

UC Santa Cruz

UC Santa Cruz Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Shelter and the Storm: the Local Politics of Homelessness in Urban California

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7td4w0p8>

Author

Amaral, David Joseph

Publication Date

2022

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

SHELTER AND THE STORM:
THE LOCAL POLITICS OF HOMELESSNESS IN URBAN CALIFORNIA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICS

by

David Joseph Amaral

December 2022

The Dissertation of David Joseph Amaral
is approved:

Eleonora Pasotti, Chair

Eva Bertram

Heather Bullock

Ben Read

Peter Biehl
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Copyright © by
David Joseph Amaral
2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	iv
List of Tables.....	v
Abstract of the Dissertation.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	ix
SHELTER AND THE STORM.....	1
<i>What kind of a problem is homelessness?</i>	21
<i>Urban Politics, City Power, and Homelessness</i>	33
<i>Methodological Approach</i>	46
1. THE HOMELESS POLICY ECOSYSTEM.....	57
<i>A TYPOLOGY OF HOMELESS POLICIES</i>	61
<i>FRAGMENTED LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF HOMELESSNESS</i>	75
<i>CONSEQUENCES OF FRAGMENTED HOMELESS GOVERNANCE</i>	95
2. INSTITUTIONALIZING AUTHORITY.....	107
<i>Prologue: Crisis, declared</i>	107
<i>INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOMENT OF CRISIS</i>	117
<i>BALLOT MEASURES FOR HOMELESS-DEDICATED REVENUE</i>	139
3. POLICYMAKING CONSEQUENCES.....	156
<i>GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY</i>	157
<i>CRISIS AMID CRISIS: ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</i>	183
4. HOMELESSNESS ON THE BALLOT.....	221
<i>BALLOT MEASURES AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS</i>	223
<i>RESULTS</i>	229
<i>WHAT VOTING PATTERNS SAY ABOUT LOCAL HOMELESS POLITICS</i>	241
CONCLUSION.....	247
APPENDIX.....	264
REFERENCES.....	274

List of Figures

1.1. Partisanship and Precinct-level support for Homeless Ballot Measures in San Francisco	93
2.1. Key political factors shaping local homeless governance and policymaking	110
2.2. Trends in Homeless Policymaking, 2008-2020	112
3.1. Supervisor Haney reacts to claims by Mayor Breed	206
4.1. Precinct percent registered Republican and Support for HHH	232
4.2. Partisan Geography of Support for Measure HHH	233
4.3. “Neighborhood Progressivism,” Homeownership and support for Measure HHH	234
4.4. Precinct percent Republican and support for Prop Q, Prop C	238
4.5. “Neighborhood Progressivism” and support for Prop Q, Prop C	238
4.6. “Neighborhood Progressivism” and diverging support for revenue- generating proposals	239
4.7. Distinct geographies of homeless policy preference in San Francisco	241
A.1. Bivariate association between Republican voter registration and homeownership in Los Angeles	272
A.2. Bivariate association between precinct support for Prop Q and Prop C in San Francisco	273

List of Tables

1.1. A Typology of Homeless Policies	64
1.2. Public Comments by Policy Type, 2008-2020	68
2.1. Contrasts in key explanatory variables in case study cities	115
4.1. OLS and Spatial Error Models for L.A. Ballot Measures	230
4.2. OLS and Spatial Error Models for San Francisco Ballot Measures	236
A.1.1. Summary statistics for City of Los Angeles (Measure HHH) regression model	264
A.1.2. Summary statistics for County of Los Angeles (Measure H) regression model	265
A.2. Summary statistics for San Francisco regression models	266
A.3. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Measure HHH (L.A. City)	267
A.4. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Measure H (L.A. County)	268
A.5. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Prop Q (San Francisco)	269
A.6. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Prop D (San Francisco)	270
A.7. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Prop C (San Francisco)	271

Abstract of the Dissertation

Shelter and the Storm:
The Local Politics of Homelessness in Urban California

by

David J. Amaral

Doctor of Philosophy in Politics

University of California, Santa Cruz, 2022

Professor Eleonora Pasotti, Chair

Homelessness is the most glaring manifestation of American inequality today. Amidst frenzied debate over causes and appropriate responses, what gets lost is that homelessness is fundamentally a political problem. Despite comparable pressures, local governmental responses to homelessness vary widely. What are the political dynamics shaping local governance of homelessness and the particular policies adopted to address it?

This dissertation begins answering this question by identifying the central political problem stymying effective solutions: political fragmentation. Decisions over how to address homelessness are divided across district-based representatives, bureaucratic agencies, and levels of government, each operating under distinct

priorities, pressures, and mandates. Effective solutions require local governments to overcome fragmentation and pursue coordinated, collaborative strategies.

To assess the political dynamics promoting collaborative coordination, I conduct a mixed-methods comparative analysis of homeless policymaking in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Adopting an ethnographic approach to archival analysis, I virtually attend all homeless-related policy meetings of the cities' local legislatures between 2008 and 2020, analyzing thousands of hours of public policymaking, 768 distinct policy actions and nearly 3,000 public comments. I also use GIS and statistical tools to conduct precinct-level analysis of five homeless-related ballot initiatives.

Over the course of four case-study comparisons, I argue that differences in two key explanatory variables – policy authority and political culture – best explain contrasting success surmounting the forces of fragmentation. The considerable authority vested to L.A. City Councilmembers, and the culture of consensus in which they govern, yields tangible policy consequences including commitments to geographic equity and comprehensive, collaborative implementation of citywide policy, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. In San Francisco, factional and inter-institutional conflict and contention over policy authority perpetuate a segregated landscape of homelessness and stymie proposals to use the pandemic as a catalyst for expanding homeless solutions.

Though cities in California won't be able to solve homelessness on their own, local governments will be intimately involved in any policy response to the problem.

The lessons from L.A. and San Francisco in this pivotal political moment reveal dynamics that can help foster the collaborative, coordinated governance required of any effective, lasting solution.

Acknowledgements

This project, and any worthwhile contributions I make within it, would have been wholly impossible were it not for the wisdom, support, encouragement, and kindness I received from so many people I so admire, appreciate, and love. Though rarely acknowledged, a dissertation is undeniably a team sport. It's the result not only of research and writing, but of hallway conversations, help watching the kids, and countless, ephemeral generousities. I am eternally grateful to many wonderful people:

To my dissertation committee, the most amazingly thoughtful, insightful and engaged collection of scholars I could have hoped to steer me on this voyage. To my advisor Eleonora, for being challenging and being a friend at the same time, for being there whenever needed, for letting me sail adrift for a bit before helping me chart the course, and for making sure I never forgot that we were, actually, dealing with life and death. To Eva, for her eternal wisdom, for often understanding my intentions long before I did, and for suggesting "Maybe you should look into housing policy" before I knew what housing policy was. To Ben, the greatest champion of my graduate school career, whose "Well done, David!" from years ago still lifts me up to this day. And to Heather, the most generous of academic collaborators, whose trust in me fostered self-confidence, who afforded me the most magnificent training in community-engaged research.

To the marvelous community within the UC Santa Cruz Politics Department. To Kent Eaton, my "shadow committee" member, for his eternally upbeat and illuminating curiosity and those long conversations at Café Roma in Berkeley. To the

many faculty and graduate students who shared such useful feedback during seminars, workshops, and unexpected moments that bring graduate school to life. And to the many undergraduate students with whom I taught and learned so much.

To the many scholars who took the time to engage with this work as it developed over the years. To Alison Post, Jessica Trounstine, and all participants of the Southwest Workshop on Mixed-Methods Research (SWMMR) in 2018. To participants of all the APSA and MPSA panels over the years, too.

To all the collaborators in my past life as a theater artist, who taught me to listen; especially, to Josh, who taught me to hear music in the seemingly mundane.

To Scott, for the friendship based on a shared love of city politics, art, and baseball (Go Sox!), and for the commiseration only a fellow grad can offer.

To Raphe, the first political scientist I ever met, for talking shop the way only an uncle can, and to Phyllis, too, for those many late-night conversations.

To Ema and Tom, for so much support, in so many forms, so many times.

To my dad for sharing his enthusiastic curiosity of scientific inquiry, and to my mom for sharing her appreciation of well-chosen words and emotional engagement with politics. To Jen for many long runs over the years where some of the things in this book got sorted out.

Most of all, to Nicole, whose commitment to social justice changed the way I understand the world, and whose love makes everything possible, worth it, and worth working to improve.

And to Ollie and August, the best reasons I know to hope we can do better.

This project was made possible in part by a generous grant from the Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy and by a Chancellor's Fellowship from UC Santa Cruz.

SHELTER AND THE STORM

“If I’ve learned anything about homelessness it’s that the only thing more controversial than homelessness and encampments is solutions to homelessness and encampments.”

Los Angeles City Councilmember Mike Bonin
Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 2/7/2018

“Okay, let’s go into item 59. That’s why we have so many people that are here today.” After breezing through dozens of motions on the day’s agenda with a handful of votes in just half an hour, Los Angeles City Council President Herb Wesson was ready to move on the main event. As he looked out into the audience of the council chambers on a Friday morning in the summer of 2018, he saw a room packed to capacity, protest signs scattered amid the standing room only crowd.

Item 59 on the council’s agenda that day was a motion that Wesson himself had introduced instructing city agencies to evaluate a publicly owned parking lot in his district for its feasibility as a site for a temporary homeless shelter. Earlier in the year, L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti – flanked by all members of the City Council – had launched a citywide initiative called “A Bridge Home” to develop temporary shelters throughout the city as an immediate step toward addressing street homelessness that had become pervasive across the city. While Wesson’s proposed shelter site was among the earliest to be considered by the council, more than twenty Bridge Home shelters would be established in the next several years, including at least one in each of the fifteen city council districts. Some of these proposals sailed through the local legislature with relatively little attention or turbulence. Many, however, sparked

tumultuous debates contested between advocates and supportive service providers (who often emphasized the urgency of the humanitarian crisis) and resistant neighborhood residents and merchants, who objected not to homeless shelters in general but to the proposed location in particular.

Wesson's proposal to evaluate 682 South Vermont Avenue in the city's Koreatown neighborhood proved particularly contentious. When first heard by the council's Homelessness and Poverty Committee a month earlier, the passions expressed during public comments on the proposal betrayed the controversy over Wesson's proposed shelter site. Many Koreatown residents and business owners criticized their councilmember for his failure to engage their community in a dialogue over the proposed location. One comment, from a speaker who identified herself as Hellen, captures this sentiment:

“The bottom line is most of the people who are here are concerned... because we never had any type of formal dialogue. Where is our dialogue with our councilman? We need to have a dialogue. [Cheers.] We need to have a dialogue. And most of the concerned citizens are worried. You know why they're worried? Because what he's proposing is just shoving down our throat. He's being a dictator here. We need to have a dialogue with the community members.”

Other neighborhood residents, however, expressed support for the proposal, and criticized demands for a more thorough community engagement process as a tactic for delaying indefinitely the proposed project. These supportive residents were joined by several homeless advocates and representatives of local unions who praised Wesson, the proposal, and the Bridge Home program more broadly. One supporter of the proposal chastised its opponents, “Where is your compassion?” he asked, and then

again, louder, “*where is your compassion?*” [LACC Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 5/22/2018].

Political opposition to the shelter proposal boiled up over the month between the committee hearing and the vote by the full council. Two separate opposition rallies in Koreatown drew hundreds of participants. Wesson held his own rally – attended by the mayor, councilmembers, and advocates – to generate support for the proposal and the broader program (Kim 2018a; 2018b). Wesson’s office received a flurry of written communications, both expressing support and opposition to the project, and including one letter from a law firm representing a newly formed organization of resistant residents threatening legal actions over alleged violations of environmental review law. Rumors spread on twitter that the shelter would be designated “for drug addicts, not mothers and daughters.”

And so Wesson, in introducing his motion, was right to expect heated debate. After presiding over public comments for the item – affording 25 minutes each to opponents to express their concerns and to proponents their reasons for support – Wesson handed off the gavel and stood to make his case to his colleagues and constituents. He sought to cool tensions by reminding the room that this was only the beginning of a process for evaluating whether the site was even appropriate for a temporary shelter. He announced amendments intended to “satisfy some of our opposition,” instructing city agencies to evaluate two other potential sites for the shelter in his district, a common demand from members of the opposition. One of the new sites was the parking lot of his district office, “Because I don’t want anybody to

ever suggest that I wouldn't make sacrifices that I'm asking them to make." But he did not acquiesce to the pressure that opposition imposed. "I submit to you," he announced, his oratorical enthusiasm building, "that leadership is about taking people places sometimes where they do not think they want to go." As Wesson's impassioned plea culminated, policy details and political promises dissolved behind moral obligation:

"Good people, do you know what's happening here in L.A.? We are driving past – oh my God – we are driving past homeless people and we are not seeing them. When that happens, that is the end of our humanity. And that we cannot do. We, as a people in Los Angeles, must rise up like a tidal wave, a tidal wave of hope, and say enough is enough" [LACC 6/29/2018].

The controversy in L.A. was by no means the only storm brewing over a homeless shelter proposal considered by local leaders of a California city. The following summer, in 2019, several hundred miles up the coast, agitated residents of San Francisco's Embarcadero neighborhood filed into the Board of Supervisors meeting eager to express their opposition to a navigation center proposed for Seawall Lot 330. The Seawall Navigation Center, when eventually approved, would be the seventh low-barrier, temporary interim housing facility developed with city funds and on city land since 2015. Unlike Los Angeles, there was no commitment among the city's Board of Supervisors to establish navigation centers in each of the supervisorial districts (much to the dismay of elected officials representing districts with the densest concentrations of unsheltered homelessness). The Seawall site was located in supervisorial district six, which also included the Tenderloin neighborhood and its decades' old concentration of homelessness. Though contained within the same local

electoral district, Embarcadero's (wealthier, whiter) residents were unaccustomed to living among such visible destitution as was characteristic of the district's more inland environs.

The Board of Supervisors only ever came to exert formal authority over whether or not the shelter was approved because of an appeal filed against the city planning department's determination that the project was exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA. Adopted in the 1970s as an environmental protection measure, CEQA had since become the notorious yet effective tool for stalling unwanted developments, especially affordable or homeless housing projects. And because suits can be filed anonymously, "it has made CEQA the preferred lever of California's infamously litigious NIMBYs (Not-in-My-Back-Yard-ers)" (Gray 2021). In response to the proposed Seawall Navigation Center, neighborhood residents opposed to the shelter formed a nonprofit organization, "Safe Embarcadero for All," which hired legal representation to challenge the Planning Department's CEQA exemption.

In making his case before the Board, the attorney for the resistant neighborhood residents challenged the validity of the CEQA exemption, calling attention to what he viewed as a number of negative environmental impacts the navigation center would cause: increased prevalence of drug and alcohol use, public defecation, garbage, and property crime. In the next breath, the attorney asserted that the soil beneath the proposed site contained environmental contaminants that would negatively impact the health of the facility's potential inhabitants. Neighborhood

residents expressed further concerns in their public comment on the item. One resident named Earl claimed “We are as committed to solving homelessness as anyone here, but the difference is that we actually live at the proposed location. Our voices matter. I oppose the navigation center in our neighborhood.” Another resident claimed the process for authorizing the shelter was “completely anti-democratic.” A resident named John expressed concern that navigation centers established elsewhere in the city had brought with them “drug use, problems caused by the mentally ill, many complaints to the police department,” issues he thought might outweigh the benefits shelters afforded people experiencing homelessness. “In the end,” he concluded, “this seems not wise, not prudent, and a very risky way to address the undeniably important problems caused by homelessness.”¹

But supporters rebuked many of the critiques of the proposed navigation center. Jeff Kositsky, director of the city’s Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, addressed concerns about crime by providing data indicating net *decreases* in crime and calls for police service in the areas surrounding navigation centers established elsewhere in the city. A number of homeless advocates and service providers – including several running navigation centers elsewhere in the city – applauded the service model used by city navigation centers and conveyed first-hand accounts of the centers’ beneficial impacts. Del Seymore, a longtime homeless advocate and member of the Local Homeless Coordinating Board emphasized the

¹ This wording – “problems *caused by* homelessness” as opposed to the “problem *of* homelessness” – hints at how and why homelessness becomes such a contentious political issue, mobilizing active involvement by neighborhood residents in local land use and policymaking decisions.

urgency of getting another 200 people off the street, and critiqued opponents for distinguishing between citizens and those who were homeless. “Those are the same thing,” he reminded the room. A housing activist called on the Board to pursue a citywide homeless strategy, one less vulnerable to neighborhood resistance, and claimed that such a strategy would require the district officials to abdicate some of their discretionary power.

District six Supervisor Matt Haney agreed that a citywide solution was necessary. As representative of the district with the highest concentration of homelessness, shelter beds and service providers, he was eager for his colleagues to pursue more homeless solutions in their own districts. Still, he remained supportive of the newest navigation center in the district he represented. Echoing testimony from the Planning Department, he agreed that the appellants had failed to identify any valid CEQA violation. “Over 400 people have died on our streets over the past two years,” he reminded the room, “so this is a life and death issue, and it’s urgent” [BOS 6/25/2019].

Urban California in the second decade of the 21st century offers a glaring vision of American inequality. Alongside vast wealth and rampant accumulation, and amid an array of indicators commonly associated with local economic prosperity, thousands upon thousands of Californians find themselves with no place to sleep but

city sidewalks. Hundreds of thousands more dangle precariously on the verge of homelessness.²

Such stark inequality was particularly on display in the city hubs anchoring the major metropolitan areas of the southern and northern regions of the state: Los Angeles and San Francisco. While the state of California alone represented the fifth largest economy in the world, these city regions served as the 16th and 22nd largest economies in the world, respectively (Storper et al. 2015, 3). Los Angeles, most famous as the mecca of the film and entertainment industry, had actively supported the redevelopment (and rebranding) of its central city core into “DTLA” where architecture and e-commerce firms accumulated in newly developed or renovated environs. In San Francisco, well-paid employees of social media giants were bussed into their lavish office headquarters on private, wifi-equipped charter busses, while above, the skyline of The City by the bay was overshadowed by new skyscrapers bearing the names of tech industry behemoths.

These signs of success were situated in close proximity and in stark contrast to areas of concentrated, unsheltered homelessness: a startling display of dire poverty alongside such wealth. In Los Angeles, just east of downtown is Skid Row, the neighborhood where people experiencing homelessness have concentrated for decades both because shelters and services were largely segregated within Skid Row, and because policing practices in the surrounding region amounted to a strategy of

² In a report for the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley, Reid (2021) estimated that nearly half a million extremely low-income (ELI) residents of the San Francisco Bay Area region were at risk of homelessness in 2020.

containment. Tent encampments lined entire city blocks of the neighborhood, and it was not uncommon for residents of the neighborhood to see neighbors sprawled across sidewalks or benches. In 2020, an estimated 4,662 people experiencing homelessness resided in the neighborhood's 55 city blocks, the highest concentration of homelessness in the country.

Thousands of residents of San Francisco, too, were frequently left with no other place to sleep but sidewalks or doorways, especially in the city's Tenderloin neighborhood, just a short walk from downtown commercial buildings, Union Square, City Hall, and the office headquarters of Twitter. Like Skid Row in L.A., the Tenderloin had long existed as a pocket of poverty and poverty-related social services. In 2019, roughly 45 percent of the city's 8,035 people experiencing homelessness were in the supervisorial district containing the Tenderloin. By this point, both Skid Row and the Tenderloin – and for that matter the skid rows of other cities throughout the state and country – were indelibly linked in the minds of local residents to visible poverty and destitution, branded as “landscapes of despair” (Dear 1987).

Homelessness is by no means a new phenomenon in America. It has existed in one form or another throughout the country's history (Blau 1992, 9–10; Rossi 1989). In colonial years, because poor laws dictated that towns were responsible for providing aid for their local poor, newcomers viewed as potentially incapable of supporting themselves (especially widows and elderly or disabled persons) were warned or forcefully sent away, creating a class of “migrants in a kind of geopolitical

limbo where no jurisdiction was responsible for their care” (Rossi 1989, 18).³ The ranks of homeless transients swelled following the Civil War and especially during the Great Depression, during which shantytowns and Hoovervilles filled public spaces in cities throughout the country. The “homeless” of these eras were generally younger, unattached men traveling in search of work and finding intermittent shelter along the way. In the postwar years – a time “when homelessness seemed to be on the verge of extinction” – the prevalent form of homelessness consisted primarily of older, white, male residents who lived in cheap hotels or missions in the local skid row, “a listless, aimless world, void of ambition or bonds, populated by casualties of poverty, pathology, old age, character deficiencies, or alcohol dependency” (Hopper and Hamberg 1986, 16–17).

But the “new homelessness” that emerged in the late 1970s and attracted increasing national attention through the 1980s was distinct from earlier forms and periods of homelessness in important ways (Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010; Rossi 1989). A first notable difference involved the demographic characteristics of the people experiencing homelessness. No longer older, white single men, in these years, racial and ethnic minorities (especially African Americans) were vastly overrepresented in the homeless population. The proportions of women, families, and

³ Katz (1996, 21) notes that towns in the early 19th century “often spent more money ridding themselves of paupers than they would have spent supporting them,” an assertion with parallels to contemporary homeless governance.

younger people⁴ among those experiencing homelessness was also dramatically expanded in this “new” homeless era (Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010; Rossi 1989).

The other major distinction of the new homelessness was the large number of people who lacked any form of shelter at all, and were left to sleep on sidewalks, in parks or bus stops, under highway overpasses, or some other precarious public space. Those thought of as “homeless” in the past were drifters or transients, or lacked reliable or adequate housing, but were generally not left to live literally unsheltered and vulnerable to the elements for long stretches of time. To be homeless in this new, contemporary manifestation increasingly meant lacking any shelter at all, or seeking cover in places or structures not intended for human habitation, and often for long durations. As Rossi (1989, 39) put it, “*homelessness today means more severe basic shelter deprivation*” (emphasis in original). This was and remains especially the case in California, where rates of unsheltered homelessness far surpass national averages.

Because contemporary homelessness was defined largely by its “visible” (Blau 1992) and “public” (Katz 2013, 231) nature, homelessness became not only a problem for the people experiencing it, but also for those for whom the presence or proximity to homelessness proved threatening in some way. Local governments – officials at the city and county levels – were called upon to take action to address the problem that was experienced locally – and viscerally – by homeowners, merchants,

⁴ But, note Kushel’s (2012) finding that individuals over 50 years old are increasingly represented among the homeless.

and business leaders who encountered signs of homelessness as they walked their children to school or on their morning commute to work.

In the early years of the new homeless era, arguments infused with moral claims of public responsibility encouraged local governments to open temporary shelters, often in partnership with charitable and faith-based organizations. As homelessness proved a stubbornly persistent problem, however, patience wore thin and policy responses in many cities grew increasingly punitive. By the 1990s and through the 2000s, in what the media termed “compassion fatigue” (Blasi 1994) and what Neil Smith (1996, 219) associated with a *revanchist urbanism* driven by an “erosion of sympathetic support and action” to alleviate homelessness, anti-homeless repression and police enforcement mechanisms became dominant responses to homelessness. In cities across California and the country, local officials responded to homelessness with anti-camping or anti-loitering ordinances, enforcing “quality of life” laws as de facto containment strategies (Fisher et al. 2015; Gowan 2010; Lipsitz 2016; Mitchell 1997; 2011; Stuart 2018; Vitale 2008). LAPD Chief Daryl Gates – who had previously championed ‘broken windows’ policing as police chief in New York – initiated the “Safe City Initiative,” a harsh crackdown on minor offenses aimed at regulating the presence of the poor in select city spaces (Stuart 2018). In San Francisco’s 1991 mayoral race, incumbent Art Agnos (a former social worker turned politician who sought to expand service and shelter availability in the city) was defeated by Frank Jordan, the city’s former police chief who went on to champion new anti-homeless laws and an increased involvement of law enforcement in the

city's homeless problem (Gowan 2010). Official repression efforts were joined by an ensemble of informal repressive efforts to disperse the unsheltered poor. Merchants in L.A., for example, set up sprinkler systems intended to spray at odd hours of the night to disperse anyone sleeping outside their shop doors (Davis 2006).

By 2010, as local governments struggled in the wake of the Great Recession – many responding by slashing budget allocations for social services – the “new” homelessness was entering its fourth troubling decade of existence. By this time, unsheltered homelessness had persisted in big cities for so long that it no longer seemed like a phase or aberration. It had become an enduring feature of the American urban landscape. In several important respects, the homelessness of the 2010s carried on themes that had emerged in the 1980s. Racial and ethnic minorities remain vastly overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness. The 2019 homeless point-in-time count found that 38 percent of those experiencing homelessness in L.A. were Black, in a city where Black or African American residents represent less than nine percent of the general population. In San Francisco, the count similarly found 37 percent of the homeless population was Black, though Black residents represented only six percent of the general population. (Racial disparities in homelessness are among the most glaring indicators of accumulated policy failure and structural inequality in the housing, labor, and justice systems.) The unsheltered nature of contemporary homelessness remains a consistent theme, too, especially in California, where nearly 70 percent of all people experiencing homelessness are found on sidewalks, in encampments, or in vehicles (Mejia and Hsieh 2019). Today, as in

decades past, proposals to develop new housing, shelter, or service provision facilities frequently incite vehement resistance from the residents and businesses located in the neighborhoods in which they would be developed. Local responses to homelessness have also consistently involved both the provision of shelter and supportive services alongside punitive enforcement of anti-homeless laws, approaches that often operate across purposes.⁵

But in years between the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of homelessness – and the quality of public and political response to it – underwent a dramatic, qualitative change in urban California. Rates of homelessness increased in many cities throughout the state, but the issue wasn't just that there were more people experiencing homelessness. The issue was that homelessness was far more visible, increasingly unavoidable, and dispersed throughout neighborhoods previously unaccustomed to such glaring, proximate evidence of extreme poverty. In L.A. and San Francisco, the inherited strategies of containment (whether de facto or de jure) began to break down and encampments were no longer successfully segregated to skid rows. Officials in both cities attributed the dispersal of homelessness to recent redevelopment projects that left fewer liminal spaces for those experiencing homelessness to seclude themselves out of sight. Public concern over the problem of homelessness (and the problems “caused by” homelessness) reached a fever pitch. Residents expressed dissatisfaction – in often impassioned pleas – and

⁵ In 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing claimed that the enforcement of such punitive policies in San Francisco and Oakland “constitutes cruel and inhuman treatment and is a violation of multiple human rights” (Rosalsky 2021)

demanded better solutions from their local representatives, whether that meant finding homes for those who lacked them or just cleaning up the streets. The issue so gripped residents of California that in 2020, just months before the pandemic struck, Governor Newsom dedicated the entirety of his state of the state speech to homelessness. “It’s a disgrace,” Newsom asserted, “that the richest state in the richest nation, succeeding across so many sectors, is falling so far behind to properly house, heal and humanely treat so many of its own people” (Fuller 2020).

In these years, the heightened public outcry led to heightened public response. A dramatic, qualitative shift can be seen in the public policies adopted by local governments in response to their local homeless crises. Cities and counties throughout the state took on new and expanded responsibilities for dealing with the problem. They committed substantially larger portions of their budgets to developing permanent supportive housing, establishing new temporary shelters, and expanding street outreach and service provision. To raise these funds, local jurisdictions increasingly turned to their residents to approve homeless-dedicated spending in local ballot measures. While at the beginning of the decade, homeless-related measures rarely appeared on local ballots, by 2018, 38 local ballot measures concerning homelessness were put to voters throughout the state. Voters in both Los Angeles and San Francisco passed ballot measures that would generate hundreds of millions of dollars in additional homeless-dedicated revenue each year. Increased provision, however, often went hand in hand with increased repression. Local policing and enforcement efforts ramped up, and increased demands for encampment clearance

were often heeded by local officials. These officials, able to efficiently address neither the conditions on the streets nor the fury of their constituents, grew increasingly frustrated by a structure and process of local homeless governance fragmented across neighborhoods and between public agencies and political jurisdictions.

Though the formidable pressures were common among California cities in these years, their governments responded to those pressures in a variety of ways. Variation can be found in the types of individual policies adopted and pursued by particular cities, with local governments using different funding sources for homeless-dedicated revenue or relying more heavily on policing practices relative to service provision (or vice versa). But the more important and impactful distinctions between cities' responses to homelessness involve how effectively they managed to weave new and inherited policies into cohesive, comprehensive homeless strategies. Cities varied considerably in terms of how successfully their homeless responses were coordinated both across city space – by achieving committed participation among neighborhoods throughout the city's geography and the elected officials who represented them – and between the many city agencies directly involved in addressing some component of the broader phenomenon of homelessness.

What are the political dynamics that shape how local governments in California are responding to homelessness today? How and why does a city's political context shape its homeless policymaking process, which policies are successfully adopted, and how they are ultimately implemented? Are political process and policy

output related? How effectively have local leaders surmounted parochial, neighborhood-based resistance to achieve broader, collective commitment to solving homelessness? These are the questions this dissertation sets out to answer.

I begin this exploration of the local politics of homelessness by focusing attention on the inherently political nature of the problem. In the remainder of this chapter, I review a multidisciplinary body of research to make the case that homelessness is a fundamentally political problem, and, more specifically, a paradigmatic problem of *local* politics. Because it draws together the most important and contested issues over which local governments possess jurisdiction – housing, policing, social service provision, and beyond all else, land use – I am convinced that studying the politics of homelessness has much to teach us about local political institutions and policymaking more broadly. After establishing the theoretical foundation of the analysis to come, I describe the mixed-methods approach used to investigate homeless politics and governance in my two case study cities: Los Angeles and San Francisco.

In the next chapter, I set the stage for the analysis to come by mapping the particular political challenges involved in governing homelessness. After developing a typology of homeless policies, this chapter focuses attention on the fragmented politics of homeless governance. Homeless-related policymaking is plagued by fragmentation across *territory* (over city geography and the districts of political representation), *function* (across city departments with different mandates and responsibilities), and between *intergovernmental* divisions of responsibility (with

authority over homelessness shared between city, county, state and federal governments). Homeless governance is also palpably shaped by ideological divisions which promote diverging preferences for policy responses to the problem. These forms of fragmentation collectively pose enormous challenges to achieving the coordinated, collaborative policy strategy required of such a complex social and political problem. Emphasizing political fragmentation as the key challenge of local homeless governance also establishes it as the central criteria for evaluating and comparing local efforts in the case studies to come.

The following two chapters present a total of four comparative case study analyses of homeless policymaking in Los Angeles and San Francisco and, in doing so, develop the central argument and contribution of this dissertation. I argue that two key informal institutions – local political culture and policymaking authority – fundamentally shape the *process* of homeless policymaking which, in turn, informs how successfully each city achieves a comprehensive and collaborative local response to homelessness. The case studies in chapter two show the diverging institution-building efforts pursued by each city – with L.A. establishing a new homeless committee on the city council while San Francisco established a new department under the purview of the mayor – and the contrasting campaigns to pass local ballot measures for new homeless-dedicated funding in each city. These first two case study comparisons reveal stark contrasts between the two cities in terms of political culture and policymaking authority. The L.A. City Council is shown to operate under a crafted culture of consensus in which the body as a whole (as well as individual

members in their districts) possesses vast policymaking authority over homelessness. In San Francisco, on the other hand, homeless policymaking is better characterized by conflict between the progressives and moderates on the Board of Supervisors, and between the Board and the city's mayor. This conflict is exacerbated by competition between the two branches of local government over policymaking authority in the city where the mayor is more actively involved in shaping policy and standing in the way of efforts by the Board.

Chapter three's case studies reveal the policymaking consequences of the cities' contrasting political cultures and policymaking authority. It begins by considering proposals made in each city promoting a commitment to *geographic equity* of homeless-serving housing or shelter throughout the city and requiring all local legislators to commit to developing facilities within their districts. In Los Angeles, the culture of consensus and collective commitment that were in part made possible by the policymaking authority and discretion each city council member had over their district led to a commitment by the full city council to develop permanent supportive housing (and later interim housing) in each of their respective districts. In San Francisco, the proposal for geographic equity failed in large part because it pitted progressive and moderate supervisors against one another and was resisted by the city's mayor and leaders of the agencies she led. The final case study examines the contrasting responses to homelessness amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Cumulatively, this chapter's case studies show how the culture of consensus and policymaking authority on the city council allowed L.A. to more fully surmount the

hurdles of fragmented homeless governance and achieve a more comprehensive and collaborative policymaking response. In San Francisco, conflict and contested authority only entrenched the problems posed by political fragmentation, yielding competition between ideological factions and institutions of government and little commitment to any sort of collaborative, comprehensive policy strategies.

Chapter four, the final empirical chapter, provides a more quantitative investigation of how ideological and geographic divisions impact local homeless policymaking and interaction with local government. Statistical analysis of five homeless-related ballot measures in the two cities reveals the powerful association between neighborhood ideology (and partisanship) and support for various responses to homelessness. Across both cities, more conservative neighborhoods (represented by higher rates of registered Republicans) were consistently less favorable of measures to increase homeless-dedicated funding. In San Francisco, conservative neighborhoods are also more likely to support proposed punitive enforcement measures.

I conclude the dissertation by highlighting several policy solutions likely help overcome the political fragmentation and better address the urgent political and humanitarian problem of homelessness in urban California today. In doing so, I encourage those involved in shaping local responses to homelessness to craft solutions not only to the housing or health problems inherent in homelessness, but also to the political problems that have long hindered effective and lasting solutions. Only by acknowledging and addressing the problems that the fragmented,

contentious, and divisive politics of homelessness entail will the decades-old and dire crisis be solved.

What kind of a problem is homelessness?

Michael Katz (2013) concludes his seminal *The Undeserving Poor* with an epilogue that asks “What kind of a problem is poverty?” In his answer to the question, he reminds us that how a social problem is defined determines the appropriate solutions to it. This is the case with homelessness: how we define the problem determines the appropriate policy response to it.

Traditionally, the *public* debate over how to define the problem of homelessness has been waged between those who view homelessness as caused by individual problems and failings and those who view homelessness as the result of structural forces and inequities (Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010). That this individual-structural fault line endures in debates over homelessness today becomes glaringly apparent by considering two books that have garnered much attention for their current accounts of homelessness: Shellenberger’s (2021) *San Fransicko* attributes homelessness to substance abuse and mental illness (and the failure of progressive politicians), while in *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, Colburn and Aldern (2022) offer a strong, structural (and more empirically rigorous) explanation of

homelessness and rebuke of purely individualistic accounts.⁶ These diverging viewpoints are reflected in the press and in public comments before local governing boards.

To say that recent academic research on homelessness is similarly divided between individual and structural understandings of homelessness, however, would be drawing too stark a line between research agendas that increasingly incorporate more nuanced explanations. As Lee et. al (2010, 509) put it, “rough agreement now exists on a conceptual model that integrates macro- and micro-level antecedents.” Micro-level studies draw attention to individual experiences or conditions that may increase a particular person’s vulnerability to experiencing homelessness. Experiencing some form of “childhood adversity” for example – like running away from home, experiences of neglect or abuse, or having a parent incarcerated – has been found to increase the likelihood of experiencing homelessness later in life (Shelton et al. 2009). Children placed into foster care are also more likely to experience homelessness⁷ (Pecora et al. 2006) as are survivors of domestic violence (Bassuk, Perloff, and Dawson 2001). Veterans are significantly overrepresented in homeless populations (Fargo et al. 2012). Studies have also documented high rates of

⁶ By no means to I intend to equate the methodological rigor of these two works. While Coburn and Aldern apply fairly sophisticated statistical techniques in their inquiry, Shellenberger more often distorts and misinterprets the social science he cites, as Ned Resnikoff (2022), former Policy Manager for the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative, made apparent in his blog post titled “San Fransicko Is Incorrect About Housing Affordability and Homelessness.”

⁷ The association between placement in foster care and increased vulnerability to homelessness could also be viewed as a more systemic policy failure and not just individual-level predictor. A similar claim might be applied to the bidirectional relationship between homelessness and incarceration (Gowan 2002; Metraux, Roman, and Cho 2007).

mental illness (Foster, Gable, and Buckley 2012; Koegel, Burnam, and Farr 1988) and alcohol or substance use (Koegel and Burnam 1988; Spinelli et al. 2017; Thompson et al. 2013) among people experiencing homelessness. However, the causal direction of the association between homelessness and substance use, for example, is contested. (See, for example, the contradictory claims in Early (2005) and Johnson and Chamberlain (2008)). The relationship between homelessness and substance abuse is likely “bidirectional” (Doran, Fockele, and Maguire 2022): while substance use may increase the vulnerability to homelessness, homelessness may also increase vulnerability to substance use disorders.⁸

Perhaps the most important and telling individual-level studies call attention to the significant adverse impacts that experiencing homelessness has upon a person’s health. As Dr. Margot Kushel (2022a), the director of the UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative put it, “Homelessness is the single most traumatic thing that can happen to a person’s health.” Kushel and her colleagues review a range of documented increased health and mortality risks associated with homelessness, including infectious diseases (Tuberculosis, Hepatitis, and HIV), chronic diseases (especially among older people experiencing homelessness), heart disease and high blood pressure, hypothermia and burns, poisoning, and traumatic brain injury (Fazel, Geddes, and Kushel 2014). The risk of infectious disease was made particularly apparent in California’s 2017 Hepatitis A outbreak which provoked

⁸ A meta-analysis by Buckman et al. (2022) similarly shows housing insecurity to be a contributing factor of depressive symptoms. Still other research indicates that homelessness and substance abuse may both be attributed to other individual characteristics, some observed and some unobserved (McVicar, Moschion, and van Ours 2015).

a state of emergency declaration by then Governor Jerry Brown (Kushel 2018). Recent research indicates that encampment clearances or “sweeps” – one particular policy response available to cities – have negative physical and mental health consequences both because they result in lost personal belongings and needed medical items and because they disrupt supportive social networks (Qi et al. 2022). Contrary to common stereotyped associations of homelessness with danger or violence, it is in fact the individuals experiencing homeless themselves who are at increased risk of violent attack (Kushel 2022b; Kushel et al. 2003; Riley et al. 2020; Tong et al. 2021).

These micro-level factors associated with homelessness are best viewed as *precipitants*, as personal experiences or conditions that make a specific individual vulnerable to homelessness. These precipitants, however, must be distinguished from the *drivers* or *root causes* of homelessness, the forces that explain temporal and regional variation in homelessness (Resnikoff 2021). Several decades of research provides convincing evidence that structural forces, especially the availability of affordable housing, are the driving force behind variation in homelessness, both across time and between geographic regions.

Some of the earlier quantitative assessments relied on the first systematic attempt to create a census of visible homelessness, the “Shelter and Street Night,” or S-Night, count of 1990 (Taeuber and Siegel 1990). These studies found consistent evidence that regional variation in rates of homelessness was strongly associated with housing rent-to-income ratios (Quigley, Raphael, and Smolensky 2001) and median

rent prices (Lee, Price-Spratlen, and Kanan 2003). The authors of both studies interpreted their results to suggest that policy interventions increasing the supply of affordable housing would be an effective way to reduce homelessness.⁹ More recent studies, improving upon those earlier efforts by using “point-in-time” homeless count data required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) starting in 2007, reveal similar findings: higher median rent costs are consistently associated with higher local rates of homelessness (Byrne et al. 2013; Hanratty 2017).¹⁰ One methodologically sophisticated treatment identifies “inflection points” in the relationship between local rental costs and homelessness, demonstrating that the expected rate of homelessness in a region rises dramatically once the median rental costs surpasses 30 percent of the area median income (Glynn, Byrne, and Culhane 2021). Lack of affordable housing for low-income households, not mental illness or substance use, best explains why homelessness is so prevalent in certain cities, including San Francisco and L.A.

Colburn and Aldern’s (2022) *Homelessness is a Housing Problem* provides perhaps the fullest effort to demonstrate that insufficient affordable housing is the root cause of homelessness (while debunking the individual-level explanations that tend to dominate the public discourse). The authors’ analysis is focused on explaining

⁹ Quigley, Raphael, and Smolensky (2001, 50) assert that “modest changes in housing market conditions can have substantial effects upon the incidence of homelessness.”

¹⁰ Point-in-time, or PIT, counts are by no means perfect or even especially good or reliable census counts for homelessness (Hopper et al. 2008; Monika Schneider, Brisson, and Burnes 2016), but since HUD requires local Continuums of Care to conduct such counts every two years, they remain the best systemwide source of data available. It is worth noting, however, that as counts of people experiencing homelessness on one single winter night, PIT estimates vastly underrepresent the number of households who experience homelessness over the course of a year.

regional variation in homelessness – why homelessness is more prevalent in some places than in others. Though the authors, in effort to produce an account accessible to the general public, limit their analytic techniques to those yielding only “descriptive and correlative findings” (29), their claims and evidence are compelling. They begin by demonstrating that there is little association between regional rates of poverty, drug use, or mental illness and regional rates of homelessness. Many cities with high rates of poverty – like Detroit, Cleveland, or Baltimore – actually have relatively low rates of homelessness. Instead, the strongest association they find is between a region’s absolute rental costs and per capita rates of homelessness. Cities or counties with higher rents – at both the median and the 25th percentile level – have higher rates of homelessness. These are the same cities, of course, where housing is far less affordable, especially for individuals and households with low or extremely low incomes.

Amid contentious, vitriolic debate in the public and press over whether people or structures are to blame for the prevalence of homelessness in many California cities, the *political* nature of the problem rarely receives the attention it deserves. As I will work to show, the political problems woven through urban homelessness not only inform how cities will respond to the crisis on their streets, but have also perpetuated and exacerbated homelessness in California cities for several decades.

Homelessness may be seen to be a fundamentally political problem for a number of different reasons. The increasing prevalence of the problem in the 1980s and its persistence is very much a result of disinvestment by the federal government

in affordable housing, and this policy decision by the Reagan administration was, of course, political. Reagan, a Republican, infamously claimed that people experiencing homelessness were “homeless, you might say, by choice” (Bogard 2003, 127). Democratic senator Al Gore, by contrast, heralding the McKinney Act (the first significant piece of federal homeless legislation, which Gore co-authored) claimed “The causes of homelessness are many and complex, and the problem is compounded by inadequate mental health care, high unemployment, alcoholism, and above all a shortage of affordable housing” (Gore 1990). That Black Americans are vastly and consistently overrepresented among the population of people experiencing homelessness should also be understood as a result of the country’s racial politics and the manifestation of generations of discriminatory policy shaping the social welfare system (Katznelson 2005), housing markets (Rothstein 2017), zoning and land use (Trounstine 2018), and law enforcement and the carceral state (Alexander 2020), among other policy areas.¹¹

These are all important components of the political nature of homelessness that deserve full treatment and attention. Additionally, the fragmentation of homelessness governance is such a significant concern that I devote considerable attention to describing this political aspect of the problem in the following chapter. For now, however, I want to call attention to three interrelated ways in which the

¹¹ See Paul et al. (2020) for research indicating that racial discrimination and systemic racism factor significantly in the “life course” of older Black residents of Oakland who experience homelessness.

political nature of homelessness informs (and, historically, stymies) policy solutions to the problem.

First, divisive debate over whether homelessness is caused by individual problems (e.g., mental illness, substance use) or structural problems (e.g., lack of affordable housing) inherently generates equally divisive political debates about the appropriate local governmental response to the problem. For those who blame homelessness on mental illness or drug use, the appropriate policy response is heightened law enforcement or increasing legal authority for involuntary holds of individuals deemed to be experiencing mental health crises (often referred to as “5150” holds in California, referring to the relevant section of the state’s Welfare and Institutions Code established by the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act of 1967). On the other hand, those attributing homelessness to lack of affordable housing encourage expanded incentives and requirements to develop and preserve below-market rental units. As we will see, these conflicting views on homelessness and its solutions frequently overlap with partisan and ideological divisions, even in liberal California cities. More conservative residents (including both Republicans and more “moderate” Democrats) are more likely to adhere to individualistic explanations of homelessness and advance enforcement-oriented solutions. These policy preferences are reinforced by conservative tendencies to resist redistributive taxes aimed at funding housing or services for low-income households. This partisan split is initially apparent, for example, in a policy report on homelessness issued by the Republican caucus of the California State Legislature in 2022, which highlights policy proposals to address

substance use, reform 5150 involuntary hold procedures, fund local law enforcement for outreach, and audit all state expenditures on homeless programs (Assembly and Senate Republicans 2022). More progressive residents (liberals whose political world view is informed by structural forces, systemic inequities, and legacies of racial discrimination) more frequently support governmental efforts to expand housing and supportive services, and resist enforcement measures as both ineffective and discriminatory. The political divide over appropriate policy response to homelessness – stemming from division over the nature of the problem and reinforced by partisan and ideological conflict – is a first way in which homelessness is fundamentally political.

Next, if homelessness is fundamentally a housing problem as Colburn and Aldern (2022) and a broad swath of experts agree, then it begs the question: why is there such an insufficient stock of housing that low-income households can afford? One key part of the answer is unavoidably clear: *the local politics of land use*. “Battles over the control of urban space,” Jessica Trounstein (2018, 3) tells us, “have always been the primary driver of city politics.” Land use authority – decisions determining what gets built and where – are among the most prominent and potent powers designated to local governments.¹² Research by economist Edward Glaeser and his colleagues has shown that a greater number of land use regulations is associated with lower levels of housing production (Glaeser, Gyourko, and Saks

¹² In his account of the making of the country’s housing crisis, Conor Dougherty (2020, 9) goes so far as to assert that “At least at the local level, zoning is democracy, and democracy is zoning.”

2005; Glaeser and Ward 2009). One important reason for this is that land use decisions are shaped especially by mobilized groups of residents – or “neighborhood defenders” – who take advantage of local institutions like zoning requirements and planning codes to delay or prevent entirely new housing development nearby (Einstein, Glick, and Palmer 2020).¹³ The purportedly inclusive, democratic venues through which the public may offer input in local land use decision making – originally created to afford minority, underrepresented communities some protection against displacement and added control over the built environment of their neighborhoods – have been “weaponized by wealthy white communities” to prevent housing and infrastructure developments especially beneficial to lower income residents (Schuetz 2022, 136).

Affordable housing projects are among the most stereotyped and stigmatized proposals due in large part to their association with racial or ethnic minority residents (Goetz 2008; Scally and Tighe 2015; Tighe 2010; 2012) and, as such, are the most vehemently resisted by residents. This resistance is amplified even further when affordable housing developments propose to serve formerly homeless individuals. Residents resisting affordable or supportive housing in their neighborhood frequently claim that they are not opposed to such types of housing in general, but instead, have specific reservations and reasons it should not be developed near them. The accumulated success with which neighborhood defenders prevent particular housing

¹³ In an article titled “Community Input Is Bad, Actually” Demsas (2022) similarly describes how the parochial interests of neighborhood groups frequently successfully prevent projects that would provide considerable benefits to the broader (but less mobilized) community.

projects creates spill-over effects yielding starkly insufficient stocks of affordable housing across entire metropolitan regions (Schuetz 2022). Lacking sufficient institutional structures to promote the political coordination necessary to meet the affordable housing needs of the L.A. or Bay Area metro regions, the sum of neighborhood resistance to affordable housing sets the stage for rampant, rising rates of homelessness.

A third and insufficiently acknowledged reason that homelessness is an unavoidably political problem is that local policy responses and political action to address homelessness are driven most frequently by public frustrations over the downstream consequences of homelessness, not by the problem itself. Decades ago, Piven and Cloward (1971) compellingly argued that government social welfare programs in the U.S. have historically been motivated less by meeting the needs of the poor and more to tamp down on potential political activism spurred by inequality and poor living conditions. Peter Marcuse (1986) provocatively applied this same argument to governmental interventions in the housing market and implementation of building codes and standards. When it comes to homeless politics, a similar dynamic exists: local officials have traditionally adopted policies addressing homelessness in order to avoid or assuage the concerns of political actors mobilized by their frustration over the problem. However, it is generally not those experiencing homelessness, nor their frustrations or problems that motivate local action.¹⁴ Instead,

¹⁴ People experiencing homelessness and their allies have been, to be sure, mobilized in social movement organizations and have informed the politics of homelessness and public debate and framing of the issue (Bogard 2003; Cress and Snow 2000; Williams 2005). In Los Angeles and San

it is the concerns of homeowners (with their outsized influence in local elections and public meetings (Einstein, Glick, and Palmer 2020; Fischel 2001)) and local merchants and business leaders, frustrated by the visible presence of homelessness, that most shapes the design of local homeless policy. In short, what most galvanizes local action to address homeless is “not misery but the unwillingness to put up with it any longer” (Hopper and Hamberg 1986, 20).

For business leaders, developers, and assorted other “place entrepreneurs,” the presence of unsheltered homelessness, and its unavoidably visible nature – sparks friction between *use value* and *exchange value* of public urban spaces (Logan and Molotch 1987). Homelessness also incites a competition over whose use of public space should be valued more: those experiencing homelessness who lack any form of privacy and occupy public space as a last resort, or residents whose leisure or aesthetic sensibilities are impacted by the presence of visible poverty? Homeless policies have too often responded to the problems homelessness causes rather than the cause of homelessness, and this helps explain why cities have consistently adopted punitive enforcement measures to sweep the problem from prime urban spaces. Making homelessness less visible, while doing nothing for the people most impacted by the problem, alleviates the brunt of the political pressure to do something about it.

If homelessness is then viewed as a fundamentally political problem, finding better solutions to the problem necessitates understanding the power dynamics that

Francisco, the L.A. Community Action Network (LACAN) and the Coalition on Homelessness respectively have been active and influential in city politics for several decades.

shape local policymaking. The next section surveys the major, canonical perspectives on city power and assesses what they can contribute to our understanding of local homeless politics today.

Urban Politics, City Power, and Homelessness

Within the canon of research on urban politics, perspectives on city power – by which I mean the forces or dynamics that shape local policymaking – are traditionally organized into three core camps: the *pluralist*, *economic imperative*, and *regime* theoretical perspectives, or “paradigms” (Stone 2017). Additional or emerging theoretical perspectives are sometimes added alongside these three. Following Hajnal and Trounstein (2010) (and because of its particular relevance for the study at hand), I also consider how the *neo-institutionalist* view of city power may inform our understanding of local homeless policymaking.

Robert Dahl’s (1961) *Who Governs?* often serves as the figurehead for the pluralist theory of city power. Dahl and his fellow pluralists¹⁵ sought to critique the elite or “stratification theory” of American politics, dominant among post-war political scientists and sociologists, which understood political decisions as overwhelmingly influenced by a powerful, political elite.¹⁶ The pluralists disputed the

¹⁵ See Nelson Polsby’s (1963) *Community Power and Political Theory* for further development of the pluralist theory of political power.

¹⁶ Hunter (1953) is often cited as the catalyst for the vast body of elite-theory informed work that followed.

notion that power was concentrated among a particular class, and instead determined that political resources were dispersed among society, and that no single group dominated the political landscape. Based on extensive, often single-case studies of local politics, pluralists determined that the citizens most impacted and most directly concerned about a particular issue were those most likely to voice their concerns to local officials and have their demands met. In Dahl's (1961, 191) words, "because most citizens are indifferent about public matters unless public actions encroach upon their own primary activities (which is not often or for long), control over any given issue-area gravitates to a small group which happens to have the greatest interest in it." Elected officials are responsive to those interests and the preferences of the citizenry more broadly since the leaders assume that they will be held accountable for their actions in the next election, always just around the corner. The pluralist theory of city politics, in short, is a theory of groups and their ability to influence and hold their representatives accountable.

