individual accountability and blame.

Laurence's defence against homelessness penetrating his mind allows him a future orientation by which to frame his homelessness as a temporally bound existence, after which another chapter of life will begin:

Laurence: [the future] looks good! It looks good because I think I have another chance, the God of my understanding is going to let me have another chance. And I never, let's see, when I was homeless and depression and the thought of getting into real estate didn't hit my mind. The thought of buying a house and turning it into a shelter didn't hit my mind. All this came from him. And I wouldn't… aint never hit my mind. The buy houses, rent them out to people. To be a real estate broker. He brought it to me. So I… it was like a star, you just grab it and hold it. SO that's what I'm doing, I'm holding it. Holding my dreams. And that's what I want. I don't want to go back to working for somebody. Unless I had to. Unless the door opened this close. That door (indicates office door) were this close, ok I walk through it. See what's at. But other than that, nope, nope I got my dreams in my hand. Holding onto them. Cos I can do it! I can do it. Cos my landlord he showed me the ropes on how to do it. And plus God, he told me some things too. So I'm ready. Yeah. And I read my horoscope cos God talks to me through the stars. And I read my horoscope and he let me know that I'm at the end of my journey. Of this chapter of the journey. The unforgettable lesson that I learned: now this time, no matter what, I cannot forget about him. I can't do that. I got to take him everywhere I go like I do now, everywhere I go, everyone I talk to, everyone I'm around – I let them know. And the people at the shelter, guys at the

shelter know that I'm a Godly man. I used to pray for them. I was praying for them. One guy, he was on alcohol, he said "you going to pray? I pray for you" I took him in the bathroom and I pray for him. You know. I go to bible study every now and again. But I read. You know. So I'm ready. Ready for the turn the page. Ready for the page to be turned. But God aint ready. You know. I just waiting for him to be ready. You know sometime I say looking up "Now?" (laughs). NOW? But you know he told me to "be patient. be patient". Ok be patient. So meanwhile while Im being patient I have to live in this world and be nice and give and teach and help and you know, occupy myself til time. Don't think it's easy because it is not easy. It is not easy, noo that shelter is not easy. Trying to be a saint is not easy. Trying to be a saint. Sometimes I loses it. Sometimes.

I find Laurence's dreams humbling in their demonstration of hope and resilience, his determination to run a thriving real estate business, as well as to help those that are struggling through opening a (good) shelter for homeless women; listening to Laurence's ambitions also prompted a feeling of sorrow within me, as I questioned whether he would realise them. Yet I believe the likelihood of Laurence's dreams materialising is secondary to the fact of their existence, and their importance as a source of courage and strength in the immediate. Drawing hope from the possibility, however (un)realistic, of a different life gives Laurence the mental resilience to survive the somatic challenges of homelessness, the hardship of the daily shelter and street existence. In Laurence's case, this strength engenders more than daily survival, but also an outlook of optimism and

compassion, a frame of mind that he alone controls in a cognitive space that remains untouchable from the forces that buffet homeless bodies.

Resistance through Memory: the Power of the Past

Just as dreams of the future represent something constant - a space of hope existing beyond the structural forces of everyday life - so too do memories of the past. Individuals frequently recounted stories of former times, and I became aware of "the past" positioned as a space temporally demarcated from the present. The past was a space in which individuals possessed a different identity, repeated description of which worked to spatially distinguish between current status as homeless with former lives.

On several different occasions, Anthony described to me his former life, detailing with incredulity its stark difference with his current situation:

Anthony: "I had become so used to the easy life where … not to go back to this… I woke up and I seriously…. I had romantic harp with sounds of nature and I would play that to get to sleep and I'd wake up and I'd turn up all of the sounds and I had a lot of trees around my house so I'd listen to all the birds and you'd be surprised – they make a little symphony every morning and you know it's just… I loved my birds! Laughs …but and my dogs.. laughs… sighs. To lose so many things close to me was something that did permanent irreparable damage to my ability to function efficiently."

"I cant believe it and I'm homeless! How did I become homeless? I had a house!

A homestead for over 40 years! 3 bathrooms, a living room, a kitchen, a dining

room. I had all of that!"

Anthony was not alone in describing his past in marked contrast to the present; Laurence

told me about his job working at a hotel and living in his "own place," with cupboards

full of clothes and belongings; Evelyn detailed her former job working for the

government and living in her own apartment, in which she regularly entertained friends.