The pluralistic perspective on city power endures as a dominant and empirically supported branch of the urban politics literature highlighting a variety of ways in which local politics and policymaking responds to the demands, actions, or preferences of engaged groups within urban society. Some studies have found, for example, that in cities with more politically engaged and mobilized populations, citizens are more successful in exerting control over local development decisions (Donovan and Neiman 1992; Goetz 1994). Within any particular city, citizens grouped according to their shared *geographic, demographic, or political*

characteristics have exerted considerable influence over local policy in ways that are especially relevant for this study of the local politics of homelessness. Residents joined by shared geography – residing within the same neighborhood – have proven a powerful force for resisting any unwanted developments in their “backyard” (Dear 1992; Scally and Tighe 2015) and this politics of NIMBYism has proven particularly heated over proposals for homeless-serving housing or shelter (Dear and Gleeson 1991; Takahashi 1997). In terms of demographics, urban politics in American is indelibly entwined with the politics of race (Benjamin 2017; Enos 2016; Hajnal 2010; Oliver 2010; Sonenshein 1993; Trounstein 2018; Sugrue 1996), and given the racialized stigma of affordable housing noted above, this racialized local politics almost surely impacts local homeless policymaking. However, an even more powerful demographic category in the local politics of housing and homelessness is that of homeownership. “Local governments are dominated by homeowners,” claims Chris Elmendorf (2019, 38), who are brought together by “a vested interest in the land-use status quo.” More specifically, homeowners’ concern over protecting property values fosters resistance to proposals to upzone parcels and increase density, especially of affordable units, even though such threats to property values are generally overblown (Albright, Derickson, and Massey 2013; Sohn, Moudon, and Lee 2012; Nguyen 2005).¹⁷ Because homeowners as a group are particularly active in local politics and likely to turn out to vote in local elections, their voice is amplified

¹⁷ Though it should be noted that the impact of affordable housing developments on surrounding property values has been found to vary according to the poverty level of the neighborhood in which they are build (Diamond and McQuade 2019; Dillman, Horn, and Verrilli 2017).

and their preferences accommodated by local leaders (Fischel 2001; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Finally, partisanship and political ideology play a powerful role in shaping local policy decisions.¹⁸ The types of policies adopted by local governments and their budgetary priorities have been found to be associated with the partisan makeup and preferences of local electorates (Choi et al. 2010; Hajnal and Trounstein 2010; Palus 2010). The party affiliation of local leaders – at both the city and county level – is also associated with significant differences in spending levels and priorities (de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw 2016; 2020). Mayors’ attitudes toward redistribution generally diverge according to their party affiliation (Einstein and Glick 2018). Recent research also demonstrates that the election of a Democratic mayor is associated with increases in local production of multi-family housing (Jones, Warshaw, and de Benedictis-Kessner 2022).

A second influential perspective on city power grows out of a critical response to pluralism and asserts that economic pressures, not political action and processes, shapes local policy (Dye 1979). Paul Peterson’s (1981) cleverly titled *City Limits* is the guiding star and most fully-developed treatment of this *economic imperative* theoretical tradition. In it, Peterson contends that above all else, city governments are constrained to those policy options most likely to enhance the local economy and attract investment. Cities are understood to compete within a marketplace for mobile, middle-class residents – or “consumer-voters” (Tiebout 1956) – who are expected to

¹⁸ While useful to make the *conceptual* distinction between geographic residence and political identity, in reality there is considerable overlap given the increasing political segregation even within cities and urban neighborhoods (Brown and Enos 2021; Sussell 2013).

move to whichever locality adopts the least burdensome taxes while still providing an appealing array of public services and infrastructure (Mark Schneider 1987). The flip side of local governments pursuing economic development policies to attract desirable residents and business investment is that cities are simultaneously concerned by “the prospect of becoming a magnet for undesirable individuals” (Minkoff 2009, 534) and pursue local policies accordingly. Proposals to provide more generous social services, or pursue higher levels of redistributive policy than other nearby cities, are understood to simultaneously deter desirable residents by attracting the undesirable. Redistributive policies are also understood as primarily the responsibility of the *national* government, and the local economy of any city pursuing redistribution is bound to suffer (Peterson 1981, 77).

Given the primacy afforded to economic pressures, “Local politics is groupless politics” as Peterson (1981, 116) provocatively put it. Low levels of citizen engagement and group mobilization are viewed as “rational responses” given the meager impact such political activity is likely to achieve at the local level. The one group that does matter in shaping local policy, however, is the collection of businesses and developers sometimes referred to as the “Growth Machine” (Molotch 1976) who share a common interest in growing the local economy, increasing local property values, and attracting a steady stream of tourism and investment. The result is an increasing commodification of urban space into “new urban glamour zones” (MacLeod 2002, 605), where the local political economy is guided more by

“entrepreneurialism” than by residents’ political activity or public welfare (Harvey 1989).

This economic imperative perspective, though rarely explicitly referenced, has been particularly influential in studies of anti-homeless policies – the punitive law enforcement efforts to contain, hide, or “banish” the visibly poor. For example, writing in the late nineties (well into the “revanchist” turn Smith (1996) describes), Mitchell (1997, 313) claims that “what sets the present era, and the present wave of anti-homeless laws, apart is the degree to which such regulation has also become an important ingredient in not just expanding capital, but in either attracting it in the first place, or in protecting it once it is fixed in particular places.” Two decades later, Beckett and Herbert (2010, 30) were even more to the point, describing the evolving arsenal of anti-homeless laws “as a kind of public subsidy on behalf of downtown commercial interests.” Steffen (2012) describes a “corporate campaign against homelessness” in Atlanta driven by the local business sector and with the ultimate goal not of solving homelessness but of removing evidence of it from the downtown business district.

Regime theory, the third canonical perspective on city power, emerged with the publication of Clarence Stone’s (1989) cogent examination of politics and policymaking in Atlanta. As Stone saw it, neither mobilized, concerned citizen groups nor economic forces exerted sufficient political sway to shape local policymaking on their own. Instead, regime theory bridges the divide between the pluralist and economic imperative perspectives by asserting that effective urban governance

depends on collaborative contributions from local business, elected officials in government, and supportive swaths of the local citizenry.¹⁹ Business, government, and voters each contribute unique resources (capital, authority, and votes, respectively) to the loose knit, informal coalition of local actors with shared policy goals. These regimes may unite a different mix of partners in different cities, but all depend on a merging of publicly accountable governmental authority with the investment power of private business (Stone 1989, 6). Regimes also represent “a longstanding pattern of cooperation rather than a temporary coalition” (Mossberger and Stoker 2001, 821).

DeLeon’s (1992) compelling analysis of San Francisco’s progressive politics offers an interesting twist on the regime perspective. Instead of an informal coalition brought together to achieve policy outputs, in San Francisco, DeLeon argues, there exists an *antiregime*, a coalition united by shared progressive preferences and mobilized primarily to prevent urban growth and development. “The ultimate function of the antiregime” according to DeLeon, “is to protect community from capital” (98). The major consequence, of course – and one San Francisco grapples with still (Dineen 2022b) – is that a culture of mobilized resistance to nearly any proposed development has meant that for several decades the city has drastically underproduced the necessary levels of housing, especially affordable rental units.

¹⁹ “The genius of the concept,” claim Mossberger and Stoker (2001, 811) “is its synthesis of elements of political economy, pluralism, and institutionalism.”

My own earlier study of homeless politics in San Francisco (Amaral 2021) contended that an “anti-homeless regime” was responsible for the adoption of anti-homeless policies in the city. Though the business community and merchants strongly favored the proposed punitive laws – one banning sitting or lying on sidewalks, the other banning tents on city sidewalks – the proposals would not have become law without political authority of local politicians who favored the measures and the votes from residents of more conservative neighborhoods in the city. Other work, while not explicitly framed in terms of regime theory, has pointed to the cumulative impact of informal coalitions joining business, elected officials, and residents to promote anti-homeless laws (Beckett and Herbert 2010) or prevent the development of homeless-serving facilities (Dear and Gleeson 1991; Oakley 2002).

A fourth and final perspective on city power worth considering here has been termed the *neo-institutionalist* school of urban politics (Davies and Trounstein 2012; Lowndes 1996). Though the potential for institutions – both formal and informal – to shape local politics certainly plays a part in each of the preceding, canonical theories of city power, in this perspective institutions take top billing. The application of new institutionalist analysis to urban politics grew out of a reemergence of institutionalist research in political science more broadly, marked especially by the seminal work of March and Olsen (1984). Most broadly, new institutionalist political analysis joins with March and Olsen in collectively building “an argument that the organization of political life makes a difference” (747).

Many institution-oriented urban studies highlight the importance of informal institutions – norms and unwritten agreements and guidelines for collaboration – in shaping local policymaking, governance, and power.²⁰ Work emphasizing collaborative governing partnerships between governmental officials and private business interests (Pierre 1999; Stone 1989), or studies of the development and maintenance of the big city machine parties (e.g. Erie 1990) could be included in this informal wing of the institutionalist camp.

Other urban studies focus on the political consequences of formal institutional structures. Many authors have revealed how institutional designs associated with the reform movement of the early 20th century – especially at-large rather than district-based legislative elections – concentrates political influence on middle-class white residents, undermining the political voice of minority and lower-income communities (Alford and Lee 1968; Bridges 1997; Piven and Cloward 1988; Bridges and Kronick 1999).²¹ District-based city council elections also frequently lead to governance shaped by “prerogative,” the norm by which councilmembers’ voting patterns betray a deference to the preferences of their colleague representing the district most impacted by a proposed policy (Louthen 2020). In their study of city council voting in Los Angeles, Burnett and Kogan (2014) find considerable evidence of this practice

²⁰ In fact, Davies and Trounstein (2012) claim that urban scholars have been particularly attuned to the role of informal institutions, and perhaps to the detriment of our understanding of the role of formal institutions in city politics.

²¹ Recent research suggests that a shift from at-large to district-based elections leads to a reduced production of multifamily housing, but also seems to abate the segregated siting of this type of housing that is essential for increasing availability of affordable housing (Hankinson and Magazinnik 2021).

(which they refer to as “logrolling”) but argue that such deference is conditional; that contentious policy proposals are less likely to be decided through deferential voting.

At an even more fine-grained institutional scale, the *size* of electoral districts impacts representation and governance. Banfield and Wilson (1966, 90–91) influentially suggested that cities with more numerous but geographically smaller districts would both allow for greater citizen access and representation (especially for racial minorities) while at the same time prioritizing parochial concerns over citywide issues or interests. Muzzio and Tompkins (1989, 91) similarly agree the parochial neighborhood interests represented by more, smaller districts could both deter collaboration among local officials and inhibit “the development of a broader policy perspective” required for effectively solving citywide problems. Importantly, however, these authors note that effective leadership can help city policymaking surmount this institutional tilt toward parochialism.

Finally, and, most important for the present study, *political fragmentation* of governing institutions – the extent to which political authority is divided geographically across electoral districts (as well as between administrative departments and levels of federal government) – has been shown to significantly impact policymaking outcomes (Zhang 2013). Because fragmentation proves so central to the politics of homeless, I devote deeper attention to it in the following chapter.

My goal is not to prove or disprove any of these particular theoretical perspectives through my study of the local politics of homelessness. Rather, I am

more interested in assessing the analytical purchase each affords to understanding homeless politics in California cities today and drawing upon all useful insights available. I have reviewed major works from these perspectives both to situate my research contribution within the broader literatures on urban politics and city power and to draw out dynamics, actors, or arrangements that might potentially help differentiate the case studies I pursue. As it turns out, each theoretical perspective informs important parts of the story I tell in the following chapters. Each perspective on its own, however, also fails to provide sufficient guidance to fully understand how and why cities respond to their local homeless crisis as they do.

The importance pluralists place on the power of mobilized groups and the policy influence of those who feel especially impacted or threatened by a particular proposal is undeniably a central part of urban homeless politics today. And yet, those mobilized groups don't always get what they want, and elected officials are sometimes swayed by forces other than their loudest constituents. Groups matter, but pluralism provides little help in determining which, when, why, and how.

As Peterson (1981) and advocates of the economic imperative school correctly identify, cities are constantly constrained by limited resources and the mandates of state and federal policy. And yet, local governments in recent years have actively pursued an array of redistributive policies that stalwart supporters of this camp would find difficult to explain (Schragger 2016). The general obligation bond measure passed by voters in Los Angeles, or business tax passed by voters in San Francisco –

each bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars annually in homeless-dedicated funding – are dissonant to the central tenants of Peterson’s perspective.

Stone (1989) and regime theorists correctly call attention to the important roles played and political resources contributed by political leaders, business interests, and the electorate, but in the unique policy arena of homelessness – which braids together housing and land use policy with policing and law enforcement and social services provision – it becomes impossible to identify any coherent coalition of actors consistently involved in shaping local governing decisions. In fact, actors who join together as proponents of supportive housing development, for example, may the next day be at odds over proposed anti-camping ordinances. For many homeless policy discussions, business leaders appear entirely uninvolved.

The cumulative efforts of neo-institutionalists to highlight the influence of both formal and informal institutions populating the local political landscape clarifies our understanding of homeless politics today, but urban institutionalists haven’t yet afforded enough attention to the role norms and political culture (*informal* instructions) play in shaping the behavior of local legislators (actors in *formal* institutions). The influence of informal institutions on the process and products of formal political institutions has been demonstrated in analyses of comparative politics (Helmke and Levitsky 2004) and identified within the American political arena (Azari and Smith 2012; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). Norms and culture among elected officials, it turns out, also powerfully shape homeless policymaking at the local level today.

Rather than adopting the analytical lens of any particular perspective (or struggling to see through them all at once), I pursue what is best described as a *policy-focused* study of local homeless politics. Building upon the seminal work of Schattschneider (1960; 1963), Lowi (1964), and Schneider and Ingram (1993) among others, Hacker and Pierson (2014) advocate a policy-focused approach to American political science that positions public policy – “the exercise of public authority to achieve substantive ends” (644) – at the center of the analysis. Such an approach encourages us see policies as both outcomes (achievements over which political actors compete) as well as forces of political influence themselves, feeding back into the political system once adopted and shaping the distribution of political resources and perceptions of power, representation, and legitimacy (Mettler 2005; Pierson 1993; Soss 1999).

My policy-focused analysis of local homeless governance begins with the many (and many types) of homeless policies considered by two large Californian cities, and allows me to then investigate if and how the key variables identified in the canonical urban politics literature – mobilized groups, economic forces, coalitions, or rules and norms – impact the policymaking process. This serves as a fairly deductive approach, allowing for occasionally surprising or unexpected key explanatory variables to emerge. The approach also allows me to assemble a nuanced depiction of the political actors, institutions, and broader forces shaping the local governance of homelessness. This depiction, however, depends on a methodological approach that is sensitive enough to detect subtle forces at work.

Methodological Approach

In mid-December of 2016, the L.A. City Council considered approval of eight sites for development of permanent supportive housing on city-owned land. Public comment on the agenda item was particularly poignant and moving. As I listened, late one night, to a supportive housing resident named Jason describe how profoundly his life had improved once he found secure housing,²² I experienced a surprisingly emotional reaction. I was surely not alone. Other speakers shared similarly moving personal experiences, applauding the developers and service providers. Others passionately urged the city council to approve the proposed projects, emphasizing the desperate need for more permanent supportive housing in the city. Council President Herb Wesson commented on the impact of the testimony. “I just want to say to the folks that have come down,” he said, “your presence is really pretty powerful, and so I just want you to know that this council is seeing you, sensing you, and feeling you, and I hope that those that are watching this are seeing this as well. It’s really pretty powerful. I wanted you to know that.”

And then a man who identified himself as Wayne Spindler approached the microphone. “This is one thing everybody can agree on,” he said. “Excellent. This is

²² “I’ve seen an improvement in myself,” he said. “Ever since we’ve had stability, we’ve been improving. That’s all I can say, we’ve been improving.”

a good project. This is a good thing. This is what we should be doing.” As his time ran out, he grew more animated. “Venice is the greatest goddamn place in the city of Los Angeles, and this is going to make it better, and for that I thank you!” [LACC 12/14/16]. Spindler’s positivity and support were very much in line with other public comments on the proposed development. But that is also why I found them so strange and unexpected. You see, over the course of many months of reviewing these meetings, I had come to know Wayne Spindler to be a constant thorn in the side of the L.A. City Council. He attended nearly every session and spoke whenever possible. During each of his allotted two-minute rants, he would berate the council members, alleging rampant corruption in the most vulgar terms he could muster. He insulted individual members regularly and spoke out against any item on the agenda despite clearly having little or no knowledge what the agenda items actually proposed. He submitted comment cards with incendiary racist language and drawings, and was actually arrested for threats made against Wesson (Hamilton and Smith 2016). And so, for council members and a small cohort of us regularly attendees of city council meetings, Spindler’s comments were a shock, and probably a welcome one. Something was in the air of the council chambers that day in December. The testimony from constituents with lived experiences of homelessness proved moving to the council members, to Wayne Spindler, and to me as I “attended” the meeting via archived video recording three years after the council voted unanimously to approve the projects.

I share this story of Wayne Spindler to demonstrate – prior to a detailed explanation of what my methods *were* – what I think they *achieved*. The Spindler incident itself is not especially consequential to what I learned about homeless politics, but it is indicative of the sensitivity to the nuance of governance that my methodological approach allowed and which contributed, I believe, to the success of the study. From the beginning of this project, I was convinced that the local politics of homelessness were not nearly as obvious or the surface-level, grotesque or one dimensional as either the canonical urban politics literature or the local press might have us believe. By pursuing a methodological approach that involved listening deeply, closely, and patiently to elected officials, administrators, service providers, and members of the public as they talked for countless hours about homelessness and what should be done about it, I developed a sensitive analytical vantage point from which to scrutinize the forces shaping local homeless governance.

This study of the local politics of homelessness is a mixed-methods research endeavor. It joins archival, ethnographic analysis of city council meetings with quantitative and geographic information systems (GIS) analyses of homeless-related election results in order to depict a layered portrait of the forces shaping homeless policymaking and governance in urban California today. Chapter four, “Homelessness on the Ballot” relies primarily on quantitative and spatial tools to determine the neighborhood characteristics associated with support for five different homeless ballot measures. The methods for this analysis are described within the chapter itself. For the rest of this project, however, statistical tools play a supporting

role to the qualitative methods that support a more deductive assessment of local homeless politics.

The next three empirical chapters are based on extensive qualitative analysis of archival city council meetings, the legislative text of the associated ordinances and policies considered, program and budget reports, and assorted other policy-related documents and correspondence. I approached the archival analysis with an ethnographic sensibility, striving to experience many of the meetings as though I had been there, growing familiar with the cadence of the meetings, with the priorities, habits, and rhetorical styles of elected officials, and with conflicts and alliances among them. What we know about homelessness today relies heavily on the ethnographic studies of researchers who have imbedded themselves in and among homelessness (Anderson 1923; Hopper 2003; Snow 1992; Gowan 2010). Since my objective was to learn more about the politics of homelessness, I imbedded myself in the central site of homeless policymaking: the city council.

For both Los Angeles and San Francisco, I sought to virtually attend each meeting of the local legislature (the city council in L.A., the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco) or one of its committees during which a homeless-related policy was considered between 2008 and 2020.²³ This time span of thirteen years allowed me to assess variation in homeless policymaking in each city over time, included two national economic crises (the Great Recession in 2008 and the impact of the COVID-

²³ Los Angeles archives contain video archives of council meetings from 2008 on, so this became the starting point of the analysis. There's no solid indication that stretching the analytical timeframe back further would have significantly changed the study's major findings. And, of course, you have to draw the line somewhere!

19 pandemic in 2020), and provided enough time to establish a baseline prior to a notable, qualitative shift in homeless politics emerging in each city in roughly 2015.

The payoff of my many months of listening stems in part from cities I chose to analyze and compare. Los Angeles and San Francisco are critical cases for understanding the politics of homelessness in urban California. Both are major economic hubs of the state's "two great city-regions" and represent the 16th and 22nd largest economies in the world, respectively (Storper et al. 2015, 3). Homelessness has been a pressing problem and political issue in both cities for decades, and the two cities have consistently had among the highest total and per capita rates of homelessness in the state (and, for that matter, country). The issue has become especially acute and unavoidable in recent years as urban development in each city has made unsheltered homelessness increasingly visible after years of de facto homeless containment strategies in Skid Row (L.A.) and the Tenderloin (San Francisco). Increasingly pervasive tents and encampments scattered throughout each city have made homelessness an ever more urgent and prickly political issue in each city, motivated in part by high levels of public concern over it.²⁴ Institutionally, the cities also share district-elected legislatures and strong mayor systems of government.

The cities differ in key manners as well. While the City of Los Angeles is a municipality within the larger Los Angeles County (containing 87 other cities and a vast swath of southern California geography), in San Francisco city and county are

²⁴ By February of 2020, two thirds of residents in the regions surrounding each city indicated homelessness as a "big problem," while an additional 22-23% saw it as "somewhat of a problem" (Baldassare et al. 2020).

contiguous and represented by one government. Those in L.A. frequently point to the unique, joint city-county status of San Francisco as a sign the city is better equipped to coordinate governmental action. (This, it turns out, does not appear to be the case.) Finally, the two cities also vary in size and density, with L.A.'s nearly four million residents spread across more than 500 square miles, while the roughly 815,000 San Franciscans are collected within 47 square miles of peninsula. This variation in geography and density stand to yield contrasts in the local homeless politics landscape.

Both cities maintain comprehensive online archives of their local legislative meetings stretching back to at least to 2008, and which include broader council file management systems that facilitated my access of both the digitized meetings and the proposed legislation or reports debated within them.

Having selected my focal case cities, my time frame, and having determined the goal of attending all meetings during which a homeless policy was considered, an early challenge emerged: what counts as a homeless policy? What criteria should be applied to determine which ordinances and resolutions should be included in the analysis? One approach would have been to search the legislative texts for references to homelessness. This criterion, however, proved too strict and would have left out many revealing and indisputably homeless-related policies. Many legislative proposals that most immediately impact the lives of those experiencing homelessness – either intentionally or implicitly – actually never mention the word “homeless” within the legislation. Ordinances banning vehicular dwelling or public camping, for

example, often attempt to avoid criticism for being anti-homeless by leaving the term out of the text entirely. Relying on press accounts for guidance (as some past research on the local politics of homelessness has done (e.g., Wagner 2012)) would also yield a distorted sample, since generally only the more contentious homeless-related policy proposals receive coverage.

Instead, I chose to search the digital transcripts of all council and committee meetings for the word “homeless.” This approach directed my attention not only to proposals for which the word “homeless” was included in the legislative text, but also to all proposals for which the issue of homelessness was raised during discussion by city officials or during public comment. While this approach captured many unrelated policies that had to be weeded out,²⁵ it ultimately allowed me to identify what I am confident constitutes vast majority of proposals and legislative actions targeting the causes, conditions, or consequences of local homelessness. In all, my analysis included a total of 768 unique policy proposals (498 in Los Angeles and 270 in San Francisco). As I discuss in the following chapter, this large group was composed of a variety of homeless policy *types*.

For each identified homeless policy in each city, I attended, via digitized archives, all portions of the council and committee meetings in which it was agendized, debated, or acted upon. For more contentious or comprehensive policy actions, this meant witnessing many hours of discussion and public comment spread

²⁵ For those who attend city hall to complain about the failures of government, homelessness is frequently cited as evidence.

across a handful of committee and full council meetings before a final vote. Many other proposals received little or no comment from officials before they passed them on the consent portion of the agendas. (Oversized vehicle restrictions targeting vehicular dwelling on select city blocks in L.A. were sometimes passed in batches of dozens without any comment from elected officials or members of the public.) Most policies in the analysis fell somewhere between these two extremes. Fortunately, using a combination of digitized meeting agendas and meeting transcripts containing hyperlinks to the moment of the meeting in which the relevant comment occurred, I was able to attend and review only the portions of the meetings during which the homeless-related policies were addressed.²⁶ The result was a sort of time-lapse capture of homeless policymaking over thirteen years in two major California cities.

During my review of these many hours of local legislative meetings, I took copious notes on legislative details and amendments, parliamentary procedures, bill sponsorship, and vote tallies, and I was particularly interested in the justifications emphasized by the local politicians for their supporting or opposing a proposal. Though the legislative testimony by politicians at the federal level often seems little more than jockeying for salient soundbites, in my experience, local politicians are quite frank and upfront in explaining why they have proposed a particular ordinance or what reservations they have about the submission from one of their colleagues. They are still politicians, to be sure, and their language is strategically crafted, but

²⁶ Admittedly, my curiosity often had me linger in meetings longer than was necessary, or stick around in unrelated policy debates just to get a better sense of how local officials tackled the sundry proposals and responsibilities of local representation.

their comments to their colleagues and the public are often quite revealing of their motivations, even if they are expressed just under the surface. Many of my notes involve long, verbatim quotations of comments by elected officials, either from a speech that seemed to capture a particular agenda shaping homeless policymaking, or capturing a back-and-forth between sparring politicians that captured tensions or pitfalls of local homeless governance.

After months in the digital archives, I scoured through my notes searching for key themes that helped explain how and why homeless policymaking played out so differently in my two case study cities. Several themes had drawn attention to themselves over the course of the ethnographic archival field work: the *deference* officials afforded to their colleagues over district-specific policy proposals and, relatedly, the *authority* officials had over homeless policy in their districts. The diverging *culture* of policymaking was also a notable contrast between the two cities. As I sifted through my notes and revisited key moments of revealing legislative meetings (a definite benefit of working in the digital archives) it became apparent that these themes were woven through many policy debates captured in my analysis. Not only were these themes present and powerful, but they helped explain why the process and products of homeless-related policymaking in L.A. and San Francisco contrasted so starkly.

Ultimately, I came to identify four key policy types considered by both cities' legislatures. The political debates over these four policies effectively capture the key themes and their impact. Focusing on these policy debates serves as a relatively

controlled method for demonstrating the contrasting homeless politics in each of the two cities and how the contrasting policymaking processes yielded distinctly different policy outcomes. Developing my argument through the four controlled case-study comparisons also allows me to expand the number of “observable implications” of my central claims (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Within each case study comparison, I reference multiple other relevant policy debates encountered during my research in order to bolster my claims about the existence and impact of the key explanatory variables central to the larger argument I make.

I present a range of types of evidence in the first three chapters to build up my case including frequent direct quotations of comments made during the meetings by elected officials, agency leaders, and others. Allowing the key political actors to speak for themselves, to express their motivations, priorities, and concerns through their own words, proves to be a particularly compelling source of evidence. For each quotation or narrative descriptions of events at a particular meeting, I cite the legislative body and meeting date in brackets (e.g., “[LACC Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 5/22/2018]”). Those interested in reviewing the archived meetings for themselves may use these citations to track down the digitized recordings online.

The case studies also draw on extensive observation and analysis of public comments concerning the policy proposals in each city. For each policy proposal or agenda item considered by the local legislature, members of the public must be afforded time to make public comment on the item before any official action or

voting occurs. I documented a total of 2,904 public comments (1,556 in L.A., 1,348 from San Francisco) on the policies included in my analysis, coding each comment according to the speakers professed identity (e.g., resident, merchant, advocate, etc.), their position on the item, and the justification for that position (e.g., urging increased shelter/housing, public safety, civil rights, etc.) The analysis of public comments proved most useful in identifying the types of homeless policies that prove most politically contentious and in demonstrating a sort of systemic NIMBYism in which city-wide proposals receive far less resistance than site-specific projects, both noted in the next chapter.

The public comments also proved incredibly important in my evolving understanding and education on the local politics of homelessness; on the priorities and fears, stigma and self-interest, the pain and tragedy, and the hopeful hard work and advocacy shaping the way cities are responding to the problem today. Many of these public comments proved scathingly resonant and insightful. “The fact that you get pressure from the more fortunate does not oblige you to put their needs ahead of those who are less so,” lamented a neighborhood council representative in L.A. “This is a failure of politics,” she went on, “not people” [LACC 730/2019].

The chapters ahead shine a light on the local governing dynamics that have perpetuated this political failure in urban California for decades. In doing so, I hope they will play some productive part in promoting more effective strategies for solving the problem in the years to come.

1. THE HOMELESS POLICY ECOSYSTEM

The John Ferraro Chambers of the Los Angeles City Council were packed full for the meeting of the Homelessness and Poverty Committee on a Wednesday afternoon in September 2019. The committee chair had scheduled the hearing to solicit recommendations from “stakeholders” for how the city should allocate \$117 million it anticipated receiving in the first round of California’s Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) Program. HHAP signaled a significantly expanded role for the state in funding homelessness alleviation measures,²⁷ and advocates and services providers who had long been involved in the issue were eager to weigh in on the types of programs the state money should support. Most of the more than one hundred public speakers made the case for increasing funding for the type of service or program their organization provided. Numerous speakers, however, also addressed an entirely different policy being considered by the council but not on the day’s agenda. They urged the committee against a proposed amendment to Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 41.18, a ban on sitting, lying, or sleeping in the public right of way.

City councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, who had previously chaired the Homelessness Committee and had been deeply involved in homeless

²⁷ HHAP built upon the Homeless Emergency Assistance Program (HEAP) initiated the previous year. While Governor Brown had signed a landmark “Housing Package” of legislation in 2017 intended to expedite the production of affordable housing in California, it was under his successor, Gavin Newsom, that the state dramatically increased funding to local jurisdictions specifically to address homelessness. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Newsom’s administration also launched Project RoomKey (to lease motels for use as emergency shelter) and Project HomeKey, a longer-term endeavor to purchase motels and other existing structures for conversion into interim and permanent supportive housing.

policymaking during his tenure on the council, was struck by the many references to the sit-lie ban. He acknowledged to the assembled audience the interrelation between such enforcement measures and efforts to expand access to shelter, housing or services. “The crowd rightly points out,” he said, “even though by law we are not considering 41.18 today... it’s absolutely right that we not look at those things in isolation because we know that those things feed each other, and it’s the ecosystem that produces the results that we see” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 9/4/19].

This chapter charts the terrain of that homeless policy ecosystem and identifies relationships between the policies that populate it. To begin, I develop a typology of homeless policies, identifying the constellation of policy types that most directly impact people experiencing homelessness and their prospects for securing reliable housing. This is a fairly straightforward but nonetheless necessary analytical step since it remains rare for homeless studies to include within their scope policies aimed at providing housing and social services alongside policies shaping policing procedures alongside policies establishing decision-making authority.²⁸ Having identified the major types of homeless policies, in the next section I show how thoroughly this homeless policy ecosystem is plagued by *political fragmentation* (Zhang 2013). Homeless policies are *territorially* fragmented across urban space when district-based representatives implement homeless strategies with different priorities in response to varying preferences (and levels of resistance) expressed by constituents within the neighborhoods represent. Homeless governance is also

²⁸ Gowan (2010) and Hennigan and Speer (2019) do address the shelter/enforcement relationship.

characterized by *functional* fragmentation, with different city departments tasked with addressing different components of the complex problem, and *intergovernmental* fragmentation, with different jurisdictions and levels of government sharing responsibility for solving homelessness. Homeless policymaking is also impacted by a more cultural divide – political ideology – which palpably shapes the attitudes and activities of invested political actors.

The political fragmentation of homeless-related policies poses significant challenges for political leaders searching for effective solutions to the problem. In the final section of this chapter, I demonstrate three especially concerning ways in which political fragmentation undercuts homeless alleviation and prevention efforts. Most perniciously, territorial fragmentation engenders a sort of collective action failure whereby accumulated neighborhood resistance (often referred to as NIMBYism) to homeless-serving facilities ultimately prevents cities from solving a problem the vast majority of residents view as a top local concern. Further, the policing of “quality of life” laws only perpetuates street homelessness and its consequences by creating barriers to accessing housing assistance. Heavy and visible policing of visibly poor people on the streets shapes public attitudes toward ‘the homeless’ and dampens support for proposals to develop supportive housing or shelter. Leading with enforcement also shapes the attitudes of people experiencing homelessness toward local governmental officials and agencies, fostering a justifiable skepticism toward offers of shelter or supportive services. The consequences of the political

fragmentation of the homeless policy ecosystem poses significant policymaking hurdles that must be overcome before any effective local solution can be achieved.

While the policy types and political dynamics identified in this chapter can be found in cities throughout California (as well as in urban areas throughout the United States), the analysis draws on the ethnographic archival analysis of Los Angeles and San Francisco described previously. The policy types I designate and the examples I provide are based upon my review of all homeless-related policies considered by the local legislatures between 2008 and 2020. This sample includes a total of 768 unique policy proposals (498 in Los Angeles and 270 in San Francisco). My understanding of the political dynamics that shape the policymaking processes of the various policy types is based on hundreds of hours of ethnographic analysis of the city council and committee meetings during which the policymaking occurred. My understanding of public attitudes toward various homeless-related policy types is substantially informed by my review and analysis of 2,892 public comments (1,544 in Los Angeles and 1,348 in San Francisco) made before the local legislatures during meetings in which the proposals were considered.

Ultimately, the goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that solving homelessness at the local level means solving the problems of political fragmentation of homeless governance. If homelessness is indeed a political problem, as I contend, then fragmentation is the major political challenge local officials face. With these political challenges established, the following two chapters investigate how and why officials in Los Angeles and San Francisco achieved notably diverging levels of

success in addressing such fragmentation and in generating the comprehensive, coordinated strategies – built upon collective commitment to addressing the problem – upon which the reduction and prevention of homelessness depends.

A TYPOLOGY OF HOMELESS POLICIES

What counts as a homeless policy?²⁹ As I define it, a homeless policy is any formal rule, law, regulation, or established governmental practice whose primary impact most tangibly affects the lives of people experiencing or most imminently at risk of homelessness. This includes, of course, policies that are overtly described as responses to homelessness, like establishing emergency shelters or providing shower and sanitation services to those living on the streets. However, I also include a number of policies whose legislative text may make no mention of homelessness, policies that are even described by their proponents as explicitly *not* targeting the homeless. These are generally enforcement policies, like laws banning sitting on sidewalks or camping in parks, that could *feasibly* be enforced against anyone but *effectively* most heavily target those lacking reliable private shelter.

I deliberately use the plural *policies* in naming the typology to avoid any implication that responses to homelessness are unified, cohesive, or motivated by a single purpose. Peter Marcuse (1986) influentially critiqued the term “housing

²⁹ Definitions are difficult and politically contentious in the homeless arena (Blau 1992; Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010). The border between who officially counts as homeless and who does not, for example, is often blurry, disputed, and shifts depending on the criteria designated, despite the significant policy implications such definitions entail.

policy” for its implicit connotation of a coordinated effort to provide poor people with adequate housing, when historically, the provision of affordable housing was more often motivated by efforts to diffuse political unrest. Many homeless policies I include in the typology are motivated not so much to solve the problem of homelessness but to solve the problems homelessness causes for housed city residents and businesses. While some homeless policies strive to assist people experiencing homelessness, others are only intended to make them less visible or push them further away, often in effort to assuage residents frustrated by the encampments on their sidewalks or the people sleeping on their doorsteps. In this way, many homeless policies are also efforts to curtail political unrest, but not of those experiencing homelessness themselves but of housed residents aggrieved and mobilized by their visible presence.

To set scope of my typology, it may be useful to identify several of the boundaries dividing between policies included and those excluded from my analysis. For example, I have not included *every* proposal related to affordable housing, even though lack of affordable housing is certainly the most pressing driver of homelessness in California. Affordable housing policies broadly involve a much larger target population than those immediately in or at risk of homelessness. I have, however, included in the analysis any affordable housing project in which units were explicitly reserved for the formerly homeless. I also included all policies involving single room occupancy (SRO) hotels since, as an advocate from the ACLU in Los Angeles put, “these hotels are the last step before homelessness and the first step to

getting out of homelessness” [LACC, 5/6/2008]. I have not included policies addressing conservatorship, Laura’s Law, or the involuntary treatment of those with suffering from mental illness in the analysis. Though mental illness is a prominent concern intersecting with homelessness, the scope of such laws stretches far beyond the homeless population. Policies involving the provision of mental health services directly to people experiencing homelessness were included. In San Francisco, I have not included debate over the formation of the Community Justice Center in 2008, despite concerns from homeless advocates that it would serve as “a homeless court” (sparking defiant retorts to the contrary from supporters). Again, the purview of the program extended far beyond those experiencing homelessness. I have included programs run by courts or City Attorney’s offices that provided legal services or citation clinics to people experiencing homelessness.

The vast majority of homeless-related policies encountered during my analysis fall within four key categories: housing & shelter, supportive services, enforcement, and authority. Table 1.1 lays out the typology, and in what follows, I describe and provide examples of the categories included within it.

Table 1.1. A typology of homeless policies.

Policy Type	Sub-type	Institution of Responsibility
Housing & Shelter	Interim Housing/ Emergency Shelter	Multiple: Housing/ Homelessness Dept.; Public Works; Public Health
	Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Multiple: Housing Dept.; Health Dept.; Social Services
	Subsidy/Voucher Program	Housing Authority; Housing Dept.
Service Provision	Health and Wellness	Public Health; Social Services
	Basic Needs	Public Works; Streets & Sanitation
	Case Management	Social Services; nonprofit partners
	Legal/Citation Clinics	City Attorney's Office
	Employment	Community Development
Enforcement	Behavior	Police Department; Sheriff; Parks Dept.
	Belongings	Police; Public Works; Sanitation
Authority	Land use/zoning	Planning Department; City Council; State Legislature
	Shelter Crisis Declaration	City Council; State Legislature
	Oversight Committee/ Agency	Multiple
	New department, agency, and/or staffing	Local Legislative or Executive Branch.
	Ballot measures	Multiple

Housing & Shelter

The most immediate step toward addressing the core condition of homelessness involves policy actions aimed at providing housing or temporary shelter to those who lack them. Three general, non-exclusive housing/shelter strategies are available to local governments. They may develop *interim housing* (which have historically taken the form of ‘emergency shelters’), intended as temporary arrangements to get people off the street while more permanent solutions are sorted

out. These are frequently managed by nonprofit organizations and faith-based institutions, traditionally consisting of congregate settings of many beds or cots filling a large room. Historically, gaining access to limited shelter beds has required adherence to strict social regulations (placing limits on the number of belongings, dividing inhabitants from their domestic partners or pets, requiring sobriety) that deterred many who lacked reliable shelter.³⁰ More recently, Los Angeles and San Francisco (along with many other cities) have pursued “low barrier” shelter models (called Bridge Home sites in L.A., “navigation centers” in San Francisco) which adhere to a Housing First³¹ philosophy, an evidence-based best practice emphasizing *voluntary* service provision over social regulation and restrictions, and affording residents incrementally more privacy. I follow the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in applying the term “emergency” to this form of shelter somewhat reluctantly since numerous residents of such shelters actually reside within them for long stretches of time. Local investments to expand shelter capacity, while offering cities a more immediate strategy for addressing unsheltered street homelessness, are frequently critiqued for creating only temporary solutions while failing to grapple with the structural causes of homelessness.

³⁰ Many justifications are expressed by those reluctant stay in emergency shelters. Many youth and people who identify as LGBTQ recall experiences of being targeted with harassment in congregate shelter settings, or example. Others complain that the many hours of waiting in line required to access a shelter bed leaves little time to do anything else.

³¹ The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) has established in 2017 in part to ensure state-funded homeless housing programs adopted Housing First practices. SB 1380, the legislation that created Cal ICH, refers to Housing first as an approach that “uses housing as a tool, rather than a reward, for recovery...”

Local governments can also pursue policies to develop *permanent supportive housing* (PSH). PSH is generally intended to provide long-term housing for people experiencing what HUD defines as “chronic” homelessness, those who have lacked reliable shelter for at least a year.³² Often, PSH developments consist of apartment buildings with onsite case management or social service facilities, but they may also involve scattered site housing or have off-site service facilities. Consensus has grown over the last decade that PSH is a crucial and effective strategy of alleviating homelessness, with research showing both that PSH significantly improves the likelihood of keeping the chronically homeless housed (Raven, Niedzwiecki, and Kushel 2020) and that communities that invest in PSH tend to see reductions in local rates of homelessness (Byrne et al. 2014). Cities are not developers (as public officials are keen to remind their critics) and so generally do not develop the PSH projects themselves. Local governments can, however, facilitate their development by providing financial incentives (or city land) to nonprofit, affordable housing developers. The development of PSH often takes several years from the time a project is proposed to the day the residents can move in, slowed both by a lengthy entitlement process³³ and by resistance and lawsuits from neighborhood residents or businesses. As a result, PSH developments can involve fairly high per-unit price tags. For example, nearly three years after Los Angeles voters approved the 2016 Measure HHH – a \$1.2 billion general obligation bond to fund the development of 10,000 PSH

³² A designation of “chronic homelessness” generally also requires attendant disability or experiences with mental health or substance use problems.

³³ The “entitlement process” generally refers to a series of authorizations and approvals that a development must achieve prior to being issued a building permit.

units – an audit by the city controller indicated that the median cost per unit for projects under construction was \$531,000, and no HHH projects had yet been completed (Galprin 2019b).³⁴ Investing in the development of permanent housing for formerly homeless people is thus frequently critiqued for failing to address homelessness at the speed and urgency the crisis requires.

A third approach is to address homelessness through the existing, private market by providing *housing vouchers*. Housing agencies administer HUD’s Housing Choice Voucher program (often referred to as Section 8 vouchers) which subsidizes rental costs for very low-income households, but cities also can develop their own housing voucher programs to address homelessness. “Rapid rehousing” programs, for example, subsidize rent (and may also cover costs involved in moving, acquiring furniture, etc.) for families on the verge of homelessness or who have recently lost reliable shelter.

Proposals to develop new homeless-serving housing or shelter are among the most politically contentious policies city governments consider. This is especially the case when specific developments – sited to be built on specific parcels and in specific neighborhoods – are up for approval. This geographically-specific political controversy is revealed in table 1.2 below. It shows that in Los Angeles, for example, citywide housing or shelter policies received support from more than three quarters of all individuals who made public comments on the proposals and were countered by

³⁴ It should be noted that the same audit indicated that city funds covered only about 30% of each unit’s cost.

only marginal opposition. For site-specific housing or shelter proposals, on the other hand, just over half of public comments expressed support, while more than 40% of public comments expressed opposition.³⁵

Table 1.2. Public Comments by Policy Type, 2008-2020.

Policy Type	Total	<u>Los Angeles</u>		Total	<u>San Francisco</u>	
		Favor	Oppose		Favor	Oppose
Housing & Shelter	891	63.7% (568)	25.5% (227)	822	76.8% (631)	13.7% (113)
<i>Citywide</i>	397	77.6% (308)	4.5% (18)	435	78.6% (342)	5.7% (25)
<i>Site-specific</i>	494	52.8% (261)	42.3% (209)	387	74.7% (289)	22.7% (88)
Services	239	55.2% (132)*	10.5% (25)	189	77.8% (147)	6.3% (12)
Enforcement	450	38% (171)	46.2% (208)	366	29.2% (107)	62.6% (229)
Authority	178	82.6% (147)	9.6% (17)	158	73.4% (116)	4.4% (7)
Total	1544			1348		

Note: Policy types are not exclusive.

* 33% neither for nor against.

Service Provision

Local governments can facilitate the provision of a range of services intended either to support the formerly homeless in maintaining stable housing or to help those on the streets meet their basic human needs. *Health and wellness* services involve the provision of medical attention and treatment for both physical and mental health issues as well as substance use disorders. In U.S. cities, health-based services are often provided by county governments through their public health departments (or, as in San Francisco, their “street medicine” teams), by local hospitals with mobile units,

³⁵ In San Francisco, both citywide and site-specific proposal were supported by about three quarters of public comments, though opposition was notably higher for site-specific proposals (22.7%) than for citywide proposals (5.7%).

or in partnership with local nonprofit organizations.³⁶ Services providing *basic needs* involve the provision of sanitation facilities (portable bathrooms and showers), food and water, laundry, as well as storage options where people lacking reliable shelter can keep their belongings secure. *Case management* services are broadly intended to connect people experiencing homelessness with other services, resources (including housing), or entitlements (e.g., benefits from the Social Security or Veteran’s Affairs Administrations). *Legal services* like citation clinics assist individuals in finding manageable ways to deal with burdensome, outstanding fines or penalties (often issued for ‘quality of life’ or “anti-homeless” measures addressed below) or bench warrants that are frequently issued when an individual fails to appear in court. *Employment services* may provide skills or training to improve job prospects and readiness or may selectively hire the current or formerly homeless for particular jobs. Generally, service type policy proposals ignite fairly low levels of public interest and little mobilized opposition.

Enforcement

Homelessness, as one particularly dire manifestation of poverty, is addressed by local governments not only through their efforts to provide assistance but also through policing of the visibly poor. Though the legislative text of homeless enforcement measures rarely explicitly mentions “homelessness,” the laws target

³⁶ In 2021, the California State Legislature passed AB 369 intended to expand the provision of street medicine to people experiencing homelessness through the state’s Medi-Cal program.

public actions and conditions that are often associated with and unavoidable for people lacking reliable private living space.

Enforcement measures targeting *behaviors* include laws banning sitting or lying on sidewalks, blocking the public right of way, sleeping in public parks, dwelling in vehicles, along with an array of other anti-loitering ordinances. As homeless advocates frequently lament, these laws afford police and other street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980) vast discretion over when and where they should be enforced, yielding biased implementation. Behavior enforcement measures also include bans on begging or panhandling, restrictions that are often constrained (as a result of legal challenges) to particular areas (e.g., panhandling near ATMs or on street medians) or of particular qualities (e.g., “aggressive” panhandling).

Enforcement measures also target the *belongings* of people lacking reliable shelter which must necessarily be kept in public space. Laws banning tents on sidewalks or in public areas like parks or greenways fall into this sub-type. Also in this category are laws prohibiting the storage of personal belongings in public spaces. The authority these laws give to police and sanitation department workers is used to remove encampments. In response to litigation by homeless advocates, city authorities are increasingly required to post notice for an established period of time prior to removing personal or “bulky” items, after which items often must be stored (not destroyed) for a prescribed period of time. Los Angeles Municipal Code 56.11 is one such enforcement policy and targets both personal items and tents in public space. The legislative text defines the motivating intent behind the ordinance:

“The unauthorized use of public areas for the storage of personal property interferes with the rights of other members of the public to use public areas for their intended purposes and can create a public health or safety hazard that adversely affects residential and commercial areas.”

As the description indicates, officials advocating enforcement measures justify their necessity by arguing that the rights of housed residents and businesses must be balanced with the rights afforded people experiencing homelessness. The ambiguity of the laws allows such officials to claim that they are not criminalizing poverty, but instead promoting the “quality of life” of all city residents.³⁷ Critical geographers, sociologists, and legal scholars are more inclined to describe enforcement laws as “anti-homeless” (Mitchell 1997; 1998a; 1998b).

Enforcement policies, like site-specific shelter proposals, prove especially contentious. In both Los Angeles and San Francisco, majorities of public comments opposed enforcement policy proposals. Committed homeless advocates (like those from the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN) or the San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness) often express deep concerns to local officials about enforcement policies, their dubious legality, and the detrimental consequences for people on the streets. Neighborhood residents, merchants and business associations, and law enforcement counter by supporting the laws as another tool for addressing safety concerns, harassment, and blight in city neighborhoods. These policing

³⁷ In a dissenting opinion in the Jones case: “Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) § 41.18(d) does not punish people simply because they are homeless. It targets *conduct*—sitting, lying or sleeping on city sidewalks—that can be committed by those with homes as well as those without.”

practices must be acknowledged as a major component of the homeless policy ecosystem, especially because their intention is not so much to solve the problem of homelessness but to solve the problems that homelessness causes for nearby housed residents and businesses.

Authority

A final type of homeless policy— what I categorize as *authority*-type policies— can be thought of as *decisions about making decisions* about homelessness. Though in the past many of these policies were probably more often studied by scholars of urban planning than by homeless-focused researchers, by determining who makes decisions and how, policies of this type significantly shape the homeless response strategies that cities pursue. Land use and zoning regulations are among the most pervasive expression of this type, constraining (often significantly) the urban areas in which shelters or group supportive housing may be developed, for example. In California, legislation at the state level has set requirements for certain zoning designation that must permit emergency shelters, but local governments still wield vast authority over what kind of housing developments are permitted in which neighborhoods. Another especially consequential authority-type policy are decisions inscribed in planning code determining which homeless-related housing developments may be approved through a *ministerial process* – where the city planning department authorizes any development project that conforms to established requirements – as opposed to a *discretionary review process*, where city officials are

granted authority to approve projects based on more subjective evaluations. Discretionary approval processes, of course, perpetuate the outsized power of NIMBY activists to prevent shelter or affordable housing development. In San Francisco, every land use variance is determined through a discretionary review process (Elmendorf 2022).

Local officials in California, using power granted to them by the state legislature, can also bring down administrative barriers by declaring a local “shelter crisis.” In doing so, local officials thereby grant themselves the authority to surmount the often onerous regulatory review process that slows shelter siting. The local legislatures in both Los Angeles and San Francisco issued such a declaration during the years analyzed. Officials can also enact legislation exempting certain types of development – most relevantly, emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing – from the environmental review process required by laws like the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Such exemptions can help speed up the notoriously slow (and in turn, expensive) process of developing housing and shelter for the homeless by snipping the claws of neighborhood resistance.³⁸

Authority-related homeless policies also include decisions that assign the institutional home base of homeless strategy- and policy-making. As we will see, as homelessness became increasingly visible, unavoidable, urgent, and contentious, both Los Angeles and San Francisco took actions to adjust authority over homeless

³⁸ Note, however, that local officials have frequently used CEQA appeals to block proposals for reasons unrelated to and unauthorized under CEQA guidelines. See Knight (2021) for an example in San Francisco, and the opinion piece by The Editorial Board (2018) of the Los Angeles Times for an L.A. example, both receiving considerable critical attention.

polycymaking. In L.A., the city council took on an increased level of authority over the issue, while in San Francisco, the mayor created a new homeless agency within the executive administration. Several decades earlier, tension (and a lawsuit) between the city and county of L.A. led to the formation of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, or LAHSA, a joint-powers agreement granted responsibility for administering homeless-focused programming and disbursing federal funding throughout much of the county. (How much authority LAHSA actually possesses has been called into question by a handful of investigations into homeless governance in L.A., several of which depict LAHSA as a weak agency caught between the competing demands of city and county officials.)³⁹ In early 2020, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors considered a proposal to create a new oversight committee to oversee actions of the city’s new homeless department, which, had it passed, would have assumed authorities previously possessed by the mayor. (The measure failed after the mayor’s allies expressed concern that she would not be able to appoint a majority of the commissioners.)⁴⁰

One final form of authority-assigning homeless policy – one which proves particularly consequential in the years analyzed – consists of homeless-related ballot measures. Ballot measures may propose to establish new sources of homeless-

³⁹ See “We’re Not Giving Up: A plan for homelessness governance in Los Angeles” (Sonenshein 2021) and the Los Angeles Chief Legislative Analyst’s report on “Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Governance” (Tso 2021). City councilmember (and mayoral candidate) Joe Buscaino expressed his more critical and dramatic views on the agency in an op-ed titled “LAHSA has failed to do its job effectively. Let’s end it.”

⁴⁰ In the November 2022 election, San Francisco voters finally approved a revised proposal for an oversight committee for the city’s homeless department.

dedicated funding (through increased taxes or municipal bonds, for example,) and occasionally propose new enforcement mechanisms but, in themselves, are only *proposals*, initiated by a collection of elected officials or via initiative. The actual decision over whether that proposal should be adopted is left to local voters.