Other individuals with whom I hung out in the day room of HoF often, and without

prompting, described their former experiences of travels abroad, or adventures at college,

service in the military, or successful careers in music and various employment. Listening

to individuals' accounts of former lives, so at odds with their current circumstances and

the setting of HoF in which we sat, I was struck by the symbolism of narrating the past –

whether true or elaborated - as an act of resistance: an opposition to the totality of

homelessness, an untouchable space from which to defend against the pejorative

characteristics that are ascribed onto homeless bodies by claiming and protecting a

historical identity.

Recollections of the United States of bygone times as a country more wholesome,

virtuous, and community focused was a further demonstration of the ways in which

individuals demarcated their past lives from their current somatic homelessness. Andrew

told me how "we've gone so far away from - you know… the way America used to be."

When I asked him to expand on this, he said:

Andrew: Ummm and it seems things are getting worse – and not only for me now but for everybody. Like I've heard it – that the average American is one or two paychecks away from the street! The average American! That's really bad, you know. Umm and there is a lack of security. Big time, you know. So there's so many things going on right now, we're in a very changing world. Right. Not only in America – worldwide. Uhhh but America has really gone down, a lot, a lot. You know.

Alice: in terms of the?

Andrew: "just so many different things, and morals – morality big time. I think that's a key, you know. Our morals have really gone down. Really bad. You know. And you don't have to be a rocket scientist to recognise that, I mean if you don't there's something wrong. You know. Umm. But when I was a kid growing up. We had some sort of ideal, and morals. But now we don't. you know. And that's a big topic, you know, that's a huge topic and you're going to get varying opinions on that, too."

A sense of the declining morality and ideals of today's America was also evident through more subtle accounts that recalled former interpersonal connections, human relationships, and a sense of community and belonging:

Evelyn: Living in SE, the neighbourhood, growing up, you know having fun outside, and being around other kids. It was kinda really nice. It wasn't as bad out there back then as it gotten over the years but yeah…

Alice: yeah! So you talk about playing outside, and I know that you love the summer…

Evelyn: oh yeah we used to do, like, jump rope and bloc parties and we'd have cook outs and then we had like a recreation centre we can go to and you know, go on up there and hang out and do like gym and just, I dunno what else did we used to do, oh summer school, I went to summer school. And um when it was too hot we couldn't be outdoors, but there was a pool in the area as well but I didn't really participate in the pool too much. Like hung out on my front, you know, where the house was, I'd go around the corner and around the neighbourhood and hang out with some of the other kids. It was cool.

Alice: and now? Today, what do you think makes you happy?

Evelyn: I miss those days! I really do! Because it's changed, I don't see the people that I grew up with anymore and it gets kinda lonely, ya know, because I still go out that way, ya know even thought I'm in a shelter

Evelyn's fond recollection alludes to a belief in the decline of spaces of community and collectivism between humans. In a similar way, Laurence's account hints at the forgotten value of face-to-face human interactions:

> Laurence: "And I saw a guy in a suit walking down the hall, and I said 'Excuse me sir, you're hiring?' and that was back then, when you used to fill the applications out, not on the computer like now. So he said 'yeah. What can you do?' and I said 'I can paint. I can professional cleaner. I can landscape', he said 'oh you can do all that. Ok. Well I tell you what, I give you an application and you bring it back tomorrow, you give it to me in my hand' and I… I got the job there. That was great."

Despite the different topics of Andrew, Laurence, and Evelyn's recollections, these accounts converge on a bygone era of the United States, of a place more collective, moral, fair, fraternal, and with the promise of opportunity. While the question of veracity of these accounts arises, I argue that the significance of these stories is not whether they are true or embellished but in the reasons why they arise (Luhrman, 2010); these stories are significant in creating critical spaces that are untouchable. These spaces of memory are removed from the stress and hardship of the reality of homelessness, a reality in which so much of daily life is controlled and regulated; stories of the past represent a place of escape, enabling the maintenance of an identity that is demarcated from homelessness, and is protected from outside interference.

These accounts hold further significance in proffering a form of explanation for one's current situation. Recollection of the kinship, morality, fun, and possibility "back

then" constructs the present as the converse – as a place of individualism, dishonesty, solitude, and inopportunity, a context in which one's prevailing status as homeless makes more sense. In this way, I understand these rose-tinted perceptions of bygone Washington D.C. and the USA as a means to salvage the self, to find an explanation for one's current, self-perceived shameful existence beyond internal fault. Laurence's account of the former ease with which he found a job helps to explain his current unemployment; the lack of morality and security in the USA explains the precarity of Andrew's, and "the average American's", existence; the sharing and community of Evelyn's neighbourhood in former times account for her present feelings of loneliness. Romanticised accounts act as a mechanism of defence, a way of resisting, and so externalising, presuppositions of self-accountability for homelessness. This sense of externalising blame for one's contemporaneous situation onto the lost values and morals of the United States represents a critique of society, a resistance to neoliberalism's logic of ascribing blame within the individual.