Considerable strategizing goes into crafting the particular contours of ballot measures to attract sufficient voter support, and ballot measures proposing new enforcement measures are often critiqued by advocates for being more about mobilizing voters than about effective policy solutions.

FRAGMENTED LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF HOMELESSNESS

In her compelling study of the urban politics of architectural preservation, Yue Zhang (2013) calls attention to the policymaking consequences of *political fragmentation*. Fragmentation exists when decision making authority is divided – or fragmented – across different jurisdictions or institutions of government, as opposed to being centralized under the control of a single, decision making body. Zhang identifies three key types of political fragmentation: territorial, functional, and intergovernmental. In each case, fragmentation matters because it shapes the political incentives for those in power to pursue (or prevent) particular policy alternatives. Zhang also argues that, in general, fragmentation “acts as a filtering mechanism that creates a tendency for blockage in the policy process” (8). Fragmentation, then, creates additional veto points at which policies or projects can be delayed or denied.

As I show below, local homeless governance is impacted by all three forms of political fragmentation which, collectively, pose significant hurdles to achieving comprehensive and coordinated homeless reduction strategies. In this section, I describe the territorial, functional, and intergovernmental fragmentation of local homeless governance, and then call attention to how another, more cultural form of division – political ideology – is woven into the other forms of fragmentation and debates over homelessness more broadly. Along the way, I argue that for local governments to effectively reduce and prevent homelessness, they will need to develop deliberate solutions to overcome the political fragmentation that characterizes the homeless policy ecosystem.

Territorial Fragmentation

Territorial fragmentation is pervasive in homeless governance and presents perhaps the most daunting barrier to solving the problem today. Jurisdictional boundaries drawn across urban geographies inform policy preferences of elected officials, enforcement practices by “street-level bureaucrats” in police and public works departments, and ultimately yield a fractured landscape of representation and responsiveness.

In the big urban centers of California today, legislative power is divided among local officials who are elected to represent particular districts.⁴¹ City council

⁴¹ All ten of the largest California cities elect city council members through district elections. Lawsuits and pressure from grassroots organizations following the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 are making district representation increasingly pervasive in cities throughout the state (Plummer 2019).

members thus face the electoral prerogative to pursue policies that are responsive to the desires or concerns of their territorially-constrained constituencies. District representatives also generally rule over their little fiefdoms with vast authority, wielding considerable influence over projects and policies contained within the neighborhoods they represent. This authority is particularly pronounced when it comes to housing and development proposals. Council members – whether formally or informally (and sometimes illegally⁴²) – have considerable say over what gets developed and where within their districts. They may employ this influence to encourage modification of project dimensions (the height, number of units, or parking availability, for example) to accommodate concerns expressed by community members, or may urge mixed-use projects to include retail space on the ground floor of an otherwise residential development. Neighborhood resistance motivated by “Not in my backyard” or NIMBY-oriented sentiments has most notoriously been directed toward proposed affordable housing developments.⁴³ The resistance is fueled by an array of stigmatized and racialized attitudes toward affordable housing and its prospective tenants, prejudices that have proved particularly effective at mobilizing neighborhood residents. The district-elected representatives, for their part, are particularly sensitive to the demands of their most mobilized and vocal constituents.

⁴² L.A. City Councilmember Jose Huizar – whose district contained Skid Row and who played a prominent role in the city’s homeless policymaking described in the following chapters, was arrested in 2020 on bribery and racketeering charges. Federal prosecutor alleged he used his authority (especially as chair of the Land Use committee) to extract bribes from developers in return for favorable treatment for their projects (Zahniser, Reyes, and Rubin 2020).

⁴³ In his seminal essay on the topic, Dear (1992, 288) defines NIMBYism as “the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighborhood.”

And, while not always the case, when voting on a proposed project or policy, council members frequently defer to their colleague who represents the district containing the proposal at stake. Such deference is expected to be reciprocal and serves as an informal institution shaping local policymaking in many American cities (Louthen 2020).⁴⁴

Homeless-serving development proposals only further inflame the prejudices commonly associated with affordable housing projects, mobilizing committed (and often emotional) neighborhood resistance. When proposals to develop permanent supportive housing or to construct navigation centers come before local legislatures, they are often accompanied by neighborhood residents eager to convince officials that the project should be built somewhere – anywhere – else. “The homeless,” as conceived by the general public as some sort of all-inclusive target population,⁴⁵ represent among the most stigmatized groups in American society (Phelan et al. 1997) and when faced with the prospect of housing or a shelter being developed to serve members of that group, neighborhood residents and merchants raise all sorts of objections.⁴⁶ Some may raise concerns about safety, crime, or harassment, arguing perhaps that inhabitants of the proposed project may pose a threat to children at a

⁴⁴ Chicago’s style of this reciprocal deference, termed “aldermanic prerogative,” is perhaps the most famous but this same governing dynamic shapes policymaking in other cities, including Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia (Grabar 2021).

⁴⁵ In reality, the only real unifying characteristic of people experiencing homelessness is that they lack reliable housing, or, as Hopper and Hamberg (1986, 13) put it, “the only sure thing these people have in common is the one thing they all lack.”

⁴⁶ According to Phelan et al. (1997, 332), “identifying a person as being homeless, rather than eliciting compassion or reducing blame, engenders a degree of stigma over and above that attached to poverty.”

nearby school or park, and implicitly associating people experiencing homelessness with crime and social deviance. Others may raise concerns about the impact on local businesses, on home property values, or on neighborhood aesthetics, equating homelessness with some form of blight. As such overtly negative attitudes toward homelessness have become increasingly faux pas (especially in liberal urban California), some members of neighborhood resistance have gotten creative in their justifications for opposing homeless-serving sites so as to avoid being branded a “NIMBY.” One speaker before the L.A. City Council claimed that a proposed supportive housing development was not qualified for CEQA exemption because it fell within a tsunami zone, for example. Others have rallied evidence of environmental contaminants found on or near proposed sites, claiming the contamination would pose health risks to the imagined formerly homeless residents. Among the commonly expressed concerns is that siting housing, shelter, or services for the homeless in a particular neighborhood will serve as a magnet, attracting more and more homelessness to that neighborhood, and exacerbating all the concerns associated with them. These concerns are so frequent and pronounced that shelter siting proposals are often accompanied by promises of “special enforcement zones” surrounding the shelters in which policing of anti-camping and loitering laws will be more stringently enforced.

It is often the geographical proximity to a specific project that elicits the neighborhood resistance. Those who show up to object to a particular proposal often voice support, *in general* or *in theory* or *in concept*, for the city’s commitment to

solutions like supportive housing, shelter, or services. Absent any strong, competing incentive, these claims and concerns will likely prove quite compelling for district representatives keenly aware of how effectively the mobilized resistance to a homeless shelter could be redirected into resistance to their reelection campaign.⁴⁷ When all district representatives face comparable constituent resistance, and officials defer to one another over proposals for shelter or housing in their respective districts, it means that any proposal to develop a homeless-serving project in any particular place faces a steep, uphill political battle.

It is not just authority over supportive housing, shelter, and services that is fragmented according to jurisdictional boundaries. Authority over enforcement and policing is also fragmented across urban space, generating striking differences in homeless-related law enforcement and encampment “clean-up” practices. Territorially fragmented enforcement practices may be caused by different preferences or priorities of the district-elected representatives who, again, are particularly attuned to constituent concerns. City Council members, as they have in L.A., legislate their own authority to designate particular street segments on which sitting or lying on the sidewalk is expressly prohibited, or where oversize vehicle parking is banned. But even absent this direct and formal authority over where and how strictly homeless-related laws should be enforced, local officials coordinate

⁴⁷ Some more progressive officials do, to be sure, push back on such neighborhood resistance. For example, L.A. City Councilmember Mike Bonin responded to such testimony by noting that “a solution, in concept, doesn’t get anybody off the streets. A solution, in concept, does not remove encampments from in front of your homes or your children’s schools. A solution “in concept” is not a solution. It’s only a solution when it’s in application” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 12/5/18].

closely with police and other city departments to shape policing and encampment clean up practices within their districts.

The uneven enforcement practices are not only the result of different priorities of district-elected officials, however. As “street-level bureaucrats” (Lipsky 1980), police officers respond to community-level pressures that inform enforcement practices, sometimes frustrating local officials. San Francisco Supervisor Ronen, for example, lamented “the fact that police let things happen, that the homeless department lets things happen, in certain neighborhoods, and they don’t in others” [BOS 12/17/2019]. Her colleague Supervisor Walton expressed concern that 311 service calls determined regional responsiveness to homeless-related concerns “when we know certain communities don’t call government as much as others” [BOS 7/23/2019], insinuating that many of the residents he represented (including racial minorities and lower-income residents) received lower levels of city services because they were less likely to contact government directly. Thus, territorial fragmentation should be understood to impact not just *policymaking* – whether or not a proposal will come to fruition – but also the *implementation* of particular policies, especially those related to policing public space.

Functional Fragmentation

As the “Institution of Authority” column in the typology indicates, there are numerous agencies within the bureaucracy of local government that play a role in addressing homelessness (along with the consequences inherent in having thousands

of people living unsheltered in city streets, parks, and overpasses). It is still fairly rare, however, for any of these departments to be organized around the specific goal of ending or preventing homelessness. (As we will see, San Francisco’s Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, created in 2016, is an exception to this generalization, though not one that effectively addressed the fragmented policy landscape.) As a result, local governments rarely have a single, central agency tasked with shaping homeless policymaking or the implementation of reduction and prevention strategies.⁴⁸

Instead, a splintered collection of city departments become involved in the components of homelessness that fall under their policy purview. Local housing departments and public housing authorities coordinate the development of affordable and supportive housing for formerly homeless people, orchestrating state and federal funds intended to support such developments, and administering rental subsidy programs like Section 8. County public health departments generally have authority over mental health services and case management provided in many permanent supportive housing facilities, coordinating substance use treatment, and addressing the public health consequences of people living on the streets. Public works and city

⁴⁸ All regions of California (and for that matter, the broader United States) are assigned to a *continuum of care* (CoC). Designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), these regions are generally contiguous with county lines, though occasionally cities will be assigned a continuum distinct from the surrounding county (as is the case for Pasadena in L.A. County) while sparse rural counties are often merged together into a continuum. CoCs are used for organizing biennial homeless census “point-in-time” counts, accounting for housing and resources available for addressing homelessness, and for allocating funds from federal programs for reducing homelessness. Beyond these accounting and grantmaking responsibilities, the CoCs do little to actually coordinate local homeless strategies and are frequently tangential to any actual policymaking process.

sanitation departments are charged with keeping streets clean and clear, and often play a large role in removing or cleaning encampments. Police departments are responsible for enforcing the wide array of laws that generally target behaviors or conditions that are unavoidable for individuals lacking reliable access to shelter and privacy. Often responding to citizen complaints (Herring 2019), the police are charged with enforcing laws prohibiting sitting or lying on sidewalks, camping in public, dwelling in vehicles, or any of the many other “anti-homeless” laws purportedly maintaining “quality of life.” Police officers have also traditionally been relied upon as the first response to people experiencing mental health crises in public. More recently (and following well-publicized instances of policy misconduct), local governments have become increasingly receptive to claims that law enforcement is not the most appropriate first point of contact with individuals in psychological duress, and have considered (or legislated) shifting resources from police departments to “policing alternatives” and unarmed intervention tactics (Batko et al. 2020).⁴⁹

These and other city departments not only address just their narrow component of the homeless crisis but do so from a distinct perspective shaped by their departmental mandate.⁵⁰ This becomes particularly apparent when department leaders appear before city councils to advocate for policy proposals being considered. As

⁴⁹ In the spring of 2021, Los Angeles reallocated \$89 million away from the LAPD to fund a variety of alternate services, including those for people experiencing homelessness (D. Smith and Zahniser 2021).

⁵⁰ Committees within city councils similarly approach the issue with priorities shaped by the policy responsibilities they have been designated. A council’s Land Use, Public Safety, or Housing committees may each address the same homeless policy, but are surely motivated by diverging priorities.

director of the Los Angeles Housing Department, Mercedes Marquez – motivated by the departmental goal of protecting and expanding the city’s portfolio of affordable housing – advocated legislation that would preserve single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels in the city, calling it “one of the most pro-tenant ordinances that have ever come before this city council in its entire history” [LACC 5/6/2008]. Police officers, on the other hand, charged with law enforcement and public safety, are more likely to view homelessness through the lens of criminality, and tend to support proposals that will expand their enforcement toolkit. San Francisco’s deputy chief of police advocated a new sit-lie ban in 2010, arguing that it would help police officers disperse criminals before they could do harm, saying “the goal here is not to wait for a criminal act. The goal here is to take some action and then prevent a criminal act from occurring in the first place,” [BOS 3/1/10]. Similarly, an LAPD senior lead officer assigned to Skid Row claimed that a proposed law prohibiting bulky personal items on sidewalks would help the police root out illegal items and actions being hidden in encampments. “Homelessness is not a crime” he said, “but we cannot deny that the criminal element has infiltrated the homeless community where I serve” [LACC 11/17/15].

Functional fragmentation, and the assorted and sometimes contradictory agency priorities it instills into local governance, poses additional challenges for creating comprehensive, coordinated homeless strategies. Absent incentives for interdepartmental coordination and cooperation, city agencies will address their

narrow, homeless-related responsibilities in ways that may prove inefficient and counterproductive.

Intergovernmental Fragmentation

Intergovernmental fragmentation is the final type identified in Zhang's typology and exists when multiple levels of government possess authority over a particular policy area. In a federal system in which local governments receive the bulk of their homeless-dedicated funding from HUD and are constrained by state laws regarding land use and environmental protection, the impact of functional fragmentation upon homeless governance is assured. And while the focus here is on *local* politics, it is worth briefly noting how the state and federal government exert influence over local government policymaking in this arena. At the federal level, for example, HUD sets priorities for the types of homeless housing and shelter projects that will be funded. Over the last decade or so, as HUD has embraced permanent supportive housing as its preferred housing strategy, this has meant reductions in available funding for emergency shelters or transitional housing. HUD and the federal government, again wielding the power of the purse, establish priorities on populations to prioritize in homeless reduction investments. During President George W. Bush's administration, HUD prioritized "chronic" homelessness. Under President Obama, homeless veterans became a population of particular interest and focused investment, yielding striking results and proving that increased investment in the particular needs

of a population could generate significantly improved outcomes.⁵¹ Following a federal court's ruling in *Martin v. Boise* that sitting on public sidewalks could not be criminalized in the absence of adequate shelter alternatives, Obama's justice department issued a supportive statement urging against the criminalization of homelessness. HUD followed suit modifying its scoring criteria determining how federal funds would be allocated among the country's continuums of care to allocate points to applicants who could demonstrate efforts to decriminalize homelessness. As the executive director of LAHSA alerted the L.A. City Council, the adoption of any ordinance perceived as criminalizing homeless could threaten federal funding. "We're certainly under scrutiny," he warned.

The state's involvement in homelessness has expanded dramatically in recent years. As late as 2014, the director of San Francisco's Social Services Agency asserted to the Board of Supervisors that the state of California had "abdicated its responsibility towards homelessness and left it to the cities and counties to deal with" [BOS Budget and Finance Committee, 2/5/14].⁵² In the years since, however, homeless-dedicated funding has flowed from the state to local governments. The No Place Like Home Program, passed by the legislature in 2016 and supported by 63% of voters in 2018, directed \$2 billion in bond revenue to counties to fund permanent supportive housing. 2018's Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) block grants

⁵¹ Following the Great Recession, Obama's ARRA focused funding on rapid rehousing and homeless prevention as tactics to prevent households most at risk of becoming homeless from losing their housing.

⁵² Similarly, a 2015 report from the UC Berkeley Policy Advocacy Clinic asserted that "The state legislature has done little to respond to this widespread problem, forcing municipal governments to address homelessness with local resources" (Fisher et al. 2015, 1)

directed \$500 million to local governments, while the first three rounds of the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) Program will disperse nearly \$2 billion between 2019 and 2022. Massive state investment through Project Homekey has dramatically expanded and expedited the production of interim and permanent supportive housing for Californian’s experiencing homelessness.⁵³ These programs establish requirements regarding the kinds of projects that are eligible for funding, as well as spending requirements for certain projects or populations. The HHAP program, for example, limits spending on administrative costs to 7% of funds allocated, while requiring that at least 8 to 10% of funds be dedicated to serving homeless youth.

Even before this influx of funding from the state, California law influenced local homeless governance in less obvious but still impactful ways. The state’s 1970 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) established procedures to ensure new development would not adversely impact the environment and, perhaps most impactfully, created legal recourse for those opposed to homeless-dedicated housing and shelter developments to delay and often deter them being constructed. As planner and housing researcher M. Nolan Gray (2021) wrote in the Atlantic, “one of the main effects of CEQA has been to exacerbate the state’s crippling housing-affordability crisis.” Acknowledging the burden of the CEQA process on the development of affordable housing, the state has recently taken a number of steps for streamlining the

⁵³ Two rounds of Homekey awards had allocated nearly \$2.7 billion to fund over 10,000 units of new housing across the state as of October 2022.

process, including 2017's SB35 (Weiner), which applies specifically to localities making little progress in achieving their affordable housing development goals determined through the state's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process. State law has also expanded the authority of local governments to declare a "shelter emergency" and thereby reduce bureaucratic and legal barriers (including CEQA) that delay the development of homeless shelters (AB2553 in 2020), and passed legislation requiring all state-administered homeless housing programs to align with a "housing first" philosophy (SB1380 in 2016).

Intergovernmental fragmentation of homeless governance exists even at the local level. Municipal and county governments – according to their charters or state law – both have jurisdictional responsibilities related to addressing homelessness. County governments receive and are responsible for administering major federally-funded social welfare programs and run agencies tasked with public health. City governments, on the other hand, generally handle land use, housing and development, streets and sanitation, and policing (though both bodies play a role in law enforcement). Though Zhang predicts that intergovernmental fragmentation is the type most likely to result in compromise and collaboration, this has not been the case at the local level when homelessness is the issue of concern. Most notably, the city and county governments in Los Angeles have had a decades-long contentious relationship over the issue. The jurisdictions have filed lawsuits against one another to provoke various homeless-related activity, one of which resulted in a joint powers

agreement forming the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, which is now at least *formally* tasked with administering homeless services for the continuum of care.

Fragmentation also exists along lines of what is sometimes referred to as “horizontal federalism.” Whereas the power relations between cities, states, and the federal government are hierarchical (with cities dependent on states for their authority according to Dillon’s Rule, and states, though delegated certain powers by the constitution, are largely dependent on social service and welfare funding from Washington D.C.), multiple cities within the same county possess the same powers and responsibilities over their respective regions. Relationships between neighboring cities represent a form of territorial fragmentation, too, but since they are governed by different local governments adopting and implementing different policies, this intergovernmental fragmentation also shapes homeless governance. Most notably, claims are often made (with little substantiation) that by increasing levels of homeless services and assistance, a city will attract the homeless populations from the surrounding jurisdictions. Similarly, from this perspective, the municipality with less stringent enforcement of anti-homeless laws is bound to have encampments pile up on its side of the border. This mentality ultimately leads to a “race to the bottom,” where cities act as though they will become the epicenter of regional homelessness without services as meager and enforcement as strict as their surrounding jurisdictions.

Ideological Division

In addition to Zhang's three types of fragmentation, it is important to call into the conversation another more cultural division shaping homeless governance: political ideology. Even in the most liberal urban centers of California, distinct ideological divisions emerge and become particularly noticeable and contentious in debates over housing and homelessness.

What I refer to as *conservative* and *progressive* ideological orientations toward homelessness represent more specific manifestations of conservative and liberal attitudes toward poverty (as well as social safety net spending, taxation, policing). Contemporary American political conservatism joins a lengthy history of viewing poverty in individual terms, as the result of bad luck or poor judgement or limited capabilities. As such, conservatives are far more likely than liberals to oppose government efforts to expand social safety net programs since they expect such programs to disincentivize hard work and personal responsibility (and since they are more likely to oppose the increased taxation needed to generate the added revenue). Conservatives are also more likely to support more strict and punitive approaches to maintaining law and order. Contemporary political liberals (and especially today's "progressives") are more likely to view poverty in terms of systemic causes and structural inequalities, and are more likely to favor more robust efforts by government to secure the social safety net and counteract inherited legacies of state-based discrimination. Liberals are also more skeptical of punitive law enforcement practices, often emphasizing how biased enforcement perpetuates racial and class

inequities rather than promoting public safety. (Bullock, Williams, and Limbert 2003; Hopkins 2009; Katz 2013; Lakoff 2016)

In public discourse on homelessness (including its causes and what should be done to address it), ideological divisions become most apparent through what Teresa Gowan (2010) has usefully categorized as “sin-talk,” “sick-talk,” and “system-talk.” Both sin- and sick-talk emphasize the individual nature of homelessness. Sin-talk generally casts homelessness in terms of social deviance and associates it with illegal or anti-social behavior. Sick-talk shifts the narrative slightly to emphasize mental illness and substance abuse as the main determinants of homelessness, and views those experiencing it “as fundamentally out of touch with their own interests, needing to be physically coerced out of ‘denial’ into ‘treatment’” (p. 264) Both sin- and sick-talk are common indicators of a more conservative orientation towards homelessness. System-talk, an indicator of a more progressive orientation towards homelessness, emphasizes the systemic and structural forces leading to homelessness – like insufficient affordable housing stock, for example, or racial discrimination in the labor market or criminal justice system – and downplays individual faults or failings as principal driving factors.⁵⁴ Though there is no strict dividing line between the two broad ideological orientations (for example, progressive-oriented political actors certainly acknowledge the prevalence of substance abuse and mental illness and the

⁵⁴ Lee, Link and Toro (1991) find that Democrats and liberals are more likely to understand homelessness as a result of systemic causes, while Markowitz and Sywerson (2021) find conservatives more likely to view the homeless as “more blameworthy and more dangerous.” Other work finds that structural attributions of homelessness tend to be associated with stronger support for increased government action (Lee, Lewis, and Jones 1992).

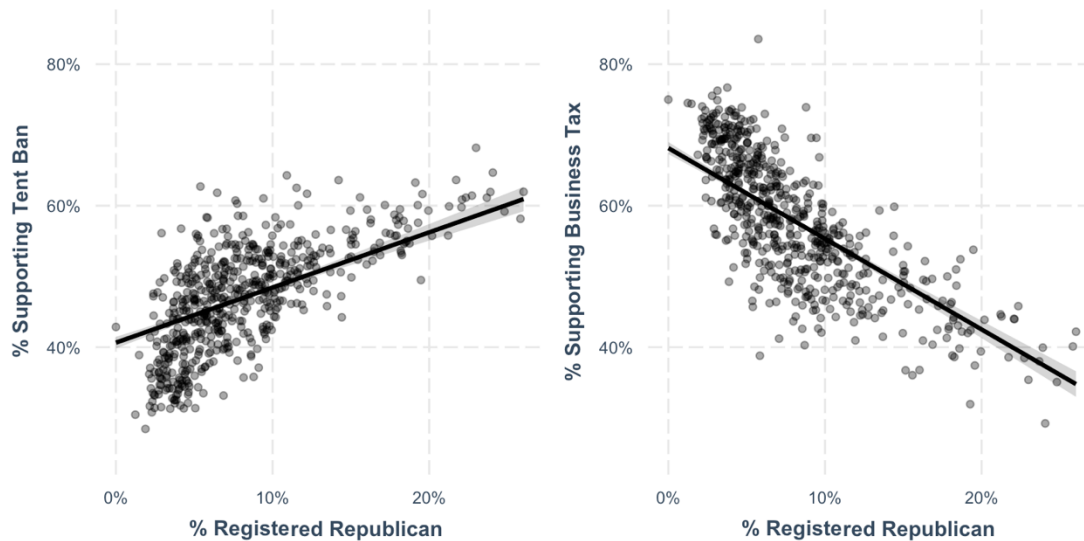
need for increased treatment), the distinction between individual versus systemic conditions pervades the political debate over homelessness.

The link between political ideology and attitudes toward homeless policies is made more tangibly apparent in voting patterns (a relationship I explore further in chapter four). Figure 1.1 below uses precinct-level results from two homeless-related ballot measures in San Francisco to display the dramatic relationship between partisan identities (and the cultural and ideological outlook associated with them)⁵⁵ and support for distinct local responses to homelessness. The scatterplot on the left presents the relationship between the percent of precinct voters registered Republican and the percent of precinct voters supporting at 2016 ballot measure to ban tents on sidewalks, an *enforcement* type policy proposal. Precincts with greater percentages of registered Republicans were more likely to support the enforcement proposal, which would grant local police another tool for regulating the presence of homelessness in city space. The figure on the right presents the relationship between precinct levels of registered Republicans and support for the city's 2018 proposal to generate new revenue for homeless housing and services through an increased tax on local businesses earning over \$50 million annually. A dramatic negative relationship exists between the percent of Republicans in a precinct and the percent of voters supporting the increased tax for homeless-dedicated funding.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Campbell (2006, 32) claims that “in the contemporary United States partisanship is actually a good proxy for one’s cultural outlook,” an assertion that has become even more compelling in the years since he made it.

⁵⁶ As I show in chapter four, the opposite relationships exist for more ‘progressive’ neighborhoods, which show lower levels of support for the tent ban proposal while higher levels of support for homeless-dedicated funding.

Figure 1.1. Partisanship and Precinct-level support for Homeless Ballot Measures in San Francisco.



The ideological divide on homelessness also becomes readily apparent in the rhetoric employed by local officials. Adherence of local lawmakers to either of the ideological orientations toward homelessness bears palpable policy implications. While resistant neighborhood residents may produce a range of varied – often creative – rationales, their justifications are only occasionally related to their ultimate, apparent objective: to prevent the homeless-serving facility from being sited in their neighborhood. Policymakers, on the other hand, employ specific rhetoric in order to justify and rally support for their preferred policy responses to homelessness. Tension between the two factions becomes especially apparent in debates over how to balance enforcement vis a vis service provision. In recent years, conservative officials have strategically described segments of the homeless population as “service resistant,” refusing offers of shelter or support made by the city, as a justification for increasing enforcement measures. L.A. City Councilmember Joe Buscaino, an ex-LAPD officer

who frequently applauded law enforcement’s involvement in addressing homelessness, provided one such example:

“We’re dealing with a specific homeless population. Not the single mom with three kids who are living out of a car. Not the family that just got evicted and is now working on finding a place to sleep. We are dealing with the shelter resistant community, which continues to drain our resources, who continues to block our public access” [LACC Public Safety Committee, 3/28/2018].

More progressively-oriented officials, on the other hand, resist calls for increased enforcement and critique the notion of service resistance. In response to Councilmember Buscaino’s formal request for a report quantifying the number of service offers refused, the newly installed chair of the homelessness committee, Mark Ridley-Thomas, characterized the term “service resistant” as “triggering language” and a strategy used by officials to avoid blame for failing to make progress in addressing homelessness. “The notion of ‘service resistance’” he went on, “leans in the direction of what I characterize as the contempt for the poor” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 2/25/2021].⁵⁷ These more progressive officials also call attention to the racial disparities perpetuated by pursuing enforcement-heavy strategies. As L.A. Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson put it:

“When people get up and stand at that mic, and they protest enforcement, it’s not, at least for the ones that I know, it’s not because they don’t believe that people who do things wrong shouldn’t be stopped and dealt with. They oppose enforcement because it almost always happens in a way that disadvantages people of African descent and sweeps a lot of people who didn’t do anything wrong,” [Homelessness and Poverty committee, 2/6/2019].

⁵⁷Ridley-Thomas concluded his comments with a bit of levity while still making clear his intended purpose: “Now, Mr. Buscaino, the floor is yours. If that little sermonette didn’t shut you down, I got a little more for you” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 2/25/2021].

Like territorial, functional, and intergovernmental fragmentation, the ideological divide over the driving causes and necessary policy responses to homelessness further inhibits any local government's ability to implement a coordinated, comprehensive homeless strategy. Collectively, failing to address these divisions leads to tangible and concerning consequences, several of which are addressed in the following section.

CONSEQUENCES OF FRAGMENTED HOMELESS GOVERNANCE

The fractures and divisions within homeless governance are notable and concerning not because different regions, departments, and jurisdictions respond to different components of the crisis, but because that fragmented involvement ultimately inhibits effective solutions to it. Fragmentation results in at least three compounded political problems: a *collective action failure*, *barriers to programmatic effectiveness*, and *policy feedbacks* that diminish public support for and commitment to homeless reduction strategies.

Collective Action Failure

The territorial fragmentation of local homeless politics most perniciously derails efforts to get people off the streets. It does so by creating incentives for political action that lead to a somewhat perverse failure of collective action. Though homelessness, as an issue, is a reliable mobilizer in local politics, its ability to mobilize parochial interests impedes efforts to address homelessness at the city-wide

or regional scale required and generally results in pushing the problem around rather than actually solving it.

The collective action failure that most shapes local homeless politics is not the traditional form in which group members fail to act together to pursue their collective interests due to a lack of sufficient, individualized incentives (Olson 1965). Instead, here individual neighborhoods are incentivized to pursue goals that ultimately conflict with the city's collective interest. This sort of collective action failure might be described as *systemic NIMBYism*.

Public opinion surveys consistently indicate that vast majorities of residents in California and particular cities within the state view homelessness as among the most pressing problems. And yet, proposals to build homeless-serving facilities in particular neighborhoods frequently galvanize mobilized resistance among residents and businesses in the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site. In testimony before local officials, concerned residents from the neighborhood frequently qualify their resistance to a proposed project by stating that they support investing in solutions to homelessness, but that this particular location is inappropriate for any assortment of reasons. And yet, when the tendency is for most neighborhoods to mobilize in resistance to solutions sited within them, any potential citywide solution to homelessness become unachievable. A representative of the Inner-City Law Center effectively described to the L.A. City Council the long-term consequences of this systemic NIMBYism:

“As you know, each time a project comes forward to help addresses this city's gap in shelter housing, there are a collection of neighbors

who say, “Not here.” There’s nothing new in this. It’s been happening for years. Public housing? Not here. Affordable housing? Not here. Supportive housing? Not here. Shelter? Not here. When one asks them, “If not here, then where?” they typically answer, “Anywhere but here.” One project at a time, year after year, decade after decade, “Not here” has been good enough to stop enough projects to result in a catastrophic shortage of affordable housing and shelter that leaves Angelenos on the street” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 2/20/2019].

The impact of this informal coalition of resistance is amplified by both formal and informal institutions of local governance. In a system of district-based representation, city council members are guided by the potent electoral incentive of responding to the most vocal and mobilized of their constituents.⁵⁸ The power of mobilized territorial resistance builds even further in political environments in which an informal institution of legislative prerogative has been established. Since reciprocal deference is the expected payoff, council members face stronger incentives to defer and maintain authority over their own districts than to override their colleagues and address homelessness citywide. This incentive structure, organized against attaining comprehensive solutions to homelessness, does not represent some malfunction or abrogation of the institutional order. Instead, it can be understood as *the dark side of responsive local government*: the unintended and unfortunate consequences of a system operating much as intended.

The most glaring and obviously unfortunate consequence resulting from this collective action failure is that an insufficient supply of shelter and supportive

⁵⁸ In recent years, elected officials who push against the mobilized resistance to homeless housing and shelter (or resist calls for increased enforcement) have been recalled in Los Angeles, serving as a warning to district-based representatives considering bucking the demands of their mobilized constituents (Zahniser 2021).

housing have been produced, meaning that the over recent years in urban California, solutions to homelessness have been far outpaced by increasing rates of people falling into (or back into) homelessness. But an additional adverse consequence of this mobilization problem is that the segregation of homeless-serving shelter, housing, and services is perpetuated, due in part to the lower levels of neighborhood mobilization against such facilities from the neighborhoods in which they are already prevalent (Dear 1987). The segregation of homeless-serving facilities raises a number of additional concerns. It further undermines efforts to generate a collective commitment among residents of all city neighborhoods to engage and participate in solving the problem. Segregating homeless-serving facilities, instead, makes homelessness seem more like a problem for *those* neighborhoods, rather than a problem for all neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Segregation also amplifies negative attitudes toward outgroups (Enos 2017), a problem of particular concern for the much stereotyped and stigmatized population of people experiencing homelessness. Clustering homeless-serving facilities in “low resource” neighborhoods burdened by higher rates of poverty and crime than other moderate- or high-resource neighborhoods may also present additional challenges for the formerly homeless seeking stability in housing. Though findings are somewhat mixed in research on the contextual or neighborhood effects on homeless interventions (Ecker and Aubry 2017), numerous public comments from advocates and formerly homeless individuals testified to concerns of this nature.

Barriers to Programmatic Effectiveness

The functional fragmentation of local homeless governance, particularly the divide between departments charged with providing supportive housing and services and those charged with policing public space, undermines programmatic efforts to reduce street homelessness. More specifically, the enforcement of anti-homeless laws by local police departments creates barriers for the individuals targeted with such enforcement from receiving the housing, services, and opportunities that are often required to bring their homelessness to an end. The vast majority of laws enforced against people experiencing homelessness are ‘quality of life’ laws banning loitering, sitting or sleeping in public places, habituating in a vehicle, or keeping a tent or personal belongings in public space. Violations of these laws often result in a citation for an infraction or misdemeanor (especially when the violation is repeated within some established period of time). However, when the fee associated with the citation is not paid, and when recipient of the citation fails to appear in court, the penalties escalate and can lead to increased fines, bench warrants for arrest, and the involvement of collection agencies (Herring, Yarbrough, and Marie Alatorre 2020). Carol Sobel, an attorney who successfully represented homeless individuals in multiple lawsuits brought against the city of Los Angeles for unlawful enforcement practices, described this process during public comment before the L.A. City Council:

“Even if you reduce penalties to infractions – you just issue a citation and reduce it to an infraction – if you fail to appear on that ticket, it goes to a warrant immediately, and the warrants are then used to arrest people on misdemeanors, so it is significant. And even if somebody appears, the fines escalate, because these people have no ability to pay them, and when the fines escalate, they go to collection, and when they

go to collection they become a bar to housing, a bar to jobs, a bar to benefits. So, all of that has to be taken into consideration,” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 8/12/15].⁵⁹

As the penalties for violating anti-homeless laws escalate, so too do the longer-term consequences. Criminal records are sometimes used in determining eligibility for public housing by Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) that have considerable discretion over establishing their local eligibility criteria, and often adopt criteria more stringent than is required by HUD guidelines (Carey 2004; Purtle et al. 2020). Housing in the private market, too, becomes considerably more difficult to access for individuals with criminal records (Desmond 2015; Thacher 2008). Diminished employment opportunities (Concepcion 2012) and access to social services (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 2019) are among the other “collateral consequences of criminal convictions” (Pinard 2010). Even in the absence of official citations being issued, ‘move along’ orders from police officers can lead to adverse and harmful outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness, including loss of personal belongings and medicine and increased vulnerability to violence (Herring, Yarbrough, and Marie Alatorre 2020).

The consequences of policing the poor – especially the perpetuation and extension of homelessness – likely disproportionately burden African Americans and communities of color. While Black Americans make up approximately 13.5% of the total U.S. population, 40% of the country’s homeless population identifies as Black of

⁵⁹ In a letter to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors regarding a proposed ban on sleeping and camping in city parks, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights detailed the same process and described it as resulting in “a permanent cycle of homelessness” [read into record during comments by Supervisor Sandoval, BOS 1/8/2008].

African American (Henry, Mahathey, and Takashima 2020). There is little doubt that the well documented racial disparities woven within the country's law enforcement and criminal justice systems (Alexander 2020) contribute the racial disparities in experiences of homelessness. Incarceration and experiences with homelessness are interrelated (Gowan 2002; Metraux, Roman, and Cho 2007), and their intersection perpetuates racial disparities in housing status (V. Schneider 2018). Qualitative research involving in-depth interviews with older people experiencing homelessness in Oakland, California, indicated that structural racism in general – and more specifically discriminatory interactions with the criminal justice system – had either led to or perpetuated homelessness for a number of the study's Black participants (Paul et al. 2020). While racial discrimination in labor markets or disparities in intergenerational wealth transfer (among other racial inequities) likely play a role in the overrepresentation of communities of color among those experiencing homelessness, heavy reliance on enforcement of anti-homeless laws almost surely exacerbates racial disparities.

Policy Feedback

Enforcement-type policies and political efforts to expand the provision of supportive housing and services are linked in more subtle ways as well. The most visible governmental response to unsheltered homelessness is conducted by the police, and it shapes public opinion and the political debate over responding to homelessness through a process referred to as *policy feedback*. The concept of policy

feedback urges us to consider public policies not just as the result of political contention, but as exerting influence upon the political dynamics shaping future policymaking as well (A. L. Campbell 2012; Hacker and Pierson 2014). Recent feedback-oriented research builds upon work by Schattschneider (1963) and Lowi (1964) that drew our attention to the ways certain policy types could reorder the political playing field upon which policymaking ensued. In an influential essay, Paul Pierson (1993) identified how policies could shape politics through *resource effects* (by unevenly distributing access, money, or other political resources among various political contenders) and *interpretive effects* (influencing perceptions of power, political groups, or of governmental responsiveness, for example).

Work by Schneider and Ingram (1993) offers useful guidance on more specific and relevant ways in which the homeless policies adopted and implemented at the local level may feedback into the policymaking process and ultimately shape homeless politics thereafter. They argue that the design of public policy informs public attitudes toward – or “social constructions” of – the particular populations the policies target. “Social constructions,” they tell us, “become embedded in policy as messages that are absorbed by citizens and affect their orientations and participation patterns” (334). If so, public attitudes toward “the homeless” as a target population – already among the most stigmatized and “dehumanized” outgroups (Harris and Fiske 2006) – are likely soured when the most visible governmental response to homelessness is led by the police. By passing new laws that criminalize behaviors or conditions associated with the visibly poor, local governments may unintentionally

reinforce the association between homelessness and crime or deviancy and entrench the notion that addressing unsheltered homelessness requires enforcement rather than housing and supportive services. During debate over a proposed amendment to a sit-
lie ban, one member of the L.A. City Council expressed concern over policymaking consequences of passing a new enforcement measure:

“I know this legislation was well-intended. It is intended to protect children and others. But I think it goes way too far, and I think it sends a wrong message, that homeless people are always a danger. And we wonder why people object when we try to build a homeless shelter, or HHH housing in their community, and thousands of people come out. Well, it’s because we’ve told them homeless people are dangerous and we believe so and that’s why we try to legislate them out of existence,” [Councilmember Koretz, LACC 9/24/19].

Not only will increased enforcement and police involvement in addressing homelessness frame the target population as dangerous and threatening, but in doing so, it will also mobilize increased resistance to future efforts to develop supportive housing and shelter, thereby perpetuating and exacerbating the crisis.

It is worth noting, however, that other elected officials highlight potential policy feedback as a way of justifying continued or increased enforcement. In order to overcome neighborhood resistance, some cities establish “special enforcement zones” surrounding new shelters or navigation centers. City officials promise heightened levels of enforcement in these zones to assuage resident concerns that the shelters will attract encampments and other undesirable activity. As another member of the L.A. City Council argued (during debate over whether to reinstate encampment cleanups several months into the covid-19 pandemic), the council’s ability to establish future shelters depended on maintaining the special enforcement zones:

“...we made promises to the community that those areas would not become magnets for more encampments and for the buildup of items and trash. We know that that does happen. It’s happening at Project Roomkey sites, it’s happening at other places, that’s a promise that we made with the community that we want to keep so that we will be able to get less resistance as we try to build more housing and more bridge homes and more shelter beds,” [Councilmember Blumenfield, LACC 7/29/2020].

Policy feedback shapes not only public attitudes toward “the homeless” as a target population, but also the attitudes toward local government held by those experiencing homelessness. Some of the most influential recent work in the feedback literature demonstrates how negative experiences during interactions with the “carceral state” or during participation in welfare programs may undercut political efficacy and trust in government more broadly (Soss 2000; Weaver and Lerman 2010). For many people experiencing homelessness, the most frequent experiences with local officials involve interactions with police. These are often negative experiences in which people experiencing homelessness are shuffled away from select urban areas, targeted by seemingly arbitrary enforcement of anti-loitering laws, have their belongings confiscated or destroyed, or are subject to far higher levels of scrutiny and surveillance than those passing by who are not visibly poor. These experiences may shape their attitudes toward local government and authority more broadly, making them skeptical of other offers of supportive service or a shelter bed, especially when outreach workers are frequently accompanied by law enforcement.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ An L.A. City Controller’s report indicated that 67% of city outreach efforts occurred alongside encampment clean ups by city sanitation workers (Galprin 2019a). L.A. City Councilmember Raman reminded her colleagues of this finding, proposing that this context “is not an effective moment to assess whether someone is rejecting services or not,” [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 2/25/21].

Those more conservatively-oriented officials who bemoan what they describe as “service resistance” among those experiencing homelessness may not be considering the role their reliance on enforcement has played in cultivating any such resistance.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have tried to draw attention to significant political hurdles local officials face in their efforts to develop effective homeless reduction and prevention strategies. Other challenges exist as well, of course. The homeless problem apparent in the streets of urban California today is unlikely to be solved without substantial and sustained infusion of funding from the state and federal levels to support the development of affordable housing and expand the availability of supportive services. The state of California will also need to take a more muscular approach to ensuring localities actually do develop affordable housing units for which their region is responsible.⁶¹ But solutions to homelessness will always be local. Local elected officials – in coordination with their housing and planning departments – will continue playing a dominant role in determining where shelter and supportive housing are developed. They will also be the primary political targets of mobilized

⁶¹ As of 2021, the state had taken several steps to more aggressively ensure local governments were meeting their housing development commitments, including the establishment of a Housing Strike Force housed within the Department of Justice. Under the direction of the state’s Attorney General, the Strike Force was assigned responsibility for, in the words of Governor Newsom, “holding cities and counties accountable for fair housing, equity and housing production.” Assembly Bill 215, signed by the Governor in September of 2021, granted the Attorney General, acting on behalf of the state’s Department of Housing and Community Development, greater authority to hold local governments accountable for violations in their proposed housing elements (Office of the Attorney General 2021).

neighborhood groups, many of whom will continue resisting the siting of homeless-serving facilities nearby. Despite increasing calls to pursue homeless engagement strategies devoid of any law enforcement presence, the police are bound to remain responsible for enforcing laws that apply nearly exclusively to people experiencing homelessness. Given the complexity of homelessness as a problem and policy area, an ensemble of bureaucratic departments – housing and planning, police and public health, sanitation and public works – will continue to play a part in shaping local homeless governance.

The urban governance of homelessness is and will continue to be shaped by interactions across city neighborhoods, governmental agencies, and political jurisdictions. When left uncoordinated, with these various forms of political fragmentation unaddressed, substantial and sustained progress in reducing homelessness will be difficult to achieve. Coordination, collaboration, and collective commitment to comprehensive local strategies emerge as characteristics that will be crucial to achieving effective local solutions. The question, then, is what can be done to encourage these characteristics? What political dynamics create incentives to pursue coordinated, collaborative, and comprehensive local homeless strategies? The comparative case study analysis of homeless governance in Los Angeles and San Francisco investigates and begins answering these questions.

2. INSTITUTIONALIZING AUTHORITY

Prologue: Crisis, declared.

Within a period of five months, officials of both the Los Angeles City Council and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors introduced legislation declaring a “Shelter Crisis” in their respective cities. California state law permitted such declarations as a way for local governments to overstep onerous zoning laws and planning codes that slowed the process for siting and building emergency homeless shelter. In both cities, the declarations were initiated by officials who played a central role in shaping their city’s policy response to homelessness, both of whom represented districts with among the highest concentrations of homelessness and encampments.

In L.A., the motion was considered during a meeting in which the council discussed an array of other homeless-related policy proposals which would eventually be consolidated into the city’s formal Comprehensive Homeless Strategy. Councilmember Mike Bonin, representing district 11 and the Venice neighborhood, explained to his colleagues that supporting his resolution would afford the council the authority to establish emergency shelters year-round (not just during winter months) and would unshackle them from self-imposed restrictions adopted by their predecessors on the council in years past. Commenting on the collection of homeless proposals before the council, council president Herb Wesson praised his colleagues: “We have come together and have agreed as a council that this is one of the most

important issues that we are facing” [LACC 11/17/2015]. The declaration of a shelter crisis was supported unanimously.

When the shelter crisis legislation was introduced in San Francisco by progressive Supervisor David Campos, who represented district nine and the Mission neighborhood, he acknowledged that there had been “pushback from the mayor who said that my office and I are grandstanding when it comes to this issue, and that we’re simply engaging in political posturing” (Public Safety and Neighborhood Services, 3/24/16). The mayor’s moderate allies on the Board echoed critiques that the measure was politically motivated, that with it, city residents were “being sold a bill of goods,” and that the declaration would have no tangible impact on local homelessness. For his part, Campos framed his shelter crisis declaration as a needed response to the executive administration’s failure to adequately respond to homelessness. Though the measure was ultimately passed, it was opposed by three of eleven members of the Board.

This brief, singular comparison – the political moment in each city in which unsheltered homelessness was formally declared to have reached crisis levels by the local legislature – exposes political dynamics that would profoundly shape the ensuing process of crafting homelessness policy as well as the character of the strategies each city eventually pursued.

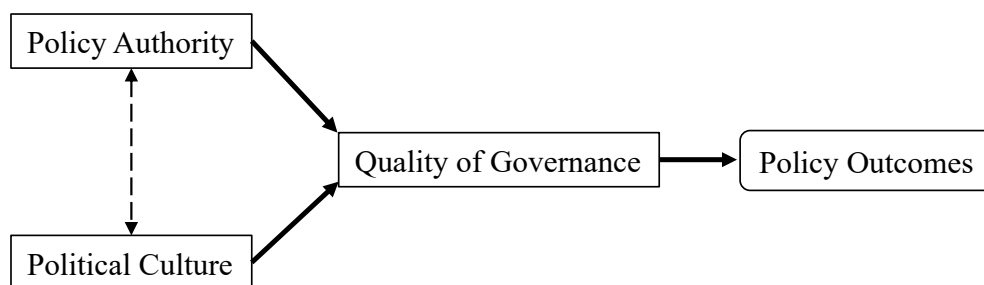
Cities face seemingly insurmountable hurdles in their efforts to address homelessness in any sort of coordinated manner. As detailed in the previous chapter,

political and institutional dynamics deter rather than promote coordination. City responses to different components of the complex issue – efforts to provide housing and shelter or the policing of street conditions and public behavior – are handled by different city agencies operating under different priorities and with often conflicting perspectives on the issue. These different policy responses are also frequently championed by different political actors, with enforcement measures generally promoted by officials with more conservative orientations toward homelessness, while efforts to increase housing or shelter most often coming from representatives of districts with high concentrations of homelessness. City officials receive few incentives to counteract legacies of de facto homeless containment strategies, while perpetuating concentration poses far fewer risks (at least for those not representing districts with the highest concentrations of homelessness). Among the most potent political pressures shaping homeless policymaking comes from residents and merchants who actively resist facilities proposed to be sited in their neighborhoods. This localized pressure creates electoral incentives for officials to justify their own resistance to projects proposed in their districts as being responsive to constituent concerns. Finally, addressing homelessness emerges as a salient political priority not because of any increased prevalence of people lacking reliable shelter, but because of the problems the prevalence of homelessness poses for housed residents and businesses. In moments of crisis, when homelessness becomes so visible and concerning that urgent action from local government is all but assured, the political

landscape tilts toward an array of fragmented and contradictory responses rather than any coherent, cohesive, and citywide strategy.

But while the same political and institution dynamics promoting fragmented response are present in most cities, not all local governments respond to these pressures in the same way. This chapter begins digging into the homeless policymaking processes in Los Angeles and San Francisco in search of patterns that help explain how and why city governments respond to the forces of fragmentation in different ways. Though the analysis includes all homeless policy activity between 2008 and 2020, I focus especially on events from 2015 on, the consequential years in which both cities grappled with an increasingly urgent crisis. Two key characteristics – policy authority and political culture – emerge as crucial to understanding the cities’ diverging, contrasting responses to their local homelessness problems. The interaction between authority and culture results in a distinctly different *quality of governance* over homeless policy within each city, producing tangible consequences for the policies the cities ultimately adopt and pursue. Figure 2.1 captures the basic architecture of this chapter’s guiding argument.

Figure 2.1. Key political factors shaping local homeless governance and policymaking.

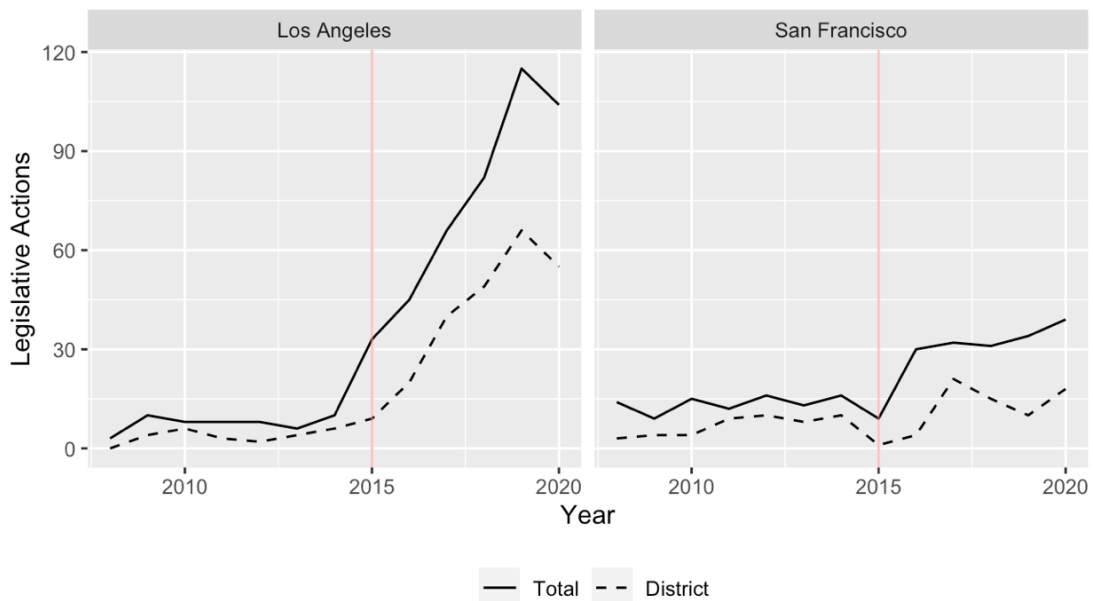


By *policy authority*, I mean both the depth of the local legislature's involvement in crafting homeless-related policy (especially its involvement relative to the executive administration) as well as the discretion that representatives have over how those policies are then implemented within their districts. While the local governments of both San Francisco and L.A. are characterized as "strong mayor" systems of city government, the authority exerted by the legislatures over city policy in general and in addressing homelessness in particular contrasts considerably. In Los Angeles, the city council has long assumed the dominant position over local governance, and when the city got serious about taking responsibility for homelessness, it was the council that took the reins. Councilmembers also have vast discretion over their own districts, and this became particularly apparent as the city's homeless policymaking ramped up. In San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors has to compete with the mayor, who is both more deeply involved in lawmaking and has assumed responsibility over the city's response to homelessness. While Supervisors are certainly granted discretion over shaping priorities and programs within their districts, they have frequently deferred to the executive administration in crafting the city's response to the homelessness and in selecting sites for homeless-serving facilities.

One initial indicator of these varying levels of policy authority can be seen in the quantity of homeless-related proposals considered by each city's legislature. As is shown in figure 2.2 below, when the L.A. City Council took steps in 2015 to position itself at the center of the city's expanded efforts to address homelessness, the

council’s policy output increased dramatically. A substantial portion of this increased legislative activity was driven by the large number of site-specific housing projects proposed by the representatives of the districts in which they would be built. In San Francisco, the bump in legislative activity was less dramatic, in part because authority over homelessness was centralized within the executive bureaucracy. Of the total 68 district-specific proposals considered by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors between 2016 and 2020, 70% were initiated by the mayor.

Figure 2.2. Trends in Homeless Policymaking, 2008-2020.



The component of *political culture* that proves most influential is the extent to which the legislative process is shaped by conflict, either between factions within the local legislature or inter-institutional conflict between the legislative and executive branches of the city’s government. In the years analyzed, the political culture of the L.A. City Council is best characterized by consensus-oriented policymaking. Details

and compromise were generally hammered out in committee and votes by the full council were frequently unanimous. The mayor acted in concert with the council on homeless-related policy, and almost never sought to resist the council's actions or check its authority. In San Francisco, on the other hand, conflict was frequent and waged both between the progressive and moderate factions within the Board and between the Board and the mayor (although these two forms of conflict frequently overlapped, as the mayor's priorities aligned with those of Board moderates in all years analyzed). Preliminary evidence of the contrast between each city's political culture can be found in the voting patterns. Of the 498 homeless-related legislative actions put before the full L.A. City Council between 2008 and 2020, a total of 19, or about *four percent*, involved a contested vote. That means that 96% of the votes on these proposals were supported unanimously.⁶² In San Francisco, just over 11% of the 270 homeless legislative actions – one of every nine – involved contested votes. Considering that many of the legislative actions were only perfunctory authorizations or contract extensions, having one out of every nine policy proposals involve some form of conflict is a fairly high frequency.

Over the course of this chapter, I will demonstrate how interactions between policy authority and political culture cultivated distinctive *qualities of governance* over homeless policy, with important consequences for each city's ability to surmount the inherent tendencies toward a fragmented local politics of homelessness. The vast

⁶² It is also worth noting that of the 264 *district-specific* proposals, only three involved a contested vote – one of which was a vote on procedure, not substance – providing initial evidence of deference to district representatives.

policy authority assumed by the L.A. City Council, coupled with its culture of consensus-oriented policymaking, fostered a governing quality characterized by collaboration, coordination, and a collective commitment to better addressing the city's homelessness crisis, allowing the city to overcome much functional, territorial, and intergovernmental fragmentation. The collective willingness of the council to commit to participating in its ambitious new strategy was facilitated by the understanding that each member possessed considerable discretion over implementation of that strategy within their respective districts. At the same time, councilmembers' ability to assert authority within their own districts – to determine the types and locations of projects to be built – was bolstered by the collective commitment of the council. Assured that each of their colleagues were also engaged in the delicate political task of proposing sites for homeless facilities within their districts, councilmembers afforded each other some level of support to brace against neighborhood resistance and claims that a project should be built somewhere else. The commitment allowed district representatives to respond to such resistance by explaining that the city was, in fact, developing homeless facilities somewhere else. Actually, they were being developed in every district of the city. Further, by retaining authority over homeless policymaking while establishing a structure to collaborate with and coordinate efforts by executive branch agencies, the L.A. council was able to devise and begin implementing a more cohesive, comprehensive homelessness response strategy.

In San Francisco, on the other hand, the creation of a new department within the executive administration only further institutionalized the tendency of the Board to defer to the mayor in matters of citywide homeless initiatives. Centralizing authority in the new administrative agency – thereby insulating it from the political pressures that often motivate community outreach and engagement – left supervisors frustrated over their inability to efficiently respond to the demands and concerns of constituents in their districts. This frustration fomented further inter-institutional conflict between members of the Board and executive administration. The culture of conflict in the city – both factional and inter-institutional – also inhibited efforts to expand the Board’s authority over homeless policymaking. The result was a homeless governance characterized more by competing priorities than any sort of collective commitment, and by ongoing contestation over authority to shape homeless strategy rather than any sort of unifying around a single plan. This resulted in a policymaking process that was unable to counter the forces of fragmentation, one that perpetuated concentration and exacerbated inter-institutional conflict, raising additional barriers to future efforts to develop a more comprehensive, coordinated strategy.

Table 2.1. Contrasts in key explanatory variables in case study cities.

	<u>Los Angeles</u>	<u>San Francisco</u>
<i>Policy Authority</i>	Strong legislative authority; High district discretion	Deference to mayor; Low district discretion
<i>Political Culture</i>	Consensus-oriented	Conflict (both factional and inter-institutional)
<i>Quality of Governance</i>	Collective Commitment; Collaboration/coordination	Competing priorities, Contested authority
<i>Policy Outcomes</i>	Comprehensive strategy; commitment to geographic equity	Perpetuated fragmentation and concentration

My claim that a heightened level of district discretion actually facilitated collective responsibility-taking and a comprehensive, coordinated strategy is somewhat unexpected. It runs counter to the widely held notion, dominant since at least Banfield and Wilson's (1963) *City Politics*, that district discretion (and deference to district representatives) leads to more parochial policymaking, and creates incentives against coordinated, citywide initiatives to address problems like homelessness. Big-city councilmembers, wielding influence over construction in their district fiefdoms, are frequently cast as the "villains of the housing crisis" (Grabar 2021). By this logic, centralizing authority over policy and insulating it from neighborhood-based political pressures should lead to more comprehensive planning. This is not what I find. The institutional design of district-based representation, it turns out, is just one piece of the puzzle. The relative levels of authority elected officials have over their districts as well as the level of authority the full legislative body exerts over a particular policy area relative to the executive branch are both important, but both are shaped by a city's distinct political culture and how it determines whether representatives will commit to developing district implementation plans for the broader citywide initiatives.

Based on extensive ethnographic archival analysis involving virtual attendance of all legislative meetings in which homeless policies were discussed along with thorough review of pertinent legislation and agency reports, I develop my argument over the course of four case study comparisons. Though comparing Los

Angeles and San Francisco isn't quite comparing apples to apples, care is taken to only compare apples selected from the same species of tree growing within each city. I begin with two case studies intended to present the potent and contrasting presence of the key explanatory variables at pivotal moments in the development of each city's homeless governance. The first focuses on the politics surrounding significant instances of institution building intended to improve each city's ability to respond to homelessness. These early projects to redesign the architecture of homeless governance would set the stage for the politics and policymaking to come. Next, I portray efforts in each city to develop and pass ballot measures aimed at dramatically increasing reliable, homeless-dedicated revenue. In each of these comparisons, palpable contrasts in policy authority and political culture rise to the surface. The starkly contrasting policymaking consequences are portrayed in the two case studies in the following chapter.

In all case studies, I connect the particular events of the case to broader patterns and trends that weave through the 13 years analyzed and that appear especially significant during the five final years of heightened activity. Together, the case studies provide a collection of evidence detailing the consequential role policy authority, political culture, and their interaction play in shaping the homeless strategies cities pursue.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOMENT OF CRISIS

The formal "Shelter Crisis" declarations emerged in each city during a time in which the politics of homelessness experienced a palpable, qualitative shift,

characterized by a notably heightened sense of urgency to address the issue. In response to the increased pressure, both cities pursued institutional developments intended to better coordinate their local governments' response to homelessness. These steps institutionalized the power dynamics that had shaped their respective homeless policymaking efforts in previous years which, in turn, had important consequences for how each city would address the problem in the years ahead. The Los Angeles City Councilmembers retained considerable district discretion while expanding their collective involvement and responsibility over local homeless policymaking, actions that were made possible by a political culture of consensus. In San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors' weaker authority over homelessness relative to the mayor was further institutionalized, while efforts by progressive members to expand the Board's involvement and collective responsibility over the issue were inhibited by a culture of ideological and inter-institutional conflict.

Los Angeles

In Los Angeles, the city council responded to the urgency of the crisis by creating a standing Homelessness and Poverty committee, thereby assuming and focusing responsibility over governing homelessness within the legislative body.

Announcing the new committee, Council President Herb Wesson claimed:

“Homelessness is an everyday problem, and it deserves an everyday committee... We will create a standing committee that will deal with homeless, homeless, homeless, and homeless issues. We're going to let the world know that we're not going to shrink away from this issue. We're going tackle it, and we're going to do everything that we can to try end homelessness. And you know why we don't know if we can do

it? Because we've never tried. So, let's give it the try now" [LACC 7/1/15].

The council had previously created an ad hoc committee on homelessness, though relatively few policies emerged from it during the years analyzed, and many of those that did were intended to respond to issues within the districts of the representatives on the committee, whose districts included the Skid Row, Venice, and Hollywood neighborhoods with the largest populations of people experiencing homelessness. The ad hoc committee disappeared during the Great Recession, reappearing just months before Wesson announced formation of the standing committee.

A city council's committee structure represents the responsibilities of the local government but also shapes the perspective from which members approach the policies they consider. Members of the land use committee, for example, or the public safety committee, are likely to approach the same homeless-related policy from a different perspective and with different priorities than a member of a committee devoted to addressing homelessness and poverty. As co-chair of the newly formed committee, Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson noted in an early meeting, "This is not a committee on sidewalks or right-of-ways. This is a committee on homelessness," [H&P, 8/26/2015]. Tangible policy implications of this perspective became apparent during the committee's consideration of a revision to Los Angeles Municipal Code 85.02, the city's ban on vehicular living. Committee member Mike Bonin explained to the audience (which frequently included many homeless advocates who vocally resisted any new enforcement mechanism) that the committee was "less enamored of 85.02 than the council as a whole, but the council as a whole is

likely to want some version of 85.02.” With this context in mind, the committee amended the proposal to “mitigate” some of the more punitive elements of the policy while writing into the legislation a commitment to a ‘Safe Parking’ program to provide space and services to those living in vehicles (H&P, 6/22/16). Even in instances of disagreement between council members over particular policy components, considerable effort was made to achieve compromise and consensus.

Establishing a standing committee also signaled that the council was assuming increased responsibility and authority over the issue, placing homelessness among issues like land use and public safety, over which local governments exert primary jurisdiction. The committee formalized the council’s increased authority over the issue. If the new committee were to meet every other week to consider homeless policy, it anticipated sufficient policymaking to warrant the committee. The founding co-chair of the committee, José Huizar, whose district had been redrawn to include Skid Row several years earlier, described the committee’s significance:

“The city is taking responsibility for the homeless that exist on our streets. For the longest time, the city has deferred to the county, who is primarily responsible for social services, and to the non-profits and the stakeholders... But with the establishment of the permanent Homelessness and Poverty committee, we are acknowledging, and we’re taking this head on, that we have a huge responsibility in this as well” (LACC 11/17/2015).

The city’s past deference to Los Angeles County on matters regarding homelessness, noted by Huizar in his remarks above, is to be expected in part, especially because counties in California are the jurisdictions tasked with social service provision and receive substantial funding from the federal and state level to

support the programs. However, instead of any sort of cordial division of responsibility, homelessness has frequently sparked bitter conflict between the city and county governments. In fact, a lawsuit proved to be the catalyst for the formation of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, or LAHSA, a joint-powers agreement between the city and county. This earlier institutional development, a response to an earlier moment of urgent crisis, did not manage to forge a reliably collaborative relationship between the two jurisdictions. While tentative cooperation between the city and county would be achieved in 2016 (largely as a result of the efforts by the Homeless and Poverty committee chair Harris-Dawson), tensions overboiled during the COVID pandemic, as we will see.

It would be overstating to say that the council had been *entirely* deferential to the county. Over the seven years prior to the establishment of the Homelessness and Poverty Committee, the council had adopted numerous homeless related policies, including a number of significant pieces of legislation, including a “Homeless Patient Dumping” ordinance increasing penalties on hospitals that released people experiencing homelessness back onto the streets, and an ordinance preserving single resident occupancy (SRO) housing, an act Mercedes Marquez, director of the housing department, described as “without question, one of the most pro-tenant ordinances that have ever come before this city council in its entire history” (LACC 5/6/2008). At Marquez’s urging, the city had also invested \$18 million from the general fund to develop permanent supportive housing in 2013 at a time when, as the chair of the Budget committee Paul Krekorian pointed out, the city was facing a \$200 million

deficit in the upcoming year. However, Krekorian was convinced by Marquez's proposal that the spending would leverage a dwindling pot of state affordable housing dollars, and voted in support of the allocation, along with every one of his colleagues [LACC 4/12/13]. Despite these and other actions, the level of involvement by the council in homeless policymaking paled in comparison to the deep and dedicated involvement following the creation of the standing committee.

In terms of district discretion, however, the policy authority of individual council members was not to be questioned. Across all years analyzed, council members exerted considerable control over implementation of city policies within their own districts, and generally afforded their colleagues the deference which they expected in return. This district-based authority is made particularly apparent by the city's oversized vehicle parking restriction ordinance and its implementation.

Oversize vehicle parking restrictions are legal tactics that have been used by Los Angeles, San Francisco, and many other cities to control the geography of vehicular living. In Los Angeles, the restriction was introduced in 2010 by councilmember Bill Rosendahl in response to complaints from his Venice constituents about RVs parked along the neighborhood's narrow streets.⁶³ Rosendahl made clear to his colleagues that each district representative would be able to determine both the streets on which restrictions were posted as well as the process through which those streets were

⁶³ Rosendahl and his chief of staff, Mike Bonin, pushed for a 'safe parking' pilot program to compliment the parking ordinance, creating both a stick and carrot policy approach, but the carrot sparked too much resistance and was ultimately abandoned. When Bonin replaced Rosendahl as representative of district eleven, safe parking proved to be a perpetual pet policy of the councilmember.

selected. He noted that, since the parking restrictions were particularly contentious in Venice, he would be setting “a very high bar” for establishing new restrictions requiring the support of two thirds of a block’s residents [LACC 11/17/2010]. In the years that followed, councilmembers submitted dozens of resolutions designating parking restrictions for new streets in their districts. Often the implementing resolutions would be submitted in large batches from multiple councilmembers. The Transportation Committee (a committee rarely attended by homeless advocates) would accept the proposals on consent, without discussion, before the full council did the same. No councilmember’s proposal for new oversize vehicle parking restrictions was ever questioned by another member of the body.

Councilmembers also exert considerable discretion over housing development within their district. The power of district representatives over developments in their districts is made especially apparent during the Land Use Committee’s hearing of a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) appeal in 2017. Following the planning department’s authorization of a supportive housing development, a business owner near the proposed project appealed the authorization on somewhat specious claims about environmental contaminants at the site. During the committee’s hearing of the appeal, committee chair Huizar, representing the district in which the development would be built, expressed deep frustration with the developer and the community outreach process. He claimed the developer had lied to the community and violated his trust by changing the proposed design of the building to remove ground-floor commercial space. Though the appeal was based entirely (and legally)

on environmental concerns, Huizar’s justification for granting it (and stalling the project) focused almost entirely on process. Despite this, Huizar’s motivations were never questioned by his colleagues on the Land Use Committee (which voted unanimously to grant the appeal) or by any member of the council when, the following year, Huizar reversed his decision and allowed the development to move forward. The developers had revised the building’s design to include the first-floor commercial space he desired [LACC 3/6/18].

Up until 2015, this vast district-based discretion and deference yielded starkly different responses to homelessness across the council districts. This fragmentation was acknowledged by the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Miguel Santana, who told the council in 2015, as momentum for seriously addressing the crisis was building, that “right now, each one of your offices, because of the urgency that you’re experiencing and the constituents that you have, are dealing with it on your own.” The initial task of the new Homelessness and Poverty Committee, according to its co-chair councilmember Huizar, was to develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing homelessness in the city. Momentum for developing a comprehensive approach increased when, in response to a request from councilmember Cedillo, Santana’s office presented a report estimating homeless-related expenditures by city departments. Santana – who had worked at a homeless shelter as a college student and demonstrated a personal commitment to solving homelessness – revealed to the council that city departments were cumulatively spending at least \$100 million each year on homelessness, with 87% going to the Los Angeles Police Department.

“And so, if doing the right thing for the homeless because it’s the compassionate thing to do is not enough, doing the right thing for the homeless because it makes fiscal sense should be. The cost around not having a comprehensive strategy around homelessness is significant” [LACC, 4/22/2015].

The CAO’s office under the leadership of Santana would become a key partner of the Homelessness and Poverty committee, serving as a vital connection between the city’s legislative and executive branches. Santana proved particularly influential in encouraging the council to work within the established structure of city government, even as it assumed an expanded role in governing homelessness:

COUNCILMEMBER CEDILLO: “You have a cadre of people interested in focusing their efforts to address this problem. What’s the best operational model?”

CAO SANTANA: “I think you’re asking the most critical question through all of this, and where it always gets fuzzy: ultimately, whose job is it? ... My preference is always to adjust those things that are already in place as opposed to starting from scratch” [H&P 10/14/15].

Over the next several months, the Homelessness and Poverty committee held multiple, in depth meetings to hear from the CAO’s office about progress on developing the strategic plan. These meetings afforded committee members the opportunity to directly shape priorities and policies included in the plan. In concluding the committee meeting on January 27th, 2016, for example, co-chair Harris-Dawson conveyed the committee’s directives to include a Safe Parking program among the plan’s short-term strategies and to more fully develop strategies for addressing the prevalence of homelessness experienced by those released from incarceration or who had experienced domestic violence. Concerns that domestic violence was being insufficiently addressed by the developing strategy had been

raised by many advocates and service providers who spoke before the committee during the public comment portion of the meeting. Though public comments did not always lead to tangible policy changes, these sessions allowed the local legislators to be informed by and also accountable to constituents concerned enough about homelessness to show up at city hall on a Wednesday at 1pm.

The resulting Comprehensive Homelessness Strategy consisted of 62 strategies to guide both near- and long-term programs and was designed to be integrated with a plan concurrently developed by the county. A new homeless coordinator – or homeless “czar” – position was established in the CAO’s office and assigned responsibility for coordinating homeless-related efforts of the various city agencies and serving as a liaison between the executive bureaucracy and the council. Relying on the Homeless Coordinator in the CAO’s office to orchestrate existing city departments was very much in line with Santana’s recommendations against reinventing the wheel. Strategy 5B of the comprehensive plan further institutionalized intergovernmental coordination by creating the Homeless Strategy Committee, which drew together the mayor, the chair of the council’s Homelessness and Poverty committee, the CAO and the Chief Legislative Analyst to oversee and coordinate implementation of the plan.

Before the council voted – unanimously – to adopt the strategy developed under the direction of the Homelessness and Poverty committee, members portrayed the policy as a monumental step for the city in assuming increased responsibility for addressing homelessness and in breaking away from the failures of the past. Council

president Wesson applauded the collective commitment of his colleagues, claiming that “this plan is THE first time that you have ever seen anything as comprehensive as this, and I commend the council for what they have done.” This is not to say that all councilmembers shared identical perspectives or priorities when it came to the problem. There were, to be sure, members with more conservative orientations toward homelessness who emphasized prioritizing quality of life issues, ensuring clean streets, and balancing the obligation to address homelessness with the obligations to housed residents impacted by side effects of it. But there was consensus among the members that the council, as a legislative body, needed to take new and increased responsibility for shaping city policy aimed at addressing the problem, a commitment manifest in the flurry of homeless-related policymaking that followed in the years that followed.

San Francisco

In San Francisco, it was not the Board of Supervisors but the mayor who initiated the city’s institutional development in response to the heightened urgency of the homeless crisis. In late 2015, Mayor Lee announced the creation of an entirely new administrative department intended centralize and coordinate the city’s response to homelessness. The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), launched in June of 2016, absorbed program responsibilities from the city’s Human Services Agency along with those of several other departments and was to assume primary responsibility for addressing and preventing homelessness in San Francisco. As a new agency within the executive administration, the mayor would effectively

retain authority over department initiatives and priorities, most obviously through the power to appoint the department's director, who would serve at the pleasure of the mayor.

Involvement by the Board of Supervisors in shaping the new department was relatively minimal. The Board's Government Audit and Oversight (GAO) committee held an informational hearing in February of 2016 to hear about developing plans for the department. There seemed to be general agreement with Supervisor Kim that for the city to effectively address homelessness, "we need one plan, and we need one vision, and that means that we need a singular department" [GAO 2/25/2016]. Supervisors were thus not opposed to centralizing authority within the executive administration. Later that year, the Board amended the administrative code to formally create the department, though did so with neither discussion nor ceremony. In July, the Board approved the department's first budget proposal.

Perhaps the most revealing discussion by the Board regarding the new department was sparked during consideration of a proposed resolution titled "Affirming San Francisco's Commitment to the Success of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing." According to the text of the legislation, rather than establishing any formal partnership or mechanism for the Board's involvement in setting departmental priorities, the resolution essentially committed the supervisors to a 'hands-off' approach; to staying out of the way of the new department. Specifically, it pledged that supervisors would neither underfund the new department nor "place ballot measures before the voters that will further hamper the

ability of the new Director of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to fulfill his chartered obligations and duties.”

The title and text of the resolution are somewhat misleading, however, since the proposal was a largely symbolic effort by the progressive faction on the Board to critique their colleague Mark Farrell who, with three of his moderate colleagues, had submitted a ballot measure amending to the police code to ban tent encampments on sidewalks. Supervisor Peskin, the author of the “Affirming San Francisco’s Commitment...” resolution, asked the newly appointed director of the department, Jeff Kositsky, to comment on the Farrell’s tent ban ballot measure. Kositsky was surely familiar with the political dynamics on the board (having interacted with supervisors for many years previously as the director of Community Housing Partnership, the largest developer of affordable and supportive housing in the city) and sought to avoid the ideological crossfire: “I don’t care to comment on any proposed ballot measures or ordinances, and one of the things that you all could do to help me is to actually not draw me into political conversations about a policy-related issue” [BOS 7/12/2016]. Peskin then asked Farrell why it was necessary to take this proposal directly to the voters since, as the legislative body of the city, lawmaking was the Board’s purview. Farrell acknowledged that ideological division on the Board made it unlikely his proposal would pass. “I don’t think an appropriate policy is going to get through the Board of Supervisors,” he said, just before deriding Peskin’s resolution as a distracting gimmick.

Supervisor Avalos, who affiliated with the progressive faction, announced that he had also been developing an ordinance aimed at addressing encampments (though surely one less focused on enforcement), but had decided not to introduce it following the creation of the new department, fearing that doing so would “pollute the water” at a time when political leaders needed to pull together to address homelessness. Avalos described the proposed tent ban as a “wedge issue,” as a catalyst for increased tension and gridlock on the Board, and as disrupting what had been a growing collective commitment on the Board to work together to address homelessness:

“Up till these measures were submitted, on the last day to submit with four signatures, we were doing really well as a city. We actually shifted from that divisive way that we talked about homelessness to one where we’re actually being collaborative, we’re actually working together. That was all thrown away, and people who are on this board who actually looked like they were appearing as a uniter around this issue suddenly lost that reputation.”

Avalos’s reference to “that divisive way we talked about homelessness” calls attention to the frequency with which homeless-related proposals were both cause and consequence of ideological divisions among city leaders in the years leading up to the establishment of the new homelessness department. Across the years analyzed, votes by the Board of Supervisors on homeless-related policies were frequently divided along ideological lines. In 2008, during debate over an ordinance restricting camping and sleeping in parks, Supervisor Chris Daly – a self-described homeless advocate and representative of the Tenderloin neighborhood – lamented, that “While the issue is politicized and there is bickering over it, we don’t have a chance to solve the homeless issue” (BOS 1/8/08). The ordinance was passed over the opposition of Daly

and two of his progressive allies. That same year, Board progressives passed an ordinance increasing health standards for city-funded shelters, though two moderate members voted against it without making any effort to justify their dissent. In 2010, during a contentious hearing on a sit-lie law proposed by then Mayor Gavin Newsom, Supervisor Daly described the proposal as politically motivated. He compared it to a similar proposal by Mayor Frank Jordan in 1994, reading an editorial from San Francisco Chronicle into the record describing Jordan's proposal as "a meaningless measure that would give the mayor a political victory without giving city government any more power than it already has. San Franciscans have already approved three measures to crack down on homelessness, and they can expect to be asked to do so every time they go to the polls." Daly also identified the ideological roots of the political divide over the present sit-lie proposal: "yeah, there's a progressive-moderate thing going on here," [Public Safety Committee, 5/10/2010].

The progressive-moderate divide overlaps considerably with tensions between the Board and the mayor since, through all years analyzed, the mayor's most devoted Board allies are the moderates. The inter-institutional friction between the legislative and executive branches of the city government are particularly salient because mayors in San Francisco are far more directly involved in homeless-related policymaking than their counterparts in Los Angeles have been. The sit-lie law and the ordinance restricting cooking and sleeping in parks noted above both emerged from the mayor's office. Mayor Newsom also introduced legislation seeking to overturn a law adopted by the Board just several years earlier that committed the city to providing homeless,

uninsured or “indigent” residents the same standard of mental health service as is provided to Medicare recipients. (The Budget and Finance committee unanimously tabled that proposal from Newsom.) Supervisors occasionally acknowledged their inferior authority relative to the mayor over homeless policy. In 2008, Supervisor Mirkarimi acknowledged that the Board had not been involved in developing the city’s first 10-year plan to end homelessness, and only exerted authority over the city’s homeless efforts during the budget process [GAO 3/26/2008]. During debate over the mayor’s proposed park restrictions that same year, Mirkarimi lamented the Board’s subservient position: “I’m a little bit bothered that I think, frankly, from this branch of government, that we’re not owning the problem as much as I think we need to,” [BOS 1/8/2008]. When Newsom refused to spend money the Board had allocated specifically for a shelter called Buster’s Place and urged the Board to reappropriate the funds, Daly frustratedly acknowledged “We have an administration that is riding roughshod over board priorities,” [Budget and Finance, 3/19/2008].

Supervisors are also less able than their counterparts in L.A. to control implementation of homeless-related policies within their districts. The same two policy types previously used to portray the significant discretion afforded L.A. councilmembers – oversize vehicle parking restrictions and the appeal of the housing department’s building authorization – can again be used as snapshots of more limited levels of discretion and deference afforded supervisors in San Francisco. In 2012, the Board considered a new oversize vehicle restriction pilot program. In justifying the proposal, its cosponsor Supervisor Chu claimed that vehicular dwellers were

particularly resistant of services offered by the city, but insisted the parking restrictions were not, in fact, intended to target the homeless. The other co-sponsor, Supervisor Cohen, associated RV dwellers with blight and crime, and said she was tired of her tenth district being a “dumping ground” for those living in their vehicles. Their moderate colleague Supervisor Weiner supported the measure, arguing the vehicular dwelling amounted to people housing themselves without respect for zoning codes. Progressives resisted the measure, voicing concern that it was yet another means to criminalize poverty [BOS 9/25/2012]. When the measure was passed (despite four dissenting votes) the Board vested authority for including new streets into the program with the Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA), not the Board itself. Then in 2016, the MTA alerted the Board that it would be refusing to issue any new parking restrictions until the city developed a comprehensive strategy for addressing homelessness. Until then, a representative from the MTA told the Board, the agency was “not comfortable pushing the problem around” [Land Use and Transportation Committee, 2/22/2016]. (Recall that in L.A., city council members propose these restrictions themselves, proposals that are unfailingly endorsed by their colleagues, often without any committee discussion.) Though Supervisor Cohen called a hearing to express frustration over the MTA’s decision, no legislative action was taken to change it. Interestingly, the MTA’s refusal to issue new oversize vehicle parking restrictions ultimately inspired the city’s first safe parking pilot program in 2019.

The Board's limited discretion relative to the L.A. Council also becomes apparent in 2011 when a proposal to develop supportive housing for transition aged youth (TAY) on the grounds of a community center sparked neighborhood resistance. The attorney hired by residents opposed to the project urged the Board to deny it, either by overturning the planning departments environmental review or by refusing to grant a required zoning change. Supervisor Farrell, who represented the district in which the project was proposed, noted having "received letters of opposition from five different neighborhood groups and dozens and dozens of the immediate neighbors." He took the opposition to heart, he told his colleagues. "That's what we're here to do as district supervisors, listen to our constituents." Farrell proposed what he called a compromise to reduce the project by one story, lowering its height from 55 feet to 45. The project applicants testified that such a "compromise" would reduce the number of units available and make the entire project financially untenable. During Board discussion, several of the members acknowledged struggling, as Supervisor Campos put it, with "how far, we as supervisors, engage ourselves in a project that is in another supervisor's district," a form of involvement Farrell referred to as "a very slippery slope." Despite reservations, progressive members of the Board emphasized that finding solutions to homelessness, especially for the city's TAY population, took priority, and the Board approved the project – at its original 55-foot height – over Farrell's opposition. Farrell was similarly outvoted over authorizing another supportive housing development in his district later the same

year. Two years later, Farrell and eight of his colleagues voted to accept funding for a new shelter in Supervisor Cohen's district, despite her opposition [BOS 6/21/2011].

As the urgency of the city's homeless crisis mounted, there were tentative signs that the Board might attempt to assert increased authority over the issue. While the action did not result in an enduring shift in policy involvement, it did ignite increased inter-institutional discord. Just months before the new homelessness department officially launched, Supervisor Campos introduced legislation requiring the city to open six navigation centers within two years. Campos, who had opened the city's first navigation center in his district, was intent that the ordinance would not solve homelessness, but was intended as a short-term strategy for addressing encampments and street homeless by creating low barrier shelters pursuing a "harm reduction" strategy and serving as a first step toward permanent housing. While many of Campos's colleagues on the Board agreed that navigation centers were a proven strategy, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing Opportunities, Partnerships and Engagement (HOPE, the agency tasked with guiding the mayor's homeless strategy up until the creation of the new department) expressed concern that the ordinance would divert resources from the production of permanent supportive housing and, ultimately, tilt the city's homeless strategy "off course." Campos responded:

"To the mayor and his folks, listen, I know that this has been a challenging issue, and I know that if Mayor Lee had had his choice, he perhaps would not want - he *clearly* did not want me or any member of the Board of Supervisors to bring this forward. I understand that. But from our perspective, we believe that this is something that needed to happen... We believe that we needed to be more proscriptive, and my

hope is that, notwithstanding that difference of opinion, that we can work together, because it's going to take the legislative, executive branch, and everyone in government working together to really make the difference that we want to make."

Board President London Breed also supported more assertive action from the Board, saying she "respectfully disagree[d]" with the HOPE director's implication that supervisors should leave decisions over homeless strategy to the agency.

"I do think it's appropriate for the Board to weigh in on this particular issue and to make a policy directive for this particular matter, and to aggressively work toward a specific goal that all of us want to see happen... To not do anything is not a solution, and I just want to make sure that the mayor's office is put on notice that this is what we expect, and this is important, and we want to see it implemented, sooner rather than later," [GAO 5/5/2016].

Interestingly, when Breed became mayor just two years later, her administration would actively resist efforts by the Board of Supervisors assume greater authority over homeless strategy, and her director of the homeless department would make nearly identical arguments against a proposal to mandate additional navigation centers as those that Breed, as Board President, critiqued. Ultimately, Mayor Lee's decision to create the new department and retain mayoral authority over the city's homeless strategy both continued the trend of San Francisco mayors exerting authority over the issue and set the stage for future conflict between the Board and the mayor.

The institution building that took place in each city in response to the heightened urgency of the homeless crisis reinforced power relations that had existed prior to the establishment of the new committee in Los Angeles and new department

in San Francisco. In one sense, these institutional developments represented only the first step toward fostering a more coherent and effective plan to address homelessness. As Councilmember Bonin stated upon adoption of L.A.'s Comprehensive Homeless Strategy,

“If solving homelessness is a marathon, all we’ve done today is fill out the registration forms. This is a long, uphill slog. The finish line is very far away, and we have to stay incredibly focused... The real test for us isn’t what we’re approving today. The real test is going to be in the budget, come April and May. The real test is going to be in November, if we put something on the ballot, and the voters are willing to back us on it. And the real test is going to be about what we do in our districts. There have been so many plans that have been announced over the years that have all failed because of the failure of political will. And we all, each of us, owe it to the people of Los Angeles, the neighborhoods of Los Angeles, to come up with individual implementation plans for this proposal in our districts.”

And yet, the institutional and organizational choices made in this moment of crisis powerfully shaped how each city responded to a multitude of challenges and opportunities in the years to come. One additional, brief example makes it particularly apparent how the two institution-building responses shaped policy authority thereafter (and affords a rare opportunity for controlled comparison). In 2018, California Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 850 into law, creating the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) to distribute a \$500 million block grant to localities according to their 2017 point-in-time count estimates of the local homeless population. In Los Angeles, city council committees discussed details of the HEAP funding with the Homeless Coordinator over nine separate meetings. During the first of these, the Homeless and Poverty committee convened representatives from various city departments, LAHSA, and the county to receive an overview of the program and

discuss proposed spending priorities. At this and later meetings, H&P committee members pushed for increased spending for their particular policy priorities (including both youth homelessness and safe parking) and designated the Homeless Strategy Committee (on which the chair of H&P sat) as the oversight body for HEAP funds. The Budget and Finance committee expressed concern about the cost of some HEAP-funded programs and requested report backs on other cities' approaches and opportunities for efficiency. In addition to these general programmatic hearings, council members submitted a total of 15 district-specific funding proposals to provide shelter or services in the neighborhoods they represented, to be evaluated by the HSC.

In San Francisco, the Budget and Finance committee spent a total of four minutes on a request from the homeless department to apply for HEAP funds and revise the city's shelter crisis declaration, as required by the state. Two of those minutes were devoted to public comment. The full Board approved the request without discussion.

The L.A. City Council had situated itself at the very center of the city's response to homelessness, thereby involving itself in the nuanced detail and process of homeless policymaking thereafter. This allowed the council to shape policy to match its priorities (and often to reflect the needs of particular districts). The Board of Supervisors, by contrast, authorized the centralization of homeless authority within the executive administration, a branch of government that had historically pursued priorities that were distinct from, and often in conflict with those held by the Board. As a result, Board members struggled to inform the priorities of the new department

and how its programs would be implemented within their districts, fostering further friction and conflict. These reinforced dynamics would lead to significant consequences for how each city ultimately responded to the crisis on their streets.

BALLOT MEASURES FOR HOMELESS-DEDICATED REVENUE

To make good on their promises to reinvigorate city efforts to reduce homelessness, officials must find sufficient funding to match their lofty plans and rhetoric. In both Los Angeles and San Francisco, officials turned to the voters to approve new homeless-dedicated revenue streams. This is an approach that local governments throughout California are pursuing with increasing frequency (Brey 2022). Over the entire decade spanning 2000 to 2009, only six local ballot measures in the state referenced homelessness. In 2018 alone, a total of 34 homeless-related local measures were put to voters across the state.⁶⁴

While each city ultimately succeeded in convincing voters to fund expanded homeless programs, comparison of the process through which each city's ballot measures were developed vividly portrays the contrasting political cultures in which each local legislature operated. Looking then to the implementation of the newly funded programs further reveals the discrepancy in level of authority and involvement exerted over local homeless policy.

⁶⁴ This count is based on my analysis of records kept by the California Elections Data Archive (CEDA), a joint venture between the CA Secretary of State and California State University, Sacramento.

Los Angeles

Before the council had even finalized the city's comprehensive plan, the Homelessness and Poverty committee had already begun holding hearings during which the CAO and CLA reported on ballot measure options for funding the strategy. At the second of four meetings on the topic, CAO Miguel Santana reminded the committee that his office estimated that between \$1.8 and \$2.2 billion would be needed over the next decade to adequately address homelessness, and without a new source of revenue, the city would not be prepared to make such a significant investment. A variety of options were available to the committee and council regarding the source and amount of funding to request as well as the type of projects towards which the funds would be dedicated. There appeared to be general support for bringing in more revenue to support the city's homelessness response. Even so, differences of opinion emerged during the four committee meetings and the hearing before the full council regarding the particulars of the ballot measure design.

One area of initial contention involved the type of housing projects that should be targeted by any newly generated revenue. The CAO's office had made it clear that revenue brought in through the issuance of general obligation (G.O.) bonds (the revenue source that polling indicated was most popular among city voters) could only fund capital improvements, not social service provision. So, investing in housing and utilizing city-owned property to facilitate its development quickly became a top priority. However, how narrowly to constrain the type of housing invested in remained open for debate. Several members of the H&P committee urged the money

focus strictly on permanent supportive housing, noting the particular difficulties involved in such development. For example, according to Councilmember Bonin,

“It is so costly to build permanent supportive housing, so hard to find locations for permanent supportive housing, so difficult to put that together, if we don’t require that permanent supportive housing be done, it simply won’t happen.”

Committee co-chair Harris-Dawson noted the particular responsibility they, as public officials, had to expand the city’s portfolio of supportive housing options:

“There is only one kind of housing that the market will never create. The market will never create permanent supportive housing, and so the way our society has run is when the market can’t get something done is when the government intervenes.”

Councilmembers urging that the revenue be devoted to PSH highlighted polling results indicating broad public support for a G.O. bond measure, particularly if revenue was devoted to permanent housing options. However, their colleague on the committee, Gil Cedillo, expressed interest in pursuing revenue dedicated to a broader array of affordable housing development. He was concerned that tailoring the ballot measure narrowly on permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals would alienate many housed Angelenos struggling to afford their housing. “We have to have a broader vision to be successful,” he argued [LACC 6/21/2016].

During public comment before the Rules committee – a committee chaired by council president Wesson which would ultimately determine the details of the ballot measure – a large and diverse collection of advocates and stakeholders presented suggestions on particular contours of the proposal, many of whom were regular participants of Homelessness and Poverty committee meetings. Several affordable

housing developers, responding to a question posed by councilmember Huizar to the assembled audience, suggested that the permanent supportive housing be devoted to residents earning below 30% area median income (AMI), since that threshold would enable developers to leverage other financing options. Many others – notably including both homeless advocates and representatives from the chamber of commerce – urged increasing the total dollar amount of the general obligation bond. Just as councilmember Bonin had urged during a recent council meeting, many public comments recommended increasing the bond from \$1.2 to \$1.5 billion. Following one such comment, Wesson responded, “you guys need to remember that we need to pass this in council.” Responding to another, he informed the crowd that his political intuition told him that \$1.2 billion was about the limit for ensuring the measure passed.

Wesson was clearly determined from the outset to land on a ballot measure that would galvanize the widest possible level of support both among members of the council and from activists and service providers who would play a crucial role in the campaign to pass the measure. “Our goal is to try to build an unstoppable coalition of support,” he told the Rules Committee. He had earlier announced to the full council that he would embark on a “listening campaign” to solicit feedback from all interested parties. Ultimately, 80% of the \$1.2 billion G.O. bond would be devoted to developing a goal of 10,000 permanent supportive housing units for households earning no more than 30% AMI, with no more than 20% of the total amount directed toward affordable housing for households earning up to 80% AMI. The resulting

proposal put to voters, Wesson eagerly pointed out, was shaped by and intended to appease the many interested parties, both on the council and in the broader public:

“What I want to say is I think this is a combination of everybody’s work. This is listening to the voices from the various organizations that spend all of their time trying to make life easier for those on the street. This is based on a conversation we had in Council last week. This is taking into consideration, Mr. Bonin, your concerns and other concerns from other members that were raised so hopefully, this puts us at least in a position where we can really begin to build a consensus.” [Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations, and Neighborhoods Committee, 6/27/16].

The following day, the full council voted unanimously to put the proposed measure on the November ballot. Councilmember Huizar called it “a historic, seminal day for the city of Los Angeles, a day when people will look back and say ‘that’s when the council decided to dedicate itself to the people most in need,’” [LACC 6/28/2016]. Following a campaign that joined elected officials with the wide coalition Wesson had sought, the bond measure passed with an overwhelming 77% of city voters supporting it. Shortly thereafter, the county passed Measure H, a sales tax increase to generate revenue for mental health services. The unifying strategy of putting Measure HHH (funding housing) and Measure H (funding health services) on the November 2016 and March 2017 ballots, respectively, served as a brief – and fleeting – moment of intergovernmental collaboration between city and county efforts.

The Homelessness and Poverty committee, as well as the council as a whole, was to remain deeply involved in the administration of Measure HHH funded projects. In fact, this is one of the primary causes behind the spike in homeless-related

policymaking beginning in 2017. The best strategy for achieving the ambitious 10,000 units in ten years, the CAO recommended, was to leverage city-owned property to be used for the housing developments. Councilmembers submitted numerous proposals for particular properties in their districts to be evaluated as potential development sites. Over the process of evaluating projects, submitting requests for proposals, and ultimately approving developers and their projects, the Homelessness and Poverty committee developed a close and collaborate working relationship with the CAO's Homeless Coordinator, Meg Barclay, and through her, the various involved city departments like housing, planning, and public works. The committee's approval was required for each step in the process. Frequently, due in part to the number of projects that were required to be built on the tight timeline, projects would be bundled, so that the committee would consider approving multiple projects through a single piece of legislation. This proved to be an effective strategy both for diffusing NIMBY neighborhood resistance as well as for solidifying the bonds of collective commitment between members of the council. At nearly every committee following HHH's passage, the committee would be asked to approve new or developing projects and would be provided updates on project achievements and funds dedicated and remaining, ensuring the committee's enduring authority over the initiative. The new revenue source, designed through collaborative and consensus-oriented policymaking, led to deeper and more authoritative involvement by the council in shaping the implementation of the HHH housing plan, the city's most aggressive initiative to alleviate homelessness.

San Francisco

In San Francisco politics, 2018 marked a year of inflamed ideological combat. Following the sudden death of Mayor Lee, conflict emerged on the Board of Supervisors over who should serve as interim mayor until voters could choose Lee's replacement. According to the city charter, the authority fell to Board President London Breed, who had already announced her candidacy for the office. However, progressives worried that the interim office would afford Breed an unfair advantage in the upcoming election in which progressive Supervisor Jane Kim was also running. Board progressives utilized the charter-granted authority to vote to select the interim mayor, and ultimately nominated and supported moderate supervisor Mark Farrell on the grounds that he wasn't running for the office in November. These political maneuverings brought to the surface ideological tensions that had long shaped the city's legislative branch, impinging upon the policymaking process. Supervisor Cohen admitted as much to the San Francisco Chronicle, saying "Let's just face it: The board dynamics are tough right now... We're mad at each other. It's hard to get things passed" (Swan 2018). That year, two ballot measures seeking increased dedicated funding for the city's homeless response – notably, one initiated by moderates and the other championed by the progressive faction – both revealed and were impacted by this ideological conflict.

The first ballot measure proposal was initiated by five more moderate members of the Board and would be put to voters in June's primary election. This measure proposed to increase the tax rate on leased commercial properties, dedicating

the new revenue to both homeless services and affordable housing more broadly. 45% of funds would be directed to the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, while the remaining 55% would be dedicated to efforts by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development to preserve and expand the city's affordable housing portfolio, including both SROs as well as units aimed at households earning up to 150% AMI.

Introducing the proposal before the Rules Committee, Supervisor Safai indicated that he was eager to change the conversation over the city's housing crisis to include attention to concerns of low- and middle-class residents as well. "Anytime a city becomes so out of balance that its middle class disappears," he said, "that is a recipe for a failure for a city." He went on to describe the proposal, designed to exist "in perpetuity," as "the largest housing measure in the history of the city." Supervisor Sheehy, a co-sponsor of the proposal, focused his comments on homelessness, asserting that "in a lot of ways, this city, at least where homelessness is concerned, is getting closer and closer to a breaking point." The director of the homelessness department, Jeff Kositsky, emphasized that only housing could solve homeless, and with 45% of funds devoted to his department, this proposal would help substantially in city efforts to alleviate homelessness.

The conversation shifted away from the enormity of the crisis and the historic nature of the proposed response when Supervisor Yee asked his colleague to address concerns that the legislation included a "poison pill." Supervisor Yee, along with his progressive colleague Supervisor Kim, were supporting another ballot measure, put

on the ballot by petition, that proposed to increase the tax on commercial leases – the same revenue source as Safai’s measure – to expand funding childcare and early education. Yee’s question referenced “Section 6: Conflicting Measures” in Safai’s proposed legislation, which stated that only the commercial property tax measure that received the most votes in the primary election would go into effect. Safai pointed the finger the other way, claiming the measure seeking funding for childcare and early education included a poison pill, and section six in his proposal was just a response to it. He also acknowledged that his proposal sought to address concerns of the business community over the impact of two concurrent tax increases.

Supervisor Kim disputed that their measure included a poison pill, and expressed frustration that the two ballot measures had been pitted against each other:

“I think what is incredibly disappointing about this ordinance that is before the Board today is, one: there’s a poison pill. Because we could have campaigned together. We could have negotiated the measures together and come together as one. And two: that the sponsor picked the exact same revenue measure that we did” [Rules Committee, 2/14/2018].

In June, the childcare and early education measure passed with a slim majority of voters supporting it. The homeless and housing measure failed, receiving support from just 45% of voters.

Later that year, Proposition C, another ballot measure seeking homeless-dedicated revenue, was placed on the November ballot as a result of efforts by the Our City, Our Home coalition, a grassroots campaign joining the Coalition on Homelessness with other homeless advocacy groups, community based affordable housing developers, labor unions and the San Francisco Tenants Union. The group

sought to emphasize the grassroots nature of the campaign, distancing itself, to some extent, from political officials. The campaign's statement in the voter information pamphlet opens: "This bold plan was created by the people on the front lines of the homeless and affordable housing crisis every day. It's a real solution – not more City Hall window dressing." The ballot measure proposed increasing taxes on city corporations earning over \$50 million a year. The estimated \$300 million in additional revenue to the city was to be devoted to multiple components of the city's homeless strategy, directing funds toward prevention efforts, shelter, mental health services, permanent supportive housing, and sanitation. "Proposition C is our last, best chance to tackle homelessness, address the housing affordability crisis and protect the city we love," the statement concluded.

Seven supervisors publicly supported Prop C, including the entire progressive faction, five of whom contributed to statements supporting the measure in the voter information pamphlet. Moderate Katy Tang submitted a statement opposing the proposal, expressing concern that if it passed, the city would be required to nearly double spending on homelessness, though without sufficient accountability. (These were the same concerns highlighted in statements by merchants' associations, the chamber of commerce, the Hotel Council, and the police officers' association.) After initially remaining neutral, Mayor Breed announced her opposition to the measure in October, just as early voting was set to begin. Breed justified her position by arguing that before such a substantial increase homeless-dedicated funding could be justified, the city needed to conduct a comprehensive audit on homeless services and spending,

a claim she had made previously as supervisor. Increased accountability was required. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, she also expressed concern that Prop C could actually exacerbate homelessness in the city by drawing people experiencing homelessness to San Francisco from the surrounding region (Fracassa 2018).

Proposition C received support from 62% of voters, sparking legal challenge as to whether it constituted a special tax (with funding devoted to specified purposes) and thus required support from two thirds of voters.⁶⁵ The Our City, Our Home fund began accumulating the tax revenue, but the city's ability to spend it was left in legal limbo for more than a year until the challenge was dismissed by the California Supreme Court in September, 2020.

Though mayor Breed had officially opposed the measure, with the funds finally released, she was granted considerable discretion, through her agencies, over how the funds should be spent. There were, to be sure, restrictions established by the legislation that Prop C enshrined into law: 50% of the fund was directed to the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development to support a variety of housing strategies for people experiencing homelessness, with up to another 15% for supportive services; up to 10% went to the homeless department for shelter; at least 25% to the Department of Public Health. The legislation also required the creation of the Our City, Our Home Oversight Committee, with eight appointments split between the mayor and the Board and a ninth appointed by the city controller, which would

⁶⁵ The requirement that so-called 'special taxes' receive supermajorities of 2/3rd support from voters is a lesser known but quite impactful consequence of Prop 13, which established the high threshold when it was passed in 1978. The application of this threshold to *initiatives* (submitted by petition by voters rather than by elected officials) has since been successfully challenged in the CA Supreme Court.

“monitor and make recommendations in the administration of the Our City, Our Home Fund,” but was not granted any formal authority that curtailed power vested in the mayor’s office or the Board of Supervisors. When Mayor Breed announced her administration’s plan for how the first batch of funds would be spent, the oversight committee had yet to meet (Rodriguez 2020). The Board of Supervisors, again, was relegated to approving or amending the mayor’s budget allocation but appeared to have little say in actually shaping strategy.

Lack of oversight and accountability over the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, which had in part motivated Mayor Breed’s opposition to Prop C, inspired one final proposed ballot measure worth noting. In 2019, Supervisor Haney, representing the Tenderloin in district six, proposed a ballot measure that would amend the city charter to create a Homelessness Oversight Commission to oversee the homeless department formed three years earlier. Unlike the Our City, Our Home committee, the proposed commission would be granted formal authority over the approving the department’s budget, decisions over opening or closing shelters, programmatic eligibility requirements, as well as contracts over \$200,000.

In presenting the legislation before the Rules Committee, Haney noted that HSH was one of the few city agencies with a budget over \$10 million dollars that lacked the sort of oversight commission he was proposing. Noting that the department currently had six different oversight committees, he described the city’s current infrastructure for addressing homelessness as “a patchwork, unwieldy, unpredictable, burdensome structure that fails to provide effective oversight. No one, including the

department, thinks that the current approach is working.” Supervisor Ronen, a cosponsor of the legislation, reminded her colleagues of Mayor Breed’s calls for greater accountability:

“Given the fact that the mayor’s reason for opposing Prop C was the fact that she didn’t believe that her own department could responsibly spend the money, I believe that this commission will provide the oversight to ensure that the department spends that money responsibly, transparently, and with the entire city watching” [Rules Committee, 7/8/2019].

When heard by the full Board, Supervisors Haney, Ronen, and Walton, representing the districts most impacted by homelessness, asked for deference from their colleagues, and to support this commission which they believed was needed to address the homeless crisis that most acutely impacted their constituents. Several supervisors expressed willingness to defer to the representatives of six, nine, and ten on this matter. However, Supervisor Mandelman, a frequent ally of the mayor, expressed concern that the mayor would not be able to appoint a majority of the commissioners overseeing a department for which she was ultimately accountable. Board president Yee was concerned that further time was needed to work out the details of the commission, and proposed pushing the proposal from the November 2019 ballot to the March 2020 election. Though Haney, Ronen, and Walton all voted against the amendment, they were outvoted seven to four.

As representatives of the districts most impacted by homelessness, Haney, Ronen, and Walton would also provide the driving force behind a push for “geographic equity” of homeless shelter and services across all city districts. This effort, too, would fail.

It is difficult to imagine more starkly contrasting cases in which cities' political cultures shape the processes through which they develop ballot measures to secure additional revenue to address homelessness. In L.A., a consensus-oriented environment fostered the creation of compromise legislation which was ultimately unanimously supported by the city council. Such collective support for the ballot measure surely helped bring about the staggering level of support from city voters. In San Francisco, proposed ballot measures for homeless funding fostered competition rather than cooperation and called attention to the pervasiveness of the conflict-oriented political culture in the city. The ballot measure that ultimately passed had been opposed by both the mayor and her moderate allies on the Board.

These measures also further institutionalized contrasting levels of policy authority. The L.A. City Council would retain considerably authority over the implementation of HHH-funded projects, and its members would assert discretion over projects proposed for development in their districts. In San Francisco, even though the mayor opposed the measure that doubled homeless-dedicated revenue, her recently-formed homeless department would bear primary responsibility over developing spending plans, leaving little opportunity for involvement by the Board of Supervisors. When supervisors representing districts with the most prevalent homelessness introduced legislation attempting to increase oversight over the homelessness department, the proposal was stymied by Board members who resisted wresting control over homelessness from the mayor.