These memories and recollections of former times are inviolable, creating a cerebral space in which to maintain one's identity and assert a sense of self that is protected from ascriptions of homelessness. This notwithstanding, these accounts also succeed in emphasising the antithesis of one's current status and, through the accompanying incredulity and shame, reinforce assumptions of homelessness as a distinct identity. There is an irony that in asserting one's former vocation, possessions, and life, to affirm a sense of self, the past becomes a further demarcated space, temporally and socially distinct from one's present existence and status. These recollections of the past

reflect a need for recognition and validation as a human being, yet seeking sense of self through historical contexts serves to entrench one's current position of homeless as a failure, alluding to the success in which neoliberal assumptions of successful citizenship become internalised.

And yet, these cerebral spaces of memory and identity remain significant because they are all that the homeless control. They are spaces of imagination and hope, of creativity, and of freedom. Evelyn told me that she only becomes aware of her identity as homeless in spaces of the city, wherein she is abruptly reminded that she is somehow different. By contrast, the spaces of memory and dreams are those in which one's identity as homeless can be shrugged off, spaces which cannot be touched by the indifference of passers-by, and in which hope is allowed to grow, defending against the constricting logic of neoliberalism.

Untouchable Faith

Similar to past memories and future dreams, I interpret the enduring faith in God,[11] to which almost everyone I spoke with attested, as a space that is constant and untouchable. Trust in a higher power enables explanation for one's situation, as well as providing a source of companionship and guidance necessary for daily survival. Laurence told me that when he first entered the shelter he succumbed to the misery and anger that its egregious conditions engender, before God intervened:

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[11] Throughout my research, I met only a couple of people who described themselves as other than Christian; the belief in a Christian God predominated – both by the frequency and volume in which people declared their faith.

Laurence: "til I heard God say "you need to overlook the situation of the shelter

and have joy that you're alive, and that you're not sick, not on drugs and that you

have a place to go"... So I moved that little, I tried to move it, I mean I did move

it, with the help of God, I moved the frustration and the depression. I moved it."

Like Laurence, the role of God in Andrew's experience of homelessness is significant.

Chronically homeless, and a heroin addict, Andrew believes God to be the reason that his

life came together. For Andrew, God helped him to overcome the "existential loneliness"

in life, belief in God brought a "wholeness" and feeling of "healing" which slowly led his

life back on track.[12] From most everyone with whom I spoke, God, and faith, and

spirituality, is a source of great comfort and hope, a constant amidst the uncertainty and

vulnerability of homelessness.

Faith in a higher being represents an additional act of resistance to succumbing to

"homelessness in the mind." For those with whom I spoke, God is the friend that prevents

loneliness, provides safety, sustains strength through misery, and provides some way to

understand the circumstances of homelessness; He is a positive force in life, a force from

which to draw hope for people whose daily life navigating private space and prejudice

routinely denies other such sources.

I understood the constant reassurance that belief in God provided to individuals at

HoF as distinct from that sought though patriotism. As I discussed in the previous

chapter, patriotic love for the USA was described by individuals alongside their sense of

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[12] See Appendix A

injustice or violation within its borders, and alluded to their failure as idealised American citizens. Belief in God, by comparison, was absolute and without critique.

Further, I understand belief in God or a higher being as an act of resistance to neoliberalism's logic of individualism. In building a deep relationship with God, and sharing this love with others who similarly entrust in Him, a source of community is created and maintained that is greater than the forces of neoliberalism. Belief in God represents a community to which inclusion does not depend on patriotic visions of normative citizens, but is open and non-discriminatory.[13] Indeed Christianity, as an institution older and further reaching than neoliberal American government, upholds an altruism and collectivism that contends with neoliberal ways of being.

The collectivism and inclusivity of religion as a site of resistance to the neoliberal privilege of individualism was evident with the recent visit of Pope Francis to Washington D.C. First visiting the United States Capitol, the head of the Catholic Church instructed Congress that they must cooperate "generously for the common good," before turning down an official government lunch to instead sit and eat with people who are homeless in the city. Francis declared "we can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing. We know that Jesus wanted to show solidarity with every person" (quoted in Baker & Yardley, 2015). The sense of solidarity and belonging generated through belief in God was evident amongst those with whom I

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[13] I acknowledge that exclusions and restrictions *do* exist in religion, with more radical forms policing who is and is not welcome. My interpretations, however, rest on the meaning and significance of God as conveyed by individuals with whom I spoke, drawing directly from their belief in their acceptance into an intimate relationship with God.

spoke, providing a source of strength through which individuals who are homeless maintain hope, and resist homelessness from governing their cognitive and somatic existence.

In a context where so many aspects of daily life are beyond the control of individuals who are homeless, faith, memories, and dreams of a different future represent deeply personal and protected spaces, which embody a strategy of survival and act as a defence against this totalizing control. It is understandable, therefore, that Andrew, Laurence, Evelyn and others who are homeless cling to these dreams and memories, and put their unwavering hope in God.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS - CREATING INTERSECTIONS

Fieldnotes - Month 8

It is the day of the rally, and I cycle over to Museum Square early, retracing my route from just last night where, along with several others, I was canvassing tenants, ensuring that everyone knew about the rally today. Afterwards we sat in the apartment of one tenant, an African American woman in her early seventies, with the intention to discuss logistics for today, but really it offered a chance to talk and relax. She told us about her 34 years of life within this Museum Square apartment – a home that she created and shared with multiple generations of family. Within those four walls she has been a mother, grandmother, aunt, grandaunt, and great-grandmother – a fact to which the photographs and knickknacks lining every inch of shelf and table space attest.

Discussion turned to today's rally and the uncertainty of the future. She told us that she doesn't want to leave - this is her home. Half jokingly she declared, "I own this apartment! I've paid rent every month for 34 years! I practically own it!" There is surely some truth to this claim: the total amount she has paid in rent must cover, and then some, the (reasonable) price of the apartment. And yet there is this innate vulnerability as a tenant whereby even 34 years of rent does not protect you from the decisions of the property owner.

This vulnerability extends beyond a threat to her physical apartment to jeopardize the home and relationships that she has nurtured over 34 years of living at Museum Square. For 34 years she has been part of a community of friends, churches, businesses that anchor her to this neighbourhood. To be told to leave is more than packing up a lifetime of belongings into boxes, but is to pull up the deep roots of her life in Chinatown, roots that are not that of a lone tree but part of an orchard of intersecting lives.

As I listened to this woman's account of her life at Museum Square, Evelyn's and Anthony's stories drifted into my mind, and I was struck by the reality of this research, the reality of homelessness and my role witnessing the processes that give rise to it. But it is not just witnessing, I live within the same city and structures that displace and marginalize some, while simultaneously benefiting others - those with resource and social capital, those like me.

Arriving today at Museum Square and the crowd is already building. I quickly jump in to help tenants and local organisers affix homemade placards and posters to the walls of the building, defying the blustery winds with extra adhesive duct tape. The posters carry messages in Chinese languages and English: "Renew Our Section 8," "Save DC Chinatown," "Tenants Over Money," "Save Our Homes," "Save Families Not Banks." I look around at the growing numbers of people assembling, of all ages, race, gender, and ethnicity, and the sense of energy and fervour is palpable.

The rally begins and the speeches are short and animated. One tenant describes her life at Museum Square, her dependence upon the building and its community, and her fear that she has nowhere else to go if she is evicted. A local organiser speaks next, declaring Museum Square a symbol of the fight for affordable housing in the city, and stirring the crowd into familiar chants adapted to the context: "No Housing: No Peace!"

I stand in the crowd and the energy is infectious, and with everyone else I am grinning and cheering, drawing hope from the community gathered here and wishing for Museum Square to remain. And despite these notes, I am not here as an observer; my voice is not that of a scholar but as a resident of the city and an activist. With my voice I can shout, and chant, and demand that tenants continue to live in Museum Square right now, and call for affordable housing in Washington D.C. to be created and protected in the future.