CONCLUSION

This section has demonstrated how two key explanatory variables – policy authority and political culture – interact to shape the governance of homelessness in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The influence of these variables is present in the homeless policymaking through all years analyzed but becomes especially apparent with the increased urgency of the crisis around 2015 and in the institutionalization of authority each city pursues in response.

In Los Angeles, the council’s high level of policy authority and culture of consensus informed the creation of the standing Homelessness and Poverty committee, its substantial participation in the development of the city’s Comprehensive Homeless Strategy, as well as the committee’s close collaboration with the newly established Homeless Coordinator in the CAO’s office. These institutional decisions were evidence of the coordinated and collective commitment that characterized the council’s governance over homelessness. The process through which the council developed Measure HHH to fund a key component of the comprehensive plan and then set about implementing the initiative further illustrates how this governance quality emerged from the council’s primacy of legislative authority and consensus-oriented culture.

In San Francisco, the Board’s inferior policy authority over homelessness relative to the mayor enabled the creation of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing within the executive administration, an institutional decision that

perpetuated the Board's limited ability to shape homeless policy in general or in ways that directly responded to the distinct demands of Supervisors' districts. This institutional choice, which in some sense insulated homeless policymaking from electoral incentives, only exacerbated the political culture of conflict in the city, especially in terms of inter-institutional conflict between the Board and the executive administration. The processes through which supervisors proposed ballot measures to secure additional homeless funding not only provides additional evidence of the prevalence of political conflict in the city's homeless policy arena, but also perpetuated the Board's limited ability to directly craft the city's homeless strategy.

It is tempting to look back, deeper into the cities' political histories, for evidence of the root causes of these diverging levels of authority and styles of political culture. There are, to be sure, historical and institutional legacies informing these key explanatory variables. The Los Angeles City Council has long been regarded as among the most powerful big-city legislatures and was, until its reform in 2000, described by the city charter as the "governing body" for the city (Sonenshein 2006, 46-49). Councilmembers' considerable discretion over their districts may be in part a result of their districts' geographic expansiveness. The relatively lower level of district discretion in San Francisco may have something to do with the city's more constrained geography, but is also probably a result of the Board's comparably limited experience with district representation. Supervisors were elected in at-large elections up through 2000 (except for a brief though consequential experiment with district representation in the late 1970s).

While historical precedent and institutional design likely contribute to varying levels of policy authority exerted by each city's legislative branch, we should not ignore the way more flexible and intangible factors, like political leadership, surely stand to shape political culture. In Los Angeles, council president Wesson devoted considerable effort and attention (and, to be sure, talent) to cultivating the council's culture of consensus. Wesson – who had previously served as Speaker of the California State Assembly – was helped in his efforts by his five colleagues on the council who had also previously served on the legislature where they became accustomed to regimented, party-line voting (Zahniser 2013). No such leadership (or willingness to be led) existed in San Francisco during the years analyzed. The role leadership likely plays in shaping political culture offers an optimistic reminder that not all political dynamics are indelibly rooted to deep underlying structures or systems.

Whatever the causes behind the contrasting policy authorities and political cultures (and there are likely many), rather than looking further into the past, I find it more interesting and important to look ahead, to see how the contrasting authorities and cultures, further institutionalized in response to urgent crisis, shaped the governance of local homelessness thereafter. This is the investigation upon which we embark in the next chapter.

3. POLICYMAKING CONSEQUENCES

In 2016, in response to an increasingly urgent sense of crisis, both Los Angeles and San Francisco pursued major institutional developments aimed at reshaping the way each city governed efforts to alleviate homelessness. These organizational decisions reinforced both the policy authority possessed by each city's local legislature as well as the political culture in which it operated. The high level of policy authority and district discretion wielded by the L.A. City Council was expanded into the realm of homelessness with the creation of the standing Homelessness and Poverty Committee and its subsequent development of the city's Comprehensive Homeless Strategy and the electoral success of Measure HHH. The process through which these efforts were achieved both revealed and depended on the culture of consensus on the council. In San Francisco, centralizing authority over homelessness in a new department within the executive administration further distanced the Board of Supervisors from deep involvement in shaping priorities to guide both citywide strategy and district implementation, which only stoked the city's political culture of conflict.

The institutionalization of each city's distinct combination of policy authority and political culture fostered governance styles that bore tangible consequences for the policies pursued by each city in the years thereafter. The two case studies in this section demonstrate how the interaction between authority and culture yielded starkly contrasting governing and policy outcomes. The first compares the political process surrounding proposals

in each city to pursue a geographically equitable distribution of homeless facilities across legislative districts. Then, the final case study comparison assesses each city's efforts to address homelessness amid the pressures presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, pressures compounded by homelessness-related lawsuits in each city. Together, the case studies indicate that the considerable policy authority and district discretion possessed by the L.A. City Council, when joined with the body's culture of consensus, cultivated collective commitment among legislators allowing for a more comprehensive and geographically equitable expansion of housing and shelter provision in the city. Absent either the level of policy authority or the culture of consensus, such an outcome would have been unlikely. In San Francisco, the relatively lower level of policy authority and district discretion possessed by the Board of Supervisors, coupled with the city's political culture of conflict, inhibited the city from achieving such comprehensive, coordinated, or collaborative efforts, affording it far less ability to overcome the fragmentation woven into the politics of homelessness.

GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY

Territorial fragmentation is among the most foreboding forces for local governments to overcome as they strive to more effectively alleviate homelessness while remaining responsive to the demands and concerns of residents. The geography of homelessness today in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and cities throughout the country has been shaped by the legacy of decades-long governmental efforts to

contain homelessness and its side effects. Shelters and supportive housing have been constrained – both by restrictive zoning laws and mobilized neighborhood resistance – to cities’ skid rows, around whose borders so-called ‘quality of life’ laws are enforced especially stringently to segregate the visibly poor, and prevent them from transgressing upon surrounding neighborhoods or business districts. And while the legal capacity of Californian cities to police the homeless out of existence has been limited somewhat by recent cases like *Martin v. Boise*, local officials, especially those representing city districts, remain wary of developing new homeless shelters of housing in the neighborhoods they represent. Even in the most purportedly progressive cities in America, residents’ and merchants’ views of homelessness are undeniably infused with stigma and prejudice. Such stigma and prejudice frequently spark mobilized, emotional resistance to any facility proposed in close proximity, resistance that can carry with it electoral consequences for local officials. While siting facilities throughout a city can yield positive outcomes – both for the formerly homeless people housed in high-resource neighborhoods and for residents citywide who are encouraged to understand the part all neighborhoods play in addressing the structural problem – pursuing such a distribution presents daunting political challenges.

This section compares proposals in both local legislatures to pursue an equitable distribution of homeless facilities across electoral districts. While we might initially expect that the vast district-based discretion wielded by L.A. City Council members might make them especially likely to placate mobilized neighborhood

resistance (effectively perpetuating territorial fragmentation), the analysis indicates instead that the district discretion paired with consensus-oriented policymaking actually made possible the council's collective commitment to geographic equity of city-funded permanent supportive housing. In San Francisco, on the other hand, the proposal ran into resistance both from the city's homeless department and from the members of the Board of Supervisors reluctant to assert authority over the process of siting homeless-serving facilities in the city. While the quality of governance cultivated in L.A. allows the council to take steps toward countering the city's legacy of containment, in San Francisco, territorial fragmentation is perpetuated.

Los Angeles

Historically, homelessness in Los Angeles has been concentrated in Skid Row, and the legacy of containment endures. In 2017, 14% of the city's homeless population (4,628 individuals) resided within the neighborhood's 50 city blocks which comprise less than one percent of the city's total geography. Services, shelter, and supportive housing have been concentrated in the neighborhood as a result. However, Skid Row's close proximity to the city's recently redeveloped downtown has made containment somewhat untenable. By 2013, when the city's housing department urged the council to invest \$18 million in supportive housing development despite the looming \$200 million budget deficit, councilmembers were already commenting on the expanding geography of homelessness in the city. One councilmember attributed the spread to redevelopment of the city's downtown,

claiming “we have many more homeless in our residential neighborhoods since we’ve had this transformation in the downtown central core area of the city” [LACC 4/12/2013]. While Mercedes Marquez, the director of the housing department, noted that efforts were underway to incentivize homeless housing development outside of Skid Row, the city lacked any formal, comprehensive strategy to avoid perpetuating concentration.

In the months leading up the establishment of the Homelessness and Poverty committee, there were signs that the council was warming to a more collective commitment to addressing homelessness. In 2015, commenting on legislation that would develop into part of the comprehensive strategy, councilmember Krekorian urged collective responsibility for addressing homelessness:

“It’s going to be imperative for all of us to support permanent supportive housing and shelters in every part of the city. We can’t continue to assume that homelessness will be concentrated in certain parts of the city” [LACC, 9/2/2015].

At the urging of councilmember Huizar, who represented Skid Row, the council unanimously adopted a motion establishing a “guiding principle” of reversing the legacy of containment, a priority that informed multiple components of the Comprehensive Homeless Strategy developed by the council with the CAO’s office. With the passage of Measure HHH – creating the resources and commitment to build 10,000 units of permanent supportive housing over the next decade – the pressure increased for all districts (and their representatives) to take responsibility for city efforts to house the homeless. In late 2016, Mike Bonin returned to his marathon metaphor, which he had previously drawn on to describe the city’s adoption of its

comprehensive strategy as “filling out the registration forms.” “And when voters approved by such overwhelming margins HHH, a couple weeks ago, that was paying the registration fee. And this is where the running of the race actually begins” [LACC 12/14/2016]. By “this,” Bonin meant actually building the housing.

In 2017, a joint meeting of the Homelessness and Poverty and the Housing committees discussed the first batch of eight HHH-funded development proposals recommended by the housing department for council approval. Co-chair Huizar was pleased to be able to consider so many permanent supportive housing units so quickly, but was disappointed that many of the proposed projects were in Skid Row, and that the guiding principle of de-concentration did not yet seem to have been applied. In order to move quickly, he was told, the first projects were drawn from proposals already in the pipeline. The housing department was in the process of considering mechanisms to incentivize future development in other parts of the city.

Other committee members present also concerned themselves with efforts to achieve more geographically equitable housing provision. Councilmember Harris-Dawson, whose South L.A. district also had a higher concentration of supportive services and housing than most other districts, reminded the committee that there were two key goals behind Measure HHH. The first was to build the ten thousand units, and the second was to “break against the de facto apartheid, the class apartheid that we all live with in this country, and certainly in this city.” Councilmember Cedillo, too, echoed the concerns of his colleagues:

“The point has to be well taken. There is segregation in this city. There is concentration in the city of where homeless people are placed. And

so, this is the beginning, and we've got to start on the right path... We need to hear clearly, what's the path that takes us away from the segregation and the concentration of homeless in a handful of districts in the city?"

Harris-Dawson acknowledged that even *within* his district, which he estimated to be "90% low income," in "the less low-income areas, the deals take longer to build the will, to get the ownership, all of it... So..." he asked Rushmore Cervantes, the director of the housing department, "how are you all thinking about balancing those two things out and meeting the needs of the project?" Cervantes' response clearly portrays the challenge from the perspective of the city's housing department:

"It's interesting, because we've thought about this quite a bit, councilman. When HHH was passed, there were high fives, great, they were thinking this was wonderful, great news. Amongst ourselves we were thinking, 'Well, okay, this is going to be interesting, a year from now, to see where we're actually able to build.' People voted for it, but do they want it in their back yard?... We're going to rely on this body, and the council and the mayor's office, to help us pursue areas of the city that we don't typically build."

City agencies could create scoring protocols that would reward development proposals in parts of the city in which homeless shelter or housing had not previously existed, but the political will to ensure that the projects were successfully developed could only come from the elected officials. Political leadership and commitment would be required to achieve anything resembling geographic equity of homeless housing development and to push back against neighborhood resistance and the legacy of concentration.

To encourage collective buy-in among council districts and, more importantly, their representatives, Harris-Dawson along with council president Wesson and five of

their colleagues introduced a resolution which came to be known as the 222 pledge. The pledge, which was inspired by advocacy by United Way's "Everyone In" campaign, expressed a commitment by councilmembers to support the development of 222 units of HHH-funded permanent supportive housing in their districts over the next three years, which would ensure the city stayed on track to meet the goal of 10,000 units in ten years. Though non-binding, the pledge reflected the council's common commitment and purpose.

A sense of occasion filled the chambers as the council prepared to vote on the pledge. Council president Wesson – with characteristic theatricality – called upon his former state assembly colleague to open the meeting by reading a poem called "Hymn to the Homeless." Harris-Dawson invited a group of advocates to speak before the council, including the director of L.A. Family Housing, a large developer of affordable housing in the city, who described the pledge as "a powerful statement that supportive housing belongs in every community in our city." She also reminded the council that "There are two key ingredients to building supportive housing: land and political will."

Councilmembers rallied notably lofty rhetoric for the occasion, commenting on both the imperative of addressing the humanitarian crisis on the city's streets and the political threats each member would face in attempting to do so. Councilmember Krekorian admitted that he had nearly been recalled over his efforts to develop permanent supportive housing in his district, but still encouraged his colleagues: "Let's not cave in to the loud few in our district." One of the less histrionic

comments, however, stands out as especially revealing. Just before the council unanimously committed to the pledge, Councilmember O’Farrell claimed that “This is what I would call healthy peer pressure,” (LACC 3/20/2018).

The pledge may have created some new level of pressure for councilmembers to pursue HHH housing in their districts with heightened level of determination than they may otherwise have had. However, their willingness to make the pledge (and perhaps the consensus-oriented council governance more broadly) was considerably facilitated by the vast discretion each member had over their respective districts. District discretion was even explicitly written into the procedures established for approving HHH housing proposals. Up until 2019, agency protocols required that proposals include a “letter of acknowledgement” from the representative of the district in which it would be built. This formal authority amounted to what Public Counsel, a legal services nonprofit, described as a *pocket veto*: without taking any action, by refusing to supply the required letter, the council representative could effectively block any proposal they chose.⁶⁶ As a result of such discretion, councilmembers willingness to commit to this pledge was encouraged in part by the recognition they would have considerable influence over the types of projects developed and the parcels of land upon which they were constructed. Councilmembers relied upon their formal and informal influence over projects in their district to ensure that developers adequately engaged communities to cultivate

⁶⁶ As a result of litigation threatened by Public Council, the council abandoned the letter of acknowledgement requirement in 2019.

support (or at least dampen resistance) to their projects. During numerous meetings, councilmembers publicly expressed the importance for developers to pursue early and thorough community outreach. Absent it, council offices were sure to bear the brunt of angry constituent calls.

The collective commitment was not only facilitated by the district discretion councilmembers possessed but also enhanced their ability to use that discretion to achieve the goal to which they had all committed. In addition to cultivating “healthy peer pressure” among the city officials, it also buffered them from NIMBY-like resistance and pressure from their constituents. During a hearing regarding options to dramatically expand shelter options in the city, Councilmember Mike Bonin described the political utility of the collective commitment:

“If I go out and say I'm going to open a recreation center in my district to shelter, it's going to be hell to pay in that neighborhood. But, if there's fifteen of us standing together and people are hearing we're all doing this in two or three places, then people understand we're all in this together, and we have to get to that point” (H&P, 3/7/2018).

Notably, Bonin described this political rationale just weeks before the council took the 222 pledge. Similarly, the L.A. Times quoted Councilmember Harris-Dawson describing the political protection an all-district commitment to geographic equity would provide: “I think all of us would get a lot of relief if our constituents could pick up the paper and say, ‘Oh, this is happening everywhere!’ as opposed to, ‘Why here?’” (Reyes 2018).

When councilmembers began proposing the flurry of requests for city agencies to evaluate city-owned land in their districts for potential HHH

development, the proposals, as anticipated, did spark intense resistance from residents and merchants in the areas near the proposed sites. During numerous committee and council meetings, mobilized neighborhood opposition levied an unwieldy assortment of arguments against the developments, often expressing anger and outrage, and occasionally threatened their district representative with electoral retribution. In response to expressions of such vitriolic discontent from constituents, councilmembers often relied upon the logic of the 222 pledge to justify their proposals and support their colleagues. Responding to public comments claiming that developing HHH housing on a parking lot in his district would prove detrimental to local businesses (and a merchant who claimed to have a petition signed by 2,000 residents opposing the proposal), Councilmember Blumenfield referenced the council's collective commitment: "Every one of my colleagues here is looking at the properties that have been identified in their districts, and I would be irresponsible not to look at the properties in my district" [LACC 6/19/2019]. Councilmember Buscaino, supporting his colleague's proposal, reiterated to those assembled in the chamber that the entire council had made a commitment to pursue projects like this in their respective districts.

The manner in which collective commitment and district discretion interact to facilitate geographic equity of homeless housing becomes most visibly apparent in the *one single instance in all the years analyzed* in which the council approved a project over the resistance of the councilmember representing the district in which the project would be built. During a Homelessness and Poverty Committee meeting in

September of 2019, the CAO and housing department presented the committee a package of 34 permanent supportive housing projects recommended for HHH funding. The housing department representative noted that eleven of the projects were proposed to be built in “high or moderate resource areas,” acknowledging that “getting those projects is specifically the desired outcome of a motion that was passed by this committee earlier this year.” City agencies, in other words, were successfully responding to the committee’s directive pursue a de-concentration strategy.

Two councilmembers sought to pull projects proposed for their districts from the package. Committee member Harris-Dawson asked to pull two proposals in order to pursue further community outreach and impact assessments. Newly elected Councilmember Lee sent a representative to the hearing to request the committee pull the project proposed for his district to allow him to engage with the developer and other stakeholders, something he had not had the opportunity to do in the four weeks since he was sworn in. Harris-Dawson (CD8) was eager to distinguish his request from that of his new colleague from district twelve:

“I am respectfully asking everybody not to conflate the request from CD 12 with the request from CD8. CD 8 has 600 units of permanent supportive housing... CD12 has zero. And we’ve been at this for four years now... It would be absolutely insulting to the people of South L.A. for this request to be conflated with the request from CD12.”

Harris-Dawson’s early comments establish the dynamics of the conversation to follow. By upholding his commitment to the 222 pledge, he implies, he deserves continued discretion over projects in his district, while leaving open the question of

whether a representative who has not yet upheld the collective commitment of the council deserves such deference.

After a brief interrogation of Lee's representative, committee member Bonin says it seems to him that the delay being requested is motivated not so much by the need for further community engagement but by questions over whether the project should be built at all, "not *how* but *if*" as he put it. Bonin hints at the political consequences of allowing one district's representative out of the collective commitment. Severing the project from the bundle, leaving no HHH-funded projects in district twelve, will make it more difficult for all other members of the council to get support for projects in their district:

"We all will have a tough time going back to our districts and saying, 'You had concerns' – people who surrounded David [Ryu] in a meeting in Sherman Oaks, or people who've come out to a town hall and shouted down the mayor and police chief, and me, that goes without saying – 'but we plowed through. But we decided to hold off in another district.' That's a very, very hard conversation."

Bonin also reminded his colleagues of the contentious debate – what he called "a pull the covers controversial discussion," – over another HHH proposal in the full council the week before. In that case, Councilmember O'Farrell had proposed developing HHH housing on a lot in his district that was currently being utilized by a community organization called El Centro for youth recreation programs. Councilmember Cedillo opposed taking lot from El Centro, and while he acknowledged the council's "unwritten rule" of deferring to the district representative, he challenged that rule by claiming that a majority El Centro's program participants actually lived in his district. Cedillo requested the motion be

sent back to committee (preferably the Housing Committee he chaired). O'Farrell countered that the delay Cedillo was requesting threatened not just the project in question but also the entirety of the HHH housing goal: "We need to build thousands more units across the city, so if we hedge on this one, I don't know what that means for us when the next one comes along" [LACC 9/11/2019]. The council sided with O'Farrell, affirming both his district discretion and its collective commitment to constructing supportive housing citywide.

Comparing the earlier request for delay to Lee's request before the committee, Bonin argued that "for consistency's sake, as a body, it's really hard to not move forward." Councilmember Ryu agreed, asserting "I think it's very important that the city council move together as one voice, not as 15 different voices." He pointed out that while the committee's authorization that day would guarantee a financial commitment to the projects, there remained a long entitlement process ahead, over which many more opportunities for community outreach and input would occur for all projects in the package. Ryu, eager to approve the entire package, asked Harris-Dawson if those opportunities for further community participation in the months ahead would be sufficient to achieve the outreach he hoped to pursue.

"No, no, it's, with deference to Mr. Chair, it's wholly insufficient, because there's a particular factor that has to be considered here that doesn't have to be considered in the instances that you cited, and that is the issue of over-concentration. Right? So, none of these things that you're talking about have another one within walking distance. *Every* one in CD8, by virtue of the density and the commitment that we've made, has that to consider. And so, it's a different thing..."

Having so far surpassed the 222 units to which he pledged, and in order to address concerns over concentrating homeless facilities (the very motivation for the 222 pledge), Harris-Dawson claimed he should be afforded a level of discretion Lee has not yet earned. Ryu conceded the distinction to Harris-Dawson and expressed willingness to support his request, but remained wary of affording similar courtesy to the representative of a district with no HHH projects yet approved.

Committee chair Mitch O'Farrell, hoping to balance council-wide commitment with deference to district representatives, expressed his inclination to honor both requests to sever projects from the bundle. He asked developer of the district twelve project (who a representative from the housing department noted was in the room to answer questions,) whether a 30-day delay was a "scenario you could live with?"

DEVELOPER: "I think part of the potential issue with that is, wouldn't the project then go to council fully by itself?... I mean, the council member hasn't done any units in his district, and to tell you the truth, for us to potentially take on that risk and exposure isn't necessarily... it would be a business decision we would have to make."

CHAIR O'FARRELL: "You're saying the project is going to die, aren't you?... We certainly don't like to have a gun held to our heads, but we also, I mean, we have to have some deference to someone who's been in office for three weeks as well."

The developer's comments reveal how bundling multiple proposals to develop housing in multiple districts can forge not only broader political buy in among the elected representatives of the various districts and perhaps inure them from local neighborhood resistance, but also that such bundling appears to influence the

willingness of affordable housing developers to propose projects in areas that have not previously been sited.

Chair O'Farrell ultimately recommended to his committee that they grant Harris-Dawson the 30-day delay he requested while granting Lee a shorter two-week delay. Ryu remained reluctant to support a delay in district twelve, and requested that they split the vote. On the first vote, the committee unanimously approved Harris-Dawson's request. Then, in one of the more curious moments encountered during my review of council and committee meetings, O'Farrell called the vote on the district 12 delay. As he did, Ryu chimes in, "I've, no. Um, yeah..." probably about to explain his opposition but then, realizing that he, Bonin, and Harris-Dawson have voted down the request, holds his tongue. The surprise is justified, given the deeply established council culture. Not only had they overturned the recommendation of the committee chair (an exceedingly rare occurrence), but they stood in the way of a councilmember's request to delay, and likely kill, a project proposed for his district [Homelessness and Poverty Committee, 9/18/2019].

This is a particularly revealing moment, indicating how a culture of consensus and district discretion comingled to shape the council's commitment to geographic equity. Granting Lee's request would not only have violated the council's collective commitment by letting Lee out of the obligations to which all members had committed, but it would have also impeded the ability of all other members to wield that collective commitment both to buffer themselves against resistant constituents and to maintain authority over proposals sited within their own districts.

A month later, when the bundle of HHH proposals went before the full board, it was supported unanimously. The culture of consensus endured, and the council's commitment to geographic equity was being realized.

San Francisco

Though geographically far smaller and more densely populated than most of Los Angeles, a legacy of containment exists in San Francisco as well. Homelessness has most notably been concentrated in the Tenderloin – a neighborhood just a short walk from downtown and city hall – though large but somewhat less visible populations of people experiencing homelessness existed on the southeastern edge of the city, in Bayview and Hunters Point. While the 2019 point in time count indicated an increase in homelessness in many districts, the issue had developed increased urgency years earlier when homelessness became far more visible, even if the actual numbers remained relatively stable. Political leaders and the first director of the city's new homelessness department attributed the increased visibility to the rapid increase in development in the city. According to HSH director Jeff Kositsky, “the issue of street homelessness, this problem has become increasingly visible on our streets. I think it's important to note that the number of homeless people hasn't increased dramatically in San Francisco, but as the city continues to grow and more land gets developed, the problem is becoming more and more visible and is impacting more and more neighborhoods” [Land Use and Transportation Committee, 10/17/2017]. Despite the increased visibility of homelessness throughout many city neighborhoods,

shelters and services remained overwhelmingly concentrated in district six (including the Tenderloin and South of Market, or SoMa, neighborhoods), along with districts nine (including the Mission) and ten (including Bayview/Hunters Point).

In May of 2017, while the Board discussed legislation authorizing the use of land in the Mission for use as a navigation center, Supervisor Jane Kim (of district six) commented that she would be introducing a resolution to encourage geographic equity of homeless shelters and services across all districts. (The proposal would later be co-sponsored by her colleagues from districts nine and ten.) The announcement sparked a conversation that hinted at the resistance that would arise to stymie future calls for geographic equity and shared responsibility among Supervisors.

Board President Breed expressed concern that a mandate for geographic equity would further politicize the issue, arguing that shelter and services should instead be targeted to the areas where homelessness is most prevalent. All three supervisors representing districts with the largest concentrations of homelessness (including Breed's close ally, Supervisor Cohen) countered Breed by emphasizing, as Cohen did, that "Homelessness touches every one of our districts." Supervisor Ronen called attention the political pressures that result from the concentration of shelter and services:

"While it is true that there are certain districts where there are services where homeless people congregate, this is a citywide issue, a citywide problem, and we all need to be participating in the solution. And what I hear from my constituents, as their number one concern, is the fact they feel like the Mission has to take all the brunt of the crisis" [BOS 5/2/2017].

Supervisor Kim noted that her constituents expressed similar concerns, fearing that the concentration of services in their neighborhood served as a magnet, drawing in people experiencing homelessness from the surrounding city, and thereby amplifying concentration in the district. Homeless advocates are often forced to play both sides of the “magnet” argument, emphasizing the pull of services when urging geographic equity and then deemphasizing it in negotiations with resistant neighborhood residents and merchants.

Though Kim’s proposal was never taken up by a committee, its legislative text is informative. The proposal amounted to an “urging” resolution, expressing the Board’s desire that the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing pursue a policy of equitably distributing shelter and services across all supervisorial districts, but establishing neither the legal requirement nor any enforcement mechanism to assure that this desire was ever realized. It would have been left to the agency to determine how – or really, if – geographic equity was to be achieved, and required no commitment or involvement of the elected representatives of each district.

Reliance upon the new homelessness department – housed within the executive branch of the city’s government – to achieve geographic equity of services among electoral districts of the legislative branch, betrays yet another contrast in the level of policy authority asserted by the Board relative to their counterparts in Los Angeles. While L.A. councilmembers took it upon themselves to achieve geographically equitable housing distribution, Kim’s early proposal delegated that responsibility to the department. The Board’s limited ability to inform the practices

and projects pursued by the homelessness department proved a continued source of frustration for supervisors. Supervisors repeatedly lamented the department's resistance to their proposals for developing navigation centers within their own districts. Supervisor Peskin, on several occasions, expressed frustration that multiple of his proposals to site navigation centers in his district have been vetoed by the city's homelessness and real estate departments. Following Peskin's introduction of his fourth and finally successful proposal for a TAY navigation center in his district, Supervisor Ronen noted that she, too, had encountered resistance from the department, claiming that "Sometimes we have to push hard even when the Department of Homelessness says no" [BOS 7/9/19].

Further, legislative hearings indicated that the homelessness department, on numerous occasions, developed project proposals with surprisingly little involvement from the supervisor representing the district in which it would be sited. Both Supervisor Haney and his predecessor Supervisor Kim acknowledged instances in which they were alerted of projects proposed for their district only a day before the projects were announced. Lack of supervisor involvement in such cases hinders the ability of the political leaders to guide and ensure thorough community engagement and education on the new city-funded shelters or service centers. It is worth noting that Haney and Kim both represented district six, in whose borders homeless services and shelter have historically been – and remain – heavily concentrated.

When a resolution establishing a formal, binding requirement to establish navigation centers in every supervisorial district was introduced in late 2019, it was

motivated by frustrations over both lack of district representative involvement and over the perpetuated concentration of homeless shelter. These frustrations were apparent in the initial comments of Supervisor Haney, who authored the resolution:

“The mayor has called for a thousand shelter beds by 2020, and is on track to meet that goal, but the plan has lacked significant input from the community or district supervisors, and the narrow concentration of the beds has ignored the needs of the 25% of the homeless population and the vast majority of neighborhoods in the city, leaving them with few solutions” [GAO, 2/6/2020].

Supervisor Ronen, who also represented a district with concentrated homelessness in the Mission neighborhood, echoed frustration over the role played by executive agencies in perpetuating concentration and urged her colleagues to make a collective commitment to address homelessness in the city:

“What the city has been doing is moving people from one corner into the next, and I’m glad that some supervisors don’t have to deal with this problem, but for those of us who do every single day, it’s not just, you know, a natural phenomenon that all people who are experiencing homelessness feel that the only places that they can go are district six, nine, and ten, with some in eight, and some in five. It’s a man-made phenomenon. It’s the fact that police let things happen, that the homeless department let[s] things happen in certain neighborhoods, and they don’t in others. And so if we are serious about all being part of the solution and solving this problem, then please don’t put that responsibility on three or four supervisors. Please stand up and take leadership” [BOS 12/17/2019].

As these statements make clear, once again, this is an instance in which the executive branch of San Francisco’s government is establishing the homeless strategy with little involvement by the legislative branch, sparking a response, not cooperation, from select supervisors. Rather than building or working through partnership, supervisors of the high-homelessness districts sought to issue a legislative mandate to the

department as their only means to instill priorities of geographic equity into city homeless strategy, an attempt that will prove unsuccessful, as we will see.

Haney's legislation, co-sponsored by the representatives of other districts with the highest concentrations of homelessness, faced resistance both from supervisors on the Government Audits and Oversight (GAO) committee (it never made it to the full Board) as well from representatives of the city homeless department. Supervisor Peskin – who frequently affiliated and voted with progressives on the board but could occasionally become fixated on principles of parliamentary rules – questioned the use of the political districts as a mechanism for distributing navigation centers. When Haney first introduced the resolution, and even before it was assigned to committee, Peskin chimed in to claim “we really need to address [homelessness] where the problem is, so I just don't really see this as a supervisorial issue” [BOS 12/17/2019]. During discussion of the resolution at the GAO committee, Peskin doubled down on the position: “Geography's important, and fair share is important, but supervisorial lines don't cut it for me,” [GAO 2/6/20]. This was a somewhat surprising statement from a supervisor whose multiple efforts to establish a navigation center in his district had been stymied by bureaucratic veto, much to his frustration. Peskin's comments effectively betray themes that have run through homeless policymaking in San Francisco: lack of district discretion and, relatedly, deference to the Mayor and her executive agencies to orchestrate the response to homelessness in the city. Establishing supervisorial districts as the unit for ensuring equitable geographic

distribution of shelters was the only mechanism for ensuring legislative involvement and commitment to the goal, a point Haney raised in his response:

“I hear the point and I agree with Supervisor Peskin that in some cases the district lines are maybe not the best way to understand our city more broadly, but at the same time, because of the role that supervisors play in this process, the political role that we play, the budgeting role to make things happen in our respective districts, this was sort of the best way to ensure geographic equity that we could develop from a policy framework... In reality, when a navigation center, or any facility, is proposed in a neighborhood, it’s going to mean a lot to the residents there to be able to understand that this is a part of a city-wide plan, that everyone is stepping up, and it will be harder to do it if it’s done as it has been in a one-off, all over the city; certainly residents of my district, and I’m sure residents other districts, always ask, well, what is the rest of the city doing? And that’s a fair question, and the answer to that should be, we are all stepping up,” [GAO 2/6/20].

Like councilmember Bonin in L.A., Haney urged his colleagues to recognize that the political consequences of the resolution he was proposing. Collective commitment by all Supervisors – who are, of course, the only officials elected to represent distinct geographic units within the city – would buffer each of them from resistance to any individual proposal and help cultivate a sense among residents citywide that all districts are participating in the solution. This argument, however, and the proposal itself could not overcome further resistance from both the executive and legislative branches of San Francisco’s government.

A representative from the homeless department, Abigail Stewart-Kahn (who would become the department’s interim director shortly thereafter), expressed concern to the committee that the resolution would unnecessarily constrain city efforts to reduce homelessness, making them slower and more expensive. Stewart-Kahn urged against committing such substantial resources – “time, political capital,

and financial and personal resources” – to navigation centers alone. Doing so, she cautioned, would divert limited resources away from other important components of the city’s homeless strategy like permanent supportive housing and rental subsidies. Stewart-Kahn’s concern that the resolution would impinge on the department’s “flexibility” revealed the department’s resistance to expanded oversight and involvement by the Board of Supervisors in shaping its programs or priorities.

Committee member Mandelman echoed concerns coming from the homeless department about investing so heavily in navigation centers, which he characterized as temporary and expensive solutions. He was eager, he said, to dedicate resources both to more permanent housing options and less expensive strategies for getting people off the streets. But the more revealing justification for Mandelman’s skepticism toward any sort of commitment to geographic equity shows that distinct district priorities puts supervisors at odds with each other. One exchange between Mandelman and Haney in particular reveals the failure of members of the Board to achieve common purpose:

MANDELMAN: “You know, I think that if I were the district six supervisor, I would absolutely be putting geographic equity in homeless services as among my very top priorities, because there is not geographic equity in the city right now, and I, if I were a resident of the Tenderloin or SoMa, I would be very frustrated about that. As the district eight supervisor, I see the problem from a different perspective, which is, we do have unhoused folks on our streets, a lot of very sick unhoused folks on our streets, and so far, it has been cost prohibitive and nearly impossible to find appropriate spaces in the Castro to open a facility that would be easily bringing people off the streets and getting them the care that they need...”

HANEY: “I do find it hard to stomach that we have a situation where - and I know, respectfully, Supervisor Mandelman, that your... *housed*

constituents are concerned about people who are living on their doorsteps, and on the commercial corridors, and you're calling HSOC and you're calling 311- What do you think is happening to those folks right now? They, if we have opportunities for them to go anywhere, they're going to shelters and navigation centers almost entirely in my district and district nine... The idea that other parts of the city, I should say other *elected officials* in other parts of the city, would continue to rely on sending folks solely to our district rather than stepping up and having that clear responsibility and mandate I think is very unfortunate and ineffective" [GAO 2/20/2020].

In this exchange, Mandelman calls attention to the particular challenges of siting a homeless facility in his district as justification for his resistance to the geographic equity commitment. This perspective is in stark conflict with Haney's call upon his colleagues to use the collective commitment as a tool for addressing and alleviating district- and neighborhood-specific challenges and resistance. Mandelman's comments also amount to a subtle acknowledgement that as supervisor, he lacks either the political will or the political authority to establish more shelter in his district. Haney, on the other hand, expresses frustration that his colleagues' resistance to geographic equity is implicitly perpetuating a policy of containment. His mention of "HSOC" – the city's Health Streets Operation Center – is an attempt to convey to the committee that though outreach workers and police respond to street homelessness across the city, the services and shelter they offer remain concentrated in just several districts. Haney's frustration also calls attention to a contradiction in Peskin's earlier claim that the siting of navigation centers was "not a supervisory issue." Evidently, directing city agencies to respond to encampments or homeless-related impacts on street conditions *is* a supervisory responsibility, while ensuring proximate availability of services or shelter is not.

Ultimately, discussion among the supervisors over the proposed geographic equity commitment betrays a broader lack of common purpose and collective commitment by the Board to addressing the city's homeless problem. Absent supervisory discretion and authority, such a commitment means district representatives will likely face new and increased complaints from resistant constituents, while being largely uninvolved and unable to shape or justify the homeless facility causing the alarm.

Following a number of amendments approved by the committee (despite the resistance of Haney) that afforded supervisors more flexibility in determining the type of homeless intervention that their district would be required to establish, the proposal was continued to the call of the committee chair. No further action has been taken to establish a commitment to geographic equity in San Francisco. Since the proposal was last debated just weeks before the COVID-19 shelter in place orders in California, it is likely that the proposed resolution was sidelined by city efforts to respond to the new public health crisis and, at least for a time, forgotten amid the heated political conflict that emerged over how the city should address the crisis of homelessness exacerbated by the crisis of COVID.

The contrast in policy outputs emerging from each city's consideration of commitments to geographic equity is clear: L.A. made (and made good on) the commitment, San Francisco did not. The case studies in this comparison reveal how policy authority and political culture interacted to create distinct qualities of homeless

governance shaping each city's policymaking process and their diverging outcomes. In Los Angeles, councilmembers' willingness to pledge to build supportive housing in their districts and push against the city's legacy of containment was facilitated both by the culture of consensus on the council and each member's discretion over projects proposed for their district. In San Francisco, the proposal for geographic equity was resisted both by the homeless department (which would have been tasked with implementing the mandate) as well as by members of the Board who were reluctant to assert greater legislative authority over the city's homeless strategy. The resistance, and lack of collective commitment, effectively perpetuated geographic fragmentation and concentrated homelessness in the city.

It is worth acknowledging that the proposed commitments vary not only in terms of *responsibility* (with the L.A. council members committing themselves to achieving the equitable distribution, while in San Francisco, the Board attempted to mandate that the homelessness department pursue geographic equity) but also in terms of *type* of facility in question. Councilmembers in L.A. committed to support permanent supportive housing, while the San Francisco proposal involved navigation center shelters. It is feasible, then, that supportive housing is somewhat less contentious, and perhaps poses lower political risks, and that this made the L.A. proposal easier for district representatives to sign on to. Whether this occurred or not, we should not make too much of this distinction. The more important point is that the commitment to collective participation and geographic equity established priorities and practices that informed homeless strategies thereafter, including the L.A.'s *A*

Bridge Home program which significantly expanded temporary shelter beds in the city and included sites in each of the fifteen council districts. This collective commitment among districts would also become apparent during L.A.'s efforts to expand access to socially-distanced shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRISIS AMID CRISIS: ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in California in March of 2020 provides a revealing opportunity to compare how the two cities addressed homelessness amid the public health threats and restrictions the pandemic brought about. In both cities, the increased pressure of dealing with homelessness during a public health crisis produced new fractures along existing political fault lines. Officials in both cities were also prodded (and to some extent constrained) in their policy responses by lawsuits intended to compel the local governments to immediately remedy street conditions impacted by the prevalence of encampments. As in the case of the geographic equity commitment, political culture and policymaking authority (including district discretion) powerfully informed the way each city responded to the pressures of addressing homelessness during the pandemic. The L.A. City Council's leading legislative role in crafting the city's response along with the collective commitment by council members to shape implementation of the plan within their districts yielded a relatively comprehensive response to the shock of COVID. In San Francisco, the mayor and her homelessness department developed response efforts largely insulated from input or involvement by the Board of

Supervisors (and sometimes in direct contradiction of the Board's demands), inflaming inter-institutional rancor and inhibiting comprehensive, citywide participation in the response.

Los Angeles

Even as the pandemic struck Los Angeles, the momentum of the city council's deep involvement in homeless policymaking developed over the preceding four years carried on. Every other week, the Homelessness and Poverty Committee received and approved proposals for HHH-funded permanent supportive housing projects and A Bridge Home (ABH) shelters, all submitted by the councilmember representing the district in which they would be built. The CAO's office frequently reported to the committee on the administration of programs and projects funded by the state's Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program, a follow up to the HEAP grants noted earlier. The committee and the CAO's office engaged in detailed talks over how to reallocate portions of the \$117 million the city received from the program to meet the immediate and pressing needs brought about by the pandemic. Committee members also initiated the process of establishing a new Commission on Lived Experience with Homelessness. "The lack of a regular, consistent and prominent platform for the voices of people who are or have been homeless," the legislative text read, "inevitably bakes stigma, stereotype, and paternalism into the legislative and administrative process." The proposal for the commission was intended as a step towards better incorporating the perspectives of those who had

experienced homelessness into the policies intended to alleviate it, and was but one additional sign of a committee and legislative body increasingly involved in the nuances of that policymaking process.

Policies introduced prior to pandemic's lock downs and mask mandates took on new significance. In late 2019, for example, councilmember Bonin instructed LAHSA to report back to the H&P committee on strategies for solving homelessness for individuals who didn't qualify as "chronically homeless." LAHSA, along with most other homeless agencies, utilized a system for evaluating the vulnerability and needs of people experiencing homelessness. Those who had been homeless for many years, and who experienced mental health issues or struggled with substance use disorders, were scored as "high acuity," and received a bulk of the homeless spending in the county. Fewer resources were devoted to the majority of people experiencing homeless who scored at low or moderate acuity levels. When the hearing eventually occurred in late 2020, Bonin frames the conversation as especially pressing given the looming "tidal wave of evictions" on the horizon absent dramatic legislative protections at the state or federal level. His concern was that the system currently in place failed to adequately provide solutions for the newly homeless and inadvertently contributed to the prevalence of chronic homelessness, which was far more difficult to address. Given the significant likelihood that the pandemic's economic shocks would push the precariously housed into the ranks of the newly homeless, Bonin sought ways to create a more "nimble" system, better focused on solving smaller problems before they became larger ones. "So, this is what I'm trying to think about,"

Bonin explained to the committee, “how do we create a system that captures somebody before they become more homeless and before the intervention is harder, and before the intervention is more expensive?” (H&P 11/12/20). This serves as yet another example of the city council, and H&P committee members in particular, taking the lead in shaping homeless strategy, as opposed to acquiescing to other agencies or branches of government.

Despite the continued deep involvement in homeless policy by an L.A. city council – whose members, as we will see, continued to demonstrate a collective commitment to addressing homelessness in each of their districts – the pandemic dramatically increased the pressure upon the council to address homelessness and to coordinate the resources required to effectively do so. The public health imperative alone would have presented a major challenge to the local officials. How was the city to shelter thousands of people living on the streets, especially those who were especially vulnerable to the virus, while lacking the ability to rely on large, congregate shelter settings commonly utilized in emergency management situations? The pressures of the pandemic were further compounded by a lawsuit filed against the city and county and which, though initiated prior to the pandemic, took on new significance because of the resources and urgency the pandemic provided.

On November 25, 2019, two members of the city attorney’s office received an email from their former colleague who now represented a group calling itself the L.A. Alliance for Human Rights. This “alliance” was a carefully curated collection of downtown business owners and residents united by a shared claim that they had been

harmed – some economically, some citing Americans with Disability Act violations – as a result of street homelessness. Though the email alerts the city attorney’s office of the impending lawsuit, its author contended that “our interests are aligned” and expressed hope that a collaborative rather than adversarial process may be pursued. “We have all seen first-hand how the courts can be used to effect change when other methods have failed,” the Alliance attorney claimed, noting that “‘Impact litigation’ can go far in providing political cover or breaking down barriers to get things done” [LACC Council File No. 20-0263].

There’s no disputing that litigation has profoundly shaped homeless policy in Los Angeles. In fact, there is a good argument to be made that until 2015, lawsuits served as the most impactful single force influencing city responses to homelessness. The city’s Comprehensive Homeless Strategy was motivated in large part by official’s eagerness to move beyond homeless policy that was entirely reactive to litigation. As councilmember Huizar, then chair of the H&P committee noted upon adopting the comprehensive plan, “No longer will we set policy simply by court directives and court orders about what we can and can’t do” [LACC 2/9/2016].

Before the L.A. Alliance lawsuit, however, the most prominent and influential homeless-related lawsuits in the city were brought on behalf of people experiencing homelessness. These legal actions alleged that police enforcement measures violated the constitutional rights of the people that they targeted. Plaintiffs in *Jones v. City of Los Angeles* alleged that enforcement of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 41.18, which banned sitting or lying on sidewalks, constituted cruel and unusual

punishment when no shelter alternatives were available. (As part of the settlement agreement, the city committed to developing 1,500 units of permanent supportive housing in the Skid Row neighborhood.) *Lavan et al. v. City of Los Angeles* in 2012 targeted LAMC 56.11, a law prohibiting storage of personal items in public spaces and the legal justification for confiscating the belongings of those experiencing homelessness, claiming the law violated the fourth and fourteenth amendments. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an injunction barring the confiscation or destruction of personal property in Skid Row. Then in *Desertrain v. City of Los Angeles*, a case brought in response to LAMC 85.02 and its prohibition on vehicular living on city streets, the Ninth Circuit determined the law to be unconstitutionally vague and enforced in a manner that selectively targets the homeless. Interestingly, the *Desertrain* case was a direct result of the considerable discretion afforded to council members over their districts. In 2010, responding to intense demands from local residents, Councilmember Rosendahl (Bonin's predecessor, for whom he served as chief of staff) ordered much stricter enforcement of 85.02 relative to other districts, which led to the police encounters that were challenged in the lawsuit. The most controversial allegation of the suit involved a police officer acknowledging that while it was illegal to sleep in a car, he had no legal recourse to prohibit someone from sleeping on the sidewalk.

These lawsuits were a frequent source of frustration for the city council, and the enforcement-oriented laws and policing practices they took to court were the one type of homeless policymaking upon which consensus was most difficult to achieve.

Over the 13 years included in the analysis, council proposals to revise or amend all three of these codes noted above sparked rare moments of conflict. Generally, it was members of the H&P committee who resisted, or at the very least attempted to water down, the newly proposed enforcement mechanisms. Despite difference of opinion regarding enforcement policy, frequent efforts were made by councilmembers to cultivate some form of consensus, especially for the most controversial laws considered. The council's commitment to consensus-oriented policymaking is made clear in comments by Councilmember Koretz during debate over revisions to LAMC 41.18, the city's ban on sitting or lying on sidewalks:

“I think at best, this is a highly split council. I am not sure that sends a good message for something like this to pass on an eight to seven vote. And while people sometimes criticize us for having worked out so much of our policy in committees and then getting a unanimous vote on the council floor, if there ever was an issue where there should be more of a consensus, I think it's this one, and I don't think it's there” [LACC 10/28/2020].

That day, no vote was taken, and when the proposal was next heard several weeks later, it was called for discussion only, delaying again a vote until something closer to consensus could be assembled.

When the council considered any new or revised enforcement proposal, the threat of further litigation hung over all deliberation, with council members frequently expressing concern that their actions might incite another lawsuit against the city. During one H&P committee, Bonin acquiesced that, “at this point we may as well just open up the keys to the reserve fund to Carol Sobel,” referring to the attorney who brought suit against the city in each of the Jones, Lavan, and Desertrain cases [H&P

committee 3/17/16]. During a later meeting in which the committee discussed proposed amendments to 85.02 prohibiting living in vehicles, Sobel was actually in the audience to express concerns during public comment. The influence of her presence (and the legal threat it conveyed) was evident in Bonin's apprehension over the revised law: "I still have a feeling that we're likely, even with a new version of 85.02, to get sued, and I think Ms. Sobel is indicating that that's true. Thank you for removing any ambiguity."

Then, at a committee meeting just a month before the COVID lockdowns in California, councilmember Harris-Dawson, responding to public comment, pointed out that all the lawsuits shaping city policymaking over recent years have been brought on behalf of people experiencing homelessness and seeking redress from policing practices violating their civil rights. He wonders aloud about the impact of a suit against the city brought by members of the public claiming to have been harmed by the *consequences* of homelessness in the city:

"You know, the trouble for us on this side, and it's something for folks to consider, and not a very popular or smart thing for an elected official to say, but I'll say it: We never get sued by neighborhoods because of health conditions. We never get sued by homeowners because of health conditions, and perhaps if we had to respond to such a lawsuit, some of these things might be different. Right now, the lawsuits we're responding to all come from well-meaning advocates and people who fight for the conditions of homeless people. We don't ever go to court and have to answer to homeowners and residents of the city what it means to have an encampment in the alley by your house at any given time. And so, I just put that out there, not to weigh in on one side or the other, but just to say, like, there's only really one side suing."

[from audience]: "Are you encouraging that?"

“I’m not encouraging anything. I’m just pointing out the landscape,”
[H&P committee, 2/5/20].

Implicit in Harris-Dawson’s comments was the notion that all homeless-related lawsuits to which the city has been forced to respond target policing practices and ultimately impact the city’s ability to enforce so-called quality of life laws against those experiencing homelessness. The suits have generally not challenged the city’s strategy for creating solutions to homelessness.⁶⁷

Whether or not the L.A. Alliance was encouraged by Harris-Dawson’s comments, the “landscape” of homeless politics and the potential for the group’s lawsuit to exert dramatic change were altered dramatically by the onset of the pandemic. The potential impact of the lawsuit grew, too, when activist federal district court judge David O. Carter was assigned the case. Carter had previously presided over a high-profile lawsuit in nearby Orange County and orchestrated a settlement that led to the rapid provision of shelter for nearly a thousand people experiencing homelessness.

Though the lawsuit under Carter’s watch would evolve in the year to come, an initial settlement agreement, brokered in June of 2020, committed the city to producing 6,700 homeless interventions on a tight 18-month timeline. The local government retained considerable discretion over the form each intervention took and would be permitted to count a wide variety of forms of shelter – including permanent supportive housing units, rapid rehousing vouchers, shelter beds, safe parking spots

⁶⁷ The *settlement* to the Jones case did, however, commit the city to developing 1,500 units of permanent supportive housing in Skid Row.

and “cabin communities” – toward the settlement goal. The county, also a party to the suit, was to be responsible for dedicating additional funding for mental health services, over and above those funded through the 2017 Measure H sales tax. In response to Judge Carter’s initial concern for the health and safety of people living on the streets near freeway exits and overpasses, the city committed to prioritizing placement of this population, in addition to those over 65 years old and particularly vulnerable to COVID, in the new housing and shelter options. While some members of the city council like David Ryu were concerned that the settlement amounted to Judge Carter “essentially creating homeless policy for us on the fly,” others, like Councilmember Bonin, expressed hope Carter would be able to broker a “global settlement” as he had in Orange County, the sort of inter-governmental commitment that had historically proven elusive for city and county officials in Los Angeles [LACC 10/28/2020].

The ambitious 6,700 intervention goal was fused with broader COVID-based efforts to secure hotel rooms and shelter capacity into the omnibus “Homelessness Recovery Roadmap,” initiated with unanimous support by the council on July 1, 2020. The plan dedicated \$100 million of the federal COVID relief funds flowing into the city to homeless-related efforts, an allocation that would not have been possible absent the pandemic. The Roadmap also instructed the CAO with the assistance of LAHSA and other relevant city departments to devise a plan for the city to meet the 6,700 intervention goal in the agreed upon timeline, and report back to the council within 30 days. What the CAO brought back to the council was an extraordinarily

detailed plan including 26 initial recommended policy actions and detailed descriptions of the various components of the strategy, their costs, and updates on the progress of ongoing projects what would be woven into the Roadmap plan. Over the months to come, the council (along with the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 Recovery and Neighborhood Investment and the Homelessness and Poverty Committee) would receive frequent and equally detailed reports, testimony, and recommendations from the CAO, charged with coordinating the many agencies and departments involved in the strategy. The council and committees also devoted considerable time and attention to the details of these policy recommendations and would amend them when they didn't align with their priorities. For example, in September, the council voted to amend the CAO's request to allocate \$97 million to fund rapid rehousing and shared housing efforts. Council president Nury Martinez, noting concern about oversight and accountability of LAHSA, amended the recommendations to allocate the full amount but only authorize \$30 million in initial spending. The amendment also required the city agencies to return to the council to make monthly progress reports and would require further action by the council before the remainder of the allocated funds were released. Once again, the council in L.A. maintained deep involvement in and authority over implementation of the city's homeless response.