The march through D.C. to "Save Museum Square" on the eve of the expiry of tenants' Section 8 vouchers brought together a community of tenants, D.C. residents, local organisers, and activists committed to preventing the displacement of people of colour and low income living at Museum Square, and across the city. The prominence of the march through D.C.'s Chinatown during evening rush hour brought visible attention to the uncertain future confronting tenants, and resulted in considerable media coverage in the *Washington Post* and on *NPR's* 'Kojo Nnamdai Show.' As we marched through the middle of the streets, we passed curious bystanders – tourists, people leaving work, or on

their way to happy hour - and stopped traffic driving in and out of the city; we interfered, briefly, with the evening routine of those we passed. This fleeting disruption perhaps caused people to pause and wonder what was provoking a crowd of several hundred people, of all ages, race, and backgrounds, to walk as one through the darkening streets of the city and demand that "Museum Square stays".

I do not know the impact of our march on those we passed, whether it triggered sympathy, annoyance, or confusion. But perhaps our disruption prompted one or two to take out their phones and Google "Museum Square," likely unsure, as I had previously been, of what Museum Square is. By so doing, they may have read the story in which tenants' lives are unravelling, a story with an uncertain conclusion as Bush Companies press ahead with their plans to demolish the building. Putting away their phones they likely continued with their evening routine, yet perhaps now the name Museum Square no longer draws blank faces, but occupies a tiny sliver of their consciousness, an alertness to the reality of housing vulnerability. This consciousness, however small, creates an intersection between the parallel worlds of domiciled spectators and the homeless and precariously housed.

This parallel world of the homeless is one that I have sought to understand through this research. Arising from my visceral shock at the paradox of homelessness in Washington D.C., this study sought to capture the significance of social and physical spaces in Washington D.C. for the homeless. Through volunteering, spending time, and striving to build mutual relationships of trust with individuals experiencing homelessness, I came to understand homelessness as a very real violence. For homeless individuals in

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Washington D.C., daily life consists of routine discrimination, surveillance, and

suspicion, and the constant struggle for space in which to sleep, sit, eat, use the bathroom,

or to simply be. Relief from this structural, symbolic, and everyday violence exists in the

space of soup kitchens and day centres for the homeless. While the mission of these

organisations is well intended and immediately critical, this assistance serves as another

force of control, removing the homeless from spaces of the city and further demarcating

their status as "other:" antithetical to idealised neoliberal subjects and American citizens.

People who are homeless become dismissed as unworthy bodies and ungrievable lives,

culturally and socially segregated from domiciled individuals. The physical presence of

the homeless in Washington D.C. stands in stark contrast to commodified urban spaces, a

contrast that attests to the radically different, parallel paths along which the lives of the

homeless and the domiciled unravel.

In concluding this thesis, I ponder the questions "what is the solution? How can I,

or we, ensure the security of Museum Square tenants? How can we end the violence of

homelessness for Evelyn, Anthony, Laurence and all those individuals with whom I spent

time?" More affordable housing seems like an obvious answer and would certainly

answer their need for a physical dwelling to call their own. And yet, as Bourgois and

Scheper-Hughes posit "the social and cultural dimensions of violence are what give

violence its power and meaning" (Bourgois & Scheper-Hughes, 2004, p. 1). The violence

of homelessness is not just the lack of a home, but it is the everyday prejudice

confronting individuals in museums and doctors offices, the challenge of finding a

bathroom when in need, the daily violations of citizenship.

To resolve and prevent the social and cultural violence of homelessness, I believe the creation of intersections between the parallel worlds of the domiciled and the homeless is critical. A disruption is necessary to disturb the trajectory of the lives of the domiciled and to create a junction with the lives of people who are homeless, a place from which the latter can be observed and apprehended as human beings, as worthy and mournable lives. Beyond recognition, this disruption must challenge and intervene in a social structural context in which some lives are played out in prosperity while others in extreme poverty.

How to achieve this disruption, this creation of bridges between parallel worlds? I believe this to be where my voice can come in. By nature of my economic, social, and cultural position, I can frequent trendy coffee shops in formerly deprived neighbourhoods or sit inconspicuously in the Kogod Courtyard of the Smithsonian Museum and, each night, I have the promise of my bed to which to return. Along with many like me, I am socially, economically, spatially distanced from those individuals struggling with homelessness, towards whom the option of indifference is readily available as my privileged life unfolds.

But as I stood with tenants of Museum Square at the rally, and as we walked through the centre of Chinatown, the reality of the spatial and social proximity of homelessness was evident. To overlook this proximity is to neglect the lives of those living in homelessness, to render their fate an inevitable, if sad, result of prevailing social structures.