The Roadmap also relied on the individual council members to develop implementation plans within their districts to contribute to the citywide goal. By 2020, just four years after the formation of the Homelessness and Poverty Committee

and the establishment of the Comprehensive Homeless Strategy, the council had developed the experience and the capacity to pursue an ambitious citywide housing or shelter target while concurrently affording each councilmember considerable discretion over projects and their placement within their districts. This style of collective commitment was initiated and most apparent in Measure HHH's goal of developing 10,000 permanent supportive housing units in a decade and the pledge by all councilmembers to support the creation of 222 units in their districts in the first three years of the program. But this collective approach continued through the implementation of the city's A Bridge Home program, for which district representatives again submitted proposed sites in their districts and worked to select service providers. By 2021, all districts had Bridge Home sites either completed or under development.

Through implementation of both the HHH and A Bridge Home programs, the council had developed a working practice of collective commitment founded upon district discretion, an established practice that informed the Roadmap and, ultimately, the city's response to addressing homelessness during the pandemic and the demands and constraints put upon that process by the lawsuit. The Roadmap established target goals for the number of interventions to be included in each district based on the 2019 point in time count of people living within 500 feet of freeway exits and onramps. District representatives proposed both properties to be evaluated for shelter sites and also the type of intervention they were interested in establishing at the particular site. This allowed the councilmembers to propose forms of shelter deemed most

appropriate (or perhaps least likely to spark resistance) for properties in their district, and to pursue the interventions – like safe parking or cabin communities – they were particularly fond of. By the time the CAO reported back to the committee in November, 2020, a total of 7,398 interventions (representing beds, units, parking spots, etc.) had been approved, distributed across all districts and with many being sited in districts where shelter siting had previously proven difficult. (By June of 2021, the CAO reported that a total of 6,312 interventions would be operational within a month, surpassing the initial settlement agreement, and another 2,000 were anticipated to be available by the end of the year.) Despite differences of opinion over policy preferences, the council responded with common purpose and collective commitment allowing it to effectively oversee the design and implementation of the Roadmap plan and to achieve the ambitious goal it set in unprecedented times of hardship.

It is a testament to that collective commitment and consensus-oriented style of governance that the heightened pressures of the pandemic and the L.A. Alliance lawsuit did not stoke greater tension and turmoil among members of the council, or between the council and city agencies. That is not to say that conflict did not emerge during this time. The tensions that emerged, however, were between the city council and the county government, reigniting a contentious relationship that, despite the delicate partnership forged over the previous few years, had been a frequent component of homeless politics in greater Los Angeles.

The catalyst for the conflict was County’s announcement that, as a result of a shortfall in expected sales tax revenue brought in through Measure H, the county would be unable to fund \$14 million of the supportive and mental health services it had promised. The announcement united the council in dire frustration and sparked serious discussion about the possibility of the city forming its own health department so it would no longer have to rely on the County for social service and mental health provision. In October of 2020, the CAO requested guidance from the council on how to respond to the County’s decision. Comments from the council members during their discussion of CAO’s request revealed both the heightened frustration and the seriousness with which they considered dramatic institutional changes:

O’FARRELL: “So, here we are again, where the city is left with no choice but to bail out the county in their obligation to ensure that nearly 19,000 of our residents experiencing homelessness receive Measure H services... I am putting the county on notice that this is not okay under any circumstance.”

CEDILLO: “We have a need to reevaluate the entirety of our relationship with the county, and that includes LAHSA as well. You would think that we would partner in our efforts to address this most critical issue, and it appears that each time we deal with the matter that we do not.”

BLUMENFIELD: “I’ve never been one in the past for thinking about our own health department, because it seemed repetitive, but more and more, as these things come up, I’m partial to that idea, because we just can’t be held over a barrel all the time.”

O’FARRELL: “Past is prologue. It has been my experience after more than seven years on this council, that this agreement that we have with the county just isn’t working out, and I don’t expect that we can expect any change from the county’s position,” [LACC 10/27/2020].

The conflict itself is perhaps not as important as is what it reveals about the relationship between policy authority and inter-institutional conflict. Unlike San Francisco (where city and county authorities are joined), L.A. County's jurisdiction over health and social services is a policy area over which the city council has little influence. Councilmembers, for example, have no authority over the vast sums of federal dollars that flow into the county to fund social services and healthcare. And yet, the city officials depend upon those services being provided in their districts, and face pressure from their constituents when the services prove insufficient. Council members rely upon the county to provide mental health services in the HHH-funded housing in their districts, but have relatively little recourse to determine how those services are provided and prioritized. This seems like a recipe for conflict: lack of discretion + dependence on service + political pressure when service is lacking. These dynamics, which foster contention between the city and county in L.A., also resemble the relationship between the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor in San Francisco, an inter-institutional relationship similarly fraught with conflict.

San Francisco

Homeless policymaking in San Francisco during the COVID pandemic betrays a continued pattern of frustrated efforts by members of the Board of Supervisors to direct or even ensure involvement in the city's strategy for addressing homelessness. While the Board's frustrated struggle to assert itself as a policymaking body is most glaringly apparent in a months-long debate with the mayor over

securing shelter-in-place (SIP) hotel rooms for city homeless – a debate that would exacerbate inter-institutional conflict between the city’s legislative and executive bodies – instances of the Board’s constrained legislative capacity surfaced throughout the year.

In May, Supervisor Peskin, whose third district contained many of the city’s SRO hotels, introduced legislation requiring the Department of Public Health (DPH) to establish protocols to protect the health of residents of the SRO buildings. Since SRO residents frequently lacked private bathrooms or kitchens, they faced heightened vulnerability to transmission of the virus. Peskin noted that after earlier, less formal efforts to encourage the health department to attend to the needs of SRO residents proved inadequate, legislating demands became his last recourse:

“Look, I didn’t want to turn these things into legislation, but we’ve been waving our arms around for a couple of months. I think everybody at DPH knows that. It took introducing this legislation to focus the attention that is now starting to be focused on these highly transmissive sites,” [BOS 5/19/2020].

In addition to mandating that DPH provide SRO residents with additional testing, information regarding infection in their building, and quarantine rooms when necessary, Peskin also intended his legislation as a step toward cultivating a new relationship between the health department and those living in the SROs. “I really want to create the space to build trust between the Department of Public Health and the community,” Peskin acknowledged during a reauthorization of the ordinance [Land Use and Transportation Committee 8/31/2020]. The initial failure of the health agency to address the particular needs or vulnerabilities of those in SROs

demonstrates how city agencies are not always attuned to the sensitivities of various communities scattered throughout the city. District elected officials on the other hand, spurred in part by electoral incentive, generally *do* cultivate these relationships and sensitivities, which can be a valuable resource for diffusing neighborhood resistance to new homeless facilities.

But, as we have seen, the lack of district discretion and involvement in implementation of homeless projects undercuts the utility of these resources. This lack of supervisorial involvement became apparent earlier in the year when, just prior to the COVID lockdowns, a new navigation center was announced for Supervisor Haney's district, yet another to be established in the district with the highest concentration of homeless shelters and services. Though Haney expressed excitement about the prospect of opening another navigation center, he remained concerned about the lack of community outreach prior to project approval. "I personally found out about this navigation center proposal, I think, the day before it was announced," he admitted to his colleagues [Budget and Finance Committee, 2/12/2020].

Amendments proposed by Haney – attempts like Peskin's noted above to facilitate a closer relationship between the city agency and neighborhood residents – established ongoing community meetings with the homeless department and the district supervisor, and created a zone surrounding the new center in which people living on the streets would be referred to the new navigation center. Rather than selecting the site himself and orchestrating outreach efforts (as his counterparts in L.A. would have done), Haney's modest amendments were reactions to decisions made by the

homelessness department largely without his input, and his efforts to create the zone for prioritized referrals was but another piece of his continued campaign against the further concentrating homelessness and services in his district.

Ultimately, the story of homeless policymaking in San Francisco during COVID is best captured in the conflict between the Board and the mayor and her homeless department over the city's strategy for utilizing shelter-in-place (SIP) hotel rooms to provide shelter for those living in congregate shelters and on the streets. On the Board, the nearly year-long series of clashes with the executive branch was waged primarily by the supervisors representing the districts with the largest concentrations of homelessness: supervisors Haney, Ronen, and Walton of districts six, nine, and ten respectively. These three supervisors were joined in their struggles by their new colleague Dean Preston who had won a special election to serve as supervisor for the district Mayor Breed once represented. Preston, the founder the San Francisco Tenants Union, was a natural ally of the most devoted homeless advocates on the Board and would lead some of the most sharply-barbed debates between the two branches of the city's government.

Toward the end of March 2020, just several weeks after the first shelter-in-place order was issued in the city, Supervisors Haney, Ronen, Walton, and Preston, along with three of their progressive allies on the Board, submitted a resolution titled "Urging Public Health Orders to Prioritize the Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness During the COVID-19 Crisis." The resolution amounted to an expression of concern by the supervisors that the administration's response to the

pandemic was not sufficiently considering the needs and threats faced by the city's homeless population. The legislative text of the resolution directly quotes testimony from both the head of the Human Services Agency indicating the administration's intention to continue utilizing congregate shelters (not individual hotel rooms) as well as the county health officer, who provided testimony that securing individual rooms was the best strategy for avoiding transmission. Though no formal legal requirements were legislated, the resolution encouraged the administration to move all people residing in congregate shelters into SIP hotel rooms, establish heightened health screening procedures for city shelters, mandate a "thinning" of shelter populations to ensure social distancing, and urged securing additional SIP rooms for those on the streets.

By the middle of April, supervisors had become sufficiently frustrated by the mayor's failure to incorporate the needs of the homeless in her COVID response strategy that they determined legislation to be the necessary course of action. Supervisor Ronen introduced an emergency ordinance – co-sponsored by her progressive colleagues – to require the city to secure 8,250 SIP rooms for people experiencing homelessness (along with frontline workers and those released from hospitals requiring quarantine rooms). During the committee hearing on the emergency ordinance, Ronen framed her proposal as an attempt to rectify the administration's insufficient initial response:

“So far, our city government's public health response has failed people in congregate settings and people who are unsheltered and put all of us at risk. With this emergency ordinance, we will correct our course and move vulnerable, unhoused individuals out of congregate settings and

off of the street, into private hotel rooms as quickly as possible where they can finally self-quarantine and shelter in place like those of us that are blessed enough to have a home” [B&F 4/13/2020].

The significant course correction proposed also amounted to a more muscular assertion of authority over homeless response – and, thus, over the mayor and homeless department – than was frequently launched by the Board of Supervisors. The proposal raised concerns among some about the political motivations and consequences of the legislation. While Budget and Finance committee Chair Fewer supported the strategy of securing thousands of hotel rooms to provide shelter for the homeless, she expressed reservations that the proposal might “fall into the trap of our traditional political divisions” [B&F 4/13/2020].

Ronen and her co-sponsors were eager counter any claims that their proposal was purely politically motivated. Supervisor Haney claimed that they “did everything that we could to work in partnership, and this was never about politics, it was always about saving people’s lives,” [B&F 4/13/2020]. Both he and Ronen described in detail their extensive efforts behind the scenes to encourage heightened urgency and focus on homelessness during the pandemic including several weeks of daily calls to the mayor’s office, department heads, and the city’s Emergency Operations Center. The supervisors’ frustration mounted not only because their efforts to encourage a homeless strategy that more closely aligned with public health guidelines went unheeded, but also, as Ronen told it, because the administration pursued strategies that seemed to directly contradict those guidelines:

“During that same period of time, the mayor’s office spent the bulk of their energy creating Moscone West, a large congregate facility. We,

behind closed doors, without making public statements, were pleading with them, ‘Please don't do that, it's not safe.’ We talked to medical experts who specialize in homelessness who agree with us, and we were trying to get them to call behind the scenes. I mean, we worked nonstop” [BOS 4/14/2020].

The final straw, according to Ronen and Haney, was the outbreak of the virus at MSE South, a congregate shelter in Haney’s district and one of the largest in the city. The outbreak would become the largest COVID outbreak in a homeless shelter in the county, leading to over a hundred infections among residents and staff. When even the MSE South outbreak didn’t lead to the rapid shelter thinning and expansion of SIP rooms that the supervisors had advocated, formal legislation became the last tool at their disposal. As Haney put it, “we didn’t see any other option other than delivering on our responsibility as legislators to make this happen and make this a full legal requirement by the city” [B&F 4/13/2020].

The Board was convinced and unified. Supervisors unanimously passed the emergency ordinance requiring the city to secure over eight thousand hotel rooms to provide shelter for those in congregate settings and on the streets during the pandemic. This act would have signified a noteworthy tilt in the balance of power over addressing homelessness in San Francisco in which the Board asserted authority and issued a directive to executive agencies in a way it had rarely done in the past. It *would* have signified such a power shift if mayor’s administration had actually implemented the law adopted by the Board. But it did not. Mayor Breed and agency leaders refused to abide by the emergency ordinance’s legal requirements, actions they justified by claiming that it would be economically infeasible, while repeating

claims that many people experiencing homelessness would refuse the rooms and couldn't care for themselves even if they did.⁶⁸ The city ultimately secured just over two thousand rooms total. So, instead of signifying any sort of shift in institutional authority, the emergency ordinance became yet another symbol of the political culture of inter-institutional conflict, and yet another example of how that conflict stymied large-scale and more comprehensive homeless strategy.

The conflict between the Board – especially the core of four homelessness-focused supervisors – and the mayor persisted throughout the year. The mutual antipathy was particularly apparent during the mayor's appearance before the Board in June. (In San Francisco, the Charter requires that the Board host the mayor for a 'question time' every month, yet another symbol of the executive's looming influence over the city's legislative process.) The meeting, like all meetings following the shelter in place orders, was held via video conferencing, with each attendee joining in from their home or office. The video-based meeting format – which presented a grid of meeting attendees on a single screen – offered the spectator a closer glimpse of sometimes subtle gestures, facial expressions, and reactions. At this particular meeting, Supervisor Preston took the opportunity to call attention both to the mayor's refusal to implement the Board's emergency ordinance and the lack, as he saw it, of any comprehensive homeless strategy. Breed's response not only revealed her

⁶⁸ The declared state of emergency in the city during the pandemic significantly expanded Mayor Breed's authority, further insulating the executive from urging and mandates from the local legislators.

tendency toward a more conservative orientation toward homelessness, but also became notably heated as it progressed.

PRESTON: “Every single supervisor here, I believe, can attest to constituents in our district, housed and unhoused, demanding answers and solutions, and rightly so. I think people want a plan and they want action. As you know, the Board passed legislation to house 8,250 people in hotel rooms, which was not implemented. We demanded that unhoused people be included in health orders that omit them entirely while giving great detail about everything from picnicking to exercise to golf, and we’ve seen no progress so far towards a health order. Meanwhile, we’ve had outbreaks in our shelters, and the crisis on our streets is growing. So, my question, Madam Mayor, is this: when will you present to this board or to the public a comprehensive plan to address homelessness during this state of emergency?”

MAYOR BREED: “So, thank you, supervisor, for your question and I just want to be clear: my goal has always been to focus on doing what we can as it relates to homelessness. And, if we’re going to talk about homelessness and what we need to do, we need to also have an honest conversation about the fact that this crisis is not going to solve our homeless problem. The fact that we have people, sadly, who are suffering from substance use disorder and mental illness, who we have had very serious difficulty in trying to get them to even accept a hotel room even when they fall under this vulnerable category... So, rather than making demands, work with me. Work with me on meeting the challenges. Work with me on providing real solutions...”

When Preston followed up to ask if the Board can expect a more comprehensive plan, Breed claimed that she believed the city was already pursuing a comprehensive plan. She pointed to the recently developed Tenderloin Plan (a plan developed solely to address homelessness during the pandemic in the neighborhood where it was most concentrated) as evidence of it. The claim that this neighborhood-based plan was evidence of a comprehensive strategy was too much for Supervisor Haney to take, especially since, as the neighborhood’s representative, he had been only marginally involved in the plan’s development. Haney clicked on his video and appeared on

screen just long enough to flash a deliberately skeptical glance toward Breed before clicking his video off again. This moment is captured in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Supervisor Haney reacts to claims by Mayor Breed.



As it turned out, street conditions in the Tenderloin – including a rapid and significant increase in the number of tents on neighborhood sidewalks during the first months of the pandemic – provoked a lawsuit that further inhibited the city’s frustrated efforts to devise and implement any semblance of comprehensive homeless strategy during the public health crisis. On May 4th, a lawsuit was filed against the city by Hastings School of Law (located in the Tenderloin) along with several neighborhood residents, an SRO owner, and a merchants’ association seeking redress from “the de facto policy of the City and County of San Francisco to use the Tenderloin community as a containment zone” for unsheltered homelessness, as the filed complaint put it. While the complaint included a wide-ranging collection of fifteen allegations against the city – including violations of the equal protection clause

of the U.S. Constitution and the Americans with Disabilities Act and the California state constitution's protection of the pursuit of life, liberty, property, safety, and happiness – the suit was fundamentally a legal maneuver to force the city to reduce the number of tents in the neighborhood.

Little more than a month after the complaint was filed, Hastings and the city had arrived at a settlement agreement. Though the Board of Supervisors ultimately possessed authority over whether or not to approve the settlement, its members had not been involved in its negotiations. In fact, as soon as the settlement was announced, supervisors began expressing concern both over what the settlement entailed and the process through which it was designed. In mid-June, Supervisor Ronen announced that she would be calling for a hearing to afford the Board the opportunity to discuss the settlement details. “My fear,” she acknowledged, “is that the whole settlement will be done and finished and its impacts will be felt everywhere without the Board ever having a chance to weigh in, and I have several concerns about how this will be implemented.” In the official request for the hearing, Ronen included fifteen questions she wanted addressed by the homeless department and other pertinent city agencies. The final two questions posed are indicative both of the Board's lack of involvement in the settlement determination and members' broader lack of discretion over the siting of homeless facilities in their districts:

“14. The agreement explains that safe sleeping villages outside of the TL will be used to relocate some of these individuals? Where exactly will these new safe sleeping villages be located?

15. How are the relevant Supervisors being involved or engaged in the creation of these new safe sleeping villages?” [BOS File No. 200655].

The questions, and the concerns they reflect, reveal that supervisors had not been consulted about over how their districts might be involved in the city's attempt to de-concentrate unsheltered homelessness from the Tenderloin. Further, there is evidently no established procedure whereby supervisors would be involved in determining if and where the 'safe sleeping villages' would be sited in their districts.

When the Board finally convened to discuss and vote on the Hastings settlement, Ronen's fear that the agreement would already have been implemented had come to fruition. When Supervisor Haney was asked what he, as the district representative, thought of the settlement, he admitted that "almost all of what is in this settlement has already been accomplished." This did not, however, deter the supervisors from using the opportunity to express the many and varied frustrations regarding the currently political climate shaping homeless policymaking in the city. Supervisor Peskin acknowledged "a profound friction between our branch of government and the executive branch of government as it relates to housing unhoused people in hotel rooms during this unprecedented pandemic." Supervisor Walton questioned whether the city even benefitted from the homeless department since, he asserted, "everybody else is responsible for addressing the needs on our street."

Supervisor Ronen's comments conveyed frustration both over the Board's lack of authority over homeless policymaking and called attention to the political consequences that emerge from the lack of a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes geographic equity:

“So, when my constituents call, screaming and yelling at me, which they do daily at this point, I don’t know what to tell them other than ‘a lawsuit worked in the Tenderloin.’ ...I am glad that so many unhoused individuals in the Tenderloin finally made it safely into hotels and safe places. Unanimous legislation from the governing body of the city and county of San Francisco couldn’t do that, so, you know, impressed that it actually, finally happened.”

Unlike district representatives in L.A. who could – and frequently did – point out to their angry constituents that each of their colleagues had committed to developing homeless housing within their districts as well, supervisors in San Francisco had no semblance of a collective commitment to protect them from neighborhood-based resistance and anger. Moreover, the settlement – which Ronen described as “the only impetus that I’ve seen work to get some change in conditions in the neighborhood” – further eroded the perception that supervisors had a significant role to play in addressing homelessness within their districts. While the litigation seemed to have achieved some minimal commitment to deconcentrate homelessness, it did so without the knowledge or cooperation of any of the Board’s members.

The settlement details also worked against the Board’s unanimously expressed desire to expand the number of SIP hotel rooms dedicated to people experiencing homelessness. According to the agreement, in addition to establishing safe sleeping sites in other districts, the city would also offer hotel rooms to some of those living in tents in the Tenderloin. This amounted to a shift in prioritizing *who* to shelter in the hotel rooms, rather than a commitment to expanding *how many* total rooms would be utilized. Supervisor Preston questioned the Deputy City Attorney regarding who, specifically, was involved in the settlement’s negotiations. In doing so, he cogently

depicted how the political process through which the settlement was developed effectively determined which policy priorities it would incorporate:

PRESTON: “Who from the city is represented there? Because, assuming it’s not the Board of Supervisors, that this just comes to us for approval, then that means the very people who are negotiating... are likely from the same administration that has made the decision to not acquire enough SIP hotel rooms. So, surprise, the agreement doesn’t have anything about acquiring more hotel rooms. And now it comes before us, and... we’re expected to just approve that, and that’s a problem, because we have a different perspective as a Board of Supervisors, that we have already articulated, that is not reflected in this agreement... Who are the principles of the city who decide what goes into this agreement that now is before us?”

Deputy City Attorney indicates she is not sure. Ronen raises her hand.

RONEN: “I know the answer. It was the mayor’s chief of staff.”

PRESTON: “I think what is clear is that it is not, procedurally, the Board of Supervisors” [BOS 8/11/2020].

Like Bonin in L.A., Preston also expressed a tentative optimism that a lawsuit could productively shape the city’s homeless response. However, where Bonin hoped litigation might forge collaboration among a fragmented governmental apparatus, Preston was interested in utilizing future settlement agreements to assert Board authority over city strategy and surmount resistance from the mayor. During an exchange with Hastings Chancellor Faigman, Preston discovered that Hastings had not necessarily opposed a settlement requirement that the city expand its SIP inventory, but no proposal to do so was ever raised during negotiations.

PRESTON: “I think we’re facing a reality that there’s a difference between the branches of government here. The branch you were negotiating with does not want to increase, dramatically, the number of hotel rooms. The branch that the settlement agreement is before does want to increase the number of hotel rooms. And so, I think it’s very

telling to me, that Hastings might be open to a settlement agreement that required the city to provide additional hotel rooms. I think that's pertinent to our considerations as a Board or Supervisors and how we vote on this."

CHANCELLOR FAIGMAN: "To put it simply and straight forwardly, Hastings doesn't have an interest in being involved in the political sovereignty questions between the Board of Supervisors and the mayor."

PRESTON: "Let me just say that you may not have intended to enter into the political dispute, but your lawsuit enters into the heart of a dispute between branches... There was a win-win here that I am concerned wasn't even on the table or addressed, which was to actually use this as a vehicle to make broader progress" [BOS 8/18/20].

It is revealing of the city's political dynamics that members of the local legislative branch would view litigation against the city not as constraining their authority over policy but as an opportunity to exert authority over the established resistance of the city's executive branch.

Even after the Board approved the settlement (despite dissenting votes from Preston, Walton, Ronen, and Peskin), more inter-institutional conflict over the SIP rooms loomed on the horizon. Near the end of the year, the debate was no longer *how many* rooms should be acquired but *how long* they should be operated. In November, the Board held a hearing on the homeless department's proposed SIP demobilization which proposed immediately starting the process of phasing out the use of hotel rooms as shelter, a process proposed to continue through June of 2021. The interim director of HSH, Abigail Stewart-Kahn, argued to the board that establishing an end date for the use of SIP hotels was needed in order "to create a sense of urgency" and encourage those residing in the hotels to accept housing placement offers. She also

described the use of SIP hotels as a “non-sustainable” component of the city’s homeless response and urged redirecting funding from SIPs to permanent housing options.

While the issue of conflict had evolved, it remained built upon enduring political tensions. Supervisors expressed continued frustration over the lack of Board and community involvement in the development of the plan, as well as the failure to incorporate the plan into a broader comprehensive strategy for addressing homelessness in the city. Supervisor Ronen conveyed her disappointment over both the process and the proposed plan:

“What I am feeling frustrated about is that this decision was made without consultation of this board, in complete contradiction to legally passed legislation by this board, without full information so we can have a meaningful dialogue on it, and without any consideration to what happens to the people that are still on the streets and that are still losing their homes and are ending up on the streets.”

Supervisor Fewer, who was in the final weeks of her term in office representing a district that had historically had relatively little homelessness, lamented the lack of a comprehensive plan:

“I know in my district, and I know other supervisors in their districts, are getting blown up about our unhoused population, and people are super angry. I think what people don’t understand is that we don’t have a citywide strategy for the person sleeping in your doorway... Because I haven’t seen one, in all the time that we’ve been here. It’s not even just during COVID, it’s just, we don’t have one” [BOS 11/10/2020].

Fewer’s frustration also revealed a disconnect between district representation and the city’s homeless strategy. Were district supervisors directly involved in developing and responsible for implementing any such strategy, the responsibility would fall to

each supervisor to convey to their constituents the broad strategy and their district's unique participation in it. Lack of deep district-level involvement in the plan thereby inhibits city residents from understanding how efforts undertaken in their neighborhood – whether the siting of temporary shelter or permanent supportive housing – fits into a broader, city-wide commitment.

Board opposition to the homeless department's plan to begin immediately 'demobilizing' the SIP hotels prodded Supervisor Haney to introduce yet another emergency ordinance – again co-sponsored by Walton, Ronen, and Preston – requiring the city to extend use of the hotels to supplement the city's shelter capacity. Haney called using the SIP rooms "a massive opportunity for us as a city to make strides in addressing our homeless crisis" [BOS 12/15/2020]. Though HSH had previously committed to rehousing all SIP occupants (rather than returning any of them to the street), the department resisted calls to make the rooms available to others experiencing homelessness once the original occupant was moved into permanent housing. The interim director, along with several members of the Board, worried that continuing to fill the SIP hotels with individuals who were assured housing thereafter would send the city over a financial cliff when FEMA ceased reimbursements for the program. Amendments proposed by Supervisor Mandelman (developed in consultation with HSH) led to a compromise whereby six of every ten rooms vacated would be reoccupied, and the guarantee of housing would not extend to the new occupants. Though Haney and his co-sponsors regretted the watering down of their ordinance, they were glad to pass legislation that would actually be implemented by

the administration. Perhaps most tellingly, Supervisor Preston conveyed frustration that the legislation was required at all. After nearly a year of crisis upon crisis during which the mayor actively resisted legislative directives from the Board of Supervisors, an emergency ordinance remained the only mechanism through which the Board could hope to force its priorities upon the administration's homelessness policies.

The COVID pandemic provides a rare opportunity to evaluate how each city's homeless strategy, informed by the institutional developments of just several years earlier, were impacted by the exogenous public health shock, especially since each city was also forced to entertain the demands of a homeless-related lawsuit. The increased pressure imposed by the shocks accentuated the contrasting levels of authority and political cultures shaping policymaking efforts in each local legislature. The vast authority and constant commitment to consensus in L.A. were as glaringly apparent as the heated conflict in San Francisco and the frustration felt by supervisors over their lacking ability to shape the priorities of the city homeless strategy.

Each city's response to homelessness during the pandemic also reveals significant path dependence of the institution building decisions made in 2016. In L.A., the Comprehensive Homeless Strategy and the commitment to geographic equity – both a result of the council's instituting the standing Homelessness and Poverty committee – set the guiderails along which city's Homeless Recovery Roadmap was set in motion. In San Francisco, competing priorities and lack of

cooperation between the Board of Supervisors and the homeless department (and mayor) inhibited any form of comprehensive plan (at least of which supervisors and the public were aware of) and blocked efforts by supervisors to use the pandemic as an opportunity to dramatically expand homeless alleviation efforts. The shocks of the pandemic and lawsuits ultimately revealed not only the durability of each city governments power dynamics, culture, and governing style, but also how significantly they shaped policymaking outcomes amid extreme turmoil.

CONCLUSION

Governing in a manner that successfully counters the political fragmentation inherent in a problem like homelessness requires cities to simultaneously pursue two priorities that may, on the surface, appear at odds with each other. First, of course, a city must develop a comprehensive plan, but more importantly, it must achieve sufficient collective commitment from political leaders and agency officials to assure participation in a coordinated and citywide effort. Otherwise, continued concentration of homelessness and supportive services is all but assured. At the same time, the plan must be flexible enough to meet the idiosyncratic needs of different parts of the city, needs only revealed through deep community outreach and education efforts that engage residents and other stakeholders in neighborhoods where projects are proposed. Without bringing stakeholders into the process, neighborhood resistance campaigns are likely to be sufficiently intense and legally creative to stall the

development of new facilities, overtax scarce city resources, and condemn any citywide strategy to a death by a thousand cuts.

The diverging institutional developments pursued by the two cities – with L.A. situating authority over homelessness in the political body designed to be most responsive to neighborhood demands, while San Francisco vested that authority in an agency seemingly insulated from political (or at least electoral) pressures – might initially lead us to expect that each city would successfully pursue one priority to the detriment of the other. All else equal, the new agency within a San Francisco’s bureaucracy should have been better situated to develop a single, comprehensive strategy, removed, as it was, from the pinch of parochial demands. And yet, the same insulation that may facilitate comprehensive planning likely undermines incentives to pursue thorough community outreach. In 2017, Supervisor Yee actually acknowledged to the homeless department’s director that “city departments, in general - in general, not always - they don’t do a good job with outreach” [BOS 12/12/2017]. Vesting authority over homelessness in the powerful, district-based city council, on the other hand, might have led us to expect that parochial concerns would have crowded out comprehensive planning and undermined willingness by officials to agree to participate in any citywide strategy.

However, the influence of each city’s institutional development was informed by the interaction between the relative policymaking authority afforded to the local legislature (including discretion over district implementation) and the political culture that pervaded the policymaking process in each city. In San Francisco, the Board’s

lack of policymaking authority and limited district discretion fomented conflict and contention over competing priorities. The new homeless department lacked the incentives either to pursue any geographically equitable distribution of homeless facilities or to develop cooperative partnerships with district representatives most attuned to neighborhood needs or concerns. In Los Angeles, the vast district discretion and policy authority possessed by the city council inhibited neither the formation of a comprehensive plan nor its coordinated implementation. When blended with the council's culture of consensus-oriented policymaking, district-based discretion actually facilitated comprehensive and coordinated efforts. Despite frequent claims that any sort of citywide strategy requires the removal of politics, community outreach actually depends on the electoral imperative of district-based representation. As councilmember Cedillo put it, "to me, city-wide is a discussion that in some respects, with all due respect, abdicates our individual responsibilities" [LACC 10/28/2020].

From the contrasting qualities of governance emerged equally contrasting policy outputs, important both in themselves as well as for the path dependent processes and priorities they established. With the adoption of the 222 pledge, L.A. City councilmembers collectively committed to pursuing a geographically equitable distribution of supportive housing in the city. This early commitment established the practice of all-district participation which was thereafter manifested in both the city's *A Bridge Home* shelter program and the more than six thousand homeless interventions achieved on a quick timeline in response to the COVID pandemic and

the L.A. Alliance lawsuit. Similarly, the omnibus Homeless Recovery Roadmap, formulated during early months of the pandemic, built upon the city's foundational Comprehensive Homeless Strategy and the increased capacity for coordinating homeless initiatives its implementation had developed. In San Francisco, by contrast, the perpetual conflict and competing over policy priorities stalled proposals of geographic equity and inhibited supervisors representing districts with the most homelessness from using the pandemic as an opportunity to increase the city's capacity to alleviate homelessness.

It is worth considering whether L.A. would have achieved any form of homeless response quite as coordinated, comprehensive, and geographically equitable absent either the city council's high level of policy authority or its culture of consensus. What if, for example, authority over homeless-related decision-making were stripped from the council and centralized in the CAO's office, despite councilmembers maintaining a cooperative style of governance? Lost would be the potent electoral incentive to ensure thorough community outreach and involvement in the development of new homeless facilities. Lost, too, would be the ability of councilmembers to control implementation over policies to meet the needs (and assuage concerns) of the neighborhoods they represent. We saw in San Francisco that the lack of district authority actually impinged attempts at cooperation and sparked conflict. A similarly conflictual relationship exists in L.A. between city and county officials who, though both responsible for addressing homelessness, are insulated from each other's influence and lack jurisdiction over their counterpart's policy

domain. On the other hand, what if the council maintained its authority, but took on a culture of conflict? Factional conflict within the council would almost surely stymie any commitment to geographic equity, let alone successfully fulfilling such a commitment. The competing priorities and policy proposals, which emerged in San Francisco as a result of factional and inter-institutional conflict, would also likely impede ambitious efforts to expand housing or services, making it exceedingly unlikely the city would have been able to expand homeless interventions by over 6,000 within two years, especially if not all district representatives bought into the initiative. Absent either its authority or culture, L.A.'s achievements appear far less likely. The council's vast policy authority (including district discretion) and consensus-oriented culture interacted, depended upon each other and, linked, were mutually responsible for the quality of governance capable of producing the preferable policy outcomes in the city.

That Los Angeles achieved a coordinated, comprehensive homeless strategy informed by the principle of geographic equity is, normatively, preferable to the alternative. And yet, any hint of a compliment for the city's handling of homelessness in recent years would surely be met by blank stares, if not indignation, from any resident of the city today. The 2020 point-in-time count indicated that the number of people experiencing homeless in the city had grown to over 41,000, an increase of 16% over the previous year, and 60% over the last five. Homelessness is more visible than ever, and frustration among city residents is unimaginably raw. Even so, the achievement in L.A. is important. The homelessness crisis in urban California today

is the result of a multitude of policy failures and structural inequalities that are far beyond the realm of what cities possess either the capacity or jurisdiction to directly address. The efficacy of any future initiative to actually address the overarching contributing factors of homelessness will depend on the ability of cities to overcome the political fragmentation inherent in homelessness. The contrasting case studies do not provide a roadmap for ending urban homelessness, but they do chart the political forces determining how and why a city may be better positioned to solve the problems of homelessness over which it bears primary responsibility and jurisdiction.

4. HOMELESSNESS ON THE BALLOT

For all the division that pervades the politics of homelessness, it is nearly universally accepted that solving the problem will require a vast influx of new resources. As we have seen, elected officials in both Los Angeles and San Francisco developed proposals to dramatically increase funding for homeless-serving housing. The decision over whether to adopt those proposals, however, ultimately fell to voters. Measure HHH in L.A., and San Francisco's Proposition C – resulting in the largest infusions of homeless-dedicated local revenue in each city's history – depended upon the approval of city voters. Increasingly, in fact, local governments are turning to voters to sign off on new bond measures or taxes in order to generate additional revenue to better address homelessness. While the word “homelessness” almost never appeared on local ballots in the early 2000s, by 2018, 38 separate local ballot measures addressed the homelessness (nearly always by proposing a new source of revenue).⁶⁹

If decisions about local homeless-dedicated dollars are increasingly being made on local ballots (decisions which, after all, substantially inform the solutions available to local policymakers) then voting on homeless-dedicated ballot measures deserves a chapter in the larger story of local homeless politics. What characteristics help us understand who votes for or against homeless-related ballot measures? How do the electoral politics of homelessness inform or contribute to the problem's

⁶⁹ These numbers are based on my review of the California Elections Data Archive, <https://csus-dspace.calstate.edu/handle/10211.3/210187>.

fragmented governance? And further, how can the identified voting patterns on homeless ballot measures contribute to what we have learned so far about the local politics of homelessness? The analysis that follows begins answering these questions for our two case study cities.

In this chapter I analyze the association between neighborhood-level characteristics and voter support for a total of five homeless-related ballot measures in the two cities. To do so, I rely on geographic information system (GIS) tools to draw together a variety of political and demographic data into an original dataset used for the analysis. The findings point to the powerful influence political identities wield over voter support for both revenue-generating and enforcement homeless policies. Since city residents are increasingly segregated according to their partisan or ideological leanings, this results in distinct geographies of policy support and preference within cities, a dynamic that likely exacerbates the most pernicious, territorial form of political fragmentation discussed in previous chapters. Fortunately, results from San Francisco specifically reveal that the association between political identity and policy preference is malleable, and can potentially be swayed, at times, through political leadership and strategic coalition building. While the methods and findings reported in this chapter represent a departure from the case studies and qualitative analysis of the previous chapters, the political dynamics identified below are crucial for better understanding the forces perpetuating fragmented homeless governance.

BALLOT MEASURES AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

I analyze a total of five homeless-related ballot measures put to voters in my case study cities between 2016 and 2018. Two measures were put to voters in Los Angeles: the city's Measure HHH, a general obligation bond measure to fund the development of permanent supportive housing, and the county Measure H, a sales tax increase to generate additional funding for supportive services (including services provided at the PSH units developed with city HHH funds). The measures were part of a broader strategic development process ignited by the city and also represented perhaps the high-water mark of collaboration between city and county officials. Measure HHH was passed with support of more than 77 percent of city voters in the 2016 general election, far surpassing the two-thirds supermajority required for passage of the measure. Measure H, put to all county voters in the off-cycle March 2017 election, passed with support from 69 percent of voters.

The remaining three ballot measures come from San Francisco. The first, in the 2016 general election, was not a proposal for increased homeless-dedicated funding but instead a newly proposed enforcement mechanism: a ban on tents on city sidewalks. By the time the tent ban was put to voters as Proposition Q, San Francisco voters had been asked to weigh in on anti-homeless laws a handful of times over the previous two decades (Gowan 2010). Such measures were frequently viewed as “wedge issues” strategically placed on the ballot to divide voters in the paradigmatic liberal city. The other two measures both proposed to generate additional homeless-

dedicated revenue. Proposition D, in the June 2018 primary election, proposed to increase taxes on commercial real estate to generate additional funding to support housing production for low- and moderate-income households. As noted earlier, it competed with a measure supported by the progressive caucus that sought the same revenue source but to fund early childhood education programs. Because of “poison pill” language written into the measures, only one could be adopted, and Prop D failed. Just several months later, however, city voters approved Proposition C, an increased tax on business revenue over \$50 million. These San Francisco ballot measures offer a propitious opportunity to dig into how and why support for the alternative policy responses to homelessness varies for voters across the city.

In all of the voting analysis conducted, the *electoral precinct* serves as the unit of analysis. Though voter files with individual voting records have been increasingly used by political scientists to investigate geographic influences of voter turnout, I am primarily interested in how voters vote on the homeless ballot measures, not if or why they turnout at all. So, the precinct serves as the most granular level at which to assess support for particular ballot measures. For Los Angeles, 1,602 precincts are included in the analysis of city Measure HHH, and 2,231 consolidated precincts are included in analysis for county Measure H. In San Francisco, 592 precincts are included in the analysis of all ballot measures.

Precinct-level election results for all ballot measure elections was collected from the Los Angeles County Register-Recorder and the San Francisco Department of Elections. I used these election records to calculate the dependent variable for each

model: the percent of precinct voters voting in favor of the respective ballot measure. Election records also let me calculate precinct levels of turnout (defined as the number of registered voters within a precinct who actually cast ballots in a particular election) to include as an independent variable in the models, allowing me to assess whether neighborhoods with higher levels of turnout were more or less likely to support the homeless ballot measures. I also used the voting records specifically from the 2016 primary elections in each city to establish the percent of precinct voters registered as Republicans and (since both cities are overwhelmingly Democratic) the percent of registered Democrats who voted for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, which I use as a proxy for “neighborhood progressivism.” Sanders espoused a worldview shaped by structural inequality and advocated a more muscular role for government in redistributing wealth, and so there is good reason to suspect that his supporters may have applied a similar world view to decisions over addressing homelessness. Including neighborhood rates of registered Republicans and progressivism in the analyses allows me to assess the extent to which political identities (likely linked with distinct cultural views of poverty) are associated with voter support for the ballot measures. All precinct-level election results were joined to a GIS shapefile containing the geographic location and borders of each precinct within each city.

I drew on the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) five-year data (for 2016 and 2018) at the census tract and block group level to establish a variety of neighborhood-level demographic characteristics. Most important, perhaps,

is the homeownership rate, since homeowners have frequently been shown to be more actively involved in local politics and more opposed to affordable housing projects (Fischel 2001; Einstein, Palmer, and Glick 2018). I also use the ACS data to establish neighborhood racial and ethnic compositions and neighborhood rates of rent-burdened residents (those spending more than 30% of their income on housing), residents living in poverty, receiving public assistance, and having graduated from college. Finally, I include the median income of each census tract in each city and use the log of this variable in the regression models. All ACS data, once gathered, were joined to shapefiles for census block groups or, when necessary due to data limitations, for census tracts.⁷⁰

Unfortunately, the borders of electoral precincts almost never align with the borders of census tracts or block groups (at least in California). To join the ACS data to the precinct shapefile, I use a process called areal weighted interpolation. Through this process, a precinct is assigned the proportion of a block group's population according to the proportion of the geographic space of that block group contained within the precinct's borders. This process assumes an even distribution of all demographic characteristics across the block group, but since they represent relatively small geographic areas, this is unlikely to distort the findings much.

Finally, I attempt to incorporate into the analysis contextual variables for the neighborhood levels of unsheltered homelessness as well as recent changes in those

⁷⁰ Census block groups are the most granular level at which ACS data is available. Generally, each tract is composed of several block groups.

levels. Considerable research has demonstrated that social context and perceptions of it can play a significant role in shaping voter behavior (Enos 2017; Oliver 2001; Huckfeldt 1986; Wong 2010). However, with a snapshot of social context at the time of an election, it is methodologically near impossible to assign causal influence to context. It may be, of course, that people who share certain characteristics or attitudes not captured in the modeling are simply more likely to live in neighborhoods with higher levels homelessness. One strategy for getting around this problem of “selection bias” is to look at changes in social contexts (Enos 2016; Hopkins 2010). Though data availability varies between my two case study cities, I attempt to establish both the current rate of unsheltered homelessness and recent shifts in that context for each precinct. For Los Angeles, LAHSA makes point-in-time (PIT) count data available at the tract level. L.A. also conducts PIT counts annually rather than biannually as is required by HUD. So, for L.A. precincts I use the same areal weighted interpolation technique to calculate the rate of unsheltered homelessness per square mile as well as the change in that rate between 2016 and 2017. (Since PIT counts are conducted in late January each year, the 2017 count data is closest temporally to both the November 2016 and the March 2017 election.) San Francisco does not make tract-level PIT data available,⁷¹ and the supervisorial district was the sub-city geography for which I was able to access PIT data. So, I assign to each precinct both the most recent unsheltered PIT estimate (using 2017 PIT data for the November 2016 election

⁷¹ Despite multiple pleas to both Applied Survey Research (ASR), the research organization that conducts and analyzes the PIT data, and city staff, all my requests for this data were refused or ignored. ASR noted that the data, even at the aggregate level, contains potentially sensitive information that has been used in the past to inform enforcement efforts.

and 2019 PIT data for the 2018 elections), as well as the changes in district unsheltered totals between the most temporally proximate count and the previous count (two years earlier). This serves as an admittedly blunt and somewhat clumsy measure for San Francisco, allowing for variation across only 11 larger groupings of precincts. It is still worth including within the model, especially as a way to keep modeling consistent across the two cities, but we should not expect especially revealing or reliable findings from this limited data.

Analyzing spatial data like neighborhood voting patterns poses particular methodological challenges. What has come to be known as Tobler's (1970, 236) first law of geography states that "everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things." Urban neighborhoods intermingle and interact. Populations cluster. There is good reason to expect that neighborhoods close to one another are more similar than those on opposite sides of the city. This, of course, violates the assumption undergirding traditional statistical methods that observations are independent of one another.

To address this concern, I run two regression models for each election: a straightforward ordinary least squares (OLS) model and a spatial regression model (specifically, spatial error models using the "spatialreg" packages in R (Bivand et al. 2021)). Spatial regression models help address autocorrelation of the error terms for the spatial (precinct-level) estimates by incorporating a neighbor weights matrix into the estimation technique.

Alongside concerns about the spatial nature of precinct-level data are additional concerns about using aggregate data to make individual-level inferences, the so-called “ecological inference problem” (King 1997). Such concerns do not apply, however, to analysis primarily interested in neighborhood *rates* of some characteristic (Sampson 2012).⁷² In my interpretation of the results, I am careful to speak in terms of neighborhood rates (making claims about “precincts with larger shares of registered Republicans” rather than “Republicans,” for example) rather than plucking individual inferences from analysis of aggregate data. I also identify two most-likely interpretations of the aggregate findings in my discussion below, following my reporting of the results.

RESULTS

Los Angeles

Table 4.1 reports the results for the four Los Angeles regression models consisting of the OLS and spatial error models for both city Measure HHH and the county Measure H four months later.⁷³ The statistically significant predictors are largely the same across both estimation techniques, though I note instances in which incorporating the spatial sensitivity into the modeling appears to alter the findings (generally regarding the statistical significance of a particular variable).

⁷² Trounstine (2020, 452) similarly addresses ongoing debate over handling ecological data by noting that she is primarily “interested in estimating the behavior of neighborhoods not individuals.”

⁷³ Summary statistics for all models are presented in tables A1.1, A1.2, and A2 in the appendix.

Table 4.1. OLS and Spatial Error Models for L.A. Ballot Measures.

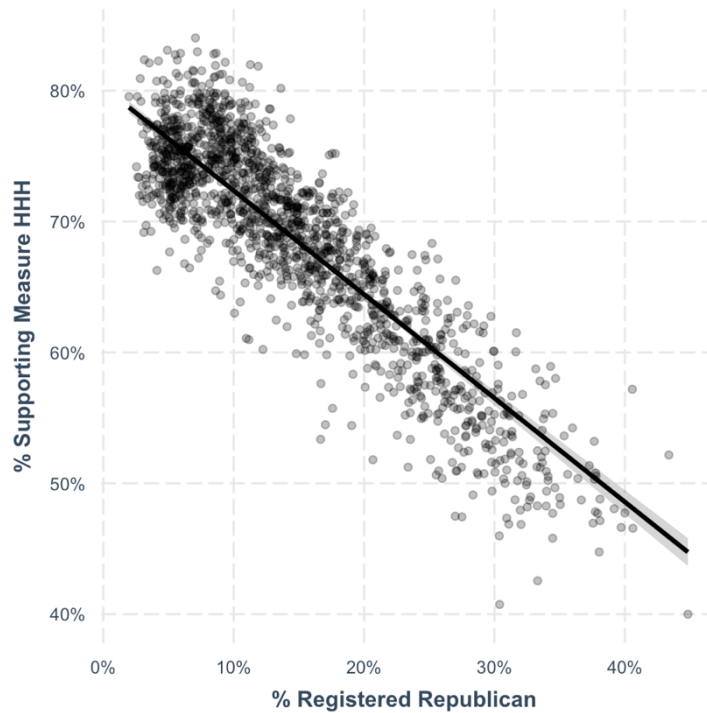
	<u>Measure HHH</u>		<u>Measure H</u>	
	OLS	spatial error	OLS	spatial error
% for Sanders	0.057*** (0.013)	0.066*** (0.014)	0.085*** (0.020)	0.066*** (0.023)
% Republican	-0.793*** (0.018)	-0.728*** (0.021)	-1.003*** (0.017)	-0.957*** (0.023)
% Turnout	-0.051*** (0.014)	-0.055*** (0.013)	-0.009 (0.020)	-0.033 (0.023)
% Homeownership	-0.052*** (0.005)	-0.054*** (0.006)	-0.060*** (0.008)	-0.066*** (0.008)
% Black	0.009 (0.010)	0.012 (0.012)	0.013 (0.013)	-0.015 (0.017)
% Latino	0.049*** (0.008)	0.042*** (0.009)	0.010 (0.011)	-0.024* (0.013)
% Asian	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.032*** (0.011)	-0.076*** (0.009)	-0.103*** (0.013)
% Rent Burdened	0.0005 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.012 (0.009)
% in Poverty	-0.013 (0.012)	-0.024* (0.013)	0.049** (0.020)	0.018 (0.020)
% receiving Public Assistance	0.095*** (0.026)	0.081*** (0.025)	0.068 (0.043)	0.045 (0.040)
% College Graduates	0.125*** (0.011)	0.101*** (0.012)	0.189*** (0.015)	0.141*** (0.016)
Median Income (logged)	0.005 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)	0.004 (0.006)	-0.004 (0.006)
Unsheltered per sq. mile	0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.00001* (0.00001)	-0.00002** (0.00001)
Δ in unsheltered per sq. mile	-0.0000 (0.00001)	-0.0000 (0.00001)	0.00003* (0.00001)	0.00002* (0.00001)
Constant	0.721*** (0.045)	0.772*** (0.045)	0.758*** (0.068)	0.884*** (0.067)
Observations	1,602	1,602	2,231	2,231
R ²	0.850		0.851	
Adjusted R ²	0.849		0.850	
Log Likelihood		3,428.852		3,747.871
sigma ²		0.001		0.002
Akaike Inf. Crit.		-6,823.704		-7,461.742
Residual Std. Error	0.031 (df=1587)		0.049 (df=2216)	
F Statistic	642.293*** (df = 14;1587)		900.927*** (df = 14; 2216)	
Wald Test (df = 1)		313.621***		483.511***
LR Test (df = 1)		268.350***		378.560***

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01)

Of all the variables included in the models, the percent of voters within a precinct registered as Republicans does the most to explain precinct support for either homeless-related revenue measures.⁷⁴ Precincts with higher percentages of voters registered as Republicans provided lower rates of support for both measures in L.A. The extent of this stark, negative association is visualized in figure 4.1. In it, each dot represents one city precinct. The highest levels of support for Measure HHH came from precincts with the lowest proportion of voters registered Republican. As the rate of Republican registration in precincts increases, support for Measure HHH declines in a linear fashion. The dark trendline laid over the scatterplot (with confidence intervals in grey) indicates the relationship while controlling for all other variables in the OLS model. (The scatter plot for Measure H, the county measure, is nearly identical, though with another thousand or so precinct dots darkening in the cloud.)

⁷⁴ Tables A3 through A7 in the appendix presents report standardized coefficients centered on their mean for all models discussed in this chapter. This can facilitate comparison of the relative “impact” each explanatory variable has on the dependent variable.

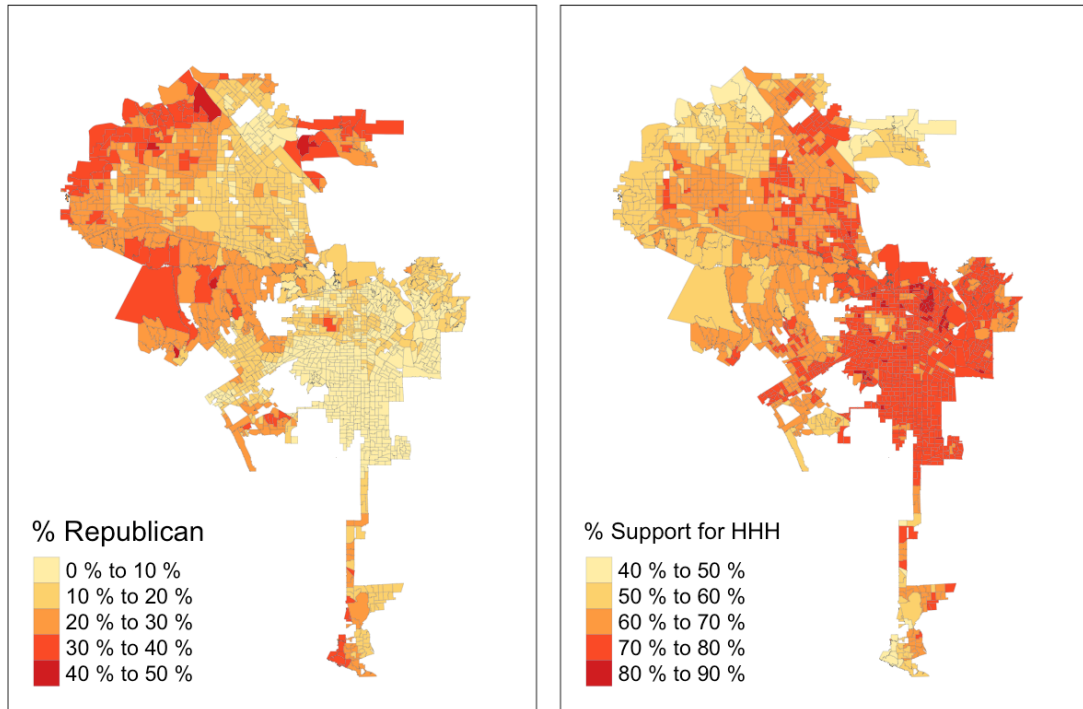
Figure 4.1. Precinct percent registered Republican and Support for HHH



Since each precinct represents a collection of voters living within particular piece of the city’s geography, another way to present the partisan divide over the homeless ballot measures is to present this data in a map. In Figure 4.2, the map on the left visualizes the proportion of voters registered Republicans for each precinct in the City of L.A., with darker colors indicating higher rates of Republican registration. Generally, the central city core precincts have the lowest level of Republican registration, with the rates rising as you move further northwest (deeper into the San Fernando Valley) and further south into San Pedro (and council district 15). The map on the right portrays precinct-level support for Measure HHH, again with higher rates represented by darker colors. The maps are nearly opposites: parts of L.A. with the

highest rates of Republican registration provided the lowest levels of support for HHH in the November 2016 election.

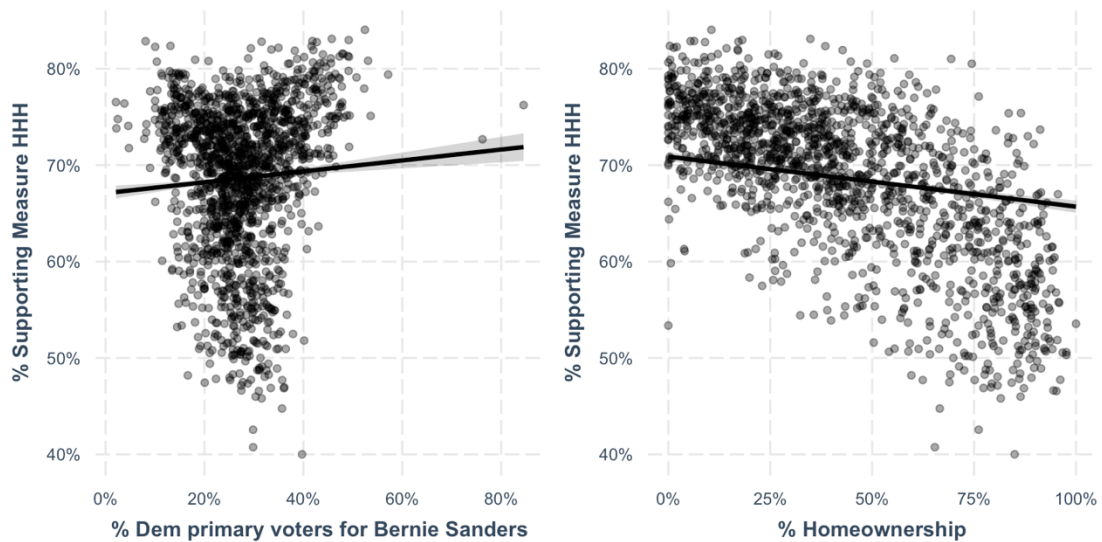
Figure 4.2. Partisan Geography of Support for Measure HHH



Both the percentage of Democratic voters supporting Bernie Sanders in the 2016 presidential primary (again, which I’m using as a proxy for “neighborhood progressivism”) and rates of homeownership in a precinct possessed statistically significant associations with support for both HHH and H. Higher rates of neighborhood progressivism were associated with higher rates of support for the homeless measures, while precincts with higher rates of homeownership provided lower levels of support for the homeless funding measure in each election. These relationships are visualized in figure 4.3 where, again, each dot represents one precinct, and the trend line shows the relationship between each explanatory variable

and support for Measure HHH while controlling for all other variables in the model. That the trend line showing the negative association between homeownership rates and HHH support is somewhat less steep than the cloud of scattered points seems to indicate is due in part to the significant, positive association between homeownership and Republican registration. (See Figure A1 in the appendix for a visualization of this relationship.)

Figure 4.3. “Neighborhood Progressivism,” Homeownership and support for Measure HHH



Several other political and demographic variables revealed statistically significant associations with voter support for the homeless measures. In the city election, precincts with higher rates of voter turnout tended to offer lower levels of support for HHH, though this relationship was not statistically significant in the county election on H. In both elections, precincts with larger shares of college graduates consistently voted with higher levels of support for the measures. City precincts with proportionally larger Latino populations were associated with higher

rates of support for Measure HHH, while percent of Asian or Asian-American residents in a precinct possessed a negative association with the homeless ballot measures in all but one of the models.

For the 2016 city election, there is no indication from the models that local rates of unsheltered homelessness or changes in the nearby rate of unsheltered homelessness had any association with voting on Measure HHH. For the 2017, off-cycle county election, there is tentative indication of association with each of the contextual variables and support for Measure H, though for the most part only at the $p < .1$ level of statistical significance. Both models indicate that precincts with higher rates of unsheltered homelessness per square mile provided somewhat lower levels of support for Measure H, while at the same time, county precincts with year-over-year increases in this rate provided higher levels of support for the measure. Not too much should be made of these findings since they do not achieve standard levels of statistical significance and because, substantially, the impact of the contextual variables is relatively minute.

San Francisco

The results from the San Francisco models are largely consistent with those from Los Angeles. However, because San Francisco voters weighed in on both a punitive measure and two revenue-generating measures, we can glean important and informative further insights.

Table 4.2. OLS and Spatial Error Models for San Francisco Ballot Measures.

	<u>Prop Q</u>		<u>Prop D</u>		<u>Prop C</u>	
	OLS	spatial error	OLS	spatial error	OLS	spatial error
% for Sanders	-0.371*** (0.027)	-0.275*** (0.028)	-0.232*** (0.024)	-0.186*** (0.027)	0.209*** (0.024)	0.183*** (0.028)
% Republican	0.780*** (0.048)	0.655*** (0.060)	-0.410*** (0.052)	-0.384*** (0.059)	-1.282*** (0.050)	-1.051*** (0.062)
% Turnout	0.012 (0.012)	0.035** (0.014)	-0.077*** (0.012)	-0.077*** (0.013)	-0.066*** (0.011)	-0.074*** (0.013)
% Homeownership	0.033 (0.041)	0.114*** (0.036)	-0.121*** (0.030)	-0.124*** (0.032)	-0.150*** (0.037)	-0.188*** (0.034)
% Black	-0.064** (0.031)	-0.013 (0.036)	0.056 (0.037)	0.043 (0.040)	-0.077** (0.036)	-0.051 (0.041)
% Latino	-0.008 (0.024)	-0.022 (0.026)	-0.060** (0.025)	-0.081*** (0.027)	0.032 (0.024)	-0.014 (0.028)
% Asian	0.107*** (0.019)	0.067*** (0.020)	-0.009 (0.019)	-0.026 (0.020)	-0.166*** (0.019)	-0.143*** (0.021)
% Rent Burdened	0.035** (0.016)	0.026* (0.014)	0.011 (0.015)	0.011 (0.015)	-0.028* (0.015)	-0.028* (0.014)
% in Poverty	-0.066* (0.034)	-0.051 (0.032)	0.059* (0.035)	0.055 (0.035)	0.100*** (0.035)	0.026 (0.035)
% receiving Pub Assistance	-0.006 (0.065)	-0.011 (0.058)	0.044 (0.075)	0.058 (0.073)	0.142* (0.074)	0.103 (0.071)
% College Graduates	-0.033 (0.023)	-0.031 (0.022)	0.059** (0.024)	0.032 (0.024)	0.068*** (0.024)	0.041* (0.024)
Median Income (logged)	0.011 (0.007)	-0.008 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)	-0.009 (0.008)	-0.003 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)
Δ in district unsheltered	0.001 (0.001)	0.004** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.009** (0.004)
Constant	0.372*** (0.088)	0.488*** (0.091)	0.736*** (0.095)	0.709*** (0.099)	0.789*** (0.094)	0.791*** (0.099)
Observations	592	592	592	592	592	592
R ²	0.727		0.548		0.838	
Adjusted R ²	0.721		0.538		0.834	
Log Likelihood		1,147.671		1,111.610		1,123.042
sigma ²		0.001		0.001		0.001
Akaike Inf. Crit.		-2,263.343		-2,191.220		-2,214.083
Residual Std. Error (df = 578)	0.040		0.039		0.038	
F Statistic (df = 13; 578)	118.214***		53.908***		229.742***	
Wald Test (df = 1)		273.321***		50.623***		148.683***
LR Test (df = 1)		141.426***		39.753***		49.103***

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01)

Table 4.2 reports results from all six regression models for San Francisco, including both the OLS and spatial error models for each of the three ballot measures: Prop Q, the 2016 tent ban, and the two 2018 proposals to generate new homeless-dedicated revenue through increased tax on commercial real estate (Prop D) and business revenue over \$50 million (Prop C).

Partisanship and political ideology are again the variables that explain the largest portion of variation in support for the homeless ballot measures. Figure 4.4 displays the relationship between the percent of voters registered as Republican and support for the tent ban (on the left) and support for the business tax (on the right). I present the two scatterplots alongside one another to emphasize the inverse relationship precinct percent Republican has with each measure: precincts with higher proportions of registered Republicans were more supportive of the tent ban while less supportive of the revenue-generating tax measure, controlling for all other variables in the models. The plotted trend lines again display the relationships while controlling for other variables in the model. Though the ceiling for percent registered Republican is lower than it was in L.A. (with a maximum of 26% compared to about 45% in L.A.), the predicted level of support for the tent ban increases roughly 20% across the entire range of Republican registration rates, while predicted support for Prop C decreases nearly 30% across this same range.

Figure 4.4. Precinct percent Republican and support for Prop Q, Prop C.

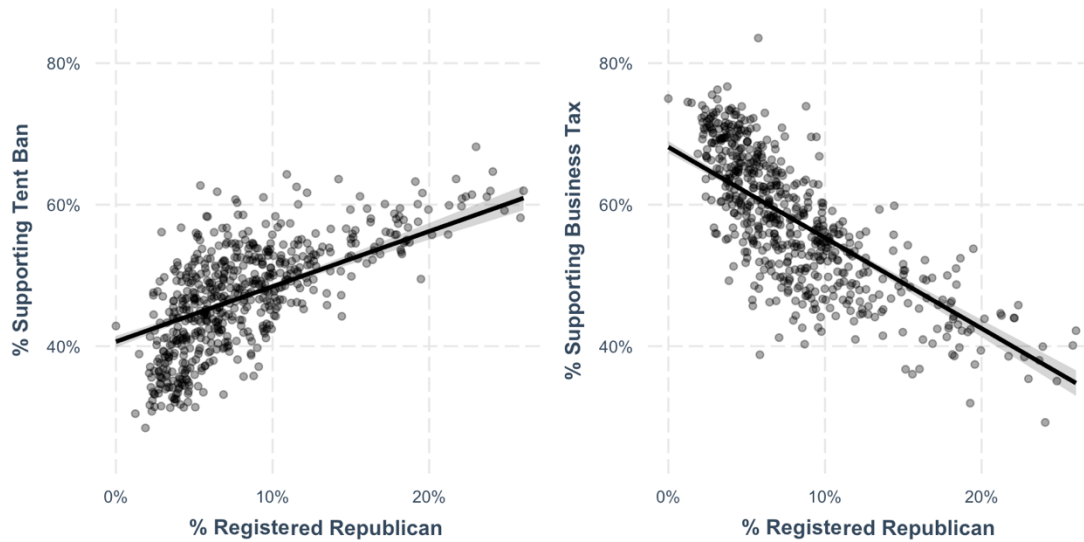


Figure 4.5. “Neighborhood Progressivism” and support for Prop Q, Prop C.

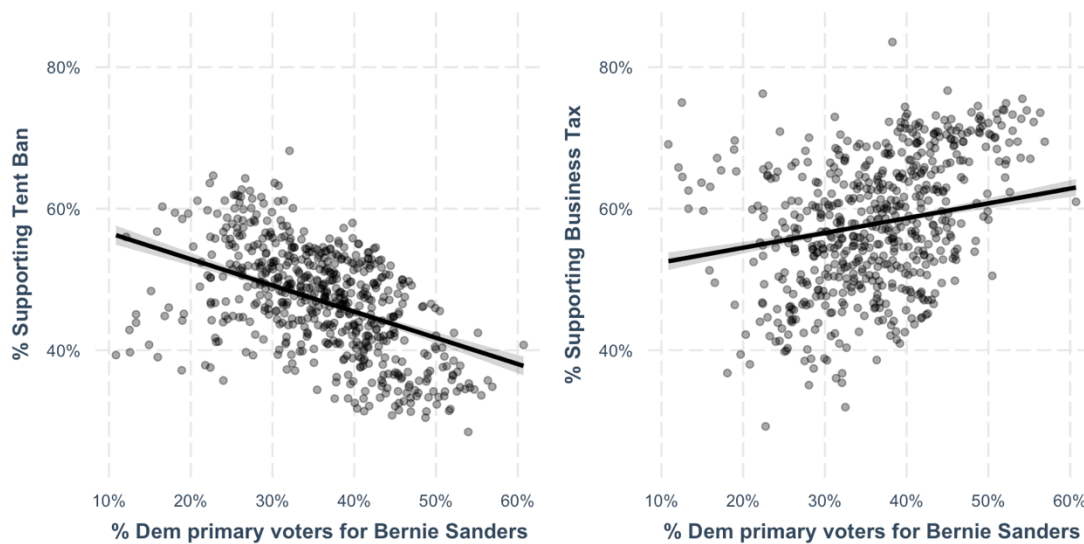
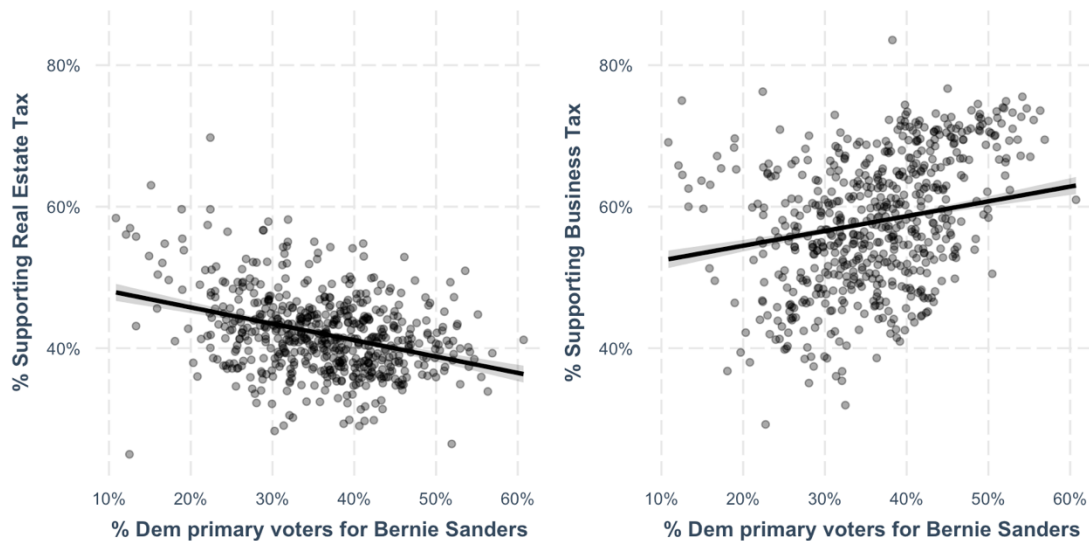


Figure 4.5 displays the flipped relationships between neighborhood progressivism and these same two ballot measures. More politically progressive neighborhoods in San Francisco – as defined by levels of support for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Democratic primary election – were on average less supportive of the tent ban while more supportive of the Prop C business tax. Once again, this neighborhood

rate of political ideology explains a considerable amount of variation in support for each measure, as is indicated by the trend line of predicted values for the dependent variables in each figure.

Figure 4.6 digs a bit further into the relationship between neighborhood progressivism and support for homelessness revenue-generating measures. Here, I present the diverging relationship between neighborhood progressivism and support for Prop D, the real estate tax (on the left) and Prop C, the business tax (on the right). More politically progressive precincts were less supportive of Prop D while more supportive of Prop C, controlling for all other variables in the models. Absent context, these findings appear to be a glaring and surprising contrast. This political context, described earlier in Chapter 2 and revisited in the follow section of this chapter, help makes sense of this flip in support for revenue-generating ballot measures in two elections just several months apart.

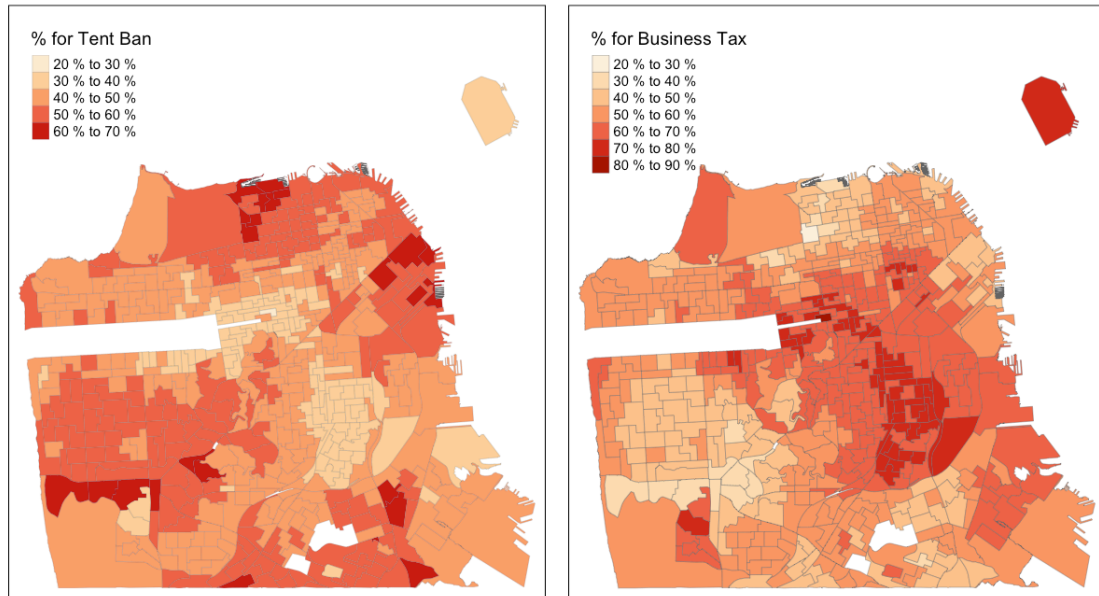
Figure 4.6 “Neighborhood Progressivism” and diverging support for revenue-generating proposals.



Both precinct homeownership and turnout rates were again a statistically significant predictors in five of the six models, indicating that neighborhoods with higher levels of turnout were more supportive of the tent ban and less supportive of the tax proposals. The same relationship was found for the precinct percent Asian variable (though not for either Prop D model). In two of the spatial error models, the district increases in unsheltered homelessness proved a statistically significant predictor, associated with higher levels of support for the tent ban and lower levels of support for Prop C. However, since this measure is only available for San Francisco at the district level (each containing dozens and dozens of precincts), probably not too much should be made of this finding.

Overall, the associations between the key explanatory variables (neighborhood partisanship, political ideology, and homeownership) and the punitive homeless ballot measure were the opposite of their associations with the revenue-generating measure. This leads to distinct geographies of homeless policy preferences in San Francisco, in which swaths of the city favoring one response to homelessness were less inclined to support the other, as figure 4.7 indicates.

Figure 4.7. Distinct geographies of homeless policy preference in San Francisco.



WHAT VOTING PATTERNS SAY ABOUT LOCAL HOMELESS POLITICS

Throughout this dissertation I have argued that the political fragmentation of homeless governance is an important part of the problem that will have to be addressed for local governments to ever effectively solve and prevent homelessness. In addition to the geographic, functional, and intergovernmental forms of political fragmentation identified by Zhang (2013), I claim that partisan and ideological division further exacerbates the tensions and conflicts political fragmentation brings to local homeless policymaking. The findings reported in this chapter provide further empirical evidence to support these claims.

Across both cities and each of the five homeless-related ballot measures analyzed above, political partisanship and ideology – as assessed from neighborhood voting and registration rates – are consistently the strongest predictors of precinct-

level support for the measures. I have been conscientious up to this point to report results only in aggregate terms, emphasizing neighborhood rates of Republican registration or Democratic support for Bernie Sanders, for example, since the analysis relies entirely on aggregate data. But, while neighborhoods certainly exert influence over those who live within them, neighborhoods don't vote. Individual people do. So how should we understand findings that neighborhood rates of registered Republicans or Sanders supporters were the most consistent and substantial predictors of support for homeless ballot measures? Two interpretations seem most likely. The simplest answer that surely explains some (and I'd wager, quite a bit) of this relationship is that individual Republican voters are actually less likely to support spending measures and more likely to support punitive measures, even though the aggregate data available cannot offer direct evidence of this relationship. This interpretation is in line with extensive research on partisanship and policy preferences. The other option which may tell another part of the story (though probably a smaller part) is that a higher concentration of Republicans or progressives exerts neighborhood effects. Perhaps in neighborhoods with a greater density of Republicans, conversations between neighbors over homelessness are more likely to be framed in terms of social deviance, blight, or lack of self-reliance. In more progressive neighborhoods, perhaps structural problems and collective responsibility frame these conversations. This interpretation is perhaps most convincing when addressing homeownership rates, since neighborhoods with more homeowners probably also have more homeowner associations, organizations, and networks through which homeless-related concerns

are communicated and mobilized against. The density and activity of such neighborhood organization could feasibly influence the voting behavior of renters living among many homeowners. Regardless, whichever interpretation we find most compelling, the bottom line remains the same: partisanship and political ideology are the strongest and most consistent predictors of support for all types of homeless ballot measures.

This is likely an indication of the cultural conceptions of poverty and attitudes toward governmental involvement in redistributive efforts that are closely entwined with increasingly salient political identities. Republicans are far more likely to associate poverty with individual fault or failing, to resist government interventions they often view as undermining incentives for hard work and self-reliance, and to support ‘law and order’ responses to punish and prevent actions perceived as deviant or morally offensive. Progressives tend to view poverty in more structural terms, to support governmental efforts reduce inequalities resulting from unbridled capitalism and the excessive political influence of corporations and the economic elite, and resist the policing of the poor as inherently discriminatory, often unconstitutional, and perpetuating structural racial inequalities. In this light, though results from the analysis are stark, it is not particularly surprising that neighborhoods with more Republicans tend to be less supportive of taxes proposed to combat homelessness and more supportive of policing practices aimed at dispersing tents from city sidewalks. Nor is it particularly surprising that more progressive neighborhoods are – generally – more supportive of proposed taxes to build housing and provide services for those

experiencing homelessness while less supportive of a ballot measure proposing a new enforcement mechanism to address visible poverty. Even if not surprising, they are important elements to understand and address through efforts to generate improved governance over homelessness.

In San Francisco, we are able to see direct evidence of this partisan and ideological divide over policy responses to homelessness, but there is no reason to suspect the relationship is unique to the City by the bay. It is very likely that the same divide and dynamics inform preferences in Los Angeles and other cities throughout the state.⁷⁵ This would mean that despite widespread agreement among Californians that homelessness represents among the most pressing problems facing the state, residents are not quite clamoring “Do something, do anything!” as is sometimes suggested. Instead, the findings indicate that political identities and the conceptions of poverty associated with them inform which types of homeless-related policies will be supported and resisted.

Political sorting and partisan segregation has become pronounced even within individual cities (Brown and Enos 2021), resulting in distinct geographies of homeless policy preferences, as we saw mapped for San Francisco. This hyper-local segregation of political preferences creates additional challenges for citywide, coordinated responses to homelessness. Elected representatives of districts with more conservative neighborhoods approach homeless policymaking with very different

⁷⁵ In fact, in his unsuccessful bid for mayor, L.A. City Councilmember Joe Buscaino – a former police officer who positioned himself as a “law and order” candidate – proposed placing an anti-camping measure for the June 2022 primary election ballot (Wick 2021).

priorities and under different pressures than officials who represent more progressive districts. As one pushes for stricter enforcement while the other pushes for increased investment in supportive housing, each will be able to correctly claim to be representing their constituents. In this way, ideological segregation exacerbates territorial fragmentation.

And yet, for all the empirical indications of the influence political identity exerts over homeless policy preferences, an important finding from San Francisco is that the association between political identity and policy preference is malleable. Political leadership matters. In the five months between the 2018 primary and general elections in San Francisco, the relationship between neighborhood progressivism and support for the revenue-generating ballot measure flipped. More progressive neighborhoods provided *lower* levels of support for Prop D, the unsuccessful real estate tax proposal, but higher levels of support for Prop C, helping the proposed business tax pass. There's no reason to think support hinged on the source of the revenue. Progressives are surely as willing (if not more inclined) to tax commercial real estate as they are to tax business revenue over \$50 million. The difference – as noted in an earlier chapter – was that Prop D threatened a measure championed by progressives on the Board of Supervisors. Progressive leaders vocally opposed Prop D, urging their supporters to vote against it. Later that year, many of these same leaders actively campaigned for Prop C. This affords us some evidence that political leaders can guide policy preferences of their supporters, that the broader political

landscape matters, and that strategic coalition-building can play an important role in determining whether or not homeless ballot measures succeed.

That such coalition building was more successful in Los Angeles than in San Francisco is reflected even in the election results of measures that passed in each city. While both L.A.'s Measure HHH and San Francisco's Prop C ultimately passed, just over 61% of San Francisco voters supported Prop C. This sent the measure into several years of litigation over whether the proposal required a two-thirds super majority for adoption. Mayor Breed and other prominent local officials opposed the measure. Even many well-respected leaders of homeless-serving organizations withheld official endorsement.

In Los Angeles, the mayor and every member of the city council campaigned for HHH. The "Everyone In" campaign brought together the city's Chamber of Commerce, United Way, and was supported by banks and philanthropy, service providers and advocates. It passed with support from over 77% of city voters.

CONCLUSION

When Willie Brown became mayor of San Francisco in 1996, he ousted from the office Frank Jordan, the ex-police chief whose enforcement-oriented response to homelessness had failed to solve the problem. Four years earlier, Jordan himself had ousted Art Agnos, a former social worker, whose ambitious “Beyond Shelter” strategy was never fully implemented. On the campaign trail, Brown had promised to leverage his strong political ties to attract increased state and federal funding for addressing homelessness. And though Brown took significant steps toward expanding the city’s stock of affordable housing, before his term was up, he conceded that homelessness “may not be solvable.” Though often misinterpreted, what Brown meant was that local actions alone could not solve the problem. “Homelessness is not a *city-solvable* problem,” he later clarified (Lelchuk 2003, emphasis mine).

Part of Mayor Brown’s claim remains true. Absent dramatically expanded investments from state and federal governments – particularly in the production and preservation of affordable housing – homelessness is bound to be an enduring feature of California’s urban landscape. But homelessness will never be solved *without* cities, either. Local governments wield a vast amount of discretion and authority over key policy areas (land use, housing, law enforcement, and social service provision) which inherently make them intimately involved in all governmental responses to homelessness. City governments can’t solve homelessness alone, but you also can’t solve it without them.

So then, what have we learned about the political dynamics that most powerfully shape local homeless policymaking? What do the preceding chapters tell us about what local governments can do to contribute toward more effective solutions to the most pressing problem cities in California face today?

I began this book by calling attention to the inherently political nature of the problem, and this claim constitutes one major contribution I make: *homelessness is a political problem*. Debate endures in the public and the local press over whether homelessness is the result of individual fault and misfortune (e.g., mental illness, substance use, deviant behavior) or structural causes (e.g., lack of affordable housing, structural racism). The debate over the problem's causes fuels contentious debates over the appropriate policy responses. Is it that local governments need greater authority to raze encampments and force those living within them to accept services or submit to psychiatric evaluation? Or is it rather that greater investment in shelter and affordable housing are needed, supported by legislation reducing administrative barriers to producing this housing and limiting the power of "neighborhood defenders" to stall or stand in the way of proposed developments?

Experts on homelessness from a wide range of disciplines are less divided, and generally agree that while individual characteristics may make a particular person more susceptible to homelessness, the driving cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing. This lack of affordable housing is a result, of course, of political decisions and institutional structures that create many ways to effectively stop affordable housing projects and few structures to support such development,

especially in California's high-cost cities where homelessness and inequality are most glaringly apparent. When local governments are forced to respond to public demands to do something about the inescapably visible and visceral form of poverty, local officials frequently appease those for whom homelessness poses problems, not those who are themselves at risk or suffering the experience of homelessness.

Most problematically, as I detail in chapter one, effective homeless policymaking is impeded by the thoroughly fragmented nature of homeless governance. In order to demonstrate the fragmented ecosystem of governmental responses, I develop a typology of homeless policies in effort to draw into one frame policies and programs that are frequently relegated to siloes, both academic and bureaucratic. When this collection of homeless-related policies is considered as a group, it becomes apparent that this policy arena is impacted by each form of political fragmentation Zhang (2013) identifies. Homeless governance is *territorially* fragmented when district-based elected officials respond to homelessness within their little fiefdoms according to their own priorities; when proposals for new interim or supportive housing developments spark resistance from residents in nearby neighborhoods; when anti-homeless policing practices are enforced more stringently in some neighborhoods than others. Homeless governance is *functionally* fragmented when the constellation of city departments that play some role in responding to homelessness or associated concerns – social services agencies, housing departments, police departments, public works and sanitation – lack any structured form of coordination to align efforts with a single, comprehensive strategy. Homeless

governance is further constrained by *intergovernmental* fragmentation because cities, counties, states, and the federal government are responsible for (or responsive to) different pieces of the homeless problem and pursue diverging (and sometimes conflicting) priorities in their policy pursuits.

Addressing this political fragmentation of homeless governance, then, should be seen as the most important thing that cities *can* do – really, *must* do – if effective solutions to homelessness are ever to be achieved. The development of a comprehensive local strategy supported by a collective commitment among elected officials and a structure to ensure it is implemented in a coordinated fashion then becomes the criteria by which I evaluate local homeless responses.

With this criteria established, chapters two and three pursue a deep, comparative analysis of the local politics of homelessness in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and the policymaking consequences these political dynamics bring about. Over the course of the four case study comparisons presented in these chapters, striking and consequential contrasts emerge. I develop my central argument that the interaction between two key variables – policy authority and political culture – best explains why homeless policymaking and policymakers in Los Angeles more effectively surmounted the problems of political fragmentation.

The first paired case study in chapter two documents the institution-building decisions made in each city following the qualitative shift in public concern over homelessness starting around 2015. In L.A., the city council established a new Homelessness and Poverty Committee on the council, a move that both reflected and

solidified the council's deep authority over homeless policymaking in the city. In San Francisco, by contrast, the city's mayor created a new Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing as part of the executive administration, a move revealing the higher level of influence exerted by the city's mayor (relative to their counterpart in L.A.) over homeless policymaking and, in turn, the legislature's more constrained role in addressing homelessness. As I show in the chapter, the contrasting levels of policy authority also extend to local representatives' influence over decisions within their districts, with L.A. city councilmembers exerting more consolidated authority over the neighborhoods they represent than supervisors in San Francisco, who must compete with mayoral decision-making and are more willing to intervene in projects sited in their colleagues' districts.

The chapter then looks to efforts by each local legislature to develop revenue-generating ballot measures to fund local homelessness efforts. The contrasting politics of these efforts exemplifies the contrasts in political culture in each city. In L.A., representatives find common ground and develop a consensus measure and then all contribute to a coalition building effort that leads to over 77 percent of city voters supporting the measure. The passage of Measure HHH also further increases the councilmembers' authority over homeless policymaking both citywide and within their respective districts. In San Francisco, any similar consensus or big-tent coalition building proves elusive. Competing political factions in the city (the moderates and the progressives) push competing measures in one election, while in another, the city's mayor comes out as opposed to the measure put on the ballot by progressive

supervisors, furthering the legacy of inter-institutional conflict over homeless policymaking. These contrasting political cultures pervade homeless policymaking through all 13 years included in the scope of my analysis.

These contrasts in policy authority and political culture are not only enduring across the years analyzed but also, as chapter three reveals, consequential for the policymaking pursuits in each city. The first case study comparison in this chapter documents efforts in each city to promote greater geographic equity of homeless-serving facilities. In each city, the legislatures considered a proposal to develop homeless-serving housing in every electoral district in the city. The diverging outcomes reveal the interaction and impact of policy authority and political culture. In L.A., city council representatives agree to each build 222 units of permanent supportive housing funded through Measure HHH within their districts. This commitment is made possible by both the culture of consensus and collective commitment among council representatives and by the precedent by which councilmembers exert vast discretion over policy implementation and building decisions within their districts. In San Francisco, during debate over the geographic equity proposal, multiple supervisors asserted that since homelessness was a citywide issue, it should really be up to the mayor to determine where homeless-serving facilities are most needed. More progressive members of the board who represented districts with the highest concentrations of homelessness favored the proposal, while their more moderate colleagues – and the mayor and her appointed leadership in the homeless department – successfully opposed the measure. A more contentious

political culture and more constrained legislative authority over homeless policy decisions intermingled to stymie the city's geographic equity proposal. The political dynamics shaping homeless policymaking in L.A. allowed the council to more successfully surmount the pernicious territorial fragmentation of homeless governance and to begin redressing the legacy of segregation and containment of homelessness. The political dynamics in San Francisco prevented city leaders from achieving comparable outcomes.

The final set of case study comparisons reveals that under the added pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and lawsuits demanding that street conditions be remedied, the contrasting characteristics that had long shaped homeless policymaking were made even more apparent and impactful. In Los Angeles, the city council responded to these added pressures by building on previously established practices of collaboration with the executive branch to dramatically expand housing inventory to be used as "shelter in place" facilities, including facilities, once again, across every council district. Councilmembers had grown practiced – through the development of Measure HHH housing proposals and the A Bridge Home shelter program – in working to designate the types and locations of projects within their district to pursue in order to contribute to a broader, citywide goal. In contrast, though the San Francisco Board of Supervisors finally achieved a unanimous vote supporting a bold and expansive proposal for increasing shelter-in-place capacity, the city's mayor refused to implement it, creating far fewer shelter-in-place units than the Board had

proposed, and using many of the rooms to satisfy a lawsuit negotiated with scant involvement by the supervisors.

Together, the four case study comparisons offer serve as a detailed political history of a particularly consequential moment in homeless governance in urban California. It was during these years that the politics of homelessness grew from a stubbornly persistent rainstorm to a raging hurricane. The detailed documentation and analysis of how and why each city responded to homelessness as they did in these years helps tell the story of homeless politics in a more complete and nuanced picture than is often presented in the local press. Capturing this pivotal moment in detail will help us understand the trajectory of homeless governances in the years to come.

My more important and deliberate contribution, however, pertains to how the contrasting homeless politics of L.A. and San Francisco can inform what we know about local politics more broadly. The dynamics of governance are clearly shaped by formal institutions like district-based elections but are also powerfully informed by *informal* institutions, by the norms and practices that sway how city officials and departments interact, in ways that students of urban politics do not often adequately appreciate or document. Both L.A. and San Francisco have district-based legislative elections and strong mayor systems, but the power balance over local policymaking is quite different in each city due, in large part, to historical precedents and informal practices, and cannot be explained fully by differences in the city charters. Similarly, while district-based elections may make each city's government more inclined toward parochialism (Banfield and Wilson 1966), Los Angeles, during the years analyzed,

proved better able to surmount these parochial pressures and pursue coordinated, citywide strategy. L.A.'s ability to do so depended, again, on the informal intuitions of consensus and collective commitment deliberately developed on the city council during these years.

These findings cut against common expectations. All else equal, we might have expected that San Francisco's action to create a new homelessness department in the executive bureaucracy, isolated from the direct electoral pressures that frequently perpetuate territorial fragmentation and exacerbate geographic inequities, should have set the city up to create a more comprehensive and coordinated citywide response to homelessness. This was not the case. The political insulation of new department seems to have dampened the incentives for deep community engagement required to generate buy-in from residents and collaboration with their elected representatives. Similarly, the vast discretion and authority possessed by L.A. City Councilmembers over their districts would have led us to suspect that the parochial priorities and pressures from their districts would have made collaborative, collective participation in a citywide strategy all but impossible. It was made possible by the norm of consensus-oriented governance and the collective commitment to improving the city's response to homelessness.

The electoral analysis presented in chapter four only further affirms the importance of pursuing coordinated, citywide governance over homelessness. The quantitative and spatial analysis depicts a segregated geography of homeless policy preferences brought about by partisan and ideological segregation. Voters in more

conservative neighborhoods – those with more registered Republicans – were far less likely to support ballot measures to generate additional local revenue for homelessness. In San Francisco, we saw evidence that these same neighborhoods were also more likely to support punitive, enforcement-oriented responses to the problem. More progressive neighborhoods, on the other hand, were more likely to support revenue-generating measures and (again, in San Francisco) to oppose enforcement-oriented proposals. This divide likely reflects a larger fault line in attitudes toward poverty and governmental involvement in redistributive efforts more broadly, a cultural divide that is not likely to diminish any time soon. Nor are we likely to soon see any reintegration of ideological opponents into shared neighborhoods, for the momentum is with further political segregation. Accepting that this political divide among the public over homelessness exacerbates the already fragmented governance of the problem, the logical, difficult, but necessary next question remains: what do we do about it?

“In order for anything to be done under public auspices, the elaborate decentralization of authority... must somehow be overcome or set aside. The widely diffused *right* to act must be replaced by a unified *ability* to act. The many legally independent bodies – governments or fragments of government – whose collaboration is necessary for the accomplishment of a task must work as one” (Banfield and Wilson 1966, 101).

The pernicious political problem of homelessness requires strategic political maneuvering. The San Francisco case indicates that redesigning the institutional landscape of homeless governance – through the establishment of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing – proved insufficient to achieving coordinated

local policymaking and action. Instead, the norm of consensus governance in Los Angeles served as a foundation for the collective commitment among city lawmakers to more effectively address homelessness. This collective commitment, in turn, enabled the ensuing development and coordinated implementation of the city's comprehensive homeless strategy.

So this story is, at least in part, one of political leadership. Norms of consensus, compromise, and collaboration on governing boards are fickle and flexible but can be cultivated by determined leaders. And when leaders come together and commit to participating in a collective strategy, they are better able to stand up to vitriolic neighborhood resistance that has historically stymied solutions and exacerbated geographic fragmentation and inequality. Recall the comment from L.A. City Council President Herb Wesson, who presided over the body during the years of the most ambitious strategy and funding development: "I submit to you that leadership is about taking people places sometimes where they do not think they want to go" [LACC 6/29/2018]. That form of leadership becomes more likely when leaders support each other through collective commitment.

The flipside, however, is that consensus, once coalesced, can fray and fall apart. This, unfortunately, has been the case in Los Angeles since my research for this work concluded. As the COVID-19 pandemic wore on, council votes over how to address homeless encampments grew more contentious. Collaboration among councilmembers further frayed as multiple members of the body considered mayoral runs in 2022. Finally, any sense of commitment to collective pursuits was obliterated

when an audio recording surfaced containing councilmembers making racist comments about their colleague's family members and scheming tactics to consolidate power through the redistricting process. The norms that promote effective homeless governance take time and effort to build but are easily broken.

Those *in* government are not necessarily the only actors shaping homeless policy who can push for more coordinated and collaborative homeless governance. Advocacy organizations and service providers should incorporate into their campaigns efforts to encourage elected officials to establish clearly defined responsibility for coordinating homeless strategy implementation across the many departments, policy areas, and neighborhoods involved. In doing so, advocates should find ways to apply pressure while maintaining collaborative relationships with elected officials to ensure they remain part of ongoing conversations and can provide crucial information based on direct service provision and lived experience in homelessness to improve planning and programs. For local politicians, addressing homelessness often seems like a “no-win” situation. If they propose interim housing, they're attacked for neglecting the structural causes and long-term solutions. If they propose PSH, they're attacked for leaving people languishing on the streets. When they propose strategies for clearing encampments (whether through blatant sweeps or through more humane, sensitive approaches) they are violating constitutional rights, but when they push to protect those in encampments, they're charged with sanctioning squalor. Advocates need to push for change, there's no question. But their pushing should be cognizant of

the entire arena of pressures and priorities shaping local officials' engagement in homeless policymaking.

My research on this project points to what may be the most practical, tactical policy action local governments can take to overcome the territorial fragmentation that has so plagued homeless governance: a commitment to geographic equity of housing for the formerly homeless. When local elected officials commit to each other and the public to have the neighborhoods they represent participate in solutions to homelessness, several very useful political resources are produced. First, such commitments give local politicians cover from their most NIMBY-oriented constituents who are bound to ask of their representative “Why must we build this housing here?” and to then argue it should be built in this, or that, or any other district. To these comments, local officials can reply “The city has made a commitment, and we must play our part. We’re building here because we’re building in every district in the city. This is not just their problem. It’s ours, too.” Recall how Councilmember Harris-Dawson described the likely political benefits of the 222 Pledge, the commitment to geographic equity of permanent supportive housing made by the L.A. City Council: “I think all of us would get a lot of relief if our constituents could pick up the paper and say, ‘Oh, this is happening everywhere!’ as opposed to, ‘Why here?’” (Reyes 2018).

This political insulation from resistant neighborhood activism is extended to developers of affordable and supportive housing, especially when the projects to be permitted, funded and developed across multiple districts are bundled and voted on as

a package. Bundled development proposals bind representatives of multiple districts together in union against NIMBY resistance, demonstrate to a greater extent that the local government is beginning to make significant investments in addressing homelessness, make the parochial concerns of resistant residents appear petty, and can galvanize a wider coalition of advocates and service providers.

And finally, by making good on commitments to geographic equity, local officials have the opportunity to begin rectifying the stigmatized public conception of homeless-serving housing developments and the people who experience homelessness. The prevalence of negative, stereotyped attitudes toward “the homeless” is due in large part to the decades-old legacy of segregating homeless housing in blighted, under resourced neighborhoods, reinforcing the public association of visible poverty with some form of threat. Integrating housing for formerly homeless people into neighborhoods across a city’s geography could instead attenuate negative attitudes toward people who once experienced homelessness, alleviate resistance to housing solutions to homelessness, and forge a greater awareness among the public that homelessness is a societal problem, and its solution a community responsibility.

The commitment to geographic equity made by councilmembers in L.A. received considerable fanfare, but Los Angeles is certainly not the only locality to have pursued homeless strategies guided by geographic equity. In Sacramento, for example, the city council adopted Mayor Steinberg’s “Master Siting Plan” for permanent supportive housing which included at least one proposed site in each

council district. In Santa Clara County, following the electoral success of Prop A in 2016 – a local ballot measure that would generate \$950 million for affordable housing – the county’s Office of Supportive Housing spearheaded an implementation plan that called for investing in housing in each supervisorial district and eight of the largest cities in the county. Other city and county governments in California should learn from and follow the lead of these early examples. When they do so, they should also form strategic, intergovernmental collaborations leveraging all resources and powers – whether land and land use authority or federal funding for social service provision or housing production – to serve a common purpose and comprehensive plan.

By 2022, big cities and counties throughout California hoping to access the largest new source of state funding for homelessness – the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program, or HHAP – were being nudged toward more comprehensive and regional planning. By the third round of HHAP program, applicants were required to include a “local action plan” addressing how cities, counties, and continuums of care were collaborating and pooling resources to effectively address homelessness. This was an important step taken by the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, the agency tasked with administering HHAP funds (and, notably, for remedying the fragmented governance of homelessness across the state-level bureaucracy). In fact, state actions like this have the greatest potential to quickly rectify the fragmented politics of homelessness in local governments across California. Thoughtfully conceived state policies *could* establish effective incentives or mandates for local governments to coordinate agencies and

regions and collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to galvanize more effective homeless solutions. Up to now, unfortunately, the state incentives or requirements have done relatively little to promote regional coordination, have provided no best practices or guidelines about what effective collaboration actually looks like, and probably only result in city or county applicants giving lip service to how effectively they work together. Nonetheless, just as the state has begun ramping up enforcement of housing production mandates (Dineen 2022a), state law probably provides the single best venue for promoting rapid improvement in the coordination and regional planning of homelessness solutions in urban areas across the state.

Homelessness is unlikely to be solved quickly. While government in the United States can sometimes mobilize incredibly rapid responses to sudden, shocking crises – responding swiftly to hardships caused by an earthquake, flood, or pandemic, for instance – its record responding to structural problems built up over decades is decidedly less impressive. In urban areas across the state right now, homelessness is shocking, but it has not emerged suddenly. It is the result of decades of short-term thinking, of acquiescing, over and over again, to loud voices and resistant neighborhoods, and each time, pushing urban California further toward the rampant inequality and insufficient, unaffordable housing inventory we see in cities here today.

Homelessness is a long-term problem and requires a long-term solution. Local governments will need to use vastly increased funding from the state and federal governments in a strategic way that surmounts the inherently fragmented local

governance of homelessness. In doing so, policymakers must remain cognizant that each step toward this long-term solution determines the political feasibility of the step that follows. The way homeless strategies are designed and implemented today will determine whether tomorrow the public is willing to invest further in solutions; whether the public is more inclined to accept communal responsibility for a problem with such deep, structural roots. Any successful strategy to end and prevent homelessness in urban California must not only bring together the constellation of local officials, city departments, and layers of government, but also a fragmented population of residents who have been taught through the poor policy decisions of the past that homelessness is someone else's intractable problem, best hidden from sight. We all must now be convinced, through smart, strategic, comprehensive policymaking, that homelessness is our problem, and one that can and should be solved through collective, sustained commitment and collaboration.

APPENDIX

Table A.1.1. Summary statistics for City of Los Angeles (Measure HHH) regression model.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	25th Percentile	75th Percentile	Max
% for HHH	1,602	0.687	0.08	0.4	0.64	0.746	0.84
% for Sanders	1,602	0.276	0.087	0.021	0.218	0.331	0.845
% Republican	1,602	0.147	0.083	0.02	0.08	0.2	0.448
% Turnout	1,602	0.682	0.102	0.182	0.617	0.756	1.62
% College Graduates	1,602	0.352	0.226	0.008	0.152	0.55	0.87
% in Poverty	1,602	0.186	0.132	0	0.084	0.26	0.874
% Public Assistance	1,602	0.042	0.044	0	0.01	0.1	0
% White	1,602	0.345	0.284	0	0.062	0.607	0.958
% Black	1,602	0.096	0.151	0	0.016	0.093	0.926
% Latino	1,602	0.418	0.287	0.004	0.15	0.68	0.988
% Asian	1,602	0.11	0.106	0	0.034	0.153	0.656
% Rent burdened	1,602	0.567	0.137	0	0.493	0.657	1
% Homeowner	1,602	0.43	0.265	0	0.208	0.64	1
Unsheltered/sq. mile	1,602	87.198	259.192	0	10.247	94.547	5,086.30
Δ in district unsheltered	1,601	11.694	102.792	-953.921	-10.572	30.946	1,402.43
Median Income (logged)	1,602	10.943	0.512	8.843	10.547	11.292	12.28

Table A.1.2. Summary statistics for County of Los Angeles (Measure H) regression model.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	25th Percentile	75th Percentile	Max
% for H	2,231	0.665	0.127	0.202	0.576	0.768	0.923
% for Sanders	2,231	0.269	0.073	0.025	0.225	0.312	0.726
% Republican	2,231	0.185	0.109	0.025	0.099	0.256	0.585
% Turnout	2,231	0.187	0.083	0.046	0.124	0.241	0.498
% College Graduates	2,231	0.337	0.215	0.009	0.147	0.512	0.878
% in Poverty	2,231	0.159	0.109	0.00004	0.077	0.217	0.764
% Public Assistance	2,231	0.038	0.036	0	0.012	0.054	0.249
% White	2,231	0.321	0.271	0	0.064	0.565	0.954
% Black	2,231	0.084	0.143	0	0.013	0.079	0.912
% Latino	2,231	0.43	0.285	0.006	0.17	0.681	0.989
% Asian	2,231	0.134	0.143	0	0.039	0.168	0.813
% Rent burdened	2,231	0.551	0.128	0.0004	0.476	0.635	0.998
% Homeowner	2,231	0.494	0.257	0.00003	0.279	0.713	1
Unsheltered/sq. mile	2,231	55.551	161.652	0	4.018	55.121	5,077.49
Δ in district unsheltered	2,231	7.228	80.716	-1,299.87	-6.224	16.035	1,233.21
Median Income (logged)	2,231	11.033	0.454	9.218	10.708	11.341	12.32

Table A.2. Summary statistics for all San Francisco regression models.

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	25th Percentile	75th Percentile	Max
% for Q	592	0.469	0.075	0.284	0.415	0.523	0.682
% for D	592	0.42	0.057	0.25	0.38	0.449	0.698
% for C	592	0.578	0.094	0.292	0.508	0.653	0.836
% for Sanders	592	0.361	0.085	0.108	0.304	0.418	0.607
% Republican	592	0.08	0.046	0	0.046	0.099	0.26
% Turnout, 2016 general	592	0.809	0.086	0.451	0.772	0.87	1
% Turnout, 2018 primary	592	0.529	0.086	0.042	0.473	0.586	0.735
% Turnout, 2018 general	592	0.744	0.094	0.317	0.697	0.811	0.894
% College Graduates 2016	592	0.568	0.203	0.078	0.423	0.732	0.914
% College Graduates 2018	592	0.59	0.198	0.041	0.455	0.754	0.926
% in Poverty 2016	592	0.119	0.094	0	0.056	0.15	0.631
% in Poverty 2018	592	0.103	0.087	0	0.045	0.131	0.616
% Public Assistance 2016	592	0.024	0.033	0	0.003	0.033	0.304
% Public Assistance 2018	592	0.022	0.027	0	0.004	0.03	0.219
% White 2016	592	0.445	0.216	0.017	0.285	0.635	0.846
% White 2018	592	0.438	0.212	0.012	0.29	0.609	0.886
% Black 2016	592	0.051	0.079	0	0.009	0.057	0.595
% Black 2018	592	0.05	0.071	0	0.01	0.061	0.505
% Latino 2016	592	0.143	0.116	0	0.066	0.186	0.662
% Latino 2018	592	0.143	0.112	0.005	0.063	0.183	0.635
% Asian 2016	592	0.313	0.188	0.019	0.146	0.454	0.884
% Asian 2018	592	0.316	0.187	0.016	0.145	0.456	0.916
% Rent burdened 2016	592	0.406	0.14	0.01	0.3	0.506	0.895
% Rent burdened 2018	592	0.367	0.138	0	0.271	0.465	0.937
% Homeowner 2016	592	0.41	0.233	0	0.226	0.591	0.98
% Homeowner 2018	592	0.42	0.234	0	0.236	0.609	0.998
District unsheltered 2016	592	333.389	480.625	31	53	281	1,723
District unsheltered 2018	592	425.689	580.598	34	141	295	1,990
Δ in district unsheltered 2016	592	0.652	1.592	-0.631	-0.267	0.519	4.286
Δ in district unsheltered 2018	592	0.599	0.681	-0.085	0.155	1.062	2.226
Median Income (logged) 2016	592	11.392	0.447	9.39	11.22	11.713	12.232
Median Income (logged) 2018	592	11.565	0.433	9.614	11.406	11.884	12.312

Table A.3. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Measure HHH (L.A. City).