I do not believe this segregation of lives need be inevitable. Through rejecting indifference, through creating an intersection, through recognising people who are homeless as grievable human beings, through condemning as indignant a society in which so many live each daily in such visible precarity, through demanding social and structural change, through acknowledging, and foregoing, the benefits of this structural organisation to make lives fairer and easier for those who visibly suffer. Change is possible, it just takes a disruption to the routine comfort and structures in which I, and so many people in privilege and security, live.

This research has changed my life; I do not say this in any glib sense, nor do I say it to detract from the lives of those individuals who are at the centre of my study. The past eight months conducting research within the spaces in which I live - fieldwork that was not physically or temporally remote - engendered proximity between my life and the lives of those who I have studied. This proximity has always been there, yet my awareness of it was catalysed through working and building relationships with people who are homeless, seeing their normality along with their oppression.

This ethnographic study of homelessness has sought to understand the experiences of certain individuals who are homeless within Washington D.C. Through my research and writing, I have endeavoured to capture the daily lives of people as they navigate the spaces and places of the city and, by so doing, to shift pejorative assumptions, to reduce the perceived distance between 'them' and 'us', to engender a desire to help, and a call for change.

My research has ended, but my task is just beginning. Whether this piece of research achieves a scholarly impact is insignificant compared to the impact it has had on me, and the zeal and commitment that the experience has engendered. As I write my final words and prepare to graduate from school, I am already beginning to use my voice to create intersections and to disrupt the seeming parallel worlds of the homeless and the domiciled.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Extract from Interview with Andrew

Andrew: I'm going to begin my story when my life changed and then whatever comes into my mind, I'll work it like that. It works for me like that. In 1995 I was homeless, and it was due to drug addiction. I had many many years of addiction, I started using drugs when I was ten years old: smoking marijuana on a regular basis. I grew up on the South Bronx of New York which is a very, at that time, bad area, and it still is, but it was really really bad and everything was really readily available in the street, you know. And I grew up in an environment where my mum was an alcoholic, and she also was addicted to prescription medications. And she also had depression and things like that, and god bless her now, she had passed away in '95 but after all these years now as an adult I really understand her, the suffering she was going through, and that was her way of coping you know with the alcohol, the prescription drugs and stuff, and she was a very lovely lady. And I love my mother, and I thank God for her. But, as I was saying, I started using marijuana very early, at ten years old. And I think that kinda helped me a little bit, because I was a withdrawn child. I was the youngest of five, and again there could be a lot of factors in that with my mother's condition, because there was always trouble in the house, you know. And also trouble with the other

siblings – different things that they went through in their life. But it kind of made me escape into the high of it, and I sort of got used to that and started to do it on a regular basis. But also, like all drugs, like marijuana – it makes you even more withdrawn, so it really didn't help me in that regard. But as I got older, the marijuana just got heavier and heavier. But then in my teen years, around 16, 17 years old – again hanging out on the street, with friends, stuff like that, they were using heroin. And you know, curiosity, peer pressure whatever you want to call it, but just being highly susceptible to that kinda thing. I had tried it and I remember getting really really sick, you know I had sniffed it, which is common, but however I loved what it did for me. I loved the feeling of it and I had, you know, it was like throwing a blanket over you, the comfort, and all my problems went away, and I felt really really good. So then before you know it, especially with opiates, it doesn't take long for you to become physically addicted, and I became really physically addicted. And you know, many addicts they keep using, particularly heroin, in order not to go through withdrawal symptoms because it's so horrible. And as you get older it gets harder to go through it, so many addicts, because of fear, of that and other factors, they use just to be normal. And that's what it became for me. Just to be normal. Just to feel ok for the day.

But anyway there was a long many many years of heroin addiction. 16 years. And I tried to get my life together many many times. Many detoxes. Many rehabs. All through out New York City, New York State, New Jersey. I kept bouncing around. Because, you know, I mean as a person I didn't want to use

drugs. Nobody sets out to be a drug addict.. But my life became a real horror show. It really did, and the whole drug world, you know, because I hung out in abandoned buildings, and really seedy spaces with other people using drugs. You see many many terrible terrible things in that world and living that life. Because each day, as soon as you get up in the morning, it's about getting that drug in my body and I'll do anything to get the money to get that. You know. My case, thank god, I didn't do anything terribly terribly bad; I never hurt anybody. Or sold my body. Or did anything, you know, really terrible like that. But you know, I would do different things. I tell people now, and of course I work with drug addicts a lot, you know the smartest people I've ever met in my life have been drug addicts and alcoholics and people with addictions. It could be any addiction, you know. And the most talented people, the most loving people, the most compassionate people have been people that have had addiction. And I think that a lot of that is we're really sensitive people. You know I met some really loving beautiful people, and I think it has to do with a sensitivity and a longing. We all have this longing, you know, for something higher in our life, you know.

But anyway, there were many years of that terrible experience of addiction. And like I started early. In 1995 I was homeless because of my addiction. My family really had had enough because I put them through so much, you know -so much mental suffering I'm sure - my parents seeing their son in that condition. But there was nothing that they could do, you know. So anyway I was homeless. I was living in the park in the Bronx, and at that time I was all yellow

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because I had hepatitis. Because at this point I had been using heroin intravenously, you know, you quickly go into that. It didn't take me long to go to that. Now I'm six foot one, I was pretty tall, but I was 110 lbs, really skinny. And I had track marks all over my arms and I was yellow and living in the park. And by some miraculous thing, you know, friends came by that I knew from the rooms of NA and AA, because I tried that too, you know? And they saw me in that condition and I was so beat up. Because this is now many years, I'm 33 now. And I was so beat up and they asked me if I wanted to go the hospital with them. And I said yeah, because I didn't have it in me to hustle up the money that day. And this is '95 and my father was dying of cancer. And not only was I beat up physically but I was beat up mentally and psychologically, suffering incredibly and spiritually. Because in 1992 my girlfriend had died of aids. And in 1993, my sister died of aids. And here it is 1995 and my father has cancer and he's dying, and I'm the youngest. I'm the only one at home with my parents because everybody else is married and got their life going. So I lived with them until they passed away, so it was really tough on me. And I was going through so much grief, and again I can't get clean, I can't get my life together. You know. So it was just incredible amount of pain. And I literally got to the point where I laid on a park bench and I said "God take me. Take me, I can't live anymore". Like I got to that point. And its emotional talking about this now because it's been many years now of clean; I mean it's a miracle – I'm 19 years clean of drugs. But its good to reflect on this, because it keeps me humble, rounded, what's really important in life, and

appreciating life, you know, because I got to that point where I didn't want to live anymore.

So anyway, I did say yes to these people that asked me to go to the hospital, and I went to the hospital. And it was a 10 day detox. And I wanted to go but I didn't want to go because I was so used to living that life, and so relying on the drugs. And like I said there are many fears of being clean. That's all I knew in my life – was drugs. I didn't know how to live. So anyway I went to the detox facility because I knew when I went, I would get methadone, and that's a drug that keeps you from having withdrawal symptoms. SO I said yeah, Im with that. So I went there and stayed there for ten days, and then they had asked me if I wanted to go to rehab again and I had, really, nowhere to go. And my father was in his condition and it was his wish that I would be ok before he passed away. So anyway, I went to the rehab and that was a 28 day rehab. And I looked so bad, now this was after 10 day detox so im still detoxing really because it takes a while, as you get older it takes even longer to withdraw and its such a horrible painful experience, you know. Somebody asked me one other day, what does it feel like to go through heroin detox. And the only thing I could think of is that you have a cat inside your body trying to claw its way out. Because everything, the nerve endings, are just so raw. Its torture. You cant sleep, you cant do anything, so I was in a real bad way. And when I got to this rehab I looked so bad that they wrote 'DOA' on my admitting papers.

Alice: What does DOA mean?

Andrew: DOA. It can mean two things: date of arrival, which it didn't mean. But it meant dead on arrival – that was their own way, because they were looking at each other, really concerned about me. That I wasn't going to make it, because I was looking real bad. Because I was yellow, don't forget! So anyway, all I did was walk the floors at night. And I was hallucinating too. And they really watched me. And again it was really painful because my father would come see me and Id see him emaciated, you know, really – it was getting close. And I was close to my parents, being the youngest. So it was really difficult and in my brain what was going on was my life is over. Like its over, like I cant live. Because I was in so much grief, you know.

But anyway, so I did that 28 days and then, all along, they were trying to convince me to go upstate New York to a halfway house, to get out of the environment. Because all I knew in my life was the Bronx, and there was so much destruction, and bad memories of addiction and everything else. So I agreed to do that. And I remember that bus ride, you know, I got on the bus and it was like a 3hour ride to upstate new york and I thought I was going to Canada, I didn't know where I was going. I had a bag with a shirt in it and a pair of pants, that's all I had. And Im going to this place called Schenectady, New York right, which is really strange because years later I found out that that's an Indian term that means 'end

of the trail', which is kinda ironic, yeah, because I was at the end. But it was the

beginning of new life.