	Est.	S.E.	t	p
% for Sanders	0.0049	0.0011	4.441	0
% Republican	-0.0662	0.0015	-44.4445	0
% Turnout	-0.0052	0.0014	-3.7064	0.0002
% Homeownership	-0.0138	0.0015	-9.4877	0
% Black	0.0014	0.0015	0.8992	0.3687
% Latino	0.0141	0.0024	5.9082	0
% Asian	-0.0004	0.0009	-0.4855	0.6274
% Rent Burdened	0.0001	0.001	0.0655	0.9478
% in Poverty	-0.0017	0.0016	-1.0852	0.278
% receiving Pub Assistance	0.0042	0.0012	3.6287	0.0003
% College Graduates	0.0282	0.0025	11.2082	0
Median Income (logged)	0.0026	0.002	1.2943	0.1957
District unsheltered	0.0007	0.001	0.7194	0.472
Δ in district unsheltered	-0.0003	0.0009	-0.3737	0.7087
Intercept	0.6865	0.0008	883.7724	0
Observations	1602			
R ²	0.85			
Adjusted R ²	0.8487			
F Statistic (df = 14; 1587)	642.2925			

Note- Continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by one standard deviation.

Table A.4. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Measure H (L.A. County).

	Est.	S.E.	t	p
% for Sanders	0.0063	0.0014	4.3649	0
% Republican	-0.1095	0.0018	-59.694	0
% Turnout	-0.0008	0.0016	-0.4607	0.645
% Homeownership	-0.0154	0.002	-7.8014	0
% Black	0.0018	0.0018	0.9853	0.3246
% Latino	0.0028	0.0031	0.9026	0.3668
% Asian	-0.0108	0.0013	-8.5309	0
% Rent Burdened	-0.0018	0.0013	-1.4169	0.1567
% in Poverty	0.0054	0.0021	2.5139	0.012
% receiving Pub Assistance	0.0024	0.0016	1.5612	0.1186
% College Graduates	0.0408	0.0032	12.6608	0
Median Income (logged)	0.0017	0.0028	0.5994	0.5489
District unsheltered	-0.0024	0.0013	-1.843	0.0655
Δ in district unsheltered	0.002	0.0012	1.7244	0.0848
Intercept	0.6651	0.001	637.7411	0
Observations	2231			
R ²	0.8506			
Adjusted R ²	0.8496			
F Statistic (df = 14; 2216)	900.9273			

Note- Continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by one standard deviation.

Table A.5. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Prop Q (San Francisco).

	Est.	S.E.	t	p
% for Sanders	-0.0315	0.0023	-13.9318	0
% Republican	0.0362	0.0022	16.2542	0
% Turnout	0.0028	0.0029	0.9659	0.3345
% Homeownership	0.0028	0.0036	0.7986	0.4249
% Black	-0.0051	0.0025	-2.0403	0.0418
% Latino	-0.0009	0.0028	-0.3165	0.7518
% Asian	0.0201	0.0036	5.5979	0
% Rent Burdened	0.0049	0.0022	2.2321	0.026
% in Poverty	-0.0062	0.0032	-1.9342	0.0536
% receiving Pub Assistance	-0.0002	0.0021	-0.0974	0.9224
% College Graduates	-0.0068	0.0047	-1.4411	0.1501
Median Income (logged)	0.0047	0.0033	1.4055	0.1604
Δ in district unsheltered	0.0019	0.0021	0.8858	0.3761
Intercept	0.4691	0.0016	287.4236	0
Observations	592			
R ²	0.7267			
Adjusted R ²	0.7205			
F Statistic (df = 13; 578)	118.2144			

Note- Continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by one standard deviation.

Table A.6. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Prop D (San Francisco).

	Est.	S.E.	t	p
% for Sanders	-0.0197	0.002	-9.7978	0
% Republican	-0.019	0.0024	-7.8945	0
% Turnout	-0.018	0.0028	-6.3544	0
% Homeownership	-0.0105	0.0026	-3.9838	0.0001
% Black	0.004	0.0027	1.4984	0.1346
% Latino	-0.0067	0.0028	-2.3882	0.0173
% Asian	-0.0018	0.0036	-0.4855	0.6275
% Rent Burdened	0.0015	0.0021	0.7229	0.47
% in Poverty	0.0051	0.0031	1.6781	0.0939
% receiving Pub Assistance	0.0012	0.002	0.5962	0.5513
% College Graduates	0.0117	0.0047	2.5048	0.0125
Median Income (logged)	-0.0052	0.0035	-1.5046	0.133
Δ in district unsheltered	-0.0009	0.0021	-0.4301	0.6673
Intercept	0.4205	0.0016	264.1376	0
Observations	592			
R ²	0.548			
Adjusted R ²	0.5379			
F Statistic (df = 13; 578)	53.9082			

Note- Continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by one standard deviation.

Table A.7. OLS regression results with standardized coefficients for Prop C (San Francisco).

	Est.	S.E.	t	p
% for Sanders	0.0178	0.0021	8.6355	0
% Republican	-0.0595	0.0023	-25.4866	0
% Turnout	-0.0155	0.0025	-6.1846	0
% Homeownership	-0.0141	0.0035	-4.04	0.0001
% Black	-0.0055	0.0026	-2.1195	0.0345
% Latino	0.0035	0.0027	1.2955	0.1957
% Asian	-0.0309	0.0036	-8.6686	0
% Rent Burdened	-0.0039	0.0021	-1.8437	0.0657
% in Poverty	0.0086	0.003	2.8364	0.0047
% receiving Pub Assistance	0.0038	0.002	1.9146	0.056
% College Graduates	0.0135	0.0048	2.7934	0.0054
Median Income (logged)	-0.0013	0.0034	-0.3661	0.7144
Δ in district unsheltered	-0.0018	0.002	-0.8847	0.3767
Intercept	0.5784	0.0016	367.5375	0
Observations	592			
R ²	0.8379			
Adjusted R ²	0.8342			
F Statistic (df = 13; 578)	229.7425			

Note- Continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by one standard deviation.

Figure A.1. Bivariate association between Republican voter registration and homeownership in Los Angeles.

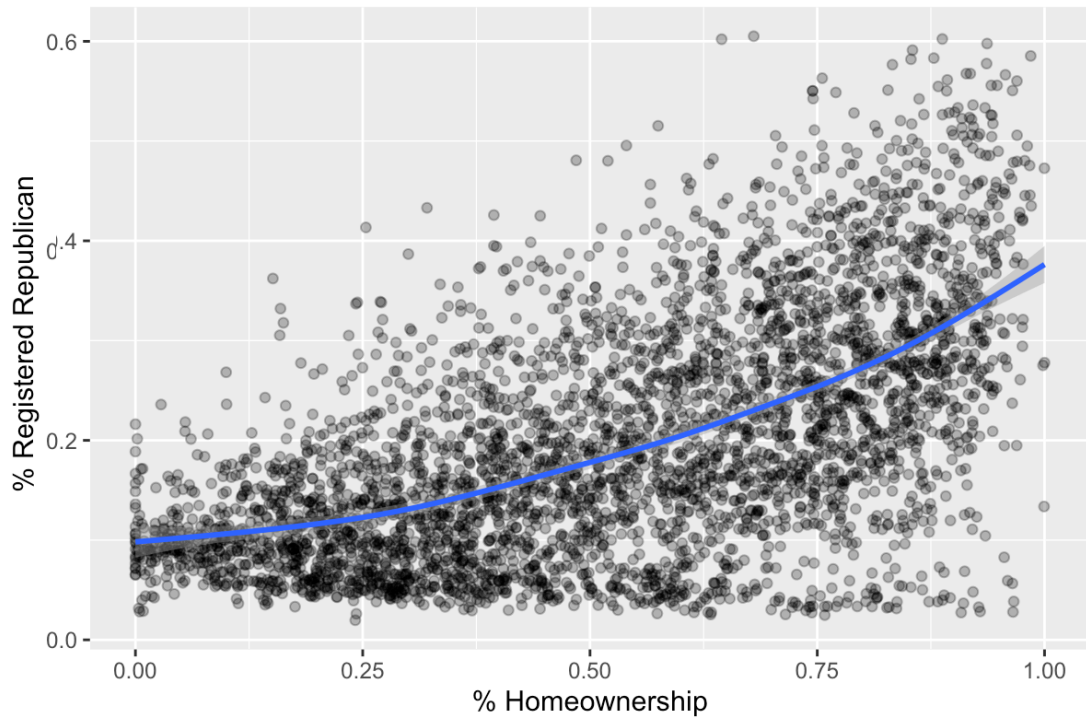
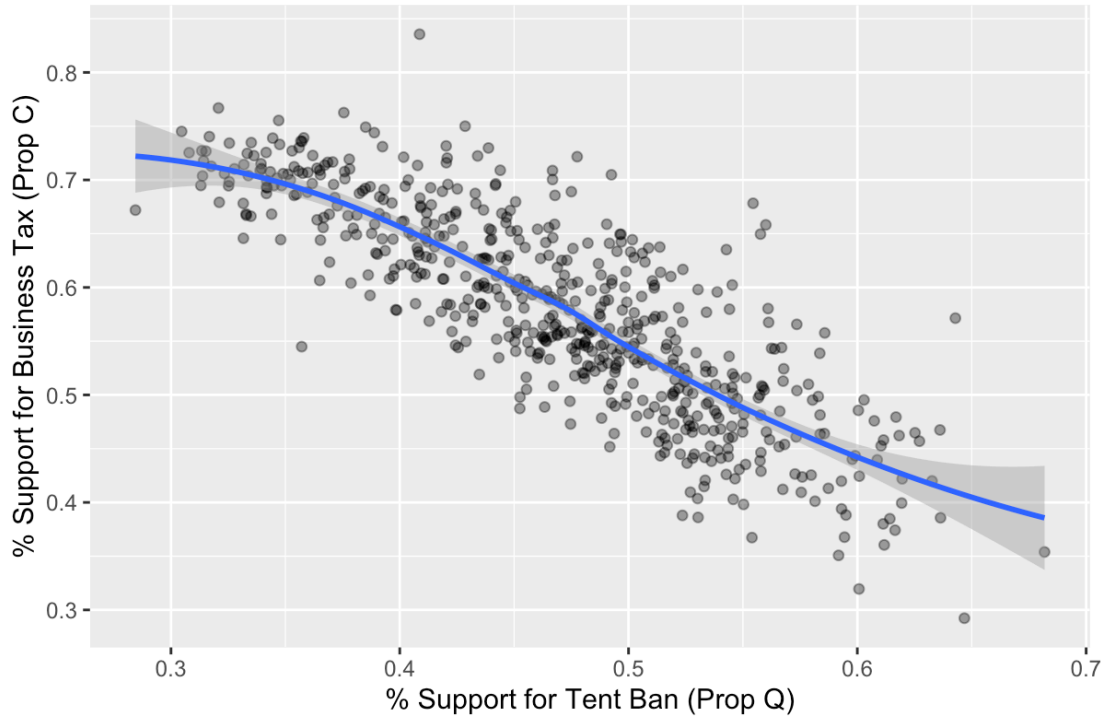


Figure A.2. Bivariate association between precinct support for Prop Q and Prop C in San Francisco.



REFERENCES

- Albright, Len, Elizabeth S. Derickson, and Douglas S. Massey. 2013. "Do Affordable Housing Projects Harm Suburban Communities? Crime, Property Values, and Taxes in Mount Laurel, NJ." *City & Community* 12 (2): 89–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12015>.
- Alexander, Michelle. 2020. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Tenth anniversary edition. New York: The New Press.
- Alford, Robert R., and Eugene C. Lee. 1968. "Voting Turnout in American Cities*." *American Political Science Review* 62 (3): 796–813. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953431>.
- Amaral, David J. 2021. "Who Banishes? City Power and Anti-Homeless Policy in San Francisco." *Urban Affairs Review* 57 (6): 1524–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087420925909>.
- Anderson, Nels. 1923. *The Hobo ; the Sociology of the Homeless Man*. Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago press.
- Assembly and Senate Republicans. 2022. "Policy Proposal Summaries to Act on Homelessness." <https://cssrc.us/sites/default/files/Full%20Policy%20Proposal%20Summary%20Document.pdf>.
- Azari, Julia R., and Jennifer K. Smith. 2012. "Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies." *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (1): 37–55.
- Baldassare, Mark, Dean Bonner, Alyssa Dykman, and Rachel Lawler. 2020. "Californians and Their Government." Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/ppic-statewide-survey-californians-and-their-government-february-2020/>.
- Banfield, Edward C., and James Q. Wilson. 1966. *City Politics*. Publications of the Joint Center for Urban Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bassuk, Ellen L., Jennifer N. Perloff, and Ree Dawson. 2001. "Multiply Homeless Families: The Insidious Impact of Violence." *Housing Policy Debate* 12 (2): 299–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2001.9521407>.
- Batko, Samantha, Sarah Gillespie, Katrina Ballard, Mary Cunningham, Barbara Poppe, and Stephen Metraux. 2020. "Alternatives to Arrest and Police Responses to Homelessness: Evidence-Based Models and Promising

- Practices.” Urban Institute.
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103158/alternatives-to-arrests-and-police-responses-to-homelessness.pdf>.
- Beckett, Katherine, and Steven Kelly Herbert. 2010. *Banished: The New Social Control in Urban America*. Studies in Crime and Public Policy. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Benedictis-Kessner, Justin de, and Christopher Warshaw. 2016. “Mayoral Partisanship and Municipal Fiscal Policy.” *The Journal of Politics* 78 (4): 1124–38. <https://doi.org/10.1086/686308>.
- . 2020. “Politics in Forgotten Governments: The Partisan Composition of County Legislatures and County Fiscal Policies.” *The Journal of Politics* 82 (2): 460–75.
- Benjamin, Andrea. 2017. *Racial Coalition Building in Local Elections: Elite Cues and Cross-Ethnic Voting*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bivand, Roger, Gianfranco Piras, Luc Anselin, Andrew Bernat, Eric Blankmeyer, Yongwan Chun, Virgilio Gómez-Rubio, et al. 2021. “Spatialreg: Spatial Regression Analysis.” <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=spatialreg>.
- Blasi, Gary. 1994. “And We Are Not Seen: Ideological and Political Barriers to Understanding Homelessness.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 37 (4): 563–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764294037004009>.
- Blau, Joel. 1992. *The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bogard, Cynthia J. 2003. *Seasons Such as These: How Homelessness Took Shape in America*. Social Problems and Social Issues. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Brey, Jared. 2022. “Local Ballot Measures Underscore California’s Housing Crisis.” *Governing*, October 21, 2022, sec. The Future of What’s Happening Now. <https://www.governing.com/now/local-ballot-measures-underscore-californias-housing-crisis>.
- Bridges, Amy. 1997. *Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest*. Princeton Studies in American Politics. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Bridges, Amy, and Richard Kronick. 1999. “Writing the Rules to Win the Game: The Middle-Class Regimes of Municipal Reformers.” *Urban Affairs Review* 34 (5): 691–706. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10780879922184149>.

- Brown, Jacob R., and Ryan D. Enos. 2021. "The Measurement of Partisan Sorting for 180 Million Voters." *Nature Human Behaviour* 5 (8): 998–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01066-z>.
- Buckman, Joshua E. J., Rob Saunders, Joshua Stott, Zachary D. Cohen, Laura-Louise Arundell, Thalia C. Eley, Steven D. Hollon, et al. 2022. "Socioeconomic Indicators of Treatment Prognosis for Adults With Depression: A Systematic Review and Individual Patient Data Meta-Analysis." *JAMA Psychiatry* 79 (5): 406–16. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.0100>.
- Bullock, Heather E., Wendy R. Williams, and Wendy M. Limbert. 2003. "Predicting Support for Welfare Policies: The Impact of Attributions and Beliefs About Inequality." *Journal of Poverty* 7 (3): 35–56. https://doi.org/10.1300/J134v07n03_03.
- Burnett, Craig M., and Vladimir Kogan. 2014. "Local Logrolling? Assessing the Impact of Legislative Districting in Los Angeles." *Urban Affairs Review* 50 (5): 648–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087414522408>.
- Byrne, Thomas, Jamison D. Fargo, Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, Ellen Munley, and Dennis P. Culhane. 2014. "The Relationship between Community Investment in Permanent Supportive Housing and Chronic Homelessness." *Social Service Review* 88 (2): 234–63. <https://doi.org/10.1086/676142>.
- Byrne, Thomas, Ellen A. Munley, Jamison D. Fargo, Ann E. Montgomery, and Dennis P. Culhane. 2013. "New Perspectives on Community-Level Determinants of Homelessness." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 35 (5): 607–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2012.00643.x>.
- Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2012. "Policy Makes Mass Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (1): 333–51. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-012610-135202>.
- Campbell, David E. 2006. *Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape Our Civic Life*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Carey, Corinne A. 2004. "No Second Chance: People with Criminal Records Denied Access to Public Housing." *University of Toledo Law Review* 36: 545.
- Choi, Sang Ok, Sang-Seok Bae, Sung-Wook Kwon, and Richard Feiock. 2010. "County Limits: Policy Types and Expenditure Priorities." *The American Review of Public Administration* 40 (1): 29–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074008328171>.

- Colburn, Gregg, and Clayton Page Aldern. 2022. *Homelessness Is a Housing Problem: How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns*.
- Concepcion, Roberto Jr. 2012. "Need Not Apply: The Racial Disparate Impact of Pre-Employment Criminal Background Checks." *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* 19: 231.
- Cress, Daniel M., and David A. Snow. 2000. "The Outcomes of Homeless Mobilization: The Influence of Organization, Disruption, Political Mediation, and Framing." *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (4): 1063–1104.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*. Yale Studies in Political Science 4. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Davies, Jonathan S., and Jessica Trounstein. 2012. "Urban Politics and the New Institutionalism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195367867.013.0004>.
- Davis, Mike. 2006. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New edition. London ; New York: Verso.
- Dear, Michael. 1987. *Landscapes of Despair: From Deinstitutionalization to Homelessness*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- . 1992. "Understanding and Overcoming the Nimby Syndrome." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 58 (3): 288–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369208975808>.
- Dear, Michael, and Brendan Gleeson. 1991. "Community Attitudes Toward the Homeless." *Urban Geography* 12 (2): 155–76. <https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.12.2.155>.
- DeLeon, Richard Edward. 1992. *Left Coast City: Progressive Politics in San Francisco, 1975-1991*. Studies in Government and Public Policy. Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas.
- Demsas, Jerusalem. 2022. "Community Input Is Bad, Actually." *The Atlantic*. April 22, 2022. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/04/local-government-community-input-housing-public-transportation/629625/>.
- Desmond, Matthew. 2015. "Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty 1." *American Journal of Sociology*, July. <https://doi.org/10.1086/666082>.
- Diamond, Rebecca, and Tim McQuade. 2019. "Who Wants Affordable Housing in Their Backyard? An Equilibrium Analysis of Low-Income

- Property Development.” *Journal of Political Economy* 127 (3): 1063–1117. <https://doi.org/10.1086/701354>.
- Dillman, Keri-Nicole, Keren Mertens Horn, and Ann Verrilli. 2017. “The What, Where, and When of Place-Based Housing Policy’s Neighborhood Effects.” *Housing Policy Debate* 27 (2): 282–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2016.1172103>.
- Dineen, J. K. 2022a. “Gov. Newsom Launches Unprecedented Review of San Francisco’s Housing Approval Process.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 9, 2022, sec. San Francisco. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/Gov-Newsom-launches-unprecedented-review-of-San-17362055.php>.
- . 2022b. “S.F. Has 5 Months to Convince the State It Can Build 82,000 Housing Units. This Is the Sticking Point.” *San Francisco Chronicle*. August 12, 2022. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/housing-California-construction-17368517.php>.
- Donovan, Todd, and Max Neiman. 1992. “Citizen Mobilization and the Adoption of Local Growth Control.” *The Western Political Quarterly* 45 (3): 651–75. <https://doi.org/10.2307/448686>.
- Doran, Kelly M., Callan Elswick Fockele, and Marcella Maguire. 2022. “Overdose and Homelessness—Why We Need to Talk About Housing.” *JAMA Network Open* 5 (1): e2142685. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.42685>.
- Dougherty, Conor. 2020. *Golden Gates: Fighting for Housing in America*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Dye, Thomas R. 1979. “Politics Versus Economics: The Development of the Literature on Policy Determination.” *Policy Studies Journal* 7 (4): 652–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.1979.tb01360.x>.
- Early, Dirk W. 2005. “An Empirical Investigation of the Determinants of Street Homelessness.” *Journal of Housing Economics* 14 (1): 27–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhe.2005.03.001>.
- Ecker, John, and Tim Aubry. 2017. “A Mixed Methods Analysis of Housing and Neighbourhood Impacts on Community Integration among Vulnerably Housed and Homeless Individuals.” *Journal of Community Psychology* 45 (4): 528–42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21864>.
- Einstein, Katherine Levine, and David M. Glick. 2018. “Mayors, Partisanship, and Redistribution: Evidence Directly from U.S. Mayors.” *Urban Affairs Review* 54 (1): 74–106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087416674829>.

- Einstein, Katherine Levine, David Matthew Glick, and Maxwell Palmer. 2020. *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis*. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; Cambridge University Press.
- Einstein, Katherine Levine, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick. 2018. "Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes." *Perspectives on Politics*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759271800213X>.
- Elmendorf, Chris. 2019. "Recalibrating Local Politics to Increase the Supply of Housing Housing." *Regulation* 42 (2): 38–44.
- . 2022. "San Francisco Is about to Change Dramatically — Whether It Wants to or Not." *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 11, 2022, sec. Open Forum. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/San-Francisco-is-about-to-change-dramatically-17367323.php>.
- Enos, Ryan D. 2016. "What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (1): 123–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12156>.
- . 2017. *The Space between Us: Social Geography and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Erie, Steven P. 1990. *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985*.
- Fargo, Jamison, Stephen Metraux, Thomas Byrne, Ellen Munley, Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, Harlan Jones, George Sheldon, Vincent Kane, and Dennis Culhane. 2012. "Prevalence and Risk of Homelessness among US Veterans." *Preventing Chronic Disease* 9.
- Fazel, Seena, John R Geddes, and Margot Kushel. 2014. "The Health of Homeless People in High-Income Countries: Descriptive Epidemiology, Health Consequences, and Clinical and Policy Recommendations." *The Lancet* 384 (9953): 1529–40. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)61132-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61132-6).
- Fischel, William A. 2001. *The Homevoter Hypothesis: How Home Values Influence Local Government Taxation, School Finance, and Land-Use Policies*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Fisher, Marina, Nathaniel Miller, Lindsay Walter, and Jeffrey Selbin. 2015. "California's New Vagrancy Laws: The Growing Enactment and Enforcement of Anti-Homeless Laws in the Golden State." SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 2558944. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2558944>.

- Foster, Adriana, James Gable, and John Buckley. 2012. "Homelessness in Schizophrenia." *The Psychiatric Clinics of North America* 35 (3): 717–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2012.06.010>.
- Fracassa, Dominic. 2018. "Three SF Elected Leaders Announce Opposition to Prop. C — Raising Business Taxes for Homeless Services." *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 5, 2018, sec. Bay Area & State. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Three-SF-elected-leaders-announce-opposition-to-13285614.php>.
- Fuller, Thomas. 2020. "California Governor Declares Homeless Crisis 'a Disgrace.'" *The New York Times*, February 20, 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/us/california-homeless.html>.
- Galprin, Ron. 2019a. "Strategy on the Streets: Improving Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Outreach Program." L.A. City Controller. https://lacontroller.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Strategy-on-the-Streets_Improving-LAHSAs-Outreach-Program_8.28.19.pdf.
- . 2019b. "The High Cost of Homeless Housing: Review of Proposition HHH." L.A. City Controller. <https://lacontroller.org/audits-and-reports/high-cost-of-homeless-housing-hhh/>.
- Glaeser, Edward L., and Bryce A. Ward. 2009. "The Causes and Consequences of Land Use Regulation: Evidence from Greater Boston." *Journal of Urban Economics* 65 (3): 265–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2008.06.003>.
- Glaeser, Edward L., Joseph Gyourko, and Raven Saks. 2005. "Why Is Manhattan So Expensive? Regulation and the Rise in Housing Prices." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 48 (2): 331–69. <https://doi.org/10.1086/429979>.
- Glynn, Chris, Thomas H. Byrne, and Dennis P. Culhane. 2021. "Inflection Points in Community-Level Homeless Rates." *The Annals of Applied Statistics* 15 (2): 1037–53. <https://doi.org/10.1214/20-AOAS1414>.
- Goetz, Edward G. 1994. "Expanding Possibilities in Local Development Policy: An Examination of U.S. Cities." *Political Research Quarterly* 47 (1): 85–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591299404700105>.
- . 2008. "Words Matter: The Importance of Issue Framing and the Case of Affordable Housing." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 74 (2): 222–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360802010251>.
- Gore, Albert. 1990. "Public Policy and the Homeless." *American Psychologist* 45 (8): 960–62. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.45.8.960>.

- Gowan, Teresa. 2002. "The Nexus: Homelessness and Incarceration in Two American Cities." *Ethnography* 3 (4): 500–534. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138102003004007>.
- . 2010. *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Grabar, Henry. 2021. "City Councils Are Villains of the Housing Crisis." *Slate*, April 29, 2021. <https://slate.com/business/2021/04/city-councils-are-fueling-the-housing-crisis-thanks-to-ideas-like-member-deference-and-aldermanic-privilege.html>.
- Gray, M. Nolan. 2021. "How Californians Are Weaponizing Environmental Law." *The Atlantic*. March 12, 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/03/signature-environmental-law-hurts-housing/618264/>.
- Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2014. "After the 'Master Theory': Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis." *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (3): 643–62. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714001637>.
- Hajnal, Zoltan. 2010. *America's Uneven Democracy: Race, Turnout, and Representation in City Politics*. Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press.
- Hajnal, Zoltan, and Jessica Trounstein. 2010. "Who or What Governs?: The Effects of Economics, Politics, Institutions, and Needs on Local Spending." *American Politics Research* 38 (6): 1130–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X10362870>.
- Hamilton, Matt, and Dakota Smith. 2016. "No Charges for Government Critic Who Penned Racist Comments and Images about L.A. City Council Member." *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 2016, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-city-council-critic-20161222-story.html>.
- Hankinson, Michael, and Asya Magazinnik. 2021. "The Supply–Equity Trade-Off: The Effect of Spatial Representation on the Local Housing Supply." *Working Paper*, 65.
- Hanratty, Maria. 2017. "Do Local Economic Conditions Affect Homelessness? Impact of Area Housing Market Factors, Unemployment, and Poverty on Community Homeless Rates." *Housing Policy Debate* 27 (4): 640–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2017.1282885>.

- Harris, Lasana T., and Susan T. Fiske. 2006. "Dehumanizing the Lowest of the Low: Neuroimaging Responses to Extreme out-Groups." *Psychological Science* 17 (10): 847–53. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01793.x>.
- Harvey, D. 1989. "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism - the Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism." *Geografiska Annaler Series B-Human Geography* 71 (1): 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.2307/490503>.
- Helmke, Gretchen, and Steven Levitsky. 2004. "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (4): 725–40.
- Hennigan, Brian, and Jessie Speer. 2019. "Compassionate Revanchism: The Blurry Geography of Homelessness in the USA." *Urban Studies* 56 (5): 906–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018762012>.
- Henry, Meghan, Anna Mahathey, and Meghan Takashima. 2020. "The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2018-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>.
- Herring, Chris. 2019. "Complaint-Oriented Policing: Regulating Homelessness in Public Space." *American Sociological Review* 84 (5): 769–800. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419872671>.
- Herring, Chris, Dilara Yarbrough, and Lisa Marie Alatorre. 2020. "Pervasive Penalty: How the Criminalization of Poverty Perpetuates Homelessness." *Social Problems* 67 (1): 131–49. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spz004>.
- Hopkins, Daniel J. 2009. "Partisan Reinforcement and the Poor: The Impact of Context on Explanations for Poverty*." *Social Science Quarterly* 90 (3): 744–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00641.x>.
- . 2010. "Politicized Places: Explaining Where and When Immigrants Provoke Local Opposition." *The American Political Science Review* 104 (1): 40–60.
- Hopper, Kim. 2003. *Reckoning with Homelessness*. Anthropology of Contemporary Issues. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hopper, Kim, and Jill Hamberg. 1986. "The Making of America's Homeless: From Skid Row to New Poor, 1945-1984." In *Critical Perspectives on Housing*, edited by Rachel G. Bratt, Chester W. Hartman, and Ann Meyerson, 12–40. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Hopper, Kim, Marybeth Shinn, Eugene Laska, Morris Meisner, and Joseph Wanderling. 2008. "Estimating Numbers of Unsheltered Homeless People Through Plant-Capture and Postcount Survey Methods." *American Journal of Public Health* 98 (8): 1438–42. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2005.083600>.
- Huckfeldt, Robert. 1986. *Politics in Context: Assimilation and Conflict in Urban Neighborhoods*. New York: Agathon Press.
- Hunter, Floyd. 1953. *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Johnson, Guy, and Chris Chamberlain. 2008. "Homelessness and Substance Abuse: Which Comes First?" *Australian Social Work* 61 (4): 342–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03124070802428191>.
- Jones, Daniel, Christopher Warshaw, and Justin de Benedictis-Kessner. 2022. "How Partisanship in Cities Influences Housing Policy." *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, May. <https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/37370513>.
- Katz, Michael B. 1996. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. 10th anniversary ed., rev. Updated. New York: BasicBooks.
- . 2013. *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty: Fully Updated and Revised*. Second Edition. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Katznelson, Ira. 2005. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Kim, Victoria. 2018a. "Furor Is Mounting over Proposed Koreatown Shelter. Is It NIMBYism, or a Community 'blindsided' by the City?" *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 2018, sec. Local - Lanow.
- . 2018b. "Faced with Rallies Opposing a Temporary Shelter in His District, Council President Herb Wesson Holds His Own." *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 2018, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-wesson-homeless-rally-20180518-story.html>.
- King, Gary. 1997. *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behavior from Aggregate Data*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton Paperbacks. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Knight, Heather. 2021. "S.F.'s Real Housing Crisis: Supervisors Who Took a Wrecking Ball to Plans for 800 Units." *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 30, 2021, sec. Heather Knight. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/bayarea/heatherknight/article/S-F-supervisors-complain-about-our-housing-16576412.php>.
- Koegel, P., and M. A. Burnam. 1988. "Alcoholism among Homeless Adults in the Inner City of Los Angeles." *Archives of General Psychiatry* 45 (11): 1011–18. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpsyc.1988.01800350045007>.
- Koegel, P., M. A. Burnam, and R. K. Farr. 1988. "The Prevalence of Specific Psychiatric Disorders among Homeless Individuals in the Inner City of Los Angeles." *Archives of General Psychiatry* 45 (12): 1085–92. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpsyc.1988.01800360033005>.
- Kushel, Margot. 2012. "Older Homeless Adults: Can We Do More?" *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 27 (1): 5–6. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-011-1925-0>.
- . 2018. "Hepatitis A Outbreak in California — Addressing the Root Cause." *New England Journal of Medicine* 378 (3): 211–13. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp1714134>.
- . 2022a. "Homelessness, Health and the State Survey." Presented at the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, January 20. https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/meetings/materials/20220127_survey.pdf.
- . 2022b. "Violence Against People Who Are Homeless: The Hidden Epidemic." *Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative* (blog). July 14, 2022. <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/blog/violence-against-people-homeless-hidden-epidemic>.
- Kushel, Margot, Jennifer L. Evans, Sharon Perry, Marjorie J. Robertson, and Andrew R. Moss. 2003. "No Door to Lock: Victimization Among Homeless and Marginally Housed Persons." *Archives of Internal Medicine* 163 (20): 2492–99. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.163.20.2492>.
- Lakoff, George. 2016. *Moral Politics*. The University of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/M/bo24837087.html>.

- Lee, Barrett A., David W. Lewis, and Susan Hinze Jones. 1992. "Are the Homeless to Blame? A Test of Two Theories." *The Sociological Quarterly* 33 (4): 535–52.
- Lee, Barrett A., Bruce G. Link, and Paul A. Toro. 1991. "Images of the Homeless: Public Views and Media Messages." *Housing Policy Debate* 2 (3): 649–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.1991.9521068>.
- Lee, Barrett A., Townsend Price-Spratlen, and James W. Kanan. 2003. "Determinants of Homelessness in Metropolitan Areas." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 25 (3): 335–56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9906.00168>.
- Lee, Barrett A., Kimberly A. Tyler, and James D. Wright. 2010. "The New Homelessness Revisited." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (1): 501–21. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115940>.
- Lelchuk, Ilene. 2003. "S.F.'S HOMELESS LEGACY / Two Decades of Failure." *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 7, 2003, sec. News. <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/S-F-S-HOMELESS-LEGACY-Two-decades-of-failure-2590953.php>.
- Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. First edition. New York: Crown.
- Lipsitz, George. 2016. "Policing Place and Taxing Time on Skid Row." In *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter*, edited by Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton. London ; Verso.
- Lipsky, Michael. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Publications of Russell Sage Foundation. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Logan, John R., and Harvey Luskin Molotch. 1987. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Louthen, Elliot. 2020. "Prerogative and Legislator Vetoes." *Northwestern University Law Review* 115 (2): 549–98.
- Lowi, Theodore J. 1964. "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory." Edited by Raymond A. Bauer, Lewis A. Dexter, and Ithiel de Sola Pool. *World Politics* 16 (4): 677–715.
- Lowndes, Vivien. 1996. "Varieties of New Institutionalism: A Critical Appraisal." *Public Administration* 74 (2): 181–97. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1996.tb00865.x>.

- MacLeod, Gordon. 2002. "From Urban Entrepreneurialism to a 'Revanchist City'? On the Spatial Injustices of Glasgow's Renaissance." *Antipode* 34 (3): 602–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00256>.
- March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *The American Political Science Review* 78 (3): 734–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1961840>.
- Marcuse, Peter. 1986. "Housing Policy and the Myth of the Benevolent State." In *Critical Perspectives on Housing*, edited by Rachel G. Bratt, Chester W. Hartman, and Ann Meyerson, 248–63. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Markowitz, Fred E., and Jeffrey Syverson. 2021. "Race, Gender, and Homelessness Stigma: Effects of Perceived Blameworthiness and Dangerousness." *Deviant Behavior* 42 (7): 919–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2019.1706140>.
- McVicar, Duncan, Julie Moschion, and Jan C. van Ours. 2015. "From Substance Use to Homelessness or Vice Versa?" *Social Science & Medicine* 136–137 (July): 89–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.05.005>.
- Mejia, Marisol Cuellar, and Vicki Hsieh. 2019. "A Snapshot of Homelessness in California." *Public Policy Institute of California* (blog). February 19, 2019. <https://www.ppic.org/blog/a-snapshot-of-homelessness-in-california/>.
- Metraux, Stephen, Caterina G. Roman, and Richard S. Cho. 2007. "Incarceration and Homelessness." In *2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. Vol. 9. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/p9.pdf>.
- Mettler, Suzanne. 2005. *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*. Oxford ; Oxford University Press.
- Minkoff, Scott L. 2009. "Minding Your Neighborhood: The Spatial Context of Local Redistribution*." *Social Science Quarterly* 90 (3): 516–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00629.x>.
- Mitchell, Don. 1997. "The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States." *Antipode* 29 (3): 303-. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00048>.
- . 1998a. "Anti-Homeless Laws and Public Space: I. Begging and the First Amendment." *Urban Geography* 19 (1): 6–11.
- . 1998b. "Anti-Homeless Laws and Public Space: II. Further Constitutional Issues." *Urban Geography* 19 (2): 98–104.

- . 2011. “Homelessness, American Style.” *Urban Geography* 32 (7): 933–56. <https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.32.7.933>.
- Molotch, Harvey. 1976. “The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place.” *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (2): 309–32.
- Mossberger, Karen, and Gerry Stoker. 2001. “The Evolution of Urban Regime Theory: The Challenge of Conceptualization.” *Urban Affairs Review* 36 (6): 810–35.
- Muzzio, Douglas, and Tim Tompkins. 1989. “On the Size of the City Council: Finding the Mean.” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 37 (3): 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1173754>.
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. 2019. “No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities.” https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/No_Safe_Place.pdf.
- Nguyen, Mai Thi. 2005. “Does Affordable Housing Detrimentially Affect Property Values? A Review of the Literature.” *Journal of Planning Literature* 20 (1): 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412205277069>.
- Oakley, Deirdre. 2002. “Housing Homeless People: Local Mobilization of Federal Resources to Fight NIMBYism.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24 (December): 97–116. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9906.00116>.
- Office of the Attorney General. 2021. “Press Release: Attorney General Bonta Launches Housing Strike Force, Announces Convening of Tenant Roundtables Across the State.” State of California Department of Justice. <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-launches-housing-strike-force-announces-convening-tenant>.
- Oliver, J. Eric. 2001. *Democracy in Suburbia*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- . 2010. *The Paradoxes of Integration: Race, Neighborhood, and Civic Life in Multiethnic America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard Economic Studies, v. 124. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Palus, Christine Kelleher. 2010. “Responsiveness in American Local Governments.” *State and Local Government Review* 42 (2): 133–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0160323X10365847>.

- Paul, Dereck W., Kelly R. Knight, Pamela Olsen, John Weeks, Irene H. Yen, and Margot Kushel. 2020. "Racial Discrimination in the Life Course of Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness: Results from the HOPE HOME Study." *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless* 29 (2): 184–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2019.1702248>.
- Pecora, Peter J., Ronald C. Kessler, Kirk O'Brien, Catherine Roller White, Jason Williams, Eva Hiripi, Diana English, James White, and Mary Anne Herrick. 2006. "Educational and Employment Outcomes of Adults Formerly Placed in Foster Care: Results from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study." *Children and Youth Services Review* 28 (12): 1459–81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2006.04.003>.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Phelan, Jo, Bruce G. Link, Robert E. Moore, and Ann Stueve. 1997. "The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label 'Homeless' on Attitudes Toward Poor Persons." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60 (4): 323–37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2787093>.
- Pierre, Jon. 1999. "Models of Urban Governance: The Institutional Dimension of Urban Politics." *Urban Affairs Review* 34 (3): 372–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10780879922183988>.
- Pierson, Paul. 1993. "When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change." *World Politics* 45 (4): 595–628. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950710>.
- Pinard, Michael. 2010. "Collateral Consequences of Criminal Convictions: Confronting Issues of Race and Dignity." *New York University Law Review* 85: 457.
- Piven, Frances Fox, and Richard A. Cloward. 1971. *Regulating the Poor; the Functions of Public Welfare*. [1st ed.]. New York: Pantheon Books.
- . 1988. *Why Americans Don't Vote*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Plummer, Mary. 2019. "The Massive Election Change In California You've Likely Never Heard Of." LAist. January 2, 2019. <https://laist.com/news/the-massive-election-change-in-california-youve-likely-never-heard-of>.
- Polsby, Nelson W. 1963. *Community Power and Political Theory*. Yale Studies in Political Science, 7. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.
- Purtle, Jonathan, Luwam T. Gebrekristos, Danya Keene, Penelope Schlesinger, Linda Niccolai, and Kim M. Blankenship. 2020. "Quantifying the Restrictiveness of

Local Housing Authority Policies Toward People With Criminal Justice Histories: United States, 2009–2018.” *American Journal of Public Health* 110 (S1): S137–44. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305437>.

Qi, Diane, Kamran Abri, M. Rani Mukherjee, Amy Rosenwohl-Mack, Lina Khoeur, Lily Barnard, and Kelly Ray Knight. 2022. “Health Impact of Street Sweeps from the Perspective of Healthcare Providers.” *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, March. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-022-07471-y>.

Quigley, John M., Steven Raphael, and Eugene Smolensky. 2001. “Homeless in America, Homeless in California.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 83 (1): 37–51. <https://doi.org/10.1162/003465301750160027>.

Raven, Maria C., Matthew J. Niedzwiecki, and Margot Kushel. 2020. “A Randomized Trial of Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons with High Use of Publicly Funded Services.” *Health Services Research* 55 (S2): 797–806. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.13553>.

Reid, Carolina. 2021. “On the Edge of Homelessness: The Vulnerability of Extremely Low-Income Households in the Bay Area.” Turner Center for Housing Innovation, UC Berkeley. <https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/research-and-policy/edge-of-homelessness-extremely-low-income-bay-area/>.

Resnikoff, Ned. 2021. “How The Atlantic’s Big Piece on Meth and Homelessness Gets It Wrong.” *Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative* (blog). November 15, 2021. <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/blog/how-atlantics-big-piece-meth-and-homelessness-gets-it-wrong>.

———. 2022. “San Fransicko Is Incorrect About Housing Affordability and Homelessness.” *Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative* (blog). January 24, 2022. <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/blog/san-fransicko-incorrect-about-housing-affordability-and-homelessness>.

Reyes, Emily Alpert. 2018. “L.A. Lawmakers Pledge 222 Units of Homeless Housing in Each of Their Districts.” *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 2018, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-resolution-20180220-story.html>.

Riley, Elise D., Eric Vittinghoff, Rose M. C. Kagawa, Maria C. Raven, Kellene V. Eagen, Alison Cohee, Samantha E. Dilworth, and Martha Shumway. 2020. “Violence and Emergency Department Use among Community-Recruited Women Who Experience Homelessness and Housing Instability.” *Journal of Urban Health : Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 97 (1): 78–87. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-019-00404-x>.

- Rodriguez, Joe Fitzgerald. 2020. "Proposition C Court Win Delivers Nearly \$500 Million for San Francisco's Homeless. But How Will It Be Spent?" *KQED*, September 12, 2020. <https://www.kqed.org/news/11837613/proposition-c-court-win-delivers-nearly-500-million-for-san-franciscos-homeless-but-how-will-it-be-spent>.
- Rosalsky, Greg. 2021. "How California Homelessness Became A Crisis." *NPR*, June 8, 2021, sec. Newsletter. <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2021/06/08/1003982733/squalor-behind-the-golden-gate-confronting-californias-homelessness-crisis>.
- Rossi, Peter H. 1989. *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rothstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. First edition. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- Sampson, Robert J. 2012. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Scally, Corianne Payton, and J. Rosie Tighe. 2015. "Democracy in Action?: NIMBY as Impediment to Equitable Affordable Housing Siting." *Housing Studies* 30 (5): 749–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2015.1013093>.
- Schattschneider, E. E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People ; a Realist's View of Democracy in America*. First edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- . 1963. *Politics, Pressures and the Tariff; a Study of Free Private Enterprise in Pressure Politics, as Shown in the 1929-1930 Revision of the Tariff*. [Unaltered and Unabridged edition]. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books.
- Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *American Political Science Review* 87 (2): 334.
- Schneider, Mark. 1987. "Local Budgets and the Maximization of Local Property Wealth in the System of Suburban Government." *The Journal of Politics* 49 (4): 1104–16. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2130787>.
- Schneider, Monika, Daniel Brisson, and Donald Burnes. 2016. "Do We Really Know How Many Are Homeless?: An Analysis of the Point-In-Time Homelessness Count." *Families in Society* 97 (4): 321–29. <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.2016.97.39>.

- Schneider, Valerie. 2018. "The Prison to Homelessness Pipeline: Criminal Record Checks, Race, and Disparate Impact." *Indiana Law Journal* 93: 421.
- Schragger, Richard C. 2016. *City Power: Urban Governance in a Global Age*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Schuetz, Jenny. 2022. *Fixer-Upper: How to Repair America's Broken Housing Systems*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Shellenberger, Michael. 2021. *San Fransicko: Why Progressives Ruin Cities*. First edition. New York: Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
- Shelton, Katherine H., Pamela J. Taylor, Adrian Bonner, and Marianne van den Bree. 2009. "Risk Factors for Homelessness: Evidence From a Population-Based Study." *Psychiatric Services* 60 (4): 465–72. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ps.2009.60.4.465>.
- Smith, Dakota, and David Zahniser. 2021. "L.A. Cut Millions from the LAPD after George Floyd. Here's Where That Money Is Going." *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 2021, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-05-26/lapd-funds-reallocation-george-floyd>.
- Smith, Neil. 1996. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. Psychology Press.
- Snow, David A. 1992. *Down on Their Luck: A Study of Homeless Street People*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sohn, Dong Wook, Anne Vernez Moudon, and Jeasun Lee. 2012. "The Economic Value of Walkable Neighborhoods." *URBAN DESIGN International* 17 (2): 115–28. <https://doi.org/10.1057/udi.2012.1>.
- Sonenshein, Raphael. 1993. *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- . 2021. "We're Not Giving Up: A Plan for Homelessness Governance in Los Angeles." Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs, Cal State LA. https://calstatela.patbrowninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PBI_LACity_Homelessness_PUBLIC.pdf.
- Soss, Joe. 1999. "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action." *The American Political Science Review* 93 (2): 363–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2585401>.

- . 2000. *Unwanted Claims: The Politics of Participation in the U.S. Welfare System*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Spinelli, Matthew A., Claudia Ponath, Lina Tieu, Emily E. Hurstak, David Guzman, and Margot Kushel. 2017. “Factors Associated with Substance Use in Older Homeless Adults: Results from the HOPE HOME Study.” *Substance Abuse* 38 (1): 88–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08897077.2016.1264534>.
- Steffen, Charles G. 2012. “The Corporate Campaign against Homelessness: Class Power and Urban Governance in Neoliberal Atlanta, 1973–1988.” *Journal of Social History* 46 (1): 170–96. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shs031>.
- Stone, Clarence N. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. Studies in Government and Public Policy. Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas.
- . 2017. “Trends in the Study of Urban Politics: A Paradigmatic View.” *Urban Affairs Review* 53 (1): 3–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087416674328>.
- Storper, Michael, Thomas Kemeny, Naji Philip Makarem, and Taner Osman. 2015. *The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies: Lessons from San Francisco and Los Angeles*. Innovation and Technology in the World Economy. Stanford, California: Stanford Business Books, an imprint of Stanford University Press.
- Stuart, Forrest. 2018. *Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/D/bo23530208.html>.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. 1996. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit (Princeton Studies in American Politics)*. S.I.]: SI: Princeton University Press. <http://portal.igpublish.com/iglibrary/search/PUPB0000545.html>.
- Sussell, Jesse. 2013. “New Support for the Big Sort Hypothesis: An Assessment of Partisan Geographic Sorting in California, 1992–2010.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46 (4): 768–73. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096513001042>.
- Swan, Rachel. 2018. “Supes’ Discord Puts a Damper on Legislation.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 13, 2018.
- Taeuber, Cynthia M., and Paul M. Siegel. 1990. “Counting the Nation’s Homeless Population in the 1990 Census,” November.
- Takahashi, Lois M. 1997. “The Socio-Spatial Stigmatization of Homelessness and HIV/AIDS: Toward an Explanation of the NIMBY Syndrome.” *Social*

Science & Medicine 45 (6): 903–14. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(96\)00432-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(96)00432-7).

- Thacher, David. 2008. “The Rise of Criminal Background Screening in Rental Housing.” *Law & Social Inquiry* 33 (1): 5–30.
- The Editorial Board. 2018. “Editorial: Using California’s Signature Environmental Law to Shut down Homeless Housing Is NIMBYism at Its Worst.” *Los Angeles Times*, April 21, 2018, sec. Opinion. <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-el-mercado-lorena-lawsuit-20180421-story.html>.
- Thompson, Ronald G., Melanie M. Wall, Eliana Greenstein, Bridget F. Grant, and Deborah S. Hasin. 2013. “Substance-Use Disorders and Poverty as Prospective Predictors of First-Time Homelessness in the United States.” *American Journal of Public Health* 103 (S2): S282–88. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301302>.
- Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. “A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures.” *Journal of Political Economy* 64 (5): 416–24. <https://doi.org/10.1086/257839>.
- Tighe, J. Rosie. 2012. “How Race and Class Stereotyping Shapes Attitudes Toward Affordable Housing.” *Housing Studies* 27 (7): 962–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2012.725831>.
- Tighe, J. Rosie. 2010. “Public Opinion and Affordable Housing: A Review of the Literature.” *Journal of Planning Literature* 25 (1): 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412210379974>.
- Tobler, W. R. 1970. “A Computer Movie Simulating Urban Growth in the Detroit Region.” *Economic Geography* 46: 234–40. <https://doi.org/10.2307/143141>.
- Tong, Michelle S., Lauren M. Kaplan, David Guzman, Claudia Ponath, and Margot Kushel. 2021. “Persistent Homelessness and Violent Victimization Among Older Adults in the HOPE HOME Study.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36 (17–18): 8519–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519850532>.
- Trounstine, Jessica. 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108555722.
- . 2020. “The Geography of Inequality: How Land Use Regulation Produces Segregation.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (2): 443–55. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000844>.

- Tso, Sharon M. 2021. "Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Governance." Report of the Chief Legislative Analyst for the City of Los Angeles. https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2020/20-0045_rpt_cla.pdf.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Vitale, Alex S. 2008. *City of Disorder How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*. New York, N.Y: New York University Press.
- Wagner, David. 2012. *Confronting Homelessness: Poverty, Politics, and the Failure of Social Policy*. Social Problems, Social Constructions. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Weaver, Vesla M., and Amy E. Lerman. 2010. "Political Consequences of the Carceral State." *American Political Science Review* 104 (4): 817–33. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000456>.
- Wick, Julia. 2021. "Buscaino Aims for November 2022 for Anti-Camping Ballot Measure after Council Defers Action." *Los Angeles Times*, November 23, 2021, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-11-23/joe-buscaino-encampments-ballot-proposal-vote>.
- Williams, Jean Calterone. 2005. "The Politics of Homelessness: Shelter Now and Political Protest." *Political Research Quarterly* 58 (3): 497–509. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3595618>.
- Wong, Cara. 2010. *Boundaries of Obligation in American Politics: Geographic, National, and Racial Communities*. Cambridge Studies in Public Opinion and Political Psychology. Cambridge [England] ; Cambridge University Press.
- Zahniser, David. 2013. "L.A. City Council a Hot Destination for Former State Legislators." *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 2013, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-xpm-2013-jul-04-la-me-new-council-20130705-story.html>.
- . 2021. "Group Says It Has Enough Signatures to Force L.A. Councilman Mike Bonin Recall Vote." *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 2021, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-11-10/backers-of-mike-bonin-recall-deliver-signatures-to-city-hall>.
- Zahniser, David, Emily Alpert Reyes, and Joel Rubin. 2020. "L.A. City Councilman Jose Huizar Charged in Federal Corruption Probe." *Los Angeles Times*, June

23, 2020, sec. California. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-23/jose-huizar-arrest-corruption-city-hall-fbi-investigation>.

Zhang, Yue. 2013. *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation: Beijing, Chicago, and Paris*. Globalization and Community, volume 22. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.