So anyway I went there, and I'm in this town, and where am I? I get out of

the bus and I take a walk to the halfway house, and it's a bad part of town, too.

But anyway I knock on the door and this big guy opens the door named Tim, I

remember, and I introduced myself and he says 'welcome, come in'. And im like

'where am I?' and now I cant turn back because I don't even know where I am.

And it was a house full of thirty something guys who were all from prison, or

addicts, or alcoholics and I'm like 'wow, this is where I end up' but it turned out

to be the best thing I ever did because I got out of the environment and it gave me

time away. And it was a structured environment where there was therapy and you

know, classes, and all this kinda stuff. And we were introduced to the twelve steps

and all the stuff like that.

But anyways, something happened to me while I was in there. My father

had given me a rosary, and I was catholic, but not really practicing and there was

no really outward side to that in my household. I mean I went to catholic school

all my life but I knew some of my faith, I didn't know all of it, I didn't know

much about it. But it wasn't alive in me, you know what I mean? But anyway I

had a rosary on me, and for some reason I was compelled to say it. And I would

actually sneak away so no one would see me pray. And I remember getting on

paper how I would say the rosary, I started playing the rosary. And it was the first

time in my life that I really prayed, you know, from the heart. Like "God I know

you're there, and I always believed in you', even in my addiction, even when I was a little boy when I wasn't addicted and stuff like that, I had a special kind of grace – it's all grace. I believed in god.

But anyway I would go and pray and I felt something happening inside me. Like a wholeness, like healing happening. And then I started to go to mass - like church – catholic mass, and not just on Sundays but all the time. And no coincidence, next door to the half way house was a church. Sacred Heart church. And I thought that was kinda ironic because the sacred heart was always close to me, my first school was sacred heart. And then, to make matters even more interesting, I found out that the halfway house that I was in used to be a rectory before it became a half way house. It was called the Sacred Heart. So isn't that something how God works, like he uses everything you know.

Appendix A: Extract from Interview with Evelyn

Alice: Last time spoke about background, growing up in DC, experiences in shelters, coming to HoF. Really useful insights, deeper picture of you as a person. How are you doing? How are things going?

Evelyn: Pretty much the same, and I'm doing good. And I enjoy this interview. You know it brings back a lot of memories when I was younger and, you know, growing up in South East. But um as far as the shelter is concerned it's pretty much the same, you know, I'm in and out, 7am in the morning and then I'm back

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in 7pm at night. So it's an emergency shelter so they're only open like 12 hours. And they may do hyperthermia or hypo, depending on what the temperatues are, you know if it gets too bad outdoors, you know, we can sit in. But um other than that, everything seems to be going the same. Yeahh..

Alice: you mentioned it brings back memories. Is it easy or hard to talk about?

Evelyn: Oh, my past?

Alice: yeahhh

Evelyn: oh no! Not at all, you know. It's like, I think, anybody else some good times and some bad times. It was pretty rough out there some years ago, like in the 70s and the 80s, pretty.. very violent. But it settled down as the years went by, you know, things changed. You know, god works miracles so… it took a while but its kinda straightened out, a lot. You know you kinda forget because when you're going through that I guess it's just, you try to keep the faith and you got all this stuff going on, you know, you just … maybe a lot of us blocked that out, but it's just an amazing change now.So It worked for the better, you know, it actually got better.

Alice: your life?

Evelyn: yeah, you know that situation out there in South East? With all that violence, you know? It actually got better because a lot of it went on when I was in school. Mmm middle school, junior high through high school. So it was pretty rough.

Alice: have you ever been the victim of a crime? From living down there?

Evelyn: Yess… I was. I was um almost raped once..

Alice: oh god.

Evelyn: yeahh… And I've been in a few fights. You know, but I think that's all a part of being a kid growing up you know? In a rough area. Being young, and I was, you know, I had some fire in me at times. You know, so yeah we'd get into little scraps and fights but nothing real serious. You know other than that, uh, assault that I had when I was in high school. Yeahh. So that was about as bad as it got for me.

Alice: that's really awful

Evelyn: yeah it is but you know, believe it or not Alice, some people were getting

shot, stabbed, I mean so I really thought it was just a blessing that I got a couple

of hits and bruises, you know. According to what it… it could have been a lot

worse back then. So I am thankful. And it's still bad but you know but I was ok

after that, you know.

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